

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

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### Bahrain: the ITUC Reaffirms Its Solidarity with the Union under Media Attack

Brussels, 3 November 2011 (ITUC OnLine): For months, pro-government press has demonized trade unionists and pro-democracy activists, falsely accusing them of any number of crimes against the state. A November 1 article in ALWATAN goes one step further, in actually declaring the dissolution of the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU), an affiliate of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Fortunately, the reports of its death are greatly exaggerated. Despite the sacking of dozens of union leaders and nearly 3,000 workers, most of whom are union members, as well as a scurrilous media campaign meant to discredit the union, the GFBTU remains a vital, democratic and non-sectarian force in Bahrain today.

"Throughout the crisis, the GFBTU has acted in the best interests of both workers and the nation. Indeed, the GFBTU had repeatedly called for national dialogue on economic, social and political issues even in the face of continued government crackdowns on peaceful demonstrators," explained ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow. Rather than pursue a process of dialogue and reconciliation, however, the government has instead sought to dismantle the union through continued dismissals, criminal prosecutions and now through a series of legal "reforms" that give the government new powers to undermine the GFBTU [link to prior post].

The time is now for the government to come to the table with the requisite political will to initiate a serious national dialogue based on respect for human and trade union rights.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 308 affiliated national organisations from 153 countries and territories.

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

For further information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on: +32 2 224 0204 or +32 476 62 10 18

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