

Geneva, 25 November 2015

Nikolai Zelenski,
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Sent by email to nikolai.zelenski@nordgold.com

cc. Clinton Bennet, General Director, and Cheickna T. Maiga, Director of Human Resources: **fax:** +226 25 3 43 50; and **Exterhum Africa:** Mme Dina Yanogo, Administrateur Général, and Jean Marie Bitibaly, Directeur des Ressources Humaines: email: contact@exterhumafrica.com; Russian Mission to the United Nations: mission.russian@vtxnet.ch, and Burkina Faso Mission to the United Nations: mission.burkina@ties.itu.int

IndustriALL Global Union calls on Nordgold to put an end to flagrant violations of trade unions rights at subsidiary in Burkina Faso

Dear Mr. Nikolai Zelenski,

I am writing this letter to you as Secretary General of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industrialunion.org), representing more than fifty million workers in the mining, energy and manufacturing industries in some 140 countries worldwide, including Burkina Faso, to call on **Nordgold** to intervene immediately at its subsidiary in Burkina Faso to put an immediate end to blatant violations of trade union rights.

We deplore in the strongest terms the unlawful dismissal of 110 agency workers—following a conflict, which has lasted more than six months, with the employment agency **Exterhum Africa**—at the Nordgold operations in Burkina Faso, i.e. Sabcé (Bissa Gold SA) and Taparco (SOMITA SA). In addition, we are appalled to learn that more than 80 percent of the workers are precarious workers.

In April of this year, workers submitted to the management of Bissa Gold SA a number of demands, including increasing the number of hours, from two to 15 hours per month, related to the role of union representatives, the right to use cell phones on site during break time and lunch hour, shortening shifts from 12 to 8 hours, according to the labour law, and paid overtime as well as when working on holidays. Since the demands went unheard, workers handed management a letter in October, informing of a planned strike if their demands were not met. As there was still no response, around 700 workers coming off their shift organized a sit-in.

Your local management's reaction—which is unconscionable—was to deny almost 400 workers, who had just begun their shift, access to food, water and the toilets. Interventions from the union, the National Union of Mine and Quarry Workers (SNTMCB), the central union organization, the National Confederation of Workers of Burkina Faso (CNTB) and local community leaders, were to no avail. When the sit-in ended four days later, management continued to intimidate workers by firing 110 of them by letter. Another group of workers was denied access to the site, and all workers involved in the strike saw their bank accounts frozen by the employer (sic).

The actions of both Nordgold and Exterhum Bissa are in violation of national labour law, and fundamental international labour standards, including Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, and Convention 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining of the International Labour Organization.

Therefore, we strongly urge Nordgold to intervene immediately at its subsidiary in Burkina Faso to ensure that its local management, and the employment agency Exterhum Africa act in strict accordance with national and international labour laws, and in consequence reinstate the unfairly dismissed workers, stop harassing workers and union members, guarantee decent working conditions, and engage in genuine collective bargaining with the union and workers.

I anticipate your quick reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a vertical line on the left, a horizontal line across the middle, and a diagonal line on the right that ends in a small hook.

Jyrki Raina
General Secretary