

Oral Presentation for CEDAW

7 October 2024

Abdul Aziz Muhamat Global Detention Project Advocacy Coordinator.

Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to address some of the grave human rights abuses that women migrant workers frequently suffer in Saudi Arabia, both at their places of work as well as during immigration procedures, including in particular arbitrary immigration detention. Based on the evidence presented in the joint submission prepared by Migrant-Rights.org and the Global Detention Project, we urge the Committee to advance the following five recommendations:

- 1) That Saudi Arabia **end all forms of administrative detention of migrant women** based on their immigration status, including de facto detention in so-called shelters operated by private contractors, where there have been repeated allegations of abusive treatment and poor conditions.
- 2) That the country **improve transparency and accountability in its treatment of migrant women and families during immigration procedures**. This should include publishing up-to-date lists of detention sites and disclosing details of the contractors managing women's shelters, including any successor companies that have replaced the previous contractor 'Sakan'. We have received numerous alarming reports about the treatment of women in these shelters, but accountability and management remain unclear.
- 3) That Saudi Arabia **end its absconding regime**, which unjustly criminalizes women who attempt to escape exploitation. This system leads to detention and further abuse, trapping vulnerable migrant women in cycles of exploitation without access to justice.
- 4) That the country **end the detention and deportation of migrant women who become pregnant**. These women should receive the same level of maternity care provided to national women, and not be punished or expelled because of their pregnancy.
- 5) That Saudi Arabia **fully incorporate domestic workers into its labour law and ratify ILO Convention 189** concerning domestic workers rights. This would provide vital protections, reducing the risk of arbitrary detention and exploitation.

Thank you.