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Advancement of women: advancement of women

Violence against women migrant workers

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [78/180](#), outlines the current situation in relation to the problem of violence against women migrant workers. It provides information on the measures taken by Member States and activities undertaken within the United Nations system to address this issue and ensure the protection of migrant women's human rights. The report concludes with recommendations for future action.

* [A/80/150](#).

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 78/180 on violence against women migrant workers, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive, analytical and thematic report to the General Assembly at its eightieth session on the problem of violence against women migrant workers, including domestic and care workers, and on the implementation of the resolution, based on information from Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and other relevant sources, including non-governmental organizations.

2. The present report covers the period from July 2023 to June 2025 and incorporates submissions from 20 Member States,¹ 1 intergovernmental organization² and 3 United Nations entities³ on addressing violence against women migrant workers in public and private spheres. It draws on recent research by United Nations agencies and other organizations, concluding observations, general recommendations and comments of human rights treaty bodies, and reports by special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council.

II. Context

A. Data and trends

3. Women represent 48 per cent of the estimated 304 million international migrants⁴ and 38.7 per cent of the world's 167.7 million international migrants in the labour force. Men comprise the majority of international migrants up to 54 years of age while women form the majority of migrants aged 55 years and over.⁵ Estimates of the number of rural women migrating internationally are approximate as the availability of sex-disaggregated data is limited. However, it is clear that the impacts of climate change are adding to pressures on rural women to migrate.⁶

4. It is estimated that one in three women worldwide experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes.⁷ Global data on violence against migrant women and women migrant workers are limited, but evidence shows that they are at greater risk of being subjected to violence and harassment than non-migrant women as a

¹ Algeria, Andorra, Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Togo and Türkiye.

² European Union.

³ United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UN-Women and World Food Programme.

⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "International migrant stock 2024: key facts and figures", January 2025.

⁵ ILO, *ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers: International Migrants in the Labour Force*, 4th ed. (Geneva, 2024).

⁶ *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Global Gender Snapshot 2024* (United Nations publication, 2024); and *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025* (United Nations publication, 2025).

⁷ UN-Women, Global Database on Violence against Women, available at <https://data.unwomen.org/global-database-on-violence-against-women> (accessed on 21 May 2025).

result of the vulnerable situations in which they often find themselves during transit, at borders and in countries of destination, including at work.⁸

5. Approximately 81 per cent of women migrant workers globally are employed in the service sector,⁹ in which demand for domestic and care work is growing.¹⁰ Domestic work remains a significant source of employment for women migrant workers worldwide: of the estimated 75.6 million domestic workers, including international migrant workers, approximately 76 per cent are women. In the Arab States, for example, women domestic workers, many of whom are migrants, constitute approximately 35 per cent of employed women.¹¹

6. Women migrant domestic workers are at heightened risk of violence and exploitation due to exclusion from labour protections and the nature of domestic work, which is often performed behind closed doors and in isolation.¹² As a result of a study conducted in 2024 of women migrant workers from Myanmar in Central Thailand, it was found that approximately 60 per cent of workers surveyed had experienced violence within the previous 12 months, which is markedly higher than the percentages of women who had reportedly experienced violence in their lifetime in Myanmar (20.6 per cent) and in Thailand (15.4 per cent).¹³ Analysis of the experiences of migrant women domestic workers in Spain, many of whom were employed informally, similarly revealed the prevalence of violence, including sexual and psychological violence, perpetrated against such women by employers.¹⁴

7. Despite international prohibitions on child labour, migrant girls (both international and internal migrants) remain engaged in domestic work, an area of work in which they are at especially high risk of violence, exploitation and trafficking.¹⁵ A study conducted in 2022 of girl domestic workers in Ethiopia, most of whom were rural-to-urban internal migrants, found that 40 per cent were not given a rest day, 27 per cent had their wages withheld by their employers and the average number of hours worked per week was 59.¹⁶

8. Globally, 81 per cent of domestic workers, including international and internal migrant women, are employed informally. That percentage is alarmingly high. The exact rate of informality among migrant women domestic workers is unknown, but the most recent estimates indicate that informality among women domestic workers was higher than that of their male counterparts in 67 per cent of the countries analysed in 2019.¹⁷ In many countries, legislation and regulations exclude domestic workers from social security entitlements, increasing their risk of destitution at some point in their lives. That risk is especially heightened for women migrant workers who often

⁸ IOM, *World Migration Report 2024*; and ILO, *Experiences of Violence and Harassment at Work: A Global First Survey* (Geneva, 2022).

⁹ ILO, *ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers*.

¹⁰ Group of Seven Gender Equality Advisory Council, *The World Needs Women's Leadership and Expertise: Gender Equality Advisory Council Report 2024* (2024).

¹¹ ILO, *The Road to Decent Work for Domestic Workers* (Geneva, 2023).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Nyan Linn and others, "Violence against women and its effects on mental health and quality of life: A study of Myanmar migrant workers in Central Thailand", *Journal of Migration and Health*, vol. 10 (2024).

¹⁴ Concepción Fuentes-Pumarola and others, "The spiral of violence experienced by immigrant domestic workers: a qualitative approach", *Violence against Women* (2025).

