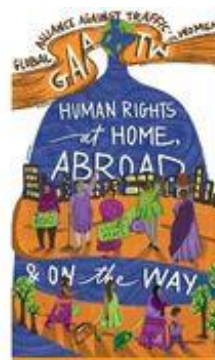




Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

e-Bulletin

April 2023



Dear friends,

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this e-bulletin!

Warm greetings from GAATW International Secretariat!

We begin this issue by welcoming three new colleagues who joined our Secretariat team early this year. **Alfie Gordo** from the Philippines has rejoined the Secretariat and is responsible for programme coordination and strategic communications. **Vivian Cartagena** from Ecuador joined as programme officer for alliance strengthening. Her work will involve a stronger engagement with members and partners, and preparatory work for GAATW's 30th year anniversary in 2024. We also hired a new accounts and grants management officer, **Wachira 'Noon' Chairattham** from Thailand.

At the end of March, we bid farewell to two of our dear colleagues, **Borislav 'Bobby' Gerasimov** and **Milena Stateva**. While Bobby will no longer be a full-time staff, he remains the editor of the Anti-Trafficking Review. GAATW-IS wishes the best for both of them!

In February, we held a three-day annual meeting for planning and reflecting on our work in 2022-2023. This was followed by a staff retreat in March. We rarely combine self-care practices during our internal meetings, but this time around we made some efforts to integrate self-care activities and practices in our review and team-building sessions.



The GAATW e-magazine - [Our Work, Our Lives](#) has been revived after a year-long gap. It is now a bi-monthly magazine. The theme for Issue 9 is [Celebrating Women Leaders](#) with 25 contributions from 12 countries across regions, to reflect on International Women's Day. It highlighted the collective actions to strengthen women's movements for social justice. Contributors highlighted the meaning of International Women's Day as a celebration of womanhood, friendship, and solidarity. Their advocacy priorities ranged from long-term visions for a life of dignity and equality to more specific ones of collective well-being, just wages, insurance benefits and freedom to organise.

On 18 April, we attended the Freedom Network USA Annual Conference where we presented the April issue of Anti-Trafficking Review themed 'Home and Homelessness'. This special issue explores the experiences of homeless people with migration and exploitation, the (inadequate) housing options available to survivors of trafficking and other marginalised groups, and problematises the notion of homelessness and simply a lack of shelter/roof. The issue is now available on the [Anti-Trafficking Review](#) website.

As always, we welcome your feedback and inputs for future issues at gaatw@gaatw.org.

International Advocacy Update

67th UN Commission on the Status of Women

In March, GAATW attended the 67th Commission on the Status of Women held in New York. The priority theme for the session was "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls." A [written statement](#) was prepared which highlighted how technology is being misused by Governments and employers to curtail the rights and freedoms of migrant women workers. We also co-sponsored [two parallel events](#), one on Women, Migration, Work and Technology, and one in our capacity as a member of the Sex Workers Inclusive Feminist Alliance (SWIFA) on the Protection of the Human Rights of Sex Workers on Digital Platforms. Both events were very well-attended, and we enjoyed a lively and progressive discussion between the audience and the panelists.

GAATW also co-organised a rally to demand respect for the rights of migrant women workers. The rally was held outside the UN building. The sun shone and we enjoyed speeches, chants and songs from a wide range of activists.

Universal Periodic Review of the United Arab Emirates

In March we traveled to Geneva to brief diplomats ahead of the Universal Periodic Review of the United Arab Emirates. The Universal Periodic Review is a mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council. Under the UPR, the human rights situation in each country is reviewed every four years. During the review, other countries make recommendations to the state being reviewed. This March we met with lots of different countries and urged them to raise issues relating to the human rights of migrant women workers, particularly domestic workers, at the UAE's UPR in May.

Input to the CEDAW General Discussion on the Participation of Women in Decision-Making Processes

In February, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) announced that it would hold a half-day of general discussion about Ensuring Equal Participation of Women in Decision-Making Processes. CEDAW issued a call for input from civil society ahead of this discussion. We coordinated a submission from GAATW and the other members of the Sex Workers Inclusive Feminist Alliance, which argued that sex workers must be allowed to participate in decision-making processes, both at the national level and the UN level. You can read the submission [here](#).

