

31st July 2020

Mr Leo Varadkar TD  
Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment  
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

**Re: Ratification of the new International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.**

Dear Tánaiste

I am writing to urge the Government to take the formal steps to ratify the new International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work. Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 are the first international legal standards that specifically recognise the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment.

The Convention defines broadly the term violence and harassment, which includes not only physical and verbal abuse, but psychosocial risks and abusive work practices. The Convention protects all workers in the formal and informal economy, including volunteers, trainees and apprentices, and sets out clearly the role of governments and the social partners in preventing, addressing and remedying violence and harassment. It includes protection against third party violence and harassment, as well as protection against the impacts of domestic violence in the world of work.

In normal circumstances, the ratification and proper implementation of C190 and R206, would be urgent to address the scourge of violence and harassment in the world of work, and particularly the prevalence of gender-based violence. The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, brought a new urgency. Globally, we have been witnessing an unacceptable rise in violence and harassment against workers deemed “essential” such as health and care workers, food retail workers and transport workers.

We have also seen an alarming surge in cases of domestic violence worldwide due to the effect of confinement measures. C190 and R206 set out clear steps that governments and the social partners can take to mitigate the impacts of domestic violence, including when home is the place of the work.

The Irish constituents to the ILO – DBEI, IBEC and Congress – played an active and constructive role in the negotiations for the instruments and Ireland was on track to be an early ratifier. Understandably, Covid-19 and saving the lives and livelihoods of people has meant that priorities had to be reappraised.

32 Parnell Square  
Dublin 1  
T +353 1 8897777  
F +353 1 8872012  
congress@ictu.ie  
[www.ictu.ie](http://www.ictu.ie)

However, it is our view that early ratification and implementation of C190 is part and parcel of response measures to curb the effects of this pandemic.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further at a time of your convenience.

Yours sincerely



Patricia King  
General Secretary