

Submission to the Legislative Council on the Proposed Race Discrimination Bill of the Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers – Hong Kong

03 March 2007

Indonesian migrant workers is one of the fastest growing ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong. Concentrated mainly in domestic work, Indonesian migrant workers have much at stake in the current process of institutionalizing a bill that shall address racial discrimination.

It is widely known that many cases of abuse and violations of rights are committed against Indonesian migrant workers. Physical abuse, contract violations, non-payment of wages, underpayment and slave-like conditions of work – these and more are the most common problems in the workplace that Indonesians experience.


The Two-Week Rule or New Conditions of Stay, though not the the only reason why these cases happen, plays a big role in perpetuating such abuses.

The NCS / TWR lays down the condition for the abuse of foreign domestic helpers. The vulnerability of FDHs to rights violations is heightened by the situation that we are severely restricted and our livelihood is threatened if we opt to stand up against the exploitation that we experience.

Thus, it is disappointing to see that the NCS / TWR is not included in the bill against racial discrimination.

Different groups have expressed opposition to the NCS / TWR since its implementation. This issue has reached international level. The committee for the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) ~~committee~~ has taken up the issue as a concern and has judged it as discriminatory.

Migrant organizations in Hong Kong have also, in numerous occasions, raised the NCS as a concrete and all-encompassing concern of foreign domestic workers.

Thus, the Association  Indonesian Migrant Workers in Hong Kong believe that the NCS must be an agenda that should be addressed by the proposed bill on racial discrimination.

Any effort to curb racial discrimination but doesn't address the NCS will fall very short from the principles that the bill strives to adhere with.

The rights of foreign domestic helpers in general and Indonesian migrant workers in particular, have been long curtailed by the NCS. It is high time that this situation be corrected.

Thank you very much.