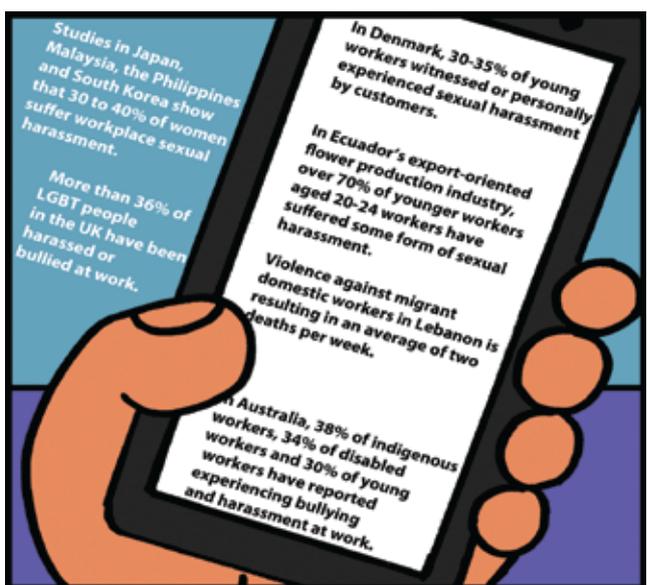
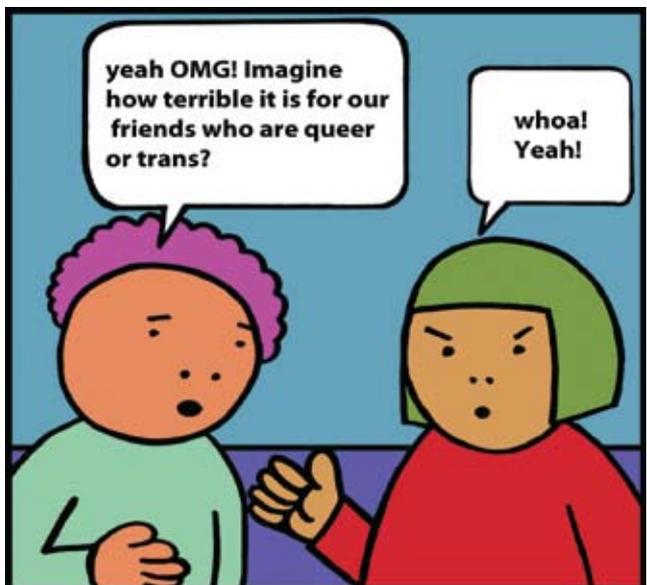
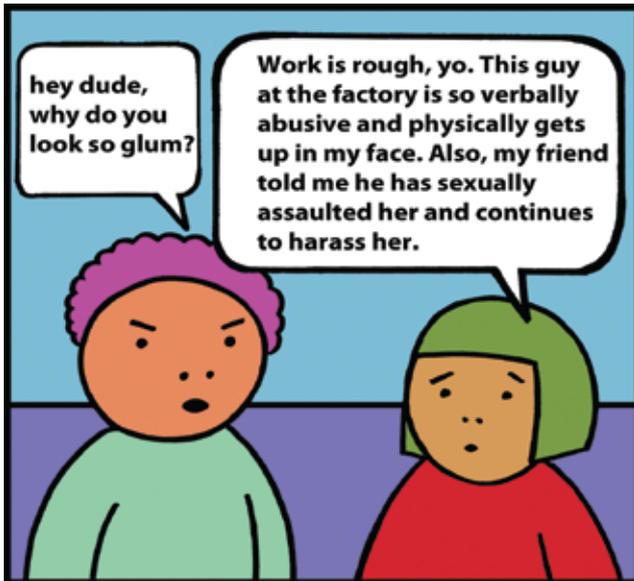




**PROTECTING THE LABOUR RIGHTS OF YOUNG WORKERS:**  
Support an international standard on workplace violence and harassment





# Protecting young people's rights at work: time for an international Convention

There is currently no internationally agreed law that deals with the many different forms of gender-based violence (GBV) at work. The ILO's International Labour Conference in June 2019 will give governments an opportunity to demonstrate their political will to address GBV at work by ratifying a new legally binding International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention and Recommendation on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. If signed, such a convention will contribute significantly to helping young workers in defending their labour rights across all sectors and in all regions.<sup>1</sup>

Strengthening legal protections against GBV at work is particularly important for young workers, 77% of whom are in informal employment<sup>2</sup>. In addition to a number of occupational health and safety risks, young workers are more targeted for violence and harassment at work because of a combination of different factors, including conditions of work, type of work, employment in the informal sector, precarious, short term work, and low bargaining power.<sup>3</sup>

Informal sector workers are subjected to violence from a diverse range of actors, such as public officials, police, fellow workers, household members, customers, criminals or employers.<sup>4</sup> Further victimisation of informal workers occurs because of the criminalisation of informal work. WIEGO, a global movement of women informal workers notes that *"often, the urban working poor are perceived as the cause of violence but ignored as the victims of violence."*<sup>5</sup>