Input to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Protection of the Rights of Migrants' upcoming Report on Regularisation Processes

We coordinated input from GAATW to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Protection of the Rights of Migrants, ahead of his upcoming report to the UN Human Rights Council on the regularisation process. We based our submission on the valuable contributions we received from Comitato, FLEX, Ban Ying, AMKAS and ASBRAD, as well as the findings of our research conducted in Latin America, Europe, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia, over the last three years. You can read the submission [here](#).

Input to the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery' upcoming Report on Slavery and Homelessness

We coordinated an input from GAATW to the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, ahead of his upcoming report to the UN Human Rights Council on homelessness. We based our submission on the valuable contributions we received from NWWT and MIST, as well as the upcoming 20th Issue of the Anti-Trafficking Review which will focus on homelessness. The submission will be published on the Special Rapporteur's website [here](#).

News from the GAATW International Secretariat

Voice and Participation: A learning journey

GAATW organised a convening with eight partner organisations of Voice and Participation from 8-10 February 2023 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.



The eight partners are part of and represent different organisations, networks, communities, and movements of 'people on the move'. The partners are: [MAP Foundation](#) (Thailand), the [Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants \(APMM\)](#) (Hong Kong), [Serve the People Association \(SPA\)](#) (Taiwan), and [Tenaganita](#) (Malaysia), [Comitato or The Committee for the Civil Rights of Prostitutes onlus \(CDCP ApS\)](#) (Italy), [Intervention and Sensitization against Trafficking Mission \(MIST\)](#) (France), [Southeast and East Asian Centre \(SEEAC\)](#) (United Kingdom) and [Melissa: Network of Migrant Women](#) (Greece). This meeting was organised to counter the sense of isolation and the eagerness to have exchanges with organisations and movements from other regions and contexts. This meeting allowed us to create a community of practitioners working with a pre-existing history, deep association and commitment with our respective groups.

The aim was to build a supportive network of practitioners, peer-review of partners' proposals for this project, plan action and accountability, unpack links between migration experience, and social/political participation of different core groups the partners work within different countries, and the plurality of these experiences. Our activities included setting-up expectations, peer-review sessions, team building by creative mediums, one-on-one conversations, and chats, solidarity dinner with members from sister organisations in Chiang Mai (Empower Foundation, Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN), Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)) and planning for the period of the project.

Reflecting on the final day of the meeting, takeaways include in-depth learnings about the diverse ways and goals of organising migrants and survivors of trafficking, the political climate that influences migration, and a shared motivation to continue our work together towards safe migration and mobility of women migrants.



[New publication] Heroes, Victims, or Slaves? Workers! Strengthening migrant and trafficked women's rights to inclusive re/integration in Southeast Asia and Europe

From Southeast Asia to Europe: *Strengthening migrant and trafficked women's rights to inclusive re/integration* is a project of the International Secretariat (GAATW-IS) together with ten partners from Southeast Asia (the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand) and Europe (Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and the UK). The project began in 2020 with the goal of encouraging

rights-affirming labour migration and anti-trafficking measures for Southeast Asian women

who migrate to or have returned from Europe.

It describes the main challenges that migrant and trafficked women from Southeast Asia face in their socioeconomic inclusion (or re/integration) in Europe and upon return to their country of origin. It highlights examples of government and NGO programmes to support women's socioeconomic inclusion or re/integration, as well as the women's own understanding of the meaning of these words. It concludes with a number of broad recommendations to governments in countries of origin and destination to ensure that women's migration benefits not only governments, businesses, and brokers, but, most of all, the women themselves.

Read the report [here](#).



Webinar on "Filipino Women Migrating for Work to Europe"

The online event is part of a 6 monthly webinar series titled, "*Towards Safe Southeast Asia-Europe Migration Corridors*" organised by the [SEA Junction](#) and GAATW. The event, held on 20 April 2023, was moderated by Rosalia Sciortino, the Founding Director of SEA Junction, and joined by two speakers, Krisanta Caguioa-Mönnich of [Ban Ying e.V.](#) and Marissa Bergonia of [The Voice of Domestic Workers](#). The webinar discussed the current and emerging challenges and possible policy solutions on women's migration in the context of Germany and the UK.

Country of Origin, Country of Destination (COO-COD) webinar

The second in our series of COO-COD webinars on knowledge exchange between organisations working for migrants' rights in the South Asia – Middle East corridor focused on the Gulf states. Hosted by Vani Saraswathi from Migrant-Rights.Org, the webinar brought together advocates and migrant rights groups including Sandigan (Kuwait); Solidarity Center (Jordan); Ali Mohammed (Bahrain); Annas Shaker (Saudi Arabia); and ILO Workers' Center (Jordan).

