



# global worker

## SPECIAL REPORT

Glencore: workers' rights abuses  
in cobalt supply chain

## FEATURE

Unions under attack

## INTERVIEW

Marie Nilsson, IF Metall

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**Organizing to increase union membership is key if unions want to have a voice that is heard.**

**Valter Sanches**  
General Secretary



## Welcome to **global** worker

**Global Worker is back with stories from unions around the world fighting for an economic and social model that puts people first. This issue looks at how IndustriALL Global Union continues to challenge the power of multinational companies, while globally, anti-union behaviour by governments and employers becomes more prevalent.**

The future sustainability of industry depends on governments making strategic choices. Unions are developing their own vision of how our industries and jobs should be transformed to meet sustainability goals.

We encourage unions around the world to develop sustainable industrial policies, which is a challenge for all. In Latin America and the Caribbean, many of our affiliates are presenting proposals for sustainable industrial policies to their governments. In Chile for example, affiliates are campaigning to make lithium a strategic national resource. This is an excellent trade union initiative to regulate and determine the production and use of the country's natural resources. See the full article on pages 16-17.

Organizing to increase union membership is key if unions want to have a voice that is heard. Take a look on page 23 at how IndustriALL affiliate, Mining and Metallurgy Trade Union of Kyrgyzstan (MMTUK) has managed to almost double their membership in a five-year period.

While some unions are thriving, others face serious attack from companies and governments. From the USA to South

Korea, Algeria to the Philippines union-busting is widespread and is becoming increasingly sophisticated, but our unions are fighting back. See our full report on pages 18-22. Too much power in the hands of multinational companies has negative impacts on communities and societies, governments need to push back against corporate greed, and that includes defending the right of freedom of association through strong action.

After years of unsuccessful attempts to engage in dialogue with mining giant Glencore, IndustriALL has launched a campaign that has taken off in full force. There are serious workers' rights and health and safety issues at their operations globally and something has to be done. Take a look on pages 5-10 to find how Glencore got where it is today.

An IndustriALL delegation visited DRC in February 2018 to meet with local unions representing mineworkers. Affiliates face a huge challenge in organizing in such a vast country, where mineral resources have contributed to war and chaos. IndustriALL affiliate Travailleurs Unis des Mines, Métallurgies, Energie, Chimie et Industries Connexes (TUMEC) is

committed to fighting for workers' rights, better pay, improved health and safety, and to organizing women, see their union profile on page 11.

In November last year, IndustriALL launched a campaign to end violence against women in the workplace. In the wake of the #MeToo movement, we must take the opportunity to push for real change and to combat violence and sexual harassment, see pages 14-15 for more on what unions around the world are doing to make this change.

In 2017 three women were elected in top leadership positions of our affiliated unions; Nora Garofalo FEMA CISL and Francesca Re David FIOM CGIL in Italy, and also IF Metall's president Marie Nilsson in Sweden who is interviewed on pages 12-13. She talks about what her union is doing tackle harassment, among other things.

**Valter Sanches**  
General Secretary



@ValterSanches



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**IndustriALL Global Union**

Representing 50 million workers across supply chains in the mining, energy and manufacturing sectors at the global level.

**HEAD OFFICE**

54 bis, route des Acacias  
CH 1227 Geneva  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41 (0)22 308 5050  
Fax: +41 (0)22 308 5055  
Email: info@industriall-union.org  
Website: www.industriall-union.org

**SOUTH ASIA OFFICE**

16-D, 16th Floor  
Atma Ram House  
No.1, Tolstoy Marg  
New Delhi - 110 001 India  
Tel: +91 11 4156 2566  
Email: sao@industriall-union.org

**LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN**

Avenida 18 de Julio No 1528  
Piso 12 unidad 1202  
Montevideo, Uruguay  
Tel: +59 82 408 0813  
Email: alc@industriall-union.org

**AFRICA OFFICE**

Physical address:  
North City House  
Office S0808 (8th Floor)  
28 Melle Street, Braamfontein  
Johannesburg 2001 South Africa  
Tel: +27 11 242 8680  
Email: africa@industriall-union.org  
Postal address:  
P O Box 31016  
Braamfontein 2017 South Africa

**SOUTH EAST ASIA OFFICE**

473A Joo Chiat Road  
Singapore 427681  
Tel: +65 63 46 4303  
Email: seao@industriall-union.org

**CIS OFFICE**

Str. 2, d 13, Grokholsky per., Room 203.  
129090 Moscow, Russia  
Tel: +7 495 974 6111  
Email: cis@industriall-union.org

**globalworker**

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President: Jörg Hofmann  
General Secretary: Valter Sanches / vsanches@industriall-union.org  
Editor: Petra Brännmark / pbrannmark@industriall-union.org  
Cover photo: Byline Urban Andersson  
Design: Nick Jackson / www.northcreative.ch





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- 1 Pascal Brun, Head of Sustainability at H&M and Jenny Holdcroft, IndustriALL Global Union Assistant General Secretary welcome participants. *IndustriALL*
- 2-5 NMC members from each country present their posters showing negative and positive developments throughout the year. *IndustriALL*
- 6 NMC members at the end of their meeting. *IndustriALL*



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## ENSURING GLOBAL FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS WORK

IndustriALL Global Union signed a Global Framework Agreement (GFA) with Swedish clothing giant H&M in November 2015. The agreement aims to protect the rights of over 1.6 million workers in its supply chain of over 1,900 factories around the world.

In order to ensure the effectiveness and implementation of the GFA a National Monitoring Committee (NMC) was created in 2016 as the “implementation arm” of the GFA.

The NMC system’s purpose is to develop the national short-term and long-term plans and strategies for implementation of the GFA at H&M suppliers. Today, there are NMCs in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar and Turkey, with other countries to follow. The monitoring committees are composed of trade unions on the ground, as well as H&M representatives.

The NMC system creates a space for unions to develop as responsible social partners and has the potential to increase union organizing and collective bargaining capacity. The second annual meeting of the NMCs was held in Bangkok, Thailand in October 2017.

