

Violence and Informal Work



All informal workers are likely to experience violence due to their status in employment and lack of protection. Women informal workers are more vulnerable to gender-based violence due to the intersection of their gender and insecure working conditions. Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images Reportage

Introduction

In 2019, the International Labour Conference voted to adopt the **ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190)** and **Recommendation (No. 206)**. Informal workers' organizations mobilized alongside trade unions at global and national levels for this convention and recommendation as violence and harassment are so prevalent in their members' lives.

The ILO Convention 190 defines violence and harassment at work as: *"a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that:*

- *aim at, or result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and*
- *includes gender-based violence and harassment"* (Article 1).

This briefing note focuses on causes and impacts of violence that informal workers experience across four sectors: home-based work, domestic work, street vending and waste picking. It identifies the different perpetrators of violence against informal workers including the state, employers and owners of capital, service users, criminal actors, other workers, and household members. The experiences described here, gathered from WIEGO members and partners across these sectors, demonstrate the urgent need for governments to ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and accompanying Recommendation (No. 206) to address both gender-based violence targeted predominantly at women informal workers and the lack of recognition, protection and access to justice that both women and men informal workers face, which results in frequent and persistent incidents of violence in the workplace.

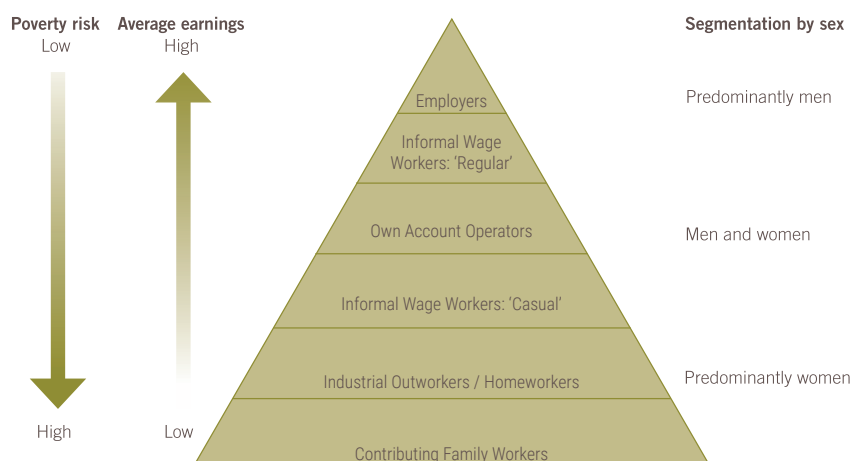
The COVID-19 pandemic brings into stark light the violence faced by women as domestic violence rates surge across the world. The violent enforcement of border closures, lockdown measures and curfews are particularly harmful for cross-border and internal migrant

workers, and are felt by all informal workers as they operate, live and move through public spaces to survive. The pandemic makes it all the more urgent for workers to organize and push governments to enact laws protecting them against violence.

Women, Informal Work and Informal Workplaces

- Sixty-one per cent of total global employment is informal; nearly 70 per cent of employment in developing and emerging countries is informal (ILO 2018b).
- In Africa, Asia and Latin America, informal employment is a greater source of non- agricultural employment for women than for men. Women are more likely to be in informal employment in more than 90 per cent of sub-Saharan African countries, 89 per cent of countries from Southern Asia and almost 75 per cent of Latin American countries (ILO 2018b).
- Women and girls are concentrated at the base of the economic pyramid (see **figure 1**) in more vulnerable activities/tasks as self-employed workers within the informal economy,

Figure 1: WIEGO model of informal employment: hierarchy of earnings and poverty risk by employment status and sex



such as own-account workers, outsourced or dependent contractors, and contributing family workers (Chen 2012).

