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Violations of trade union rights at the RUPP “Granite” Company

President,

The International Trade Union Confederation, on behalf of 175 million workers of 305 national trade union centers in 151 countries and territories, writes to express its serious concern regarding the worrying anti-union developments in the RUPP "Granite" company in Mikashevichi, Brest region.

The ITUC has been informed by its affiliate the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) that Oleg Stakhaevich the leader of the newly formed independent union at the RUPP “Granite” affiliated to the Belarusian Independent Trade Union (BNP), a BKDP affiliate, has been illegally dismissed on February 2012. This dismissal has been the last anti-union act to date of a series against the trade union leader.

Following the set-up of the independent union in December 2011 – January 2012, the RUPP “Granite” management has launched a series of action in order to put pressure on the union members as well as to deter other workers from joining the union. In January, Oleg Stakhaevich was accused on trumped charges of a truck accident. Deprived of his driving license, he was then not able to access his workplace. In addition, the contract of the wife of another union activist, Liudmila Litvinka, was terminated. Other union members have been threatened not to pass workplace assessment certifying professional competences. The governor of the Brest region together with the Minister of construction and architecture even visited the site.

Those attacks are clearly aiming to prevent the development of independent trade union organisations. Despite the local union following the procedure laid out by the Belarusian legislation, the management of the company refused to recognise it and to provide it with a legal address. This legal address, considered by the International Labour Organisation as an obstacle to trade union registration – and as such a violation of fundamental rights that needed to be eliminated, is still necessary under the Belarusian law to get a legal entity status.

The ITUC is highly concerned by the fact that despite the recommendations of the ILO Commission of Inquiry, numerous conclusions of the ILC Standards Committee and the ILO Governing Body, the violations of trade union rights and liberties of trade union

leaders and rank-and-file members in the Republic of Belarus on the part of authorities and employers continue.

As requested by the ILO on the several occasions mentioned above, the ITUC urges the Government to:

- Stop and enable the punishment of union harassment and discrimination
- Ensure that freedom of association is fully and effectively guaranteed in law and in practice in Belarus;
- Amend legislative texts that are not in conformity with the International Labour standards and with the right of workers to organize their activities and programmes free from interference by the public authorities
- Implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the related plan of action

As a first step in that direction, in the concrete case of the RUPP “Granite” company, the ITUC urges your Government to ensure that

- Oleg Stakhaevich and Liudmila Litvinka are reinstated
- The RUPP “Granite” company union is recognised and can operate within any interference
- Workers are free to join organization of their own choice.

The ITUC will monitor the situation of workers and trade union rights in RUPP “Granite” company as well as in Belarus. It will consider the possibility to report to the ILO and the European Union of those latest developments.

The ITUC supports and expresses strong solidarity with the independent trade unions and workers of Belarus in their fight for the free exercise of fundamental rights.

Yours sincerely,

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

General Secretary

Cc: Eduard Gavrilkovich, Acting General Director, RUPP “Granite”

Vasilevich Grigoriy Alekseevich, General Prosecutor of the Republic of Belarus

Shchyotkina Marianna Akendinovna, Ministry of labour and social protection of the Republic of Belarus