

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 56th SESSION

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

25 – 26 June 2024

In his first update after taking office in November, **Mr. Gehad Madi, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants**, emphasized the significance of defending and enhancing migrant rights in the face of rising xenophobia and divisive political discourse. He has actively participated in interactive discussions and gatherings, such as the UN Network on Migration's fifth annual meeting and the 14th Global Forum on Migration Development. In order to combine his lobbying efforts, he joined the Platform of Independent Experts on Refugee Rights (PIERR).

In his statement, he addressed the growth in xenophobia, false information regarding immigration, and polarizing political discourse. He emphasized how unfavorable stereotypes have overshadowed the historical benefits that immigrants have brought to society. In his report, he hoped to examine the contributions that migrants have made to society from the perspective of human rights, as well as to analyze the elements that help and hinder this process. Regardless of their contributions, migrants are entitled to certain protections and privileges, but they also significantly benefit society in three key ways. By means of their traditions, customs, and knowledge, they enhance the **social enrichment** of the host country. According to data from 2019, migrants make up 4.9% of the labor force overall and more than 41% in Arab nations. They serve a crucial role in filling essential labor shortages in the labor markets and remittances in low- and middle-income nations, which has numerous positive **economic benefits**. They support **civic and political engagement** as well. Through their engagement in political forums, they serve as a bridge between the nations of origin and the host nation, promoting international collaborations. This offers a more democratic, inclusive, and participative government structure.

In contemporary society, migrants who were formerly seen as a resource are **increasingly seen as a threat to national security** that needs to be contained. As "desirable" and "undesirable" migrants, travelers encounter prejudice in both transit and destination nations, leading to grotesque disparities in access to regular migration. This discrimination primarily affects migrants from African nations. By encouraging evidence-based migration narratives, Mr. Madi asked participants to consider how to overcome barriers that hinder the recognition of migrants' contributions in various spheres of the host society as well as how to develop their socio-cultural, civic-political, and economic contributions. Governments are advised to take certain steps to guarantee that the necessary steps are taken to manage migration. The creation of specialized departments to **strengthen anti-discriminatory legislation** underscores the advantages of migration; bolstering anti-discrimination protocols; **safeguarding the human and labour rights of migrants**; endorsing integration endeavors; ensuring migrant freedom of association and collective bargaining; **ensuring legal recourse**; augmenting regular migration pathways and regularization programs; and endorsing migration narratives grounded in evidence. He underlined that these initiatives are essential to recognizing and optimizing the contributions that migrants make to society.

Concerning his first official visit, Mr. Madi expressed his gratitude to **Kuwait** for its cooperation and willingness. The report's purpose was to call attention to the human rights circumstances of children who are on the move and to highlight human rights norms.

Interactive dialogue

The interactive dialogue featured **68 country delegates**. All countries agreed with the Special Rapporteur's report and expressed concern about the increase in hate speech, racism, and discrimination against migrants. The majority of countries voiced concern about migrants not being adequately recognized for their contributions to the host country, particularly in terms of the economy and labor. Cultural integration also encourages inclusivity throughout society. Disregarding these sides of migration and focusing solely on the negative implications has raised concerns about the protection of their human rights, regardless of their contribution. These issues raise concerns and demand international action and accountability.

Pakistan voiced concern about the growing tendency of ill-informed narratives about migrants, particularly on social media and in media stories, which are frequently discriminatory and spread Islamophobia. The OIC Group also expressed worry about the growing tendency of pushing back against migrants at international borders, citing dubious interpretations of human rights standards and the use of a wide range of deterrence and discriminatory actions by some Western states. Additionally, they underlined that a legal distinction between migrants and other types of displaced persons, such as refugees and IDPs, should be made in accordance with relevant international law provisions. **Türkiye** acknowledged the SR's advice to incorporate and execute international human rights and labour norms to ensure migrant-focused rights is critical.

Luxembourg accepted the SR's findings on migrants' contributions to host nations, highlighting that the European Union's foundational ideals of openness and tolerance are related to the continent's friendly attitude toward migrants. It emphasized that empirical data contradicts anti-migration rhetoric, highlighting migrants' greater labor force participation rates, large representation among critical workers (8-50%), and disproportionate contributions to economic growth and innovation. It closed by asking the SR how to effectively explain migrants' generally beneficial influence on society, particularly on social media platforms where anti-migration attitudes are frequently expressed.

UN Women emphasized the challenges migrant women encounter in obtaining a work permit when looking for work in their destination country because their qualifications are not recognized. This implies working for lower-skilled occupations, resulting in a waste of potential, increasing the risk of labour exploitation and abuse, frequently being refused social assistance, limiting economic independence and autonomy, and increasing their chances of poverty. To limit the use of dangerous irregular migration channels and better protect their rights, all migrants, particularly migrant women, must have access to secure and regular migration pathways, which are disproportionately vulnerable to gender-based violence and discrimination. **UNICEF** called on governments at all levels to change discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and make efforts to ensure children on the move can thrive in their hosting communities; encouraged all relevant stakeholders to provide children with opportunities and skills that allow them to fully and meaningfully participate in society and become agents of positive change; and urged all relevant actors to recognize the serious harm caused by propagating negative narratives. The rising discourse on anti-migrant sentiment has caused alarm since it affects attempts to defend children's rights.

NGOs appreciated the rapport's contribution to the contribution of the policy to the society of the migrants. In addition, **Franciscans International** and **PRATYK** raised the issue of legislation in the United Kingdom which aims to deter migrants who may have legitimate claims of asylum. The UK must uphold the human rights of migrants and asylum seekers and end their policies, practices, and statements that demonize and retraumatize them. **NGOs** welcomed the call to establish an investigative mechanism on human rights violations at international borders: violence must end. Migrants are rights holders, and their rights should be protected regardless of the contributions that

they make to society. In particular, **APG23** reiterated the need for immigration policies aimed at promoting inclusion, mutual respect, and solidarity. Fostering regular channels for migrating, rethinking a positive and human narrative on people on the move, and ensuring protection and equality of opportunity overall are imperative factors needed to fully realize migrants' rights and their inclusion into society.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (68 country delegations):

Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Brazil, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Ghana, India, Kenya, Libya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico (on behalf of a group of countries: Colombia, Mexico, Morocco), Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan (on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Paraguay, Poland (on behalf of Lublin Triangle: Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine), Portugal, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, Sovereign Order of Malta, Spain, Togo, Tunisia, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Iran, South Africa, El Salvador, EU, Gambia (on behalf of a group of African States), Costa Rica (on behalf of a group of Countries), Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Ethiopia, United States of America, Costa Rica, Algeria, Iraq, Republic of Moldova, Colombia, China, Turkmenistan, Cuba, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Mali, Sudan, Thailand, Bolivia, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Belize, Bangladesh, Honduras, Israel, Tunisia, Lithuania.

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (11):

Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII, Centre du Commerce International pour le Développement, Commission Nationale indépendante des droits de l'homme (Burundi), Edmund Rice International Limited, Franciscans International, Friends World Committee for Consultation, Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) Limited, PRATYEK, VIVAT International, War Resisters International, MADRE, INC.

International Organizations: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNICEF, UN Women.

To watch the full meeting refer to the UN WEB TV: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).