



NEPAL'S HUMAN TRAFFICKING ROUTES: MAPPING DESTINATIONS FOR MIGRANT LABOUR USING COLLECTIVE DATA

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TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING. TOGETHER.

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Thank you and congratulations to Aaprabasi Mahila Kamdar Samuha Nepal (AMKAS) and Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee (PNCC) for their contributions and collaboration on this report.

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About the contributors

Aaprabasi Mahila Kamdar Samuha Nepal (AMKAS)

Aaprabasi Mahila Kamdar Samuha Nepal (AMKAS), previously known as Pourakhi (2003-2016) was established in 2016 with a vision to protect female returnee migrant workers through capacity building incentives (policy advocacy, knowledge creation, awareness generation, vocational training, employment security services etc.). AMKAS is unique in the way that it was established by returnee women migrant workers to protect and unite other women within this niche, with a vision to establish a strong network where women can support each other and organize so as to strengthen the collective bargaining power of all women migrant workers on various issues at the local, provincial, national, regional and global level. In close partnership with the government and other organizations, AMKAS has tirelessly worked to advocate for women's rights, with the overarching goal of creating a safe space for women migrant workers to discuss, share and learn from each other's life experiences. It is their belief that women are unfairly discriminated against by both labor law and societal norms as labor migration and the policies surrounding them are rooted in patriarchy. Labor trafficking therefore gets highlighted as being a male problem, and women migrant workers get sidelined, making them more vulnerable to exploitation. AMKAS therefore has made it their mission to design and implement innovative programs to widen the scope of awareness generation on ethical recruitment practices, migrant rights and safety standards, with the hope it will reduce the risks and vulnerabilities amongst women who plan for both intra and inter-country labor migration. Informed choices will also help minimize trafficking and promoting safer migration. A large part of AMKAS's work also lies in strengthening livelihood of survivors. Aiding in proper reintegration back into society and the workplace helps reduce the social stigma around women and trafficking.

Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee (PNCC)

Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee (PNCC) was established in 2009 by a group of returnee migrant workers who upon return recognized the need to provide support to fellow workers who faced risk of human trafficking and labor violations especially in Gulf countries, Malaysia and Middle East Countries. What PNCC recognized was that the gap in policies and the lack of support provided by the government for migrant workers both leaving and returning were the root causes for the expansive labor violation and labor trafficking problem that Nepal was facing. With this in mind PNCC has dedicated its work to cater to male migrant workers – to ensure their rights are protected, and needs are serviced. PNCC is considered a pioneer and leader within Nepal's migration and labor trafficking landscape. They work with a multitude of stakeholders both in Nepal and in destination countries, using their large network to provide rescue and repatriation services. Their close ties with Nepali Missions abroad have allowed for increased success in these efforts. PNCC's mission is to ensure that the rights of Nepali migrant workers are respected, guaranteed and promoted and aims to create an environment where Nepalese migrant workers can entertain their rights, by advocating, generating knowledge, sharing information, building partnerships and capacitating various response groups at national, regional and international levels. PNCC is a membership-based organization where membership is renewed on a yearly basis. Both returnee migrants and those with valid visas in the destination countries are eligible for membership once they complete and pass the assessment phase. PNCC's network expands over 39 districts, where Migrant Resource Centers have been set up by the government of Nepal with the technical support of HELVETAS. Internationally, they have outreach centers in Qatar, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

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INTRODUCTION

Nepal has a longstanding history of outward migration, predominantly resulting from a lack of economic opportunities at home. Migration for foreign employment, therefore, has become a lucrative industry, with families becoming heavily dependent on foreign employment as their major source of income.

In the last 10 years, over 3.8 million labor permits have been issued, with each fiscal year bringing in up to USD 7 million in remittances. This makes up over one quarter of the national GDP - one of the highest proportions in the world. Remittance has become the major avenue contributing to economic growth and with-it cementing Nepal's image as being one of the biggest source countries for foreign migration, with the biggest destination countries being Malaysia and the Gulf.

Nepali migrant workers face both push and pull factors, as they not only make major economic contributions at home but also fill labor market gaps in destination countries. This high demand for their labor means workers often take up precarious jobs in destination countries exposing them to vulnerabilities and abuse. As many of the jobs are in industries that are harder to regulate, workers are subjugated to poor working conditions, wage theft, salary deductions, and various other labor rights violations. Furthermore, as many migrant workers are unskilled, they rely on recruitment agencies, more commonly known as manpower agencies and intermediaries that often charge exorbitant fees, creating situations of debt bondage. This means many workers face constant uncertainty starting from the recruitment process, and into their employment experience.

Nepal's political and socioeconomic situation also contributes to the general exodus of the worker population. While institutional structures and labor policies exist, and the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security claims to safeguard the rights of migrants, enforcement is weak. Furthermore, as the border between India and Nepal spans 1770km, many border areas remain

unmanned, making the journey from Nepal into India easy, and creating further avenues for exploitation, especially women working in the informal sector. Harsh immigration policies, in particular the ban on women under a certain age to seek domestic foreign employment, exposes them to higher risks of exploitation, as they must rely on informal channels to access employment. It also means that many women do not have access to care and support services in the fear of being caught, perpetuating their situation of vulnerability. For most male labor migrants, who make up the majority of the labor migrant population, there is a general reluctance to participate in anti-trafficking efforts. This stems from the patriarchal values and nuances that exist in Nepali culture, making it shameful for men to admit victimization, or even speak on the matter. This means a majority of labor violations go undocumented. Overall, the combination of various factors included but not limited to the ones mentioned already significantly impacts human rights work in Nepal and makes migration a very difficult subject to tackle, especially when it comes to protecting workers.

Every year thousands of complaints are registered by the Department of Foreign Employment, with workers seeking compensation and prosecution. This shows that there is a severe lack of oversight on the part of the government to curb bad recruitment practices. This perhaps is stemming from the problem that the government cannot afford remittances to decline, as this majorly impacts the GDP of Nepal. Unfortunately, this means that migrants from Nepal will continue to face exploitation unless better systems are put in place to protect workers' rights, both domestically and in destination countries. There is also a dire need to collaborate and fund civil society associations which provide direct services to victims, and those vulnerable to trafficking resulting from migration. Nepal. Implementing improved case data record-keeping, the CSOs have been working to highlight stories and provide an evidence base of issues faced by Nepali migrant workers abroad, so as to use them for policy advocacy.

There is still a lot of room for improvement in Nepal, as most of the data collection, formal reintegration, and repatriation processes that are managed by the government are antiquated, making collaboration between CSO's and the government very complicated. This also means that the data available is not good enough to identify trends in labor migration and therefore inform policy. As complaints are often only registered after a worker returns, it makes it very difficult to gather evidence and prosecute foreign companies. While many CSO's work to improve care provision, and advocate for improved rights, they face funding shortages and severe backlash as there is general reluctance to accept the gravity of the human trafficking problem in Nepal.

