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HTUR/JSV

17 November 2011

Universal Periodic Review – Bahrain

In accordance with UN Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1 of 2007, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC),¹ representing 175 million workers in 151 countries and territories through 305 national affiliates, together with Education International (EI)², a global union federation representing over 30 million teachers and education employees, file this submission outlining serious and systematic violations of fundamental human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain committed in 2011. The mission of the ITUC is to combat poverty, exploitation, oppression and inequality, ensuring the conditions for the enjoyment of universal human rights, and promoting effective representation of working women and men worldwide. We hope that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) will consider these comments when it undertakes its review of Bahrain under the Universal Periodic Review framework in 2012.

This submission details serious and systematic violations of the Right to Freedom of Association and to Organize and Non-Discrimination in Employment and Occupation. These include the mass dismissal or suspension of Bahraini workers due to their involvement in protected strikes and other trade union activity and/or due to discrimination on the basis of their political opinion; the arrest and prosecution of trade union leaders for same; the unilateral elimination of dues check-off in order to starve unions of economic support; and the unilateral amendment of the Trade Union Law with the intent to weaken the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU). These acts are contrary to the rights guaranteed in the instruments and declarations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), including ILO Conventions 87 and 111, as well as the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. These acts also violate Articles 7, 20 and 23 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Articles 22 and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as Articles 2 and 8 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

I. FACTS

A. *Dismissals and Prosecutions*

On February 14, 2011, peaceful mass pro-democracy protests commenced across Bahrain. From February 14-17, protests grew remarkably in size, drawing several thousands to join

¹ www.ituc-csi.org

² www.ei-ie.org

the encampment at the Pearl roundabout, which was the locus of the protests. One protester was killed on February 14, and another was killed at the funeral procession on February 15. The GFBTU urged the government of Bahrain (GoB) to open an investigation into the attacks and to guarantee freedom of assembly and expression. The GFBTU also called on the GoB to commence a national dialogue to address a long list of concerns, including the establishment of a social and economic council, job creation and fair wages – long standing demands of the trade union movement. The same day, the King expressed regret for the deaths, announced an investigation into the violence, reiterated his commitment to reform and affirmed the constitutionally guaranteed right of freedom of expression. The GFBTU welcomed the King's speech.

However, on the morning of February 17, security forces moved in the Pearl roundabout and, using tear gas and batons, dispersed the protestors. Tanks occupied the area. Several people were reported killed and hundreds sustained injuries. Public security forces continued the attacks into the following day, using live rounds against protestors and mourners, leaving more dead and wounded. On February 19, the GFBTU welcomed the proposed national dialogue initiative of the Crown Prince, while stressing that a precondition was the cessation of the use of force against peaceful protesters. To ensure the protection and safety of citizens, the GFBTU called for a general strike starting on February 20, which it suspended that same day after the army withdrew from the streets and guarantees were made to provide for respect of freedom of assembly.

In the following weeks, the demonstrations continued. Trade union leaders and union members participated in them, demanding economic, social and political reforms. Throughout this period, the GFBTU issued public statements emphasizing national and labour unity, affirming the GFBTU's support for the national dialogue initiative (which had failed to materialize), and stressed the necessity for the government to fulfil its commitments, including respect of basic freedoms and investigations into the violent aggressions perpetrated against peaceful protesters.

Events took a dramatic turn when, on March 13, state security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters in an attempt to clear the sit-ins, with reports of unidentified armed civilians also attacking protesters. Hundreds of protesters were wounded and hospitalized. In response to the use of excessive force against protesters and the endangerment of civil peace, the GFBTU called for a general strike with the purpose of finding a solution to the crisis without delay and without further bloodshed.

Instead, on the following day, March 14, Gulf Cooperation Council Peninsula Shield Forces, consisting mainly of Saudi and UAE troops, arrived in an armoured convoy at the request of the government of Bahrain.³ On March 15, the King declared a three-month state of emergency under Article 36(b) of the Constitution,⁴ which prohibited most forms of public assembly and speech related to such assembly, as well as to prohibit the operation of non-governmental organizations, political societies and unions. Reports also emerged

³ GCC troops remain in Bahrain to this day.