Violence in the Workplace and Informal Workers

- The informal economy is heterogeneous, made up of different sectors, with different statuses in employment and different workplaces (i.e. streets, construction sites, markets, landfills, private homes, etc.). Where all informal workers are likely to experience violence due to their status in employment and lack of protection, women informal workers are more vulnerable to gender-based violence due to the intersection of their gender, class and insecure working conditions (ILO 2017). Sector, place of work and gender all have an impact on the types of violence experienced by different groups of informal workers. Violence can take different forms including physical, verbal, sexual and psychological abuse. It can also include economic deprivation through low and irregular earnings or prohibited access to valuable productive resources and public spaces.
- The violence that informal workers experience can be rooted in material conflicts, manifesting especially when there is competition for scarce resources such as productive urban space or valuable recyclable material. Other workplaces, such as private homes, leave women susceptible to violence due to isolation and a lack of access to complaint and legal recourse mechanisms.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic informal workers face a higher risk of violence in their workplaces. Public authorities use violence to impose curfews and physical distancing measures, preventing informal workers from securing their livelihoods. Traders have been forcibly evicted from their workplaces, and many informal workers are facing evictions from their homes amid the pandemic (WIEGO 2020). Informal workers classified as essential workers and therefore able to work during lockdown periods, such as food vendors, waste pickers, and domestic workers caring for the ill, are stigmatized and harassed on suspicions that they may be infected.
- Rising stress levels brought on by the health crisis, lockdowns and loss of income led to a dramatic increase in domestic violence, and violence against live-in domestic workers confined in their employers' homes (UN Women 2020, IDWF 2020b).
- Women are concentrated at the base of the economic pyramid as self-employed informal workers due to gender discrimination and segmentation in the labour market (Chen 2012). Violence is a way to discipline and control women's labour, both inside and outside the home (Bhattacharya 2013). The causes for this can be rooted in strong views regarding women and men's gendered roles within the family, workplace and society. Therefore, discussions on violence in the world of work cannot be divorced from domestic violence or from violence in public spaces; all intend to suppress and control women's mobility, sexuality and access to resources. Poverty and deprivation do not necessarily lead to gender-based violence but can be

contributing factors to the violence women informal workers experience. Low earnings, dangerous or poor working conditions and inadequate living conditions leave informal workers at a higher risk of violence in the world of work – both in private homes and in public spaces.

Addressing Violence Against Women and Men Informal Workers

Table 1 outlines a typology of violence faced by informal workers. It is derived from WIEGO's experiences in working with urban informal workers across four sectors – home-based work, domestic work, street vending and waste picking. It is not a comprehensive account but instead gives an overview of how sector, place of work and gender interact with sources of violence to determine the types of violence experienced by informal workers. It also enumerates the potential perpetrators of violence based on the experiences of informal workers.

The ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment at Work (No. 190) and accompanying Recommendation (No. 206) recognizes the scope and scale of violence affecting all workers, formal and informal. This is particularly important because the informal economy remains the main source of employment in the global South. Power imbalances resulting in gender-based violence in the workplace are more pronounced for women informal workers due to their gender, status in employment, and place and sector of work.

The convention and recommendation are relevant to informal workers and their organizations in demanding greater protection against violence and harassment at work.

Recognizes informal workplaces: The convention includes a broad definition of workplaces including both public and private spaces.

“This Convention applies to violence and harassment in the world of work occurring in the course of, linked with or arising out of work: (a) in the workplace, including public and private spaces where they are a place of work;” (Art. 3, ILO Convention No. 190).

Regulations intended to protect workers have typically excluded the private home. Yet domestic workers too often experience diverse forms of gender-based violence in their employers' homes due to the unequal power relations that characterize their employment relationship. Equally, this recognition is important for home-based workers who may experience violence in their homes by household members and middlemen. Private homes in which domestic workers and home-based workers operate are considered high-risk workplaces due to the isolation of these workers (Art. 9, ILO Recommendation 206).

Similarly, public spaces such as city streets, markets and landfills are acknowledged as workplaces giving recognition to street vendors, market traders and waste pickers among others who operate in these spaces. This draws on the ILO Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) which recognizes the need for regulated access to public spaces and the use of public natural resources.

Role of public authorities: In drawing attention to public spaces, the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) also considers the role of those who regulate these workplaces if it is not a specific employer.

Table 1: Types of violence experienced by informal workers, by sector, place of work and source of violence

