



INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION



Mr. Aleksandr Lukashenko
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PERC/AL

22 December 2010

Detention of members of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions

Dear Mr. President,

We have been informed by our member organisation – the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions – that four of its members were arrested together with hundreds of other citizens of Belarus, who were protesting over disputed presidential elections on Sunday evening in Minsk. We denounce the violent attacks by the police and the special security forces on demonstrators this Sunday.

Mikhail Kovalkov, President of Belorussian Free Trade Union (SPB), Alexei Kovtun, member of the Belorussian Free Trade Union (SPB), Vladimir Sergeev, member of Free Metalworkers' Union (SPM) and Alexander Tysevich, member of Belarusian of Radio and Electronics Workers' Union (REP) were sentenced to detention in remand for different terms. With overcrowded custodies the conditions of their detention are appalling. Furthermore, they are prohibited to meet with their relatives and colleagues and even handing over of food to them from outside is not allowed. It is difficult to believe that such inhuman treatment is possible in a state that has claims to be a democratic and socially oriented, with high ambitions of cooperation with the European Union.

Hereby we demand to immediately release the members of the BKDP and to remove any administrative record for them. We also once more call on the Belarusian government to respect fundamental human rights, including freedom of association and freedom of assembly.

As you will be very well aware, the international trade union movement is closely monitoring the situation regarding the implementation of the ILO Commission of Inquiry recommendations that, among others, refer to necessity to change the legislation on collective activities and to ensure that freedom of assembly is fully respected in law and practice. The recent events obviously demonstrated the opposite.

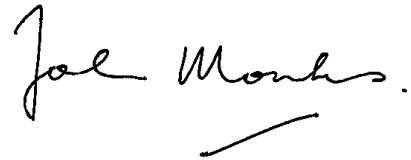
Dear Mr. President,

Once again, we request the release without any delay of Mikhail Kovalkov, Alexei Kovtun, Alexander and Vladimir Sergeev. Please be informed that we will be sending copies of this letter to Juan Somavia, ILO DG, and Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security, requesting their intervention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Burrow', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Sharan Burrow
General Secretary
ITUC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Monks', with a horizontal flourish underneath.

John Monks
General Secretary
ETUC and PERC