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INTERNATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS' NETWORK

Issue Highlights:



Justice to Rizana; Uphold Human Rights of Migrant Domestic Workers

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Dear friends,

On Jan 18, the IDWN gave a letter to the King Abdullah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), condemning the execution of a Sri Lanka migrant domestic worker in Saudi Arabia on 9th of this month. The letter was signed by our Chairperson, Myrtle Witbooi, and brought to the KSA Consulate in Hong Kong by Elizabeth Tang, the International Coordinator during a demonstration.



The domestic worker, Rizana Nafeek was accused of murdering an infant in May 2005. She was then only 17 years of age. Since then she was behind bars and denied of legal services and even translation.

According to Human Rights Watch report, some 45 women, including domestic workers are on death row in Saudi Arabia. We demand justice to Rizana and to all those in jail. Domestic workers are very vulnerable, facing high risk of framed accusation and even legal charges.

Please continue this action by sending letter to the King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. You may use the model letter and feel free to adapt it according to your situation and send it to the KSA consulate in your country or fax to the followings:

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c/o Ministry of The Interior

Fax: 1 403 1185

A Model Letter

(Date)

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz,
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Your Excellency,

We, (name of organization), representing (how many) domestic workers in (name of country), condemn in the strongest terms the beheading of Rizana Nafeek, a Sri Lankan domestic migrant worker, in Saudi Arabia on 9th January 2013, for a 'crime' which still has yet to be confirmed.

Rizana Nafeed was accused of murdering an infant she helped to take care of in May 2005 when she was only 17 years old. In her 7 years of imprisonment prior to her execution, justice has been denied to her. There was no thorough investigation into the case. No autopsy of the baby's body was carried out and Rizana was not provided with legal service and even interpretation services.

The decision of the Saudi Arabia government under Prince Mohammed bin Nayef bin Abdul Aziz to carry out Nafeek's execution despite repeated appeals for clemency by her family as well as local and international human rights and civil society organizations around the world is deplorable and unacceptable.

Migrant domestic workers, like all other migrant workers, are workers and human beings. Due to their nature of work, they are the most vulnerable and easy preys of exploitative recruitment agencies, abusive employers and the unjust legal system. Rizana Nafeed was a case in point. According to the Human Rights Watch's report, at least 45 women, including domestic workers, are now on the death row in Saudi Arabia. They will not be forgotten.

We strongly demand that the government of Saudi Arabia indemnify the case by apologizing to Rizana Nafeed's family and making other compensations according to the family's wishes. We further demand that the government of Saudi Arabia immediately adopt and reform its policies and laws in line with international standards as stipulated in the United Nations and International Labour Conventions, such as the C189, protect human rights and labour rights of migrant workers, in particular those of domestic workers, and avert future miscarriages of justice.

Yours faithfully,

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