



PRESS RELEASE

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Migrants rights advocates pays tribute to undocumented migrant workers killed in 9-11 ; says no human being is illegal

(New York City) Migrant workers and migrant rights organizations from the United States, Asia, Africa and Europe will converge at the Ground Zero this evening and join the New York-based immigrant rights advocates to recognize the heroism of hundreds of undocumented migrant workers killed in the September 2001 terror attacks. The early evening vigil also aims to challenge repressive migration policies across the globe and call for the 'decriminalization' of undocumented workers who are called illegal workers in many countries.

"Migrants are among the victims of that heinous and barbaric attack five years ago. Some of them did not have the proper documents as well. Would you call those people, who had served coffee, mopped the floors and cleaned the windows of the World Trade Center, illegal? They sacrificed their lives for this country during the 9-11 attacks," says Catherine Tactaquin, Executive Director of the US-based National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and member of Migrants Rights International. "Tens of thousands of migrant workers in the US face daily sacrifices including loss of life, as they toil to provide safe and healthy lives for their families," she adds.

"An undocumented worker is not illegal. No human being is illegal. Undocumented migrant workers have the same rights as any other worker. Both contribute to the companies they worked for, the countries they reside in and the countries they will go home to," says William Gois, the Regional Coordinator of Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA).

According to Mr. Gois, categorizing migrant workers who have no proper documents as illegals allows governments to conduct activities that will violate the rights of the migrants. In Asia, MFA has repeatedly condemned the Malaysian and South Korean governments for the violent crackdowns and arbitrary expulsions against undocumented workers.

"Stop the crackdowns and vicious raids. These are not the actions of mature and democratic societies. What we need here is the genuine recognition of the tremendous contribution of migrant workers to the development of host and home countries. These are the facts. Without these workers, there will be no food on your table, no clean clothes in your closet and no roof over your heads," Mr. Gois says.

The various migrant rights groups are in New York City to attend and observe the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development on September 14 and 15. Ms. Tactaquin says that their group will also be organizing community dialogues on migration and talking with the different permanent mission representatives of the UN Member States to give their inputs on migration and highlight the perspectives of migrants and migrant civil society organizations.#

For interviews and more information, please contact:

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** Migrant Rights International has members in Asia, Europe, North America and Latin America.