

South Korea – contextual human rights issues



The purpose of this summary is to provide a high-level overview of documented human rights issues in a particular country and how they could intersect with TV production. It aims to prompt further consideration and planning by production teams where appropriate. Not all issues will be relevant for all TV productions and, conversely, there may be aspects not yet covered that are relevant.

Human rights issue	Description of context	How this could intersect with TV production	Suggested mitigations	Resources
Discrimination – women	Very high gender pay gap and consistently ranked as having the worst working environment for women among 29 advanced economies (HRW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unfair gender pay gap among crew and ancillary workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and transparent pay for advertised positions Inclusive culture 	Toolkit: Getting the culture right
Discrimination – LGBT	The LGBT rights movement in South Korea is growing but continues to face hostility and severe discrimination. (HRW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crew and talent may experience or witness homophobia Local LGBTI crew may be hiding their identities or living in fear Local crew may exhibit homophobia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive security practices, including digital security Establish culture where everyone can raise concerns Wellbeing and support resources 	Aide Memoire for Inclusive Personal Safety on Location Inclusive security risk management Toolkit: Getting the culture right
Online violence against women and girls	Ongoing concerns about the extent of digital sex crimes in South Korea and also exposed fundamental problems such as a lack of dedicated personnel and budget for police investigations into gender-based violence. (Amnesty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female crew may be at risk of online violence or sexual harassment Local female crew may have experienced or be experiencing online violence outside the production 		FATV Charity: The Whole Picture Toolkit CPJ: Digital Safety Kit
Freedom of expression	South Korea has a relatively free press and lively civil society, but the government continues to use draconian criminal defamation laws and sweeping intelligence and national security laws to restrict speech. Implementation of these laws creates a chilling effect that limits critical scrutiny of the government as well as corporations. (HRW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal action against journalists or media organisations, including local crew 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal agreement for duty of care towards local media support workers Adequate legal support including for local media workers 	ACOS Alliance resources and training Committee to Protect Journalists: Safety Kit

Trafficking of migrant workers	Traffickers subject men and women, primarily from China Thailand, Russia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Morocco, and other countries in Asia, the Middle East, and South America, to forced labour. (US TiP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers of ancillary services (e.g. hospitality, cleaning, security) could be employing illegal foreign workers or trafficked workers Productions may also encounter such workers in hotels and venues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due diligence on suppliers of ancillary services Direct engagement with and checks on ancillary workers during production 	Production pack: protecting the most vulnerable workers Toolkit: Vetting suppliers appropriately Toolkit: Supporting ancillary workers directly Toolkit: Category Management Due Diligence
Sex trafficking	Traffickers exploit South Korean women and in commercial sex, including in bars and night clubs or through internet-advertised escort services. NGOs reported some government employees, including police, sexually exploited children and solicited individuals in commercial sex, some of whom may have been trafficking victims. (US TiP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International crew may encounter sex trafficked victims Care should be taken in reporting potential victims to the authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief crew in advance on potential issues and steps to take Put a response plan in place 	Toolkit: Responding to and remedying issues identified
Suicide	South Korea has one of the highest suicide rates in the world, especially among men (WHO).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local crew may be more likely to have experience of suicide (e.g. friend, family member) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to mentally healthy productions Sensitive briefings and trigger warnings to the whole team where suicide is covered as a topic Wellbeing and support resources 	FATV Charity: The Whole Picture Toolkit

Have further insights? Please share suggested issues, intersections with TV, mitigations and resources with amelia.knott@tvhumanrights.org.