

International Domestic Workers Federation



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Issue Highlights:

1. Sign on to Stop Abuses of Migrant Domestic Workers in HK
2. Over 5000 people signed to call for "No Diplomatic Immunity for Domestic Worker Abuse"

1. Sign on to Stop Abuses of Migrant Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

Erwiana Sulistyaningsih, an Indonesian domestic worker working in Hong Kong was sent back to Indonesia on January 10, after working 8 months in Hong Kong. On arrival at the airport, she



was found so badly injured that she was immediately hospitalized. Until today, she has been at hospital. Erwiana's horrific abuse underlines the urgent need for the Hong Kong government to ensure thousands of migrant domestic workers do not suffer exploitation at the hands of recruitment agencies and their employers.

Surveys by the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (2012) and Mission for Migrant Workers (2013) and a report of the Amnesty International all demonstrate abuse suffered by migrant domestic workers is widespread and not limited to isolated incidents. Thousands of women spoke of excessive and illegal agency fees, underpayment, confiscation of passports, and physical, as well as psychological and sexual abuse. Those who flee their employer, they must find another job within two-weeks or must leave Hong Kong. Those who file a complaint at the Labour Tribunal have to first find a shelter to accommodate them and be prepared to be jobless for months.

The IDWF, together with the Amnesty International, Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, Hong Kong Federation of Asian Domestic Workers believe that the people of Hong Kong will no longer tolerate the illegal acts of placement agencies and abusive employers.

[Through an online petition launched, we are calling on Matthew Cheung, Secretary for Labour & Welfare of the Hong Kong government, to](#)

1. Establish a robust, proactive body that monitors, investigates and punishes agencies that charge migrant domestic workers illegal fees, confiscate their passports and encourage underpayment of wages.
2. Introduce a government-run system for payment of recruitment fees and wages so that agencies and employers cannot underpay workers.
3. Establish a working group where government, workers and employers agree on recruitment fees, and work towards the international standard of "no fee to the employee".
4. Allow employers and workers to decide on whether the worker will live-in or out.
5. Abolish the "Two-Week Rule" so that migrant domestic workers are equally under same immigration policy as other migrant workers.



So far, over 15,000 people have already signed.

[But we need more, please sign to add to the strength!](#)

SIGN TODAY!!

2. Over 5000 people signed to call for "No Diplomatic Immunity for Domestic Worker Abuse"

In early January, we IDWF, the IUF, National Domestic Workers Alliance, United Workers Congress and domestic workers unions and organizations in India launched a series of actions to demand the India government not to give diplomatic immunity to the India diplomatic in the USA, Ms. Khobragade who underpaid her domestic worker and made her work overtime without pay. For details, please go to www.idwfed.org.

One of the actions launched was an online signature campaign at the IUF website which collected some 5000 signatures in less than a week's time. At the end, the Indian diplomatic was transferred to the United Nation and the local police in USA dropped the charge. Nevertheless, this case has led to Indian government to consider formulating a policy under which India will accept the prevalence of the host country's wage laws for its migrant domestic workers.

[Domestic help abroad to be paid as per that country's laws: draft policy](#)



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No diplomatic immunity for domestic worker abuse!

08-01-2014 **Urgent Action**

Devyani Khobragade, India's deputy consul general to the US, was arrested by US police in December for allegedly paying her housekeeper Sangeeta Richard less than one-third the legal minimum wage and lying to US officials about Sangeeta's real wage and working conditions. While there are understandable concern about Khobragade's treatment following arrest, **the diplomatic row between the US and India triggered by the arrest has obscured the real issue of worker exploitation. Click here to send a message!**

The government of India is trying to shield the diplomat from the potential consequences of criminal fraud and exploitation, first by arguing that her position at the time of her arrest entitled her to diplomatic immunity, and now by rewarding her with a UN position intending to solidify her immunity. The US and Indian governments are currently negotiating the granting

This a small step we have made towards better protection of migrant domestic workers of India including working for diplomats. To ensure the eventual success, we must work with domestic workers organizations in India to keep the pressure on so that the India government will do the right thing. Let's thank all those who have put their effort on this action to reach this result.

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