⁴ Article 36 b): Martial law shall be proclaimed only by law, unless otherwise dictated by urgent necessity to be by a decree giving the justification therefore, provided that the matter shall be referred to the National Assembly within two weeks for decision. In all cases the period of martial law shall not exceed three months, but this period may be renewed in whole or in part once or more, provided that approval by a majority vote of the members constituting the National Assembly has been obtained.

of security forces occupying medical facilities, denying access to care to the wounded, harassing doctors and nurses and redirecting the wounded to military facilities – where they were certain to be detained and interrogated.

In response, the International Labour Organization (ILO) immediately expressed concern regarding the state of emergency, stating in a press release on March 15th:

The Director-General of the International Labour Office, Juan Somavia, expresses his grave concern at today's declaration of a state of emergency in Bahrain. This constitutes a serious setback to civil liberties, including the rights to legitimate trade union action. In the current volatile situation it is even more urgent to intensify efforts towards the dialogue that has started between the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the key actors of society.⁵

Meanwhile, the GFBTU maintained the general strike largely out of concern for the protection and safety of workers, stressing that the security situation and aggressions against commuting workers did not allow for the resumption of work until a return to normalcy. On March 22, after meeting with the Minister of Labour and the President of the Shura Council, who communicated assurances from the Deputy Prime Minister that aggressions against workers would cease and no reprisals would occur, that the checkpoints would ease and security would be provided for national and resident workers, the GFBTU called off the strike on March 23. It urged workers to coordinate with their trade unions and the management of their enterprises to record any violations to their safety and present them to the GFBTU. It also stressed the need for workers to exert every effort to preserve social and national cohesion and called on management in the public and private sectors to be understanding of the exceptional circumstances and safeguard the rights of all workers. The GFBTU also reiterated the necessity of preparing enabling conditions for genuine dialogue leading to a solution to the crisis.

On March 24, the GFBTU and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) issued a joint statement calling on all those responsible in the public and private sectors to show understanding for the exceptional circumstances the country was going through with regards to workers. Both parties stressed that dialogue was the best means to exit from the crisis. The BCCI praised the decision of the GFBTU to call off the strike and resume work.⁶

In the following weeks, however, the BCCI underwent a political change due to a shift in the internal balance of powers, which tilted the organization in favour of the government. Around this time, prominent trade union leaders and hundreds of rank and file members were fired;⁷ some faced criminal prosecution for their role in organizing and participating in strikes and/or demonstrations.⁸ In demanding the dismissal of workers who went on

⁵ ILO, The crisis in Bahrain must be solved through national dialogue, Statement by the ILO Director-General, available online at http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_153131/lang--en/index.htm

⁶ See, e.g., Bahrain News Agency, *BCCI and GFBTU issue joint statement*, available online at <http://bna.bh/portal/en/news/450792>.

⁷ A complete list of trade union leaders fired during this period can be provided upon request.

⁸ The ITUC has on file copies of notices of dismissal that cite as a reason participation in strikes or pro-democracy demonstrations.

trade union endorsed strikes or who otherwise demonstrated for political and socio-economic reforms, largely in state owned or invested enterprises (including Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO), Aluminium Bahrain (ALBA), Bahrain National Gas (BANAGAS), Gulf Air, Bahrain Telecommunications Company (BATELCO), APM Terminals, Arab Shipbuilding & Repair Yard (ASRY), Gulf Aluminium Rolling Mill Co (GARMCO) and Bahrain Airport Services (BAS)), the government actively worked to intimidate and dismantle an independent, democratic and non-sectarian trade union movement.⁹ The government also persecuted public sector union members and leaders. For example, the female vice-president and four board members of the Bahraini Teachers Association (BTA) were arrested on March 29 and the female general secretary, Sana Abdul Razzaq, on March 30. Security forces also twice raided the house of BTA President Mahdi Abu Deeb (on March 20 and 29) and interrogated his wife and children. He was eventually arrested on 6 April.¹⁰

Once again, the ILO was swift to denounce the repression of trade union activity.

