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**Spotlight Report on Global Migration 2026 Urges Governments
to End Exclusion, Commit to Rights at IMRF**

The Women in Migration Network (WIMN) launched the *Spotlight Report on Global Migration 2026 (SRGM)* on March 4 to urge transformation of migration governance. The SRGM, supported by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), intends to inform migration policies ahead of the UN's 2nd International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) in New York, 5–8 May 2026.

The IMRF will assess progress of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), adopted by the UN in 2018. During the virtual launch event, several contributors to the report urged UN Member States to go beyond rhetoric and make tangible, rights-based commitments, particularly at a time of global turmoil and the highly visible and controversial issue of migration.

“...Migrants must be understood first and foremost as rights holders – with their human rights remaining intact regardless of whether or when any border is crossed,” the report states. “Governments must cease treating migrants as default threats, and instead reflect on the threats that their own policies and practices have posed to migrants – taking measures to transform them.”

Vani Saraswathi of Migrant Rights Research Open Repository (MRRORS) and a WIMN Board of Directors member, cautioned that, “Inaction at this time will be complicity.” During the launch event, Saraswathi was among several speakers to amplify key recommendations in the report.

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The SRGM identifies steps for governments to prioritize rights-based solutions instead of migration deterrence, surveillance, detention, and criminalization. Chus Álvarez, coordinator of the report, commented, “The report is a global review on the limitations of the UN’s impact on migration.” It critiques structural barriers that drive irregular migration and calls for expanded regular pathways accessible to people across nationalities, income levels, and sectors.

According to Hayat Akbari of the International Detention Coalition, “Global migration governance has shifted in a troubling direction,” adding, “Many governments are treating migrants as threats.”

The report urges the abolition of “employer-tied visas” that expose migrant domestic workers and others to exploitation—calling instead for simplified and inclusive “regularization” mechanisms with pathways to permanent residence and citizenship, ending detention as a default practice, reversing the criminalization of migration and solidarity, and establishing limits and safeguards on digital surveillance technologies targeting migrants are also cited as good policies and practices.

Focusing on harms migrants face, Bariyah from the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) raised concerns about the increased risk of physical and sexual abuses experienced by domestic workers. Roula Seghaier, International Coordinator of WIMN, emphasized that migrants “cannot afford to leave a horrible employer, cannot afford to report abuse, and are bonded to a system that calls itself legal.” She also insisted on family reunification with all of all it entails. “We must also name how LGBTQI+ migrants face compounded barriers. In many origin countries, they flee persecution, yet upon arrival they are forced to prove that persecution through traumatic, dehumanizing asylum processes that reduce their identity to a bureaucratic category of ‘worthiness’”. She added, “Their unconventional families are often unrecognized. Rather than broad, intersectional protection, the system offers them a competition for recognition based on suffering.”

Glenda Belen Huerto Vizcarro, a report contributor based in Spain, cited the report’s timeliness as it “creates starting points for an approach that considers migrant rights as human rights.” Hayat also explained, “Too often, migrant policies are designed without migrants...Policies risk reflecting political agendas rather than real world realities.”

The full report, available in English, German and Spanish, is available here:

<https://womeninmigration.org/spotlightreport>