

«Let's work together towards a labour-friendly media environment»



International
Labour
Organization

This guide support of
Office workers' activities / ILO

Preamble



It is the opinion of the vast majority of people that the media should play a critical role in the efforts to raise awareness of human rights in general; and labour issues and rights in particular. The media represents a non-negligible force, in terms of its ability to shape the public opinion, social intellect and culture regarding a specific issue. This ability is the result of the advanced and several tools and mechanisms the media has; enabling the same to penetrate the homes of most; if not all, community segments.



Mindful of the advancement and far reach of media outlets, which manifests in the gigantic number of satellite TVs, radio stations, and websites, while traditional media also remains in the picture, as it manifests in newspapers and others, the role the can be potentially played by the media; usually by adopting, believing, propagating, and perpetuating a specific idea, has amplified substantially.



When talking about the role of the media in raising awareness of labour rights and issues, it's fair to say that the media has done so through the publication of news, material, and reports that draw the public's attention to the labour rights by virtue of the law, and how such rights can be attained.

Nevertheless and unfortunately, and as the case regarding the human rights awareness file in general, we can say safely that media outlets in the Arab world for decades have failed to adopt a clear-cut strategy in their coverage of labour issues. Instead, Arab media confined their role to publishing intermittent news and reports, which were in some cases void of the media material standards. This approach often deprived this file of its context, rendering it negligible, under-covered, or under-appreciated.

Preamble



A follower of labour issues coverage in Arab media would be almost certain that this file is not receiving the due attention in the media circles due to several considerations. Some of these considerations are pertinent to the editing policy in place, i.e. when the news and reports on human rights in general and labour rights in particular is at the bottom of the organization's pyramid of importance; giving larger space for headlines.



This can be confirmed by looking at most newspapers, which almost never designate their news summary, distinctive incidents or headlines to cover labour issues. Rather, such spaces are often designated to express the journal's opinion on a political issue.



On the other hand, the responsibility is partly burdened on the shoulders of the journalist or the media professional covering this sector. Often, most journalists' seems to be focused in their media coverage on the benevolent style, which they derive from their sources, but they often forget or ignore the presence of other journalism styles. Such styles may be beneficial to the journalist's sector, as they provide more information and attempt to identify the issues surrounding the incident or the main issue, with an attempt to probe for solution.



Such journalism styles manifest in:

- investigative reporting
- news stories or what's called "The Feature"
- extensive news reports
- interviews and Caricature

On another hand, most official and private organizations working in the labour arena refrain from exerting their due diligence to mobilize the media in favor of their objectives. The majority of these organizations under-appreciate the critical role that can be potentially played by the media in changing public views and social culture vis a vis a specific issue or in solidifying a certain belief. Further, most of these organizations actually deepen the media negligence by treating it as if it's only a conveyor of the news, or as if the journalist role is only constrained to covering a certain event, without probing into the depths of these news stories.

Based on the foregoing , the Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) was keen to develop a simplified guide for media professionals, in order to provide a set of information on the most significant labour issues that emerge from time to time on the surface in the majority of Arab countries presently. With this effort, the Confederation endeavors to enhance the role of the media and enable it to play its rightful role in serving the cases of its society; which include labour issues.

How to use this guide ?!

“

The Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) deemed it appropriate to include in this guide a categorization of labour issues in the Arab region, and to provide some information about these cases. The Guide then provides some guidance for journalists and media professionals on how to cover such cases; in a journalistically professional manner.

”

The Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC)

The Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) was found to convey the voice of workers with a special focus on Arab countries. The Confederation; which is of course subsidiary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), was established to execute a specific mission that manifests in working to protect and enhance the rights and interests of workers all over the world, in addition to achieving international solidarity.

In order to accomplish the Confederation's mission; which consists of 17 member countries and more than 3 million workers; ATUC carries out a number of initiatives. Such initiatives are primarily aimed at raising the level of awareness worldwide regarding workers' rights, raise public awareness pertaining to any practices that undermine trade unions. This effort is set to mobilize national, regional, and international public opinions in favor of labour causes, in order to achieve better protection for human rights and trade unions in the region.

ATUC works through several channels; focusing primarily on drawing the attention of regional media organizations to labour cases, and to provide speedy information related to any violations of the rights of trade unions taking place in the region. In addition, ATUC endeavors to provide regular information to trade union organizations and other social and humanitarian protection organizations, as well as research centers. ATUC also provide information to ILO and other UN agencies mandated to execute international conventions.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Is a UN organization that works to ensure application of fundamental rights at the work place, and to promote dialogue between the relevant professional parties. The organization has 185 member countries.

The organization works to achieve four strategic goals; namely:

- Ensure respect for human rights at work.
- Helping to secure job opportunities for men and women equally.
- Ensuring social security for all workers.
- Strengthening the dialogue between all professional parties.

To that end, the Organization sets international standards related to labour in the form of agreements and recommendations with a view to ensure successful work relationship. This is done through the development of a legal framework that ensures the right to assembly, the right to affiliation, equal opportunity and treatment, regulating working hours, and other standards that govern the relationship between workers and employers.

The organization has a tripartite structure, which makes all decisions made by its committees and commissions representative of the employers, workers, and governments opinions.

