

# VOICES FROM THE SOUTH

*“Please keep your intervention to two minutes.”*

*Two minutes  
for a life.  
Two minutes  
for a war.  
Two minutes  
for a childhood  
spent inside a tent.*



**Global Migrant  
Workers Network**

Cover Art by: Jether L. Latigo

A painting of a desert landscape. The foreground is dominated by a large, vertical wooden post, possibly a fence post or a marker, standing in the sand. The sand is a mix of light and dark orange tones, with visible brushstrokes. In the background, there are rolling sand dunes under a dark, overcast sky. The overall style is expressive and somewhat somber.

***VOICES FROM THE  
SOUTH***

*The **Voices from the South Initiative** is organized by Migrant Forum in Asia and the Global Migrant Workers Network to unite the voices of migrant workers, community organizers, and activists from Asia and Africa. It seeks to amplify their aspirations, hopes, and demands in global spaces where they are often underrepresented due to barriers such as restrictive visa regimes, limited mobility, and participation constraints.*

*Despite these challenges, these individuals continue to assert their presence and agency by sharing their stories and visions through letters, songs, poems, and other artistic expressions. These works reflect the lived realities of migrant workers and illustrate what more inclusive, rights-based spaces should look like.*



# The Negotiation Table

By Peter Kidi

They told us,  
"Refugees must be part of the  
conversation."  
They said,  
"Nothing about you without you."

So we came.  
Across oceans.  
Across checkpoints.  
Across deserts of paperwork and  
waiting.  
We came with the dust of the  
camps on our shoes  
and the names of the missing  
burning quietly in our mouths.

The room was bright.  
Too bright  
for the things we carried.  
In the middle  
stood the table  
long as a border,  
smooth as a promise.

Around it sat  
the architects of our survival.

Diplomats.  
Lawyers.  
Donors.

People who have never stood  
in a food line that ends  
before your turn.

They smiled when we entered.  
"Welcome," they said.  
"Your voice matters here."

Then they seated us  
at the edge.

Not where the pens were.  
Not where the maps were.  
Not where tomorrow  
was being written.  
Just close enough  
to be photographed.

The meeting began.  
"Let's talk about sustainable  
solutions."  
"We must focus on efficiency."  
"Resources are limited."

We waited.  
We waited for someone to ask  
what hunger sounds like.

For someone to ask  
why boys from the camp  
are disappearing toward the sea.

For someone to ask  
how a mother cooks  
when the pot holds nothing  
but water and shame.

Instead a polite voice said,  
"Please keep your intervention to  
two minutes."

**Two minutes  
for a life.  
Two minutes  
for a war.  
Two minutes  
for a childhood  
spent inside a tent.**

We spoke anyway.  
But every sentence we offered  
was translated into something  
safer.

We said hunger.  
They wrote "food insecurity."

We said despair.  
They wrote "resilience challenges."





We said people are breaking.  
They wrote  
"communities are adapting."

And slowly  
we understood the truth.  
We were not invited  
to shape the decision.  
We were invited  
to prove the decision was fair.

Outside the room  
the camps were still breathing dust.  
Children were still counting empty plates.  
Mothers were still whispering  
to sleeping stomachs,

"Tomorrow will be better."  
Inside the room  
they thanked us.

"Your testimony is very powerful."  
"We appreciate your perspective."  
"This discussion has been very productive."

They shook our hands  
like history had moved forward.

But we knew.  
A seat at the table  
does not mean  
your life is being protected.

Sometimes  
it only means  
you are close enough  
to hear someone say,  
"Unfortunately, we cannot fund everyone."

Art by @adawyahmad  
from @flyers\_for\_falastin

Amuel  
Samm  
11.2024

# WE RESIST

SONG BY SHERRYNORTH ALSO KNOWN AS MISSI RESILIENCE

**We've walked through fire and we've carried pain,  
But we rise together and we break the chains.  
No more silence, no more fear,  
Our voices louder, strong and clear.**

**Chorus**

**Here we chant**

**We resist — we will not fall  
We reclaim — our voice, our all  
We realise — a world made new  
Justice lives in me and you.**

**From every street to every land,  
We rise as one and we take a stand.**

**Dignity we won't deny,  
For we are the truth they can't defy.**

**Here we Stand,**

**We resist — we will not fall  
We reclaim — our voice, our all  
We realise — a world made new  
Justice lives in me and you.**

**FREE THEM ALL**

## Foot Soldiers of the Draw

By Winfred A. Nansamba

They rise before the sun's first bleeding light—  
a clutch of dreams in calloused, soot-stained hands.

Their labour feeds the cities, quickens might,  
yet systems turn their backs on their demands.

They toil where ladders crumble into dust,  
in houses where every request is a slither,  
in factories where safety's merely a style—  
a ghost who vanished long before the "please

### **The law books speak in tongues no migrant knows, where rights are clauses buried six feet deep.**

Their contracts and promises scrawled  
on paper torn with woe,  
and commitments dissolving in the steep.

No union speaks for them, or if it does,  
it echoes from a hall too cold to warm.  
Healthcare costs as much as stolen shoes,  
while children watch their parents lose the storm.

The bureaucratic maze, a fortress of delay,  
where affidavits crumble without proof.

Papers lost in winds of war and pay,  
as debt collectors circle like a loom.  
Humanitarian slogans, glossy and bold,  
fall soft.

For every hand that lifts the world above,  
we must build a net to hold when safety fails.

Not walls to separate, but ropes of love,  
not borders to exclude, but tools to hail:  
This is their fight; this too is ours to claim—  
until each worker finds a just terrain.  
Let not our systems falter in the name  
of power over people, loss over gain.  
Let bodies no longer pay the price for shame—  
let labour's truth at last meet mercy's rain.

## To the Member States Participating in the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF),

I write this submission not only as Social worker, but as someone who has stood closely with migrant workers and families in [redacted] and across the Gulf. Through my work, I have seen both the strength and the suffering of our migrant communities. I have listened to workers in distress, families in fear, women in vulnerability, and men who left their homes with dreams, only to find themselves trapped in hardship, uncertainty, and silence.

For many in the Global South, migration is not a luxury. It is a necessity born out of unemployment, poverty, debt, and the desire to give one's family a better future. Thousands leave their homes in India and other countries and come to [redacted] and the Gulf with hope. They come to work honestly, to support their parents, educate their children, and build a life of dignity. But the reality many face is painful. Too often, migrant workers experience exploitation, delayed or unpaid wages, unsafe working conditions, contract substitution, job loss, irregular status, detention, lack of legal awareness, and barriers to justice.

In [redacted] and other Gulf countries, migrant workers play a major role in building the economy and sustaining society. They work in construction, transport, domestic work, hospitality, cleaning, maintenance, and many other essential sectors. Yet when crisis strikes, it is often these same workers who become the most invisible. I have personally encountered cases where workers were abandoned without salaries, left without food, stranded without documents, or pushed into extreme distress because of legal, labour, or financial problems. In such moments, the system often moves too slowly, while the suffering of the worker is immediate and real.

Women migrants in the Gulf face an even more difficult reality. Many carry the burden of economic responsibility while also facing isolation, fear, abuse, and a lack of protection. Survivors of trafficking and exploitation often struggle in silence, not because they have no voice, but because the world has not created enough safe spaces to hear them. Their pain must not be reduced to policy language. Their lives demand urgent action, protection, and justice.

One of the deepest concerns I wish to raise is that migrant workers are still too often discussed without being truly heard. Decisions are made in high-level forums, but the lived reality of migration is experienced in labour accommodations, crowded rooms, worksites, detention centres, shelters, and community spaces. The worker who has not received wages for months, the woman who fears speaking out, the family waiting for the return of a loved one, and the volunteer trying to rescue a person from distress all carry truths that global systems must listen to more seriously.

Today, the discourse around migration is becoming increasingly toxic across the world. Migrants are too often portrayed as burdens instead of contributors. This is deeply unjust. In [redacted] and across the Gulf, migrant workers have contributed enormously to national growth, infrastructure, services, and development. They have built roads, homes, offices, hospitals, and communities. They have cared for families, supported businesses, and strengthened economies. At the same time, through remittances, they have sustained families and local economies back home in the Global South. Migrants are not a problem to be managed. They are human beings to be respected.

From my experience on the ground, I strongly believe that migration governance must become more humane, practical, and accountable. Ethical recruitment must be ensured. Wage protection must be effective. Access to justice must be simple and real. Legal aid and grievance systems must be more accessible to vulnerable workers. Women migrant workers must receive stronger protection. Survivors of trafficking must be supported with dignity, not stigma. Community organizations, migrant support groups, and civil society must be treated as partners in protection and response.

I also wish to emphasize that the Gulf migrant experience must be given serious attention in global migration discussions. [redacted] and the Gulf are home to millions of migrant workers from the Global South. Any honest conversation on migration justice must include the realities, contributions, and challenges of these workers. Their voices matter. Their sacrifices matter. Their dignity matters.

I submit this message with conviction and responsibility.

**I have seen pain, but I have also seen extraordinary resilience. I have seen workers who continue to stand with courage despite suffering. I have seen communities come together in solidarity. I have seen hope survive even in the middle of crisis. These are the real voices from the South.**

At the International Migration Review Forum, I humbly urge world leaders, governments, and institutions not to speak about migrants only in terms of systems, labour, and borders. Speak about them as people. Listen to them as rights-holders. Protect them as human beings. Let migration policy be guided not by fear or politics, but by dignity, justice, and compassion.

We call for a migration system rooted in humanity, fairness, and accountability. Recruitment must be ethical and free from exploitation. Wages must be protected. Access to justice must be real and accessible. Women migrant workers must be safe and empowered. Survivors of trafficking must receive protection, rehabilitation, and pathways to rebuild their lives with dignity. Civil society, community leaders, and migrant-led groups must be recognized as essential partners, not peripheral actors.

The future of migration governance must not be shaped only by states and institutions. It must also be shaped by the courage, pain, resilience, and wisdom of migrants themselves. "Voices from the South" are not voices from the margins. They are voices from the frontlines of migration. They speak not only of suffering, but also of strength, contribution, survival, and hope.

Let the International Migration Review Forum be a space where migrants are not merely spoken about, but truly heard. Let this process reaffirm that every migrant life has value, every worker has dignity, and every human being deserves rights, protection, and respect.

The time has come to move beyond promises and toward real action. Migrants do not ask for sympathy alone. They ask for fairness, protection, recognition, and the right to live and work with dignity.

