REPUBLIC OF KENYA

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Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

State Department for Labour and Skills Development

LABOUR MIGRATION INDICATORS REPORT

FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26
(JULY 2025 – JUNE 2026)



FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26 *(July 2025 – June 2026)*

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Preface



Labour migration occupies a central place in the Government of Kenya's agenda for employment creation, human capital development and inclusive economic growth. In a period when the country continues to confront the challenge of youth unemployment, access to decent work beyond our borders offers a legitimate and important pathway to income, skills acquisition and improved household livelihoods, while contributing substantially to the national economy through remittance inflows.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is committed to the promotion of safe, orderly and regular labour migration. This commitment is anchored in the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, Kenya Vision 2030 and the country's obligations under international labour standards and global compacts on migration. It is given practical effect through the attestation of employment contracts, the clearance and orientation of departing workers, the regulation of private recruitment agencies, and the negotiation of bilateral labour agreements that secure the rights and welfare of Kenyan workers abroad.

This Annual Labour Migration Indicators Report sets out where Kenyan workers went, the occupations they took up, the skill levels at which they were engaged, and how these patterns differed between women and men across the year. In doing so it provides a clear and candid account of both the opportunities that international labour markets present and the structural limitations that continue to constrain the benefits Kenya derives from them.

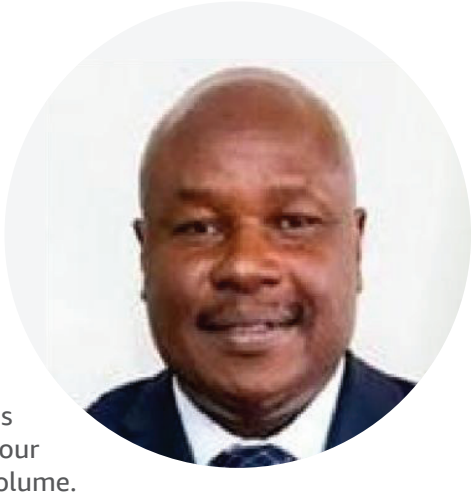
The findings contained in this report call for deliberate and sustained action , to widen the range of destination markets available to Kenyan workers, to expand bilateral labour agreements into skilled and professional occupations, to invest in market-responsive skills development and international certification, and to strengthen the protection of migrant workers, particularly women engaged in domestic employment.



Hon. Dr. Alfred N. Mutua, EGH
Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

This Annual Labour Migration Indicators Report sets out where Kenyan workers went, the occupations they took up, the skill levels at which they were engaged, and how these patterns differed between women and men across the year.

Acknowledgement



The preparation of the Consolidated Annual Labour Migration Indicators Report for the 2025/26 Financial Year has been a collaborative undertaking involving the contribution, expertise and commitment of various institutions and individuals. The State Department for Labour and Skills Development wishes to express its sincere appreciation to all those whose efforts made the preparation of this report possible.

Special appreciation is extended to the Labour Market Observatory Unit within the Directorate of Labour Market Research and Analysis for conceptualising, compiling and analysing the four quarterly labour migration reports that have been consolidated into this annual volume. The Unit's continued commitment to the production and dissemination of timely, reliable and relevant Labour Market Information, as well as its role as the custodian of the Kenya Labour Market Information System, has been instrumental in the development of this report.

I also acknowledge the Directorate of Labour for its critical role in the attestation of employment contracts, which generates an important source of administrative data for monitoring labour migration trends. Appreciation is equally extended to the Directorate of Labour Migration Management, particularly the outbound clearance desks at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and Moi International Airport, whose daily records on the clearance of departing migrant workers provide essential data for the analysis presented in this report.

Finally, I wish to recognise and commend the technical team involved in the preparation and consolidation of this report for their professionalism, dedication and attention to detail. Their collective efforts have resulted in a comprehensive body of evidence on Kenya's labour migration dynamics during the 2025/26 Financial Year.

It is my expectation that this report will serve as a valuable reference for policymakers, planners, training institutions, recruitment agencies, researchers, development partners and prospective migrant workers. More importantly, the evidence and insights presented in this volume are expected to contribute to informed decision-making, strengthened labour migration governance and the development of policies and interventions that promote safe, orderly and productive labour migration.



Shadrack M. Mwadime, CBS

Principal Secretary, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

It is my expectation that this report will serve as a valuable reference for policymakers, planners, training institutions, recruitment agencies, researchers, development partners and prospective migrant workers.

Technical Note



Labour migration information is a critical component of effective labour migration governance. Reliable and timely data on the characteristics of migrant workers, their destinations, occupations, gender and skill levels provides an important basis for understanding overseas employment patterns and informing measures to promote safe, orderly and regular labour migration.

The Labour Migration Indicators Report for Financial Year 2025/26 has been prepared through collaboration between the Labour Migration Management and the Labour Market Observatory Unit. The report consolidates findings from the four quarterly Labour Migration Indicators Reports produced during the financial year and provides an annual perspective on key labour migration trends and patterns.

The analysis draws primarily on two administrative data sources. The first is the contract attestation register maintained by the Directorate of Labour, which captures information on employment contracts processed prior to workers' departure. The second comprises clearance records maintained by Labour Migration Desks at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) and Moi International Airport (MIA), which capture information on workers cleared for departure.

The data were subjected to extraction, cleaning, validation and classification using the Kenya Standard Classification of Occupations (KeSCO). Occupational categories were subsequently grouped by skill level, and descriptive analysis was undertaken using frequencies, proportions and distributions.

It is important to note that the two administrative data sources represent different stages of the labour migration process. Contract attestation relates to employment arrangements prior to departure, while airport clearance records relate to workers departing the country. Consequently, the quarterly findings are presented according to their respective data sources and should not be interpreted as a single cumulative count of migrant workers. In addition, administrative records may not capture irregular or otherwise unrecorded migration.

The findings provide evidence to support labour migration management, including destination-market diversification, skills development and certification, bilateral labour agreements, pre-departure preparation and measures for the protection and welfare of migrant workers.

The report therefore serves not only as a statistical reference, but also as an evidence base for strengthening labour migration policy, planning and management.



Joel Mwanzia

Secretary, Labour Migration Management

The findings provide evidence to support labour migration management, including destination-market diversification, skills development and certification, bilateral labour agreements, pre-departure preparation and measures for the protection and welfare of migrant workers.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BETA	Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda
CS	Cabinet Secretary
FY	Financial Year
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
JKIA	Jomo Kenyatta International Airport
KLMIS	Kenya Labour Market Information System
MIA	Moi International Airport
PS	Principal Secretary
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SDLSD	State Department for Labour and Skills Development
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UAE	United Arab Emirates

LABOUR MIGRATION INDICATORS REPORT

FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26
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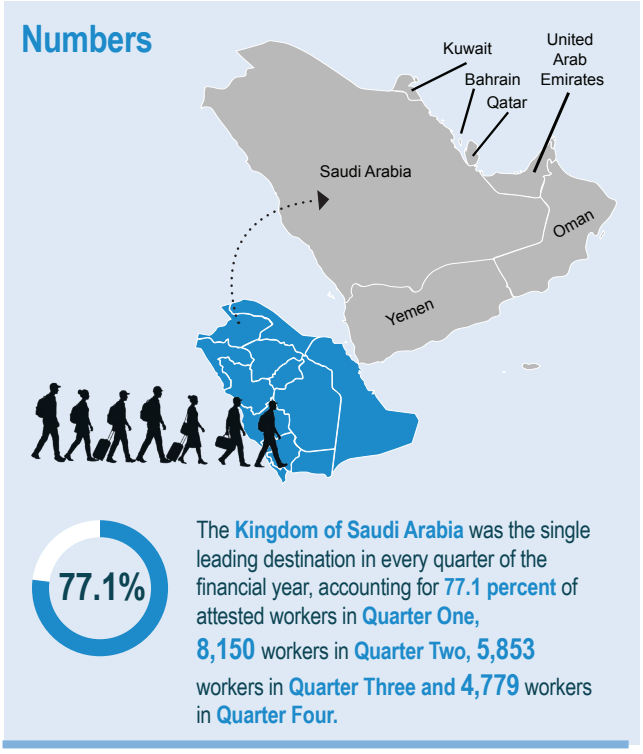
Executive Summary

This report consolidates the four quarterly labour migration indicators reports covering the 2025/26 financial year, from July 2025 to June 2026. It draws on administrative records generated through the contract attestation process of the State Department for Labour and Skills Development and through the Labour Migration Desks at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and Moi International Airport. Together, these four quarters provide a continuous, evidence-based account of the destinations, occupations, occupational groups and gender patterns that characterised Kenyan labour migration over the course of the year.

