Committee: Economic and Financial Committee (GA2)

Topic: Addressing Workplace Violations in the Global Gig Economy

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Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Katerina Pachini, and I am a 12th grade student at the American Farm School of Thessaloniki. This year I have the honour of serving as the co-chair of the Economic and Financial Committee (GA2) at the 9th Deutsche Schule Thessaloniki Model United Nations.

First of all I would like to welcome all delegates to the GA2 Committee and this year's conference in general. Be certain that it will be a memorable one, inside and outside the committee alike. Whether it's your first time debating or not, remember to not allow the process to overwhelm you but rather enjoy it in its fullness.

Having participated in multiple conferences in the past, I remain excited to continue my journey and engage in even more multifaceted debates with you. It is my firm belief that MUN conferences can push one to evolve, both intellectually and personally. They provide an unparalleled opportunity to communicate and collaborate, adapt to new situations, familiarize yourself with constantly evolving world level issues and, most importantly, think innovatively in an attempt to resolve those issues.

The topic at hand, namely "Addressing Workplace Violations in the Global Gig Economy", is a contemporary and highly relevant one. Tackling it is essential towards achieving a more equitable and stable labor system and an economy visibly guided by internationally recognized standards, especially in a time distinguished by a rapid expansion of digital labor platforms. I hope that this study guide will prompt further and deeper research into your countries' policies and the multifaceted nature of the subject at hand, as such preparation is vital for participation during debate.

In conclusion, I look forward to meeting all of you and diving deeper into this critical matter. I wish you all the best in your preparation for the fruitful dialogue to be conducted. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me at; katpouki@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Katerina Pachini

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the global gig economy has emerged as a rapidly expanding segment of the modern labor market. It is premised on individual workers connecting with customers through a digital platform to offer temporary services in exchange for an amount of money determined by the type of task the provider executes. These include a variety of services, including the delivery of physical goods or food, asset sharing for a predetermined time frame, or even transportation upon request. It is considered non-standard employment, as it does not cover a full-time schedule and relies on autonomous operation. This means that workers are not formally classified as salaried employees, which poses an issue as it limits their entitlement to working rights. It should thus be addressed so as to ensure that economic growth does not undermine their wellbeing.

The gig economy generates substantial profit for companies that own digital labor platforms, especially those with a range of operations across multiple countries - for example Uber, Bolt and Doordash. Studies indicate that it will reach a size of 1,847 billion USD by 2032 [JDE][1]. Hiring short-term contractors allows for more flexibility in the workforce, offering employers the ability to respond and adapt to the shifts of the market. The classification of “independent contractor” entails reduced legal obligations due to its limited recognized workplace rights, and thus exempts companies from the provision of otherwise prerequisite wage guarantees, injury compensation and occupational safety measures. Subsequently, gig workers do not receive the rights and basic privileges of a standard employee and become subjects of related violations more easily, as there are no compulsory guidelines to prevent those.

These dynamics that seem advantageous for employers raise foundational concerns about fairness towards workers and protection of their workplace rights. This encompasses their inability to regulate working hours and rather remain bound to a payment-by-task basis often allocated by algorithms. Evaluation solely depends on online reviews and constant availability. The agility such jobs provide is offset by job insecurity and exclusion from any form of social security, endangering the citizens and exposing them to risks with low reward. In some cases, it can even be viewed as exploitation of financial distress.

Several attempts have been made by the United Nations, the European Union and other organizations to address the diverse workplace violations occurring and advocate for the rights of gig workers. However, even though recognition and classification of their rights and employment status is gradually taking place, protections are not yet adequate or globally enforced. For instance through the European Union Platform Work Directive is aimed at specifying their employment status and establishing beneficial working conditions.

[1] Sharma, Animesh Kumar, and Rahul Sharma. “The Gig Economy and the Evolving Nature of Work in India: Employment, Policy, and Platform Realities in the Age of Convenience.” *Journal of Digital Economy*, vol. 4, 6 Aug. 2025, pp. 156–167, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2773067025000366#bib14, 10.1016/j.jdec.2025.07.005.

Therefore, it is evident that safeguarding worker rights in the global gig economy is a necessary step towards humane, sustainable and fair international economic growth. The significance of measures to mitigate the issue is further reinforced by the vast expansion of the sector - as previously mentioned - which should guide future attempts to resolve it. Overall, collective cooperation and transparency are required, along with the implementation of actions and standards across all states.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Decent Work

"Decent work encapsulates the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; security in the workplace and social protection for all; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men" [ILO][2]. The standards of decent work are commonly violated in the global gig economy. Therefore, it is highly important that measures are taken to uphold those values and ensure fairness and humane working conditions for the workers of this segment of the economy.

Employee Misclassification

"The improper categorisation of employees as independent contractors. This occurs when an organisation works with a worker on a full-time basis through a commercial contract rather than an employment agreement." [Boundless][3] It constitutes one of the major causes of violations in the gig economy as there are no clear guidelines for how workers should be treated.

