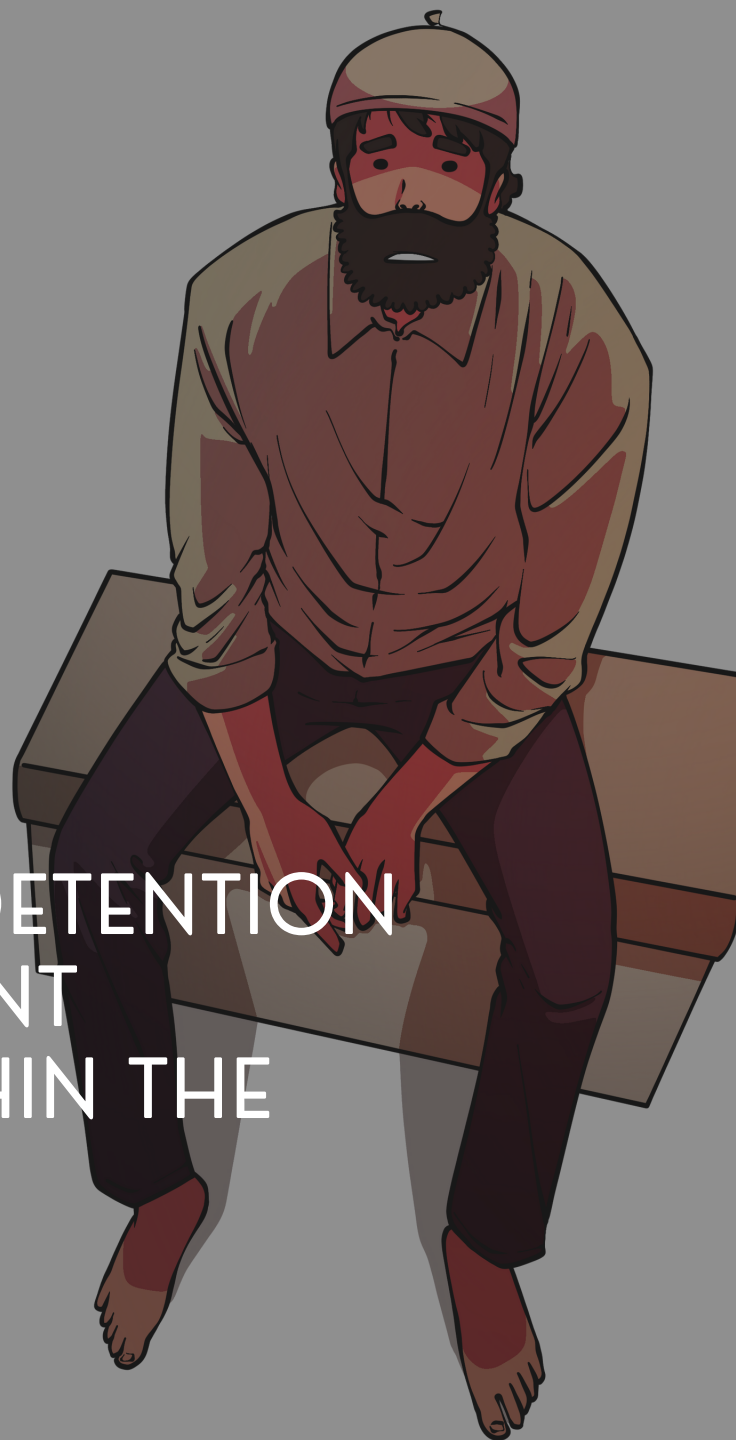




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**IN-SIGHT:** INCREASING  
UNDERSTANDING OF DETENTION  
PRACTICES OF MIGRANT  
WORKERS FROM WITHIN THE  
SYSTEM ITSELF



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*“In order not to violate the right to liberty and security of person and to protect against arbitrariness, detention of migrants must be prescribed by law and necessary, reasonable and proportional to the objectives to be achieved.”*

Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants.  
A/HRC/20/24, §9, April 2012.



## INTRODUCTION

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) - heavily rely on migrant workers to grow and sustain their economies. However, despite this reliance, the unlawful detention of migrant workers has become a pressing issue raising concerns on human rights violations and legal ambiguities. This report aims to shed light on the complexities surrounding the unlawful detention of migrant workers and its impact on their communities in the Gulf countries.

