

>>> ITUC Press <press@ituc-csi.org> 27.02.2008 11:34 >>>
INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC Online
035/270208

Denial of free trade union existence in Brunei

Brussels, 27 February 2008 (ITUC OnLine): A new ITUC report on core labour standards in Brunei Darussalam issued today to coincide with the country's trade policy review at the WTO condemns the lack of trade union activity in this country.

Brunei, which became an ILO member at the end of 2007, has ratified none of the ILO core labour standards. According to the report a great deal of work needs to be done to put Brunei legislation in conformity with ILO standards.

Trade union activities are virtually nonexistent in the country and there is no legal basis for either collective bargaining or strikes. In addition the suspension of democratic rights precludes effective trade union activity, the report argues.

The report finds the situation of non-Brunei citizens particularly worrisome as they are excluded from coverage of most labour laws including freedom of association.

The rights of women domestic workers are frequently abused and women's access to legal remedies is scarce. "Female domestic workers are entitled to decent work and working conditions as much in Brunei as anywhere else in world. It is a matter of fundamental human rights," stated Guy Ryder, ITUC General Secretary.

The report further found that living and working conditions of some foreign workers are equivalent to forced labour, in breach of the ILO core labour standards concerned.

Link to the full report :
http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Brunei.final_1_.pdf

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates. Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org>

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