The Committees prepared their 2017 annual country reports setting their objectives for the year to come, paving the way forward to making social dialogue work, and promoting sustainable business that can benefit everyone.



# special report

Text:  
Walton Pantland



# GLENCORE

## THE COMMODITIES GIANT WITH NO SOUL

After surviving a near-death experience in 2015, Glencore stocks are riding high on world markets: the company has just posted its best ever results. One reason is its dominance of supplies of cobalt, an essential mineral used in batteries for smart phones and electric cars. Cobalt prices are soaring, and Glencore controls supply through massive operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).





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For Glencore, workers are a disposable and replaceable resource like any other.



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When IndustriALL Global Union visited DRC in February 2018 to meet with local unions at Glencore mines, the company denied access to its operations, and security forces attempted to break up a union meeting in a church and arrest the organizers. What are they hiding?

Last year, the Paradise Papers revealed that Glencore paid huge sums of money to a corrupt fixer to obtain mining interests in DRC. Adding to its reputation for corruption, human rights abuses and environmental degradation, Glencore’s treatment of its workforce – in DRC, and across more than 150 operations in the world - is the scandal that has not received the attention it deserves.

The company directly employs 83,679 people around the world, with a total of 145,977 including contractors. Glen Mpufane, IndustriALL mining director, says:

**“For Glencore, workers are a disposable and replaceable resource like any other.”**

These include miners at Glencore’s Oaky North mine in Australia who were locked out of their workplace for 230 days, workers at CEZinc in Canada having to strike for nine months to prevent a raid on their pensions, the loss of thousands

of jobs through casualization in Zambia, a spate of preventable accidents at the Cerrejón mine in Colombia, and brutal labour conditions in DRC.

### INDUSTRIALL’S GLENCORE CAMPAIGN

At its Executive Committee meeting in Sri Lanka in October 2017, IndustriALL launched a campaign against Glencore. This follows years of unsuccessful attempts to establish global dialogue with the company to resolve workers’ rights and health and safety crises at its operations around the world.

Speaking at the launch of the campaign, Tony Maher, national president of Australian affiliate the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Engineering Union (CFMEU), said:

**“Glencore has no corporate soul. This is a Frankenstein company, stitched together with body parts.”**

Glencore is a hybrid, whose sole purpose is to make money, a corporate colossus with a stranglehold on world resources. The company has built up an extremely complex network of 80 or more subsidiaries on five continents, using shell corporations, partnerships and offshore accounts to obscure



transactions and avoid tax, and working with corrupt intermediaries to gain access to resources.

Unions representing Glencore workers in Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, DRC, Germany, Italy, Norway, Peru, South Africa, the UK and Zambia have come together to coordinate action against the company: many have been confronted by the arrogance and intransigence of Glencore in their own countries.

Kemal Özkan, IndustriALL assistant general secretary says:

**“The purpose of the campaign is to restrain the monster, to prevent it from causing further damage. IndustriALL affiliates are seeking to negotiate with the company at a global level, to create a transparent mechanism for resolving disputes wherever they arise.”**

## COMPANY PROFILE

Glencore’s criminal past – its founder was on the FBI’s Most Wanted list for almost 20 years - and ongoing contempt for the law means the company tries to keep a low profile and stay out of the spotlight. But recently, since the company’s public listing in 2011, and the leaks of the Panama Papers, Paradise Papers and Hilary Clinton’s emails, more information about the company’s behaviour has come to light.

Glencore, originally named Marc Rich + Co, was founded in 1974 by Marc Rich, a Belgian-American commodities trader. Before Rich, oil production and trading was dominated by big, established companies like BP and Exxon, who made long term deals with stable governments. Rich flew into conflict zones with borrowed money, making

deals with officials to buy oil directly. Rich brought two great innovations to the world of commodities trading: defying international law, and using leverage – trading with borrowed money and reselling at a profit – to corner lucrative markets.

The company’s fortune was built on tax avoidance and sanctions busting: Rich defied international trade embargoes to do business with pariah regimes from across the political spectrum, including Iran during the hostage crisis, Libya under Ghaddafi, Chile under Pinochet, and apartheid South Africa. Rich also did deals with North Korea’s Kim Il Sung, Yugoslavia’s Slobodan Milosevic and the Philippines’ Ferdinand Marcos, and through convicted money launderer Gilbert Chagoury, with Sani Abacha in Nigeria.

Never fussy about the sources of his wealth, Rich claimed that breaking the UN embargo of South Africa resulted in his “most important and most profitable” business deals.

In the 1980s, Rich worked with the Israeli secret service, Mossad, to set up a secret pipeline to sell Iranian oil to Israel. In 1983, Rich was charged in the US with tax evasion, fraud, trading with the enemy and illegal business dealings. A fugitive from justice – and for almost two decades, on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted list – he fled to Switzerland.

Although Rich was controversially pardoned by Bill Clinton on his last day in office in 2001, Glencore’s headquarters remain in canton Zug in Switzerland. Despite being the largest company in Switzerland, and at number 16 on the Fortune Global 500 of the world’s biggest companies, Glencore prefers to keep a low profile.

In 2011, the company went public and was listed on three stock exchanges; London, Hong Kong and Johannesburg. The public listing forced a greater degree of scrutiny, and Glencore’s dealings are now more widely reported. The company’s prospectus was candid about its strategy of operating in high risk and volatile environments.

Laura Carter, IndustriALL Latin America regional officer, has had a lot of experience with Glencore:

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**Glencore profits from the misery of others. It is an ogre with the feet of a ballerina, honing in on shortages and disaster with razor-sharp precision.**

**The business model is to borrow money to buy controlling stakes of commodities, influencing the price and potentially making a huge profit. Glencore originally traded mostly in oil, but moved into coal, zinc, copper, lead, nickel, ferroalloys, iron, aluminium and agricultural products.**

Seeing the benefit of controlling production as well as trade, Glencore began investing in mining company Xstrata in 1990. In 2013, Glencore merged with Xstrata, by then the world’s largest coal mining company, and acquired a number of significant mining operations. The company has moved along commodities supply chains, controlling primary extraction as well as value added processing and logistics, and bought controlling interests in mines, coal terminals and freighters, refineries, smelters and warehouses. Glencore also moved into agriculture, buying interests in grains, oils, cotton, sugar and storage facilities.