GOVERNMENTS



WORKERS



EMPLOYERS

Traits of "Good" media report or news

It's appropriate here to remind the reader of the traits of "Good" media report or news:

- Confirmation and accuracy: This means that news shall not be published until it's unequivocally confirmed. This applies especially to news related to the occurrence of violations or corruption. Confirmation is necessary to avoid defamation of character, or personal vendetta.
- Comprehensiveness: meaning that the news should cover all details. For instance, in case an individual is subjected to a certain legal violation. In this case, all of the details and circumstances related to the incident must be mentioned, and it should also be linked to similar previous incidents. Furthermore, experts views, official and private statements must be elicited; while light must be shed on the stipulations of the respective local laws and regulations and how to the latter align with international conventions that apply to this particular case, this is in addition to eliciting the testimonies of eye witnesses. In case there are medical reports or any other relevant documents, they must not be omitted; while making sure the opinion of the perpetrator party is elicited as well.
- The journalist shall refrain from stating his/her own views: whereas the journalist remains neutral. This means that the journalist shall at all times refrain from bias to neither the victim or perpetrator, therefore confining the journalist role to relaying the full view without any personal involvement, prejudice, or trying to play the role of the judge.



Media organizations have multiple roles; which can be summarized in the following two:

- Exposing violations.
- Protection, prevention, and awareness.



By linking the traits of the "Good" report and the reality of how the media treats news, the gap manifests itself very conspicuously in the form of lack of comprehensiveness of most reports, while others are inclined to one view over the other; rendering void of professional objectivity. In some cases, the journalist would state his/her own opinion, forgetting the differentiation between a news material and an essay. Not to mention the cases where the journalist opts for reciting the circumstances only without subjecting them to analysis or following up on the story from all facets.



Obstacles facing the journalist

Notwithstanding the foregoing, some impediments facing the journalist must be noted. Such impediments superficialize and undermine the role of the media, upon dealing with human rights and labour issues. Such impediments include:

- The difficulty for the journalist to access the information, due to uncooperative sources.
- The lack of media training for journalist on the principles and standards of producing professional-standard-adherent media material, and at a high level of quality.
- The lack of journalist dedication to one field; being compelled to cover multiple sectors. This is very cumbersome for journalists and makes them compelled to opt for quick and ordinary coverage, such as the coverage of press conferences, activities and other events.
- The constant shifting of the journalist sector; depriving the journalist the opportunity to accumulate sufficient experience in a single sector. This way, the journalist work would be confined to superficial and quick coverage, which absents specialized journalism.
- Burdening journalists with daily coverage and requiring them to present news material almost daily. This renders them unable to allocate time to prepare qualitative expansive reports; which of course are time-consuming. However, time is a luxury which most media organizations don't usually provide to their journalists.

Obstacles facing the journalist

- Often, humanitarian media coverage is linked to notion that influences the journalist. This notion in our society is that such human rights principles are Western-imposed, and thus automatically are incompatible with the local traditions and norms. That's the reason why most journalists and media professionals refrain from such a file.
- There seems to be a prevalent attitude among journalists which is to question the legitimacy and good will of civil society organizations; which usually execute the projects and undertake the spread of human rights culture and the solidification of its principles. The vast majority of journalists believe that such organizations are only in it for the money, and that covering such organizations will only serve this greedy purpose.
- The editorial policy and priorities thereof adopted by media organizations represent the greatest barrier in the face of covering the principles of legal awareness, whereas most media organizations dedicate the largest spaces for political news, and the daily coverage of benevolent type.

It is incumbent upon all journalists or media professionals who cover labour cases for their media organization, or would like to specialize in labour cases to acquaint him/her self with all international conventions and recommendations as well as their local equivalents related to labour cases. In respect of international conventions, a journalist must learn whether or not his/her country is a signatory or a ratifying member of such conventions.

Fundamental Rights for Workers

Following several discussions and consultations; which were spear-headed in early nineties of the bygone century by international organizations concerned of workers' rights, a number of principles related to the fundamental rights at work were adopted. In the wake of that, an extended labour movement began that still continues today. This movement is aimed at enabling workers attain these rights; which manifest in the following:

- The right to organize and the actual recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
- Annihilating all forms of forced or coercive labour.
- Actual elimination of child labour.
- Elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation.

In turn, the ILO has interpreted these principles in eight main conventions:

- Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105).
- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87).
- Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100).
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).



“ Note

The rationale behind the exceptional adoption of the fundamental principles and standards related to the fundamental rights at work out of other conventions and rights stipulated under the overarching human rights regime; including the human rights at work, is for publication and confirmation that these four principles extend beyond specific commitments resulting from the ratification of on country on the conventions. The 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work has emphasized on bounding the countries to these rights and principles, regardless of their ratification of the conventions preceding these rights; while insinuating that the ILO is committed to assisting member countries to promote and achieve these principles.

Therefore, it's incumbent upon all journalists to acquaint themselves with these principles in order to better understand the workers' rights system and the extent of its enforceability. Then they can expand further on their understanding of other conventions related to labor issues; which will also be touched upon briefly in this guide.

”

General Tips

To be a professionally dedicated journalist in the area of labor and labor rights; consider following these rules:

- Always use a rights approach that is based on the media material in its entirety, in a manner that depicts what you are putting forward as a demand for workers' rights. Refrain from invoking the audience's pity or compassion.

Example: a laborer was arbitrarily terminated from work. As a journalist, you should put forward the idea of the laborer's right to return to work or to be restituted. You should not narrate the difficult financial situation of the laborer for instance, or send a subliminal message which solicits the audience's sympathy or the employer's pity.

- Always adhere to the rule of thumb; which to cause no harm to the main character of your story, whether the same is a victim of human trafficking, forced labour, violation of rights, or child labour. Remember that often some laborer segments are marginalized and vulnerable, who could potentially be harmed further if prudence is not applied upon covering their stories.
- Give your audience credible and clear information. In case, as a journalist, you have some unconfirmed impressions, contradictory information, or doubts, then let your audience know about them.

