

**Submission of the United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-HK) on the
“Report of the HKSAR Government under the International Convention on the
Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination”**

Migrant workers in Hong Kong, majority of which are foreign domestic helpers (FDHs), are principally the victims of racial discrimination.

The most awful acts of discrimination do not come from daily individual acts in Hong Kong society but from the policies of different HK government agencies and various departmental and executive orders, which are equally powerful and binding yet do not need to pass legislation.

We have seen in the past years the institutionalization of discrimination through retrogressive government initiatives that affects the wages, employment protection, respect for human rights, conditions of stay and working environment of migrant workers. All these did not happen only after the hand-over. It exists way back before the return of Hong Kong to its motherland.

There are some political parties that are hell-bent in pushing for unreasonable taxation and levies targeting FDHs. We have heard bankrupt arguments of some proponents that their proposals are not discriminatory or racist since they are just suggestions and it is up to the government if they will approve it or not. But proposals such as the infamous 20% “service charge” or “tax” or “levy” does not need to be enacted first to be discriminatory or racist. Their basis for this is that they claim that FDHs are not permanent residents and therefore should not enjoy the same social services. The mere insinuation of such ideas is already racist and discriminatory. And if the government approves the proposal, it is in effect institutionalizing racism and discrimination.

What is sad about this is that the HKSAR government is using these discriminatory policies under the pretext of protecting local workers. From our observation, this is not true. Even local workers are subjected to wage cuts, termination of work in the guise of voluntary redundancy, and the like. Local workers groups that we relate to even support our opposition against said discriminatory proposals as these might be applied to them in the future.

We hope that our submission of our position to the Panel on Home Affairs of the Legislative Council would be considered in its final report. In this way, we wish that in the near future the concerned government authorities that made or proposed such discriminatory policies and orders would be persuaded to review and to withdraw such decisions.

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Executive Committee
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