

Questionnaire for NGOs and other stakeholders on domestic servitude

This questionnaire is addressed to stakeholders such as international and regional organisations, national human rights institutions, UN agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, research institutions, businesses, community initiatives, private individuals, foundations and academia.

The below questionnaire is meant to assist the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Urmila Bhoola, with elaborating a comprehensive report on domestic servitude of migrant women and girls that will be presented to the Human Rights Council in September 2018.

The responses to the below questionnaire should be submitted to the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences in English, French or Spanish at [srsalavery@ohchr.org](mailto:srslavery@ohchr.org)

The deadline for submissions is 18 May 2017.

If not stated otherwise in your submission, the responses received will be published on the website of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences.

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 Liberia Association of Female Sociologists-LAFSO is a registered not for profit organization that seeks to promote peacebuilding and peaceful co-existence in Liberia and the society at large. LAFSO mitigate factors that may create conflict in every part of Liberia and within the sub-region. Promote and protect the rights of women and children in peacebuilding and development. Provide empowerment and capacity building opportunities for girls and women with regard to their rights and protection. Work with duty bearers and stakeholders in policy making, good governance and help women and children get access to justice.

Generally, we protect and promote women and children rights in peacebuilding and provide capacity building, empowerment and opportunities to better their lives. We are providing access to justice, psychosocial support, counselling and making policies, do research and provide protection for women and children in Liberia. We partner with local and international organizations, Equality Now, World Hope Liberia and national networks: The Anti-Human Trafficking Taskforce, the National SGBV Taskforce, the National Human Rights Action Plan-Steering Committee and the FGM Working Group.

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.

In 2005, Liberia put into place the requisite domestic legal framework through the passage of the Act to Ban Trafficking in Persons that prohibits all forms of trafficking in persons. The Act prescribes a one-year minimum sentence for trafficking of adults, and a minimum six years' imprisonment for the trafficking of children. In 2013, the Government of Liberia amended the penal law regarding Extortion, Environmental Crimes and Trafficking in Human Beings, thereby re-enforcing the legal framework responsible for dealing with these inter-related international crimes. More recently, in 2015, the government passed into law a Decent Work Act. The bill seeks to improve the working conditions of employees with specific reference to domestic/national staff. Moreover, the bill seeks to ensure a safe, secure work environment free of sexual harassment, intimidation etc.

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

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.

The Government of Liberia does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government provided emergency funding to temporarily shelter 25 potential child trafficking victims and prosecuted one trafficking case. However, the government did not demonstrate increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period. The government did not provide training or basic resources to law enforcement or prosecutors to allow them to effectively identify, investigate, and prosecute trafficking cases; complicity and corruption continued to inhibit anti-trafficking law enforcement action; and for the third consecutive year, the government did not convict any traffickers. Victim care remained sparse and provided primarily by NGOs without government support, and the government did not allocate any funding specifically for anti-trafficking activities in its 2016 budget. Therefore, Liberia was downgraded to Tier 2 Watch List <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271227.htm> .. Many Liberia cultural practices expose its women and children to criminal exploitation and manipulation, including sex trafficking in children, child labor and other forms of criminal ventures. For a variety of reasons, including poverty, traditional family structure, many Liberian families send their children to live with relatives and friends outside of their community of origin. A substantial number of children who live with relatives and friends, however, are often exploited for labor, rape, expose to intense

domestic servitude and prevented from receiving adequate education. There is a huge challenge in ensuring the human rights of migrant domestic workers victims most especially in Liberia. There is little known about the word trafficking in Liberia. Even those that know about trafficking don't see internal trafficking as been harmful or a criminal a venture. It is hard to ensure victims or survivals human rights of domestic servitude because the perpetrators are often relatives and friends to the family. Due to poverty and traditional family structure or practices, both victims and communities are afraid to report any harm perpetrated on its victims. Victims are often afraid to report their relatives. They see them as people that trying to give them help which they wouldn't have gotten in their own individual families.

For example, if social worker or authority see the harm perpetrated against the victim and try to intervene, the victim denial and say all is well with them. It is difficult ensuring human rights for victims or to track an internal traffickers in Liberia.

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.

