



October 29, 2007



His Excellency Hosni Mubarak
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Abdin Palace
Cairo, Egypt

Via fax: 011 202 390 1998

Re: Closing Center for Trade Union and Worker Services and Prison
Sentence for Defender of Workers' Rights

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the 3.2 million working women and men across Canada affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), we strongly condemn the one year prison sentences for Mr. Kamal Abbas, General Coordinator of the Center for Trade Unions and Workers Services (CTUWS) and his lawyer, Mohamed Helmy by an Egyptian court. A lawsuit for alleged "slander and defamation of character" against Kamal Abbas was filed by Mohamed Ibrahim, chairman of the board of directors of a youth center at 15 of May City, and member of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP).

According to our sources, the Center for Trade Union and Worker Services (CTUWS) has been a target of your government. It has been intimidated, and its offices in Helwan, Mahalla, and Naj Hamadi were closed by force.

We are very concerned by these incidents, targeted at an organization which has earned itself much esteem in the international trade union movement for its active role in providing support to Egyptian workers struggling for the respect of fundamental labour rights in their country, particularly amongst vulnerable workers in the informal economy and women workers. We are also well aware of the CTUWS' relentless efforts to assist workers from many regions in defending their right to stand in trade union elections, particularly when they protest against refusals to issue them with union membership certificates, removal of their names from trade union electoral lists, threats and other acts aimed at preventing them from running in trade union elections.

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We note that in the last few months, Egypt has witnessed workers' protests, including strikes in a number of industries, particularly in the spinning and weaving sectors. The problems in these sectors have been openly acknowledged by your Government. It is thus all the more surprising that government bodies and officials have blamed the CTUWS for some of these strikes. Indeed, the organization has repeatedly stated that, while defending the right of workers to resort to industrial action as an internationally-recognised right, it was firmly committed to promoting the spirit of social dialogue in order to avoid disturbances and troubles.

Mr. President, I urge you to take direct action against the violations of basic human and trade union rights, namely the right to organize, freedom of expression, freedom of opinion and freedom to publish information.

We look forward to hearing that Messrs Abbas and Helmy have been freed and of the actions that you will take to stop the closing of the CTUWS and to allow it to continue its work for the sake of Egyptian workers and citizens.

Yours Sincerely,



Kenneth V. Georgetti
President

cc: CLC Officers and Executive Assistants
CLC Executive Committee
The Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Labour
Guy Ryder, General Secretary, ITUC
Embassy of Egypt, Ottawa
The Center for Trade Union and Workers Services (CTUWS)