

► Reporting on forced labour, fair recruitment and labour migration in the East and Horn of Africa (EHoA) regions:

An ILO Toolkit
for Journalists

► **Reporting on forced labour,
fair recruitment and labour
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of Africa (EHoA) regions:**

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► Acknowledgement

This toolkit was developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO), a specialized agency of the United Nations. Since 1919, the ILO has brought together governments, employers and workers from 187 member states to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.

The toolkit is part of the Fair Recruitment Initiative and aims to contribute to the United Nations TOGETHER campaign, which promotes respect, safety and dignity for refugees and migrants. It also supports Alliance 8.7, a global partnership committed to achieving Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals: eradicating forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking, and child labour worldwide.

This toolkit is the result of contributions from various organizations and individuals, including the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), ILO staff in country offices, and journalists globally. The original ILO Media Toolkit was developed by Charles Autheman, Kevin Burden, Cassandre Guibord Cyr, Nicolás Castellano, Lou Tessier, Jane Colombini, Maria Gallotti, Mélanie Belfiore and Clara van Panhuys, drawing on lessons from media engagement programmes and the experience of the IFJ. The authors express their gratitude to Joanne Land-Kazlauskas for editing the original publication.

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► Foreword

Accurate and responsible reporting on labour migration is essential to fostering informed public debate and shaping policies that protect migrant workers while recognizing their contributions to economic and social development. In many parts of the world, including the East and Horn of Africa, migration is often portrayed through incomplete or inaccurate narratives. However, evidence consistently demonstrates that, when effectively governed and supported by fair recruitment practices and the protection of rights, labour migration can contribute significantly to socio-economic development in countries of origin, transit and destination, while benefiting migrant workers, their families and communities.

This toolkit has been developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to support journalists and media professionals in reporting more effectively on issues related to forced labour, fair recruitment and labour migration in the East and Horn of Africa region. By providing practical guidance, key terminology and contextual insights, the toolkit aims to strengthen evidence-based reporting and promote balanced narratives that reflect both the challenges and the opportunities associated with labour mobility.

The publication forms part of broader efforts by the ILO and its partners to promote rights-based labour migration governance and to prevent and address forced labour and exploitation. In particular, it contributes to the objectives of the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative, the United Nations TOGETHER campaign promoting respect and dignity for migrants and refugees, and Alliance 8.7, the global partnership working to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour.

This regional edition has been prepared within the framework of two major initiatives supporting labour migration governance in Africa: the Better Regional Migration Management (BRMM) Programme funded by the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and the AU ILO IOM Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP), funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). These programmes work with governments, workers' and employers' organizations, media actors and other stakeholders to strengthen migration governance systems, promote fair recruitment and enhance protection for migrant workers across the region.

Journalists and communicators play a critical role in shaping public understanding on migration. Through responsible, evidence-based and gender-responsive reporting, the media can challenge stereotypes, highlight abuses, inform policy debates and amplify the voices of migrant workers. This toolkit is intended as a practical resource to support journalists and communicators in reporting on labour migration with accuracy, balance and sensitivity.

By strengthening media engagement and public awareness, this publication contributes to broader effort to ensure that labour migration in the East and Horn of Africa is safe, orderly, and regular and delivers positive outcomes for all.



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► Introduction

Why use this guide?

Worldwide, migrants are often victims of racist, discriminatory and xenophobic attacks. At the same time, their contribution to the socio-economic development of countries of origin, destination and transit often goes unrecognized. The media may unintentionally promote a negative public narrative on migration and reinforce the stigmatization of migrants. Migrants are often portrayed as criminals or “stealing jobs from national workers”. They are also often scapegoated during economic recessions.¹

Changing negative perceptions and attitudes around migration through fact-based journalism can help address public misconceptions. A balanced reportage recognizing migrants’ contributions to economic growth and development is needed. The search for employment and better wages is a key driver of international migration, often alongside other factors such as climate change, political instability, and famine. Even if employment is not the primary driver, it usually occurs at some point in the migration process. Labour migration is a key aspect of Africa’s socio-economic development and regional integration.

Labour migration is a global phenomenon involving several actors in the world of work (representatives of ministries of labour, workers’ and employers’ organisations) and other stakeholders, including ministries of foreign affairs and home affairs, ministries of health, education and gender or women’s affairs, private recruitment agencies (PREAs) and civil society organizations. Understanding the specific responsibilities of these actors is crucial for producing accurate reports and supporting measures to counter labour exploitation, abuse and discrimination. Labour migration remains a key priority in several socio-economic strategies in Africa, at the levels of the African Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and member states. The challenge is how to ensure that labour migration contributes to **national, regional and continental economic and social development**.

Expert studies and data show that migration, particularly labour migration, is an **important enabler and beneficiary of regional integration and economic development in Africa**. For example, a 2018 **ILO/OECD study on the impacts of immigration on developing countries’ economies**² found the following:

- **Migrants can have a positive impact on economic growth.** Immigration is unlikely to depress gross domestic product (GDP) per capita; in some countries, immigrants contribute up to 19 per cent of GDP, such as in **Côte d’Ivoire**.³ According to World Bank estimates, Kenya was the third largest recipient of remittances in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2023 (USD 4.2 billion) and the volume of remittances exceeded the country’s key exports, including tourism, tea, coffee and horticulture.⁴

1 The impact of the financial crisis on European attitudes toward immigration <https://comparativemigrationstudies.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40878-019-0127-5>; Fear of Foreigners: Recession and Racism in Europe <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/racethmulglocon.4.2.183>

2 ILO-OECD: How Immigrants Contribute to Developing Countries’ Economies <http://www.oecd.org/migration/how-immigrants-contribute-to-developing-countries-economies-9789264288737-en.htm>

3 ILO-OECD: How Immigrants Contribute to Ivory Coast’s Economy https://www.oecd.org/fr/publications/comment-les-immigres-contribuent-a-l-economie-de-la-cote-d-ivoire_9789264293304-fr.html

4 Dilip Ratha, Vandana Chandra, Eung Ju Kim, Sonia Plaza, and Akhtar Mahmood. 2024. “Remittances Slowed in 2023, Expected to Grow Faster in 2024.” World Bank, Washington, DC.

- **Immigrants may generate additional employment opportunities for native-born workers.** In **South Africa**,⁵ recently arrived migrants have a positive impact on native-born employment rates and monthly wages and contribute to a decrease in unemployment rates.
- **Migrant workers in the formal economy can positively impact public finance.** In **Ghana**,⁶ immigrants' contribution to the government's fiscal balance exceeds the contribution of the native-born population (per capita). In **South Africa**, immigrants have a positive net impact on the government's fiscal balance.

However, migrant workers' contribution to the economy depends on their **jobs, working conditions and migration status**. Good governance of labour migration is therefore critical to harness the full potential of labour migration benefits for both countries of origin and destination, as well as migrant workers and their families. Specific measures to counter exploitation, abuse and discrimination in the labour market and workplace should be put in place, along with legislation, policy and practical measures to improve labour and social protection.

This toolkit helps you report on fair recruitment, forced labour and labour migration in the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) region. You don't need any prior knowledge to use the guide. You can work through the material at your own pace and time.

The course can be followed in logical order, but it is not necessary. If time is short, you can access the information you need most and return later to expand your knowledge.

The role of the media

► Box 1: Kenyan government moves to combat migrant worker abuse in the Gulf

The Kenyan government has launched a crackdown on rogue employment agencies to curb the exploitation and abuse of its migrant workers in Gulf countries.

In response to the alarming number of cases involving the mistreatment of Kenyans abroad, the government revoked the licenses of 930 agencies recruiting Kenyans to work in the Middle East on 29 September 2014.

Labour Cabinet Secretary Kazungu Kambi also announced the temporary ban on the recruitment of workers to the region.

From now on, all private employment agencies will have to undergo strict auditing before acquiring new licences.

"[This] will enable the government to put in place adequate structures for the effective management of labour migration and the protection of our migrant workers," Kambi told reporters.

Read the full article, which was a finalist of the 2015 edition of the ILO Global Media Competition on Labour Migration, here: <https://www.equaltimes.org/kenyan-government-moves-to-combat>

5 ILO-OECD: How Immigrants Contribute to South Africa's Economy https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/events-training/WCMS_620797/lang-en/index.htm

6 ILO-OECD: How Immigrants Contribute to Ghana's Economy https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_634506.pdf

This story highlights the importance of addressing forced labour, promoting fair recruitment and managing labour migration in the East and Horn of Africa regions, as well as the several important interconnected policies at stake.

On such issues, journalists have a voice that many people lack. They can shed light on abusive practices and denial of fundamental human rights, alerting readers or viewers to these abuses. Journalists can shape public opinion and influence policy, impacting workers' lives. They also have an ethical duty to avoid exacerbating situations, which can happen when derogatory language or sensationalist headlines are used.

Reporting on labour migration requires more effort than covering routine news stories. It also involves investigating, consulting multiple sources and verifying information. Stories on forced labour and fair recruitment have global implications and local impacts. For example, workers exploited in the garment industry may produce clothing worn by readers. Understanding global economic interactions and production mechanisms is essential for accurate reporting. The following pages provide information and advice on reporting forced labour, fair recruitment, and labour migration. Examples of good reporting and tips from experienced journalists are included.

A word about us

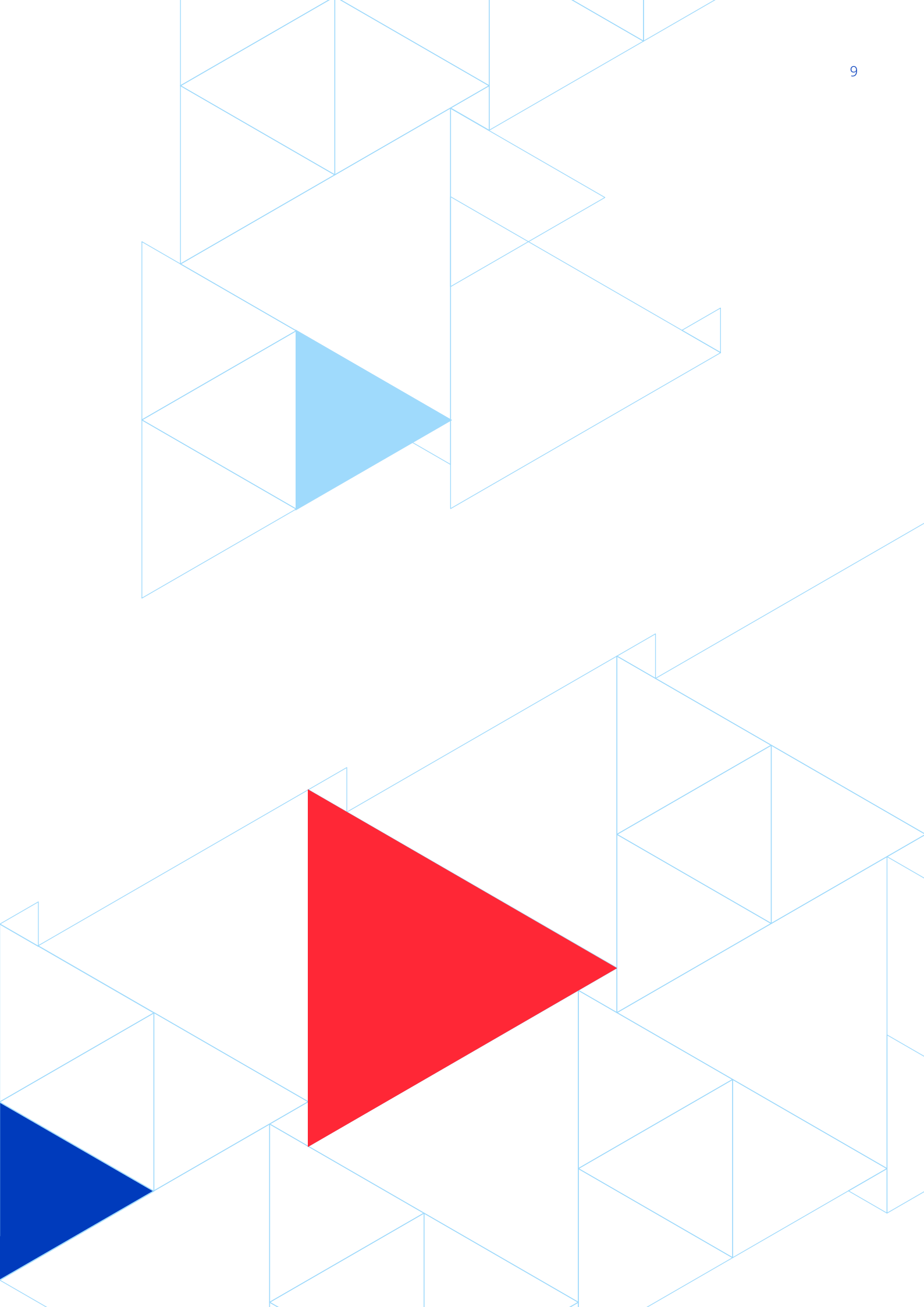
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The toolkit supports the United Nations TOGETHER campaign, which promotes respect, safety and dignity for refugees and migrants.

It also contributes to Alliance 8.7, a global partnership working to achieve Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals: eradicating forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour worldwide.

The toolkit was developed with contributions from various organizations, including the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and journalists from around the world.

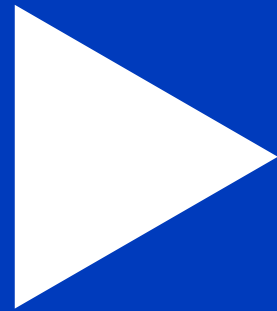
This edition of the toolkit was developed within the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)-funded Better Regional Migration Management (BRMM) Programme and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)-funded Labour, Employment and Mobility actions of the AU-ILO-IOM Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP-Lead).



Module

▶ 1

Understanding the story



Unit 1.1. Looking for a common terminology

While reporting on forced labour, fair recruitment and labour migration, it is essential to understand that some terms have legal definitions, while others don't. Knowing these definitions and interpretations is crucial for accurate reporting. Without a clear understanding of the terms used, reporting accuracy and the ability to challenge sources are compromised. Dictionaries, glossaries and media stylebooks are key resources for gaining expertise and improving media production quality. The ILO has developed media-friendly glossaries on labour migration in different languages as well as contextualized editions.⁷

Unit 1.2. Forced labour

Forced labour takes many forms. Victims are often tricked into jobs with little or no pay and are unable to leave due to debt manipulation or confiscation of identity documents. Factors like poverty, illiteracy, discrimination and migration increase workers' vulnerability to forced labour.

