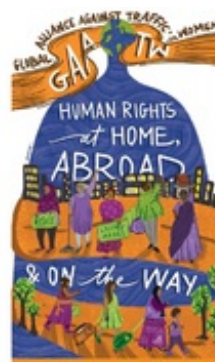




Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

e-Bulletin

October 2023



Dear friends,

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this e-bulletin!

Warm greetings from the GAATW International Secretariat.

We are pleased to bring you the last bulletin of the year. As we reach November 2023, it feels as if the year has passed too quickly. After two and half years of online work, like all of you, we also got busy with many in-person events. So several meetings, consultations, and workshops were held in different parts of the world. Many of you were part of those convenings. The remaining two months look busy too.

During August and September, we organised two consultations in Sri Lanka and the Philippines on women workers' experiences of return migration and the various reintegration provisions that are available in their respective countries. .

We also organised a learning visit to the UAE in August for some of our South Asian partners. They met up with migrant workers from their countries, visited their diplomatic missions, and also interacted with CSOs and representatives of the Government of Dubai.

During September and October, we held three one-day workshops in Thailand keeping mindful eating at the centre. The first meeting was with migrant domestic workers in Chiangmai. While the primary focus of the discussion was on worker organising, including a session on food literacy and cooking a meal together added an interesting and useful dimension to it. For more details, read Srishty Anand's blog "[Meeting domestic workers over a meal of miang pla tu](#)", The second and third workshops, co-organised with our member Just Economy and Labour Institute, were with groups of women platform and hospitality workers. Studio Horjhama in Mae Rim was our knowledge partner in these workshops. Do read our blog "[Kin khao duai gan kha](#)" for more details.

The new issue of Anti-Trafficking Review is out. [Issue no. 21](#) highlights challenges faced by low-wage workers, trafficked persons, internally displaced persons, LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, and other marginalized groups during the pandemic. The narrative focuses on the struggle against violence, exploitation, discrimination, and the quest for healthcare and social protection. Based on evidence, the authors suggest changes to policies and practices to lessen the negative effects on human rights during future tough times.

While project and programme-related activities have kept us busy, the many worrying developments around us are a cause for concern. We are sure that like us, many of you must be wondering about the efficacy of our current systems to ensure a just, fair, and peaceful world for all. The failure of the international community to stand up for innocent people who are losing their lives and livelihoods is deeply disturbing.

The most recent one in the series of geopolitical crises is the situation in Israel and Palestine. As the war escalates, alongside millions of innocent people, a group of third-country nationals also find themselves in a dangerous situation. They are the migrant workers in Israel. More than 100,000 migrant workers from several Asian countries, many of whom are in agricultural and care work, are employed in Israel. Deaths of workers from

Thailand, Nepal, and the Philippines have been evacuated by their governments, many are also unwilling to return as they have taken huge debts to pay their recruitment fees.

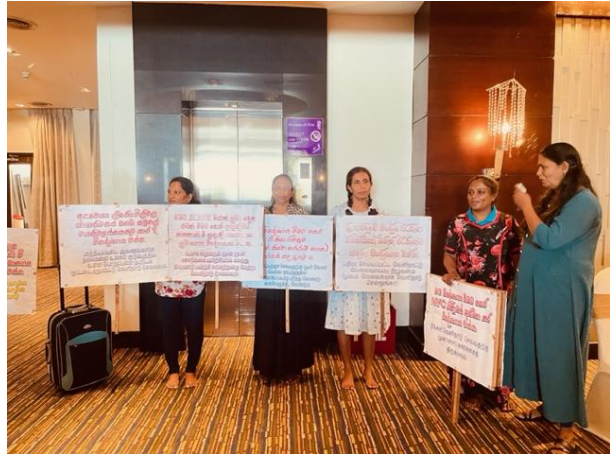
The war has intensified with little regard for the UN General Assembly's vote in support of an immediate ceasefire. But a majority of UN member states and millions of people around the world have spoken up. Along with them, we call for an immediate ceasefire and a peaceful world.

News from the GAATW International Secretariat

Events

Berlin Consultation on the Socioeconomic Inclusion of Migrant Women in Europe

In July 2023, GAATW-IS held a [consultation](#) with eleven other networks to examine the barriers to socioeconomic inclusion for migrant women in Europe. The organisations included members La Strada International, ESWA, KOK, and Ban Ying, as well as European Trade Union Confederation, Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe, Women and Development in Europe+, International Women* Space, Wo-Mi, Transnational Migrants Platform – Europe, and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants.



