



Call for Abstracts

2nd National E-hailing Conference on Strengthening Platform Drivers Voices and Addressing Corporate Violence and Crime through a Restorative Justice Approach.

Organized by the Amalgamated Union of App-based Transporters of Nigeria.

In collaboration with:

- The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC).
- Trade Union Congress (TUC).
- The Federal Ministry of Labour.
- The Lagos State University (School of transport and Logistics).
- University of Mauritius (Faculty of Law and Management).
- African Forum for Restorative Justice (AFRJ).
- Restorative Justice for Africa (REJA).
- Maynooth University (Department of Sociology and the Faculty of Law and Criminology).
- Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti (Faculty of Law and Management)
- Cornell University

7-8 July 2025

Abuja, Nigeria.

Formulating a National Policy to Regulate the Ride-sharing Sector in Nigeria.

Amalgamated Union of App-based Transporters of Nigeria (AUATON).

2025 Conference Homepage:

www.auatwon.org/nationale-hailing-conference-2025

Digital labour worker initiative

Homepage:www.auatwon.org/SPDV

The emergence of digital labour platforms has improved economic growth globally by providing employment opportunity for informal workers, reducing the percentage of unemployed youth and solving some complex public transportation issues in urban cities across the globe. While the innovation of digital labour platform is noteworthy in creating income opportunities and the elimination of poverty, it has also affected the living and working conditions of workers that perform given tasks denying them certain rights and protections that are very fundamental.

There is a need to redefine and clarify the scope of the current fault -based system of the status of the self-employment classification of platform drivers. The Traditional model denies workers rights to collective bargaining or the freedom of association, and the functions of algorithms result into arbitrary decisions that impact on the fundamental human rights of workers. How can we ensure that platform drivers and those workers within the private sector have access to social protection and other entitlements that are applicable to traditional workers. How can we ensure a robust regulatory framework that will provide redress to platform drivers and address the needs and concerns of all stakeholders.

Despite the challenges, legislators and regulators in countries within the sub-Saharan African region have not enacted into national law provisions that protects vulnerable informal workers. The reduction of worker's voices and the lack of robust representation of workers or the failure of the fault based traditional model has contributed largely to this issue. While platform drivers are vulnerable to specific and general forms of victimization in terms of corporate violence, there is a need to innovate approaches to help redefine and clarify the scope of the status of the employment relationship of platform drivers and ensure that adequate protection and compensation is available to those that are harmed on the job to prevent a repeat victimization.

The second national e-hailing conference in 2025 explores these issues based on the lessons learned from the national collective agreement which was adopted at the Lagos Declaration on Improving the Living and Working Conditions of App-based Transporters in Nigeria. The conference aims to formulate a national policy adopting a restorative approach to clarifying and redefining the scope of the status of employment relationship by building restorative relationships with stakeholders to achieve the development of a robust regulatory framework.

The conference adapts a restorative approach with the help of facilitators by bringing together workers representatives, platforms, researchers, legislators and regulators from across Nigeria to formulate a national policy that addresses the needs of the victims of corporate harm and crime in Nigeria and the prevention of their repeat victimization. Session 1: "Labour regulation and Social Protection System for Informal Workers": This track examines existing labour regulation in Nigeria in terms of labour rights such as access to collective bargaining, freedom of association and access to social protection under law. It seeks to strengthen the voices of platform drivers and other informal workers by examining ways to ensure that certain entitlements that are applicable to traditional employees are also extended to informal workers. Session 2:"Corporate Violence and Crime: Can restorative justice provide redress to workers that are harmed in Nigeria?" This track explores corporate harm through the lens of restorative justice for the victims of corporate violence in Nigeria and the lack of adequate social protection and compensation for the family members of victims who lost their lives as a result of platforms failure to profile passengers. Session 3: "Can restorative justice help to redefine and clarify the scope of the status of employment relationship?: Formulating a national policy for platform drivers and other informal workers in Nigeria".

Session 1. Labour regulation and social protection system for informal workers.

There are two things that can properly define the problematic concept of digital labour platforms in Nigeria. The first is the lack of proper regulatory environment for stakeholders, and the second is that lack of labour regulation for platform drivers in Nigeria has reduced workers voices and have abused their rights to freedom of association, or their access to social protection and collective bargaining. While the existing labour regulation practically does not cover platform drivers in Nigeria, platforms have taken advantage of this gap by dwelling solely on contractual agreements based on subordination and control and have continued to subject workers to the law of a different jurisdiction from which the worker is established or works. This has further strengthened the control over platform drivers and have limited their liberty or rights.