**Sudheer Thirunilath**  
Community Organizer

## To the Member States Participating in the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF),

We write to you not as statistics, but as people.

We are migrant workers—sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers—who leave our homes in pursuit of dignity and opportunity. Our journeys are rooted in hope, yet too often marked by sacrifice and vulnerability. While our labor sustains economies, many of us remain unprotected within the very systems we help uphold.

Across the world, we serve in essential roles as builders, engineers, caregivers, service workers, and laborers. We take on work that is often undervalued yet critical to the functioning of societies. Through our efforts, destination countries benefit from our productivity, while our families and home nations rely on the lifeline of remittances.

Despite these contributions, we continue to face gaps in protection and representation. Many of us are excluded from decision-making processes, denied fair wages, or left without access to justice. The demand for migrant labor is growing, but policies ensuring our rights and welfare have not kept pace.

This is most evident in the lack of strong social protection systems. Too often, we have limited access to healthcare, social security, and legal safeguards. These gaps become even more severe during times of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed how quickly we can lose our livelihoods, our security, and our access to basic support. In moments of conflict and economic instability, we are often the first to be displaced and the least protected.

We call on you to act with urgency and resolve.

Strengthening inclusive and portable social protection systems.

Uphold migrant rights through fair labor standards and enforcement.

Promote migrant empowerment by ensuring our voices are heard and our access to information is secured.

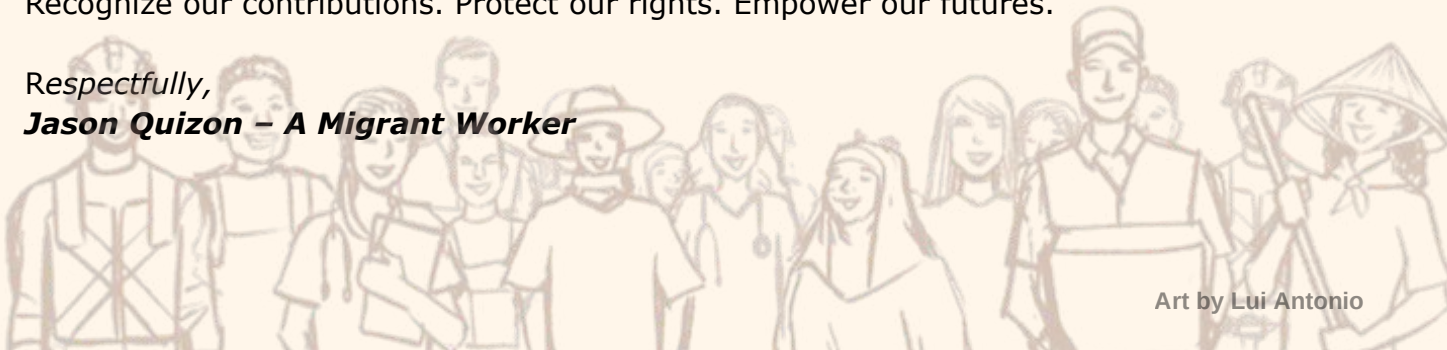
Protect us not only in times of growth, but especially in times of crisis.

We are not asking for charity, we are asking for fairness.

**In difficult times, we rely on one another. We stand in solidarity, offering support where systems fall short. But this resilience should not replace responsibility.**

Recognize our contributions. Protect our rights. Empower our futures.

Respectfully,  
**Jason Quizon – A Migrant Worker**



Art by Lui Antonio

20 March 2026

H.E. Ekitela Lokaale  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations  
866 UN Plaza, Suite 304  
New York, NY 10017

Dear H.E. Ekitela Lokaale,

I write to you not only as a Kenyan, but as one voice among millions of migrant workers who leave home with hope often at great financial cost only to face uncertainty, sacrifice, and resilience in foreign lands. I commend you for assuming this responsibility at such a complex and defining moment in global history.

Migration today is too often framed in dehumanizing terms. Migrants are reduced to statistics, headlines, and political rhetoric, yet behind every number is a story of courage, survival, and dignity. This reality stands in contrast to the progress marked by global milestones such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Having lived and worked in the Gulf region for 18 years as community representative and not only for Kenyans but for Africans in GCC, I approach the upcoming International Migration Review Forum with both urgency and hope because challenges continue to intensify, and hope because this forum remains a vital platform for shaping meaningful global commitments.

Every day, Kenyan migrant workers and migrants worldwide face exploitation, wage theft, unsafe working conditions, family separation, and, in extreme cases, trafficking and abuse. Yet, despite these hardships, they continue to contribute significantly to economies, sustain families through remittances, and build bridges between nations.

In this spirit, I humbly present the following calls to action:

- Center migrant voices in decision-making by ensuring meaningful inclusion at all levels of governance.
- Strengthen protections against exploitation, particularly for domestic and informal sector workers.
- Expand safe and regular migration pathways to reduce reliance on dangerous and irregular routes.
- Promote dignity in public discourse by recognizing migrants as contributors, not threats.
- Ensure access to justice, including legal aid, shelter, and psychosocial support for all migrants.
- Protect family unity and prioritize the emotional well-being of those separated from loved ones.

Your Excellency, this is more than policy, it is about humanity. It is about the mother who has not held her child for years, and the young man who risks everything to support his family. It is about dignity, justice, and the kind of world we choose to build.

**I urge you to carry these voices into the forum not as distant concerns, but as urgent realities requiring bold and compassionate action.**

We stand ready, as migrant workers and advocates, to work alongside you in shaping a future where migration is safe, dignified, and truly human centered.

Thank you for accepting this humble submission.

Yours sincerely,  
**Pastor George Muturi**

24 March 2026

H. E. Ekitela Lokaale

Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations  
866 UN Plaza, Suite 304 New York, NY 10017

Message from the ground

Dear H.E Ekitela Lokaale Garu,

We, the members of Andhra Domestic Workers Union, many of whom are overseas migrant domestic workers, appreciate you for taking on this challenge at this critical time of geopolitical moment. Governments have been meeting at various occasions in our names with hope each time like Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2006, again in 2018 in the name of UN High-Level Dialogue, and ultimately the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration.

As a collective of the migrant domestic workers life and possibility has not changed for us. The issue of trafficking of women and young workers from the interior villages are on with much promise and hope, governments are still far from addressing the issues and our concerns. At the work place and to the workplace we experience lots of violence, discrimination, denial of basic rights. We have long stories of struggle, struggle to get respectable living, working, health, social security etc.

Will this second International Migration Review Forum on the Global Compact for Migration be different to really address our issues? Will we be at the centre of your planning and deliberations? Will the governments speak up for us? Or will there be CSOs who will represent us to let our voice be heard in these meetings?

We wish and hope that an important space is given to us for the participation to make considerations, that the ground realities and lived experiences of migrant workers, women workers, and domestic workers could be heard and attention given by the global community to reflect and the decisions taken for the way forward.

Domestic Workers are Workers and women workers, we have left our homes to serve other homes, we have left our familiar shore to join you and make your home a place of ease. We toiled day and night keeping away our basic comforts. We run around to satisfy each of the members in the home. We kept awake to your needs.

**Time went day by day, month by month and year by year. My young self can no longer move now, I have left behind many years of service in your home,** now I am old, broken, without health, no money, I am not in need of anyone, at home and in your home. Where to turn? Whom to Ask?

**Will this meeting make a real difference for people like us?**

**Members from Andhra Domestic Workers Union, Andhrapradesh, India**

# We Cross More Than Borders

By Mars Ashir

We do not leave because we want to,  
we leave because the ground beneath us  
forgets how to hold our names.

We carry homes in fragments—  
in the warmth of spices we grew up with,  
in lullabies our mothers whispered,  
in the dust that clings to our memories.

In the quiet tears we carry,  
and the smiles we remember,  
we hold the pieces of home  
the world could never take from us.

They call us numbers,  
waves, crises  
but we are not statistics.

We are hands that build cities  
we may never belong to.  
We are voices that soften languages  
that once felt foreign.

We are hearts stretched across continents,  
beating in more than one place.

From the South, we speak  
not as shadows, but as stories.

We speak of courage sewn into survival,  
of dignity rising even when denied,  
of hope that refuses to drown  
even in the deepest crossings.

Do not frame us in fear.  
Do not reduce us to borders.

See us-  
as workers, as dreamers, as families,  
as lives in motion, not problems to solve.

Because migration is not a crisis of people  
it is a reflection of a world  
still learning justice.

And still—  
we rise.

**With every step taken across  
unknown lands,  
we carry more than loss-  
we carry the future.**

**And we will not be silenced.**



Art by @adawyahmad  
from @flyers\_for\_falastin

## ***An Interrupted Migration Journey:***

*The Story of Mr. [REDACTED] Sunil*

Mr. [REDACTED] Sunil, a resident of Nyavanandi village in Sirikonda Mandal, Nizamabad district, Telangana, represents the lived realities of many migrant workers from the Global South whose journeys are shaped by aspiration, vulnerability, and systemic challenges.

Born into a poor family, Sunil grew up understanding hardship early. With limited livelihood opportunities and increasing responsibilities, he became the primary provider for his wife and children. Every decision he made was guided by the need to support his family. Like many others in his village, migration was not a matter of choice but a necessity—driven by survival and the hope of building a more secure future.

With borrowed money from friends and relatives, and after paying a significant amount to a recruitment agent, Sunil migrated to Bahrain to work as an electrician. This decision came with risk and sacrifice. He carried with him not only the burden of debt, but also the hopes of his family—**the dream of educating his children, repaying loans, and improving their living conditions.**

However, the reality he encountered was far from what had been promised. Sunil lived in poor conditions and worked under difficult and often exploitative circumstances. Despite these hardships, he continued to persevere. Month after month, he sent remittances home, prioritizing debt repayment and his family's daily needs over his own well-being.

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a critical turning point in his journey. Work became uncertain, and eventually, Sunil was not paid wages for six months. With no savings, no social protection, and no institutional support, he found himself stranded in a foreign country, struggling to survive. The debts at home remained, and his family continued to depend on him, but his income had suddenly disappeared.

Faced with no viable options, Sunil was forced to return to India without receiving his pending wages. His return was not one of relief or success, but one marked by distress and unfinished burdens.

Back in Nyavanandi, his challenges continued. The debts he had incurred for migration remained largely unpaid, and the financial strain on his family persisted. With limited local employment opportunities, Sunil now relies on irregular, short-term work. Each day brings uncertainty, and each earning is temporary, making it difficult to rebuild stability.

