

Hotline for Migrant Workers

"You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" - *Exodus 22:20*

The Hotline for Migrant Workers: A Decade of Activism for Migrants' Rights

Facts and Figures

A. Migrant Workers:

Fifty Thousand People Assisted: During the last ten years, volunteers have assisted some 50,000 migrants in Israel. While there is no official figure for the total number of migrants in Israel over the past decade, this figure is, nevertheless, significant. Because the State does not provide migrants with assistance, clients rely on the HMW and other organizations. Indeed from the large number of people turning to the HMW and partners, we can infer that migrants are a group in distress.

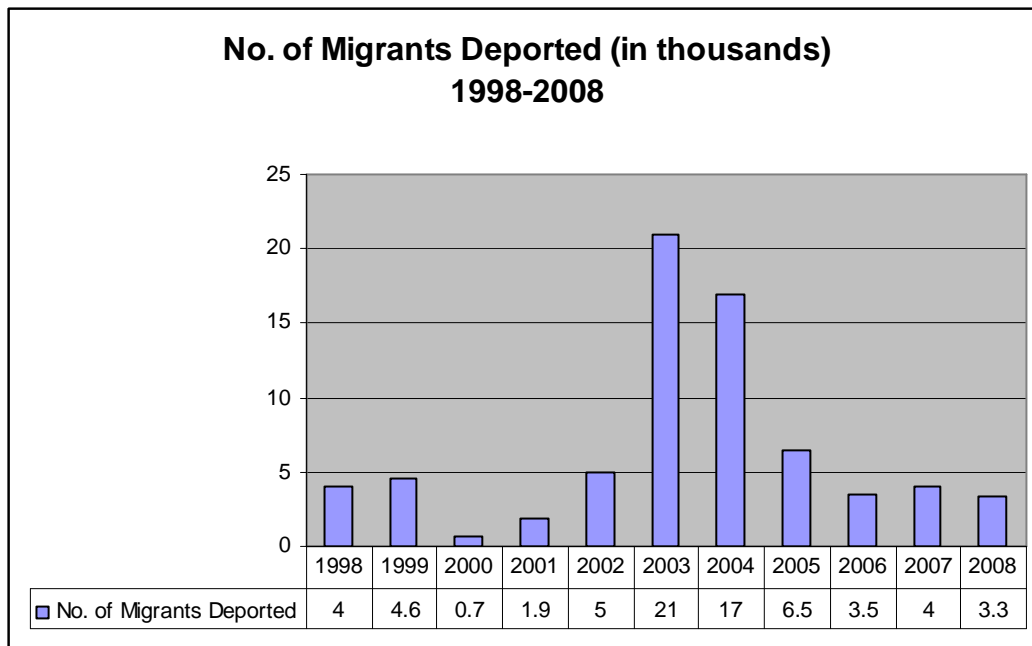
Migrants from 125 Different Countries: The HMW has assisted people from Asia (Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, China, Nepal, Uzbekistan); Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Congo, Sierra Leone); South America (Columbia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru) Europe (Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Bulgaria) and the Middle East (Turkey, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq).

71,500 Deportees:¹ Deportation of migrants from Israel has been taking place since 1995. Large scale deportations began in October 2002 with the establishment of the Immigration Authority. Along with the rise in deportations, came a simultaneous rise in complaints of violent arrests. Deportation numbers peaked in 2003-2004 with the forcible deportation of 38,000 people - more than half the number of those deported throughout the decade. Arrests were conducted with a complete lack of sensitivity; migrants were arrested while at church, graffiti was sprayed on the doors of migrant residences; raids were conducted at night, arrests of parents with children took place and more. To date, HMW volunteers have conducted some 1,150 visits to detention centers throughout Israel holding migrant workers and have provided para-legal representation to some 8,000 migrants.

¹ The number of deportees and work visas is based on a report written by Roni Bar Tzuri for the Economic and Research Authority of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, May, 2009.