| Source of violence | Home-based work (own homes) | Domestic work (private home of employer) | Street vending (public space) | Waste picking (public space, landfill sites) |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| State | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harassment Evictions Zoning Rising taxes and utility fees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigration status investigations Exclusion from legal provisions due to immigration status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harassment, verbal and physical abuse/beatings Evictions Violent arrest Immigration status investigations Exclusion from legal provisions due to immigration status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harassment, verbal and physical abuse/beatings Violent arrest Evictions Immigration status investigations |
| Public/users of service provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harassment and sexual violence at shared community toilets and water points | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (For employers, see below) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harassment and verbal abuse Arguments over prices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harassment and verbal abuse Arguments over prices |
| Fellow workers | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transactional sex for access to trading space, licences, permits and goods Rape Disputes over vending spaces | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transactional sex for access to waste and recycling processes Rape Violent enforcement of gendered division of labour Competition over access to waste |
| Household members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic violence/intimate partner violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic violence/intimate partner violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic violence/intimate partner violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic violence/intimate partner violence |
| Criminal elements and/or criminal practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theft Evictions Violent assault | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trafficking Bonded labour Criminal practices of migration agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theft Evictions Violent assault Sexual assault and rape Murder | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theft Violent assault Sexual assault and rape Murder |
| Powerful vested interests, e.g. employers/owners of capital, contractors, intermediaries, moneylenders and landlords | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harassment and verbal abuse Threats and physical abuse Transactional sex for work or piece rates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual assault and rape Murder Violent assault Deprivation of mobility and basic needs Verbal and emotional abuse Slavery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evictions from valuable urban space Theft | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transactional sex for protection and access to waste and recycling processes Evictions from sites and/or streets where most valuable waste can be collected (e.g. private waste management companies) |



Work-related violence can come from a number of sources, most prominently: the state, fellow workers, household members, the public and/or users of the service provided by the informal worker, criminal actors, and powerful vested interests. Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images Reportage

“Each member shall take appropriate measures to prevent violence and harassment in the world of work, including: (a) recognizing the important role of public authorities in the case of informal economy workers;” (Art. 8).

The role of urban authorities is critical as they control, manage and oversee informal workplaces such as public markets and streets, landfills and poor urban areas or informal settlements where informal workers reside and work. These authorities have control over the physical infrastructure, which can often either promote or mitigate against violence. As the world rapidly urbanizes, the growing prevalence of informal work means it is no longer sufficient to rely on state institutions directly related to labour to address issues. Rather, a pluralistic and coordinated response is required from across government services and functions.

‘Third parties’ – perpetrators of violence in the workplace are diverse: For informal workers, work-related violence

can come from a number of sources. Most prominent among these are the state (for example, municipal police, traffic officials, border officials), fellow workers, household members, the public and/or users of the service provided by the informal worker, criminal actors, and powerful vested interests who have control over the working conditions of informal workers and their workplaces (see **table 1**).

The Convention recognizes this in Article 2, stating:

*“Each Member shall adopt, in accordance with national law and circumstances and in consultation with representative employers’ and workers’ organizations, an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach for the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. Such an approach should take into account violence and harassment **involving third parties**, where applicable,” (ILO Convention No. 190).*

For domestic workers, third parties can include family members and friends/

relatives of the employer, owners and employees of employment/placement agencies and brokers (IDWF 2017). As many informal workers are self-employed, and given the prevalence of urban violence, the state and criminal elements can be important perpetrators of violence against women and men informal workers.

There is widespread criminalization of the urban working poor, and this leads to a perception of violence as the outcome of deprivation – that people become violent because they are poor. This in turn escalates the violence meted out on the urban poor. An alternative perspective is needed that sees violence as a source of deprivation – violence disrupts economic activities and deprives the urban working poor of their livelihoods.

Impacts of domestic violence on the world of work: The ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and accompanying Recommendation (no. 206) specifically call on governments to:

“recognize the effects of domestic violence and, so far as is reasonably practicable, mitigate its impact in the world of work;” (ILO Convention, No. 190, art. 10(f)).

In 2019, it was estimated that globally 243 million women and girls aged 15-49 had been subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner over the past 12 months (UN Women 2020). This represents 18 per cent of women and girls, and the figure increases to 30 per cent when considering intimate partner violence experienced during women’s lifetime. In 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown measures, rates of domestic violence are rising dramatically. Economic hardship, poverty and the health threat create tensions accentuated by the cramped and confined living conditions imposed

by lockdown measures. Reported cases of domestic violence and calls to crisis helplines and emergency services have increased in many countries, at a time when many of these services were unable to operate due to lockdown restrictions (UN Women 2020).

Domestic violence affects women’s ability to access work and continue to secure their livelihoods. For home-based workers, domestic violence happens in their workplace. Women in informal workers’ organizations report domestic violence as a growing concern and barrier to earning an income during the pandemic (IDWF 2020b, WIEGO 2020).

Strategies to Address Violence Against Informal Workers in the Workplace

There are few work-related complaint mechanisms for workers in the informal economy. They often lack access to state-provided complaint and recourse mechanisms and lack the financial means to seek legal recourse; they cannot afford to pay legal fees or spend time away from work in legal proceedings. Further, when women informal workers seek justice, their employment status, gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual identity, and migrant status can contribute to the discrimination they face before the law.