A. What is forced labour?

Forced labour refers to situations where work is compelled from individuals. According to the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), forced labour is "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily." People in forced labour have not given their free and informed consent to work and/or are not free to leave.⁸ Terms like human trafficking, debt bondage, bonded labour, slave labour and modern-day slavery are terms that are used to describe labour exploitation. As of 2021, an estimated 27.6 million people were victims of forced labour worldwide.⁹ Forced labour exists in various regions, including Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Central Asia, Africa, the Arab States and the Americas.

► Box 2: Ten-Year Action Plan to Eradicate Child Labour, Forced Labour, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery (2020-2030)

The Ten-Year Regional Action Plan was adopted by African heads of state during the African Union Summit in February 2020 and by Ministers of Labour and Social Development in December 2019. It is a comprehensive plan to achieve SDG Target 8.7, which calls for immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and eliminate child labour. This is essential for achieving decent work for all, full and productive employment, and inclusive and sustained economic growth. Through the Action Plan, African leaders recognize the magnitude of the challenge and set the groundwork for positive policy experiences in several African countries, guiding regional efforts. The AU is committed to accelerating SDG 8.7 implementation, using its policy frameworks, legal instruments, and convening capacities to drive coordination across the continent.

Read the action plan: https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/40112-wd-child_labour_action_plan-final-english.pdf

7 Different versions of the Media-Friendly Glossary can be accessed on the following link, including an "Ending Violence Against Women" (EVAW) edition: <https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/fair-recruitment/media-engagement-forced-labour-and-fair-recruitment>

8 https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_203832/lang-en/index.htm

9 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage, <https://www.ilo.org/publications/major-publications/global-estimates-modern-slavery-forced-labour-and-forced-marriage> (ILO 2022).

B. How do people get trapped?

some workers are more vulnerable to forced labour due to discrimination (for example, minorities) or isolation (for example, migrant workers). The risk of abuse is higher when work is performed out of sight, behind closed doors, such as in domestic work.

C. What type of work or which sector?

forced labour can occur in any labour market activity, formal or informal, though some low-wage jobs are more prone to abuse.

D. Recruitment practices

Coercion can be subtle and hard to detect. Recruitment through deception, including false promises, is common in forced labour. Private recruiters and informal intermediaries may be the only employment information source for migrants, making it easy to lie about the nature of jobs and conditions.

E. Impunity and profits

Unscrupulous recruiters and employers reap illegal profits due to an environment of impunity, where abuses are not effectively investigated or prosecuted. Victims and their families lose income, perpetuating poverty, and creating unfair competition for ethical companies. This environment must be addressed with the contribution of all relevant parties to ensure they take responsibility and follow the law.

F. Labour migration and the risk of forced labour

Migrant workers are highly vulnerable to forced labour, with around 15 per cent of victims being international migrant workers.⁸ Once abroad, they can be exploited, especially if they do not speak the language. **Debt bondage:** Debt bondage is a common coercion method, affecting 20.9 per cent of private sector forced labour victims. Accepting credit for expenses like travel costs immediately places workers in debt to employers, which can be manipulated through sudden interest rate increases or hidden charges. **Retention of passports:** Retention of passports restricts workers' freedom of movement, preventing them from seeking help. This is a common practice for domestic workers and one of the eleven forced labour indicators. In many countries, it is common for domestic workers living with their employers to experience this situation. **Wage withholding:** Wage withholding creates dependence on employers for food and shelter, trapping workers in forced labour. Wages may be withheld to cover costs such as housing, tools and equipment, further increasing workers' debt and vulnerability.

G. Ending forced labour

Forced labour is a severe violation of human rights and a crime under international law. It should be punishable by penalties reflecting the offence's gravity and deterring perpetrators. Although most countries outlaw forced labour, human trafficking and/or slavery-like practices, successful prosecutions remain few.

H. The importance of regulation

When labour markets fail, and workers are unprotected, the most vulnerable are at risk of exploitation. The ILO promotes decent work through international labour standards addressing forced labour, child labour and domestic work. Combating forced labour requires effective labour market regulation and enforcement of labour laws at national and international levels.

Unit 1.3. Decent work opportunities through fair recruitment

In today's globalized economy, millions seek job opportunities beyond their community or country. Recruitment and employment along global supply chains are increasingly common. Migration is increasingly linked to work. Millions also migrate within their country for decent work. Ensuring fair recruitment is key to securing decent work opportunities for all.

A. What is fair recruitment?

Fair recruitment is a concept central to international debates and ILO work, though not defined in international law. The ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative aims to improve recruitment practices through a four-pronged approach:

1. **Enhancing Global Knowledge:** This involves enhancing, exchanging, and disseminating global knowledge on recruitment practices to advance understanding and share best practices.
2. **Improving Laws, Policies and Enforcement:** The initiative strengthens laws, policies, and enforcement mechanisms to promote fair recruitment, aligning national laws with international labour standards. 3) **Promoting Fair Business Practices:** This pillar encourages businesses to adopt fair recruitment practices, ensuring ethical and compliant processes. 4) **Empowering and Protecting Workers:** The final pillar empowers workers with tools and support to protect themselves against abusive practices, ensuring access to remedies for those abused during recruitment. The concept of fair recruitment is embedded in the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment¹⁰, which address various aspects of the recruitment process, including: **Information on job opportunities:** Fair recruitment starts when information on job opportunities is shared. Unfair practices like deception can occur, for example, through false promises in job advertisements. Governments can issue press releases or publish advertisements to counter such misinformation.
3. **Direct recruitment or agents:** Recruitment processes can involve multiple intermediaries, increasing the risk of unethical practices. Workers often face issues with recruitment fees or costs, which can be charged directly or indirectly. The ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment state that workers should not pay recruitment fees or related costs. However, in many countries, workers are still charged these fees, either partially or fully. It is essential to understand the full range of costs workers' pay, including "recruitment fees and related costs like identity documents, travel documents, medical checks and pre-departure training.
4. **Appropriate job matching:** The recruitment process should ensure that an efficient job matching, offering workers placements suited to their qualifications, abilities and aspirations.

¹⁰ ILO, 2019. ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment, and Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs.

► **Box 3: AU Strategy on Fair and Ethical Recruitment for Africa (2024)**

► The AU Fair and Ethical Recruitment Strategy for Africa was adopted by the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment (STC-SDLE-5) in July-August 2024. This strategy aligns with the ILO Fair Recruitment Strategy for Africa, which comprises four strategic objectives in line with the ILO [Fair Recruitment Initiative Strategy \(2021-2025\)](#) and aims to promote fair recruitment practices across the continent. The strategy is expected to serve as a tool to support collective efforts, strengthening a rights-based approach to labour migration governance and piloting innovative practices to promote fair recruitment from, to, and within the continent. The strategy has four strategic objectives, with accompanying targets and a 6-year implementation plan (2024- 20230): Enhance Knowledge and Tools: Improve knowledge sharing recruitment processes within Africa and along migration corridors. Improve Laws and Policies: Review and enhance laws, policies, and enforcement mechanisms for fair recruitment. Promote Fair Business Practices: Strengthen and promote ethical business practices in recruitment.

► **Protect Migrant Workers:** Protect African migrant workers from recruitment abuses and empower them to contribute to policy design.

Fair Recruitment in the Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD) and East African Community (EAC)

- a. The East African Community (EAC) adopted its Labour Migration Policy in 2024, prioritizing “Fair and Ethical Recruitment Practices” (5.7) as a key area of work. for the EAC Secretariat and member states. The policy’s key focus areas include: Promoting fair recruitment, decent work and access to remedy by migrant workers
- b. Strengthening the regulation and monitoring of private employment agencies
- c. Promoting institutional regulatory frameworks
- d. Creating an enabling environment for [fair] recruitment of migrant workers.

The [Djibouti Declaration on Labour, Employment and Labour Migration](#) (2021) is a policy agreement among Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) member states addressing regional labour challenges. It upholds the need to strengthen labour migration governance in line with international labour standards and calls for implementing all 23 objectives of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, including objective six on fair recruitment. The Declaration also states the establishment of supervisory mechanisms to monitor the situation of migrant workers in countries of destination, including recruitment, placement, working conditions, return and reintegration.

As a follow-up, IGAD member states have committed to reviewing recruitment policies and practices, and developing regional guidelines aligned with continental and global initiatives and frameworks (For example, ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment), as outlined in the Ministerial Communique of the 2nd IGAD Ministerial Conference on Labour, Employment and Labour Migration (2023).

Additionally, through the Ministerial Communique of the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Labour, Employment and Labour Migration (2025), the member states have committed to “Intensify operational measures in line with the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative as well as the AU Fair and Ethical Recruitment Strategy (2024) to detect, identify and prevent abusive and fraudulent recruitment practices against migrant workers and protect them from violence, harassment and practices that can lead to conditions amounting to forced labour”.

B. Eliminating worker-paid recruitment fees and related costs

The recruitment process often involves third-party intermediaries charging high fees, which burdens migrants in low-paying jobs. ILO-World Bank surveys¹¹ show that low-income migrants, often the least skilled or educated, pay the highest costs relative to their earnings. This makes migrant workers vulnerable to debt bondage and abuses that amount to human trafficking or forced labour. The ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment, and the Definition of recruitment fees and related costs, call for recruitment fees and associated costs to be borne by employers, not workers.

C. Who else has a role to play in this story?

Many different actors have a role to play in promoting fair recruitment and ensuring its effective implementation. Governments bear ultimate responsibility for advancing fair recruitment and should adopt and enforce laws and policies meeting international standards.

Enterprises, including labour recruiters, public employment services, private and public employers, as well as trade unions and civil society organizations, are essential to promote fair recruitment. The media also plays a role by informing workers and exposing malpractices publicly.

D. Fair recruiters

Some private recruitment companies/agencies have made the choice to be “fair recruiters”. They offer transparent terms and conditions to employers and workers, respecting fair recruitment guidelines. Their experience demonstrates that compliance with the law and behaving fairly is effective.

Unit 1.4. Policy frameworks

A. Labour migration policies

Labour migration policies can include formulating and implementing temporary¹² and seasonal¹³ migrant workers schemes, carrying out of regularisation¹⁴ programmes (if necessary) to regularize migrant workers in irregular situations¹⁵ typically, in the informal economy, and determining refugees’ access to the labour market.

11 The World Bank, 2017. KNOMAD-ILO Migration Costs Surveys

12 **Temporary international migrants** are defined as international migrants entering the country of labour attachment or country of destination with the intention of staying for a limited period of time which may be less or more than 12 months.

Definitions are extracted from the *ILO 2018 Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration*: <https://www.ilo.org/resource/other/ilo-2018-guidelines-concerning-statistics-international-labour-migration>

13 **Seasonal migrant workers** are defined as not usual residents of the country of employment, whose work by its character is dependent on seasonal conditions and is performed during part of the year.

14 Migration **Regularisation or Amnesty Programmes** are administrative schemes to allow migrants in an irregular or undocumented situation to apply for legal residence and work permits. They take place for economic and humanitarian reasons and they have the long term goal of curbing irregular immigration. Arguments against state that such programs reward lawbreakers and encourage further unauthorized immigration; arguments for point to their importance in increasing tax revenues, integrating migrants and reducing their vulnerability to exploitation, formalizing the informal economy, and “wiping the slate clean” for future immigration enforcement. There are usually two categories of regularization programs: de facto or “one-shot”. De facto regularization programs automatically grant permanent residency to migrants after they have lived in a country for a certain number of years and are implemented on a rolling basis. The “one-shot” regularizations target a limited number of migrants who have specific residency and work requirements; such programs also have deadlines for applications.

15 Migrants are considered to be in an irregular situation or non-documented situation if they are unauthorised «to enter, to stay and to engage in a remunerated activity in the State of employment pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreement to which that State is a party.

Evidence-based labour migration policies require producing and compiling labour migration statistics to consider labour market needs at all skill levels (low-skilled, semi-skilled, and highly skilled) based on periodic and objective labour market analysis and the identification of sectoral, occupational and regional labour shortages.

Evidence-based labour migration policies should ensure a positive impact of labour migration on economic growth and development, avoiding a “social dumping”¹⁶ effect or a “race-to-the-bottom”¹⁷ approach in national labour markets. This can be achieved through effective utilization of policy tools, including labour market/vacancy tests,¹⁸ Skills/ Occupations Shortage lists or Critical Skills Lists¹⁹ and fair and flexible immigration quota²⁰ systems among other practical tools, to ensure non-discrimination between national and migrant workers.

Discrimination in working conditions (remuneration, working hours, leave entitlements, occupational safety and health, social security protection and so on) can create a sentiment of unfairness among national workers if not detected and addressed promptly.

This is particularly relevant for low-skilled migrant workers, to safeguard the “equal pay for the work of equal value” principle, protecting migrant workers and preventing the displacement of national workers in certain sectors and occupations.

16 “**Social dumping**” is a practice to use cheaper labour than is usually available at the site of production or provision of services.

17 The “**Race to the bottom**” approach refers to a competitive situation where employers, companies, or the state/nation attempt to undercut the competition's prices by reducing labour costs, sacrificing quality standards or worker safety (often defying regulation).

18 A **labour market or vacancy test** takes place to establish that no national worker can be found to fill a job or position available. It involves the procedure of acquiring information about the actual labour market demand and supply situation. Such a procedure should confirm the lack of eligible nationals who could be employed in that given job or position. It implies that a foreign worker may be granted a work permit for a specific employer under the condition that among the national unemployed or job seekers there are none who would meet the job requirements or show interest in taking the job. The procedure usually involves the following:

1. An employer submits a notification of a vacancy to the National Employment Agency or Service (e.g. Public Employment Service, the Private Employment Agency or the Labour Office);
2. The employer and/or the National Employment Agencies or Services publicly place and announce the vacancy (e.g. public employment networks, national and/or local newspapers) for at least 4 weeks;
3. The vacancy notice must include the following information: a description of the employment; the name of the employer; the minimum monthly and/or annual remuneration; the location/s of employment; and the hours of work.
4. The Employment Agencies or Services analyze and compare the vacancy with unemployed and job-seekers' records (qualifications, job experience, etc.);
5. If the analysis reveals an adequate number of persons meeting the requirements arising from the job description, the Employment Agencies or Services, offer the job and organize the recruitment among the unemployed and job-seekers;
6. The Employment Agencies or Services compare the amount of remuneration proposed by the employer with the remuneration that can be obtained in the same, or similar occupation or for performance of similar type of work;
7. If no unemployed or job seeker accepts the job offer within a determined fair period of time, the national authority issues a relevant decision;
8. Once the labour market or vacancy test is completed, the decision issued is passed to the employer who attaches it to an application for a foreign worker work permit.

