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Trade Union Rights Centre,
Indonesia

Ozlem Yildirim,
Policy Officer,
International Department
CGT France

Director

Daniel Blackburn, MA,
barrister

Researcher

Ciaran Cross, LL.M.



International Centre for Trade Union Rights

Centro Internacional para los Derechos Sindicales
Centre International pour les Droits Syndicaux

Address: 177 Abbeville Road, London SW4 9RL , UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7498 4700
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7498 0611
E-mail: ictur@ictur.org
Web: www.ictur.org

ICTUR was founded to
defend and extend trade union rights and
to raise awareness of these rights and their violations
around the world

By e-mail:

info@president.gov.ge

info@moh.gov.ge

Attn:

H.E. Giorgi Margvelashvili, President of Georgia
1 M. Abdushelishvili Street, Tbilisi,
Georgia 0103

CC:

Davit Sergeenko, Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs
Trade Union of Metallurgy, Mining and Chemical Industry Workers of
Georgia (TUMMCIWG)
IndustriALL Global Union

May 2017

Dear President Margvelashvili,

The International Centre for Trade Union Rights is writing to express its concerns regarding violations of trade union rights in Georgia.

ICTUR understands in January 2017 new management at the fertilizer plant Rustavi Azot began a process of mass dismissals. According to information provided by the Trade Union of Metallurgy, Mining and Chemical Industry Workers of Georgia (TUMMCIWG), the dismissals were carried out in violation of Georgia's laws. ICTUR further understands that TUMMCIWG organised a protest on 2 February outside the management's office, in support of 350 workers who had been fired, calling for their reinstatement. Protestors are understood to have suffered broken ribs and other injuries after they were violently removed from the company building by police. It is further understood that on 20 March, management unilaterally cancelled the collective agreement concluded in 2013 without the trade union's consent – again contrary to Georgia's labour law – and is forcing workers to sign one-year contracts, replacing previous permanent contracts, on threat of dismissal.

ICTUR wishes to remind the government of Georgia that it has ratified all eight of the fundamental ILO Conventions. The unlawful

termination of individual contacts and collective agreements, the use of disproportionate police force to disperse the workers' legitimate protest and the signing of new contacts under duress represent serious violations of the rights of workers protected under these Conventions.

ICTUR calls on the government to take steps to ensure the immediate reinstatement of all workers who were unlawfully dismissed, to ensure that Rustavi Azot abide by the earlier concluded collective agreement, and to protect the rights of all workers' to take legitimate actions in defence of their interests.

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 sincerely,

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

Daniel Blackburn, Director