

Geneva, 16 March 2017

To A.G. Lukashenko
President of the Republic of Belarus

Sent by e-mail: contact@president.gov.by; contact@government.by; belarus.geneva@mfa.gov.by

IndustriALL Global Union calls on government of Belarus to abolish unemployment tax, and respect the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly

Dear A.G. Lukashenko,

I am writing to you on behalf of [IndustriALL Global Union](#), which represents 50 million workers in the mining, energy and manufacturing sectors in 140 countries, including Belarus, to call on your government to abolish immediately the infamous unemployment tax (Presidential Decree "On Prevention of Social Dependency"), which constitutes an affront to human dignity and runs counter to internationally recognized human rights instruments, and respect strictly the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

IndustriALL Global Union condemns in the strongest terms the massive arrest of peaceful dissenters in the last days, who have been legitimately expressing their voice of opposition to the unemployment tax. Therefore, we call on the Belarusian authorities to release all the civil society protesters, including 12 union leaders, without any delays.

The Presidential Decree amounts to a form of forced labor because it imposes an exorbitant tax on unemployed workers, and the failure to comply with such unfair levy may result in administrative detention and compulsory community service. In consequence, IndustriALL Global Union calls for the abolition of the unemployment tax, which is in blatant violation of Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, and international core labor standards, including ILO Convention 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour.

I anticipate your swift action and immediate reply.

Sincerely,



Valter Sanches
General Secretary