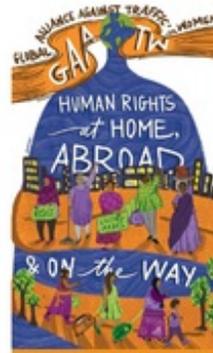




Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

e-Bulletin

July 2023



Dear friends,

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this e-bulletin!

Warm greetings from GAATW International Secretariat!

Since our last e-bulletin, we have welcomed a new colleague to our team **Michelle Soe Moe** from Thailand joined the Secretariat as Program Officer Communications in mid-June and she is responsible for implementing the communications strategy and multi-media work with various stakeholders.

We are pleased to share the latest news and activities by the GAATW-IS.

## News from the GAATW International Secretariat

### Changing the Narrative; from Stigma and Rejection to Recognition and Respect

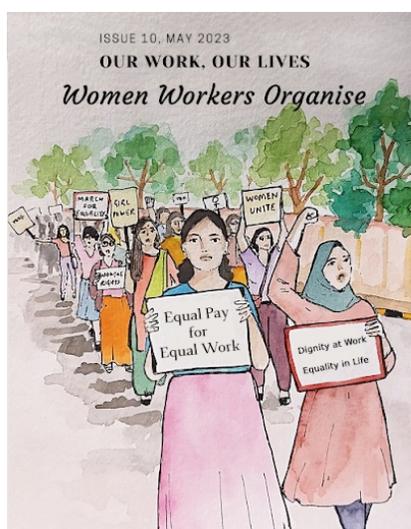
On 12-14 May, we carried out a 3-day regional consultation with returnee women migrant workers, women's rights and migrant rights activists, and media personnel from Bangladesh and Nepal. The aim was to further strengthen the ongoing work of partners on sustainable reintegration of returnee women migrant workers.



Participants discussed about developing communication strategies to change the disempowering narratives about low waged cross border women migrant workers and highlight their courage and their contribution to families and the states

This meeting also focused on listening to the lived experiences of eight representatives of returnee women migrant groups from Nepal and Bangladesh who worked as domestic workers, caregivers, factory workers, and agricultural workers mainly in the Middle East. The women also shared what kind of changes will lead to recognition and respect. In a nutshell, it begins by valuing the spectrum of women's work - within households and as migrant workers, increased autonomy to make decisions about their education, choice of work, marriage, and childbearing and a robust, unbiased social and state support system when they migrate.

The meeting was attended by representatives from migrant and women rights movements, trade unionists, labour rights activists, and GAATW partners and members from Nepal ([WOREC](#) and [Tarangini Foundation](#)) and Bangladesh ([OKUP](#), [BNSK](#), [ACD](#) and [Badabon Sangho](#)).



## Women Workers Organise

In June, the GAATW e-magazine - Our Work, Our Lives has launched its new issue "[Women Workers Organise](#)" where we hear from community organisers and union leaders affiliated to AMKAS-Nepal, ARM-Lebanon, CHRCD-Sri Lanka, DoWan-Sierra Leone, ESCO-Sri Lanka, JALA PRT- Indonesia, OKUP-Bangladesh, OPSI-Indonesia, Tarangini-Nepal, WINS-India, WOFOWON-Nepal, MAP-Thailand, PTS-India and Yasanti-Indonesia.

There are stories of organising and unionising from women domestic workers, home-based workers, porters, entertainment workers, farmers, and sex workers. "When we started speaking as a group, things did change sometimes. Not big changes but at least the behaviour of male colleagues and employers changed a

little. When we started to respect ourselves, we noticed that people also treated us with some respect in public places," Ayushma KC, an entertainment worker leader from WOFOWON tells us. Erna Maria from Jogja City Homeworkers Federation explains that by joining the union, she learnt about workers' rights and how to fight for it. Her words are echoed by members of the women farmers' cooperative in Tirupati, India who say, "We thought that if we present our situation to policy makers as a group, there is greater possibility of being taken seriously."

