

Geneva, 6 February 2014

Her Excellency Mrs. Hind Subaih Barrak Al-Subaih
Minister of Social Affairs and Labour
And Minister of State for Planning and Development Affairs
State of Kuwait

Sent by fax: +965-241-9877 and info@kuwaitmission.ch

Oil Industry Dispute

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org), which represents more than 50 million workers in mining, energy and manufacturing industries in some 140 countries. We are proud of the fact that the Federation of Oil Workers of Kuwait is one of our affiliated trade unions and we work closely with them.

It is of great concern to us that we have been informed that your government, together with the state-owned Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC), the national oil conglomerate, has unilaterally announced the intention to cut benefits and wages of oil workers. This call for wage cuts comes despite the fact that the average wages of Kuwaiti oil workers are reported to be only half that of counterparts in neighbouring Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

We understand that the union has given a two-week notice period to give your government time to withdraw the decision and negotiate with the oil trade unions. The Federation of Oil Workers and union leader Abdulaziz al-Sharthan have the full support of our affiliated trade unions throughout the world. Abdulaziz al-Sharthan has made, and continues to make, strenuous efforts to resolve the situation equitably, but despite making a number of proposals that would resolve the situation at lengthy talks with new Oil Minister Ali al-Omair and top oil executives, all these proposals were rejected and press reports now describe a strike as inevitable.

We wish to remind you of the obligations that your government has made regarding trade union and human rights with the ratification of ILO Conventions, including the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) respectively. Under these conventions, we would emphasize that it has long been recognised that workers and their unions have the right to take strike action to achieve their demands and we wish to point out that all jurisprudence of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association recognises the right of oil and gas workers to take strike action.

We urge you to sit down with the Federation of Oil Workers of Kuwait to resolve this matter equitably. Furthermore, we call on you to desist from promoting legislation aimed at limiting trade union and labour rights guaranteed by international conventions.

Sincerely Yours,



Jyrki Raina, General Secretary