The webinar highlighted the gaps in access to justice for migrant workers in the Gulf region. In general, although there are some differences between countries, migrant workers are not adequately covered in the labour laws, and their rights are not effectively protected. This is especially the case for domestic workers, who often fall under separate laws or no laws at all when it comes to their rights.

In addition, speakers mentioned that, even where labour laws had been reformed in recent years (e.g., in the UAE), it remains very difficult to verify the impacts of these reforms on the ground, since there are no independent media, and civil society is very restricted in most places. The speakers also shared how COO embassies play a limited and sometimes counterproductive role when assisting migrant workers.

New issue of Anti-Trafficking Review Home and Homelessness'

This special issue of *Anti-Trafficking Review* examines the links between housing, homelessness, migration, and exploitation. With contributions from New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, the United States, and Ecuador, it critiques immigration, criminal justice, and social welfare systems that are failing migrants, survivors of trafficking, and other marginalised groups. It demonstrates how these systems create conditions for exploitation and uplifts



the voices of people struggling to find not just a roof over their heads but a home.

[Read more](#) about ATR issues.

Call for Papers: 'Following the Money II'

Anti-Trafficking Review calls for papers for a Special Issue themed 'Following the Money II', which will aim to analyse trends in donor financing (patterns of change detectable over time) and the main beneficiaries (including intergovernmental organisations, faith-based or secular NGOs, research institutes, governmental agencies, and others). We are also interested in comparisons between anti-trafficking funders and those operating in other sectors, for example, public health (combatting malaria, or HIV/AIDS) or violence against women.



In addition to full-length conceptual, research-based, or case study thematic articles, we invite authors to submit short, blog-style pieces reflecting on the question "What would be the best use of twenty million US dollars for anti-trafficking work?" We particularly encourage contributions from advocates, service providers, and those with direct experience of human trafficking or forced labour.

At the end, we hope that the issue will help increase the accountability of anti-trafficking funders as well as project implementers and will, ultimately, lead to a more efficient allocation of anti-trafficking funding, which truly serves the needs of survivors and at-risk groups. The deadline for submissions is 12 December 2023. See the full call for papers and how to contribute [here](#).

REDLAC Members' Consultation

At the end of March, we held an online consultation with GAATW member organisations from Latin American and the Caribbean (REDLAC). The meeting was to formally introduce our new colleague for alliance strengthening, as well as to receive updates from regional members. Each organisation reflected on their work in the region and as part of the Alliance. At the same time, it was an opportunity to discuss proposed initiatives, and to prioritise issues and joint advocacy actions significant for the region and the Alliance. The



2023 thematic priorities mentioned by members include issues around sex work, access to justice, and trafficking in persons for the purpose of labor exploitation. They are also interested to take a pro-active role in participating in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the Universal Periodic Review of States, and to conduct comparative research at a global level.

International Member's Congress

GAATW completes 30 years of its journey in 2024. Some of GAATW members are older than the Alliance, some are contemporaries or a few years younger and some are very young. Our alliance is diverse, not just geographically but also in the focus of work, i.e., while some members work only on human trafficking, others work on migration or focus on the rights of specific groups of workers. What unites the alliance is our rights-based approach to trafficking and migration-related issues.

GAATW-IS invited members to do a collective reflection of the journeys together, to assess our contributions and impact towards the movements that we have been part of, and to work towards accountability and movement building.

News from GAATW Member Organisations

Meet Our Members

'Meet our Members' is an initiative to highlight the work of GAATW members. We interview member organisations about their history, context, current programmes and activities, challenges and successes. The most recent interviews include:

[Raising support and awareness against trafficking and violence](#) (The Association for Action Against Violence and Trafficking in Human Beings – Open Gate, North Macedonia)

[Organising marginalised women to advocate for their rights in Jharkhand](#) (Shramajivi Mahila Samity, India)

[Breaking the stereotypes about human trafficking for better prevention](#) (Espacios de Mujer, Colombia)

[Giving a platform to the voices of women on the margins](#) (Women's Initiative - WINS, India)

[Empowering women and children in Jharkhand, India to advocate for their rights](#) (Srijan Foundation, India)

[Combating gender-based violence and human trafficking in Mongolia](#) (Mongolian Gender Equality Center, Mongolia)

[ECPAT Guatemala: 20 years of work for a childhood free of violence and sexual exploitation](#) (ECPAT Guatemala, Guatemala).

