

THE ILO GUIDELINES FOR FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS AT WORK EXPLAINED

In March 2026, the International Labour Organisations adopted new Guidelines for the promotion of the fundamental principles and rights at work, providing guidance for how international labour standards should be applied to professional and high-level athletes.

These guidelines recognise that professional athletes are workers and are entitled to the same basic rights and protections that any other worker is.

The governments of all major cricket countries are members of the International Labour Organization. As members, they are required to ensure that organisations, like sport's governing bodies, uphold and respect these rights.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS AT WORK

For a professional cricketer, some of the most relevant rights are:

THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION



To come together and join groups of your own choosing.

THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE



The right to form, run and use an association to represent you as a member of the group.

THE RIGHT TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN



To work together with other players and make a deal on behalf of the group.

According to the guidelines meaningful and fair consultation in sport depends on athletes or their associations (e.g., WCA) and employers (e.g., National Governing Bodies / ICC) being able to speak as equal, independent groups, with governments supporting that process.

ATHLETES SHOULD...

- Enjoy the rights of freedom of association and recognition of their right to collective bargaining.
- Regardless of their employment status, have the right to establish and join organisations of their own choosing without previous authorisation, at the national, regional and global levels.
- Be protected against acts of anti-union discrimination.

GOVERNMENTS SHOULD...

- Respect, promote and realise the fundamental principles and rights at work, including freedom of association and collective bargaining, for athletes.
- They should support this by encouraging open discussion and cooperation between athletes and organisations.

EMPLOYERS AND THEIR ORGANISATIONS SHOULD...

- Respect and benefit from the right of freedom of association and recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
- Engage in sports labour related issues at national, regional and global levels. This includes promoting and educating members about the importance of open and meaningful consultation with athletes.