Throughout the report, the term "unlawful detention" is employed rather than simply "detention" to underscore the legal and ethical complexities surrounding the confinement of migrant workers. This encompasses instances of arbitrary detention, where individuals are unlawfully confined without proper legal justification or due process, as well as cases of administrative detention, which may similarly lack sufficient legal basis and oversight.

While we acknowledge that not all detentions of migrant workers in Gulf countries may be deemed unlawful, the term "unlawful detention" is employed to emphasise the widespread practice of migrant workers being held without formal charges or unable to challenge their detention, violating fundamental principles of fairness and justice.

# METHODOLOGY

This report is part of our ongoing efforts to gather data and gain deeper insights into the unlawful detention of migrant workers within the GCC countries. It is important to note that while this report provides a general understanding of the issue, it does not offer an exhaustive analysis.

The information presented in this report is derived from our organisation's work in the region, particularly in providing support to migrant workers who find themselves detained and facing deportation. Our support initiatives encompass various facets, including covering fines, facilitating flight tickets for deportation, engaging in direct conversations with detainees, liaising with their families, and referring them to reintegration support services upon their return home.

Through the support process, we carry out interviews directly with those detained, allowing us to gain insights into their individual experiences. These interviews provide valuable qualitative data that enriches our understanding of the issue.

We also engage with community leaders who play a crucial role in facilitating access to support services. Their perspectives and observations contribute to a broader understanding of the systemic factors contributing to the unlawful detention of migrant workers.

Furthermore, we gather information during the deportation process, closely documenting the circumstances surrounding each case, including the reasons for detention, the treatment of detainees, and the challenges they faced.

Finally, our interactions with the families of detained migrant workers offer valuable insights into the impact of detention on both individuals and their loved ones. By listening to their stories and concerns, we gain a holistic understanding of the human dimensions of migrant worker detention and the ripple effects it has on communities.



# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Migrant workers in the GCC countries face high levels of exploitation, abuse, and the risk of unlawful detention. The unlawful detention of migrant workers is a complex issue deeply rooted in the region's institutional structures and systems, as well as broader social dynamics.

Within this context, several key contributors perpetuate the widespread occurrence of unlawful detention. These factors include, among others, the lack of due process, the lack of clear and enforceable regulations, and discriminatory enforcement practices. The combination of these factors create a precarious environment for migrant workers in GCC countries, where the threat of detention looms large, undermining their rights, dignity, and well-being.

## LACK OF DUE PROCESS

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Migrant workers may be detained without proper adherence to due process rights, such as the right to be informed of the reasons for detention, access to legal counsel, or the right to challenge detention before an impartial tribunal. Without adequate due process protections, migrant workers are left vulnerable to unlawful detention and denied the opportunity to defend themselves against unjust accusations or allegations.

## LACK OF CLEAR REGULATIONS

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The lack of clarity in rules and regulations can contribute to migrant workers being unlawfully detained. When legal provisions are ambiguous or open to interpretation, it creates opportunities for misuse or abuse by employers, authorities, or other actors in positions of power. Without clear guidelines, migrant workers may find themselves detained without proper justification or due process, particularly if there are no robust mechanisms in place to ensure accountability and adherence to legal standards. And while the lack of clarity in laws alone may not directly lead to unlawful detention, it can certainly contribute to a broader environment where such abuses are more likely to occur.

## LACK OF ENFORCEABLE REGULATIONS

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The absence of enforceable monitoring and implementation mechanisms exacerbates the risk of unlawful detention among migrant workers. Inadequate oversight and accountability within the legal and regulatory frameworks create conditions where violations of migrant workers' rights can occur with impunity. Without robust mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with laws and

regulations, employers, sponsors, and authorities may exploit loopholes or disregard legal standards, leading to increased vulnerability among migrant workers. In such contexts, migrant workers are left without effective recourse or protection against unlawful detention, as there are few avenues for redress or accountability.

