



Trades Union Congress

Mr. Alain Villard  
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our ref H/SI/SA/0817  
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Dear Mr Villard

### **Violations of ILO Conventions 87 and 98 at Sewing International SA (SISA) in the export processing zones of Haiti**

On behalf of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the national trade union centre for Great Britain, and the 5.6 million members of our affiliated unions, I want to let you know that we firmly condemn the union-busting operations and the serious violations of Haitian workers' rights, such as the right to freedom of association and social dialogue, currently taking place within your export processing zone company, Sewing International SA (SISA). I urge you to reinstate without delay the 49 workers recently dismissed as a result of taking part in trade union actions.

As you are aware, workers' organisations have been mobilising since May to make their voice heard and claim their right to decent work and a decent life in the face of issues including the high cost of living; employer refusal to negotiate agreements on better pay and working conditions; the government's interference in trade union affairs; the circumvention of the tripartite dialogue on the reform of the labour law, with the imposition of flexibility and the eradication of existing rights; and the absence of freedom of association and a culture of social dialogue.

The only response to the workers' desperate cries and their legitimate demands has been a brutal offensive, which has translated into violent police repression, the militarisation of the SONAPI industrial zone, the confiscation of trade unionists' telephones, the abuse of pregnant women, jailings and the dismissal of large numbers of workers taking part in trade union actions to denounce these injustices and defend their rights. In short, fierce retaliatory measures are being taken to punish anyone daring to defend and promote decent work in Haiti.

The TUC condemns these blatant trade union rights violations and recalls that Haiti, on ratifying ILO Conventions 87 and 98, undertook the commitment to respect and to implement these Conventions. Likewise, your company, on joining the Better Work programme, also undertook to respect all the fundamental ILO Conventions.

We urge your company, operating within the Haitian state and as a member of the Better Work programme, to:

- abide by its obligations regarding freedom of association and all the legal rights and guarantees provided for under ILO Conventions 87 and 98. This includes trade union representation, social dialogue, trade union freedoms, the right of workers and their organisations to strike and hold public demonstrations, pay and working conditions, social security, and the principle of non-interference in trade union affairs and the appointment of their representatives;
- reinstate all the workers dismissed from Sewing International SA since May;
- reinstate without conditions all the executive members of the trade union at Sewing International SA.

The TUC stands in solidarity with the struggle of our Haitian colleagues and will support and assist their trade union organisations in all the legal actions taken at national and international level to defend their rights.

Yours sincerely

**Frances O'Grady**  
TUC General Secretary

C.C:

- Jovenel Moise, president of the Republic of Haiti
- Roosevelt Bellevue, minister of Social Affairs and Labour (MAST)
- Guy Ryder, director-general of the ILO
- Maria-Helena André, director of ACTRAV
- Carmen Moreno, director of ILO Costa Rica
- Dan Rees, director of Better Work
- Claudine François, general coordinator of Better Work Haiti
- Buyer companies
- Trade union organisations in Haiti