In other news, we warmly welcome a new member from South East Asia, [Biswas Nepal](#). Biswas Nepal is a women-led organisation established in 2008. They have engaged in various advocacy activities to develop laws and policies to address the issues of entertainment sector workers.

[Read more](#) about their work.

Resources from Members

FIZ Magazine “Protection. Law. Justice?”

Read the [FIZ Magazine "Protection. Law. Justice? \(November 2022\)](#) on victim protection during criminal proceedings. This material is available in English.

In the magazine, a victim of human trafficking talks about her experiences in the criminal proceedings against her perpetrators. It also features narratives from a police officer, a victim advocate, as well as a lawyer and professor, Parosha Chandran, on the role and experience in dealing with victims of human trafficking. The magazine also features what rights and obligations victims of human trafficking have in criminal proceedings and what their situation looks like in practice.

Digitalisation of Trafficking in Human Beings in Germany

The study [Trafficking in Human Beings 2.0 - Digitalisation of Trafficking in Human Beings in Germany: Developments and Courses of Action](#) by the German NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings-KOK highlights the increasing role of communication and information technologies in trafficking. It examines the influence of the internet and social media on trafficking in Germany and shows the serious impact of technological developments on the fight against trafficking in human beings and the support of trafficked persons.

Global Justice: Using Strategic Litigation to Combat Forced Labor

The Human Trafficking Legal Center has released a new report today, [Global Justice: Using Strategic Litigation to Combat Forced Labor](#). The report examines the impact of strategic forced labor cases brought across the globe.

Case studies cover a range of litigation strategies: a challenge to the *thekafala* system in Lebanon, efforts to hold corporate officers and directors liable in the United Kingdom, and a prosecution of a multinational company for crimes against humanity in France. In addition, the report highlights successes under United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPPRA), a law providing trafficking victims with access to the federal courts. As of December 31, 2021, plaintiffs in the United States had filed more than 539 civil trafficking lawsuits, and courts had ordered more than \$265,009,825 in settlements and damages judgments. The *Global Justice* report examines the impact of these cases, including an action in California that led to real changes in the fishing industry.

Strategic litigation is a powerful tool to increase corporate accountability and achieve systemic change in industry behavior. This report, a follow up to a [2016 report](#) on strategic litigation co-published by the Human Trafficking Legal Center and the Freedom Fund, provides an analysis of recent successes and a guide for future litigation.



Progetto Stella Polare, 20 years of route and anti-trafficking network

On 9 March 2023, the anti-trafficking project organisers of CDCP APS in Trieste presented a book entitled 'Stella Polare, 20 anni di rotta e di rete anti tratta' to celebrate 20 years of the anti trafficking project. The event was hosted at the University of Trieste, one of the partners of the anti-trafficking project and editor of the book. Curators: Professor Roberta Altin and Veronica Saba, social assistant of the anti-trafficking project. Other funding partners: Coop Alleanza 3.0 and Rotary Trieste.

This book gathers the narratives of magistrates, judges, policemen, social workers, cultural linguistic mediators, legal workers, social assistants, anthropologists, activists, and volunteers who have been protagonists

and active collaborators in the implementation of this anti-trafficking network. The book is available [here](#).

CDCP APS at the Pordenone Docs Fest

On March 30 the regional anti-trafficking project was invited to present a documentary at one of the events, Le voci del documentario (The voices of documentaries), that were organized at the PNDOCS FEST in Pordenone from March 29 to April 2, 2023.

The docu-film entitled "My name is Charity" by Floriane Devigne was presented by Pia Covre and Barbara Vidacovich of the Committee for the Civil Rights of Prostitutes in tandem with Chiara Valerio from the anti-trafficking center in Pordenone. The docu-film recounts the experience of a young Nigerian woman, a victim of trafficking who, having arrived in France, manages to denounce her exploiters and, thanks to the support of associations and institutions, rebuilds her life. You can find the docu-film [here](#).

Sex workers project report on non-prosecution of sex workers

The [Yale Global Health Justice Partnership](#) (GHJP) and the [Sex Workers Project](#) (SWP) of the Urban Justice Center have released a [joint handbook](#) focused on District Attorneys (DA)'s policies of non-prosecution of sex work-related charges. The handbook seeks to support sex worker rights advocates, prosecutors, policy makers and other stakeholders to develop, influence, track and assess the operation and impact of DA non-prosecution policies so that they protect and promote sex workers' rights and health, and mitigate the harms of the criminal law, to the greatest extent possible in the context of sex work criminalization.

