



**Stop Gender Based
Violence at work!**

Support an ILO Convention!



ITUC CSI IGB

International Trade Union Confederation



What is gender based-violence?

There is no single universally agreed definition of gender-based violence. GBV can be any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

GBV is a reflection of unequal power relations between women and men in society and at work. GBV is a serious human rights violation.

GBV in the world of work

Gender-based violence (GBV) at work, whether occurring at the actual place of work or on the way to and from work, can take on multiple forms such as:

- Physical abuse including assault, battery, attempted murder and murder
- Sexual violence including rape and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Verbal and sexist abuse
- Bullying
- Coercion
- Psychological abuse, intimidation and threats of violence
- Economic and financial abuse
- Stalking

GBV at work affects women in many different ways. A woman might lose her job for challenging a violent colleague. She might lose her job due to being absent from work because of GBV. She might be less able to concentrate, or work productively, and her pay, position and job security may be threatened as a result. A woman might 'put up' with violent behaviour out of desperation to keep her job. In worst cases, GBV at work can contribute to the death of a worker herself, or to the unborn child of the worker.



The risk of exposure to violence is often greater in jobs and sectors where work is informal or precarious, where wages are low, where workers are stopped from joining or forming trade unions and where management accountability is low.

Segregation into jobs or occupations which are mainly female or mainly male also often increases the risk of exposure to gender-based violence, whether from colleagues or from members of the public. Women are overrepresented in jobs in domestic work, hospitality, health and social care, the garment and textile industry, tea and flower plantations and at the bottom of the global supply chains of multinational companies. Women in male-dominated sectors such as construction and transport can also be more exposed to forms of GBV.

In addition to GBV that happens at work, domestic violence can also spill over into the workplace, for example through prolonged/or frequent absenteeism, poor concentration and productivity, or even through being stalked at the workplace by a violent partner.





- Thirty-five per cent of women worldwide have experienced violence whether physical and/or sexual.
- Between 40 and 50 per cent of women experience unwanted sexual advances, physical contact or other forms of sexual harassment at work.

Campaigning for change!

Trade unions, together with feminist organisations and other civil society allies, are campaigning for a ground-breaking International Labour Convention on gender-based violence in the world of work.

Why there is a need for an ILO standard on GBV?

Workplaces are an important environment in which to address violence. GBV in the world of work is one of the most important and widespread obstacles to women's economic empowerment, autonomy and independence – and to the realisation of gender equality.

There is currently no internationally agreed law that deals with the many different forms of gender-based violence in the workplace!

An ILO Convention and Recommendation would send a strong message that violence is NOT part of the job. It would help to give workers voice to stand up against gender-based violence, and negotiate collective agreements that address GBV. It would help workers and employers agree on policies to prevent and address GBV in the workplace. It would empower women workers to take action.



Join the campaign!

- Form coalitions of trade unions, feminist groups, migrants' rights groups and other civil society allies to raise awareness of the impact of GBV at work and the forms that it takes.
- Collect stories from workers about how GBV at work affects them
- Call meetings with your government to explain why action is needed at the international and national level to outlaw gender-based violence at work – you can use the arguments set out on this briefing.
- Call meetings with employers and their associations to explain how an international standard on GBV would benefit business and industrial relations and why employers should support such a standard – again, you make use of the arguments set out in this briefing.
- Send or email a letter or a petition to the key government and independent or opposition Members of Parliament calling for an ILO Convention on gender-based violence.
- Meet with your Ministers of Labour and Women's affairs and get their support.
- Hold meetings with membership to inform them of the importance of the issue and what they can do to make a difference at the workplace, national and internal levels.
- Make sure to include issues of gender-based violence on your union's bargaining agenda.
- Conduct workplace surveys on women workers' experiences of gender-based violence and use the results to inform your discussions with governments and employers, and other actors, as well as your organising and bargaining agendas. Please also inform ITUC of the results: equality@ituc-csi.org
- Engage male champions of change (e.g., from amongst your membership, from local/national media, politicians, the world of sports, fathers, etc.)



- Use the press and social media (Twitter, Facebook, blogs, etc.) to highlight and spread awareness of the extent of the problem and the need for an international labour standard on gender-based violence.
- Please keep the ITUC informed of your campaigns: equality@ituc-csi.org. We will add them to our end gender-based violence hub.

Arguments in support of an ILO standard

Why should governments support an ILO standard on GBV?

- It would contribute to the realisation of women's rights.
- It would contribute to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals).
- It would reduce women's vulnerability to exposure to GBV and increase their economic independence and productivity at work.
- It would save money. Domestic and workplace violence costs the economy billions of dollars in health care, court cases, lost wages, and sick pay. For example, in Australia alone it has been estimated that gender-based violence will cost the economy AUD 15.6 billion by 2021-2022 unless effective action is taken to prevent this.
- It would contribute significantly to realising decent work objectives.
- It would help to improve health and safety at work and improve industrial relations.
- It would assist in building greater consistency into legal frameworks aimed at eradicating gender-based violence and promoting women's human rights.

