

**STATEMENT ON
INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY 2026
YOGYAKARTA MEDIA AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY WORKERS UNION FOR DEMOCRACY
(SINDIKASI YOGYAKARTA)**

“Flexible Work, Increasingly Unlivable Lives: It Is Time for Yogyakarta’s Creative Workers to Organize!”

International Workers’ Day 2026 arrives amid a deepening political and economic crisis. The collapse of the formal sector has accelerated the expansion of informal labor, especially among young people. In Yogyakarta, this pressure is felt most strongly within the media, arts, and creative industries, sectors often celebrated as the “economy of the future,” yet in reality marked by precarity and exploitation.

Hundreds of thousands of creative workers labor without contracts, receive substandard wages, endure unlimited working hours, and lack social protection. The “flexibility” promised as freedom has instead become a mechanism for employers to evade responsibility. Power relations have grown increasingly unequal, while labor violations have become normalized.

The state has not only failed to provide decent work, but has also submitted itself to the interests of capital and the regime of labor flexibility. New and exploitative forms of work such as freelance, project-based, and gig economy labor have emerged without adequate legal protection. As a result, many workers are trapped in conditions of precarity, working without recognition, without certainty, and without guarantees of a dignified life.

Informalization has now become the norm. Workers are forced to bear all occupational risks, from production tools to healthcare coverage without compensation. Wage standards remain unclear, while demands for professionalism continue to rise. Under these conditions, work no longer guarantees survival.

In Yogyakarta, this situation is even more ironic. A city branded as “special” has instead become a place where workers survive on low wages while the cost of living continues to rise. Yogyakarta cannot truly be called special as long as its workers are unable to live decently.

This crisis is also connected to rising unemployment, waves of layoffs, and shrinking access to work. Vulnerable groups, including women, freelance workers, artists, queer workers, persons with disabilities, street workers, and those over the age of 30 face layered barriers and are pushed into informal sectors rife with risk and discrimination.

Amid this situation, state policies remain incapable of responding to reality. Wage standards do not cover freelance workers, social security systems remain exclusionary, and the creative sector has yet to be properly recognized within labor systems. Even platform-based labor practices such as online ride-hailing services demonstrate weak oversight, with platform deductions frequently exceeding established limits.

May Day must not stop at symbolic ceremony. It must become a momentum to strengthen organizing efforts and cross-sector solidarity.

Therefore, SINDIKASI Yogyakarta puts forward the following demands:

1. **Decent wages and price control** — Wage increases based on decent living needs (KHL) standards relevant across generations, accompanied by inflation control and affordable basic necessities.
2. **Recognition of creative and freelance workers within labor systems** — Including wage standards, employment contracts, working hours, social security (BPJS), and holiday allowances (THR).
3. **The creation of a new inclusive labor law** — One that protects all workers without exception, abolishes exploitative practices such as outsourcing, and suppresses mass layoffs.
4. **Universal social protection for all workers** — Including healthcare access, pension guarantees, social assistance, decent housing, and labor protection.
5. **The use of public assets for workers' welfare** — Including the utilization of Sultan Ground, Pakualaman Ground, and other state/regional assets as decent and affordable housing for the working class.
6. **Protection from discrimination** — For women workers, queer and gender-diverse workers, persons with disabilities, and the abolition of discriminatory age limits in employment.
7. **Improved conditions for platform and gig workers** — Including transparency and limitations on platform fee deductions.
8. **Recognition and protection for journalists, media workers, and CSO workers** — Including guarantees of workplace safety, legal protection, adequate facilities, and decent labor standards.
9. **Protection for informal and street workers** — Including trans women and other vulnerable groups from violence and criminalization.
10. **Worker-oriented economic policies** — Including progressive taxation on conglomerates to fund welfare programs for the working class.
11. **Expanded parental leave rights** — Including three months of leave before childbirth and six months after childbirth for working-class parents, as well as safe, affordable, and adequate childcare facilities.
12. **An end to the exploitation of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI)** — Including guarantees for the safety of workers trapped in conflict zones, and the promotion of an active Indonesian diplomacy against war, imperialism, and colonialism, including colonialism within our own land.

May Day is not merely a symbolic occasion. It is a space to build collective power. In the face of an increasingly fragmented world of work, only through organizing and solidarity can workers reclaim control over their labor and their lives.

Long Live the Workers!
Long Live Creative Workers!
Long Live Solidarity!