

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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El Salvador: A strike leads to the imprisonment of the SELSA General Secretary

Brussels, Friday 10 June 2011: The ITUC strongly condemns the illegal imprisonment of Atilio Jaimes Pérez, General Secretary of the Lido Limited company trade union (Sindicato de Empresa LIDO S.A. - SELSA) and leader of the Trade Union Confederation of El Salvador Workers (Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores y Trabajadores de El Salvador - CSTS).

According to the information received by the ITUC, on 8 June, while the workers at LIDO were peacefully exercising their right to strike at the factory in Boulevard del Ejército, the LIDO manager, Heriberto Pacas, filed a false charge against the SELSA General Secretary, Atilio Jaimes Pérez, for allegedly making death threats. This led to his immediate arrest by the National Civil Police.

Subsequently, in a blatant act of blackmail, LIDO offered to withdraw the charges in exchange for an end to the strike. The trade union leader is currently being held in the National Civil Police prison in San Bartolo, in the most overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, as a result of an employer manoeuvre to put an end to this completely legal strike.

In a letter, (<http://www.ituc-csi.org/encarcelamiento-del-secretario.html>) sent to the Salvadoran authorities, the ITUC urges President Mauricio Funes to take the necessary steps to order the immediate release of Atilio Jaimes Pérez, SELSA General Secretary, and for the Ministry of Labour to act decisively to mediate in this conflict that is getting out of hand at an alarming rate, even though the workers have employed all the legal procedures to exercise their right to strike

"This is unacceptable," said Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary. "The right to strike is an inalienable right and fundamental to democracy. The illegal detention of a trade union leader constitutes an attack on the rule of law and demonstrates the lack of respect for the fundamental ILO Conventions ratified by El Salvador".

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