



Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

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January 2017

Dear friends,

At the beginning of the New Year, we would like to take a moment to reflect on the one that passed. As 2016 was drawing to an end, there seemed to be a widespread consensus that it had been a terrible year.

The war in Syria entered into its fifth year and thousands of people lost their lives, while hundreds of thousands continued trying to flee to safety. As a response to this so-called 'migrant crisis', the European Union (EU) struck [a deal](#) to return refugees to Turkey and went on to plan similar deals with [African nations](#) and [Afghanistan](#), despite [the protest](#) of civil society. In India the [sudden demonetisation](#) hit poor people the hardest and risks exacerbating poverty and undermining social trust even further. In the Philippines, the newly-elected president encouraged the extra judicial killings of suspected drug dealers and drug users, with the [death toll](#) rising every day. In Latin America, Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff was removed from office after a coup, and throughout the continent [leftist governments lost popularity](#). In Europe and the US, xenophobia and right-wing populism continued to rise, culminating in the two events that shook the world and are likely to have the worst implications for 2017 and the coming years: the UK's vote to leave the EU and the US vote to elect a xenophobic, sexist and climate change-denying president. Although the impacts of these two votes on migration, human and labour rights around the world are yet to be seen, we have few reasons to be hopeful.

As 2016 was nearing its end, one word was dominating political analyses: post-truth. In fact, it had been used so much around the Brexit and Trump votes, that the Oxford Dictionaries selected it as their [word of the year](#). Used especially in reference to politics, the word is defined as 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief'.

Our little world of anti-trafficking mirrors the larger world of politics and this definition is all too familiar to those of us who've been working in the field for many years. In the post-truth politics of anti-trafficking, policy and discourse are shaped by movie stars more than service providers and by sensational media reports more than sound research. When it comes to trafficking, sober reasoning and critical faculties seem to disappear: almost anyone can say almost anything and it will be taken as truth. The more shocking and outrageous it is - the more truthful... [Read on](#)

As long as you're already here, we would like to ask for your feedback on the format and contents of this e-Bulletin. We have developed a short survey that will help us improve it and include more relevant and interesting information. To start the survey, please [click here](#). It should take you no more than five minutes and will be of great help for us.

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

News from the GAATW International Secretariat

Rights and Justice in the Context of Labour Migration



Access to justice remains a significantly underserved right for migrant workers. Very few migrant workers, whether in countries of work or upon returning home are able to access sufficient support services, legal aid, or justice institutions to remedy the violations they experience. To understand and respond to this gap, in November, the GAATW-IS organised a civil society consultation on rights and justice in the context of labour migration.

We welcomed over 50 participants including migrant, labour and anti-trafficking organisations providing direct services and legal support, migrant rights networks, trade unionists, donor partners, academics, and other stakeholders from South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the United States. [Read on...](#)

GAATW at the Global Forum on Migration and Development



In December GAATW took part in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The GFMD is an annual meeting to discuss migration and development issues, held since 2007. While the meeting formally refers to a meeting between governments, civil society has, over the years, carved out a role in both the forum itself, and by holding independent meetings prior to and in protest against the exclusionary government process. [Read on...](#)

Conference of the Parties to the UN Transnational Organised Crime Convention



In October, GAATW European Board Member Evelyn Probst, as well as representatives of several other member organisations, attended the 8th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) took place in October 2016 in Vienna, Austria. The aim of the Conference is to improve the capacity of States Parties to combat transnational organised crime and to promote and review the

implementation of this Convention.

Since the adoption and ratifications of the Convention and its protocols GAATW has lobbied for the development and establishment of a mechanism that would review its implementation by member states and make them accountable, in particular to trafficked persons. [Read on...](#)

Response to UN Women consultation on sex work

In September UN Women published a call for submissions to a 'Consultation seeking views on UN Women approach to sex work, the sex trade and prostitution', which will assist the development of a UN Women position on the issue.

