



THEMATIC REPORT ON DOMESTIC SERVITUDE OF MIGRANT WOMEN AND GIRLS

Submission by the Humanitarian Organization for Migration
Economics, Singapore (www.home.org.sg)
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Question 1

Please provide information on your organisation and its work with migrant domestic workers who became victims of contemporary forms of slavery, including the countries in which you work on this issue.

The **Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics** (HOME; www.home.org.sg) is a non-governmental organization established in 2004 to respond to the urgent needs of the migrant community, especially low-wage migrant workers, in Singapore. HOME has been granted United Nations ECOSOC status, and provides services to thousands of migrant workers in need through the provision of shelter, legal assistance, training, and rehabilitation programmes. In the last five years, HOME has provided shelter to approximately 3,500 migrant domestic workers (MDWs).

Singapore is highly dependent on migrant workers and there are close to a million low-wage migrant workers here labouring in sectors such as construction, marine, service, manufacturing, and domestic work. One in five households in Singapore hires a live-in female migrant domestic worker and they come from countries in the region including the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and India. There are currently about 240,000 female migrant domestic workers in Singapore.¹ HOME has been regularly documenting problems related to their exploitation and abuse² – last year, HOME submitted a joint report with migrant worker advocacy group, Transient Workers Count Too (www.twc2.org), to the United Nations' CEDAW Committee.³

¹ Ministry of Manpower, 'Foreign Workforce Numbers', 3 May 2018, <http://www.mom.gov.sg/documents-and-publications/foreign-workforce-numbers> (accessed May 17, 2018).

² Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics, 'Research', <https://www.home.org.sg/research/> (accessed May 17, 2018).

³ Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics & Transient Workers Count Too, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Shadow Report for Singapore*, October 2017, https://www.home.org.sg/s/REFORMATTED_HOMETWC2_CEDAW_Singapore_2017.pdf (accessed May 17, 2018).

HOME is deeply involved in anti-trafficking efforts in Singapore. We offer the whole spectrum of initiatives against human trafficking. As detailed in later sections, the State does not sufficiently recognize victims of forced labour and trafficking. Thus, the responsibilities of caring for these victims are borne by NGOs like HOME. HOME provides lodging and a holistic range of support services, including medical care, psychological services, legal assistance, transportation, repatriation, and vocational training. We also counsel victims on their cases and work directly with the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) as well as other law enforcement agencies to follow up on the cases and advocate for their wellbeing.

At HOME's dedicated shelter for women domestic workers, we receive 15-20 new MDW cases *every week*. Our shelter houses around 60 women and usually operates at maximum capacity, though the need is greater. Many of these women meet the ILO's definition for victims of forced labour and would fulfil at least one dimension of human trafficking (notably exploitation). Victims stay at our shelter for an average of one to three months. Those with pending police investigations may stay as long as one to five years. During their stays, victims' medical and mental health needs are heavily borne by HOME.

HOME is also heavily engaged in advocacy efforts. In September 2014, HOME led a group of NGOs to launch the stoptrafficking.sg campaign for a dedicated rights-based, victim-centric, anti-human trafficking law.⁴ HOME also works with NGOs in the region for advocacy efforts and cross-border referrals and is part of the regional network Migrant Forum Asia.⁵

Question 2

A. Please characterise the legal and/or policy frameworks relevant to the protection of migrant domestic workers subject to contemporary forms of slavery, as well as any global trends you would like to highlight. Please include information about provisions criminalising contemporary forms of slavery, those that might establish distinct rights and/or restrictions for domestic workers, including migrant domestic workers (in regards to, for instance, salary, working hours, freedom of movement, freedom of association, limited freedom to change employers, etc.), as well as measures to identify and support migrant domestic workers who are or were victims of contemporary forms of slavery.

B. Please include specific references to the source of law when possible.

EXCLUSION FROM PROTECTION

Migrant domestic workers (MDWs) are excluded from the Employment Act (EA),⁶ Singapore's main labour law. This exclusion leaves MDWs bereft of core labour rights in terms of limits on working hours, number of rest days (including time off during rest days), as well as entitlements to annual leave and sick leave, reasonable notice periods, among others. The Ministry of Manpower (MOM)'s stance is that it is 'not practical to regulate

⁴ Stop Trafficking SG, 'Homepage', <https://stoptrafficking.sg.wordpress.com/> (accessed May 17, 2018).

⁵ Migrant Forum Asia, 'Homepage', <http://mfasia.org/> (accessed May 17, 2018).

⁶ Singapore Statutes Online, Employment Act (Chapter 91), <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/EmA1968> (accessed May 17, 2018).

specific aspects of domestic work'.⁷ Exclusion from the Employment Act also means domestic workers are not able to access low-cost dispute resolution under the EA, including the Employment Claims Tribunal and Labour Court.⁸

While the Singapore government states that MDWs are covered by the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act (EFMA),⁹ the Act offers a limited set of protections and entitlements which are not equal to that provided for under the Employment Act. The ambiguous language of EFMA provisions impacts on MDW's welfare. Presently the EFMA requires employers to provide 'acceptable' accommodation, 'adequate' food, 'adequate' rest, and 'reasonable' notice of repatriation.¹⁰ Failure to clearly specify these terms means MDWs' wellbeing and working conditions are largely dependent on the whims of employers; this is exacerbated by inconsistent enforcement even when guidelines are issued.

Rather than set clear and firm guidelines on unacceptable employment practices and conditions, the State affirms their preference for matters to be settled on a case-by-case basis. This means domestic workers are highly reliant on the discretionary powers of MOM officers who mediate their cases (see later section on mediation).

EMPLOYER-SPONSORED WORK PERMIT SYSTEM

Migrant domestic workers in Singapore are hired on a work pass that is officially known as a Work Permit (WP). Singapore's Work Permit system is a sponsorship system similar to the *kafala* system in the Gulf States, a system Human Rights Watch calls a 'sponsored' gateway to human trafficking.¹¹ This employer-sponsored WP system is a fundamental stumbling block to the realization of migrant workers' rights, as any attempt to assert rights of any kind can lead to immediate dismissal and repatriation.

Employer's Powers Under the WP System:

- An employer can unilaterally cancel a WP online without a migrant domestic worker's knowledge or consent and immediately repatriate the worker, without penalty. Conversely, there have also been situations where an employer goes online to extend a domestic worker's WP without her consent, despite her expressing her desire to terminate her employment and return home.

