



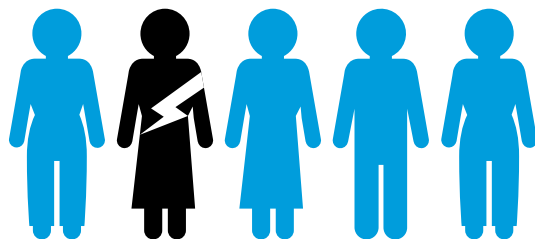
ON THE ROAD TO AN INCLUSIVE AND SAFER WORLD OF WORK: RATIFYING ILO C190 AND R206

Photo Credit: UN Nepal

Introduction

The global pandemic of violence and harassment against women deeply affects the world of work across the public and private sectors and the formal and informal economies. More than one in five people have experienced violence and harassment at work, with women more likely to face recurrent forms of sexual harassment.¹

Preventing and eliminating all forms of violence and harassment in the world of work is critical for the realization of universal human rights and a precondition for sustainable development, especially in times of polycrisis. An inclusive and safe world of work, free from gender-based violence (GBV) and harassment can result in better health, well-being and retention of workers, as well as increased productivity and reputational gains for workplaces. It also contributes to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.



¹ ILO, Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup. 2022. [Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey.](#)

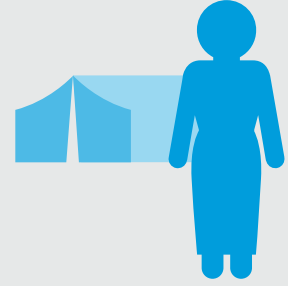
Cover Photo: Hands painted in symbolic colours to end harassment and other forms of violence against women, as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence in 2023.

WHILE ALL WOMEN ARE AT RISK OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE, WOMEN WHO EXPERIENCE MULTIPLE AND INTERSECTING FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION FACE INCREASED RISKS OF VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AT WORK

- **Young women** are twice as likely as young men to experience sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence at work.²



- **Migrant women** are almost twice as likely as non-migrant women to report sexual violence and harassment at work.³



ACROSS THE WORLD WOMEN CAN EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE IN DIFFERENT WORK SECTORS

- In the technology sector, **44 per cent** of women founders experienced some form of harassment at work in 2020. Of these women, **41 per cent** experienced sexual harassment.⁴



- Globally, **73 per cent** of women journalists surveyed experienced online violence in the course of their work.⁵
- In Africa, **40 per cent** of women parliamentarians experienced sexual harassment at work.⁶

ILO C190

On 21 June 2019, the International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190), 'C190', and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206), 'R206'. The global community made it clear that violence and harassment in the world of work will not be tolerated and must end.

The development of C190 and R206 began in 2015, spearheaded by a broad and powerful coalition led by women and unions. It expanded to encompass protection for all individuals from all forms of violence and harassment, while recognizing that women and girls are disproportionately affected. The adoption of C190 and R206 was historic, articulating the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including sexual harassment and other forms of GBV, in an international treaty for the first time, and offering a clear and common framework to

prevent and address violence and harassment, based on an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach. This right is recognized for everyone in the formal and informal economies and in the public and private sectors, including employees, job seekers, trainees, people working irrespective of their contractual status, and those exercising the duties and authority of an employer.

The instruments also acknowledge the fast-changing nature of the world of work, by going beyond the physical workplace to include within the scope of protection any place where work is performed or is linked to work, including commuting to and from work, and social events.

Five years after its adoption, 44 countries have ratified C190⁷, with numerous initiatives urging for its continued ratification and implementation worldwide.

² Ibid.