”

Note:

most press material attempt to play the card of gaining public sympathy for the cause. This is especially evident in humane cases. There is no harm in doing so as long as the material in its essence focuses on the presence of the victim's right. Distinction should be made between sympathy and pity.

General Tips

- Never accept any monies or gifts from your sources or the parties you're covering. This is ethically and professionally unacceptable. Also, never pay any money to obtain information.
- Never accept to present your report to the source prior to publication, and never allow your source to direct or dictate how you prepare your report. Always use statistics and figures, as they represent a strong description of your report's contents.
- It's always recommended to attribute the statement to or to quote to the source. This gives strength and credibility to your report. It happens sometimes, however, where your source requests to remain anonymous to avoid any implications.
- If you decide to keep your source anonymous, you should explain the rationale behind that. You should also mention whether or not you've used an alias.

In your coverage of labor cases, maintain your source anonymous in the following instances:



- In case a source provides very dangerous information. In which case disclosing the name of the source could lead to his/her termination, or could render the source being pursued in any form.
 - In the cases where the source is a very vulnerable victim, such as the cases of victims of rape, sexual harassment at work, child labour, or forced labor. In such cases disclosing the identity of the source could be life threatening, or could cause a social stigma.
- Refrain from provocation and stereotyping.
- Local and international civil society organizations are the jackpot of information, which may not be easily accessed or obtained through official departments. Furthermore, the majority of civil society organizations would be willing to cooperate with media, as disclosing the information they have in store would serve their best interest. Therefore, maintain a good relationship and keep in touch with them.

Most Important Labour Cases





Most Important Labour Cases/ The Right of Association

Most important labour cases/ The Right of Association

What you should know about this:

The right of association is one of the fundamental rights in any given country, and is considered a fundamental principle for the protection of and advocacy for workers' rights, and the improvement of their working conditions. Every country should legally warrant this right for its workers.

Pursuant to the international system pertaining to the right of association, the right of association is considered thereunder as a fundamental right; constituting the minimum accepted level of rights that is inalienable by the state or excluded out of its local regulations and legislation.

The right of Association within the International Human Rights System:

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights: Article (20) of the declaration stipulates that: « Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and that no one may be compelled to belong to an association ». Section 4 of article (23) of the same declaration stipulated: «Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests ».

The International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights: Article (8) of the covenant warrants: « The right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned, for the promotion and protection of his economic and social interests. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a

Most important labour cases/ The Right of Association

democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others».

The International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights: Article (22) of the covenant warrants: « Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests ».

The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87): This convention emphasizes on the right of workers and employers to form associations and join the association of choice without the need for permit.

The Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98): This convention demands the provision of sufficient protection for workers against any discriminative practices in terms of their employment that aim at undermining their right to association. It prohibits making the employment of the laborer conditioned to non-affiliation or disassociation from the trade union. It also prohibits termination of the laborer or prejudicing against him/her in any other way due to his/her affiliation with the trade union, or due to his/her participation in any of the association's activities out of the working hours, or during working hours with the consent of the employer.

Most important labour cases/ The Right of Association

The convention also acknowledges the right for labour associations and business (or employers) association to sufficient protection against any behaviors that could be considered an interference in the affairs of the other; whether such interference is direct or indirect or through its agents or associates, or whether such an interference targets the formation or management style of the association.

Things the journalist should pay attention to upon covering such a right:

- First of all, you should take into consideration the position of your country vis a vis the respective international conventions, and whether your country has ratified them. In case your country is a non-signatory of these conventions, then question the reasons
- behind such a refrainment.

Refer to the local regulations governing this right. Compare them against the overarching human rights system, provided that you keep in mind at all times that internationally granted rights transcends over locally granted rights, and shall take priority in implementation.

In case your country has "Independent" trade unions which are not officially recognized, refrain from using term like "Unrecognized, illegitimate, or unlawful trade unions" upon preparing your report. This is due to the following reasons:

- Impartiality is among the most important traits of a professional journalist. Thus, if you use terms like "Unrecognized, illegitimate, or unlawful" when describing independent trade unions you're then aligning yourself with the government position whether or not that was your intention. This due to the fact that the government is the one that uses this description; while the trade unions do not consider themselves as illegitimate, since it stems its legitimacy from the system and rules of human rights.

Most important labour cases/ The Right of Association

- When preparing your report, insinuate international laws that support the right of association. If your country denies such a right, then address this dissonance.
- Your country might among those who allow for trade unions plurality. Here, you have to dig deep into the roots on the ground to see whether forming associations and joining them is in fact allowed. For example, you should study the atmosphere surrounding the formation of associations to learn how easy the procedures are? Are there any complexities? And whether the workers face any challenges that hinder their affiliation? Such challenges could manifest in their intimidation of their management at work, or the difficult government criteria one has to meet to form an association.
- Covering independent trade union issues in your country; which are often in conflict with the government or the lawfully established trade unions, doesn't necessarily means adopting an adversary position to that of the government. It also does not mean you should opt for covering lawful trade unions only. You are a journalist whose responsibility is to relay the facts and views of all parties.
- Often, defamatory or smearing claims by each party against the other would be delivered to your disposal. In this case, you should not publish the info immediately. But rather, you should request some supporting documents. Always avoid publishing rumors.
- When you are writing about a labour case, try as much as practically possible to cover the views of all parties involved; including the public and independent trade unions, the government, and the workers themselves. As a journalist, you should be interested in covering all aspects and dimensions of the case; remaining neutral to the disputes between the relevant parties.
- Maintain a good relationship with all parties. Never allow any of the parties to count you of their own. And of course never accept any gifts or monies from any of them.