All this information is extremely alarming, in particular as the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions had called on workers to return to work and had been given assurances by State officials that they will not face any punitive measures for their participation in strikes. Indeed, the GBFTU had taken a constructive attitude in inviting the workers to return to work in the interest of the national economy and to allow for conditions that would strengthen the basis for a national dialogue.¹¹

On June 12, the Joint Committee of Major Companies, which includes companies wholly or partly owned by Mumtalakat, the GoB's investment arm, which is also represented on the board of the BCCI, issued a communication to the GBFTU leadership, asking its executive council of 15 members to "voluntarily" resign immediately or face civil and criminal prosecution. The ILO condemned this communication:

The Director-General of the ILO condemned the public call by the Joint Committee of Major Companies in Bahrain to the 15 members of the Executive Committee of the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions to resign immediately or to face criminal and civil law prosecution. The threat of criminal and civil prosecution by enterprises wholly or partly owned by the Government is an act of intimidation which takes Bahrain still further away from the course of respect for trade union rights on which it had embarked since 2002 and which has been widely recognized and praised by the ILO in the past.¹²

⁹ Of note, several companies had announced (in some cases on public television) that they would only issue a warning to striking workers. It appears that the GoB put direct pressure on these firms to dismiss these workers instead of warning them.

¹⁰ The Bahrain Teacher Association called for a teacher strike on 14 March to raise concern about the physical security of academics, education workers and students in all education institutions.

¹¹ ILO, ILO Director-General Sounds Alarm on Situation of Workers in Bahrain, available online at http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_154099/lang-en/index.htm.

¹² ILO, ILO Director-General's Statement on Bahrain, available online at http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_158329/lang-en/index.htm

Months after the demonstrations at the Pearl Roundabout, the dismissals continue. Government workers, especially those in health, education and municipal sectors (which by the nature of their work frequently interface with the public), continue to be suspended or fired for their actual or suspected participation in, *inter alia*, political activity earlier this year. These dismissals have actually increased since June, as the government, through “investigation committees”, has sought to cleanse the public service of workers it deems a threat due to their political opinions. To date, roughly 550 municipal workers have been fired or suspended. The GFBTU also reports that at least 132 teachers have been fired. This figure does not include the 14 university professors who were fired on August 12. Together, these professors, some of whom were department heads, had an average of 20 years of service. Teachers facing dismissal report having to appear before a disciplinary board with no opportunity to mount a legal defence of any kind. The salaries of those under investigation were either stopped completely, or halved. There is little question that the outcomes of these disciplinary hearings are predetermined. Further, it appears that pro-government employees are replacing dismissed workers. According to BTA, 2,500 teachers have been brought in from Egypt to replace dismissed Bahraini teachers, together with another 6,500 unqualified local volunteers. This is resulting in the serious deterioration of the quality of education.

Minister of Labour, Jamil Humaidan, has refused to discuss the dismissals of government workers with the GFBTU, disclaiming any responsibility and instead referring government workers to the Civil Service Board. He has repeatedly stated that he will focus solely on the dismissals in the private sector.

Today, 2,815 workers in both the public and private sector have been dismissed or suspended, affecting 14,069 family members. Despite public promises to the contrary, the government has largely failed to reinstate workers illegally dismissed.

According to GFBTU, only 336 workers have been reinstated to date and 212 workers have had their suspensions revoked. Many of the reinstated workers have had to agree to unacceptable, indeed illegal, conditions to get their jobs back. Workers had to agree not to take part in any further political activity, to waive the right to join legal complaints pending before the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Justice, to waive any payments or benefits they may have been due and to agree not to join the union. Some workers, who worked on indefinite term contracts, are being returned on fixed-term contracts. Though employed, there is no question that the government continues to retaliate against these workers because of their political opinion, and would not hesitate to fire them again were they to resume once again legal expression of their views.

Of great concern, trade union leaders have and continue to face criminal charges. For example, the Vice-President of the Bahrain Teachers Association, Jalila al Salman and Roula al-Saffar, head of the Bahrain Nursing Society, stood trial before a military tribunal and were sentenced, before those sentences were vacated and the cases transferred to civilian criminal courts. The transfer to civilian courts is a positive step, though these leaders should not be facing charges in the first place. We are deeply sceptical that they will be afforded due process of law. The government has also commenced prosecutions against leaders at Gulf Air, DHL, GARMCO, BAPCO, among others, with the clear intent of undermining the union. Senior journalist Mansour Al Jamry, editor-in-chief of *Al Wasat*

newspaper is on trial along with three other senior staff charged with publishing false information about the police crackdown, a charge that carries a one-year prison sentence.