The reporting year opened with the Quarter One report (July–September 2025), which was based on contract attestation records and covered 14,893 attested migrant workers. From Quarter Two (October–December 2025) onwards, reporting was anchored primarily on Airport Labour Migration Desk clearance data. Because the two data streams measure different points in the migration process, quarterly totals are presented separately and are not aggregated into a single annual figure.

Destination countries

Across all four quarters, labour migration remained heavily concentrated in the Gulf region. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was the single leading destination in every quarter of the financial year, accounting for 77.1 percent of attested workers in Quarter One, 8,150 workers in Quarter Two, 5,853 workers in Quarter Three and 4,779 workers in Quarter Four. Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates consistently occupied the next tier of destinations, while Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq and Russia received comparatively small numbers. Oman emerged over the year as an increasingly significant destination, rising from a marginal position in Quarter One to second place in Quarter Three. The persistence of this pattern confirms that Kenya's labour migration relies on a narrow corridor of destination markets.



Occupational structure

Elementary occupations dominated the occupational structure throughout the year, accounting for 72.1 percent of workers in Quarter One, 83.5 percent in Quarter Two and 8,719 workers in Quarter Four, the largest single group in that quarter. Service workers, shop and market sales workers formed the second largest group in most quarters, followed by plant and machine operators and assemblers. Professionals, technicians, legislators, administrators and managers together accounted for a very small share of migrant workers in every quarter. The reported occupational group distribution for Quarter Three departs from this pattern and is discussed in Sub-section 6.3.4 and in the Technical Note.

At the level of individual occupations, housemaid was the leading occupation in every quarter of the financial year. Security guards, cleaners, labourers and drivers consistently featured among the most common occupations, reflecting sustained demand



> Occupational segregation by sex was pronounced and stable across the year. Female migrant workers were overwhelmingly concentrated in domestic and care-related occupations, with housemaids accounting for 10,398 workers in Quarter One, 9,104 in Quarter Two, 7,149 in Quarter Three and 6,685 in Quarter Four.

for domestic, security, cleaning, transport and general labour services in destination countries.

Gender patterns

Occupational segregation by sex was pronounced and stable across the year. Female migrant workers were overwhelmingly concentrated in domestic and care-related occupations, with housemaids accounting for 10,398 workers in Quarter One, 9,104 in Quarter Two, 7,149 in Quarter Three and 6,685 in Quarter Four. Male migrant workers were distributed across a broader range of occupations, principally security services, cleaning, general labour, transport and hospitality, indicating comparatively greater occupational diversity but a similar concentration in low- and semi-skilled work.

Skill levels

The Quarter One analysis, which examined skill levels directly, recorded only 25 highly skilled workers across four occupations: production and operations managers, real estate agency managers, nurses and university lecturers. Middle-skilled workers were absorbed mainly into security, transport, care and maintenance roles, while low-skilled workers dominated the overall distribution, particularly in domestic and construction-related occupations. This profile persisted through the remaining quarters and represents the central structural finding of the financial year.

1. Introduction

Labour migration remains a critical pillar of Kenya's socio-economic development, offering significant opportunities for employment creation, poverty reduction and skills transfer. It also contributes substantially to the national economy through foreign remittances, which support household incomes and drive local investment. Over the years, the Middle East and other emerging labour markets have become major destinations for Kenyan workers seeking employment abroad. The growing participation of Kenyan migrant workers emphasises the country's position as an important source of labour within the global labour market.

The State Department for Labour and Skills Development is mandated to promote, coordinate and regulate labour migration in line with national policies and international labour standards. One of its key functions is the attestation of employment contracts for Kenyan migrant workers, which ensures that workers' terms of employment are fair, transparent and compliant with destination-country regulations. A second is the clearance of departing migrant workers through the Labour Migration Desks at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and Moi International Airport. Both processes generate administrative data that forms the basis for monitoring migration trends, assessing emerging opportunities and identifying potential risks.

This Consolidated Annual Labour Migration Indicators Report presents, in a single volume, the analysis produced across the four quarters of the 2025/26 financial year. It examines the number and distribution of migrant workers by destination country, occupation and major occupational group and by skill level, providing evidence-based insights into prevailing patterns of labour mobility.

The analysis aims to inform policy formulation and programme planning, strengthen migration governance, and support the Government's broader Human Capital Development and Employment Creation Agenda, including the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, Kenya Vision 2030 and international commitments on safe, orderly and regular labour migration.



2.0 Objectives

The main objective of this report is to consolidate and analyse trends in Kenya's labour migration across the four quarters of the 2025/26 financial year. Specifically, the report seeks to:

I. Determine the number and distribution of migrant workers by destination country

II. Identify the most common occupational groups among Kenyan migrant workers.

III. Assess the skill levels of migrant workers.

IV. Determine the top occupations for male and female migrant workers.

3.0 Scope of the Report

This report covers the analysis of attested labour migration data and data of migrants cleared by the labour migration desks at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and Moi International Airport for the period July 2025 to June 2026, representing the four quarters of the 2025/26 financial year. It focuses on key labour migration indicators, including the number and distribution of migrant workers by destination country, occupation and major occupational group. The analysis highlights the top destination countries, the most common occupations, the top occupations for male and female migrant workers, and the skill levels of Kenyan migrant workers, in order to inform policy decisions and programme interventions.



4.0 Methodology

The data for this report was drawn from two administrative sources maintained by the Labour department: attestation records, which document contracts and employment attestations for Kenyan migrant workers, and Airport Labour Migration Desk records, which capture migrant workers cleared for departure at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and Moi International Airport. Data cleaning and validation were undertaken in each quarter to ensure consistency and accuracy before analysis. The data was analysed in STATA to generate frequencies and proportions, which were then presented in tables and graphical formats.

5.0 Limitations

Lack of comprehensive data: The report is based on official records and does not capture data on irregular migration. Many migrants may not travel through official channels, making it difficult to account for all workers.

QUARTER 01 JULY – SEPTEMBER 2025

6.0 Findings

This section presents the findings of the four quarterly labour migration indicators reports for the 2025/26 financial year. Each sub-section corresponds to one quarter and presents that quarter's data tables and accompanying analysis as reported at the time. Sub-section 6.1 covers Quarter One (July–September 2025), 6.2 Quarter Two (October–December 2025), 6.3 Quarter Three (January–March 2026) and 6.4 Quarter Four (April–June 2026)

6.1 QUARTER ONE: JULY – SEPTEMBER 2025

The Quarter One analysis is based on contract attestation records together with data on migrants cleared by the airport desks at JKIA and MIA.