Freedom Collaborative aims to work with CSO's around the world to share data and knowledge on human trafficking and exploitation as a means to expose routes taken and conditions faced by migrant workers. This report has been made possible through the contributions of two CSO's in Nepal and sheds light on the migrant journey with

Nepal as a source country. An outstanding 498 routes were submitted capturing a wide range of destinations traveled by Nepali migrant workers in pursuit of jobs in the hospitality/food/entertainment and manufacturing sectors.

The participating CSOs believe in the power of methodical research and publication as a tool to build capacity within their organizations, but more importantly to advocate for truthful dissemination of information of the current state of labor trafficking in Nepal. Implementing improved case data record-keeping, the CSOs have been working to highlight stories and provide an evidence base of issues faced by Nepali migrant workers abroad, so as to use them for policy advocacy.

We are grateful to AMKAS and PNCC for their contributions and their commitment to building larger data sets on migration in both Nepal and the region. We hope that this report is a foundation for further research on migration and routes in Nepal and a means to make more informed decisions by stakeholders.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Data sources

All of the participating organizations provide a range of services to migrant workers and survivors of trafficking in person. They provide shelter (safe) houses, provide reintegration support, and work closely with reintegrated returnee migrant workers for prevention campaigns across districts of Nepal.

All the data submissions are based on cases that the CSOs have worked on directly.

Data collection

The participating CSOs submitted their data through Freedom Collaborative's Victim Journey data collection tool. The submissions included the following data points:

- City and country of origin (origin)
- Transit points
- City and country of final destination/exploitation (destination)
- Mode of transportation used
- Type of exploitation
- Industry of exploitation
- Methods of Force and Coercion

In addition, the CSOs could submit information on recruitment and additional context information for each of the submissions made.

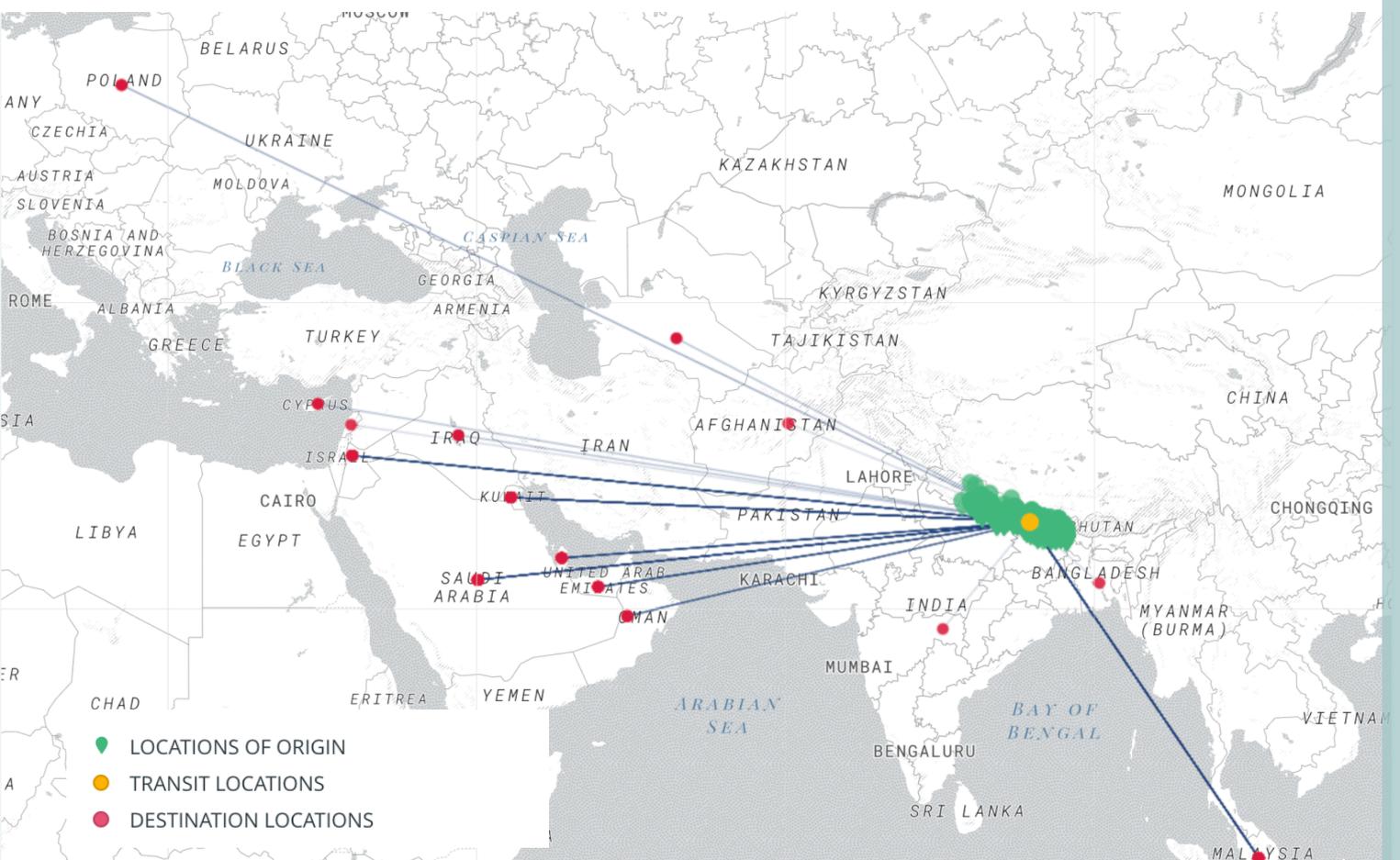
DATA SUMMARY

In total, the participating organizations submitted 498 routes that relate to Nepal as a country of origin. The Nepali CSOs have recorded cases of migrants traveling to a wide range of countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cyprus, India, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Oman, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, and the United Arab Emirates.

The majority of submissions included one transit location - Kathmandu Airport - from where migrants fly to their various destinations, however, no city-level information for the destinations.

The visualization below shows all the locations of origin (green), transit points (orange) and final destinations (red).

The following chapters provide an overview of the collected data, in particular highlighting the many locations of origin within Nepal. We also provide an overview of the industries of exploitation in each location, and we take a look at the methods of force and coercion experienced by Nepali migrants.