⁷ MOM, 'Contracts and Safety Agreement for Foreign Domestic Worker', <http://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-domestic-worker/employers-guide/contracts-and-safety-agreement> (accessed February 1, 2018).

⁸ The Employment Claims Tribunal (ECT) was established in 2016 under the State Courts and is a low-cost avenue to resolve salary-related disputes. Labour Court is part of the Ministry of Manpower and hears employment-related complaints such as work injury compensations. It used to hear salary-related disputes before the ECT was established. State Courts, 'An Overview of the Employment Claims Tribunals (ECT)', 27 June 2017, [https://www.statecourts.gov.sg/ECT/Pages/An-Overview-of-the-Employment-Claims-Tribunals-\(ECT\).aspx](https://www.statecourts.gov.sg/ECT/Pages/An-Overview-of-the-Employment-Claims-Tribunals-(ECT).aspx) (accessed May 17, 2018); Toh Yong Chuan, 'NGO Study Finds Gaps in Labor Court System', 30 June 2017, *Straits Times*, <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/ngo-study-finds-gaps-in-labour-court-system> (accessed May 17, 2018)

⁹ Singapore Government, *CEDAW: Fifth Periodic Report of State Parties Due in 2015*, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/SGP/CEDAW_C_SGP_5_6007_E.pdf (accessed September 14, 2017), 28.

¹⁰ Employment of Foreign Manpower Act (Chapter 91A), Employment of Foreign Manpower (Work Passes) Regulations 2012, Fourth Schedule, Part 1, s(1), s(4), s(10a); Part II, s(12).

¹¹ Human Rights Watch News, 'Middle East: End 'Sponsored' Gateway to Human Trafficking', 14 June 2010, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/06/14/middle-east-end-sponsored-gateway-human-trafficking> (accessed February 1, 2018).

- Employers also have the ability to restrict the occupational mobility of MDWs within Singapore. Under MOM regulations, only MDWs who are held back as prosecution witnesses to assist in investigations may be granted permission to switch employers on a case-by-case basis (the employer's consent is not required in this instance). Otherwise, it is entirely contingent on employers whether or not to allow MDWs to transfer to a new employer while in Singapore. This dependency on employers for their legal and employment status often induces compliance with exploitative conditions for MDWs who do not wish to lose their jobs and be sent back home. Even in instances where an employer may have mistreated the MDW (for e.g. withheld her wages or denied her rest days), the employer retains the right to repatriate the worker and deny her the opportunity to seek a new employer if MOM does not require her as a possible prosecution witness.¹²

WITHHOLDING OF PASSPORTS & SECURITY BOND CONDITIONS

Nine out of ten of the domestic workers that seek assistance from HOME have their passports withheld by either employers or employment agents. This practice is widespread but employers are rarely (if ever) penalized for it. Employers often rationalize this practice as 'necessary' due to the Singapore government's regulations. The Singapore government requires every employer of a Work Permit holder to furnish a S\$5,000 security bond for each worker hired. This bond is liable to be forfeited if the domestic worker 'goes missing' or contravenes Work Permit conditions.¹³

There are Work Permit conditions that place restrictions on female WP holders' 'conduct'. WP conditions impose restrictions on marriage (female WP holders are not to marry a Singaporean or PR without the permission of the Controller of Work Passes).¹⁴ WP Conditions also stipulate that female WP holders 'shall not become pregnant or deliver any child in Singapore during and after the validity period of her work permit' – domestic workers who are found to be pregnant are to be repatriated; they may also be blacklisted.¹⁵ Meanwhile, migrant domestic workers have to undergo mandatory six-monthly medical examinations, which include a pregnancy test.¹⁶ WP conditions also state that the 'foreign employee shall not be involved in any illegal, immoral or undesirable activities, including breaking up families in Singapore'.¹⁷ This broadly-worded provision potentially criminalizes MDWs who become involved in intimate relationships with Singaporeans or PRs, and induces the moral policing of MDWs. As it is regarded an employer's responsibility to ensure domestic workers do not violate the terms of their WPs, these regulations incentivize

¹² Terry Xu, 'FDW Owed 10 Months of Salary, Sent Back Home After Ministry of Manpower Said She Must Return', *The Online Citizen*, 29 September 2017, <https://www.theonlinecitizen.com/2017/09/29/fdw-owed-10-months-of-salary-sent-back-home-after-ministry-of-manpower-said-she-must-return/> (accessed September 30, 2017).

¹³ Ministry of Manpower, 'Security Bond Requirements for Foreign Worker', 4 April 2018, <http://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-worker/sector-specific-rules/security-bond> (accessed May 17, 2018)

¹⁴ Employment of Foreign Manpower Act (Chapter 91A), Employment of Foreign Manpower (Work Passes) Regulations 2012, Fourth Schedule, Part VI, Conditions to be Complied with by Foreign Employee Issued with Work Permit, Section 6.

¹⁵ Joanna Seow, 'Maids Fear Losing Job When They Get Pregnant', *Straits Times*, 3 December 2017,

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/maids-fear-losing-job-when-they-get-pregnant> (accessed May 17, 2018).

¹⁶ There are mandatory six-month medical checks test for domestic workers that screen for pregnancy, syphilis, HIV, and tuberculosis. Domestic workers who fail their medical test must be repatriated. See Ministry of Manpower, 'Six-monthly medical examination (6ME) for foreign domestic worker (FDW)', <http://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-domestic-worker/eligibility-and-requirements/six-monthly-medical-examination> (accessed May 17, 2018).

¹⁷ Employment of Foreign Manpower Act (Chapter 91A), Employment of Foreign Manpower (Work Passes) Regulations 2012, Fourth Schedule, Part VI, Conditions to be Complied with by Foreign Employee Issued with Work Permit, Section 7, 8, p.46

employers to adopt draconian control measures to restrict and monitor their MDWs movements and activities, such as through the denial of rest days or the enforcement of curfews on rest days, and through the confiscation and withholding of MDWs' mobile phones, passports, and other key documents.