## Young workers and Gender Based Violence at Work

- # Young women working in economic processing zones are particularly vulnerable to violence and sexual abuse in factories, in company accommodation or when travelling to work.<sup>6</sup>
- # Globally, women make up **83%** of domestic workers and one in 25 women workers is a domestic worker. In 2008, **12%** of 15-17 year old girls in employment were domestic workers.<sup>7</sup> ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation) describes abuse and exploitation of domestic workers as systematic.
- # Violence in the health and social care sector is widespread and constitutes at least **25%** of all GBV at work.<sup>8</sup>
- # In Kenya, a study among 400 workers in tea growing and processing revealed that more than **90%** had experienced or observed sexual abuse at their workplace.<sup>9</sup>
- # In Ecuador's export-oriented flower production industry, over 55% of workers have suffered some form of sexual harassment, and for younger workers aged 20-24 the figure is as high as **70%**.
- # In Bangladesh, over **60%** of female garment workers have been intimidated or threatened with violence at work.<sup>10</sup>
- # In a 2013 study amongst men, women and transgender sex workers in South Africa, **50%** reported having experienced violence by police or clients including murder, assault, rape and arrest.<sup>11</sup>
- # In Iceland, a study found the majority of workers who had experienced sexual harassment were below the age of 24.<sup>12</sup>
- # In Australia, **38%** of indigenous workers, **34%** of disabled workers and **30%** of young workers have reported experiencing bullying and harassment at work.<sup>13</sup>
- # More than one in three (**36%**) of LGBT people in the UK have been harassed or bullied at work.<sup>14</sup>

Source: ITUC-CSI Factsheet on Gender Based Violence in the World of Work <https://www.ituc-csi.org/gbv-factsheet>

# Violence is not part of the Job!

## Join the campaign for an international Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work

Through the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) led global campaign, “Stop Gender Based Violence at Work”, trade unions and allied social movements, including women’s rights organisations are lobbying their governments to support a new legally binding international convention that will be comprehensive enough to address the full range of GBV at work.

Rallying support for an ILO Convention and Recommendation is a great opportunity to heighten awareness on GBV, expose its harmful impacts, collectively empower young workers and end impunity for GBV at work.

The *Stop GBV at Work* Campaign is demanding an international legally binding set of instruments on Violence and Harassment at Work that will include:

- A broad definition of violence and harassment in the world of work in its diverse and multiple forms, including physical abuse and assault, sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault; verbal abuse; bullying; psychological abuse and intimidation; sexual harassment; and threats of violence and stalking;
- A strong focus on gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work;
- Provisions to prevent violence and harassment in the world of work;
- Measures to protect and support workers affected by violence and harassment in the world of work, without discrimination as to race, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, gender identity, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, migrant or refugee status, age or disability, or place of work – whether in the formal or informal economy;
- A description of the workers disproportionately affected by violence and harassment in the world of work such as women, LGBTI workers, indigenous workers, migrant workers, racialised workers, workers living with HIV/AIDS and disabilities, workers in the informal economy and people trapped in forced and child labour;
- Inclusion of jobseekers and applicants, volunteers, laid-off and suspended workers, interns and apprentices;
- Measures to address the impact of domestic violence in the world of work;
- A broad definition of the “world of work”, which could include, for example, public and private spaces where they are a place of work; the commute to and from work; and work-related travel, training or social events;
- Provision of various employment and social security rights for complainants, including the right to reduce or reorganise working hours; and
- Specific provision for the appropriate and sensitive treatment of complainants of violence and harassment, including protection from reprisals or penalties for making the complaint.

*Source: Campaign Toolkit: Stop gender-based violence at work - support an ILO Convention*

# No decent work with GBV at work

Decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; security in the workplace and social protection for families; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men, including protection from and redress against gender based violence at work. The importance of decent work in achieving sustainable development is highlighted by SDG 8 which aims to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

## How can young people get involved?

*“It is crucial now, more than ever, for young people to be at the forefront of activism and social transformation. It is our mission to create fair societies and safe and healthy environments for all – in our workplaces, schools, universities, homes and communities. If we all play our part, the change will be enormous.”<sup>15</sup>*

Young people can make a difference by learning about the ITUC Campaign Toolkit and Briefing Paper, which seek to (1) build critical support for the adoption of an ILO Convention, accompanied by a Recommendation, and (2) mobilise and strengthen trade union action in eradicating GBV from the world of work.

The Campaign Toolkit provides a set of actions you can take, including:

1. Know about the ILO’s:
  - yellow report and proposed conclusions
  - the law and practice report (white report)
  - the report of the ILO Tripartite Meeting of Experts.

These contain valuable arguments on why an international instrument(s) is needed and what such an instrument(s) could cover:

2. Signing up to the campaign and sharing information about your campaign work by sending an email to [equality@ituc-csi.org](mailto:equality@ituc-csi.org), or post it on the campaign Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/StopGBVatWork/>
3. Explaining to your youth networks how these ILO standards could help them in their work to organise around this issue;
4. Asking potential allies to support your campaign and joining local trade union action;
5. Engaging your government and employer on the Convention using the strategies recommended in the ITUC Campaign Toolkit.
6. Join the campaign online: **#StopGBVatWork #SafeSpaces4Youth #PSI4Youth #HearMeToo #ILOEndGBV**

## (Endnotes)

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8. Public Services International 2018 Tackling Violence in the Health Sector: A Trade Union Response <http://www.world-psi.org/en/node/9513>
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12. *Nordic Union – Report on sexual harassment (2016)*
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