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Mr. Nori Al-Maliki
Prime Minister
Republic of Iraq
Baghdad
By email: oilministry@oil.gov.iq

HTUR/MP

23 July 2010

Banning of trade unions in the electricity sector

Dear Prime Minister,

The ITUC, which represents 176 million workers through its 312 affiliates in 156 countries, is writing to protest against the Iraqi governments' violations of trade union rights.

The ITUC has been informed that on July 20, 2010, the Minister of Electricity on behalf of your government issued a Ministerial Order, Issue 22 244, which prohibits all trade union activities in the electricity sector. It orders the ministry in coordination with the police to close all trade union offices and take control of the trade unions' assets, properties, documents, furniture and computers. Finally, the Ministerial Order grants the police authority, under the terrorism act of 2005, to arrest any trade union activist who tries to protest against this unjust action.

This is a clear case of intimidation of free, independent and democratic trade union organisations and I urge you to stop this unjust government action immediately. If the Iraqi state is genuinely trying to embrace democracy, respect for the constitution and rule of the law it should adhere to international standards.

Iraq, as a member state of the ILO, is bound by international treaties, including ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of association, which aims to ensure that workers' organisations can exercise their legitimate activities without acts of interference or reprisals against their leaders and membership. Once again I urge you to stop these ongoing abuses and violations of fundamental rights.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Burrow'.

Sharan Burrow

General Secretary