Reaffirming our support for the rights of sex workers and the need for sex workers to be consulted in matters affecting their lives, we submitted [a response](#), co-signed by 24 of our members. In it, we stress the need for a clear distinction between sex work and trafficking and that the decriminalisation of sex work is the only policy that has the potential to improve the position of sex workers and reduce violence and coercion, including trafficking, in the sex industry. [Read on...](#)

[Read all news from the GAATW-IS.](#)

From our Member Organisations...

Access to Compensation for Trafficked Persons



In October, La Strada International and 32 other GAATW members and partners launched the campaign 'Justice at Last - Access to compensation for trafficked persons' to raise awareness about the rights of trafficked persons to claim and receive compensation.

Although compensation is a guaranteed right by the Council of Europe Convention and the EU Directive, in practice it remains underutilised. There are many obstacles that prevent trafficked persons from seeking and obtaining compensation... [Read on ...](#)

Research on Migrant Workers in Singapore

In October our Singaporean member Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2) published two reports focusing on different aspects of access to justice for migrant workers in Singapore.

'Diluted Justice: Protection and Redress for Trafficked Fishermen in Asia', a joint research by TWC2 and Dr Sallie Yea, revealed that trafficked fishermen face insurmountable barriers to access legal and economic justice and protection. These barriers are caused by gaps in victim identification and assistance and lack of political will on the part of authorities to investigate the issue and prosecute the criminals. The research focused on the trafficking of fishermen involving Singaporean, Taiwanese, Filipino, Cambodian and Indonesian actors working in collusion to deploy men into hyper-exploitative working situations on Taiwanese fishing vessels... [Read on ...](#)

Protest against Violence against Sex Workers in Madrid



This Congress, organised by GAATW member [SINTRASEDOM](#), was held on 15, 16 and 17 October in Santa Marta, Colombia with the participation of domestic workers from Colombia, Honduras, Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala, Ecuador, The Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Chile and Mexico. The aim of the Congress is to advocate, exchange experience, unify concepts and strategies and promote organisational processes that strengthen the domestic workers movement in Latin America and the Caribbean. [Read on ...](#)

[Read all updates from members...](#)

If you would like to contribute your news to our members' section of the e-Bulletin, please email borislav@gaatw.org

And in case you missed it, we would like to ask for your feedback on the format and contents of this e-Bulletin. We have developed a short survey that will help us improve it and include more relevant and interesting information. To start the survey, please [click here](#). It should take you no more than five minutes and will be of great help for us.

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Resources

[Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016](#)

UNODC

The 2016 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons covers 136 countries and provides an overview of patterns and flows of trafficking in persons at global, regional and national levels, based primarily on human trafficking cases detected between 2012 and 2014. Trend information is presented for a broad range of indicators. The thematic chapter of this edition looks at how migrants and refugees can be vulnerable to trafficking in persons, en route or at destination. It also analyses the particular conditions of people escaping war, conflict and persecution.

[Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the CSW 61 Priority Theme: Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work](#)

UN Women

In preparation for the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), UN Women convened an Expert Group Meeting on the CSW priority theme 'Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work', which took place in September. The group's report makes recommendations for improving women's economic empowerment and their working conditions, including specific recommendations for, among others, migrant women, sex workers and women in conflict areas.

[Overworked and Undervalued: Discrimination against women migrant workers in construction and domestic work in Thailand](#)

ILO

The ILO recently published two studies, exploring the experiences of women migrant workers in the [construction](#) and [domestic work](#) sectors in Thailand. In addition to being economically undervalued, women migrant workers' contributions are also socially undervalued. Domestic work is often not treated as work; instead it is seen as an innately female role that women perform as 'helpers' or as 'part of the family', excluding them from labour rights and social protection. In the construction sector, employers indicated that they regarded women workers as of secondary value, employed as part of a 'package' that primarily aims to recruit the husband. Despite the fact that many women construction workers perform the same tasks as men, the majority receives lower wages than men, with only one-third of women receiving above minimum wage.

