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Jamaica: Threats to Workers' Rights

Brussels, 18 January 2011 (ITUC OnLine): A new report by the ITUC on core labour standards in Jamaica, published to coincide with the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) review of its trade policies, has found that further measures are needed to comply with the commitments Jamaica accepted when it joined the WTO. The report finds violations of international labour standards especially with regard to child labour and discrimination as well as trade union rights and forced labour.

Anti-union discrimination and union-busting occur frequently, and in the export processing zones (EPZs) there are no trade unions, essentially because workers are threatened if they seek to establish a union. In EPZs, pro-employer "workers' councils" interfere in the handling of complaints but are not allowed to engage in collective bargaining.

The report also finds that Jamaica's law is insufficient to provide adequate protection to women, disabled persons and persons who live with HIV/AIDS. Female workers and other groups still face discrimination in terms of remuneration and access to labour market.

The government is making progress in adjusting its child labour laws to meet the ILO standards. However, the government needs to do more on child labour as well as issues of forced labour, which is not yet prohibited by law in Jamaica.

To read the full document: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/report-for-the-wto-general-council,8307.html>

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 301 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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