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: maffairesociales@yahoo.fr
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Attn: Marie Elise Brisson Gelin
Minister of Social Affairs and Labour
7 Ave Charles Sumner
Port-au-Prince, HAITI

CC: Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association
Trade unions: CTSP, CSH, PSI, ITUC

March 2019

Dear Minister,

The International Centre for Trade Union Rights is gravely concerned for the safety and security of trade unionists in Haiti.

ICTUR understands that Jean Bonald Golinsky Fatal, president of the Confédération des Travailleurs-euses des Secteurs Public et Privé (CTSP), was recently named on a list threatening five individuals, one of whom was murdered in December 2018. Lionel Alain Dougé was assassinated at his home in Pétion-Ville. As executive director of the Tripartite Implementation Commission of the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) law, Dougé had been responsible for ensuring textile companies’ compliance with HOPE, Haitian law and International Labour Organisation standards in order to access preferential trade advantages. It is reported that Dougé and the CTSP had recently complained about attempts by companies to channel clothes manufactured in China through Haiti in order to benefit from tariff-free access to the US market.

In the climate of escalating social unrest, in which at least four people have been killed and dozens injured in national anti-corruption protests in February, this development is highly alarming. The International Trade Union Confederation and the Confederación Sindical de los Trabajadores y Trabajadoras de las Americas (CSA) have long reported on widespread anti-trade union discrimination, persecution and criminalisation of trade union members and leaders in Haiti.

ICTUR wishes to remind the government of its obligations to protect and
promote the principles of freedom of association that are enshrined in the International Labour Organisation Conventions 87 and 98, which Haiti has ratified. The ILO’s Committee of Freedom of Association has stated that these rights ‘can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against the leaders and members of these organizations, and it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected’ (Freedom of Association: Compilation of decisions of the Committee on Freedom of Association, ILO. 6th Edition, 2018. para. 84).

ICTUR calls on the authorities to fully investigate the threat to Golinsky’s life and the murder of Dougé, in order to identify those responsible and hold them to account. ICTUR further urges the government to take immediate and effective action to ensure that workers are afforded adequate protection in the exercise of their fundamental rights to organise and defend 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 faithfully,

[Signature]

Daniel Blackburn, Director