

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

Korea: Major Government Crackdown Against Unions

Brussels, 21 November 2015 (ITUC OnLine) : The ITUC has condemned the Korean government's latest crackdown against trade unions, following a series of raids on union offices and the creation of a special task force to arrest KCTU President Han Sang-gyun who is currently under the protection of the Jogyesa Buddhist Temple in Seoul. Police swooped on the offices of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions and its member unions today, confiscating computers, documents and other equipment, in an attempt to suppress ongoing protests against new labour laws which will push yet more workers into insecure jobs and reduce wages.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said, "Korean President Park Geun-hye is showing some of the worst dictatorial tendencies of Korea's darkest days of political oppression. We call on her to take responsibility to call off the hounding of the KCTU President by the police and release all the unionists who have already been detained. The world is facing real and immense challenges to democracy and security, and the Korean government's ongoing campaign against those who stand up for workers, and for democracy in the workplace, is a fool's errand. Working people need secure jobs and decent wages and every country needs to defend and support essential pillars of democracy including trade unions, rather than trying to destroy them. President Park should stand up for ordinary people instead of pandering to Korea's hugely powerful industrial conglomerates which are using her to entrench their power and privilege."

KCTU President Han said, "Today, the government and the police have trampled on the rights of the KCTU and workers in Korea. The anti-democratic, anti-worker policies of the Park Geun-hye government roused the indignation of the working people. We will broaden worker solidarity and fight to stop the regressive labour reform bill which will make it easier for employers to dismiss workers, cut wages and create more precarious employment. These reforms will not create the jobs the government promises but only ensure that all jobs are insecure and poorly-paid. With the ITUC, we will work to build a world where workers and their rights are respected."

See also:

New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/20/opinion/international/south-korea-targets-dissent.html>

Equal Times: <http://www.equaltimes.org/the-fight-to-secure-migrant#.VIDSCnarTIU>

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