Sunil's experience highlights critical gaps in migration governance, including high recruitment costs and debt burdens, wage theft, weak enforcement of labour protections, lack of social protection during crises, and limited reintegration support for returnee migrants.

His story underscores the urgent need to centre the lived experiences of migrant workers in global migration discussions. It calls for stronger accountability, fair and ethical recruitment practices, and comprehensive systems that protect workers throughout the migration cycle—from departure to return and reintegration.

Mr. Sunil's journey is not an isolated case. It reflects the broader reality of migrant workers whose labour sustains economies across borders, yet whose rights, dignity, and well-being remain insufficiently protected.

**Sr. Lissy Joseph**  
**Trade Union Leader / Migrant Rights Activist**



Art by @malaka\_abu\_owda  
from @flyers\_for\_falastin

*I come from the Global South. I am a survivor of hidden dangers that many migrants face, exploitation and trafficking that steal lives and dreams. I survived a hard journey. I want to share my story to help others and ask for change.*

*Migration is not just a movement of people. It is the movement of hopes, of families, of futures. Yet too often, it is painted with toxic words that forget the human behind the journey.*

*We must remember that behind every statistic is a person like me, who fought to survive and reclaim dignity.*

### **"From Darkness to Light"**

*By Abubakar Farouq*

**In dark places, I walked alone,  
Far from home, so unknown.  
Fear held me tight, hands that hurt,  
But inside me, a small bright light.**

**I was trapped but I did not stay,  
I found my strength and walked away.**

**My voice is strong, I want you to hear,  
Justice and help for all who fear.  
From South to North, let voices rise,  
Every person has a prize.  
Together we stand, we will fight,  
To bring all lost ones into light.**

መልዕክት  
ራሄል ዘገዬ - የ [redacted]

እኔ ራሄል ዘገዬ፣ የ [redacted] መስራች እና [redacted] ውስጥ የሰደተኛ የቤት ሰራተኞችን የምወክል እንደ መሪ፣ ይህን መልዕክት ከመሬት የሚነሳ የሰደተኛ ሰራተኞች ድምፅ አቀርባለሁ።

ብዙ ሰደተኛ ሰራተኞች ቤተሰቦቻቸውን ለመደገፍ ተስፋ ይዘው አገራቸውን ይተዋሉ። ነገር ግን ብዙዎች በከባድ ሁኔታ ውስጥ ይገኛሉ፤ ረጅም ሰዓታት ይሰራሉ፣ አንዳንዶች ደሞዛቸውን አያገኙም፣ ብዙ ጊዜም በቤት ውስጥ ተገልለው ይኖራሉ። ድካማችን ይፈለጋል፣ ግን ድምፃቸው አይሰማም።

[redacted] ውስጥ ብዙ ሰራተኞች በቀን እስከ 16 ሰዓት ይሰራሉ፣ ነገር ግን የሚከፈላቸው ደምዘ እጅግ ዝቅተኛ ነው። በብዛት በቀን ከአምስት ዶላር በታች የሚመጣ ክፍያ ይቀበላሉ። ከዚህ የከፋው ግን አንዳንድ ሰራተኞች እንደ ሰው በክብር አይታዩም። ይህ በጤናቸው፣ በእካላቸው እና በነፍሳቸው ላይ ከባድ ጉዳት ያመጣል።

ይህን ጉዳይ የምናነሳው [redacted] ያለው ሁኔታ ከብዙ ሌሎች የአረብ አገሮች የሚለይ ስለሆነ ነው። ሀገሪቱ ከባድ የኢኮኖሚ እና የፖለቲካ መሰናክሎችን ያጋጥማታል፣ እና በዚህ ሁኔታ የሰራተኞች መብት ብዙ ጊዜ የመጨረሻ የምንግስት ስራ ይሆናል።

ነገር ግን ተስፋ አለ። [redacted] ገስደተኛ ሰራተኞች የሚመራ ድርጅት ሲሆን ሰራተኞች እንዲደራጁ፣ ስለ መብቶቻቸው እንዲማሩ እና ድምፃቸውን እንዲያሰሙ ቦታ ይፈጥራል።

ዛሬ የዓለም መሪዎች በInternational Migration Review Forum ላይ ተሰብስበው በGlobal ላይ፣ እኛ ከመሬት የሚመጣውን ድምፅ እንዲሰሙ እንጠይቃለን።

መልዕክታችን ግልጽ ነው፤ ሰደተኛ ሰራተኞች ቁጥጥሮች ብቻ አይደሉም። እናቶች፣ ሴቶች፣ እህቶች እና የማህበረሰብ መሪዎች ናቸው። ክብር፣ ፍትህ እና ጥበቃ ልዩ ጥቅሞች አይደሉም—እያንዳንዱ ሰደተኛ ሰራተኛ የሚገባው መሰረታዊ ሰብአዊ መብት ናቸው።

የፍትህ ጥያቄ ለወደፊታችን እንቅፋት እንዲሆን ካልፈለግን፣ እርምጃ መውሰድ አለብን። ግንኙነቶችን የምንገነባበት እና እውቀትን የምንጋራበት እያንዳንዱ ቦታ መልእክታችንን ለማሰራጨት በሮችን ሊከፍትልን ይገባል።

ይሁን እንጂ፣ እነዚህ በሮች በራሳቸው አይከፈቱም። ልንገናኝ፣ ከሌሎች ጋር መገናኘት እና መልእክታችንን በሰፊ ልናካፍል የምንችልባቸውን መደረኮች መፍጠር አለብን።

**(English Version)**  
**Message from the Ground**  
**Rahel Zegeye – Founder of [redacted]**

My name is Rahel Zegeye, the founder of [redacted] and a community leader representing migrant domestic workers in [redacted]. I share this message as a voice from the ground, reflecting the lived realities of migrant workers.

Many migrant workers leave their home countries with hope—to support their families and build a better future. Yet for many, that hope turns into hardship. They face long working hours, unpaid wages, and deep isolation. Their labor is needed, but their voices are often unheard.

In [redacted] many migrant domestic workers work up to 16 hours a day with little rest. Some are paid extremely low wages—sometimes less than five dollars a day. Others are confined inside homes, with no freedom of movement and no access to help. Even more painful is that many workers are not treated with the dignity every human being deserves.

The situation in [redacted] is particularly challenging due to ongoing economic and political crises. In this context, workers’ rights are often not a priority. Many workers cannot return home easily, access to healthcare is extremely limited, and there are few effective government mechanisms for protection or accountability.

Despite these challenges, there is hope. [redacted] is a migrant worker–led organization that creates space for workers to organize, learn about their rights, and raise their voices collectively.

Today, as global leaders gather at the International Migration Review Forum to review commitments under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, we ask them to listen to voices from the ground.

Migrant workers are not just statistics in policy discussions. They are mothers, daughters, sisters, and leaders in their communities. Their work supports families and strengthens economies across the world.

Our message is simple: dignity, justice, and protection are not privileges—they are fundamental human rights that every migrant worker deserves.

**If we do not want the question of justice to become a barrier to our future, we must take action.** Every place where we build relationships and every place where we share knowledge should open doors for us to spread our message.

However, these doors do not open by themselves. We must create platforms where we can reach out, connect with others, and share our message widely.

**Rahel Zegeye**  
**Community Leader**

## What Was Her Fault?

Noor, Meaning light  
Seeing this beautiful baby girl born, her  
parents named her Noor  
But little did they know her life ahead had  
something else planned for her

Noor, now 32 years old, packed her life in a  
loaned suitcase,  
folded dreams between worn-out sarees,  
kissed her daughter with a trembling smile  
and left before dawn could ask her why.

Not for adventure,  
not for escape—  
but for food on her family members plates,  
for books in those small hands of her  
daughter,  
for a future that didn't taste like hunger or  
misery.

A foreign land opened its doors—  
clean floors, quiet white painted walls,  
a family that mostly spoke in kindness.  
Mostly! But,  
Except the storm in a child's shape—  
the youngest daughter of that family,  
with eyes that knew no mercy.

She was not allowed to pray,  
as if faith was a crime.  
Not allowed to bathe,  
as if dignity was a luxury.  
Her sleep—  
broken by kicks and screams,  
by sudden blows in the dark.

With never ending heartbeat and mind endlessly  
wandering – is she coming? What if I fall asleep  
and she kills me?  
Waiting for sunrise as if that's the only way to  
survive.

But again, Days were booked up by endless  
chores.  
No clock, no rest, no voice—  
just work and work and work,  
and silence that swallowed her whole.

Fear Built a home inside her chest.  
And till date it's a constant.

One and half years of suffering and now she  
decides to return.  
She returned!  
Not empty-handed,  
but not whole either.



Art by @tanneland  
from @flyers\_for\_falastin

People saw the changes in the noor on her face –  
from light to dullness  
Encouraged and supported her mentally  
A lot of them offered help,  
hands reached out,  
and somehow,  
she built something of her own—  
a small business,  
a new beginning to her fragile and almost lost life.

Yes its difficult to be physically and mentally unwell  
but,  
Slowly she stands again,  
stronger than yesterday,  
but the nights still betray her.

**Sleep doesn't come easy.  
Dreams turn into echoes—  
of footsteps,  
of screams,  
of hands that should never have hurt her.  
Her mind still fights wars that  
her body already survived.**

So tell me—  
What was her fault?  
Was it wrong to hope?

Was it a sin to dream of a better life for her  
daughter?

Or is our world simply too cruel to allow women to  
dream of a better future of herself and her family  
and dares to travel miles to try out her luck, of  
course by her hard work?

**Farzana Akter**  
**Bangladeshi Psychotherapist**

## ***Pag-ibig... sa Totoong Buhay***

Ang pag-ibig sa totoong buhay  
hindi laging sweet.  
Minsan tahimik.  
Minsan pagod.  
Minsan malayo.

Hindi ito puro "I love you."  
Minsan ito yung  
"Pasensya na, di ako makakauwi."  
Yung "Kaya pa ba?"  
Yung "Para sa inyo 'to."

Ang padala—  
hindi lang pera.  
Yan ang kapalit ng yakap,  
ng birthday na di napuntahan,  
ng gabi-gabing pangungulila.

At sa tumatanggap,  
hindi lang tuwa ang dala nito,  
kundi tanong:  
"Sapat ba 'to para sa lahat ng sakripisyo  
mo?"

