

## IDWF Asia News December 2014 - January 2015



December 2014 to January 2015 was an exciting time for IDWF and its Asian affiliates. Asia's domestic workers were active in spreading the word about domestic workers rights – celebrating the launch of the IDWF Communication network and celebrating International Human Rights Day on December 10 and International Migrant's Day on December 18. Then they kicked off International Human Trafficking Awareness month in January. The IDWF has also continued to hold workshops and help with capacity building, and expanded the online communication network to include regional pages for region-specific sharing and updates.

### UPDATES

#### Bangladesh

Jan: Former Bangladeshi domestic worker Mashud Parves Rana is suing his former employers, who worked for the Bangladeshi consulate in New York. Rana says he was never paid during the 18 months that he worked for the couple, and worked 16-20 hour days. He says that his employers threatened his life if he tried to escape.

#### Cambodia

Dec 10: Forty local and international NGO's, including the Cambodian Domestic Workers Network, asked the Cambodian government to ratify ILO Convention 189 to safeguard the rights of Cambodian domestic workers domestically and abroad.

#### Hong Kong

Jan: The trial of the former employer of Erwiana Sulistyarningsih began on December 8 and lasted for six weeks. Her employer is on trial for assaulting her during the 7 months that she worked for the employer in 2013.

Jan: Former Hong Kong domestic worker and photographer Xyza Cruz Bacani was awarded a prestigious human rights scholarship to study photography at New York University. She told other domestic workers that 'all dreams are valid!'



**Xyza Cruz Bacani**

1 Mutual Friend · 22 January · Central District · Edited ·



All dreams are valid! Im one of the 2015 magnum fellows! Im going to see new york and finally get a formal education! Im literally crying when i received the news. Thank you to Sim Chi Yin, Kerri Of NYT lensblog, JVS, Torsten, Steve, Robin, Vineet and to my Manong Rick Rocamora.. My papi and mama was so proud and excited, even my girls in Bethune!

<http://magnumfoundation.org/2014hrfellows/>

#pinay

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#### India

Dec 09: Saudi Arabia and India have approved an agreement to allow Indian domestic workers into Saudi Arabia for work. The domestic workers shall not have criminal records and must be trained in special centres on household work, as well as educated in Saudi Arabian customs and traditions.

Dec 11: Kuwait is considering banning domestic workers from migrating from India after Indian missions in GCC countries reported high levels of complaints about unpaid and delayed wages and harassment in the work place. Around 270,000 Indians work in Kuwait as domestic workers and they report that their passports are often confiscated under the Middle East 'kafala' system.

#### Indonesia

Jan 18: Indonesia's Minister of Manpower M. Hanif Dhakiri issued a regulation on domestic workers rights, but it did not include any clear guidelines. Lita Anggraini, the executive director of Jala PRT, a domestic

workers rights network in Indonesia, says that it is a first step by the government, but more needs to be done. Jala PRT is lobbying the government to introduce domestic worker protection draft bill and ratify ILO C189.

## Lebanon

Jan: Migrant domestic workers in Lebanon formed the first-ever domestic workers labour union in the country, the Federation of Employees' and Workers' Trade Unions of Lebanon (FENASOL), under the requirement that they include some local members in the new organisation. Many of Lebanon's migrant domestic workers come from Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines.

## Nepal



Dec 08: A seminar with parliamentarians regarding Nepalese Law on Domestic Worker and ILO C189 was held in Kathmandu by Swatantrata Abhiyan. Twenty-two parliamentarians from the development committee, international relations and labour committee, women and children committee, and the bills Committee attended the program. The program concluded that Nepal should ratify C189 and that civil Bill code sections 664 and 665 shall be amended. The New Labour Code shall include a special section on domestic worker. The event was supported by IDWF and Human Rights Magna Meet 2071.

## Singapore

Indonesia and the Philippines introduced tighter regulations for protecting maids going to Singapore. Indonesia will now require that Indonesian women going to Singapore earn \$500/per month, compared to \$450 per month previously.

