

Geneva, 30 November 2021

Mr. Andrey Soyko
General Director
JSC Naftan
Belarus

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IndustriALL Global Union urges JSC Naftan to stop union busting and harassment of trade union leaders, activists and members

Dear Mr. Soyko,

I am writing this letter to you as General Secretary of [IndustriALL Global Union](#), representing more than fifty million workers in the mining, energy and manufacturing industries in over 140 countries, including Belarus.

IndustriALL Global Union condemns in the strongest terms the gross violations of workers' rights and trade union rights at JSC Naftan, including dismissals of workers for exercising their right to freedom of association by joining the Belarusian Independent Trade Union (BITU), and harassment of trade union leaders and members. Please, note that the BITU is affiliated to IndustriALL Global Union.

We have learned that JSC Naftan is putting pressure on many workers to force them to terminate their union membership, as well as mass dismissals of trade union leaders and union members in the last months.

Furthermore, the chairperson of BITU at Naftan, Volha Brytsikava was fired, as well as a number of activists, including deputy chairpersons: Andrei Shkirenka, Yury Hashau, Siarhei Plihaika, Siarhei Vatralla, Siarhei Lapunou, and Dzianis Abramovich.

Labour contracts with BITU members, including Andrei Harbunou, Siarhei Kazlou, Siarhei Liukhavets, Ilya Padhol and Ivan Kavalenka, were not renewed because of their union membership. In contrast, there are several examples of workers who terminated their BITU membership and immediately received contract extensions.

Workers have been pressured to quit the BITU membership under the threat of disciplinary penalties, removal of bonuses and incentive payments for professional skills, threats of not approving skills exams, summons to the security service, warning meetings with the managers, and dismissals due to staff reduction.

Moreover, your company has used the recent amendment to the Labour Code of the Republic of Belarus that allows employers to dismiss workers for absenteeism in connection "with serving an administrative penalty in the form of administrative detention" to get rid of unwanted union activists.

Andrei Berezovsky, machine operator, was dismissed in October 2021 for truancy due to serving 7 days of administrative arrest and the employment contract of Alexander Bolonkin, design engineer, Deputy Chairman of BITU, was terminated in November 2021 for truancy in connection with serving 15 days of administrative arrest.

As a result of these anti-union actions engaged by Naftan management, the membership of BITU has substantively declined.

Naftan's actions are in blatant violation of fundamental workers' rights and trade union rights, which are guaranteed by the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s core labour standards such as Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, ratified by the Government of Belarus.

It is imperative that Naftan end the persecution of BITU union leaders and members, and desist from threatening with dismissal those workers who make their free choice to join a union.

IndustriALL Global Union strongly urges Naftan to immediately reinstate all the unfairly dismissed workers, the BITU members, stop harassing union activists, members and leaders conducting lawful trade union activities, and engage in good-faith social dialogue with the Belarusian Independent Trade Union (BITU).

We truly hope that it will not be necessary to take further actions at the international level to ensure the full respect of fundamental labour rights in supply chains.

I anticipate your prompt action and reply.

Yours sincerely,



Atle Høie
General Secretary