

# Special attention needed to protect the rights of women migrant workers



PRASAD KARIYAWASAM

**I**NTERNATIONAL migration is a complex phenomenon dealing with overlapping issues relating to the human rights of migrants, mixed migration flows, international protection, smuggling and trafficking, as well as other push and pull factors affecting migration.

But, the need of the hour is a rights-based comprehensive approach placing the human rights of migrants at the centre of the discussion to halt and roll back overall deterioration of treatment of migrant workers, worldwide, in particular, women migrant workers and children.

Evidence suggests that the world is on the eve of far greater international mobility largely due to workforce decline and population ageing, coupled with low birth rates in many industrialised countries. Migrants will be even more essential to address labour market needs and the sustainability of economic development in many countries.

But as we all know, migrants move due to a number of reasons. Migration is not only due to economic factors; man-made disasters and conflicts can drive them in large numbers as we observe now.

And migration can be engendered due to poverty and lack of human development; gender inequalities; discrimination; abuse and neglect; gang violence; political instability; socio-ethnic tensions; bad governance; food insecurity; environmental degradation and climate change.

As underscored by many human rights defenders, human rights abuses play a crucial role in decisions to migrate, in particular by women.

Out of more than 244 million migrants throughout the world, half are women, and an estimated 20 percent are in an irregular situation. In some countries like Sri Lanka and the Philippines, female migrant workers leaving for work abroad are much more than half of those leaving.

Overall, international migration is becoming increasingly feminised as more women are migrating on their own volition, seeking economic and social opportunities and empowerment through migration.

Most women contribute more than men in destination countries in professions, such as caregivers while contributing even more to the well-being of their families in their countries of origin. But, women migrant workers are particularly at risk of discrimination, abuse and exploitations.

They receive wages that are under the minimum baseline, and are victims of fraudulent practices, excessive working hours and even illegal confinement by their employers. Sexual harassment, threats and intimidation against them are rampant.

Meanwhile, the number of women migrant workers committing suicide is on the increase. Abuses of women migrant workers are more intensified when their immigration status is irregular. They are often denied the most basic labour protections, personal security, due process guarantees, health care and, education

labour codes.

Their work is not quantified in financial terms and therefore not adequately compensated. They may be locked within their workplace and subject to physical and sexual violence for lack of means for seeking formal protection normally available for other women in formal sectors of employment.

Therefore, policymakers and other stakeholders in every country must adopt a gender-sensitive and rights based approach in developing labour migration laws and policies in line with the core human rights treaties,

All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is a robust and agreed legal framework for the rights of all migrant workers and their families in countries of origin, transit and destination.

The Convention sets out the best strategy to prevent abuses and address challenges faced by female migrant workers. It provides guidance for elaborating of national migration policies for international co-operation based on respect for human rights and the rule of law.

In addition to setting minimum

they develop effective pre-departure and awareness-raising programmes for female workers who have made the decision to migrate, with briefings on their rights under the relevant human rights treaties in force, including CMW, as well as the conditions of their admission and employment and their rights and obligations under the law and practice of the receiving States.

Among other measures, CMW encourage countries of origin to enter into agreements with States of destination for the establishment of standard, unified and binding employment contracts with fair, full and clear conditions and labour standards that are enforceable by systems of law in countries of origin and employment; and to ensure that consular offices are trained to assist female migrant workers, and to provide counselling and guidance for submitting complaints; and encourage States to regulate and monitor recruitment agencies to ensure that they respect the human and labour rights of women migrant workers.

CMW also advises States to repeal sex-specific bans and discriminatory restrictions on women's migration on the basis of age, marital status, pregnancy or maternity status, including restrictions that require women to get permission from their spouse or male guardian to obtain a passport or to travel or bans on women migrant workers.

The issue of detention of female migrant workers is yet another punitive measure that is often abused by authorities in many countries. The convention attempts to make migration for work as a positive and empowering experience for individuals and their societies, contributing to economic progress and human development both at home and in destination countries.

