

## **Joint submission from Socialist Refugee Action and Socialist Immigrant Action**

### **Against restricting refugee screening mechanism**

Today while we are discussing the working condition of ethnic minority in Hong Kong, I want to say there is a group of ethnic minority, the refugees are not even allowed to work legally here. Refugees in Hong Kong can be put into prison for 3 years if they go to work.

We can only rely on the government subsidies to survive, including food subsidy (\$1200) and rent subsidy (\$1500) to survive. \$1500/ person cannot even rent a subdivided unit in Hong Kong. Many of us have not enough food for your children. Many of us are forced to live in extremely small and unsafe apartments.

Yes, many refugees would rather take the risk of being arrested and go to work illegal. If they don't work they live worse than being in prison. We want our legal right to work. We want to become an ordinary worker with the same wage, same labour right as Hong Kong workers.

The acceptance rate of refugees in Hong Kong is only 0.02%, lowest in the whole world. Many refugees are forced to stay in Hong Kong for more than 10 years, waiting for the extremely slow and harsh screening process. Staying here for so many years, we have our family and children. We need to support their lives.

My children asked me why they need to study so hard. I don't know how to answer because they won't be able to get any job in future even they graduate from their school with the best result. I know the day when he is graduated he will become unemployed.

There are only less than 10,000 refugees in Hong Kong. The government tells lie that refugees will steal all jobs of Hong Kong labour. But in fact Hong Kong companies are making huge profit and they force Hong Kong workers to work very long hours. Now there is a shortage of labour in catering and construction sector and the government is talking about importing more migrant labour. They don't want refugees to work is not because of economic reason, but they want to exclude us socially and create racism in society. The government wants Hong Kong people to hate us and regard us as 'lazy people' so that they can blame all the social problems on us. In fact it is the problem of the government and the rich people.

The jobs of Hong Kong workers should be shared with refugees so that all workers will have shorter working hour. At the same time all workers wage should not be cut.

The government and pro-government newspaper attack refugees as 'lazy' or 'taking benefits from society'. It is totally a lie and smear campaign against refugees. We want to work as a ordinary worker to contribute to the society.

We want to work. We want to organize and unite together with the local workers to fight against the government and the rich!