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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Burma: Fears for Safety of Five Union Delegates Arrested by Junta

Brussels, 9 April 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has condemned the arrest by the Burmese military junta of five delegates to the 1st National Congress of the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB) as they returned home from the Congress which ended on 24 March. The ITUC understands that the UN's International Labour Organisation has intervened with the Burmese authorities to seek their release.

Those arrested are:

U Zaw Myint Aung (49 years old, Teacher, South Okkalapa, Rangoon)
U Soe Oo (37 years old, Textile Factory Worker, Shwe Pyi
Thar, Rangoon)
Maung Tun Nyein (22 years old, Worker, Shwe Hninsi Textile factory,
Hlaing Thayar, Rangoon)
Ms. Khine Lin Myat (22 years old, Worker, UMH Textile factory)
Ms. Shwe Yi Nyunt (25 years old, Nurses Aide and Law Student, University
of Western Rangoon, and Member, FTUB Women's Committee).

In a letter <http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/burma_protest_letter.pdf> to junta leader Than Shwe, the ITUC has also expressed its concern that family members of the five detainees have also been arrested and put under duress in an effort by the regime to compel the five to comply with its demands. The ITUC is concerned that those detained are at serious risk of torture in the notorious Burmese detention system.

"This is yet another serious violation of fundamental rights by Burma's military rulers. The FTUB is a legitimate trade union organization, engaged in peaceful defence and promotion of workers' rights. This latest act demonstrates once again the determination of the junta to block any form of democratic activity and to clamp down on any type of dissent from its iron rule. We demand that the immediate and unconditional release of those detained and the intimidation and threats against their families cease forthwith," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The historic three-day Congress of the FTUB <
><http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article2848>>
<<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article2848>> confirmed the democratic legitimacy of the country's union movement, which has worked since its foundation in 1991 to end violations of fundamental trade union and other human rights, notably the systematic use of forced labour by the military. According to information received by the ITUC, the junta is continuing to use forced labour, including in reconstruction projects following the devastating Cyclone Nargis in May 1998.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national

organisations from 157 countries and territories. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>
<http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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