

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

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Nine Somali Workers Killed by Al-Shabaab Islamic Militants

Brussels, 18 August 2011 (ITUC OnLine): On 14 August 2011, nine Somali workers from the public transport sector were killed by Al-Shabaab Islamist fighters in the town of Afgoye, 30 kilometres south of Mogadishu, after refusing to pay the sums the militants were trying to extort from them.

The ITUC immediately expressed its solidarity <http://www.ituc-csi.org/solidarity-message-to-festu-nine.html> with the Somali labour movement and reiterated its commitment to support the country's unions.

Although the Al-Shabaab Islamist group has been weakened in recent times, this region of Somalia is still under militant control and the extortion of funds from public transport workers and business people has become increasingly commonplace.

Ibrahim Ahmed, vice president of the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU), affiliated to the ITUC, has described these acts as cruel and unforgivable, and called on workers "not to accept these heinous murders perpetrated by criminals showing no respect for human life".

According to Omar Faruk, general secretary of the FESTU and the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), these crimes are yet another clear illustration of the unacceptable brutality suffered by Somali workers.

Journalists' trade union rights also flouted

In June of this year, the ITUC had contacted the president of Somalia's transitional federal government, Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed, regarding the rights violations and other attacks

suffered by the NUSOJ over recent months. Now under the control of the Information, Telecommunications and Postal Service Ministry, the NUSOJ has been forced to choose a new leader and to hold a parallel general assembly. Meanwhile its offices have been the target of armed robberies and everything has been done to prevent their investigation.

The government interference in the union's internal affairs, the judicial harassment, the intimidation, the death threats and the other violent attacks recently suffered by NUSOJ members constitute blatant violations of the trade union rights enshrined in ILO Convention 87.

The ITUC has called on the government to bring an end to this violence and allow NUSOJ workers to exercise their activities without fear for their lives and safety.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates.

<http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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