Glencore’s model of borrowing money to carry out trades almost led to bankruptcy in 2015, when a crash in worldwide commodities prices left the company over-exposed and overwhelmed with debt.

To ensure more sustainable and long-term sources of financing for commodities deals, Glencore has begun to form partnerships with state-owned sovereign wealth funds, such as the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), which



owns 8.2 per cent of Glencore stock. In 2017, QIA and Glencore bought 19.5 per cent of Rosneft, the Russian state energy company. Other sovereign wealth funds, from Norway, United Arab Emirates, Singapore and China have also been major Glencore investors.

Glencore CEO Ivan Glasenberg owns 8.4 per cent of Glencore stock, tying his personal fortune to that of the company.

**Glencore's opaque network of shell companies and intermediaries allows it to show a loss in the countries where it extracts raw materials and to sell these products for a pittance to subsidiaries in tax havens.**

## CONTEMPT FOR THE LAW

In 2015, Glencore was fined in South Africa for supplying substandard coal to utility company Eskom, and accused by the government of Ghana in 2017 for illegally importing and reselling petroleum products.

The McArthur River mine in Australia has not paid royalties to the government since it opened in 1995, and in 2017, the tax office ruled that Glencore had understated its taxable income by diverting US\$190 million offshore. The company was also accused of tax evasion in Zambia in 2011, and in 2018 the UK Court of Appeal upheld sanctions against Glencore for tax evasion.

Subsidiary Xstrata faces a lawsuit in the UK after allegedly paying the police force in Peru to attack protesters. In 2017, the London Metal Exchange fined Glencore US\$1.4 million for falsifying warehouse documents.

DRC subsidiary Katanga is subject to legal proceedings in both the US and Canada for giving false statements to investors.

The company also has a reputation for bullying governments, after suing Bolivia and Colombia through Investor-State Dispute Settlements, and using oil-backed loans to control resources in Chad, leaving the country in a financial crisis.

## HUMAN AND WORKERS' RIGHTS

Glencore has been accused of human rights abuses in many countries. In addition to the case in Peru, in Colombia, Glencore subsidiary Prodeco is accused of financing a paramilitary group between 1996 and 2006, during the country's armed conflict in an attempt to control the carbon industry.

IndustriALL campaigns director Adam Lee says:

**"Workers are expendable commodities to Glencore. In operations in Europe – where Glencore employs few people in an environment of strong unions and regulations – conditions generally meet industry standards. But in many other countries, the company has either neglected or viciously attacked its workforce."**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

**"Glencore claims to want to be an industry leader in the field of health and safety and proudly announced that it only killed nine people in 2017,"** says IndustriALL health, safety and sustainability director Brian Kohler. **"But our affiliates around the world report a lax attitude to health and safety."**

In Bolivia, workers complain that **safety equipment is substandard**. Because they are paid for what they produce, stricter health and safety regulations slow production and have led to a considerable drop in wages. Unions say contract workers are not properly trained, leading to fatal accidents. According to Glencore's annual report, two workers were killed in 2017. After a worker was killed at the San Lorenzo mine in

2014, the company put pressure on the workforce, threatening to close the mine if there are any further accidents.

In August 2017, the Sintracarbón union in **Colombia** reported that in less than one month there were **13 work accidents** at Glencore's open-cast coal mine, Cerrejón, five of them in a single day. Tragically it was only a matter of time before somebody got killed. **On 25 January 2018, Carlos Urbina Martínez died in an accident at the mine.**

The problems at Cerrejón have a long history. Colombia is yet another of the resource-rich, conflict-ridden countries favoured by Glencore. As early as 2006, there were allegations of corruption and severe human rights violations with the local union accusing the company of forced expropriations and evacuations of entire villages to enable mine expansion, in complicity with Colombian authorities.

## OUTSOURCING AND CONTRACTING

Like many employers, Glencore casualizes its workforce to avoid responsibility, leaving over 62,000 of its workers and their families without the security of a permanent contract, pension and health cover. In the last few years, the proportion of contractors to permanent workers has gone up, while overall employment is falling.

In 2016, Cerrejón was fined US\$2 million for illegal and excessive use of contractors. Unions in Bolivia report that the company employs subcontractors even though this is illegal, and hires workers classified as 'employees of confidence' to limit their right to organize or to strike.







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According to the Mineworkers' Union of **Zambia**, about half of the workers at Glencore's Mopani copper operations in Zambia are **casual and these workers make on average under a third of the wages of permanent employees**. This is despite Mopani's claim that it aims to pay every contracted employee 80 per cent of a permanent salary.

### BREAKING INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

A frequent complaint from Glencore workers is that the company refuses to bargain centrally – even at country level – and there is no consistency in terms and conditions at different operations. The company owns a number of operations in South Africa where local unions are campaigning for a company level agreement.

Although Glencore claims that “We are committed to working honestly and openly with labour unions at all our locations and treating employees with respect”, the reality is very different.

**Instead of negotiating in good faith with unions as representatives of the workforce, Glencore tries to actively break unions.**

In **Australia**, workers at Glencore's Oaky North mine were locked out by the company for more than 230 days for resisting a plan that aims to replace permanent workers with contractors. Rather than making a fair offer, the company chose to lock out its workforce.

Workers were punished and intimidated for opposing the company's plans. **Australia's state labour arbitrator, the Fair Work Commission, had to order the company to stop its surveillance of workers and refusing to allow them to wear union T-shirts.** Workers and their families were followed around town to their homes, and filmed at social events, by private security guards employed by the company. Workers say that security guards filmed their children at the playground.