## Practices in Participatory Grantmaking webinar

In the first session of Practices in Participatory Grantmaking, we speak to Carmen Dupont from FundAction and Mina Jaf who is the founder of Women Refugee Route and presently, Community Coordinator at Hibiscus in the UK. They are both part of the FundAction, an activist-led participatory and feminist fund in Europe. It is a network of 250 activists in 30 countries doing grassroots activism, supporting deep system change and developing alternative solutions. The participants in the webinar shared their questions about participatory grantmaking and processes that the two speakers. The webinar was moderated by Srishty from GAATW.



## Donne in Cammino dall Asia all Europa (Women's Migration from Asia to Europe), Trieste, Italy

On 23 June, Bandana Pattanaik was invited as the main speaker at an event in Trieste which was co-organised by Comitato per i Diritti Civili delle Prostitute (Comitato), Casa Internazionale delle Donne-Trieste, and Stella Polare. Around 35 participants joined the interactive session.

Bandana gave a general overview of Asian women's migration to Europe beginning from the colonial connections to the period of 1980s-2000 until the present time. The discussion also focused on how the states have looked at migrating women, how feminists have worked together to resist patriarchal notions around good and bad women, and how migrating women have tried to assert their agency and autonomy against all odds.

The event is part of Comitato's knowledge and leadership-building programme with women from Uruguay, Mexico, Romania, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ukraine, Brazil, Croatia, Senegal, China and Italy. The event continued with a focus group discussion on women's feminist vision of change and their perspectives on women's well-being. The group of participants agreed to continue the conversations online and to explore opportunities for doing outreach work with migrant communities that have cases of violence against

women.

## Meeting of European Migration Networks in Berlin 2-3 July



Following on from our [research](#) into the experiences of Southeast Asian women in Europe, we organised a consultation meeting with other networks and movements in Europe to broaden our understanding of the regional context and the experiences of people in Europe who have migrated from other parts of the world.

From 2-3 July we held a consultation in Berlin with members [La Strada International](#) and the [European Sex Workers Rights Alliance](#), as well as [PICUM](#), [Transnational Migrant Platform - Europe](#), [Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe](#), [WIDE+](#), [Wo-Mi](#), and the [European Trade Union Confederation](#). We were also joined by our German members [KOK](#) and [Ban Ying](#), as well as the German-wide network [International Women's Space](#).

We had a rich discussion, ranging from the need to decolonise the language we use in Europe to talk about migration and women's rights, to specific EU policy developments that further threaten the realisation of the rights of people on the move in Europe. We hope to use these findings to inform our work over the next couple of years and we hope we can discuss many of these issues with you all at the International Members Congress next year.

## Learning Visits with Partners

From 28 June to 6 July 2023, Bandana, Alfie and Srishty from the GAATW-IS team visited members and partners based in Paris, France and in Berlin, Germany. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the country contexts and policies on labour migration in Europe through the work of partners with migrant communities especially from the Asia region.

On 28 June, the team had a meeting with [The Committee against Modern Slavery \(CCEM\)](#) in Paris. CCEM took part in the latest [Feminist Participatory Action Research \(FPAR\) on Re/integration](#) where GAATW produced a report based on the research findings from 10 partners in Southeast Asia and Europe. The meeting gave us an opportunity to get to know the grounded work of CCEM and their advocacy actions to strengthen assistance services for trafficked persons and migrant workers who experienced labour exploitation in France.

On 29-30 June, the team visited the office of [MIST](#) (Mission d'intervention et de sensibilisation contre la traite des êtres humains) in France. MIST, a GAATW member, is currently part of the Voice and Participation learning programme. Their work aims to promote the creation of spaces for women migrants allowing them to speak for themselves within an evolving framework, to empower themselves by taking part in the action and governance of the association, to work in favour of the production of recommendations, better access to rights for victims and the fight against the trivialization of violence or phenomena of influence within peer groups. The two-day engagement with MIST colleagues provided deeper insights into their work with women who experienced sexual exploitation, women's access to legal services, procedures at the reception centres for asylum seekers, the role of cultural mediators, and the process of participation among MIST members.