Gig

"A job that is temporary, does not offer many hours, or may end at any time, usually involving working for yourself rather than for an employer" [CUP][4]. It is the basis of the gig economy, which is defined by individuals taking up flexible, short-term, payment-by-task jobs to acquire money.

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[2] *Decent Work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. International Labour Organization, https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/decent-work-and-2030-agenda-sustainable-development

[3] *What Is Employee Misclassification? Boundless*, https://boundlesshq.com/glossary/employee-misclassification/

[4] "Gig." *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/gig

Independent Contractor

"A person or company that supplies goods or services to another company" [CUP][5]. Most gig workers fall under this category as they can provide services without being tied to a specific company. In addition, the platforms they work with assume limited legal responsibilities towards them.

Informal Work

"Informal employment refers to working arrangements that are in practice or by law not subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, or entitlement to social protection or other employment guarantees; for example, advance notice of dismissal, severance pay, or paid annual or sick leave" [ILO][6]. Certain instances of gig work may be associated with this type of work, as there are inadequate frameworks to guarantee protections and provisions for workers.

Labor Market

"A crucial part of the economy that deals with the supply and demand for jobs. It includes everyone who is working, everyone who is looking for work and the availability of jobs from employers" [Eurostat][7]. It is highly affected by the gig economy as there are increasingly flexible positions and individuals alternating between multiple jobs. As a result, demand for new labor market standards is induced.

Non-Standard Employment

"Non-standard forms of employment" – also referred to as diverse forms of work – is an umbrella term for different employment arrangements that deviate from standard employment. They include temporary employment; part-time and on-call work; temporary agency work and other multiparty employment relationships; as well as disguised employment and dependent self-employment."[ILO][8] Gigs fall under this category due to its differences from traditional work in schedule, stability, pay, etc.

Precarious Work

A form of employment/work which does not abide by the standards of working in terms of pay, protective rights and security. It is not a clearly determined term legally.

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[5] "Independent Contractor." *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/independent-contractor

[6] *What Is Informal Employment?* International Labour Organization, 2023, https://www.ilo.org/media/5481/download

[7] "Beginners: Labour Market – Basic Definitions." *Statistics Explained*, Eurostat, European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Beginners:Labour_market_-_basic_definitions

[8] International Labour Organization, *"Non-standard Forms of Employment,"* International Labour Organization, https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/non-standard-forms-employment

[WRC][9] Gig workers may experience such circumstances, for instance low pay and job insecurity.

Service Sector

"The part of a country's economy that is made up of businesses that provide services" [CUP][10]. It is strongly linked to the gig economy, as most of its branches heavily concentrate in this sector -for example transportation, food delivery, and others-.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Origins of the Global Gig Economy

In modern society, the gig economy is recognized for the utilization of digital platforms and algorithmic matching of clients and service providers. However, even though the official term was coined relatively recently, in 2009, similar practices have existed for centuries. The original establishment of "gigs" themselves was much earlier, attributable to musicians closing venues independently for each performance and alternating between them to earn money in the early 1900s. Since then, this mindset has expanded to various other industries, with part of the demographic working multiple jobs according to their financial needs. This trend escalated exponentially in the late 2000s and continued exhibiting upward drifts until today.

The initial foundations of the gig economy in its current form can be ascribed to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) that took place in 2007-2009. During those years, the international economy suffered intense pressure. In the years leading up to the GFC, countries all over the world were experiencing extreme and steady economic development, characterized by limited inflation, low rates of unemployment and manageable interest rates [Reserve Bank of Australia][11]. This encouraged real estate investments, especially in the US, which evolved into a competitive market requiring constant mortgage loans, often with high risks waved off as "profitable". When these favourable conditions ceased to continue investors could no longer repay the high volume of loans that had accumulated until that point. Specifically, when housing prices started plummeting, the costs of loans far exceeded the selling prices. In addition, the early signs of the crisis were ignored by governments and banks alike.

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[9] *What Is Precarious Work? Work Rights Centre*, https://www.workrightscentre.org/work-rights/what-is-precarious-work/

[10] "Service Sector." *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/service-sector

[11] Reserve Bank of Australia. "The Global Financial Crisis." *Reserve Bank of Australia*, 2025, https://www.rba.gov.au/education/resources/explainers/the-global-financial-crisis.html.

The effects of the Global Financial Crisis spread to the population as a whole. Distrust in the financial system flourished and the labor force began pursuing side hustles to cope with inflation, job insecurity and cover their basic needs. Consequently, demand for supplementary income positions increased [Britannica][12]. Specifically, according to estimates of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the number of unemployed rose by almost 34 million from 2007 to 2009 [ILO][13]. There was a growing need for jobs that allow agility so that they could be combined in the schedule of a single person. Simultaneously, companies could no longer support hiring to their previous extent and were seeking opportunities to reduce fixed costs associated with traditional employer-employee relations. The rising pursuit of alternative income streams, coupled with a shift toward more flexible labor models marked the pivotal turning points in the evolution of the gig economy.

