

# e-Bulletin



Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

## GAATW e-Bulletin

March 2008

Dear Members and Friends,

Greetings from warm and sunny Bangkok. As the first quarter of the year passes, the GAATW-IS is gearing up for the many activities being planned for 2008. It promises to be a full and engaging year. Three new staff have joined the IS team to support the activities for campaigns, advocacy and research work for GAATW's three-year programme priorities. We are also preparing for the annual GAATW Board meeting that will be happening in early April.

We recognize that we are writing at a time when there is great upheaval in Tibet. After decades of repression, there is now a movement for change. In response to China's military crackdown against the protests in Tibet, a global call on China for restraint and dialogue to find a peaceful resolution for Tibetan people has come from many governments and individuals. One such action is an on-line petition organized through AVAAZ, an online activism organisation, which now has over one million signatures. We urge GAATW members to sign on: [http://www.avaaz.org/en/tibet\\_end\\_the\\_violence/98.php/?cl\\_tf\\_sign=1](http://www.avaaz.org/en/tibet_end_the_violence/98.php/?cl_tf_sign=1) There are many more local and regional actions being organized in solidarity with Tibetan people all over the world, and we encourage everyone to show their support.

This month's bulletin brings you global news about the recent appointment of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, the UN's international campaign against gender-based violence and the developments on anti-trafficking measures at the national level. For the Regional/Member Updates, we are happy to share news from the recently concluded GAATW-REDLAC meeting held in the Dominican Republic and some updates from the GAATW members' work and campaigns. The resources section provides the reports on the situation of undocumented migrants from two countries in Asia, and an annual conference on combating modern day slavery.

In line with the advocacy work of GAATW, a separate Advocacy Update electronic bulletin will now be released on a monthly basis. We look forward to bringing you further developments on GAATW's work to promote the human rights principles in addressing the human trafficking issue.

We hope that you find this issue enriching and we always look forward to hearing your ideas and feedback.

Warmly,

**The GAATW International Secretariat**

## GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

### **Ms Gulnara Shahinian appointed Special Rapporteur**

On 26 March, the Human Rights Council appointed Ms Gulnara Shahinian as the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences.

Ms. Shahinian, who is from Armenia, has a long history of working on trafficking and smuggling issues at a national and international level, including as an expert in trafficking for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and as a member of both the UN expert group on trafficking and the Board of Trustees of the UN Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. GAATW welcomes the appointment of Ms. Shahinian and looks forward to working with her.

[http://www.huntalternatives.org/pages/253\\_gulnara\\_shahinian.cfm](http://www.huntalternatives.org/pages/253_gulnara_shahinian.cfm)

### **U.N. launches global campaign against gender violence**

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will recruit men from around the globe to support efforts to end violence against women as part of a new 7-year campaign aimed at addressing such abuse. UN Secretary will call on male political leaders, artists, athletes, religious figures and businessmen to speak out as part of the Unite to End Violence Against Women initiative. The initiative will include efforts to win Security Council approval for the creation of a mechanism to monitor violence, engagement with individual governments to develop national plans, and requests to national legislatures to review laws and criminalize gender-based violence.

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=1701>

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### **Anti-trafficking agreement signed with Vietnam**

Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej opened a three-day visit to Vietnam with the signing of an agreement between the two countries on combating human trafficking, on 24 March. The memorandum of understanding on combating human trafficking was signed by the Thai Social Development and Human Security Minister Sutha Chansaeng and Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Public Security Le The Tiem. The agreement is part of a joint anti-trafficking initiative launched in 2004 between the six countries in the Mekong sub region, which also includes Myanmar, China, Cambodia, and Laos. Thailand is a relatively minor destination for Vietnamese trafficking victims, usually women, who are more often smuggled to Cambodia or China and forced into sex work, according to officials at anti-trafficking programs in Vietnam.

[http://www.bangkokpost.com/breaking\\_news/breakingnews.php?id=126700](http://www.bangkokpost.com/breaking_news/breakingnews.php?id=126700)

### **Uzbek Parliament adopts Anti-trafficking law**

On 18 March, it was reported that the Uzbek parliament voted to adopt a new law on 13 March, which aims at combating human trafficking. According to an official press release issued by the Uzbek government, the new law will serve as a "reliable legal base for the prevention of human trafficking" and help to bolster the state effort to "fight the illegal exploitation, migration, and trade of human beings," according to the Jahon news agency. The press release also claimed that Uzbek law enforcement agencies have investigated over 1,000 reports from victims of human trafficking over the past three years, resulting in the formal initiation of over 700 criminal cases.

