

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

062/150311

Bahrain Update: Martial Law Condemned by World Trade Union Movement

Brussels, 15 March 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has condemned the decision of the ruling authorities in Bahrain this afternoon to impose martial law, as increasing numbers of foreign security forces move into the country.

“The decision to impose martial law is totally unacceptable, and an affront to human rights. We are more deeply concerned than ever for the welfare and rights of everyone in Bahrain, and we call upon the authorities to rescind this decision immediately. Such heavy-handed repression will only put the prospects of a negotiated outcome to the crisis there even further out of reach, and will do enormous harm to Bahrain’s economy and society,” said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

The ITUC affiliate in Bahrain, the GFBTU, has confirmed reports of brutal aggression against a number of workers, including security forces in civilian clothes shooting at workers on their way to and from work. The GFBTU has condemned the interference of forces from other Gulf countries in Bahrain, and called their presence in the country an “occupation of Bahrain”.

In addition to some 1,000 troops with armoured vehicles from Saudi Arabia, the ITUC understands that security forces from other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are also entering the country. The GCC includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Oman.

The ITUC is launching a global appeal to call on governments to press Bahrain to end martial law and send all the foreign forces home.

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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