The redefinition of a fault -based self employment relationship in platform work means there is collective bargaining and social dialogue, freedom of association and the right of workers to join a trade union, health insurance and pension, protection from bodily injury or accidental death, proper dispute resolution mechanism to address some of the problems of the misclassification of drivers

The disguised form of self- employment relationship by platforms have weakened platform drivers access to social protection, a new regulation for platform work is therefore required to address the problems and the challenges with the implementation of existing legislation which will clarify and redefine the employment relationship of platform drivers providing access to collective bargaining and other employment relationship benefits. It would be the benefit of this session to invite papers on the following questions:

- What lessons can be learned from the national collective agreement and other relevant literature in terms of clarifying and redefining the scope of the status of employment relationship for platform drivers.
- How do algorithmic functions impact labour rights of platform drivers including unjust deactivation and dismissal and proper channel of communication?

What should be the goals of a regulatory framework that would provide redress for platform drivers.

- What developments are necessary to enact into law criteria to presume employment classification status of informal workers.

Track Coordinators: Professor Damilola, Professor Gunput, Professor Ding Fei Professor Odewunmi, Dr Nyenye Okafor.

Session 2: "Corporate Violence and Crime: Can restorative justice provide redress to workers that are harmed in Nigeria?"

The digital labour worker initiative explored corporate harm through the lens of restorative justice for the victims of corporate violence in Nigeria. The lack of adequate social protection and compensation for family members of victims who lost their lives as a result of platforms failure to profile passengers has been a major concern. Aersten (2017) has defined corporate violence taking place when corporations in the course of their legitimate activities commit criminal offences which result in harms to natural persons health, integrity to life (p. 236). Sutherland (1940) has defined the criminological concept of white collar crime that it can be "split up into 'occupational crime' on the one hand, and 'corporate crime' on the other: while the first one refers to transgressions committed by individuals or small groups in relation with their professional activities, the second deals with corporations (and public and non-profit organisations) or their employees committing offences in line with the objectives of the organisation (Victims and Corporations Project, 2017, p. 236)).

Generally, proper recognition has not been given to victims of corporate harm, the reason for this has been described in Green (2007) and Stobl (2010) that "which groups of harmed persons are recognized as victims and receive victim status depends on social processes of identification and definition, not seldom determined by vested cultural, political or economic interests" (Aersten, 2017, p. 252). This is the case in Nigeria when the families of drivers who died while working on Bolt and Uber did not receive adequate compensation, their need for recognition or clarity was ignored leaving a long -lasting impact on their mental and emotional wellbeing and survival, or the inability to move on from the incident. Lately, legal systems globally have started to give attention to corporate crime, Aersten (2017) describes that "awareness of the massive impact of white-collar crime, and of corporate crime in particular, has increased significantly in the USA since the wave of corporate scandals beginning with the Enron case in 2001" (Aersten, 2017, p. 255). However, important attention has not been paid by regulators or lawmakers in Nigeria to the victims of corporate crime despite efforts by workers representatives including strike actions and protest to create more public awareness about the need for adequate passenger profiling. Restorative justice in platform work is needed to strengthen workers voices by aiming to rebuild the disconnection in the broken relationship between platforms and workers which stem from the nature of workers misclassification and the violation of their social and human rights.

This session invites papers which offers solutions on how corporate violence can be addressed not only in platform work, but also how restorative justice can be adapted to other settings outside of the criminal justice system.

- What can be done to address corporate violence or crime in platform work in terms of passenger profiling, and lessons can be learned from the national collective agreement that proffer solutions within a robust regulatory framework.
- How can we respond to the needs of victims of corporate harm within a proposed regulatory framework, and what alternatives can be provided to stakeholders to ensure compensation to victims or achieve apology and accountability from platforms and the responsibility of regulators or policymakers.
- How do platform drivers react to the shared responsibility model? What can be learned from the national collective agreement or the Simpliride experience so far?
- How do we prevent the repeat victimization of platform drivers in Nigeria, and what lessons can be learned from similar jurisdictions.

Session Coordinators: Dr Ian Marder, Professor Omale, Professor John Braithwaite.

"Can restorative justice help to redefine and clarify the scope of the status of employment relationship?: Formulating a national policy for platform drivers and other informal workers in Nigeria.

The current realities of the nature of platform work clearly has shown that the work being carried out by workers is disguised under a contractual agreement. In Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African countries, platform drivers are self-employed workers and are subject to the partner agreement which fails to provide social protection coverage, and other entitlements that are applicable to traditional employment relationship. The Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No.198) remains the key guiding tool for established criteria on clarifying and redefining the scope of employment relationship for self-employed workers. The ILO Recommendation 198 stipulates that "member states need to ensure the development of a national policy on the employment relationship, it also recommends appropriate criteria to differentiate between employment and self-employment, it further stresses the need to enforce existing rules by also providing guidelines on how to do so" (ILO Working Paper 27, p. 8).