## DISCRIMINATORY ENFORCEMENT PRACTICES

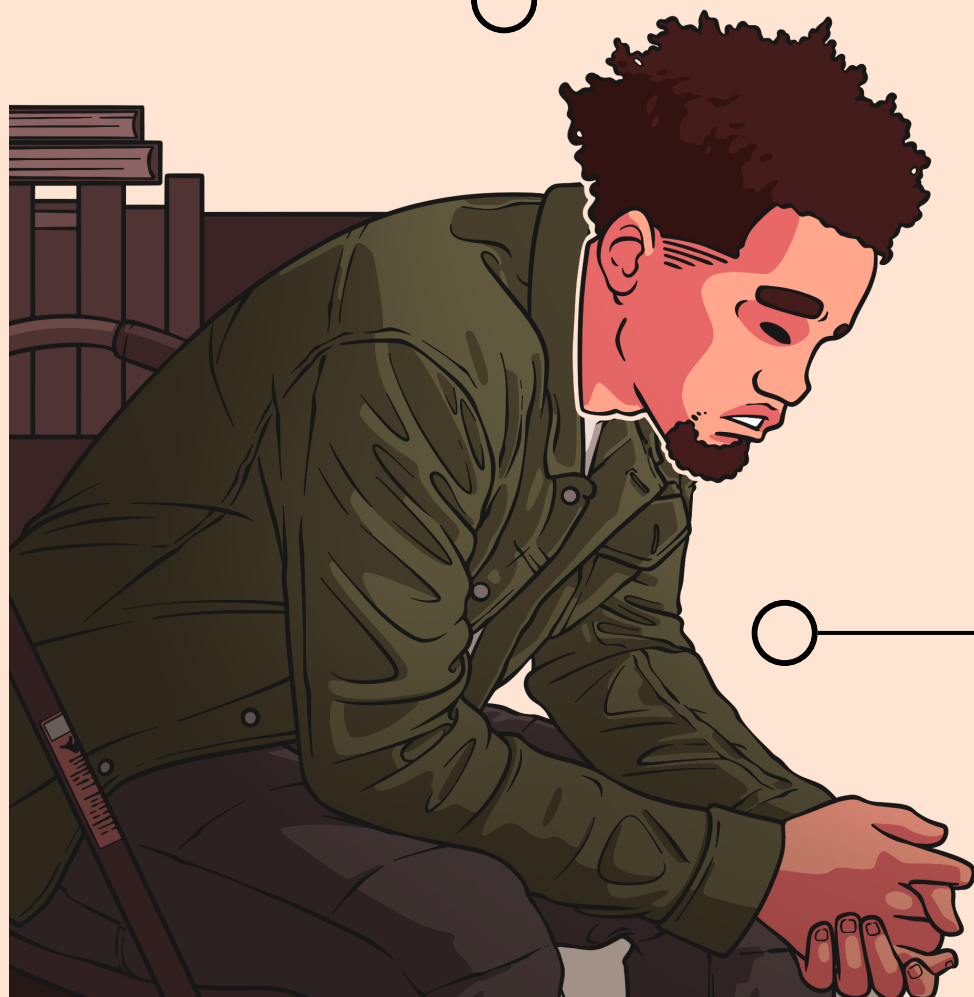
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Unlawful detentions and unjustified deportations of migrant workers have increasingly become tools for "managing" migration within the region, evolving into an aggressive strategy employed across various countries. This strategy involves routine inspections, sweeping crackdowns, raids, and surveillance operations targeting undocumented migrants under the guise of enforcing immigration laws or addressing security concerns, leading to the widespread detention of migrant workers and resulting in mass deportations without due process. This aggressive approach to migration "management" not only violates the rights and dignity of migrant workers but also perpetuates a climate of fear and insecurity within migrant communities, undermining social cohesion and human rights principles.

