



جمعية حماية العمال الوافدين  
Migrant Workers Protection Society  
(MWPS)

## MISSION STATEMENT

**TO CREATE A COMMUNITY  
WHERE EXPATRIATE  
RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED  
AND TO RAISE AWARENESS  
OF THESE RIGHTS AND  
RESPONSIBILITIES**

## EDITORIAL

As we navigate through another year, MWPS remains committed to safeguarding the rights and dignity of migrant workers. We provide support, guidance, and advocacy, striving to empower individuals and effect positive change.

This monthly Newsletter – MIGRANT VOICE – reflects MWPS and its activities in the country. It is a showcase of teamwork – of volunteers, well-wishers, donors, yes, a vibrant lot, committed to a cause.

Together, let's champion the rights of migrant workers and build a future where every individual's contributions are valued and their rights are upheld.

Happy reading!

**RAJI UNNIKRISHNAN**

EDITOR - MIGRANT VOICE

# MIGRANT VOICE

EMPOWERING COMMUNITY

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## FROM THE CHAIRPERSON...

As we embark on a new year, I am filled with gratitude for the support and dedication shown by all towards the cause of migrant workers' rights. The past year has been a testament to the resilience and strength of the migrant community, and it has reinforced our commitment to championing their rights and well-being. Amidst the challenges and uncertainties, our collective efforts have made a tangible difference in the lives of migrant workers, providing them with essential support, advocacy, and hope for a brighter future. As we look ahead, let us reaffirm our pledge to continue advocating for the rights and empowerment of migrant workers.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated team, volunteers, and supporters for their tireless efforts. Your commitment is the driving force behind our mission, and I am confident that together, we will achieve even greater milestones in the year ahead.

With warm regards,

**MONA ALMOAYYED**

CHAIRPERSON

MIGRANT WORKERS PROTECTION SOCIETY

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**MIGRANTS ARE AN ASSET TO EVERY  
COUNTRY WHERE THEY  
BRING THEIR LABOUR.**

**JUAN SOMAVÍA**

FORMER DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION



## SPOTLIGHT

### MEET THE TEAM

Get to know the exceptional individuals behind the MWPS scenes in this segment.



#teammwps

## A PROFILE IN LEADERSHIP

MONA ALMOAYYED  
CHAIRPERSON

Mona Almoayyed, the Chairperson of MWPS, has been a driving force behind the society since its establishment in 2005. A prominent Bahraini businesswoman, former Shura Council member, philanthropist, environmentalist, and women's rights campaigner, Ms Almoayyed, the founder chairperson of MWPS, brings a wealth of experience and dedication to her role. As the Managing Director of YK Almoayyed and Sons, one of Bahrain's oldest conglomerates, Mona has demonstrated exceptional leadership and business acumen. Recognised in 2023, by Forbes Middle East as the 16th most powerful businesswoman in the Middle East, she continues to make significant contributions to various charitable institutions and advocates for the empowerment of women in society. Mona's commitment to the principle of 'Business with a Conscience' is evident in her multifaceted involvement in both business and social endeavours, all while maintaining a balance as a mother, housewife, and mentor.

## BULLETIN

### RELEVANT LOCAL NEWS

- In the past two months, 938 foreign workers were deported as part of a nationwide campaign against illegal residents in Bahrain. The inspection drives also led to the detention of 605 irregular workers.
- The government has proposed options to increase expatriate workers' fees by 10% or more to bridge the preference gap between national and foreign workers. The Finance and National Economy Minister presented three options to legislators, aiming to address the disparity. Currently, expat worker permit fees are BD100, healthcare costs BD72, and monthly fees range from BD5 to BD10 per worker based on business size.
- Shura Council rejected a parliament proposal to tax expatriate remittances with a two percent levy. The legislation was urgently referred by Parliament Speaker Ahmed Al Musallam. The government, had deemed the remittance tax as unfair and unconstitutional, at the time of the proposal.
- MPs unanimously approved a proposal to align the five-year validity of an expatriate driving licence with the expiry of residence permits. The amendment aims to address violations by expatriates illegally residing in Bahrain and reduce traffic congestion. The proposal was presented by five MPs, despite opposition from the Interior Ministry.
- MPs unanimously approved amendments to align expatriates' smart identity cards with their residence permits in Bahrain. The Interior Ministry and the Information and eGovernment Authority supported the move, stating that it was already being implemented when work permits are cancelled by the LMRA to prevent illegal residents from accessing services.
- MPs unanimously approved a proposal to amend the 2012 Private Sector Employment Law, allowing employers to withhold or reduce the indemnity of domestic workers who leave their workplace in violation of their contracts. The aim is to reduce the number of runaways and those seeking 'free visa'. However, Labour Minister Jameel Humaidan warned that the move could be unconstitutional and discriminatory.



