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Intimidation and harassment of trade union activists and their families

Mr. President,

I write to you on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation, which represents 181 million workers in 163 countries and territories and has 340 national affiliates, including in Kazakhstan.

We are forced to express again our concern about the serious violations of trade union rights in your country, most recently, the persistent and increasing intimidation and harassment of trade union activists and their families. Further to the recent wave of police interrogations, surveillance and arrests of trade union activists, we have now been informed that pressure from enforcement agencies on KNPRK leaders and trade union activists is escalating, including intimidation and harassment of family members.

On 25 July 2017, the Yenbekshinsky district court of Shimkent sentenced Larisa Kharkova, Chair of KNPRK, to four years of restriction of movement, 100 hours of forced labour and 5 years ban to hold leading positions in public organisations and other NGOs. Kharkova can no longer change the place where she lives or works and is not allowed to visit certain places or to leave the city without approval of authorities. On 27 September, there will be a hearing in the court of appeal.

On 14 September, the car of Larissa Kharkova's son was set on fire at a fenced, private house terrain. Other activists have also reported irregularities with their cars and some others report stolen identity documents. We are concerned that the incidents may be linked to the criminal charges for Larissa Kharkova and the dissolution of KNPRK.

These reports lead us to fear for the safety of Larissa Kharkova, as well as other leaders, who stand up for the right to continue independent union activity, and for their family members.

Once again, we call for the immediate and unconditional release of trade unionists facing criminal charges for their activism and to refrain from any harassment or intimidation against trade union leaders and their relatives.

We will continue to closely monitor the situation and the court cases and engage with the ILO, the EU and the OECD on the matter.

Yours sincerely,



General Secretary