# THINKING POINTS

## IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

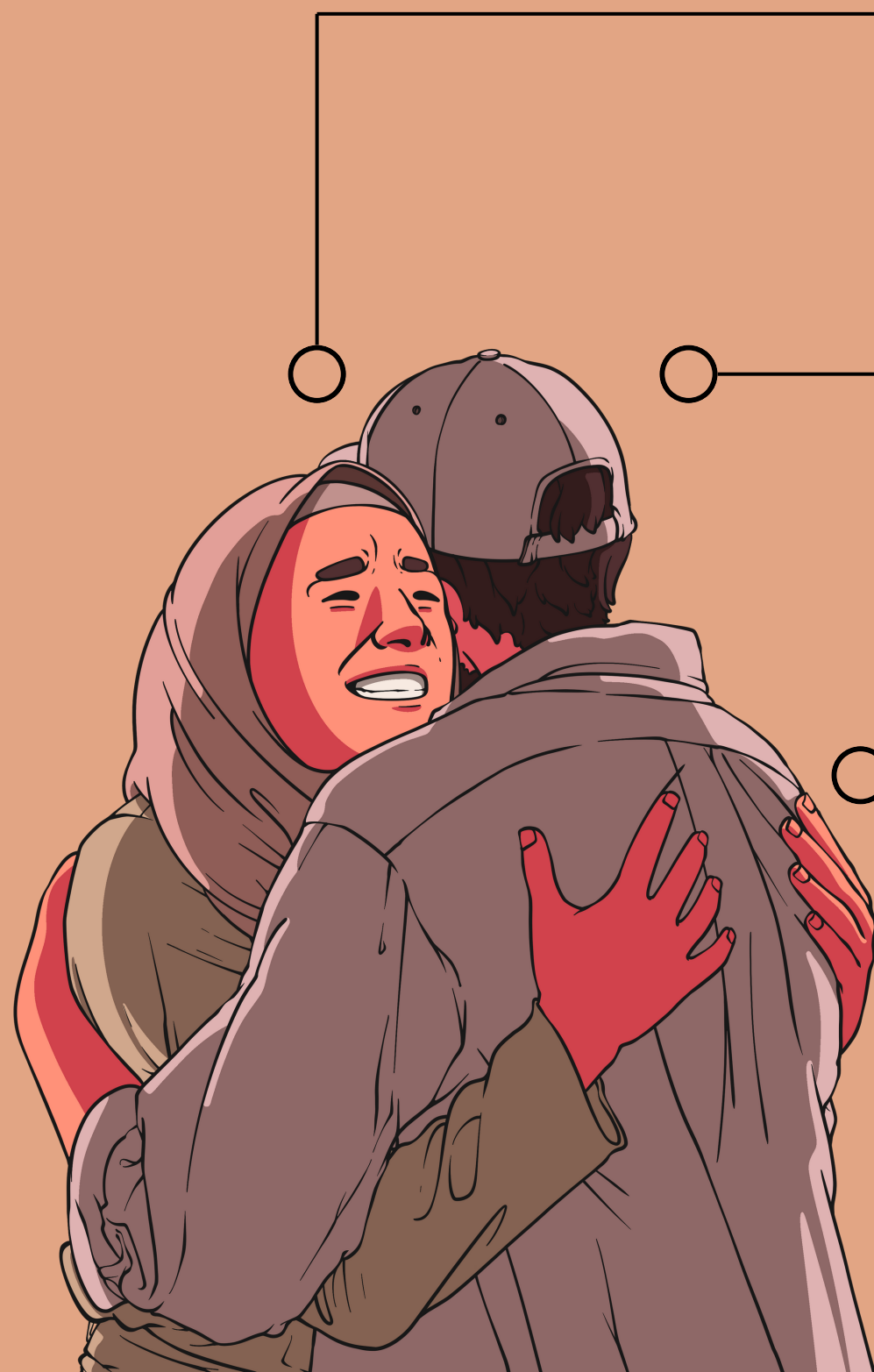
The unlawful detention of migrant workers raises significant human rights concerns, violating their right to liberty, security, and due process under international law.



## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Detention disrupts the lives and livelihoods of migrant workers and their families, exacerbating financial hardships and psychological distress.

# IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANT WORKERS



## HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Protecting the rights of migrant workers is essential for upholding human dignity, promoting social justice, and ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and equally.

## ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

Migrant workers drive growth and development in the region. Their labor is essential to meet the countries' labor demands and fuel economic progress.

## INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

GCC countries have international obligations to uphold the rights of migrant workers under various human rights conventions and agreements. Adhering to principles of non-arbitrary detention and implementing fair administrative detention procedures are essential for meeting these obligations and maintaining credibility in the international community.

# ARBITRARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION

Arbitrary detention refers to the unlawful deprivation of liberty or confinement of an individual by authorities without proper legal justification or due process. In other words, it occurs when someone is detained without legitimate grounds or without following the established legal procedures.

Administrative detention is a legal process through which individuals can be detained by relevant authorities without trial or charge, often for reasons related to immigration control. Administrative detention is often preventive in nature, intended to address perceived risks or threats posed by the detainee's actions or circumstances. However, concerns about potential abuses of administrative detention powers, including arbitrary or indefinite detention without adequate safeguards, underscore the importance of ensuring transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights in its application.

Both, arbitrary detention and administrative detention are issues of concern in the GCC countries, often highlighting challenges related to immigration policies, workers rights, social practices, and human rights abuses.