Ang pag-ibig sa totoong buhay  
hindi palaging masaya,  
pero pinipili.  
Araw-araw.  
Kahit mahirap.  
Kahit malayo.

Pag-ibig... na Laging Handa (Para sa OFW)

Ang pag-ibig ng OFW  
hindi lang marunong magtiis—  
marunong maghanda.

Hindi sapat ang padala lang.  
Kasi ang tanong palagi:  
"Paano kung magkasakit?"  
"Paano kung biglang mawalan ng  
trabaho?"  
"Paano kung kailangan kong umuwi?"

**Ang pag-ibig na handa  
may ipon bago gastos,  
may plano bago pangako.  
Hindi para yumaman agad—  
kundi para may masasandalan.**

Ito yung padalang may direksyon.  
May proteksyon ang pamilya.  
May emergency fund,  
may insurance,  
may tapang harapin ang totoo.

Kasi ang pag-ibig ng OFW  
hindi lang nasa halaga ng padala—  
nasa kahandaang  
alagaan ang bukas  
kahit malayo ka ngayon.

**PAG-IBIG NA MAY PANININDIGAN**

Ang pag-ibig ay hindi lang damdamin. Hindi  
lang ito kilig, pangako, o matatamis na salita.  
Ang tunay na pag-ibig ay may paninindigan. Ito  
ay pagpili—araw-araw—na gawin ang tama,  
kahit mahirap.

Kapag nagmamahal tayo nang may  
paninindigan, inuuna natin ang values-based  
decisions. Hindi tayo nagpapadala sa bugso ng  
emosyon o pansariling interes. Sa halip,  
tinatanong natin ang sarili: Ito ba ay tama? Ito  
ba ay makabubuti, hindi lang para sa akin,  
kundi para sa iba?

Ang pag-ibig na may paninindigan ay may  
consistency. Hindi ito nagbabago depende sa  
sitwasyon. Pareho ang respeto, katapatan, at  
malasakit—may nakatingin man o wala. Dahil  
ang tunay na pag-ibig ay hindi pakitang-tao;  
ito ay isinasabuhay.

At higit sa lahat, ang pag-ibig ay may  
responsibilidad. Pananagutan sa salita, sa kilos,  
at sa epekto ng ating mga desisyon. Dahil  
kapag nagmamahal ka, handa kang tumayo sa  
likod ng iyong mga pinili.

Sa huli, ang pag-ibig na may paninindigan ay  
pag-ibig na matatag—hindi perpekto, pero  
totoo. Pag-ibig na may direksyon, dangal, at  
saysay.

***By Agnes Serafin  
Woman Migrant Worker***

**To: The Government of India**

**Subject: Need for Stronger Protection Measures for Indian Migrant Workers**

*Respected Sir/Madam,*

I am writing this based on my long engagement with Indian migrant workers, especially those working in the Middle East. Through continuous field interventions, rescue cases, and direct interaction with workers and their families, it is clear that many serious issues are still affecting our migrant population.

Recently, during the Loka Kerala Sabha organized by the Government of Kerala, a domestic worker from Dubai shared her experience directly before policymakers. She spoke about long working hours, isolation, non-payment or delay of wages, and lack of access to complaint systems. Many domestic workers, especially women, are still working without proper protection. Their documents are often controlled by employers and they are not able to freely seek help.

Recruitment malpractice is another major issue. Many workers are misled by agents about job, salary and working conditions. After reaching destination countries, they face completely different situations. In many cases, workers are pushed into exploitation without proper legal support.

In this context, the proposed Overseas Mobility/Emigration policy of India needs stronger focus on protection. From the current understanding, the policy is moving more towards facilitation rather than ensuring rights and safety of workers. There is a need to strengthen provisions related to accountability of recruitment agencies, access to justice, and protection of vulnerable groups, especially domestic workers.

**It is important to remember that Mahatma Gandhi's early struggle in South Africa was against injustice faced by Indian migrants.** Even today, migrant workers are facing similar issues of dignity, rights and fair treatment in many parts of the world.

The present global situation is also creating additional challenges. Conflicts and tensions in the Middle East are affecting migrant workers through job loss, salary issues, and uncertainty. In such situations, workers are often left without proper support systems.

In this background, I would like to request the Government of India to take the following steps:

- Strengthen the proposed migration policy with clear protection measures for migrant workers
- Ensure strict regulation and monitoring of recruitment agencies
- Improve access to grievance redressal systems for workers abroad
- Negotiate stronger bilateral agreements with destination countries to ensure labour rights and protections
- Take steps to adopt and implement international conventions related to migrant workers' rights
- Fully implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration with focus on protection and dignity

Migrant workers are contributing significantly to the economy of the country. Their safety, dignity and rights must be protected through strong policies and effective implementation.

I request the Government to give serious attention to these issues and take necessary action.

*Yours sincerely,*  
**Rafeek Ravuther**

මගේ නම ඉන්ද්රාණි මෙන්ඩිස් මම ශ්රී ලාංකික කාන්තාවක් ,දැනට අවඅවුරුදු 25 කට පෙර මම [redacted] පැමිණියේ විගමනික සේවකාවක් විදිහටයි මගේ මාසික වැටුප උනේ ඩොලර් 50 එහෙත් මම අවුරුදු 2 සේවයෙන් පසු එතනින් ඉවත් වෙලා මගේ යාලුවෙක් මට හොයල දුන්න ඒජන්සියක භාෂා පරිවර්ථකාවක් විදිහට වැඩ කටයුතු කලා ඒ අතරතුර

කාලයේදී මට අහම්බෙන් වගේ [redacted] පොලිසියේ (අරාබි ,සිංහල) භාෂා පරිවර්තක විදිහට වැඩ කරන්න අවස්ථාව ලැබුණා. එතනදී මාට උසාවියේ භාෂා පරිවර්තක විදිහට යොමු කලා මම ඊට පසු දිගටම (සිංහල,අරාබි ) භාෂා පරිවර්තක ලෙස උසාවියේ සේවය කලා කලා. ඒ අතරතුර කාලයේදී මට [redacted] ශ්රී ලංකා තානාපති කාර්යාලයේ නිල නොවන භාෂා පරිවර්තකාවක් විදිහටද සේවය කරන්න අවස්ථාව ලැබුනා

ඉන් පසු මම 2015 [redacted] solitary net work ආයතනයට සම්බන්ධ වෙලා භාෂා පරිවර්ථකාවක් විදියට සහ සංවිධානයක ලෙස කටයුතු කලා ඉන්පසු 2018 දී එතනින් ඉවත්ව Migrant Resources center ආයතනය සමඟ සම්බන්ධ වීම ආයතනය 2018 වර්ෂයේ නීතිගත කරනු ලැබුවා under Arab Trade union ඒ ආයතනය සමඟ සම්බන්ධ වී මම [redacted] සිටින සියලුම විගමික සේවකාවන් වෙනුවෙන් සේවයක් ලබා දෙන්නට උත්සාහකලා පසු අපිට කොරෝනා කාලයක් පැමිණ නිසා ඒ ආයතනය සමඟ සම්බන්ධ වී යමක් කරන්නට හැකියාව ලැබුණේ නැහැ

දැනට මේ වර්ශයේ සිට අපේ මධ්යස්ථානය General federation Trade Union confederation යටතේ නැවතත් නීති ගත කර අපේ ආයතනය වැඩ කටයුතු ආරම්භ කරගෙන යනවා දැනට අපි නැවැත අලුතින් මේ රටට පැමිණෙන අප්රිකානු විගමනක සේවක සේවිකාවන් වෙනුවෙන් විශේෂ අවධානයක් යොමු කරමින් ඒ අයට සේවයක් ලබාදීම

සඳහා ඉදිරි වැඩ කටයුතු සුදානම් කරමින් සිටිනවා 2023 වසරේදී මම Global Migrant Workers network එක සමඟ සම්බන්ධ වීමට ලැබීම මගේ ජීවිතයේ හැරවුම් ලක්ෂය බවට පත්වුණා රට රටවල්වලල සිටින සාමාජික සාමාජිකාවන් සමඟ සම්බන්ධ වී ඔහුගේ දැනුම බෙදා හදා ගනිමින් මගේ ජීවිතයේ ඉදිරි කටයුතු සාර්ථකව කරගෙන යාමට මට පිටුවහලක් වුණේ මේ ආයතනය සමඟ සම්බන්ධ වීම නිසයි ගිය වසරේදී මට MFA සමඟ සම්බන්ධ වීම එයාලගේ වැඩ මුළු වලට සහභාගී වන්නට අවස්ථාව ලැබුණා. ඒකත් මම ජීවිතේ ලබපු වාසනාවක් ස්තූතියි මාව සම්බන්ධ කරගත්ත සියලු දෙනාටම

[redacted] විගමනක සේවකාවක් විදිහට පැමිණි මම මගේ ජීවිතයේ මම ප්රාර්ථනා කරපු තැන මට ලැබුනා දානයට පැමිණෙන සියලුම විගමනික සේවක සේවකාවන්වෙනුවෙන් මට හැකි පමණින් උදව්වක් උපකාරයක් කිරීමයි ඒ මමත් විගමනික සේවකාවක් විදිහට [redacted] මා පැමිණ ලැබූ අත්දැකීම් නිසයි . මට ඒ දේවල් ලැබුනේ මගේ උත්සාහයෙන් දෙව්රියයෙන්ම අද මං ගැන මම නිහතමානීව සතුටු වෙනවා

ස්තූතියි,  
ඉන්ද්රාණි මෙන්ඩිස්

[English Version]

My name is Indrani Mendis. I am a Sri Lankan woman who arrived in [redacted] 25 years ago as a migrant worker. At the start of my journey, my monthly salary was only \$50. After two years, I transitioned into a new role as a translator for an agency a friend recommended.

During this time, an unexpected opportunity arose to work as an Arabic-Sinhala translator for the [redacted] police. This led to my appointment as a court translator, a role I maintained for several years. I also had the privilege of serving as an unofficial translator for the Sri Lankan Embassy in [redacted]

In 2015, I joined the solidarity network in [redacted] where I worked as both a translator and an organizer. By 2018, I moved to the Migrant Resource Center (MRC), which was legalized that same year under the Arab Trade Union. My goal was to provide essential services to all migrant workers in [redacted], though our operations were unfortunately stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of this year, our center has been re-legalized under the General Federation of [redacted] Trade Unions, and we have resumed our vital work. We are currently focusing our efforts on supporting newly arrived African migrant workers, ensuring they receive the guidance they need.

