



54 bis, route des Acacias
Case Postale 1516
CH 1227 Geneva
Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0)22 308 50 50
Fax: +41 (0)22 308 50 55
info@industriall-union.org
www.industriall-union.org

President: Jörg Hofmann
General Secretary: Valter Sanchez

Geneva, 15 March 2019

H.E. Mr Nursultan Nazarbaev,
President of Kazakhstan
mission@kazakhstan-geneva.ch
CC. press@prokuror.kz; kezekshi@mfa.kz

IndustriALL Global Union urges Government of Kazakhstan to stop the repression against trade unions and their members

Dear Mr President,

I am writing to you on behalf of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org), which represents 50 million workers in the mining, energy and manufacturing sectors in 140 countries, including Kazakhstan, to urge the Government of Kazakhstan to stop the repression of trade unions and their members, and to ensure that human and trade union rights in Kazakhstan are respected.

IndustriALL Global Union follows closely the rallies that have been held by workers in Zhanaozen since 22 February demanding an increase in wages for low-paid categories of workers to 150 thousand tenge (US \$395), job for unemployed people, and full freedom to exercise trade union activities. Instead of being satisfied over their fair demands, 19 activists have been arrested. There are disturbing messages indicating that additional police forces and internal troops have been sent to Zhanaozen.

In addition, IndustriALL Global Union is outraged to learn that independent trade unions in the country continue to be destroyed and their members are being persecuted. An international union mission conducted by our sister organizations in November 2018 witnessed and confirmed a serious escalation of the persecution of trade unions and their members.

Furthermore, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (KNPK) and its several affiliates were dissolved, and their leaders, including former chairperson of KNPRK, Larisa Kharkova, chair of the trade union of Oil Construction Company (OCC), Amin Yeleusinov, and Nurbek Kushakbayev, labour inspector, faced criminal prosecution.

According to the information provided, Erlan Baltabai, chair of the Fuel and Energy Workers' Union (FEWU), is unreasonably suspected with the ungrounded claims of embezzling trade union funds. His relatives have been interrogated, the police have conducted searches at home and in the office of the FEWU, and seized trade union documents. Dmitry Seniyavskiy, a trade union leader of the local branch of the FEWU in the Karaganda Region, was attacked and brutally beaten.

It is imperative that the Government of Kazakhstan comply fully with national labour legislation, and international labour standards, including Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, and Convention 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which were ratified by Republic of Kazakhstan.

In consequence, IndustriALL Global Union urges the Kazakh authorities to:

- Release immediately the 19 arrested trade union activists over their participation in peaceful rallies;
- Start a social dialogue with workers, unemployed people as well as their representatives;
- Stop the prosecution of Erlan Baltabai and Kuspan Koshegulov;
- Ensure the full investigation of the beating of Dmitry Seniyavskiy to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice;
- Drop charges against leaders of the KNPK.

I expect your prompt action and reply.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sanches". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial letter.

Valter Sanches
General Secretary