



Malaysia urged to ratify ILO C190 treaty on gender-based violence and harassment in the 'world of work'

The Malaysia government is failing women workers by its failure to ratify [ILO Convention C190](#), the first global binding treaty to address gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) in the 'world of work'. Today, as we commemorate the adoption of this treaty in 2019, EMPOWER Malaysia urges the Malaysian government to step up its commitment to respect and protect women workers' rights by ratifying this convention immediately.

On 21 June 2019, the International Labour Organization adopted Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment and its accompanying Recommendation (R206). The Convention sets out standards that aim to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work. In defining violence and harassment as a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, the Convention focuses on the harm that may be caused, whether physical, psychological, sexual or economic. It also recognises and defines the specificities of gender-based violence and harassment.

The treaty calls on governments, employers and unions to work together to confront the root causes of gender-based violence and harassment and for governments to put in place the necessary legislative and policy measures to prevent, expose and remedy gender-based violence and harassment.

Instead of taking steps to support the treaty, the government sadly decided to [abstain](#) while voting on the treaty at the International Labour Conference in 2019. Although subsequently in January 2020, the government stated publicly it would [ratify the convention](#), no progress has been reported to date.

In Malaysia, gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace is believed to be pervasive. Many women workers face violence not only in the four walls of an office or factory, but on their commutes to work or while dealing with customers or other third parties. There are also frequent [reports](#) of verbal, physical and sexual violence against women migrant workers. Many women [fear reporting](#) as it could negatively affect their workplace performance assessment or even worse they could be fired from their jobs.

This treaty gives us an unprecedented opportunity to come together to demonstrate our collective commitment to ending violence against women at work. The Malaysian government should ratify this treaty without delay and seek to make a safe workplace a reality.

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