

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

ICFTU OnLine...

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Nepal: ICFTU and WCL Call for Day of Action to Defend Trade Union Rights

The ICFTU and the WCL today jointly announced an international trade union action day on 22 March in solidarity with the national trade union organisations NTUC, Gefont and Decont to put further pressure on the country's King to restore trade union rights and put the country on the path to democracy. The Nepalese trade union movement has been under attack since the coup by King Gyanendra on 1 February 2005.

Under the pretext of ending the prolonged conflict between the authorities and the Maoist insurgency and tackling corruption and inefficiency, the King has stopped all legitimate trade union activity as part of a broader assault on civil liberties. Several trade unionists, including Laxman Basnet, President of the ICFTU-affiliated NTUC, are on a list of around 1,400 persons targeted for arrest or close surveillance.

In an interview

(<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991221406&Language=EN>) with the ICFTU, Basnet describes the situation inside the country today, and calls for international solidarity in defence of Nepalese working people. A total of 25 trade unionists have been arrested to date, some of whom are known to be in poor health.

Following protests against the coup by the WCL, the ICFTU and their regional organisations, APRO and BATU, as well as by the Global Union Federations the ICFTU and WCL are calling for member organisations to protest at Nepalese diplomatic missions abroad, to make clear to their own governments that the King's actions constitute a flagrant violation of fundamental rights, to demand an immediate end to the repressive measures put in place since February 1 and the restoration of freedom of association.

The case is also expected to be raised at next week's Governing Body session of the UN's International Labour Organisation, as well as at other international and regional bodies which have responsibility for economic and human rights issues.

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers in 233 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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