

Addressing labour exploitation of women workers through taking forward the outcomes of the Global Tribunal of Women Workers

Part D: Freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation



University of
Nottingham
Rights Lab



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**GLOBAL SOUTH
WOMEN'S FORUM**
ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

Addressing labour exploitation of women workers through taking forward the outcomes of the Global Tribunal of Women Workers

A toolkit for advocacy by women's human rights organisations in South and Southeast Asia advancing gender equality in the world of work

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Authorship and acknowledgements

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This toolkit is part of a project that the Rights Lab, University of Nottingham conducted in partnership with IWRAP Asia Pacific, to understand the forms of labour exploitation in specific countries in South and Southeast Asia that create the conditions for modern slavery to thrive.

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Table of abbreviations

CBA	Collective bargaining agreement
CEACR	ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CESCR	United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CFA	ILO Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA)
EPZs	Export Processing Zones
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
JWG	Jury Working Group
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
NUWHSAS	National Union of Workers in Hospital Support and Allied Services
OHCHR	UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SGSF	Sommilito Garments Sramik Federation
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

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1. About the toolkit

This toolkit is a collection of materials from the Global Tribunal on Women Workers (“the Tribunal”), designed to assist advocacy organisations and interested individuals in undertaking activities to take forward the outcomes of the Tribunal. The toolkit is part of a project that the Rights Lab, University of Nottingham conducted in partnership with IWRAW Asia Pacific, to understand the forms of labour exploitation in specific countries in South and Southeast Asia that create the conditions for modern slavery to thrive.

The toolkit provides information on:

- 1) The international human rights and labour laws that protect women workers from exploitation.
- 2) The key issues that women discussed at the Tribunal.
- 3) The testimonies presented by witnesses at the Tribunal.
- 4) The findings and recommendations of Jury Working Groups presiding at the Tribunal.
- 5) The areas for law and policy advocacy identified by organisations to take forward the Tribunal outcomes.

The toolkit is constructed as follows:

- › **Part A:** Introduction to the Global Tribunal of Women Workers and the international conventions applicable to the human and labour rights of women workers
- › **Part B:** Ending gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work
- › **Part C:** Wage inequality, living wage, and equal pay for work of equal value
- › **Part D** (this part): Freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation
- › **Part E:** Care work, social protection, decent work, and informalisation
- › **Part F:** Health rights, including occupational health and safety, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health and rights

1.1. Who should use the toolkit?

This toolkit can be used by women’s rights organisations, trade unions, legal advocates, and activists to identify the relevant international and regional human rights and labour rights instruments protecting freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation. It provides detailed guidance on the use of international norms and conventions to enforce rights of women workers to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and unionisation in the workplace.

Table 1: Overview of content

1. Relevant international human rights and labour rights instruments	This section provides a list of the relevant international and regional human rights and labour rights instruments relevant to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation.
2. Key international norms relevant to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and unionisation	This section reviews key international norms applicable to the issue of freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation.
3. Specific challenges faced by women workers in accessing the right to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and unionisation	This section highlights key challenges faced by women workers in accessing the right to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and unionisation, including obstacles faced by specific groups of women workers.
4. Testimony about rights violations presented to the Global Tribunal of Women Workers	This section outlines the rights violations identified by witnesses providing testimony at the Global Tribunal of Women Workers relevant to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation.
5. Findings and recommendations of the Jury Working Group	This section summarises key findings and recommendations of the Jury Working Group on freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation, with key takeaways for governments, businesses, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, and multilateral agencies.
6. Areas for law and policy advocacy identified by organisations to take forward the Global Tribunal recommendations	This section presents examples of good practice and advocacy by organisations that participated in the Global Tribunal, and key commitments from these organisations to take forward the recommendations of the Jury Working Group.

2. Relevant international human rights and labour rights instruments

This section provides a list of the relevant international and regional human rights and labour rights instruments relevant to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation.

This list reflects only instruments relevant to this thematic area. Other general instruments applicable to women workers in general can be found in Part A of this Toolkit.

UN Conventions

- › Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 (Article 20)
- › International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (ICCPR) (Article 22(1))
- › International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 (ICESCR) (Article 8)
- › Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 18: The Right to Work (24 November 2008)

Labour Standards

- › ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998)
- › ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (1948)
- › ILO Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (1949)
- › ILO Convention No. 154 on Collective Bargaining (1981)
- › ILO Collective Bargaining Recommendation 163 (1981)
- › ILO Convention 11 on Right of Association (Agriculture) 1921
- › ILO Convention 84 on Right of Association (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention
- › ILO Convention 135 on Workers Representatives (1971)
- › ILO Workers' Representatives Recommendation 143 (1971)
- › ILO Convention 141 on Rural Workers' Organisations (1975)
- › ILO Rural Workers' Organisations Recommendation 149 (1975)
- › ILO Convention No. 159 on Labour Relations (Public Service) 1978
- › ILO Labour Relations (Public Service) Recommendation 159 (1978)
- › ILO Collective Agreements Recommendation 91 (1951)
- › ILO Co-operation at the Level of the Undertaking Recommendation 94 (1952)
- › ILO Consultation (Industrial and National Levels) Recommendation 113 (1960)
- › ILO Communications within the Undertaking Recommendation 129 (1967)
- › ILO Examination of Grievances Recommendation 130 (1967)

3. Key international norms relevant to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and unionisation

This section reviews key international norms applicable to the issue of freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation.

3.1. The right to freedom of association and collective bargaining

Freedom of association is a **fundamental human right for workers and employers** guaranteed in several United Nations human rights instruments.

Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (UDHR):

- (1) *Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.*
- (2) *No one may be compelled to belong to an association.*

Article 22(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (ICCPR):

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the rights to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests”.

