

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Bahrain: Repression against Workers and Attacks against Trade Union Rights Are Still Going On

Brussels, 17 October 2011: The ITUC has once again condemned the terrible repression hitting the Bahraini workers. Trade union rights have been constantly under attacks for months now despite government promises. Although the states authorities are pretending the opposite, the repression is still present at all levels.

In 2011, nearly three thousand Bahraini workers, the majority of them trade unionists, were summarily fired for their participation in legitimate trade union activity and/or for their political opinions, which in many cases were expressed through participation in mass mobilizations earlier this year to call for economic and social as well as political reforms. The response by the government was brutal. Several were killed, tortured and/or arrested, and numerous activists received lengthy prison sentences handed down by militarily tribunals. A government-sponsored national dialogue that took place earlier this year was never a serious attempt at reconciliation and has thus not resulted in meaningful reforms.

Today, the repression continues. Despite unsupported government claims, few workers and even fewer trade union leaders have been reinstated, and politically-motivated dismissals continue in the public sector. Just as the government has launched yet another PR offensive, this time to avoid debate on the establishment of a commission of inquiry at the International Labour Organization (ILO), the government unilaterally and without notice amended the trade union law in an effort to silence the independent and democratic voice of Bahraini workers, the General Federation of Bahraini Trade Unions (GFBTU), our affiliate.

The recent amendments, an obvious act of retaliation by the government, mark yet another serious attack on the fundamental rights of Bahraini workers. The purpose of these amendments is clear - to further undermine the GFBTU and thereby eliminate an important voice for economic and social reform in Bahrain.

Click here to see the full ITUC Statement and have more information on the amendments
http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ITUC_Bahrain_Statement_Final_3_.pdf

The ITUC condemns this blatant retaliation against Bahraini trade unionists. The government cannot resort to legislation in the place of the police truncheon or the pink slip and expect to further social or industrial peace. The ITUC and its affiliates stand by the GFBTU and call upon the international community to condemn the government's ongoing attacks and to take all measures necessary to guarantee the free exercise of human and trade union rights in Bahrain.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 305 affiliated national organisations from 151 countries and territories.

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

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