19 “**Critical Skills/Occupations Lists**” also referred to as “Occupation in Demand Lists”, “Skill Shortage Lists” or “Catalogues of Occupations Difficult to Fill”. There are lists of skills or occupations facing labour shortages in countries of destination. Aspiring migrant workers with skills/occupations on these lists are often given preferential treatment in visa or work permit applications to help fill this demand. Labour market information systems, including regular needs assessments, labour migration statistics and trends, provide up-to-date information on occupations and skills to be included in such lists. It is important to include not only highly-skilled occupations but also allow for semi-skilled and low-skilled occupations (for example, jobs in agriculture, construction and domestic work). If these are not included in shortage lists, demand for these jobs could encourage irregular migration and employment in the informal economy.

20 An **immigration quota** is established by countries of destination for the purposes of limiting the entry of immigrants. It represents a quantitative restriction on the number of migrants to be admitted by the State. Immigration quotas can determine the number of migrant workers to be accepted per economic sector, industry and occupational level per an established period of time.

As such, evidence-based labour migration policies should ensure policy coherence with employment, and education/training policies related to existing unemployment, underemployment, jobs and skills mismatch, as well as labour surplus or skills shortages in certain economic sectors and occupations and consider the presence of migrant workers in an irregular situation in the informal economy. They should prevent the “deskilling”²¹ and “brain waste”²² of the workforce (national and foreign) while promoting the recognition of their qualifications, certificates and diplomas.

Evidence-based labour migration policies should also involve significant participation of labour market institutions in their implementation:

1. Labour Inspection Service
2. Labour Market Observatory
3. Social Security Institute
4. Public Employment Service
5. Vocational Training Institute
6. Occupational Safety and Health Service
7. Working Conditions Service
8. Skills Recognition/Recognition of Prior Learning Agencies
9. Anti-discrimination and Labour Market Integration Agencies.

B. Relevant continental frameworks on labour migration

The African Union has designed comprehensive continental frameworks, integrated within its long-term socio-economic development strategy, the Agenda 2063, to strengthen labour migration governance in Africa, including:

- The AUC First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2014-2023) of its Agenda 2063²³
- African Union (AU) Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030)²⁴
- AU Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons in Africa (2018)²⁵
- African Union Commission’s Ouagadougou + 10 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development in Africa (2014)²⁶

21 **Deskilling:** Labour market-related term that describes the phenomenon experienced by skilled or highly-skilled workers who enter the labour market and obtain a job below their skills or qualification level (compared to their acquired qualifications) and are considered to be “overqualified” for the job they occupy. This practice results in situations where workers perform lower-skilled jobs and are often badly paid. If they stay (which is often the case) in that same job, they rarely climb the occupational ladder. The longer they stay in that lower-skilled job, the harder it is for those workers to obtain a job in accordance with his/her qualifications, since unused skills might be lost or depreciate over time – and workers suffer deskilling. The end result is an unfair loss of the time and money that the worker spent in obtaining (eventually unused) qualifications and the waste of funds that their family and country spent on human resources.

22 **Brain waste:** A term commonly used in migration terminology in relation to other terms such as brain drain and brain gain. It refers to the underutilization or lack of utilization of foreign human resources available in the labour market. This occurs when migrant workers’ skills, qualifications and job experience acquired in the country of origin are not properly utilized in the destination country’s labour market. Main causes include the lack of recognition of skills and qualifications, underutilization of workers’ skills, difficulties obtaining work permits, which can drive migrant workers to take informal or low-skilled jobs. This results in a lose-lose situation for workers, countries of origin, and countries of destination.

23 <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/ftyip>

24 <https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35956-doc-au-mpfa-executive-summary-eng.pdf>

25 <https://au.int/en/treaties/protocol-treaty-establishing-african-economic-community-relating-free-movement-persons>

26 <https://www.ilo.org/resource/2014-aucs-ouagadougou-10-declaration-and-plan-action-employment-poverty>

- AU Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2022)²⁷
- AU/ILO/IOM/UNECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP) Strategic Framework 2020 - 2030²⁸
- Assessment of Legal Labour Migration Frameworks in Africa²⁹

C. Selected relevant regional frameworks on labour migration

Regional legal and policy frameworks govern migration at the sub-continental level and are crucial for understanding regional migration dynamics. Journalists and communicators should explore these strategies to understand their impact on countries of origin and destination. They may highlight success stories, scrutinizing how these frameworks have positively impacted migrant workers on issues such as labour mobility, labour rights enforcement, or effective coordination on issues such as irregular migration. Media practitioners have a critical role in following up on the implementation of these different strategies and holding governments and regional authorities accountable for their implementation.

East African Community

► Protocol on the East African Community Common Market (2010)

The Protocol is a significant milestone in regional integration, aiming to enhance economic cooperation and development among East African Community (EAC) member states. Key aspects of the protocol related to labour mobility and migrant workers:

Key Provisions of the Protocol

- **Free Movement of Workers:** Article 10 of the protocol ensures the free movement of workers among EAC member states, allowing citizens of one member state to work in another without discrimination based on nationality. This includes rights to employment, remuneration and conditions of work similar to those of local workers.
- **Rights of Migrant Workers:** The protocol guarantees several rights for migrant workers, including:
 - **Right to Employment:** Workers can apply for and accept employment offers in other member states.
 - **Freedom of Movement:** Workers can move freely within the territories of partner states for employment purposes.
 - **Right of Residence:** Workers have the right to stay in the host country for employment purposes, subject to national laws.
 - **Social Security Benefits:** Migrant workers are entitled to social security benefits similar to those of local workers.
 - **Freedom of Association:** Workers can join labour unions and participate in collective bargaining.

²⁷ https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/41106-wd-DRAFT_DECLARATION_-_ENGLISH.pdf

²⁸ <https://www.ilo.org/projects-and-partnerships/projects/auiloimuneca-joint-programme-labour-migration-governance-development-and>

²⁹ https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40africa/%40ro-abidjan/%40sro-cairo/documents/publication/wcms_853283.pdf

- **Mutual Recognition of Qualifications:** The protocol encourages mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications to facilitate smoother labour mobility across borders.
- **Impact on Labour Mobility:** The Common Market Protocol has promoted labour mobility within the EAC region, facilitating the movement of skilled and unskilled workers and contributing to economic growth and job creation by matching skills with job requirements more effectively.
- **EAC Labour Migration Policy (2024):** The Policy, approved in 2024, is a comprehensive framework designed to enhance the governance, regulation, and protection of migrant workers within the EAC region.

Key Objectives and Provisions

- **Protection of Migrant Workers:** The policy prioritizes the protection and empowerment of migrant workers, ensuring their rights and well-being are safeguarded in host countries.
- **Labour Migration Governance:** It aims to strengthen governance mechanisms for managing labour migration processes, ensuring effective oversight and regulation.
- **Maximizing Benefits:** The policy seeks to leverage labour migration as a driver for socio-economic development within the EAC region.
- **Priority Areas:** The policy includes ten key priority areas, such as:
 - Labour migration governance
 - Harmonization of labour migration policies
 - Protection and empowerment of migrant workers
 - Access to social protection and social security benefits
 - Mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications.

Implementation Plan

- **Duration:** The implementation plan spans from 2025 to 2030, indicating a long-term commitment to the policy's objectives.
- **Guiding Document:** The policy serves as a guiding document for EAC Partner States to align their national policies with regional standards or develop new ones if needed.

Regional Context

- **Regional Cooperation:** The policy reflects broader regional efforts to formalize and consolidate cooperation on labour migration policies among African Regional Economic Communities.
- **Action Plan:** The EAC has also adopted a 5-year migration action plan to facilitate policy dialogue, align migration policies, and enhance collaboration among member states.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

- **IGAD Protocol for Free Movement in IGAD (2021)**
The Protocol integrates international labour standards and addresses mobility due to climate change.

► **IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework (2012)**

The Policy Framework provides Member Governments with a framework to govern migration and protect migrants within the region.

► **Djibouti Declaration on Labour, Employment and Labour Migration (2021)**

IGAD Member States have committed to harmonizing policies related to labour and labour migration.

Unit 1.5. Gender

A. Gender and labour migration

Women represent 38.7 per cent of international migrant workers globally,³⁰ despite being equally represented in the overall population. This proportion has remained stable over the past years, due to factors such as the under-representation of international migrants of working age and their lower labour force participation. Additional factors contributing to this situation include women migrating as accompanying family members and facing economic and non-economic obstacles in accessing the labour market.

Regional data show significant differences: in Northern, Southern and Western Europe, women international migrant workers slightly outnumber men, whereas in the Arab States and Sub-Saharan Africa, men international migrant workers outnumber women.

► **Box 4: AU-ILO Youth Employment Strategy for Africa (YES-Africa) (2024)**

"The AU/ILO Youth Employment Strategy for Africa (YES-Africa), endorsed in August 2024, is a collaborative framework aiming to create decent jobs and integrate young people into African labor markets. It focuses on structural transformation, digital/green jobs, and skills development to address the urgent need for productive employment across the continent. It aims to address the rapid population growth in the continent by enabling economic structural transformation and leveraging investments in key sectors like the care economy, digital technology, and green energy."

Link to the strategy: <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/AU-ILO%20Youth%20Employment%20Strategy%20for%20Africa.pdf>

Historically, economic migration in Africa has been largely male-dominated; however, women's migration is increasingly gaining prominence. A growing number of women are migrating for work, education and other economic opportunities in the region, a phenomenon referred to as the feminization of migration.

Over the past two decades, the number of women migrating for employment has risen significantly. African women migrants constitute an undervalued workforce, often employed in sectors characterised by substantial decent work deficits. While labour migration can serve as a tool for women's economic empowerment, including through labour market integration and gendered remittances, women and men face distinct risks, experiences and vulnerabilities. Notably, women migrants are less likely than men migrants to be engaged in informal employment and economic activities.

³⁰ ILO global estimates on international migrants in the labour force: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/major-publications/ilo-global-estimates-international-migrants-labour-force>

This situation necessitates an intersectional approach to analyzing trends and gaps in decent work outcomes for migrant workers, taking intersecting forms of discrimination such as gender, migration status, race and age. High-quality, sex-disaggregated data is also essential for developing and implementing gender-responsive policies and measures. Gender considerations are crucial, influencing both the reasons for and the experiences of migration. Socially constructed roles, expectations and power relations affect the migration process, resulting in inequality of opportunity and treatment for women and men migrant workers. Women migrant workers face a dual challenge: they are at the intersection of two groups – women and migrants – often undervalued and face various labour market barriers.

UN DESA data suggests that the feminization of migration has reached significant levels in Eastern Africa, with 50.6 per cent of all migrants being female. Data about IGAD and EAC countries are presented in Table 1.

► **Table 1: Breakdown by Sex of Migrant Stock in IGAD and EAC countries, 2024**

	Percentage of females among international migrants (Total stock of international migrants)
Burundi	50.7% (387.000)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	51.8% (1.085.000)
Djibouti	47.5% (126.000)
Eritrea	43.9% (13.000)
Ethiopia	49.7% (1.168.000)
Kenya	49.5% (993.000)
Rwanda	49.4% (513.000)
Somalia	44.9% (78.000)
South Sudan	49.7% (914.000)
Sudan	50.3% (2.397.000)
Tanzania	50.0% (462.000)
Uganda	55.0% (2.058.000)
Total (Eastern African region)	50.6% (8.303.000)

Source: UN DESA, *International Migrant Stock 2024*

Since nearly half of all migrant workers in the region are women, labour migration policies should be gender-responsive and evidence-based. Labour migration policies should ensure coherence with employment, social protection and skills policies, and should be factored into development policies with a significant involvement of labour market institutions in their implementation.

For many women, as for men, migration can be a positive experience with important emancipating and empowering impacts. However, migration remains a gendered process; gender often determines whether someone has the option or resources to migrate, how to migrate, where to migrate, which sector to work in, terms and conditions of employment, and how a migrant worker returns and reintegrates. Women migrants are often confronted with gender-specific disadvantages and vulnerability in the migration process and in their employment. Women workers, especially young female migrants, often experience double or even triple discrimination, disadvantage, marginalization and vulnerability, including violence and harassment, and forced labour). The multiple layers of discrimination and vulnerability can take the form of:

- **Being women vis-à-vis men: Women migrant workers tend to be more exposed to human rights violations compared to men during every stage of their migration experience, due to limited access to and control over resources and decision-making.**

For example, women are more likely than men to lack access to accurate information on recruitment, the migration process, and the economic and social costs and benefits of employment abroad, increasing their risk of being deceived by unscrupulous recruitment agents and traffickers. Stereotyped labour roles lead to the concentration of female and male migrants in different sectors or occupations, with specific risks and vulnerabilities. Women are often concentrated in low-paid jobs, such as domestic work, which are not, or only partially, covered by labour laws and social protection provisions. Domestic and care work are performed within the private sphere of the home, where abuse and poor labour practices are less visible, and peer support is largely unavailable. Men are often concentrated in hazardous occupations such as construction or fishing, where their vulnerabilities are often unrecognized and unaddressed.

- **Being foreigners vis-à-vis nationals: Women migrant workers are vulnerable due to lack of labour and social protection in their jobs. They face gender discrimination in accessing information, education, and support networks, making them less aware of destination country laws and regulations and limiting their ability to seek legal redress. Like men migrants, women migrants face challenging living and working conditions, health risks, lack of access to social services and various forms of abuse. However, their disadvantaged situation in origin and destination societies increases their exposure to abuse. With rising xenophobia and discrimination, especially in unstable economic times, female migrants are more vulnerable than national workers.**
- **Being dependent compared to autonomous migrants: Migrant workers, particularly women, are vulnerable due to strong dependency on a specific employer. Their dependent status can lead to mistreatment and sexual harassment. Some migrants face restrictions on changing employers or require visa sponsorship, placing them under the employer's control. The "one employer rule" and visa sponsorship system can exacerbate this vulnerability, especially for women in domestic work, where work and living spaces are shared. In such cases, households typically fall outside the mandate of labour inspection, and the lines between personal and employment relationships tend to become very blurred. Employers may isolate workers, confiscate documents, limit contact, or evoke fear of job loss and deportation. Women may also face barriers if their migration status is linked to a male family member's consent or if they depend on a spouse/father for residence/work permits. Being undocumented or irregular migrants: Migrants can enter a country irregularly or fall into irregularity due to non-compliance with requirements, such as losing a regular job. Restrictive policies in countries of origin, like age bars or consent requirements, can limit legal migration channels for women, increasing their risk of irregular migration and abuse. National legislation may also force migrants to stay in exploitative workplaces. Women are often more vulnerable to being undocumented or irregular migrants, with limited resources to law and fear of approaching authorities.**

Gender-responsive labour migration policies ensure rights are enjoyed by men and women migrant workers, respecting gender equality and non-discrimination principles. These policies may include special gender-specific provisions, such as preferential treatment or affirmative action, to address long-term discrimination faced by women migrant workers particularly compared to men migrant workers and national workers (both women and men).

