

# **Draft resolution on Korea submitted by the Secretariat at IndustriALL Global Union's Executive Committee meeting in Geneva on 27-28 April 2017**

## **Support and solidarity to South Korean unions in the fight to achieve democracy, workers' and trade union rights**

Considering that:

The South Korean government, on behalf of transnational corporations, led a full-blown attack on trade unions, workers' rights and democracy, including intervening in voluntarily-concluded collective agreements; pushing retrogressive changes to labor law; raiding the trade union headquarters of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU); criminalizing assemblies and demonstrations with imprisonment of trade union leaders, beginning with the KCTU president HAN Sang-gyun.

As crony ties between TNCs and government continued to surface, and amid the concerted international solidarity actions of IndustriALL Global Union affiliates, the Korean union movement staged a nation-wide strike and built a coalition of popular movement forces, a "People's Action" to organize weekly candlelight demonstrations calling for the president to step down and the TNCs to be held accountable. From October to December 2016, over 10 million workers, farmers, youth, bereaved families of Sewol Ferry victims, artists and citizens cumulatively took part in the "candlelight assembly movement" that grew from this, and the South Korean president was impeached on 9 December 2016. With sustained mass candlelight assemblies continuing, she was removed from office on 10 March 2017, and on 31 March 2017 she joined Samsung heir-apparent LEE Jay-yong behind bars while undergoing trial. A new government will be elected in snap elections on 9 May 2017.

As South Korea stands at a historical crossroads of change, South Korean unions are calling for not only a reckoning to undo the accumulated abuses of the past regime—such as liberation for imprisoned KCTU president and fugitive KCTU general secretary and the withdrawal of anti-worker government measures and laws—but also preparing the struggle to dismember the chaebol regime and fight for ratification of ILO conventions 87 and 98 on Freedom of Association.

IndustriALL affiliates in Korea are also working with members of the National Assembly to propose legislative changes for chaebol reform and to end union busting with parliamentary hearings and mass mobilization in late May. KMWU and KCTU affiliates will continue the struggle for workers' rights with a general strike in late June.

Therefore, let it be resolved that:

IndustriALL stands together in struggle with the South Korean workers and their unions to reverse the accumulated abuses of the old regime, dismantle the chaebol regime, and win labor and fundamental trade union rights;

IndustriALL and its affiliates commit to work with the Korean unions, the International Trade Union Confederation and other national and global unions to keep up the pressure on the new government and transnational corporations, and to support this struggle. We will together take all necessary solidary support action until our just demands are met.

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