A major turning point in my life occurred in 2023 when I joined the Global Migrant Workers Network. Connecting with members worldwide and sharing our collective knowledge has been instrumental in my success. Additionally, participating in Migrant Forum in Asia workshops last year was a true blessing. I am deeply grateful to everyone who helped me make these connections.

I came to [redacted] as a migrant worker, and through hard work and courage, **I have built the life I envisioned. Having experienced the challenges of migration firsthand, I am dedicated to helping others.** Today, I look back on my journey with humble pride and happiness.

Thank you,  
**Indrani Mendis**  
**Woman Migrant Worker**

30 March 2026

H. E. Ekitela Lokaale  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations 866 UN Plaza,  
Suite 304 New York, NY 10017

Dear H.E Ekitela Lokaale,

I commend you for taking on this challenge at such a complex and critical geopolitical moment. We are witnessing a time when migration is increasingly framed in toxic and derogatory terms, despite the significant progress that has been made over the years from the 2006 Global Forum on Migration and Development, to the 2018 UN High-Level Dialogue, and ultimately the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration.

As a community organizer, we look toward this second International Migration Review Forum on the Global Compact for Migration with hope. We see it as an important space in which these considerations, grounded in the lived realities and aspirations of migrants, could be kept in view as the global community reflects on commitments and the way forward.

### **A Voice from the South: The Desert's Debt**

By Manfred Mosaka

In the shimmering heat where the skyscrapers rise, we carry the dreams of the Southern skies. From the heart of Cameroon to the Middle East sand, we seek out the bread for a far-distant land.

But the gold of the city is built on our sweat,

In a cycle of labor, of hunger, and debt.

The passports are locked in a cold, metal drawer,

As we scrub at the tiles and we sweep at the floor.

We are sisters and brothers, not tools for the trade,

In the shadow of towers that our own hands have made.

The "Kafala" binds us, a heavy, invisible chain,

While we swallow our longing, our silence, and pain.

From the Global South's spirit, we call for the light, For the safety of transit, for a worker's true right. At this Forum of nations, let the message be clear: The cost of our labor is a price far too dear.

**We bring not just struggle, but a vision so bold, of a world where our stories are finally told.** For the migrant who wanders, for the family who waits, we demand open justice at these hallowed gates.

## शीर्षक: आक्रोश :

By Khemraj Subedi

कर्मस्थलको भवसागरमा  
एक थोपो पसिना बगाएर  
एक गाँस भोक जोगाएर  
एक परिवार अन्न घर पठाउने श्रमिकलाई,  
देशमा देखाउनको निमित्त मात्र  
देखाइएको परिवर्तनले के अर्थ राख्छ?

बेदनाले भरिएको जीवन सुस्ताउँदै  
अर्धमृत सपनाहरू हेरी मुस्कुराउँदै  
राप, ताप र अभावमा आफूलाई गलाउँदै  
मरुकणमा बेल्चा रूपी गाण्डिव चलाउँदै  
केवल सास फेरेर, जिउँदो हुनको निमित्त मात्रै  
किन गर्नु पर्दछ श्रमिकले दैनिक महाभारत ?

अनेकौं कष्ट सहेर  
पसिनाको गंगामा  
अभावलाई बगाउँदै  
श्रमी शोषकीलाई  
रेमिट्यान्सले अघाउँदै  
पैंसठ्ठी प्रतिशत देश बोकेर  
राष्ट्रलाई सघाउँदै  
गरीबी र भोकको  
खाल्टो पुर्दा पुर्दै  
किन पुरिनु पर्दछ आफैं  
विदेसिएका श्रमिकले  
देश समेत नहेरी

हे! बाटो छेकेरे दोबाटो टेक्ने हरू हो,  
हे! ममता मारेर माटो बेच्नेहरूहो, सुन !  
हे! श्रमिको रगतमा जलकृडा गर्नेहरू हो सुन !  
श्रमिकको आक्रोशले आज जङ्गे श्रमी जन्माउँदैछ  
देशद्रोही र शोषकी सँग नयाँ कोत पर्व मनाउन ।

## Outrage

By Khemraj Subedi

In the vast ocean of the workplace,  
shedding drops of sweat,  
saving a morsel from hunger,  
sending grain home to feed a family—  
what meaning does change hold  
when shown only for display in the nation?

A life filled with pain, moving slowly,  
smiling at half-dead dreams,  
melting oneself in heat, hardship, and want,  
wielding the spade like Arjuna's bow in the  
dust,  
breathing only to remain alive—  
why must a worker fight a daily  
Mahabharata?

Bearing countless struggles,  
flowing in the Ganga of sweat,  
washing away scarcity,  
feeding exploiters,  
satiating the nation with remittance,  
carrying sixty-five percent of the country,  
helping the nation,  
while filling the pit of poverty and hunger—  
**why must migrant workers themselves  
be buried unseen,**  
without even looking at their homeland?

O you who block the path at crossroads,  
O you who sell soil by killing affection,  
listen!

O you who play in the blood of workers,  
listen!

The outrage of workers today  
is birthing a fierce laborer,  
to celebrate a new Kot festival  
against traitors and exploiters.



## **Silence!**

A kind-hearted prison,  
where the oppressor sends the oppressed.  
A space disguised as privilege,  
that kills emotions one by one.  
A comfort so false,  
it lulls you into peace that betrays.

Silence—  
a velvet chain, a cage without bars,  
a mask pressed against the mouth.  
It keeps you in the good book,  
yet destroys every dream you hold.  
It keeps you safe,  
yet erases who you are.

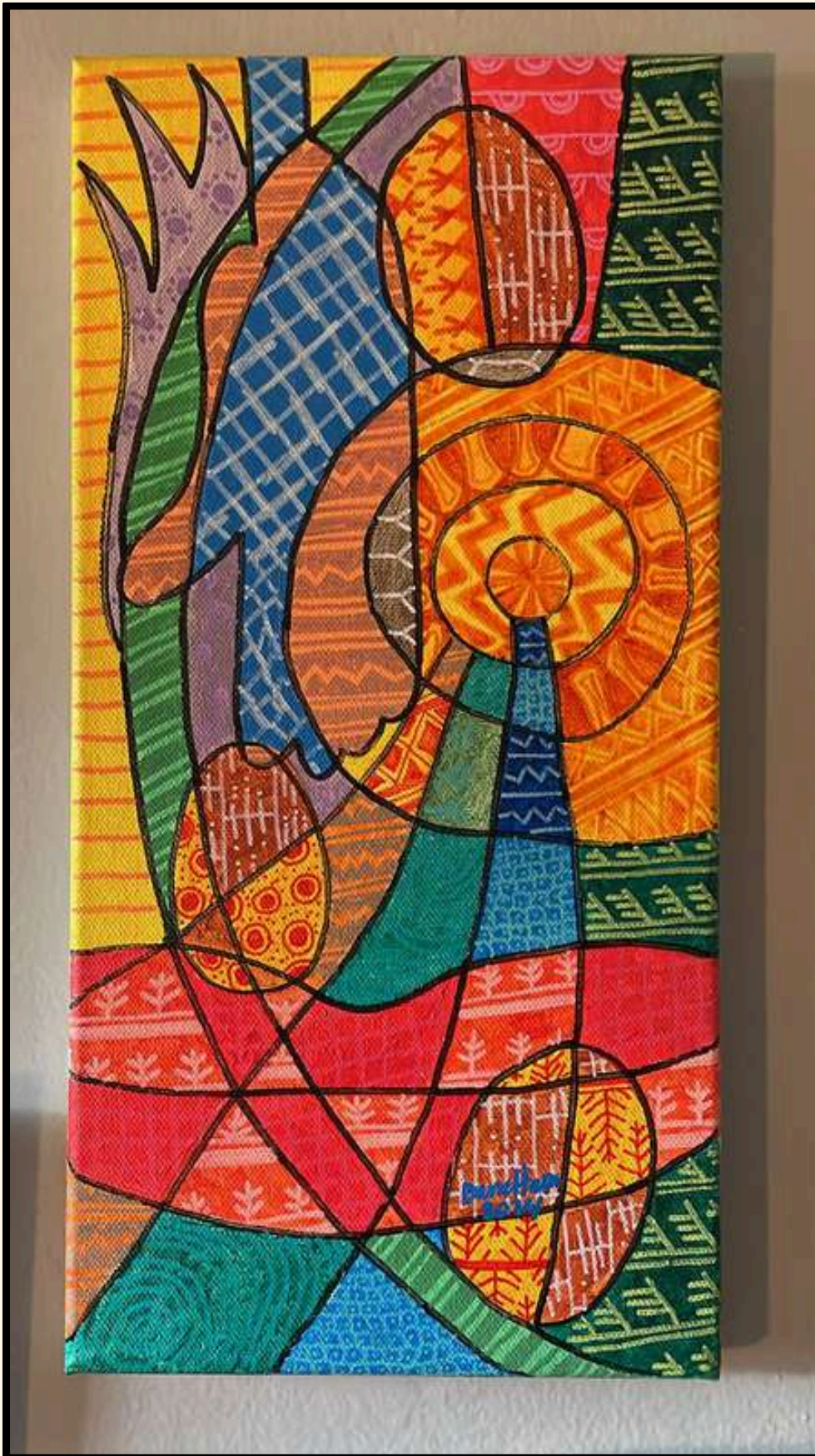
I am a migrant, not a criminal.  
To sell me silence is criminal.

**My life matters.**  
**My rights matter.**  
**My voice matters.**

And when I speak,  
my words are fire against the dark.  
My voice is a bridge,  
my truth a weapon,  
my breath a rebellion.  
Listen, please, listen!

We are everywhere,  
We are here,  
We have one request,  
Please, Listen

**BY NDAGIRE JOANITA**



**“Sarabo ti Pamilya”**  
Alejandro Ben B. Braga  
IV Acrylic on Canvas

Timpuyog ti Baro a  
Namnama ti OFW ken  
Balligi ti Pamilya ti OFW  
iti Baguio City  
Organization Inc.

An art work depicting a  
balikbayan box.