Today's dramatic migration crisis underscores the urgent need to begin a more honest discussion about the obstacles to ratification of the Migrant Workers Convention. The Convention at present has only 50 State parties, and most are States of origin of migrant workers, and destination countries by not ratifying the Convention are conspicuously avoiding the human rights standards of the Convention.

A clear vision of the need for migrant labour in destination countries, with more channels for regular migration, as well as for family reunification, would assist greatly in preventing the exploitation and other dangers faced by female migrant workers and to enable them to live a life in dignity.

The writer is a member of the UN Committee on Migrant Workers.

Source: Inter Press Service



IMAGE: HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

for their children. They often face abuse and harassment at international borders based on race, identity and age. And often they risk being trafficked, enslaved or sexually assaulted.

Domestic female migrant workers are a most vulnerable group. According to the ILO, 53 million women and girls around the world are employed as domestic workers in private households. They clean, cook, care for children, look after elderly family members, and perform other care giving essential tasks for their employers.

Despite their important role, they are among the most exploited and abused workers in the world. They often work 14 to 18 hours a day, seven days a week, for wages far below the minimum wage. And their work is often not recognised as work under national

and in particular CEDAW and CMW, as well as relevant ILO labour standards.

These human rights instruments relevant to migrants seek to achieve gender equality and protection for women and girls irrespective of age, sexuality, race, disability, migration status and other identity markers.

National and local laws and policies should be evolved to guarantee that human rights, including labour rights, are enjoyed equally by men and women migrant workers and that migration legislation, policies and programmes must promote equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupations with a view to eliminating any discrimination based on sex.

In this regard, female domestic workers must receive special attention. The Convention on the Protection of the Rights of

obligations for the protection of migrant workers and members of their families, the Convention is a helpful tool for governance of migration. The Convention explicitly provides a framework for human-rights based policy-making on migration, including irregular migration and female migrant workers.

The treaty body of the convention, the "Committee on Migrant Workers" (CMW) seeks to encourage its State parties and all stakeholders to work towards reaching standard enunciated in this convention and other relevant international instruments. And CMW in its general comments have elaborated guidance as to how States can implement their obligation with respect to migrant domestic workers, in particular, females.

CMW regularly advises States to ensure that

## A heartfelt goodbye to beloved Behrouze bhai

MOHAMMAD BADRUL AHSAN

**M**IRZA Ali Behrouze Ispahani, chairman of the Ispahani Group, one of the largest business conglomerates in the country, died as quietly as he lived. He went to sleep while recovering from a leg surgery, and then made his condition altogether irrelevant because he never bothered to wake up and walk again. Behrouze bhai to his countless friends and admirers, one of the country's wealthiest men died the most mischievous death. He changed gear in his restful sleep and sped off to eternal rest.

To say that Behrouze Ispahani lived quietly isn't to say that he was a quiet man. He enjoyed the company of his friends, engaged in small talk, discussed politics and cracked his share of jokes. You could tell when he was at his best. He would hold the palms of his hands together like a sheet of hot towel and rub his face up and down in quick succession. A tiny smirk then flowered across his face as if the genie of the lamp produced by that rubbing appeared to do the bidding of his friends.

But he was quiet in terms of the wealth he and his family possessed, hating with passion the idea that it must ever be flaunted. If you didn't know about him already, you couldn't guess who he was from the model of the car he rode or the clothes he wore or anything else for that matter. He preferred to sit in the front seat of his car, next to the driver. I don't

remember him carrying a wallet, always keeping his cash in a money clip in his pocket. Back in 2002 or 2003, he told me he didn't have a credit card while he was paying for the lunch we had at Purbani Hotel.

Behrouze bhai was a rich man without the trappings of affluence. He took to his privileges like duck to water. He rubbed shoulders with the high and the mighty, but longed for the company of his "ordinary" friends. Most of his close friends, he once confided, didn't have a lot of money. He did business with the businessmen and socialised with the



Mirza Ali Behrouze Ispahani

"social" men, he said. He liked to keep it that way for the same reason the boardroom wasn't the bedroom, he explained.

