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Circular N° 11 (2024)

To all affiliated organisations
To all Regional Organisations, PERC, ATUC
To all Global Union Federations and TUAC

For information:

To all General Council Members
To all Women's Committee Members
To all Youth Committee Members

PERC/AL

25 March 2024

Day of action for trade union rights and democracy in Belarus on 19 April 2024.

Dear colleagues,

We call on you to take part in a day of action for democracy in Belarus on 19 April 2024.

Two years ago, on 19 April 2022, leaders and several activists of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) were arrested and detained by the State Security Committee (KGB). In mock processes they were sentenced to different terms in prison, labelled extremists and terrorists, while all the BKDP organisations were outlawed by the regime. Many activists had to flee the country; many stopped their union activities in fear of similar repression. BKDP reorganised itself in exile in the form of [Salidarnast](#).

As part of the ITUC worldwide campaign for democracy, we call all affiliates to take symbolic actions on 19 April to honour trade union fighters for Democracy, for freedoms and for workers' rights in Belarus. Our colleagues are still imprisoned, new sham trials are initiated while those who are released after serving their prison terms are deprived of their rights as citizens and face threats of being incarcerated again.

Despite clear calls by the ILO supervisory bodies and the Governing Body and other international bodies, the government refuses access to imprisoned brothers and sisters.

You can find a videostory here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gK22vbJtGLYHfVPT0u7zIDno4DNbChB5/view>

We call on you to take solidarity actions for democracy in Belarus on 19 April. These actions can take the forms of:


- Sending letters to the Republic of Belarus and actions at embassies with a request demanding access to and release of trade union leaders, including BKDP President, ITUC Vice-President and ILO Governing Body member Aliaksandr Yarashuk ([download here the template letter by BKDP](#)).
- Making a short video (2-3 minutes) with the participation of leaders of organisations with a solidarity message: trade unionism is not extremism, calling for freedom of association and democracy and the release of imprisoned trade unionists in Belarus.

- Sending letters to your own national governments requesting the implementation of the ILO resolution adopted by the [International Labour Conference in June 2023](#), taking into account cultural, economic, trade, scientific and other areas of international cooperation with Belarus, seeking information on actions already taken in this regard including matters regarding non-refoulement and engagements with other UN and international bodies and demanding diplomatic efforts to get access to and release of imprisoned trade unionists.
- Holding human rights due diligence meetings with employers and governments on Belarus and analysing supply chains and financial and other business services in which Belarusian enterprises are involved and taking steps to exercise leverage to address violations.
- Demanding national representatives – tripartite partners, but also state representatives in different UN agencies to participate in the high-level thematic meeting on Belarus to be held prior to the International Labour Conference as decided by the ILO Governing Body urging Belarus to respect the recommendations of the ILO supervisory bodies and to ensure that trade unions are owned and controlled by workers themselves and not the government.

We also count on your active participation in the respective trade union actions during the International Labour Conference, including a special sitting of the Committee on Application of Standards (where we also urge you to encourage labour friendly governments to take the floor) and the launch of the ITUC Global Rights Index¹.

We also call on all member organisations to inform the ITUC General Secretary about actions taken and outcomes of those actions. Our campaign team is available for promoting and publicising these actions.

Yours sincerely,



Luc Triangle
General Secretary

¹ The Index is expected to be launched on 12 June, 2024 during the 112 ILC.