

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

Algerian Government Blocks Trade Union Mission to Western Sahara

Brussels, 26 May 2016 (ITUC Online): The Algerian authorities have blocked an international trade union mission to Western Sahara, refusing to allow Arab Trade Union Confederation Executive Secretary Mustapha Tlili to enter Algeria on his way to Western Sahara.

ITUC Deputy General Secretary Jaap Wienen, who was also part of the planned visit this week, said “The Algerian authorities, despite previously agreeing to allow the mission to pass through on the way into Western Sahara, refused to allow one of the key mission members to enter Algeria, without giving any reason.

This makes a mockery of Algeria’s claim to be on the side of the people of Western Sahara in their quest for an end to the control of their territory by Morocco, and underlines the depth of the authoritarian instincts of the Algerian regime. Their refusal to allow the head of an Arab-country organisation to enter the country can only be because the Arab Trade Union Confederation has stood in solidarity with Algerian workers who have been seeking their right, guaranteed under international law, to union representation free from control of the government and the ruling party.”

Algeria has been strongly criticised, within the region and internationally, for the government’s continued repression of the independent trade union organisation CGATA, its membership and its leaders <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-support-for-algerian-teachers> .

The government’s repression has included police occupation of offices of independent unions, bans on them holding meetings, mass sacking of union members and systematic police violence against peaceful protesters.

The International Labour Organisation has repeatedly called on the Algerian government to stop the sacking of trade unionists, and respect workers’ fundamental right to union representation.

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