Gender-responsive labour migration policies should include measures to counter exploitation, abuse and discrimination of migrant workers. They should account for differences in socio-cultural roles, needs, opportunities, constraints and vulnerabilities of women and men, ensuring equal enjoyment of human rights, including labour rights. Migration legislation, policies and programmes should promote equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation, eliminating sex-based discrimination.

B. The importance of journalism and communication

Public debates on labour migration often overlook gender-related disparities. Stories about “migrants” are typically gender neutral, neglecting specific challenges faced by women or men. To address this, the ILO has developed guidance for journalists and communicators to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach.³¹

► Box 5: Gender-sensitive reporting on migration - guidelines

A gender-sensitive story is stronger and more nuanced, reflecting different viewpoints and voices. It assesses relations, representations, social hierarchies, structures and power dynamics between men and women and other gender identities, and their different experiences in society.

- Use words that remove sexist biases and frameworks, avoiding references to a person’s race, class, sexual orientation, nationality, or marital status when irrelevant.
- Consider gender-aware alternatives, labour force or workforce (instead of ‘manpower’), female or woman (instead of ‘girl’ for an adult), domestic worker (instead of ‘cleaning lady’), sex worker (instead of ‘prostitute’) and so on. Gender-aware language avoids assumptions about women’s and men’s roles in society, challenging discriminatory representations.
- When reporting, consider key issues faced by women, including gender-based violence, marriage migration, pay inequity, discrimination, and maternal healthcare and rights.
- Avoid portraying family, children, contraception and maternity as the mother’s sole responsibility.
- Be aware of gender-based discrimination in migration policies and jobs abroad, such as migration bans based on age, marital or maternal status, and jobs abroad that perpetuate gender roles.
- Include gender-disaggregated data in all reporting when possible.
- Recognize women’s unpaid care work and its impact on their lives.
- Acknowledge that men and boys can experience domestic violence, sexual assault, rape and human trafficking.
- When interviewing, gather diverse perspectives from men and women to equally represent their different voices and perceptions.
- Apply gender concerns to image use, avoiding reinforcement of social constructions of femininity and masculinity.
- When quoting from sources using demeaning language, put sexist words or phrases in quotes to highlight their offending usage.

31 Gender-sensitive reporting and communication on labour migration https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/fair-recruitment/publications/WCMS_858566/lang--en/index.htm

Unit 1.6. Bilateral labour migration and circular migration agreements

Bilateral labour migration agreements (BLMAs) are arrangements between two countries or agencies, outlining responsibilities and actions for governing labour migration. BLMAs include legally binding agreements (BLAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), as well as bilateral agreements between ministries or agencies on labour migration aspects. These agreements may also cover topics like irregular migration, readmission, and migration and development.³²

A. Bilateral labour agreements (BLAs)

Bilateral labour agreements³³ can facilitate safe, regular and orderly labour migration between countries, when addressing labour market needs and protecting migrant workers and can be more beneficial if they are based on social dialogue. They can be tailored to specific groups of migrants, allowing sending and receiving states to share responsibilities for ensuring adequate living and working conditions, monitoring, and managing pre- and post-migration processes.

► Box 6: AU Guidelines on Developing Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (2022)

The AU guidelines on Developing Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (2022) aim to achieve three objectives:

1. Provide guidelines for policymakers and practitioners to develop BLAs and MOUs based on international (including African) instruments on human and labour rights, global frameworks (SDGs and GCM), existing African protocols/ legal instruments on free movement and migration policy frameworks, as well as relevant tools and good practices.
2. Address gaps in existing BLAs in migrant protection and labour migration governance and propose steps to enhance the promotion and protection of migrant workers' rights.
3. Propose an African template and guidelines that complement where needed and promote implementation of the AU Protocol on Free Movement and the respective REC free movement and labour mobility systems and are aligned with regional integration objectives/considerations.

Read the AU Guidelines: https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/41106-wd-GUIDELINES_ON_DEVELOPING_BILATERAL_LABOUR_AGREEMENTS_BLA-ENGLISH_0.pdf

► Box 7: IGAD Regional Guidelines on rights-based Bilateral Labour Agreements

The IGAD Regional Guidelines on Rights-Based Bilateral Labour Agreements were developed by the ILO and the IGAD secretariat and adopted by member states as a regional standard for drafting, negotiating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating BLMAs.

Read the IGAD Regional Guidelines: <https://igad.int/download/igad-regional-guidelines-on-rights-based-bilateral-labour-agreements-blas/>

³² UN Global Guidance on BLMAs 2022.

³³ The ILO has mapped, categorized and analyzed over 150 BLAs which can be searched on an online repository: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/policy-areas/measuring-impact/agreements/lang--en/index.htm>

B. Memoranda of understanding (MoUs.)

Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) are less formal than BLAs, preferred by destination countries for their flexibility. MOUs are easier to negotiate, implement and modify according to changing economic and labour market conditions. Countries sign MOUs for political reasons, to reflect friendly relations, or to reinforce cooperation in managing irregular migration.

C. BLMAs in the region

EAC and IGAD countries, such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania, have signed different agreements with countries within and outside the region, as suggested in Table 2.

► **Table 2: Examples of existing BLMAs in the Region**

		Year of Agreement	Type of Agreement
Ethiopia	Qatar	2013	BLA
	Jordan	2023	MOU
	Saudi Arabia (Domestic Workers)	2018	BLA
	Bahrain	2013	BLA
	Lebanon	2023	BLA
	UAE	2018	MOU
	Kuwait	2024	MOU
Kenya	Qatar	2012	BLA
	Saudi Arabia	2016	BLA
		2023 (Domestic Workers)	BLA
	United Arab Emirates	2018	BLA
	Rwanda (for teachers)	2006	BLA/MOU
	United Kingdom (for healthcare workers)	2021	BLA
	Germany	2024	BLA
	Austria	2024	MOU
Somalia	Qatar	1983	BLA
Uganda	UAE	2019	MOU
	Jordan	2016	BLA
	Qatar	2024	BLA
	Saudi Arabia	2023	BLA
Tanzania	Jordan		
	Qatar	2024	MOU
	Saudi Arabia	2023	
	United Arab Emirates		

Source: Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLMAs) – Rapid Assessment of the Southern Corridor, IOM, 2021; Author's compilation as of time of the publication.

► **Box 8: Reporting BLAs in the region**

Journalists play a key role in covering the design, signing and implementation of BLAs, as illustrated in the following articles:

Kenya to sign labour deal with Saudi Arabia soon, says president

Read article: <https://www.zawya.com/en/economy/africa/kenya-to-sign-labour-deal-with-saudi-arabia-soon-says-president-sotljwwc>

EAC moves to protect migrant workers from abuse

Read article: <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/eac-moves-to-protect-migrant-workers-from-abuse-4217054>

Ethiopia's MoLS Minister In Saudi Arabia To Discuss Employment Cooperation

Read article: <https://www.fanabc.com/english/ethiopias-mols-minister-in-saudi-arabia-to-discuss-employment-cooperation/>

D. Circular migration agreements

Circular migration refers to temporary movements, of a repetitive character and either formal or informal, of persons across borders. Managed or regulated circular migration programmes have emerged as a migration policy tool to mitigate the effects of brain drain and promote development in origin countries through a steady flow of remittances, return of skilled workers and support for enterprise development.

E. Regional Agreements

In addition to various bilateral arrangements, there are also a number of regional and sub-regional agreements on various aspects of migration. Regional agreements on migration typically involve a series of meetings that allow participants to share experiences and develop relationships and a common understanding of mutual problems.

Unit 1.7. Social security protection of migrant workers**A. Social protection needs**

Social protection is defined by the ILO as the set of public measures that a society provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress caused by the absence or a substantial reduction of income from work as a result of various contingencies (sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age and death of the breadwinner); the provision of health care; and the provision of benefits for families with children.

By definition, social protection is broader and more inclusive than social security since it incorporates non-statutory or private measures for providing social security, but still encompasses traditional social security measures such as social assistance and social insurance. For the purpose of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), social protection floors are nationally defined sets of fundamental social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. As social security systems remain less developed in East and Horn of Africa States, with coverage being extended to mostly formal sector workers, the situation of migrant workers remains precarious when it comes to access to social protection and particularly to the

portability of accrued social security benefits. This is especially the case with migrant workers in an irregular situation who have been able to contribute to the social security systems of countries of destination. Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of ensuring adequate social protection coverage for all, including migrant workers. They have been among the most affected categories of workers in terms of both health and economic impact of the pandemic, as they often work in high-risk sectors such as health care, caregiving, agriculture, agro-food processing, transportation and so on.

ILO standards that address the issue of social security for migrant workers globally comprise the **Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118)**, and the **Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157)**. Conventions Nos. 118 and 157 establish a system based on several basic principles: equality of treatment, the maintenance of acquired rights and the maintenance of rights in the course of acquisition.

- 1. Equality of treatment:** By the principle of equality of treatment, non-national workers must benefit in the host country from the same conditions as nationals in terms of coverage and entitlement to social security benefits.
- 2. Maintenance of acquired rights and the provision of benefits abroad:** The maintenance of acquired rights permits migrant workers to receive benefits due to them from a State, even when they cease to be resident on its territory. This principle, which is essential for the social protection of migrant workers, is intended to ensure them real equality of treatment and not just legal equality. In the case of long-term benefits (particularly invalidity, old age and survivors' benefit, and annuities paid as a result of an employment accident or an occupational disease), there is a direct obligation to maintain acquired rights, in the sense that it is not dependent on the conclusion of an agreement between the States concerned. With regard to short-term benefits, the obligation to maintain acquired rights is indirect. States have to endeavour to participate in schemes for the maintenance of these rights.
- 3. Maintenance of rights in course of acquisition:** The maintenance of rights in the course of acquisition makes it possible to add together periods of coverage of migrant workers under the social security legislation of the various countries in which they have lived.
- 4. Applicable legislation:** The States concerned have to determine by common agreement the applicable legislation, in accordance with certain principles set out in the Convention itself. The applicable legislation is normally that of the State in which the persons concerned carry out their occupational activity or, in the case of persons who are not active, in which they are resident.
- 5. Administrative assistance and assistance to persons:** Convention No. 118 provides that States parties shall afford each other administrative assistance free of charge with a view to facilitating the application of the Convention and the implementation of their respective social security legislation. The matters covered by Conventions Nos. 118 and 157 are very complex. With a view to facilitating the conclusion of agreements between the States concerned and their coordination at the international level, the Maintenance of Social Security Rights Recommendation, 1983 (No. 167) contains model provisions in annex for the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral social security instruments.
- 6. Social security** is a set of interventions and benefits aimed to reduce and prevent poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout the life cycle through nine main benefits:
 - Retirement benefits
 - Unemployment benefits
 - Survivors' benefits
 - Occupational injury and disease benefits
 - Health insurance benefits

- Maternity benefits
- Invalidity benefits
- Sickness benefits
- Family benefits

7. Portability is defined as the maintenance of the right to social security benefits that are acquired, or in the course of acquisition, in two or more different countries. Portability enables a migrant worker to preserve, maintain, and transfer those social security benefits. It requires cooperation between the country of origin and the destination.

B. Barriers in accessing social protection

Migrant workers may face many challenges and barriers in accessing social protection. These may be territorial – related to their country of origin or the destination country where they work – or attached to their nationality. The ILO has also identified numerous legal and practical barriers which may be related to certain categories of workers, migration status, informality or lack of information.³⁴

C. Regional efforts

Efforts are underway in the EAC and IGAD to develop social security coverage for migrant workers and ensure portability of benefits.

In the EAC, efforts are grounded in the EAC Common Market Protocol (CMP), which includes clauses calling for member states to coordinate and harmonize policies to improve access of citizens to social protection and expand the scope to include all workers. These priorities are also reflected in the EAC Labour Migration Policy, which calls for strengthening legal frameworks on social protection through harmonization, coordination and collaboration and broadening the scope and the coverage to include migrant workers, as well as establishing mechanisms to ensure portability. In order to effectively implement these commitments, the EAC has been developing two key instruments, including:

Key resources include:

- **EAC Council Directive** on the coordination of social security benefits
- **EAC Social Protection Policy**

In the IGAD region, similar efforts are underway to extend coverage, availability and access to social protection for all workers, including migrant workers and workers in rural areas and the informal economy, as well as those impacted³⁵. Member States and sub-regional partners are working together to extend social protection to migrant workers. The IGAD Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, in Article 9, calls upon Member States to facilitate, through IGAD or bilateral arrangements, the portability of social security benefits to citizens of another Member State residing or established in the host Member State. The region, as per the recommendation in the Ministerial Communiqué of the Second Ministerial Conference on Labour, Employment and Labour Migration, is in the process of finalizing the IGAD Regional Social Protection Strategy.

³⁴ A comprehensive list of challenges and barriers is listed in the publication *Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers, Refugees, and their Families: Guide for Policymakers and Practitioners* (Chapter 1.3): <https://www.ilo.org/publications/extending-social-protection-migrant-workers-refugees-and-their-families>

³⁵ IGAD Regional Workshop on Extending Social Protection for Migrant Workers, 2022, <https://igad.int/igad-opened-regional-workshop-on-extending-social-protection-for-migrant-workers/>

Unit 1.8. Skills mobility and recognition of migrant workers skills

A. Migrant workers face skill recognition challenges

Migrant workers are over-represented in jobs and tasks that require fewer and lower-level skills, are lower paid and offer restricted career prospects.

Migrant workers, especially women migrant workers, are often subjected to “deskilling” and “brain waste” during their migration experience. To gain access to employment, migrant workers not only need to possess relevant skills but also need to be able to signal and validate these skills to potential employers. They need to have relevant and verifiable skills to gain access to job opportunities and adjust to changing labour markets. This means skills need to be transferable between jobs and easily recognized by employers, that is portable.

The low capacity of national recognition bodies and processes in both countries of origin and destination has been one of the significant barriers to skills portability and recognition of migrant workers’ skills, but it is not the only one. Skills recognition at the country level and between countries can be promoted by instruments available at the international level or negotiated at bilateral, regional or multilateral levels.

B. The African Continental Qualification Framework

The African Union is working on the development of an African Continental Qualifications Framework³⁶ (ACQF). The ACQF is a policy instrument that will contribute to enhancing comparability and transparency of qualifications; facilitate mutual recognition of certificates; improve mobility of learners and workers across the continent; and promote cooperation and alignment between different qualifications frameworks (national, sub-regional) in Africa and eventually with other frameworks globally.