## ARBITRARY DETENTION

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- Migrant workers are subjected to arbitrary detention - held without a charge or due process
- Authorities detain workers without following proper legal procedures - such as disputes over wages, absconding or presumed theft, without allowing them the opportunity to challenge their detention
- Migrant workers are being arbitrarily detained for extended periods, with limited access to legal representation or communication with their families

## ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION

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- Authorities in Gulf countries use administrative detention as a means to enforce immigration laws
- Its disproportionate use and the lack of transparency and accountability in enforcement is concerning
- Administrative detention of migrant workers often occurs without formal charges or access to due process rights. This means that migrant workers are being detained without being informed of the specific reasons for their detention or having the opportunity to challenge it
- Migrant workers detained often face deportation proceedings, which may be initiated without adequate consideration of their individual circumstances, such as family ties or identifying them as potential victims of human trafficking
- In some GCC countries, deportation costs, specifically the flight ticket to return home, are imposed on families. This is a heavy burden on families who have to resort to loans or selling properties in order to afford the flight ticket. As a result, this requirement not only further exacerbates their already difficult situation, but also extensively prolongs the worker's detention period
- Detention pending deportation can be prolonged indefinitely
- Administrative detention can have devastating consequences for migrant workers and their families, including separation from loved ones, loss of income, and psychological trauma



## DE FACTO DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY

*De facto* deprivation of liberty refers to situations where workers are effectively deprived of their liberty without formal acknowledgment or legal authorization by private actors. This form of detention, recognized and identified by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) during a visit to Qatar, occurs when domestic workers are subjected to various restrictive measures that amount to confinement.



# DE FACTO DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY

*De facto* deprivation of liberty of domestic migrant workers in the GCC arises from a combination of factors mentioned below. *De facto* deprivation of liberty, despite not being formally recognised as the detention of individuals, many domestic workers experience conditions tantamount to deprivation of liberty, highlighting the urgent need to acknowledge it as so. Here's a closer look at how *de facto* deprivation of liberty manifests for domestic migrant workers in the GCC:

## CONFISCATION OF DOCUMENTS

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Domestic workers's passports are often confiscated by their employers upon their arrival. This practice is widespread leaving workers effectively trapped in their employers' homes, unable to leave without their documents.

## ISOLATION AND CONTROL

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Many domestic workers in the GCC countries are subjected to isolation from the outside world. They may have limited or no contact with their families back home, restricted access to communication devices, and limited interaction with the outside community. This isolation reinforces their dependence on their employers and exacerbates their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation.

## FEAR AND INTIMIDATION

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Domestic workers may be subjected to psychological coercion, threats, and intimidation tactics by their employers, further reinforcing their sense of captivity. Fear of reprisal or deportation may deter them from attempting to escape or seek help.

## LONG WORKING HOURS AND EXHAUSTIVE CONDITIONS

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Domestic workers often work from Sunday to Saturday and endure long working hours, sometimes without adequate rest or breaks. Combined with the lack of freedom of movement and isolation, these conditions contribute to a sense of confinement and powerlessness, akin to *de facto* deprivation of liberty.

## RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT

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Domestic workers often face severe restrictions on their freedom of movement. They may be confined to their employer's residence, with limited or no opportunity to leave the premises without permission or alone. This restriction can be enforced through physical confinement, surveillance, or threats of punishment.

## LACK OF LEGAL RECOURSE

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Due to their vulnerable legal status and the imbalance of power in the employer-employee relationship, domestic workers in the GCC countries often face significant barriers to accessing legal recourse or seeking assistance from authorities. This lack of protection and support further entrenches their *de facto* deprivation of liberty.

# REASONS FOR DETENTION

Detentions of migrant workers represent a complex intersection of socio-economic disparities, legal ambiguities, and normalised yet discriminatory practices within the region. Common reasons for the unlawful detention of migrant workers in the GCC countries include:

## OVERSTAYING VISAS

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Most migrant workers in the GCC countries enter on temporary work visas, which are tied to specific employers. Some workers may choose to stay beyond the expiration of their visas, but also other scenarios can happen that workers overstay on their visa, *inter alia*: their employers do not renew their visa without the workers' knowledge, workers face exploitation and leave their employer - and are unable to change employers (especially domestic workers), renew their visa, or return home - or workers are unable to pay for their visa (known as visa trading - an illegal practice) due to wage theft or lack of work opportunities. However, regardless of the reason all lead to being vulnerable to detention.

