

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

Qatar: Swiss Government Mediation between BWI and FIFA a Good Step

Brussels, 3 May 2017 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has welcomed the outcome of a Swiss Government-mediated agreement between the Building and Wood Workers' International and FIFA over conditions for workers building the stadiums for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. The agreement, which follows a complaint lodged by the BWI in Switzerland, the home of FIFA, under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, confirms a number of undertakings made by FIFA over monitoring of working conditions, with an oversight body established inside Qatar and mechanisms to handle workers' complaints and working conditions.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said "we welcome the Swiss government's mediation efforts, and look forward to the full implementation of this agreement. It is yet another indictment of Qatar that the government of another country has had to step in to help at least some of the huge migrant workforce that is building the massive World Cup infrastructure programme but is denied the most fundamental rights under international law. While this agreement only covers a few thousand of the more than 2 million migrant workers in Qatar, it shows what could be done as a stepping-stone to full rights for all migrant workers there. Meanwhile, the Qatar government is still doing its utmost to deflect international criticism and keep its migrant workforce in conditions of modern slavery under the notorious kafala system."

"Qatar should end the kafala system and allow workers to form and join unions and bargain collectively for decent pay and conditions and safe work. It should also end racially-based pay discrimination, exploitative recruitment practices and ensure that all workers have access to effective dispute and grievance mechanisms. A real starting point would be for Qatar to ratify the 2014 ILO Protocol on Forced Labour," said Burrow.

The ITUC is also calling on multinational companies operating in Qatar to conduct due diligence throughout their entire supply chains in the country, in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, to allow workers to organise democratically within company operations and to eradicate abuses in the recruitment and employment of migrant workers.

To read the BWI statement: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=7842&Language=EN>

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