

A 2024/2025 report by the National Commission for Human Rights has revealed that the vast majority of private-sector workers in Rwanda lack knowledge of the country's labour law, with only 2.5% saying they understand it well.

The findings were discussed during a meeting between members of the Parliamentary Commission on Rwandan Unity, Human Rights and the Fight against Genocide and leaders of the Private Sector Federation (PSF). The session focused on human rights compliance in private companies, highlighting gaps that could affect workers' welfare and workplace conditions.

The report also assessed compliance with legal labour protections, including statutory leave, working hours and overtime pay. The review, conducted in 388 private companies, found numerous violations that require corrective action. In particular, researchers noted that only a small fraction of workers are aware of the laws that are meant to protect them.

Chairperson of the Committee on Unity, Human Rights and Fight against Genocide Hon. Madina Ndangiza said the findings show a significant information gap that must be addressed by both employers and government institutions.

"In the 388 companies where the research was conducted, only 2.5% said they know the labour law well," Ndangiza said. "This means the law is not adequately known."

Ndangiza stressed that while ignorance of the law is not an acceptable defense, the lack of awareness among workers is a serious concern that warrants urgent discussion and intervention.

She called on the PSF to intensify education and training efforts for employers and employees, and urged companies to establish internal monitoring systems to address rights violations.

The report further noted that 63.6% of private-sector infrastructure, including factories, schools, hotels and tourism facilities, is not accessible to people with disabilities, exposing gaps in compliance with disability rights in the workplace.

PSF Advocacy, Safety and Occupational Health Director Rusanganwa Leo Pierre said employers must comply with labour laws to avoid financial and legal consequences.

"We are campaigning for this law so that those who do not know it are not left

behind," he said. "PSF is urging all employers to comply because it has been shown that this has not been achieved."

Lawmakers said they will forward the report's findings to the Ministry of Public Service and Labour for further action.