<http://www.legislationline.org/news.php?tid=1&jid=1>

## REGIONAL/MEMBER UPDATES

### 2<sup>nd</sup> GAATW-REDLAC Meeting



#### Dominican Republic, 5-7 March 2008

The members of GAATW in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) gathered in the Dominican Republic from 5-7 March to exchange information and experiences at regional and interregional levels, and to advance the development of regional coordination and actions. A total of 23 people representing 14 members from the LAC region, 1 member from Europe, 1 GAATW-IS representative, 4 non-members from Peru, Uruguay and the Dominican Republic and 3 consultants/donors participated.

REDLAC (the GAATW regional chapter in LAC) was launched in 2006 with the mission to facilitate joint actions at regional level among the GAATW members. During the 3-day meeting a common research on trafficking patterns, from the North of Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname, undertaken by members in these countries was presented. Proyecto Esperanza from Spain presented its report on the evaluation of its direct assistance, which served to strengthen the links between countries of origin and destination. The Self-organised Groups (SOGs) in LAC also shared their work, and there were updates about the GAATW-IS 2008-10 Action Plan and the Vienna Forum. The meeting served to outline the GAATW-REDLAC Action Plan for the next year and to discuss the internal coordination and structure of the regional chapter. A new Coordinating Committee was elected with a 2-year mandate, and involves COIN (Dominican Republic), SODIREITOS (Brazil) and ECPAT (Guatemala).

For more information you can contact Nerea at the IS ([nerea@gaatw.org](mailto:nerea@gaatw.org))

MODEMU (the Movement of United Women), a member organisation in the Dominican Republic, organised its Congress on the 5-6 March 2008. The Congress gathered 306 sex workers from all corners of the country.

The Congress' programme included topics such as an analysis of MODEMU's work to date, discussions on the organization's main demands for advocacy, training on trafficking, and the approval of the organization's new Action Plan and Statutes, as well as the selection of MODEMU's new directive.

After the congress ended one participant stated: *I am seeing my partners growing and I really like it!*

Miriam Gonzalez, a member of MODEMU's directive said: *This congress showed that sex workers in the Dominican Republic are progressing in their effort to recover their sense of being. The event has also showed numerous challenges and new concerns to strengthen our work. It has been another milestone in our social compromise with us and the Dominican people.*

You can get more information by writing to: [nerea@gaatw.org](mailto:nerea@gaatw.org)

LEFO-IBF Intervention Centre for Women Affected by Trafficking is celebrating its 10th anniversary with an event on 11 April at the MOYA -- Museum of Young Art, Löwelstraße 20 | 1010 Vienna. There will be a Press Conference with Doris Bures, the Austrian Minister of Women Affairs, at 10 in the morning, followed by a Reading at 6:30pm in the evening. For more information about the program please contact Philippa Stockert +43.1.79 69298, email: [ibf@lefoe.at](mailto:ibf@lefoe.at)

The Centre for Human Rights and Development, a GAATW member organisation based in

Mongolia, has worked in 2006 and 2007 to collaborate with the State Supreme Court of Mongolia on a proposed amendment to Article 113 (Human selling and buying) of the Criminal Code. To prepare for this amendment, research was undertaken, including a comparison of other countries' criminal laws on human trafficking, reviewing bilateral agreements between Mongolia and other countries, and obtaining comments and recommendations from law enforcements group who work closely with victims. Based on this research, Article 113 of the criminal code was amended according to international standards and best practice. At the end of January 2008, the Mongolian Parliament adopted the amended criminal code. The date of implementation was 24 February 2008.

#### **Foreign Domestic Workers' March for Pay Hike**

The Asian Migrants Coordinating Body (AMCB) submitted a petition to the Hong Kong government that included the demands to: 1. Increase wages of foreign domestic workers to a level that is substantive and commensurate to the Hong Kong standard of living; 2. Remove the HK\$ 9,600 levy imposed on employers of foreign domestic workers, and; 3. Provide a just, transparent and scientific formula for the minimum wage review. Spokesperson, Eni Lestari, said that their reasons for such demands included the government reports and projection of continued economic development, the fact that FDWs who work a minimum of 12 hours day get a measly HK\$11 per hour, and the data that in countries whose economies are at par with that of Hong Kong's, the salary of FDWs here pales in comparison to their counterparts.

On 8 March the Euro 08 Campaign Against Trafficking in Women launched a petition for better protection for the victims of trafficking. The 'Euro 08 campaign against Trafficking in Women' is an initiative launched by more than 25 women's and men's organisations, Human Rights organisations, gender equality offices, counselling centres, faith organisations and trade unions. The campaign aims not only to raise awareness on the trafficking of women in Switzerland but also to mobilise its population on this very serious form of Human Rights violation.