Most Important Labour Cases/ The Right to Peaceful Assembly

The right to peaceful assembly under the international human rights system:

- Article (21) of the International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights granted the right for individuals to participate in peaceful assemblies.
- The UN declaration on the Advocates for Human Rights stressed the importance of this right for the promotion and protection of human rights and basic liberties. It also granted that each individual has the right, whether severally or jointly, to peaceful assembly on both the local or international levels.

Most Important Labour Cases/ The Right to Peaceful Assembly

How to provide media coverage of this right or these privileges:

- In case your country prohibits or restricts the practice of this right by the worker, then always use the rights approach; emphasizing that this is a right for the laborer which the state has to warrant.
- Never use terms like "Unlawful or illegal rally or demonstration" if you cover a workers' demonstration that hasn't been permitted by the government. If you do so, then you'd be falling in the trap of biasing yourself with the government position or the authority that has labeled the rally unlawful. You could, however, mention in your report that the government or any other party has labeled the demonstration "unlawful".
- When covering the demonstration in real time, you should always wear the Press vest, while keeping a badge displayed at all times. This way, you are fully protected against any assaults that may occur should the demonstration take a non-peaceful form. Identifying yourself would also ensure the cooperation of all, including the organizers of the demonstration or the security agencies; which are usually abundant during such times.
- Never carry arms during your coverage of a workers' demonstration, and never accompany a photographer or a journalist who is carrying a weapon.
- You should wear a comfortable shoes and garment during your coverage of the demonstration as you might have to walk for long distances. You might also find yourself in a situation where you have to run if things get out of hand.

Most Important Labour Cases/ The Right to Peaceful Assembly

- If the demonstrators are wearing a specific uniform, or carrying indicative signs or flags, avoid ever wearing similar garment even if you're a sympathizer. Also, never acclaim along. You're only there to cover the event.
- Don't only be satisfied with the pre-written speeches or statements of the organizers. Rather, try to elicit statements from demonstrators themselves, while paying attention to the nuances and mentioning them in your report. This is what would distinguish your report from the others.
- If you notice any contradictions in the demonstration, insinuate them in your report and attempt to analyze them. For example: a demonstration demanding the rights of female workers in a certain factory; but all demonstrators are males.
- Should you be asked by security personnel to surrender your press equipment to confiscation, try to reason with them in a friendly manner and don't lose your temper. If you notice that the security personnel are more inclined to violence, then try to deescalate the situation. If they insist on confiscating your equipment then comply and you can file a complaint later to the respective department. You should also narrate what happened with you on your media channel.
- Try to secure a continual communication channel with the demonstrator and maintain in contact with them after the end, as some of them could be the material of a subsequent report, should be harassed at work for their participation in the demonstration.
- Remember to bring plenty of your business cards in order to present them to those who you think could make a good news source in the future.



Most Important Labour Cases/ The Right to Strike

The right to strike under the overarching international human right system:

Article (1/8/d) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, & Cultural Rights has granted: « The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure: The right to strike, provided that it is exercised in conformity with the laws of the particular country».

It was mention in of the ILO that it's permissible for workers to carry out a strike should the management deny their demands while it can in fact meet those demands.

ILO hasn't found anything to prevent those to who intend to carry out a strike, who are usually trade unions, from informing the employer of their intention; giving the employer a grace to meet the demands before carrying out the strike.

Most Important Labour Cases/ The Right to Strike

How to cover labor strikes:

- Usually, trade unions announce their intention to carry out a strike. In this case, as a journalist you should prepare a report in which you should mention the reasons why the trade union had to resort to strike. You should also call the employer to learn his/her opinion, and whether it's possible to meet the demands of the workers prior to the strike. You should also talk to another party that can tell you about the consequences of the potential strike, whether in terms of financial losses the employer may incur as a result of the cease of operation or in any other terms.
- Do not take any positions neither with nor against the workers. Be careful with the terminology and the language you use in the report, which may accidentally accuse one of the parties. For example: you might start with a slug that says (Labor strike caused losses in the amount of.....; severely damaging the factory). Using the word (caused) is an automatic accusation of the workers and blaming them, even if that wasn't the actual intent. Also, the use of the word (damage) creates an impression with the receiving audience that the workers were wrong when they strike. You might also say in your report: (The employer's failure to meet the demands lead to the continuation of losses). Here you are again accusing the employer or the management of the factory.

The strike may extend over a long period of time. Therefore, you should always find different angles to prepare your report around.

Most Important Labour Cases/ The Right to Strike

- If you prepare a series of reports on the strike, remember to always set the backgrounds for your reports that remind the audience of what happened previously regarding the strike. Never assume that the audiences already know what happened from your previous reports, whereas your fifth report on the strike could be the first report the receiver sees, reads, or hear.
- If the strike comes to an end, then obtain full information about that. Were the workers able to obtain their full demands? Are they content? Compare what the workers have received against what they originally demanded, and prepare a report on that.
- After the end of the strike, follow-up on the situation of the workers, especially their leaders. Sometimes some of them may be terminated or harassed.





However, the journalist can quote any of the parties. In this case the journalist can use any terms to express their position.

The journalist has to understand that he/she is only but a conveyor of the event or incident, not a judge. Therefore, the journalist should always stick to this role; while trying as possible to maintain impartiality and objectivity.