As a result, there was an opportunity for entrepreneurs to found companies offering location-based services, namely deliveries or transport, and remote assistance in various computer-based tasks and teaching, where individuals could opt to work according to their independent needs. Key examples include Airbnb, Uber and similar platforms, which surfaced around that time. Furthermore, existing corporations increased their reliance on external contractors, essentially transferring the risks of labor onto them by avoiding paying for benefits, insurance and payroll taxes.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and Technological Development

The COVID-19 pandemic (2019-2023) was another key factor for the expansion of the gig economy. When the first quarantine protocols were implemented, citizens were forced to rely on platforms to purchase edible goods and other commodities [ILO][14]. A distinctive example is that of eating establishments, e.g., restaurants, adapting their operation to distribute food via platform workers [ILO][15]. Additionally, remote working spread as a concept as few occupations were granted permission to leave their place of residence. While not all instances are immediately tied to the gig economy, this reinforced how the digital world impacts daily life. As its model primarily relies on technological advancements for its efficient function, a smoother transition was ensured as it integrated deeper into daily life.

Evidently, the technological innovation taking place over the past 30 years was a prerequisite for that integration to be successful. The inventions of cloud computing and broadband connectivity are heavily utilized to facilitate interactions both between clients

[12] Duignan, Brian. "Britannica Money." Www.Britannica.Com, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/money/financial-crisis-of-2007-2008/Effects-and-aftermath-of-the-crisis.
[13] "Global Employment Trends, January 2010." *International Labour Organization*, 26 Jan. 2010, https://www.ilo.org/publications/global-employment-trends-january-2010
[14] ILO. "The Role of Digital Labour Platforms in Transforming the World of Work | International Labour Organization." *Www.Ilo.Org*, 23 Feb. 2021, https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/role-digital-labour-platforms-transforming-world-work.
[15] ILO. "The Role of Digital Labour Platforms in Transforming the World of Work | International Labour Organization." *Www.Ilo.Org*, 23 Feb. 2021, https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/role-digital-labour-platforms-transforming-world-work.

and service providers and workers and companies owning those websites. Among other developments in the sector of information and communication technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has prevailed in the automation of platform functions. Around 41%[BRI][16] evolving gig-related websites are incorporating machine learning algorithms to expedite workflow management, pricing and job matching, a statistic expected to grow in the following years. This type of online technology offers increased productivity and profitability combined with decreased human intervention, thus businesses can extend their markets.

Economic Significance and the Situation Globally

As previously mentioned, the global gig economy is a continuously expanding segment of the labor market today, accounting for up to 12% of it [World Bank][17]. About 4.4-12.5% [World Bank][18] of the global labor force partake -either full or part time- in one or more freelance positions on an online platform. Usual sectors include transportation, food delivery, digital services and more.

As a result, there is augmented investing in digital labor platforms. Almost the entire funding is allocated among three geographical areas: Asia, North America and Europe, totaling around 114 billion US dollars [ILO][19]. This is a reflection of the highly developed markets in those parts of the world, combined with their large consumer markets and technological progress. On the contrary, a portion of the workers entering the industry originates from Africa, India and Ukraine, offering services to clients from the aforementioned areas where investment is concentrated [PJC][20]. The gig economy can thus be described as a planetary market.

These dynamics exercise pressure in the low-income populations, simultaneously due to decreasing wages and the magnified chasm between them and more economically stable communities. In fact, developing countries constitute 40% of platform traffic [World Bank][21] in worker numbers, primarily as a result of high unemployment rates. As opposed to Europe and the US, however, money gained through platform work acts as a basic income source there. Because the competition is global, companies are able to categorize workers by how likely they are to accept lower pay as a result of limited employment opportunities.

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[16] Business Research Insights. “Gig Economy Market Size, Share, Growth Analysis Report 2028.” 2024, https://www.businessresearchinsights.com/market-reports/gig-economy-market-102503.

[17] “Working Without Borders - the Promise and Peril of Online Gig Work (Overview).” 2025, https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099071923114025720

[18] Datta, Namita, et al. “Working Without Borders: The Promise and Peril of Online Gig Work.” Openknowledge.Worldbank.Org, 24 July 2023, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/40066, 10.1596/40066.

[19] ILO. “The Role of Digital Labour Platforms in Transforming the World of Work | International Labour Organization.” *Www.Ilo.Org*, 23 Feb. 2021, https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/role-digital-labour-platforms-transforming-world-work.

[20] Esmurzayeva, Natalia Mikhaylovna. “The Rise of the Gig Economy: Global Trends and Policy Implications—A Mixed Methods Study.” *Premier Journal of Cardiology*, 25 Sept. 2025, 10.70389/pjec.100006.

[21] “Working Without Borders - the Promise and Peril of Online Gig Work (Overview).” 2025, https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099071923114025720

In Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) less protection and weaker enforcement of legally set benchmarks allow for such discrimination to take place regularly. Therefore, gig workers usually navigate between platforms to be able to meet their required earnings, building up to the imbalance between freedoms and commitments.

