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SHARAN BURROW
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President of Ukraine
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PERC/GG/AL

19 Jun. 15

Harassment and intimidation of KVPU leaders

Dear Mr. President,

We are deeply concerned by the information we have received from our Ukrainian affiliate – the Confederation of Free Trade Unions (KVPU). We have been informed that its leaders have been summoned by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) in relation to public and industrial actions undertaken in the last few months demanding the reconsideration of some government policies, and against unlawful wage arrears, rising unemployment and the growth of poverty in the country. In May this year, the Ukrainian unions officially entered into a collective dispute with the government, in compliance with the national legislation. They organized a set of pickets and rallies which are absolutely legal and recognized as a means to advance interests of members – both in Ukraine and internationally.

I express our shock concerning the actions of the SBU, in summoning trade union leaders and activists and interrogating them for several hours about the lawful protest actions. The President of the KVPU, Michailo Volynets, was summoned by SBU today in Kiev, while other KVPU activists from the mining sector were also summoned in other cities. Such actions are reminiscent of the methods the KGB used to harass and intimidate citizens asking for their rights in the USSR. This is completely contrary to the announcements of you and your government to support European values.

Dear President, on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation, which represents more than 176 million workers in 162 countries and territories, I urge you to ensure that trade union leaders and activists are not subject to any further harassment and intimidation in relation to legal protest actions. This must be stopped. Unions are not a threat to national security. They are the voice of the citizens that, in these challenging times for Ukraine, support democracy, stability and the prospects of a European-oriented future for the country.

Yours sincerely,



General Secretary

Cc: KVPU, FTUU