

Geneva, 29 September 2017

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Calling on Government of South Korea to ensure trade union rights at Kumho Tire in Macon, Georgia, USA

Dear Honourable President Jae-in,

I am writing this letter to you as the General Secretary of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org), which represents more than fifty million workers in mining, energy and manufacturing sectors throughout the world, including South Korea, to urge your Government to ensure that Kumho Tire respect workers' rights at its site in Macon, Georgia, United States.

On 19 September, 2017, the United Steelworkers union filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to conduct a union representation election at Kumho Tire's plant in Macon, Georgia. This petition is supported by authorization cards signed by a large majority of the more than 300 employees. The NLRB will shortly schedule an election for the workers to vote on union representation.

The Kumho Tire employees have raised several important concerns:

1. They believe they have a right to **fair and equal treatment**, including
 - a. No discrimination
 - b. No retaliation
 - c. No favoritism
 - d. No harassment
2. **Seniority** should be the basis of selection for
 - a. Job signing
 - b. Awarding overtime
 - c. Scheduling vacation

3. The employees believe that **SAFETY** should be a proactive value in the workplace, and that every employee is entitled to a safe work environment.
 - a. Adequate training
 - b. Availability of personal protective equipment
 - c. Written standards and procedures

Kumho Tire management has responded to the election petition in a hostile manner by requiring workers to attend captive audience meetings in which Korean managers have attempted to dissuade them from their effort to form a union. When the managers were asked whether Kumho Tire workers in the Republic of Korea are unionized, they refused to answer. The company has also established an anti-union website, <http://www.kumhounionfacts.com>

We are concerned that by opposing the efforts of its workers to exercise their right to freedom of association by forming a union, Kumho Tire may violate its obligations under international agreements including Convention 87 of the International Labor Organization, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, among others.

Moreover, as we understand that Kumho Tire is currently under effective control of a creditors' committee headed by the Korean Development Bank, it appears that the Government of the Republic of Korea may bear direct responsibility for the behavior of the company's management.

We request that you communicate with Kumho Tire to request that their management at the Macon, Georgia plant immediately desist from all anti-union activities, adopt a clear position of neutrality in the upcoming NLRB election, and allow the workers to exercise their right to freedom of association without interference.

We are happy to discuss this situation further.

Very truly yours,



Valter Sanches
General Secretary