

# KYEEYO ASSOCIATION UGANDA

"Representing All Ugandan Migrant Workers"



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HONOURABLE MINISTER  
MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
P.O BOX ..... KAMPALA



Dear Sir,

RE: OBJECTION TO THE EFFECTION OF THE BILATERAL  
MIGRATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN UGANDA AND THE HASHEMITE  
KINGDOM OF JORDAN



KYEEYO ASSOCIATION UGANDA (KAU) is a nonprofit membership association which was formed by Ugandan Migrant Workers and registered by the Uganda Registration Service Bureau as the Representing Association for all Ugandan Migrant Workers including those intending to go for Kyeeyo (abroad), those on Kyeeyo (working from abroad) plus the Kyeeyo (Migrant) Returnees.

KYEEYO ASSOCIATION UGANDA has been in place for the past 7 years with the highest membership amongst all other migrant workers' based associations in Uganda with the updated membership being 411 Migrant workers intending to work from abroad (in process), 40013 Ugandans working from abroad plus 3112 Kyeeyo (Migrant) returnees as by 05<sup>th</sup>/8/2023.

Notably, KYEEYO ASSOCIATION UGANDA operates legally following the laws governing Uganda and the Globe at large plus Observing and promoting the International Labour Standards.

Mission: "To Promote Safe Labour Migration, Unity and Development among Migrant Workers and to Collectively Bargain for the Collective Interests of Migrant Workers"

Vision: "Enlightened, Safe and Effectively Represented Migrant Workers for Global Development and Cooperation".



On 8<sup>th</sup>/11/2016, a Ugandan delegation led by the then Honorable Minister for Gender Labour and Social Development Ms **Jannat Mukwya** met with the Minister of Labour in Jordan Honorable **Ali Ghezawi** and signed a **bilateral Labour Migration Agreement** between **Uganda** and **Jordan** which later saw various companies taking Ugandans to work in Jordan mainly as **Domestic service workers, Cleaners and drivers**. Mr **Wandera Martin** who was the **Director of Labour** at the **Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (Uganda)** and part of the delegation noted that Jordan had a **progressive law regime and enforcement mechanisms** with a **24 hours toll free line** not until later severe abuse and torture was imposed on **Ugandan migrant workers** that we saw no progressiveness in Jordan Labour laws, no toll free lines, etcetera.

Mr **Wandera Martin** too noted that **Ugandan and Jordanian Labour recruitment companies** plus the **labour employers** would be liable for implementing the workers' employment contract without workers themselves being involved in that process no wonder as many workers were being tortured and mistreated, it was again their already economically compromised recruitment companies and the very torturous employers who could speak for the employees they were torturing. Furthermore, a **Joint technical Committee** was promised shortly which for now 6 years has never been established.

Because of the much **National and International outcries** from the concerned public and other organs due to the rampant mistreatment of Ugandan Migrant workers in Jordan from 2016 to 2019 which was traited by **very late and half salary payments, nonpayment of salaries, denial of food, human trafficking, absence of sleeping facilities and shelters for domestic workers, verbal, physical and sexual abuses, confinement in houses, working in multiple homes, forceful renewal of contracts** which would even lead to **overstays, rampant death cases of Ugandan Migrant workers**, etcetera Uganda suspended its Labour agreement with **Jordan** in 2019.

On 15<sup>th</sup>/12/2023, Honorable Ambassador **Abbey Walusimbi** the Senior Presidential Advisor on **Diaspora Affairs** met with the delegation from the **Ministry of Labour in Jordan** which included the **Vice Minister and Secretary general** of the **Ministry of Labour in Jordan** Honorable **Farouk Al Hadad**, Mr **Fagez Al Jbour** the **Director of Domestic workers** and others on among others the issue of making another **Bilateral Labour Migration Agreement** between **Uganda and Jordan** and that without first putting into account the factors which led to untold torture and suffering of **Ugandan Migrant workers in Jordan between 2016 till date**.

On 22<sup>nd</sup>/8/2023, a delegation from the **Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development** led by the **Honourable Minister of Gender Labour and Social Development Ms Amongi Betty**, **Commissioner of Employment Services Mr Egule Lawrence**, **International Organization on Migration (IOM) staff**, **Ministry for Foreign Affairs staff** and others plus representatives from the **Uganda Association of External Recruitment Agencies** met with a delegation from the **Ministry of Labour of Jordan**, **Ministry of Internal Affairs of Jordan** plus those from the **Recruitment Agencies Association of Jordan** and discussed among others the issue of opening another **Bilateral Labour Migration Agreement between Ugandan and Jordan**.

The following are the association's objections to the proposed bilateral labour migration between Uganda and Jordan;

**No workers representation**; there was no representation from workers side, no representative from **Kyeeyo Association Uganda** which represents Ugandan Migrant workers was called or engaged to represent the workers. The workers are main stakeholders and know their plights most plus better ways to settle their plights. This will make it harder for migrant workers to bargain for their welfare and rights, it fosters limited and biased image of what really will be happening to workers since the left out workers are the first hand information givers due to the fact that they are the ones directly involved in the work. This too perpetuates more discrimination of migrant workers and disorderliness in the **Labour Migration Sector**.