Article 8 (1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 (ICESCR):

The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure:

- (a) *The right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned, for the promotion and protection of his economic and social interests. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others;*
- (b) *The right of trade unions to establish national federations or confederations and the right of the latter to form or join international trade-union organizations;*
- (c) *The right of trade unions to function freely subject to no limitations other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others;*
- (d) *The right to strike, provided that it is exercised in conformity with the laws of the particular country.*

This right is defined as follows in ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (1948), article 2:

“Workers and employers, without distinction whatsoever, shall have the right to establish and, subject only to the rules of the organisation concerned, to join organisations of their own choosing without previous authorisation.”

Freedom of association is the enabling right that allows for ‘effective participation of non-state actors in economic and social policy, lying at the heart of democracy and the rule of law.’¹ The ICESCR makes it clear that only restrictions prescribed by law, and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others can be imposed on the individual and collective rights (of workers, employers and organisations) that it protects. An ‘organisation’ is defined as ‘any organisation of workers or of employers for furthering and defending the interests of workers or of employers.’²

Freedom of association is also a means by which the right to work guaranteed in the ICESCR is realised. This is also referred to as the right to unionisation, according to the ICESCR Committee in its General Comment No. 18 on the right to work.³

Freedom of association and the collective bargaining principles and rights guaranteed in ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (1948) and ILO Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (1949) are part of the core principles and rights that member States of the ILO must comply with regardless of whether they have ratified them or not.⁴ The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up (1998), as amended in 2022, makes it clear that all ILO Members, even if they have not ratified the Conventions in question, have an obligation, arising from the very fact of membership in the Organisation, to respect, to promote and to realise the principles concerning the fundamental rights which are the subject of the respective Conventions. These fundamental rights are:

- a) Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- b) The elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;
- c) The effective abolition of child labour;
- d) The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation; and
- e) A safe and healthy working environment.

For workers and their organisations conducting advocacy, this means that the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining can be asserted against all governments.

Collective bargaining is directly related to freedom of association and the right to unionise. It is rooted in the ILO Constitution and reaffirmed in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental and Rights at Work and plays a fundamental role in the formulation of regional, national and organisation-level employment policies.⁵ The ILO Convention on Collective Bargaining, 1981 (No.154) [C154](#) (article 2) defines “collective bargaining” as:

...all negotiations which take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organisations, on the one hand, and one or more workers' organisations, on the other, for:

- (a) determining working conditions and terms of employment; and/or
 - (b) regulating relations between employers and workers; and/or
 - (c) regulating relations between employers or their organisations and a workers' organisation or workers' organisations.
-

¹ ILO, Decent work for sustainable development (DW4SD) Resource Platform: Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining, at <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/dw4sd/themes/freedom-of-association/lang--en/index.html>.

² Article 10, ILO Convention on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No.87)

³ Available at

[https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=4slQ6QSmIBEDzFEovLCuW1a0Szab0oXTdlmnsJZZVQfUKxXVid7Dae%2FCu%2B13J25Nha7I9NlwYZ%2FTmK57O%2FSr7TB2hbCAidyVu5x7XcqiNXn44LZ52C%2BikX8AGQrVylc#:~:text=The%20International%20Covenant%20on%20Economic%2C%20Social%20and%20Cultural%20Rights%20\(ICESCR,inherent%20part%20of%20human%20Dignity.](https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=4slQ6QSmIBEDzFEovLCuW1a0Szab0oXTdlmnsJZZVQfUKxXVid7Dae%2FCu%2B13J25Nha7I9NlwYZ%2FTmK57O%2FSr7TB2hbCAidyVu5x7XcqiNXn44LZ52C%2BikX8AGQrVylc#:~:text=The%20International%20Covenant%20on%20Economic%2C%20Social%20and%20Cultural%20Rights%20(ICESCR,inherent%20part%20of%20human%20Dignity.)

⁴ [ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work \(1998, revised 2022\)](#). See Part A of this toolkit for references to ILO core or fundamental standards.

⁵ Para 39, CESCR General Comment No. 18.

The right to free and voluntary collective bargaining guaranteed in Convention No.154 applies to *all* branches of economic activity (article 1).

Under Convention No. 98 (article 1) workers are also protected from anti-union discrimination, which includes employment that is conditional on not joining, or leaving, a trade union, or dismissal or prejudice to workers as a result of their union membership or activities. It is also important to note (in the context of employer-aligned worker's committees in garment factories in Export Processing Zones) that article 2 (2) of Convention No.98 considers this to be interference with trade unions.⁶

Convention No. 98 (article 3) requires States to establish institutional machinery appropriate to national conditions for the purpose of ensuring respect for the right to organise of both workers and employers. States should also provide for the rights of workers' representatives to effective protection from prejudicial acts in the world of work and must be offered facilities, in addition to necessary time off from work without losing any benefits, to carry out their representation functions.⁷

Violations of the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining can be reported to the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA), which consists of an independent chairperson and three representatives each from government, workers' organisations, and employers' organisations.

The ILO has also established labour standards applicable to specific categories of workers to ensure their rights to association and unionisation. This includes rights guaranteed for agricultural workers,⁸ rural workers,⁹ workers in non-metropolitan territories,¹⁰ public service workers,¹¹ and migrant workers.¹²

3.2. Role of workers' organisations, trade unions and collective bargaining in advancing gender equality

Trade unions facilitate democracy in the world of work. Similarly, collective bargaining is a vital means through which stakeholders in the world of work can ensure effective participation and social dialogue. Given the broad range of issues collective bargaining can cover, the right to collective bargaining, coupled with the foundational freedom of association and right to unionisation can have far reaching impacts on achieving gender equality in the world of work and ending the labour exploitation of women workers.