# “Sarabo ti Pamilya”

By Alejandro Ben B. Braga IV

I used to wait for a box.  
Not just any box—a balikbayan box.  
It came from a place I could not imagine, sent by a  
mother I barely knew.  
Inside were chocolates, clothes, toys—pieces of a life  
that felt distant and unreal. But what I remember  
most was not what was inside the box.  
It was my father. He would stand at a distance, never  
touching it. Never opening it.  
“This is not mine,” he would say.  
I didn’t understand then.  
But I saw it—the pain in his eyes, the silence louder  
than words. I grew up learning how to be quiet.  
Raised by my grandmother, I became a shadow in  
my own home—careful, invisible, afraid to feel too  
much. I thought my mother left because she wanted  
to escape us. I carried that belief like a wound.  
So I made a decision.  
I would follow her.  
I left the Philippines without telling anyone—except  
my father.  
He didn’t stop me.  
He just said, “The life you choose is not easy. But  
when you are in trouble, I’ll be here.”  
Those words followed me all the way to Kuwait.  
When I arrived, the dream shattered quickly. I was  
not welcomed—I was judged.  
Not respected—I was reduced.  
Not seen—I was treated like I didn’t belong.  
The country was beautiful, yes.  
But beauty does not protect you from humiliation.  
I realized something:  
The stories we tell about migration are not always  
the truth. Sometimes, they are survival.  
When I finally lived with my mother, everything  
made sense.  
Her letters. Her recordings. Her stories of a beautiful  
life—they were not lies.  
They were shields. Because the truth was harder to  
send home.  
Migrant workers are like seeds thrown into dry, rocky  
soil.  
Some never grow.  
Some are lost.  
Some survive—barely.  
And the box I once waited for?  
It was not a gift.  
It was a sacrifice wrapped in cardboard.  
Then everything collapsed.  
My mother was arrested. Jailed. Deported.  
For helping others.  
In that moment, I learned how alone a migrant  
worker can be.  
Systems fail you. People disappear. Fear takes over.

But I remembered my father’s words.  
So I fought.  
I worked everywhere—teacher by day, cleaner on  
weekends, tutor in between, nanny at night.  
I carried debts, exhaustion, and fear... but I kept  
going.  
Because I had no other choice. Years later, I went  
home.  
But I was too late.  
My father had asked me to come home for  
Christmas.  
I didn’t.  
It was more practical to send money. More logical to  
stay.  
That was his last request.  
I arrived at his wake carrying regret heavier than  
any luggage.  
And then I learned something I never knew.  
My father—quiet, distant, wounded—had lived a life  
of service.  
He helped youth.  
He fed the hungry.  
He gave himself to others without recognition.  
He was a man I never fully understood... until he was  
gone.  
That was the moment everything changed. I  
realized: No one is coming to save us. No system will  
fix everything.  
No title—Bagong Bayani or otherwise—will ease the  
pain we carry.  
**If change must happen, it has to begin  
with us.**  
**So I chose a different path.**  
**Not an easy one.**  
**But a necessary one.**  
**I became the person I once needed.**  
**A listener.**  
**A guide.**  
**An advocate.**  
Because migrant workers are not just providers.  
We are human beings—carrying stories, sacrifices,  
and silent battles.  
Today, I lead. I serve. I build.  
Not because I am strong— but because I had to be.  
Not because I have all the answers— but because I  
know the questions.  
And I still remember the boy who waited for a box.  
Only now, I understand:  
He wasn’t waiting for things.  
He was waiting for truth.  
For presence.  
For love that didn’t need to travel across oceans.  
I cannot change the past.  
I cannot erase the pain.  
But I can make sure that the next child waiting for a  
box... won’t have to wonder why love had to leave.



## **Injecjas**

Jether L. Latigo

Water color in Matte Paper Injecjas

Timpuyog ti Baro a Namnama ti OFW ken Balligi ti Pamilya ti  
OFW iti Baguio City Organization Inc.

# Injecjas

*Jether L. Latigo*

"I am the child of a migrant domestic worker based in Hong Kong—a silent witness to both love and longing. I grew up not just with memories, but with absences. I know what it means to wait—for a voice on the other end of a call, for a presence that fades with distance, for a love that arrives in parcels instead of in person.

Migration did not just shape my life—it defined it. It taught me how to endure silence, how to carry questions without answers, and how to find meaning in moments that felt incomplete. I learned early on that distance is not measured in miles, **but in missed birthdays, empty seats at the table, and the quiet spaces where a parent should have been.**

**And yet, within that absence, I found strength.**

More than a victim of migration, I am a survivor of separation. I learned to turn longing into resilience, to transform pain into purpose, and to rebuild myself from the fragments of distance. What was meant to break me became the very foundation of who I am today.

Because behind every remittance is not just money—but sacrifice. Behind every box is not just gifts—but years of longing. Behind every migrant story is a family holding on, a child still hoping, and a love that refuses to disappear despite the distance.



My story is not just mine.

It is the story of millions—children who grew up waiting, families who learned to love across oceans, and lives shaped by both loss and unwavering hope.

And if there is one truth I carry with me, it is this:

Distance may separate us—but it will never define the depth of our love, nor the strength we build from it."



**Distance**

Jolina M. Villanueva Acrylic on Canvas  
Timpuyog ti Baro a Namnama ti OFW ken Balligi ti Pamilya ti  
OFW iti Baguio City Organization Inc



## Distance

*Jolina M. Villanueva*

Migration has rewritten  
the meaning of home—  
stretching it across oceans,  
threading it through time zones,  
teaching us that presence  
can exist without touch.

**Our tables are no longer whole,  
yet they are never empty—  
filled with voices through screens,  
laughter delayed by signal,  
love wrapped in parcels  
crossing borders we cannot.**

Our culture now travels with us,  
folded in luggage,  
spoken in accents that shift and blend,  
holding on—  
even as it learns to change.

And we ask, quietly,  
in the spaces between calls:  
Is this the life we now accept?  
Is this what family has become?

But perhaps—  
it is not about what we have lost.  
Perhaps it is in how we learn  
to love differently,  
to care across distance,  
to hold on without holding.

Because family  
was never just a place.

It is a promise—  
that no matter how far we go,  
no matter how long we are apart,  
we remain—  
connected.

Not by proximity,  
but by something stronger.

By a love  
that refuses  
to be left behind.

**To: Member States**

The Government of the Philippines  
 The Kingdom of Bahrain  
 IMRF Co-Facilitators (Kenya and Luxembourg)

**Our Voices, Our Dignity: Hopes and Demands from Bahrain**

Dear Excellencies and Esteemed Partners,

My name is **Suzanne Baldago**, a migrant worker, a woman, and a community leader who has lived and worked in Bahrain for more than three decades. I have walked the same path as many migrant workers in the Gulf, sharing their fears, their small victories, and their quiet acts of courage. This letter brings my own journey, and the journeys of our community, to the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF).

For years, I have seen workers arrive with hope and end up trapped by broken contracts, delayed or unpaid wages, restrictions on mobility, and almost no access to justice. I have supported women whose passports were taken, men who were detained for speaking up, and families who could not send money home because their salaries were withheld. These are not abstract “cases” for me, they are people I know, people I love, and a story I share as a migrant myself. At the same time, I have also witnessed incredible strength. I have seen women form support circles in small rooms at night, and men contribute from their limited salaries to help a friend facing a case. I have helped organize communities to find shelter, legal advice, and emotional support when there was nowhere else to turn. **This resilience, born from pain, faith, and love is the foundation of my hope and the source of my demands today.** From these lived experiences, I bring **three core hopes and demands** to the IMRF:

**1. Protect our lives, not just our labor.**

Put protection and dignity at the center of the Global Compact for Migration. This means real steps to stop broken contracts, wage theft, and abuse, and to make sure workers can get justice when our rights are violated. No human being should ever be treated as cheap or disposable labor.

**2. Let us sit at the table.**

Migrant workers must be equal partners, not just “beneficiaries” of policy. Our voices need to be present in local, national, regional, and global spaces where migration rules are made and reviewed. These policies are about our lives, so our direct participation is needed for any real and lasting change.

**3. Shared responsibility: where we come from and where we work.**

Both origin and destination countries must take responsibility. For countries of origin, real protection means honest recruitment, fair and safe work abroad, and a dignified welcome when we go home. For countries of destination, reforms must be felt in everyday life, in every household and workplace not only written in laws or announced in meetings.

To the IMRF Co-Facilitators, **Kenya and Luxembourg**, we do not come asking for sympathy. We come to claim our rightful place at the table where decisions about our lives are made. The Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) **“Voices from the South”** platform has united our stories, creating a vital space where migrant workers from the Global South can share their lived realities directly, not from the sidelines but at the very heart of the conversation. By amplifying our voices and experiences, the platform ensures that our collective concerns and aspirations are recognized and valued.

I hope that this IMRF marks a true turning point, a moment when the global community shifts from speaking on our behalf to genuinely hearing and acting upon our voices. My call is clear: every migrant must be seen, every migrant must be included.

**With unwavering hope and solidarity,**  
**Suzanne Baldago**  
**Community Organizer**

## To the Member States

International Migration Review Forum, Second Quadrennial Session  
New York, May 4–8, 2026

My name is Shailee Chaudhary. I write to you from Nepal as someone who has moved across countries for study and work, and as the Chief Operating Officer of the Global Migrant Workers Network (GMWN).

But I want to begin somewhere else.

I grew up in Birgunj, a city near the border between Nepal and India, a border crossed every day by people for work and survival. I left home for Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. I left Nepal for Australia on a scholarship to study human rights law. I went to Germany for an internship in the field of peace and the rule of law. And now I am back in Nepal, building something I believe in.

I have crossed borders for work. I have navigated visa queues, labor contracts in languages I had to learn, bank accounts in currencies I did not understand, and the particular loneliness of being far from home with something to prove. I know what it feels like to land in a country and not yet know whether you belong.

I am not a domestic worker in Kuwait. I am not a seafarer in the Strait of Hormuz. I am not the woman who left the Philippines to care for a stranger's child and was never paid. The distance between my migration and theirs is real, and I will not pretend otherwise.

***But I have never let myself forget what it feels like to leave.***

I joined GMWN because I believe in something very simple: the people who have crossed the borders, borne the costs, and survived the systems are the ones who understand them most completely. And they are the ones who have been kept furthest from the decisions.

This week, workers are stranded in the Middle East conflict. I am trying to get information to a family in Udayapur, Nepal, with any information about their son, Amrit Jha, a captain detained in an Iranian prison for an undisclosed period, uncharged, unreachable, and largely invisible in the systems, in theory, meant to protect him.

As someone who has spent years working with Madheshi, women, LGBTQIA+, and Dalit communities in Nepal, watching the gap between the law on paper and the law as lived grow wider with every year, every report, every international commitment made and then quietly set aside has been real.

