

Belarus: Free union leaders and activists



In the last couple of months, Belarus has experienced rigged elections, mass protests, and severe violence carried out by the security forces.

Union leaders, members of the Belarusian Independent Trade Union (BITU), have been arrested and imprisoned for participating in protests and strike action.



At the center of these events is the JSC Belaruskali potash fertilizer site. Dozens of activists and strike committee members at Belaruskali have been prosecuted, threatened, fined and deprived of benefits at work for their activities. BITU vice chair Siarhei Charkasau and three of his comrades, Pavel Puchenia, Yury Korzun and Anatol Bokun are in prison now. One sentence has followed the other while they were still serving their sentence.

BITU and IndustriALL are demanding an end to the persecution of employees of Belaruskali for their participation in the strike, and also those who continue to “work to rule” at Belaruskali. They are demanding an immediate release of the BITU leader and jailed activists. **Please take a moment to support the online campaign – click here.**

And please share this message with your friends, family and fellow union members.



Eric Lee

Necessity of a broad workers' front – Attack is the best defence! Invitation to a conference in Zagreb 31 January – 1 February

[threecolumns]

Workers' Front (<https://-fronta.org>) invites you to attend and give a talk at the trade union conference which will be held in Zagreb at the Centre for Culture and Information (KIC) 31 January – 1 February 2015 (Saturday and Sunday)

This trade union conference is the continuation of the past two conferences organized by Workers' Struggle under the working title "Workers' resistance to the destruction of companies" in 2012 and 2013, which tried to help create space for discussion, tighter connections and a network for information exchange between trade unionists, as well as social movement activists, and contribute to the strengthening of labour movement in Croatia. The Third Trade Union Conference, "Necessity of a broad workers' front – attack is the best defence!" is organized by Workers' Front, an initiative aiming to become a workers' party which should give additional importance to this conference.

In the light of increasing poverty of a large majority of the population, declining economy and unprecedented social stratification, as well as a joint attack on the workers' rights by all political parties and business elite, we intend to question past strategies of organizing workers' resistance and offer a vision of an alternative model which would unite trade union and political levels of struggle into a stronger

entity.

The aim of this conference is to exchange trade union experiences in terms of workers' struggle, forge closer links between militant trade unions and point out the necessity of labour unions for all workers.

We think that it is of essential importance for unionists and activists to join forces in a common resistance against this social and economic system and its supporters – the political elite. Some of the most honest and active Croatian trade union leaders will be present at the conference, such as Mario Iveković (Novi sindikat/New Trade Union), Mijat Stanić (HAC / Croatian Motorways), Željko Stipić (Preporod School Trade Union), Zvonko Šegvić (Brodosplit Shipyard) and Denis Geto (HEP/ Croatian Electricity Company). Alongside the trade unions leaders will be members of the Workers' Front who will present their opinions regarding political, but also trade union landscape in Croatia. Beside domestic unionists, we have also invited international speakers to the third union conference: unionist Goran Lukič from the largest Slovenian trade union organisation ZSSS (Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia) members of *Združena levica* from Slovenia (the United Left) and activists and workers from Serbia and

We hope to see you at our conference in Zagreb.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,

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For more information regarding the previous conferences, please refer to the following links:

<http://www.radnickaborba.org/2012/11/22/sindikalna-konferencija-radnicki-otpor-unistavanju-poduzeca>

<http://www.radnickaborba.org/2012/12/03/veliki-uspjeh-sindikalne-konferencije-radnicke-borbe>

<http://www.radnickaborba.org/2012/12/12/deklaracija-sindikalne-konferencijee> [/threecolumns]