Trade unions are placed in a unique position between employers and the government on the one hand, and workers they represent on the other, to negotiate for better conditions of work for women, in addition to pushing for more gender-inclusive labour policies more broadly. Women's interests must be represented, and they must be allowed to actively participate in decision-making that affects their lives.

Trade unions and workers' organisations are pivotal in collective bargaining to advance the following fundamental rights of women workers:¹³

⁶ Article 2 (1.) Workers' and employers' organisations shall enjoy adequate protection against any acts of interference by each other or each other's agents or members in their establishment, functioning or administration. (2.) In particular, acts which are designed to promote the establishment of workers' organisations under the domination of employers or employers' organisations, or to support workers' organisations by financial or other means, with the object of placing such organisations under the control of employers or employers' organisations, shall be deemed to constitute acts of interference within the meaning of this Article.

⁷ See Article 1, ILO Convention on Workers' Representatives, 1971 (No.135)) and Part IV, ILO Workers' Representatives Recommendation, 1971(No.143)

⁸ ILO Convention on Right of Association (Agriculture), 1921 (No.11).

⁹ ILO Convention on Rural Workers' Organisations, 1975 (No 141).

¹⁰ ILO Convention on Right of Association (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947 (No.84).

¹¹ ILO Convention on Labour Relations (Public Service), 1978 (No.159).

¹² International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families 1990.

¹³ See generally ILO, *Empowering Women at Work: Trade Union Policies and Practices for Gender Equality* (2020).

Equal pay for work of equal value and closing the gender pay gap¹⁴

Trade unions can negotiate for collectively regulated wage structures, which have been associated with reducing direct gender pay discrimination.¹⁵ Similarly, undervaluation of jobs can be better addressed through collective action. Other actions that unions can take include advocating for and implementing gender-sensitive processes of job grading. Related measures include advocating for family-friendly work policies that help enhance work-life balance and encourage women to stay in the workforce. For instance, workers' organisations can play an important role by conducting gender pay audits and developing evidence and grievance-based policies at organisational level. The ILO notes that pay audits have been more effective when there has been trade union involvement in monitoring and evaluation processes.¹⁶ It also notes the impact of different 'levels and modalities of collective bargaining' on the gender pay gap, noting that more centralised collective bargaining processes result in smaller gender pay gaps.¹⁷

Workers' and employers' organisations play a vital role in protecting workers from violence and harassment in the world of work. The ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) recognises this crucial role employers' and workers' organisations play—particularly in recognising, responding to, and addressing the impacts of domestic violence. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) #RatifyC190 campaign, for example, brought unions all over the world together to demand governments ratify C190. The campaign seeks to ensure wide ratification and effective implementation of C190, mobilising and strengthening trade union action for the elimination of gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work, and raising public awareness of the convention.¹⁸

Non-discrimination in employment

Trade unions play a crucial role in ensuring non-discrimination in employment. This would include measures to increase women leadership and membership in workers' organisations. An example of a successful campaign to achieve this is the 'Count Us In!' campaign steered by the Women's Committee of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in 2012, which campaigned for at least 30% female representation in decision-making bodies of ITUC affiliates by 2018.¹⁹

¹⁴ Jill Rubery & Mathew Johnson, *Closing the Gender Pay Gap: What Role for Trade Unions?* (ILO 2019), at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms_684156.pdf.

¹⁵ See footnote 14, at p 13.

¹⁶ ILO, *Empowering Women at Work: Trade Union Policies and Practices for Gender Equality* (2020), 21.

¹⁷ ILO, *Empowering Women at Work: Trade Union Policies and Practices for Gender Equality* (2020), 8.

¹⁸ See 'Gender-based violence at work: #RatifyC190 for a world of work free from violence and harassment', at <https://www.ituc-csi.org/GBV>; ITUC, C190 & R206 Mini Guide, at https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/c190_mini_guide_en.pdf.

¹⁹ See 'Count Us In! campaign newsletter' (January 2014) at https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/_count_us_in_campaign_newsletter_-_no_1_january_2014_eng.pdf.

4. Specific challenges faced by women workers in accessing the right to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and unionisation

This section highlights key challenges faced by women workers in accessing the right to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and unionisation, including obstacles faced by specific groups of women workers.

There are structural problems and challenges that women face in relation to the freedom of association, right to unionisation, and collective bargaining. These factors erode gender equality in the world of work, and women workers' right to work.

4.1. Under-representation and discrimination against women in trade unions

The right to form and join trade unions without discrimination is guaranteed by Convention No. 87, and that includes discrimination based on the sex of the worker. The only relevant instrument in this context which makes a distinction based on gender is the Rural Workers' Organisations Recommendation, 1975 (No. 149). Paragraph 16 recognises that, in order to ensure a sound growth of rural workers' organisations and the rapid assumption of their full role in economic and social development, steps should be taken to “(c) promote programmes directed to the role which women can and should play in the rural community, integrated in general programmes of education and training to which women and men should have equal opportunities of access”. This important normative message of inclusiveness is said to counter a certain sexism against working women and societal perceptions of women's inappropriateness—or incapacity—to lead, especially to lead organisations that hold power, such as trade unions.²⁰

The ILO notes that the number of women in national social dialogue bodies, tripartite commissions, labour advisory boards, and other similar organisations is minimal.²¹ There is an underrepresentation of women in trade unions even in female-majority sectors. Although the ITUC found that in the last few years although there has been a higher female unionisation rate, the representation of women in union leadership remains low. In 2018 it found that the average representation of women in the highest decision-making bodies of ITUC affiliates was only 28%.²²

4.2. Challenges faced by specific categories of workers

With the high level of informalisation and casualisation of work, and a growing care economy, the challenges to specific categories of workers—particularly in female-dominated occupations—is increasing. Women at the intersection of other identity attributes, such as ethnicity, gender, migrant status, nationality, and economic status, face additional vulnerabilities in ensuring their rights as workers are protected. For instance, the impediments to the freedom of association that rural workers face have been specifically documented, despite specific international standards applicable to them.²³ Similarly, most agricultural workers are part of informal or precarious working arrangements and are therefore not covered by national laws, regulations, and policies on the freedom of association.

