Fair Labor **ISSUE BRIEF**

NOVEMBER 19, 2026

Return airfare entitlements for foreign migrant workers in Jordan's textile and garment industry

THE ISSUE

Jordan's Unified Work Contract and the collective bargaining agreement for the textile and garment industry (available in Arabic and English) establish employers' contractual obligation to provide foreign migrant workers with return airfare at the end of their employment contract.[1] However, suppliers often do not provide this benefit if workers renew their contract for an additional employment period.

The Fair Labor Association (FLA) requires its member and affiliate companies sourcing from Jordan to ensure that their suppliers provide migrant workers with their return airfare entitlement, whether or not they renew their contract.

BACKGROUND

In Jordan's garment and textile sector, employers are required to cover certain travel expenses for foreign migrant workers, including inbound airfare from the worker's home country upon recruitment and return airfare at the end of the employment contract. However, neither the Unified Work Contract nor the sector's collective bargaining agreement explicitly state how employers should manage the return airfaire obligation when a worker completes a fixed-term contract and immediately enters into a new contract with the same employer.

As a result, some suppliers assume that workers forfeit their return ticket if they choose to remain in Jordan and sign a new contract. This issue impacts many foreign migrant workers in Jordan, who often choose to remain in the country and sign a new, three-year contractual agreement when the first is complete.

At the point of contract renewal, suppliers typically provide workers with two options:

1. They can terminate their employment, return to their home country, and receive the return ticket; or
2. They can remain in Jordan and sign a new contract, but only by giving up the return airfare entitlement associated with the completed contract.

[1] The relevant clauses regarding return airfare in each document are as follows: Unified Work Contract (Clause 4.B.2) and collective bargaining agreement (Article 8.2.d).

This creates a risk for forced labor, as workers are faced with deciding whether to request their entitled benefit or secure a new contract – directly impacting their income, legal status, and housing. For workers to have genuine consent regarding their working conditions, they must be able to make choices without threats, penalties, or fear of losing continued employment or benefits.

FLA RECOMMENDATIONS

FLA interprets the Unified Work Contract and the sector collective bargaining agreement's return airfare entitlement as accruing **at the end of each contract.** Employers must provide return airfare regardless of whether a worker completes their contract and returns home or renews their contract for another term. Continued employment should not require a worker to surrender this benefit.

Suppliers in Jordan should provide workers with the following options:

1. **A priority return ticket or worker-elected deferral:** Suppliers should give priority to providing workers with a return ticket. This allows workers to visit their home country, reunite with family, and take a meaningful break before starting a new employment term. Where a worker voluntarily chooses to remain in Jordan, the worker may elect to defer use of the ticket until they take annual leave and visit their home country at another point during the renewed contract period, while preserving the value of the entitlement.
2. **Immediate cash equivalent:** Suppliers can also offer a cash equivalent of the one-way flight ticket to the worker's home country, paid at the end of the original completed contract, based on the prevailing cost of a comparable ticket at that time.

Regardless of the option used, employers must clearly inform workers of their options and the decision must belong to the worker, not the supplier. Workers should not be pressured or encouraged to select an option that is more convenient or financially beneficial to the supplier.

During communication with suppliers and social compliance audits, FLA members and affiliates sourcing from Jordan should take the following actions:

- **Ensure that workers are provided with return airfare at the end of each contract period, as a contractual obligation:** Suppliers can provide workers with an air ticket home, or a cash/bank transfer payment for the full value of the ticket.
- **Prohibit conditional renewals:** Prohibit suppliers from making contract renewal conditional on surrendering the return airfare. Any deferral or alternative arrangement must be transparent and provide equivalent consideration, such as a ticket or cash payment.
- **Ensure clear, written pre-signing information:** Ensure workers receive clear written information about their return airfare entitlement before signing a renewal contract and are not pressured to waive or defer the benefit.
- **Verify implementation and worker awareness:** During social compliance audits, verify that suppliers properly implement return airfare entitlements, including informing workers about their rights and available options. Auditors should also assess whether workers understand that renewal of their employment contract should not require them to surrender this entitlement.

- **Ensure consistent implementation across suppliers:** Brands should ensure that all suppliers apply a consistent approach to return airfare so that foreign migrant workers receive equal treatment, regardless of their employer.

FLA CODE ELEMENTS

THE GOVERNING ELEMENTS OF THE FAIR LABOR CODE RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP AND FORCED LABOR

"There shall be no use of forced labor, including prison labor, indentured labor, bonded labor or other forms of forced labor."

"Employers shall adopt and adhere to rules and conditions of employment that respect workers and, at minimum, safeguard their rights under national and international labor and social security laws and regulations."

"Every worker has a right to compensation for a regular work week that is sufficient to meet the worker's basic needs* and provide some discretionary income*. Employers shall pay at least the minimum wage or the appropriate prevailing wage, whichever is higher, comply with all legal requirements on wages, and provide any benefits required by law or contract. Where compensation does not meet workers' basic needs and provide some discretionary income, each employer shall work with FLA to take appropriate actions that seek to progressively realize a level of compensation that does."

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP BENCHMARK F.2: FREEDOM IN EMPLOYMENT

F.2.2 Employment terms shall be those to which the worker has voluntarily agreed, in as far as those terms do not fall below:
F.2.2.1 Provisions of national laws;
F.2.2.2 Freely negotiated and valid collective bargaining agreements; or
F.2.2.3 The Fair Labor Code.
F.2.3 There can be no employment terms which allow employers, employment agencies, or intermediaries:
F.2.3.1 To hold wages already earned; or
F.2.3.2 Use earned back wages as penalties; and
F.2.3.3 In any way punishes workers for terminating employment.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP BENCHMARK ER.15: TERMINATION AND RETRENCHMENT/TERMINATION PAYOUTS

ER.15.1 Employers shall have in place a procedure for determining termination payouts, including methods for correct assessment of payouts for all modes of termination/retrenchment, taking into account national legal requirements.
ER.15.3 Employers shall not demand that workers sign any declaration of good health, waivers or releases of other rights as a condition of receiving severance pay or other legal benefits from the company, and shall not threaten to withhold benefits if workers do not sign.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP BENCHMARK C.1: GENERAL COMPLIANCE COMPENSATION

C.1.1 Employers shall comply with all national laws, regulations and procedures concerning the payment of compensation to workers.
C.1.2 In any case where differences or conflicts in national law and the Fair Labor Code arise, employers are expected to apply the highest standard.

ABOUT THE FAIR LABOR ASSOCIATION

The Fair Labor Association (FLA) promotes human rights at work. We are an international network of companies, universities, and labor and civil society organizations collaborating to ensure that millions of people working at the world's factories and farms are paid fairly and protected from risks to their health, safety, and well-being.