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Across the Gulf states, the protections and provisions for domestic workers are weaker than those of other private-sector workers who fall under the labour law. Due to their exclusion from labour laws and the common perception that domestic work is not ‘real work,’ employers and workers alike lack awareness of the due entitlements. A 2018 survey by the Kuwait Society for Human Rights revealed that 62.2% of employers and 71.59% of domestic workers were not aware of the existence of a domestic worker’s law at all, even though more than three years had passed since the law was issued.

One critical provision that is often overlooked is the end-of-service benefits for domestic workers. While these workers are generally entitled to fewer benefits than their counterparts in the private sector, they are nonetheless guaranteed a gratuity at the end of their service in every country except for Oman and the UAE. Under the previous domestic worker’s law in the UAE, domestic workers were explicitly entitled to end-of-service benefits. However, the recent domestic workers’ law of 2022 no longer specifies the provision of end-of-service benefits.

Most domestic workers leave the Gulf countries without obtaining their entitled gratuity. To address this, Gulf States should implement mechanisms and regulations ensuring that all domestic workers receive their end-of-service benefits before returning to their home country. One potential solution could involve making it mandatory for employers to settle all worker entitlements prior to terminating their contracts and work permits. However, this should serve as an interim measure, while efforts are made to establish more comprehensive social protection systems that encompass domestic workers.

Pre-employment orientations and awareness campaigns need to highlight the right to end-of-service benefits and explain how to calculate it. For example, a domestic worker in Bahrain who has worked for 8 years with an employer with a salary of BD100 (US\$ 265) per month is entitled to BD650 (US\$ 1,725) at the end of their service.

In addition to end-of-service benefits, domestic workers in the Gulf are entitled to a specific number of annual or biennial paid leave days. However, similar to gratuity, many domestic workers in the Gulf either do not receive their paid annual leave at the end of their contract or are forced to take unpaid leave.

Below is a comparison of the end-of-service benefits along with paid annual leaves for domestic workers in each of the Gulf countries:

Country	End-of-Service Entitlement	Paid Leave Entitlement	Law
Bahrain	The worker shall be entitled upon the termination of his/her contract to a reward equivalent to the wage of half a month for each year of service for the first three years and the wage of one month for each subsequent year. The worker shall be entitled to a reward for the fraction of a year pro rata the period of service he/she spent with the employer	30 days of paid annual leave per each year of service.	<i>For end-of-service:</i> Article 116 of Bahrain's 2012 Labour Law <i>For paid leave:</i> Article 58 of Bahrain's 2012 Labour Law
Saudi Arabia	Domestic workers are entitled to one month's wage if he or she has spent four consecutive years with the same employer	30 days of paid annual leave for every two years of service.	<i>For end-of-service:</i> Article 16 of Decision No.310 of 2017 on Domestic Workers <i>For paid leave:</i> Article 10 of Decision No.310 of 2017 on Domestic Workers
Kuwait	Domestic workers are entitled to one month's wage for each year of work at the end of the work contract.	30 days of paid annual leave after 11 months of completed service.	<i>For end-of-service:</i> Law No. 68 of 2015 on Employment of Domestic Workers <i>For paid leave:</i> Article 28 of Ministerial Decision No. 22 of 2022
UAE	On the Minister's recommendation, the UAE Cabinet shall adopt the rules and regulations for workers.	30 days of paid annual leave per each year of service.	<i>For end-of-service:</i> Article 22 of Federal Decree-Law No.9 of 2022 Concerning Domestic Workers <i>For paid leave:</i> Article 10 of Federal Decree-Law No.9 of 2022 Concerning Domestic Workers
Qatar	An employer shall be responsible for paying the end-of-service bonus to a domestic worker who spent at least one year in service as of the date on which the law entered into force, at the end-of-service, in addition to any other entitlements. This bonus shall be determined in agreement between both parties provided it shall be at least a three-week wage for each year spent in service. A domestic worker shall be entitled to fractions of the year multiplied by the period spent in service.	3 weeks of paid annual leave per each year of service.	<i>For end-of-service:</i> Section 15 of Law No. 15 of 2017 concerning Domestic Workers <i>For paid leave:</i> Article 14 of Law No. 15 of 2017 concerning Domestic Workers
Oman	No law to stipulate end-of-service gratuity for domestic workers	30 days of paid leave every 2 years of continued service.	<i>For paid leave:</i> Article 5 of Standard Employment Contract of 2011

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