¹⁵ ILO, *Ending Child Labour in Domestic Work and Protecting Young Workers from Abusive Conditions* (Geneva, 2013).

¹⁶ Annabel Erulkar, Lemi Negeri and Eyasu Hailu, "The prevalence of domestic servitude among child domestic workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia", The Freedom Fund, October 2022.

¹⁷ ILO, *The Road to Decent Work for Domestic Workers*.

have inadequate access to social security in old age due to a lack of portability of social protection.¹⁸

B. Information and digital technology

9. Access to information is a defining factor in women's migration journeys, influencing their choice of route, choice of transportation, engagement with smugglers and awareness of potential dangers, including trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence. Accurate estimates of migrant women's access to technology are unavailable owing to data limitations, but existing evidence on the digital gender gap demonstrates that women from low- and middle-income countries are less likely to have access to the Internet or mobile phones, which means that they are less likely to be able to obtain valuable information.¹⁹ A study conducted in 2023 showed that only 40 per cent of migrant women travelling through Latin America and the Caribbean used mobile phones during their migration journeys.²⁰

10. While social media are a significant source of information for migrants, they also expose migrants to smugglers, who use social media as a recruitment tool. As reported by UNODC, smugglers use social media to coordinate their operations, receive payments and advertise their services.²¹ Smugglers also commonly use social media to provide updates to migrants' families or, in some cases, to extort them. As a result, by using social media, migrants, especially women, are at an increased risk of experiencing violence, such as kidnapping, exploitation and assault.²²

11. The weaponization of digital technologies is also increasingly common among traffickers, who use online platforms to profile, recruit, control and exploit migrants while retaining anonymity.²³ Although more research is required, the available evidence suggests that the growing use of digital technologies by traffickers increases the risk of technology-facilitated violence against women migrant workers.²⁴ In addition, it has been reported that the increasing availability of artificial intelligence tools has facilitated surveillance, stalking and the production of deepfaked content, which can be used to shame, humiliate and extort migrant women and their families.²⁵

12. The increasing use of online platforms to process migration applications can disadvantage women from countries where there is limited access to technology, including limited Internet connectivity.²⁶ As migrant women may be unaware of their rights and of the human rights obligations of countries of transit and destination, such

¹⁸ ILO, *Labour Rights and Social Protection Coverage for Domestic Workers in ASEAN* (Bangkok, 2024).

¹⁹ Casey Breen and others, "Mapping subnational gender gaps in Internet and mobile adoption using social media data", SocArXiv Papers, 27 February 2025.

²⁰ IOM, *Information and Communication Technologies and the Migrant Smuggling in Central America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic* (San José, 2023).

²¹ UNODC, "Using open-source intelligence to investigate human trafficking and migrant smuggling", 2024.

²² Gabriela Sánchez, Marta Sánchez Dionis and Kerrie Dearden, *Familias de Personas Migrantes Desaparecidas: su Búsqueda de Respuestas y el Impacto de la Pérdida – Lecciones de Cuatro Países* (Geneva, 2021).

²³ UNODC, Teaching Module Series: Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, available at <https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/en/education/tertiary/trafficking-in-persons-smuggling-of-migrants.html>.

²⁴ UN-Women and World Health Organization, "Technology-facilitated violence against women: taking stock of evidence and data collection", March 2023.

²⁵ Sarah W. Spencer and Caroline Masbouni, "Artificial intelligence in gender-based violence in emergency programming: perils and potentials", United Nations Children's Fund, November 2024.

²⁶ IOM, *World Migration Report 2024*.

limitations, coupled with a lack of accurate and gender-responsive pre-departure orientation programmes, hinder the ability of migrant women to make informed decisions related to migration.²⁷

C. Dangers along the migration journey

13. Violence against women migrant workers is perpetrated by a multitude of actors, including corrupt officials, criminal gangs, smugglers, traffickers and other migrants. Such violence takes many forms, including kidnapping, robbery, extortion and sexual violence. In 2024, a sevenfold increase in sexual violence was reported in the Darién Gap, which showed the high risk of gender-based violence to which women, in particular, are exposed as they engage in irregular movements from Colombia to Panama.²⁸ An analysis of the experiences of migrant youth in Ethiopia and the Sudan in 2022 and 2023 also showed that migrant women face an increased risk of gender-based violence; one conclusion of the analysis was that young migrant women were more likely to experience sexual violence than their male counterparts.²⁹ Along certain migration routes, sexual violence is so prevalent that some women obtain injectable contraceptives before departure in order to limit their risk of pregnancy in the event of a sexual assault.³⁰

14. Many women migrant workers rely on recruitment agencies, brokers and employers to gain access to regular migration pathways. Although genuine recruiters help migrants to navigate complex administrative processes, the widespread use of deceptive recruitment practices puts women migrant workers at risk of experiencing exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence.³¹ Moreover, the practice among some recruiters of charging recruitment fees and other costs is associated with an increased risk of debt bondage. In a recent analysis of the experiences of migrant workers from Cambodia, Ghana, the Philippines and Viet Nam, it was found that the time required for women migrant workers to earn the amount that they had paid in recruitment fees and associated costs was longer than that of migrant men workers.³²

15. Women migrant workers who engage smugglers in order to travel through irregular migration pathways often experience violence and abuse, including sexual violence, forced labour and trafficking at the hands of those hired to guide them.³³ Migrant women with insufficient funds who engage smugglers at the beginning of their journeys are particularly at risk of gender-based violence,³⁴ as economic precarity increases their vulnerability to debt bondage, forced labour and sexual exploitation.³⁵

16. Restrictive and discriminatory migration policies that limit access by women migrant workers to regular migration pathways increase the risk of violence and

²⁷ IOM, “Addressing women migrant worker vulnerabilities in international supply chains”, 2021.