OVERCHARGING OF RECRUITMENT FEES (EXCESSIVE DEBT BURDEN)

Currently, many migrant domestic workers are required to pay fees of S\$2,000–\$4,500 (USD 2,209–3,314) to employment agencies (EA) for being placed in a job in Singapore. These fees are collected from the worker in the form of a 'loan' to the EA that is to be repaid via monthly salary deductions. Typically, the employer would be required to make an upfront payment to the EA; the employer would then deduct an MDW's salary until the amount is recovered. Depending on the MDW's salary and the size of the 'loan', this could stretch up to six or eight months worth of salary deductions. MDWs therefore often work for months either without any pay or with only a minimal monthly sum. Fearful that the MDW may 'run away' during this salary deduction period, employers may impose additional restrictions such as denying their workers their full complement of rest days and/or restrict their use of mobile phones.¹⁸ Domestic workers who wish to leave their placement are particularly vulnerable at this time; they often experience great difficulty in getting their recruitment agents to provide them with assistance, as agents often pressure MDWs to endure unfavourable working conditions until they have paid off their 'loan'.

If a worker does manage to switch to a new employer, they may end up with an increase in their debt as agents often charge an additional one or two months worth of fees, ostensibly to cover work placement fees. Domestic workers may be transferred by agents from one employer to another, leaving them 'caught in eternally ballooning debts which are very difficult to pay off'.¹⁹ In one extreme case, HOME assisted an underage Myanmar domestic worker who saw her six-month loan inflated to 17 months as she had three different employers in just five months. Employment agents can also be perpetrators of abuse: in her case, when she was eventually sent back to the agency, the employment agent physically assaulted her, verbally insulted her, and harassed her family in Myanmar about the recruitment debt.

While the Employment Agencies Act (EAA) in Singapore stipulates that employment agencies should not collect more than one month of a worker's salary for each year of service, capped at two month's salary,²⁰ domestic workers are routinely and openly charged more than this. Despite this EAA regulation, the Ministry of Manpower allows the deduction of MDWs' salaries for amounts exceeding two months, and accepts the explanation by employment agencies that deductions in excess of two months salary are to pay for fees charged by the overseas recruitment agency. The MOM regards this as a loan beyond the jurisdiction of the Employment Agencies Act. However, this undermines the

¹⁸ 'The Current System is No Good': The Challenges of Singapore's Domestic Work Industry', *Asia Research Institute*, Policy Briefing, September 2016, no.5, <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/files/file.php?name=rp08-mig-ind-mi-policy-brief-v9.pdf&site=354> (accessed May 17, 2018).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Ministry of Manpower, 'How Will Foreign Workers Know How Much They Have to Pay the Singapore Employment Agency (EA)?', <http://www.mom.gov.sg/faq/employment-agencies/how-will-foreign-workers-know-the-amount-that-they-are-expected-to-pay-the-singapore-ea> (accessed May 17, 2018).

original intent of the EAA that seeks to control the migration costs imposed on MDWs and their inequitable debt burden: HOME often encounters domestic workers who leave abusive employers after five or six months of work and return home empty-handed, because they were not paid for all those months and their salaries were not deemed 'claimable' by MOM as it was still their 'loan deduction' period.

LACK OF STATUTORY MINIMUM WAGE

As a matter of national policy, the Singapore government does not prescribe a minimum wage for any workers, whether local or foreign. The MOM's stand is that '[w]hether wages should increase or decrease is best determined by market demand and supply for labour'.²¹ While the Philippines embassy and the Indonesian embassy have set minimum wages for their citizens working as domestic workers in Singapore – at the monthly rate of S\$570 (USD 400) and S\$550 (USD 405) respectively²² – these wage rates are not enforceable. Wage rates therefore remain low, particularly for MDWs from countries such as India and Myanmar. At HOME's helpdesk, the salaries of MDWs range from S\$350 (USD 258) at the lower end, to around S\$650 (USD 479) per month. With average working hours of 13 hours a day,²³ this would translate to an average wage rate of S\$1 (USD 0.75) an hour to S\$1.90 (USD 1.40) an hour.²⁴ At the recommended embassy minimum wage rates, the hourly wage rates would be S\$1.70 (USD 1.25) and S\$1.60 (USD 1.18) respectively.

The lack of enforceable minimum wage guidelines leave MDWs vulnerable to long-term economic exploitation, where their wages remain depressed and do not reflect increased costs of living as well as the inflated placement costs incurred in overseas labour migration. MDWs have expressed in HOME's focus groups in 2017 that socio-economic mobility is a key motivation for migrating overseas to work: the end goal of financial empowerment and eradicating inter-generational poverty will remain elusive if both sending and receiving country governments take a hands-off approach in dealing with excessive recruitment fees and multiple forms of wage theft, including chronic wage depression. MDWs should have the right to earnings that commensurate with their experience and capabilities, and to the ability to accumulate assets and retire comfortably after many years of employment.

SOCIAL PROTECTION: SICK LEAVE & MEDICAL CARE

Being excluded from the Employment Act means domestic workers do not have legal entitlements to sick leave; many are deprived of rest when sick. Even though the

²¹ Ministry of Manpower, 'Is There a Prescribed Minimum Wage for Foreign Workers in Singapore', <http://www.mom.gov.sg/faq/work-permit-for-foreign-worker/is-there-a-prescribed-minimum-wage-for-foreign-workers-in-singapore> (accessed May 17, 2018).

²² Joanna Seow, 'Minimum Pay Raised for Filipino Maids Here', *Straits Times*, 1 April 2017, <http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/manpower/minimum-pay-raised-for-filipino-maids-here> (accessed May 17, 2018); Joanna Seow, 'Cap on Fees Paid by Indonesian Maid', *Straits Times*, 3 February 2017, <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/manpower/cap-on-fees-paid-by-indonesian-maids> (accessed May 17, 2018)

²³ Two separate research projects conducted by HOME and TWC2 revealed that domestic workers' daily working hours are, on average, around 13 hours (HOME's research found it was 13 hours while TWC2's report found it was 13.9 hours). See Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics, *Home Sweet Home? Work, Life and Well-Being of Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore* (Singapore: HOME, March 2015), 2; Transient Workers Count Too, 'Foreign Domestic Workers' Living Conditions Survey – Full Results', 6 July 2016, <http://twc2.org.sg/2016/07/06/foreign-domestic-workers-living-conditions-survey-full-results/> (accessed May 17, 2018).

