

Initiative

Solidarity with Ukrainian and Belarusian Trade Unions: The ILO Governing Body is no place for FNPR representatives

Brussels, 19 April 2024 | **The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) is an active supporter of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and a participant in the illegal occupation of Ukrainian territories. As an integral part of Vladimir Putin's dictatorial and war-mongering regime, the FNPR has no place in the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO).**

Background

The European trade union movement rejects war and violence. CETUN condemns the Russian Federation's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, which started in 2014 and was escalated by Russia to a full-scale invasion in 2022. Investigating war crimes committed in the context of Russia's aggression, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has in 2023 issued arrest warrants against Vladimir Putin and several of his officials.

We express full support and solidarity with the Ukrainian people, their trade unions and their joint fight for democracy, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

We also express solidarity with trade unionists of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) persecuted and imprisoned by the Lukashenko regime before and after its active facilitation of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The FNPR is incompatible with ITUC principles

Meanwhile, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) stands in stark contrast to the principles of democracy, independence, human rights, anti-discrimination, peace, anti-colonialism and anti-militarism as declared in the Constitution of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).¹ Being an integral part of Vladimir Putin's dictatorial regime, the FNPR is "independent" and a "trade union" by name only. It supports the regime's oppression of its own people, the oppression of free trade unions and is a staunch supporter of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The presence of Vladimir Putin, a war criminal wanted by the International Criminal Court, as a guest of honour at the FNPR Congress 2024 in Moscow is symptomatic and revealing in this regard. In his speech, Putin explicitly thanked the FNPR for its "support for our military personnel [...] in the special military operation" and the restoration "of the trade union system [...] in our historical territories of Donbass and Novorossiia" thus literally confirming that the FNPR is an active and integral part of the Russian regime's illegal occupation of Ukraine.² This

¹ ITUC, Constitution and Standing Orders (as amended by the 6th Extraordinary World Congress in October 2023), pp. 9f. Available at: https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ituc_constitution_6th_congress_en.pdf

² English transcript of Vladimir Putin's speech at the 12th Congress of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (4 April 2024). Available at: en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73791

is an explicit admission of FNPR's complicity in war crimes and the illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory as well as its participation in the war machine of Vladimir Putin's regime.

Furthermore, where the FNPR has installed itself in the illegally occupied regions of Ukraine (Crimea, Donbass, Kharkiv, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia), it has usurped the goods and buildings of Ukrainian trade unions and is now doing Putin's bidding on the ground in the world of work.

Recommendations

To preserve the integrity and credibility of its solidarity with Ukraine, the Ukrainian people as well as Ukrainian and Belarusian trade unionists, the ITUC and the trade union movement must take a firm stand against the FNPR in its current, putinist incarnation.

As CETUN we call for:

- The suspension of the FNPR from all trade union bodies.
- The exclusion of the FNPR from the ITUC at the next ITUC Congress if no radical change in FNPR's stance is observed.
- No ITUC-nominations of FNPR representatives to the ILO Governing Body.
- The closure of the ILO office in Moscow and the later transfer to Kyiv when the security situation allows it.

About

The Central European Trade Union Network (CETUN) assembles trade unions from Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland. As a regional grouping of ETUC members, the network's goal is to foster trade union structures and social dialogue in the region. Through greater cooperation and coordination, participants aspire to promote common themes at European level.

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