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President: Jörg Hofmann
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Geneva 29 September 2021

The Honourable Sheikh Hasina,
Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,
info@pmo.gov.bd; pm@pmo.gov.bd; ps1topm@pmo.gov.bd

Calling for an end to police interference in trade union activities in Bangladesh

Dear Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina,

I am writing this letter to you as General Secretary of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org), representing more than fifty million workers in the mining, energy and manufacturing industries, including readymade garments, in over 140 countries, including Bangladesh. We wish to bring to your attention the issue of police obstruction in the formation of Chittagong Regional Committee of the IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC), which is the coordinating body of the affiliates of IndustriALL Global Union in Bangladesh.

The IBC had decided to form a regional committee in Chittagong as the area has a substantial number of RMG factories and the workers working in some of these factories are members of unions affiliated to federations, which make up the IBC. Accordingly, several leaders had travelled to Chittagong to form this regional committee with representatives of the federations in Chittagong.

The police in Chittagong did not allow the meeting to take place. On the 24th of September, when the meeting was to take place in the office of our affiliate BIGUF in Chittagong, the IBC's senior Vice President Salauddin Shapon received a telephone call from the Double Mooring police station that the meeting could not take place. The meeting was thereafter shifted to take place in the Kotwali Thana area on 25th September. The senior vice President again received a call from the Kotwali Thana police that the meeting could not take place in that area either. Calls made by the IBC leader to the Industrial Police and the police department did not receive any positive response.

What happened next was a serious violation of trade union rights. The IBC decided to shift the meeting to BTGWL office in the Bandar Thana area. When IBC leaders reached the office, police officers, including some in plainclothes blocked the gate of the office and did not allow anyone to enter. The incident is a direct violation of the ILO conventions guaranteeing freedom of association. This is also a serious intervention of the police force in the activities of independent trade unions in Bangladesh, which is highly condemnable.



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In the circumstances, IndustriALL Global Union calls upon the Government of Bangladesh to conduct an immediate enquiry into the matter and ensure that the police, including the industrial police, will not interfere in the legitimate activities of trade unions across Bangladesh.

I look forward to hearing your positive response soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Atle Høie', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Atle Høie
General Secretary
IndustriALL Global Union