

From Palm Plantations to Detention Centers: Deportation, Exploitation, and the Vulnerability of Undocumented Indonesian Migrant Workers in Sabah

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Abstract

This article explores the dynamics of vulnerability faced by migrant workers, from the process of becoming undocumented to the impact of repressive immigration policies. Using a qualitative approach, the research analyzes experiences of deported migrant workers through in-depth interviews, sharing sessions, policy and report analysis. The findings reveal that undocumented status arises not only from the absence of legal documents but also from the politics of illegality that perpetuate cheap labor under vulnerable conditions. The study also explores the responses of the Indonesian and Malaysian governments, which are often reactive and fail to provide adequate protection for undocumented migrant workers.