²⁸ Doctors Without Borders, “Shocking increase in sexual violence reported in the Darién Gap”, 5 February 2024.

²⁹ Mixed Migration Centre, “A sharper lens on vulnerability: a statistical analysis of migrant youth vulnerability in Sudan and Ethiopia 2022–2023”, January 2025.

³⁰ Patricia Letona, Elly Felker-Kantor and Jennifer Wheeler, “Sexual and reproductive health of migrant women and girls from the Northern Triangle of Central America”, *Revista Panamericana de Salud Pública*, vol. 47 (2023).

³¹ ILO, *Fair Recruitment Roadmap: A Guide for National Action* (Geneva, 2024).

³² ILO, “Recruitment fees and related costs at a glance”, 2024.

³³ UNODC, “Accessing justice: challenges faced by trafficked persons and smuggled migrants”, 2024.

³⁴ Mixed Migration Centre, “Trafficking and exploitation”, 4MI infographic, April 2025.

³⁵ IOM, *World Migration Report 2024*; and UNODC, *Smuggling of Migrants in the Sahel: Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment – Sahel* (Vienna, 2023).

exploitation perpetrated by government officials. Incidents of corrupt officials extorting sexual favours from women in exchange for documentation required for migration have been documented.³⁶ There have also been reports of violence against migrant women perpetrated by border enforcement officials, especially along borders with high levels of irregular migration.³⁷ It has been reported that government officials have extorted sexual favours from migrant women, particularly those engaging in irregular migration, as a condition for avoiding arrest, crossing borders or being released from detention.³⁸ Migrant women who are victims and survivors of violence often lack access to specialized support services because of a myriad of institutional, legal and social barriers, as well as a shortage of gender-responsive service providers located on or near migration routes.³⁹

D. Challenges and risks in countries of transit, in countries of destination and upon return

17. Many migrant women move in stages along migration routes, often delayed by legal restrictions, policy barriers and limited financial means.⁴⁰ Extended stays in countries of transit often lead migrant women to enter the labour force as undocumented and informal workers with limited or no labour protections, increasing the risk that they will be subjected to violence and exploitation.⁴¹ In many countries, discriminatory nationality laws limit women's access to legal documentation, contributing to statelessness among migrant women and their children. The risk of statelessness among children born to migrant women is heightened in contexts where nationality is conferred on the basis of paternal *jus sanguinis* and requires the father to be a national or to engage in an administrative process to prevent his children from being stateless. Statelessness increases the vulnerability of migrant women and their children, especially those born as a result of sexual violence, to violence, trafficking, detention and exclusion from social services.⁴²

18. Migrant women's gendered vulnerabilities and risks continue to shape their experiences after arrival in countries of transit and destination. While all migrants are at risk of racist and xenophobic violence and discrimination, the risks faced by women are compounded by gender inequalities, including discriminatory laws and practices that contribute to the social exclusion of migrant women.⁴³ Many women migrant workers are disproportionately affected by gender-specific barriers to social services, including indirect costs, inadequate childcare services and a lack of women healthcare

³⁶ Human Rights Watch, "'This hell was my only option': abuses against migrants and asylum seekers pushed to cross the Darién Gap", 9 November 2023.

³⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Turkish border guards torture, kill Syrians", 27 April 2023; Human Rights Watch, "US: border deterrence leads to deaths, disappearances", 26 June 2024; and Oxfam International and Egala Association, *Brutal Barriers: Pushback, Violence and Violation of Human Rights on the Poland – Belarus Border* (2025).

³⁸ Transparency International, "Breaking the silence around sextortion: the links between power, sex and corruption", 5 March 2020; and Regional Support Office of the Bali Process and UNODC, *Corruption as a Facilitator of Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons in the Bali Process Region with a focus on Southeast Asia* (Bangkok, 2020).

³⁹ World Bank, "SAFE: gender-based violence response services for women in human mobility in Central America", 2024.

⁴⁰ Liliane De Brauwier and others, "Trapped in transit", Center for Strategic and International Studies, 28 January 2025.

⁴¹ African Union Commission and others, *Gender Analysis: Gender Mainstreaming in the Joint Labour Migration Programme* (Addis Ababa, 2021).

⁴² See [A/78/256](#).