²⁰ Jane Aeberhard-Hodges, 'The gender dimension of the work of the Committee on Freedom of Association' in Karen Curtis and Oksana Wolfson (eds), *70 years of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association: A reliable compass in any weather* (ILO 2022, 173).

²¹ ILO, *Empowering Women at Work: Trade Union Policies and Practices for Gender Equality* (2020), 5.

²² The 2018 ITUC data notes that the average women's membership rates in ITUC affiliates was 42%. See 4th ITUC World Women's Conference 2022: Outcome Document, at <https://www.ituc-csi.org/outcome-4wwc-en>.

²³ Ramapriya Gopalakrishnan and Ashwini Sukthankar, 'Freedom of Association for Women Rural Workers: A Manual' (2012) ILO https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/--gender/documents/publication/wcms_186808.pdf

› Garment workers

Garment workers face significant challenges arising from the fact that that major garment manufacturing countries in South-East Asia invoke repressive measures to restrict union activities.²⁴ Garment factories are often located in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) where systematic violation of freedom of association rights occur. In Bangladesh, for example, this led to a complaint by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to the ILO supervisory Committee on Freedom of Association. In the 2018 complaint, the ITUC claimed that the proposed Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Labor Act was not compliant with the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining principles. The Committee on Freedom of Association found that in light of Bangladesh's ratification of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), this was the case. The current EPZ Labor Zones Act (Act No. II of 2019), makes provision for Workers' Welfare Associations to be formed by workers for the purposes of addressing issues between workers and employers. These associations are however said to not be significant in ensuring the rights of workers in the EPZs. Approximately 50% of companies in the garment and textiles industry do not have effective and meaningful collective bargaining.

In individual companies collective bargaining is limited and within multinational corporations the terms and conditions of employment are determined by company headquarters and implemented by international managers. In some cases, multinational corporations have allowed employees to form their own trade unions, but have curtailed their bargaining power by isolating plant level trade unions. It is noteworthy that 132 new company level trade unions have been registered since 2012.²⁵

› Migrant workers

Another category of workers, migrant workers, also face may find many challenges accessing trade union protection due to the fact that many of them may not have formal documentation and fear being deported if they unionise. They may also experience lack of access to grievance mechanisms due to language and cultural barriers. In some countries, such as Malaysia, they are allowed to join existing unions established by Malaysian workers and are prohibited by section 28 of the Trade Unions Act from forming and joining their own trade unions.²⁶

› Domestic workers

Domestic workers are vulnerable to these rights being violated as they may not be covered under national-level laws and policies and do not enjoy the right to form and join trade unions.²⁷

²⁴ Business and Human Rights Navigator, 'Freedom of Association: Industry-specific Risk Factors' <https://bhr-navigator.unglobalcompact.org/issues/freedom-of-association/industry-specific-risk-factors/>.

²⁵ Md Asaduzzaman Khan, Katharine Brymer and Karl Koch, 'The Production of garments and Textiles in Bangladesh: Trade Unions, International Managers and the Health and Safety of Workers', (2020) South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management 7(2) <https://doi.org/10.1177/2322093720944270>

²⁶ 50 for Freedom, 'Giving a voice to migrant workers'(undated) <https://50forfreedom.org/blog/stories/mtuc-trade-unions-role/#:~:text=Currently%2C%20Malaysian%20law%20prohibits%20migrant,unions%20founded%20by%20Malaysian%20citizens.>

²⁷For instance, see ILO, *Domestic Workers and Decent Work in Sri Lanka* (2020), at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-colombo/documents/publication/wcms_768671.pdf which refers to the non-recognition of domestic workers in trade union legislation. For more information on domestic workers, see 'Domestic Workers Organizing', *WIEGO: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing*, at <https://www.wiego.org/domestic-workers-organizing>. See also Public Services International, 'Trade Union Rights in the Asia-Pacific region' (September 2014, updated August 2016), at http://www.world-psi.org/sites/default/files/en_psi_turs_ap_updated.pdf in which it is noted that many countries in the Asia region exclude certain categories of workers from the right to organize.

› Workers in the informal economy

Informal economy workers also face significant constraints in forming and joining trade unions. The informal economy accounts for more than half of total employment in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and represents a continuously growing segment of the labour force.²⁸

› Sex workers

Sex workers also face specific challenges in exercising rights to form and join trade unions. The exploitative nature of their work has been exhaustively documented.²⁹ An inevitable consequence of criminalising sex work is the lack of regulation of their employment, which includes lack of access to workers' organisations and denial of the right to form and join trade unions.



Illustration by: Apolonia Tesera

4.3. Criminalisation of union activities and prejudicial acts against association members and activity

The testimony before the Global Tribunal shows that many women workers have been subjected to reprisals for exercising their right to engage in union activity in their workplaces. Attacks on unions result in a decline in wages and other benefits and protections, and the disintegration of decent work, which often affects the sectors and industries where women work the most. The testimonies also show that women face gender-specific threats of physical, sexual, and verbal violence as reprisals for organising themselves or engaging in legitimate trade union activities.