Most Important Labour Cases/ Forced labour

Things you should know about forced labour:

A clear definition of Forced labor was provided in the ILO Convention on servitude and forced labour No. 29 of 1930. The Convention defines forced labour as: (All of the works and services that are imposed coercively on any individual under threat of any punishment, to which performance this individual has not volunteered willingly).

Usually, there are indicators which could confirm the worker had been a victim of forced labour. An example of that would be forcing the worker to work for very long hours, detaining the worker at the workplace and denying him/her the right of free movement, or could manifest in tricking the worker upon recruitment from his/her country regarding the nature of the work. Sometimes, coercion takes place in the form of trickery like promise of marriage, promising the worker to pay his/her wages later, or promising the worker improvement of his/her work environment. Nevertheless, the most significant indicator of forced labour is restricting the worker's freedom of movement, retention of his/her official documents, forcing the worker to stay in the workplace, or forcing the worker to work indefinitely until all debts owed by the worker are paid off.

To label a certain case as forced labour case, two main elements must be present: the worker carries out the work under threat of punishment. The second element is when the worker does the work unwillingly.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Forced labour

Several studies of the ILO suggest that the category most susceptible to forced labour in the Middle East is the migrant workers' segment. Forced labour is mostly practiced against domestic workers, and workers in agriculture, construction, and manufacturing sectors.

How to provide media coverage of such an issue:

- Before labeling the worker as victim of forced labour, you should make sure that this description applies to him/her. You should be very meticulous in using this term.
- Rely on a subject-matter expert to determine whether in fact the worker of your story is a victim of forced labour. Never be the one to label the worker as a victim of forced labour, but leave to the experts instead. This however doesn't necessarily prevent you from collecting sufficient information on forced labour and its indicators, as such could be greatly helpful for your report, and will also help interview potential victims.
- Victims of forced labour are usually vulnerable and afraid. Therefore remember to treat them as human beings not objects. They might need you to treat them in a rather humane manner than professional.
- Review the local laws in your country to learn how forced labour is addressed thereunder, and if there are provisions that penalize employers who subject their workers to forced labour.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Forced labour

- In case the person who you think is a victim of forced labour is not willing to talk to you, then you should respect his/her will. But most importantly, you should respect the victim's fears to talk to you as a journalist.
- Never make any promises to the victim of forced labour by which encouraging him/her to have an interview with you if you can't fulfill these promises later on. Let the victim know that the best you can do as a journalist is to publish his/her story.
- Be humane in posing your questions and create a supportive and friendly environment around the victim before commencing on the interview.
- Upon preparing your report, always keep the best interest of the victim in mind as a priority over your desire to have an important scoop, even if the victim agrees for example to disclose his/her name and photo; while you realize with your experience that such disclosure could be harmful. Always prioritize the victim's protection; whereas the situation in which the victim is often causes impaired judgment.
- Never rely only on the testimony of the victim, but also elicit the other views, and always collect sufficient information prior to publishing.



Most Important Labour Cases/ Human Trafficking

Things you should know about human trafficking:

Distinction must be made between the terms "Human Trafficking" and "Migrants Smugglers". While international law criminalize both acts, as both include transporting individuals from one place to another for the purpose of financial gains, the use of the term "human trafficking" however is provisional to three elements:

- The acts: the acts of recruiting, transporting, harboring, sheltering, or receiving individuals.
- The means used to perpetrating these acts: by threat or actual use of force, or any other form of coercion, kidnapping, fraud, manipulation, abuse of authority, abuse of vulnerability, or through providing or receiving funds or privileges in order to secure the consent of an individual who has control or influence over the victim.
- The purposes of exploitation: this includes exploitation for third party prostitution, or any other sexual exploitation, servitude or forced service, semi-slavery practices, enslavement, or removal of organs.



On the other hand, there are severe forms of human trafficking. Such forms are defined under the UN protocol

as (the sex trade, whether through a commercial sex act that is carried out by the use of force, manipulation, or coercion, in which an individual under the age of eighteen is lured or seduced into such an act. This also includes recruitment, sheltering, transfer, or obtainment of an individual to work or serve through the use of force, manipulation, or coercion, with a view to subject such an individual to forced labour, servitude, debt enslavement, or slavery).



Most Important Labour Cases/ Human Trafficking

Exploitation that leads to victimization to human trafficking appears usually in several manifestations. The least of these manifestations are the low forms; such as the exploitation of male and female workers for prostitution or in any other type of sexual acts, or forcing the worker to work.

Forced or coercive labour is a form of human trafficking

It's safe to say that women and children are the most susceptible groups to human trafficking. The studies and reports conducted by ILO confirm that women and children constitute over %80 of the total number of trafficked individuals. Often, those victims are exploited for prostitution, or for domestic and agricultural servitude at very low wages.

The phenomenon of human trafficking seems to be more prevalent in humanitarian disaster zones or in armed conflict zones, whereas refugees and IDPs are lured by human traffickers through giving promises of a better life, and through furnishing job opportunities or a safe haven. However, what ends up happening is that those victims are forced to engage in sexual acts or are forced to work.

Several in-depth studies on the topic of human trafficking confirm that the reasons behind this phenomenon are attributed to the fact that some groups in host countries of potential victims insist on pursuing quick financial profits by exploiting workers for scanty wages. Usually, women are exploited in the sex trade, in light of rigorous recruitment and migration policies adopted in those countries. This leads some potential victims to the hands of human traffickers.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Human Trafficking

Often, migrant workers come from impoverished countries that cannot secure jobs for their citizens. In such a situation, scoring a job opportunity abroad becomes a dream for wide segments of their communities. Some of them might even use all possible means to do so, including dealing with smugglers.