²⁴ This figure was derived by first dividing the monthly wage (e.g. SGD350) by 26 days to get the daily rate. The daily rate was then divided by 13 hours, which is the average number of hours worked by MDWs as revealed by HOME and TWC2's research (see footnote 23).

Employment of Foreign Manpower Act stipulates that employers are responsible for the cost of medical expenses, many employers are often reluctant to pay. It is currently mandatory for employers to purchase medical insurance as well as personal accident insurance (PAI) for their domestic worker employees. The medical insurance coverage should be at least S\$15,000 (USD 11,046) and, from 1 October 2017, the personal accident insurance at least S\$60,000 (USD 44,187).²⁵ However, the medical insurance only covers hospitalisation and surgery. Illnesses and treatment that does not require surgical procedures – including dental treatment – are not included and can be very costly; medical fees can easily escalate if a catastrophic illness or accident occurs,²⁶ as the government withdrew subsidies for all foreigners at public hospitals and clinics.²⁷ Many MDWs have reported not receiving necessary medical attention and they dared not risk termination or angering their employers for incurring costly medical bills. At our shelter, we encounter women who eventually run away when they are unable to tolerate the pain or discomfort any longer.

Migrant domestic workers are also *excluded* from the Work Injury Compensation Act (WICA), which is a no-fault system that awards lump sum compensation to workers who sustain injuries at the workplace that result in permanent incapacity. WICA also provides for claims related to medical leave wages (including hospital leave) and medical expenses.²⁸ When a work injury results in the death of a worker covered under WICA, family members and dependents may also claim compensation, with the compensation ranging from S\$69,000–204,000 (USD 50,815–150,237).²⁹ Being excluded from WICA means that MDWs who sustain serious injuries at the workplace – that is, in the households where they work, or in the course of their work³⁰ – that result in disability or death are not able to claim beyond the personal accident insurance limit of S\$60,000, an amount significantly lower than what WICA offers. Personal accident insurance benefits are also more limited than WICA not just in terms of compensation amounts but type of injuries covered. There is also no consistent standard as PAI coverage tends to rely on the criteria of the assigned insurance company.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING & THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

In Singapore, the right to strike cannot be guaranteed when employers have the unilateral right to cancel WPs and repatriate workers: in essence, there is no meaningful way for migrant workers to realize this presumed ‘right to strike’. Additionally, Singapore’s Trade Unions Act does not allow foreigners to register a union without the permission of the

²⁵ Kenneth Cheng, ‘Foreign Domestic Workers to Be Better Insured Against Accidents from Oct’, *TODAY*, 7 May 2017, <http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/greater-personal-accident-insurance-protection-domestic-workers-oct> (accessed May 17, 2018).

²⁶ Joanna Seow, ‘Parliament: About 55 Maids Per Year Need Medical Treatment Costing More Than \$15,000, says Sam Tan’, *Straits Times*, <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/parliament-about-55-maids-per-year-need-medical-treatment-costing-more-than-15000-sam-tan> (accessed May 17, 2018).

²⁷ Ministry of Health, ‘Reduced Hospital Subsidies for Non-Citizens’, 6 December 2007, https://www.moh.gov.sg/content/moh_web/home/pressRoom/pressRoomItemRelease/2007/reduced_hospital_subsidies_for_non-citizens.html (accessed September 27, 2017).

²⁸ Ministry of Manpower, ‘Types of Compensation Under WICA’, <http://www.mom.gov.sg/workplace-safety-and-health/work-injury-compensation/types-of-compensation> (accessed May 17, 2018).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ There have been numerous cases of domestic workers falling out of windows of high-rise apartments to their death (or serious debilitating injuries) in the course of their work (for e.g. cleaning outside of windows). Liz Neisloss, ‘Call for Action as Singapore Maids Fall to Their Deaths’, *CNN International*, 24 May 2012, <https://edition.cnn.com/2012/05/23/world/asia/singapore-maids-deaths/index.html> (accessed May 17, 2018).

Minister of Manpower. Singaporeans, meanwhile, can apply to form a union without seeking the Minister's permission: they need to do so by applying to the Registrar of Trade Unions. The Trade Unions Act also disallows foreigners from holding key appointments and executive committee positions in trade unions.³¹ This has deprived women migrant workers, in particular domestic workers, from being able to represent their own interests. The government has justified this prohibition by claiming that it is to prevent foreigners from interfering in domestic affairs and politics. The formation of associations or societies for low-wage migrant workers to promote their rights is also highly restricted due to regulations that stipulate that the governing bodies of such associations should have Singapore citizens as the majority. In HOME's knowledge, no migrant worker has been granted permission to register a union or become a trade union officer—if indeed any has tried to make such an application. It is extremely unlikely that permission will be granted.

TRAFFICKING & FORCED LABOUR

Although the Singapore government enacted the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act (PHTA) in 2014 to tackle trafficking in persons,³² there are major weaknesses in the law that prevents individuals who have been trafficked from being identified. The PHTA's definitions of human trafficking differ markedly from the UNODC Model Law.³³ At issue are definitions of 'abuse of the position of vulnerability', 'coercion', 'deception', 'exploitation' and 'forced labour':

- In defining 'abuse of the position of vulnerability', the PHTA ignores abuse of vulnerability which preys upon socioeconomic variables, despite the UNODC Model Law provision that includes vulnerability caused by being in a precarious situation from the standpoint of social survival.³⁴ We are concerned about this omission as vulnerability caused by social and economic weakness is the leading source of vulnerability among the victims HOME encounters.
- In the case of 'coercion', psychological pressure is omitted as a means of coercion. This omission is concerning because emotional abuse, intimidation and threats, as well as pressure from high recruitment debt, are frequently utilized as tools of coercion by employers and employment agents in order to force MDWs to continue to work.
- The PHTA does not specify that the concept of 'deception' should include conditions of work, not just the nature of work.
- The PHTA does not have a definition of 'exploitation' that follows the Palermo Protocol or clearly defines the forms of exploitation involved in trafficking. In particular, 'forced labour or services' should be defined to criminalize all involuntary work or services extracted by the use of threats or penalties. This is of particular

³¹ Trade Unions Act (Chapter 333), Part V, s(30), s(31).

³² Singapore Statutes Online, 'The Prevention of Human Trafficking Act 2014,' Part 1: Preliminary and Part 2: Trafficking in Persons, <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/PHTA2014> (accessed May 17, 2018).