MIST organised a presentation from Jessica Gourmelan, a representative of MIPROF, an inter-ministerial Mission for the Protection of Women against Violence and the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings. She elaborated on the implementation of the second national action plan against human trafficking and the process of drafting the third national policy. The second part of the meeting had focused on MIST's journey towards transforming the 'lived experiences' of survivors into social and political participation, and creating spaces to enable these forms of participation.



In Berlin, we met with colleagues from [Ban Ying](#), a coordination and counseling center. They provide services for distressed migrants who have experienced violence, exploitation or human trafficking. They have worked mostly with Thai and Filipino migrants. They are also part of the recent [FPAR research project](#) by GAATW. During the two-day visit, we had an opportunity to hear the stories of marriage migrants, survivors, and volunteers within migrant communities.

We will be posting some of the write ups and multi-media production from our recent engagements with members and partners on our GAATW website and in social media platforms.

**Visit to the German NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings– KOK in Germany**  
GAATW's half day visit to [KOK](#) in Germany was focused on learning about the national legal framework on anti-trafficking and KOK's national network of CSOs focussed on anti-trafficking work across communities in Germany. We learnt more about their work at the counselling centers, with the federal police and state to improve sensitization for victims and their rights and advocacy strategies for improved migrant rights.

We send our special thanks to colleagues from CCEM, MIST, Ban-Ying and KOK.

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## International Advocacy Update

### GAATW Statement on the UK's Illegal Migration Bill

In solidarity with our members in the UK, we issued a [joint statement](#) criticising the proposals contained with the UK's Illegal Migration Bill. The Bill will remove all protections for victims of trafficking who entered the UK without a valid visa. Over 50 organisations from 28 different countries signed the statement.

### ASEAN Declaration on Trafficking and Technology

On the 10th May, the ASEAN leaders released a Declaration on trafficking and technology. This follows a complain GAATW made to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) about the treatment of trafficking victims in online scam centres. You can read our complaint [here](#) and see the media coverage [here](#).

Whilst the new Declaration does not consistently use the language of human rights, it is still quite progressive and responds directly to the issues we raised in our complaint to AICHR. Significantly, the ASEAN leaders have reaffirmed that potential trafficking victims should not be criminalised or detained.

### UN Secretary General's Annual Report on the Human Rights of Migrants

We prepared a submission on behalf of GAATW to the UN Secretary General, ahead of his annual report on the human rights of migrants. We focused on issues relating to 1) tied visas/temporary labour migration schemes 2) the rights of irregular migrants 3) stigma and harmful cultural attitudes towards women who migrate overseas for work.

The Secretary General's report will be published later this year.

### Colombia's review by the UN Human Rights Committee

The GAATW-IS worked with member organisation, [Espacios de Mujer](#) to prepare a

submission to the UN Human Rights Committee, which is reviewing Colombia's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Also, the Colombian Alliance of Civil Society Organizations Against Trafficking in Persons submitted a document on the situation of human rights in the country.

The hybrid meeting of the Special Rapporteur with civil society organisations took place in Bogotá on May 24. You can read our submission [here](#). The review will take place on the 10th and 11th July.

## Universal Periodic Review of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Mexico

The GAATW-IS worked with members and partners to contribute to the Universal Periodic Review of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Mexico by the UN Human Rights Council.

For Mexico, we worked with our member organisation [Brigada Callejera](#) to prepare a submission on the rights of sex workers in Mexico and our key human rights concerns from the last four years.

For Saudi Arabia, we worked with members of the National Workers Welfare Trust (NWWT) in India and [Sema Nami](#) in Kenya to highlight the rights violations experienced by women who have migrated to Saudi Arabia. We also worked with [Migrant-Rights.org](#) for this submission.

For Jordan, we partnered with the [Awaj Foundation](#) who are based in Bangladesh on a submission focused on the rights of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Jordan.

These submissions will be reviewed by the Working Group for the UPR who are responsible for providing a comprehensive report on the human rights situation in each country. This report is then shared with the governments of all UN Member States. By contributing to this process, we hope to ensure that the rights of migrant women workers remains a priority issue at the UPR for each country.

