



QATAR: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS NOT CRIMINAL!

RELEASE KENYAN MALCOLM BIDALI NOW.

The KHRC is distressed by developments in Qatar where a Kenyan national, Malcolm Bidali, was arrested on the night of May 4 for questioning by the state security service. Malcolm, who has been working as a security guard in Qatar, was taken from his labour accommodation on allegations that he had violated Qatar's 'security laws and regulations'. Malcolm is an activist and blogger whose articles have given deep insight into the working and living conditions of migrant workers in Qatar. He has been on the front line fighting to reform Qatar's labour laws by sharing his own experiences as a migrant worker in the country.

The issues that Bidali has been raising through social media are in the public domain, so it is preposterous for the authorities to pick on him. In 2017, Human Rights Watch made a series of recommendations in relation to migrant worker deaths and called upon the Qatari authorities to release data, conduct investigations, reform laws to protect workers from heat and perform autopsies. None of these recommendations have ever been implemented. Two years later in June 2019, FairSquare asked FIFA to call publicly on the Qatari authorities to commission an independent investigation into worker deaths.

Days before Bidali's arrest and detention, he had spoken to various civil society organisations about the poor working and living conditions of migrant workers. He had

also raised concerns over possible reprisals, particularly from his employer, as he was speaking up against the poor treatment of migrant workers. Two weeks later, his whereabouts remain unknown and the Qatari authorities have refused to disclose where they are detaining him. Detaining Bidali incommunicado is causing too much anguish to his family, friends, colleagues and members of civil society organisations who cannot reach him and have no way of knowing the conditions under which he is detained. Such detention also means Bidali is denied the right to legal representation.

We demand that Qatari state security service disclose the whereabouts of Bidali and the exact charges that have been pressed against him. The Qatari authorities must also guarantee his safety and security under Qatar and international laws. Specifically, the right to be protected from torture, ill-treatment and right to access justice and a fair trial must be guaranteed. Finally and in the event that the charges against Bidali remain unclear, he must be released unconditionally.

#WhereisMalcolm