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Fiji Refuses Entry to International Union Delegation

Brussels, 13 December 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The refusal by the Fiji authorities to allow an Australian and New Zealand trade union delegation to enter the country today shows that the country is “sliding deeper into dictatorship”, according to ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

“The Fiji regime has maintained that it is open to outside scrutiny, but this denial of entry tells the opposite story. Try as the military authorities might, the spotlight will continue to shine on their violations of workers’ rights and other basic freedoms. Today’s events will only increase pressure on the regime,” said Burrow.

The delegation, led by ACTU Australia President Ged Kearney, was refused permission to enter the country on arrival at Nadi airport and deported without any access to consular assistance. Delegation members’ mobile phones were confiscated until their departure. The New Zealand and Australian unions had planned to meet Prime Minister Bainimarama to seek a fresh dialogue on human and labour rights in Fiji, and had also planned to meet Fiji trade union counterparts, church leaders, and other civil society and business representatives.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 308 national affiliates.

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