C. IGAD & EAC qualification frameworks

IGAD and EAC are working on the development of regional qualifications frameworks. Background information and integration processes can be found in the two following documents:

- The IGAD Qualifications Framework³⁷ (IGADQF)
- The East African Qualifications Framework For Higher Education³⁸ (EAQFHE)

Unit 1.9. Labour migration statistics

Labour migration data

The collection, analysis and utilization of accurate and disaggregated data are the basis for evidence-based policies. Migration is a very sensitive political area that requires comprehensive, up-to-date and high-quality data to guide policymakers in taking the right policy decisions. Access to reliable data on labour migration is necessary to understand migration flows and their implications for labour markets. Accurate sex-disaggregated data and in-depth gender

36 See African Continental Qualifications Framework — ACQF <https://acqf.africa>

37 See https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/webinars/2nd-training-week-5-9-september-2022-skills-qualifications-and-frameworks-for-mutual-trust/session-15_igadqf-updates.pdf/@display-file/file/session-15_igadqf-updates.pdf.pdf

38 See https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-10/session_5_eaqfhe_6th_plw_22oct.pdf

analysis of international labour migration and its gender dimensions and gaps are crucial to help design effective, evidence-based and gender-responsive policies that address the specific needs of women and men migrant workers and enable them to access decent work, equal pay, equal opportunities and fair treatment in their countries of destination.

Such data and analysis can inform the policy solutions to address those gaps so that the enormous potential of labour migration contributes to sustainable development in EHoA and its Member States. The ILOSTAT website includes a section³⁹ dedicated to labour migration with access to data sets, edited content, tutorials and publications. It serves as the go-to website for anyone interested in accessing the latest, reliable data on migrant workers.

► **Box 9: Working with migration statistics is a complicated exercise, not just for rookies**

Because migrants are relatively small percentages of the population (3 – 5 per cent on average, globally), it can be difficult to find enough migrants to respond to national household surveys, which themselves typically cover about 5 per cent of a country's population. Moreover, in many places, migrants are housed in collective or institutional housing arrangements, which are usually not covered by these surveys. Informal workers or irregular migrants are also often reluctant to talk to survey enumerators, for fear of being identified, fired or deported, despite assurances that any information provided to the survey is anonymous. All of these factors make it challenging to produce reliable and valid migration statistics.

Countries also use different definitions to identify who is a 'migrant' in official statistics. A distinction can be made between migration statistics based on 'country of birth' and those based on 'citizenship'. Depending on the policy being developed, it might be more relevant to look at one or the other. For this reason, the ILO collects and produces statistics using both definitions.

Finally, in many places, migration is a politically sensitive topic. Being on the unpopular side of the migration debate has made or broken careers, institutions, and even entire governments. Like any other statistics, interpreting migration statistics can serve a range of purposes or ideologies. While there are often very few statistics to base analytical conclusions or policy recommendations on, it is essential to use a broad range of information, which all point to a reasonable interpretation from different angles, to substantiate an evidence-based conclusion.

For additional guidance, see: <https://ilostat.ilo.org/avoid-these-5-rookie-mistakes-when-using-ilo-databases/>

Efforts⁴⁰ are underway in the East and Horn of Africa region to address significant gaps in labour migration and strengthen institutional capacities for data collection, analysis and dissemination. For example, IGAD has endorsed the Roadmap for the development of the IGAD Regional Labour Market Information System to harmonize the collection of labour market and migration data to inform policy and action at national and regional levels.

39 <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/labour-migration/>

40 <https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/enhancing-labour-migration-statistics-through-regional-training-and>

Unit 1.10. Legal frameworks

A. A rights-based approach to labour migration

Labour migration is a global phenomenon involving a number of different parties. Understanding the specific responsibilities of these different actors is critical to producing accurate information. In 2020, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights produced a toolbox⁴¹ with seven key elements to building human rights-based narratives on migrants and migration.

Using a rights-based approach, journalists and communicators should consider the heightened vulnerability of migrant workers to human rights and labour rights violations. Instances of abuse and exploitation can occur throughout the migration cycle, prior to departure, in the country of destination, or upon return to the country of origin.

The legal framework governing labour migration and addressing forced labour and fair recruitment is both international and national. At the international level, several instruments have been adopted over time.

Some of these instruments are legally binding for the countries that have ratified them (conventions and protocols), and some provide non-binding guidance to strengthen national frameworks (recommendations). In addition, the elimination of all forms of forced labour is one of the ILO's four fundamental principles and rights at work. As a consequence, the instruments related to forced labour must be respected, enforced and promoted by all ILO member States, whether they have ratified it or not.

B. International labour standards

While not an exhaustive list of international legal standards relevant to labour migration, trafficking, forced labour and related offences, the following timeline presents selected relevant international law instruments:

► **Table 3: Selected international law instruments on labour migration, trafficking and forced labour**

1930	Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) – Convention No. 29 defines forced labour as: "...all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily". The Convention requires ratifying States to suppress all forms of forced or compulsory labour (Article 1(1)). As the first convention on the subject, it provides the definition of "forced or compulsory labour" (Article 2(1)) and lists five exceptions. It also requires ratifying States to ensure that the use of forced labour is punishable as a penal offence and that penalties are "really adequate and strictly enforced" (Article 25). You can verify if your country has ratified this convention on the ILO NORMLEX website: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312174
1948	Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88) – Convention No. 88 outlines the responsibilities of a public employment service. It requires ratifying States to maintain a free public employment service for workers (Article 1). Ratifying States are also required to establish advisory committees, including representatives of employers' and workers' organizations, to advise on the organization and operation of the public employment service and on the development of employment service policy (Article 4(1)). The public employment service should assess workers' vocational capacity and assist them in obtaining training and match employers' vacancies with workers who have suitable skills (Article 6(a)). You can verify if your country has ratified this convention on the ILO NORMLEX website: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312233

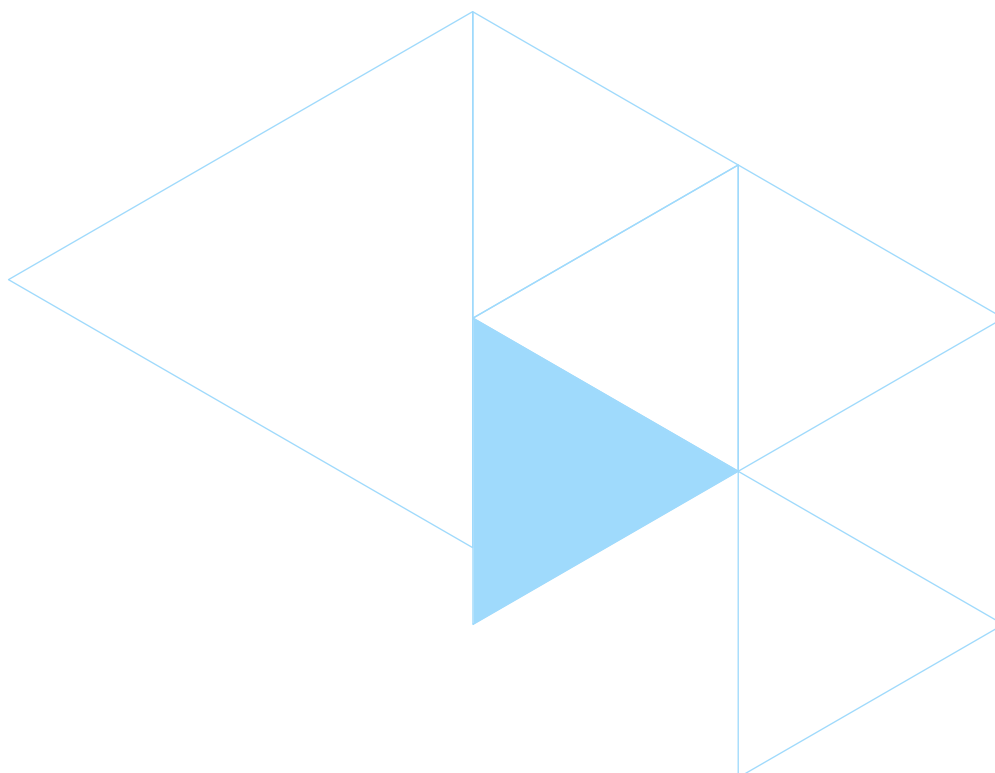
41 OHCHR, 2020 <https://www.standup4humanrights.org/migration/en/toolbox.html>

1949	Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) – The Convention requires ratifying States to facilitate international migration for employment by establishing and maintaining a free assistance and information service for migrant workers and taking measures against misleading propaganda relating to emigration and immigration; it includes provisions on appropriate medical services for migrant workers and the transfer of earnings and savings. States are required to apply treatment no less favourable than that which applies to their own nationals in respect of a number of matters, including conditions of employment, freedom of association and social security. You can verify if your country has ratified this convention on the ILO NORMLEX website: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312242
1957	Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) – Convention No. 105 explicitly prohibits five situations where forced labour is imposed by state authorities, namely: forced labour as punishment for the expression of political views, for the purposes of economic development, for participation in strikes, as a means of racial or other discrimination or as labour discipline. You can verify if your country has ratified this convention on the ILO NORMLEX website: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312250
1958	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) – The ILO adopted this Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, which is part of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (Declaration on FPRW adopted in 1998 and revised in 2010). The Convention requires States to enact legislation that prohibits all discrimination and exclusion on any basis, including race or colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, in employment and to repeal legislation that is not based on equal opportunities. You can verify if your country has ratified this convention on the ILO NORMLEX website: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312256
1975	Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143) – The Convention provides for measures to combat clandestine and illegal migration while at the same time setting forth the general obligation to respect the fundamental human rights of all migrant workers. It also extends the scope of equality between legally resident migrant workers and national workers beyond the provisions of the 1949 Convention to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, social security, trade union and cultural rights and individual and collective freedoms for persons who, as migrant workers or as members of their families, are lawfully within a ratifying State's territory. The convention calls upon ratifying States to facilitate the reunification of families of migrant workers legally residing in their territory. You can verify if your country has ratified this convention on the ILO NORMLEX website: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312288
1990	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990 – Entering into force in 2003, this Convention obligates States to protect the human rights of migrant workers and members of their families without distinction of any kind, such as sex, race, colour, language, religion or conviction, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, economic position, property, marital status, birth or other status and regardless of their stage of migration. Under Article 11, no migrant worker or member of their family shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour or be held in slavery or servitude. You can verify if your country has ratified this convention using the OHCHR dashboard: https://indicators.ohchr.org
1997	Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181) – Adopted in 1997, this Convention recognizes the “role private employment agencies may play in a well-functioning labour market”. The purpose of the Convention is to allow the operation of private employment agencies as well as to protect the workers using their services. According to Article 7 of the convention, private employment agencies shall not charge directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or costs to workers. You can verify if your country has ratified this convention on the ILO NORMLEX website: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312326
1998	Declaration on Fundamental Principles of Rights at Work, 1998. Adopted by all ILO Member States in 1998, the Declaration defines the four core labour standards that all Member States must “respect, promote and realize”, whether or not they have ratified the relevant Conventions. The four principles are freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, as well as the elimination of forced labour, child labour, and discrimination. In 2022, a fifth principle was added to the Declaration: occupational safety and health.

1999	Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182) – Adopted in 1999, this Convention calls for the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency. The worst forms of child labour include all types of slavery, including the sale and trafficking of children; forced labour to pay off a debt; any other type of forced labour, including using children in war and armed conflict. Other worst forms of child labour include the sexual exploitation of children, the involvement of children in illicit activities, and work which is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. Since 2020, this convention has been universally ratified. https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/ilo-child-labour-convention-achieves-universal-ratification
2000	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000 – The Palermo Protocol is one of three protocols that were adopted by the United Nations to supplement the 2000 Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Protocol). Article 3 of the Protocol defines trafficking in persons as requiring three components: the act, the means and the purpose. The Palermo Protocol establishes children as a special case for which only two components are required for a definition of trafficking in persons – the act and the purpose. You can verify if your country has ratified this protocol using the OHCHR dashboard: https://indicators.ohchr.org
2008	General Recommendation No. 26 on Women Migrant Workers, 2008. This General Recommendation, under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, aims to elaborate on the circumstances that contribute to the specific vulnerability of many women migrant workers and their experiences of sex- and gender-based discrimination as a cause and consequence of the violations of their human rights.
2011	Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) – Adopted in 2011, this Convention focuses on decent work specifically for domestic workers. Articles 8 and 15 address the recruitment of domestic work with notable provisions on the role of private recruitment agencies, fees and repatriation. According to Article 9, domestic workers: a) are free to reach an agreement with their employer or potential employer on whether to reside in the household, b) who reside in the household are not obliged to remain in the household or with household members during periods of daily and weekly rest or annual leave; and c) are entitled to keep in their travel and identity documents in their possession their travel and identity documents. You can verify if your country has ratified this convention on the ILO NORMLEX website: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:2551460
2014	Forced Labour (Supplementary Measures) Recommendation, 2014 (No. 203). Recommendation No. 203, which supplements both the Protocol and Convention No. 29, provides non-binding practical guidance on measures to strengthen national law and policy on forced labour in the areas of prevention, protection of victims and ensuring their access to justice and remedies, enforcement and international cooperation. It builds on the provisions of the Protocol and should be read in conjunction with it. Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (P029) – The Protocol is a legally-binding instrument that requires States to take effective measures to prevent forced labour and provide victims with protection and access to remedies, including compensation. It supplements Convention No. 29, so ILO member States must have ratified the Convention first to be able to ratify the Protocol. You can verify if your country has ratified this protocol on the ILO NORMLEX website: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:3174672
2019	Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (C190) – Adopted in June 2019, this Convention is the first international treaty to recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. You can verify if your country has ratified this protocol on the ILO NORMLEX website: https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:3999810

► **Table 4: Ratification of ILO Migrant Workers Conventions (No. 97 and No. 143) as well as the Private Employment Agencies Convention (No.181), the Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189), the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention (P029), and the Violence and Harassment Convention (No.190) in IGAD and EAC as of January 1st 2026.**

	Migration for Employment Convention (Revised) 1949 (No. 97)	Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention 1975 (No. 143)	Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)	Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)	Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (P 029)	Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)
Burundi						
Democratic Republic of the Congo						
Djibouti					2018	
Eritrea						
Ethiopia			1999			
Kenya	1965	1979				
Rwanda			2018			2023
Somalia	2021	2021	2021			2021
South Sudan						
Sudan					2021	
Tanzania-Zanzibar	1964					
Uganda		1978				2023
Total ratification	3	3	3	0	2	3



► **Box 10: ILO supervisory system/mechanism***

International labour standards are backed by a supervisory system that is unique at the international level, and that helps to ensure that countries implement the conventions they ratify. The ILO regularly examines the application of standards in member States and points out areas where they could be better applied. If there are any problems in the application of standards, the ILO seeks to assist countries through social dialogue and technical assistance.