³³ UNODC, 'Model Law Against Trafficking in Persons,' Chapter II, Article 5: Definitions, 8-15, https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/UNODC_Model_Law_on_Trafficking_in_Persons.pdf (accessed May 17, 2018).

³⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 'Model Law Against Trafficking in Persons', https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/UNODC_Model_Law_on_Trafficking_in_Persons.pdf (accessed May 17, 2018), 9.

concern as HOME believes a significant number of cases that we see qualify as forced labour cases: about 80% of the complaints received at HOME's helpdesk are recognized by the ILO as **strong indicators of forced labour**.³⁵ These include:

- recruitment linked to debt;
- excessive working hours (including inadequate rest days);
- intimidation and threats (of abuse as well as denunciation to authorities);
- withholding of wages;
- confiscation of mobile phones;
- constant surveillance;
- food deprivation;
- withholding of passports and personal documents.

Additionally, based on our casework, attempted exploitation is not pursued under the PHTA. HOME has been told by government agents that intent to traffick does not constitute trafficking.

Support measures for victims of trafficking are currently inadequate under the Act, which does not provide for a transparent system of victim identification, support and protection. Victims of trafficking still do not have a legally mandated right to protection measures, including:

- the right to be treated as a victim during the identification process;
- immediate authorization of temporary residency upon reporting to the authorities;
- the right to not be prosecuted for legal infractions committed while trafficked;
- informed consent to participation in investigations, protection and privacy;
- legal assistance at no cost;
- the right to decent work opportunities, compensation, a recovery period after reporting;
- access to physical and psycho-social recovery services/facilities;
- return to country of origin;
- special support for victims who are minors.

Question 3

Please describe the main challenges and barriers identified in the country or countries in which your organisation works to ensuring the human rights of migrant domestic workers victims of contemporary forms of slavery. Please also specify any global trends that you are aware of.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Disincentives to Filing Employment Claims

The Work Permit system that governs MDWs in Singapore generates strong disincentives to domestic workers filing claims against their employers. As earlier mentioned, employers

³⁵ International Labour Organization, *Hard to See, Harder to Count: Survey Guidelines to Estimate Forced Labour of Adults and Children*, Geneva: ILO, 2012; ILO, *ILO Indicators of Forced Labour*, Geneva: SAP-FL, ILO, 2013, http://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_345673/lang-en/index.htm (accessed May 17, 2018).

have the right to deny MDWs the ability to transfer to another employer. Employers can also cancel a MDW's WP and repatriate her suddenly, thus frustrating any attempt by the MDW to seek assistance. While the MDW may refuse to board the plane in order to file a claim with the authorities, this is a daunting situation for MDWs, who may have to resist harassment from employers/recruitment agents as well as immigration authorities, who may also pressure the MDW to leave the country.

Additionally, the Ministry of Manpower maintains a 'feedback' system in which employers are able to submit unsubstantiated negative feedback about an MDW after she has left the country.³⁶ A domestic worker will not know this has occurred until a prospective employer or recruitment agent makes a new application. At that point, the prospective employer will be alerted to the fact that the MDW's ex-employer has left 'feedback' (usually a complaint). He/she will be provided with the contact details of the former employer, who can then make unverified allegations about the MDW, thereby jeopardizing her chances of being hired. HOME has also documented cases where the Ministry of Manpower has disallowed work permit applications from MDWs who have 'run away' from their employers, even those who are fleeing abuse. This ability of employers to ruin a migrant domestic worker's chance of returning to Singapore to work makes the threat of 'blacklisting' a fearsome and powerful tool, one that employers and agents regularly and effectively wield to threaten and coerce workers into not making claims against them or into agreeing to unfavourable terms of employment.

Lack of Autonomy and Agency

The Ministry of Manpower mandated a new casework referral system (CRS) in August 2017 that frontline organizations who deal with migrant domestic workers – such as HOME – have to follow. This CRS determines the following:

- All MDW cases have to be filed with the Ministry of Manpower whether or not the MDW wishes to file an official complaint;
- Upon filing this claim at the MOM, the MOM will decide if it is a 'valid claim';
- MDWs who do not have a 'valid claim' as determined by MOM may be sent back to their employment agencies;
- MOM may decide to send the MDW to another shelter (aside from HOME).

This CRS is problematic in several ways. It negates the agency of MDWs in making decisions about how they wish to resolve their employment problems; it also denies them the right to decide where they wish to stay and who they wish to seek assistance from. MDWs frequently do not wish to return to their employment agencies because agents were either indifferent to MDWs' pleas for help when they ran into employment problems, or because employment agents can sometimes be perpetrators of abuse themselves. MDWs who do not comply with instructions may be threatened with blacklisting by government officials, which would result in them not being able to return to Singapore to work for at least three years.

³⁶ Joanna Seow, 'Employers Share Feedback on Maids', *Straits Times*, 15 April 2017; Joanna Seow, 'Tough Time for Maid After False Complaint', *Straits Times*, 15 April 2017.

There is also no official definition of what MOM considers a 'valid claim' in relation to MDW cases. From HOME's casework experience, issues related to verbal abuse, denial of rest days, poor living conditions, excessive working hours, intrusive employer surveillance, and the confiscation or unreasonable restriction of mobile phones are generally not viewed as 'valid claims': MDWs who leave their employers to file such complaints will most likely not be allowed to transfer to a new employer without their consent and will be repatriated.

MDWs are also not given the right to decide whether to pursue a claim or not. HOME has documented several cases of MDWs who were physically and sexually abused and have been compelled by the authorities to remain for several months to over a year to assist in investigations despite being traumatized and wishing to return home as soon as possible.

Mediation: After Claims are Filed

In HOME's experience, the Ministry of Manpower mediation processes and their subsequent outcomes are shaped by a disingenuous framing of the employer-employee relationship as one in which both parties are presumed to have equal bargaining power. This allows MOM officials to hold migrant workers accountable for 'agreeing' to exorbitant recruitment fees and unfavourable working conditions, and for signing documents that reduce their rights and terms of employment. There is also a strong culture of leniency towards employers of domestic workers: employers who withhold salaries but claim they were 'safekeeping' the domestic worker's money will not be punished (see Indah's case study below). Meanwhile, the domestic worker who files such a complaint will, by then, have lost her job, and may not be allowed to transfer unless her employer consents to this.