Generally, the measures implemented to tackle this situation need to correspond to the exponential growth of the gig economy over the past years while remaining relevant to future development. The expected market size for platform work is estimated to reach about $1,847 in 2032, triple that of 2024 estimates -around $556.7 [WEC][22]. Additionally, an increasing part of the workforce is undertaking freelance work and side jobs to cope with the ascending cost of living. Unless regulatory frameworks adapt to the continuingly expanding economy, unsafe and unfair violations of workplace rights are more likely to affect larger parts of the labor force.

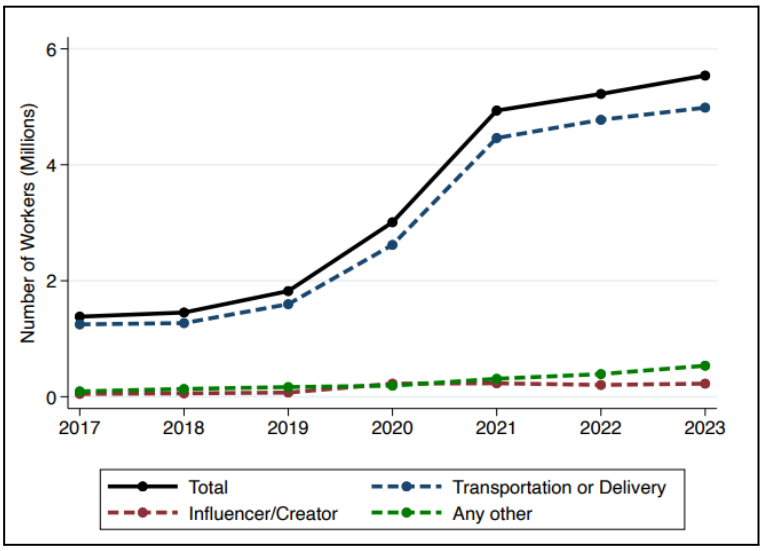


Figure 1: Platform Gig Workers in the US, 2017-2023 [NBER][23]

[22] Charlton, Emma. "What Is the Gig Economy and What's the Deal for Gig Workers?" World Economic Forum, 22 Nov. 2024, https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/11/what-gig-economy-workers/.
[23] Garin, Andrew, et al. "The Evolution of Platform Gig Work, 2012–2023." NBER, 7 Mar. 2025, www.nber.org/books-and-chapters/changing-nature-work/evolution-platform-gig-work-2012-2023.

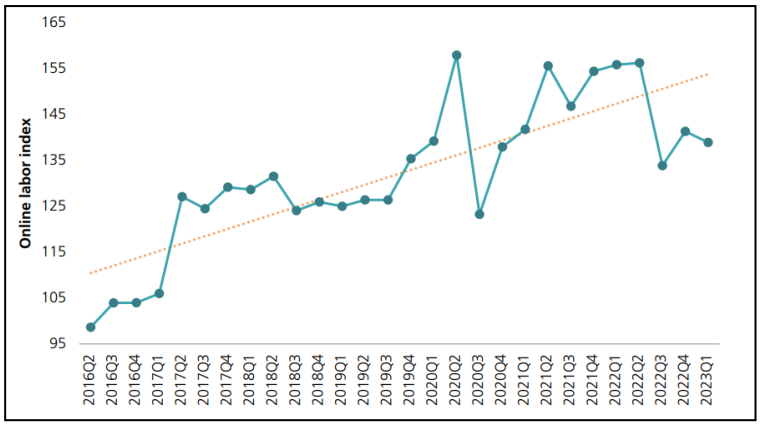


Figure 2: Gig Economy Labor Demand Index, 1st Quarter of 2016-2nd Quarter of 2023, Online Labor Index [OLI][24]

Issues with the current state of the gig economy

As previously mentioned, gig workers from both MEDCs and LEDCs remain subject to workplace violations. As a result of the lack of comprehensive frameworks on this segment of the economy until recently, they face unfair working conditions without restrictions to prevent them from doing so.

One of the primary issues is employee misclassification. It is common practice to classify workers as independent contractors, meaning that they are exempt from certain protections as they are not direct employees of the companies they provide services to. This creates vagueness in employment relationships, providing companies with opportunities for loose accession to the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as set by the International Labor Organization as well as country-specific regulations. This way, they can exercise authority over working conditions and schedules to their benefit and engage with individuals unfairly.

Undermining worker rights may not be a deliberate intent, but a casualty of ensuring benefits for the company itself, which is why a number of corporations oppose stricter regulations. A lot of responsibilities tied with hiring employees instead of independent contractors raise operating costs, which may be viewed as disadvantageous for their goals as a whole. That is to say that they prefer collaborating with independent workers to maintain flexibility and adapt quickly to market shifts without being accountable for them and thus having limited freedom and profit. In most cases, this is interpreted as a way to ignore the wellbeing of the workers almost entirely, as mentioned above.

