

# UNITED FISHERMEN OF NAMIBIA



WORKERS OF NAMIBIA  
UNITE !

WORKERS OF THE  
WORLD UNITE!

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN  
INJURY TO ALL!

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## FISHERMEN FIGHT ON!

Since the 27th October 2015, we have been on strike for these demands: ☐ Stop forced labour!!! ☐ Stop illegality and violation of the Law and Labour Conventions! ☐ Proper wages and benefits! ☐ Cessation of downgrading of labour conditions to slavery! ☐ Recognition of unions! ☐ Immediate reinstatement !

The strike started, because the safety conditions at sea did not exist; the fishing companies employed illegal labour conditions such as forcing fishermen to work an average of 21 hours per day; they did not recognise the unions.

The Fishermen had the right to strike in terms of the Labour Act of which Section 42 for example says as follows:

*42. (1) If an employee has reasonable cause to believe that, ...it is neither safe nor healthy to continue work in a place of work, that employee may leave that place.*

*(3) An employee who leaves a place of work in terms of this section is entitled to the same conditions of service applicable to that employee and to receive*

*the same remuneration during the period of absence.*

On the same basis the fishermen had the right to refuse to work 21 hours. Since 2014 the fishermen wrote to the Government, the fishing companies to demand safe work conditions, but they were ignored.

They therefore embarked on a legal strike until the fishing companies put proper safety measures into place. They did not and claimed that the fishermen were striking illegally and dismissed them.

### TREACHERY BY THE UNIONS AND SHINGUADJA

The strike started on 27 October 2015.

The Fishermen requested the presence of Government for a conference to discuss their situation and demands.

Mathew Shinguadja the Labour Commissioner travelled from Windhoek to the coast to deal with the strike. While the Fishermen were waiting for him in Walvisbaai, he met with unions hostile to the striking fishermen and fishing companies on 11 November 2015 in Swakopmund.

When the fishermen heard of the meeting they sent a delegation from Walvisbaai, but they were put out by Shinguadja. The agreement was publicised as an agreement between the unions Nafau, Nasawu and NFI for better labour conditions.



The signatories were Mathew Shinguadja on behalf of the Government, Edwin Kamatoto and Matti Hamukwa on behalf of the fishing companies, and Paulus Hango on behalf of Nasawu (Namibia Sea and allied Workers Union).

#### THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

The Fishermen are continuing their struggle at all levels. It is clear that we are fighting the Government, the courts, the fishing companies.

We are uniting with our brother and sister workers, we are fighting internationally, and we are fighting nationally. We realise that this is not only a union struggle, but a political struggle firstly. We fight for political power as the only longterm solution.

**MAYDAY MESSAGE** : We greet the workers of Namibia and encourage them to work towards a United Front to fight against the laws and policies of the capitalist government and the businesses who are oppressing and exploiting the workers. We give Mayday Greetings to the workers of Southern Africa (and the world) and we encourage NUMSA of the metal workers in South Africa to continue to lead the struggle for an independent workers movement and revolutionary party.

The workers in Namibia are starting to realize that they need a political struggle for power to end their problems. In the United Front we need to fight against the destruction of union rights which the workers have won from 1971 to 1992. These rights have been taken away.

We must rededicate ourselves to the struggle of the working class for political power.

## Namibian Fishers support Madagascar Dock Workers !!!



**Dock workers in Madagascar were sacked for joining their union to fight for an end to precarious work, low-pay and unsafe working conditions.**

In March, unions from around the world delivered letters to Madagascar consulates demanding justice for these workers and that they be allowed to return to work.

Hundreds more people delivered the message directly, emailing the Government of Madagascar urging it to enforce its local labour laws and defend workers' rights.

On 3 April 2017, International Transport Workers Federation, the International Trade Union Confederation, and the workers' union SYGMMA filed a formal complaint with the International Labour Organisation on behalf of the 43 dock workers.

Thank you!  
Eric Lee