## ALLEGATIONS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

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**Absconding:** Migrant workers may find themselves in situations where they feel that their only option is to leave their employer, to abscond, due to various factors such as abusive working conditions or inhumane living standards. Absconding, or fleeing from employment without authorization, results in the detention of these workers. Regardless of their reasons for leaving their employer, absconding is considered a violation, leading to detention and deportation.

**Resorting to Prostitution:** In cases where migrant workers abscond from their employers and find themselves without means of financial support, some may resort, or be coerced, to prostitution as a means of survival. These individuals, often vulnerable and marginalized, face heightened risks of unlawful detention. Authorities in GCC countries frequently crack down on individuals engaging prostitution, resulting in their detention and deportation. This intersection of absconding and involvement in prostitution underscores the complex challenges faced by migrant workers who seek to escape abusive employment conditions only to encounter further hardships.

**Sex Trafficking:** Sex trafficking is a harrowing reality faced by migrant workers, particularly women. Traffickers exploit their vulnerabilities, promising employment opportunities or better

lives but instead subject them to sexual exploitation. Victims of sex trafficking are often detained when authorities intervene in trafficking operations or conduct raids on establishments involved in sex trade.

**False Accusations:** Migrant workers, particularly domestic workers, can be falsely accused of criminal acts by their employers, leading to their detention without proper investigations or due process.

## IMMIGRATION RAIDS

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Gulf countries periodically conduct raids and crackdowns targeting undocumented migrant workers as part of efforts to "manage" migrants. These operations often result in mass detentions, and deportations of undocumented workers without due process.

## DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES

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Migrant workers, especially those from certain nationalities or ethnic backgrounds, may be disproportionately targeted for detention based on racial profiling. This results in unfair treatment and violations of their rights under the guise of immigration enforcement.

# HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The detentions of migrant workers in the GCC countries raise significant human rights concerns, each with distinct implications for the affected individuals.

## RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSONS

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The most fundamental human right at stake is the right to liberty and security of person, enshrined in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)\*. Unlawful detention deprives migrant workers of their freedom arbitrarily and without proper legal justification. This violates their inherent dignity and autonomy, as well as their right to live free from arbitrary interference by the state or other actors.

## RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS AND FAIR TRIAL

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Unlawful detention also infringes upon the right to due process and fair trial, as guaranteed by Article 10 of the UDHR and Article 14 of the ICCPR. Migrant workers who are detained without adequate legal recourse are denied the opportunity to challenge the lawfulness of their detention or present their case before an impartial tribunal. This absence of procedural safeguards undermines the principles of justice and equality before the law.

## RIGHT TO EFFECTIVE REMEDY

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The denial of effective remedies for unlawful detention violates the right to an effective remedy, as articulated in Article 8 of the UDHR and Article 2(3) of the ICCPR. Migrant workers must have access to legal avenues to challenge the lawfulness of their detention, seek redress for any abuses suffered, and obtain reparations for the harm inflicted upon them.

## RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM TORTURE AND CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

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Prolonged detention under harsh conditions may amount to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, in violation of Article 5 of the UDHR and Article 7 of the ICCPR. Migrant workers held in detention centres may face overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and inadequate healthcare. Such treatment not only causes physical harm but also inflicts psychological suffering and undermines the dignity of the individuals affected.



\*Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar are the only GCC countries signatories to the ICCPR Convention

# GENDER SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES

Women migrant workers may face unique vulnerabilities and risks in detention. The lack of gender-sensitive policies and facilities within detention centres can exacerbate these risks, exposing women to further harm and trauma. When considering gender-specific concerns in detention for women migrant workers, several key issues arise:

## MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS

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Limited access to menstrual hygiene products can pose a significant challenge for women in detention, potentially leading to discomfort, embarrassment, and unhygienic conditions. Providing adequate supplies of menstrual hygiene products is essential for ensuring the dignity and well-being of women detainees.

## REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

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Women may encounter difficulties in accessing necessary healthcare services, prenatal care for pregnant detainees. This absence of essential healthcare infringes upon their reproductive rights and jeopardises their health and well-being.

## GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT

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Women in detention may be at increased risk of gender-based violence and harassment from both fellow detainees and staff. Ensuring safe and secure living environments, implementing protocols for reporting incidents of violence, and providing support services for survivors are essential measures to address this issue.

## SEPARATION FROM CHILDREN

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Women migrant workers detained may be mothers who are separated from their children, especially in the case that their child's father is a national and the child is a boy. This separation can cause significant distress and emotional trauma for both the mothers and their children, highlighting the need for family reunification measures and support services for detained mothers.



