



solidar

Brussels, 14.06.2016

To the attention of:

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini,

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn,

Object: Reinforcing Trade Unions' rights in Algeria and Egypt as part of the EU Partnership Priorities

On the occasion of the 105th session of the **International Labour Organisation Conference (ILO-ILC)**, that took place in Geneva from 30 May until 11 June 2016, more than 400 delegates and representatives of international organisations signed a petition of solidarity on the deteriorating situation workers rights' and violations of trade unions freedoms in Egypt and Algeria. These violations include the imprisonment of workers and trade unionists who dare exercising the right to strike, the prosecution of trade union members and workers in military courts, and unfair dismissal, **breaching the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**, as well as the **ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)**, to which both countries are parties to.

In **Egypt**, the government is engaging in a fierce campaign against independent trade unions, as shown by the recent Ministerial periodical No. 6 issued in March 2016 to stop the endorsement of stamps of independent unions. In addition, Egyptian authorities have filed lawsuits attempting to dissolve independent unions¹. Plans are currently under way to form a committee with members of the Ministry of Social Solidarity and International Cooperation to identify so-called 'violations' committed by independent unions with a view to taking legal measures against them, including investigating into their financial aid and foreign funding².

With regard to **Algeria**, during the 104th session of the ILO-ILC in June 2015, the Committee on the Application of Standards adopted a resolution on freedom of association, requesting the Algerian Government to bring national legislation in line with international standards, register independent unions

¹ CTUWS, Periodical from Ministry of Interior concerning ceasing to endorse seals of independent unions with the aim to limit independent unions, 1 March 2016.

² Arab Trade Union Confederation, Egypt to Investigate Funding provided to the independent unions, <http://arabtradeunion.org/content/egypt-investigate-funding-provided-independent-unions>

and reintegrate dismissed or suspended labour activists. None of these recommendations have been implemented by the authorities, to the contrary, repression of independent unionists continues to intensify, and the creation of independent unions remains hampered by arbitrary administrative practices that violate international standards, in particular ILO Convention No. 87³.

Recognising the deteriorating situation for workers' and unions' rights, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on Algeria on 30 April 2015. A resolution on human rights violations in Egypt was adopted on 10 March 2016. **The EU is currently negotiating Partnership Priorities with Egypt and Algeria, as part of the implementation of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy.**

In the context of the continuing violations of labour rights and trade union freedoms in Algeria and Egypt, the undersigned organisations call upon the European Union to:

- **Ensure that the negotiation of the Partnership Priorities with Egypt and Algeria will be conducted on the condition that the fundamental rights of citizens, in particular freedom of association and assembly (and associated union rights) are duly protected, and that social partners, notably independent trade unions, are recognised and associated in all matters that concerns them.**
- Urge the Egyptian and Algerian authorities to ensure in all circumstances that independent unionists are able to fully exercise their **rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly without fearing harassment or interference**, in accordance with the ILO's conventions and the international human rights conventions ratified by Egypt and Algeria, as a precondition to engage in further negotiations.

Please kindly find enclosed:

The International Trade Union Confederation Petition on Egypt and Algeria

The EuroMed Rights [Briefing on the Violations of trade union freedoms and harassment of independent unionists in Algeria](#).

The undersigned organizations,

ARAB TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

EUROMED RIGHTS

SOLIDAR

³ EuroMed Rights Briefing, [Violations of trade union freedoms and harassment of independent unionists in Algeria](#), 25 May 2016