

ICFTU online

2005, June 3rd

Brussels 3 June 2005 (ICFTU OnLine): In a strongly worded letter today to Burundi President Donitien Ndayizeye, the ICFTU protested at the government's action in stopping Pierre Claver Hajayandi, General Secretary of the ICFTU-affiliated national trade union centre COSYBU, from travelling to the annual conference of the UN's International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva. According to information received by the global trade union body, security agents threatened Hajayandi, stopped him from boarding a plane at Bujumbura airport and confiscated his passport. He has now had to go into hiding to avoid being detained by the authorities. Hajayandi's name had been registered with the ILO conference as part of an ICFTU delegation, since the government had refused to include him on the national delegation to the annual meeting.

The letter to President Ndayizeye calls upon him to ensure that the trade union leader's passport is returned to him immediately, and to take the necessary steps to allow him freedom of movement.

The incident follows a series of actions by the government against trade union representatives from the Burundian National Statistics Institute, at which advance notice of an impending strike by workers had been given. One union leader from the Institute has already been sacked, and six other representatives suspended.

"The government should put an immediate end to these violations of fundamental workers' rights, and fulfill its obligations under international law" said ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers in 231 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a member of Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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