Glencore uses its employees as political tools. In 2017, the Copperbelt Energy Corporation, which supplies electricity to mining companies in Zambia, raised the price of electricity. Mopani halted operations and threatened the Zambian government to retrench 4,700 workers, claiming the hike in electricity tariffs would have a huge effect on their budget.

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Glencore has no corporate soul. This is a Frankenstein company, stitched together with body parts.



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## CHASING COBALT: GLENCORE IN DRC

Perhaps the starkest example of Glencore's treatment of its workforce is in DRC. A vast and frequently lawless country, DRC produces a range of extremely valuable minerals, including cobalt and copper. DRC is central to Glencore's newfound fortune, and much of the company's recent success is dependent on its operations here.

In 2012, Glencore was exposed for purchasing copper mined using child labour. It has worked hard to improve its public image since then, but conditions remain terrible for workers mining some of the most valuable minerals on the planet.

According to the leaked Paradise Papers, Glencore loaned US\$45 million to controversial Israeli billionaire Dan Gertler for his help in obtaining mining concessions from state-owned mining company Gécamines at a discounted price, saving Glencore US\$440 million.

Glencore paid Gertler a further US\$960 million to buy his stake in the mines. Gertler is linked to a string of bribery allegations and is subject to criminal proceedings in Switzerland.

The US treasury sanctioned Gertler in December 2017, saying his corruption had cost DRC US\$1.3 billion.

Since buying the stakes, Glencore employs about 15,000 people in DRC through its subsidiaries Mutanda Mining and Katanga Mining. It intends to double its cobalt production over the next few years.

**Seven workers died at Katanga in 2016 when the wall of an open pit mine collapsed.** A February 2018 mission by IndustriALL to the Glencore operations in the Kolwezi area exposed horrendous conditions. **Workers say they are treated like slaves, exposed to danger at work, and are exposing their families to occupational diseases because they have no facilities to wash.**

**"We are so filthy when we get home that we cannot hug our children,"** said one worker.

The grinding poverty of the region was on clear display. Cobalt – essential to the production of many high-tech products – is hugely valuable, yet almost all this wealth disappears into foreign companies, or locally through corruption, with the complicity of foreign companies.

Glenn Mpufane said:



**We were shocked by the desperate poverty of the people of Kolwezi, and the lack of development and infrastructure. The contrast with Glencore's vast wealth is stark. There is a great irony in the fact that environmentally-conscious electric car buyers rely on a supply chain built on Glencore's environmental and social pillaging.**

Glencore denied IndustriALL access to the sites and when local union TUMEC held a meeting in a church, security forces attempted to break it up and arrest the organizers.



© Byline Urban Andersson

**It is possible to produce copper and cobalt, and make a profit, while still respecting workers' rights.** Belgian-headquartered Umicore is a competitor of Glencore's, also producing cobalt, lithium and other precious minerals.

But the company has signed a global framework agreement on sustainable development with IndustriALL covering 14,000 workers in 38 countries. The agreement also covers environmental sustainability, as the company increases its focus on extracting minerals by recycling electronic equipment.



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- 1 Meeting of Glencore miners in DRC. *IndustriALL*
- 3 Glen Mpufane addresses miners from Glencore operation in DRC. *IndustriALL*
- 4 The Mine Workers' Union of Zambia take action against Glencore. *IndustriALL*
- 5 In Australia, the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division protest at Glencore's Brisbane office. *CFMEU*
- 6 Protest sign at Glencore AGM in Zug. *IndustriALL*
- 7 Metallos from Canada and IndustriALL outside Glencore AGM in ZUG. *IndustriALL*





## profile

Union: **Travailleurs Unis des Mines, Métallurgies, Energie, Chimie et Industries Connexes (TUMEC)**

Country: **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**

Text: **Elijah Chiwota**

DRC is rich in cobalt, copper, gold and other minerals. About 65 per cent of the global cobalt, whose prices have spiked because of increased demand from electric car batteries and smartphones makers, is mined in DRC. However, the country's history has not made organizing easy for TUMEC as multinationals have become used to exploiting workers.

DRC is often used as an example of a country facing "a resource curse" where mineral riches fund wars and bloodshed instead of developing the country's economy and infrastructure including roads and clinics to reverse poverty.

Organizing in a country with such a past and as vast in size as DRC has not been an easy task for TUMEC, but the struggle for due diligence and responsible mining and to unionize more workers continues.

TUMEC fights to ensure that employers conform to labour practices that are agreed upon in collective agreements as protected by the law. Organizing in the mines, in energy, and chemical sectors, including workers from subcontractors and artisanal mines, TUMEC has over 12,000 members in companies that include mining multinational Glencore, and state-owned mining company Gecamines.

# TUMEC - ORGANIZING AND DEFENDING CONGOLESE WORKERS' RIGHTS

IndustriALL Global Union affiliate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), **Travailleurs Unis des Mines, Métallurgies, Energie, Chimie et Industries Connexes (TUMEC)**, is committed to fighting for workers' rights, better pay, improved health and safety, and to organizing women.

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TUMEC is part of IndustriALL's Glencore campaign, aiming to enforce respect of workers at the company's operations at Mutanda and Kamoto Copper Company in Kolwezi, Lualaba province.

Through continued recruitment and organizing, it is now an established union in Kolwezi, Lubumbashi, Doko, Kisangani, Mbujimayi, Kinshasa, Lukala, Matadi and Muanda. TUMEC campaigned through union elections at workplaces, according to the labour laws. The union with the highest number of votes in the elections becomes the majority union, whilst that with less votes will be a representation union. **This year, TUMEC aims to become a majority union, which has power to negotiate with the employer.**

Much of TUMEC's work over the last years has been supported through an IndustriALL union building project funded by Dutch trade union solidarity support organization Mondiaal FNV.

In the last couple of years, leadership problems at TUMEC in Kolwezi stunted membership growth. However, after last year's congress a new leadership was elected and recruitment and organizing plans were put in place. Among other workplaces, TUMEC is targeting Mutanda and Kamoto. At Mutanda, it has only 200 members out of a permanent workforce of 6,500, and at KCC it has 175 members out of 5,800 permanent workers. The union is working hard to reverse this situation.

