

ASEAN Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers: *Evolving a Rights Regime for the Regional Protection of Labor*

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In 2015, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is seen to be coming together in a tighter form of regional integration. Historically, Europe led the path for this species of political organization, which various regional entities around the world have sought to emulate with varying degrees, but usually disappointing degrees of relative success. ASEAN is considered to be one of the promising supranational communities, but much still remains to be desired judging from its record in engaging issues such as human rights in the region, particularly those of regular or irregular migrant workers or laborers.

This Article briefly notes the international milieu of protecting the rights of migrant workers, then specifically examines the current conditions, persistent conundrums, and emerging developments as regards the movement towards an excruciatingly slow yet continuously evolving human rights regime in the in the ASEAN region.

Despite the recent developments in the region such as the ASEAN Declaration on Human Rights and the Cebu Declaration, and even considering the commitments of the ASEAN member states to longstanding treaties and international documents espousing the promotion of human rights, implementation, state centrism, and state interests prove to be strong determinants or at times provide a formidable deterrence to migrant workers are protected from abuse.

Regardless, the Article argues that historical factors, existing international documents, and recent incremental movements are steps in the right direction in ensuring that regional mechanisms further develop for a more effective human rights regime building and protection of migrant labor in the ASEAN region.