

IFJ Policy on Sexual Harassment

This policy will be both circulated and drawn to the attention of all participants at the outset of each IFJ event.

The IFJ seeks to encourage the active participation of its members in meetings, projects, campaigns and activities. The IFJ is committed to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct in all its activities. **The IFJ is committed to assure and promote gender equality.**

Every member has the right to participate and to be treated with dignity, equality and respect. Any kind of behaviour or intimidation that undermines these basic rights is unacceptable.

All participants taking part in IFJ events and activities must

- avoid personal remarks or behaviour that may cause offence or distress
- challenge **and report** inappropriate language or behaviour if you see it or hear it or

The IFJ has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment within its structures, events and activities.

What is meant by sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is where any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

It can include:

- Unwanted physical contact, suggestive remarks or 'banter', propositions of a sexual nature or innuendos; unwanted comments on appearance; verbal abuse of a sexual nature or relating to a person's gender; leering; displaying pornographic pictures
- Sexual harassment directed at people because of their sexuality or their perceived sexuality. Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) members may feel particularly vulnerable.

According to the ITUC and IFJ Gender council, examples of sexual harassment include:

Physical

- Touching, pinching, stroking, squeezing, or deliberate brushing against someone
- Leering or ogling
- Making homophobic comments and sexually suggestive signals
- Sending unwanted e-mails, text messages, whatsapp and any other messaging systems messages
- Unnecessary physical contact and touching
- Physical assault

Verbal

- Making sexual comments or innuendos,
- Calling someone by a sexually-oriented nickname
- Telling sexual jokes, or asking about sexual fantasies
- Making insults based on a person's sex or rating their sexuality
- Turning work discussions to sexual topics
- Requests for sexual favours

Sexual harassment is:

- Unwanted
- Unwelcome
- Perceived by the person on the receiving end as intimidating, humiliating, harassment.

Dealing with sexual harassment:

If you are being sexually harassed - *you don't have to put up with it.*

- Don't think it is your fault or that you 'asked for it' You have a right not to be harassed. Remember, it's not you, it's him/her.
- Keep a note of anything that happens including dates, times, where it occurred, what was said or done, witnesses if possible and a copy of letters/emails/texts if relevant.

Informal approach

- If you feel confident enough, tell the harasser that the behaviour is unwelcome and ask him/her to stop. Sometimes an early, strong response is enough to prevent the matter escalating. *But don't worry if you haven't done so the first time or subsequently. Sexual harassment can come as a shock when you are not expecting it and not everyone is ready with the right words and sometimes it takes a while to understand what is going on.*
- If you don't feel confident enough to speak to the harasser individually or personally – you can write/email to him or her or you might want to seek the support of a colleague, IFJ Executive Committee member, Gender Council member or a representative of your organisation to accompany you. But if you can't face it, don't worry.
- If the person subject to unwanted behaviour wishes to seek an informal resolution of the concern and requests it **the designated** IFJ representative/s may talk to both parties separately, and will pay particular attention to the allegations made by the subject of the harassment. They will then talk to the parties, together if appropriate, but ensuring that targeted person's privacy is respected according to her/his wishes, whilst aiming to find a settlement between the parties.

Making a complaint

In all circumstances consider making an official complaint. You may find this decision difficult but it will not be any more difficult than living with the harassment.

If the incident and/or unwanted behaviour is serious or persistent MAKE A COMPLAINT.

The IFJ will establish a pool of up to 10 members and train them to serve as a member of the independent complaints panel.

IFJ staff who have been subjected to sexual harassment at an IFJ event or in the workplace will have the option of making a complaint under this policy or under the procedures set out in collective agreements and/or their contracts.

This policy will be distributed as part of the statutory information at all IFJ events, including training sessions, workshops, meetings, conferences and other activities.

The policy will be reviewed by the Gender Council and Executive Committee annually.

IFJ Sexual Harassment Complaints Policy

General Principles

All members taking part in IFJ activities have the right to raise concerns or complaints of sexual harassment without fear of discrimination or retaliation.

This Policy applies to all IFJ organised events and activities, including statutory meetings, training, projects, workshops and public events.