There has to be a commitment to strengthening workers voices through the application of restorative justice practices and principles in platform work as a form of social dialogue towards the development of a national legislation. For example, coordinated restorative conferences between social actors at regular intervals is indeed in consonance with the purpose of the ILO Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198). In addition, it is important to stress the principle of the primacy of facts, especially how lawmakers and workers representatives can engage platforms through restorative conferences or panels in bringing to light the actual realities of work performed by the worker and their obligations and responsibilities. The disguised and the objectively ambiguous self-employment relationship harm platform drivers because of the lack of social protection and inadequate compensation resulting from corporate violence, and the deliberate attempt to reduce workers voices as shown in the previous section. Overtime, the existing relationship becomes disconnected and broken and will require a restorative intervention to rebuild that relationship. The lessons from the national collective agreement clearly have shown that restorative justice can be adapted as a form of social dialogue in platform work, especially in helping to define the needs and concerns of workers affected by the consequences of a disguised employment relationship, and arriving at solutions or an outcome that is suitable for all those that are concerned. Restorative Justice practices can support the development of national policies and regulatory frameworks in countries in line with the Employment Relationship 2006, No 198 which has "the primary purpose to have the ILO member states formulate and apply a national policy for reviewing at appropriate intervals, and if necessary, clarifying and adapting the scope of relevant laws and regulation" (ILO Working Paper 27, p.8).

While the major platform competitors within the Nigerian market (Uber and Bolt) refused to participate in the adoption and the signing of the national collective agreement, the app -based transport sector is faced with two contemporary options: first is the notion of shared responsibility amongst stakeholders and reparation for workers seeking to redefine and clarify the disguised employment relationship status of workers. The second is maintaining a status quo of the current self-employment relationship status of platform drivers and define possible terms for collective bargaining or social dialogue and other social protection benefits that would be provided to platform drivers. At the level of the national collective agreement, the shared responsibility model seems appropriate when considering corporate violence through the lens of restorative justice. The difficulty here lies with the implementation of the national collective agreement relating to platforms refusal to implement and enforce safety mechanisms that will prevent repeat victimization. The national policy for platform work should address the issue of passenger profiling mandating state authorities to supervise and enforce the profiling of every user on platforms with a national identity number, international passport number or other Government issued Identification for verification purpose. It is necessary that in the event of an incident, the rights of victims or their family members should be respected in terms of information and communication about what truly happened. Since unjust deactivation and dismissal and the exclusion from social protection of platform drivers should be regarded as a general form of victimization, a proposed national policy should have in place opportunities for victims to file claims administratively against misclassification. Legislative provisions that set-up restorative panels which would subject the evidence and facts of work being carried out based on certain indicators to determine the status of the employment relationship under question. Restorative panels can also be used to investigate claims that arise as a result of inadequate social protection, families of victims of involuntary manslaughter can seek for compensation, information, closure and apology from platforms. Restorative panels should act as automated responses to cases of involuntary manslaughter, employment misclassification, compensation for accidental injury and harm resulting from the workplace.

Preventive measures are also necessary to ensure safety in the workplace, for example, legislative requirements are needed to ensure that platforms put in place effective and safety measures such as activation of the SOS button, information technology should be considered and collaboration with law enforcement to respond swiftly to emergency situations triggered through the SOS button. Proactive legislative measures like raising current caps on medical insurance that arise from corporate crime are very necessary to ensure adequate protection to victims of platform harm.

Based on the experiences of victims of corporate violence from the previous section, it is clear that the trip insurance platforms claim protect both passengers and drivers while on active trip are inadequate to cover medical bills of drivers that experience harm. The issue is that the standardized trip insurance cover platforms provide is limited in scope and does not provide sufficient coverage for medical expenses, compensation for mental and emotional distress, or adequate damages for accidental incidents. It is recommended that a national policy framework should ensure the compensation of platform drivers that are victimized as a result of corporate violence by introducing collective compensation funds for victims and their family members. This can be achieved through a system of mandatory contribution at the sectoral level. The worker, the platform, and the passenger make the contribution - the funds should be set aside for the adequate compensation of corporate violence victims and their families.

Session invites papers to address the following questions:

- How can we determine criteria based on international standards on the presumption of the status of employment relationship of platform drivers.
- How can restorative justice approach be adapted to platform work as an alternative to litigation or social dialogue or design a proper channel of communication between workers representatives and platforms?
- What can be done to support platform workers with schemes at the sectoral level for car financing and compressed natural gas and other injustice practices that platform drivers are faced with sectorally?
- What safety mechanisms can be put in place to address the victimization of platform drivers with regards to carjacking and car theft crimes.

Session Coordinators: Dr Ian Marder, Professor Don Jon Omale, Professor John Braithewaite.

Day 1: Keynote Address and Plenary

DAY 2: Closing Plenary

Deadlines:
Paper Submission 18 May 2025
Communication of acceptance 31 May 2025
Registration for the National Conference May 10 2025

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