

“Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Proverbs 31:9

Bondage

“They aren’t dying because they are sick. They are dying because they’re being mistreated.” Yohana spoke these words to a gathering of religious leaders, rights activists, and journalists at a memorial service and press conference at the office of the Evangelical Christian Church of Timor in Indonesia. Yohana didn’t say much - she speaks a Timorese language, not Indonesian - but her tears spoke volumes. A year earlier, Yohana’s 21-year-old daughter, Adelina, died in Malaysia. Adelina had been a domestic worker whose employers made her sleep on a veranda with their vicious dog. Neighbors eventually reported the case. Finding Adelina’s arms and legs covered by infected wounds, the police rushed her to a hospital where she died within a few days.



KAREN
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NELSON

In Indonesian villages and cities, hidden groups seduce people like Adelina into lives of debt bondage. Legislators are urged to create and enforce laws to prevent human trafficking and illegal migration and better protect its victims, but few are brave enough to face the trafficking networks. Deterrents to trafficking like quality education and safe, local employment opportunities are lacking. Tempted by empty promises, people become overnight slaves who suffer years of abuse and terror. Victims return home in coffins week after week and families mourn the loss of their children.

The efforts of the press conference and memorial service were noticed. The following day, the Minister of Human Resources of Malaysia issued a statement promising to launch a war on human trafficking and back comprehensive legislation to that effect. Global Ministries played a significant role in this “fruit of solidarity” when it brought together anti-trafficking organizations and activists at a conference in West Timor last year. Many anti-trafficking groups have been working together since. The gathering for Adelina was a joint effort between anti-trafficking networks in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Karen Campbell-Nelson serves with the Evangelical Christian Church of West Timor. Her appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Church’s Wider Mission, WOC, OGHS and your special gifts.

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