

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The growing number of migrant workers coming to Qatar each year cannot be separated by the fact that this country's rapid economic growth after the oil boom offers a wide range of lucrative opportunities. It has attracted millions of worker from around the world to come to Qatar in search of better livelihoods. Coupled with its ambition in infrastructure development to make Qatar as a modern state and a business hub in the region, have created the country's great dependence on migrant workers.

In regulating the immense migration of migrant workers, Qatar uses the *kafala* (sponsorship) system like most other Gulf countries. This system requires everyone working in Qatar to have a local sponsor who is also their employer. In fact, *kafala* system has long been condemned by INGOs as a source of exploitation towards the migrant workers, especially the low-skilled ones. It is because, under the system, workers' freedoms and rights are limited by forbidding them to change jobs and leave the country without the consent from the employer. The using of *kafala* system has given the employer excessive power to control the workers that make them become vulnerable to various forms of exploitation. In Qatar itself, *kafala* system is set in the Labor Law No. 4 of 2009 (Sponsorship Law) in which the law is seen as the government's legitimacy over abusive practices towards migrant workers in the country.

The winning of Qatar's bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup has increased the level of complexity in problems related to migrant workers in the country, especially for those working in the construction sector related to the World Cup. The demanding and dangerous employment conditions have made this sector become the most dominant form of slavery in Qatar.

INGOs like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented detailed evidence which shows that migrant construction workers have been experiencing exploitation and mistreatment even before they arrive in the destination country. Exploitation started in their home country where they fall into debt bondage due to the extremely high cost of recruitment fee charged by the local recruitment agency. They are also given false promises of a good job with high wage, to know that they are placed on the job with lower wage only when they arrive in Qatar. Moreover, other problems faced by migrant workers in Qatar are like prolonged delays and non-payments wage from the employer, undocumented status because employers fail to issue or renew workers' residence permit, confiscation of passport, cannot leave the country and changing jobs without employer's approval, dangerous working conditions without sufficient safety and health procedure, appalling accommodation, and force labor. Coupled with a prohibition for workers to join or form a union and the government's negligence in implementing laws that should have protected migrant workers which further worsen the condition of migrant workers in Qatar.

The presence of World Cup in Qatar has become a turning point for INGOs to detonate the issue of migrant workers in the country. This sporting event is seen as a catalyst for change in pressuring Qatar and another key stakeholder involved in the World Cup to improve the protection towards migrant construction workers. Qatar has just acknowledged the exploitation and abuse faced by migrant workers as an impact of *kafala* system. In 2014, the Qatari government finally agreed to reform their old Sponsorship Law which results in adopting a new Law No. 21 of 2015.

The role of INGOs here is crucial to voicing and bridging the needs of migrant workers to the government. The change of Qatar attitudes towards this issue cannot be separated from the advocacy process of INGOs. By using the Model of Triangular Coordination, the author analyzes the advocacy process to

eliminate exploitative practices and improve the quality of migrant workers' life in Qatar. The measures of advocacy taken by INGOs are like providing data and information about the issue to the government, FIFA, World Cup sponsor, Inter-Governmental Organizations, and international community that aims to raise their awareness and support for migrant workers. Pressuring the government through campaign, protests, and petitions, and also conducting training of safety migration to prospective workers in sending countries. Moreover, INGOs are active in lobbying and influence the Qatari government to reform their Sponsorship Law.

Although the result of the newly established law has not fully protected the rights of migrant workers, however, the work done by INGOs has been giving a positive impact on the changing attitude of the Qatari government and other relevant parties. Therefore, INGOs must remain firm in monitoring the progress of the new bill promised by the government and continuing to provide its best recommendations to achieve the goal of eliminating the root causes of exploitation and improving the protection towards migrant workers in Qatar.