²⁸ Increasing efforts are being made to bring informal workers into trade unions in light of the [ILO Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 \(No. 204\)](#). See in this regard ILO “Organising Informal Economy Workers into trade unions. A trade union guide”, ACTRAV, 2019 at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms_711040.pdf

²⁹ See Human Rights Watch, ‘Why Sex Work Should be Decriminalized’ (7 August 2019), at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/08/07/why-sex-work-should-be-decriminalized#:~:text=Sex%20workers%20are%20often%20exposed,sexual%20violence%2C%20against%20sex%20workers> ; Human Rights Watch, “*Swept Away*”: Abuse against Sex Workers in China (14 May 2013), at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/05/14/swept-away/abuses-against-sex-workers-china>.

5. Testimony about rights violations presented to the Global Tribunal of Women Workers

This section outlines the rights violations identified by witnesses providing testimony at the Global Tribunal of Women Workers relevant to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation.

5.1. Summary of evidence

Fifteen workers testified at the Global Tribunal on Women Workers about the extent to which their fundamental rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and the right to unionisation were denied in their economic sectors and countries. A witness from a garment factory operating in Sri Lanka tried to join an independent trade union (Free Trade Zones and General Services Employees Union) but faced numerous obstacles. The employer decided to close the factory because it preferred to deal with a union that in fact was a sub-committee of the business and did not represent the workers. A witness from Nepal described her efforts to form a worker's organisation in the entertainment sector, which was thwarted by threats and reprisals from her employer which led to her eventual resignation.

Although all the worker voices heard were of equal importance, we summarise below only selected testimonies presented to the Global Tribunal.

5.2. Selected witness voices

Anonymous participant

The factory management along with the local musclemen, not only harassed and abused me, they had been continuing same kind of torture on the other union members...

A witness (who prefers to remain anonymous) working at a garment factory in Bangladesh testified about the support that Awaj Foundation and their sister trade union, Somnilito Garments Sramik Federation (SGSF) have achieved for women workers. She and other workers tried to organise an independent trade union in the factory where they are employed but suffered reprisals from management. She testified that it was common practice for employers to recruit local gang members to threaten workers who were opposed to the workplace committees and tried to form their own organisations. She said:

“The local goons attacked our house and threatened my husband and other family members and said that they would gang rape me and kick our family out of the area. The factory management along with the local musclemen, not only harassed and abused me, they had been continuing same kind of torture on the other union members also. After those horrifying days, many workers were forced to resign from their jobs.”

We have submitted the complaint of unfair labour practice to the Director of Labour, Ministry of Labour. But the factory management influenced the government department to nullify our complaints regarding this serious issue. The factory owner and chairman defamed us workers in the meetings with the labour minister. The Director of Labour rejected our union registration application.

So, we let the buyer know about the issue and lodged a formal complaint at the labour court. We will continue organising the workers again to form a union. We will continue struggling to ensure the rights of freedom of association and freedom of joining unions.

In this situation, I would like to raise the following demands to the Global Tribunal of Women Workers -

1. The lawful right of the workers of freedom of association and collective bargaining agreement must be ensured.
2. The government must ensure that workers' rights to form and join trade unions is given effect to by means of proper legislation and monitoring as the [Bangladesh] government has signed the ILO conventions 87 and 98.
3. The brands and buyers must be accountable for this violation of our rights as workers”.

“We will continue struggling to ensure the rights of freedom of association and freedom of joining unions.”

Lipi

“We continued agitation till the announcement of a wage increase came from our factory, but when we went back to work after the strike, we found that many workers had been laid off.”

I have been working for 18 years in the garment factories of Dhaka EPZ in Bangladesh. In 2006, when workers in the garment industry of Bangladesh started to organise ourselves to demand an increase in the minimum wage, our actions spread from the Gazipur area to other EPZs. At that time there were no service benefits in my factory and the minimum salary was 700 Taka.

The workers' representatives and other workers came together and drafted a demand letter with 10 issues. The demand letter was submitted to the factory authorities. The authorities informed us that the minimum wage would be increased but before that we must continue to work. We refused and the police arrived. In the face of the workers' protest, some factories increased the workers' wages and brought them back to work. We continued agitation till the announcement of a wage increase came from our factory, but when we went back to work after the strike, we found that many workers had been laid off.

In 2010 we again started demanding higher wages because of the increase in the price of daily necessities. We were given an increase of 10% of the basic wages, but at the end of the strike the labour leaders who were at the forefront of the movement were retrenched.

In 2014 we went on strike to demand service benefits. I was then working in the dyeing section, the labour leader from the spinning section entered our section and asked us to stop work. When the management failed to take any decision on the matter immediately, the workers locked the main gate of the factory and took a position inside and where we continued our protest. Eventually we were removed by the police and given warnings.

In 2019, factory monitoring officials from the BEPZA (Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority) came to my factory and asked us if we had any problems. We complained about not receiving service benefits and they then instructed the factory managers to pay the service benefits to us. That was when we realised we had been denied the benefits we were entitled to from the beginning of the year. We are often also harassed by factory managers – on one occasion when workers protested against extra production targets, the manager, who was Sri Lankan, mocked us by saying that that Bangladeshi women workers were cheap and we would work for 10 Takas. He was fired as a result of our protests.

“I want everyone in the world to listen to my words, if every man listens to us women, then our government will also listen. We don’t have to protest in the streets, we don’t have to be fired from our jobs, we don’t have to endure police torture. We can solve all our requirements in the factory.”

Sarasvathy Muthu

For the past 30 years I have been defending women worker rights. I face harassment from employers and authorities.