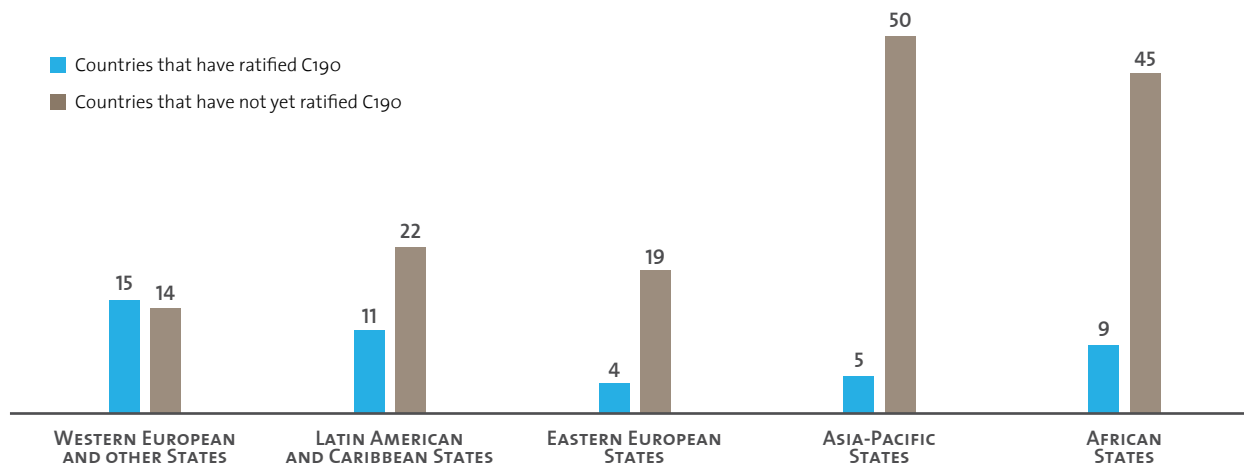
³ Ibid.

⁴ Women Who Tech. 2020. [The State of Women in Tech and Startups: Top Findings for 2020.](#)

⁵ UNESCO. 2020. [UNESCO's Global Survey on Online Violence against Women Journalists.](#)

⁶ Inter-Parliamentary Union & African Parliamentary Union. 2021. [Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women in Parliaments in Africa.](#)

⁷ As of June 24, 2024.



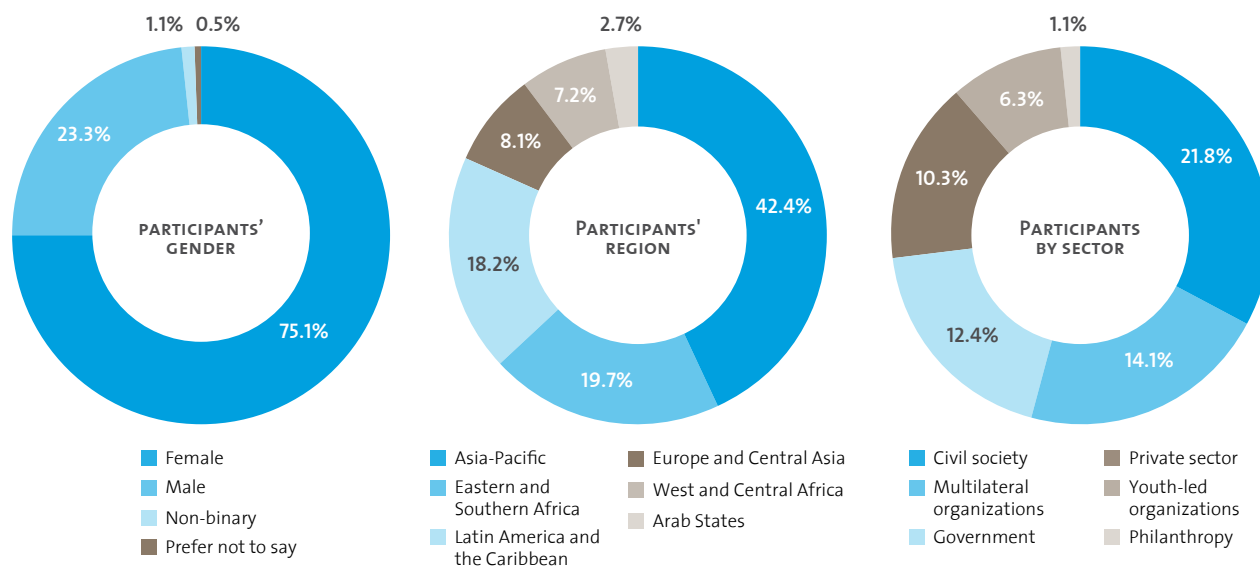
C190 Regional Roadshows

The [Generation Equality](#) Action Coalitions⁸ on Gender-Based Violence and Economic Justice and Rights have issued a joint [Collective Commitment⁹ on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work](#). The Collective Commitment seeks to prevent and eliminate harassment and violence against women in the world of work through global multi-stakeholder action. One of the key priorities of the commitment is advocacy for the ratification and implementation of C190.

