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Illegal interference in trade unions

Prime Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents 176 million workers in 162 countries, including in Georgia, to condemn the serious acts of interference by the RMG Gold and RMG Copper in the functioning of the Trade Union of Metallurgy, Mining and Chemistry Workers of Georgia (TUMMCWG). We have been informed by the Georgian Trade Union Confederation (GTUC) that the aforementioned companies coerced some 1,000 members of TUMMCWG to renounce their union membership. This began immediately after TUMMCWG urged management to fulfill its legal obligations under the collective bargaining agreement which was signed on 23 March 2014 following a 40-day strike. In response, management forced employees to sign pre-printed resignation letters.

Coercing union members into resigning from their union is a serious violation of national and international law. Section 40.3 of the Georgian Labour Code stipulates that any form of interference in employees' associations by employers is strictly prohibited. Moreover, Article 2 of ILO Convention No. 98 obliges state parties to ensure the total independence of trade unions in exercising their activities. The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association specifically pointed out that the presentation of resignation letters to the workers constitutes a violation of ILO Convention No. 98.

We therefore call on you to intervene with RMG Gold and RMG Copper in order to stop these illegal actions targeted to undermine the existence of trade unions in the companies. In addition, we urge you to impose sufficiently dissuasive sanctions in order to ensure the effective protection of trade unions not only in law but also in practice.

Yours sincerely,



Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary