



## The Significance of Indonesian Diplomacy in Bilateral Relations with Malaysia on the Case of Migrant Worker Protection

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### **Abstract**

Migration is important to the global economy, however there are numerous issues that have yet to be resolved. The United Nations, as the International Government Organization, has created regulations for migrant workers, but this is insufficient because the involvement of the government that sends the worker is essential. The aim of this study is to examine the effort that done by Indonesian government in conducting the protection of migrant worker who works in Malaysia. Furthermore, because this is a qualitative study, direct observation was used to capture both governmental and non-governmental actors involved in resolving the case of an Indonesian migrant worker in Malaysia. The research findings from the interviews revealed that use of bilateral agreement with Memorandum of Understanding as a soft power diplomacy instrument could be effective in protecting migrant workers. However, the success of the Indonesian migrant workers protection requires participation from both Indonesian and Malaysian government.

**Keywords:** *Bilateral Agreements; Migrant Worker Protection; Soft Power Diplomacy*

### **Introduction**

Despite controversy, migration plays an important role in the global economy. According to the IMF, skilled and unskilled migrants benefit their new home countries in the long run by increasing per capita income and living standards because migrants increase the working-age population, improve the human capital development of receiving countries, and contribute to the technological process. Furthermore, the presence of migrant workers boosts GDP, productivity, and the ability to share benefits the average income per person of both the bottom 90% and top 10% of earners (Jaumotte, Koloskova, & Saxena, 2016).

Following the United Nations 2030 Sustainability Development Agenda (IAEG-SDGs, 2016), issue on migration worker is addressed in SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities). The UN urges governments to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well- managed migration policies” (target 10.7) and to “protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments

for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment” (target 8.8).

The migrant worker case is particularly concerning because of the numerous issues that have arisen, the majority of which are the result of gender discrimination. As migrant workers, women face more economic and non-economic challenges. They may face gender discrimination in the labor market as well as a lack of social networks, making it difficult to balance work and family life in a foreign country ( International Labour Organization, 2021).

The most recent case involving migrant workers concerns the injustice and arbitrariness perpetrated by the job recipient in Saudi Arabia against a Filipino worker. In brief, the Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) was illegally terminated without remuneration. Because of a lack of legal force and regulation pertaining to migrant workers, the OFW was dismissed from the Supreme Court on the grounds of insufficient evidence (Pulta, 2021).

A similar injustice occurred in the Philippines, as well as in Indonesia, where thousands of reports of salary issues, violence, and even sexual harassment are made to the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia each year. To address the issue, the Indonesian government attempted to reach a bilateral agreement with a specific country, in this case, Malaysia, which receives the greatest number of Indonesian migrant workers, in order to combat the issues that arise in Indonesian workers who work in Malaysia.

Malaysia has had full employment and a high level of education since 1990. Nevertheless, the Malaysian economy relies heavily on migrant workers to perform low-skilled jobs, with approximately one-third of workers in the services sector and twenty-five percent in agriculture (World Bank, 2020). Along with Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines, Indonesia is one of the leading countries that provide foreign workers with an estimated 2.7 million workers.

Due to Indonesia's high unemployment rate and economic pressure, the job opportunities offered by Malaysia are advantageous to Indonesians especially to those who lived in rural areas. For the vast majority of Indonesian migrant workers, working in Malaysia in a low-skilled position carries a very high risk, as there are numerous problematic cases. From January to May of 2022, the Embassy of Indonesia resolved 46 cases of unpaid wages totaling approximately Rp 2.9 billion (Chaterine, 2021). In addition to this case, migrant workers face issues such as falsification of documents, human trafficking, the desire to be repatriated, sexual harassment, and acts of violence from employers.

Indeed, the risk is very high, as is the presence of illegal migrants. Migrant workers apprehended in raids are frequently imprisoned and deported back to their home countries. Despite that, many people are free after paying compensation. According to Mr. Hermono, Indonesia's ambassador to Malaysia, only about one-third of workers are documented, with the rest arriving illegally. Given their financial circumstances, the majority of them are reckless enough to embark on the hazardous journey. In December 2021, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency discovered that only 14 individuals out of 50 had survived the perilous voyage; 18 bodies had been discovered, and 20 individuals were presumed to have perished (Llewellyn, 2021).

## ***Literature Review***

Several academics and researchers have conducted research and analysis on migrant worker protection issues. However, as per my research on the journals that examine the issue, there is no journal that can explain how to combat the problem and injustice that migrant workers face in. According to Wouter van Ginneken's research on Social Protection for Migrant Workers, regional efforts may help to bring about change in the approach to social protection across borders, but their impact may be limited

for the same reasons that deter the implementation of comprehensive social security systems (Ginneken, 2013). International Government Organizations, such as the United Nations under UN 2030 goals, have led efforts to protect migrants. However, the involvement of governments is essential because they could regulate and control migrant workers.

Another journal explaining migrant worker protection based on the efforts done by the countries who send the workers. Fithriatus Shalihah was examining about the effectiveness of One-Stop Integrated Services (also called LTSA) as a system that created by local government in Central Java. Based on her research, she explains that the local government is unable to solve the problem because in building the system the involvement of the entire elements of government such as the Manpower Service, Immigration, Police, and other entities is needed in resolving about the case (Shalihah, 2021).

As a result, in this journal article, the author would like to investigate the government's efforts to resolve the Indonesian migrant worker case in Malaysia through bilateral agreements. The author believes this research will be able to answer how to resolve the migrant worker issue as well as how to protect the migrant issue in the context of government as the actor.

As protection mechanism for migrant workers, the governments of Indonesia and Malaysia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on April 1, 2022, to replace a similar agreement that had expired in 2016 (Rahman, 2022). The MoU signed at the Ministry of Manpower's office in Jakarta establishes a single-channel mechanism for all workers placement, monitoring, and return processes in Malaysia. In addition, the MoU highlighted a number of important points in nominal terms, including the salaries for the workers, which set the minimum wage for PMI at 1,500 ringgits and the minimum income for prospective employers at 7,000 ringgits (Karunia, 2022).

Nonetheless, after the signing of the MoU, Malaysia was deemed to have violated its terms, prompting Indonesia to place a temporary ban on the export of migrant workers to Malaysia. Malaysia's immigration authorities continued to use an online recruitment system for domestic workers that was linked to allegations of human trafficking and forced labor, prompting the imposition of the freeze. The system's continued operation violated an April agreement between Malaysia and Indonesia (Reuters, 2022).

On August 1, 2022, Indonesia agrees to lift its ban on sending migrant workers to Malaysia. This decision follows the resolution of worker rights concerns by Indonesia and Malaysia. After both nations agreed to test a single channel to facilitate the recruitment and entry of Indonesian migrant workers, Indonesia agreed to resume sending workers.

From the perspective of the author, this phenomenon is intriguing to be analyzed. The Indonesian migrant workers case in Malaysia is one of the major bilateral issues that might affect the stability of both nations. Recommitting after the Indonesian government's severe rebuke and pressure does not guarantee the safety and justice of Indonesian migrant workers. Therefore, the author will examine **“How is Indonesian Diplomacy’s Significance in Bilateral Relations with Malaysia on The Case of Migrant Worker Protection?”**

### ***Analytical Framework***

Under the regulation that made by International Labour Organization (ILO), the case of migrant worker can be solved by the state. In point number 10, it is stated that any employee who is reported to have absconded will be detained and may face fines, deportation, or criminal charges. The employer should bear the associated costs, but they are frequently borne by the individual worker and, in some cases, by the government or a foreign embassy. According to the statement, the state bears responsibility

for resolving the issue of its citizens who migrate and work abroad (International Labour Organization, 2014).

The migrant worker case can be resolved through government-to-government diplomacy, also known as track diplomacy, which involves communicating with foreign governments through formal, traditional channels such as written documents, meetings, summits, and diplomatic visits (William F. Ekstrom Library, 2022). In this case, the theory used to resolve the issue is soft power diplomacy.

According to Joseph Nye, soft power diplomacy is a country's ability to structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways that are consistent with its own. This power is derived from resources such as cultural and ideological appeal, as well as the rules and institutions of international regimes (Nye, 1990).