Map 1: Overview of all submitted routes and locations

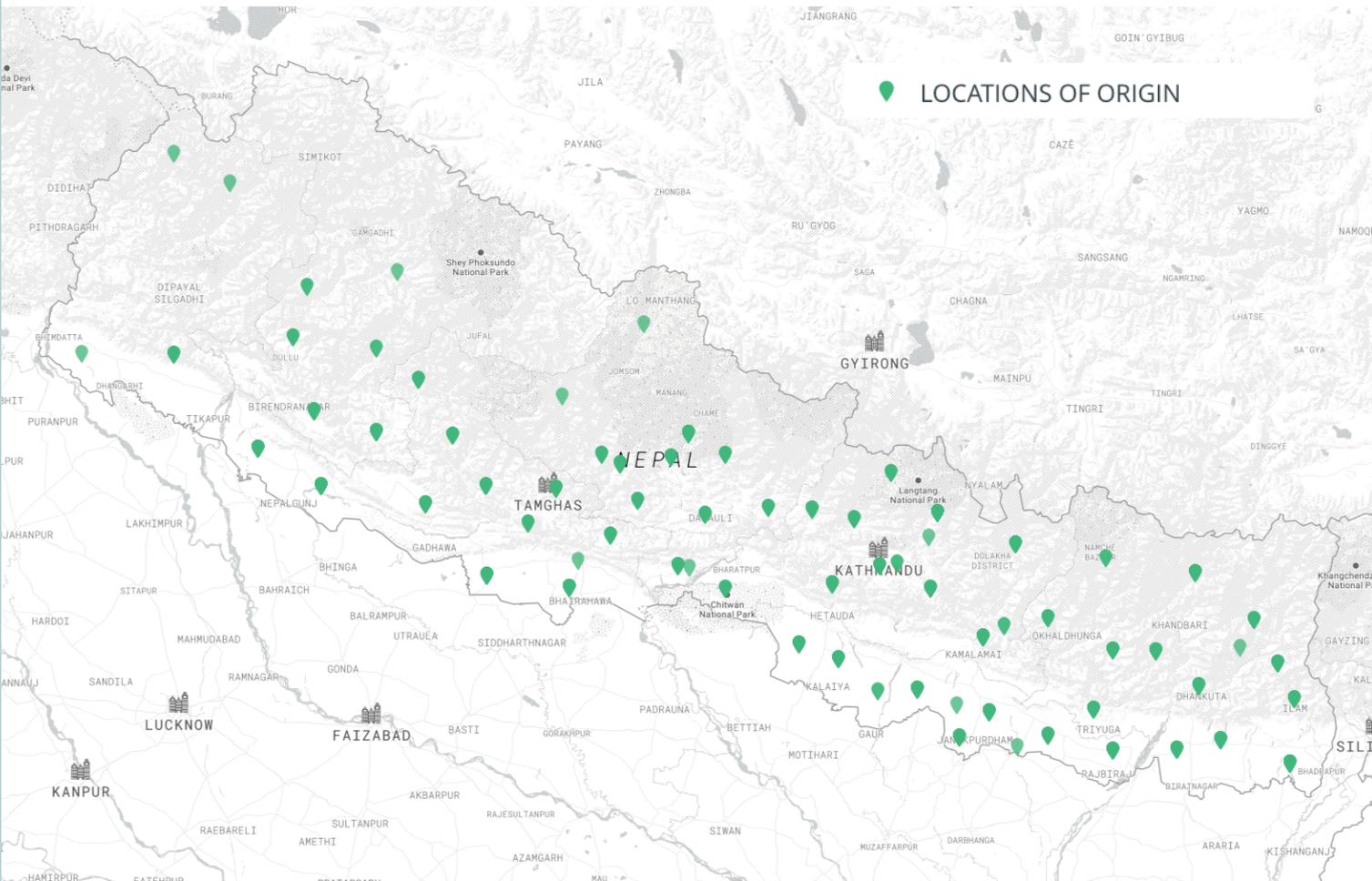
ORIGINS WITHIN NEPAL

Migrants from Nepal make their way to Kathmandu Airport from many districts and points of origin within Nepal. In total, the CSOs submitted routes from 73 Nepali cities/districts as origins of migrants traveling abroad.

These include Morang (32), Jhapa (29), Sindhupalchowk (17), Sunsari (16), Dhanusha (15), Nawalparasi (15), Rupandehi (14), Sindhuli (13), Salyan (12), Makawanpur (11), Kapilvastu (11), Dang (11), Banke (11), Saptari (11), Bardiya (10), Mahottari (10), Sarlahi (10), Dhading (9), Surkhet (9), Bhojpur (9), Siraha (8), Parbat (8), Udayapur (7), Parsa (7), Palpa (6), Bara (6), Sankhuwasabha (6),

Khotang (6), Dhankuta (6), Panchthar (5), Okhaldhunga (5), Gorkha (5), Nuwakot (5), Chitwan (5), Kailali (5), Dolakha (5), Pyuthan (5), Rukum (5), Rolpa (5), Arghakhanchi (4), Tanahu (4), Kavre (4), Kaski (4), Syangja (4), Lalitpur (4), Taplejung (4), Ilam (4), Baglung (4), Gulmi (4), Dailekh (3), Lamjung (3), Rasuwa (3), Ramechhap (2), Bhaktapur (2), Solukhumbu (2), Kavrepalanchowk (2), Rautahat (2), Jajarkot (2), and Kalikot (2).

Bajhang, Butwal, Darchula, Ilam, Jumla, Kanchanpur, Kawasoti, Mustang, Myagdi, Nawalpur, Nuwakot, Paanchthar, and Tethrathum were each mentioned once in the dataset.