The ILO has developed various means of supervising the application of Conventions and Recommendations in law and practice following their adoption by the International Labour Conference and their ratification by States.

There are two kinds of supervisory mechanisms:

Regular system of supervision

Examination by two ILO bodies of reports on the application in law and practice sent by member States and on observations in this regard sent by workers' organizations and employers' organizations.

- The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations.
- The International Labour Conference's Tripartite Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations.

Special procedures

Unlike the regular system of supervision, the three special procedures listed are based on the submission of a representation or a complaint.

- Procedure for representations on the application of ratified Conventions.
- Procedure for complaints over the application of ratified Conventions.
- Special procedure for complaints regarding freedom of association (Freedom of Association Committee).

Observations and requests made by the supervisory bodies can be a useful resource for journalists. They can help them identify shortcomings or improvements in the implementation of specific international labour standards. Recent requests from the ILO related to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) can be found on the NORMLEX platform**.

* Detailed information can be found on the ILO official website (<https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/ilo-supervisory-system-mechanism/lang--en/index.htm>).

** https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:4021990

C. Good practices in national legislation

Armenia: The 2011 Criminal Code (Amendments) allowed for the confiscation of property from offenders. Additionally, victims of trafficking have been included in the list of vulnerable persons eligible for extra employment assistance by the government.

Ethiopia: Ethiopia has ratified key international conventions related to forced labour, including ILO Conventions No. 29 (Forced Labour) and No. 105 (Abolition of Forced Labour). The country has also incorporated these principles into its national legislation, including the revised Labour Proclamation No. 1156/2019.⁴² This proclamation prohibits forced labour and outlines penalties for offenders. The Ethiopian government has also developed a National Action Plan (NAP) to combat human trafficking, which includes elements related to forced labour and a proclamation on the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons, Proclamation No. 1178/2020.⁴³

Nigeria: Section 62 of Nigeria's Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, as amended in 2015, provides that where "the circumstances so justify, trafficked persons shall not be detained or prosecuted for offences related to being a victim of trafficking, including non-possession of valid travel documents, use of a false travel or other document."

United Kingdom: The United Kingdom's 2015 Modern Slavery Act criminalizes human trafficking, including forced or compulsory labour.

United States: The United States Government emphasized the importance of due diligence in preventing human trafficking with Executive Order No. 13627 in 2012, and Title XVII of the National Defence Authorization Act for FY 2013. Subsequently, the U.S. Government enacted "Combating Trafficking in Persons" in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, setting out strict requirements for contractors and subcontractors who receive federal contracts.

D. National legislation related to forced labour and fair recruitment

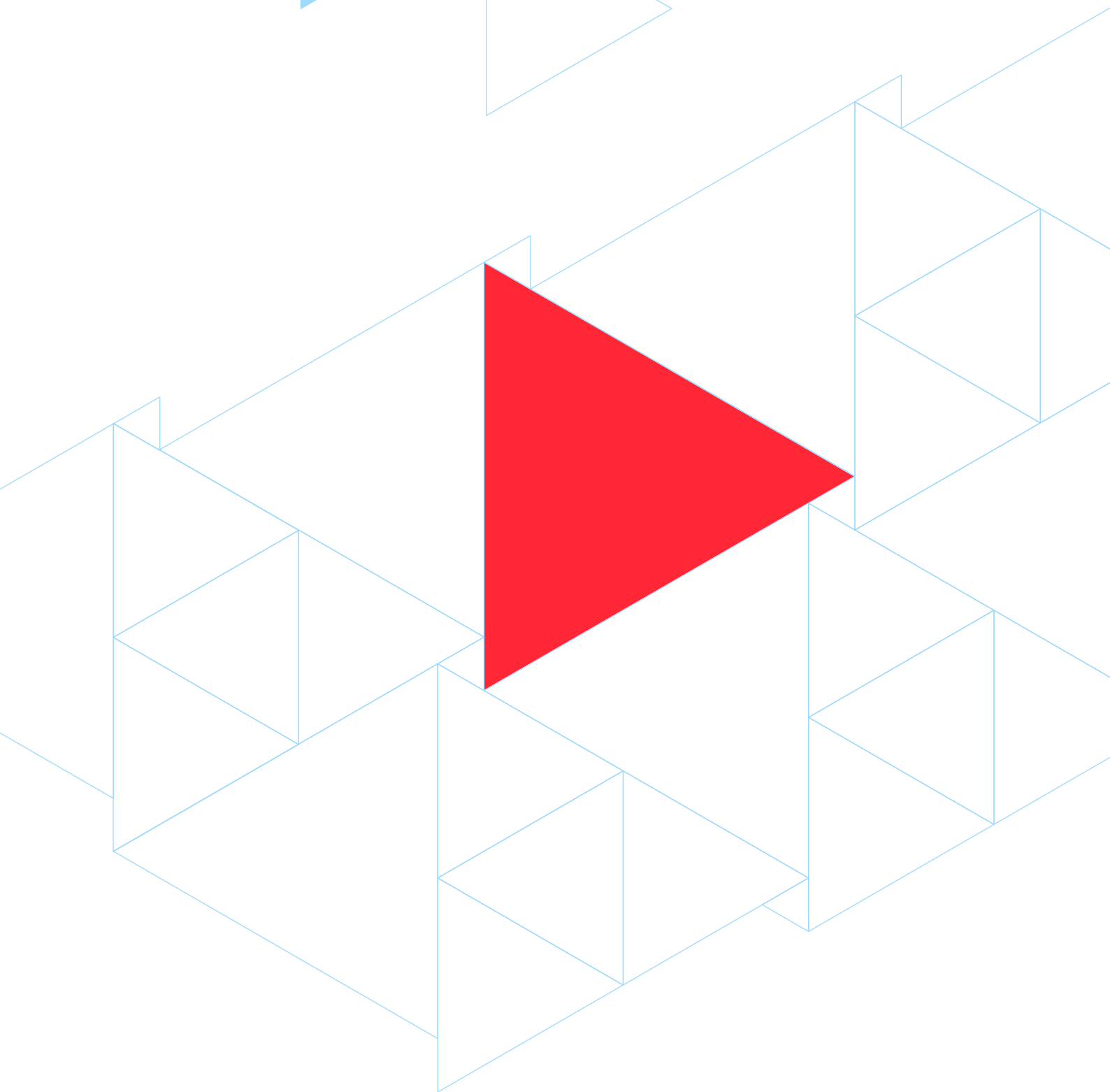
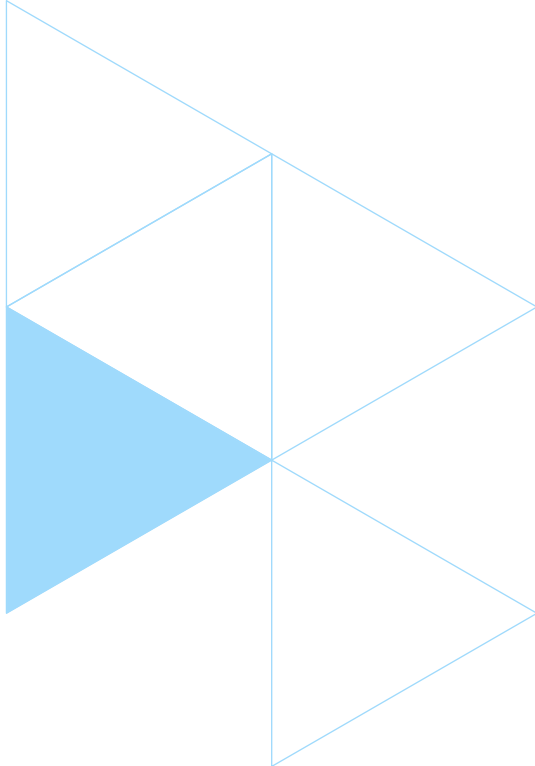
The ILO NATLEX platform allows searching for national labour, social security and related human rights legislation. It is possible to browse the platform either:

By country https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.byCountry?p_lang=en

By subject https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.bySubject?p_lang=en

42 Proclamation No. 1156/2019: https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/r/natlex/fe/details?p3_isn=109825

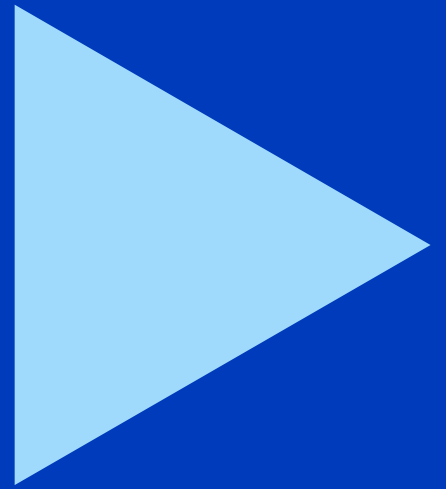
43 Proclamation No. 1178/2020: https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/r/natlex/fe/details?p3_isn=113354



Module

▶ 2

Finding the story



Unit 2.1. Getting prepared

Being fair to the story is a challenging task. It requires good preparation, understanding of the subject matter, hard work and long-term dedication. According to photojournalist and documentary filmmaker Mimi Chakarova, the biggest preparation is mental. Beyond the mental preparation, she also suggests that quality reporting comes from extensive research. When doing so, you should bear in mind the following dos and don'ts:

► Table 5: Dos and Don'ts

DO Read current media reports and identify stories with poor coverage, gaps in legislation, inadequate victim protection and discrimination in services provided to victims.	DON'T Look for stories that are sensational or try to fit into an existing narrative by distorting reality.
DO Reach out to relevant expertise, including: civil society organizations, academia, and professionals working on labour migration and forced labour.	DON'T Overlook the fact that you are dealing with vulnerable persons. Rushing, even with tight deadlines, can have dramatic consequences.
DO Assess the feasibility of possible stories, considering: time, format, legal and personal risk, resources and potential consequences for you and your sources.	DON'T Forget that your responsibility is to inform your audience and not to advocate.

Unit 2.1. Finding a story

This section provides examples of reporting on labour migration and forced labour situations. However, the focus is not on exposing abuse. Positive stories can be powerful, providing information that prevents abuse and improves public perception of labour migration benefits. When labour migration occurs under fair recruitment and decent working conditions, it can contribute to development, benefiting countries of origin and destination, as well as migrants themselves.

Journalists can also report on positive changes in policies, laws and business practices, highlighting their potential impact on thousands of people. This section is organized thematically, featuring a brief introduction, reporting examples and relevant questions to spark story ideas.

A. Human stories

The most compelling stories are those where people share their own stories. Sensationalizing these accounts is unnecessary; instead, let the facts and testimonies speak for themselves, adding relevant factual information as needed. Support groups can facilitate connections with individuals, such as those who have escaped. Protect their identity if requested. Human interest stories are often widely shared, raising awareness and creating social pressure for change.

Key questions you may wish to consider include:

- How were they recruited?
- What work are they doing?
- What journey did they take?
- What are their living conditions outside work?

If trapped in forced labour, how did they gain freedom? How did their community react?

► **Box 11: Domestic Workers in Gulf Countries Vent Woes on TikTok**

In-depth examination of how domestic workers in the Middle East have turned to TikTok to share intimate details of their lives — and the potential consequences they face for speaking out.

Read the story: <https://fullerproject.org/story/domestic-workers-in-gulf-countries-vent-woes-on-tiktok/>

B. Labour and the workplace

Decent work embodies people's aspirations in their working lives. The Decent Work Agenda has four pillars: employment creation, social protection rights at work and social dialogue. Recruitment conditions can impact these pillars, and fair recruitment should apply to all workers. Abuses can occur in various industries, leading to forced labour, often in hidden or remote areas like domestic work, agriculture, mining and fishing, as well as in everyday industries like catering and hospitality.

Key questions to consider :

- What are the main sectors in your region?
- What steps do workers take to get a job? Do they pay recruitment fees? How can advance payments lead to "debt bondage"?
- Are employers and workers aware of their rights at work?
- What are the working conditions like?
- Is safety and health information provided on the job?

► **Box 12: Example of stories about work**

Ethiopia recruits 500,000 women for domestic work in Saudi Arabia

Human rights activists have criticised Ethiopia's ongoing recruitment of women for domestic work in Saudi Arabia.

Read the story: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/4/17/ethiopia-recruits-500000-women-for-domestic-work-in-saudi-arabia>

C. Business and economics

Forced labour and unfair recruitment generate huge illegal profits. An ILO study found that modern slavery generates annual profits of over US\$236 billion⁴⁴.

News reports can highlight the economics behind these issues, encouraging employers and businesses to address forced labour risks and promote fair recruitment and decent working conditions in their own operations and supply chains.

44 ILO, 2024. Profits and poverty: the economics of forced labour, <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/annual-profits-forced-labour-amount-us-236-billion-ilo-report-finds>

Key questions to consider:

- What economic incentives are behind unfair recruitment, exploitative working conditions and forced labour?
- How can these be reversed or overcome?
- What measures are businesses taking to promote decent working conditions?
- How do public and private employers ensure supply chain due diligence?
- How are corporate promises integrated into business practices?
- Has consumer pressure led to worker improvements?

► Box 13: Example of stories about money

EAC Diaspora Remittances Soar to a Record \$9.3 billion

Remittances from the East African diaspora soared to a record \$9.3 billion in 2022, despite the high transfer costs according to the World Bank. This makes remittances one of the largest sources of external financing for the region.

Read the story: <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/east-africa-news/eac-diaspora-remittances-soar-to-a-record-9-3-billion-4502248>

D. Migration

The ILO estimates that there are 167.7 million migrant workers globally⁴⁵. Stories about migration can highlight the challenges individuals and their families face when seeking better opportunities. They can also showcase the positive contributions migrant workers make to economies, helping to counter negative stereotypes and xenophobia. Key questions to consider:

- Why do people look for work opportunities abroad? What are the legal migration pathways?
- How do people travel?
- Who facilitates migration?
- What happens when legal migration routes are suddenly closed? How are migrant workers received in destination countries? Are they treated fairly?

► Box 14: Example of stories about mobility

South Sudan Joins Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to allow free movement of engineers across East Africa

South Sudan has just acceded to the Mutual Recognition Agreement of engineers, marking a significant milestone towards the free movement of professional engineers within the East African Community region.

