Working abroad from Sri Lanka

Your rights under the law of Sri Lanka, and where to get free help

What the law of Sri Lanka says

Agency fees — PARTIAL
The law limits fees, or bans them only for some jobs or countries.

Written contract — STRONG
You must get a written contract, checked by the government, before you leave.

Training before you go — PARTIAL
Training is required, but you may have to pay, or it is only for some workers.

Insurance or welfare fund — STRONG
A government fund or insurance covers death, injury and the trip home.

Help line — STRONG
There is an official help line, open 24 hours.

A lawyer abroad — PARTIAL
The government may pay for legal help abroad, case by case.

Safe place to stay — PARTIAL
Some embassies have a safe place to stay.

Complaint at home — PARTIAL
A complaint can punish the agency or get your fees back. For other money owed, you go to court.

This is what the law says. What happens in practice can be different.

MAIN LAWS

- Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment Act No. 21 of 1985

Before you go

1. Keep a photo of your passport, visa and contract on your phone. Give copies to your family.
2. Ask for a receipt for every payment to an agency.
3. Save the numbers on this page before you leave.

Free help

Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) hotline 1989
1989
slbfe.lk
Government hotline for Sri Lankan migrant workers.

Justice Without Borders
justicewithoutborders.org
Helps migrant workers bring claims in the country where they worked, even after returning home, with pro bono lawyers.

We list a phone number only when we have checked it.

Court decisions that helped workers

We are still collecting court decisions from Sri Lanka.

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