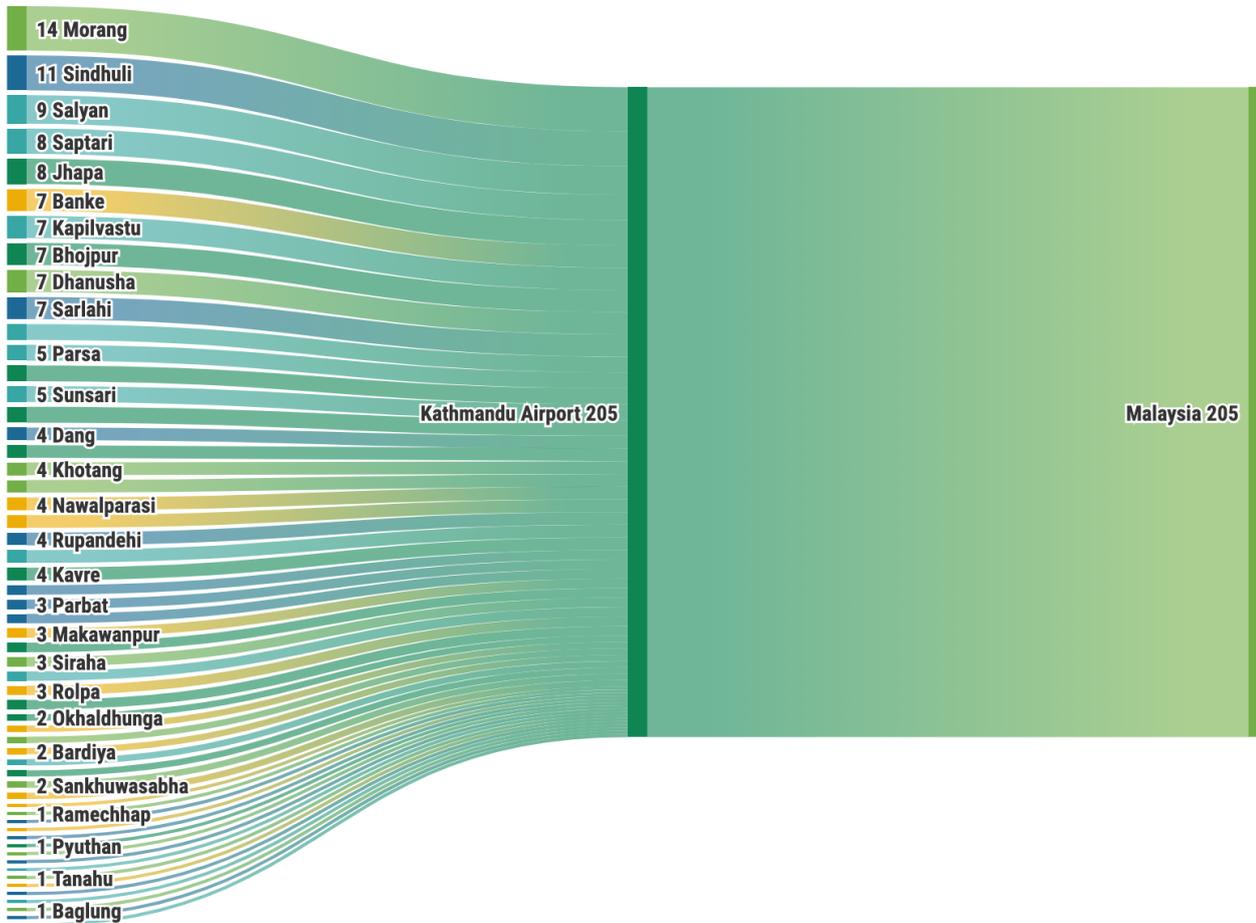


Map 2: All locations of origin

NEPAL TO MALAYSIA

The most common destination for Nepali migrants is Malaysia. 211 routes in the dataset relate to Malaysia as a destination, where migrants from many provinces in Nepal travel via plane from Kathmandu Airport.

Nepali migrants work primarily in Malaysia's hospitality/food Service/entertainment (93 submissions), manufacturing (37 submissions), and construction industries (17 submissions). All the cases in the data set were categorized as labor exploitation, and coercion, fraud and excessive working hours were reported as the most common violations.

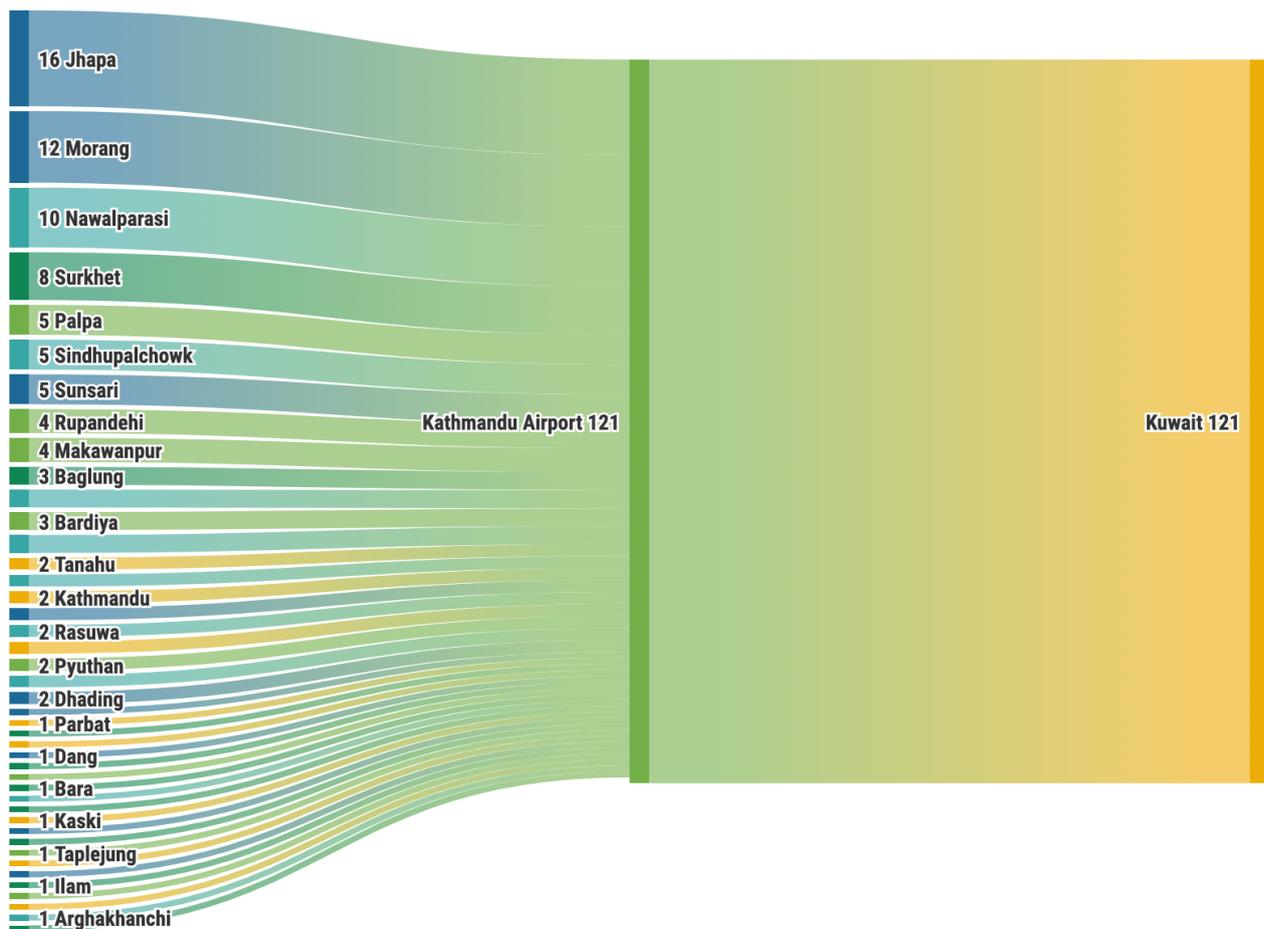


Visualization 1: All submitted routes relating to Malaysia as destination country

NEPAL TO KUWAIT

The second most submissions in the data set referred to Kuwait as a destination for Nepali migrants. 122 submissions were made relating to the corridor Nepal-Kuwait, again highlighting how common it is for Nepalis from various provinces to travel abroad for employment.

