

IndustriALL Global Union solidarity statement and call for support of unions in South Korea fighting back against government crackdown

The current government of South Korea has made several attempts to weaken the rights of workers and their unions, resulting in the ILO criticizing the serious violations of the right to freedom of association and to bargain collectively on several occasions.

- On 21 November 2015, the government sent riot police to raid the offices of IndustriALL affiliate Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU), the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and a number of other unions. Police seized documents, equipment, computers and external hard drives.
- The raid follows the unions' participation in a rally on 14 November to protest against a proposed package of labour law reforms seriously undermining the rights of workers and their trade unions, while increasing the use of precarious work and decreasing workers' incomes.
- Police have investigated, arrested and imprisoned dozens of union officers and members in the current crackdown, whose sole offense is representing workers and opposing anti-union legislation.
- The President of South Korea has likened protestors to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in a shameful attempt to vilify public protest in defense of workers' rights.

IndustriALL calls on the government of South Korea to respect the right to freedom of association, including the right to peaceful assembly and to strike. All charges against KCTU President Han Sang-Gyun must be dropped, the workers detained in recent police raids must be released and all charges dropped.

The government must withdraw the regressive labour reforms and instead commit to consultations in good faith with trade unions over reforms to the labour laws.

IndustriALL expresses its solidarity with the workers, affiliates and other unions in South Korea fighting back against the government attack.

IndustriALL continues to support this struggle and to make it public. We will work with the ITUC and other global unions to request that the ILO urgently intervene with the government of South Korea. We will mobilize our affiliates around the world to make sure the South Korean government respects workers' fundamental rights.