

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

### ITUC OnLine

#### Forced Labour, Child Labour, Discrimination and Violations of Trade Union Rights All Common in Thailand

Brussels, 28 November 2011 (ITUC OnLine): A new report by the ITUC on core labour standards in Thailand, published to coincide with the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) review of its trade policies, reveals serious violations of fundamental workers' rights including a high degree of prevalence of forced labour.

Both local suppliers and multinational enterprises such as Ford, Mazda, Michelin and Goodyear make extensive use of anti-union practices including lockouts, dismissals, unfavourable work assignments and eviction of union members in order to limit union membership and activities. Employers often use contract labour to weaken bargaining power in Thailand. Moreover, the laws discriminate against migrant workers allowing them only limited rights to organise.

Many children are victims of the worst forms of child labour, mainly in agriculture, shrimp farms, fisheries, prostitution and domestic servitude. They often have to carry heavy loads, work long hours and deal with pesticides and other dangerous substances. A 2006 survey found that 12.3 per cent of working children between the ages of 5 and 14 in agriculture performed unpaid work. Girls are often employed as domestic servants where they work long hours and are vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse.

The report also reveals that women, disabled persons and other groups face discrimination in various aspects of employment, including in hiring and remuneration. The laws do not effectively protect migrant workers, ethnic groups, indigenous and stateless people from forced labour and human trafficking. In practice, forced labour and human trafficking are rife. One study found that 57 per cent of the Burmese migrant workers in the seafood industry in the province of Samut Sakhon were working in conditions of forced labour. Usually, the workers are recruited under false promises or required to pay high recruitment fees or travel expenses which bind the victims until repayment. According to the United Nations Interagency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP), more than half of the migrant fishermen surveyed on Thai boats have witnessed killings of other fishermen when they become too weak to work.

For the full report, see: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/report-for-the-wto-general-council,10103.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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