## OUTREACH

### CASE 01

Asma, after reporting abuse by her employer, attempted suicide and was hospitalised. MWPS, with support from the Indian Embassy, Interior Ministry and Salmaniya Medical Complex, secured her belongings and arranged a flight ticket, offering vital assistance during her distressing ordeal.

### CASE 02

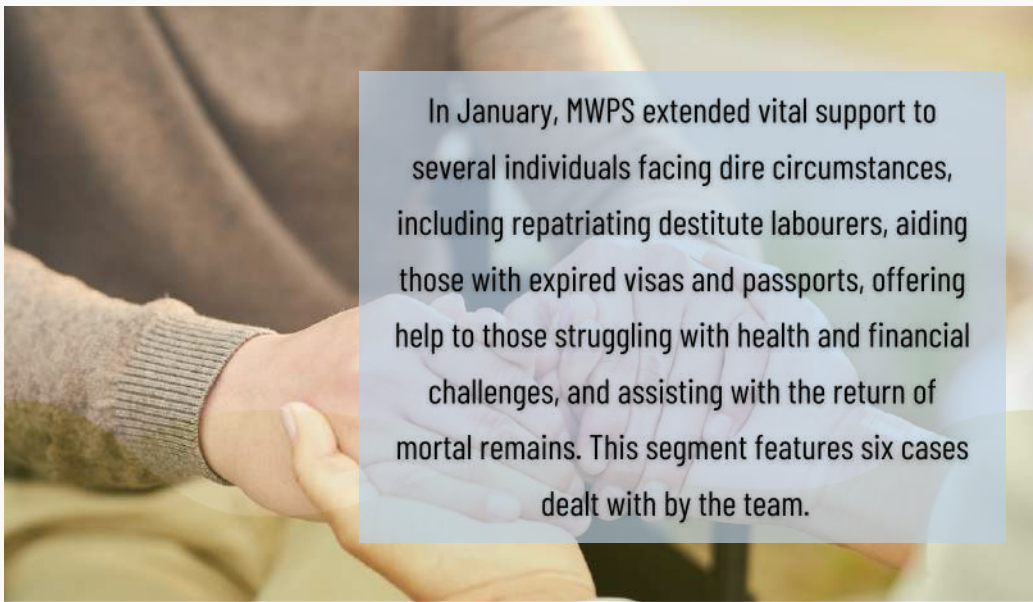
Divya, a domestic worker, suffered a severe burn to her arm. In a display of unwavering support, MWPS facilitated her transfer to the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) expat protection centre and coordinated with the Indian Embassy to arrange flights for her safe return home.

### CASE 03

In a tragic incident, a 56-year-old Sri Lankan woman lost her life while crossing a highway in Bahrain. The MWPS stepped in to arrange for the repatriation of her mortal remains, with the support of the Sri Lankan Embassy in Bahrain, to her family in back home.

### CASE 04

Joseph Fernandez, an Indian labourer, faced significant hardships during his time in Bahrain. After arriving in 1986 on a domestic work visa, he worked locally and later as an office boy until 2016. However, financial troubles in the company led to unpaid salaries, prompting him to seek work elsewhere as a wage labourer. Tragically, in 2019, he suffered a broken leg in a road accident, further complicating his situation. Despite his efforts to seek compensation for the accident, he faced numerous challenges and received no



In January, MWPS extended vital support to several individuals facing dire circumstances, including repatriating destitute labourers, aiding those with expired visas and passports, offering help to those struggling with health and financial challenges, and assisting with the return of mortal remains. This segment features six cases dealt with by the team.

positive response. The Indian Embassy, along with the support of a church group, played a crucial role in providing assistance. MWPS provided financial assistance for his immigration fee and travel expenses.