Hotline for Migrant Workers

"You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" - *Exodus 22:20*



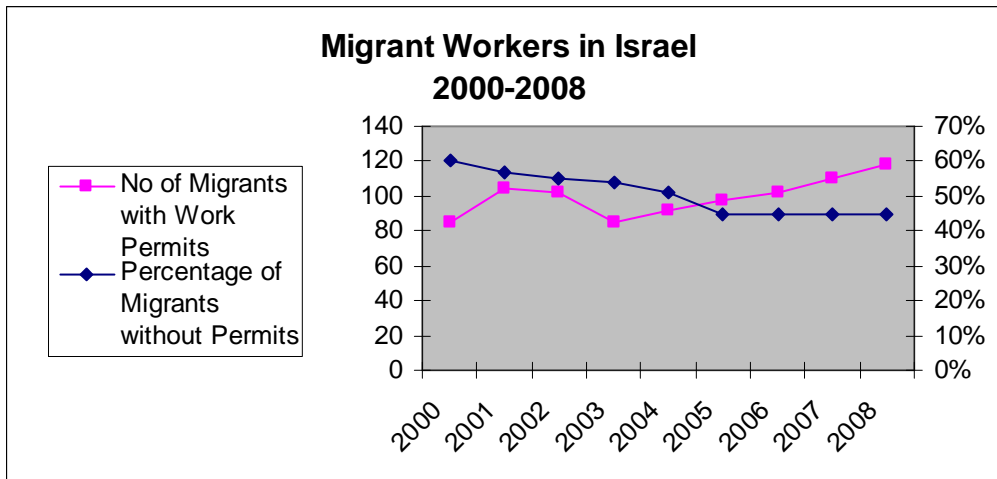
Continual Increase in the Number of Migrant Workers Arriving in Israel: Despite claims that numbers of migrants being invited to Israel are on the decline (e.g. Minister of Interior Eli Yishai from the Shas party on the TV show Meet the Press: October 31st), the facts reflect the opposite. Every time a member of Shas serves a head of the Ministry responsible for establishing the number of work permits, numbers have gone up. A decrease was recorded from 2003 to mid-2005, when issuing of permits was under the purview of Ehud Olmert. Following this period, a 20% increase was noted.

No. of Migrants with Work Permits (in thousands)	Year	Minister in Charge
85	2000	Eli Yishai (Shas)
104	2001	Shlomo Benizri (Shas)
102	2002	Shlomo Benizri (Shas)
85	2003	Ehud Olmert (Likud)
91.5	2004	Ehud Olmert (Likud)
98	2005	Ehud Olmert (Likud)/ Eli Yishai (Shas)
102	2006	Eli Yishai (Shas)
110	2007	Eli Yishai (Shas)
118	2008	Eli Yishai (Shas)

2009 – A Record Year for the Issuing of Work Permits to Migrants: While the Netanyahu government regularly claims that it is reducing the number of legal work permits of migrants, statistics point to the contrary: currently, 120,000 permits are in circulation - the highest number yet recorded. **Indeed, the increase in numbers of migrant workers in Israel is directly related to an increase in work permits issued.** The chart below demonstrates that the percentage of undocumented workers fell during the past decade. From 2005 it stabilized at 45% of all migrant workers in Israel.

Hotline for Migrant Workers

"You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" - *Exodus 22:20*



Legal Migrant Workers are Exposed to Greater Exploitation: Paradoxically, those with legal work permits are more likely to experience exploitation and conditions of slavery. Migrants pay fees ranging from \$3,000 (Philippines) to \$30,000 (China) for the privilege of working in Israel. They are then forced to work for many years to pay off their debts; often legal employers pay less than minimum wage.

Primary Accomplishments: Judicial review in detention (2000); the right to submit complaints to the police without fear of detention (2001); placement of inspectors from the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor in detention (2002); release on bail (2002); the Closed Skies procedure (2002); a procedure for addressing police violence (2006); cancellation of the binding procedure (2006 - together with other NGOs).

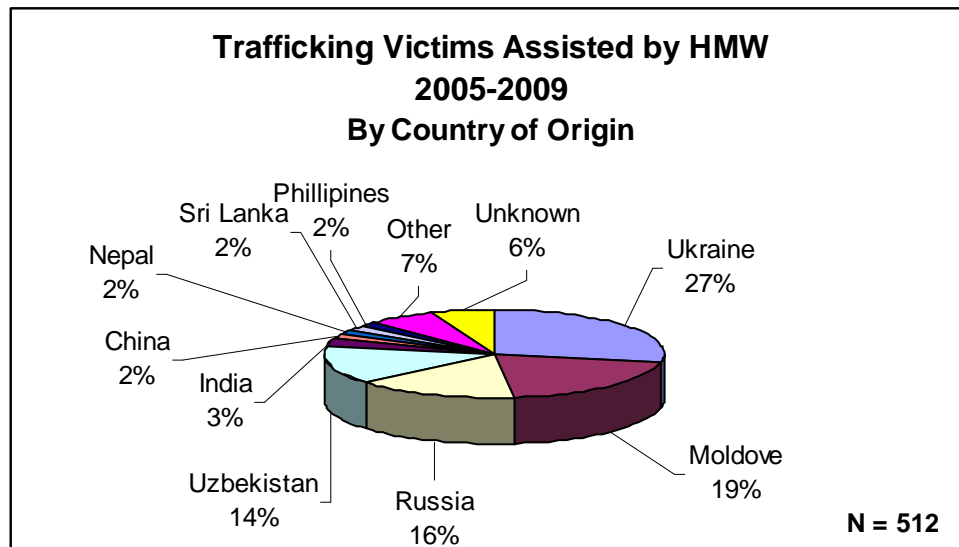
Future Challenges: Putting an end to the 'revolving door' (bringing in workers, on one hand, and deporting them on the other); cancellation of the binding policy on the ground; stopping the charging mediation fees; reducing the numbers of those deported.