**"TUMEC's recruitment and organizing strategy focuses on problems that workers face daily at the workplace. We then try to solve the problems in**

participatory ways involving workers. We don't attract workers to the union by offering them money or clothes. Instead, they join the union because it is guaranteed that TUMEC will fight for their rights," says general secretary Didier Okonda.

In 2017, the IndustriALL DRC women's committee was set up to address issues affecting women workers in the union. The committee is organizing more women into the union and setting up women's committees at companies where TUMEC is organizing. There are plans for training workshops on rights and working conditions for women, campaigning against sexual harassment, freedom of association, health and safety, laws that affect women, and improving the understanding of gender issues.

**"Hopefully the training will develop a strategy to stop violations of women's rights at workplaces in DRC and to build their participation and leadership skills,"** says Olga Kabalu, chairperson of the women's committee.



1 A member of TUMEC at meeting in Kolwezi. *IndustriALL*

2 Representatives of TUMEC and IndustriALL in Kolwezi. *IndustriALL*

# interview

Union:  
**IF Metall**  
Country:  
**Sweden**  
Text:  
**Petra Brännmark**

## MARIE NILSSON

**Elected in May last year, Marie Nilsson is president of Swedish industrial workers' union IF Metall, a union with a predominately male membership. In October 2017, the #MeToo movement, highlighting sexual harassment against women, started to gain momentum and the response in Sweden was huge, with some analysts comparing the movement to when women achieved the right to vote.**

Marie Nilsson says there is a very clear before and after #MeToo, and that IF Metall reacted quickly when the discussions reached the trade unions.

“Questions on sexual harassment have always been part of our surveys on workplace environment but never a substantial part of it. But when we realized the extent of #MeToo, we asked the questions in a different way and the answers were different, especially from young women.

“I was shocked how widespread sexual harassment is, even knowing that we work in a male dominated environment. And I was appalled; we want to organize women and if we do nothing they will leave the union.

“There is a legal framework and guidelines in Sweden, but they are of little use if they are just stuck on a shelf and not used. Employees need to know who to turn to, and that their concerns are taken seriously. And employers and unions share this responsibility.”

**IF Metall has met with employers to discuss the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace, and they are taking action together. A number of joint conferences are planned with an employer organization to discuss the issue together with the local union and the company management in the workplace.**

“I am pleased that we are doing this together with the employers. It shows that we agree on the basic principle to fight sexual harassment in the workplace and that we take it seriously.”

1 Marie Nilsson. *IF Metall*

2 Marie Nilsson at IndustriALL Congress 2016 in Rio. *IndustriALL*



## What can unions do?

“What happens in the workplace is the employer’s responsibility, but as unions we need to be there and take our responsibility. As IF Metall, we are making sure that our regional and local organizations know how to handle cases of sexual harassment.”

**Several groupings of professionals have taken to social media in Sweden to talk about experiences in their workplaces. For example journalists, actresses and hospital staff have shared their testimonies of sexual harassment. And the hashtag #InteFörhandlingsbart (non-negotiable) has put focus on sexual harassment in the union movement.**

“We have had cases of union representatives behaving inappropriately, which is very difficult for everyone involved. When everyone knows each other there has to be clear instructions on how to deal with it, and maybe move it from a local level to a regional level.

“The discussion on what is ok and what is not has been very important. Even though it is sometimes hard to discuss when sexual harassment happens internally, we have a responsibility and can’t be seen as covering it up.

“And that is why IF Metall has called on our counterparts in industry to use this as a wakeup call. All companies should have a policy and actively work to combat sexual harassment, violation and gender-based discrimination. There has to be zero tolerance.”

## How is IF Metall approaching Industry 4.0?

“Industry 4.0 is, without a doubt, our most important challenge. We look at technical development as something positive. We know some jobs will disappear, but we also know there will be new ones.

“Although digitalization has huge effects, it is not really news for us. We have been through this before. But today it is faster and it also touches society as a whole.

“We think the major breakthroughs will come in the next five years or so. This will affect not only those who are new to the labour market, but also the ones already in employment. As a trade union, we have to be part of that journey as a reliable partner in the transformation.

“So we are working on how to make sure our members will have the right skills to be employable in the future. Most of our members work in export industries and they need a safe transition.”

## Union membership is going down in Sweden, a country with a traditionally high union density. What is IF Metall doing to counter the trend?

“From 2006 we lost 10,000 members per year but in 2017 we actually increased our membership with 800 new members.

“Organizing is a clear priority. And that is not only organizing new members but also about making sure existing members do not leave IF Metall. We need to talk to them and find out why they want to leave.

“Not knowing why they should be members of a union, not seeing the benefits, are often cited as reasons for leaving. They feel as if no one cares, they are disappointed in us as an organization, we haven’t been present enough and they haven’t received the service they expected or needed.

“To grow, we need to make sure that every new employee is asked to join IF Metall. Younger workers are not always interested, but we have to ask them and motivate them - joining a union is no longer only about solidarity.

“We also inform about trade unions in schools. We know that if we can reach people while they are still in school, they will know what a union is when they enter the workplace and are more likely to become a member.”

## With historically close ties to Sweden’s governing party, the Social Democratic Party and Prime Minister Stefan Löfvén, a former IF Metall president, IF Metall is a highly political trade union. How are you preparing for the government elections in September?

“The elections are a large part of our focus this year, especially as opinion polls currently show a tie between the social democrats and the conservative block.

“Until September, political work will be an important part of what we do. Before the current government, we had eight years of conservative rule and as a union we were marginalized. During the recession and economic crisis, Sweden’s industry shrunk and 48,000 of our members lost

their jobs. Despite lobbying relevant ministers and government departments to find solutions we were seen as irrelevant.

