



Cornell University Student Assembly

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| Originally Presented on: | 10/15/2015 |
| Type of Action: | Recommendation |
| Status/Result: | New Business |

S.A. Resolution #16 Addressing Labor Issues in Qatar

ABSTRACT: The Student Assembly and the Cornell Organization for Labor Action recommends that Cornell University ensure that exemplary labor practices are utilized on all of their campuses

Sponsored by: Paul Russell '19

Whereas, there are many labor abuses prevalent in Qatar including wage withholding, passport seizures, inability to escape, and deplorable working and living conditions that result in the daily deaths of migrant workers. Workers are often tricked into signing false contracts with promises of a living wage and dignified working and living conditions;

Whereas, according to a report submitted by the International Trade Union Confederation, the construction of Cornell's and other campuses in Qatar has resulted in the exploitation and deaths of campus workers, an outcome that is antithetical to our mission as a university dedicated to the public good;

Whereas, Cornell University is lending its name to a globally recognized system of human trafficking and forced labor;

Whereas, Cornell University's relationship with the Qatari government is lending legitimacy to this exploitative migrant-labor system. Former President David Skorton was unwilling to act on these requests to address these problems;

Whereas, these concerns were expressed by The Cornell Organization for Labor Action in a letter (found in Appendix A) to President Garrett on September 15, 2015.

Whereas, President Garrett sent a letter (found in Appendix B) to the Cornell Organization for Labor Action that was unsatisfactory to the organization as they were expecting the University to launch an investigation for these concerns;

Be it therefore resolved, that the Student Assembly and the Cornell Organization for Labor Action recommends that all foreign universities operating in Qatar, and indeed the Gulf, must agree to an independent monitoring process, which could be undertaken by the Workers' Rights Consortium or a similar credible NGO. Universities must make a commitment to implement the findings of these reports within a short, defined period of time;

Be it therefore resolved, that the Student Assembly requests that President Garrett forwards a copy of these reports to the Student Assembly and the Cornell Organization for Labor Action upon receiving them;

Be it further resolved, that the Student Assembly and the Cornell Organization for Labor Action recommends that universities must collectively call on the government of Qatar to abolish the kafala system, and to ensure that all workers have the right to form or join a union of their choosing and to bargain collectively;

Be it further resolved, that the Student Assembly and the Cornell Organization for Labor Action recommends that universities should recognize legitimate worker representatives and negotiate terms and conditions with such representatives. The universities must insist that the Qatar Foundation do the same, as they are the ultimate employer of many of the workers providing services at Education City;

Be it further resolved, that the Student Assembly and the Cornell Organization for Labor Action recommends that Cornell University continues to enforce and improve upon all of the labor practices outlined in a letter (found in Appendix C) from the former President of Cornell University, David J. Skorton;

Be it further resolved, that the Student Assembly and the Cornell Organization for Labor Action take seriously the concerns outlined by the International Trade Union Confederation in a letter (found in Appendix C) to the former President of Cornell University, David J. Skorton, in March 2014;

Be it finally resolved, that the Student Assembly expects that under President Garrett's leadership, the Cornell University administration will ensure that exemplary labor practices are utilized on all of their campuses and be a leader in the field of labor relations.

Respectfully Submitted,

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(Reviewed by: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 10/14/15)