Read the story: <https://tanzaniatimes.net/news-tanzania-south-sudan-kenya-uganda-rwanda-sign-pact-to-allow-free-movement-of-engineers-in-east-africa/>

⁴⁵ ILO, 2025. ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers (<https://www.ilo.org/publications/major-publications/ilo-global-estimates-international-migrants-labour-force>)

E. Discrimination

Discrimination can be based on gender, race, ethnicity, indigenous identity and disability. These forms of discrimination can influence recruitment and working conditions. Workers may be in due to their ethnic group, caste or political opinion. Women migrant workers may experience discriminatory labour practices at home and abroad. Considering discrimination is essential when examining recruitment and forced labour issues. Stories about overcoming workplace discrimination and promoting equality can raise awareness and change mindsets.

Key questions to consider:

- Are certain groups job opportunity, recruitment or working condition discrimination? In which sectors?
- Are efforts being made to ensure workplace equality?
- Does internal and international migration affect specific groups differently?
- Are some groups more vulnerable to forced labour? Children? Women? Men? Indigenous people?
- Do women and men have equal rights at work? Are they equally aware of their rights?

► Box 15: Examples of stories about differences

Fleeing war and poverty, African migrants face racism in Egypt

Egypt has long been a refuge for African migrants, but racist harassment is reportedly on the rise.

Read the story: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/1/2/fleeing-war-poverty-african-migrants-face-racism-in-egypt>

F. Law, Enforcement, and Crimes

The justice system in most countries exposes some of humanity's most unsavoury practices, such as labour rights violations. If your country takes action against labour abuses, contact the responsible organizations and individuals, whether in the mainstream police or a specialist agency. If laws exist but are not enforced, ask: "Why not?"

Key questions to consider:

- What relevant laws are in place in your country?
- Who enforces these laws?
- How is enforcement carried out?
- How effective is law enforcement?

What consequences do those who abuse workers' rights face?

► **Box 16: Example of stories about justice**

'She just vanished': Ethiopian domestic workers abused in Lebanon

For decades, Ethiopians have flocked to Lebanon seeking work, but many find a cycle of abuse that's hard to escape.

Read the story: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/6/16/vanished-the-plight-of-3-ethiopian-domestic-workers-in-lebanon>

G. Information, education and advocacy

Stories can highlight individuals addressing labour abuses and promoting decent work for all.

Key questions to consider:

- How are people being informed about their rights?
- Who is advocating for those abused?
- What public support or hostility exists for those in forced labour and migrants?
- Are advocacy groups' policies having unintended consequences? What role do celebrities or other figures play in raising awareness?

► **Box 17: Example of stories about awareness**

Mo Farah becomes a UN goodwill ambassador after retiring from athletics

Professional athlete Mo Farah has joined the UN migration agency IOM as its first global goodwill ambassador. The four-time Olympic gold medal winner, who was trafficked to Britain as a child from Somalia, has served as a migrant rights advocate for several years.

Read the story: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/53571/mo-farah-becomes-un-goodwill-ambassador-after-retiring-from-athletics>

Unit 2.3. Getting support

A. Gaining support

If you are a reporter pitching a story that requires time and resources and may attract hostile attention, be prepared to face challenges in convincing editors. Persuade them that the work is important and adds value to the news organization by highlighting: Investigations are core to journalism. Strong investigative reports can boost the organization's profile, standing and revenue. High-quality reports bring attention and recognition. Your organization can become the go-to source for the subject, attracting related stories.

Awards and recognition are possible outcomes.

B. Funding

When seeking extra time and resources for investigations, outline likely costs, including staff time, travel and accommodation and other expenses. Consider external funding options, such as international non-governmental organizations covering costs for reporting on migration. Grants may be available through competitions. However, be aware that funding can compromise editorial independence. Ensure your news organization retains control and remains responsible for published content.

C. Collaborating with other media outlets

Collaborating with another news organization can reduce costs and increase impact. Even major outlets like the Guardian and the Washington Post collaborate effectively. Similar organizations can also partner across borders.

Collaborative efforts are also useful at publication time, allowing simultaneous launches in multiple media and countries, which can amplify impact and audience.

The Global Investigative Journalism Network's Human Trafficking Resources⁴⁶ lists examples of successful collaborations.

D. External support

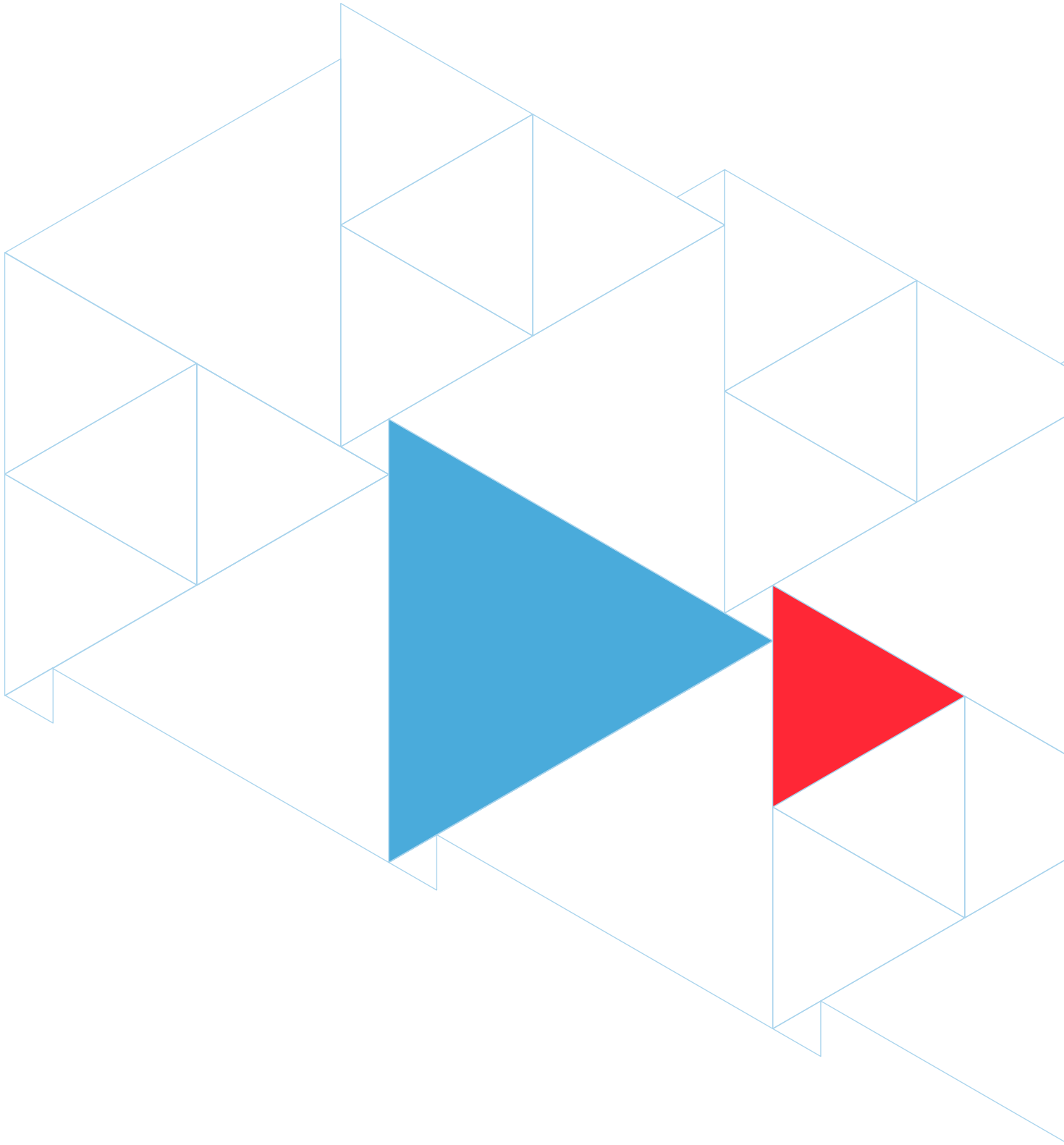
Secure support for your reporting both within and outside your media organization.

Possible supporters include:

- Elected politicians
- Business leaders
- Law enforcement officials
- NGOs and campaign group leaders
- Academic experts Celebrities

Explain your story and request support. Publish a brief statement of support alongside their image to demonstrate community backing. This will show those who oppose you that you have support in the community.

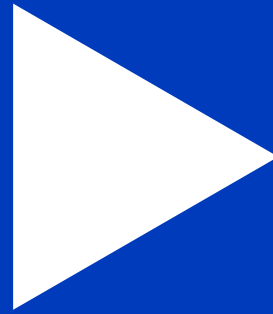
⁴⁶ <https://gijn.org/topic/human-trafficking/>



Module

▶ 3

Getting the story



Unit 3.1. Resources

A. Facts and figures

Facts underpin investigative journalism. Often presented as dry numbers, they can reveal compelling stories with proper understanding and interpretation. Develop a fondness for documents, particularly official or respected sources like official statistics, legal and regulatory frameworks, court documents, company publications and reputable newspapers.⁴⁷

B. Photographs and videos

Photographs and videos are crucial in modern storytelling. However, forced labour and unfair recruitment often occur in secret, making it challenging to capture images or footage. Both perpetrators and victims may be unwilling to be identified. If someone agrees to be photographed or filmed but requests anonymity, protect their identity during filming. For example, film them in silhouette or focus on their hands instead of relying on postproduction techniques such as pixelation. If original images are not available, consider:

- Using stock images (though they may not match your story).
- Do not use sensationalized images (For example, people bound in chains)

Illustrating with visual arts (drawings, cartoons, paintings). Leaving the story unillustrated and explaining why Images are important, but unprofessional editing can do a disservice to your audience.

Unit 3.2. Safety

A. The principles of ethical journalism

Here are some top key tips for safe reporting:

Be accurate: Only report facts you have checked and double-checked and know to be true. Everything else is a claim and should be attributed. Take care to report claims accurately. Do not draw conclusions. Report according to your abilities. When covering sensitive issues, report on what you see or are told by those around you. Leave analysis and interpretation to others with broader perspectives.

Be sceptical: Analyse the information that you are given on a situation critically. Consider recording conversations with anyone involved in a sensitive story and keep transcripts for potential evidence. Later, they may be pressured to deny reports, and you may need to present recordings and transcripts to a court.

Be balanced: Seek views from all parties. Use authoritative sources of their position, like official websites or news agencies. If you fail, explain why: "For such and such reason, it has not been possible to reach the following source of information."

Don't act as a judge, advocate or human rights activist. Leave this to the experts who can brief you and provide analyses.

Be impartial: Don't promote one party's views in the conflict. Avoid biased language: Don't describe one side as "strong, heroic, determined, rightful" or the other as "evil, weak, cowardly". Use neutral descriptions.

⁴⁷ Relevant data sources include the Migration Data Portal (<https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/labour-migration-statistics>) as well as statistics specific to the EAC (<https://www.migrationdataportal.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1251/files/2023-04/EAC%20International%20Migration%20Statistics%20Report%20Edition%20One.pdf>) and IGAD (<https://igad.int/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/IGAD-english-digital-2022-1.pdf>).

Show respect: Words used widely without intended prejudice in one community can cause offence in another. Would you like to be described as a 'tribal' or 'aboriginal'? Find out how people prefer to be described. Recognise personal biases and remove them from reporting.⁴⁸

B. Personal safety

Journalists reporting on issues like unfair recruitment or forced labour are particularly at risk – even if they do so in a balanced and objective way. They may be exposing criminal organizations, powerful individuals, or government abuses. Reprisals can range from intimidation and harassment to actual violence, illegal arrest, and arbitrary detention. It's essential to be aware of these risks and prepare accordingly.

► Box 18: Diverse Resources

- **Committee to Protect Journalists. (2012). Journalist security guide.** Retrieved from <https://cpj.org/security/guide.pdf>
- **Council of Europe. (n.d.). Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists.** Retrieved from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom>
- **Digital Platform for Safety of Journalists in Africa (n.d.).** Retrieved from <https://safetyofjournalistsinafrica.africa/resources/>
- **IFJ. (n.d.). Safety.** Retrieved from <https://www.ifj.org/what/safety.html>
- **IFJ. (n.d.). Gender Equality.** Retrieved from <https://www.ifj.org/what/gender-equality.html>
- **INSI. (n.d.). INSI Safety Code.** Retrieved from <https://newssafety.org/about-insi/insi-safetycode>
- **UNESCO. (n.d.). Basic Texts Related to the Safety of Journalists.** Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/basic-texts>
- **UNESCO. (2015). Safety guide for journalists. A handbook for reporters in high-risk environments.** Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/full-list/safetyguide-for-journalists>
- **UNESCO. (n.d.). UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.** Retrieved from <https://en.unesco.org/un-plan-action-safety-journalists>

C. Physical and mental health

Prepare mentally for potentially traumatic assignments. Share stories and experiences with colleagues and consider debriefing sessions with bosses and team members. Be aware of any potential physical health risks.

⁴⁸ Ethical Journalism Network, 2018. Five-point guide for migration reporting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aongjvQ-QCE>)

D. Digital security

- Avoid storing sensitive source contact details in your handwritten notes, books, mobile phones or computer files.
- Use code names for sensitive contacts in notes.
- Protect your mobile phone with strong PIN codes.
- Store sensitive contact details under assumed names.
- Delete records of sensitive calls and text messages.
- Disguise sensitive numbers in alternative formats.
- Learn about higher security options for web browsing and encrypted email.
- Exercise caution when posting on social media.

E. Going undercover

It is a general principle of journalism that reporters should be open and honest about their identity. They should not disguise their identity or activity to gain access to information that would not be shared with a reporter. However, gathering convincing evidence of crime and anti-social behaviour can be challenging while being fully transparent.

In cases where there is a strong public interest reason to suggest crime or serious anti-social behaviour, some investigative reporters will take on an assumed identity, such as posing as an unskilled worker to take a job where workers are abused. This is known as 'going under cover'.

If the reporter makes covert sound or video recordings, a court may decide that they are an invasion of privacy and illegal. Reporters who are uncovered may face threats and physical violence.

When preparing for an undercover investigation, consider the following:

- How to join the organization, being exposed, whether to work alone or with others
- Safety measures to ensure personal security
- Establishing and maintaining an undercover identity and story
- Avoiding suspicion by asking appropriate questions. Methods for gathering and transmitting information
- Contingency plans for exiting the situation if it becomes unsafe.

