



Geneva, 1st February 2022

The Chairperson
Honourable Commissioner Remy Ngoy Lumbu
African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights
Banjul
The Gambia

By email

IndustriALL and ITUC call upon the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights to protect human rights to support inclusive dialogue for democratic reforms in Eswatini

Dear Honourable Commissioner Remy Ngoy Lumbu,

We write to you from IndustriALL Global Union, which represents 50 million workers from 140 countries in sectors that include the automotive, base metals, energy, garment and textile, and other manufacturing sectors and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) which represents 200 million workers from 163 countries. We wish to express our deep concerns about the continued workers and human rights violations by the government of Eswatini under King Mswati III, and to call upon the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) to demand the expediting of the processes towards an inclusive dialogue for a democratic dispensation in the country.

Global and pan-African trade unions support the initiatives for dialogue by SADC special envoys. However, we are concerned by the slow pace and lack of political will, especially with law enforcement agencies continuing with the repression. We have written [letters](#) to the Prime Minister of Eswatini [Cleopas Dlamini](#) and to the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#) to express the same concerns.

We are also campaigning for the suspension of Eswatini from the Commonwealth for rights violations including failure to comply with the Commonwealth Charter's commitments and obligations on democracy, equality, freedom, human rights, and good governance. Unions in the Commonwealth are urging governments represented on the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group to insist that Eswatini fulfils its obligations under the Commonwealth Charter, or face suspension, for the reasons outlined in detail in [Holding Eswatini to account](#).



According to the Amalgamated Trade Union of Swaziland (ATUSWA) and the Swaziland Electricity Supply, Maintenance, and the Allied Workers Union (SESMAWU) and the Trade Union Congress of Swaziland (TUCOSWA), affiliated to IndustriALL and ITUC respectively, over 100 people have been shot dead, and hundreds injured and arbitrarily arrested in incidences where the police and the army used excessive force against prodemocracy demonstrators. The security forces are continuously violating human and workers' rights to freedoms of expression, assembly, association, and the right to life. This has made life unbearable to the workers who are living in harsh conditions characterised by increasing poverty, high unemployment and the pandemics of Covid-19, and HIV and AIDS.

We recall that the African Charter of Human Rights and the African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance all protect the right to freedom of association, assembly and the strengthening of political pluralism including ensuring that opposition political parties are given a legal status under national law. Therefore, human rights defenders, including trade unions and other citizens, who exercise their human rights in pursuit of democracy in Eswatini must be protected from attacks, reprisals and retaliation from the government and security forces.

We look forward to the ACHPR to call for the immediate commencement of inclusive dialogue and for an end to workers and human rights violations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Atle Høie".

Atle Høie
General Secretary
IndustriALL Global Union

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharan Burrow".

Sharan Burrow
General Secretary
ITUC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kwasi Adu-Amankwah".

Kwasi Adu-Amankwah
General Secretary
ITUC-Africa