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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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MM/vb

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IMF Statement regarding human and trade union rights violations in Russia

The International Metalworkers' Federation of (IMF), representing 25 million workers employed in the metal industry in more than 100 countries, expresses grave concern with the nonfeasance of the Russian law enforcement authorities and the indifference of the Russian authorities in general regarding the increasing threats, assaults and battery of union leaders and activists, appealing for respect of the fundamental right of workers to organize and form unions.

On June 24, 2008 in the city of Taganrog, trade union activists of the primary organization of the Russian Interregional Trade Union of Autoworkers (ITUA) at OAO «TagAZ», Alexei Gramm and Sergei Bryzgalov, were assaulted and beaten. The day before they had participated in a picket at the entrance to the enterprise demanding that management provide employees with information on wages and compensation to verify that proper payments had been made to workers. They also call for the recognition of the abovementioned trade union organization.

One month later, on July 24, 2008, following another unsuccessful attempt to officially receive the requested information from the accounting department of the enterprise, S. Bryzgalov was again beaten when returning to his home from work. The police have refused to carry out a thorough criminal investigation of these assaults and bring to justice those responsible.

On 7 November 2008, three unknown assailants armed with brass knuckles attacked Alexey Etmanov outside his home. Etmanov is the ITUA co-chairperson and also the chairperson of the ITUA primary organization at ZAO «Ford Motor Company».

A day later on 8 November 2008, Vladimir Lesik, Vice-Chairperson of the ITUA primary organization at ZAO «Ford Motor Company» received a call from an unidentified person saying that the attack on A. Etmanov was only a mild warning and made a death threat if he did not cease his activities.

The IMF is deeply alarmed about these attacks and threats to trade union leaders and activists. We are gravely concerned about the authorities' indifference to violations of fundamental human and labour rights and the failure to act promptly and effectively to ensure these rights are fully upheld and protected against any such attack.

The IMF appeals to the General Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation, the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Leningrad Region and the Public Prosecutor's Office of Rostov region, demanding an immediate, unbiased and transparent investigation into the facts of attacks against trade union leaders Alexei Etmanov, Alexei Gramm and Sergei Bryzgalov, as well as the death threats made to Vladimir Lesik.

We demand that the Russian government authorities ensure full compliance by all employers with ILO Conventions 87 «On freedom of association» and 98 «On the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining» ratified by Russia. We call on OAO «TagAZ» management to immediately provide the workers with requested information and to recognize the ITUA primary trade union organization.

The International Metalworkers' Federation reserves its right in case of inaction of Russian authorities to appeal to the International Labour Organization and to use all international instruments to ensure the government fulfils international commitments to uphold and enforce respect for worker and trade union rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marcello Malentacchi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Marcello Malentacchi
General Secretary