To advance the joint commitment, UN Women and ILO convened six regional virtual roadshows to strengthen the capacities of multiple stakeholders (e.g., civil society, multilateral organizations, governments, youth-led

organizations, private sector, philanthropy, etc.) to advocate for the implementation and ratification of C190 and R206. Over 1,300 participants representing diverse regions, organizations and work sectors participated in the roadshows.

Data on participants from each regional roadshow are provided below. In the pages that follow, brief snapshots by region are provided on violence and harassment at work, the progress of ratification of C190, good practices from national efforts to ratify C190, as well as relevant regional resources. They also contain insights from key stakeholders involved in efforts to end harassment and violence in the world of work who shared their experiences during the roadshows, offering a deeper understanding of the regional context.



⁸ The Action Coalitions are part of [Generation Equality](#), a global multi-stakeholder initiative convened by UN Women that aims to accelerate gender equality and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

⁹ [Collective commitments](#) bring together actors from different sectors to work together on innovative solutions for cross-cutting issues and move the needle on gender equality together in a collective manner.

Arab States

A 2021 global survey found that women wage and salaried workers in the Arab States are 7.2 per cent more likely than men to experience violence and harassment, compared to the Americas (8.8 per cent) and Europe and Central Asia (4.3 per cent).¹⁰ Although no country in the region has ratified C190 (as of June 2024), concerted efforts have been initiated in many countries since 2019, aimed at raising awareness about the instrument and lobbying for its ratification and implementation, including by amending or revising relevant laws and policies. Some examples:

- In 2024, Iraq officially committed to ratifying C190, the first country in the region to do so.
- Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates enacted laws on protection and prevention of violence and harassment in the world of work, including gender-based violence and harassment.
- Bahrain and Oman passed laws criminalizing sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Lebanon adopted comprehensive protection for victims, safeguarding them from retaliation in various forms while also instituting whistle-blower safeguards and prohibiting discrimination or abuse against those who report harassment.
- In Qatar, a guidance tool was developed to promote fair recruitment and employment standards in the hospitality sector.

In Jordan, the political process for ratification of C190 advanced. A new labour law defining and prohibiting sexual harassment at work was adopted, and the country introduced measures to support, among others, lactating and pregnant workers. Measures aimed at tackling discrimination, violence and harassment were introduced through collective bargaining agreements in the garment, education and food sectors. Extensive awareness-raising campaigns were also rolled out on the unacceptability of violence and harassment at work and the importance of C190 ratification.

Regional resources – Arab States

ILO. 2023. [A No Woman's Place: Employers' Discrimination and Hiring Challenges in Less Feminized Sectors in Egypt](#).

ILO. 2022. [What categories are protected in ILO Convention No. 190? \(Arabic\)](#). Video.

ILO. 2020. [ILO Convention 190: The Right of Everyone to a World of Work Free from Violence and Harassment in the Arab States. Regional Policy Brief](#). Also available in [Arabic](#), 2023.



Photo: UN Women/Christopher Herwig, taken in Jordan

¹⁰ ILO, Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup. 2022. [Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey](#).

Asia-Pacific

In the Asia-Pacific region, 17.1 per cent of women have experienced violence and harassment at work.¹¹ Governments, civil society organizations and human rights defenders in the region have courageously fought against sexual harassment at work and made significant progress. Despite these efforts, only five countries in the region had ratified C190 (Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa) as of June 2024. Samoa, the fifth and most recent country to ratify C190, did so in May 2024,¹² while several other countries have been working towards C190 ratification.

