

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



GJK

GLOBAL JUSTICE KENYA

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2025 REFLECTIONS AND THE ROAD AHEAD

In 2025, Global Justice Kenya stood at the intersection of profound suffering and extraordinary courage, confronting the realities of a system that exploits women seeking opportunities beyond borders. And each day, we witnessed the strength of survivors who refuse to be defined by the violence inflicted upon them.

As we deepened our work, I was reminded, again and again, that justice is not an abstract concept. It lives in the voice of a young woman who finally feels safe enough to tell her story. It lives in the quiet dignity of a family receiving their daughter at the airport after months of unimaginable fear. It lives in every survivor who chooses to stand up, not only for herself, but for the thousands she will never meet.

Our team documented hundreds of cases of trafficking, torture, forced labour, and death, evidence of a system that must change. We supported rescues and repatriations, walked alongside families seeking truth, and strengthened our survivor-led networks so that women returning home are not alone, but held by a community committed to their healing and power.

We made critical steps in the fight for accountability. The documentation we gathered is no longer just testimony, it is becoming legal action. It is shaping advocacy at the national, regional, and international levels. It is challenging impunity. We submitted dozens of cases for administrative remedy and laid the groundwork for landmark civil litigation that will demand financial accountability from those who profit from exploitation. This work is slow, difficult, and often painful, but it is necessary.

Our vision is not modest. We seek a future where accountability is real, and where the cost of human suffering is too high for anyone to profit from. A future where justice is accessible, survivor-centered, and uncompromising.



To every survivor who trusted us with her story: we honor you. To our partners and allies: we thank you for standing with truth. And to our team, whose courage is matched only by their compassion, your work is changing lives and transforming systems.

We are not yet where we must be, but we are moving with purpose. The road ahead is long, but it is lit by the strength of survivors who continue to lead us toward justice. Women who now speak for entire communities, who lead legal awareness, who co-design advocacy strategies, who hold the pen that writes the next chapter of this movement.

We are proud to be their pen. And it is alongside them, that we will keep walking, until justice is not the exception, but the rule.

Valentina Cominetti
CO-FOUNDER/CHAIRMAN

WHO WE ARE

Global Justice Kenya (GJK) is an independent, women-led NGO dedicated to upholding human rights by advancing **Access to Justice** and **the Right to a Remedy** for victims of gross human rights violations and international crimes.

We are guided by the understanding that crime and exploitation are profit-driven, and that change happens when the perpetrators and profiteers of these crimes are held financially accountable to the people they harm.

Without meaningful legal recourse, rights remain theoretical. To transform rights into reality, GJK adopts a rigorous evidence-based approach grounded in establishing liability, meticulous documentation of violations, and catalyzing survivors' access to legal representation and legal awareness.

Across East Africa, we work to dismantle economic and socio-cultural barriers to justice. Recognizing the vulnerabilities women face, we provide gender-sensitive, trauma-informed support—including safe reporting mechanisms, legal education, and approaches that restore agency and dignity.



WHERE THERE IS A RIGHT THERE MUST BE A REMEDY

Crime is profit-motivated.

By seeking legal accountability, challenging financial impunity, and promoting evidence-based advocacy, we disrupt the cycle of abuse.

Remedy is justice, empowerment, and deterrence.

MISSION

Advance the Right to a Remedy for victims of gross human rights violations, holding perpetrators and profiteers legally and financially accountable to survivors, and ensuring crime becomes unprofitable.

VISION

A world where justice is a fundamental right, not a privilege, and where no one can profit from human suffering.

VALUES

INTEGRITY:

Honesty and transparency.

SERVICE:

Commitment to victims.

RESPECT:

Dignity and rights for all.

JUSTICE:

Relentless pursuit of accountability.

OUR FOCUS

WHERE LABOUR MIGRATION MEETS MODERN SLAVERY BETWEEN OPPORTUNITY AND EXPLOITATION



East Africa faces a growing **crisis of human trafficking and exploitation**, driven by structural pressures at home and unsafe labour regimes abroad.

Kenya's youth (18–35), making up 75% of the population, face 43% to 67% unemployment.

To address this, the government has rapidly expanded labour migration, aiming to send one million workers abroad annually. According to President William Ruto, between January and August 2025, 430,000 Kenyans had secured overseas jobs, generating USD 1 billion in foreign exchange.

Deployment has outpaced protection. As activist Nerima Wako-Ojiwa notes, widespread joblessness has created “**a culture of exploitation**”. The Gulf remains the main destination, but Kenyan workers are also trafficked to Malaysia, Myanmar, India, and other Asian countries. **98.73% of returning migrants report forced labour violations. 316 Kenyan migrant workers died** across the Gulf between 2022–2024, and, **371 Kenyan women died** in Saudi Arabia, between 2020–2024.

