

# Silent suffering of Ghanaian workers worrying

By Raymond Klutse

**T**he suffering of many Ghanaian workers goes far beyond underpayment. Across both the informal sector and a significant portion of the formal sector, thousands of workers continue to face serious labour rights violations, often with little or no protection.

Many workers are denied their rightful annual leave, overtime pay, holiday pay, and proper conditions of service agreements.

In some workplaces, SSNIT contributions are not paid, remuneration is left to the discretion of employers instead of being guided by law, and workers are subjected to harassment and intimidation. Workers who speak against injustice are often dismissed, knowing very well that unemployment and the "there is no work" reality in Ghana force many

to remain silent.

This culture of fear has created an environment where workers are denied freedom of expression, workplace dignity, and job security. Employers continue to take advantage of vulnerable workers who have little bargaining power and limited alternatives for survival.

## Worrying

As a practitioner in this field, it is deeply worrying to witness situations where the law is clear and the right professional directions can be given, yet enforcement institutions fail to act. When institutions responsible for protecting workers refuse or fail to enforce the law, employers become emboldened to continue operating in illegality.

But the problem does not end there.

After facing exploitation and labour rights abuses in Ghana, many workers decide to seek opportunities abroad in search of better conditions

of service. Unfortunately, this journey has become another painful trap for many poor Ghanaians.

## Laws

Under Ghana's labour laws, Private Employment Agencies (PEAs) are the institutions mandated to recruit Ghanaian workers for employment outside Ghana. However, weak regulation and poor enforcement have created room for many unlicensed and unregulated operators to enter the system. Some individuals, including public figures and so-called celebrities, have reportedly engaged in overseas recruitment activities without proper legal authorisation.

As a result, many desperate Ghanaian workers have been deceived with promises of better jobs abroad. Some sold their land, businesses, cars, and personal belongings to finance these journeys, only to find themselves stranded in foreign countries, abandoned by recruiters, subjected to inhuman treatment, poor

working conditions, passport seizures, exploitation, and in some cases complete neglect without support.

## Reports

There have been several reports over the years of Ghanaian migrant workers stranded in countries in the Middle East and elsewhere after being lured abroad under false promises of decent employment, only to face abuse, exploitation, and harsh living conditions.

This raises serious questions:

Who is protecting the poor Ghanaian worker? Who is regulating these agencies? Who is enforcing the law?

Workers are the backbone of national development. They deserve fair wages, paid leave, overtime compensation, social security protection, decent conditions of work, freedom of expression, protection from harassment, and safe migration

• Continued on page 10

# Silent suffering of Ghanaian workers worrying

• **Continued From page 7**  
opportunities when seeking work  
abroad.

Ghana cannot continue to allow

labour exploitation at home and  
unsafe migration abroad to destroy  
the hope of its workforce.

As a practitioner in this field, I am  
deeply worried about Ghana's future

workforce. If urgent reforms are not  
made, if enforcement institutions  
remain weak, and if labour laws  
continue to be ignored, the  
consequences will be devastating for

the next generation of Ghanaian  
workers.

Protecting workers is not a favour  
, it is a legal and moral duty.

The time has come for Ghana to

stand for the poor worker.

*The writer is a Labour Officer.*

*E-mail:  
raymond.klutse@labourdepartment  
.gov.gh*