6.1.1 Top Destination Countries for Migrant Workers

Table 1: Top destination countries for migrant workers, Quarter One (July–September 2025)

Destination Country	Number of workers	Proportion (%)
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	11,479	77.08
Qatar	1,520	10.21
United Arab Emirates	1,085	7.29
Kuwait	281	1.89
Russia/Kazakhstan	151	1.01
Kenya	120	0.81
Turkey	87	0.58
United States of America/Canada	58	0.39
Serbia	35	0.24
Oman	24	0.16
Bahrain	22	0.15
Austria	13	0.09
Jordan	12	0.08
Croatia	3	0.02
Japan	2	0.01
Seychelles	1	0.01
Total	**14,893**	**100.00**

Source; Regional job advertisement data

During the first quarter of FY 2025/26, a total of 14,893 Kenyan migrant workers were attested for employment. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia remained the dominant destination, accounting for 77.1 percent of all placements. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates followed respectively. Other notable but smaller destinations included Kuwait, Russia, and Kenya-based attestations for returning or locally engaged migrant workers. The remaining countries cumulatively accounted for less than 2 percent of total outflows.

This distribution indicates that labour mobility remains heavily concentrated in the Gulf region, showing the continued demand for Kenyan labour in the Middle East, particularly in domestic and low-skilled occupations.

6.1.2 Top Ten Occupations for Migrant Workers

Table 2: Top ten occupations for migrant workers, Quarter One (July–September 2025)

Occupation	Number of workers
Housemaid	4,551
Guard, security	405
Driver, car	377
Cleaner, domestic	323
Helper, domestic	317
Housekeeper, domestic	209
Carer, home: aged or disabled persons	197
Waiter	135
Worker, home support	132
Labourer, odd-job	125

Source: Contract attestation records, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

The top ten occupations accounted for a significant share of all placements secured by Kenyan workers during the quarter, reflecting the dominance of demand for elementary and domestic service labour. Demand for housemaids led by a wide margin, followed by requirements for security guards and drivers.

Other common roles included domestic cleaners, helpers, housekeepers, and carers for the aged or disabled. Waiters, home support workers, and odd-job labourers highlight the continued relevance of both domestic and service-oriented positions.

6.1.3 Distribution of Migrant Workers by Major Occupational Groups

Table 3: Distribution of migrant workers by major occupational group, Quarter One (July–September 2025)

Major Occupational Group	Number of workers	Proportion (%)
Elementary occupations	6,032	72.14
Service workers, shop and market sales workers	1,136	13.59
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	795	9.51
Craft and related trades workers	164	1.96
Technicians and associate professionals	111	1.33
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	95	1.14
Legislators, administrators and managers	20	0.24
Professionals	5	0.06
Secretarial, clerical services and related workers	4	0.05
Total	**8,362**	**100.00**

Source: Contract attestation records, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

Elementary occupations dominated, accounting for 72.1 percent of all migrant workers in this classification. These include housemaids, cleaners, helpers and other low-skilled workers. Service workers, shop and market sales workers made up 13.6 percent, while plant and machine operators and assemblers accounted for 9.5 percent.

The remaining groups, including craft and related trades workers, technicians and associate professionals, skilled agricultural workers and professionals, constituted a relatively small share.

This distribution demonstrates that Kenya's labour migration continues to be dominated by low- and

semi-skilled categories, pointing to opportunities for skills development and diversification into higher-skilled occupational groups. It should be noted that the occupational group classification covered 8,362 records, being those for which a valid occupational code could be assigned, and therefore does not correspond to the full attestation total of 14,893 workers.

6.1.4 Top Occupations in the Three Leading Destination Countries

The occupations taken up by Kenyan workers varied appreciably between the three leading destination countries, reflecting differences in the structure of labour demand in each market. The tables that follow should therefore be read as a profile of the demand to which Kenyan workers responded in each market during the quarter.

Table 4: Top ten occupations for migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, Quarter One (July–September 2025)

Occupation	Number of migrant workers
Housemaid	4,512
Helper, domestic	272
Housekeeper, domestic	203
Worker, home support	132
Carer, home: aged or disabled persons	120
Driver, car	115
Servant, domestic	101
Cleaner, domestic	84
Gardener	54
Fire prevention specialist	41

Source: Contract attestation records, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

The demand that Kenyan workers met in Saudi Arabia was overwhelmingly for domestic labour. Housemaids formed by far the largest single requirement, followed by domestic helpers, housekeepers and home support workers. Demand extended to carers for the aged or disabled, car drivers, domestic servants and domestic cleaners, with smaller requirements recorded for gardeners and fire prevention specialists. The pattern indicates that the occupations open to Kenyan workers in the Saudi market are concentrated in household and caregiving services, and that Kenyan labour is drawn into that market almost entirely on the strength of demand from private households and social support services.

The demand that Kenyan workers met in Saudi Arabia was overwhelmingly for domestic labour. Housemaids formed by far the largest single requirement, followed by domestic helpers, housekeepers and home support workers.

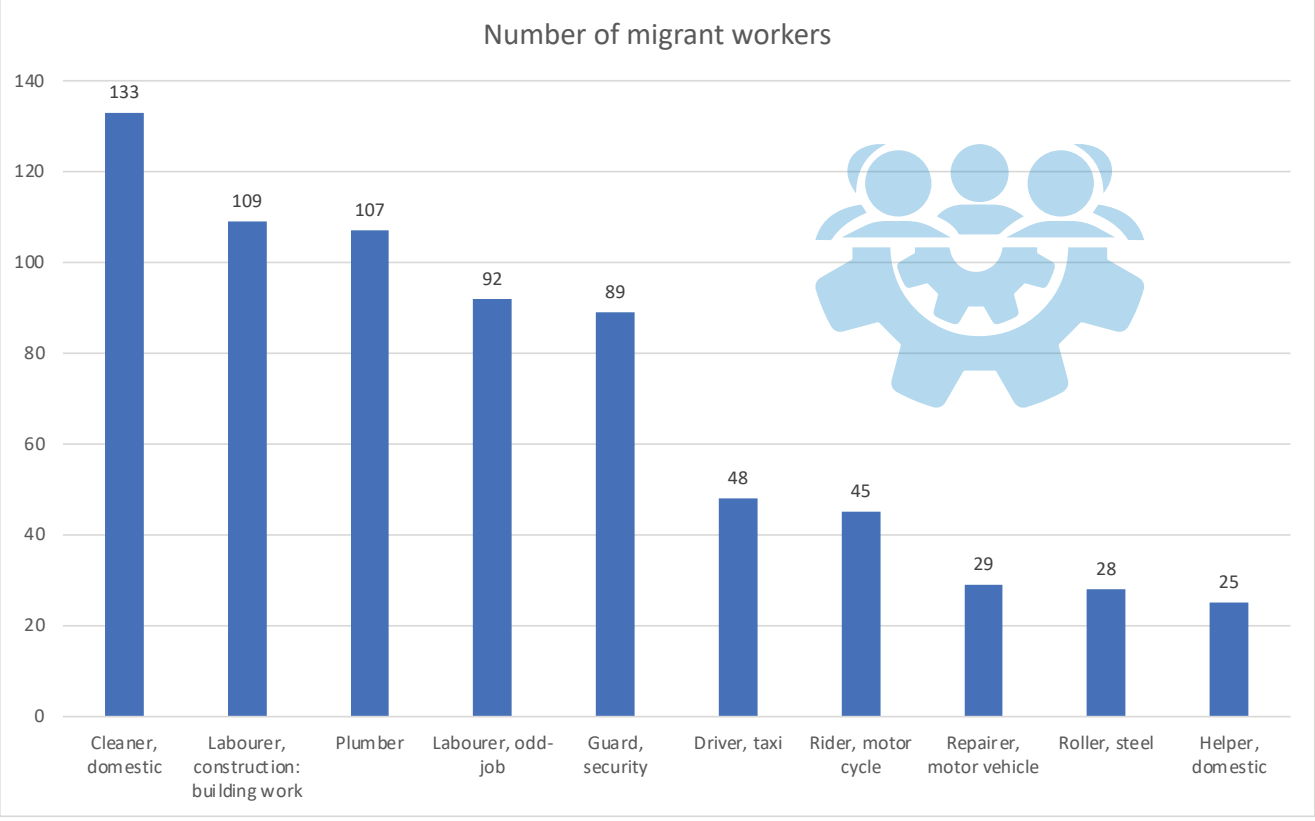
Table 5: Top ten occupations for migrant workers in Qatar, Quarter One (July–September 2025)

Occupation	Number of migrant workers
Guard, security	292
Driver, car	244
Cleaner, domestic	106
Driver, heavy goods vehicle	81
Waiter	58
Rider, motor cycle	56
Driver, bus	45
Chef	16
Driver, taxi	14
Lifeguard	13

Source: Contract attestation records, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

The demand Kenyan workers met in Qatar was more diversified, spanning security, driving and service occupations. Security guards and car drivers were the occupations most sought after, followed by domestic cleaners and heavy goods vehicle drivers. Demand was also recorded for waiters, motorcycle riders and bus drivers, indicating requirements in both transport and hospitality, with smaller numbers of chefs, taxi drivers and lifeguards taken up. Overall, the Qatari market drew Kenyan workers into a higher proportion of semi-skilled and male-dominated occupations than Saudi Arabia, indicating broader sectoral demand.

