

IndustriALL Global Union's Executive Committee's resolution in support of former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

The IndustriALL Global Union Executive Committee, meeting on 26-27 April this year in Geneva, Switzerland, totally repudiates the incarceration of the former president of Brazil, our colleague Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. This tragic episode in recent Brazilian history is another stage of the parliamentary coup begun in 2016 with the impeachment of the legitimately elected president, Dilma Roussef.

The conviction of Lula, the most important political leader in the country and in Latin America as a whole, is the result of politico-judicial persecution that has the clear objective to prevent him standing for office in the forthcoming presidential elections.

The Brazilian Supreme Court and other parts of the Brazilian judiciary, in collusion with the mass media and conservative sectors of the national congress, and with the support of a reactionary elite and large economic groups, have convicted him of a criminal offence without proving their case. They have gone so far as to ignore the federal constitution, which clearly states that defendants should only start serving their sentence after all options for appeal have been exhausted.

Lula is a political prisoner, kept in isolation, and prevented by the Brazilian judiciary from having any type of contact either within the prison or externally. The judiciary has turned down all requests to visit him, including from friends, such as former president Dilma Roussef and Leonardo Boff, members of congress (senators and federal deputies) and international authorities, such as the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. More recently, this week, even his personal doctor was not allowed to see him. All these attempts to silence him are aggravating factors and his release is an essential step for re-establishing Brazilian democracy.

At this difficult time, we offer our solidarity to Lula and his family, to the Workers' Party and to the Brazilian people, who are facing major problems caused by the dismantling of public policies, the removal of labour rights, the introduction of neoliberal measures with a privatization agenda, the abdication of national sovereignty and an increase in poverty.

Finally, we affirm the importance of the unity of the international working class in defence of democracy and the freedom of our colleague Lula. To this end, we urge IndustriALL Global Union and the other global union federations to encourage their affiliates in all continents to get involved in this important struggle, send delegations to visit Lula in Curitiba and express their solidarity by writing to him, organizing demonstrations outside Brazilian embassies throughout the world and denouncing the arbitrary nature of the measures taken against him.

It is fundamentally important to denounce this issue and state these facts at the ILO's International Labour Conference (ILC), which will take place in June in Geneva. It is also important to ask the ILO to issue a statement on this question, as these arbitrary measures are manifestations of a state of emergency in Brazil, which is wholly contrary to the exercise of human and individual rights recognized by international instruments and the Brazilian Constitution.

The struggle is difficult and resistance is necessary: “They can never imprison our dreams”.