I am writing to you as a migrant, someone who has crossed borders for work and for purpose, who has rebuilt in unfamiliar places, and who has never fully stopped carrying the weight of the one question that defines migration: what happens if it goes wrong, and no one is there?

**When you review the Global Compact for Migration at this forum, I want to ask you to measure it against the lives of the people it was meant to protect. Not the policies adopted, not the national action plans submitted, not the number of country reviews completed. The Lives.**

Because from where I stand, inside a migrant worker- and survivor-led network that is less than a year old and already overwhelmed with cases, the gap between the Compact's commitments and the reality of migrant workers in crisis is not narrowing. It is widening.

We need you to close it. Not with words. With resources, with accountability mechanisms, with the genuine, structural inclusion of migrant worker leaders in every global conversation about migration that happens from this point forward.

The people in our network did not wait for permission to organize. They are leading, right now, in the middle of a crisis, from inside a network built in the past year, and still building its institutional infrastructure, because they understood that if they did not build it, no one would.

We are not waiting for permission.

We are already building what does not yet exist.

Now we ask you to meet us there – as partners.

*With hope and solidarity,*  
**Shailee Chaudhary**

To the Member States Participating in the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF),

Many Ethiopian migrants go to the Middle East due to unemployment, conflict, and the hope for better wages, along with the strong demand for cheap labor in Gulf countries. However, migration is often dangerous, and many face drowning, starvation, kidnapping, or death before even arriving.

Those who migrate irregularly have no legal protection, making it hard to escape abuse. A major issue is the kafala system, which ties workers to their employers, preventing them from changing jobs or leaving without permission. The system often leads to exploitation.

Many Ethiopian migrants experience passport confiscation, unpaid wages, long working hours, and physical and sexual abuse, especially women. If they lose legal status, they risk detention, deportation, or worse.

Weak protection systems, poor law enforcement, lack of awareness make the situation worse. Despite this, migration continues because families rely on remittances.

**Migration itself is not a problem, but the system is unsafe.** Key solutions include reforming the kafala system and better regulating recruitment agencies in Ethiopia.

Eniy  
Ethiopian Returnee Migrant Worker

## Jeritan TKW yang Teraniaya

By Kasiati

Former Women Migrant Domestic Worker

Oooh nasib...  
kami berlayar di atas gelombang laut yang ganas,  
di dada berdegup takut—  
speedboat ini bisa saja menelan kami ke dasar.  
Namun kami berdoa,  
pada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa,  
agar selamat sampai ke negeri tujuan.

Di sisi lain,  
bukan hanya laut yang mengamuk—  
gelombang luka dan api yang tak bernama menghantam tubuh dan jiwa kami.  
Hati kami hancur,  
bahkan sebelum benar-benar sampai.

Pukul 04.50 subuh,  
seorang diri kami dijemput—  
bukan keselamatan yang datang,  
melainkan tangan yang merampas harga diri.  
Pelecehan itu tidak berhenti di sana,  
di rumahnya,  
kejahatan itu dilanjutkan tanpa jeda.  
Besoknya,  
kami diambil majikan—  
seolah luka bisa dipindahkan begitu saja.

Rindu kami kubur dalam-dalam,  
tak pernah sempat menyapa keluarga.  
Hingga kabar itu datang—  
ibu pergi untuk selamanya,  
dan kami tak sempat menggenggam tangannya terakhir kali.

Kerja tanpa batas,  
tiga rumah bungalow, empat mobil,  
siang dan malam tak lagi berbeda.  
Pergi pagi, pulang larut,  
negeri tujuan tak pernah tahu—  
atau mungkin memilih untuk tidak tahu.

Kami makan seperti bukan manusia,  
bahkan tempat makan kami  
lebih rendah dari yang seharusnya layak.

Hari raya...  
tak pernah benar-benar tiba bagi kami.  
Hanya suara radio yang berbisik,  
mengabarkan bahwa dunia sedang merayakan,  
sementara kami  
tetap terkurung dalam sunyi dan luka.

pesan untuk negara tujuan

**\* Tolong hargai "harga diri para pekerja migran**

**\* Beri waktu untuk istirahat & holiday**

**\* Beri waktu untuk sembahyang**

**\* pada pekerja migran**

**\* baik majikan muslim atan non muslim**

Pesan buat Negara sendiri

\*Kami bangga telah menjadi TKI\*

Kepada bapak presiden\* Bapak prabowo\*

Kami adalah korban perdagangan orang (trapicking)

Jika pemerintah indonesia tidak bisa mensejahterakan di negeri sendiri

Tolong lindungilah

pekerja migran indonesia" jangan sampai ada nyawa yg tersia-sia\* dan Jangan sampai Keluarganya

bertanya\* Dimana :Negara ???!!!!

# The Cry of an Abused Migrant Worker

By Kasiati

Former Women Migrant Domestic Worker



Oh, fate...  
we sailed upon ferocious waves,  
our hearts trembling with fear—  
this fragile speedboat could have swallowed us  
whole.  
Yet we prayed,  
to the Almighty,  
to carry us safely to the land we were  
promised.

But beyond the raging sea,  
another storm was waiting—  
not of water, but of wounds,  
of fire that consumed our bodies and souls.  
Our hearts were shattered  
long before we ever arrived.

At 4:50 in the morning,  
we were taken alone—  
not into safety,  
but into hands that stripped away our dignity.  
The violation did not end there;  
within those walls,  
the cruelty continued without mercy.  
The next day,  
we were handed over to an employer—  
as if our pain could simply be transferred and  
erased.

We buried our longing deep inside,  
never able to reach our families.  
Until one day, the news arrived—  
our mother was gone forever,  
and we were never given the chance  
to hold her one last time.

Endless labor became our days:  
three bungalows, four cars,  
morning and night no longer had meaning.  
We left at dawn, returned long after dark,  
and the country we served never knew—  
or perhaps chose not to know.

We ate as though we were less than human,  
our place at the table  
beneath what dignity demands.

And the holidays...  
they never truly came to us.  
Only the radio whispered faintly  
that somewhere, the world was celebrating—  
while we remained,  
trapped in Silence and Pain

A Message to Destination Countries

Please,  
honor the dignity of migrant workers—  
our dignity is not negotiable.

**Give us time to rest,  
time to breathe,  
time to live beyond labor.**

Give us the right to observe our faith—  
to pray,  
to believe,  
to remain human—  
whether our employers share our religion or  
not.

A Message to Our Own Country

We are proud  
to be Indonesian migrant workers.

To our President,  
Prabowo Subianto—

we are not just workers,  
we are survivors  
of human trafficking.

If our homeland  
cannot yet provide us prosperity,  
then at the very least— protect us.

Protect Indonesian migrant workers,  
so that no life is lost in vain.  
So that no family  
is left behind asking in grief:  
Where was the State  
when we needed it most?



# Stories of Returnees

## "Mahfuza"

I am a returnee migrant worker from [redacted]. I went there in 2019 with the hope of improving my financial condition, but instead, I faced a very harsh reality.

I was employed in the house of a police officer, where I was subjected to extreme torture and exploitation. I had to work long hours without any rest. Not only was I forced to work in my employer's house, but I was also made to work in their mother's house and even in the houses of their relatives. I was regularly beaten, often locked inside a room, and not given enough food. I was denied even basic necessities like washing powder to clean my clothes.

According to my contract, I was supposed to receive 1,200 riyals per month, but I was paid only 700 riyals. Later, I was sent to another house, where my situation did not improve. I was not allowed to contact my family, and I did not receive my wages for four months. Eventually, I was sent back to Bangladesh without any proper compensation.

Now I have no savings and am struggling to survive. **Despite everything I have been through, I am considering migrating again through a middleman because I have no other option.**

I want to say that workplaces for migrant workers must be safe, secure, and have decent conditions. No worker should have to face the kind of abuse I endured. I demand justice for the torture and unfair wages I experienced. I urge employers to treat workers with respect and humanity—no one deserves to be abused.

## "Sharmin"

I migrated to [redacted] and [redacted] in search of work and to support my family. Every time I returned I had to give away all my income to my in-laws.

**I was first sent [redacted] by my in-laws, who forced me to go abroad to earn money.** At that time, I was under 18 and was sent with falsified documents. In [redacted] I faced severe hardship. I did not understand the language, which made communication very difficult. I often received food only once a day and had to struggle every day just to survive. Somehow, I managed to continue like that for two years.

After returning to Bangladesh, I migrated again to Oman. Compared to [redacted], the situation there was better and more stable. However, the salary was very low, so I could not achieve much financially and decided to come back.

Just three months after returning, I went to [redacted]. This was the most difficult phase of my migration journey. In the first house, I was not given any food for the first three days and was not allowed to speak much. Somehow, I managed to contact the recruiting agency, and they took me back and placed me in another house. But there, I was given only one piece of bread a day and no proper meals. I survived like that for 28 days. Later, I was moved again to another household where the conditions were finally stable, and I worked there for four years.

I want to tell all female migrant workers—save your money and invest wisely so that you don't have to migrate again and again. Use your earnings to build something of your own. Don't give away everything to your family; keep some savings for yourself, because having your own money is essential to survive with dignity, even when no one else is there for you.



## "Alo"

I stayed in [redacted] for two years, where I worked as a domestic worker. During that time, I faced constant abuse. My employer would beat me without any reason. I would ask what my fault was, but I never got any answer—they would still beat me.

I was supposed to receive 1,200 riyals as per my contract, but my employer would deduct 200 riyals every month, saying it was for using internet at their house. I was also forced to work not only in my employer's home during the day but also at their relatives' houses at night, leaving me with no rest at all.

I somehow endured this for two years before returning to Bangladesh.

I want to urge that migrant workers' workplaces must be safe and secure. **Workers should not face abuse, and they should be able to safely send their hard-earned money back to their families without unfair deductions.**

## "Nargisa"

I went abroad for work and stayed there for about two and a half months, but I had to return because my husband fell seriously ill. Since coming back, life has been a constant struggle. Despite everything, I still hold on to hope.

I want to migrate again, because I believe it is the only way I can improve my financial situation. Here in Bangladesh, no matter how hard I try, I don't feel I can earn enough to support my family or fulfill my dreams. But abroad, I believe I can earn better and build a future.

