



Trades Union Congress

His Excellency Mr Miguel Angel Solano
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Dear Ambassador

51 drivers dismissed for forming trade union

On behalf of the British TUC, its 56 affiliated unions and almost six million workers, I urge the government of Paraguay to join me in condemning the anti-union actions of La Limpeña SRL bus company, Line 49, which has dismissed 51 drivers who formed a trade union.

These drivers had worked informally at the company for more than ten years, enduring exploitation at the hands of the management, including excessively long working hours, pay per shift and the violation of their right to social security and a monthly salary.

In response to this situation, on 22 June 2015, the drivers formed a trade union to fight for the defence and fulfilment of their rights. The following day the company dismissed en masse and without justification 51 drivers from the newly formed union. It also requested the Labour and Social Security Ministry to revoke the organisation's registration.

The dismissed workers have responded by nailing themselves to crosses and have been on hunger strike since July of this year in front of the company's workshops in Asuncion, demanding a response to their labour grievances. This eloquent but shocking expression of injustice should deeply shame those responsible for the plight of these workers in denying them the right to organise a trade union.

In allowing this situation, your government is complicit in breaching these workers' rights, as well as failing to uphold Conventions 87 of the International Labour Organisation, which requires governments to "take all necessary and appropriate

measures to ensure that workers and employers may exercise freely the right to organise”. The explicit anti-union behaviour of Line 49 requires that your government take such “necessary and appropriate measures” to hold the company to account and to do everything possible to remedy this tragedy.

I urge the Paraguayan government to intervene immediately to ensure a definitive and favourable solution for the workers of Line 49, taking into account their appalling health condition and the serious violation of their human rights. I look forward to hearing how your government has responded.

Yours sincerely

FRANCES O’GRADY

General Secretary