- In Indonesia, the Coalition on Ending GBV in the World of Work, made up of 59 trade unions, domestic workers' organizations and civil society organizations, serves as a strong platform for the ratification of C190.¹³ In addition, 38 enterprises have signed a zero-tolerance policy on violence and harassment with their respective trade unions, demonstrating their joint commitment to rejecting any forms of violence and harassment in the world of work.¹⁴
- In Nepal, with the support of the ILO, a C190 Action Group has been established, with members nominated by the

Government and workers' and employers' organizations. The Action Group coordinates capacity-building activities for employers' and workers' organizations.¹⁵

Regional resources – Asia-Pacific

ILO. 2024. [Promoting the ratification and application of ILO Convention No. 190: Experiences and good practices from Asia and the Pacific.](#)

ILO, IOM, UNODC and UN Women. 2022. [Framework: Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Harassment Against Women Migrant Workers in South and Southeast Asia.](#)

ILO. 2022. [Labour inspection guidelines with attention to women migrant workers, elimination of violence and harassment, domestic workers, and forced labour.](#)

ILO and UN Women. 2022. [Prevention of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work: Guidelines for Companies and Workers](#) (Bahasa version).



Photo: UN Women/Narendra Shrestha, taken in Nepal

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² ILO. 2024. ["Samoa ratifies two important ILO Conventions"](#). 2 June 2024.

¹³ International Trade Union Confederation. 2022. [Workers Unite for the Right of Everyone of a World of Work Free from Violence and Harassment: #RatifyC190.](#)

¹⁴ IndustriALL. 2022. ["Indonesian unions sign zero-tolerance policy on violence and harassment with companies"](#). 10 August 2022.

¹⁵ For example, ILO. 2021. ["C190 Action Group Training"](#). Event. 5 to 7 April 2021.

East and Southern Africa

Some 22 per cent of women in Eastern Africa and 11 per cent of women in Southern Africa have experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence and harassment at work.¹⁶ Some 80 per cent of countries in East and Southern Africa have legislation on sexual harassment in employment,¹⁷ almost all of which also provide for either civil remedies or criminal penalties in the case of assault. Namibia was the third country globally to ratify C190 in December 2020 and was later followed by Somalia, Mauritius, South Africa, Lesotho, Uganda and Rwanda (as of June 2024).

Trade unions play a crucial role in advocacy for C190 in the region:

- In Zimbabwe, a sustained union campaign led to the passing of legislation in August 2023 that included wording from C190 on violence and harassment in the world of work and additional penalties.
- In Lesotho, the importance of collaboration with the private sector and civil society was emphasized when trade unions won binding agreements with garment suppliers to end violence and harassment in the world of work with the support of global brands, as well as women's rights organizations and the US Solidarity Center.

South Africa serves as a good example for an integrated approach to C190 implementation. After C190 ratification, a Code of Good Practice on the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace was promulgated by the government. Moreover, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has prioritized the ratification of C190. South Africa and other SADC Member States established a C190 Task Team that serves as a platform for sharing experiences and promoting the Convention's application and impact. In 2023, the African Union's 3rd Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity convened in South Africa under the theme, "Consolidating Commitments Towards the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls", for increased awareness and sensitization.

Regional resources – East and Southern Africa

ILO. 2023. [Inclusion of persons with disabilities in workplace policies and programmes on violence and harassment, including SGBV: Action Plan.](#)

ILO and Zimbabwe Gender Commission. 2023. [Workplace training manual for policy development and programme implementation addressing gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace in Zimbabwe.](#)

Department of Employment of South Africa. 2022. [Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace.](#)



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown, taken in Seychelles

¹⁶ Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup. 2023. [World Risk Poll 2021: Safe at Work? Global experiences of violence and harassment.](#) See also: ILO 2022.

¹⁷ World Bank. 2024. [Women, Business and the Law database.](#)

Europe and Central Asia

In Europe and Central Asia, 25.5 per cent of persons in employment have experienced violence and harassment over their working life, with women 8 per cent more likely than men to have done so.¹⁸ Within the European Union (EU), between 11 and 41 per cent of women have experienced unwanted behaviour with a sexual connotation in the workplace.¹⁹

As in other regions, women are at the forefront of efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence and harassment and are mobilizing for the ratification and implementation of C190 on violence and harassment at work. As of June 2024, 18 countries²⁰ in the region have ratified C190.