My plan is to go to [redacted] this year and work as a domestic worker. I hope to stay there for at least two years. With the money I earn, I want to build a house of my own, support my husband's treatment, and most importantly, ensure a better future for my daughter. I dream of seeing her become a doctor one day, and I am determined to do everything I can to make that possible.

**For me, migration is not just about earning money—it is about proving to myself and to society that I am capable, that I can stand on my own feet, and that I can create a better life for my family**

## "Rabeya"

I migrated to [redacted] and worked there for three years. In the beginning, everything was going well. I received fair amount wage and facilities.

However, things changed in the last five months of my stay. I was not paid any wages during that time. Despite all my hard work, I was left without the money I had earned. One day, my employer told me they would take me out to buy a burkha. But instead of going to a shop, they took me to the airport. There, they handed me a ticket and left me behind without any explanation. I had no choice but to return to Bangladesh.

After coming back, I faced many challenges. People in my community spoke badly about me and I was subjected to stigma. It was very painful, but I had no option except to endure it and move forward.

Now, I am thinking of migrating again to [redacted] I could not save the money I had brought back, and my family is still struggling. **My husband's income is not enough to meet our needs. I want to go abroad again so that I can earn and support my children's education.** Their future is my biggest motivation, and I am determined to keep trying despite everything I have gone through.

## "Sabiha"

I migrated to [redacted] twice in my life. The first time, I stayed there for three years. During that time, I had to work extremely long hours and take care of ten children in my employer's household. It was very difficult, but I continued working with the hope of securing a better future.

After returning to Bangladesh, I gave all the money I had earned to my family. A piece of land was bought, but it was registered in my father's name. I also supported my parents financially, as they were taking care of my daughter. In the end, I was left with no personal savings.

**I am a single mother now—my husband has abandoned me.** With no financial security, I decided to migrate again. I went to [redacted] for the second time and worked there for two years. But once again, I could not save any money. I did not have any knowledge about financial management or how to build savings, and everything I earned was spent.

Now, I am planning to migrate for the third time. I still have not been able to secure a stable future for myself and my daughter. Raising her is my biggest responsibility, and I have no other option but to try again.



## "Asma"

I stayed in [redacted] for three years. According to my contract, I was supposed to receive 1,200 riyals every month, but in reality I was paid only 1,000 riyals. Even then, I had no choice but to continue working.

My employer also did not provide me with money for internet or communication. I had to spend part of my own salary to buy internet so that I could stay in touch with my family back home. My employer clearly told me that they would not pay any telephone or internet bills.

After returning to Bangladesh, I could not save any of the money I had earned. My husband does not earn, and now he needs eye surgery. I am the one who has to support the family and arrange the money for his treatment.

I tried to work here after coming back. I became involved in agricultural work, but the income was not enough to run the family. **No matter how hard I worked, I could not find any job that would provide enough money for our needs.**

That is why I now want to migrate to [redacted] again. I hope that by going abroad once more, I will be able to earn enough to support my family and arrange my husband's eye surgery. Even though the experience was difficult, I still believe it is my only chance to improve our situation and bring some financial stability to our lives.

## "Rubina"

I went to [redacted] in 2023 to work as a domestic worker, as stated in my contract. But after arriving, I was forced to do completely different work—I was made to raise cattle on a farm. The work was extremely heavy and exhausting. I had to work all day in the desert, lifting heavy sacks and doing physically demanding labor.

Despite working so hard, I did not receive any wages. I was forced into this work against my will. I complained to the recruiting agency, and eventually I was taken to the police to file a complaint. However, I was told that the case could take up to two more years to be processed. I had no choice but to return to Bangladesh.

After seven months of hard labor without any pay, I came back empty-handed. I endured extreme hardship but received nothing in return.

Now, despite everything, I am planning to migrate again to [redacted] **I still hope to earn some money so that I can support my family and improve our situation.**



Art by Faviana Rodriguez  
from justseeds.org

## "Ayesha"

Ayesha had a positive experience during her previous work in [REDACTED]. She received her wages on time and did not face any abuse. However, all the money she earned was given to her husband and invested by the family. She now plans to migrate again, this time through an agency she has not met in person. She got in contact with the agency through an acquaintance and provided all her documents via that contact, speaking to the agency only over the phone. **The agency keeps demanding multiple new requirements every day but has given her no assurance of when she will be sent to [REDACTED].** Her documents remain with them, leaving her uncertain and frustrated.

## "Rahena"

I first went to [REDACTED] through a middleman. When I arrived, I was kept at the recruiting agency office. They threatened me, saying that if I complained about my workplace, I would face torture. Later, I was appointed to a house where my employer forced me to work nearly 24 hours a day. I was not allowed to contact my family, and whenever I asked, they would punish me. I endured this for two years before finally returning to Bangladesh.

After some time, I went to [REDACTED] again to work as a domestic worker. There, I was forced to do excessive work for a large family. One day, my employer asked me to go out supposedly to take a photo for documents, but after the photo was taken, they handed me over to the police. The police interrogated me and then assigned me to another house. Even in that house, I faced hardship. I was kept in an isolated room and struggled daily, though I received my wages. I worked there for a year, and eventually, I had to get myself arrested to the police in order to return to Bangladesh.

**Now, I am back in Bangladesh, jobless, and my husband is ill.** I want to migrate to [REDACTED] again to earn money and support my family. Despite all the difficulties I have faced, I have no other option but to try again in hopes of building a better future.

## "Lovely"

My name is Lovely. I worked in [REDACTED] for two years as a domestic worker. During that time, **my employer forced me to work not only in their house but also in three other houses, which was beyond my contract.** I did not want to go, but they would forcefully take me to those houses. I also had to endure regular verbal abuse.

According to my contract, I was supposed to receive 1,000 riyals, but I was paid only 900 riyals. The workload and pressure became unbearable for me. I could no longer tolerate it, so I told my employer that I wanted to go on leave, and that is how I managed to return to Bangladesh.

Before migrating, I worked as a garments worker, but the salary I earned was not enough to sustain my life and support my family. Even now, I am struggling financially. That is why I want to migrate again. I plan to go back to [REDACTED] in the hope of earning enough to run my family and improve our situation.



### "Mst Bonna"

Mst. Bonna had a positive experience working in [redacted], where she stayed for two years. However, she had no knowledge of financial management and could not save her earnings. Instead, she invested all the money she brought back but was unable to secure any stable financial return.

Currently, her husband is unemployed, and her family is facing financial hardship. As a result, she is planning to migrate again in order to earn and support her household. This time, she is going through a middleman, **hoping for an improvement in her situation and a chance to build a more secure future.**

### "Kolmi"

She had a positive experience while working in [redacted]. She was appointed to take care of a disabled child in a household, where she received her wages on time and was treated with warmth and respect. She worked there for two years before returning to Bangladesh.

After coming back, she was unable to find suitable work to sustain herself. **Due to her previous positive experience, she is motivated to migrate again to [redacted] in hopes of earning a stable income and improving her situation.**



Art by Saya Muriyasu  
from justseeds.org

# Light in the Dark Room

By Lucy Turay

## VERSE 1

The doors are bright but it's dark inside  
In a foreign land that I went for work  
A woman in a place looking for survival  
I left my home and all I knew  
For a dream that promised to come true  
But, it was my struggles that were at the  
doorstep  
The doors are bright but it's dark inside  
I push back a little, day to day

## VERSE 2

I work long hours in hope of little pay that I  
never receive  
Not a day off and no place to sleep  
Subject to abuses galore, without sufficient food  
to eat  
The language is a barrier, stranger to the  
culture  
I miss my family, my friends  
Loneliness a constant companion, no one to  
comfort  
Enslaved and suffering in silence, yet I refuse to  
give up  
The doors are bright but it's dark inside  
I crack it open and push through the pain to  
hear my own voice

## VERSE 3

Convicted for a crime I was innocent of  
Justice was denied, as it often is for those like  
me  
One of the multitudes of migrant workers  
enslaved and suffering in silence  
The doors are bright but it's dark inside  
But we raise our voices a little louder  
Our collective shall push through the pain  
Our rights and our dignity must be respected .  
And there is a switch within each of us and  
justice shall prevail

Bye and bye when the morning comes we will  
tell the story to our grandchild we will tell the  
story when we overcome you will understand it  
better bye and bye.

## Vase 1

There's is a time in our country that things are  
not easy to be feed is a problem we are  
homeless and naked so we have to go to the  
Middle East to find job there we found ourself  
into slavery they will beat us they will kill us  
there is no one to help us we are working  
without payments there is no one to help us  
they don't care for what we eat they don't care  
for where we sleep so please understand us  
bye and bye

## Chors

Bye and bye when the morning comes we the  
story to our grandchild we will tell the story  
when we overcome **you will understand us  
better bye and bye**

## Vase 2

We are calling on UN we are calling on human  
rights we are calling on all nations that cares  
for our life we are on girls we are suffering we  
are dying in the Middle East so please  
understand us bye and bye

## Chors

Bye and bye when the morning comes we the  
story to our grandchild we will tell the story  
when we over come you will understand us  
better bye and bye

## Vase 3

We are working for our families we are working  
for our homes we are working children for a  
better tomorrow we don't wish to be here if we  
have jobs in our country please understand us  
bye and bye

## Chors

Bye and bye when the morning comes we the  
story to our grandchild we will tell the story  
when we over come you will understand us  
better bye and bye



**Migrant Forum in Asia**  
[www.mfasia.org](http://www.mfasia.org)

**Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)** is a network of grassroots organizations, trade unions, faith-based groups, migrants and their families and individual advocates in Asia working together for social justice for migrant workers and members of their families

Address: 25 Matiyaga Street, Diliman, Quezon City 1100  
Philippines

Email: [mfa@mfasia.org](mailto:mfa@mfasia.org)  
Telefax: +63-2-82779484 | Mobile: +63-921-540-5063  
Website: <http://www.mfasia.org>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/migrantforumasia>



**Global Migrant Workers Network**  
[www.globalmigrantworkers.org](http://www.globalmigrantworkers.org)

**Global Migrant Workers Network (GMWN)** is a grassroots, migrant worker- and survivor-led global network connecting over 23,000 migrant workers from 27 countries across East and West Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Gulf. GMWN exists to ensure that migrant workers are not only represented but are at the center of shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

Address: Nairobi, Kenya  
Email: [leadership@globalmigrantworkers.org](mailto:leadership@globalmigrantworkers.org)  
Website: [www.globalmigrantworkers.org](http://www.globalmigrantworkers.org)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/globalmigrantworkers>