



Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

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January 2018

Dear friends,

It's been a whole year since we published our last English-language bulletin. We were caught in a whirlwind of projects activities, deadlines, conferences, and workshops, and we had less time for reflection and communication with our members and partners, although many exchanges around concrete issues or events did take place. Adding to that was the strained human resource situation within our team, with two colleagues leaving the organisation in January-March and two in September-October. However, we were pleased to welcome two new colleagues at the end of 2017 - Eunha Gim as Programme Officer Research and Ratna Mathai-Luke as Programme Officer Asia.

With new additions to the team and new energy at the beginning of the year, it is our wish for the new year (we won't say resolution!) to make the time to inform you more regularly about our work. We do believe it is important to share our successes, challenges and insights with all of you, as well as learn from yours.

In 2017 we continued working on our three thematic priorities - Accountability, Access to Justice, and Power in Migration and Work - as well as our core activities of research, advocacy, and participatory learning.

Within the **Accountability** programme, we worked with our members and partners in Bolivia, Colombia, and Guatemala to conduct, for the second year in a row, an assessment of their governments' obligations to implement national anti-trafficking policies. Similarly to [the 2016 Assessment](#), the [one published in 2017](#) found that institutions in the three countries are not fulfilling their legal responsibilities and are failing to guarantee the rights of trafficked persons and at-risk groups. Governments do not allocate appropriate budgets, do not collect statistical information, and do not ensure ongoing training of state officials. In addition, this time government institutions were less cooperative, and in some cases hostile, to the requests for information they received from our partners. This is yet another manifestation of the shrinking space for civil society that we are witnessing throughout the world, and the diminished opportunities for NGOs to act as watchdogs. We reflected on some of these frustrations in a [short piece](#) published this month on Beyond Trafficking and Slavery. In 2018, together with our members and allies, we will continue this work and review what we've done so far in order to deepen the analysis and improve the methodology.

In 2017 we also began a landscape assessment exercise to map the advocacy work related to trafficking undertaken by NGOs in the ASEAN region. We conducted scoping visits to five countries to determine the interest and capacity of civil society organisations to conduct monitoring of the implementation of the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP), and this year we will visit another four countries. Once the study is complete, we will organise a regional consultation to determine how regional advocacy efforts on the monitoring and implementation of ACTIP may be better coordinated.

Within the **Access to Justice** programme, we completed two projects and published two reports

summarising their key findings and learnings. The first one, [Access Unknown](#), highlights the experiences of abuse, labour exploitation, and human trafficking of Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand and the factors that facilitate or hinder their access to justice. It documents how lack of information about migration and work procedures and working conditions, mistrust of authorities, and lack of information about sources of support, prevent Cambodian workers from seeking justice for rights violations in Thailand. The second report, [Enabling Access to Justice](#), focuses on the experiences of CSOs in trying to support South Asian women migrant workers abused and trafficked in the Middle East. The report documents the many obstacles to justice that migrant workers face, including legal, social, and procedural, and the many ways in which CSOs are assisting them in their struggles. Some of these are exemplified through the stories of three Nepali women, documented in [a thirty-minute video](#). Based on the two reports, as well as reports by GAATW members in Europe and consultations with members in Asia, we prepared a [submission](#) to the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery for a special report on access to justice and remedies for victims of contemporary forms of slavery. It is clear from our work that justice remains an elusive concept for many trafficked persons and abused migrant workers the world over, and cannot be separated from the broader issues of democracy and rule of law. In many countries, corrupt, slow, and inefficient legal systems prevent marginalised groups, such as migrants or trafficked persons, from seeking justice. In many countries, trafficked persons don't even associate the concept of justice with the legal system and simply want to move on with their lives and find a new, non-exploitative job, without seeking recourse for the abuses they suffered. We were pleased that these, and other issues we highlighted, were included in the [Special Rapporteur's report](#).

[Continue reading about our work in the other thematic and core programmes](#)

As always we welcome your feedback and contributions to future issues at borislav@gaatw.org.



From our Member Organisations...

In 2017 we welcomed three new members to the Alliance from Europe, Asia and North America.

NGO Novi Put, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Udruženje "Novi put"

Novi put was established in 2010 by women with long anti-trafficking experience. The organisation is registered at the state level and implements anti-trafficking programmes comprised of education and grass roots prevention activities among groups vulnerable to human trafficking; counselling support to potential and confirmed victims; training and lectures for both law enforcement agencies and general public; lobbying and information campaigns. Novi put runs a Help Line providing up-to-date information on human trafficking and safe migration. The organisation is a member of the core Regional Monitoring Team for anti-trafficking established by the ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and a member of the La Strada International NGO Platform and European NGO Platform Against Trafficking, Exploitation and Slavery (ENPATES). Website: <http://www.newroadbih.org/>

Justice Centre Hong Kong

JUSTICE CENTRE | HONG KONG

PROTECTING FORCED MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

Justice Centre Hong Kong is a leading nonprofit human rights organisation working to protect the rights of vulnerable groups in Hong Kong: refugees and victims of torture, human trafficking and forced labour.