Access to justice is nearly impossible: systems fail to uphold migrant rights, complaints mechanisms are difficult to access, consular institutions are understaffed, costs are prohibitive, and the transnational nature of trafficking undermines accountability.

GJK works at the frontline of this crisis, advancing access to justice for African migrant domestic workers, especially women and youth caught between unemployment, gender inequality, and systemic exploitation.

Addressing exploitation across these migration corridors strikes at the heart of modern slavery.

OUR WORK AND IMPACT

When remedies, knowledge, care, opportunity, and collective strength come together, they form the roots of a just ecosystem, one that allows societies not just to survive, but to grow.

GJK's work is grounded in intensive, legally rigorous evidence collection, which forms the backbone of access to justice, informs our advocacy, and drives our policy reform efforts.

In 2025, we took a major step forward by conducting a systematic analysis of judicial and non-judicial remedies for migrant domestic workers across countries of origin and destination. This has opened concrete opportunities for accountability: we have begun testing selected remedial mechanisms and are now seeking strategic partners to pursue and evaluate these justice pathways at scale.

We also expanded our prevention and capacity-building work through partnerships, supporting research and awareness initiatives in the Kakuma refugee camp through refugee student internships, delivered anti-trafficking legal training to frontline organizations in Nairobi's informal settlements, and led targeted community awareness campaigns to strengthen early detection and protection.

Recognizing that justice takes time, we advanced a holistic survivor-care model by launching psychosocial healing groups, with a second phase focused on training survivors as counselors and community facilitators. In parallel, we established a new in-house Economic Justice Program focused on identifying grant opportunities, supporting survivors and prospective migrants with grant applications, and building partnerships with educational institutions and industries to expand access to training, livelihoods, and dignified economic opportunities in Kenya.

What follows is the practical translation of this strategy into action. Each program detailed below reflects how GJK turned evidence, partnerships, and survivor-centered care into concrete results in 2025.



RESCUE AND REPATRIATION

Rescue is the first step,

Justice is the solution.

GJK's rescue and repatriation work did not begin as a formal program, but emerged organically as survivors began to trust our presence, methods, and commitment to justice. As that trust deepened, women and men in distress started reaching out to us directly, and what began as individual interventions evolved into a critical area of our work. Our repatriation efforts are guided by a firm policy of **holding duty bearers accountable** and **never fueling traffickers**: we do not pay agents or employers for the release of victims, refusing to participate in or legitimize the market that sustains exploitation.

In 2025, we partnered closely with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya**, in particular, the **Welfare Directorate** of the **State Department for Diaspora Affairs**, submitting well-documented cases enabling them to perform as duty bearer, for repatriations from Saudi Arabia. As institutional trust strengthened, State Department for Diaspora Affairs referred a high volume of cases from Iraq to GJK, where Kenya has no consular representation. This lead us to partner with the **Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Iraq through its Anti-Human Trafficking Directorate** on repatriation.

Over the course of 2025, we **received 34 repatriation requests, successfully supported the return of 21 migrants**, and continue to **actively manage 13 ongoing cases**. Cumulatively, between 2024 and 2025, GJK has supported the safe repatriation of **48 migrants**, with primary countries of intervention including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Malaysia. Each case is handled individually, with victim safety as the absolute priority.



DOCUMENTATION

LEGAL RESEARCH

ACCESS TO REMEDY

2025 marked a pivotal year in which GJK converted documentation, research, and partnerships into concrete pathways for cross-border access to justice.

We **documented 56 new trafficking cases**, bringing our **database** to a total of nearly **300**. Our rigorous, trauma-informed evidence collection approach has sustained the **safe reporting space** we created for survivors and their families.

This year, we also developed the **Legal Roadmap on Access to Justice in Kenya for Returnee Migrant Workers**, defining concrete accountability pathways for rogue recruitment agents, who are often the primary drivers of exploitation. The roadmap maps civil, criminal, administrative, informal, and alternative dispute resolution remedies, integrating cost-reduction strategies essential to break the barriers that migrant workers face in accessing justice. We plan to formally launch the Roadmap in 2026 and roll out dedicated trainings for legal practitioners.

In parallel, we conducted **comparative legal research on the legal frameworks governing foreign workers in Saudi Arabia and Iraq**, examining recent legislative reforms, newly introduced remedial mechanisms, and begun testing some of these in practice.



To pursue remedies, we submitted **12 applications to Kenya's National Assistance Trust Fund**, **4 cases through Iraq's Ministry of Labour**, **13 cases through Iraq's Counter Trafficking in Persons Directorate**, and **2 submissions to the Saudi Human Rights Commission**. The NATF applications remain pending due to the temporary absence of the Board of Trustees, and while most mechanisms remain unresponsive, our sustained collaboration with Iraq's Anti-Human Trafficking Directorate led to the official recognition of **4 individuals as victims of trafficking and their consequent repatriation**.

