



WEEKLY MEDIA REPORT
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Wajir Woman MP Jeho calls for girl education, end to early marriages

The Standard, 4th May, 2024

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Wajir Woman Representative Fatuna Jeho has appealed to residents to prioritise education for girls and shun the retrogressive culture of forcefully driving them to early marriages.

Jeho on Thursday said a time has come for women in the North Eastern region to unite and together champion the rights of girls.

She spoke at Eldas Girls Secondary School where she donated bursary cheques and dignity packages.

Her words resonated with urgency and determination as she highlighted the detrimental effects of early marriages on young girls.

With unwavering conviction, Jeho underscored the importance of education as a powerful tool for empowerment, emphasizing that every girl deserves the opportunity to pursue her dreams and aspirations without the constraints of early marital unions.

"I Would not have been a women's representative if my parents did not take me to school. I urge parents to take girls' education very seriously and ignore those advising them to give out their daughters for Marriage," she said adding, "Early Marriage has a lot of side effects and trauma-related stress to young girls."



US-Based Nigerian Doctor And His Wife Face 20 Years In Prison Over Forced Labour

Tori.NG, 4th May 2024

[Link](#)

Isiaka and Bolaji Bolarinwa aged 67 and 50 years old respectively residing in Burlington County used coercive scheme to force two people in engaging in domestic labour.



In Camden, New Jersey, a federal jury has found a Nigerian couple guilty of forced labor and related crimes in the United States, potentially facing up to 20 years in prison.

Isiaka and Bolaji Bolarinwa aged 67 and 50 years old respectively residing in Burlington County used coercive scheme to force two people in engaging in domestic labour.

The jury also found the couple guilty of two counts of forced labour, one count of sheltering a stranger for financial gain and two counts of document servitude.

Following two weeks of trial, the jury found the couple guilty, according to a press release by the US Department of Justice.

The evidence presented at trial, including the testimony of two victims, established that, between December 2015 and October 2016, Bolaji, a nurse, and Isiaka, a doctor – originally from Nigeria, but living in New Jersey as American citizens – recruited two victims to come to the US and then compelled them to perform domestic labor and childcare services for their children.

They subjected their victims to physical harm, threats of physical harm, isolation, constant surveillance and psychological abuse. The defendants engaged in this venture knowing that both victims were out of lawful status while working in their home.

Wanton child labour cases in Nyamira raises concern

People Daily, 2nd May 2024

[Link](#)

Child labour has been identified as an issue that calls the attention of stakeholders in Nyamira county.

Administrators and politicians from Nyamira county have said the number of children being engaged in informal employment was increasing by the day but were escaping attention of stakeholders.

Nyamira Woman Representative Jerusha Momanyi yesterday said even as the world celebrated Labour Day, rights of children were yet to be fully recognized and observed as the rate of violation continued to rise. According to Momanyi, stakeholders in the education and administration should carry out an audit of school dropout rates which was a key indicator of children engaging in labor for cash at the expense of attending school.

The legislator was speaking at Nyabogoye in Rigoma ward where she handed tents to self help groups in the area.

Bright red flags on the export of Ugandan workers to Oman

Observer Uganda, 1st May 2024

[Link](#)

In 2017, the Uganda government blacklisted Oman as a destination for Ugandans who were seeking work abroad as domestic workers.

The stories then coming out of Oman (and other Middle Eastern countries) of torture and mistreatment of Ugandan domestic workers were hellish. Back then, the government warned that it could not guarantee the safety of Ugandans working in Oman, citing the lack of a bilateral agreement with Oman.

The export of Ugandan labour to the Gulf and Middle East is a fat cash cow raking in millions of dollars in remittances. These thousands of Ugandans, aged 21 to 36 years, in the prime of their youth, seek better livelihoods abroad due to poverty and youth unemployment at home.

These youthful Ugandans are the proverbial goose that laid golden eggs. If we must send our golden goose abroad as domestic workers (shhh...let's not talk the failure to create sustainable work opportunities and enabling environments for our young people in their own country), we must ensure their protection.

Therefa, the recent development in early April where the government signed a bilateral agreement with Oman and plans to ink a labour export deal with the Middle East country sounds like steady progress as this paves way for more youthful Ugandans to seek work abroad.

On April 25, *The Observer* headline blared, 'Minister Anyakun vouches for new market for Ugandans in Oman' accompanied by a lovely photo of the minister and an Omani government representative smiling for the cameras.

Yet, proceed with caution, as we now know that smiley photos and 'ministerial vouching' are simply not enough when Ugandan migrant workers are trapped abroad in exploitative situations.

For too long, we have heard continually of the hell many (Africans) citizens go through seeking better work opportunities in Arab nations.

The stories are unfailingly harrowing and leave one with a palpable powerlessness. Too many young women who expected better work opportunities in the Gulf countries and the Middle East have returned home broken and haggard, their robust youth frittered away, a dullness in their-once-bright-eyes, penniless save for the clothes on their backs and a lifetime of trauma.