Figure 1: Top ten occupations for migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates, Quarter One (July–September 2025)

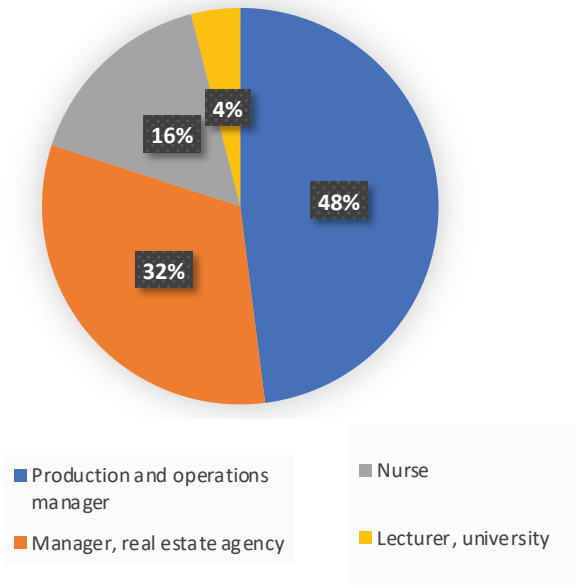


Source: Contract attestation records, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

The demand Kenyan workers met in the United Arab Emirates was led by domestic cleaning, building construction and plumbing. Requirements were also recorded for odd-job labourers, security guards, taxi drivers and motorcycle riders, with smaller numbers for motor vehicle repairers and steel rollers. This profile indicates that the Emirati market opens more opportunities to Kenyan workers in construction, maintenance and transport, in addition to traditional domestic service roles, presenting a more varied pattern of demand than either Saudi Arabia or Qatar.

6.1.5 Distribution of Occupations by Skill Level

Figure 2: Top occupations for highly skilled workers, Quarter One (July–September 2025)



Source: Contract attestation records, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

The number of highly skilled Kenyan workers attested during the quarter was relatively low compared to low- and middle-skilled categories. The leading occupations among highly skilled workers were production and operations managers and real estate agency managers, followed by nurses and university lecturers.

This limited representation of highly skilled workers highlights the continued underutilisation of Kenya's professional workforce in international labour markets. It also shows the need for targeted government strategies to negotiate and promote skilled labour mobility pathways, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, education, ICT and engineering, where global demand remains high. Expanding access for highly skilled workers could enhance remittance inflows, promote technology and knowledge transfer, and position Kenya competitively in the global skills market.

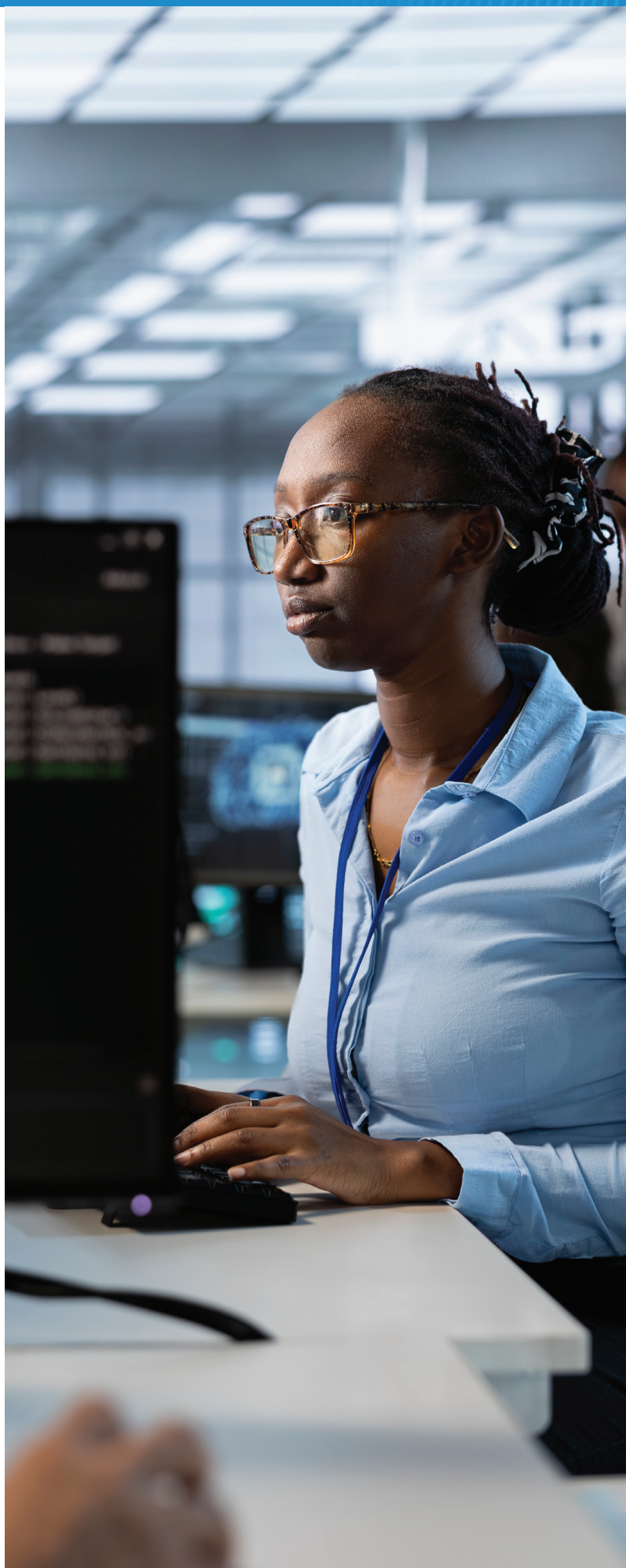


Table 8: Top ten occupations for middle-skilled workers, Quarter One (July–September 2025)

Occupation	Number of workers
Guard, security	405
Driver, car	377
Housekeeper, domestic	209
Carer, home: aged or disabled persons	197
Waiter	135
Worker, home support	132
Plumber	117
Driver, heavy goods vehicle	106
Rider, motor cycle	103
Driver, taxi	48

Source: Contract attestation records, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

During the review period, middle-skilled occupations accounted for a moderate share of attested migrant workers. The most common occupations were security guards and car drivers, followed by housekeepers and carers for the aged or disabled. Other notable occupations included waiters, home support workers and plumbers. Transport-related jobs such as heavy goods vehicle drivers, motorcycle riders and taxi drivers were also well represented.

These findings suggest that Kenyan middle-skilled workers are mainly absorbed in service, transport and maintenance sectors, particularly in the Gulf region. The diversity of these roles indicates growing opportunities for semi-skilled labour, especially for men, and underscores the importance of continuous skills upgrading, certification and training to enhance job quality and safety outcomes.

