



Human Rights Now

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Speaker: Yuko Hanada

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Thank you, Mr President.

It is less than one year until the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. Temperatures in August 2019 in Tokyo were deadly, with an average maximum of 32.8° C and 1,857 people transported to the hospital for heat stroke between July 29 and August 4. If next year's Olympics see this kind of heat, the risk of heat stroke deaths cannot be ruled out.

On August 2, Human Rights Now visited six Olympic construction sites and observed many workers labouring outside without shade or protective measures from the extreme 35-degree heat. There was no standardized human rights policy to protect workers from these extremely hazardous working conditions.

Since our August 5 briefing, one worker has died, presumably from heat stroke at a construction site. The international labour NGO Building and Wood Workers' International published a report in May highlighting Olympic construction workers' complaints including long working hours, dangerous working environments, and discrimination against foreign technical interns. The existing grievance mechanism has also completely failed by rejecting worker complaints made by a union that did not expose their names.

Mr. President, we conclude that serious human rights violations have occurred during preparations for the 2020 Games. We urge international stakeholders, including the IOC, and relevant mandate holders, including the UN Working Group on business and human rights, to take immediate action.

Thank you.