

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Swaziland – Monarchy Bans All Union and Employer Federations

Brussels, 9 October 2014 (ITUC OnLine): Swaziland's government, one of the world's last remaining absolute monarchies, has announced an immediate ban on all trade union and employer federations. With one of the worst industrial relations records of any country, the decision announced yesterday constitutes an absolute violation of ILO Convention 87, which guarantees freedom of association for workers and employers.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said "The Swaziland authorities have for many years shown their contempt for fundamental workers' rights, and this latest decision, which abolishes workers' and employers' organisations, is absolutely shocking. The government claims that a technical oversight in existing legislation needs to be fixed to allow the registration of union and employer federations, but there is no justification whatsoever in banning existing organisations while the government tidies up a legal mess that it is responsible for. This is the latest in a long list of severe violations of international standards by King Mswati's regime. We demand that the ruling be rescinded immediately."

The decision will affect union groupings TUCOSWA and ATUSWA as well as the Federation of Swaziland Employers and Chamber of Commerce, and the Federation of the Swazi Business Community. Tripartite bodies such as the Wages Council, Labour Advisory Board, Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration Commission, Swaziland National Provident Fund, Training and Localisation Committee and the Social Dialogue Committee will stop functioning as a result.

"The government claims that this move is somehow in line with recommendations from the ILO. This is patently false, and is a misrepresentation of what the ILO has called on Swaziland to do," said Burrow.

To read the ITUC letter to Swaziland's Prime Minister:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/protest_letter_tucoswa.pdf

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