Table 9: Top ten occupations for low-skilled workers, Quarter One (July–September 2025)

Occupation	Number of workers
Housemaid	4,551
Cleaner, domestic	323
Helper, domestic	317
Labourer, odd-job	125
Servant, domestic	114
Labourer, construction: building work	109
Washer, car	32
Labourer, construction: civil engineering	25
Labourer, farm	22
Packer, hand	19

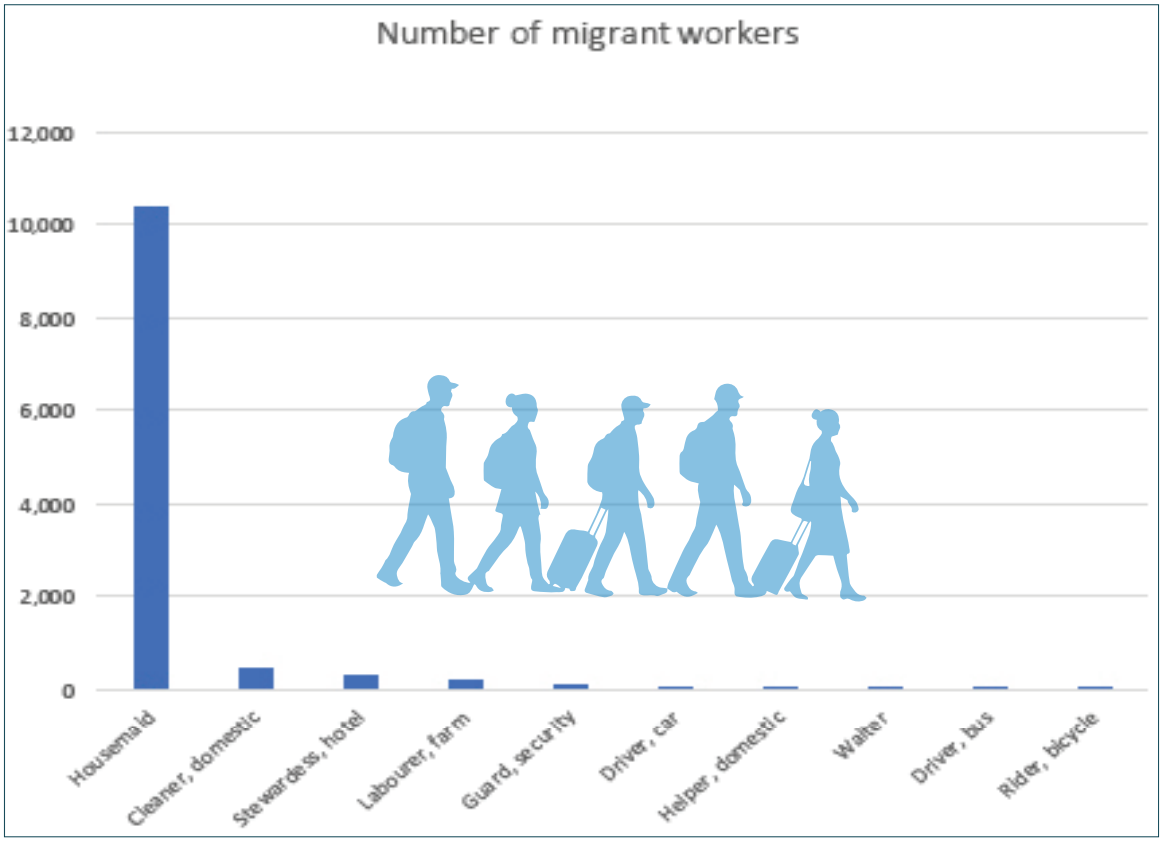
Source: Contract attestation records, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

Low-skilled occupations continued to dominate Kenya's labour migration landscape, reflecting sustained demand for domestic and elementary services in destination countries. The top occupation was housemaid, followed by domestic cleaners, domestic helpers and odd-job labourers. Other occupations included domestic servants, construction labourers, car washers, civil engineering labourers, farm labourers and hand packers.

This trend confirms that Kenya's migrant workforce remains largely concentrated in low-wage, low-skill sectors, primarily within household and construction services. While these opportunities provide income and employment, they also expose workers to vulnerabilities associated with informal and domestic work. The findings reinforce the need for enhanced protection mechanisms, structured pre-departure training and policies that promote a gradual transition toward higher-skilled labour mobility.

6.1.6 Top Occupations for Female Migrant Workers

Figure 3: Top ten occupations for female migrant workers, Quarter One (July–September 2025)



Source: Contract attestation records, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

The data shows that female migrant workers are heavily concentrated in domestic-related occupations. Housemaids dominate with 10,398 workers, indicating that domestic work remains the primary source of employment for women migrating for work. Other domestic roles such as domestic cleaner and domestic helper also appear, reinforcing the trend that many female migrants are engaged in household and care-related work. Hotel and hospitality opportunities exist but at significantly lower numbers, reflected in occupations such as hotel stewardess and waiter. Very few female migrants are engaged in traditionally male-dominated fields such as security, agriculture and transport, though small numbers appear in roles such as farm labourer, security guard and car driver. This distribution highlights gendered occupational segregation in labour migration, with women predominantly employed in domestic environments.

6.1.7 Top Occupations for Male Migrant Workers

Table 11: Top ten occupations for male migrant workers, Quarter One (July–September 2025)

Occupation	Number of workers
Labourer, farm	1,146
Driver, car	959
Guard, security	952
Cleaner, domestic	497
Steward, hotel	479
Driver, bus	183
Helper, domestic	77
Rider, bicycle	62
Labourer, odd-job	60
Carpenter	29

Source: Contract attestation records, State Department for Labour and Skills Development

Male migrant workers show a more diverse occupational spread across manual labour, transport, domestic support and hotel work. The leading occupation is farm labourer, indicating strong demand for male labour in agriculture. Transport-related occupations such as car driver and bus driver also feature prominently, showing the preference for men in driving roles.

Male migrant workers show a more diverse occupational spread across manual labour, transport, domestic support and hotel work. The leading occupation is farm labourer, indicating strong demand for male labour in agriculture. Transport-related occupations such as car driver and bus driver also feature prominently, showing the preference for men in driving roles. Security guard is another major employer of male migrants, reflecting gendered labour market expectations in security work. Notably, some men are also employed in domestic and hotel-related jobs such as domestic cleaner and hotel steward, though in lower numbers compared to women. Overall, the distribution suggests that male migrants are more represented in physically demanding and mobile occupations, with limited but notable participation in domestic service roles.



QUARTER 02 OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2025

6.2 QUARTER TWO:

The Quarter Two analysis is based specifically on administrative data collected at the Airport Labour Migration Desk at JKIA and MIA. The desk captures information on migrant workers departing the country for employment abroad, including their occupations, sex and destination countries, and therefore provides insights into the characteristics of outbound migrant workers at the point of departure.



6.2.1 Top Ten Occupations for Female Migrant Workers

Table 12: Top ten occupations for female migrant workers, Quarter Two (October–December 2025)

Occupation	Number of workers
Labourer, farm	1,146
Driver, car	959
Guard, security	952
Cleaner, domestic	497
Steward, hotel	479
Driver, bus	183
Helper, domestic	77
Rider, bicycle	62
Labourer, odd-job	60
Carpenter	29

Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA

The demand that Kenyan women met during the quarter was strongly concentrated in low-skilled service and domestic work. Housemaid was the occupation most in demand, followed by cleaner and labourer. Requirements were also recorded for support workers, security guards, hospitality workers and nurses.

This distribution indicates that the majority of Kenyan female migrant workers continue to secure employment in domestic and elementary service occupations. The dominance of housemaids reflects sustained demand for domestic workers in destination countries, particularly in the Middle East. Professional occupations such as nursing appear in significantly lower numbers, suggesting limited uptake of high-skilled migration pathways during the period under review.

