

Proposed to accept into affiliation

Iraq – General Federation of Iraq Trade Unions (GFITU)

GFITU Iraq (its predecessor) was accepted as Associated organisation in 2012. It has existed since 2003 and was earlier forbidden by the Iraqi authorities.

The ITUC and its affiliates and ATUC have frequently protested to the Iraqi government against the violations of trade union rights in relation to the organisation.

Recently GFITU informed us of an agreement with the Minister of Labour of Iraq that enables it to work on a fully legal basis without any risk of prosecution for its trade union activities.

ATUC has a very positive impression of the professional capacities of the GFITU leadership and has no doubt about the independent character of the organisation.

GFITU claims 800,000 members spread over 15 governorates in Iraq (excluding the Kurdish region), and counts 8 professional federations, mechanical and printing workers, social workers, transport and communication, energy and electricity, petroleum and gas, leather and textile, agriculture and food, construction and wood workers.

Services to individual members takes place from the GFITU offices in the 14 regions.

A new labour law came into effect in February 2016 after a 3-year campaign of Iraqi trade unions, strongly supported by the Solidarity Center. The Iraq labour law is broadly in line with ILO Conventions and also enables many workers in the public sector to join trade unions. The law also includes the right to strike which had been banned since 1987.

Despite the fact that the Minister of Labour praised the active role of social partners in the process of creation of the new law, GFITU still faced many problems in its functioning.

Although the Iraqi constitution generates the right to establish trade unions the so-called “**Ministerial Committee**” that is supervising government regulations has interfered many times in internal affairs of the GFITU with the aim to preventing it from organising workers.

For many years the government of Iraq tried all it could to avoid the recognition of independent unions – it prefers a single trade union entity that is totally in the hands of the ruling party.

Despite the undermining efforts of the government, the GFITU has resisted and survived, apparently with success given the recent formal recognition by the Minister of Labour.

GFITU has requested full membership of the ITUC. Affiliation to the ITUC would strengthen its position in Iraq and would be considered as a clear signal of recognition of the important role it played during many years of repression.

The General Council is requested to accept GFITU Iraq into affiliation.

The ITUC has another Associated organisation in Iraq, the GFWUI. This organisation has not (yet) requested full membership of the ITUC.

It is proposed to take the initiative to start discussions with GFWUI about its future status in ITUC.

The Arab Trade Union Confederation is also exploring the current state of affairs of KUWU, Iraq Kurdistan, and the General Council will be informed about recent developments.
