

# Filipino migrant youth organize and fight back

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On Nov. 5, trafficked young workers from the Philippines gathered in Fort Washington, Md., to form Migrante Youth Fort Washington, which joined the Migrante USA alliance. Migrante USA is a national association of Filipino worker and migrant organizations dedicated to fighting for the rights and welfare of Filipinos in the U.S. and for genuine democracy and freedom in the Philippines.



The youth who formed the Fort Washington chapter of Migrante were promised by an employment agency that, if they were to migrate to the U.S., they would have jobs in the hospitality industry that not only paid well, but promised career advancement. They paid their own way to the U.S. only to find that they were working at a hotel, far below minimum wage and for tips.

At the founding event, BAYAN USA, GABRIELA Washington, DC, and the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines joined with Migrante Fort Washington to provide an overview of the dire political situation in the Philippines.

For example, despite the abundance of natural resources in the Philippines, over 20 percent of its workforce labors overseas and sends back remittances. There is no reason for the overwhelming joblessness and poverty except for the conditions created by capitalism, imperialism and feudalism in the Philippines.

President Rodrigo Duterte folds to the pressures of U.S. neocolonial rule in order to continue receiving military and police aid, further fueling the flames of repression. Duterte has gone above and beyond in granting extra-legal powers to these brutal forces to deny due process and execute dissenters.

The youth of Migrante Fort Washington have chosen to fight back. They refuse to bow to the horrendous working conditions imposed by U.S. imperialism and to be tricked into accepting pay far below what was promised.

In front of a full house, these youth pledged to fulfill their duties in securing better working conditions here, as well as national democracy and sovereignty in the Philippines.