Strategies to address violence against informal workers requires a more integrated approach that draws on the resources of not only labour inspectorates, but numerous government entities at all levels, incorporating in particular the municipal authorities that control many informal places of work and owners of capital that influence how public space is used. Governments must also look beyond labour law to

incorporate other areas of law that can more easily provide legal protections to informal workers (for example, administrative law, municipal by-laws and family law in the case of domestic violence and abuse).

Informal workers are excluded from legislation on violence and harassment: In the majority of the 80 countries reviewed by the ILO report on violence in the world of work, most apply work-related violence and harassment provisions only to persons in an employment relationship (ILO 2018a). Labour, occupational safety and health (OSH), non-discrimination and other laws that address violence in the world of work do not apply to informal workers – particularly the self-employed. Urban policies and legislation either ignore or prohibit informal workers from exercising their economic activities, resulting in violence and confrontations with local authorities. Certain categories of workers, such as domestic workers, can also be explicitly excluded from labour law and cannot benefit from the same protections as other workers. The ILO notes that 20 countries, of the 80 studied, exclude domestic workers from labour laws, while eight exclude contributing family workers. As women are disproportionately represented in these forms of employment, this kind of legal exclusion entrenches gender discrimination and allows gender-based violence to go unaddressed.

Legal recourse outside of the standard employment relationship is necessary: Informal workers report widespread exposure to violence and harassment and cannot access dispute mechanisms or benefit from labour inspections. Strengthening regulatory frameworks to prevent gender-based violence in the world of work must include measures

to strengthen women's access to justice in cases of physical, sexual and psychological violence experienced at the hands of state officials, criminal actors, employers, household members, fellow workers and consumers.

Migrant informal workers are not only more likely to experience violence in the workplace than their non-migrant counterparts but have less legal recourse and access to social protection due to their migrant status and low earnings. The ILO Recommendation (No. 206) under article 10 underscores,

“Members should take legislative or other measures to protect migrant workers, particularly women migrant workers, regardless of migrant status, in origin, transit and destination countries as appropriate, from violence and harassment in the world of work.” (2019).

Article 11 of the Recommendation (No. 206) recognizes that informal workers – particularly women workers – will face greater challenges in addressing violence and harassment at work and calls on governments to act accordingly.

“In facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy, Members should provide resources and assistance for informal economy workers and employers, and their associations, to prevent and address violence and harassment in the informal economy.” (2019).

This reinforces the ILO Recommendation on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy, 2015 (No. 204), which calls for the adoption of an integrated policy framework to facilitate the transition to the formal economy that addresses, among others, the promotion of equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence, including gender-based



*Workplaces, such as private homes, leave women susceptible to violence due to isolation and a lack of access to complaint and legal recourse mechanisms.
Photo: Juan Arredondo/Getty Images Reportage*

violence, at the workplace (para 11). Integrated strategies to address violence can aim at improving national legal frameworks, strengthening OSH and labour inspection, extending social protection, and organizing informal workers (ILO 2018a). A more pluralistic approach is needed. First, this requires bringing together different parts of government beyond the labour inspectorates, including urban authorities, law enforcement, and legal and social security services to prevent and address the violence informal workers face.

This includes regulating owners of capital that may be a source of violence for informal workers. Second, it requires broadening beyond labour law. Administrative law, for instance, can be more relevant to protecting informal workers' access to public space for street trading and waste picking (see examples below).

Access to social protection to reduce intimate partner violence: Evidence

suggests that access to cash transfers can alleviate tensions in low-income households that can lead to domestic violence. Cash transfers to women can increase economic security, decrease intra-household conflict and support women's self-confidence and autonomy – all contributing to fewer incidences of intimate partner violence (Buller et al. 2018). These cash transfers are most effective if combined with services for survivors of gender-based violence, and social and economic empowerment interventions such as mentoring, safe spaces and active labour market strategies (WHO 2019, OHCHR 2020). More than ever, it is critical to include these provisions in national COVID-19 response plans and budgets to combat the deepening gender inequalities brought on by the pandemic.

Informal workers' organizations must be included in consultations on national legislation against violence in the workplace: Neither the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention nor the accompanying recommendation



Home-based workers are vulnerable to contractors who may refuse to pay a decent rate, delay or withhold payments and subject women workers to psychological violence.