B. Attacks on the Leaders of the Bahrain Teacher Association

The crackdown on the Bahrain Teacher Association and its members are a hostile reaction to the participation of teacher unionists in the peaceful protests that started on 14 February at the Pearl Roundabout in Manama and the call to action on 14 March to raise concern about the physical security of academics, education workers and students in education institutions.

On 13 March, the Ministry of Education had announced the temporarily closure of all schools. The university academic year was also suspended. When the schools reopened for staff on March 20, teachers refused to return to work and volunteers were recruited to fill in for striking teachers. Nineteen students from the Teachers College in Bahrain were detained and 18 academics and administrators of the University of Bahrain¹³, including the Dean of the Business School, were dismissed. All public school teachers who were affiliated to the Bahrain Teacher Association (BTA) decided not to go to work in support of the pro-democracy movement but also for fear for the life of the teacher union leader Mahdi Abu Deeb.

Since the declaration of a state of emergency in March, the authorities have conducted pre-dawn raids on the homes of many students, teachers and teacher union leaders, detaining some for months with no trial and depriving their families of any knowledge of their whereabouts. Many other students were expelled, including 63 students on 12 June. The educational environment in schools is of high risk for both students and teachers who have been attacked by riot police and are constantly being attacked by the pro-government administration.

By August 2011, the Bahrain Teacher Association and the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights reported at least 66 serious infringements of teachers' human and trade union rights since the uprisings for democracy began. According to BTA, more than 8,000 teachers have been affected by the crackdown, creating a climate of fear amongst educators.

On September 25, the National Safety Court of First Instance – a Bahraini military court – sentenced Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb to three and ten years' imprisonment respectively for their involvement in peaceful protests last March. An appeal is scheduled to be heard in a civilian court on December 1. They were tried on charges including “inciting hatred towards the regime”, “calling to overthrow and change the regime by force”, “calling on parents not to send their children to school” and “calling on teachers to stop working and participate in strikes and demonstrations”. Amnesty

¹³ When the University of Bahrain, the leading university reopened after almost two months of closure, students and academic staff were allowed to re-enter the campus only after signing an oath proving their loyalty to the government and ruling royal family. Those refusing to sign were prevented from continuing their studies and/or employment at the University. A number of students decided to boycott classes in response to the regime's crackdown on pro-democracy protestors and the drastic security measures implemented on the campus. The Bahrain News Agency reported that 200 students, academics and university staff have been dismissed by the University's Probe Committee for their alleged links with the anti-government protests.

International (AI) has reviewed the statements issued by the BTA and has listened to speeches delivered by its President Mahdi Abu Dheeb. AI found no evidence that either of them advocated violence of any kind. Consequently, AI believes that they are likely prisoners of conscience detained solely for exercising their legitimate rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly as leaders of the BTA.¹⁴

a. Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb

Reliable reports indicate that both Mahdi Abu Dheeb and Jalila al-Salman have been tortured in detention. On June 7, a family member of the BTA President explained to members of EI that Mahdi Abu Deeb had been in detention for 61 days of detention and lost a lot of weight due to the torture and other ill-treatment. He was kept in solitary confinement in a windowless room. He did not have access to a lawyer until June 7.

Other eye-witnesses confirmed that Mahdi Abu Dheeb had been brutally tortured on a daily basis during the first three months of his detention from April to July 2011. After his arrest, he was taken to the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) headquarters in Adliya where he was first handcuffed, blindfolded, beaten on the head, ears, kidneys and back and insulted about his religious beliefs. He was also forced to stand for long period of times. On the second day of his detention, he was taken from his cell and hung from the ceiling and brutally beaten with a plastic hose. Although he signed a forced confession, the beatings continued and he was threatened to be hung again.