“We know from experiences in Germany and Belgium that there are ways of dealing with economic crisis where the government, employers and workers share the burden, by reducing working hours for example. But we got the cold shoulder when trying to protect our members. So we know what a conservative government will mean for our members, and we want a government that supports industrial development.

“We have produced material to distribute in the workplace and 36 of our local unions have appointed so called election leaders, who will take the discussion in the workplace about what the election means for the labour market, the industry and the union.

Most importantly, we want everyone to vote. Like many other countries, Sweden has seen a surge in right wing politics and those ideologies often benefit from low numbers of voters.”

### IF METALL

- ▶ 310,000 members, of whom 20 per cent are women
- ▶ 78 per cent of members work in manufacturing industries, mostly auto, with car maker Volvo being the biggest employer
- ▶ Marie Nilsson is IndustriALL vice president for Europe and part of IndustriALL’s Executive Committee





**report**

Text:  
 Armelle Seby  
 Petra Brännmark

## WHY UNIONS MUST TAKE THE LEAD TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



IndustriALL Global Union's campaign to end violence in the workplace has been embraced by affiliates all over the world since it launched in November 2017. More than 55 unions from the USA to Turkey, and South Africa to the Philippines have taken IndustriALL's pledge to end violence against women, recognizing their role in preventing abuse in the workplace and in unions.

### Violence and harassment against women is widespread

According to the World Health Organization 35 per cent of women globally – 818 million women – over the age of 15 have experienced sexual or physical violence at home, in their communities, or in the workplace. Unions need to keep raising awareness that violence against women is real, and it is happening everywhere.

IndustriALL affiliates around the globe are taking action to prevent this violation of human rights, through measures such as education campaigns with their membership, including provisions to protect women from violence in collective bargaining agreements, and providing paid leave for women who have suffered from violence and harassment.

By taking IndustriALL's pledge, affiliates commit to continue and reinforce their actions to stop violence against women in the workplace and in unions.

"This is an issue that unions can work on in their own structures; it is not only a demand towards employers," says IndustriALL assistant general secretary Jenny Holdcroft. "It's difficult for unions to make demands to employers on issues

they are not adequately addressing, and addressing it will put them in a stronger position."

### Violence against women is a violation of human rights

According to the **Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women**, "Violence against women" is "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." This Declaration recognizes that violence against women violates women's rights and fundamental freedoms, while the **Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action** recognizes that the elimination of violence against women in public and private life is a human rights obligation.

### Violence against women is an obstacle to gender equality at work

Women are less likely to enter the labour market than men. Sexual violence and harassment remains a barrier for women to enter and evolve in the labour market, or to perform certain jobs. At the same time, the continued segregation of



women in precarious, low paid and low status jobs and positions, increases the risks for these women workers.

**Trade unions have a fundamental role in preventing and eliminating violence against women in the workplace**

The ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities' report on violence against men and women in the world of work shows there is a strong connection between access to decent work, non-discrimination and being protected by a trade union in preventing violence against women and men at work. Unions play a key role in raising awareness about sexual harassment among their members, negotiating policies and agreements that establish procedures for making and processing complaints, as well as preventing sexual harassment.

"Unions have a huge role to play, and it is more than a question of equality. It is about the survival of unions and the capacity to present themselves as organizations representing women in their specific struggles with gender discrimination and harassment in the workplace," says Jenny Holdcroft.

**We need an ILO convention on Gender Based Violence**

There is still no law at the international level that sets a baseline for taking action to eradicate violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment, in the world of work. There is a **need for a comprehensive**

**ILO Convention**, supplemented by a Recommendation, with a strong focus on preventing, addressing and remedying gender-based violence at work.

"Having international recognition at the ILO will strengthen the hand of the trade unions and give the issue greater prominence and urgency," says Jenny Holdcroft.

"Trade unions need to take action on violence against women and advocate for a binding international law on gender-based violence."



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Action taken by IndustriALL affiliates on International Women's Day, 8 March 2018.

- 1 South Africa
- 2 South Africa
- 3 Indonesia
- 4 Mozambique
- 5 Mauritius
- 6 Germany
- 7 Spain
- 8 India
- 9 Pakistan
- 10 Philippines
- 11 Spain
- 12 Spain
- 13 Nigeria
- 14 Japan



# report

Region:  
**Latin America and the Caribbean**

Text:  
**Kimber Meyer**

## SEEKING SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL POLICIES FOR LATIN AMERICA

**IndustriALL Global Union encourages its unions throughout the world to develop sustainable industrial policies. But this can be challenging, especially for IndustriALL affiliates in Latin America and the Caribbean - a developing region where neoliberal policies are once again back on the agenda and threatening workers' rights.**

Achieving sustainability involves working for a present and future where social and economic needs are satisfied without endangering the environment.

To that end, IndustriALL has been working on developing a sustainable industrial policy since 2013. The objective is to seek solutions to situations affecting everyone: particularly climate change and the environmental, economic and social crisis.

In 2015, 195 countries signed the Paris Agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit climate change at the global level. All of IndustriALL's sectors have significant impacts on the environment, but environmental regulations for those sectors are weak.

By getting actively involved, unions can prevent decisions on the future of industries, jobs and the planet from remaining exclusively in the hands of governments, multinational corporations and market forces.

Instead, they can ensure that the voice of industrial workers is heard when

developing an industrial policy that allows for a Just Transition to a sustainable future, i.e. by seeking measures to safeguard existing jobs, create new ones, and ensure decent and sustainable workplaces.

"It must be remembered that a Just Transition is not an end in itself – it is a pathway to a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable future," says the director for health, safety and sustainability at IndustriALL, Brian Kohler.

### NEOLIBERALISM VS. A JUST TRANSITION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Currently, many countries in the region have neoliberal governments that favour the interests of business above social and environmental rights, thereby obstructing a Just Transition to sustainability.

In Argentina, the government of Mauricio Macri is implementing an economic policy of "adjustment" which has led to an avalanche of layoffs. Macri is promoting the privatization of state



enterprises and the flexibilization of labour with the aim of making Argentina an investor-friendly country.