Photo: Paula Bronstein/Getty Images Reportage

make specific mention of including informal workers' organizations in tripartite negotiations regarding violence and harassment in the workplace. However, the ILO Recommendation on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy, 2015 (No. 204) calls on governments to include *"representatives of membership-based representative organizations of workers and economic units in the informal economy"* (art. 34) in tripartite negotiations. This sets a precedent in international labour standards that can be drawn on nationally so that informal workers and their organizations may voice the specific protections and preventive measures they require.

Organizing informal workers through unions, associations and cooperatives is a prerequisite to successfully using other tools to access justice. For example, it is through their organizations that informal workers can access legal support and advocate for their protection against violence. Below is a summary of the issues and some successful interventions

in each of the four occupational sectors mentioned in this paper. The information was gathered from WIEGO members and partners across these sectors.

Home-Based Workers

Home-based workers are mostly women who have taken up paid work that they can do in their homes. They are isolated from other workers and from the public spaces in which waste pickers and street vendors experience violence. However, their position in the home also makes them vulnerable. They may experience violence from family members. Often this is exacerbated by low earnings. "Fighting and violence erupts at home when we do not earn," said one home-based worker from Lahore, Pakistan (WIEGO 2014). In the midst of the pandemic, home-based workers note a significant underreporting of domestic violence as they fear their partners will be taken into custody and then be more likely to contract COVID-19 and infect the household.

Many homeworkers are sub-contracted and represent the very bottom of value chains. Piece-rate work is often accompanied by violence perpetrated by the contractors who can be physically and verbally abusive when low or delayed payments are questioned. Contractors have also been known to demand transactional sex in exchange for allocating work.

Home-based workers can use the ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 to draw attention to the domestic violence they experience in their homes and workplaces. Legislation leading to greater transparency and regulation in global and local supply chains is also an important way to address the violence and harassment homeworkers face at the hands of contractors. Access to legal recourse becomes possible when a clearer working relationship can be established between homeworkers and suppliers, even while operating in the informal economy.

Domestic Workers

Like home-based workers, domestic workers work in isolation in private homes. However, the difference is that they are working in their employers' homes and thus have a direct personal dependency relationship as workers. They face multiple forms of violence including physical abuse, intimidation, threats, bullying, sexual assault, harassment, being provided with poor-quality food and a lack of privacy (IDWF 2018, IDWF 2020a). Severe instances of violence against domestic workers can include bonded labour, rape and sometimes even murder. Migrant domestic workers can experience violence in each stage of the migration cycle, which is considered as violence at work. In cases where they are undocumented migrants, their immigration status is a barrier to

reporting incidences of violence and accessing legal services. For these domestic workers, reporting violence may lead to an immediate loss of employment and deportation (IDWF 2020a).

COVID-19 has led to higher rates of violence and harassment at work and at home for domestic workers. Many live-in domestic workers were in lockdown with their employers, leading to longer working hours with no rest day or additional pay. Some are subjected to violence due to mounting stress levels brought on by the pandemic (WIEGO 2020). Domestic workers travelling to work have also experienced violence at the hands of public authorities due to the imposition of curfews. Many domestic workers also face domestic violence without access to shelters or services due to lockdowns (IDWF 2020b).

In response, the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) is calling for national legislation against violence at work that includes domestic workers, official legal complaint mechanisms for domestic workers, private home inspections, and official efforts aimed at raising awareness about relevant legislation among domestic workers. Domestic workers' organizations provide a range of services to their members in response to gender-based violence including legal advice, referrals to legal centres and government services where these exist, training and awareness raising campaigns, and immediate support through shelters, job placements and financial assistance (IDWF 2018). During lockdown measures, some domestic workers' organizations provided emergency shelter for their members facing violence in their workplace or at home (WIEGO 2020).

Street Vendors

Street vendors are often subjected to harassment from municipal officials, and are frequently evicted from their places of work in markets and roadsides. Sometimes this is because cities are attempting to modernize their public spaces, and other times it is because powerful private interests are seeking to secure valuable public space for their own commercial ends. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in Accra, Ghana, street vendors were forcibly evicted from their trading spaces without compensation to make more room for bus stops.

