



UN Human Rights Council, 39th Session, September 2018

Item 3: Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, its causes and consequences and the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order

Oral statement submitted by Anti-Slavery International

Anti-Slavery International welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery. We thank Ms Bhoola for shining a spotlight on a category of workers who are particularly vulnerable to contemporary forms of slavery.

As the report highlights, migrant domestic workers face grave human rights violations including extremely long hours of work, an absence of rest and leave periods, delayed or non-payment of wages, retention of passports, confinement to the house, denial of freedom of association, physical abuse, psychological abuse and sexual violence.

In addition to the challenges posed by the invisibility of work inside a private home and exclusion from the scope of labour laws and social protection, migrant domestic workers face a number of additional challenges: precarious recruitment processes, poor regulation of recruitment agencies, irregular immigration status, social isolation, a lack of local support networks, and unfamiliarity with local law and customs.

Migrant domestic workers that are also members of socially excluded and marginalised groups, such as indigenous people and Dalits, are particularly vulnerable.

Vulnerability to domestic servitude is substantially increased for those whose visa is tied to their employer. The right to change employer is a fundamental safeguard, without which victims are forced to choose between tolerating abuse and losing their livelihood, and face illegality, detention and deportation.

Restrictions on migration abroad for domestic work are ineffective and lead to the use of risky irregular migration routes.

A global rise in anti-migrant sentiment in many countries has been accompanied by harsher migration policies and an excessive focus on the immigration status of victims.

We urge states to fully implement the Special Rapporteur's recommendations. To

- ratify and implement the ILO Domestic Workers Convention
- extend the coverage of national labour law and social protection to all domestic workers
- end sponsorship systems, introduce an independent immigration status and grant a grace period to find new employment when leaving an employer

Thank you