

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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040/170211

Bahrain: Authorities Must Immediately Stop Violent Repression and Open Dialogue

Brussels 17 February 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has demanded that the Bahraini authorities immediately cease their violent repression of peaceful demonstrations, and start talks with the trade union movement and other civil society groups on the concrete demands which they and the demonstrators have expressed. Hundreds of police swept through the Pearl Roundabout in Manama in pre-dawn raids, killing at least two further protestors and injuring some 70 more. Security forces blocked access to the Roundabout, stopping the evacuation of the dead and injured, and a temporary clinic there was also attacked and medical staff injured. Reports reaching the ITUC indicate continued and escalating violence against demonstrators, with fears of further killings and injuries. An unknown number of demonstrators have also been detained, as protests continue.

An emergency meeting of the ITUC-affiliated General Federation of Bahraini Trade Unions is to take place this afternoon to assess the situation and decide on further action.

“We are very deeply concerned at the authorities’ use of deadly force against peaceful and legitimate protest. The government must stop the harassment, detention and violence against protestors, and refrain from any further action against trade unionists or other civil society representatives. Those in power must recognise that the only acceptable solution to the crisis is to open a serious dialogue with the trade unions and other groups to listen to their legitimate grievances and sort out the underlying problems which have given rise to such widespread and growing discontent. No other course of action is acceptable. We stand in absolute solidarity with our Bahrain trade union colleagues, and will intensify international pressure to stop this brutal repression,” said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

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

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