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## News from GAATW Member Organisations

We begin this news by welcoming six new members who joined our alliance in late May/early June. They are: Public Union Clean World Aid to Women (Azerbaijan), Mujer & Mujer Foundation, Quimera Foundation (Ecuador), Freedom Network USA, AWAJ Foundation (Bangladesh) and Just Economy and Labor Institute, JELI from Thailand.

[Clean World](#) is a Public Union for the assistance to women and is one of the first non-governmental organisations in Azerbaijan to fight all forms of violence against women and promote women's rights.

[Mujer & Mujer Foundation](#) is a leading organisation in humanitarian assistance in the city of Guayaquil, Ecuador, with a particular emphasis of his work on the care of women, LGBTIQ+ population and GBV survivors.

[Quimera Foundation](#) is a non-profit organisation in southern Ecuador. Their work focuses on promoting programs, projects and actions for the prevention and eradication of gender-based violence (GBV), including human trafficking, especially against women, children, the LGBTIQ population, refugees and migrants, as well as host communities.

[Freedom Network USA](#) is the largest coalition working on human trafficking in the United States. The network convenes survivors, legal and social service providers, researchers, and expert consultants to engage in advocacy, training and technical assistance, and increase the capacity of the anti-trafficking movement

[Awaj Foundation](#) aims to redress the structural problems in the garment industry, raise awareness on the issues that garment workers face, train workers on their rights and responsibilities under national and international labour law frameworks. They actively build leadership capacity and negotiation capability of women workers as they are the majority of the workforce in the industry as Awaj believes that leadership from women can

transform the society towards greater equity and justice.

[Just Economy and Labor Institute \(JELI\)](#) is a non-profit organisation working to promote social justice and ensure the protection of labor rights in Southeast Asia, with the focus on Thailand. We support workers and labor organisations by offering educational and capacity-building programs. We also partner with rights-based organisations that share our vision and mission to conduct research and propose policy recommendations aimed at achieving economic and labor justice.

In our "[Meet our Members](#)" interviews, we recently published the work of our members from Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Europe:

- [ECPAT Guatemala "ECPAT Guatemala: 20 years of work for a childhood free of violence and sexual exploitation"](#)
- [ASBRAD "It has been 26 years of struggle to include the issue of human trafficking in the human rights agendas and to build a culture of support for the survivors of this crime"](#)
- [AAINA "Promoting the livelihood of persons with disabilities and of women in the Ganjam district: A journey towards sustainability"](#)
- [Brigada Callejera "No more Elisás Martínez, 28 years of work for the recognition of the rights of sex workers in Mexico"](#)
- [Animus Association "Animus and the fight for human rights of women: a combination of professionalism and activism"](#)
- [Ban-Ying "a house for women survivors of domestic violence, and sexual and labour exploitation"](#)



## Training, forums, and consultations organised by the Association for Community Development

From May to July, the [Association for Community Development](#) (ACD) developed 22 meetings that included consultations, courtyard meetings, and trainings in different locations of Bangladesh. These meetings were utilised as platforms for raising awareness, empowering local women, civic

engagement, initiating collaborations, and violence prevention. In addition, ACD organised a rally and a campaign event at an academic institution in Rajshahi where more than 100 school students and children participated. The aim was to raise awareness about the sexual exploitation of boys and foster a sense of responsibility among the attendees.

## Awaj Foundation's Activism: Empowering marches for workers' rights, women's equality, and environmental responsibility

On 1 May, [Awaj Foundation](#) from Bangladesh organised a march for the International Workers' Day calling for an increase in minimum wage, free of gender-based violence in the workplace, six months maternity leave, and freedom of association. The Foundation further organised another march on 2 June, ahead of International Women's Day, with a focus on the Dalit Community who are considered as part of the "low caste" and are deprived of the rights



that the general population have access to.

In observance of World Environment Day, Awaj Foundation orchestrated a march calling for the Bangladesh government to control the harmful chemicals in factory production, prevent deforestation in favour of factory constructions, reduce factory waste, and amongst others.

## Understanding the Forms and Strategies for Safety for Women Online

[Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue](#) (FDHRD) from Egypt, released a [report](#) on digital violence against women, a pervasive violation of human rights across the globe. It has emerged as a severe form of aggression towards women in this era of digital expansion.

This form of digital violence, also known as cyber-abuse or cyber-harassment, spans a broad spectrum that includes online threats, defamation, invasion of privacy, and even stalking, among other things. Such actions have profound real-world consequences, inflicting physical, sexual, or psychological harm on women, often causing distress, fear, or a sense of powerlessness.



## Women's Inclusive Governance and Participation program.

[FIDA-Kenya](#) in collaboration with the German Federal Cooperation, Zivik Funding Programme, and other partners launched a mentoring program for elected women in public office in Kenya to enable them to participate fully in the decision-making process. The initiative

will ensure that women leaders have the capacity to promote their common agenda by influencing the implementation of laws affecting women. It also aims in bringing solidarity among women politicians, irrespective of their political affiliation, to ensure the gains for women in Kenya are consolidated and safeguarded.

The initial 2-day introductory forum was held in Kisumu on the 24th and 25th of May with women members of the County Assembly from Nakuru and Homa Bay Counties. The [program](#) will run for 9 months.

## Visit from the Minister of Labor to Renacer Foundation, Colombia

The Minister of Labor, Gloria Ramirez, visited the [Renacer Foundation](#) from Colombia, in the city of Riohacha, to see first-hand the living conditions of rescued survivors from child labor and other forms of violence.

## Creation of crisis centers for women and children

From February - June 2023 the Animus Association Foundation team, in partnership with other organisations, held 12 regional meetings on the creation of new crisis centers/shelters for women and children who have suffered from domestic violence.

They took place in administrative areas of the country, where there are currently no such services. According to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence: "Countries shall take necessary legislative or other measures to create a sufficient number of suitable and easily accessible shelters for safe accommodation and to proactively connect with victims, especially women and their children."

## La Strada International's representation in June

On 5 - 6 June 2023, [La Strada International](#) and [LS Poland](#) contributed to the ERA seminar on reducing demand for human trafficking in Krakow, Poland. See representation by LSI's

International Coordinator. On 8-9 June, LSI participated in the final conference of the VULNER project in Brussels, Belgium. See recording of the panel event and the project's new discussion paper.

LSI and several members also participated in PICUM's General Assembly and Victim Support Europe's annual meeting. You can check their report [here](#).

## World Refugee Day Picnic by La Strada Poland

On June 24th, La Strada Foundation Against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery – “La Strada Poland” hosted a picnic for World Refugee Day. The day was filled with happiness and joy and featured amazing performances and creative workshops. There were games, arts/crafts and face painting, making this a fun event for all ages to participate in. The picnic could not have taken place without the multitude of volunteers including those from the Rev. Julian Chrościcki Primary School No. 66.



## Draft report “Regulation of Prostitution in the EU”

[La Strada International](#), together with other human rights organisations and sex worker rights organisations calls upon the members of the European Parliament to reject the [Prostitution Report](#) when it comes before the Plenary vote, expected in September.

On 27 June 2023, the FEMM Committee of the European Parliament adopted the draft report “Regulation of prostitution in the EU”. Not only does the report conflate sex work with human trafficking, but it also purposely misinterprets the definition of human trafficking. According to the report, the “consent of a victim of trafficking in human beings to the exploitation, whether intended or actual, shall be irrelevant where it is obtained through the giving or receiving of payments or benefits.” The report presents sex work as a form of violence against women, disregarding sex workers’ own experiences which make a clear distinction between sex work and violence in sex work.

## REDLAC public hearing about Access to Justice for Victims of Trafficking in Persons in the Americas at the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR)

On July 12th, GAATW members from the Latin American and Caribbean region appeared before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to express their concerns about the worsening situation of victims of trafficking throughout the region.

The 21 petitioners presented the issues around prevention, investigation, and punishment of the crime and the restitution of rights to the victims. They also highlighted that the worsening situation in Latin America and the Caribbean is due to the failure of various states to comply to their international obligations and commitments with regard to the implementation of national laws on trafficking



# Awareness Raising Workshop on Human Trafficking in Guayaquil, Ecuador



As part of the local agenda in Guayaquil, [Fundación Mujer y Mujer](#) organised a training on awareness, identification, and prevention of trafficking in persons to more than 40 public officials of the Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador, including healthcare providers. The theoretical-practical workshop was supported by IOM Ecuador, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Public Health.

The objectives include reviewing basic concepts for understanding the phenomenon of human trafficking and the identification of cases; to review the scope of competencies that the officers have in relation to the inter-institutional protocol on human trafficking; and to identify critical issues and challenges that arise for health professionals in dealing with cases of trafficking.

## Strength in numbers

On July 14, the [European Sex Workers Rights Alliance \(ESWA\)](#) tweeted that they now have 111 member organisations across Europe and Central Asia. The majority of these organisations (60) are led by sex workers. Each year their members support an estimated 100,000 sex workers! Following this tweet, they exclaimed "perhaps our opponents who accuse us of being 'unrepresentative' might like to reconsider?"



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## Resources from Members

### Op-Ed: The protection of victims, fiction and its relationship with the search for justice, by CHS Alternativo

Reality is stranger than fiction, and fuels the creativity of artists. In this age where films, series, novels and other transmedia productions appear with the theme of human trafficking as an important element, reality could generate an endless production of stories to narrate and represent.

At CHS Alternativo there are more than 1,800 real stories that they could share, belonging to people who have been directly impacted by this crime. However, it is professional ethics and deontology and the protection of victims that prevent them from making these stories public, which could surprise us due to their harshness. There have been few exceptions where this rule has left room for the interest of the victims themselves to share their experiences as part of their recovery process.

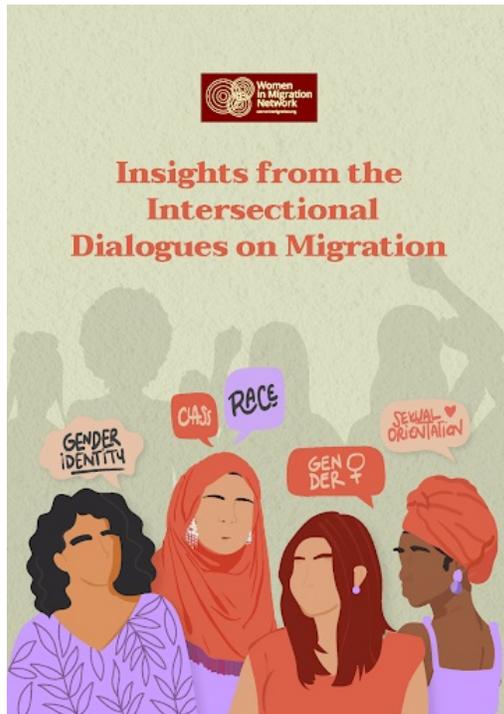
Curiously, the State's response is an aspect frequently forgotten in the fictions that are represented on cinema and television screens. We don't see the precariousness and high impunity at the level of the sanction of the crime or the deserved reparation that the victims require. This practice is not free, but is explained by the low social interest in the situation of the victims.

You can read the full op-ed [here](#).

# Brigada Callejera at the XXVI Meeting of the Mexican Sex Work Network

On July 20th, at least 50 women sex workers from 28 states in Mexico gathered to denounce abuses and the lack of support for the sector from local and federal governments. At the XXVI Meeting of the Mexican Sex Work Network, held at Brigada's Callejera offices, they addressed issues such as violence, insecurity, health, education or the serious damage caused by the pandemic.

You can watch [here](#) an interview to Elvira Madrid, Director and Founder of Brigada Callejera E.M.A.C.



## WIMN report's launch: Insights from Intersectional Dialogues on Migration, in English, French and Spanish.

The Women in Migration Network just launched their report, [Insights from Intersectional Dialogues on Migration](#) on 13 July. The report is organised in three parts: (1) An intersectional feminist approach to migration and its implications for movement building, (2) Intersectionality in practice: learnings from the dialogues and (3) Moving forward on intersectional feminist organizing around migration. This report aims to reach broader audiences on the importance of movement building from a feminist and intersectional approach, and in particular, contribute to intersectional and inter-sectoral movement building on migration



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