

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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ICFTU-WCL joint press release

Niger: Court of Appeal orders the reinstatement of an unfairly dismissed union leader under pressure from the international union movement

Brussels, 8 February 2006 (ICFTU online): "The dismissal of Diamyo El Hadj Yacouba was annulled by the Court of Appeal of Niamey". The ICFTU and the WCL welcomed the news on 7 February of the positive verdict in the dispute between Diamyo El Hadj Yacouba, General Secretary of the energy workers' union (Syndicat des Travailleurs de l'Energie du Niger) and representative of the CNT (Confédération nationale des travailleurs) on the National Commission on Human Rights and Labour Standards, and his employer, the company NIGELEC. If the company respects the decision of the Appeals Court, the union leader will be reinstated and will receive back pay, bonuses and benefits dating back to the time of his dismissal. The representations made by the ICFTU and the WCL to the country's authorities and the complaint to the ILO undoubly had a major impact on the outcome of this case.

More than two years ago, Diamyo El Hadj Yacouba was arbitrarily dismissed. This sparked off solidarity from various organisations in Niger, in particular the Entente des Travailleurs du Niger (ETN), and the African and international trade union movements. At the time, nothing was done to remedy this situation, which was in breach of ILO Convention 87 and the country's Constitution.

The case has brought to light the existence of anti-union practices at the NIGELEC company, as well as the precarious working conditions that the union had denounced. There had even been several reports of workers losing arms or legs owing to the lack of safety measures at workplaces and it seems the victims had not even received any compensation.

The ICFTU and the WCL welcome this ruling by the Court of Appeal of Niger and urge the authorities to continue to promote and respect trade union rights. They draw particular attention to the need to overturn the unjust decision to transfer several leaders from the same trade union to far-flung parts of the country where the company has subsidiaries, and to the pressing need to provide compensation to the victims of occupational accidents and to introduce safety measures at workplaces.

The ICFTU represents 155 million workers through its 236 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. The ICFTU is also a member of Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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