

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

092/140508

Iraq: Government interference in trade unions internal affairs

Brussels, 14 May 2008 (ITUC OnLine): In Iraq, where stability is still far from reality, trade unions face continuing government interference in their internal affairs on the eve of the upcoming trade union elections. An investigation is also needed in the case of the killing of Shihab al-Timi, President of the Iraqi Journalist Union (see previous OnLine: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article1851>)

The ITUC condemns the continued use of the Law N°. 150 (1987), inherited from the Saddam dictatorship, which effectively bans independent trade unions. This use of the dictatorship legislation violates tripartite and democratic values.

"Trade unionists must have the right to exert their activities without having fear for their lives" said Guy Ryder, ITUC General Secretary. "The Government interference and the lack of security prevent trade unionists from carrying out their activities in full freedom" he added.

As a member of the ILO, Iraq has the obligation to respect fundamental principles including the obligation to protect the safety of trade unionists, not to interfere in internal trade unions affairs and to allow the existence of independent and democratic trade unions. According to the ITUC, Iraq must ratify without delay the fundamental ILO convention 87 on freedom of association.

In a letter sent to the authorities, <http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/28-04-08_TU_elections_13-05-08.pdf> the ITUC urges the Iraqi Government to take all necessary measures to adopt urgently the draft labour law of 2006, drafted with assistance of the ILO and which is consistent with core labour standards, to allow a pluralistic trade union framework before trade union elections and to investigate into the murder of Shihab al-Timi.

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

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