[24] World Bank, *"Working Without Borders: The Promise and Peril of Online Gig Work: Chapter 5 – Demand for Online Gig Work,"* World Bank, 2025, https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099071923114032769

Consequently, gig workers do not have access to basic working rights. An indisputable example is the lack of minimum wages as well as economic benefits provision - pensions, paid leave, etc. They are excluded from social security systems, as their situation has mostly not been covered by national planning due to its being relatively small, so vulnerability to the aftermath of being sick, injured, or unemployed lowers their demands and requirements. Furthermore, workers are unable to control the hours they work and are instead at the mercy of a payment-by-task mechanism forcing them to overwork to gain a respectable salary.

Based on how online gig platforms function, on average, tasks are allocated by Artificial Intelligence or automated algorithms. These often take into account unverified and biased customer ratings, cancellation rates, and how easily each user accepts a task. In certain cases, there are even subscription plans to obtain higher-paying jobs or increase visibility. That automatically excludes some susceptible populations, such as those with a less economically developed background, who may even have minimal technological access or face language barriers. This system lets companies keep a considerable number of workers on standby without a guarantee of demand or financial compensation. Accordingly, gig workers experience the downsides of an independent contractor without enjoying any of the autonomy and self-determination.

Working Status Classification Models

Overall, there are three main classification categories in which gig workers can be placed into, as mentioned previously. The majority is characterized as independent contractors, who offer their respective services to a platform company that provides a bridge between them and the clients requesting them[25]. Due to the nature of the position itself, aspects such as time management and scheduling are up to the discretion of the worker. Nevertheless, they are reliable for injuries, insurance and time off and miss on other benefits otherwise secured by the employer. In addition, they have to cope with job instability and fluctuations in market demand [HRW][26].

On the other hand, an employee is a part of the company they work for and receives a stable salary. Even though superficially some consider it binding because an employee has to oblige to company schedules and policies, there is guaranteed stability in pay -steady income- and provisions related to paid leave, injury compensation, retirement plans and so on [Boundless][27]. However, gig workers are not usually placed under this category as they alternate between platforms and are not committed to a specific company.

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[25] Charlton, Emma. "What Is the Gig Economy and What's the Deal for Gig Workers?" *World Economic Forum*, 22 Nov. 2024, https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/11/what-gig-economy-workers/.

[26] "Algorithms of Exploitation." *Human Rights Watch*, 13 May 2026, https://www.hrw.org/feature/2026/05/13/algorithms-of-exploitation/rights-abuses-in-the-gig-economy-and-the-global-fight.

[27] "What Is Employee Misclassification? | Boundless Glossary." *Boundless*, 4 Dec. 2025, https://boundlesshq.com/glossary/employee-misclassification/.

It has been proven on numerous occasions that this state of affairs, instead of ensuring a positive result for both contracting parties, burdens workers for the benefit of the hiring entities. This is why an intermediate status can be proposed, which would for example include the aspect of flexibility without restricting the supply of basic working rights. It could be deemed an effective solution on limiting workplace violations in the gig economy but still remains mostly theoretical.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

China

China is nearly matching the US in the number of gig workers employed, with an estimated 84 million citizens engaged in some type of short-term online platform job [ILO][28]. It has endorsed the ILO Convention 193 for platform workers' rights and has committed to adapting the social security system accordingly. Nevertheless, the individuals working in the sector are still not regarded as employees, confronting the challenges of both non-standard and traditional employees. Due to shifts in the Chinese manufacturing industry, mainly related to automation, there is a large influx of people expecting to be absorbed by the gig economy. According to studies, gig worker numbers escalated by 40 million in 2026, from 280 to 320 million in comparison to 2025 [Reuters][29]. This means that almost half of the workforce depends on gigs to secure their basic income, yet the pension system cannot correspond. As previously mentioned, the Chinese government has pledged to improve those conditions but concurrently maintains the goal of raising governmental influence, denying workers the right to form unions independently and rather permitting participation in state monitored groups to mediate with the government without public strikes.

India

Gigs and freelancing contribute a valuable part of the Indian economy, anticipated to open up 90 million job opportunities, making up 1.25% of the country's GDP by 2030 [Sharma, 2025][30]. Despite that, workers in India continue to face adverse conditions while working long hours. There is no definitive legislation to protect them, forcing the population to protest in an attempt to define their rights. Furthermore, there are documented complaints for instances of wrongful termination within Indian platform companies [Al

[28] "Beyond Employees and Contractors: Mapping China's Platform-Based Gig Workers." International Labour Organization, 12 Nov. 2025, https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/beyond-employees-and-contractors-mapping-china%E2%80%99s-platform-based-gig-workers.

[29] Reuters "China's Booming Gig Economy Masks Job Market Pain, Strains Welfare System." *Reuters*, 6 July 2026, www.reuters.com/business/world-at-work/chinas-booming-gig-economy-masks-job-market-pain-strains-welfare-system-2026-07-06/

[30] Sharma, A., and R. Sharma. "Gig Work and Employment Uncertainty." *Journal of Economy and Technology*, 2025, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2773067025000366

Jazeera][31], mainly as a result of the vague legal status, which also allows for underpayment and limited social security protections. Previous attempts to neutralize the situation have been made, for example through the Code on Social Security in 2020, but implementation is incomplete. In general, in order for income opportunities to be exploited effectively and for unemployed Indian residents to take up even part time positions, stability needs to be established and future measures need to be executed with efficiency and in an immediate manner.