**NO MORE WORDS !
TIME 4 ACTION**



Why should employers support an ILO standard on GBV?

- An ILO standard on GBV would benefit employers, the working environment and industrial relations by:
- Ensuring consultation with the social partners in the drafting of the legislation;
- Better defining what constitutes GBV at work;
- Giving clear guidance to employers and workers concerning their responsibilities to prevent, address and redress GBV at work;
- Assisting employers with crafting well-designed human resource policies that contain clear processes for preventing GBV and addressing the consequences of GBV in the world of work – including the impact of domestic violence on the workplace;
- Assisting employers in establishing clear procedures for reporting grievances and complaints;
- Providing guidance to employers on investigating and handling complaints of GBV at work;
- Better defining the extent of employers' liability (vicarious and direct) for GBV at work;
- Creating a workplace culture where GBV is not tolerated;
- Improving safety at work and reducing employers' economic losses associated with gender-based violence (e.g., through absenteeism, loss of productivity, court/tribunal cases, compensation orders); and
- Reducing the risk of bad publicity and reputational damage due to incidents of GBV.

What could an ILO Convention possibly cover?

- A broad definition of gender-based violence at work which would include the diverse forms of violence endured by workers at their workplace;
- Provisions to prevent gender-based violence at work;



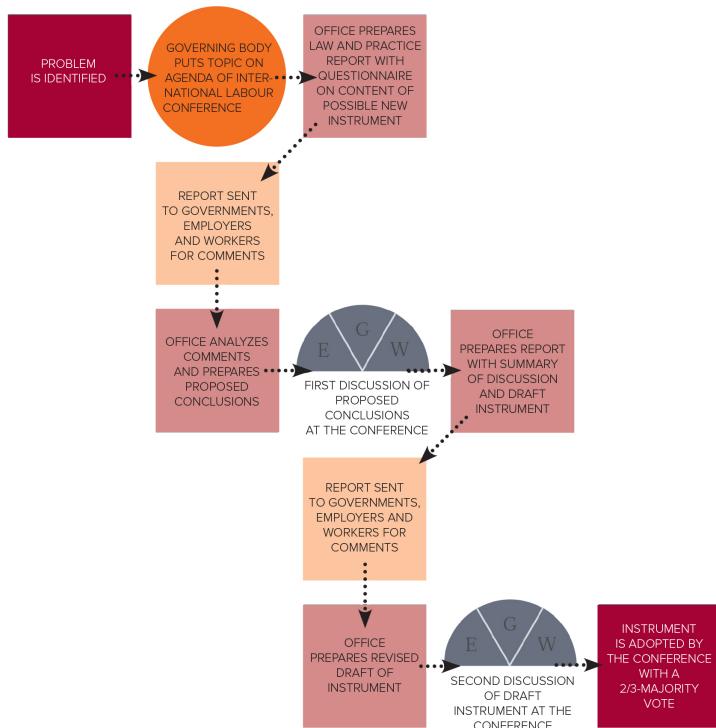
- Measures to protect and support workers affected by gender-based violence;
- A description of the groups most affected by gender-based violence: LGBT persons, indigenous and migrant workers, workers living with HIV/AIDS and disabilities, people trapped in forced and child labour;
- Protection of all workers without discrimination as to race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, marital status, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, migrant or refugee status, age or disability, or place of work;
- Recognition of the impact of domestic violence on the workplace;
- Invoking a broad definition of the “workplace”;
- Provision of various employment and social security rights for complainants, including the right to reduce or reorganise working hours; and
- Making of a specific provision for the appropriate and sensitive treatment of complainants of violence who suffer from multiple forms of discrimination, prohibiting employers from discriminating against them or penalising them for the consequences of the abuse.





ILO Process

How an international labour standard is adopted





Resources and tools:

- ITUC global call to support an ILO Convention on gender-based violence: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/unions-call-for-ilo-standard-on>
- Domestic and workplace violence costs the economy millions of dollars in health care, court cases, lost wages, and sick pay. Check out ITUC's report in 2009 - Part II: Who Bears the Costs? <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-report-gender-in-equality-in>
- Equal Times - articles: Violence against women, the global fight back: <http://www.equaltimes.org/violence-against-women-in-the-global>
- Flyer: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/leaflet_english.pdf
- Order buttons at equality@ituc-csi.org
- The agreed conclusions of the 57th session of the United Nations Commission of the Status of Women (2013) call on governments to:

"take measures to ensure that all workplaces are free from discrimination and exploitation, violence, and sexual harassment and bullying, and that they address discrimination and violence against women and girls, as appropriate, through measures such as regulatory and oversight frameworks and reforms, collective agreements, codes of conduct, including appropriate disciplinary measures, protocols and procedures, referral of cases of violence to health services for treatment and police for investigation; as well as through awareness-raising and capacity-building, in collaboration with employers, unions and workers, including workplace services and flexibility for victims and survivors": <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/57sess.htm#ac>



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