



**NORDIC IN**

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## **ATTACKS ON TRADE UNION ACTIVISTS IN RUSSIA**

Dear Sirs,

We have been informed by the International Metalworkers' Federation IMF of several physical attacks against the representatives of the Russian Interregional Trade Union of Autoworkers (ITUA / MPRA).

On the evening of November 7, Alexey Etmanov, ITUA co-chairman and chairman of the ITUA primary organization at Ford enterprise in Vsevolozhsk, was assaulted when he returned home from the second shift at the Ford plant. He parked his car and was walking in the direction of his home. On the street, three assailants armed with brass knuckles ran towards Etmanov and without a word assaulted him.

After a scuffle, the assailants escaped. Originally, Etmanov believed these were ordinary robbers. However the next day deputy chairman Vladimir Lesik received a call on his mobile phone and was alerted that the night incident had no relation to a robbery or a plunder. "You were softly scolded. But if you continue to create obstacles for us, we will take away your life", threatened the anonymous caller.

On June 24 in the city of Taganrog, trade union activists of the primary organisation of the 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 called for the recognition of the trade union organisation. A month later on July 24, following another unsuccessful attempt to officially receive the requested information from the accounting department of the enterprise, Sergei 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 behalf of Nordic IN's 22 affiliated unions representing 1.2 million workers in metal, chemical, paper and textile industries in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland, we appeal to the General Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation, the Leningrad Region and the 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 are 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. Establishing the rule of law is an urgent priority if Russia wants to be taken seriously as a civilised nation.

*Yours Sincerely,*

Nordic IN



Stefan Löfven  
President



Jyrki Raina  
General Secretary