He was a walking encyclopedia of the social life in Dhaka, rattling out information at the slightest provocation. He was very blunt in his assessment of issues and individuals, and never pulled any punches when sharing views with his friends. He was also a kind hearted man. To the best of my knowledge, he never turned down anybody who asked for his help.

In 2006, I had recommended a "costumed" intellectual to him, because the man said he needed some money to finish writing his book. When the book

was never finished years later, Behrouze bhai with his genie-smile shrugged off the whole thing. But I remember what he had said after rubbing his face, "Yaar, how could he sell his dignity for this paltry sum of money?"

This was an abiding dilemma for Behrouze Ispahani. Personally and through the schools, Islamiya Eye Hospital and other charities supported by his family, he had touched many lives. Yet, he forever struggled with human inadequacies. In Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Nick Carraway, the narrator, begins his story by recalling the words of his father, "Whenever you feel like criticising anyone . . . just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had." Underlying Behrouze Ispahani's compassion for and patience with others was a deep-rooted sense of gratitude drawn from the bedrock of privileged upbringing. He believed it was his responsibility to give back to the world that gave so much to him.

The scion of one of the wealthiest families of this country understood his place in life. He has done many things for which he deserves credit, but foremost amongst them was the equanimity with which he handled his relationship with the world. This is something awfully remiss in so many others from his class!

If not in intellect or power, Behrouze Ispahani was ahead of his time in terms of how a man makes money but not the other way around. He disliked flashy and conceited folks around him, those who were "legends" in their own minds. He was an affront to them in flesh and blood, his humility laden voice, congenial manner, and beaming smile challenging them with a missionary zeal that this life was too short for such pompous nonsense.

Behrouze bhai's life is a metric to measure the great tensions of our time. It tells those who are obsessed with money and material pursuits that they are wasting their time. An intelligent mind must not spend so much of his energy collecting what he has to leave behind.

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*He has done many things for which he deserves credit, but foremost amongst them was the equanimity with which he handled his relationship with the world.*

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
 বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ  
 অধিনায়কের কার্যালয়  
 ১২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন  
 উত্তরা, ঢাকা

**উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

The Public Procurement Act-2006 & Regulation-2008 এবং তদীয় সংশোধনী বিধি মোতাবেক ২০১৬-২০১৭ অর্থ বৎসরের ১২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, উত্তরা, ঢাকা'র নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজের ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের নিমিত্ত প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী ঠিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে।