This policy applies to all staff, representatives and participants, including employees, volunteers, consultants or contract staff.

Throughout this process there must be respect for the general principle that the individual subjected to sexual harassment has rights, as well as the person who is accused of being a harasser.

The IFJ will, at all times, seek to ensure that the individual who is subject to unwanted behaviour will be treated in a way that minimises any harm caused.

Concern for the person subjected to sexual harassment must be at the heart of the process, and the IFJ should assist to ensure there is also a follow up after the event, that could include advice on therapy or other professional counselling (where appropriate).

This complaints process is not a formal legal process, it is a way to ensure safe, secure and good working environment for our members, based on trade union values, respect for all, and basic human rights.

Making a formal complaint

Anyone who is subjected to sexual harassment should:

- promptly report the incident(s), either orally or in writing, providing as much evidence as they can, including details of any witnesses, names, dates, places and events that took place.

➤ Who to contact

Two named individual/s will be appointed at each event – one male and one female – to whom any initial report about the incident(s) should be raised.

Where a satisfactory response is not received, or if the organization or individual is uncomfortable addressing their concerns to the designated individuals, the complaint should be addressed to the IFJ General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary or President.

Once a complaint is received, immediate steps should be taken to inform the Adcom that a complaint has been received, without providing details of the complaint. Adcom, shall, within 7 days, establish an independent complaints panel of 3 persons (which will include at least two women members, at least one of whom shall be a representative of the IFJ Gender Council) to conduct an investigation into the matter and make a report with recommended action to Adcom within a specified period, which shall not exceed 30 days.

➤ Confidentiality and anonymity

At all times the IFJ will respect the confidentiality of any complaint received, except as necessary to conduct an investigation and address the complaint.

The IFJ encourages members to only make anonymous complaints as a last resort. If individuals choose to remain anonymous and/or do not provide sufficient detail, it may not be possible to undertake a comprehensive investigation of their claim.

➤ **Investigation and resolution of complaints**

The IFJ assumes that complaints made under this Policy are made in good faith, are real, legitimate and significant enough to warrant an investigation. All complaints under this Policy will be investigated as promptly as possible but at the very latest within 30 days after the establishment of the independent complaints panel.

In the event a member of the Administrative Committee or Executive Committee is under investigation he/she will be temporarily removed from the Council until the matter is resolved.

All information disclosed during the course of the investigation will remain confidential except as necessary to conduct the investigation and take any remedial action or where disclosure is required by applicable law.

In exceptional cases, the IFJ may choose to obtain external assistance in the conduct of the investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation a report will be submitted to the Administrative Committee.

The Administrative Committee shall meet within 7 days to consider the findings.

If it is determined that the complaint has been substantiated appropriate corrective or disciplinary measures will be taken to address the issue with the offending party commensurate with the severity of the offence. Steps will also be taken to prevent further violations.

Such measures may include:

- A formal letter to the offender
- A formal letter to the offender's union
- Exclusion of the offender from the meeting
- Exclusion of the offender from any or all future IFJ events
- A temporary or permanent exclusion of offender's organisation from IFJ activities and/or membership.

The matter may also be reported to the appropriate outside agency to ensure compliance with all laws and regulations. The IFJ has the responsibility to make sure this process does not prohibit a person subjected to harassment from exercising her/his legal rights. If an offence is a violation of the law, or suspected as such, the targeted person must be helped to exercise her/his legal rights. This could take the form of a report to the police.

The status and resolution of the investigation will be communicated to the individual that made the complaint.

All IFJ member organizations or individuals attending IFJ events have a duty to cooperate in an investigation. If member organizations or individuals fail to cooperate or if they provide false information in an investigation, the IFJ will take action commensurate with the severity of the offence.

➤ **Prevention of retaliation**

If an individual makes a report under this Policy, they will be protected from retaliation, harassment, or other forms of reprisals or discrimination, or threats thereof, arising from the reports if:

- the disclosure of the information was made in good faith;
- they believe it to be substantially true;
- they do not act maliciously or make false allegations;

IFJ regards the making of deliberately false or malicious allegations under this policy as a serious offence. Such actions may result in appropriate disciplinary measures up to and including, if warranted, legal action.