# DETENTION AND RELIGION OBSERVANCE

Detention during Ramadan for non-Muslims in the GCC countries can present unique challenges and considerations, as it involves navigating a cultural and religious context that may differ from one's own beliefs and practices. Here are some key points to consider:

## RESPECT FOR RELIGIONS DIVERSITY

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GCC countries have a predominantly Muslim population, and Ramadan is widely observed as a significant religious practice. It's important for authorities to respect the religious diversity of non-Muslims and ensure that they are not subjected to discrimination or pressure to participate in religious observances against their beliefs.

## ACCESS TO FOOD AND WATER

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Non-Muslim detainees who are not fasting during Ramadan should have access to regular meals and drinking water throughout the day, in accordance with their dietary needs and religious practices. Authorities should ensure that detention facilities are adequately stocked with food and water to accommodate non-fasting detainees, especially during fasting hours.

## HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

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Non-Muslim detainees who are not fasting during Ramadan may have specific health considerations, such as medical conditions that require regular meals or medications. It's essential for detention facilities to provide access to necessary healthcare services and ensure that the health needs of non-fasting detainees are met during Ramadan.



# IMPACT ON MIGRANT WORKERS

The unlawful detention of migrant workers carries significant repercussions that extend far beyond the individuals directly affected. Firstly, for those detained, it can lead to prolonged periods of uncertainty, where individuals did not have an opportunity to challenge their detention. Such conditions not only violate their human rights but also exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, including mental and physical health issues.

The impact extends to the families of detained migrants, many of whom rely on remittances sent back home for their livelihoods. Detention disrupts these financial lifelines, plunging families into economic instability, especially if they need to fund the deportation of the family member who is detained. Additionally, the psychological toll on families separated from their loved ones due to detention cannot be overstated, as they grapple with anxiety, fear, and the anguish of not knowing the fate of their relatives.

Beyond individual cases, the widespread detention of migrant workers sends a chilling message throughout the broader migrant workforce in the GCC. Fear of detention looms large, creating a climate of intimidation where workers may be reluctant to assert their rights or report abuses by employers for fear of reprisal. This perpetuates a cycle of exploitation and impunity that undermines the principles of justice and dignity for all workers.



# IMPACT ON MIGRANT WORKERS

## DETENTION CONDITIONS

- **Overcrowding:** Detention facilities in GCC countries can be overcrowded, with inadequate space and resources to accommodate the large number of detainees. Overcrowding can lead to unsanitary conditions, increased risk of disease transmission, and psychological distress among detainees.
- **Limited Access to Healthcare:** Detained migrant workers may face barriers in accessing timely and adequate healthcare services, including medical treatment for pre-existing conditions. The lack of access to healthcare can exacerbate health issues and contribute to deterioration in detainees' well-being.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL EFFECTS

- **Stress and Anxiety:** The uncertainty surrounding their legal status, separation from families, and fear of deportation can cause significant stress and anxiety among detained migrant workers. The psychological toll of detention can manifest in various forms, including depression, insomnia, and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- **Stigmatisation and Isolation:** Detained migrant workers may experience social stigma and isolation, especially after their deportation, facing discrimination and marginalization within their communities. This can further compound feelings of shame, hopelessness, and alienation.

## FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

- **Loss of Income:** Detention can result in the loss of wages or employment opportunities for migrant workers, exacerbating financial hardships for themselves and their families, particularly if they are the primary breadwinners or if they have a loan they used to pay recruitment fees to migrate to the GCC.





## AHOU'S\* STORY

In the outskirts of Muscat, Ahou\*, a migrant worker from Ivory Coast, found herself in a difficult situation. She was working for a large household of eight people, cleaning a two story home and taking care of a flock of goats. She worked from Sunday to Saturday taking a break only while she ate. She was not allowed to leave the house, and when the family was out she was locked inside the home to make sure she would not go out. She communicated with her family only as long as she had data credit, as she was not allowed to access the home wifi.

After seven months of exhausting work, Ahou decided to leave her employer due to extreme exhaustion. She found her passport hidden by her employer, and took the opportunity to leave the house one day when the family was out and they had forgotten to close the gate. As a domestic worker in Oman, leaving your employer is a crime, thus her attempt to leave Oman was met with arrest at the airport.