Migrant women and girls who are in domestic servitude are expose to gang (rape), hard labor in homes of their traffickers, no medical support, expose to (HIV, AIDS and other forms of STIs); some of the sexual assaults leads to the damaging of the victims sexual reproductive system, For example, a 14 year old girl who was raped by her uncle (guardian) is faced with health problem, shelter, education and lack of family connection and protection. Similarly, a 13 year old who was gang rape by some unknown men due to her exposure in the community, got pregnant and now suffer's mental illness. These are few violence, threats and harassment faced by migrant women and girls who are in situation of domestic servitude. Due to the poor standard of living couple with the traditional family structure, many women and girls are expose to traffickers. A substantial number of children who live with relatives or friends, however, are often exploited: rape, no contact with love relatives, deny freedom of movement, their basic human rights are withheld and expose to intense labor and prevented from receiving adequate education.

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.).

In addition to other human rights violation faced by migrant women and girls, as it is reported by the United States' Department of States 2017 Human Rights Report, Liberia is a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking, <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271227.htm> migrant women and girls who are expose or victim of such, don't have access to health care, lack of safe drinking water and are sold to third party for labor or for commercial sex. Currently LAFSO is working with young women and girls who were brought from the rural communities of Liberia to Monrovia by guardians to get a better living. They were deceived. Instead of a better living, they were turn into domestic workers. Those young women and girls flew those homes and some of them enter into a third party traffickers hand called Play-ma. Those Play-mas' keep them in a house, feed and clothed them and called her clients to have sex with them. She the play ma receive the money and

give her victim little of nothing. While others are involve in commercial sex as a means of livelihood.

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. They are homeless, no education, no access to health care and lack of protection, expose to danger of reoccurrence abuse. In order for migrant women and girls who at risk of or who are already under conditions of domestic servitude to obtain protection, they need to be rehabilitated. Get medical supports, good shelter and empower to be self-sufficient and access to justice.

Challenges: as a result of ill treatment from guardians most young girls are involve in commercial sex trade. They are mostly found in slum communities and concessionaries areas.

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.

Many Liberia cultural practices expose its women and children to criminal exploitation and manipulation, including sex trafficking in children, child labor and other forms of criminal ventures. For a variety of reasons, including poverty, quest for better education, traditional family structure, many Liberian families send their children to live with relatives and friends outside of their community of origin. Children living with relatives or friends, family not able to care for its members. Government not fully implementing the trafficking law, and no prosecution don't to violators to serve as deterrence to others.

Question need your input 7

A. Please detail any examples of good practice in relation to protecting, identifying and rescuing migrant women and girls in situation of domestic servitude. This might include actions and initiatives taken by governments, civil society organizations, international organizations, media outlets, employers, individuals, survivors, etc.

Following reports in 2015 of group of Liberian women in Lebanon who were taken from Liberia under the pretence of obtaining jobs but ended up being sex traders for the individuals who facilitated their transport, the Liberian government dispatch a delegation led by the then Minister of Labour who met and held discussions with the Lebanese counterpart. Following series of meeting and in the spirit and maintaining diplomatic ties, the government of Liberia with the support of the Lebanese government were able to bring back the girls with legal action filed against their perpetrators.

Similarly, following a leak tape which displayed molestation of underage girls by Lebanese merchants, the Liberian government took up the case which resulted into a hung verdict thereby

requiring a re-trial. However, that case was marked by series of sit in action on the part of CSOs especially women groups.

Question 8

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

Some of the challenges in ensuring that migrant women and girls have access to justice are the unknown identities of traffickers. Parents don't have the resources to trace their child/children location. Economic contains of family to properly care for their relatives. No rehabilitation centers to habilitate women and girls who are victims or survivors of domestic servitude to allow them go through legal proceedings. No standardise programs to allow survivors or victims to speak out. No provision to repatriate or reunite survivals into their communities. For example, the young women and girls we are working with in the King Gray Town, they were identified during an Awareness on Sexual Violence, Sex Trafficking (Sexual Exploitation and abuse against girls and young women) that was conducted by LAFSO in Montserrado County. They are survivors of domestic servitude who are now into prostitution in King Gray. We are having a challenge with those survivors to speak out. They are afraid to expose their traffickers name and location. They said, they don't want to expose their traffickers because of fear of their traffickers coming after them. And also no package or support for resettlement. These are some of the challenges we facing in ensuring access to justice.

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. The Awareness on Sexual Violence, Sex Trafficking (Sexual Exploitation and abuse against girls and young women) in Montserrado and the Baseline study survey conduct in Montserrado, Margibi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Gbapolu and Nimba Counties serve as eye opening for the counties we created the awareness and conducted the research. Since the implementations of these project, we been receiving calls of report perpetrating abuse and violations.

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. Baseline Study 'A Safe and Just World for Girls: Making Equality Reality' Project 2017-2020' conducted by Liberia Association of Female Sociologists-LAFSO, was supported by Equality Now.

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.