⁴³ UN-Women, "Racially marginalized migrant women: human rights abuses at the intersection of race, gender and migration", 2023.

providers delivering culturally appropriate care.⁴⁴ Many women migrant workers' experiences of violence are compounded by prejudices related to their socioeconomic status, country of origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics.⁴⁵ There have been reports of government officials expressing xenophobic views and discriminating against, verbally abusing and purposefully misinforming migrant women.⁴⁶ Such discrimination and exclusion of women migrant workers hinders their ability to gain access to justice and support services.⁴⁷

19. In parallel to growing restrictions on regular migration pathways, many countries are adopting harsh deterrence, detention and removal strategies, in line with which migrants with irregular migration status are targeted.⁴⁸ The fear of arrest, detention and deportation felt by women migrant workers with irregular migration status may be weaponized to exert control over them, putting them at greater risk of experiencing gender-based violence and exploitation.⁴⁹ In some contexts, having irregular migration status means that women are less likely to report abuse, have limited access to essential services⁵⁰ and are less able to escape abusive relationships.⁵¹

20. In some contexts, violence against women migrant workers is exacerbated by anti-migrant rhetoric and the introduction of laws that criminalize migration.⁵² The criminalization of migration has contributed to a breakdown of firewalls⁵³ between immigration enforcement agencies and service providers, including healthcare providers, has suppressed reporting by migrants of exploitation, abuse and violence and has hindered their access to essential services for victims and survivors of violence.⁵⁴ Furthermore, as a result of that criminalization the number of women in immigration detention around the world has risen and continues to rise.⁵⁵ Gross violations of migrant women's human rights, including through the perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence, have been documented in detention facilities

⁴⁴ UN-Women, "Leaving no one behind: access to social protection for all migrant women", Policy Brief, No. 14, 2020; and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "New walled order: how barriers to basic services turn migration into a humanitarian crisis", 2018.

⁴⁵ UN-Women, "Migration experiences of people with diverse SOGIESC", December 2023.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2025: Events of 2024* (New York, 2025).

⁴⁷ UN-Women, "Racially marginalized migrant women".

⁴⁸ Yasmine Zarhloule, "Migrants at the gate: Europe tries to curb undocumented migration", Carnegie Middle East Centre, March 2025.

⁴⁹ ILO, *The Road to Decent Work for Domestic Workers*.

⁵⁰ As defined by the United Nations Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence ("Essential services package for women and girls subject to violence"), the term "essential services" refers to a core set of services provided by the healthcare, social service, police and justice sectors to women and girls who have been subjected to gender-based violence, together with the coordination and governance mechanisms required to deliver such services.

⁵¹ Alexandria Innes and others, "Experiences of violence while in insecure migration status: a qualitative evidence synthesis", *Globalization and Health*, vol. 20, No. 83 (2024).

⁵² Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants, "Cases of criminalization of migration and solidarity in the EU in 2023", 2024.

⁵³ As defined by the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants ("Reporting obligations and 'firewalls'"), a "firewall" separates immigration enforcement activities from public service provision and systems, such as healthcare, education, social welfare, labour inspection and justice. Firewalls ensure that individuals can gain access to those services and interact with competent authorities without fear of migration-related repercussions, such as arrest, detention or deportation.

⁵⁴ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "New walled order".

⁵⁵ Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants, "Cases of criminalization".

around the globe.⁵⁶ Migrant detention facilities often lack not only the staff and infrastructure to meet women's specific needs, but also the resources required to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including against migrants with divergent sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics.⁵⁷

21. Women migrant workers employed in poorly regulated sectors, such as agriculture and domestic work, regardless of migration status, are also at an increased risk of violence, abuse and exploitation.⁵⁸ In many countries, workers in the aforementioned sectors, many of whom are women, are legally excluded from labour regulations and social protection coverage.⁵⁹ The lack of legal protections for women and girl migrant workers in poorly regulated sectors puts them at a heightened risk of trafficking, including for forced labour and sexual exploitation.⁶⁰

22. Widespread violence and abuse, including rape, have been documented among migrant women domestic workers under the Kafala sponsorship system in the Gulf States and some Arab States, where migrants' visas and access to social protection are dependent on individual sponsors.⁶¹ Under the system, migrant domestic workers are often isolated and surveilled, limiting their ability to report and escape violent, abusive and exploitative employers.⁶²

23. Experiences of discrimination, exclusion and violence often persist upon women migrant workers' return to their countries of origin, especially for those forcibly returned, who may be unjustly stigmatized as criminals. Documented experiences of returning migrant women domestic workers in Ethiopia show the adverse impacts of gender-specific stigma and stereotyping that prevent the reintegration of women returnees into their communities.⁶³ Similarly, in a recent analysis of the experiences of forcibly returned Bangladeshi migrant domestic workers, it was found that, upon return to Bangladesh, they experienced pervasive discrimination and social exclusion, which was most severe for those who had experienced abuse and exploitation during their time abroad.⁶⁴

24. Several regional actions have been taken to confront the heightened risk of gender-based violence faced by women migrant workers. States in Latin America and the Caribbean endorsed the Buenos Aires Commitment, which contains calls for greater protections for domestic workers, and 11 East African countries adopted an agreement to foster regional cooperation to protect the rights of migrant workers.⁶⁵ Support has been provided by the United Nations for a programme in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations region on the realization of women migrant workers'

⁵⁶ Nora Ellmann (Center for American Progress), "Immigration Detention is Dangerous for Women's Health and Rights", 21 October 2019; [S/2025/389](#).

