

## **Ethiopian maids 'abused in Middle East'**



**Thousands of young Ethiopian women are being enticed to the Middle East with the promise of work - only to suffer verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Now the Ethiopian government wants to take action as Nita Bhalla reports from Addis Ababa.**

Yemisrach was 23 when she went to Beirut in 1996.

She worked there for three years, seven days a week from 5am to 10pm. She was locked in the house at all times and never given any freedom.

### **The Barbaric Torture of Ethiopians in the Middle East (Nebiyu Sirak)**

Posted by [admin](#) on October 22, 2012

Kuwait City: Sources revealed more than 700 Ethiopian housemaids are said to be roaming around — a phenomenon which might spread contagious diseases and lead to dire consequences especially if some of them decide to return to their sponsors.

### **Ethiopian Maid Suicide Highlights the Middle East's Domestic Worker Problem**

## The Struggle to End Domestic Slavery in Lebanon

A work opportunity or modern-day slavery? This is the ongoing debate on foreign workers being shipped off to the Middle East for little pay and even worse living conditions. Kabobfest give an analysis and some statistics on how bad the situation really is for these foreign domestic workers.

Other horror stories have also been emerging about girls who have been raped and sexually abused, although many are reluctant to talk about it owing to cultural taboos.

The Ethiopian government has acknowledged that thousands of young Ethiopian women working in the Middle East are being abused by their employers.

With unemployment at an all-time high in Ethiopia, many go to Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Bahrain or The Emirates to look for work as housemaids.

### Back-breaking jobs



Young women are trying to escape unemployment in Addis Ababa

There are currently an estimated 15,000 Ethiopian girls working as maids in Beirut alone.

But government officials have only recently confirmed that most girls are employed in back-breaking jobs for up to 18 hours a day.

Among his cases, there have been girls who have returned partially paralysed, insane, with broken backs and legs and girls who have been burned with acid.

He says some never come back and their families have no way of finding them.

## **Saudi Arabia:**

“Nearly 160,000 Ethiopian women went to work in Saudi Arabia in the 12 months ending July 7, more than 10 times the number a year earlier, data from the Ethiopian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs show. Tens of thousands more migrated illegally, according to the United Nations.”

‘Extremely Hostile’

The kingdom employs more than 750,000 domestic servants, according to the UN’s International Labor Organization. New York-based Human Rights Watch puts the number at 1.5 million or more. While many “enjoy decent work conditions,” the nonprofit said in a 2008 report, “others endure a range of abuses,” including conditions amounting to forced confinement and sexual and physical abuse.

“The legal framework in Saudi Arabia is extremely hostile to migrant women’s rights,” said Nisha Varia, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch.

A Saudi law guaranteeing one day off a week and limiting hours worked doesn’t apply to housekeepers, according to the group. Employers control a worker’s immigration status, including when he or she can leave the country.

## **Two Ethiopian Maids Commit Suicide in Bahrain in Less than a Week**

“I have lived in the middle east for over 10 years and have helped few victims and shared their stories face to face and its not a joke. These girls are from small villages back home and sell everything to come to the middle east in search of a better future but, their

hopes and dreams are crushed from the very moment they step inside their employers home. Most of them are abused and raped constantly and often left to work all day and night with a min of 100 dollars or 40 bahrini dinar for 1 month. Most of the time they dont bother to pay them and make them work even in their extended families homes. Ethiopia might be struggling with poverty and many girls leave their home in good faith but again they work hard and are mentaly tortured in the middle east. In Bahrain there is no embassy and unfortunately no one does anything about it..... just another life gone and another one waiting her/his turn of life without humanity and rights.”

## **Ethiopia to send 45,000 maids every month to Saudi Arabia.**

- Thu, 03/15/2012 - 00:37 (The Sheba Post). Ethiopian is said to finalize a procedure that will allow the travel of 45,000 Ethiopian maids to Saudi Arabia every month, reports The Saudi Gazette. Ethiopian housemaids have been high in demand after Saudi Arabia stopped recruiting housemaids from four countries, including Kenya, because Saudi Arabia has been unable to reach a satisfactory agreement with these countries. However, the treatment and conditions of Ethiopian workers in Middle Eastern countries have been thorny issue these days. Ethiopian immigrants to these countries often receive abusive and inhumane treatment from their host. Just this week the world had witnessed the unimaginable brutality so many immigrants found themselves in when several Lebanon men brutally abuse and drag an Ethiopian girl in daylight Beirut. That barbaric incident

had led the abused Alem Dechassa to take her own life few hours ago. On top of that, the lack of proper mechanisms on the part of Ethiopian government to protect its own citizens prior to such kind of incidents or identify victims and take proper legal measure once abuse occur, as well as repatriate its citizens have exacerbate the conditions.