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New Legal Report: Right to Strike Backed by International Law

Brussels, 3 June 2014 (ITUC OnLine): A new 122-page ITUC legal report, confirming that the right to strike is protected under international law, has been released today as employers try to overturn decades of jurisprudence at the International Labour Organisation. Employer representatives at the ILO are continuing their efforts to strip back ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association, which guarantees workers the right to take strike action, as the UN agency holds its 103rd International Labour Conference in Geneva this month.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said from the ILO Conference, “Employers have been holding the ILO system to ransom, trying to discard more than 50 years of international law by removing the guarantee of one of the most fundamental human rights. ILO standards are increasingly important as benchmarks in international trade and investment agreements as well as guidelines for responsible business, and ultra-conservative employer groups want to remove any real meaning from them. The ITUC and its member organisations are determined to see this challenge off and ensure that workers everywhere cannot simply be forced to keep working when their bosses refuse to ensure fair pay and dignity and safety at work.”

As the ITUC’s new **Global Rights Index** <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-global-rights-index-the-world> shows, the right to strike is frequently restricted in law and violated in practice around the world. In Cambodia, employers even recently called on the government to denounce ILO Convention 87, while bringing lawsuits against union that took to the streets to protest against poverty wages in the garment industry.

“The employers’ arguments at the ILO are legally unfounded. I am confident that the ITUC’s case, set out in our new report, would prevail before any international tribunal,” said Burrow.

To read the ITUC Legal Report: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ituc_final_brief_on_the_right_to_strike.pdf

To access the ITUC Global Rights Index in: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/new-ituc-global-rights-index-the?lang=en>

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 161 countries and territories and has 325 national affiliates.

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