⁵⁷ IOM, *World Migration Report 2024*.

⁵⁸ *The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024* (United Nations publication, 2024).

⁵⁹ ILO, *Labour Rights and Social Protection*.

⁶⁰ ILO, *ILO Strategy on Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers, Refugees, and their Families* (Geneva, 2025).

⁶¹ ILO, *Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers in the Arab Region: An Analysis of Existing Barriers and Good Practices in Light of International Social Security Standards* (Beirut, 2023).

⁶² Amnesty International, *Locked In, Left Out: The Hidden Lives of Kenyan Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia* (London, 2025); and Médecins sans frontières, "Trapped and abused: migrant workers' experiences in Lebanon", 23 April 2025.

⁶³ United Nations Network on Migration, "Mapping gaps and positive practices for safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration", December 2021.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, document LC/CRM.15/6/Rev.1; and IOM, "New agreements foster regional cooperation on migration for sustainable development and migrant workers rights in the East and Horn of Africa", 7 April 2022.

rights and for the expansion of the “Fairway” programme across Arab States in order to advance regional efforts to address violence against migrant workers.⁶⁶

III. Measures reported by Member States

25. Member State submissions for the present report contained information about the diverse actions taken to combat violence and discrimination against women migrant workers, including the adoption of frameworks to guide national efforts to address gender-based violence; legislation and policies to expand labour protections; efforts to raise awareness among women migrant workers of their rights; and measures to expand women migrant workers’ access to social protection. Member States also reported the adoption of anti-trafficking strategies, laws, policies and measures to better protect and assist victims of trafficking.

A. International instruments

26. Since 2023, there has been a marginal increase in the number of Member States that are Parties to international instruments related to addressing violence and discrimination against women migrant workers.⁶⁷

<i>Treaty</i>	<i>Number of ratifications, 2023</i>	<i>Number of ratifications, 2025</i>
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	58	60
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	191	193
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	178	180
Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	153	153

27. Many of the Member States that contributed to the present report (see footnote 1) are Parties to ILO conventions relevant to the situation of women migrant workers, including the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), to which Algeria, Brazil, Guatemala, Morocco, the Philippines and the Republic of Moldova are Parties. All contributing Member States, with the exception of Andorra, are also Parties to the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). The Philippines and Togo are the only reporting Member States to have ratified the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), while Algeria, Morocco and the Republic of Moldova are the only reporting Member States to have ratified the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181).

⁶⁶ UN-Women and others, “Safe and fair: realizing women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region”, Regional Programme Results, 2024; and ILO, “ILO expands FAIRWAY programme to advance decent work for African migrant workers in the Arab States”, 2 May 2025.

⁶⁷ All information on United Nations treaty ratification is available from https://treaties.un.org/pages/ParticipationStatus.aspx?clang=_en.

28. The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), has been ratified by 39 Member States, including the reporting Member States of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and the Philippines. As at June 2025, the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), had been ratified by 49 Member States, representing a significant increase from 27 in 2023. Convention No. 190 entered into force for Mexico and Peru in 2022 and for the Philippines and the Republic of Moldova in 2024.

29. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, has been ratified by all reporting Member States. In addition, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, has been ratified by all reporting Member States except Andorra, Colombia and Morocco.

30. In their submissions, several reporting Member States (Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Philippines and Togo) referred to the importance of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in protecting the rights of women migrant workers.

B. Bilateral, regional and other cooperation

31. Several Member States (Guatemala, Honduras, Lebanon, Mexico and Republic of Moldova) are engaged in cooperative agreements to address issues related to migration, including violence against women migrant workers, and are working to strengthen those agreements. In 2023, an assessment was published in Mexico of national efforts to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in which the actions taken to identify and respond to violence against migrant women were highlighted.⁶⁸ In its submission, the Republic of Moldova reported that it had adopted a national programme for the prevention and combating of violence against women and domestic violence for the period 2023–2027 and established a national agency for the prevention and combating of violence against women and domestic violence in order to enhance the implementation at the national level of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), which is to be implemented without discrimination based on migration status.

32. In the submissions from Guatemala, Honduras, the Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia and Togo, strategies for expanding pathways for regular migration and protecting the rights of women migrant workers in destination countries were outlined. Guatemala reported that it had extended a programme for its nationals who were temporarily working abroad. The programme was established in 2019 and provided a regularized migration pathway for migrants seeking work in North America, a small percentage of whom are women. Similarly, Honduras reported facilitating the regular migration of its nationals, including a small number of women, by connecting them with job placements abroad through a programme for temporary work abroad since 2017.⁶⁹

33. The participation of Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Togo in cooperative agreements to combat trafficking in persons and support migrant returnees was highlighted. Togo

⁶⁸ Mexico, Migration Policy, Registration and Identification Unit, *Diagnóstico de Seguimiento al Pacto Mundial sobre Migración en México 2018–2022* (Mexico City, 2023).

