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**International Centre for Trade Union Rights**

*Centro Internacional para los Derechos Sindicales*  
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ICTUR was founded to  
defend and extend trade union rights and  
to raise awareness of these rights and their violations  
around the world

**July 2017**

By e-mail:  
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**Attn:**  
**Xi Jinping**  
**President of the People's Republic of China**  
**Zhongnanhai**  
**No. 174 Xi Chang'an Jie**  
**Beijing 100017 China**

CC:  
Zhang Dejiang, Chairman of the National People's Congress  
Guo Qingliang, Director of the General Office, Ministry of Justice  
Yin Weimin, Minister of Human Resources and Social Security  
Annalisa Ciampi, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to  
freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

Dear President Xi Jinping,

The International Centre for Trade Union Rights is writing to raise serious concerns about the arrest, detention and sentencing of trade unionists and labour activists in China.

ICTUR understands that in June 2017, three worker representatives (Fu Tianbo, Ai Zhenyu and Wang Shuai) were arrested by police for organising agency workers at the FAW-Volkswagen company in the city of Changchun. Fu Tianbo is reportedly still held in custody, and his family have since experienced police harassment. Thousands of agency workers for FAW-Volkswagen have been demanding equal pay since 2016, and have attempted to negotiate with management and government officials to settle their dispute. A large proportion of the agency workers are known to have worked at the company for over 10 years, but receive only half of the salary and none of the benefits of FAW-VW employees. The workers claim that their treatment is in violation of China's Labour Contract Law which provides that 'dispatched workers' have the right to pay equal to that of employees undertaking the same work (Art. 63). It is understood that in January 2017, over one thousand FAW-VW agency workers presented their

case to the district's labour arbitration committee. It is further understood that on 21 May 2017, workers organised a protest at the gates of the company and on 26 May police detained the three worker representatives for 'gathering crowds to disrupt public order'.

ICTUR further understands that on 7 July 2017, labour activist Liu Shaoming was sentenced to four years and a half imprisonment for 'inciting subversion of state power'. Liu is a well-known labour activist, who has been active in a number of workers' struggles in recent years, helping to negotiate for improved working conditions. He was arrested and has been detained since in 2015 for publishing an online essay about his experiences as a member of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation (WAF).

The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted in 1998, commits all ILO members to respect and promote the principles of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, as enshrined in ILO Conventions 87 and 98. The arrest and detention of trade unionists constitutes a serious violation of the principles of freedom of association. According to the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association, it is 'incumbent upon the government' to show that the arrest, detention and sentencing of a trade union official are 'in no way occasioned by the trade union activities of the individual concerned' (*Digest of decisions and principles of the Freedom of Association Committee of the Governing Body of the ILO*, Fifth Edition, 2006, para. 94).

ICTUR calls on the government to secure the immediate release of both Fu Tianbo and Liu Shaoming, and to drop all charges against them, as well as any charges pending against the other worker representatives. ICTUR further calls on the government to ensure that the agency workers' grievances are reviewed and that these workers are guaranteed their rights to equal remuneration as provided for under law. ICTUR will report these incidents in the journal *International Union Rights*, which was established in 1993, and which enjoys a readership in more than 100 countries.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Blackburn', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel Blackburn, Director