► Box 19: Diverse resources

- **New Vision (2021). Undercover in Saudi Arabia [Podcast].** Available at: <https://podcasts.apple.com/fr/podcast/new-vision-podcast/id1537095765?i=1000581248870> (episode #1)
- **R.AGE. (n.d.). [Online]. Student/Trafficked. [Online].** Available at: <https://www.rage.com.my/trafficked/>
- **Fruit picking investigation (2016). [Online].** Available at: <https://www.smh.com.au/interactive/2016/fruit-pickinginvestigation/>

Unit 3.3. Sources

Information can be gathered from various sources, including workers and their families, employers, agents and intermediaries involved in recruitment, as well as academics.

However, sources may be reluctant to speak out due to concerns about exacerbating the problem or putting themselves in danger. It is essential to be sensitive and respectful while encouraging them to provide information.

Stories about recruitment may address good or bad practices, leading to very different outcomes for workers and affecting their professional and personal lives.

Journalists reporting on these stories should work carefully and methodically to build a body of evidence, ensuring accurate, fair and balanced reporting.

A diversity of sources should be considered. The following section provides tips on addressing particular types of sources.

A. Survivors

When interviewing survivors, do not pressure them, but explain that speaking out can inform the public about the scale and nature of the problem, give others confidence to speak and warn others of potential dangers they may face when travelling across borders.

To gain their trust, assure them that they will not be denigrated or re-victimised by the reporting. The way their stories are presented will also impact their willingness to cooperate with future interviews. Treat victims/survivors and their families with compassion, care, respect and dignity, while maintaining a sceptical and truth-seeking approach.

Allow interviewees to choose a comfortable and safe location for the interview. If requested, protect the identity of victims and survivors by not publishing identifying information, despite potential concerns about using anonymous sources. This is crucial to prevent retaliation against those who speak out.

Victims and survivors may request that their identities be protected. News organizations are often reluctant to use anonymous sources, as this can weaken the impact of the testimony. Those accused may attempt to punish those who speak out, making it essential to protect the anonymity of sources.

If anonymity is promised, ensure that it is maintained. Avoid revealing the source's identity, even inadvertently, by limiting the information published about them. In sensitive cases, protect the source's identity in notes and publications, and avoid mentioning their name or identity in any materials that may fall into hostile hands.

B. Support groups, advocacy organizations, academics

- The power and emotional impact of a story can be enhanced by testimonies from those directly impacted, and further strengthened by a wider perspective that places individual stories into context. To achieve this, gather information from experts in the field, including: Support groups for victims and survivors
- Associations
- Trade unions
- Law enforcement agencies
- Social services and other public services
- Academics
- Politicians with a specialist interest in the issue.
- Lawyers
- Global organizations, such as the ILO.

When meeting these experts, ask for recommendations on other relevant contacts. Build a network of contacts, follow their work, and read their publications. Take detailed notes during research, including the views and opinions expressed by each person. This allows for accurate attribution and enables verification of information if needed, helping to maintain the trust of sources. Inaccurate representation or misattribution can damage relationships and lead to loss of trust. Organizations and experts working on forced labour and fair recruitment can be found in the Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Expert directory: <https://humantraffickingexperts.com/>

C. Actors suspected of abuse

People accused of crimes or anti-social behaviour should be contacted last, when all evidence has been gathered, and a strong case has been built. Early contact can enable them to influence witnesses, destroy evidence, or undermine the investigation.

- However, fairness requires giving them an opportunity to respond to allegations. A response time of one to two days is often considered sufficient, allowing for a considered response without enabling interference with the investigation or actions to prevent publication. If an interview is agreed, ensure personal safety by: Having a colleague present
- Informing the editor of the meeting location
- Arranging for a check-in
- Taking detailed notes or making a recording.
- Maintaining a professional and polite demeanour. Avoiding displays of anger or indignation.

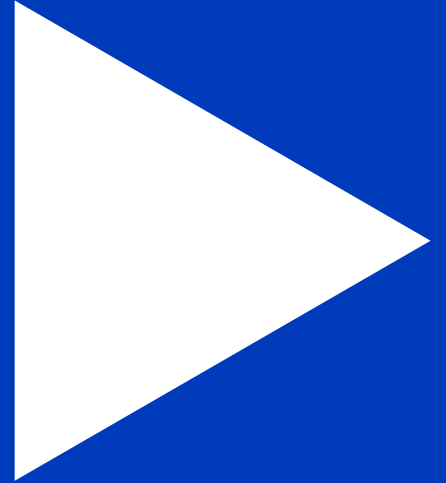
If they refuse to meet, they may be asked to answer questions by phone or email. Alternatively, they can prepare a written or recorded statement in response to the allegations. Persistence is necessary in seeking a response, reiterating the importance of their view in the interests of accuracy and fairness.

If no reply is received after repeated contact, their position can be represented using publicly available sources. The report can then state that the accused declined to comment or failed to respond. Maintain a polite tone, as the journalist's role is to present facts, not to determine guilt, but to set out the facts as far as they can be established so that the public can reach their own conclusions.

Module

▶ 4

Telling the story



Unit 4.1. Which medium?

Journalists can use various platforms to publish their stories, and it is beneficial to consider early on how to maximize the material's reach and impact. Multiple platforms can be used, including newspapers, the web, and television.

A. Web

Most news outlets have a website, with some existing solely online. These websites can host video, audio and text-based content. When building a story, consider capturing photos, audio or video recordings to accompany an article. A "long read" is a web article format that incorporates multimedia elements, such as pictures, infographics, maps, audio and video clips into a lengthy text article. This format is engaging and particularly suited to features and investigations.

B. Social media

Many news organizations use social media platforms like Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter) and Instagram extensively. Social media can serve as a tool for attracting audiences for mainstream output or as a medium for storytelling in its own right.

Some reporters effectively tell complex stories on X through concise posts, often accompanied by images or short videos. Instagram is ideal for sharing images and short videos, allowing the publication of testimonial images with permission. Social media's instantaneity can prompt concrete reactions from individuals or organizations. X has been used to highlight exploitative human trafficking conditions, promoting swift reactions from authorities. Social media is also a platform where recruiters operate, potentially leading to forced labour or fair recruitment opportunities. As people increasingly search for jobs on social media, quality reporting should appear on these platforms.

C. Radio programmes

Radio programmes can be part of a regular schedule or exist as standalone podcasts, downloadable and playable at any time. Smartphones can serve as recording devices, especially when used with a plug-in microphone or held close to the sound source.

Editing can be performed on a smartphone or computer.

D. Video

Lightweight video production techniques, such as filming and editing on a smartphone, enable individuals with modest resources to create videos that can be shared online, broadcast on TV, shown in cinemas, or played to audiences in community halls.

E. Animation

Animation is an effective way to tell stories while protecting the identities of those involved.

F. Apps

News organizations offer apps for accessing content, and some have experimented with using apps to tell stories innovatively. For example, the BBC created an immersive video to simulate a migrant's experience of risking their life to seek work and a future in another country.

G. Telling the story in pictures

As mentioned in the previous chapter, journalists should carefully consider how they portray their subject when reporting on labour issues, paying particular attention to preserving source anonymity and protecting victims of labour abuses.

Unit 4.2. Consider a series

When working on a difficult subject like fair recruitment or forced labour, you may have more material than needed for a single news report. Consider creating a series of reports on the same theme and hosting it online.

You may consider turning your series into a campaign, where a news organization goes beyond its usual role of reporting neutrally on an issue and supports a policy change. News media aiming to be impartial and objective typically do this when fighting criminal activity and promoting human rights, such as liberty, health and free labour.

Campaign stories may focus on an individual and unfold over time, or feature different individuals facing similar problems. Alternatively, a single issue can be examined from multiple angles: the trafficked or abused worker, employer, agent, law enforcement officer and so on.

- Stories can run consecutively or as an occasional series. Signposting forthcoming stories helps maintain viewer or reader engagement, for example: "Tomorrow, in our upcoming series, we'll meet the broker who sent Abdul on his perilous journey."
- We'll hear more from Marie and find out how she's getting on with life as a free woman."

Six steps to a successful campaign

Step 1: Set out your goal

Campaigns can start off big or start small and grow. They benefit from clear objectives and advance planning. Define the goal, such as a change in the law or other action. Examples:

- "An end to the permit system"
- "State care for trafficked women "

Step 2: Manage your campaign

Assign a daily manager, typically the lead reporter and a senior editorial champion (for example, deputy editor, head of newsgathering), to ensure momentum and resource allocation, including time and protect the writing team from external pressures. The champion will also address the potential reluctance of junior staff to commit resources.

Step 3: Seek to make a strong initial impact

Launch the campaign with impact, avoiding competition with planned news events. Prominently feature the first story, supported by side stories, backgrounders, images, and infographics.

Step 4: Make it easy for readers to join in

People are increasingly used to having their say on controversial issues via social media. Enable reader participation through social media and website comments. Publish notable comments and establish a clear code of conduct for online commenting, as comments can also be negative, racist, sexist or otherwise unacceptable. Create a dedicated email account for public comments, story ideas and suggestions.

Consider setting up or promoting e-petitions to support campaign demands, such as changes in legislation.

Encourage readers to sign and track signatories to demonstrate growing support. If setting up a petition, ask a sympathetic politician to support it. Publish the number of signatories as it rises to show growing support.

Step 5: Do something readers can't do

Leverage the news organization's power to amplify readers' voices, ask questions and demand answers from authorities. Specifically, follow up with calls to check if the material was received, has been read and if there are any comments on the dossier. Maintain pressure by re-contacting if necessary, such as trying again a week later if there is no response. Record efforts to obtain answers and publish them.

Step 6: Keep at it

Sustained campaigns require ongoing effort. There is an old newspaper adage that says when you are getting tired of a campaign, readers are only just beginning to notice it. Unless you have opted for a short, sharp campaign, you are in it for the long run. Engage the entire newsroom in maintaining campaign momentum and interest- it is a collective responsibility, not just for those directly involved. Keep campaigns lively, active and interesting.

Unit 4.3. Are you ready?

A. The editing process

Reporting on fair recruitment and forced labour requires the use of good editing guidelines and practices, similar to other types of reporting. Various resources on editing are available, but this focuses on key considerations.

B. Are you ready?

Before publishing, bring everyone involved in the story together to ensure all information is available. Confirm the following:

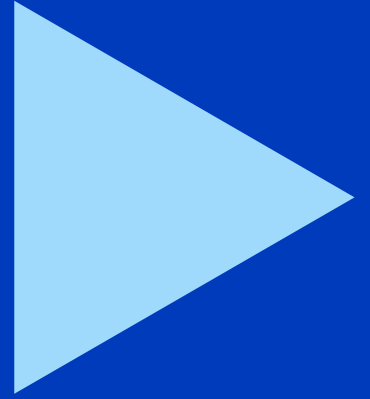
- What are you trying to say or allege?
- Do you have sufficient information and evidence?
- What are the implications of your allegations?
- Do you have full confidence in your sources and document analysis?
- Have you verified and checked all information? Have those under criticism been given the opportunity to respond?
- Is the story well-structured (beginning, middle, end)?
- Can the story be broken into manageable parts?
- How will you illustrate the reports (pictures, illustrations, tables, graphics)?
- Has a lawyer or experienced editor checked the entire story (including the headlines)?

If you can't answer all these questions fully, you are not ready to publish.

Module

▶ 5

Following up



Unit 5.1. Impact, awards and specializing

A. Impact

Effective journalism can positively impact people's lives.

Reporting on issues like forced labour and unfair recruitment can lead to significant changes, even if the practices themselves might not end. Reports may:

- Lead to individuals being freed from forced labour
- Encourage employers to modify practices and influence business partners to do the same
- Give workers who had their rights infringed the confidence and contacts to set up a support group for others
- Prompt authorities to strengthen laws and enforce existing ones
- Influence policy-makers to address the root causes of forced labour and unfair recruitment
- Raise awareness and change public perceptions about specific worker categories

Consider the desired outcomes for workers when reporting. For example, freeing workers from forced labour is a clear outcome, while improving working conditions may involve complex changes with multiple stakeholders, hence, it is more difficult to reach and monitor.

B. Awards

Awards, prizes and fellowships⁴⁹ are available for various types of reporting, including labour migration issues and forced labour. These topics regularly feature in generic media awards, particularly when they involve intensive investigation. In recent years, some of the most prestigious prizes in different countries have gone to these types of stories:

- Pulitzer prize (USA): Seafood from Slaves (2016)⁵⁰
- National Magazine Award (Canada): The Cage (2016)
- Albert Londres (France) : Voyage en barbarie (2015)⁵¹

These awards can amplify a story's impact by drawing attention from other media professionals and the general public. Additionally, several award schemes focus specifically on labour and migration issues, such as:

- Global Media Competition on Labour Migration and Fair Recruitment⁵²
- Migration Media Award⁵³
- Anti-Slavery Day Awards⁵⁴
- ILCA Labour Media Awards⁵⁵
- International Women in Media Foundation Awards⁵⁶
- IGAD Media Awards⁵⁷

49 See notably the African Union Media Fellowship: <https://www.nepad.org/aumf>

50 Associated Press, 2016. An AP investigation helps free slaves in the 21st century.

51 Voyage en Barbarie, 2018. Accueil.

52 ILO, 2020. ILO launches sixth Global Media Competition on Labour Migration and Fair Recruitment.

53 Migration Media Award.

54 Human trafficking foundation, 2018. Anti-slavery day awards.

55 International Labour Communications Association.

56 International Women's Media Foundation: Our Awards.

57 <https://mediaawards.igad.int>

Unit 5.1. Final tips

A. Read up

To effectively report on labour migration and recruitment issues, it is essential to have a solid understanding of the subject matter. This involves reading extensively on the topic, including specialist magazines and relevant blogs. Follow government bodies and NGOs, which often publish newsletters about their activities. Understand recruitment mechanisms, labour migration, and national and international legal instruments.

Take advantage of opportunities to learn about the subject, such as workshops, to build knowledge and develop a professional network.

► Box 20: Diverse Resources

- ILO Topic page on Fair Recruitment: www.ilo.org/fairrecruitment
- ILO Topic page on Forced Labour: www.ilo.org/forcedlabour
- Thomson Reuters Foundation. Reporting on Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery: <https://www.trust.org/media-development/programmes/?sfid=a15D0000018xNIaIAM&areaOfFocus=Human%20Trafficking%20and%20Modern%20Day%20Slavery>

B. Don't get lost in the subject

- To effectively communicate specialist issues, explain them clearly to your audience using everyday language. This involves: Translating technical terms into everyday language
- Cutting out irrelevant detail
- Explaining things which are not clear
- Making your stories relevant to readers, listeners or viewers

C. Don't be alone

Connect with other journalists covering similar topics for support and resources. This can include reaching out to colleagues for information, contacts and story ideas, joining or forming local groups or networks, and organizing informal meetups to share knowledge and experiences.



International
Labour
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