

**MICHAEL SOMMER**  
PRESIDENT  
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PRESIDENTE

**SHARAN BURROW**  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRALE  
GENERALSEKRETÄRIN  
SECRETARIA GENERAL

Mr. Vladimir Putin  
President of Russia  
Presidential Executive Office  
23, Ilyinka Street,  
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Russia

HTUR/NT

Brussels, 22 November 2013

Aeroflot pressures on Sheremetevo Trade Union of Airline Pilots (ShPLS)

President Putin,

I am writing on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents 175 million workers in 156 countries and territories - including Russia - to express my serious concerns regarding the arrest, detention and prosecution of several trade union leaders, members of the Sheremetevo Trade Union of Airline Pilots (ShPLS).

I have been informed by the ITUC affiliate, the Russian Confederation of Labor (KTR), that on October 18th and 20<sup>th</sup>, Alexei Shliapnikov, Valery Pimoshenko, and Sergei Knyshov, leaders and activists of the Sheremetevo Trade Union of Airline Pilots (ShPLS), were arrested by the police. They are currently under criminal investigation for an alleged attempt to extort a large sum of money from JSC Aeroflot. They are kept in police custody at least till December 19<sup>th</sup> and face charges that carry prison terms of up to ten years.

According to KTR, those events seem to be part of an on-going Aeroflot campaign against the airline pilots' union. It is worth noting that shortly before these events took place, the union won a major court victory against the Aeroflot Company. The court ruled that Aeroflot must pay its pilots over Rub 1 billion in unpaid wages for night work and hazardous work in 2011/2012. There have been many cases of unionists being intimidated and discriminated against by Aeroflot management.

For years, ShPLS has been fighting for the right to sign its own collective bargaining agreement with the employer to reflect unique aspects of airline pilots' work – including work and rest schedule, leave, planning, insurance, and health check-ups. Aeroflot management refused to participate in any official negotiations with the ShPLS. It even launched a media campaign against the union main objective of which was to block collective bargaining negotiations as well as to avoid that the court ordered payments to pilots.

Along with its affiliate, the ITUC strongly denounces those anti-union practices and the Aeroflot's refusal to bargain collectively.

The ITUC urges you, President, as guarantor of the Russian Constitution, to push for a thorough investigation of the ShPLS case as well as a fair and impartial trial. And also to ensure that Aeroflot – a publicly owned company - stop attacking and defaming trade unions and accept to engage in a constructive social dialogue ensuring fair collective bargaining.

I look forward to your positive response on these urgent and important matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Romanov', written in a cursive style.

General Secretary

Copy to

Mr. Boris Kravchenko President, Confederation of Labour of Russia KTR

Mr. Mikhail V. Shmakov, President, Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia FNPR

S.E.M. Alexandre Romanov, Ambassador, Embassy of the Russian Federation in Belgium

Mr. Stephen Cotton, General Secretary, International Transport Federation (ITF)

Mr. Kirill Androsov, Chairman of the Board of Directors in JSC Aeroflot

Mr. Saveliev Vital, JSC Aeroflot Director General