



42nd Regular Session of the Human Rights Council (9 - 27 September 2019)

ITEM 3: Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences and the WG on the use of mercenaries

Oral Statement delivered by Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23), NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC.

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“Migrants subjected to contemporary forms of slavery in the Italian agricultural sector”

Mr President,

APG23 is grateful to the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, for drawing the attention on the labour and living conditions of migrant workers in the Italian agricultural sector.

We would like to point out another reality present on the Italian soil, the so called Rosarno of the North: from June to October, over 10,000 seasonal workers¹, gather in an agricultural area of almost 50 km, at the centre of which there is the municipality of Saluzzo.

Cases of undeclared work and “grey” jobs (i.e. wages and contributions paid only in part) are present, and recently three gangmasters were arrested for illegal recruitment².

There is a very strong connection between social marginality and job insecurity. In Italy, the current trend in immigration management is creating the perfect labourers willing to be exploited. We are witnessing an involitional process that is facilitated by having very adaptable manpower, vulnerable and who suffers from discrimination and political disenfranchisement.

The effect of the first “security decree”, which at the end of 2018 abrogated humanitarian protection, is to increase the number of people in an irregular situation, invisible and without rights, with the consequence of causing a potentially explosive social situation at all levels.

If inclusive policies were not to be approved, more and more people will face vulnerable situations in the future. Sustainable development, economy, migration, justice are all interlinked facets of our world, and we would like to stress that, as stated by the SR, “in order to effectively eradicate such exploitation in all its forms, Governments and other stakeholders must address the root causes of poverty, social exclusion and all forms of discrimination,” putting into practice the conditions so that a true development of the whole human family could really take place.

Ms Bhoola, how can this effect of ultraliberalism be reversed, so that the human cost of agricultural production could be respected, as well as the human rights of these exploited labourers? Thank you!

¹ Sala, D., “The difficult situation of laborers in Saluzzo”, Open Migration, 25/07/2019, https://openmigration.org/analisi/la-difficile-situazione-dei-braccianti-di-saluzzo/?fbclid=IwAR15AzwCLavwm0-w8uuNIDe05BUL4sUTpaiexn9_gYPW7Ft0Wgp71ztg5Qc.

² Boratto, L., “Three arrests for gangmasters in the Saluzzo area: fruit migrants paid less than 5 euros per hour”, La Stampa, 23/05/2019, <https://www.lastampa.it/cuneo/2019/05/23/news/tre-arresti-per-caporalato-nel-saluzzese-migranti-della-frutta-pagati-meno-di-5-euro-all-ora-1.33703798>