

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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ILO Condemns Fiji Junta over Labour Rights

Brussels, 18 November 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The UN's International Labour Organisation has issued a strong condemnation of Fiji's military Junta over severe violations of labour rights. The ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association described the situation there as "extremely serious" and requiring urgent attention. The ruling follows the arrests of Daniel Urai, President of the national trade union centre FTUC on October 29 and Felix Anthony, the organisation's General Secretary, on 5 November. Worker representatives have also been subjected to a campaign of harassment, intimidation and physical beatings.

"Fiji's military rulers are turning the country into an absolute dictatorship, and seem determined to destroy the trade unions as part of their strategy to crush any dissent and eliminate the legitimate voice of civil society," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow. "The rulers must turn back from this destructive path, and allow Fiji to return to democracy."

The arrests of Urai and Anthony and the travel bans placed on them, have been linked to union opposition to a recent "essential services decree" which eliminates the right to trade union representation for a large part of Fiji's workforce. The decree, written for the military regime by a US law firm, takes away collective bargaining rights for many workers, imposes heavy restrictions on those elected to union leadership positions and removes the right to strike and minimum wages for all the sectors it covers.

"The ITUC and its international trade union partners will be ramping up action against the Fiji junta's plan to destroy workers' rights, and is calling on all governments to put maximum pressure on the military rulers," said Burrow.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions and national employer group ACCI have jointly condemned the junta's actions, and trade union representatives at this week's ILO Governing Body meeting have issued their own strong condemnation through the ILO's Workers' Group <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ilo-workers-group-statement-on.html>

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>

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