Life upon Return: Women Migrant Workers Advocating for Safe and Fair Migration

On 2-4 August, GAATW-IS hosted a 3-day national consultation in Colombo with returnee women migrant workers and CSOs working on migrant rights. The discussions focused on sustainable reintegration of women migrant workers. While acknowledging the steps taken by state and non-state actors, participants also made recommendations for future action. CHRCD, our partner based in Kurunegala, presented an [incredible performance](#) by organised returnee migrant workers. The street play showcased challenges faced by women workers at different stages of their migration cycle and emphasized the role of the state in protecting rights of migrants.

Learning Visit of South Asian Partners to Dubai

On 21-24 August, a group of our partners from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka visited Dubai to meet up with migrant workers from their countries and other stakeholders in the UAE. Partners also held meetings with their diplomatic missions to learn about the kind of support available for the workers. Representatives of the Dubai Government and the private sector joined the meeting to share the legal scenario with regard to labour recruitment and working conditions.



Rights and Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Women in Southeast Asia

On 18-20 September, GAATW-IS and Blas Ople Policy Center, co-organised a 3-day consultation and public event in Manila on the rights and reintegration of returnee women migrant workers in Southeast Asian countries. The meeting brought together 29 participants from 15 organisations from Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Vietnam. The aim of the meeting was to initiate a discussion on the socio-economic challenges faced by returnee women in Southeast Asia, and explore strategies to foster social cohesion and long-term support for returnee migrant women. As the [concept note](#) points out, migration policies across the Southeast Asian regions have mainly focused on the expansion of outward migration with a view to receive more remittances that would contribute to the country's economic growth. Return and reintegration services are limited to supporting distressed migrants and trafficked persons. Further, in Southeast Asia, reintegration programmes are generally focused on training schemes, assistance services, and nominal financial support for self-employment. At the consultation, participants talked about their current work and how they are supporting organising among returnee migrants. We also had a sharing session with women returnees who talked about their migration journeys and the work they are doing in their communities. Following the consultation, GAATW-IS held a public event to launch the research report. A [press statement](#) was released with recommendations for sustainable reintegration of migrant returnees. The public event included a dialogue between women migrant leaders and key officials from the Department of Migrant Workers and representatives from the House of Representatives. Check out the soundbites from the public dialogue [here](#).

Advocacy

EU Trafficking Directive and Prostitution Report

On 14 September, the European Parliament's report on "Regulation of prostitution in the EU" was adopted. Disappointingly, the report conflates consensual work with exploitation. On 5 October, [proposed amendments](#) by the European Parliament to the EU Trafficking Directive called for stricter regulations on sexual services. GAATW-IS, alongside the European Sex Workers Rights Alliance (ESWA) and La Strada International (LSI), advocated against these provisions. While the amendments were approved, our commitment to challenge them remains steadfast.

New Report of the Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls

On 27 September, the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls released a report advocating for the complete decriminalisation of adult sex work to safeguard the rights of sex workers. GAATW-IS and other members of Sex Workers Inclusive Feminist Alliance (SWIFA) gave input on the adverse effects of criminalisation, especially on migrant sex workers who face heightened risks from law enforcement and

potential deportation. More details [here](#).

UN CERD briefing

The GAATW-IS and Comitato attended a Zoom briefing of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to brief them about the situation of migrants in Italy, following our joint written submission to the Committee about the same. The Committee has now published its findings about the situation in Italy, raising specific concerns about the difficulties facing migrants, including deplorable living conditions, reduction of the availability of psychological and legal services, and disproportionate use of immigration detention. These were all points raised by Comitato in their briefing.

UPR Stakeholder Reports for Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Jordan

Ahead of the Universal Periodic Review for Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, we prepared stakeholder reports that outline the key human rights issues facing migrant women and trafficked persons in each of the respective countries.

Many thanks to members Brigada Callejera, National Workers Welfare Trust, Awajj Foundation, and Sema Nami for their invaluable contributions to these three reports. The final review of each country will take place in January 2024

ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour 25-26 October 2023

GAATW was nominated as one of two regional CSO representatives to attend the 16th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) in Jakarta, Indonesia, which convenes annually to evaluate the protection and governance of migrant labour in the ASEAN region. Following discussions between ASEAN governments, CSOs, trade unions, employer organisations, and UN agencies, the forum concluded with a set of recommendations that were agreed by the participants.

The discourse at AFML was mostly centred on regular migration channels, leaving the rights of irregular migrants less exposed. However, GAATW did manage to successfully request the inclusion of a recommendation for states to make migration pathways more inclusive by addressing restrictions on the basis of gender, age or parental status. You can read the full list of final recommendations [here](#).



Alliance News

We begin this section by welcoming Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, CDH, our new member from Ecuador.

[Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos](#), a non-profit in Guayaquil, promotes and defends human rights universally. In Ecuador's coast, they established the Human Mobility Network of the Coastal Region (RMHRC), a network of institutions and organisations working collaboratively to support migrant and refugee women through case

referrals, and advocacy with public authorities.