### CASE 05

Indian Irudayaraj, 47 years old, arrived in Bahrain in 2014 after being recruited by an agency to work for a construction company. Despite being promised a monthly salary of BD220, he only ever received BD60. In 2015, the company failed to pay his salary for 45 days, and his visa expired, forcing him to work as a daily wage labourer. His situation was further complicated by the fact that he couldn't retrieve his passport and couldn't recall the company's name or office location. His attempts to seek help from the police were hindered by his lack of a valid visa. He was unemployed and was relying on a friend for support for 8 months, but this friend's own low salary made continued assistance impossible. Meanwhile, his family in India has been facing financial hardship, and his own health has deteriorated. MWPS provided dry ration items to offer temporary relief and assisted with all kinds of legal formalities to deal with authorities. They also provided financial assistance to pay the immigration penalty fee for travel clearance. Additionally, the Indian Embassy played a crucial role in securing clearance from the police station and immigration, issuing the outpass, and arranging an air ticket for the individual's journey back home.

### CASE 06

Muthaiyan, 36 years old, arrived in Bahrain in 2009 through an agency in India, investing all his family savings of Rs 100,000. Despite being promised a monthly salary of BD150, he only received BD50. When the company refused to increase his salary, he requested his passport to join another company, but the sponsor demanded BD800 for its return. Left with no choice, he departed without paying or retrieving his passport and worked as a daily labourer to support his family. His visa expired in 2010, and his passport expired in 2016, preventing him from attending his parents' funerals and leading to a decline in his mental and physical health. The MWPS assisted with all kinds of legal formalities, provided financial assistance in immigration and travel clearance. The Indian Embassy secured police and immigration clearance, issued outpass, and arranged return air ticket.

## INSIGHT



## TRAFFICKING VIGILANCE

January serves as a crucial period for raising awareness about the pervasive issue of human trafficking.

With India marking National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on January 9 and the US designating the entire month as International Human Trafficking Prevention Month, the global community comes together to shed light on this pressing concern. This concerted effort aims to educate individuals about the various forms of exploitation, such as forced labour and sex trafficking, and to empower communities to identify and prevent these heinous crimes. In this context, Bahrain stands out for its absolute commitment to combat human trafficking. Recognised as a Tier 1 country by the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report for the past six years, Bahrain has demonstrated remarkable dedication to addressing this issue. The nation has adopted the '4 Ps' framework—prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership—as part of its National Strategy for Combatting Trafficking in Persons. This comprehensive approach underscores Bahrain's proactive stance in preventing human trafficking, protecting victims, prosecuting perpetrators, and fostering partnerships to address this complex challenge.

## GALLERY



Bahrain's efforts are commendable, and its commitment to combatting human trafficking is evident in the initiatives undertaken to raise awareness and provide support. The Labour Market Regulatory Authority's informative website dedicated to human trafficking awareness highlights the prevalence of forced labour as a significant form of trafficking, shedding light on the coercion and exploitation faced by vulnerable individuals. By addressing these issues head-on, Bahrain sets a positive example for the region and the world in the fight against human trafficking.

As we observe Human Trafficking Awareness Month, it is imperative that we continue to advocate for the protection of human rights and work collectively to eradicate this grave violation. By promoting a culture of awareness, education, and advocacy, we can strive towards a world free from the scourge of human trafficking. The global and regional efforts to combat human trafficking are crucial, and it is through sustained awareness and action that we can make meaningful progress in addressing this critical issue.

For more information visit, [endtrafficking.lmra.gov.bh](http://endtrafficking.lmra.gov.bh).

## IN FOCUS



The Nadeen School Bahrain's family fun run will be held on February 2 at the Dilmunia Mall. All students, parents, and staff are invited to participate. In the spirit of giving back, all registration fees will be donated to the MWPS. Participants are encouraged to dress in green for the run, in support of environmental awareness. The run is supported by Tamimi Markets and Dilmunia Mall.

**WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

Check out our website for the link to our membership form.  
Tel: 00973 17827895 Email: [mwpsbah2@gmail.com](mailto:mwpsbah2@gmail.com)



[www.mwpsbahrain.com](http://www.mwpsbahrain.com)