

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

ICFTU Online

063 /070406

Bangladesh: the return of anti-union repression

Brussels, 7 April 2006 (ICFTU online): 3 trade union leaders were arrested by the Bangladeshi authorities on 24 March. They are members of the Bangladesh Cha Workers' Union (BCWU), an affiliate of the Bangladesh Mukto Sramik Federation (BMSF), which is itself affiliated to the ICFTU.

Rajendra Prashad Boonerjee, the President of the BCWU, was arrested by police at his home around 10am. The General Secretary, Naiendra Boonerjee, and Mr. Bupesh Sind were arrested a little later that day. Many workers belonging to the BCWU subsequently gathered in front of the organisation's head office in Srimongal to protest against these arrests. The police quickly stopped the union meeting in a brutal manner.

The arrests are apparently linked to a recent complaint concerning union funds said to have been used in a fraudulent manner. A detailed investigation totally cleared the union and its leaders of these charges. Though they were supposed to be released provisionally, and in spite of two official requests to that effect by the union, the three leaders are still in prison.

The ICFTU has firmly denounced these anti-union measures. Bangladesh has obligations to fulfil as a member of the International Labour Organisation, particularly with respect to freedom of association and collective bargaining, since the country has ratified the relevant conventions. In a letter sent to the national authorities <http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991223635&Language=EN> , the union international called for all necessary measures to be taken to ensure the release of these union leaders and the speedy cancellation of all the charges against them.

The ICFTU represents 155 million workers through its 236 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. www.icftu.org

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