

Main findings of the ITUC Solidarity Visit to Swaziland

15. Mai 2015

The ITUC organised a fact-finding mission between 14-16 May in order to assess progress with regard to respect to freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. In addition, the delegation, joined by COSATU and the AFL-CIO, intended to conduct solidarity visits to political and human rights activists imprisoned for exercising their right to free speech.

However, the Swazi Correctional Services did not grant the delegation permission in violation of the UN Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment

The delegation tried to engage the Minister of Labour and Social Security over long-standing issues and systematic violations of workers' rights. The Minister of Labour and Social Security first agreed to meet the delegation but then failed to attend the meeting because of "other commitments." The meeting was attended by senior government officials, including the Legal Advisor, the Principal Secretary and the Commissioner of Labour.

The main findings of the delegation:

- - TUCOSWA was finally registered 3 years after its establishment. Despite this, police continues to present in intimidatory numbers, even for internal trade union meetings as it was the case one day after the formal registration.
- - ITUC is seriously disturbed by the fact that the Ministry of Labour and Social Security was not able to give a political assurance that trade union meetings would not be interfered with by police in the future, despite the registration of TUCOSWA.
- - Repressive legislation used by police against legitimate trade union activities has still not been addressed by Parliament.
- - Activists continue to be imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of speech and are facing harsh conditions depriving them of their most fundamental rights.
- - The government is tolerating the use of labour brokers without restrictions.

Follow-up: The ITUC will intensify its campaign for democracy and recognition of fundamental rights of workers by mobilizing workers globally. These findings will also be reported to the ILO and the Members of the European Parliament who will discuss the issue of human and labour rights next week.

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