

# IDWF Statement on Protecting Domestic Workers Rights and Fighting the Coronavirus Pandemic

*The coronavirus pandemic is our common challenge across borders. Only in solidarity will we succeed in fighting it.*

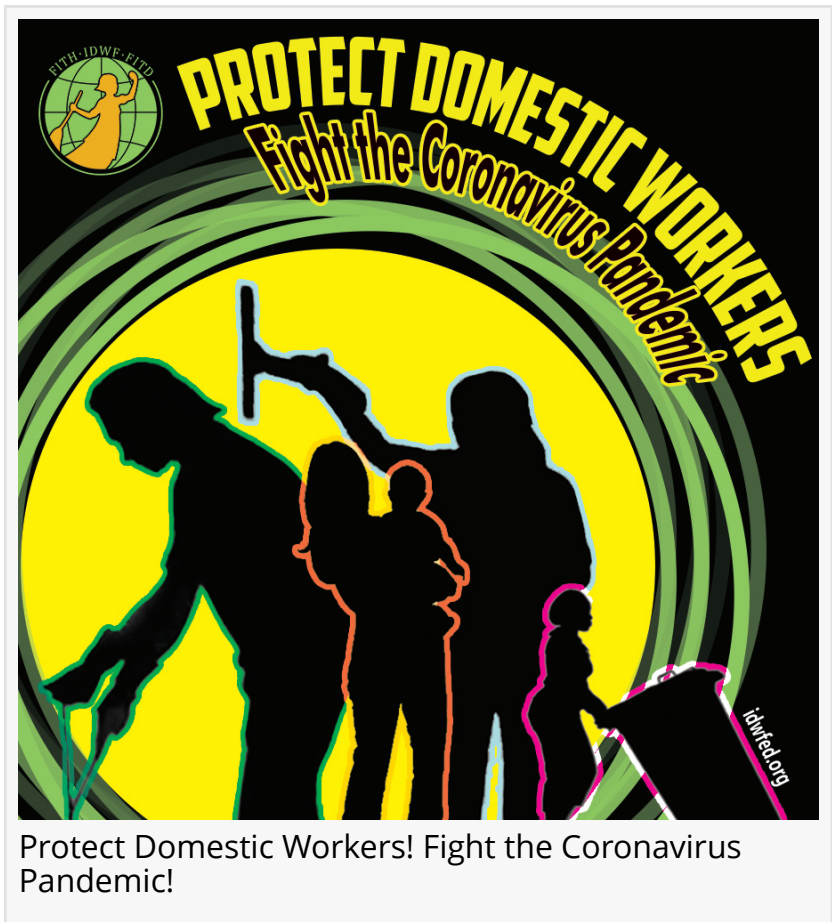
HONG KONG, March 17, 2020  
/EINPresswire.com/ -- International [Domestic Workers Federation](#) Statement on Protecting Domestic Workers Rights and Fighting the [Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

The new coronavirus disease outbreak has been impacting all lives for more than 3 months. Domestic workers, same as other workers in the care economy, are on the frontlines of keeping families and communities healthy. However they are also most vulnerable as their own health and safety are ignored and even violated.

We are deeply concerned and outraged to hear that domestic workers in many of the affected countries are experiencing a substantial increase in workload to ensure cleanliness and hygiene without overtime work compensation. They are not provided with protective gears when using cleaning products containing harmful and unknown chemicals. Domestic workers are thus exposed to a stressful and hazardous working environment.

Until today domestic workers in many countries do not enjoy paid sick leave. They are not protected by any national legislation against workplace accidents and injuries. They are left without choice but to accept these health risks while continuing to work. There are domestic workers being dismissed without notice. Some employers do it because of financial reasons as they lose their jobs. Some do it simply because of scapegoating especially when the domestic workers are migrants. There are cases of domestic workers becoming infected at work after their employers have become infected. It is not clear if they will be able to claim sick leave or other kinds of compensation.

Today, the pandemic is still growing. Governments and communities are trying different options to fight it. Domestic workers, who number in thousands are protecting homes and taking care of older people and people in chronic medical conditions. Their health and safety need to be



protected and guaranteed for them to be part of communal efforts fighting the virus. We call upon governments to take immediate steps to protect the rights of domestic workers:

1. Right to safe and hazard-free workplace: This would include provision of protective gears and measures and training to use these appropriately. Governments need to ensure that domestic workers have the same access to protective measures as any other workers and citizens.
2. Right to paid sick leave and access to health care: When domestic workers are sick, they should stay at home and be covered by paid sick leave. This includes those who are in quarantine and infected.
3. Coverage of workers' rights: In the event of dismissal, domestic workers should be paid their wages and all compensation according to their contracts and the law.
4. Right to information: Information on the pandemic needs to be disseminated widely in the communities including those of migrants. In particular, preventive and protective measures and information needs to be in languages that migrants understand. Domestic workers including migrant domestic workers must have the right to follow the same safety instructions than other workers and citizens generally. Employers need to ensure these rights.

Furthermore, governments must be vigilant in sharing accurate information about how the virus spreads and how it can be checked. Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity. Any racist or anti-immigrant policies and behaviors have to stop.

The coronavirus pandemic is our common challenge across borders. Only in solidarity will we succeed in fighting it.

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