In Kuwait, Nepali migrants work primarily as domestic workers (98 submissions). A smaller number of workers was employed in manufacturing (15), healthcare/beauty (4), hospitality (2), and retail/sales (2). The cases have been recorded as labor exploitation, with excessive working hours, withholding of wages, and psychological abuse as the most common experiences by Nepali migrant workers in Kuwait.

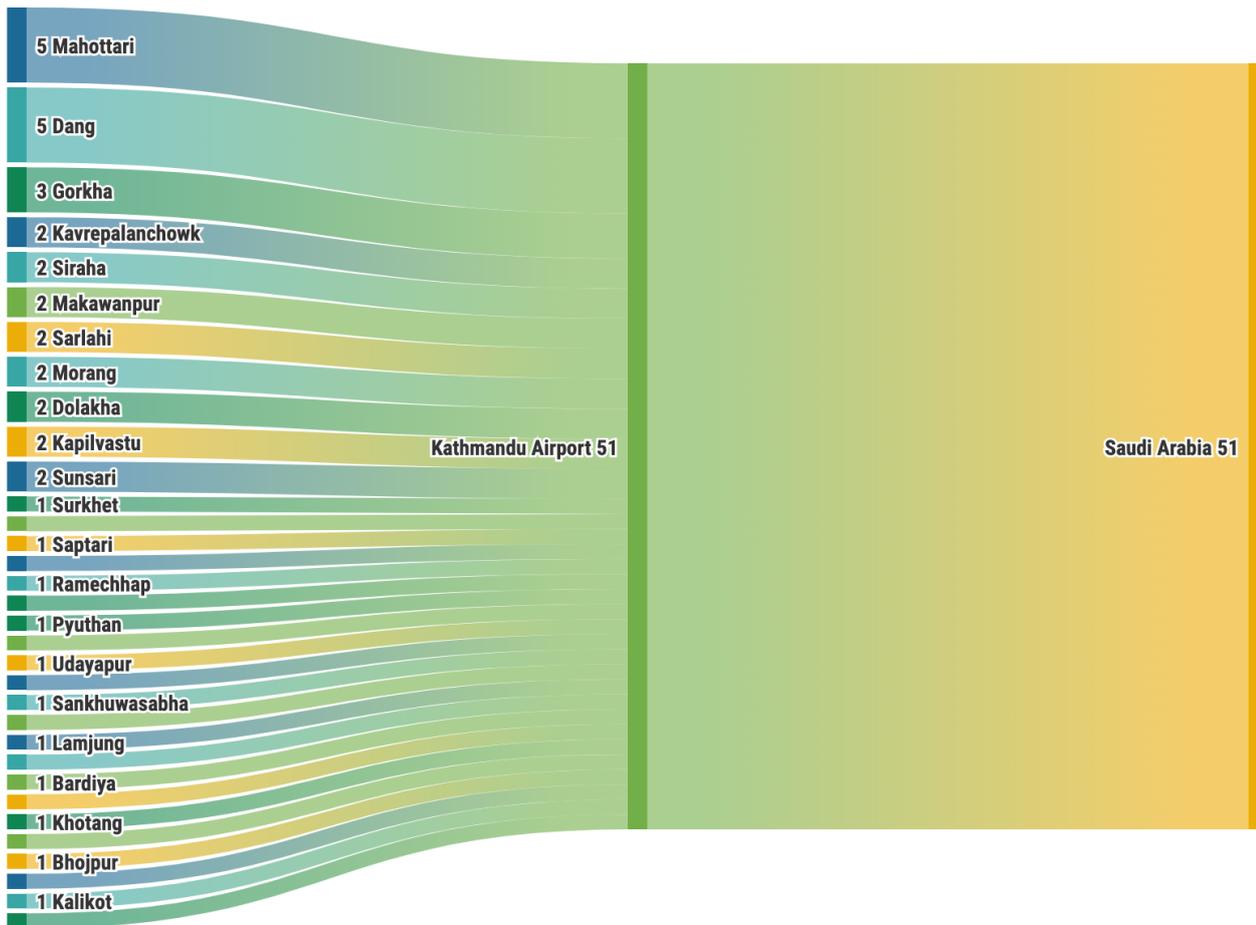


Visualization 2: All submitted routes relating to Kuwait as destination country

NEPAL TO SAUDI ARABIA

51 submissions within the dataset refer to Saudi Arabia as the destination country for migrants from 33 districts in Nepal. In Saudi Arabia, migrants work in various industries including services, domestic work, hospitality, construction and manufacturing.

Migrant workers reported that they have experienced a range of abuses, with excessive working hours, psychological abuse, and withholding of identity and travel documents being the most commonly reported abuses in the data set.