Street vendor organizations are calling for the legalization of street trade and the implementation of transparent licensing systems for vendors to protect them from harassment from police and the municipality. However, even where street trade is legal and traders have licences to sell, such as in Lima, Peru, insecurity remains. “When we have permits that protect us, they [the municipal officials] don’t threaten us much, but they don’t protect us...and there is a lot of crime around...a lot of street gangs,” complained a woman trader in Lima (WIEGO 2014).

In Durban, South Africa, street trader John Makwicana won a landmark case over the confiscation of his goods by police officers, setting a legal precedent that recognizes the validity of informal work (WIEGO 2015). Makwicana received support from the Legal Resources Centre to seek legal recourse. Such provisions should be considered in national policies to specifically address the lack of access and affordability of legal services for informal workers.

Women vendors also report that poor urban infrastructure exacerbates their insecurity. For example, lack of adequate lighting, unsafe toilet facilities, and unsafe public transport stations all contribute to gender-based violence in public spaces, particularly when women are working very early in the morning or late at night. As the ILO standard recognizes public spaces as workplaces, governments bear the responsibility to protect informal workers operating in public spaces, rather than criminalizing their activities.

Another significant source of violence and harassment for women is in the context of cross-border trade (Yusuff 2014). Governments can provide for gender-sensitive border control procedures and training to tackle the multiple forms of violence women cross-border traders face, such as sexual harassment, rape, detention, confiscation of goods and financial extortion (UN Women 2010).

Waste Pickers

Waste pickers work in different urban spaces – on landfill sites, on the streets and, in some cases, in municipally-sanctioned sorting sheds. The type of violence experienced differs according to the place of work – the most vulnerable waste pickers tend to be those who are unorganized and work on landfills and streets. Waste pickers working on streets often complain of harassment from the public and/or users of their services, as well as from the police – apart from verbal abuse, dogs are set on them and objects thrown at them. Those working on landfill sites work in highly insecure conditions, where criminal elements are often present and the use of violence to protect territory is common. Sexual and physical abuse against women waste pickers at the hands of private security



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Photo: Juan Arredondo/Getty Image Reportage

forces, law enforcement officials and other workers is prevalent. Many waste pickers also live in fear that the state (usually the municipality) will take away their livelihood by banning them from the landfill sites where they access the recyclable materials they recover and sell.

In the Dominican Republic, 421 waste pickers were forcibly evicted from an open dump to protect the interests of a private company (Espinosa and Parra 2017). They were prohibited from entering the waste dump, Rafey, by the company's private security service and received no protection from the municipality. In response, waste pickers from the Asociación de Recicladores de Rafey marched 160 kilometres to present their case to national government and regain access to the waste dump. They pushed their case in the media and allies from national and regional waste picking associations and in the National Human Rights Commission have challenged the government for a response.

Violence has been the catalyst for the formation of some of the strongest informal worker organizations. For example, the formation of the Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB), an organization of waste pickers in Bogotá, Colombia, was a response to the murder of waste pickers in the city streets during the 1980s. WIEGO and its network have noted a decided trend that those informal workers who are organized are less susceptible to violence than less organized workers.

Again, it is important to reiterate that domestic violence has an impact on the workplace and women's ability to engage in paid work. In Brazil, women waste pickers who are part of the national waste pickers' movement, MNCR, were able to share their experiences of domestic violence and how this impacts on their lives at home and in the workplace through a participatory action research programme on **Gender and Waste** (Dias and Ogando 2015).



*Organizations of informal workers need support to train women leaders among their membership on how to address violence and harassment at work.
Photo: Paula Bronstein/Getty Images Reportage*

What Is Needed for All Informal Workers

Strategies by informal workers' organizations to address violence can be strengthened with the ratification of the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (No. 190) and Recommendation (No. 206) as these recognize and address the specific forms of violence and harassment at the workplace. Informal workers and their organizations are mobilizing for the following demands:

- Resources for informal workers' organizations to raise awareness of the specific forms of violence and harassment they face and advocate for appropriate measures aimed at perpetrators of violence including employers, third parties, public authorities and household members.
- Train informal worker leaders on how to address violence and harassment at work among their membership.
- Build effective partnerships and alliances to fight against violence and harassment with trade unions, employer associations, women's rights organizations and other civil society actors.

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ABOUT WIEGO

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) is a global network focused on empowering the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy to secure their livelihoods. We believe all workers should have equal economic opportunities, rights, protection and voice. WIEGO promotes change by improving statistics and expanding knowledge on the informal economy, building networks and capacity among informal worker organizations and, jointly with the networks and organizations, influencing local, national and international policies. Visit www.wiego.org.