How to provide media coverage of such cases:

- Be careful of using the term "victim of human trafficking" unless there is a court verdict ruling that the individual in question is in fact a victim of human trafficking. Nevertheless, you can refer to a suspicion of human trafficking by quoting a subject-matter expert. Bottom line: You as a journalist are not in the position of making a verdict to determine an individual is a victim of human trafficking.
- In Arab countries, courts often resort to characterizing human trafficking cases; that have some labour attributes, as labour cases. This is usually due to the novelty of the human trafficking concept, as well as the absence of clear legal provisions out of most local laws that defines human trafficking in labour cases. Usually, only the cases of human organs trafficking are characterized as human trafficking cases. Here, you should, as a journalist dedicated to labour cases, resort to the opinion of experts in human trafficking cases to comment on any judiciary decision that could characterize a human trafficking case as a labour case.
- As a journalist, you should pay attention to some indicators that could help you identify potential victims of human trafficking. Here we say: you can mention these indicators in your report; making it clear that these are the signs of human trafficking victim. These indicators are:

Most Important Labour Cases/ Human Trafficking

- Usually, the victim workers of human trafficking are usually present at night clubs, restaurants, hotels, prostitution houses, factories, farms, mines, and private homes.
- If you start a conversation with a worker, or asked someone from the environment in which the potential victim is working and noticed that the worker is not allowed to leave work or is forced to stay, or the worker does not have control of his/her money, his/her official documents are confiscated, does not receive any wages for his/her work, receives a very scanty wage, lives in an unhealthy environment, is always monitored by the employer, shows some signs of assault such as wounds, burses, scars, or burns, looks sad and depressed, you should know then that you are dealing with a potential victim of human trafficking.
- You should also pay attention to the age of the worker. If the worker is under the age of eighteen, then he/she becomes more susceptible to human trafficking.
- If you coincidentally run into a worker during your mission who you suspect to be a victim of human trafficking, then remember the three elements on which human trafficking is based; namely: the acts, the mean, and the purposes of exploitation.
- ever label the victim or treat him/her with contempt, especially female victims of human trafficking who were exploited in prostitution houses and night clubs. Try to eliminate stereotyping.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Human Trafficking

- If you want to conduct an interview with a potential victim of human trafficking; pay attention to the following:
 - The vast majority of human trafficking victims are women. Thus, the victim could be more comfortable talking to a female colleague of yours instead of a male. So, if you are a male journalist, consider taking along a female colleague if possible.
 - Create a friendly atmosphere prior to posing your questions, especially with female victims of rape. Always start with preparatory questions to allow the victim the opportunity to narrate her story without leaving her comfort zone. What we mean here is that if you immediately start by asking; for instance: "Tell me about the circumstances around your rape", this could shock the victim and make her uncomfortable, especially if it's your first time meeting her.
 - If you would like to record the interview or take photos, you should ask for the interviewee's permission first. Should the interviewee refuse you should respect his/her will. You can certainly offer to take photos or record the interview but obliterate the photo or disguise the voice upon broadcasting.
 - Ask the potential victim if he/she would like to disclose his/her real name or would prefer to use an alias.
 - Demonstrate understanding and sensitivity when the victim is narrating the story. Try not to interrupt the victim, maintain appropriate eye contact, and don't get distracted with your phone or anything else. This could make the victim feel that you're bored of listening to him/her, or that you're not really interested.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Human Trafficking

- If you ask a question the victim refuses to answer, don't pressure him/her and respect the victim's will.
- If the potential victim refuses to talk to you, then interviews could be conducted with people surrounding the potential victim. This could include friends, relatives, or an eye witness to the incident.
- In most Arab countries, there are civil organizations working on the issue of human trafficking victims. Such organizations usually have actual cases of individuals who were proven to be victims of human trafficking. Try to communicate with such organizations, because in addition to the sufficient information available at their disposal regarding human trafficking, which they might want to share with you as a mean of supporting their advocacy for such a cause, they also represent in most cases a trust worthy safe haven for victims. This way it would be easier for you to find actual cases that would potentially support and strengthen your report, and spare a lot of effort searching for cases.
- Upon preparing your report, avoid blaming the victim and stay away from stereotypical concepts that are insensitive to the victim's right. For example; never say in your report (self inflicted wound) or (brought shame) or other similar expressions. Remain impartial and neutral at all times and leave the opinions and impressions to the receiving audience. Don't be a contributor to the further solidification of misbeliefs.
- Avoid mentioning the nationality of the worker. This is an error we see more often in our media, which usually causes labeling of certain nationalities.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Human Trafficking

- It would be greatly helpful if you can elicit some testimonies by the human traffickers themselves; which is usually very difficult. However, if you manage to contact the trafficker and he agrees to cooperate with you, then you should be mindful of the following:
 - Upon preparing your report, don't forget that you're aiming to promote a culture of human rights, and that what the trafficker has done is a crime. Therefore, never demonstrate any sympathy with the trafficker or justify his actions; such using the expression (compelled to do that). This, however, does not necessarily prevent you from quoting him or to place his statements between brackets (I was compelled to do that). This means that you've reserved his right to stating his testimony the way he deems appropriate, you'd avoided attacking him personally, and you'd remained impartial.
 - The trafficker would often want to stay anonymous in the report. But because your report is in need for his testimony you might agree. But remember that you're obliged, if you agree, to disguise his identity in your report. You shall have no right to change your mind or back away from your commitment. Remember that you could be subject to threat if you fail to honor the agreement. On the other hand, you might be summoned or subpoenaed by a security department or a court of law after publishing this report. You might be requested to disclose the identity of your source. According to most laws, you may not refuse such a request if you're summoned before court.
 - This means that you have to think deeply before committing yourself to anything. You should study the situation carefully and decide base on that.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Human Trafficking