I am the Executive Secretary of the National Union of Workers in Hospital Support and Allied Services (NUWHSAS), Malaysia. I started working with workers in the 1990s at the height of privatisation. I see the impact of privatisation of hospital cleaning workers, mainly women worker and especially working class women from then until now. Since privatisation in 1997, all cleaners who worked directly under the government before became contract workers of contractors appointed by the Ministry of Health. We represent about 50,000 cleaners in government hospitals and clinics nationwide, and more than 85% of cleaning workers are women. This kind of work is dominated by women because people think “cleaning” is a “woman's job”. In general, the workers are vulnerable in many ways. They are mostly B40 women, single mothers, sole breadwinners, and they have little or no formal education.

They are being exploited and their rights are denied due to the fixed -term contract system which does not guarantee job-security. The companies to which government hospitals outsource contracts then outsource the cleaning services to sub-contractors for two years. This causes the sub-contractors to offer work contract for periods of six months, a year, and two years to the workers. Every time the contractor offers a work contract, they treat the worker as a new employee. The workers are denied their employment rights such as yearly bonus, annual leave, salary increment, employee's termination layoff benefits, and they even cannot apply for loans as they are contract workers.

This cycle continues every one or two years and the workers are in a peculiar situation, where they have worked continuously in the same hospital, doing the same task but offered a new employment contract every certain period without a break in their service. The nature of the job is a permanent employment, but the concessionaire companies have 'dressed up' the job as a seasonal job. This is modern slavery system. This situation affects all workers; however, women workers are particularly vulnerable because they then become bonded labourers.

There are cleaners who have worked for more than 20 years, and their salaries are stuck at minimum wage, and they have been given only eight-day annual leaves. For example, by the 10th of every month they have no money to fill their petrol, to pay their children school fees, to pay medical fees. They have to borrow money from their employer or relative to pay these expenses and repay back on the next pay day. It becomes a circle of debt which they can't get away from. Senior cleaner's salary and benefits are not different compared to a new worker who just worked for one month. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia in the year 2020, Malaysia national poverty line income is RM2,208 per month. Cleaners are forced to live with minimum wages of MYR 1200 which means they live in debt and poverty.

This practice of contracting and subcontracting permanent and long-term work is wrong in law, as it is in violation of the Malaysian Employment Act 1955. It is also illegal and ultra vires the Constitution of the country which guarantees the right to an adequate standard of living under article 11. For the past 30 years I have been defending women worker rights. I face harassment from employers and authorities. Employer would tarnish my reputation by saying I am not a trustable person to the worker and warn workers of interacting with me like I am a criminal. At the same time, when I comment on the violation of women workers, employers will try to silence me with legal action.

Tharani

I am in the Exco of the Union of Private Support Workers Service in Government Hospitals in Peninsular Malaysia. I have been working at Seri Manjung Hospital for almost 3 years. Cleaner workers are one of the most oppressed and looked down upon. People think that this is a woman's job, and it is a very dirty job. Not only is it looked down upon, the right to freedom of speech, assembly and association is also restricted.

We are always facing union busting from our employers. These include:

1. Workers are threatened that if they join a union, they will lose their jobs, lose their overtime, change shifts and so on.
2. Employees are not allowed to gather during breaks to discuss unions. If there is a gathering, the supervisor will disperse everyone.
3. Workers are threatened to not attend union activities and meetings.
4. Workers who lodge reports at the Department of Labour and Department of Industrial Relations are threatened and deceived by the supervisor, to withdraw the case.
5. These are only some of the union-busting examples.

As a transgender person and an executive official of the union, I too faced discrimination by my employer because of my union activity. I started working in 2018. I also began to participate actively in the union. My gender was never an issue but in 2019, after I started getting active in union activity, my gender started to become an issue. The Edgenta UEMS [private company contracted by Malaysian government hospitals, and which took over cleaning workers from the government owned Malaysian hospitals] supervisor forced me to cut my hair, remove my earrings and chain on grounds that it got in the way of my work, and said that "men should look like men." But my long hair, earrings or chain has never gotten in the way of my work, and I've always worked this way all this while. But at that time, because there was a new contractor that came in, they wanted to get rid of the union, that's why they looked for trouble with me, and forced me to cut my hair. The supervisor also said, if anyone joins the union, they will not be able to work under Edgenta UEMS in 2020. At that time, I was very stressed.

In 2020, Edgenta UEMS fully took over the cleaning services contract. The management put even more pressure on me. I lodged a complaint at the Department of Labour and Department of Industrial Relations because they did not pay 1 hour of overtime, and because of their union busting. But after I lodged the complaint, my employer made things even worse for me. The supervisor incited the other employees to ignore me and issued a counselling letter for the slightest thing. I asked for the women's uniform, but they did not allow it and insisted that I must wear the men's uniform. But I've always worn the women's uniform, and the supervisor knows this. But after the change to Edgenta UEMS, I was forced to wear the men's uniform. I was very unhappy because I am a woman, not a man, but the supervisor refused to give me the women's uniform. There were some staff that touched me inappropriately, I reported it to the supervisor, but the supervisor did not take any action. The supervisor also constantly bullied me because I am transgender, and I am active in the union. They wanted to put pressure on me so that I would resign or leave the union.

These things did not happen only once, but multiple times. The supervisor made things increasingly difficult. In April of this year, the supervisor again issued 2 counselling letters, because there was an officer from the Industrial Relations Department who was coming to interview me. I held on for more than a year, until I was suicidal. I went to see a doctor, who gave me a medical certificate and told me to go home and rest because they were concerned after seeing me being so stressed up and suicidal. But I am not the only one facing this kind of pressure. A female employee at Seri Manjung Hospital also faced the same problems. To get revenge, the supervisor deliberately changed her station to the men's ward. As a result, the employee suffered from stress until she fainted and was admitted to the ward. She was also suicidal and finally she could not stand it and stopped working.

