

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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ICFTU Leaders in Nepal: Solidarity with Nepalese Trade Unions

Brussels, 1 February 2005 (ICFTU Online): ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder, currently in Katmandu at a meeting of the global trade union confederation's Asia-Pacific Regional Organisation (ICFTU-APRO), has denounced anti-union actions undertaken by Nepal's King Gyanendra following the dismissal of the country's government on 1 February.

The ICFTU-APRO conference has adopted a strong statement deplored the King's actions and pointing out that Nepal's problems, including the protracted and bloody struggle with Maoist insurgents, cannot be solved by violating fundamental rights. A decree promulgated by the King has "suspended" all trade union rights and banned meetings of more than five persons. Notwithstanding the King's decree, the ICFTU-APRO meetings are continuing, and the unions are demanding the immediate repeal of the anti-union provisions.

Leaders of the ICFTU-affiliated Nepal Trade Union Congress, and of the other main trade union centre GEFONT, have had to go into hiding, as it is understood that their names are included in a list of several hundred persons targeted for arrest or close surveillance.

The Decree and other actions taken by the King constitute flagrant violations of internationally recognised fundamental labour rights, and the ICFTU is taking the case to the UN's International Labour Organisation, based in Geneva.

"We will do our utmost to support the working people of Nepal and their trade unions. The true potential of this country will never be realised while fundamental rights are repressed", said Ryder

The ICFTU represents 148 million workers in 231 affiliated organisations in 150 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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