Justice Centre Hong Kong works to protect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, survivors of torture, human trafficking and forced labour. The organisation's vision is for Hong Kong to be a fair and inclusive society where even the most marginalised enjoy fundamental rights and access to justice. The mission is to enable clients to access their rights through legal and psychosocial support, policy, advocacy and research while strengthening the rule of law in Hong Kong.

Justice Centre was historically Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre (HKRAC) founded in 2007 and was

the first and only non-governmental organisation in Hong Kong to provide free and vital legal aid to vulnerable refugees seeking protection through the UN refugee agency's Refugee Screening Determination process. The organisation was relaunched as Justice Centre Hong Kong in 2014, expanding its services to assist all refugees seeking protection via the Unified Screening Mechanism, as well as working on human trafficking and forced labour issues in Hong Kong. Website: <http://www.justicecentre.org.hk/>

Human Trafficking Legal Center, USA



The Human Trafficking Legal Center (HT Legal Center) uses a rights-based approach to fight for justice for trafficking victims. HT Legal Center trains pro bono attorneys to represent trafficking victims in the United States. It makes referrals on case-by-case basis, providing mentoring and extensive technical assistance for complex civil, immigration and criminal cases. HT Legal Center attorneys monitor the developing case law, focusing on impact litigation in the federal courts. The Center also conducts research and

maintains a comprehensive database on federal civil and criminal trafficking cases. Website: <http://www.htlegalcenter.org>

www.gaatw.org

Resources

[More than catch phrases and click bait: mutual learning as a tactic for combating the exploitation of migrants](#)

Borislav Gerasimov

Anti-trafficking awareness-raising campaigns are by necessity simplistic and can lead to unintended consequences and comic results. Given all their flaws and limitations, the money used for awareness-raising campaigns may be much more efficiently spent on smaller-scale direct work in communities, as well as on research and collective advocacy for change. NGOs can play a catalytic role in this process if they strive to go beyond generating clicks and return to grassroots, bottom-up approaches.

[Civil society and the clampdown on freedoms](#)

Chus Álvarez

The space for effective action is narrowing for civil society organisations, and many groups fear repercussions when they challenge the government. This was also obvious when GAATW members and partners in Colombia, Bolivia, and Guatemala tried to hold their governments accountable for their obligations towards trafficked persons. In this hostile environment it is essential more than ever that civil society is organised and stands up to the clampdown on civil liberties and social participation that states are carrying out in the name of security and economic prosperity.

[What does justice mean for migrant women workers?](#)

Priyanka Borpujari

Social and gender justice for migrant workers ought to include universal social protection, access to basic healthcare, basic income security, and access to education regardless of citizenship. However, migrant workers in many countries must also contend with intolerance and extremism that increases marginalisation and foments exclusion. More than ever before, it is crucial that the pursuit of justice is a unified effort, carried out in collaboration with migrant workers themselves. This also means that their work is recognised, and that their working conditions are improved.

[Confronting root causes: forced labour in global supply chains](#)

Genevieve LeBaron, Neil Howard, Cameron Thibos and Penelope Kyritsis

This new Beyond Trafficking and Slavery report aims to answer questions about globalisation, poverty, exploitation, and supply and demand, in relation to forced labour, in a rigorous yet accessible way. It is organised around 12 closely-related chapters: two examining concepts, four looking at the "supply side" and four looking at the "demand" side of forced labour. The report demonstrates that rather than a simple consequence of greed or the moral shortcomings of individuals, forced labour in global supply chains is a structural phenomenon that results when predictable, system-wide dynamics intersect to create a supply of highly exploitable workers and

a business demand for their labour.

[Animation video: Between Decent Work and Modern Slavery](#)

Focus on Labour Exploitation

A new animation from GAATW member Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX) shows how labour abuse can develop into exploitation and what can be done to prevent it. The film is intended to inform the public and policy makers about how workers can become vulnerable to exploitation through abuse of their labour rights. It shows the ways in which FLEX works to protect workers and, in doing so, to prevent labour exploitation.

[Supporting the Reintegration of Trafficked Persons: A Guidebook for the Greater Mekong Sub-Region](#)

Rebecca Surtees, NEXUS Institute

This guidebook is meant for practitioners from government and non-government organisations alike, to address weaknesses in the current frameworks of victim assistance and reintegration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS: Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam). The guidebook highlights positive examples of the reintegration of trafficked persons as well as challenges that many victims face as they seek to move on from their exploitation. It also offers practical guidance to practitioners - through checklists and recommendations - on how to improve reintegration programming and policies.

['Understanding sex work: a brief guide for labour rights activists'](#)

International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe

The labour movement was born during the industrial revolution in the 19th century when workers came together to advocate for better working conditions and treatment by their employers. Workers formed trade unions in different industrial sectors, and, through collective action such as strikes, obtained sick and maternity leaves, holidays, abolished child labour, reduced weekly working hours, increased wages and forced governments to adopt labour laws protecting people's lives through health and safety measures. This briefing paper is intended as an introduction to sex workers' rights from a labour rights perspective. Its aim is to provide labour rights activists and trade unionists interested in including sex workers in their fight for labour rights with basic information on the struggle for the recognition of sex work as work and the correlation between the criminalised nature of the sex industry and labour exploitation.

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