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THE BIG PICTURE

Sanitation workers: covid-19's forgotten frontline

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Sanitation workers such as Iliyasu Abbas (pictured), a pit latrine and septic tank emptier in Nigeria's Kano state, have been largely forgotten during the covid-19 pandemic, despite risking their lives every day to provide a service essential to public health, the charity WaterAid says. In a report the charity said that, while many such workers have continued to work in hospitals and quarantine centres throughout the pandemic, few have received extra training or support from their employers, and personal protective equipment has often been scarce or unfit for purpose.¹

The workers' access to safe water, decent sanitation, and good hygiene facilities has also been poor. WaterAid is calling on governments, local authorities, employers, and the general public to protect, respect, support, and invest in these essential staff.

¹ WaterAid. Sanitation workers: The forgotten frontline workers during the covid-19 pandemic. <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/sanitation-workers-forgotten-frontline-workers-covid-19-world-toilet-day>.

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