B. Trafficking in Persons:

Assistance to Over 800 Trafficked Persons: The vast majority of trafficking clients have been foreign women trafficked for prostitution from some 25 different countries.

Hotline for Migrant Workers

"You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" - *Exodus 22:20*



Increase in Survivors of Trafficking for Purposes Other Than Prostitution: Since 2007, HMW has noted a decrease in women trafficked for prostitution while simultaneously there has been an increase in those trafficked for labor. In the majority of such cases, migrants were working as domestics however slavery exists in the construction and agriculture sectors as well. An analysis of cases handled by the HMW is below:

Year	Sex Trafficking	Labor Trafficking	Total
1999-2005	605		605
2006	77		77
2007	30	10	40
2008	20	26	46
2009*	22	14	36
			804

* Until the end of September

External Trafficking of Israeli Women: In 2006, HMW volunteers uncovered a new trend –trafficking of Israeli women for prostitution abroad. Volunteers responded to suspicious newspaper advertisements and turned their findings over to the police. To date, as a result of these complaints, five Israeli traffickers (three of which were women) have been arrested. Additional complaints are currently being investigated.

Internal Trafficking of Israeli Women: Despite the fact that few women are trafficked into Israel to work in prostitution, the sex industry has not disappeared, but rather changed form. Israeli women trapped in prostitution suffer from subjugation, exploitation and violence; very similar to conditions of those trafficked into Israel from abroad. While the

Hotline for Migrant Workers

"You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" - *Exodus 22:20*

authorities have yet to recognize that this is also trafficking; the US State Department Trafficking in Persons report (2009) substantiates such claims.

Major Accomplishments: Release of prosecution witnesses from prison (2001); State provision of legal aid to trafficked persons (2003); establishment of the Ma'agan shelter for trafficked women (2004); State-funded medical care for trafficked persons (2004); prevention of deportation to Egypt from Israeli prisons (2005); transfer of trafficked persons directly to the shelter/prevention of placement in detention (2006); comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation (2006); provision of rehabilitative visas (2006); legal redress without proof of damages (2006); imprisonment of traffickers of Israeli women (2007); establishment of shelters for all trafficked persons (2009).

Future Challenges: Improvement in identification of trafficked persons, increase in prosecution of traffickers; enforcement against traffickers of Israeli women.

C. Refugees and Asylum Seekers:

Israel: A Model for Stinginess in Granting Refugee Status: Since Israel signed the refugee convention in 1951, only 170 people have been recognized as convention refugees. Furthermore, at least 100 of those have since left Israel, primarily bound for Canada. In 2008, Israel recognized only three refugees while a fourth was granted refugee status only following an appeal. For the sake of comparison: Greece, who accepted the fewest refugees of any country in Europe – granted 379 people refugee status during the same time period.

Some 19,000 Asylum Seekers are Currently in Israel: The largest groups are from Eritrea (9,000), Sudan (7,000) and Congo (300). Some 2,000 are children and minors. HMW has provided direct assistance to 5,300 and has aided in release from detention of over 1,500. Some 1,500 are currently in prison, the vast majority at Ketziot while the rest are in Givon.

Major Accomplishments: Judicial review for asylum seekers in detention (2006); release of families from detention (2007); provision of temporary residency status to 452 refugees from Darfur (2007); a public campaign against proposed amendments to the law to prevent

Hotline for Migrant Workers

"You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" - *Exodus 22:20*

infiltration; cancellation of the Hadera/Gadera policy and increased transparency in processes related to refugee status determination.

Future Challenges: Cancellation of proposed changes to the Law to Prevent Infiltration; establishment of an asylum system which is grounded in Israeli legislation; release from prison and the granting of work permits to refugees.

D. Families and Children

Undocumented Children and Families: Some 2,000 children and their families live without legal status in Israel. After an extended public battle, the Prime Minister decided to postpone planned deportation of children and families to August 2010.

Children and Families with Legal Status: In 2006, the government decided to grant 562 children (and, accordingly, their families) permanent residency in Israel. HMW assisted 460 of those children in submitting applications for status and led the public and legal campaign upon which this decision was based.

Upcoming Challenges: Establishment of status for children and families in legislation; passage of a legislation outlawing the detention of children.

E. Unaccompanied Minors:

Minors in Detention: HMW has assisted 275 minors detained in Israeli prisons. We transferred five to the Yemin Orde boarding school and identified guardians for an additional 58 (50 from migrant communities, 8 Israeli families). Today, some 30 minors remain in detention.

Major Accomplishments: Establishment of separate prison wings for minors (2003); State provision of legal representation for minors (2007); involvement of social welfare authorities in minors' cases (2007).

Future Challenges: Preventing the detention of minors; transfer of primary responsibility for their cases from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Social Welfare; integration of all minors into the education system.