

Geneva, 22 July 2022

Mr. Guy Ryder
Director-General
International Labour Office (ILO)

By email: ryder@ilo.org

CC: Karen Curtis, ILO Branch Chief Freedom of Association via curtis@ilo.org

IndustriALL Global Union requests ILO'S urgent intervention to ensure the existence of independent trade unions and the release of all trade unionists in Belarus

Dear Mr. Ryder,

I am writing to you as General Secretary of [IndustriALL Global Union](https://www.industriall-union.org), representing more than fifty million workers in the mining, energy and manufacturing industries in over 140 countries, including Belarus. We wish to call your attention once again to the serious violations of human rights and trade union rights in Belarus, and request your immediate intervention to ensure the existence of independent trade unions and the release of all trade unionists in Belarus.

It is outrageous that in Belarus one more appalling step has been taken in the repression against the independent trade unions in the country. The Supreme Court in Belarus has decided on 18 July 2022 to liquidate and dissolve the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP), and its four members: the Belarusian Independent Trade Union (BITU), the Union of Radio and Electronics Workers (REP), the Free Trade Union of Belarus (SPB), and the Free Trade Union of Metalworkers (SPM).

IndustriALL Global Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the court decision and considers it null and void as it is in clear violation of international law. BITU, REP and SPM continue to be our members and we will continue to assist and fully support them along with the whole independent and democratic trade unions in Belarus to guarantee their organizational continuity under any circumstances.

Moreover, we urge and demand that the government of Belarus give access, as a matter of urgency, to visitors, including **an ILO mission to the country**, IndustriALL Global Union, ITUC and other global trade unions, to ascertain the conditions of arrest and detention and the welfare of

the detained trade unionists. In addition, we demand that access be given to these organizations to observe the ongoing trials against trade unionists and trade union organizations.

We continue to demand the immediate release of the following trade union leaders, who are kept in prison without any justified reason:

1. Aliaksandr Yarashuk - Chairperson of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic trade unions, BKDP. Arrested on 19 April 2022. Suspect in criminal case; he is in prison. We were informed that his health has deteriorated.
2. Siarhei Antusevich - Vice-Chairperson of BKDP. Arrested on 19 April 2022. Suspect in criminal case; in prison.
3. Hennadz Fiadynich - Vice-chairperson of the Radio and Electronic workers' union, REP. Arrested on 18 April 2022. Suspect in criminal case; in prison.
4. Vatslau Areshka - activist of REP. Arrested on 19 April 2022. In prison.
5. Mikhail Hromau - Member and Secretary of SPM Council. Arrested on 19 April; in prison.
6. Iryna But-Husaim - BKDP media team officer, bookkeeper of BKDP. Arrested on 19 April; suspect in criminal case; in prison at KGB pre-trial detention centre.
7. Miraslau Sabchuk - Activist of SPM, drafted an appeal by Minsk Tractor Plant (MTZ) in which workers condemned the violence and demanded new fair elections in 2020. Arrested on 19 April 2022.
8. Yanina Malash - Deputy Chairperson of SPM, officer for organizing. Arrested on 19 April 2022; in prison.
9. Vitali Chychmarou - Member of SPM Council, labour inspector; was fired in 2020 due to trade union activities. Arrested on 19 April 2022.
10. Vasil Berasneu - Acting Chairperson of REP. Arrested on 19 April 2022.
11. Zinaida Mikhniuk - Deputy chairperson of REP, arrested on March 25, charged with defamation of the president. Tried and found guilty; sent to prison for 2 years.
12. Aliaksandr Mishuk - Vice-Chairperson of BITU, Chairperson of BITU at JSC Belaruskali. Arrested on 25 May 2022. Suspect in criminal case; in prison at KGB pre-trial detention centre.

13. Ihar Povarau - activist of BITU at Belarusian Metallurgical Plant, BMZ. 3 and a half years' term in colony for an attempt of a warning strike on 17 August 2020.

14. Yauhen Hovar - activist of BITU at Belarusian Metallurgical Plant, BMZ. 2 and a half years' term of "chemistry" for an attempt of a warning strike on 17 August 2020.

15. Artsiom Zhernak - Chairperson of SPM at Minsk Automobile plant. Arrested on 17 November 2021. In prison at a pre-trial detention centre.

Taking full account of these egregious violations of human and fundamental trade union rights, IndustriALL Global Union reiterates its request calling on you to intervene urgently vis-à-vis the government of Belarus to put an end to these violations. We strongly believe that the ILO should conduct a mission to Belarus without any delay.

IndustriALL Global Union is willing to participate in this mission. Furthermore, we are at your disposal to provide you more information about these terrible attacks, inter alia, on the right to peaceful assembly and association, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of the press, the right to a fair trial, freedom of association and the right to organize and collective bargaining.

We look forward to your prompt action and reply.

Yours sincerely,



Atle Høie
General Secretary