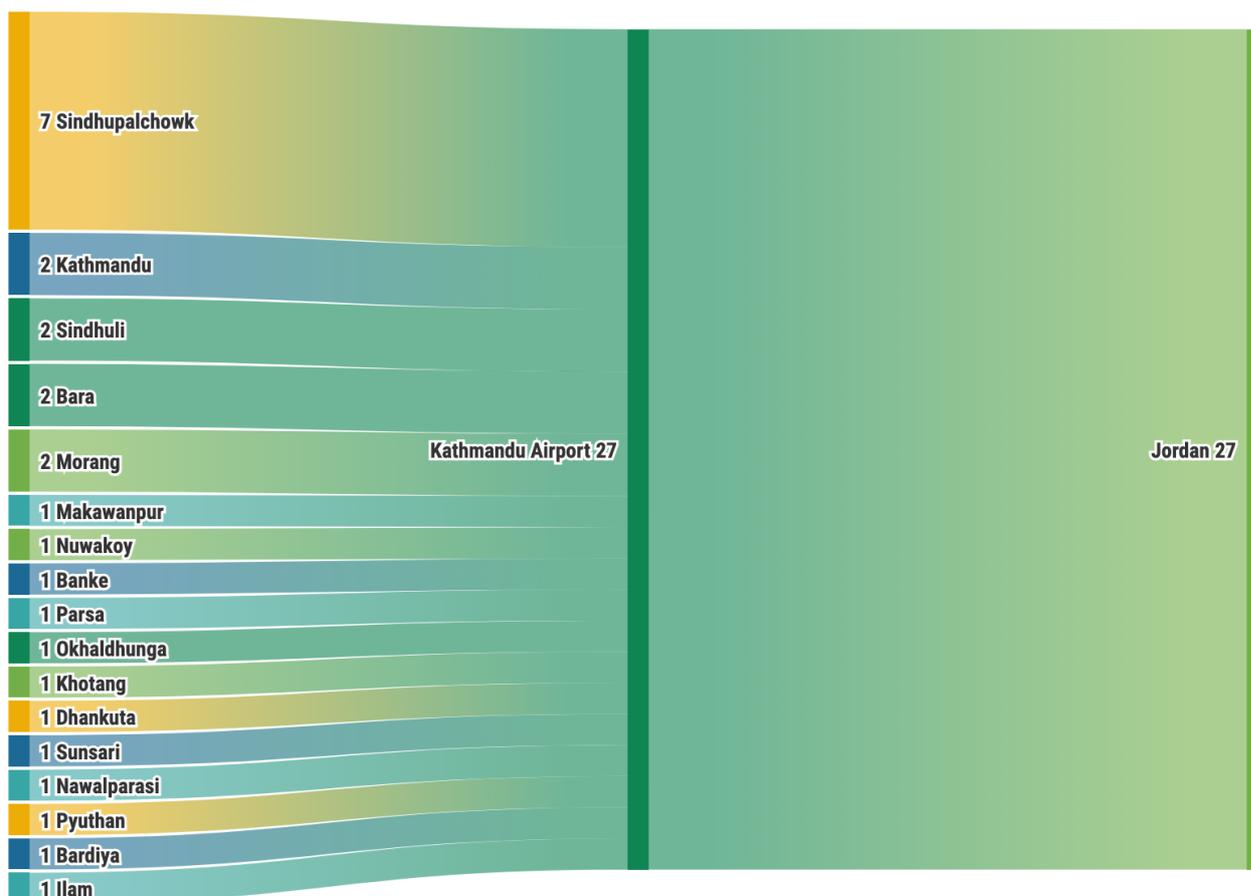


Visualization 3: All submitted routes relating to Saudi Arabia as destination country

NEPAL TO JORDAN

27 submissions referencing 17 routes - - from 17 districts in Nepal - to Jordan were made by the contributing organizations. 25 submissions in the data set refer to Nepali migrants working as domestic workers in Jordan, and 2 submissions listed manufacturing as the relevant industry.

Excessive working hours, as well as denied freedom of movement, psychological and physical abuse, and denied food/drinks are all common abuses experienced by Nepali migrant workers in Jordan.

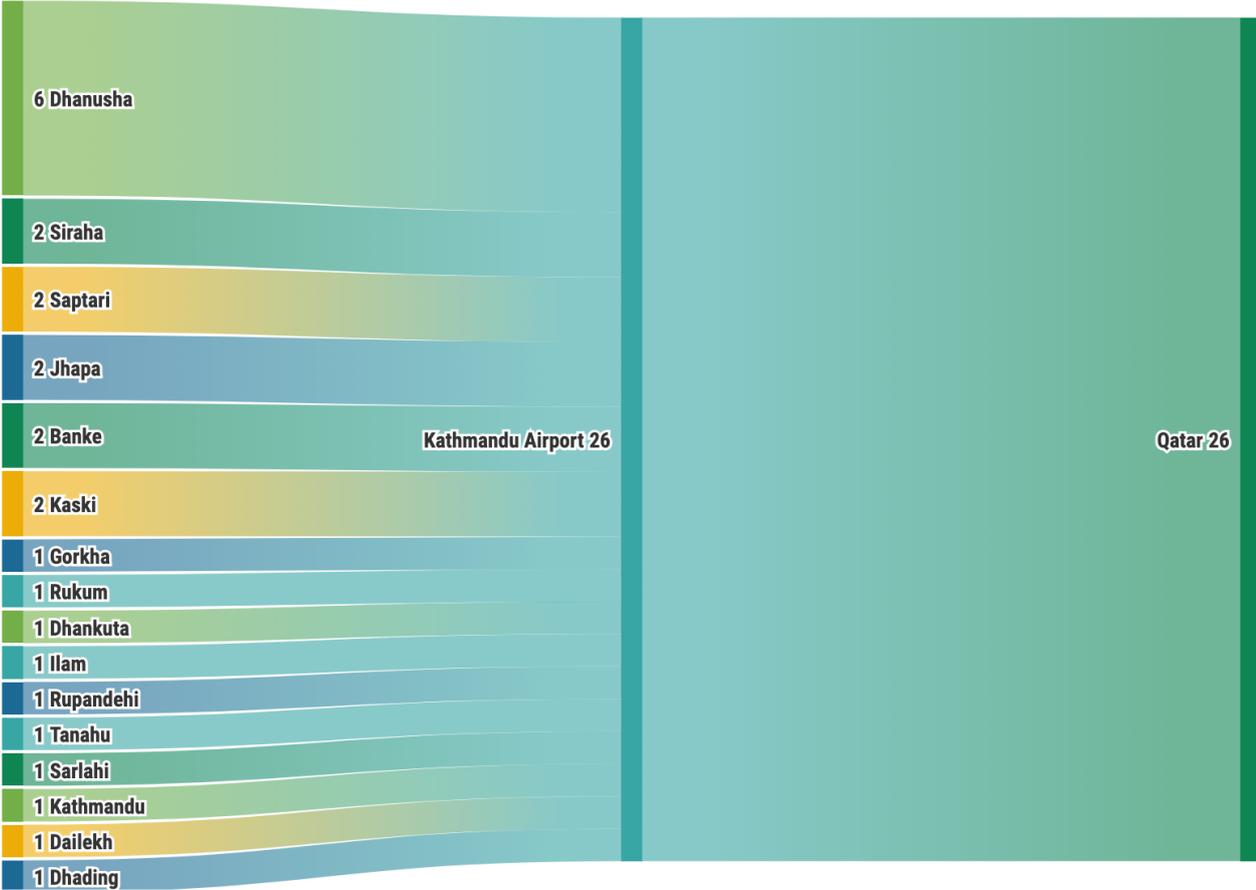


Visualization 4: All submitted routes relating to Jordan as destination country

NEPAL TO QATAR

22 routes in the dataset reference Qatar as the final destination for Nepali migrants. These work primarily in the hospitality and foodservice and construction industries in Qatar.

Withholding of wages and excessive working hours are the most common types of labor violations experienced by the migrant workers that the contributing CSOs encountered and cared for.



