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INTERNATIONALER METALLGEWERKSCHAFTSBUND
FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES ORGANISATIONS DE TRAVAILLEURS DE LA METALLURGIE
INTERNATIONELLA METALLFEDERATIONEN
FEDERACION INTERNACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES DE LAS INDUSTRIAS METALURGICAS
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August 28, 2008.

Re: Mass violations of workers' rights and attacks on TagAZ trade union activists.

Dear Mr. Roskolod'ko,

The Geneva office of the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) representing the collective interests of 25 million union members employed in metal industry in more than 100 countries has received information on flagrant facts of pressure brought by the administration of the TagAZ company on leaders and members of the local trade union and attacks on activists of this local trade union organization affiliated to the Russian Interregional Union of Autoworkers (ITUA).

The local trade union organization was set up in Taganrog on August 31, 2007 at a constitutive meeting held by workers of the Taganrog Automobile Plant. Ever since October 25, 2007, when the organization notified the plant administration of setting up a local trade union whose membership totaled 150 people at that time, union members came under pressure brought to bear on them by the employer. In particular:

The chairman of the local trade union organization S. Penchukov was on numerous occasions summoned to the office of G. Sukach, deputy director for seats production, where he was told to give up the setting up of a trade union at the plant for fear of being fired while all union members would be fined.

Foremen or workshop chiefs told every union member to quit the union or else face being fined or fired.

S.Penchukov was summarily moved to another job outside the plant's main site and so could not contact union members inside the plant; six weeks later, on December 18, 2008 he was fired for alleged truancy initiated by the employer in line with the Article 81, Item 6 of the Labor Code.

Following the firing of S.Penchukov the plant administration pressured numerous plant workers into quitting the union. Workers would call on Penchukov's apartment in groups of 10 to 15 men, on numerous occasions accompanied by foremen, and filed statements that they wished to leave the local trade union organization.

As a consequence of this mass pressure the union membership dropped by early January 2008 to eight members and increased again by July 2008 when information and advocacy activities were stepped up.

In contravention of the existing legislation and international standards ratified by the Russian Federation (ILO Conventions No.No. 87 and 98) the plant administration would not recognize the local trade union organization set up by workers.

The local union activists staged throughout the year 2008 protest actions and picketing at the plant entrance calling on employer representatives to accept workers' demands; the representatives rejected them referring to the fact that they had no powers to do so or any desire to talk with local trade union representatives.

On the day following a June 23, 2008 local trade union picketing at the plant entrance demanding from the plant administration to comply with labor legislation, to furnish pay-sheets and to recognize the local trade union leaders, an unknown athletically built man beat up trade union activist Sergei Bryzgalov as he was exiting the plant while picket Alexei Gramm was beaten up elsewhere and later fired in contravention of the Article 374 of the Russian Labor Code.

The police took no action in response to complaints over attacks on trade union activities and, according to S. Bryzgalov, closed the case on July 26, 2008.

When his sick leave ended, S. Bryzgalov and an initiative group called on the plant chief accountant T. Varakina on July 18, 2008, and asked her to give him a pay-sheet. The chief accountant would not give him that information. On his way home from the plant on July 24, 2008, S.Bryzgalov was again beaten up by an unknown man.

The International Metalworkers' Federation considers the above facts as plant administration persecution of workers for their trade union activities related to ensuring workers' rights, in particular, the right to obtain information on payroll

accounting, and requests you as the plant director to show good will and take specific steps to recognize the local trade union organization, put an end to persecution for being trade union members and express your willingness for a civilized social dialogue. We also insist to reinstate A. Gramm, fired in contravention of the Article 374 of the Russian Labor Code.

If you fail to respond properly to this request the International Metalworkers' Federation reserves the right to refer to the International Labor Organization and to call the Russian Federation Government's attention to mass violations of trade union and workers' rights at the Taganrog Automobile Plant as well as to inform the Hyundai company management and South Korean trade unions of an unhealthy situation at the plant.

Hoping for your prompt response and restoration of infringed standards of the Russian legislation.

Faithfully,

Marcello Malentacchi

Copies:

Head of Rostov Region Administration
Head of Taganrog Municipal Administration
Prosecutor's Office of Rostov Region
Taganrog Prosecutor's Office.