> The data shows that male migrant workers are primarily absorbed in construction-related labour, private security services, transport and general cleaning services.

6.2.2 Top Ten Occupations for Male Migrant Workers

Table 13: Top ten occupations for male migrant workers, Quarter Two (October–December 2025)

Occupation	Number of workers
Labourer	901
Security guard	865
Cleaner	464
Driver/Rider	377
Housemaid	303
Driver	135
Hospitality	80
Rider	55
Security	38
Helper	24

Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA

The demand that Kenyan men met during the quarter was led by general labour, followed closely by private security. Cleaning and driving or riding work accounted for a further substantial share. Requirements were also recorded for housemaids, drivers, hospitality workers, riders, security personnel and helpers.

The data shows that male migrant workers are primarily absorbed in construction-related labour, private security services, transport and general cleaning services. These occupations fall largely within elementary and service categories, indicating that male migration is also predominantly low-skilled. The presence of drivers and riders suggests growing opportunities in transport and logistics sectors within destination countries.

6.2.3 Distribution of Migrant Workers by Major Occupational Groups

Table 14: Distribution of migrant workers by major occupational group, Quarter Two (October–December 2025)

Major Occupational Group	Proportion (%)
Elementary occupations	83.5
Service workers, shop and market sales workers	10.4
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	4.6
Craft and related trades workers	0.5
Professionals	0.4
Technicians and associate professionals	0.3
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	0.2
Secretarial, clerical services and related workers	0.2
Legislators, administrators and managers	0.0
Total	**100.0**

Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA

The occupational structure of migrant workers is heavily skewed toward elementary occupations, which account for 83.5 percent of all migrant workers. Service workers, shop and market sales workers represent 10.4 percent, while plant and machine operators and assemblers account for 4.6 percent.

Professional categories such as professionals (0.4 percent) and technicians and associate professionals (0.3 percent) represent a very small proportion of total migrants. Craft and related trades workers account for only 0.5 percent, while skilled agricultural workers and clerical roles each account for 0.2 percent.

This distribution highlights a significant imbalance in Kenya's labour migration profile, with a dominance of low-skilled workers and minimal representation in higher-skilled categories. The findings explain the need for targeted skills development, certification and bilateral labour agreements that promote migration of skilled and semi-skilled workers to enhance remittances and protect workers from vulnerabilities associated with low-skilled employment.



6.2.4 Top Destination Countries

Table 15: Top destination countries for migrant workers, Quarter Two (October–December 2025)

Country of Destination	Number of workers
Saudi Arabia	8,150
Qatar	2,703
Oman	1,490
United Arab Emirates	1,294
Kuwait	233
Bahrain	179
Russia	56
Iraq	19
Security	38
Helper	24

Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA

The leading destination country for migrant workers is Saudi Arabia, hosting 8,150 workers. This is followed by Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Other destinations include Bahrain, Russia and Iraq.

The findings indicate that the Middle East remains the dominant destination region for Kenyan migrant workers, particularly the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. The high concentration in a few countries suggests reliance on a narrow labour market corridor, which may expose workers to geopolitical and labour market risks. Diversification of destination markets, especially into emerging and high-income economies with demand for skilled workers, would strengthen Kenya's labour migration strategy.

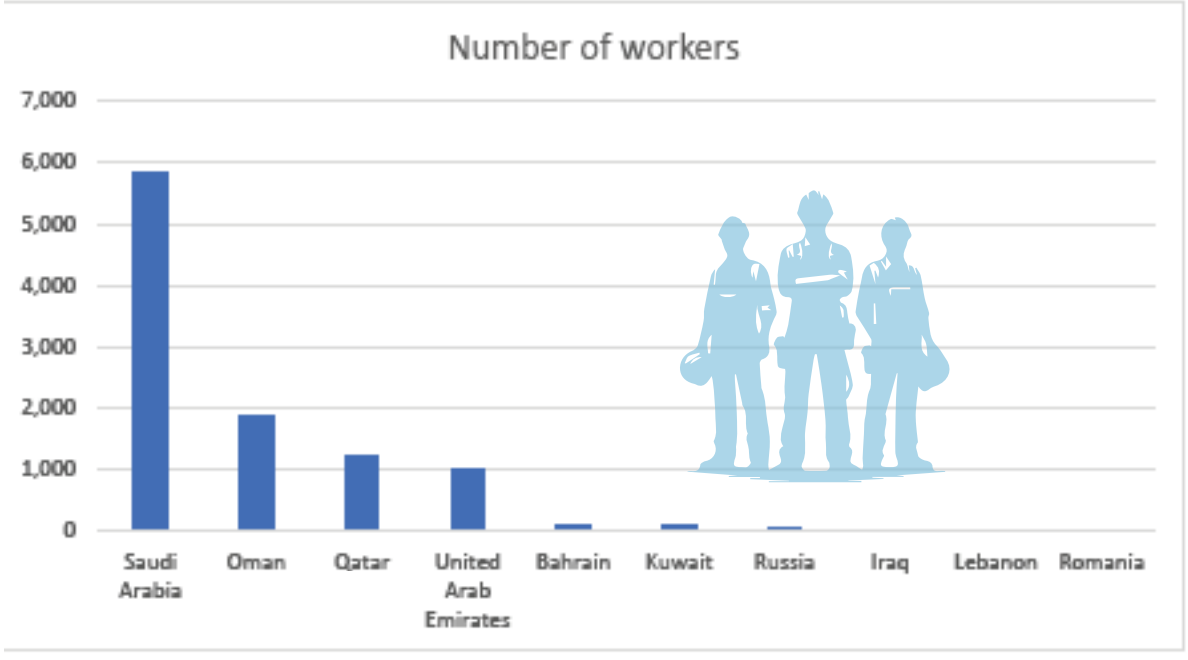
QUARTER 03 JANUARY – MARCH 2026

6.3 QUARTER THREE

The Quarter Three analysis is based on administrative data collected from the Migration Clearance desk at JKIA & MIA, where migrant workers departing for employment abroad are processed. It examines the leading destination countries, the occupations of migrant workers by sex and the distribution of migrant workers across major occupational groups.

6.3.1 Top Destination Countries for Kenyan Migrant Workers

Figure 4: Top destination countries for migrant workers, Quarter Three (January–March 2026)



Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA

During the third quarter, Saudi Arabia remained the leading destination for Kenyan migrant workers, accounting for 5,853 workers, which was significantly higher than any other destination country. Oman ranked second with 1,881 workers, followed by Qatar with 1,216 workers and the United Arab Emirates with 1,010 workers. The dominance of Gulf countries as destination markets highlights the continued demand for Kenyan labour in domestic work, security services, hospitality and other service-related occupations. Other destinations such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Russia, Iraq, Lebanon and Romania accounted for relatively small numbers of migrant workers. The findings indicate that the Middle East continues to be the primary destination region for Kenyan labour migrants.

6.3.2 Top Ten Occupations for Female Migrant Workers

Table 17: Top ten occupations for female migrant workers, Quarter Three (January–March 2026)

Occupation	Number of workers
Housemaid	7,149
Support worker	259
Cleaner	170
Housekeeper	71
Security guard	51
Labourer	31
Driver	24
Domestic worker	24
Caregiver	16
General helper	15

Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA

Demand for housemaids was by far the strongest driver of female labour migration during the quarter, drawing 7,149 Kenyan women into that occupation. This was followed by requirements for support workers, cleaners, housekeepers and security guards. Smaller numbers of women took up work as labourers, drivers, caregivers and general helpers. The findings suggest that female labour migration remains heavily concentrated in domestic and care-related occupations, particularly in Middle Eastern countries where demand for household services continues to be high. The concentration of women in a narrow range of occupations underscores the need for diversification of overseas employment opportunities through skills development and certification in other sectors.

