

Co-organizers:



## Statement from the Feminist Forum on Migration and Displacement

30 November – 1 December 2024 -- Bangkok, Thailand

### Solidarity, Dignity and Equity for Women and Gender Diverse Migrants!

Women and gender diverse migrants, migrant activists and organizations working on gender and migration around the world came together in the *Feminist Forum on Migration and Displacement* to shape a bottom-up, intersectional feminist migration policy addressing causes of migration, realities and challenges faced by women and gender diverse people in migration in all their diversity.

This is an approach for movement-building among women in migration and across movements – one in which we aim to address the systemic nature of patriarchy and other oppressions in all institutions through intersectional practice, challenging power inequalities at all levels.

We believe that feminism must address the systems that create inequality. We recognize that women experience multiple forms of oppression -- particularly based on but not limited to race, caste, class, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, religion, migration status, age, marital status, and disability. An intersectional feminist approach to migration centres migrant voices in decision-making processes and advocates for policies and programs that promote their rights and agency.

Transforming systems takes strong, organized, informed movements that build power to demand change. This is most effective when different sectors work together, building an integrated agenda that identifies how their concerns intersect, and in which the voices and leadership of those directly affected help shape national and global agendas.

Migration should be high on the feminist agenda, given the gendered nature of migration and its centrality in global realities and shifting geo-politics. Migrant women comprise half of the world's migrants.

They are affected differently by factors driving migration and they face pervasive, intersecting forms of discrimination. The migration process impacts the rights of women and gender diverse persons, including on issues such as decent work, recognition of paid and unpaid care work, gender-based violence and harassment, access to sexual and reproductive rights, non-discrimination, and political participation. Additionally, anti-migrant sentiment is used as a mobilizing issue in the rise of authoritarian regimes that then deny women's rights and roll back labour rights, migrant rights, efforts to address climate change and more.

**Women and diverse gender groups in migration face multiple challenges, including but not limited to:**

- **Climate change, that** frequently drives forced displacement and migration. While climate-related events intensify, there are few national or international mechanisms to address the rights and long-term solutions for those who migrate or become displaced. The climate crisis impacts women's bodies, health, livelihoods, and human rights, including food security, access to services, access to justice, job security and housing. Limited responses that exist are rarely gender responsive. Displaced women and gender diverse migrants in all their diversity must be involved in the development of strategies addressing climate change.
- **Hardening of borders and criminalization:** Criminalization of migration leads to arbitrary arrests, detention, deportation including of pregnant women, family separation, limited access to care and services, and other violations of migrants' human rights. With increases in the securitization and militarization of borders, the lives and rights of those who migrate, especially through irregular pathways, are more at risk.
- **Lack of recognition of care work whether paid or unpaid:** This impacts women migrant care workers' ability to exercise their labour rights, including safe work conditions, wage protections, paid time off, the right to organize and collectively bargain, decent wages, and social protection. Women migrant care workers are more at risk of gender-based violence and harassment, discrimination, wage theft, passport confiscation, isolation, and trauma. Women migrant care workers who work under the Kafala system, those who are undocumented, or those who work in the informal care economy are particularly at risk of rights violations.
- **War, conflict, intervention, and occupation** drive forced migration and displacement. Under these situations, migrant women are at risk to gender-based violence and harassment, sexual assaults, killing, human trafficking, psychological violence, and trauma. Migrant women are more at risk of labour rights violations and exclusion from humanitarian services in war situations, including food and shelter.
- **Multiple forms of discrimination:** There is an increase in xenophobia, racism, homophobia, transphobia, stigmatization, Islamophobia, labelling and gender-based violence and harassment based on migratory status. Discrimination based on migration or residency

status, gender identity, sexual orientation, racial identities, marital status, and disability impact access to rights, resources and services and pushes women migrants into more exploitative environments. There is an urgent need to create counter-narratives to existing anti-immigrant ones.

- **Access to regular migration pathways for migration is limited and highly gendered.** Women can face many risks in migration—and risks such as trafficking, debt bondage and lack of wage protection may be heightened if they are undocumented. Irregular migration status may further limit women’s access to health care and social protections as well as freedoms such as the freedom of movement and freedom of association. Some may experience statelessness. Recruitment bans that allege to “protect women” actually force them to migrate through irregular and riskier pathways.
- **Political participation and freedom of association:** Migrant women in destination countries are often denied their political and labour rights, including freedom of association, the right to form, join and lead labour unions and bargain collectively. In addition, they are often denied the right to participate politically.

**We invite our allies in feminist movements to integrate migration into your agendas and join with us in lifting these demands**—which are highlights from a much more extensive set of demands:

- All women and gender diverse migrants and their families, no matter how or why they migrate, where they migrate from, or what identities they hold, have all human rights. **Migrants are human beings and should be treated with dignity and respect!**
- **Decriminalize migration.** Migrating is not a crime. This would mean the end of detention. Instead of investing in detention, including private detention centers, advocate for resources that support migrant communities.
- Urge governments to **create and enforce laws that protect migrants' rights** and hold those who violate these laws accountable.
- **Advocate for regularization of undocumented migrants**, pathways to long-term residency for all migrants and their families and access to citizenship for those who want it.
- **Support migrant women workers and gender diverse migrant workers in their fight for social protections and freedom of association**, including access to justice and the right to join labour unions. They have the right to bargain collectively and have a voice in migration policy development.
- States must recognize the legitimacy of the work of **migrant human rights defenders** in all their diversity, including migrant human rights defenders.
- **Build feminist alliances and collective solidarity** to push for national laws and policies that protect the rights of domestic workers and call for countries to ratify and implement the ILO

Convention 189 on decent work for domestic workers and ILO Convention 190 on ending violence and harassment in the world of work.

We join with our siblings in feminist movements to unite in demanding an end to war and occupation. Not only do war and occupation increase displacement and forced migration, but they often strand women and gender diverse migrant workers in conflict situations. Migrant and displaced women in situations of conflict have the right to be safe and free from trafficking and other forms of labour exploitation and abuse. They should not be excluded from human rights and humanitarian services, such as food, shelter, health, and legal aid.

Join us in calling for funding for migration and diaspora organizations that is collaborative, flexible, accessible, accountable and supports impacted communities.

**We demand dignity and equal rights for all migrant women and gender diverse migrants. What defines us is the action we take. Raise your voice! Feminist power for one and all!**

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