

Mitigating irregular migration through information dissemination using multifaceted platforms.



IOM Officer participating in Television interview.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) established its operations in Sri Lanka in 2002 but the country became a Member State of IOM in 1990. IOM's focus shifted from meeting humanitarian needs in the former conflict areas of the North and East, towards addressing long-term sustainable development goals across the country. With the economic crisis that started in 2022, many Sri Lankans have been desperate to migrate for employment abroad. Some of these migrants fall victim to human smugglers, who use deceiving tactics to persuade the migrants to select the irregular migration paths. Rescue of 303 Sri Lankans in the Vietnam Sea by a Japanese vessel in November 2022 and many other Sri Lankans stranded in different parts of the world were often reported in the media are clear

indications of how the smugglers have exploited the migrants.

As part of IOM's mandate to serve migrants and to promote safe and regular migration so that migrants are treated in a humane manner, IOM maintains dialogues with public and private stakeholders. During these discussions, a highlight that has been brought up is the lack of information available on public platforms. The high demand for outward migration has become a preying ground for human smugglers. Hence it is easy to create confusion among the users with false information.

To address such a pressing matter, IOM took to mass media with information campaigning. The radio broadcasting service is well received in Sri Lanka with over 40 radio channels going live every day. After thorough

research on the market share of each radio broadcasting service, four radio channels were chosen to conduct the information session. During these broadcasts, the listeners were given concise information regarding safe and regular migration. The Safe Migration Campaign hotline was promoted in the radio advert to permit the listeners to reach IOM for safe migration related information.



IOM Officer participating in Television interview.

In addition to the radio campaign, an IOM officer participated in television interviews on two mainstream television channels and one regional TV channel. The interview content was planned to disseminate information on safe and regular migration and the issue of human smuggling.

In addition to the well-received electronic media campaigns, a series of news articles were published in newspapers which had a larger circulation. The articles were developed in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Bureau for Foreign Employment in Sinhala and Tamil languages. A regional newspaper also published the article. Articles included in-depth information useful to those who migrate for foreign employment, as the government of Sri Lanka has issued several official gazette notifications outlining several changes regarding the foreign employment recruitments, training, fee structure and other processes.



A picture of the newspaper article published in a Tamil newspaper.

The information published was of most important to the migrants, therefore these articles were well received by the readers.

All the public campaigns were well received by the target audience. This was proven with the increased number of calls received to the SMC hotline maintained for safe migration related queries. The total number of calls received exceeded 50 for the last three weeks in the month of March.

The target of these public campaigns was to reach the potential migrants with information as well as to allow the public to access safe migration information via SMC hotline number.

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Financé par le
gouvernement
du Canada

| **Canada** 