

FEMIG WORKSHOP REPORT: THAILAND

Building Feminist Migration
Policy for Gender Equality
from Grassroots to Global

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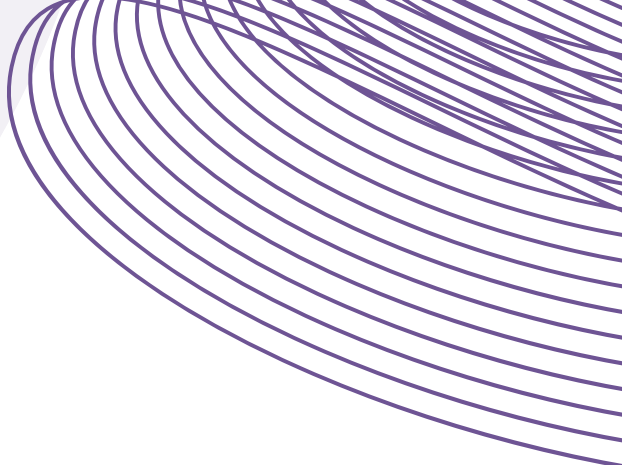


INTRODUCTION AND WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The Feminist Forum on Migration and Displacement (FFMD), convened in Bangkok, Thailand from 30 November to 1 December 2024, constituted a landmark global gathering of feminist, migrant-led and civil society organizations engaged in advancing gender justice in the context of migration and displacement. Taking place at a moment of intensifying border militarization, expanding temporary labour regimes, protracted conflicts, climate-related displacement, and shrinking civic space, the Forum provided a critical international platform for collective feminist analysis, political dialogue, and agenda-setting grounded in lived experiences.

The Feminist Forum on Migration and Displacement was convened by the [Women in Migration Network \(WIMN\)](#) as a global feminist space for dialogue, analysis, and movement-building. The [Gender+Migration Hub](#) at the International Migration Research Centre participated actively in the Forum through the Feminist Migration (FeMig) Initiative implemented in partnership with the [International Detention Coalition \(IDC\)](#), including by supporting Forum activities and contributing financial support through funding from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). FeMig is grounded in the recognition that migration shaped by structural inequality does not inherently produce empowerment or gender equality. Instead, prevailing migration systems organized through racialized, gendered, and exclusionary policy frameworks systematically reproduce precarity, exploitation, and violence, particularly for women, gender-diverse, racialized, and LGBTIQ+ migrants.

Within this context, FeMig's engagement at the FFMD was guided by four interrelated objectives: to strengthen feminist civil society participation in global migration governance; to create a space for transnational feminist dialogue rooted in grassroots realities; to document and systematize civil society knowledge through participatory research tools; and to amplify migrant-led



perspectives through accessible and politically resonant formats. The Forum thus functioned not only as a space for exchange, but as a strategic intervention in global migration governance processes, aligned with FeMig's theory of change of building feminist migration policy from the grassroots to the global level.



COUNTRY CONTEXT: GENDER AND MIGRATION

The Feminist Forum took place within a global political and economic context marked by deepening inequality, the externalization and securitization of borders, and the normalization of temporary and employer-tied labour migration regimes. Across regions, migration governance frameworks continue to prioritize control, deterrence, and labour market flexibility over human rights, dignity, and gender equality. These systems are deeply gendered and racialized, disproportionately exposing women and gender-diverse migrants to exploitation, gender-based violence, detention, deportation, family separation, and exclusion from essential services across the migration cycle.

Forum discussions underscored that migration and displacement are shaped by intersecting structural drivers, including global labour markets, climate change, armed conflict and occupation, colonial legacies, and discriminatory citizenship and nationality regimes. Feminized sectors such as domestic and care work remain systematically undervalued and excluded from labour protections, while asylum and displacement regimes increasingly rely on containment, deterrence, and temporary protection frameworks that leave women and gender-diverse people in prolonged states of insecurity.

At the same time, participants emphasized that feminist and migrant-led civil society organizations play a central role in contesting these harms and advancing transformative alternatives. Across continents, organizations represented at the Forum engage in frontline service provision, documentation of rights violations, strategic litigation, labour organizing, feminist advocacy, and movement-building. The FFMD provided a space to connect these struggles across regions, identify shared patterns of structural injustice, and articulate a collective feminist vision for migration governance grounded in autonomy, accountability, and justice. This global framing reflects FeMig's core commitment to centring civil society leadership and knowledge in efforts to transform migration systems at all levels.




WORKSHOP DESIGN AND PARTICIPANTS

The Feminist Forum on Migration and Displacement was designed as a two-day global feminist political space, structured to facilitate collective analysis, cross-regional dialogue, and movement-building rather than technical training or capacity development. Grounded in feminist principles of inclusivity, care, reflexivity, and attention to power, the Forum prioritized participatory formats that elevated migrant and grassroots voices as central to knowledge production and political strategy.

Over the course of two days, the Forum combined plenary dialogues, thematic group discussions, collective visioning sessions, and informal networking spaces. These formats enabled participants to move between sharing lived experiences, analyzing structural drivers of inequality, and articulating shared demands and strategies for action. Interpretation in multiple languages supported meaningful participation and language justice, ensuring that linguistic hierarchies did not reproduce exclusions within the space.

