

Ayuba Wabba

President
Président
Präsident
Presidente

Sharan Burrow

General Secretary
Secrétaire générale
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The Honourable Dr Abdalla Hamdok
Prime Minister
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HTUR/ZM

24 February 2021

The ITUC and ITUC-Africa condemn the persecution of trade unionists in Sudan

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), representing 200 million workers in 163 countries, including Sudan and the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa), to condemn the persecution of trade union leaders in your country.

We are reliably informed of the arrests and detention of the following trade unionists: Dr Osama Dawina Hamad Al-Nil, treasurer of the Federation of Trade Unions in North Kordofan State; engineer Abdel-Baqi Nour Al-Daem Muhammad, member of the executive office of the Sudanese Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF) and member of the Secretary of the Secretariat for Economic Studies and Statistics in the same union; Hussam Eddin Suleiman, member of the syndicate in the Ministry of Education; and Muhammad Al-Makki Saleh, general secretary of the Education Syndicate in North Darfur.

In Gedaref State: Osama Taha Al-Bashir, deputy treasurer of the Gadaref State Workers Union; engineer Al-Amin Ahmed Mohamed Tom, youth secretary of the Gedaref State Workers Union; and Alamuddin Yahya Farah, head of the syndicate of the Ministry of Education.

We note with grave concern that the crackdown on independent trade unions and their leaders by your government has continued unabated, with the objective of placing such organisations under the control of your government. As earlier stated in our letters of 17 December 2019, 30 June 2020, 19 August 2020 and 2 February 2021, we want to reiterate that your government's decision to dissolve trade unions and persecute trade union leaders constitutes violations by Sudan of international labour standards that protect the right to freedom of association.

In particular, the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association has established that "the absence of civil liberties removes all meaning from the concept of trade union rights; the rights conferred on workers' and employers' organizations must be based on respect for those civil liberties, such as security of the person and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention. The arrest, even if only briefly, of trade union leaders and trade unionists, and of the leaders of employers' organizations, for exercising legitimate activities in relation with their right of association constitutes a violation of the principles of freedom of association."

Your government is also in violation of article 3 of the ILO Convention on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948 (No.87), which provides the following: "Workers' and employers' organizations shall have the right to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their

representatives in full freedom, to organise their administration and activities and to formulate their programmes. The public authorities shall refrain from any interference which would restrict this right or impede the lawful exercise thereof.”

We also draw your attention to articles 6, 10, and 11 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights that guarantee the right to personal liberty, protection from arbitrary arrest, freedom of association and freedom of assembly. Your government has a duty to respect the Charter and its principles, both in law and in practice.

Prime Minister, the ITUC and ITUC-Africa demand an immediate and unconditional release of all trade union leaders, and we demand that they and their trade unions be allowed to operate without interference.

We remain hopeful that your government will comply with its international obligations, and we look forward to your reply.



Kwasi ADU-AMANKWAH
GENERAL SECRETARY
ITUC-Africa

Yours sincerely,



General Secretary

cc: The Director General, International Labour Organization (ILO): ryder@ilo.org
cc: Mr Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association: civilsociety@ohchr.org
cc: African Union Commission: chairperson@africa-union.org
cc: African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR): au-banjul@africa-union.org
cc: The European Union (EU) delegation-sudan-info@eeas.europa.eu
cc: Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTF)