

FORUM SEEKS HE MIGRANT WORK

Migrant Forum in Asia and Global Trade Unions coalition call for a repatriated migrant workers. The International Labor Organization be wiped out as a result of the pandemic ... reports A

A coalition of civil society organisations and global trade unions launched a call for an urgent justice mechanism for repatriated migrant workers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates 195 million jobs will be wiped out as a result of the pandemic. In the Middle East region alone, an estimated five million jobs will be lost, many of those jobs are held by migrant workers.

Since the start of the pandemic, more than 200,000 migrant workers have been repatriated to Asia from different parts of the world. This number is expected to rise exponentially over

the next few months. Countries like India, Nepal, Bangladesh and the Philippines, anticipate the eventual return of a large number of their migrant workers population abroad.

“Extraordinary times, call for extraordinary measures,” said William Gois, Regional Coordinator of Migrant Forum in Asia. “Millions will suffer if this crime goes unnoticed. We cannot see this as collateral damage brought by the pandemic”.

It should be a priority to guarantee that all repatriated workers with legitimate claims are able to access justice and some kind of compensation. The appeal which, civil organizations and trade unions have launched together, calls on governments to urgently es-



BUILD BACK BETTER

The repatriation procedures have been undertaken hastily by countries of both origin and destination, without any proper redress mechanism, since courts and other labour dispute mechanisms have also been closed during the period of the lockdown. Therefore, these violations will pile up and either not be addressed or overburden the existing dispute resolution mechanisms.

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While it must be of the utmost importance to ensure that cases are resolved as soon as possible, without delay, especially in cases involving labour disputes, safeguards must be put in place to ensure that migrants are able to pursue their cases post return. Access to legal advice and support, facilitating power of attorney pro-

establish a transitional justice mechanism to address grievances, labor disputes of repatriated workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic. Many migrants have reconciled to the loss of wages in the form of unpaid wages for months and years before the COVID 19 pandemic.

In this regard, Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), Lawyers Beyond Borders (LBB) Network, Cross Regional Centre for Migrants and Refugees (CCRM), South Asia Trade Union Council (SARTUC), and Solidarity Center (SC) call upon countries of origin and destination to urgently put in place a transitional justice mechanism with the following objectives:

The transitional justice mechanism will address grievances, claims and labour disputes of repatriated workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic. That the mechanism needs to be expedited, accessible, affordable, and efficient.

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cedures, and easing requirements for in-person testimony and court appearance or appearance in front of a tribunal/grievance mechanism are paramount.

States should require employers and businesses to keep all employment records, including payroll, employee lists, and hours worked and allow workers to take copies of their records with them.

“If we are to ‘Build Back Better’, we cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the issue of wage theft that has been persistent across migration corridors for years, and will be unprecedented in the case of repatriated migrant workers in the COVID 19 pandemic,” the MFIA said in a statement.

They have accepted it as their fate and refrained from complaining lest they lose their jobs, or, worst still, live under the fear of their status being made undocumented.

Without proper controls, employers might take advantage of mass r programs to terminate a workers who have not beer due compensation, wages at Millions will be repatriate tions of debt bondage as th forced to pay off recruitme