**No stakeholders engagement meeting was done**; Many appropriate Labour Migration stakeholders were not consulted to assess the resumption to take workers to Jordan, these included **Kyeeyo Association Uganda** which represents the Kyeeyo Workers to give the workers' views, **Migrant Labour Trainers Association** which is responsible for training Migrant workers unless the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development will train the workers to be taken to Jordan, and others and so many key points which would have come from such stakeholders were not got thus the very few stakeholders who decided to take the matters in their own hands gave out and are still going to leave out much knowledge in pre-effecting of the **BLMA with Jordan**.

**No systematic assurance for safety of Ugandan Migrant workers**; the cases of mistreatment of migrant workers as listed above which led to rampant international outcries from 2016 till date are still prevalent with even many Ugandans still incarcerated for example **Ms Kayesu Janet** who was beaten and even lost **2 front teeth**, **not paid any salary since 2017**, later put on a **case of stealing gold** and still in **Juan Amman Prison** is still pending.

Notably it's **Kyeeyo Association Uganda** in liaison with Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations handling her case. **Kyeeyo Association Uganda** suggests that let the plights above be first settled and then a new bilateral opened.

**No points of Redress and recourse for Ugandan Migrant workers in Jordan;** Notably there is **Uganda Embassy or Mission or Consulate** representing Ugandans in **Jordan** meaning there is no avenue to run to for safety and recourse in terms of conflicts with the employers and Jordan recruitment offices. No legal teams are in place to pursue justice for Ugandan Migrant workers in Jordan, this means that the distressed workers will again run to their very bosses who will be torturing them and or the Jordan recruitment offices which will be already economically compromised also represent their bosses and hence more perpetuation of the torturing of Ugandan Migrant workers. Notably, the Ugandan Embassy in Saudi Arabia which takes care of Jordan is already Socio-economically and legally overburdened by several diplomatic roles and Migrants issues in Saudi Arabia no wonder the increasing cases of torture and distress of **Ugandan Migrant Workers** in Saudi Arabia.

**Non operationalization of some bilateral labour migration agreements;** notably on 7<sup>th</sup>/10/2021 the **United Arab Emirates** and the **Government of Uganda** represented by the **Honourable Minister for Gender Labour and Social Development Ms Amongi Betty**, signed a **memorandum of Understanding** to facilitate manpower to UAE, including domestic workers, to promote the rights and welfare of Ugandan Migrant workers in UAE but till date it hasn't yet been operationalized. Thus, its insensitive to rush to open other Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements with other states yet there are some which haven't yet been operationalized just, otherwise **it puts Migrants rights and welfare in a state of confusion.**

**Observation of the proposal to open labour markets outside the Middle East;** in the **pre and neo- new bilateral labour Migration Agreement** (that of Saudi Arabia) **stakeholders engagements**, **Kyeeyo Association Uganda** proposed to the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development and other line Ministries to identify and open up labour markets and zones in areas and global regions beyond the Middle East for example in **Europe, USA, Nordic region** etcetera which have high levels of the practicability and observation of labour laws and rights and also offer better payments for workers something which would triple the revenue from Labour externalization and this proposal was adopted and later even read to the public and other stakeholders from the Media Centre and thus understandable why we cling

ourselves ever on the Middle East. Is it because of the quick recruitment process, greed for money, being static, or?

**No systematic Framework for Monitoring of Ugandan Migrant workers in Jordan;** there hasn't been put any strategy of how the migrant workers in Jordan will be monitored to ascertain their employment, health, socio-economic and legal progress for purposes of redress when and where needful, or we are waiting for them to be on media crying of being thrown out of employers homes, beaten, dumped in hospitals or detention centers without payments and then we react instead of being pro-active!

**Conclusively, Official effectation of externalizing Ugandan Labour to the Hashmite Kingdom of Jordan is ok but it must not be at the expense of the rights and welfare of Ugandan Migrant workers.**

Yours Sincerely



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CHAIRPERSON

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**Cc: Permanent Secretary-Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development**

**Cc: Permanent Secretary-Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Cc: Senior Presidential Advisor on Diaspora Affairs**

**Cc: Executive Director- Uganda Association of Recruitment Agencies (UAERA)**

**Cc: Executive Director-External Labour Association of Uganda (ELAU)**

**Cc: Executive Director-Migrant Trainers Association (MILTA)**

**Cc: Ambassador-Ugandan Embassy in Saudi Arabia**

**Cc: Ambassador- Ugandan High Commission in India**

**Cc: Permanent Secretary- Ministry of Internal Affairs, Uganda**

**Cc: State Minister-Ministry of Foreign Affairs**