



May 16, 2016

## **Open Letter to Jennifer Lopez Calling for Cancellation of Qatar Airways Event Contradicting 'Ain't Your Mama' Women's Rights Message**

Dear Ms. Lopez:

Last week we were alerted that you will be featured at a red-carpet event on May 17th in Atlanta's historic Fox Theatre celebrating the entrance of Qatar Airways to the Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in June. We have been working to get notice to you about the dangers of performing at this event, especially with the uplifting messages you have been promoting through "Ain't Your Mama." We are asking you to stand with us on women's rights and human rights and cancel this appearance.

The problem is that Qatar Airways Group is owned by the nation of Qatar, where:

- Being LGBT is illegal, punishable by up to five years in prison. Other illicit sexual relations are punished by flogging, the penalty for adultery being 100 lashes.
- Labor Unions are also illegal in Qatar, where immigrants make up 90% of the workforce. Upon entering the country, their passports are seized and the migrant workers are often forced into slavery. Those who protest or try to leave are thrown in prison.
- Qatar is one of the worst countries in the world for human trafficking and slavery.
- Human Rights groups are lining up against Qatar Airways and there will be a massive protest outside the Fox Theater on May 17th.
- Qatar's Chief Executive Officer, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker maintains, "With every new destination we serve, we seek to become a part of that community." This is concerning especially in Atlanta, the bastion of the civil rights movement and birthplace of Martin Luther King Jr.

The International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), representing millions of aviation workers around the globe including the 50,000 members of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, has launched an international campaign supporting Flight Attendants at Qatar Airways who have no voice and no recourse in the face of discrimination.

- Qatar Airways Group employs more than 40,000 people. Women are 80% of the workforce – and women's rights are obliterated under the airline's policy and practice.
- There are serious limits on the freedom of speech / expression- workers must sign lifetime confidentiality agreement.
- If workers resign or get terminated they banned from returning to Qatar even as a tourist.
- Staying overnight outside of company-assigned accommodation is not allowed. Key cards track crew movement. Permission is required from the company to leave the country on days off.
- Crew members have reported that "cameras and security guards watch everything you do." The company searches crew rooms while crew members are on flights.
- Permission is required to marry and this can be denied. Pregnancy leads to termination.

After attempting to alert you to this issue through Twitter last week, Qatar Airways reached out to me within 12 hours and offered to host me at the concert, assuring me these "issues" were in the past. I asked that they find an openly gay Qatar crew to invite me to the event, but there has been no response. It is offensive that these people think everyone is for sale and it reinforces the depth of wrongdoing at Qatar Airways.

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Flight Attendants, 83% women, are fans of your work and recent music video "Ain't Your Mama" that heralds women's rights, starting with a voiceover of Hillary Clinton stating "women's rights are human rights," and continuing to equal pay and other women's issues. However, supporting an airline that demolishes women's rights and tramples human rights will destroy your credibility and popularity. Going forward with this event will signal that you are only motivated by profiting from inequality, the oppression of workers and contempt for our gender. Please consider that this could also hurt the credibility of those you promote, including the woman who is best positioned to become the first woman President of the United States of America. The stakes are high.

We are asking that you cancel your appearance at the Fox Theater on May 17th and join us in calling for equal rights, labor rights and human rights at Qatar Airways.

We hope you will join us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Sara Nelson  
International President