On April 9, he was transferred to the Bahrain Defence Force Royal Medical Services. On the way to the hospital he was beaten again. After receiving treatment, a police officer warned him that he would be beaten again if he did not follow their instructions. Mahdi was taken to cell #2 at Al-Grain military prison. Co-detainees witnessed how Mahdi continued to be tortured. He was forbidden from praying according to his religion. The torturers also threatened to rape him several times. In one month, Mahdi lost around 15 pounds, his health deteriorated and his kidneys were affected by the beating.

On May 9, he was taken back to the CID for interrogation by an officer. The officer refused to acknowledge the marks of torture on Mahdi's body. Another person entered the room and threatened Mahdi to call in "specialists." one to beat him, one to rape him and another one to torture him by electric shock. They threw cigarette ash on Mahdi's head. After signing new forced confessions to be used by the military prosecution, Mahdi was allowed to go to the restroom where he saw his face for the first time in one month. Mahdi was never allowed to see a lawyer until at the first military court session. After he returned to the Al Grain prison following his interrogation, he was beaten again.

On September 11, Mahdi started a hunger strike to protest his detention and the incarceration of his colleagues as well as the fact that his two letters to the military prosecutors remained unanswered. On 12 October, Mahdi was transferred to the Jaw prison which houses 450 to 500 inmates and is known by human rights activists for its appalling detention conditions. New inmates are reported to be mistreated heavily while in

¹⁴ See Amnesty International, Bahrain: Further information: Teachers' military trial resumes, available online at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE11/045/2011/en/205a96bf-b04d-4438-b0a0-054580a14c46/mde110452011en.html>

detention. Mahdi Abu Dheeb did not get treatment for diabetes and high blood pressure during his detention.

b. Jalila al-Salman

The BTA female vice president Jalila al-Salman's house in Manama was raided on March 29 by more than 40 security officers. She was reportedly taken to the Criminal Investigations Directorate in Manama where she remained for about a week during which she was beaten and held in solitary confinement. She is believed to have been transferred to the custody of the military and held there for two months, before being transferred again to a detention centre in 'Issa Town.

C. *Unilateral Cancellation of Dues Check-Off / Non-Recognition of Union*

a. Dues Check Off

In several cases, the employer has unilaterally cancelled dues deductions in apparent retaliation for trade union activity carried out earlier this year. These dues deduction arrangements had been in place for many years and were never previously breached.

For example, at Arab Shipbuilding & Repair Yard (ASRY), workers noted that their paystubs, which had reflected the deduction of dues in April, no longer reflected dues deductions in May or afterwards. At no point had these workers resigned from the union or had the worker or union asked the employer not to deduct dues from the pay checks. The ASRY Trade Union wrote to the company and the Ministry of Labour in June regarding the cancellation of the dues check-off; neither letter received a response.¹⁵ The intent of the move is obvious – to starve the union of financial resources needed to represent its members.

Similarly, Bahrain Airport Services cancelled the dues check-off arrangement with the Bahrain Airport Services Trade Union. It had argued that the workers had asked to have the dues deduction cancelled. Apart from being untrue, it is not even the proper procedure. A worker would resign from the union and the union would inform the employer that the worker is no longer a member and to stop deducting dues.¹⁶ The union protested the employer's cancellation of the check-off system in November 2011.

b. Refusal to Recognize Union

At one time, the union at Gulf Aluminium Rolling Mill Co. (GRAMCO) represented 750 of 780 employees. Following the events of March 13, the TU went to extraordinary lengths to ensure that production would continue despite the total lack of security and road-blocks. The union even proposed that its members go from three eight hour shifts to two twelve hour shifts to avoid curfews and other logistical obstacles. A month later, however, the investigations commenced and numerous terminations and suspensions followed. On May 8, the entire union executive board was fired after the union filed a complaint regarding the dismissals. GRAMCO then circulated a petition denouncing the union.

¹⁵ Copies of paystubs and the letters will be forwarded to the CFA.

¹⁶ Copies of standard membership application forms and union withdrawal forms used by the union are available.

About 130 workers signed it but several have subsequently stated that they were forced or tricked into signing the petition.