Power is defined as the "ability to do things and control others, to get others to do things they would not otherwise do." There are two types of power: hard power and soft power. Hard power is the use of force and violence to control and force others to obey. Meanwhile, soft power is the ability to appear legitimate in the eyes of others, resulting in less resistance to one's wishes, primarily through the use of three categories: culturally, ideologically, and institutionally (Limes Rivista Italiana Di Geopolitica, 2018).

Damien Horigan added that the use of the law could also be considered as a factor in soft power diplomacy. According to Horigan's theory, a country's law may attract substantive law and even courts from another country (Horigan, 2018). The use of government-created law and treaties can be considered as part of the country's effort to resolve the case.

As a result, from Horigan's perspective, soft power is not only concerned with the indirect action of influencing other parties through the three categories mentioned by Nye, but it can also be done through government participation, in this case, through the creation of treaties or Memorandum of Understanding between Indonesian and Malaysian government.

### ***Research Method***

The author employs qualitative methodology in her investigation of the research. The author conducted the research using primary sources, including a direct interview with the actor who was believed to be involved in this case. The author conducted interviews with governmental actors involved in the case of Indonesian migrant workers, including the Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Malaysia, the Coordinator of Protocol and Consular Affairs, and the Head of Manpower Attache. In addition, the author interviewed an Indonesian migrant worker and a Malaysian employer who has years of experience with Indonesian housemaids.

In conducting the research, the author also referring to mass media as another source of the research because the case itself is a new case that the flow is very dynamic. The timeframe of the analysis is from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, when Indonesia and Malaysia are agreed to sign the Memorandum of Understanding about the Indonesian migrant worker protection, until the end of September 2022, which is the duration of the author's internship program at the Embassy of Indonesia in Kuala Lumpur.

### ***Findings and Results***

Labour shortage is one of Malaysia's most significant challenges in running its economy. In three consecutive years, a worker shortage has prevented Malaysian palm oil companies in maximizing the harvesting during the peak production season, resulting in the rotting of thousands of tonnes of fruits. The

global benchmark crude price of vegetable oil will be affected by the production shortfall of Malaysia, the second largest producer of palm oil (Chu, 2022).

From the middle of 2021, businesses attempted to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic by pleading with Putrajaya to allow foreign workers to return to Malaysia to assist businesses in their recovery. The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) requested the same, noting that the situation has an impact on the manufacturing, construction, plantation, and service sectors. MEF cited the plantation industry as an example, claiming a 40,000-worker shortage and an unrecoverable RM10 billion loss in 2020 (Surendran, 2021).

The illustration above depicts how Malaysia's economy is dependent on labour to run production in order to meet economic goals. The labour shortage does not imply that Malaysia is fully employed; in fact, Malaysia's unemployment rate is 3.7 percent per July 2022 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). This occurred because Malaysia has had full employment and a high level of education since 1990, making them unwilling to work in low-skill jobs. As a result, the Malaysian economy relies heavily on migrant workers to fill low-skilled positions, mainly from Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines, and Indonesia, the leading countries that provide foreign workers, with an estimated 2.7 million workers.

With 208.54 million working age population and a 5.83 percent unemployment rate in 2022 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022), Indonesia may see Malaysia's labor shortage as an opportunity to improve its economic situation by working in Malaysia, even for a low-skilled position. People in the lower classes, who are mostly illiterate and have fewer job opportunities, make most of the decisions.

The author interviewed Kak Toi, one of the Indonesian migrant workers, who work at a laundry shop in Kuala Lumpur about the reason to work abroad. She explained that her decision to work in Malaysia was motivated by economic considerations. She aspires to a better life not only for herself but also for her family in Indonesia. Another factor to consider is that Indonesia and Malaysia do not have a significant language gap, which makes communicating easier (Toi, 2022).

However, this does not imply that working in Malaysia is the best option. Kak Toi explained that she is working illegally because she lacks the necessary legal documents to work in Malaysia. As a result, she is unable to move freely because she is afraid of being apprehended by Malaysian immigration. Fortunately, Kak Toi's employer is supportive, and he has done everything possible to protect the worker from Malaysian immigration. Although it appears to be safe, this cannot be justified. Kak Toi does not have the freedom to engage in activities and is constantly under the shadow of fear.

This is contrary to the basic human rights stated in Article 1 of the Migrant Worker Convention No. 143, which refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in the article 1; all peoples have the right to self-determination. They have the right to freely determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social, and cultural development as a result of this right (General Assembly resolution 45/158, 2003).

Aside from Kak Toi's cases, there have been numerous severe cases involving Indonesian migrant workers. In 2020, there was a case involving a worker with the initials DB who worked for nine years but was not paid by the employer. The worst part is that DB had to work 15 hours per day without a day off and had been subjected to physical violence to the point where her hearing was impaired.

In November 2020, DB reported her employer to The Kelantan Manpower Office and the police. The case was brought to court on charges of human trafficking with forced labor and abuse. However, the Kota Bharu Court of Kelantan State acquitted the employer because, according to the lawyer, DB's employer once proposed an out-of-court settlement by paying unpaid wages. The DB and the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, however, rejected the offer because it was far below the salary demands that the employer should pay (Cahyani, 2022).

According to Erga Grenaldi, the Head of Manpower Attache of the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, the above-mentioned case occurred because Malaysia lacks a significant migrant worker law. As a result, the law used in resolving cases involving migrant workers in Malaysia is local law, which almost never results in a win-win solution, particularly for Indonesian migrant workers (Grenaldi, 2022). He also stated that legal standing is required in order to resolve the cases of Indonesian migrant workers.

Considering the International Labour Conference, Geneva, June 1999, in the section on International Migration and Development, states that "governments are urged to exchange information regarding their international migration policies and the regulations governing the admission and stay of migrants in their territories" (International Labour Organization, 1999). According to the specific regulations, a bilateral agreement is required to resolve the migrant worker case in Malaysia. Therefore, Indonesia created the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to protect Indonesian migrant workers signed on April 1st, 2022.

Rijal Al Huda, Head of Protocol and Consular, explained that Indonesia's bilateral agreement with Malaysia has expired since 2016. With this expiration agreement, Indonesia prohibit in sending workers to Malaysia, particularly housemaid. This means that sending Indonesian workers to Malaysia is illegal from 2016 until the signing of the MoU on Indonesian Migration Worker Protection. Given the high demand for foreign workers in Malaysia, Indonesia is considering establishing a new agreement on Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia. However, due to technical issues and the pandemic situation, the bilateral agreement was not put into effect until 2022 (Huda, 2022).

Rijal added that, Indonesia was hastening the creation of Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) for worker protection due to the insecurity of Malaysian immigration policy. At first, Malaysian government decided to impose a moratorium on migrant workers sent to Malaysia during the pandemic, except for those who had previously worked in Malaysia, due to health protocol regulations in a pandemic situation. On the other hand, Malaysian immigration issued thousands of working permits to new and inexperienced foreign workers in Malaysia, including in Indonesia.

The existence of work permits created by Malaysian Immigration runs counter to Indonesian government policies. Aside from that, the use of Maid Online System (MOS) as the recruitment procedure Indonesian government difficult to collect data on migrant workers in Malaysia because Indonesia does not have the data access. In addition, all the workers who came to Malaysia with MOS were using tourist visa.

Without the ability of data access, many Indonesian worker issues have arisen such as inadequate wages and working hours, violence, and even sexual harassment, due to the absence of a law that can protect migrant workers in Malaysia. As a result, the Indonesian government must expend significant effort and incur significant state costs in order to handle each of the existing cases, because the vast majority of workers with problems do not have enough money to solve their problems, said Rijal during the interview.

In the MoU that was signed on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, Indonesia created a new procedure of sending workers to Malaysia. There are several important points inside of the MoU that transformed the law of Indonesian migrant worker in Malaysia. This includes: (1) the change of worker recruitment mechanism from the use of Maid Online System to One Channel System; (2) the upholding of basic human rights by the Malaysian government, particularly the violence case as the biggest problem involving Indonesian migrant workers, and; (3) the increase of wages from RM 800-900 to RM 1,500 (Indonesian Government, 2022).