Malaysia

Malaysia is considered one of the upcoming developing countries on the subject of the gig economy. Specifically, the state's government has seized the opportunity of capitalizing on underemployed citizens turned into platform workers [Forbes][32]. This scheme bolsters productivity while simultaneously ensuring that the workers themselves can profit from flexible, part-time positions. The relevant programs are subsidised governmentally by The Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC). They exert positive influence on neighbouring countries to tackle poverty by funding vocational programs for citizens to cultivate skills in business management and online work and providing adequate job chances for them to put them to use.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has a fairly active gig economy sector, constantly evolving over the past years. To tackle some of the main issues it generates, the government has implemented measures such as but not limited to clarification of status of employment and obtaining the basic rights of minimum wage and certain security protections. Even though transparency has been deemed vital for a fair and equitable economy, workers still report that data publication by employers and corporations is scarce. This hinders research and prevents gig workers from claiming more of their rights. Another issue that has been raised repeatedly is that of unfair ratings together with low demand for work, leaving workers unpaid for unspecified periods of time [Cambridge][33]. In conclusion, progress has been made but there is definite need for more concrete actions.

United States of America (USA)

The United States is one of the countries with the most participation in platform-related economic activities, signifying a benchmark for the segment's growth,

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[31] "India's Urban Company Revolutionised Gig Work for Women. Then It Bled Them." *Al Jazeera*, https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2024/3/1/how-indias-urban-company-has-soured-gig-work-for-women.

[32] Say, My. "How the Gig Economy Could Drive Growth in Developing Countries." *Forbes*, https://www.forbes.com/sites/groupthink/2017/03/23/how-the-gig-economy-could-drive-growth-in-developing-countries/.

[33] "Riders and Drivers in the UK Gig Economy Suffer Anxiety over Ratings and Pay." *University of Cambridge*, 3 June 2025, https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/gig-economy-anxiety-ratings-pay.

opportunities and fluctuations. The majority of platform-owning companies are based in the US. Moreover, according to research, about 72% of US citizens over 18 years old have used platforms to receive a type of service [NDE][34], with the most popular being ride-hailing and food delivery apps. However, even though in 2024 the American gig market expanded by almost 30%, the country voted against the ILO Convention 193, which was the first relevant treaty, bound to limit violations for gig workers. This was due to the universal rights it acknowledged regardless of worker classification, which contradicted pre-existing labor frameworks. Additionally, even though 7 out of 10 in the platform workforce conduct business through two or more platforms simultaneously [Forbes][35], there are no unwavering guidelines to protect them from being underpaid. Overall, the US government approaches the topic with minimal intervention, allowing the companies themselves to determine their operation standards.

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) pursues the involvement of European workers in decision making so as to defend their rights to fair, equitable work and living standards as a basic pillar of sustainable economic growth. It consists of 10 European and 94 national trade union confederations spanning over 42 countries. It can form implementable proposals for measures to protect workers by utilizing their own experiences and therefore voicing complaints. Overall, it constitutes a comprehensive tool to understand the struggles and violations firsthand in the attempts to resolve them.

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

Human Rights Watch is a non-profit organization aiming to observe and report on rights abuses all over the globe. The key values for its operation include independence from governmental influence, cooperation with similarly aligned movements, and impartiality. It has investigated numerous case studies where platform companies exploited employees, in countries such as China and the United States. It advocates for protections of the workforce and transparency, especially on the topic of Algorithmic Control, namely how artificial intelligence unfairly dictates pay, working hours and performance reviews. In addition, HRW journalists cover recent events and developments to promote the information of the general public on the matter.

International Labor Organization (ILO)

The International Labor Organization (ILO) is an official UN agency dedicated to advancing social justice and globally recognized human and labor rights, with the greater goal of achieving universal enduring peace. On the topic of workplace violations in the global

[34] Pew Research Center, *The New Digital Economy*, 19 May 2016, www.pewresearch.org/internet/2016/05/19/the-new-digital-economy/

[35] *Ran Grushkowsky. "Global Payouts Are Won at the Last Mile." Forbes, 17 Aug. 2026, https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbestechcouncil/2026/08/17/global-payouts-are-won-at-the-last-mile/.*

gig economy, it has adopted Convention 193, the first binding treaty acknowledging gig workers rights internationally. As an entity, it serves the purpose of conquering a balance between development opportunities for companies and fair working conditions in the age of digitalization.

BLOCS EXPECTED

Bloc A

This bloc consists of the countries whose economies are generally more developed. In these states, "gigs" and platform work usually function as supplementary income so as to balance the elevated cost of living. Moreover, states in this bloc host the majority of platform companies, such as Uber or Airbnb. They wish to adequately regulate those companies, aiming to ensure fair working conditions through strong measures without eliminating flexibility and generating revenue by imposing excessive costs that strain businesses. Specifically, in their attempts to ensure economic competitiveness, corporations could be made accountable to prove why workers are not classified as employees and maintain transparency in their enterprises. Among others, European Union countries and the United States could be included.