Ahou was detained and brought before the court, where she was ordered to pay 773 Omani Riyals, equivalent to \$2008 USD or seven months of her salary in Oman. This fine was justified by the court because she hadn't completed her two year work contract as agreed. Her employer had incurred expenses amounting to 800 Omani Riyals for recruitment and 290 Omani Riyals for handling her case as an absconder. Based on these expenses, the court ordered her to pay the amount in order for her employer to be reimbursed.

Throughout the legal process Ahou did not have the opportunity to challenge her detention or present the reasons why she had absconded. No efforts were also made to investigate her working conditions or whether she could have been a victim of human trafficking or any other form of abuse.

Ahou spent six months behind bars until enough money was gathered to pay off her fine. She is the sole provider for her mother, who is unable to walk and depends entirely on Ahou's earnings. Her mother did not have the opportunity to sell anything or ask for a loan due to her living conditions, thus prolonging the time Ahou spent in detention. Ahou's return was entirely dependent on others that were willing to help.

Ahou's determination remained unbroken. With the support of compassionate individuals, her fine was covered and her flight ticket secured. After spending seven months working in Oman, and six months detained, she returned home in January 2024.

\* Her name has been changed to protect her identity.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent the unlawful detention and improve the treatment of migrant workers in detention, the relevant authorities should:

- Ensure that detention is a measure of last resort, used only when necessary and proportionate to the objective to be achieved.
- Identify and provide appropriate care for trafficked persons, avoiding criminal penalties or deportation.
- Reform the sponsorship (kafala) system, both in law and in practice, to allow employment mobility and prevent power abuse from employers.
- Tackle root causes leading to irregular migrant status to prevent unlawful detention and deportation.
- Cease the arrest and detention of migrant workers accused of "absconding", and protect domestic workers when fleeing abusive working conditions, especially making sure that they are not prosecuted as "absconding", punished with fines, imprisoned or deported.
- Cease *de facto* deprivation of liberty at the hands of private individuals, including by ensuring that grievance mechanisms are safe and accessible by domestic workers and provide adequate outcomes.
- Women and their children waiting for deportation should never be detained and instead provided with appropriate care and assistance.
- Ensure that detention and deportation decisions are non-discriminatory.
- Improve and prioritise the humane treatment of detained migrant workers by improving adequate detention conditions, including ensuring access to healthcare, medical, and legal assistance.
- Ensure that the responsibility for covering the cost of deportation (the flight home) of a detainee falls on the state authorities rather than the detainee themselves.
- Provide access to consular authorities for immigration detainees.
- Provide data on detained migrants and deportees as well as information on immigration detention practices and conditions.
- Adopt and adhere to several conventions and international standards to ensure the protection of migrant workers in detention. These include:
  - International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
  - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
  - Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
  - Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT)
  - ILO Convention No. 97 (1949) on Migration for Employment
  - ILO Convention No. 143 (1975) on Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions)
  - Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
  - UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules)
  - UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Detention Guidelines



# CONCLUSION

The unlawful detention of migrant workers in GCC countries represents a grave violation of human rights and a stark reminder of the systemic injustices prevalent within the region's systems and practices. The widespread detention of migrant workers stems from various factors perpetuated by deeply entrenched structural inequalities and unchecked power imbalances.

The reasons for unlawful detention are multifaceted, often rooted in the exploitative practices of employers and the failure of regulatory mechanisms to protect the rights of migrant workers. These unlawful detentions not only strip individuals of their freedom, but also perpetuates a cycle of exploitation and impunity that undermines the principles of justice and dignity as highlighted by the story of Ahou.

The human rights implications of such detentions are profound, reflecting a flagrant disregard for the dignity and well-being of migrant workers. These individuals, who leave their homes in search of better opportunities, are instead met with exploitation and injustice, denied basic rights and subjected to inhumane treatment.

Moreover, gender issues exacerbate the vulnerability of migrant workers, particularly women, who face heightened risks of exploitation and abuse. The story of Ahou underscores the intersectional challenges faced by women migrant workers, who are often forced into further vulnerable situations.

In light of these pressing concerns, urgent action is needed to address the root causes of unlawful detention and uphold the rights of migrant workers in GCC countries. This includes strengthening regulations, enhancing oversight mechanisms, ensuring access to justice, and implementing gender-sensitive policies and interventions to address the unique vulnerabilities faced by women migrant workers.

As we strive towards a more just and equitable future, it is only through collective action and unwavering commitment to human rights and the rule of law, we can create a world where all individuals are treated equally, with dignity and respect, regardless of their nationality or immigration status.





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