GRAMCO then unilaterally decided to no longer “recognise” the union. Trade union officials have been barred from the premises and the union offices have been burglarized by company officials.

D. *2011 Amendments of Trade Union Law*

On October 9, the government of Bahrain unilaterally and without notice amended the trade union law in an effort to silence the independent and democratic voice of Bahraini workers, the GFBTU. These recent amendments mark yet another serious attack on the fundamental rights of Bahraini workers, the passage of which was an obvious (and illegal) act of retaliation by the government for the exercise of trade union activity. The purpose of these amendments is clear – to further undermine the GFBTU and thereby eliminate an important voice for economic and social reform in Bahrain. We fear that the amended legislation will be used to establish and promote government-backed unions that will be used to mouth a defence of the government’s anti-union and anti-democratic policies to the international community.

The amended articles of the trade union law include:

Article 8(1), which was amended to prohibit the establishment of a general labour federation, allowing instead only the establishment of a federation of “similar” trade unions. It is up to trade unions, not the government, to determine which unions may belong to a federation. The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association has already found that such a requirement contravenes Article 5 of Convention 87.¹⁷

Article 8(3) allows the Minister of Labour to determine which trade union may represent Bahraini workers in international fora and in national level bargaining. These rights belong (as they do in most countries) to the most representative trade union(s) – here the GFBTU. This is a naked attempt by the government to prohibit the GFBTU from further denouncing government-sponsored violations of trade union rights before the International Labour Organization (ILO). Similarly, the GFBTU will no doubt be barred from participating in the setting of national labour and employment policy. We fear this article could be used to promote government-backed unions that will parrot a defence of the government’s anti-union and anti-democratic policies to the international community.

Article 10, which allows for the establishment of multiple unions at the enterprise level, so long as the union is not formed on the basis of sect, religion or race. Legislation permitting multiple unions in an enterprise is fully consistent with international law. The timing of this reform raises obvious questions about the government’s motivations. Similarly, trade unions absolutely should not discriminate on the bases of sect, religion or race. The GFBTU is a non-sectarian organization and no GFBTU-affiliated trade union has been formed on any of these prohibited bases. However, we are concerned that the government will look for and find trade unions with a large Shia majority – which is to be expected given that the vast majority of working class Bahrainis are in fact Shia. The law could be

¹⁷ See e.g., CFA Digest ¶ 615.

invoked to deregister trade unions claiming that they were established along religious or sectarian lines even where there is no evidence of any such intent.

Article 17, which now includes language barring trade unionists who are held responsible for violations that led to the dissolution of a trade union organization or its executive council are prohibited from nominating themselves to the membership of the executive council of any trade union organization within five years from the date of decision or final judicial ruling on the dissolution of the union. While a law barring the election of a trade union leader convicted of a crime related to his or her integrity, such as corruption or fraud, may be appropriate, this amendment is an obvious attempt to remove the trade union leadership that participated in the political mobilization earlier this year.¹⁸ If it were used for that purpose, it would constitute a grave violation of the right of freedom of association. As mentioned above, the trade union leaders of a number of major enterprises, including Gulf Air, GARMCO, BAPCO, and DHL have been summoned to appear before the courts on charges related to the demonstrations earlier this year. If convicted, it could lead to the dissolution of the executive council, and potentially the union. If those unions dissolve, it would strike a severe blow to the GFBTU.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Government of Bahrain must unconditionally reinstate all public sector workers illegally fired for participating in trade union activity that is protected under international law. Similarly, the government must ensure that dismissed workers in the private sector are also unconditionally reinstated. Any conditions imposed on those few workers who have been reinstated that are inconsistent with national and international law should be deemed null and void. Criminal prosecutions for activity related to trade union activity should end and those already convicted should be released immediately. The recent amendments to the Trade Union Law should also be repealed to the extent they are inconsistent with international law; new amendments bringing the labour legislation into compliance with C 87 and 98 should be developed through social dialogue and enacted as soon as possible.

The UN OHCHR, together with the ILO, should monitor the situation and ensure that the government ensure that the rights expressed in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are fully guaranteed in law and in practice.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. B.', written in a cursive style.

General Secretary

¹⁸ See e.g., CFA Digest ¶ 422.