CASE STUDY: Indah, Domestic Worker, Indonesia

Overwork, Wage Theft, Restricted Communication, and Isolation

Indah worked with her employer for nearly ten years without direct pay. In those ten years, her employer said she was not allowed to hold on to any money and withheld more than S\$40,000 of her salary. Four years after she started working for them, her employer remitted about S\$1,000 to her family (this was confirmed by her family). Another four years later, her employer claimed they remitted S\$2,000 but no proof was given. Indah worked from 7am to 11pm daily, and was not given a rest day for ten years: she could only go out of the house for chores such as to wash the car, water the plants or sweep outside the house. She was not allowed to own a mobile phone and was also instructed not to speak to any strangers (including other domestic workers in the neighbourhood) and would be censured if 'caught'. Appeals for home leave were rejected by her employer and she was not able to speak with her family for almost seven years. Indah was underage when she first arrived (20 years old) and was never shown or given a copy of her employment contract – her salary was only S\$280 when she first arrived in Singapore. Her passport and work permit were kept by her employer throughout her employment.

HOME considered Indah's case one of forced labour and suggested to the authorities that Indah could also be a victim of trafficking: this suggestion was rejected. Additionally, her employer, who did pay the outstanding wages after HOME referred her case to MOM, was not publicly penalized (HOME is not privy to other outcomes, for example, if the employer was privately punished or given a warning). It was deemed by MOM that the matter was successfully resolved once Indah's wages were received; she was viewed as 'not [having] other wellbeing issues'.

TRAFFICKING: VICTIM IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRALS

In HOME's experience, MOM and police officers consistently identify complaints filed by MDWs as invalid claims despite clear presence of forced labour and trafficking indicators, often sending MDWs back to agents they seek protection from. Despite pronouncing that prevention is a key pillar of anti-trafficking efforts, employers/agents are rarely (if ever) penalized for violating the rights of MDWs, particularly: excessive hours of work, no rest days, inadequate food, unreasonable restriction on phone usage, constant surveillance, poor living conditions, verbal/psychological abuse, excessive recruitment fees, confiscation of passports, and deceptive recruitment.

Police and MOM officers also appear to lack experience in recognizing trafficking indicators and fail to flag cases as trafficking despite clear presence of trafficking indicators. In 2017, HOME assisted a woman whom our organization identified as a victim of trafficking for sexual exploitation. There was deception about the conditions of work as well as the legality of her work status. Her passport was confiscated daily, and she was subject to a salary and obtuse debt-repayment system that implicitly relied on the victim sexually servicing clients (which she did not consent to). Not only were these elements disregarded, the victim was instead arrested by the police for working without a valid work permit—the MOM refused to take up her case—and pressured to find her own means to fund repatriation.

Finally, there is a lack of transparency regarding outcomes of investigations by the TIP Taskforce,³⁷ MOM, or the police, which makes it hard for HOME to understand what kind of cases are accepted and rejected and why.

Question 4

A. Please elaborate on any specific violence, threats of violence, abuse or harassment faced by migrant women and girls who are in situation of domestic servitude.

B. Please elaborate on any other human rights violation faced by migrant women and girls who are in situation of domestic servitude (including, for example, their right to health, water, housing, freedom of movement, freedom of association, etc.).

³⁷ The Singapore Inter-Agency Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons was established in 2010 and is co-led by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Manpower, with representatives from seven other government agencies. See Ministry of Manpower, 'Singapore Inter-Agency Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons', 2 May 2018, <http://www.mom.gov.sg/trafficking-in-persons> (accessed May 17, 2018)

HOME runs a shelter for migrant domestic workers in distress (see response to Question 1). In the last one year, HOME sheltered 872 women (see Appendix A). As MDWs are excluded from the Employment Act, there are no regulations on working hours and over half of the women complained of **excessive working hours**: it is common for the domestic workers who seek assistance to report working 14-16 hours a day; in some extreme cases, they work up to 20 hours a day, sometimes with no rest days. As there is a live-in requirement for migrant domestic workers, those who look after the elderly or young children may be on call 24/7. The presence of surveillance cameras in the home—which is very common in Singapore—makes it difficult for domestic workers to take breaks or rest during the day without express permission from their employers. Workloads are often excessive and unreasonable, and domestic workers may also be asked to perform duties that are not traditionally viewed as domestic work, such as washing their employers' cars and giving them massages, sometimes everyday. There are also regular complaints about **illegal deployment**, in which domestic workers are forced to undertake work for another household, or perform chores for relatives of the employer, or to work in the employer's business (e.g. a shop or a restaurant). This is a violation of EFMA but remains one of the top five complaints encountered at HOME.

Many domestic workers who seek help from HOME do not have weekly **rest days**: those who are allowed to have rest days may only be allowed to go out once or twice a month. Additionally, even among those who have rest days, a common complaint is that they are asked to perform chores before they leave the house and have early curfews (sometimes as early as 5pm) as they are required to return home in time to prepare dinner. Currently, the law does not state that a domestic worker's rest day has to include 24 hours of continuous rest.³⁸

Verbal abuse is the second top complaint, and migrant domestic workers frequently endure shouting and name-calling ('stupid', 'idiot', 'dog'), vulgarities ('fuck you', 'cunt'), as well as sexually-loaded insults and harassment ('you are no better than a prostitute'). Domestic workers are also often threatened: employers may threaten to dismiss and repatriate them, blacklist them and ensure they are not able to work in Singapore, or file a police report against them (for a theft charge, for example). These threats are taken seriously as they are tools frequently utilized by employers and can greatly undermine a domestic worker's livelihood. At the same time, psychological abuse, including threats, is not an issue taken seriously by the authorities.

Violence and/or threats of violence are also regular complaints. Domestic workers are subject to abusive behaviour not just by their main employer, but anyone else living in the household (the elderly or even children). Domestic workers have complained of being slapped, bitten, scalded, kicked, punched; sometimes they have items thrown at them. They

³⁸ Two ILO conventions set 24 hours continuous rest as an international standard for rest days: Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14); Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957 (No. 106).

may also be threatened with harm. HOME also receives complaints of sexual harassment and abuse, and the live-in requirement and isolated nature of domestic worker makes them especially vulnerable. Domestic workers complain of being molested, of having to deal with lewd remarks and suggestive talk, of being flashed at. There are also cases of sexual assault, which is likely under-reported.

