

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences; the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences

REFERENCE:
UA UGA 4/2019

13 September 2019

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences; Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children and Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 34/21, 33/1, 34/19, 35/5 and 41/17.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the human rights abuses currently suffered by Ms. **Sylvia Nandawula**, a Ugandan national.

According to the information received:

Ms. Nandawula, a Ugandan national born on 6.12.1986, was allegedly employed by a recruitment agency in Uganda called Verdant Pastures Agency (U) Ltd and sent to work as a housemaid in Saudi Arabia.

She allegedly travelled to Saudi Arabia on 6 January 2019, was received on 7 January 2019 and started working as a housemaid in Almahrajan City, Tabuk, Saudi Arabia.

It is alleged that she soon started to be mistreated, beaten, and subjected to torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as demonstrated by some pictures showing wounds and scars on her body. She also allegedly reported being subjected to forced labour, being denied food and access to medical treatment.

The week of 9th September, the recruitment agency that sent her to Saudi Arabia allegedly reported that they are processing papers to return her to Uganda. However, family members have since then lost contact with Ms. Nandawula as it

has been impossible to reach her over her known phone number in the past few days.

Ms. Nandawula is allegedly a victim of trafficking in persons and has expressed her desire to be repatriated back to Uganda and reunite with her family.

The Ugandan Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development and the Ugandan Human Rights Commission have been informed about the matter but have allegedly failed to take any action so far.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of this information, we are concerned at the reported abuse committed against Ms. Nandawula as well as the alleged failure of the Ugandan authorities to prevent trafficking in persons, including by cooperating with countries of destination.

We therefore urge the Government to cooperate with the competent authorities from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to locate and repatriate Ms. Nandawula and ensure that she is provided with appropriate protection measures upon return, such as access to adequate health and psychosocial care.

The full texts of the relevant human rights instruments and standards are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, we would appreciate a response on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned person(s) in compliance with international instruments.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above mentioned allegations.
2. Please indicate which measures your Excellency's Government has undertaken to ensure protection and repatriation of Ms. Nandawula.
3. Please indicate which measures your Excellency's Government is taking to combat trafficking in persons and regulate and monitor private recruitment agencies.

5. Please provide information on access to justice, reparation and reintegration available to returnees' migrant workers who may have been subjected to abuse and exploitation abroad.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person responsible of the alleged violations.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

A communication regarding the concerns raised will be sent in parallel to the Government of Saudi Arabia.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Felipe González Morales
Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

Urmila Bhoola
Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences

Nils Melzer
Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Maria Grazia Giammarinaro
Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

Dubravka Šimonović
Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences