



21 February 2018

Mr. Guy Ryder
Director-General
International Labour Organization (ILO)
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ILO Direct Contact Mission to Algeria

Dear Mr. Director General,

On behalf of Public Services International (PSI), International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and IndustriALL Global Union, we are writing to express our appreciation as well as our concerns regarding the forthcoming ILO Direct Contact Mission to Algeria.

We welcome the Mission. The situation is urgent, as described in our request for direct urgent intervention by the ILO in our letter of December 20, 2017.

The Governing Body of the ILO has repeatedly called the government of Algeria to account for its ongoing violations of the right to freedom of association. Unfortunately, the government continues to violate fundamental rights with impunity. The most recent of these blatant violations are set out in our additions to the ongoing case 3120 which we have presented to the Committee on Freedom of Association. We hope that the events and the issues documented in the additional material we have made available to the Committee will be fully taken into account in the course of the Mission.

We fully understand that the Mission is the guest of the Algerian government. We believe it is essential however that the independent trade unions we are seeking to defend be fully involved in the Mission planning, and their participation guaranteed. In October 2015, independent unions were effectively sidelined from participating in the tripartite conference in which the ILO participated. That meeting, as described by the ILO in an official announcement, included "the signing of an agreement between the Government of Algeria and the ILO on the funding of a South-South cooperation programme on social dialogue and social protection that will enable African countries to benefit from Algeria's experience in those fields." The government's continued assault on basic rights, we believe, constitutes an object lesson in the total absence of social dialogue in that country, where the dialogue is confined to trade union organizations deemed acceptable by the state authorities.

Hundreds of trade union members since that meeting have been dismissed strictly as a consequence of their legitimate trade union activity. The authorities make abundant use of an arbitrary and compliant legal system to prosecute trade unionists on bogus charges. Faced with an ILO complaint contesting the refusal to register CGATA's affiliated unions, the government cynically creates clone organizations of the same name, thumbing its nose at the ILO. The Labour Ministry fraudulently announces the self-dissolution of SNATEGS, when no such dissolution took place. To speak of the Algerian government's 'experience' in this context invites cynicism and undermines the credibility of the ILO.

We believe it essential that the Mission include separate meetings with the legitimate elected leaders of CGATA affiliated unions, namely, Rachid Malaoui, President of CGATA, Raouf Mellal, President of SNATEGS, Kaddour Chouicha, president of SESS, Nassira Ghozlane and Yamina Maghraoui leaders of SNAPAP as well as their full involvement as participants in any tripartite meetings.

The ILO should obtain firm guarantees from the government that no one will face retaliation for speaking out in the context of the Mission. The Mission should recommend to the government concrete a timebound action plan to remedy specific violations within specified time periods, and be prepared to follow these up.

We sincerely hope that the Mission will take this into account in its planning, and that it will succeed in advancing respect for freedom of association in Algeria.

Yours sincerely,



Valter Sanches
General Secretary
IndustriALL Global Union



Sue Longley
General Secretary
IUF



Rosa Pavanelli
General Secretary
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Sharan Burrow
General
Secretary ITUC