The same is happening in Brazil, where the government of Michel Temer who, after a parliamentary coup, is pursuing a pro-business and financial market agenda, while backing reforms that attack workers' rights. For example, Temer tried, unsuccessfully, to push through a decree that would allow mining companies to exploit a huge reservation in Amazonia.

To say, these examples will not lead to social, economic or environmental sustainability. Rather, they will lead to increasing environmental catastrophes and social distress. Workers, their families, and the communities that depend upon them will be forced to pay the price.

In addition to the examples above there are free trade agreements (FTAs). Negotiations are continuing with a view to signing an FTA between the Common Market of the South (Mercosur) and the European Union (EU), an agreement which the unions of Mercosur are opposing.



“The intent of such trade agreements is to enshrine and de-regulate business interests – particularly those of the finance industry – above national laws and above all other human and environmental interests. Let it be understood: there is nothing about the financial market that will bring about a sustainable future,” adds Brian Kohler.

The unions from Mercosur argue that what is emerging is not a genuine, fair and balanced association agreement, but rather an FTA prejudicial to national industries, and indeed the long-term sustainability of the less developed countries.

According to the unions, the FTA would promote unemployment in the Mercosur countries as, by lowering import tariffs on products manufactured in Europe, Latin American enterprises would be unable to compete and would go out of business.

In parallel, negotiations are underway for the renewal of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, Canada and the United States.

The unions of all three countries agree that since its beginning in 1994, the treaty has hurt workers’ rights, especially in Mexico. It has also been detrimental to the environment, and put pressure on social protections. Trade unions from the three countries have been pressuring the Mexican government to raise its labour standards and wages to prevent unfair competition with US and Canadian workers.

### THE UNIONS’ RESPONSE: ALTERNATIVES AND STRUGGLE

Faced with this situation, the unions have devoted their efforts to proposing alternatives and continuing to fight back.

Together with the Coordinating Centre of Southern Cone Labour Confederations, the International Labour Confederation, UNI Americas and other social movements, IndustriALL affiliates have participated in mobilizations against the World Trade Organization, which they consider is only interested in discussing an agenda that defends the interests of the big multinational corporations.

Unions affiliated to IndustriALL in Latin America also held a debate on democracy and fundamental labour rights throughout the world on 12 December 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where they undertook to work toward political, social, economic, feminist and environmental alternatives that give priority to human rights and harmony with the environment.

Unions affiliated to IndustriALL in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay also participated in the 2017 Day of Mobilization for Democracy and Against Neoliberalism on 16 November in Uruguay, an initiative of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA).

As part of those activities, IndustriALL organized a seminar for the defence of sustainable national and regional industry with a view to showing that all the countries of the region are continuing to suffer job losses, falling industrial production and violations of workers’ rights, and that the time has come to seek a solution.

The unions have reaffirmed their commitment to oppose policies of precarious employment and harmful social policies of those intent on subjugating them. They agreed to continue work with IndustriALL to develop sustainable industrial policies, including measures to preserve and create secure, well-paid jobs, to ensure sustainable employment and to have a say in the decisions made by their respective industries.



“We have to act together and oppose the policies that encourage precarious work. We must deepen our experiences and debates among the unions so that we can think together, merge and build strong unions with capacity to generate proposals and negotiate on sustainable development,” says the regional secretary of IndustriALL in Latin America and the Caribbean, Marino Vani.

- 1 March for the Day for Democracy and Against Neoliberalism in Montevideo, Uruguay. *IndustriALL*
- 2 IndustriALL leaflet for the defence of a sustainable national and regional industry in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 3 Marino Vani, IndustriALL regional secretary in Latin America and the Caribbean, at Seminar for the defence of a sustainable national and regional industry in Montevideo, Uruguay. *IndustriALL*
- 4 IndustriALL’s affiliates from Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay participate in the march for the Day for Democracy and against Neoliberalism in Montevideo, Uruguay. *IndustriALL*



## SHOWING THE WAY TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: JUST TRANSITION

- ▶ IndustriALL affiliate, Industrial Chile, has been participating since 2016 in the Movement for Lithium, an initiative of social and union organizations to propose a National Lithium Policy. The goal is for the state to mine lithium and create a new industry which would be environmentally sustainable, and initiate a process of industrialization which presently does not exist in that country. They stress that demand for lithium will continue to grow in the renewable energy sector, and that non-metallic mineral can be used as an input in the manufacture of lithium carbonate batteries for electric cars and electronic appliances.
- ▶ In 2017, the unions of the CUT Brazil (also affiliated to IndustriALL) set up the Institute of Labour, Industry and Development (LID), a body that works to promote development in Brazil. They are seeking to establish sustainable public policies that promote industry as the main engine of social development. Their aim is to promote workers’ interests in decision-making forums, defend national industry and preserve jobs.
- ▶ The Trade Union Confederation of the Workers of the Americas (TUCA) has been promoting the Development Platform of the Americas since 2014, a proposal from the labour movement for sustainable growth of the continent in the political, social, economic and environmental fields as an alternative to neoliberal policies. The Platform is supported by the International Labour Organization’s Bureau of Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV/ILO), the FES Union Project and IndustriALL Global Union.



feature

Text:  
Léonie Guguen

# UNION BUSTING

## INDUSTRIALL AFFILIATES UNDER ATTACK

Union busting is arguably the biggest threat to trade unions the world over. As unions come under attack from companies, governments and corrupt judiciaries, union-busting tactics are becoming increasingly sophisticated and no less severe.

Union repression is symptomatic of increasing global inequality and corporate greed. It is no wonder that global forces seek to suppress trade unions, which are economic actors in the redistribution of wealth from capital to labour. IndustriALL Global Union affiliates are no strangers to these attacks.







**USA**

When IndustriALL affiliate, the United Steelworkers filed an election petition at Kumho Tire in the USA, the company immediately launched a campaign to destroy workers' chances of union representation that is typical in the American South.