⁶⁹ ILO, “Executive summary: women’s participation in temporary labour migration programmes”, 2024; and ILO, “Todo lo que debes saber sobre: migración laboral en Honduras”, August 2024.

entered into a partnership with Gabon in 2025 to manage migration and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Since 2024, Algeria has increased its support for returning migrants by participating in the European Union–IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in North Africa, which includes specific measures to address the needs of returning women migrant workers.⁷⁰

C. Legislation

34. In Algeria, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, the Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Togo and Türkiye, constitutional frameworks have been established and legislative measures taken to protect the human rights of women migrant workers, including from violence and exploitation. In the Constitution of Morocco, for example, the equal fundamental freedoms of all persons residing in the country, regardless of their migration status, are recognized. In Peru, Decision No. 0020-2023 on migration was adopted in order to establish protocols for the identification and protection of migrant women in vulnerable situations, including pregnant women, single mothers and victims and survivors of gender-based violence and trafficking.

35. In several Member States (Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Morocco, Peru, Togo and Türkiye), labour laws that enhance protections for women migrant workers from exploitation, abuse and violence were adopted. Under the Migration Amendment (Strengthening Employer Compliance) Act 2024, labour protections for migrant workers in Australia, regardless of their migration status, have been enhanced by increasing penalties for employers that engage in exploitative practices, such as underpaying wages, confiscating passports and sexual harassment. Under Amended Law No. 74/2023 in the Republic of Moldova, labour inspectors have increased powers to investigate cases of sexual harassment in the workplace and penalties have been established for employers that fail to take adequate measures to prevent and respond to sexual harassment.

36. In Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, legislation and criminal codes are being implemented that sanction and respond to violence against women, including women migrant workers, and provide access to services for victims and survivors. In the Federal Penal Code of Mexico, amended in 2024, sanctions are outlined for the violation of sexual intimacy, a form of technology-facilitated violence against women that is becoming more widespread. It was reported that, in Honduras, thanks to the efforts of the Interinstitutional Commission for Monitoring Investigations into Violent Deaths of Women, established in 2017, there has been an increase in the budget allocated both to improving interinstitutional coordination to address violence against women and femicide, including against migrant women, and to carrying out investigations into such matters.

D. Policies

37. In several Member States (Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Togo and Türkiye), plans were adopted and institutions established to guide policy responses to violence against women, including against migrant women, and the nexus between migration

⁷⁰ CD-BE Consulting and Development, *Final Evaluation of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration-North Africa* (2023).

and trafficking in persons. In the Philippines, a priority of the national action plan to end violence against women (2025–2030) is to strengthen institutional cooperation across government. In its submission, Chile highlighted the participation of migrant women and their organizations in the formulation of the national plan for the right to live free from gender-based violence (2022–2030). In Colombia, the Intersectoral Commission for Combating Migrant Smuggling continued to monitor the evolution of trafficking networks and was working towards finalizing a new national strategy to combat trafficking in migrants.

38. In Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Morocco, Peru, Togo and Türkiye, policies have been implemented to increase the access of women migrant workers to social protection. Over the previous decade, efforts have been made in Türkiye to expand the provision of healthcare for migrant women through the national network of migrant health centres, which has been accompanied by an initiative to validate the medical licences of migrant healthcare workers in order to increase migrant women's access to linguistically and culturally appropriate care. In 2021, comprehensive health insurance in Peru was expanded to cover migrants, including migrant women, diagnosed with HIV and tuberculosis. In 2024, Saudi Arabia established the Social Insurance Law, which provides for access to social benefits and labour protections for migrant women domestic workers and their employers.

E. Data collection and research

39. Action has been taken in Belarus, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, the Republic of Moldova and Türkiye to close data gaps related to migration and violence against migrant women. In Belarus, a geostatistical analysis system is being used to facilitate the analysis and visualization of data related to migrant women. In Colombia, a national system for the registration, provision of care follow-up and monitoring of instances of gender-based violence was launched in 2024. The aim of the system is to improve the collection and accessibility of data on cases of gender-based violence, including against migrant women, and ensure that survivors have access to the relevant services.

40. In Colombia, Honduras, Peru and the Philippines, measures have been taken to collect data on migration, including information on the departure and return of migrant workers. In 2023, an information system for registering and providing care for returning migrants was established in Honduras in order to collect disaggregated data on returning migrants, including by sex, age, level of education and former employment sector.⁷¹ In 2024, the National Institute of Information and Statistics of Peru launched a survey of the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population residing in the country to collect data, analyse and report on the situation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, including the rate of labour force participation and sectors of employment of migrant women.

F. Preventive measures, training and capacity-building

41. In several Member States (Algeria, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Togo and Türkiye), preventive measures aimed at eliminating violence against women and trafficking in persons, including women migrant workers, were implemented. Since 2012, in Türkiye, provincial action plans to combat violence

⁷¹ Honduras, Ministry of Social Development, SIAMIR Tablero Estadístico Dinámico de Atención a Personas Migrantes Retornadas, available at <https://ods.sedesol.gob.hn/geoportaltableros/>.

against women, which were prepared with stakeholder consultations across 81 provinces, have been being implemented. The plans are designed to address the needs of women survivors and those at risk of violence, including migrant women. In 2023, a national council against trafficking in persons was established in El Salvador in order to coordinate actions across 13 governmental institutions on combating trafficking, including in migrant women.