6.3.3 Top Ten Occupations for Male Migrant Workers

Table 18: Top ten occupations for male migrant workers, Quarter Three (January–March 2026)

Occupation	Number of workers
Security guard	305
Cleaner	251
Labourer	231
Driver	169
Electrician	43
Rider	43
Livestock worker	38
General helper	36
Coffee server	34
Helper	32

Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA

The strongest demand met by Kenyan men during the quarter was for security guards, drawing 305 workers, followed by requirements for cleaners, labourers and drivers. Demand was also recorded for electricians, riders, livestock workers, general helpers, coffee servers and helpers. Unlike female migrants, who are predominantly employed in domestic work, male migrants were distributed across a wider range of occupations, particularly in security, transport, construction and service-related activities. This reflects the diversity of labour demand for Kenyan male workers in destination countries.



7,149

Demand for housemaids was by far the strongest driver of female labour migration during the quarter, drawing 7,149 Kenyan women into that occupation.



305

The strongest demand met by Kenyan men during the quarter was for security guards, drawing 305 workers, followed by requirements for cleaners, labourers and drivers.

6.3.4 Distribution of Migrant Workers by Major Occupational Groups

Table 19: Distribution of migrant workers by major occupational group, Quarter Three (January–March 2026)

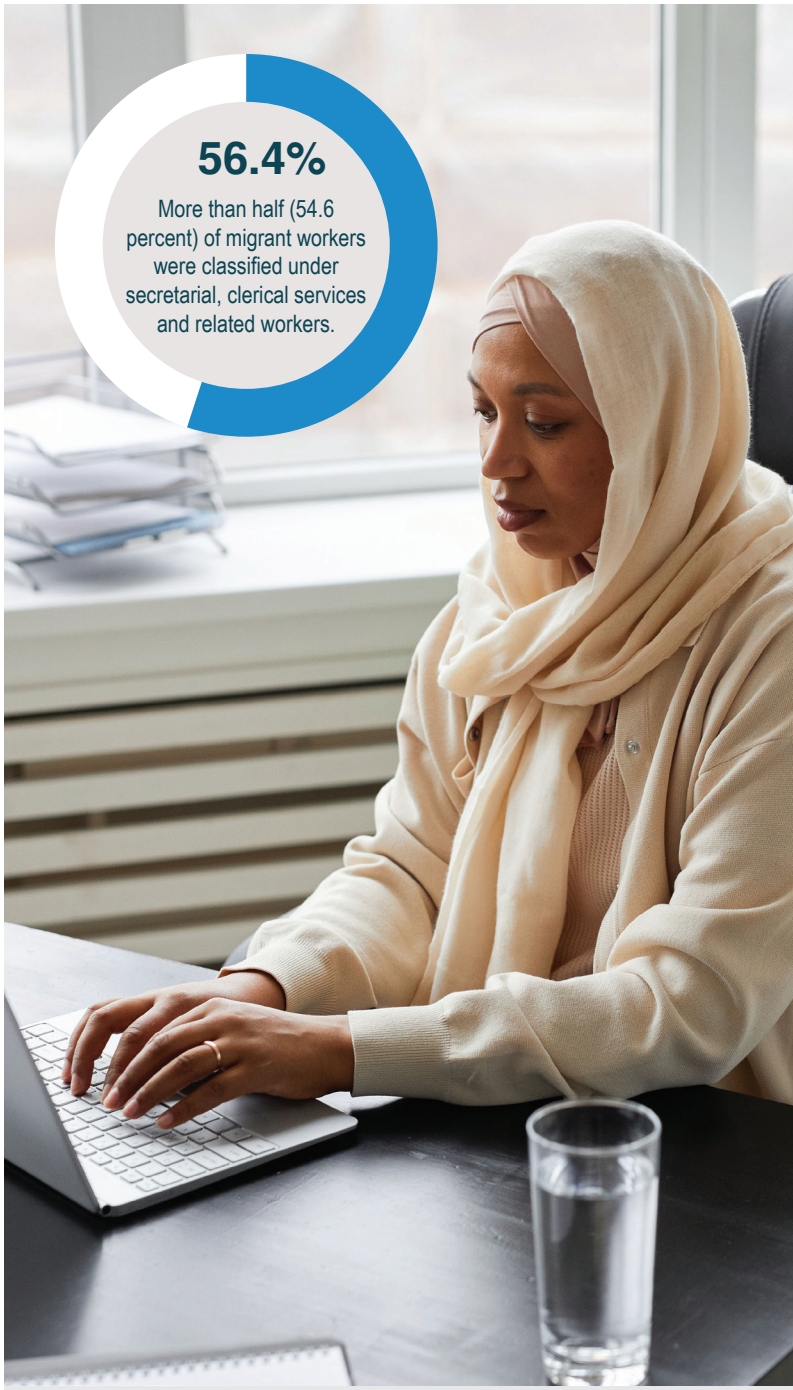
Major Occupational Group	Proportion (%)
Secretarial, clerical services and related workers	54.60
Elementary occupations	37.10
Service workers, shop and market sales workers	4.16
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	1.80
Craft and related trades workers	1.10
Technicians and associate professionals	0.69
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	0.35
Professionals	0.20
Legislators, administrators and managers	0.00
Total	**100.00**

Source: Migration Clearance Office records, JKIA

More than half (54.6 percent) of migrant workers were classified under secretarial, clerical services and related workers, while 37.1 percent were employed in elementary occupations. Service workers, shop and market sales workers accounted for 4.16 percent of migrant workers, followed by plant and machine operators and assemblers at 1.8 percent and craft and related trades workers at 1.1 percent. Technicians and associate professionals represented 0.69 percent, while skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers accounted for 0.35 percent. Professionals constituted only 0.2 percent of migrant workers, and no migrant workers were recorded under legislators, administrators and managers.

The findings indicate that Kenyan labour migration is predominantly concentrated in low- and semi-skilled occupations, with limited participation in professional and managerial occupations. This highlights the need to strengthen skills development and international recognition of qualifications to facilitate access to higher-skilled and better-paying overseas employment opportunities.

The share reported under secretarial, clerical services and related workers in this quarter departs markedly from the pattern recorded in the other three quarters, in which elementary occupations consistently accounted for the largest share.