- In Ireland, trade unions negotiated for workplace policies to support survivors of domestic violence, leading to the adoption of progressive workplace policies in the financial services, communications and postal sectors.²¹
- France has obliged employers to prevent all kinds of gender-based violence and harassment at work.
- In Italy, numerous national and workplace agreements, including collective bargaining agreements, have integrated C190 provisions.²²

Despite these successes, there is much more to be done. Further defining and prohibiting all forms of violence and harassment at work has not been fully implemented in the countries that ratified C190. Overall, the successes in the region show that movements led by women in collaboration with unions represent a key best practice in ratifying and implementing C190.

Regional resources – Europe and Central Asia

ILO. 2024. [Violence and Harassment at Work within the Scope of ILO C190: Türkiye Case. Policy brief.](#)

ILO. 2023. [Advancing Gender Equality and Decent Work in Uzbekistan. A Compendium of the Conference: Pathways to gender equality and decent work in Uzbekistan with Country Cases and Policy Recommendations.](#)

Ministère du Travail, France. 2019. [Harcèlement sexuel et agissements sexistes au travail: Prévenir, agir, sanctionner. Guide pratique et juridique.](#)



Photo: UN Women/David Snyder, taken in Kyrgyzstan

18 ILO, Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup. 2022. [Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey.](#)

19 Eurostat. 2022. [EU survey on gender-based violence against women and other forms of inter-personal violence \(EU-GBV\) — first results: 2022 edition.](#)

20 Albania, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Spain and the United Kingdom.

21 ITUC. 2023. [C190: Unions in Action to End Violence and Harassment at Work, 2023.](#)

22 Examples were presented in the Europe and Central Asia C190 Workshop on 6 March 2024, by Mabel Grossi, International and European Policy Officer, CGIL Nazionale, Italy.

Latin America and the Caribbean

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 24 per cent of women have experienced violence and harassment at work,²³ with youth, migrants and wage/salaried workers being particularly vulnerable. For migrant workers who are often undocumented and work in the informal labour market, power imbalances heighten their vulnerability to violence and harassment. As of June 2024, 11 countries²⁴ in the Latin America and the Caribbean region have ratified C190 and advocacy is ongoing for more countries to ratify the convention and create workplaces free of violence and harassment.

- In Peru, a law was enacted in 2019 to prevent and punish violence against women in private and public spaces. The law protects against workplace dismissal, allows for a change of workplace without detriment to employment conditions and permits justified absences from work.
- Brazil has taken measures to implement the provisions of C190 – even though it has not yet ratified it – by creating guidance for preventing and addressing sexual harassment at work through a collaboration between the Federal Labour Prosecution Office and ILO in 2017.

In 2020, the Government of Argentina showed the power and value of an integrated and whole-of-government approach, establishing an Interministerial Task Force, which brought together various ministries in addition to the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security to implement C190 recommendations. This has resulted in increased engagement across the government on violence and harassment in the world of work, and the development of an action plan for C190 implementation, as well as other initiatives to raise awareness about C190 and build the capacity of tripartite constituents for its effective implementation.

Regional resources – Latin America and the Caribbean

ILO. 2023. [Guía para la prevención y el abordaje de la violencia y el acoso en el mundo del trabajo para empleadoras y empleadores.](#)

ILO. 2022. [Guía sindical. Cómo prevenir y abordar la violencia y el acoso en el mundo del trabajo.](#)

Spotlight Initiative, Caribbean Congress of Labour, Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies, Caribbean Employers' Confederation. 2023. [Joint Policy Position to Address Gender-Based Violence at the Workplace.](#)



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown, taken in Colombia

²³ Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup. 2023. [World Risk Poll 2021: Safe at Work? Global experiences of violence and harassment.](#) See also: ILO 2022.

²⁴ Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Bahamas, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay.

West and Central Africa

In West and Central Africa, gender-based violence and harassment remain pressing issues, with one quarter of women experiencing a form of violence and harassment at work.²⁵ Only 16 out of the 24 countries in the region have legislation that explicitly prohibits sexual harassment in employment.²⁶ In Ghana, all forms of violence and harassment occurring in the household environment — including in domestic work — is prohibited by the 2020 Domestic Violence Act. In Niger, employers must take all necessary measures to prevent acts of sexual harassment.²⁷ As of June 2024, only two countries in the region had ratified C190: the Central African Republic and Nigeria.

Various stakeholders in the region have organized to not only advocate for their governments to ratify C190, but also to begin implementing its provisions.

