

# JVP insists Lankan workers didn't leave Kuwait as infected persons

Monday 1 June 2020, by [INDRAJITH Saman](#) (Date first published: 29 May 2020).

**The JVP-led Ethera Api organisation, yesterday, accused the government of making use of the high number of COVID-19 infected cases, from Kuwait, as an excuse to avoid bringing home thousands of Lankans stranded overseas.**

Addressing the media at the party headquarters, yesterday, former JVP MP and Chairman of the Ethera Api organization, Sunil Handunnetti, said that there were thousands of Sri Lankans, stranded in many countries and seeking government assistance to return home. "The government is creating a corona-bogeyman. It should immediately stop denigrating the migrant workers who have been the lifeblood of our national economy,."

Handunnetti said that it was not because of a fault of those migrant workers that they got infected. "The government kept driving them from pillar to post, instead of bringing them home. It was during that time they got infected. The Kuwaiti government, on April 21, allowed 19,000 migrant workers, who had lost their employment, to return to their home countries. That government expressed its wishes to bear the cost of that process. But the Lankan authorities wanted to get the time period extended, and started discussions to achieve that objective. The period was extended till May 31. By April 21, there were 466 Lankans, who had registered with the Lankan Embassy, in Kuwait, to be sent here. As at that date, a total of 1,995 coronavirus cases had been identified in Kuwait. There were no infected Lankans there then. The government could have sent two flights and brought them home. They could have returned home uninfected. But the number of coronavirus cases increased rapidly there," he said.

Handunnetti said that Lankan migrant workers had not left Kuwait as coronavirus infected persons. "On May 19, the day they were brought home, Kuwait's total number of cases had increased to 16,784. There are reports that Embassy officials had selected Lankan workers to be sent back. It is said that the ambassador had personally overseen the process. The selected Lankans boarded the flight, only after facing relevant medical tests. They did not get on the plane as coronavirus cases. So, it is not right for a minister to call them corona bombs."

The former MP said that the government should expedite the process of bringing other migrant workers home. "If the government says it does not have money, it could draw money from the Kuwaiti Compensation Fund, set up at the Foreign Employment Bureau. The fund, set up during the war in Kuwait, has more than 4000 million rupees."

Treasurer of the Ethera Api organisation Attorney-at-Law Janaka Adikari also addressed the press.

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