42. In Australia, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Lebanon, Morocco, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Togo, mechanisms to prevent and respond to the labour exploitation of all migrant workers have been implemented. In 2025, a basic guide on domestic and care work was published in Brazil in order to raise awareness about labour protections and workers' rights in the sector, including those of migrant women domestic workers. In the Republic of Moldova, the aforementioned national programme for the prevention and combating of violence against women and domestic violence for the period 2023–2027 was adopted, in line with the country's commitments under the Istanbul Convention, to support effective multidisciplinary responses by social services agencies and the justice system for victims and survivors of violence.

G. Protection and assistance

43. In Andorra, Belarus, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Lebanon, the Russian Federation and Türkiye, actions were taken to expand protections against gender-based violence. In Lebanon, efforts to address gender-based violence were strengthened through the adoption in 2020 of a law criminalizing sexual harassment in the workplace, one of the aims of which was to prevent and address the harassment of groups of people, such as women migrant workers, that are at a heightened risk of abuse. In Australia, a pilot programme on reporting protections, which is effectively a mechanism for reporting and assistance, was established in order to address the exploitation of, and threats of abuse made against, migrant workers, including women. In the European Union, under Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, protections, access to justice and support services for groups at a heightened risk of violence, including women migrant workers, have been strengthened.

44. In Andorra, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, action was taken to extend assistance to migrant women, including victims and survivors of gender-based violence and trafficking in persons. In the Philippines, the implementation of recovery and reintegration programmes for trafficked persons continued. Through the programmes, comprehensive support was provided for victims of trafficking, including returning women migrant workers. In Andorra, support was provided for several hundred women victims and survivors of violence in 2024, regardless of nationality or migration status, through a programme providing services for victims of gender-based violence.

IV. Initiatives of United Nations entities in support of national efforts

A. Research and data collection

45. United Nations entities continued to support improvements to the collection and analysis of data related to migrant women, including the accessibility of data on violence against women migrant workers. ILO continues to play a central role in the

provision of global estimates on women migrant workers by compiling national migration data in its International Labour Migration Statistics database. The IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix serves as a key tool for collecting sex-disaggregated data on migration and monitoring migration flows, migrant sectors of employment and vulnerabilities, such as the percentage of migrant women who are pregnant or lactating and the number of children under five years of age accompanying each woman.⁷² Through its Making Migration Safe for Women programme, UN-Women supported efforts to carry out a survey of over 1,200 migrant and returnee women in Ethiopia in 2024 that generated critical data on their migration experiences, including exposure to violence and other forms of exploitation. As a result of the survey, it was found that one in five women had experienced gender-based violence during their migration.⁷³ The importance of data in closing evidence gaps in order to support the design of more effective policies cannot be understated.

46. United Nations entities continued to support capacity-building and provide guidance to Member States on the collection and analysis of migration data, including data related to the experiences of women migrant workers. UN-Women published a guidance note titled *Developing a Survey Instrument on the Situation of Migrant Women at the Country Level* in 2023, which contains recommendations for developing gender-responsive national surveys on migration, including the collection of data on smuggling, trafficking and gender-based violence.⁷⁴ In addition, UN-Women and IOM established a strategic collaboration agreement in 2024 to advance gender equality in migration and displacement contexts, address violence against women and trafficking, and renew cross-country collaboration to improve the availability of data on the gendered dimensions of migration.⁷⁵

47. In 2024, ILO published the findings of a survey on the experiences of migrant domestic workers in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, including estimates of their exposure to abuses that limit their ability to report and flee situations of gender-based violence, such as wage theft, forced labour and the withholding of travel documents.⁷⁶

B. Support for legislative and policy development

48. United Nations entities have supported the efforts of Member States to develop legislation and policies that protect the human rights of women migrant workers and promote their economic empowerment. ILO supported the ongoing implementation in the Philippines of the Department of Migrant Workers Act of 2021, pursuant to which a national agency was established in order to improve recruitment practices, strengthen labour protections for migrant workers, and prevent and address trafficking in persons.⁷⁷ In view of the increased risks of sexual and gender-based violence faced by migrant women, IOM supported the development in Morocco of a national strategic plan on migration health (2021–2025), which is aimed at expanding access to healthcare services to include migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers.⁷⁸

⁷² IOM, “Somalia: cross border movements – February 2025”, 20 May 2025.

⁷³ UN-Women, “Rapid assessment of the situation of women migrating from, into, through and back to Ethiopia”, December 2024.

⁷⁴ UN-Women, *Developing a Survey Instrument on the Situation of Migrant Women at the Country Level*, (New York, 2023).

⁷⁵ UN-Women, “IOM and UN-Women Scale Up Efforts to advance women’s rights, protection, and empowerment in migration policies and humanitarian response”, 2 October 2024.

⁷⁶ ILO, *Skilled to Care, Forced to Work? Recognizing the Skills Profiles of Migrant Domestic Workers in ASEAN amid Forced Labour and Exploitation* (Bangkok, 2024).

⁷⁷ ILO, “Philippines leads the way in strengthening protections for migrant and domestic workers”, 3 March 2025.