- In Nigeria, a coalition of unions and human rights organizations successfully campaigned for C190 ratification.
- Employers in Côte d'Ivoire developed a strategic plan and advocated to their government to ratify C190.

- In Senegal, a broad coalition, including trade unions, employers' associations, journalists, customary and religious authorities, civil society and youth associations, women, people living with disabilities, informal workers and waste collectors was brought together by the Ministry of Labour to spearhead a national campaign on C190 and to advocate for legislative action.

Key lessons from the region include the importance of collaboration, coordination, knowledge and policy advocacy, including with union leaders, who have played a pivotal role in mobilizing workers and building capacity to effectively implement the comprehensive provisions of C190.

Regional resources – West and Central Africa

ILO. 2023. [Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Workplace Policies and Programmes on Violence and Harassment \(including SGBV\)](#).

Sarpong, Gideon. 2022. [Keeping journalists safe online: a guide for newsrooms in West Africa & beyond](#).



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown, taken in Cameroon

²⁵ Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup. 2023. [World Risk Poll 2021: Safe at Work? Global experiences of violence and harassment](#). See also: ILO 2022.

²⁶ World Bank. 2022. [Women, Business and the Law 2022: Regional Profile – Western and Central Africa](#).

²⁷ Article 122 of Decree No. 2017-682/PRN/MET/PS on the regulatory component of the Labour Code.

Call to Action

Join the Collective Commitment

The elimination of all forms of gender-based violence and harassment against women, including sexual harassment, in the world of work, is critical for advancing decent work, achieving women's full and effective participation in the labour force, promoting their economic empowerment, and contributing to productive and sustainable enterprises. The right to a world of work free from gender-based violence and harassment is urgent and must be prioritized.

The Action Coalitions on GBV and Economic Justice and Rights, UN Women and ILO call upon all workers, employers and governments to commit to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence and harassment against women in all their diversity in the world of work.

In recognition of the power of multi-stakeholder action, we encourage all stakeholders — from governments to the private sector to civil society — to join us. To learn more about the Action Coalitions, please visit the website [here](#). Please register your interest in making a commitment by clicking [here](#) or scanning the QR code below.



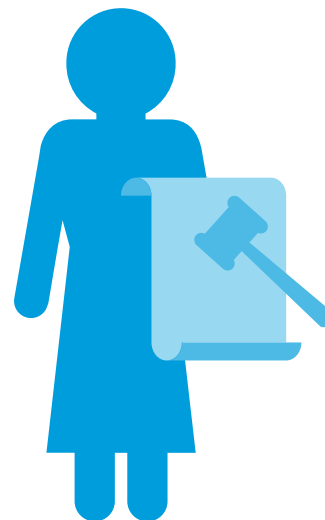
Ratify C190

Gender-based violence and harassment against women, including sexual harassment, is a widespread human rights abuse whether in the workplace, public spaces or at home. Violence and harassment in the world of work damages lives and livelihoods, having serious social and economic costs for individuals, families and across societies.

C190 recognizes the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. C190 also acknowledges that women, as well as persons belonging to vulnerable groups are at greater risk and calls for the adoption of an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach to prevent and end all forms of violence and harassment at work.

To turn this right into a reality and leave no one behind, we call on all countries to ratify and implement C190. Universal ratification will help ensure dignity, safety and respect and will contribute to advancing decent work and promoting social justice for all.

Let's work together to create a world of work free from violence and harassment for everyone! [#RatifyC190](#)



Useful resources

ILO. n.d. [C190 campaign toolkit](#).

ILO. n.d. [Violence and Harassment in the World of Work](#).

ILO. 2022. [Violence and harassment at work: A practical guide for employers](#).

ILO. 2021. [Violence and harassment in the world of work: A guide on Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206](#).

ILO, Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup. 2022. [Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey](#).

ILO and UN Women. 2023. [Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work](#).

ILO and UN Women. 2019. [Handbook: Addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work](#).

ITUC. 2023. [C190: Unions in Action to End Violence and Harassment at Work](#).

ITUC. 2020. [#RatifyC190 campaign toolkit](#).

Spotlight Initiative. 2024. [Compendium of Innovative and Good Practices and Lessons Learned](#).

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