QUARTER 04 APRIL – JUNE 2026

6.4 QUARTER FOUR

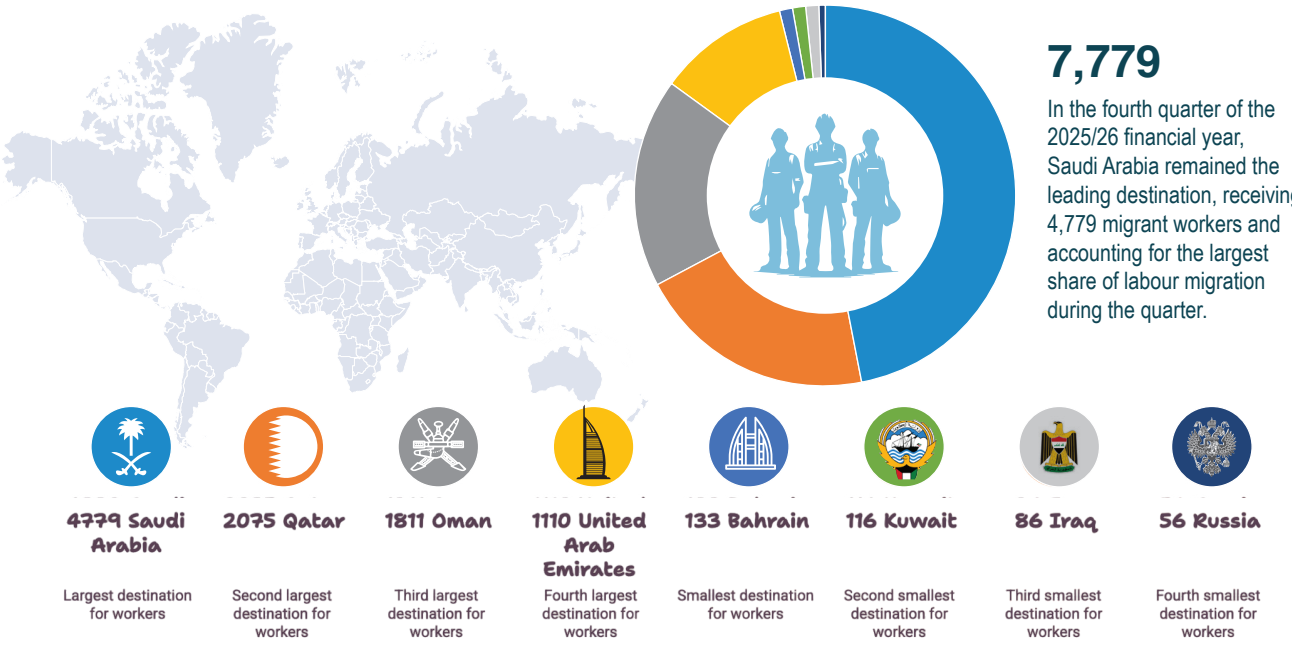
The Quarter Four analysis is based on administrative data from the Airport Labour Migration Desk at JKIA and MIA. It provides insights into the characteristics of Kenyan migrant workers deployed during the quarter, highlighting the leading destination countries, the most common occupations for male and female migrant workers, and the distribution of migrant workers by major occupational group.

6.4.1 Top Destination Countries for Migrant Workers

Table 20: Top destination countries for migrant workers, Quarter Four (April–June 2026)

Country of Destination	Number of workers
Saudi Arabia	4,779
Qatar	2,075
Oman	1,811
United Arab Emirates	1,110
Bahrain	133
Kuwait	116
Iraq	86
Russia	56

Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA



In the fourth quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, Saudi Arabia remained the leading destination, receiving 4,779 migrant workers and accounting for the largest share of labour migration during the quarter. This was followed by Qatar with 2,075 workers and Oman with 1,811 workers, while the United Arab Emirates remained another key destination with 1,110 workers. Comparatively fewer workers migrated to Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq and Russia.

The continued concentration of Kenyan migrant workers in the Gulf region reflects sustained demand for labour in domestic services, hospitality, construction, transport and other service-related sectors. The trend also demonstrates the growing role of bilateral labour agreements and government-to-government labour migration initiatives in facilitating overseas employment opportunities. However, the heavy reliance on a few destination countries presents risks associated with economic downturns, policy changes and labour market fluctuations within these countries. This reflects the need to diversify destination markets while strengthening bilateral labour agreements and enhancing mechanisms for safeguarding the welfare and rights of Kenyan migrant workers abroad.

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6.4.2 Top Occupations for Female Migrant Workers

Table 21: Top ten occupations for female migrant workers, Quarter Four (April–June 2026)

Occupation	Number of workers
Housemaid	6,685
Cleaner	336
Support worker	88
Labourer	78
Sales	44
Security guard	31
Driver	28
Sales officer	25
Domestic worker	20
Care giver	19

Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA

The demand met by Kenyan women during the fourth quarter remained overwhelmingly for domestic service labour. Housemaids constituted the largest single requirement, drawing 6,685 women and accounting for the vast majority of female migrant workers in the quarter. Demand was also recorded for cleaners, support workers, labourers, sales personnel, security guards, drivers, sales officers, domestic workers and care givers.

The occupational distribution indicates that female migrant workers continue to access employment largely within low-skilled service occupations, particularly domestic work, which remains the most accessible employment pathway in international labour markets. While these opportunities contribute significantly to employment creation and household incomes through remittances, the high concentration in domestic work highlights the need for strengthened worker protection, improved pre-departure orientation, skills certification and continuous engagement with destination countries to ensure compliance with labour standards. In addition, promoting training in specialised caregiving, hospitality, healthcare support and other market-driven skills could expand employment opportunities for women into higher-skilled and better-remunerated occupations.

6.4.3 Top Occupations for Male Migrant Workers

Table 22: Top ten occupations for male migrant workers, Quarter Four (April–June 2026)

Occupation	Number of workers
Cleaner	444
Labourer	424
Security guard	346
Driver	188
Rider	172
Helper	60
Security	53
Bike rider	44
Butcher	43
Sales officer	32

Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA

The demand met by Kenyan men during the quarter was led by cleaning work, followed closely by general labour and private security. Requirements were also recorded for drivers, riders, helpers, security personnel, bike riders, butchers and sales officers.

The findings show that male migrant workers were predominantly employed in elementary and service-related occupations requiring practical and manual skills. Demand remained strong for workers in cleaning services, security, transport and general labour, reflecting labour shortages in these occupations within destination countries. The occupational profile presents opportunities for expanding technical and vocational education and training programmes aligned to international labour market needs. Strengthening competency-based training, occupational certification and language proficiency programmes would enhance the competitiveness of Kenyan workers and facilitate access to higher-skilled occupations with improved wages and career progression.

6.4.4 Number of Migrant Workers by Major Occupational Group

Table 23: Number of migrant workers by major occupational group, Quarter Four (April–June 2026)

Major Occupational Group	Number of workers
Elementary occupations	8,719
Service workers, shop and market sales workers	816
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	280
Technicians and associate professionals	240
Craft and related trades workers	209
Professionals	68
Secretarial, clerical services and related workers	65
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	14
Legislators, administrators and managers	6
Total	**10,417**

Source: labour Migration clearance records, JKIA and MIA

The distribution of migrant workers by major occupational group reveals a significant concentration in elementary occupations, which accounted for 8,719 workers, representing the overwhelming majority of all migrant workers during the quarter. This was followed by service workers, shop and market sales workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, technicians and associate professionals, and craft and related trades workers. Comparatively smaller numbers were recorded among professionals, secretarial, clerical services and related workers, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, and legislators, administrators and managers.

The findings demonstrate that Kenya's labour migration continues to be driven primarily by demand for low-skilled and semi-skilled workers. Although these employment opportunities contribute to reducing domestic unemployment and increasing remittance inflows, the limited participation of professionals and highly skilled workers suggests untapped potential within international labour markets. Expanding investments in technical skills development, professional certification, language training and international accreditation would position Kenyan workers to access higher-skilled occupations that offer better wages, improved working conditions and enhanced career mobility.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Diversify Labour Migration Destination Markets

The Government should actively pursue new labour migration corridors beyond the Gulf Cooperation Council

7.2 Expand Bilateral Labour Agreements to Cover Skilled Occupations

Existing bilateral labour agreements should be reviewed and expanded to include explicit provisions for professional, technical and managerial occupations

7.3 Invest in Market-Responsive Skills Development and Certification

Technical and vocational education and training programmes should be aligned to documented international labour demand, with emphasis on competency-based training, occupational certification, language proficiency and international accreditation.

7.4 Strengthen Labour Migration Data Systems

The need to strengthen, the administrative data systems underpinning labour migration reporting. Priority actions include full digitalisation and integration of Airport Labour Migration Desk records with attestation records

8. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of labour migration data across the four quarters of the 2025/26 financial year confirms that Kenya's labour migration remains highly concentrated in the Gulf region, with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates accounting for the vast majority of outbound workers in every reporting period. Most migrants were engaged in low- and semi-skilled occupations, particularly domestic service, cleaning, security, general labour and transport. Female migrant workers were overwhelmingly employed as housemaids in all four quarters, while male migrant workers occupied a somewhat broader but similarly low-skilled range of occupations.

Labour migration continued throughout the year to serve as an important source of employment for Kenyan workers and of foreign exchange earnings for the national economy.



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