⁷⁸ IOM, “Migration Health Strategy 2024–2028”, 2024.

C. Advocacy, awareness-raising and capacity-building

49. The United Nations system provided guidance and support for bilateral and regional efforts to enhance cooperation in managing migration and protecting the rights of migrants. In 2024, UNODC and the United Nations Children's Fund supported the launch of a joint programme to strengthen mixed migration management in support of efforts made in Gabon and Togo to dismantle migrant smuggling networks and prevent trafficking in persons, with a special emphasis on supporting women and children. Since 2017, UNDP has supported the efforts made by Lebanon to strengthen the capabilities of judicial officials and law enforcement, including the promotion of gender-responsive policing to safeguard the rights of survivors of gender-based violence and to ensure access to justice services for migrants and refugees.⁷⁹

50. UN-Women has led targeted capacity-building initiatives in Cambodia and Thailand to equip front-line workers, including staff working in the judiciary, police and consulates, with the tools to deliver coordinated, survivor-centred support that is tailored to the realities of migrant women. Since 2022, the World Food Programme has provided training modules to enhance community awareness of reporting mechanisms for groups in vulnerable situations, including migrant women.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

51. **The risk that women migrant workers face of being subjected to gender-based violence and exploitation is exacerbated by deeply entrenched gender inequalities and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, inadequate labour protections and a lack of access to safe and regular migration pathways. Preventing, identifying and addressing violence against women migrant workers requires an increase in the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data on the gender dimensions of migration. Several Member States have reported efforts to strengthen the availability and publication of such data. Many Member States also reported the adoption and implementation of policies and programmes to prevent violations of women migrant workers' human rights and provide support services for victims and survivors of violence, labour exploitation and trafficking. In spite of those efforts, women migrant workers, especially those who are undocumented or stateless, remain at a heightened risk of gender-based violence and continue to lack equitable access to social and justice services.**

52. **Building on efforts to eliminate violence and discrimination against women migrant workers and to enhance their access to justice, social protection, decent work and essential services, Member States are encouraged to implement the following recommendations to prevent and address violence against women migrant workers:**

(a) **Accelerate the gender-responsive implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in order to advance the empowerment of women migrant workers and eliminate all forms of violence against them;**

(b) **Enhance regional cooperation in order to strengthen efforts to eliminate violence against women migrant workers;**

⁷⁹ UNDP, "UNDP and Canada reaffirm their commitment to enhancing community security and access to justice in Lebanon", 7 March 2022.

- (c) Intensify efforts to end gender inequalities at all stages of migration, including violence and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women, and to address the unequal access, control and ownership of productive resources and unequal access to decent jobs between women and men;
- (d) Eliminate migration policies that discriminate against women, including on the basis of age, marital status, pregnancy and/or maternity status;
- (e) Promote and protect the human rights of women migrant workers in accordance with the commitments made in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (f) Significantly increase investments to implement the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;
- (g) Ratify and implement international labour standards, in particular ILO Convention No. 190, the associated Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206), and Convention No. 189 and the associated Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201);
- (h) Improve access to gender-responsive and human rights-based migration pathways for all migrant women, especially victims and survivors of gender-based violence and trafficking and those affected by humanitarian crises;
- (i) Ensure the availability of accurate and timely information on safe and regular migration, including through gender-responsive pre-departure orientation programmes, and monitor and enforce fair and ethical practices for the recruitment of women migrant workers by employers and agencies;
- (j) Take action to combat anti-migrant rhetoric and xenophobia by training law enforcement personnel, border officials and other relevant actors in gender-responsive and non-discriminatory practices to better assist migrant women, especially those who have been subjected to violence;
- (k) Develop gender-responsive national migration policies, with the equal and meaningful participation of women migrant workers, that address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that adversely affect women migrant workers;
- (l) Take action to protect all migrant women from gender-based violence, including trafficking, in countries of origin, transit and destination, and establish measures to criminalize and punish all forms of violence and harassment in the workplace, including technology-facilitated violence against migrant women;
- (m) Establish safeguards to reduce the risk of violence against women migrant workers in the world of work by preventing and addressing harassment, abuse, exploitation and violence, particularly for workers in domestic and care services, and ensure that they have access to support services for victims and survivors of gender-based violence and trafficking;
- (n) Ensure that women migrant workers who are survivors of violence have access to quality specialized services, including health, justice and social services, that meet their cultural and linguistic needs;

(o) Create and enhance mechanisms to protect women migrant workers' access to decent work and social protection, including pensions, unemployment and injury insurance, and disability benefits;

(p) Take action to strengthen firewalls between immigration enforcement activities and public service provision to protect migrant women's privacy and prevent barriers to access to social services;

(q) Strengthen the collection, analysis and dissemination of representative sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on the situation of women migrant workers, including the incidence of gender-based violence and technology-facilitated violence against them.

53. The United Nations system is encouraged to support Member States in the implementation of efforts to combat violence against women migrant workers and strengthen their partnerships with stakeholders that support women migrant workers, including civil society organizations, cooperatives, trade unions and human rights defenders. The United Nations system should further strengthen inter-agency collaboration to increase the protection of women migrant workers from all forms of violence, including through the United Nations Network on Migration.