Participants included over 100 representatives of civil society organizations and networks working for and with women migrants, women refugees, displaced women, and gender-diverse migrants across regions. Organizations represented diverse continents and migration contexts, including countries of origin, transit, destination, and return. Participants brought expertise from grassroots migrant worker collectives, refugee-led organizations, feminist and women's rights groups, trade unions, human rights organizations, and transnational advocacy networks. Representation included women migrant workers in domestic, care, agricultural, and service sectors; displaced and refugee women affected by conflict and climate crisis; migrant returnees; stateless persons; and gender-diverse and LGBTIQ+ migrants.

FeMig engagement during the Forum centred on three interconnected activities. First, FeMig team members supported and co-facilitated collective discussions



on feminist migration governance, synthesizing insights emerging from cross-regional exchanges. Second, the FeMig team conducted 15 semi-structured video interviews with Forum participants as part of the CSO Voices Video Series, documenting feminist civil society perspectives on migration, labour, borders, displacement, and resistance. Third, a global civil society mapping survey was administered to participating organizations, generating systematic data on organizational priorities, challenges, and strategies across regions. Together, these activities ensured that the Forum produced durable knowledge outputs that extend beyond the event itself and feed directly into FeMig's global research and advocacy agenda.




KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of Forum discussions, the 15 video interviews, and the global civil society survey revealed strong convergence across regions regarding the structural drivers of inequality embedded in contemporary migration systems. Temporary, employer-tied, and sector-segregated migration regimes were consistently identified as central mechanisms through which exploitation and precarity are produced and normalized. Restrictions on job mobility, lack of access to services regardless of status, and dependency on employers or recruiters expose women and gender-diverse migrants to violence, wage theft, coercion, and isolation across migration contexts.

Militarized borders and the criminalization of migration emerged as pervasive concerns across regions. Participants and interviewees described detention, deportation, pushbacks, and family separation as routine governance practices that disproportionately harm women, pregnant migrants, and gender-diverse people. These practices were widely understood as political choices rooted in racialized, colonial, and gendered power relations, rather than as neutral or inevitable responses to migration.

The CSO Voices Video Series provided particularly powerful insights into how these structures are experienced and contested. Interviewees emphasized migrant agency, collective organizing, feminist solidarity, and cross-movement alliances as critical strategies for change. Feminist migration governance was articulated not as incremental reform, but as a transformative political project grounded in substantive equality, freedom of movement, accountability, and the leadership of those most affected.

Findings from the global CSO mapping survey reinforced these themes, highlighting shared priorities across continents: access to secure and regular migration pathways; freedom from violence, detention, and criminalization; recognition and protection of care and reproductive labour; family unity; access



to justice and services irrespective of migration status; and the protection of civic space. Together, the interviews and survey underscore FeMig's central premise: that feminist migration policy must be built from the knowledge, strategies, and leadership of civil society actors operating at the forefront of migration and displacement.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on collective deliberations at the Forum, the global civil society mapping survey, and the 15 CSO video interviews, participants articulated the following recommendations to advance a feminist migration policy from the grassroots to the global level:

- 1. Establish accessible, rights-based, and gender-responsive regular migration pathways.**
 - States should create migration pathways that ensure long-term security, including pathways to permanent residency and citizenship, family unity, and meaningful protections for undocumented migrants. Gender-discriminatory policies, recruitment bans, and restrictive visa regimes that undermine women’s autonomy should be repealed in favour of rights-based approaches that prioritize mobility and safety.
- 2. Decriminalize migration and dismantle detention- and enforcement-based governance.**
 - Participants called for the decriminalization of migration and an end to detention, deportation, and militarized border regimes. Public resources should be redirected away from enforcement and toward community-based, migrant-led support systems that uphold dignity, safety, and access to justice.
- 3. Recognize, value, and protect feminized labour, particularly care and domestic work.**
 - Governments must ratify and implement ILO Conventions 189 and 190, formally recognize domestic and care work as labour, and guarantee labour rights, social protection, freedom of association, and collective bargaining for all migrant workers regardless of status.

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4. **Address intersecting forms of discrimination embedded in migration systems.**
 - Migration policies must confront intersectional discrimination based on gender, race, caste, disability, sexuality, nationality, and legal status. Participants emphasized the need for language justice, inclusive services, and targeted protections for those facing compounded exclusion and violence.
 5. **Ensure protection and accountability in contexts of conflict, climate crisis, and displacement.**
 - States must uphold international standards to protect migrants in situations of conflict, occupation, and climate-related displacement. This includes halting the deployment of migrant workers to conflict zones, guaranteeing non-discriminatory access to humanitarian assistance, and ensuring accountability for rights violations.
 6. **Centre migrant women's and gender-diverse people's leadership in migration governance.**
 - Meaningful participation of migrant women and gender-diverse people must be institutionalized at local, regional, and global levels. Sustained, flexible funding for migrant-led and women-led organizations is essential to support leadership, organizing, and advocacy.
 7. **Protect civic space and migrant solidarity.**
 - Participants stressed the urgent need to safeguard civil society organizations, human rights defenders, and migrant solidarity actors from criminalization, repression, and surveillance, recognizing civic space as a foundational condition for feminist migration governance.



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