Bloc B

The second bloc encompasses those categorized as emerging economies, namely countries whose citizens mostly rely on flexible work as a primary source of income and not as supplementary. In these states gig workers could account for the majority of the workforce in the future as well as compose a large part of gig workers overall. Their objectives revolve around securing basic labor rights and categorizing the working population. This bloc would generally avoid the enforcement of generalized, international frameworks that limit national sovereignty and discourage investment that is required for the development of the segment, and would aim for more gradual and balanced measures. Example members of Bloc B include but are not limited to China, India and Pakistan.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
16th December, 1966	**ICESR and ILO Declaration** The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

18th June, 1998	ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
December 2007 - June 2008	**United States Financial Crisis** Financial Crisis in the United States, followed by the Great Recession
31st December, 2019	**Coronavirus Pandemic** The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent quarantines forced citizens to rely on online delivery services to cover even basic needs
10th June, 2022	**ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Amendment** The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work was amended to
12th June, 2026	**International Labor Organization Convention 193 (C193)**

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Convention Concerning Decent Work in the Platform Economy (C193)

The Convention Concerning Decent Work in the Platform Economy (C193) is the first treaty to directly address the gig economy and set international standards for its operation. It was adopted on the 12th of June, 2026 to ensure that there is adequate advocacy for gig workers' rights in parallel with the constant evolution of the segment. Its mandate includes both digital platforms and workers, as well as self-employed individuals, targeting correct classification instead of requiring all workers to be treated as employees. Apart from basic legal, safety and wellbeing protections, it covers negative effects of technological management and automated systems, a main but previously underrepresented part of the modern economy. [UN][36]

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

[36] United Nations. "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights." *Ohchr*, United Nations, 16 Dec. 1966, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) has been in force since January 3, 1976. It establishes fundamental working rights, for example regarding fair wages, forming unions to express opinions, the existence of social security and others. It allows signatory states to implement it progressively, especially the measures requiring legislative changes. This means that each state can adopt measures independently in accordance with progress and other actions. [UN][37]

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Evaluation of past Treaties and Protocols

Even though the gig and platform economy is a relevant segment of the global economy, some efforts have been made to address the workplace violations regarding it. Binding treaties such as the Directive (EU) 2024/2831 and the ILO C193 mentioned above remain pivotal in extinguishing inequality and exploitation. However, some states have been reluctant to ratify them and even in cases where they were immediately accepted enforcement has not always been efficient. Additionally, ILO conventions are not immediately binding and need to be incorporated into national law individually through ratification, posing another form of progress delay.

Governments such as that of the United States prefer to dissociate themselves from private companies and not interfere with how they manage affairs with employees. Another obstacle is the regulatory capacity in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs), due to a lack of financial resources and neutral oversight mechanisms. Stricter guidelines are also often seen as discouraging for investors. Naturally, other states have already taken steps to mitigate the situation. The United Kingdom has placed gig workers under the special status of ‘workers’, so that they are entitled to paid holidays and minimum pay, whereas the Spanish government passed an obligatory instruction that all delivery workers needed to be hired as employees instead of remaining independent contractors. While these approaches provide an example to follow with their attitude towards protecting gig workers, each only tackles part of the issue.

An inclusive framework that is widely accepted is yet to be discussed, as each country has its own employment criteria. Moreover, there is still no agreed upon approach for algorithmic management and its unpredictability, which is harmful for the workers as well. Perhaps the solution would need to involve a set of protections that do not depend on classification until there are further results in the attempts to avoid misclassification.

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[37] United Nations. “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.” *Ohchr*, United Nations, 16 Dec. 1966, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights.

Actions beyond Treaties and Resolutions

Apart from standard courses of action, including but not limited to treaties and legislatory frameworks, led by governments and official international organizations, workplace violations in the gig economy have sparked the interest of activists worldwide. A key example is the "Gig Workers Rising" campaign, a movement supporting platform workers in their fight to voice their complaints and establish more favorable working conditions. [GWR][38] They express their demands through protests and advocate for fair treatment, pay that covers basic expenses, economic benefits, transparency and more.

Another approach is raising awareness and reporting violations through research. The "Fairwork"[39] Foundation aims to achieve a clear understanding of the constantly developing segment of the economy that revolves around the internet and online work. They focus on assessing how major platform companies treat their workers as well as investigate how Artificial Intelligence (AI) influences their workplace. Furthermore, the Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), a non-profit organization with an objective to disclose and question European Union practices, corporations and policymaking, has addressed the gig economy and its unethical aspects [CEO][40].