Supervisors have given us all kinds of pressure, they want us to be afraid, want us to be afraid to go to the union, they want the union to be abolished. The workers are all very scared, they don't dare say anything. I don't want the union to be abolished, I want the union to live, it will help the workers, we can fight together, and it can be good for the workers.

6. Findings and recommendations of the Jury Working Group

This section summarises key findings and recommendations of the Jury Working Group on freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation, with key takeaways for governments, businesses, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, and multilateral agencies.

6.1. Findings

The testimonies for freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to unionisation revealed the failure of States, multinational corporations (global brands and buyers), and national businesses to comply with human and labour rights duties and responsibilities. They also revealed that there is a great deal of impunity for gross violations of the fundamental human and labour rights of workers, which seriously impacts women workers. Many gaps exist in compliance with international legal obligations by governments that are member States of the ILO, which result in lack of access to effective and adequate remedies for women workers. There are also numerous structural and systemic barriers to gender equality that are manifest from violations of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The violations of the right to freedom of association within this context are often also accompanied by violations of the right to equality and non-discrimination, of the right to work and livelihoods, the right to freedom of assembly, and the right to enjoy just and favourable work conditions, among others. The testimonies also demonstrated that governments, employers, and transnational corporations blatantly disregard national and international laws and standards protecting the rights of workers to freely associate with trade unions and in fact in some instances respond with violence and reprisals against women workers.

The testimonies shed particular light on cleaning sector workers, domestic workers, and garment workers in their struggles across different parts of the world in realising their rights within the workplace. Some of these worker witnesses were successful in accessing grievance mechanisms at national and international levels, with the assistance of unions and through collective efforts, thus achieving relative access to justice. An example of this was provided in the efforts of workers to seek legal recognition of their trade unions through protest action accompanied by negotiations and eventually court proceedings.

In addition to the listed violations and adverse impacts on human rights, the denial of workers' right to freedom of association through unionisation and collective bargaining—enshrined in international law and instruments—has serious short and long-term impact on workers' conditions and well-being. The impact on workers is the creation of a precarious workplace and conditions, as their employment is subject to instant dismissal and other forms of threats and intimidation if they are found to be organising trade unions, even though there may be no explicit prohibition against doing so. Many workers cited the fact that the anti-union discrimination practised by the employer results in workers who are involved in organising unions and in union activity (such as protests), being either harassed or threatened, or, in most cases, being subjected to instant dismissal.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed and intensified grave systemic injustices across our globe, including gender inequality in the workplace, failing and/or non-existent labour protections and ineffective regulation of the corporate sector, as well as continued attacks and abuses of workers' rights, particularly against women and migrant workers. Impoverishment, difficult living conditions, illiteracy and a lack of rights awareness all contribute to accepting poor and unfair working conditions, whereas recruitment debt, deportation, criminalisation, overloading and overburdening production targets, and dismissal have been key and ongoing practices used by employers to control workers, especially women workers, and prevent them from unionising and other related activities.

6.2. Recommendations

Law and policy changes to be addressed by governments

- 1) Ratify all the relevant up-to-date ILO conventions which have not been ratified.
- 2) Adopt and enforce labour laws and policies to give effect to obligations under ILO Conventions 87 and 98. In particular, national legislation should be amended to provide for organising trade unions within the EPZs in Bangladesh, and workers should be allowed to exercise their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining freely within EPZs, instead of being forced to join so-called political or “sweetheart” trade unions formed by the employers.
- 3) Ensure that all companies operating within their jurisdiction, in particular transnational corporations, adhere to relevant national laws giving effect to the rights of workers to freely join trade unions of their choice and to allow collective bargaining and the right to unionise.
- 4) Rescind all national laws, such as the Employment Act 1955 in Malaysia, that restrict and criminalise migrant workers’ freely joining and participating in trade union activities and which limit freedom of association.
- 5) States should ensure access to effective remedy for victims and those affected, including through national grievance mechanisms both State-based and non- State based. In this regard, governments should make sure that the relevant compensation mechanisms are accessible to victims and are functional.
- 6) Make public all Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and State to State bilateral agreements that oversee the migration of thousands of migrant workers, for the purposes of accountability and transparency. These MOUs should have in-built labour safeguards and protective mechanisms which provide access to remedy in the event of a violation of rights as a result of migration.
- 7) Governments should ensure that workers have access to legal aid and assistance to bring civil and criminal claims arising from abuse and reprisals by employers and their representatives for their involvement in trade union activities.

Responsibilities of private sector businesses

Private sector businesses, particularly brands and retailers sourcing goods produced in global supply chains in countries in the Global South, should do the following:

- 8) Global brands and buyers sourcing products produced in global supply chains in developing countries should ensure that collective bargaining agreements are in place in all suppliers they purchase from.
- 9) They should be engaged to support the formation of independent trade unions in Export Processing Zones (EPZs).
- 10) They should ensure that workplace policies make it clear that managers will be held accountable for reprisals against workers participating in trade union activities, and that this will include managers and employees who rely on local criminal gangs to intimidate, assault, and threaten workers on account of their participation in trade union activities.
- 11) They should also ensure that effective workplace grievance mechanisms exist to enable workers to raise issues arising from their harassment, victimisation, and intimidation for trade union activities.

What should non-governmental organisations and trade unions do?

