



ITUC International Trade Union Confederation
CSI Confédération syndicale internationale
CSI Confederación Sindical Internacional
IGB Internationaler Gewerkschaftsbund

João Antonio Felicio

President
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Mr Pierre Krähenbühl

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Sharan Burrow

General Secretary
Secrétaire générale
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Secretaria General

HTUR/MG

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ITUC condemns interference by UNRWA Jordan Field Management in internal trade union affairs

Dear Mr Krähenbühl,

I am writing on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), representing 207 million workers globally, to express our utmost concern over the interference by the UNRWA Jordan Field Management in the internal affairs of the General Services Sector Council and Committee in Jordan.

On 12 February 2018, responding to a request from more than one-third of the members of the General Services Section Council, the Chairperson of the General Services Committee informed the management about the intention of holding a Council Meeting to discuss UNRWA's staff working conditions. Despite an initial approval from management on 13 February 2018, management withdrew the approval immediately thereafter, arguing that Council Meetings can only take place twice a year. After several refusals by the Director to coordinate with the Chairperson of the General Services Committee, the Section Council meeting was convened outside of the workplace and working hours. Not only the management refused to accept the outcome of the meeting, but on 8 March 2018, the Director of UNRWA in Jordan unilaterally issued a memo to all employees announcing the replacing of one member of the Section Committee of the General Services Sector Union.

We would like to stress that the right of trade union organisations to hold meetings at the workplace to discuss occupational questions, without prior authorisation and interference by the employer and/or management, is an essential element of freedom of association, as enshrined in ILO Conventions No. 87 and No. 98. Also, the refusal to allow the union's Section Council meeting is a violation of article 5/9/B of the Statute of Union of Area Staff of UNRWA that provides that Council Meetings can be convened "on request from one-third of its members".

Also, by refusing to coordinate with the Chairperson of the General Services Committee over the holding of a Council meeting, the employer is violating Article 4(2) and article 4(3) of the Statutes which indicate that "elections may take place at meetings of geographical sub-divisions in coordination with the Field Office Director" and that the management should appoint central polling officers to facilitate and observe the elections. Also, article 4(2) cannot by any means provide the employer and/or management with the discretionary power to approve or refuse the outcome of a legitimate trade union meeting.

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In addition, the request of the UNRWA administration for the agenda of the meetings of the General Services Committee before and after its meetings constitutes a serious infringement of the right of trade union organisations to organise freely their activities.

We condemn these acts of interference that are a stark violation of ILO Conventions No. 87 and No. 98 and in full breach of the principles enshrined in the UN charter and several treaties. Also, we urge UNRWA management to recognise the new General Services Committee that was elected on 26 February 2018, and to halt all practices of interference in the General Services Sector Council and Committee.

Yours sincerely,

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

General Secretary