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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Korea: Anti-union repression continues

Brussels, 17 July 2008 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has strongly protested to the Korean government over the anti-union practices faced by the Pohang Construction Plant Workers' Union (PCPWU), an affiliate of the Korean Federation of Construction Industry Trade Unions (KFCITU), which is a member of the Building and Wood Workers International.

The PCPWU represents workers that are employed at construction plants which are largely operated by subcontractors, but owned by POSCO, one of the major steel production companies in the country. On 1 July 2006, the union had engaged in a strike that ended after a collective bargaining agreement was signed between the union and the subcontractors' association on 20 September 2006.

The strike came at a high cost to the union, as it resulted in the death of its member and activist Ha Joong Keun. Furthermore, almost 200 members were injured as a result of the violent repression of the strike, and many of them had to be hospitalized. Moreover, almost 100 union members were arrested. Currently eight are still in jail after having been sentenced from two and a half to three and a half years for their role in the strike. With the exception of its former President Lee Ji Kyung, all the jailed union members are expected to be released in the course of this month.

In a letter sent to the authorities,

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/POSCO - union members discriminated_15-07-08.pdf the ITUC urges President Lee Myung-bak to ensure that a full and impartial investigation is launched into the death of PCPWU member Ha Joong Keun; that former PCPWU President Lee Ji Kyung is released from prison without delay; and that workers are no longer forced to choose between having a job or being a union member, a clear violation of international law.

To see the Building and Wood Workers International campaign, please go to: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=1788&Language=EN>

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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