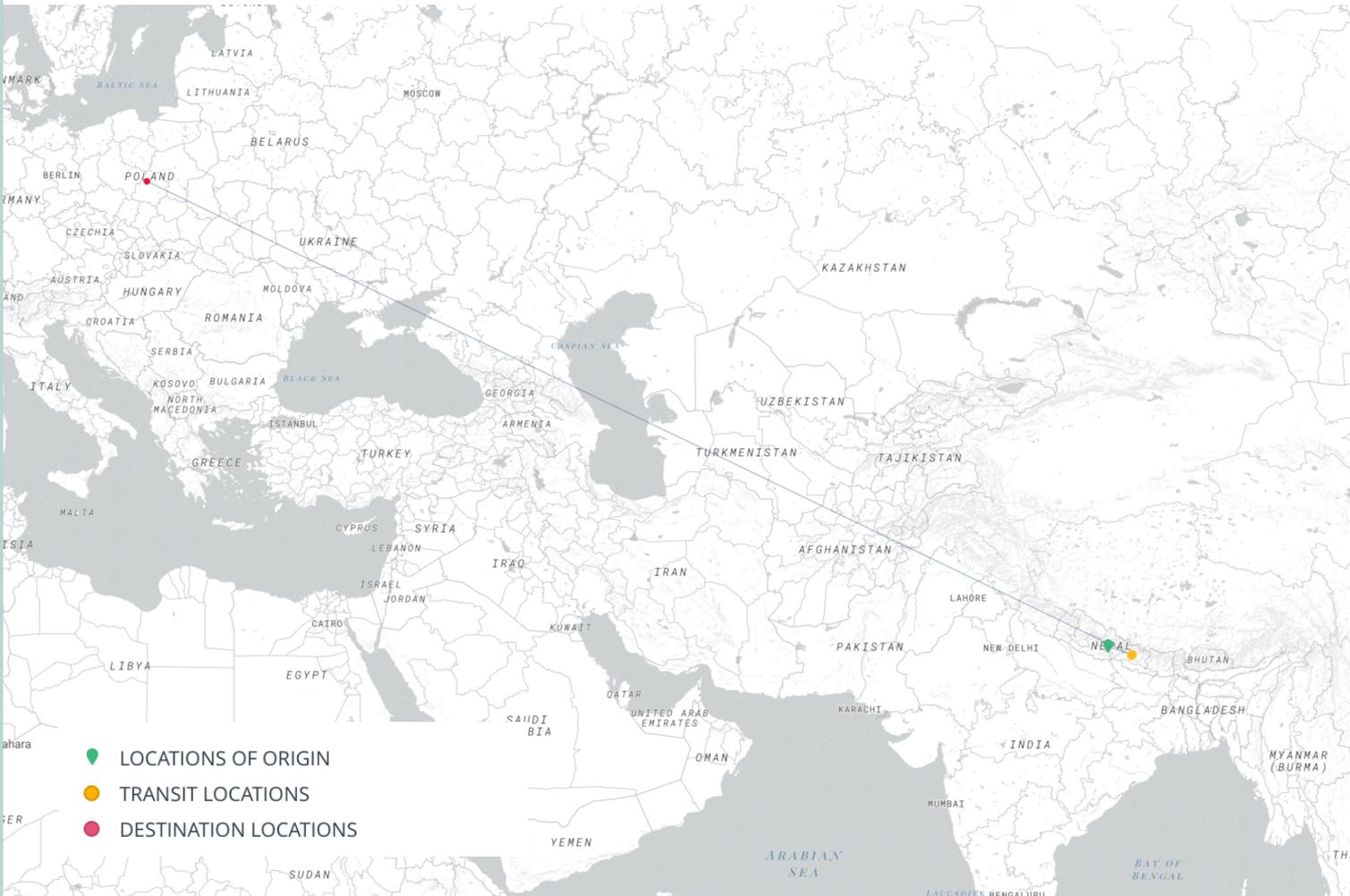
Visualization 5: All submitted routes relating to Qatar as destination country

NEPAL TO POLAND

In addition to the identified routes relating to Southeast Asia and the Middle East, three submissions were made relating to Poland as the final destination for Nepali migrants.

According to the contributing CSOs, the Nepali migrants worked in the hospitality sector in Poland, and experienced coercion, fraud, and a range of labor standard violations.

Only one submission included district-level information for the point of origin, and we were able to map a route from Parbat District to Poland.