WAITING FOR ERITREAN HUMAN TRAFFICKERS' TRIALS IN THE NETHERLANDS

justiceinfo.net, 29th April 2024

[Link](#)

WAITING FOR ERITREAN HUMAN TRAFFICKERS' TRIALS IN THE NETHERLANDS

29 APRIL 2024 | BY MARGHERITA CAPACCI (OUR CORRESPONDENT IN THE HAGUE)

A year and six months after a string of arrests of human traffickers accused of holding families living in the Netherlands to ransom, Dutch courts are making slow progress towards trials. Our correspondent attended the latest hearings at the Court of Zwolle, eagerly followed by the Eritrean community, which the defendants come from.

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On April 16, the judge in the Dutch court of Zwolle was about to decide whether the trial would start in absentia. The indictment is ready, but alleged Eritrean trafficker [Zekarias Habtemariam Kidane](#) is still in custody in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which the Netherlands asked last year to extradite him. The man is accused of being part of a [human trafficking](#) network involved in money extortion.

The matter discussed at the hearing was a missing signature. Earlier this year, the prosecutor sent a summons to the UAE, where Kidane faces another court case for money laundering. But to date, his signature – and official proof that he received it – is still missing. After a brief deliberation, the judge decided that he could not be sure the 40-year-old defendant was aware of his rights and the trial could not start.

The provincial courtroom was filled up with over 30 people, including journalists, Eritrean NGO observers and a handful of academics. “Every communication with the UAE takes up to six months,” Prosecutor Petra Hoekstra told the court. Abu Dhabi, she said, gave no recent update on the Dutch extradition request. Kidane, described by Dutch police as “one of the most notorious and cruel human smugglers in the world”, has been held there since January 2023, when he was finally arrested in Sudan after escaping Ethiopian justice in 2021.

EXTORSION OF FAMILIES LIVING IN THE NETHERLANDS

On the same day, the court of Zwolle also discussed the case of another Eritrean trafficker, Tewelde Goitom, also known as Amanuel Welid. Both suspects, Kidane and Welid, were previously convicted in Ethiopia for human trafficking. They belong to the same criminal organisation, says the prosecutor who wants their cases to be handled together. She also summoned five other people located in the Netherlands, suspected of taking part in the extortions.

Welid was extradited from Ethiopia to the Netherlands in October 2022, on accusation of participating in a criminal organisation involved in human smuggling, hostage-taking, extortion and sexual violence. The charges span from 2014 to 2020. Most of the victims are migrants from Eritrea who travelled to the Netherlands. The prosecutor outlined how during the journey, migrants were locked up in camps in Libya, abused, tortured and in some cases killed. To free them, families in the Netherlands had to pay large sums of money. The preliminary hearings in his case have been going on since January 2023.

UNODC launches new action to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling

UNODC, 22nd April 2024

[Link](#)

Human trafficking and migrant smuggling are multi-billion-dollar businesses that have changed dramatically in recent years, driven by global challenges such as war, large migration and refugee flows, cybercrime, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Against this backdrop, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is launching a global Action against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling.

“Over the past two decades, there was relative optimism that we could win the fight against trafficking and smuggling globally,” said Ilias Chatzis, Chief of the UNODC Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section. “Then things changed drastically. Progress achieved is today under threat.”

The involvement of organized crime and the rapid evolution of digital technologies have exacerbated the situation. Online technologies are regularly abused to exploit trafficking victims or advertise migrant smuggling services.

Financial crises, armed conflicts and forced displacement, catalyzed by the pandemic, have strained justice systems, significantly reducing investigations, prosecutions, victim identification and protection. In 2020 alone, the number of detected victims worldwide fell by 11 per cent compared to the previous year.

Under its new Action, UNODC will highlight the links between trafficking and smuggling and other forms of organized crime such as cybercrime, money laundering, drug trafficking, firearms trafficking, and corruption.

Given the overwhelming number of child victims – more than 30 per cent of all victims identified globally – it will prioritize the fight against child trafficking and will give voice to human trafficking survivors.

UNODC’s work against migrant smuggling will broaden its scope to encompass the protection of vulnerable migrants and the identification of human trafficking victims among migration and refugee flows.

Under the Action, UNODC will also expand its on-the-ground presence, deploying resident experts to countries most in need of assistance, while redoubling its commitment to sustainable development and gender equality.

UNODC has been at the forefront of the fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling for over 20 years, since the adoption of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols against these crimes.

These instruments have now garnered near-universal ratification since the early 2000s, with 181 states acceding to the Trafficking Protocol and 151 states to the Smuggling Protocol.

“During this time, UNODC has emerged as the leading organization in the fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling. We remain committed to the eradication of these crimes,” Chatzis said, citing over a thousand technical, legal and policy assistance activities spanning some 120 countries in recent years.

UNODC has trained over 35,000 anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling experts, helped investigate and prosecute hundreds of cases, and supported numerous victims of these crimes.