The regulation under the MoU was designed to incriminate Malaysia because domestic workers have historically been unfairly treated. Furthermore, Hermono, the Indonesian Ambassador in Kuala Lumpur, stated that the Indonesian government's future goal is to create 'zero housemaids,' so that the

image of Indonesia is no longer associated with blue-collar workers, particularly housemaids (Hermono, 2022). That is why, under the Memorandum of Understanding on Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection, the Indonesian government has set a high price so that Malaysia will reject the import of workers from Indonesia. Malaysia, on the other hand, agrees and is willing to follow the Indonesian government's regulations.

The MoU was signed in Jakarta on Friday, April 1, 2022, by Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, Ida Fauziah, and Minister of Human Resource of Malaysia, M. Saravanan, in the presence of President Joko Widodo and Prime Minister of Malaysia, Ismail Sabri bin Yaakob (Sekretariat Negara, 2022). This MoU appears to have high political significance because both countries have interests in which Malaysia requires migrant workers and Indonesia requires worker protection. Accordingly, the Indonesian government hopes that the regulations under the MoU on migrant worker protection will be implemented and the recruitment mechanism process will be shifted to One Channel System.

After three months, the Indonesian government, specifically the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, realized that the Malaysian government was not implementing the regulations agreed upon in the MoU. With a firm attitude, Hermono immediately imposed a moratorium on sending Indonesian workers to Malaysia. The Indonesian ambassador in Kuala Lumpur expressed disappointment with Malaysia, which appears to have underestimated the MoU attended by two heads of state.

Malaysia was taken aback by Indonesia's decision to impose a moratorium. Malaysia's Minister of Home Affairs, Hamzah Zainuddin, explained that the country is in the process of transitioning from the Maid Online System to the One Channel System, as agreed in the signed Memorandum of Understanding (Firdaus & Mustafa, 2022). Following Indonesia's moratorium, the Malaysian government attempted to use the One Channel System mechanism via *sipermit.id* as the website that connected both the Indonesian and Malaysian governments in order to access the data.

The Indonesian government lifted the ban on sending workers to Malaysia on August 1, 2022. According to the findings of the author's interviews with the Head of Manpower, the Coordinator of Protocol and Consular, and the Ambassador of Indonesia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, all of them agree that the Malaysian government has made no significant changes in how it treats Indonesian migrant workers. It takes at least a year to evaluate; however, Indonesia now has the power and legal standing to investigate any cases that may occur as a result of the MoU's regulations and procedures for resolving them.

On September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, there was a case about Zailis, an Indonesian migrant worker, who experienced torture and also did not receive a salary since the first time working, which totaled 32,000 Malaysian Ringgit (approximately Rp 109 million). Zailis had burns and scalded wounds that were never treated and were left to heal on their own (Makdori, 2022). According to the information from Indonesian Embassy, Zailis was losing a significant amount of weight, approximately 30 kilograms. The most unfortunate aspect is that Zailis's employer is a police officer.

In the case of Zailis, the Indonesian government is putting the Malaysian government to the test to see if they are truly implementing the MoU that was signed (Voi.id, 2022). In the end of the case, a verdict was given under Section 13 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007, read in conjunction with Section 34 of the Penal Code, and Zailis' employer faces life imprisonment, not less than five years in prison, and whipping if convicted (The Star Malaysia, 2022).

During an interview with the Indonesian Ambassador in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Hermono stated that the Zailis' case was the fastest migrant labor case ever processed in history, taking only eight

days to go to court. As a result, the MoU of migration workers signed on April 1st, 2022 will have a significant impact in resolving the problems of Indonesian workers in Malaysia.

The author was also able to interview a Malaysian family who had been hiring Indonesian workers for many years. Based on the interview, the author discovered that the labour agency is another crucial actor who has become an intruder. The employer said that they would have to pay a lot of money to the agency in order to hire the maid. However, the maids they hired were largely incompetent, and various paperwork was forged, most notably the workers' actual age. The employer also stated that they must pay the high cost of transportation fees. However, it turns out that the employer discovered that the worker had entered Malaysia illegally, implying that the agency committed fraud in this case (Malaysian Family (Anonymous), 2022).

Based on the information given by the employer, we can presume that the labor agency is one of the primary causes of the migrant worker issue in Malaysia. The employer paid a high fee to the agent, but the quality obtained falls short of expectations. Employers' disappointment at having to pay a high price for laborers causes them to take inappropriate actions such as not paying salaries or even committing violence. Therefore, the Indonesian and Malaysian governments need to be concerned about this particular issue.

