

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Albania: Police destroy trade union offices

Brussels, 3 August 2007 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has denounced the expulsion of the two nationally recognized trade union confederations – the KSSH and the BSPSH – from their offices on the first of August. The police were enforcing a court decision involving property seized by the former communist government. The police appeared without notice and staff were prevented from entering the building. Trade unions property and documents were destroyed.

In a letter to Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha sent today ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder stated that there was no need for the behaviour that the police displayed on Wednesday. Ryder reminded the prime Minister that “pledges made by your government, had they been honoured, would have avoided an ugly event that has paralysed an important democratic institution in your country”.

In July 2006 on two separate occasions both the Albanian Minister of Justice and the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities pledged to find alternative solutions to the need for trade union premises. That year police had made several attempts to expel the unions from their premises, and only by the means of public mass protest and urgent intervention of the ITUC's predecessor organization these attempts were halted.

“We believe that these commitments reflected an appreciation of your country's international obligations and that they should have been followed through.” Ryder stated. He urged the Prime Minister to “intervene immediately and personally” in order to enable trade unions to resume their normal activities.

Founded on 1 November 2006, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 304 national affiliates. Website: www.ituc-csi.org

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