- Don't try to tempt the trafficker with promises to make him cooperate, like promising him to: depict him in a good way in your report. You can whatever you want, whether you're interviewing the victim or the trafficker, but you should never insult. You want to obtain information not to pass judgment.
- You may consider going as an undercover journalist and not disclose your actual identity to neither the victim nor the perpetrator. You can do that indeed, but remember that you will not be able to mention any names in your report, or show any photos you might've taken. In such a case, you can only narrate the story from your perspective without any testimonies, as you haven't received their consent. In which case you shall not have the right neither morally nor professionally to include any identifying information.
- In respect of the details related to rape and harassment cases, think thoroughly before publishing and ask yourself: is mentioning the nuances necessary for my story? How would that serve my story? What reaction should I expect from the audience to these details, especially within conservative communities? What damage could be potentially inflicted upon the victim as a result of these details?



Most Important Labour Cases/ Migrant Labour Cases

Most Important Labour Cases/ Migrant Labour Cases

Things you should know about migrant labour:

- Migrant workers are those who left their home countries to go to another country temporarily for the purpose of work against a wage. Usually, a migrant worker departs to the recruiting country after receiving an employment contract.
- A large portion of migrant workers work in low skills and low-waged occupations; often in occupation which local labour refrain from.
- Often, migrant worker are more vulnerable to violation of their labour rights. They also represent the larger portion of human trafficking and forced labour victims.
- Women represent half of the total migrant labour, who usually end-up being domestic workers.
- Migrant workers in the Arab world can be categorized into "legal"; those who hold work permits, and illegal workers who lack such permits.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Migrant Labour Cases

How to provide media coverage of migrant labour cases:

- Never use the term "Illegal worker". Instead use "Migrant worker or undocumented worker". This is due to the following reasons:
 - The term "Illegal" is not accurate and encourages all parties, whether it's the employer, security departments, or the government to violate the rights of the worker. This is in addition to labeling the worker and accusing him/her of committing a crime.
 - In most Arab countries, obtaining the work permit and paperwork and renewal of the same for the worker is the responsibility of the employer, where the worker is not allowed legally to obtain them him/her self. Therefore, using the term "Illegal" renders the worker responsible for a situation which he/she cannot correct.
 - International organizations, institutions, and associations concerned with human rights; such as the UN general assembly, ILO, and international confederations have issued reports and recommendations in which they emphasized on the importance of using terms like "Irregular migrant workers" or "Undocumented migrant". These organizations consider these terms more neutral and do carry any stigmatization or labeling of the worker, in addition to being a more accurate description of the worker.
 - International conventions and standards, including international conventions for the protection of all migrant workers and their family members, have all emphasized on the importance of protecting the migrant worker's right to a fair trial should the worker

Most Important Labour Cases/ Migrant Labour Cases

- violates regulatory procedures. However, using the term "Illegal" is an immediate labeling of the worker as a criminal who should be punished. If the media, which is supposed to be impartial, adopts this term it's then automatically endorsing the government position in the country, which may sometimes practice unfair procedures against migrant workers. Such practices include detention or deportation of migrant workers without giving them the chance to fair trial due process.
- Labeling the migrant worker "Illegal" implies to the community that it's ok to treat those workers inappropriately or exploit them since they are "illegal".
- Let's ask ourselves: how does the migrant worker feel when labeled "illegal"? While he/he knows that this illegal status is not his/her responsibility? Don't you think the migrant worker would feel wronged?
- Some migrant are accompanied by their dependants. Thus there are children who would also be labeled as "illegal".
- The term "illegal worker" narrows down the issue of migrant labour to merely the status, disregarding so many other critical issues that concern this group. Such issues could include the loopholes in the local regulation, the means of recruitment, and the violations such segment is potentially vulnerable to.

From a social perspective, using the term "illegal" conveys a message to the community that these people are suspects an unworthy of trust; those encouraging divides and discrimination against them.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Migrant Labour Cases

- Avoid stereotypical mentality that is usually linked to migrant workers. Such as:
"They are stealing our livelihood and compete against us for jobs". Usually, migrant workers are hired in low-level jobs that are not acceptable by citizens. Also, migrant workers accept lower wages than a citizen.
"Workers of this nationality are inclined to committing crimes". This can't be logical, where there is nothing to prove that whatsoever.

"Migrant workers tolerate humiliation and insult and tolerate poor working environment"

- Often times, we see the disadvantages of migrant labour being frowned upon in Arab media reports; touching upon the crimes, poor craftsmanship and other disadvantages. However, we hardly see any articles talking about the advantages of having migrant labour; such as the extent of their contribution in the economy, and their coverage of some occupations that are not attractive to local labour.
- Do not take a part in the justification of any violations perpetrated against migrant workers just because they are aliens. Remember that you're a journalist who must be impartial.

