



Fighting together to halt and defeat Psychosocial Hazards at Work and Containing Heat Stress from Climate Change

*The International Workers' Memorial Day (IWMD) theme for April 28, 2026, is focused on **Fighting Psychosocial Hazards at Work**, highlighting the urgent need to address mental health risks, excessive workloads, burnout, and stress caused by modern working conditions, technology and climate impacts.*

The day continues its long-standing campaign to "Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living" and the Africa Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) joins workers around the world to commemorate this day. As part the commemoration focus, we also consider it important to also pay attention to the effects of heat stress from climate change in the world of work.

To African Workers, Trade Unions, and Allies

Today we honor those killed, injured, or made ill by their work. Yet too many deaths remain invisible: the farmer whose heart fails under extreme heat, the call center agent crushed by digital monitoring and abuse, the pregnant factory worker who experiences miscarriage due to excessive heat and poor ventilation, or the first respondent such as the police officer or paramedic in South Africa, who commits suicide due to the high exposure to trauma, long hours, and poor mental health support.

In Africa, two urgent hazards are converging:

The Rise of New Technologies – AI-driven tracking, gig economy platforms, and automated scheduling – are eroding job control, intensifying workloads, and creating chronic stress, anxiety, and depression among workers. Remote monitoring without boundaries destroys rest.

Heat Stress from Climate Change – rising temperatures in farms, factories, mines, and informal markets – directly impairs cognition and emotional stability. Combined with poor ventilation and lack of water breaks, it fuels exhaustion, irritability, and trauma.

Our Key Demands:

1. Recognize psychosocial risks – including digital surveillance and extreme heat – as occupational hazards in national OSH laws, with binding exposure limits.
2. Heat action plans at every workplace – shade, hydration, paid rest breaks, adjusted shift times, and early-warning systems linked to climate forecasts.
3. Worker-centered technology design – mandatory union consultation before introducing AI, tracking tools, or platform algorithms that affect mental health.
4. Access to psychosocial support – confidential, affordable mental health services for all workers, including informal and migrant workers.

Actions for Africa Trade Unions:

- Investigate and document – collect testimonies on tech-induced stress and heat illness; use them to negotiate collective agreements.
- Demand joint labour-management heat risk committees – with worker health and safety reps empowered to stop work when heat is hazardous.
- Bargain for digital rights clauses – limits on monitoring, transparency of algorithms, and AI impact assessments.
- Train health and safety reps specifically on psychosocial risks, climate heat, and digital stressors.
- Campaign for national policies – push labour ministries to add mental health and heat stress to OSH inspections and workers' compensation.
- Build alliances – with climate justice, digital rights, and public health groups to amplify worker voices in climate adaptation and tech governance.

As we commemorate IWMD, let us remember the fallen by fighting for the living. No worker should sacrifice their mind to an algorithm or their life to a heatwave.

Our grief demands action, our unity delivers it!

In solidarity,

Issued in Lomé, Togo, on 13th April 2026 by Akhator Joel Odigie, General Secretary, ITUC-Africa.