To read more updates in the region, click here: <http://www.idwfed.org/en/updates/en/updates/asia-pacific>

## ACTIVITIES

- **Dec 6:** the National Domestic Workers Movement in India hosted a one day training program on team building for the leaders of the domestic workers federation at Peroorkada. Mr. Deepak OJ was the facilitator. On Dec 11, the Domestic Workers Federation held their state level meeting at Peroorkada. Mr. Yesudas presented a session on the 'way forward for Domestic Workers Federation and Mr. Deepark Oj facilitated a session on 'annual action plan of the federation'.
- **Dec 10:** the National Domestic Women Workers Union organised a day long hunger strike in front of the National Press Club in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Over 50 domestic workers participated in the hunger strike to demand the government approve the draft of 'Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy 2010', ratification of ILO C189, and inclusion of domestic workers in national labor laws.
- **Dec 16:** the International Domestic Worker's Federation announced the official launch of the IDWF communication network in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. <http://idwfed.org/en/campaigns/idwf-new-online-communication-network>
- **Dec 18:** In celebration of International Migrants Day, the Hong Kong Federation of Domestic Workers Unions organised a rally on Sunday December 21 in front of the Nepalese, Thai, and Philippines consulates and the Central Government Office to demand that China ratify C189, and the Hong Kong government provide adequate rest days, stop violence, and stop the visa ban on Nepali domestic workers.



National Domestic Women Workers Union outside the National Press Club in Dhaka

**Dec 18:** Each year, December 18 marks the United Nation’s International Migrants Day. Fifteen years ago on December 18 1990, the UN General Assembly adopted the International convention on the Protection of the



Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

**Dec 18-21:** the Asia Pacific Regional Workshop for female trade union organisers was hosted in Chiang Mai, Thailand, with the theme “Women leading, Women organizing.”

**Dec 23:** The Cambodian Youth network and IDEA met with MOLVT to discuss domestic migrant workers network in Malaysia and to spread support for ILO C189.

- **Dec 30:** The Cambodia Domestic Workers Network (CDWN) hosted their second annual congress in Phnom Penh. The group has 450 members, mostly in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap provinces. The meeting was held in cooperation with the Independent Democracy of Informal Economic Association (IDEA). Ms Yim Soth was voted president of CDWN, Ms. Vun Samphous –vice president, and Ms. Hai Somaly is the new secretary.

### *January 2015*

- **Jan 12:** Domestic workers hosted a press conference calling on the government to “protect local and migrant domestic workers rights in Hong Kong”
- **Jan 13:** Indonesian migrant workers rallied in defence of their rights
- **Jan 18:** The IDWF with LEARN Philippines Domestic Workers hosted a learning ToT workshop on strategy, vision, and commitment.
- **Jan 19:** Indonesia’s Manpower Ministry announced that it will introduce Manpower Ministerial Regulation No.2/2015. The draft bill will hopefully increase protection of domestic workers and is a draft bill prioritized in the House’s 2015 National Legislation Program.
- **Jan 25:** Domestic workers in Lebanon celebrated the first ever trade union for domestic workers: the Federation of Employees’ and Workers’ Trade Unions of Lebanon (FENASOL), and hosted their founding congress with the help of IDWF, the International Labour Organisation, the International Trade Union Confederation, and the Arab Trade Union Confederation.



The ladies at LEARN Philippines having too much fun at the ToT workshop

To read more details of the above activities, follow this link: <http://www.idwfed.org/en/activities/asia-pacific>

### **RESOURCES**

No one should have to work this way: journalist Karen Emmons and photographer Steve McCurry travelled through Asia to document and expose the abuse faced by Asian migrant domestic workers.

[http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS\\_329960/lang--en/index.htm?shared\\_from=media-mail](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_329960/lang--en/index.htm?shared_from=media-mail)

Dreams for Sale: the Exploitation of Domestic Workers from Recruitment in Nepal and Bangladesh to Working in Lebanon: a study on the recruitment process with recommendations for reforms to ensure a rights-based recruitment process. The study was conducted by KAFA (Enough) violence and Exploitation, a Lebanese organisation that fights violence and exploitation of women. <http://www.idwfed.org/en/resources/dreams-for-sale-the-exploitation-of-domestic-workers-from-recruitment-in-nepal-and-bangladesh-to-working-in-lebanon/>

### **CONTACTS**

Asian Affiliates: <http://www.idwfed.org/en/affiliates/asia-pacific>

Coordinators & Facilitators: <http://www.idwfed.org/en/help/help>