Overall, 2025 laid the legal groundwork necessary to initiate civil litigation and to deepen and scale our work toward financial accountability for survivors.

RIGHTS LITERACY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

“The effects of human rights education can be dramatic in awakening people to the value and power of their own lives.” Daisaku Ikeda

Injustice often begins with lack of rights literacy; when people do not know what abuse looks like, what protections exist, or where to seek help, exploitation flourishes. In 2025, we strengthened prevention through Know Your Rights (KYR) legal awareness on human trafficking, safe migration, and the related Kenyan legal framework.

We trained 2 community-based organizations in Nairobi’s informal settlements, equipping them to identify victims and activate referrals and reporting mechanisms to protect survivors.

In parallel, we trained refugee students from the Kakuma Refugee Camp for six months on trafficking risks, victim identification, and safe referrals; the students then conducted an awareness survey across the camp, researching risks while spreading life-saving information.

We also carried out community awareness campaigns through faith-based and grassroots organizations in Kibera and Githurai, targeting young adults with guidance on safe migration, trafficking red flags, and reporting systems.

To extend reach beyond in-person sessions, GJK made KYR materials available online. Across trainings, community outreach, student-led research, and digital dissemination, we estimate that 800–1,000 people were directly and indirectly reached in 2025.



ADVOCACY FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

Frederick Douglass

GJK’s advocacy in 2025 reached national, and global platforms, transforming evidence into policy pressure and public accountability.

Our research directly informed **two major investigative features published by The New York Times**, “A Kingdom’s Deadly Trade: The Powerful Profit Off the Lives of Maids in Saudi Arabia” (March 16, 2025) and “When Kenyan Maids Sought Help Overseas, Diplomats Demanded Sex” (April 4, 2025), which exposed systemic abuse and corruption in labour migration. This triggered a wave of further investigative reports that continue to amplify the issue.

GJK also submitted **evidence to the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights** for the report “Labour Migration, Business and Human Rights” to the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly, and to **the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons**, who placed strong emphasis on Migrant Domestic Workers in her report to the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council.

In Kenya, GJK made contributions to the Labour Migration Management Bill and the Kenya Migrant Workers Welfare Fund, a proposed migrants’ safety net.



GJK was also appointed to the **National Technical Working Group convened by the Ministry of Labour of Kenya** to support public participation for the ratification and domestication of International Labour Organization **Conventions 189 and 190**.

We amplified survivors’ call for justice also through national and international platforms, taking part in International Domestic Workers Day, the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, International Women’s Day, and the Africa Business Forum on Human Rights, bringing testimony to the forefront and highlighting the realities of migrant women, who now constitute almost half of global migrant workers.



EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

In our last Annual Report, we committed to expand psychological support and strengthen economic empowerment for survivors. In 2025, we delivered on both promises.

Because justice is often a long and complex journey, while survivors' needs for safety, healing, and income are immediate, we invested toward the establishment of a comprehensive, holistic care approach to support healing and reintegration alongside legal action.

With the Trauma Healing Institute, we launched structured healing groups for survivors to process their experiences, rebuild stability, and restore dignity. The next phase of this work will train selected survivors as counselors and healing facilitators, offering them a path toward professionalization, positioning them as leaders and change makers within their own communities.



GJK also launched a new in-house Economic Justice Program to confront the economic vulnerabilities that place survivors at risk of re-trafficking. Many return in worse financial condition than before they migrated, and external training or placement opportunities, while valuable, remain insufficient. The program seeks to disrupt the root causes of exploitation by helping survivors and prospective migrants access opportunities that are otherwise out of reach.

This includes identifying grants and vocational programs, supporting applications, and developing partnerships with educational institutions and industries to expand pathways to dignified work.

Our progress is real: 21 survivors trained, 3 already in new jobs, and dozens more applications submitted. Still, the scale of the need reminds us how much work lies ahead.

THE FUTURE AHEAD

OUR NEXT GOALS



Expand our team and legal capacity to file many more cases, so that we can support far more survivors in accessing justice.



Initiate strategic civil litigation to establish financial accountability for profiteers and perpetrators, ensuring that they are held directly responsible to survivors.



Strengthen international advocacy and visibility by expanding our presence in global forums and policy spaces, bringing survivor voices and GJK's research to international attention.



Expand economic opportunities and psychosocial support in Kenya, reducing vulnerability to human trafficking and lowering the risk of re-trafficking.



Broaden and diversify our donor and partnership base, so that more individuals, institutions, and communities actively sustain survivor-led justice.



Extend GJK programs to other countries in East Africa, building a cross-border approach to justice, reform, prevention, and survivor support.

GJK

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