While physical and sexual abuses cases tend to be taken seriously by the authorities, the problem lies in obtaining sufficient evidence for prosecution. The investigation process is also protracted and unpredictable. If required for a police investigation, a migrant worker's passport is impounded by the police, and they are not allowed to leave the country unless permission is granted. Such investigations can drag beyond a year. In 2017, HOME housed two domestic workers who suffered egregious abuse by their employers: they were punched, slapped, suffered food deprivation and humiliating punishments (one of them was forced to eat her own vomit), and closely monitored via surveillance cameras.³⁹ As of early May 2018, the case has yet to conclude and it's been *five years*. Domestic workers who are abused by employers are often reluctant to file police reports because they are either afraid that doing so will jeopardize their chance of getting back to work as soon as possible, or because they do not wish to be held back for lengthy investigations and want to return to their country as soon as possible.

In HOME's experience, domestic worker cases that involve physical and sexual abuse typically include other strong indicators of forced labour: threats of denunciation to authorities, limited freedom of movement and communication, constant surveillance, confiscation of passports, and recruitment linked to debt. It is our view that most—if not all—physical and sexual abuse cases encountered would qualify as forced labour cases as outlined by the International Labour Organization (ILO). However, this tendency for the authorities to segregate issues means allegations of physical abuse are investigated by the police, and all other issues mentioned are not considered punishable offences by the MOM unless they are severe enough to become *criminal* offences. Despite having ratified the ILO's Forced Labour Convention C29,⁴⁰ there are no discernable efforts by the Singapore government to align the national penal code accordingly.

Food deprivation is another common complaint by migrant domestic workers.⁴¹ While the Ministry of Manpower issues advisories for employers on what a typical daily food intake

³⁹ Hannah Teoh, 'Myanmar Maid Recounts Incidents of Abuse by Singapore Couple,' *Yahoo News*, 25 September 2017, <https://sg.news.yahoo.com/myanmar-maid-recounts-incidents-abuse-singaporean-couple-114719067.html> (accessed May 17, 2018); Elena Chong, 'They Slapped Her, Punched Her, Whacked Her with Canes,' *The New Paper*, 11 March 2017, <http://www.tnp.sg/news/singapore/they-slapped-her-punched-her-whacked-her-canes> (accessed May 17, 2018).

⁴⁰ ILO, 'Ratifications for Singapore'. http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:0::NO:11200:P11200_COUNTRY_ID:103163 (accessed accessed May 17, 2018).

⁴¹ Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics, 'Domestic Workers Lack Adequate Food and Nutrition', <https://www.home.org.sg/our-stories/2017/11/30/domestic-workers-lack-adequate-food-and-nutrition> (accessed May 17, 2018)

for an MDW should consist of,⁴² at HOME's helpdesk for domestic workers, such advisories do not have the force of the law, and enforcement is inconsistent. In 2014, it was reported that as many as eight in 10 domestic workers who sought help from HOME do not get enough food.⁴³ During a series of focus groups conducted by HOME in early 2017, MDWs complained of inadequate food in terms of quantity as well as quality: some were only allowed to eat instant noodles and/or bread, others only leftovers, and almost all said they were not allowed to have fruit. Many said they were not allowed to snack in between meals and would drink water to stave off their hunger pangs.⁴⁴ Some Muslim MDWs have related how their employers did not consider their religious beliefs and would mix pork (considered non-*halal*) with most of the food, leaving them to eat only rice and some leftover vegetables.

In September 2017, a couple who starved their Filipino domestic worker were sentenced to 10 months jail. The domestic worker, Thelma Oyasan Gawidan, was fed a 'diet of plain bread and instant noodles'.⁴⁵ She was only 29 kg when she finally fled the house, and had lost 40 percent of her body weight. This appears to be the first conviction of an employer under EFMA for inadequate food, despite HOME regularly encountering MDWs with complaints about insufficient food.

About 40% of the complaints received by domestic workers are **salary-related**. Such complaints involve unpaid salaries, withheld salaries, delayed salary payments and salary deductions (including for employer obligations such as medical expenses). There are also cases where salaries are not paid in accordance to what was initially promised to the domestic worker.

Isolation, confinement or surveillance is a strong indicator of coercion at destination under the ILO's framework for identifying victims of trafficking for forced labour.⁴⁶ HOME has documented dozens of cases where MDWs have been locked up in their employer's houses or their agent's living quarters. Those living in government-approved quarters and shelters are also not allowed to leave the premises freely. Many employers also disallow them from owning mobile phones or may confiscate their phones and severely restrict their use (for example, only allowing them to use it on certain days and for a specified period of time).

⁴² Here is MOM's example of a day's food intake for a female engaged in moderate activity: breakfast—four slices of bread with spread; lunch—one bowl of rice and a three-quarter cup of cooked vegetables and a palm-sized amount of meat (fish/poultry/beef/lamb) and fruit; dinner—one bowl of rice and a three-quarter cup of cooked vegetables and a palm-sized amount of meat (fish/poultry/beef/lamb) and fruit. See Ministry of Manpower, 'Rest Days and Well-Being for Foreign Domestic Worker,' <http://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-domestic-worker/employers-guide/rest-days-and-well-being> (accessed September 27, 2017).

⁴³ Chang May Choon, 'More Foreign Domestic Workers Say They Do Not Get Enough To Eat,' *Straits Times*, 25 October 2014.

⁴⁴ HOME conducted six focus groups with approximately 30 MDW residents living in HOME's shelter in March and April 2017. The MDWs were from the Philippines, Indonesia and Myanmar. During the focus groups, the MDWs discussed their living and working conditions, and inadequate food surfaced as a key issue.

⁴⁵ Vanessa Paige, 'Couple Who Starved Filipino Maid to Serve Longer Jail Sentences,' 15 September 2017, *Channel NewsAsia*, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/couple-who-starved-filipino-maid-to-serve-longer-jail-sentences-9220984> (accessed September 27, 2017).

⁴⁶ International Labor Office, *Operational indicators of trafficking in human beings*, September 2009, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_105023.pdf (accessed May 17, 2018)

When complaints are made against employers and agents for forced confinement and confiscation of mobile phones, they are not accepted as serious complaints and MDWs are usually terminated by their employers and repatriated for filing such claims. As earlier stated, employers commonly install surveillance cameras in their home to be able to keep a watch on domestic workers. Sometimes, cameras are also installed in the bedroom or living space where the domestic worker sleeps: this practice is allowed, especially if the domestic worker shares the bedroom with a child or elderly person. Complaints made against such arrangements are usually not accepted by the Ministry of Manpower and results in the termination and repatriation of the MDW.

