

Saudi Arabia, Malaysia...: Rights of more than 1 million Indonesian migrant workers violated: NGO

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More than 1 million Indonesian migrant workers experience various violations in the foreign countries in which they work, the head of a local non-governmental organisation said on Monday.

Speaking at the Gymboree of Indonesian Migrant Workers event, Migrant Care executive director Anis Hidayah said that by the end of 2014, 1,503,000 workers out of a total of 6.5 million migrant workers working overseas had experienced human rights violations.

The violations were varied, ranging from being unpaid, facing the death penalty, rape and harassment to being trafficked, she told newsportal tempo.co.

Many of them also had their political rights violated as they could not vote during the 2014 legislative and presidential elections, she said.

Migrant Care stated that slavery of Indonesians grew more than 500 per cent in 2014 based on the Global Slavery Index, amounting to 710,000 Indonesians being enslaved overseas in 2014, a drastic jump from the 104,000 from the previous year.

Slavery occurred in various sectors, including the domestic industry in which some housemaids worked 18 hours a day without having time off to rest or pray.

"Their payment also does not match [that stated in] their contracts," Anis told tempo.co.

Most violations took place in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, where there are 1.5 million and 2.4 million Indonesian migrant workers, respectively, according to Migrant Care data.

While most violations occurred in homes in Saudi Arabia, violations in Malaysia occurred in various types of workplaces, such as homes, plantations, construction sites, factories and services companies.

Anis criticised the government's lack of a road map on the protection of migrant workers, saying the government acted only when there was an issue and took an ad-hoc approach.

"[The government] discusses a moratorium or forming a team if there is a death penalty case, she said.

The Gymboree of Indonesia Migrant Workers was initiated to draft a road map on the protection of migrant workers based on issues, studies and policies.

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* THE JAKARTA POST/ANN. Tuesday, Nov 24, 2015:

<http://news.asiaone.com/news/asia/rights-more-1-million-indonesian-migrant-workers-violated-ngo#sthash.gZv69w8V.dpuf>