[Revitalizing Imperialism: Contemporary Campaigns against Sex Trafficking and Modern Slavery](#)

Kamala Kempadoo

In this paper Prof Kempadoo looks closely at three prominent campaigns that sustain the anti-trafficking discourse and discusses some of the work that these campaigns do. She argues that a closer examination makes visible a twenty first century version of the 'white (wo)man's burden' supported by contemporary western, corporate, neoliberal interests, through which the unfettered exploitation and abuse of working people's lives and labour continues. So, rather than getting to 'the bottom of things', she argues here that dominant discourses on human trafficking tend to obfuscate structural problems and revitalise imperialism in new ways.

[Decent work for migrant domestic workers: Moving the agenda forward](#)

ILO

This report analyses trends and patters in the migration for domestic work at global, regional and corridor levels and presents good practices and lessons learnt in the areas of skills development and recognition, recruitment, collective action and voice. It offers key guidance and recommendations for improving migration policies, awareness raising campaigns and capacity building programmes for domestic workers, with the objective of leveraging better working conditions for migrant domestic workers with a view to realising the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

[Compendium of Good Practices on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings](#)

Council of Europe

This guidebook highlights examples of good practices in the areas of prevention of human trafficking, prosecution of traffickers, protection of victims and partnerships identified in Council of Europe (CoE) member states. The good practices were collected by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) in the process of monitoring member states' implementation of the CoE anti-trafficking Convention. Some specific examples include the provision of compensation in the Netherlands, reflection period in Norway, multidisciplinary identification in Moldova and online awareness-raising in Romania.

[Policy Brief: Addressing the demand-side of trafficking in the domestic work sector: main findings at European level](#)

ICMPD/DemandAT

In Europe, the employment of domestic workers is a widespread phenomenon. Despite different national policies and regulations, domestic workers, in majority migrant women, still face vulnerability to exploitation - including cases of human trafficking. Trafficking in this sector is an area neglected by policy makers and law enforcement and this situation is exacerbated by the challenges of monitoring activities occurring within private households. This policy brief examines the demand-side of trafficking in the domestic work sector in Europe based on seven country studies. It calls for a comprehensive approach in addressing demand in anti-trafficking efforts-at the intersection of trafficking, labour, and migration frameworks.

[Can we end violence against sex workers?](#)

Frankie Mullin

This article, published in the New Statesman ahead of International Day to End Violence against Sex workers, looks at some of the reasons for the pervasive violence against sex workers. This violence, the article argues, is not intrinsic to the industry but rather the result of misogyny, poverty and stigma, exacerbated by criminalisation. 'No single piece of legislation will make everything perfect - the most vulnerable will still need accessible social services, housing, childcare, food, healthcare, open borders, a safe place in society - but, on 17 December, we owe it to sex workers around the world to listen to their demands', concludes the author.

[The Three-Headed Dog](#)

Laura Agustín

The Three-Headed Dog by Sex at the Margins author Laura Agustín, is a mystery/crime novel about undocumented migrants and their smugglers, set in Spain. A lot of them work in different segments of the sex industry. The incidents portrayed would be labelled trafficking and the migrants victims by anti-prostitution and anti-migration campaigners. But just as we've seen in Sex at the Margins, many migrants don't perceive themselves as inert objects of cruel fate and evil men, here a few of them act out their stories, trying to find ways to get ahead and stay out of trouble.

[Brazil Responsible for Contemporary Slavery and Trafficking of Workers on Haciendas](#)

Inter-American Court of Human Rights

In December, in a landmark judgment, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights pronounced the State of Brazil guilty of not protecting its citizens from contemporary slavery and human trafficking. The case concerns 85 people who worked long hours for low payment under the threat of penalty on the Hacienda Brasil Verde in the state of Pará in 2000. The Court found that Brazil violated Art. 6 of the American Convention on Human Rights and ordered further investigation into the case and compensation for the workers. This is the first sentence on slavery and human trafficking on which the Inter-American Court has ruled.

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