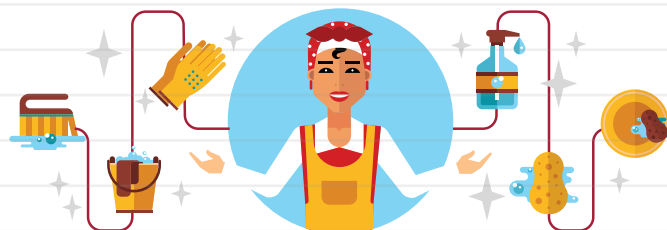


Most Important Labour Cases/ Domestic Workers

Most Important Labour Cases/ Domestic Workers

Things you should know about Domestic workers issues:

- Never use the term "Servant". Always use "domestic worker" instead.
- Don't say in your report "She fled her master's home", but "she left her place of work" instead. The relationship between the owner of the house and the domestic worker is contractual of nature, which allows her to leave the place of work just like in any other occupation.
- Don't take a part in "demonizing" domestic workers and always keep your role as a journalist in mind. In your capacity as a journalist you're neither a judge nor a member of the community who carries the social mentality, which usually entail stereotypes. You are entitled to your own belief system, but in your capacity as a journalist you should leave this aside and only rely on facts and information.
- Pay attention to the sensitivity of domestic workers occupation, as they work in closed homes. This often makes it difficult to interview them; therefore you should look for other ways to hear their perspective.



Most Important Labour Cases/ Domestic Workers

- Always follow a rights approach to your coverage of domestic workers issues. This of course does not mean you should not elicit the perspective of the employer.
- The issue of domestic workers fleeing the homes of their employers seems to be predominant of other manifestation of domestic workers issues. However, it's rear to see a report touching upon another dimension of the issue; such as the recruitment mechanism and conditions that is usually costly for the employer. As a result, the employer resorts to restricting the movement of the domestic worker lest having such huge amounts wasted.
- Never mention the nationality of the domestic worker or try to categorize her into a specific group; such as attributing hostility to one nationality and laziness to another.
- Don't exaggerate individual cases to make them look like a phenomenon, as in the example of a domestic worker murdering her employer, or a domestic worker committing suicide. In such cases, wait for the judiciary verdict or the determination of security departments and don't jump into conclusions. It might be beneficial to deeply probe the circumstances and background of the incident, like the violations and abuse the domestic worker was subject to. As a journalist, you should of course refrain from justifying the domestic worker's violent behavior, whereas a crime is unjustifiable.
- Introduce a humanitarian aspect to domestic workers' cases, and talk about their lives and activities away from their occupation. This will remind the community that these are human beings after all.

Things you should know about child labour cases:

- Organizations, confederations, and governments alike perceive child labour as a main challenge that should be completely annihilated. Endeavors have been exerted to that end, but weren't so far able to eliminate the phenomenon due to multiple reasons. Poverty, which includes wide segments of the society, is thought to be the main cause of this phenomenon; leading to child labour.
- The majority of conventions and laws correlate the work age to the age of completing primary education. Thus, most countries allow those who are above 16 to enter the labour force.

International law completely prohibits child labour in some occupations. These include:

- Occupations which entail a suspicion of human trafficking, forced labour, mobilizing children as combatants in armed conflicts, or any other illegal acts of whatever form.
 - If the work is not suitable for the child's age, and the child is not authorized to work in that position. Examples of that would be working in mining, or any other type of work that could abrupt the child's education or could distort the child's physical development.
- International laws and conventions allow child labour in soft work, provided that such work does not adversely affect the child's health or disrupt his/her education.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Child Labour

How to provide media coverage for this issue:

- First of all, think about the protection of the working child and the potential harm that could be inflicted on the child if his/her name or photo is featured in a press report.
- Introduce yourself to the child and explain to him/ her, what exactly do you want and where will this report be published; audio, visual, or paper media.
- Respect the will of the working child if he/she does not want to cooperate.

Always prioritize the best interest of the child. Even if the child agrees to answer all of your questions and did not mind to disclose

- his/her name in the report, you should thoroughly consider the circumstances of the child before publishing any piece of information. This is a child after all, who is likely unable to properly anticipate the potential implications of disclosing some information.
- Never pressure the child to disclose further information to make your report more exciting. For example: some family circumstances that forced the child to work; which the child might not be willing to share, or any other details related to violence the child may have experienced at work.

Most Important Labour Cases/ Child Labour

- Never tempt the child with money or any other gifts to convince him/her to be interviewed.
- If the working child is accompanied by a parent or a guardian, then you should ask for the written consent of the parent or the guardian.
- Try as much as possible to comfort and assure the child. If you feel that the child is dodging to answer a certain question, then don't pressure him/her. Narrow down the number of people present during the interview as much as possible, whether they are photographers or others.
- Refrain from presenting information in your report that could identify the child later, like the place of residence or photo, lest the stigmatization which the child might be vulnerable to upon publishing or broadcasting the report.

Titles Index

	Page		Page
Preamble	1 - 3	The Right of Association	16 - 20
How to use this guide	4	The Right to Peaceful Assembly	21 - 24
Arab Trade Unions Confederation (ATUC)	5	The Right to Strike	25 - 29
International Labour Organization (ILO)	6	Forced Labour	30 - 33
Traits of "Good" media report or news	7 - 8	Human Trafficking	34 - 42
Obstacles facing the journalist	9 - 10	Migrant Labour Cases	43 - 47
Fundamental Rights for Workers:	11 - 12	Domestic Workers	48 - 50
General Tips	13 - 14	Child Labour	51 - 55
Most important labour cases	15 - 54		

No.1 Said Al Mefthi Street
Swaifieh - Amman
850 290 Amman 11185 - Jordan

Tel. (962 6) 5824829
Mobile: 0779776777
Email: info@arabtradeunion.org

Follow us on :
ArabTradeUnion

