

Global unions urge governments and employers to help put an end to human and trade union rights violations in Belarus

Global Unions Joint Statement

Trade unionism is not a crime! Trade unionism is not extremism!

Repression of free trade unions in Belarus over the past decades culminated in 2022 with the dissolution of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) and its affiliates and arrests and detention of more than 40 trade union leaders and activists, including BKDP President Yarashuk and Vice-President Antusevich.

In view of this escalation of repression of free trade unionism, and the persistent failure of the Belarus regime to implement the findings of the 2004 ILO Commission of Inquiry, the forthcoming International Labour Conference (ILC) must agree to take action under Article 33 of the ILO Constitution, to pressure the Government to release trade union leaders and activists, reinstate the unions and demonstrate real commitment to implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. The measures recommended by the Governing Body are outlined in a draft resolution ([Appendix VI of the Office document](#)) and we urge trade unions around the world to press their governments and employers' organisations to vote with the worker representatives at the ILC in support of a comprehensive set of measure involving the ILO bodies, Member States and international organizations, including the United Nations.

For more than 20 years, government interference in trade union activities and elections, forced dissolution of unions and detention of trade union leaders, dismissals and blacklisting has been condemned by ILO bodies. The 2004 ILO Commission of Inquiry concluded that the Belarus trade union movement had been the subject of significant interference on the part of Government authorities and issued recommendations to the Government of Belarus.

But the Government of Belarus continued its systematic suppression of the independent trade union movement in the country. The Belarusian authorities refer to independent unions as 'extremists' and 'terrorists' and engage in defamation campaigns with the clear and explicit message that anyone who is in any way associated with the BKDP and its affiliates risks persecution. Many leaders and activists have had to leave the country.

The Global Unions urge workers' delegates, employers and governments to support the adoption of the resolution by the Conference to secure compliance, at last, by the Government of Belarus with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, and to put an end to the flagrant violations of human rights and trade union rights in the country.

Trade unionism is not extremism! Trade unionism is not a crime! Freedom to the trade unionists of Belarus!

The Global Unions signing this joint statement are:

- [International Trade Union Confederation](#)
- [International Transport Workers' Federation](#)
- [UNI Global Union](#)
- [Public Services International](#)
- [IndustriALL Global Union](#)
- [International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations](#)
- [International Federation of Journalists](#)
- [Education International](#)
- [Building and Wood Worker's International](#)
- [Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD](#)