



Mr Osama Al Najafi
Speaker of the Parliament

Mr Unadem Kana
Chairman of Parliament Committee of Labour and Social Affairs

Parliament of Iraq
Baghdad, Iraq

30 September 2013

Re: Labour Law and Trade Union Law

Dear Sirs,

We are writing to you on behalf of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents 175 million workers in 156 countries and territories affiliated to 315 national centres, and IndustriALL Global Union, which represents more than 50 million workers in mining, energy and manufacturing industries in some 140 countries. For years, the international trade union movement has urged successive Iraqi governments to amend the labour and trade union laws because they place substantial restrictions on the fundamental rights of workers, including the right to freedom of association, to bargain collectively and to strike. You will also recall that you met with a delegation from IndustriALL Global Union in Baghdad in July 2013 when we discussed our concerns regarding the labour and trade union laws.

The Iraqi government has received considerable technical assistance from the International Labour Organization (ILO) on drafting new legislation but until last year there was little movement to pass these new laws. Indeed, the United States put under review Iraq's trade benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences in 2012 - in large part over the government's failure to adopt ILO-complaint legislation. We appreciate that the Parliament may now be ready to pass new labour legislation.

As you are aware, Iraqi trade unions jointly submitted detailed amendments to the draft labour law last year and this year a comprehensive proposal for a new trade union law that we believe is consistent with international standards. We strongly urge the Parliament to move forward on the basis of the input from the trade unions, as well as the ILO, to ensure that any new legal framework affords workers their rights under international law – including the conventions that Iraq has already ratified. Further, it is critical that the labour law and

trade union law move together. We fear that considering the laws separately could lead to the passage of the Labour Law, but without political will to return to and adopt the Trade Union law. In that tragic case, the 1987 law would remain in force, divesting the majority of Iraqi workers of their fundamental rights. Finally, we would urge that any final draft of either law be made available to the trade unions for a final review and comments before any action is taken.

Parliament has an historic opportunity to ensure that workers and trade unions in Iraq are finally able to exercise their rights. We strongly urge you to move forward on the basis of our recommendations above. The ITUC and IndustriALL are prepared to offer your any necessary technical assistance in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Burrow', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Sharan Burrow
General Secretary
International Trade Union Confederation

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Raina', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jyrki Raina
General Secretary
IndustriALL