Map 3: Submitted route relating to Poland as destination country

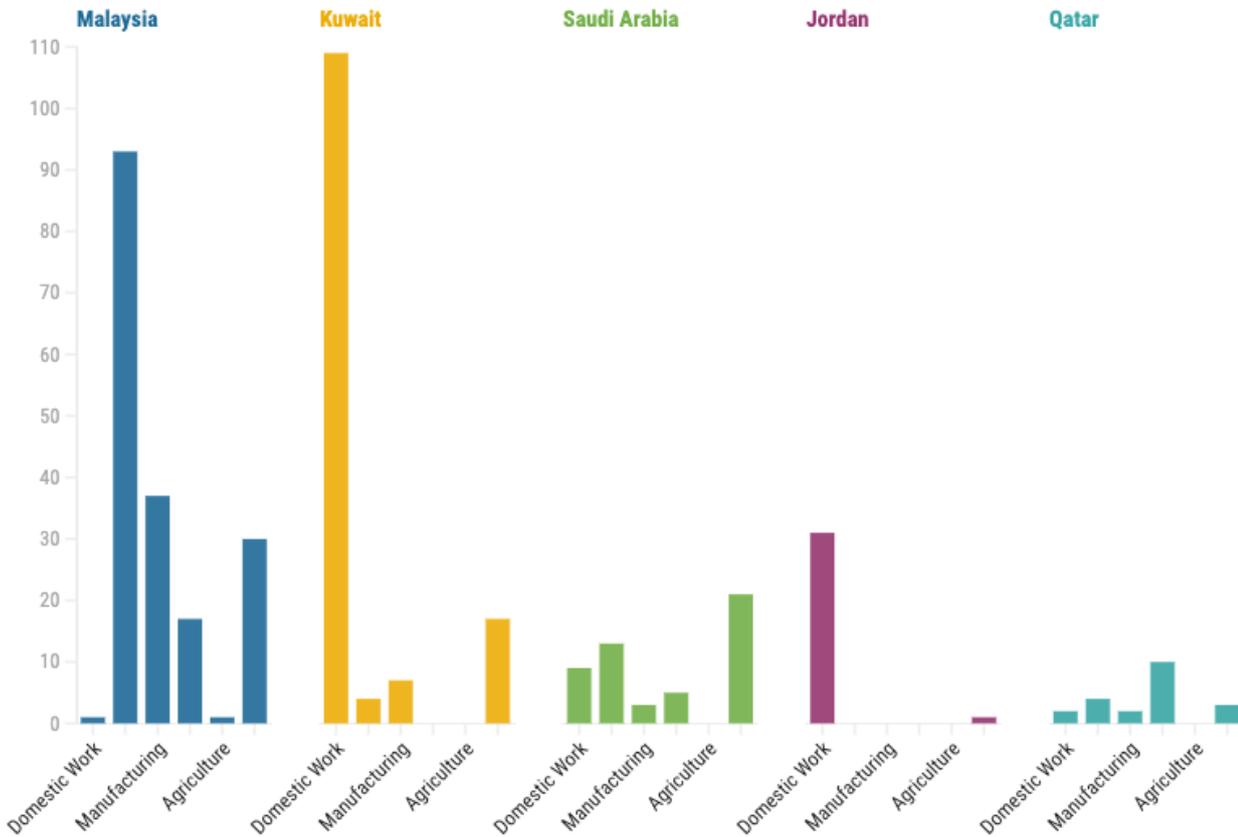
INDUSTRIES OF EXPLOITATION

Within the data set, a number of industries of exploitation of Nepali migrant workers abroad have been identified. The most referenced industries are domestic work and hospitality/food service/entertainment, followed by manufacturing/factory work.

A few submissions noted cases of migrants working in construction, services healthcare and beauty, and transport industries.

Within the data set, all cases were recorded as cases of labor exploitation of Nepali migrant workers at their respective destinations.

The below graphic provides an overview of the referenced industries of exploitation by destination countries.

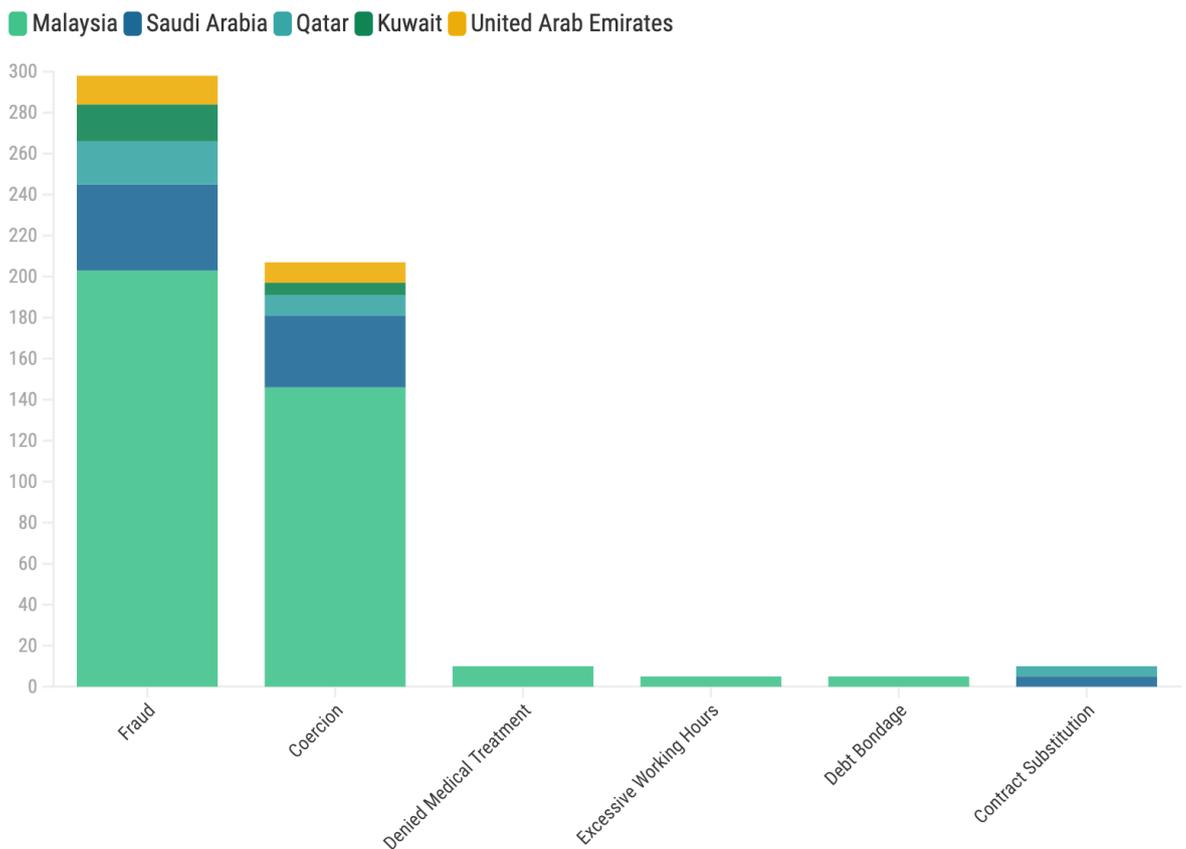


Visualization 6: Industries of exploitation by destination countries

TYPES OF ABUSES AND EXPLOITATION

The participating organisations mentioned a range of abuses and forms of exploitation in their submissions. The most common were fraud as well as coercion, meaning that the majority of migrants initially agreed consented to migrating overseas and their job offers, however, later found themselves in a different situation than promised and exploited by their employers.

The submissions also referenced excessive working hours, psychological abuse, withholding of wages, physical abuse and denied freedom of movement among the abuses experienced by Nepali migrants abroad.



Visualization 7: Types of abuses and exploitation by destination countries

DATA APPLICATIONS

As noted in Freedom Collaborative reports relating to other countries, the collected data about human trafficking and unsafe migration routes have several potential applications to help guide operational, tactical and strategic decisions made by civil society organizations, law enforcement, the private sector and government.

It is hoped that the data can support stakeholders to:

- Identify at-risk communities and recruitment hotspots in order to better target prevention programming and protection messaging
- Identify destination hotspots in order to guide the development of bilateral partnerships and to foster collaboration, so that more robust protection and after-care services can be provided
- Identify critical transit points in order to design more effective monitoring, outreach and intervention programming, and to inform the development of law enforcement/border protection and public-private partnerships (e.g. identify training needs for airport staff)
- Based on identified critical geographies, collaboratively assess these locations in terms of CSO coverage to avoid duplication of efforts and to help address gaps in areas of high need

- Identify industries at higher risk of involvement with exploitative labour, in order to improve outreach and identification efforts and inform engagement with industry.

In addition, the report contributes to improving data capture and sharing and coordination across the region, with the aim of achieving the following outcomes:

- Enhanced sharing of information among Nepali civil society and with other stakeholders
- Decreased duplication of data collection activities and siloed data sets
- Improved overview of relevant actors in the region and available data contributors
- Increased participation and familiarity of Nepali civil society actors with collaborative data collections
- Enhanced understanding of data usage and application for strategic planning and decision making

