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Zahir Belounis given exit permit to leave Qatar

Brussels, 27 November 2013 (ITUC OnLine): The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and FIFPro are delighted to hear Zahir Belounis' ordeal will soon be over. Having finally received his exit visa on Wednesday (November 27), the French-Algerian footballer is now free to leave Qatar.

Zahir Belounis is scheduled to leave Doha for Paris on Thursday (November 28).

For two years the French-Algerian professional footballer has been trapped in Qatar. The restrictive kafala sponsorship laws give migrant workers no freedom to leave the country without their employers' permission.

"A grave injustice is nearly over for Zahir and his family. One man and his family have come to illustrate the conditions faced by 1.3 million migrant workers in Qatar," said Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC.

"The torment that Zahir and his family have been put through because of bad laws which give workers no rights should never be repeated.

"Sadly, today in Qatar there remain many workers who have no voice. The Qatar authorities should reform their laws to respect International Labour Organisation conditions," said Sharan Burrow

In a statement (http://www.fifpro.org/news/news_details/2429), FIFPro said:

"As the worldwide representative for professional footballers, FIFPro will be able to welcome back a long-lost family member.

The World Footballers' Association would also like to express its gratitude to all who joined together with FIFPro to ensure a successful outcome."

The ITUC and FIFPro head to Qatar on Thursday (November 28) to start a four-day visit to engage local authorities in a bid to help prevent future misery for those who find themselves powerless under the working conditions of Qatar's kafala sponsorship system.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 156 countries and territories and has 325 national affiliates.

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