

Date: October 11, 2024, 5:52:48
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Object: Hierarchical Appeal: Urgent request for intervention to speed up the issuing of visas and appointments for work visa applications in Italy in Bangladesh

Hierarchical Appeal

Hon. Giorgia Meloni

President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic

Pec: Presidente@pec.governo.it

As representatives of the Bangladeshi community in Italy, we are addressing you. In the context of the 2023-2024 Flow Decree, we are currently facing a serious backlog of Nulla Osta al lavoro in Bangladesh, especially for seasonal workers, with approximately 100,000 permits already issued to Bangladeshi citizens. **These documents are issued at the request of Italian employers and are examined and approved by the Italian Government Prefecture. We are workers who suffer the consequences of this situation, forced to live in unsustainable uncertainty and face a nightmare that seems to have no end.**

Currently, around 40,000 Bangladeshi candidates are experiencing unfair and discriminatory treatment in their search for a work visa for Italy. We want to highlight the difficulties we are facing due to the impossibility of submitting our visa applications, with waiting times ranging from six to twelve months. We kindly ask for your support in solving this long waiting period by speeding up the appointment assignment process and visa issuance.

Furthermore, it is essential to highlight that currently over 40,000 passports are blocked at the Embassy awaiting the issuance of visas, with requests that have not been resolved **for over a year**. This situation contributes to generating a climate of great uncertainty and discomfort among candidates.

It is not acceptable to hold a worker's passport for a year without providing a response to their request. Many workers have received Nulla Osta and have gone to apply for visas from different countries in the Middle East, where they had stable jobs, to seek a better future in Italy, leaving their jobs and returning to Bangladesh to apply for visas. However, they now find themselves living in poverty. **There have also been reports of deaths from heart attacks, caused by the nightmare and depression related to the uncertainty of the future.**

We would also like to bring to your attention that VFS Global Visa Application Agency for the Embassy of Italy in Dhaka has announced the commencement of appointment bookings via **email from 31 March 2024**. However, after six months of waiting and numerous emails sent to the designated email address provided by VFS Global, we have not received any concrete information regarding the scheduling of appointments or the progress of our applications.

According to the Italian Embassy in Dhaka, the current staff can only handle 100 cases per day, which translates to about 2,500 cases per month and 30,000 cases per year. Therefore, it is clear that a reinforcement of staff of at least ten times would be necessary to address and resolve the current crisis.

Although appointments were offered via email from March 31 to April 25, 2024, those who continued to contact the office from May to today have not received an appointment. Estimates indicate that more than 40,000 applicants are currently waiting for an appointment, with many submitting repeat requests.

On October 3, 2024, the candidates' representatives interacted with VFS Global officials, who confirmed that they did not have specific information regarding the timeframe for reconfirming appointments. It was reported that the Italian Embassy is monitoring the situation, but we are told that it could take another 2-3 months of waiting, bringing the total to a period of 12 months, which further exacerbates the situation.

It should also be noted that many applicants received their Clearances **one to twelve months before** submitting their applications. If the wait times continue to lengthen, this could potentially result in actual waits of 12 or even 24 months, creating serious concerns.

In addition, prospective employers in Italy are waiting to fill their positions and are also concerned about the uncertainty of appointments, fearing they will have to abandon their hiring plans, which carries significant economic and emotional risks.

Recently, a growing number of dishonest brokers have resumed their activities, canceling appointments without notice and trying to extort money from candidates. This situation adds further pressure to those who are already struggling.

Currently, each candidate is forced to experience significant emotional and financial hardship as they await an uncertain future. We are eager to contribute positively to the Italian economy by working legally and providing support to the workforce, as well as supporting our families through remittances.

To address these issues, we respectfully request the following:

Immediate Increase in Staffing: There is an urgent need to increase a reasonable number of staff to 1. cope with the current crisis, due to the high volume of Nulla Osta issued by the Prefecture of the Italian Government.

2. **Appointment Scheduling Process Begins:** The appointment scheduling process is expected to begin by October 30, with ongoing scheduling to facilitate quick appointments for pending emails.
3. **Scheduling of Application Submission:** Visa application submission must be scheduled to occur within 30 days of notification of appointment.
4. **Application Processing Times:** Visa applications must be processed and completed within a maximum of 60 working days of application.
5. **Stopping Inappropriate Behavior:** It is imperative that rude and harassing behavior by VFS Global personnel toward candidates cease immediately. Candidates should be given the opportunity to receive updates on the status of their applications by monitoring emails in the backlog until they receive an appointment.
6. **Timely Responses from Embassies and VFS Global:** Embassies and VFS Global must respond promptly to inquiries from employers seeking updates on their employees' appointment status or visa application processes.
7. **Stop All Forms of Harassment:** It is essential to stop all forms of harassment, including fraudulent nomination reports, broker fraud, and harassing behavior by scammers.

Therefore, we humbly request your kind consideration in taking effective measures to expedite the appointment scheduling process, taking into due consideration the above issues.

We await a prompt and urgent response, as this concerns the lives and dignity of workers.

Attention: Italian Government

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2. Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic Pec: segreteria.generale@cert.esteri.it, dgap.segreteria@cert.esteri.it
3. Director General, Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic
4. **General Directorate for Italians Abroad and Migration Policies**
5. Secretariat: dgit.segreteria@cert.esteri.it
6. Visa Unit: dgit.unita.visti@cert.esteri.it
7. Mr. Ambassador, Embassy of Italy, Dhaka, Bangladesh pec: amb.dhaka@cert.esteri.it

Attention: Government of Bangladesh:

8. Hon. Chief Adviser Dr. Yunus Government of Bangladesh.
9. Hon. Adviser, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of Bangladesh.

10. Hon.Adviser, Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Labour at Foreign Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh.

11. Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Bangladesh.

12. Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Labour at Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh.

Best regards

Mohammed Taifur Rahman Shah

The President

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