We are pleased to draw your attention to the "Meet our Members" interviews published on our webpage. Below are the links to the recent interviews with our members from Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Europe:

- Ban-Ying "[Ban Ying, a "house for women" survivors of domestic violence, and sexual and labour exploitation](#)".
- Libera Foundation "[Public policy against human trafficking should consider the lived experiences of survivors](#)".
- Yayasan Anisa Swasti "[Our foundation has the vision of realizing working women as independent, equal and free of injustice](#)"
- Comitato per i Diritti Civili delle Prostitute aps (CDCP ApS) "[Our approach to anti-trafficking is centered on women's agency](#)"
- Sunita Foundation "[Sunita's work is about creating a safe and understanding space where survivors feel heard and supported](#)"
- Awaj Foundation "[We try to empower women by building their capacity to raise their own voices and strengthen their bargaining capacity](#)"

Publications

Anti-Trafficking Review

[No. 21 \(2023\): Special Issue - COVID-19: Labour, Migration, and Exploitation](#) Drawing from global contributors, this Special Issue portrays challenges faced by various vulnerable groups, from trafficked individuals to LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, in areas like discrimination, healthcare access, and racism. It praises civil society organisations for bridging the state's support gap. The contributors also offer insights to strengthen human rights during future crises.

Resources from our members

Asia

Centering the Agency of Women in Thailand's platform-based Care Economy

This report is the product of research conducted by Just Economy and Labor Institute, in collaboration with two grassroots organisations: Empower and MAP foundations. It looks at the impacts of online and digital labor platforms on Thailand's care workers, with a focus on worker precarity, gender issues, and women workers' agency in negotiating platform-mediated work in the gig economy. Read the full report [here](#).

Advocacy for the Implementing Regulations of Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence

In May 2022, Law Number 12 concerning Criminal Sexual Violence (TPKS) was enacted in Indonesia. Despite its passage, victims of sexual violence face hurdles in the legal process. While some court decisions cite the TPKS Law for victim restitution, its implementation proves challenging. [LRC-KJHAM](#) and the Service Providers Forum (FPL) are pushing for regulations to operationalise the TPKS Law.. Their evidence-based advocacy includes lobbying various ministries and institutions in the country.

Legislative Brackets for the Crime of Torture

The Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue released a policy paper on August 21, titled "Legislative Gaps in the Crime of Torture." The paper critiques Egypt's inadequate laws on torture and notes unmet goals in the National Strategy for Human Rights. It concludes with legislative recommendations and emphasises the need to adopt the optional anti-torture protocol. Read the full paper [here](#).



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Europe

KOK Sheds Light on Trafficking in Persons Trends in Germany for 2022

To mark EU Anti-Trafficking Day, KOK, Germany's NGO Network against Trafficking, released its [fourth report](#) on trafficking in persons in Germany. Data from specialised centers revealed 875 trafficking cases in 2022, with 733 cases analysed. Most victims hailed from West Africa, with 47% exploited in Germany and legal proceedings started in 35% of cases. The report highlights gaps in ensuring victims' rights.

Latin America

CHS Alternativo and Peruvian Ministry of the Interior signed an agreement to eradicate human trafficking

At the signing ceremony, Andrea Querol of [Capital Humano y Social \(CHS\) Alternativo](#) and Vice Minister Miguel Núñez from the Ministry of Interior formalised a four-year agreement. This pact pledges joint efforts in executing plans to eradicate human exploitation crimes, aligning with the National Policy against Human Trafficking.

North America

Canadian members meet with UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery

On 30 August, GAATW Canada and SWAN Vancouver briefed UN Special Rapporteur, Prof. Tomoya Obokata, on Canadian policies potentially exploiting temporary migrants and sex workers. Prof. Obokata noted Canada's inaction on [recommended](#) regulatory changes and will reference this in his report. The groups also emphasised the disproportionate attention on trafficking into the sex industry. Their suggestions were mirrored in the Special Rapporteur's [final comments](#).



Call for papers

Anti-Trafficking Review calls for papers for a Special Issue themed '[Family and Community](#)'. It will aim to shed light on family dynamics within the realms of migration, trafficking, and precarious labour. We hope that the issue will inform



the development of programmes that address the needs of migrants, survivors, and workers within their familial and community contexts.

We welcome contributions that delve into various facets of these dynamics, including but not limited to: the caregiving motivations for migration, the interplay between domestic violence and trafficking, insufficient state welfare provisions, the complex roles of family members in trafficking scenarios, and the family experience during a member's trafficking ordeal.

The submission deadline is **1 July 2024**.



Visit our
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