১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়।
২.	সংস্থা/বিভাগ	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩.	ক্রম/সংগ্রহের স্বত্বাধিকারীর নাম	অধিনায়ক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), ১২ এপিবিএন, উত্তরা, ঢাকা।
৪.	ক্রম/সংগ্রহকারীর কোড নং	প্রয়োজ্য নহে।
৫.	সংগ্রহকারী দপ্তর/জেলা	১২ এপিবিএন, উত্তরা, ঢাকা।
৬.	যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র আহ্বান	(ক) বিভাগীয় ভাভারের মালামাল সরবরাহ (খ) কমব্যাট পোশাক সেলাই কাজ (গ) চিকিৎসা ও শৈলা চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ।
৭.	দরপত্র আহ্বানের সূত্র	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি স্মারক নং-এপিবিএন/১২/প্রশাঃ/১৯৯
৮.	তারিখ	২৫/০১/২০১৭খ্রিঃ।
৯.	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
১০.	পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স হতে বরাদ্দ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে।	
১১.	দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নং	০১/২০১৬-২০১৭ অর্থ বৎসর।
১২.	দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নাম	(ক) বিভাগীয় ভাভারের মালামাল সরবরাহ (খ) কমব্যাট পোশাক সেলাই কাজ (গ) চিকিৎসা ও শৈলা চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ।
১৩.	দরপত্র পত্রিকায় প্রকাশের তারিখ	২৮/০১/২০১৭ - ২৯/০১/২০১৭খ্রিঃ এর মধ্যে।
১৪.	দরপত্র দলিল (সিডিউল) বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১২/০২/২০১৭খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত (ছোট্ট দিন ব্যতীত)।
১৫.	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	১৪/০২/২০১৭খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৬.	দরপত্র বাজ খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৪/০২/২০১৭খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা। দরদাতা অথবা তার প্রতিনিধির সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্রসমূহ খোলা হবে।
১৭.	দরপত্র দলিলাদি বিক্রয়কারী অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	১) এপিবিএন হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, উত্তরা, ঢাকা ২) ডিআইজি, এপিবিএন কার্যালয়, ঢাকা ৩) অধিনায়ক, ১২ এপিবিএন, উত্তরা, ঢাকার কার্যালয়।
১৮.	দরপত্র দলিলাদি গ্রহণকারী অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	১২ এপিবিএন, উত্তরা, ঢাকা।
১৯.	দরপত্রদাতার প্রাক যোগ্যতা	পরিপূর্ণ মোতাবেক দরপত্র দলিল (সিডিউল) ক্রয় করতে ইচ্ছুক প্রার্থীকে প্রাকযোগ্যতা যাচাইয়ের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নোক্ত শর্তসমূহ পূরণ করতে হবে। দরপত্র ক্রয়ের সময় নিম্নবর্ণিত কাগজপত্রের মূলকপি অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করতে হবে (ক) হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, (খ) যে কোন তফসিলভুক্ত বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক হতে হালনাগাদ আর্থিক স্বচ্ছতা সনদপত্র ও বিগত ০৩ মাসের ব্যাংক বেনেদেন বিবরণী (গ) ডিআইএন নম্বর উল্লেখসহ হালনাগাদ আয়কর পরিশোধের সনদপত্র (ঘ) ড্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র (ঙ) নাগরিকত্বের সনদপত্র (চ) মালিকানা সনদপত্র (নোটারি পাবলিক কর্তৃক স্বাক্ষরিত) (ছ) প্রতিনিধির ক্ষেত্রে মালিকের ক্ষমতা অর্পনপত্র (জ) প্রথম শ্রেণীর সরকারি কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি ০১ কপি ও ০৩টি নমুনা স্বাক্ষর (ঝ) বিগত ০২ বছরের মালামাল সরবরাহ এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্র (ঞ) কোনো তালিকাভুক্ত নয় মর্মে অঙ্গীকারনামা।
২০.	মালামাল অথবা কাজের বিস্তারিত বিবরণ	দরপত্র তফসীল (সিডিউল) মোতাবেক।
২১.	লট নং	লটের পরিচিতি
	লট নং-১	বিভাগীয় ভাভারের মালামাল সরবরাহ
	লট নং-২	কমব্যাট পোশাক সেলাই কাজ
	লট নং-৩	চিকিৎসা ও শৈলা চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ
	লট নং-৩	চিকিৎসা ও শৈলা চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ
	লট নং-৩	চিকিৎসা ও শৈলা চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ
	লট নং-৩	চিকিৎসা ও শৈলা চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ
	লট নং-৩	চিকিৎসা ও শৈলা চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ
২২.	লট নং-৩	চিকিৎসা ও শৈলা চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ
২৩.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	মুহাম্মদ মাহাবুবুর রহমান।
২৪.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	অধিনায়ক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)।
২৫.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	১২ এপিবিএন, উত্তরা, ঢাকা।
২৬.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার সঙ্গে যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	মোবাইলঃ ০১৭৬৯-৬৯২৭২৪।
২৭.	সংগ্রাহক সত্তা কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	
২৮.	জ্ঞাতব্য বিষয়	১। নিজস্ব প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয় করতে হবে। ২। দরপত্রের সঙ্গে উল্লিখিত টাকার ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার সংশ্লিষ্ট কাগজপত্রাদি সংযুক্ত করে দাখিল করতে হবে। ৩। দরপত্রের সকল কার্যক্রম The Public Procurement Act-2006 & Regulation-2008 এবং তদীয় সংশোধনী বিধি মোতাবেক পরিচালিত হবে।

মুহাম্মদ মাহাবুবুর রহমান  
 বিপি-৭৩০৩০২০৮৩৫  
 অধিনায়ক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)  
 ১২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন  
 উত্তরা, ঢাকা

জিডি-২৩২