Poor living conditions are the norm for many migrant domestic workers.⁴⁷ The Ministry of Manpower does not forbid employers from allowing MDWs to sleep in a store room, living room, kitchen, or narrow corridors in employers' homes. The Employment Of Foreign Manpower Act only stipulates that they live in 'acceptable accommodation' and provides guidelines for employers and agencies to follow.⁴⁸ The lack of clear legal standards has led to patchy and inconsistent enforcement of proper living standards for MDWs.

A TWC2 survey on 429 domestic workers on their living conditions conducted in 2016 revealed that 40 percent had to share their sleeping space with their employer's family members while five percent shared a room with a male teenager or adult member of the employer's family. About 10 percent of the respondents indicated that they sleep in small windowless spaces such as the store room or bomb shelter or open spaces such as the living room or the kitchen. Twenty percent of the respondents were not provided with a bed and given only a mattress while about five respondents stated that they slept on the hard floor. One in three respondents did not have access to a locker, drawer or wardrobe that they could lock, while one in four of those who were provided with such a facility shared that someone else would have access to it.⁴⁹

Migrant domestic workers are also heavily discriminated against and their access to public spaces restricted. For example, certain condominiums have regulations that ban domestic workers from using shared facilities such as swimming pools.⁵⁰

Other problems related to access to medical care, freedom of association, limited job mobility, the confiscation of identity papers, and excessive recruitment fees have been detailed in the response to Question 2.

⁴⁷ Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics, 'No Privacy, No Space: Domestic Workers Endure Poor Living Conditions,' <https://www.home.org.sg/our-stories/2017/11/30/no-privacy-no-space-domestic-workers-endure-poor-living-conditions> (accessed May 17, 2018).

⁴⁸ Ministry of Manpower, 'Rest Days and Well-being for Foreign Domestic Worker', 5 March 2018, <http://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-domestic-worker/employers-guide/rest-days-and-well-being> (accessed May 17, 2018)

⁴⁹ Tay Wei Yu, *Foreign Domestic Workers' Living Conditions Survey*, Transient Workers Count Too, June 2016, http://twc2.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FDW-Report_Final.pdf (accessed May 17, 2018).

⁵⁰ Geraldine Yeo, 'No Maids Allowed in Pool', 19 January 2011, *Asia One*, <http://www.asiaone.com/News/The%2BNew%2BPaper/Story/A1Story20110118-258823.html> (accessed May 17, 2018).

Question 5

Please elaborate on the challenges faced by migrant women and girls who are at the risk of or who are already under conditions of domestic servitude to obtain protection against their human rights violations.

Please see response to Question 3.

Question 6

Please elaborate on the specific situation of migrant women and girls in domestic servitude, taking into consideration factors that might contribute to their increased vulnerability to contemporary forms of slavery, including poverty, identification to minority groups, indigenous people, age, and caste.

Please see responses to Questions 2, 3 & 4.

Question 8

Please describe any challenges identified in ensuring that migrant women and girls who are survivors of domestic servitude have access to justice?

Please see response to Question 3.

Question 9

Please describe any projects delivered by your organisation or other civil society organisations to ensure protection of the human rights of migrant domestic workers victims of contemporary forms of slavery.

Please see response to Question 1.

Question 10

Please provide any research, data or other information that your organisation has produced or is aware of relating to the protection of domestic workers victims of contemporary forms of slavery.

Please see the following reports and submissions by HOME:

- *The Invisible Help: Trafficking into Domestic Servitude in Singapore*⁵¹
- *Home Sweet Home? Work, Life and Well-being of Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore*⁵²

⁵¹ Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics, *The Invisible Help: Trafficking into Domestic Servitude in Singapore*, October 2013, https://www.home.org.sg/s/Report_trafficking-into-domestic-servitude-lpee.pdf (accessed May 17, 2018)

⁵² Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics, *Home Sweet Home? Work, Life and Well-being of Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore*, March 2015, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a12725612abd96b9c737354/t/5a1fe5610d9297c2b97526ff/1512039798091/Report_Home-sweet-home_work-life-and-well-being-of-foreign-domestic-workers-in-Singapore.pdf (accessed May 17, 2018)

- *Shadow Report for the United Nations Committee on the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Singapore)*⁵³
- *Questionnaire: Trafficking in Persons in Singapore 2017 (A Submission to the US Embassy)*. This submission was not made public and remains a confidential document. It is attached with this questionnaire and we request that it not be uploaded on the UN website or made public.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please feel free to include any additional pertinent information on access to justice and remedy that you think would help the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences.

APPENDIX A
DOMESTIC WORKER CASEWORK STATISTICS
HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION ECONOMICS
1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

DOMESTIC WORKER CASEWORK DATA: APRIL 2017 TO MARCH 2018	
Total no. of cases: 872 (average 17 a week)	
Nationality:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philippines: 401 • Indonesia: 200 • Myanmar: 196 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India: 38 • Sri Lanka: 2 • Cambodia: 1 • Nationality unknown: 34 	
Overwork	483
Verbal abuse (shouting/threats/insults)	472
Salary-related issues: <i>salary unpaid; salary withheld; salary delayed; salary deducted; medical expenses paid by worker/deducted from salary; salary not according to promised</i>	342
Inadequate or poor quality food	292
Illegal deployment by employer (more than one house, or employer's business)	194
Unreasonable restriction of phone usage	197
No days off	166
Poor living conditions	154
Physical abuse	138
Unsafe work	91
Denied medical treatment	90
Denied sick leave	65

⁵³ Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics & Transient Workers Count Too, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Shadow Report for Singapore*, October 2017, https://www.home.org.sg/s/REFORMATTED_HOMETWC2_CEDAW_Singapore_2017.pdf (accessed May 17, 2018)

Terminated by employer	61
Inappropriate tasks (e.g. massage, paint works)	55
Sexual abuse/sexual harassment	32

NOTE: This number does not include the enquires HOME receives regularly via our helplines, our Sunday satellite helpdesks, as well as via Facebook messenger.