The handbook presents several recommendations regarding the scope of charges that DAs should decline to prosecute under a Model Policy, underscoring the importance of not prosecuting the range of offenses that may be used to surveil, control, and punish sex workers, clients and third parties.

See the press release [here](#).



Against Structural Exploitation

30 sex workers from *cuarterías* (rooms for rent) in Cintalapa, Chiapas, met with Fabián de Jesús Román Rodríguez, the Municipal Secretary, with the intention of reducing the charges that were demanded from the sex workers through an official letter from the municipal government. They were accompanied by Elvira Madrid, president of Brigada Callejera, who demanded to see the municipal president, and to hear

his explanation. She voiced out that there should be "total respect for sex work".

Brigada Callejera highlighted the need to talk about this issue where sex workers are made to pay high tax fees to the Municipal office. It is important to note how in the recent years, sex workers have reduced their income by up to 60% and this led them to an impoverishment of up to 50%. Majority or 90% of the sex workers are single mothers, heads of family, so it is critical to demand that high taxes must not be requested from vulnerable sectors of the population.

The dialogue had reached an agreement that the women will only need to pay for health procedures to continue their work, and for the Municipal government to review the other concerns that affect sex worker groups to avoid constant threat or risk while they are at work.

Finally, Brigada Callejera will organise workshops on how to respond to incidences of institutional violence against sex workers.

Sema Nami held trainings for police officers

From January to March, [Sema Nami](#) has organised a



series of training sessions for 52 police officers in Kenya. They realized that while increasing awareness, law enforcement will continue to identify areas in which they need support, assistance and information to better identify human trafficking cases and respond to its victims. The main topics carried out in the session were: victim identification, case handling and the need for thorough investigation. They also identified several challenges in the proper treatment of victims, and poor handling of investigations where culprits are most of the time released of any charges.

FLEX relaunches website to mark its 10th year Anniversary

In celebration of its 10th anniversary this year, FLEX relaunches its website which contains publications, resources, updates, and an impact page that details the work and achievements of FLEX over the past 10 years. They also acknowledge the valuable collaborations with key partners across the sector, including organisations working directly with those at-risk and exploited workers, and workers themselves. Visit their website at <https://labourexploitation.org/>

Resources

[Could survivors help 'fix' anti-trafficking?; Trafficking in Antiracism: Modern-Day Slavery, White Indemnity, and Racial Justice](#)

Lyndsey P. Beutin - Duke University

This book strives to analyze how campaigns to end human trafficking—often described as “modern-day slavery”—invoke the memory of transatlantic slavery to support positions ultimately grounded in antiracism. Drawing on contemporary anti-trafficking visual culture and media discourse, it shows how a constellation of media, philanthropic, NGO, and government actors invested in ending human trafficking repurpose the history of transatlantic slavery and abolition in ways that undermine contemporary struggles for racial justice and slavery reparations. The recurring narratives, images, and figures such as “slavery in Africa,” “Arab slave traders,” and “Black incapacity for self-governance” discursively turn Black people across the diaspora into the enslavers of the past and present in place of white Americans and Europeans. Doing so, Beutin contends, creates a rhetorical defense against being held liable for slavery’s dispossessions and violence. Despite these implications, Beutin demonstrates that anti-trafficking discourse remains popular and politically useful for former slaving nations and their racial beneficiaries because it refashions historic justifications for white supremacy into today’s abolition of slavery.

[Could survivors help 'fix' anti-trafficking?](#)

Alex Balch, Allen Kiconco and Wendy Asquith

This article examines that involving people with lived experience in anti-trafficking work is a trend, but will it create real change? Survivors are no longer to be treated as mere targets of interventions. Instead, anti-trafficking organisations are expected to involve them in policy and programme design and implementation, and support them to become effective advocates in their own right. Yet, anti-trafficking policies and programmes have historically been a closed shop. Generally speaking, a narrow set of people – governments, a small number of (often faith-based) NGOs, and their elite allies from around the world – have dominated discussions. Those who have experienced forms of trafficking have been kept out.



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GAATW | P.O. Box 36, Bangkok Noi Post Office, Bangkok, 10700 Thailand

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