For more information, please email: [kampagne-em08@fiz-info.ch](mailto:kampagne-em08@fiz-info.ch)  
<http://www.frauenhandeleuro08.ch/en/kontakt/>

Have you released a new report? Have you organised an important event? Does your campaign need support? We want to hear about it and so do other members and friends. If you need support, ideas, resources or information from other members on campaigns or activities you are running, the e-bulletin can help. Send us the brief message you may like to send out to other members through the e-bulletin. If it is urgent, we could consider sending the message out through our members' mailing list.

### **FROM THE SECRETARIAT**

#### **The International Secretariat welcomes new colleagues**

GAATW-IS warmly welcomes three new colleagues who have recently joined the staff this month. Amy Bain from Washington DC will be working as the Programme Officer on Advocacy; Rebecca Napier-Moore from USA/UK will be working as the Programme Officer for Research and Training; and Zoe Bake-Paterson from Vancouver, Canada as the Communications and Campaigns Officer. A three and a half day New Staff Orientation was recently held on 20-21, 24-25 March 2008 at the GAATW IS Office.

Individual profiles of all IS staff will be added to the GAATW-IS website in the coming month.

### **RESOURCES**

#### **Reports**

##### **Forced Labour in North Korean Prison Camps**

The cross-border migration of undocumented North Koreans into China is an issue of concern to Anti-Slavery International (ASI) because those North Koreans who are caught while crossing the border or who are deported by the Chinese authorities are subject to forced labour in North Korean prison camps. In light of the report, ASI calls on the North

Korean Government to amend their Criminal Code so that leaving the country without permission does not constitute a criminal offence, to take immediate action to prevent unconvicted detainees from performing forced labour and to abolish the use of forced labour in prison camps.

<http://www.antislavery.org/homepage/resources/PDF/NK%202007.pdf>

#### **Undocumented migrants and refugees in Malaysia: Raids, Detention and Discrimination**

On the occasion of the World Day for the elimination of racial discrimination, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM), its member organization in Malaysia, launch a report entitled *“Undocumented migrants and refugees in Malaysia: Raids, Detention and Discrimination”*. The report includes the current immigration context in Malaysia, the role and status of refugees and asylum seekers and recommendations based on the findings of the international fact-finding mission conducted by FIDH.

<http://www.fidh.org/?Undocumented-migrants-and-refugees>

#### Events

##### **Freedom Network Conference**

The Freedom Network USA will have its 2008 Annual Conference on 23-24 April in Atlanta, Georgia with the theme *“Action through Alliance: Partnerships in Combating Modern Day Slavery”*. Nationally known experts on Human Trafficking will be speaking on a variety of topics. Legal advocates, victim advocates, social service providers, ethnic, faith-based, community-based organization members, local and federal law enforcement, governmental representatives, and anyone else interested can attend. Registration Cost is US\$200.

To register: <http://freedomnetworkusa.eventbrite.com>

For inquiries, please contact [cecilia@tapestri.org](mailto:cecilia@tapestri.org)

Website: <http://freedomnetworkusa.org/docs/FreedomNetworkConference2008.pdf>

#### Website

The Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) launched a website titled *“Arab Women and Media”* on International Women's Day, 8 March.

<http://www.arabwomanmedia.net/>

#### Call for Nominations

The deadline for nominations for **Anti-Slavery International's 2008 Anti-Slavery Award** is 31 March 2008. If you would like to nominate an individual or organisation for the Award, please fill out and return the online nomination form at [www.antislavery.org/homepage/antislavery/nomination.htm](http://www.antislavery.org/homepage/antislavery/nomination.htm).

The winner of the Anti-Slavery Award must work on an issue of contemporary slavery; be involved in direct intervention with those affected and campaigning work against these abuses; and appreciate the need for the international attention that the Award offers.

For further information about the Anti-Slavery Award and previous recipients, please visit [www.antislavery.org/homepage/antislavery/award.htm](http://www.antislavery.org/homepage/antislavery/award.htm).

“Investing in women and girls' ... is about changing the systems and attitudes that discriminate against women and prevent them from fully participating in and benefiting from the economies and societies in which they live.”

- UNDP Administrator Kemal Derviş

<http://www.un.org/events/women/iwd/2008/undp.shtml>

sister NGOs worldwide.

- The e-bulletin is published every last week of the month. A Spanish version goes out three days after the English version. Sometimes additional follow up information and/or reminders are also sent via email to member organisations.
- Primarily a tool for communication between the International Secretariat and the Alliance members, the e-bulletin aims to cover a broad range of topics although trafficking related issues remain its special focus. We also use this e-bulletin to inform members about upcoming events and provide regular updates about the Secretariat.
- We strongly encourage members and friends to send us their input to the e-bulletin at [info@gaatw.org](mailto:info@gaatw.org)
- If you do not want to receive this e-bulletin please send us a message at [info@gaatw.org](mailto:info@gaatw.org) and we will delete your address from the list.

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