

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Georgia – Striking Steelworkers Forced Back to Work by Police

Brussels, 16 September 2011 (ITUC OnLine): One hundred and fifty striking workers at the Hercules Steel plant in Kutaisi, Georgia, were forced to end their strike and return to work in a sudden raid by an overwhelming force of police yesterday. Fifty police vehicles, led by the local Governor, descended on the strikers and detained more than 40 of them for several hours. Managers then went to workers' homes to threaten them, and police made several more workers sign statements that they would go back to work.

When the workers established their union on August 4, the company immediately fired six of its elected representatives, provoking a warning strike by the workers on 2 September. The company then fired more of the workers, after which the workforce launched a full-scale strike with several members also going on hunger strike.

“Georgia’s state repression of freedom of association is getting even worse. This government is behaving like a totalitarian dictatorship, and this should not be tolerated by the international community,” said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

For more information, see the protest letter to President Saakashvili:
http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Hercules_Letter_to_Georgia_President_16-06-11.pdf

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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