- 12) Utilise national mechanisms for reporting employers who do not comply with national legislation to give effect to State duties and obligations under ILO Conventions 87 and 98.
- 13) Raise the violations perpetrated against women workers in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) processes relevant to each country, during which UN Member States engage in the review of the human rights record of other Member States and provide concrete recommendations. While UPR recommendations are not legally binding, the process allows for civil society to raise awareness on specific issues as well as advocate for specific recommendations to protect women workers' rights in a specific jurisdiction based on the relevant obligations of the state and responsibilities of the private sector under international law.
- 14) Resort to and exhaust other relevant UN mechanisms and bodies, including UN Treaty Bodies—namely CESCR, ICCPR, CEDAW—to report on, submit evidence, and advocate against national legislation, policies and practices that undermine women workers' rights.
- 15) Call on the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as well as the relevant UN Special Procedures experts and working groups to investigate and report on pertinent violations and abuses within the sphere of work, and to engage with relevant governments and authorities to urge them to meet their pertinent obligations under international law and protect women workers across different economic sectors.
- 16) Lodge complaints with the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association protesting the violations of the rights to organise and join trade unions and seeking investigation of States that are non-compliant. These complaints should be accompanied by associated national and international advocacy, should denounce the systematic violation of freedom of association rights by States, which occurs through repeated violations of workers' rights, anti-union violence, gender-based violence and harassment, and other forms of retaliation from employers and factory management.
- 17) Continue to build local capacity of women workers on issues of freedom of association and collective bargaining. Capacity building will ensure that workers understand their rights as well as the State and employer duties and responsibilities, and are able to articulate their demands for rights violations to be addressed.

7. Areas for law and policy advocacy identified by organisations to take forward the Global Tribunal recommendations

This section presents examples of good practice and advocacy by organisations that participated in the Global Tribunal, and key commitments from these organisations to take forward the recommendations of the Jury Working Group.

7.1. AWAJ Foundation

AWAJ works in a context where several restrictions exist on the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining in Bangladesh. About 64% of the workers in EPZ factories, especially in the garment industry, are women. EPZ workers are often deprived of their rights as the law does not allow women workers the freedom to organise and restricts special privileges and collective bargaining rights for women workers. The Labor Act 2006 applies to all formal sector workers in Bangladesh, but a separate labour law exists for Special Economic Zone (SEZ) workers called the EPZ Labor Act, 2019. Unlike the Labor Act 2006 the EPZ Labor Act 2019 does not allow workers to exercise their fundamental rights to freedom of association, which is the right to organise or form a trade union. Instead, it provides for the formation of a Workers Welfare Association at each factory in the EPZ, and sets out various conditions which apply to their activities. This includes that Workers Welfare Associations of different factories cannot associate with one another, and that factory workers cannot join any outside organisation/national federation/trade union. If any evidence of involvement is found, workers are dismissed from the factory, and therefore the workers are always under strict surveillance. Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) and factory owners are the monitoring authorities. This situation exists despite the fact that ILO Convention C87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention) and ILO Convention C98 (Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention) were ratified in Bangladesh in 1972.

The ILO expert body monitoring compliance by countries with the right of freedom of association and collective bargaining (and all other Conventions) the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) again in 2021 warned the Bangladesh government of its duty to protect workers in EPZs against acts of anti-union discrimination. In its previous comments, the Committee had requested the Government to provide clarification on several aspects of inspection and hearings conducted by the BEPZA and on the application of the Ready Made Garments (RMG) helpline to EPZ workers. It requested the government establish an online database for anti-union discrimination complaints specific to the EPZs and to continue to provide statistics on anti-union discrimination complaints. The Committee noted the Government's clarification that the RMG helpline established is not applicable to EPZ factories but that there is an individual helpline and independent help desk in eight EPZs where labour-related complaints can be easily submitted, and that the establishment of an online database for workers' complaints is still in process.

AWAJ continues to organise and mobilise workers and engage with the members of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) to agree on collective bargaining agreements in Ready Made Garments (RMG) sector. It also works closely with the Sommito Garments Sramik Federation (SGSF), a federation of trade union representing workers in the RMG sector in Bangladesh. It reported that on 1 March 2022 Hoplun Apparels Ltd and SGSF signed a second 12-point Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The CBA is ground-breaking and paves the way for workers' better future with a 10% increment on wages, 17th week maternity leave, 2400 calories of food provided every day for pregnant women workers, 250,000-taka welfare money in case of worker's death outside the Workers Welfare Foundation and a Fair shop for workers. This is the 14th CBA which has resulted from AWAJ and SGSF's efforts to secure the rights of women workers to freedom of association and rights to unionisation.

7.2. National Union of Workers in Hospital Support and Allied Services (NUWHSAS)

Malaysia has ratified the ILO Right to Organise and Collective bargaining Convention, 1949 (No.98) but has not ratified the Freedom of Association and the right to organise Convention, 1948 (No.87). Under the Malaysian Trade Unions Act of 1959, workers have the right to form and join trade unions and unions can engage in collective bargaining with employers. However, the Act provides that the government can restrict or suspend trade unions that are considered to be a threat of national security or public order. Certain categories of workers, such as domestic workers, security guards, and managers cannot form or join trade unions.

The NUWHSAS continues to conduct advocacy to address the rights of its members, including their denial of long-term service benefits as a result of the outsourcing of hospital cleaning services to private companies. The workers have demanded that government to restore their rights and address the issue.³⁰

7.3. LWIRE Philippines

The Philippines Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Article III, Section 8 states that “the right of the people, including those employed in the public and private sectors, to form unions, associations or societies for purposes not contrary to the law shall not be abridged”. The Philippines has also ratified the ILO Freedom of Association and the right to organise Convention, 1948 (No.87), which guarantees the right of workers to form and join trade unions. However, it is clear from the witness testimony that this right is not always enforced, especially in certain economic sectors or factories.

LWIRE works to address the rights violations to which many of its members are subjected by factories that do not allow trade unions to operate and workplaces where union organisers are victimised and intimidated.



³⁰See <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2022/02/05/hospital-workers-union-taking-protest-on-unfair-contracts-to-putrajaya/>.

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**GLOBAL SOUTH
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ON SUSTAINABLE
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