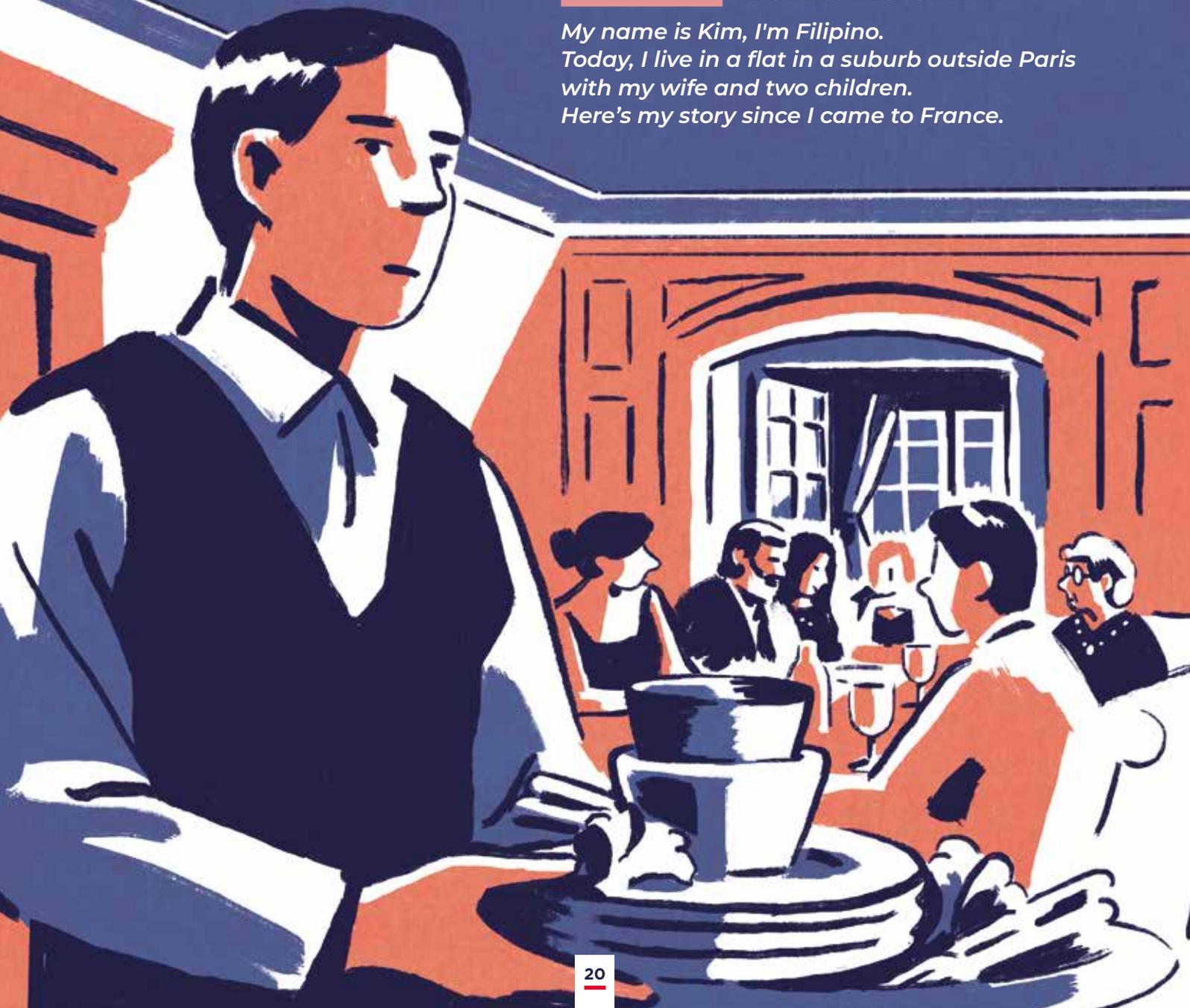


KIM DOMESTIC SLAVE

*My name is Kim, I'm Filipino.
Today, I live in a flat in a suburb outside Paris
with my wife and two children.
Here's my story since I came to France.*



When I left my home country 12 years ago, it was above all to find work in France to support my family. On arriving in Paris, I answered an ad posted by a couple, looking to employ a butler. They were ready to hire me. They asked for my passport to sort out my situation and draw up a contract for me. I agreed and, without waiting, started work.

My employers were very wealthy. They were aged about 50 and lived in a nice area of Paris, in a very luxurious apartment. He was a doctor and had his own practice. She managed a fashion boutique in the Les Halles district.

To begin with, my task was essentially that of home help. I had to keep the apartment clean and tidy, do the cooking and the shopping and serve at table when they had guests. All that for a tiny salary. I was given accommodation in a very cramped room, but the situation was bearable. I managed to send part of the money back home to my family.

But, as time went by, the situation got worse and worse. I now had to do the cleaning at the doctor's surgery as well as in the apartments that my employers rented out to tourists. During the holidays, I was responsible for running their holiday home in the south of France. Despite the additional workload, my salary remained the same and was still tiny. There was never any rest.

My employers threw endless receptions, inviting loads of guests, which mean I had to work right through the night. And, the following day, I was up at the crack of dawn to clean up the house. It was just endless.

“My employers kept my passport and there was no news regarding the legalisation of my status”.

In addition, my employers had kept my passport and there was no news regarding the legalisation of my status. Without documents, there was nothing I could do. I was far too afraid of the police to go and talk to them about my situation.

I kept going like this for several years. Up until the day when, exhausted, I refused to go to the family's holiday home for the weekend. I asked for my employment conditions and my salary to be reviewed. My employers were outraged by my requests. Their reaction was extremely violent and humiliating for me.

The altercation reached a point of no return. I felt that I was in danger. So I alerted an association which helps victims of trafficking which supported with asserting my rights before the courts, finding a new job and bringing my family over.



KEY POINTS

Human trafficking for exploitation in the workplace, commonly known as modern slavery, involves vulnerable individuals who are subjected to physical and psychological force in order to provide underpaid or unpaid work, deprived of their freedom and whose housing and working conditions violate human dignity. In these situations, we observe elements such as: confiscated passports and identity documents, interruption of family connections and cultural isolation. As for Rita and Kim, this kind of exploitation can happen in a domestic context, i.e. within a family and a private home. This is then described as “domestic servitude or slavery” or “domestic exploitation”.



WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

Victims can be of any age and nationality. However, they usually have multiple difficulties which render them vulnerable. For example, they may not speak French, not be able to read, not know their rights in France or they may suffer from a physical or mental disability. In cases of domestic exploitation, victims tend to be women, sometimes still underage, in contrast for example to cases of exploitation in the workplace where most victims are men.



HOW CAN THEY BE IDENTIFIED?

It is very difficult to identify these victims who are rendered invisible by those exploiting them. However, we can all be vigilant and put discreet questions to workers whose working conditions (lack of any safety equipment, worrying physical condition, etc.) attract our attention. We can all also take the time to listen carefully, for example, to someone who is in the street because they have had to flee a place of exploitation. It is always important to turn to specialist associations who will be able to advise you on how to act without putting yourself in danger. You are strongly discouraged from confronting any employer you suspect of being guilty of exploitation!



WHY DOES THIS SITUATION OCCUR ON THE SIDELINES OF MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS?

During major sporting events, the significant influx of tourists and diplomatic parties can increase the risk of families employing people in unfit conditions coming to France with such individuals without bringing their working conditions into line with French standards.

Another factor that can lead to an increase in the number of cases is the strong demand for short-term property lets, for example, through platforms used to rent accommodation by and to private individuals. People who are already being exploited in private homes or who have been recruited for this special purpose can then be forced to clean these rental properties in addition to working in the normal home of the employers.

