

Ayuba Wabba

President
Président
Präsident
Presidente

Sharan Burrow

General Secretary
Secrétaire générale
Generalsekretärin
Secretaria General

Ambrose Mandvulo

Prime Minister
The Kingdom of Eswatini
Mbabane
Eswatini
kunenejabu@gov.sz
dludlusp@gov.sz
mbingoli@gov.sz

HTUR/MG

4 October 2019

The ITUC condemns police shooting at trade unionists and calls for urgent and impartial investigation and effective use of Joint Negotiating Forum

Honourable Prime Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), representing 207 million workers across 163 countries, to strongly condemn the police brutality against peaceful demonstrators of the Public Sector unions.

Last week, during a peaceful and legitimate strike action, the police fired rubber bullets and teargas at the public sector workers on strike, who were demanding cost of living adjustments and a 7.85 per cent salary increase, injuring at least 15. Yesterday, we were informed that at least other 17 demonstrators were severely injured.

We are shocked to learn that the General Secretary of the National Public Service and Allied Workers Union (NAPSAWU) was shot with live ammunition, requiring his urgent transfer to Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital. We condemn in the strongest terms this brutal attack.

In addition, your government resorted to the National Industrial Relations Court to have the strike declared illegal, under reasons of posing “threats to national interest”. We recall that the use of violence, even for purported reasons of internal security, constitutes a serious violation of human and trade union rights.

We would like to recall the commitments made by His Majesty the King Mswati III during a meeting organized with the ITUC in the margins of the International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva this June, to engage in good faith in dialogue to improve industrial relations. The violence and repression against the protesters and the legal obstacles for strike actions and protests undermine this commitment.

We urge your government to hold the perpetrators of the recent violations to account and to initiate credible and impartial investigations into these violent events and ensure proper redress. Also, we call on the government of Eswatini to urgently put in place measures for the protection of public events and demonstrations, as already recommended by the observations of the Human Rights Committee (CCPR/C/SWZ/CO/1), and to fully align the Public Order Act with the provisions of ILO Convention No.87 and the Code of Conduct developed with the assistance of the ILO. We call on your office to ensure that the Public Sector unions exercise

their right to strike and peaceful protest without any let or hindrance. Additionally, your Government must ensure that there are genuine and effective negotiations by social partners at the Joint Negotiating Forum.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. B.' followed by a stylized flourish.

General Secretary