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Platform Algorithmic Management Regulation

A possible way to prevent abuses and inequality for platform workers would be to strengthen regulations for the algorithms and automated mechanisms utilized to assign tasks and evaluate their performance. Companies could be obliged to disclose how these systems operate, therefore ensuring transparency instead of letting them accept their decisions without reasoning. Moreover, governments could prepare a set of guidelines so that the use of Artificial Intelligence does not negatively interfere with the job opportunities of each individual due to biased programming or discriminatory data. This could be reinforced by the option to appeal a decision, provide feedback and easily communicate with the company itself, fostering a healthier employer-employee relationship. However, some companies could consider the enforcement of such steps as disclosing sensitive information and thus harmful to their enterprises and thus be unwilling to cooperate.

[38] "Gig Workers Rising — the Fight Continues.." *Gig Workers Rising*, https://gigworkersrising.org/.
[39] "Homepage." *Fairwork*, 2026, https://fairwork.oii.ox.ac.uk/en/fw/homepage/.

[40] "Gig Economy | Corporate Europe Observatory." Corporateeurope.Org, 2024, https://corporateeurope.org/en/taxonomy/term/855.

Secure Rights Regarding Working Status Classification

In numerous countries, the legal status of workers in the gig economy remains unclear. Establishing concrete legal criteria to determine their basic rights, including but not limited to minimum wages, social security and paid leave, regardless of classification would be a first step towards forming fair and sustainable working environments. As a secondary action, gig workers could be placed into a new status category with characteristics from both the employees and independent contractors, so as to secure flexibility and independence without infringing on their rights. Such a measure would benefit both them and the companies wishing to cooperate with an agile workforce and would certify that workers in less developed economies do not face adverse working conditions. Nonetheless, the challenge of establishing universal legal definitions could impede the process, as each country treats the categories differently and has a distinctive legal system. There is additionally the issue of compliance from individual companies, specifically in how they treat gig workers, either classified as independent contractors with further basic rights or falling into the new status category.

Allow Gig Workers to form and join Trade Unions

Guaranteeing gig workers the right to legally organize and join trade unions would be key to improving their overall position. As in most countries they are classified as independent contractors, platform workers are excluded from such forms of collective representation. As a result, they can not resort to a unified front to address mistreatments or submit requests, thus remaining vulnerable to exploitation. By forming unions they would have the opportunity to advocate for themselves and negotiate to achieve reasonable conditions and further benefits. Moreover, they would be taken into account when drafting future conventions, certifying that they would be precise, efficient, effective and applicable in correlation with their actual business experiences.

There are, naturally, certain factors that complicate the implementation of this measure. A prerequisite would be that workers would need to achieve collective bargaining irrespective of their different schedules and working conditions. Moreover, they would need to maintain an open-minded attitude towards change and active assertion of their demands, while simultaneously factoring in the diverse needs of different gig worker types.

Encourage Collective Bargaining between Platforms and Worker Representatives

Because forming a union does not guarantee that complaints will be taken into account by a company's management, it is highly recommended that along with the formation of those unions gig workers are granted the right to collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is a process through which a group of employees negotiate with their employer, pursuing mutually decided working conditions and/or perks or aiming to solve

issues that have emerged in the workplace [DOL][41]. This will ensure that they derive the benefits of belonging in a trade union, namely representation, resistance to exploitation and influence on decision making regarding their rights and responsibilities, as mentioned above.

However, it is crucial that possible difficulties that may arise are taken into account. Currently, by default, gig workers do not qualify as employees, so the term of collective bargaining may need to be adapted accordingly. In addition, among others, there is high worker turnover due to migration between platforms, which would pose an obstacle in maintaining stable, long-term relationships with employers. Overall, despite the above, collective bargaining could constitute a vital step in ensuring access to better working conditions for gig workers.

Provide Portable Benefits to Gig Workers

Alternating between employers as well as vague legal classification status have posed crucial impediments in providing gig workers with a stable and universal set of rights and benefits. This could be tackled through portable benefits, namely perquisites that are not tied to a specific employer and rather to the person themselves, even if they switch workplaces [NELP][42]. They would allow gig workers to achieve a more certain situation and be able to respond to market shifts without remaining vulnerable to the consequences of having little to no savings, no pension plans and no safety net in case they are victims to sickness or injury.

Even though this is an established practice, companies have abused it to evoke the impression of fairness towards gig workers without actually providing adequate protections [NELP][43]. Examples encompass ensuring "benefits" which are in reality below the bare minimum or having required conditions under which they apply. Therefore, there should be clear guidelines for the financial support of such plans, which could be supported proportionately by the companies, the governments and workers themselves. Undoubtedly, there should be transparent and mutual communication between these stakeholders so that workers gain financial security without overburdening businesses, and governmental social protection plans are modified appropriately.

[41] "What Is a Union." *DOL*, 2026, https://beta.dol.gov/policy-regulations/unions-collective-bargaining/what-union.
[42] "Why Workers Need Real Portable Benefits - National Employment Law Project." *National Employment Law Project*, 2 Apr. 2025, https://www.nelp.org/insights-research/why-workers-need-real-portable-benefits/.
[43] "Why Workers Need Real Portable Benefits - National Employment Law Project." *National Employment Law Project*, 2 Apr. 2025, https://www.nelp.org/insights-research/why-workers-need-real-portable-benefits/.

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