In the case of Indonesian migrant worker protection, it is clear that Indonesia wields significant power in bilateral relations, particularly with Malaysia. Aside from the Indonesian government's ability to conduct diplomacy, the central government must be constitutionally defensible. In this case, the Ministry of Manpower must develop an immediate grand strategy for dealing with Indonesian migrant worker issues so that not only Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia are protected, but also those in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Middle East.

Hermono explained that the Indonesian government has not imposed strict regulations to prevent illegal workers from working abroad. As a result, the number of illegal workers continues to rise, and injustice toward migrant workers persists. The Memorandum of Understanding on Migrant Protection in Malaysia will have no effect if illegal workers continue to exist.

Therefore, the central government must conduct and facilitate the basic protection and regulation so that there are no more illegal workers. Hermono explained that one of the root causes of illegal migrant workers is the Indonesian government's leniency toward migrant workers who want to work abroad due to corruption in the chain of authority. In the end of the interview, Hermono informed the author that he had recently been invited by the Indonesian House of Representatives to have a discussion with several institutions regarding migrant worker cases in order to create the protection of Indonesian workers so that Indonesian workers are treated well and the goal of Indonesia Zero Housemaid in the world is realized.

## **Conclusion**

The presence of migrant workers is essential to the global economy, particularly in an aging society with a scarcity of human resources in the region. However, issues with migrant workers' technical procedures are unavoidable. Migrant workers, specifically Indonesian migrant workers, face numerous injustices and even violence. According to the International Labour Organization's Labour Conference in June 1999, the government must create a bilateral agreement to resolve the migrant worker case in Malaysia.

Indonesia made an effort by drafting a Memorandum of Understanding on migrant worker protection, which was signed by both Indonesian and Malaysian labor ministers and witnessed by President Joko Widodo and Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob. Nonetheless, Malaysia did not



implement the mechanism outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding. As a result, as a decisive step, the Indonesian government implemented the moratorium by not sending workers to Malaysia, as well as Indonesian diplomacy to Malaysia, so that they submit and do as agreed.

The Indonesian government lifted the ban on sending workers to Malaysia on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. According to three diplomats at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, there has been no significant improvement in migrant protection as of the end of September. However, the signed mechanism was carried out, albeit in a rudimentary manner, and Indonesia now has legitimacy and power in resolving future problems that migrant workers may face as a result of the Memorandum of Understanding.

In this regard, Memorandum of Understanding play as the law that used as the instrument of soft power diplomacy based on the statement of Horigan. Based on this research we could see that soft power diplomacy is not merely focus on the indirect activities that done culturally, ideologically, and institutionally, but government also can conduct by using legal instrument. Therefore, in succeeding the diplomacy of a country both government and non-government actors need to work together.

On the research that conducted, Indonesia's migrant protection effort through diplomacy can be considered successful. Malaysia has successfully accepted and compiled Indonesia's requests, one of which is Malaysia accepting the request for a salary increase. The Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, stated that in order to solve the case of migrant workers, the central government, particularly the Minister of Manpower, should have a grand strategy and regulation to solve the migrant worker case, not only in Malaysia but also in other regions. One of the most important things that the Indonesian Minister of Manpower should do is reduce, if not eliminate, the number of Indonesian illegal workers in the world.

With the Indonesian government's success in managing migrant workers in Malaysia, the author hopes that the regulations and sanctions can be implemented in other countries that receive a large number of Indonesian migrant workers, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Middle East. Furthermore, the increase of minimum wage should be balanced with the skills of Indonesian workers, one of which is by providing proper training not only as a good maid, but also as a professional individual.

Aside from that, the government must closely monitor and impose strict regulations on labor agencies in order to prevent inappropriate incidents from occurring to Indonesian workers working abroad. The most important regulations to be concerned with are the legal registration requirements document and the fees that must be paid by both the employer and the worker as the service user.

This research is expected to serve as a basis for Indonesian migrant worker protection efforts by utilizing the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Indonesia and Malaysia on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Due to the timeframe used by the author being unable to see the big picture, further research is required to observe both parties in carrying out the protection efforts.

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