Kumho Tire in Macon, Georgia, which supplies tyres for auto manufacturers including Chrysler, Hyundai and Kia, hired a consultancy firm, RoadWarrior Productions, paying them at least US\$300,000 to employ seven full time union busters at the plant.

Kumho Tire set up an anti-union website, which included a message from the mayor of Macon urging workers to vote against the union. The site has since been taken down.

Workers were forced to attend daily anti-union meetings that lasted for several hours, with managers telling them that the newly-opened factory would be forced to close if they voted for a union. The Korean multinational is currently under control of a committee of creditors headed by the state-run Korea Development Bank, and plant managers emphasized this to play on workers' fears.

Workers were also made to attend many one-on-one anti-union meetings:

"We have a recording of the company human resources manager threatening loss of customers and plant closures if they unionize. We also have witnesses

who will testify they were told one-on-one that if they supported the union they would be fired," said a spokesperson from the United Steelworkers.

**Before the relentless campaign of intimidation and scaremongering at the Macon plant, 80 per cent of workers at Kumho Tire signed cards saying they wanted a union. When the vote took place on 12 and 13 October 2017, the USW lost the election by 28 votes (164 to 136) – a drop of 34 per cent in favour of a union.**

Not satisfied with the election result, Kumho Tire then fired Mario Smith, one of the leaders of the organizing campaign, just days after the vote. The Steelworkers have retaliated by filing unfair labour practice charges with the National Labour Relations Board. If successful, the election would be re-run or the company could be ordered to bargain with the union.

It's worth noting that virtually all 3,700 Kumho Tire works in South Korea are organized by IndustriALL affiliate the Korean Metal Workers' Union.

Anti-union discrimination is rife in the southern states of the US, even at companies that normally engage in social dialogue such as Nissan, Boeing and Airbus. German car manufacturer, Volkswagen, which has good relations with unions in its home country, is actively fighting the US legal system to stop workers from organizing at

their plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee. IndustriALL's global framework agreements with both Volkswagen and Airbus have had little sway in the US.

**SOUTH KOREA**

South Korean companies are well-known for their anti-union activities abroad, but union-busting in South Korea is entrenched and severe. **Han Sang-gyun, president of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), has been imprisoned since December 2015, while former KCTU general secretary, Lee Young-joo, was arrested in January 2018 and is now held in the same detention centre in Seoul.**

Sister Lee had been seeking refuge at the KCTU office for two years after an arrest warrant was issued for her role in organizing the People's Mass Mobilization on 14 November 2015 against the repressive labour reform of the former government.

While mobilizations by a broad alliance of unions and civil society succeeded in removing President Park in March 2017, Lee and Han Sang-gyun were not among the many thousands of people pardoned by the new administration under President Moon Jae-in.

IndustriALL has visited and met Han and Lee several times since 2015 as part of its global solidarity with South Korean union movement.



In April 2017, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary detention considered the case of Han and Lee and reminded the Korean government that it has “the responsibility, including in the context of peaceful protests, to prevent arbitrary arrest and detention, and called upon States to avoid the abuse of criminal proceedings at all times”.

Aside from the authorities, trade unions in Korea have an ongoing battle against brutal attacks on workers’ rights in the all-powerful, family-owned companies in the country (known as chaebols) such as Hyundai and Samsung.

**ALGERIA**



**Governments are taking scant notice of international labour conventions designed to protect trade union rights, even when their country has ratified them. Algeria signed the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Convention 87 on the right to freedom of association and Convention 98 on the right to organize and collective bargaining in 1962.**

And yet a powerful alliance of government, enterprise and the judiciary is determined to crush independent unions in Algeria, including SNATEGS, affiliated to IndustriALL. SNATEGS represents more than 30,000 workers at state-owned gas and electricity company Sonelgaz, whose demands for higher wages and better health and safety have been met with extraordinary reprisals.

Since the union was registered in 2013, SNATEGS and its leaders have been subject to increasing oppression and judicial persecution. In December 2016, SNATEGS President, Raouf Mellal, who was fired by Sonelgaz for union activities, was sentenced in absentia to six months in prison after he blew the whistle on the illicit overcharging of eight million Sonelgaz customers over a ten-year period.



Five months later, the Minister of Labour withdrew SNATEGS’ registration just days before a nationwide strike by Sonelgaz workers. In a letter dated 16 May 2017, the Minister said the union had disrespected the Algerian law 90-14/1990 without detailing how. It also said Mellal had been dismissed from his role as union president.

He has since been convicted to a total of 17 months in prison and fines of 10,000 euros (US\$12,300) on a plethora of spurious convictions. He is currently not in custody and appealing the charges.

Judicial persecution has extended to other members of SNATEGS. The general secretary and other senior leaders of the union and even the lawyer representing SNATEGS are now facing trumped up charges.

Security forces have been employed on numerous occasions to stop the union organizing rallies. On 20 January this year, around 10,000 Algerian police officers were employed to stop a peaceful rally organized by SNATEGS in the capital, Algiers. They detained some 1,000 would be protestors, who were taken by bus to remote areas and denied food and water for ten hours. Security forces confiscated their phones and deleted photos of the rally, as well as evidence of police oppression that took place. According to SNATEGS, some women protestors were sexually harassed and other trade union members were physically assaulted.

Global unions, IndustriALL, IUF, PSI and the ITUC wrote to the Algerian labour minister, Mourad Zemali, to condemn the treatment of the protestors, who were a

mix of trade unionists and civil society sympathetic to the workers’ demands.

In February 2018 an ILO direct contact mission to Algeria was cancelled following the government’s refusal to allow the mission to meet with independent unions.

**BANGLADESH**

In December 2016, the Bangladesh government used wildcat strikes by garment workers demanding higher wages as an excuse to launch a major crackdown on trade unions in the sector. Thirty-five trade union leaders and garment workers were seized and arbitrarily detained for several weeks. Union offices across garment producing areas near the capital Dhaka were shut down and vandalized by authorities. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) suspended production at 59 factories and more than 1,600 workers were suspended. Police filed charges against 600 workers and trade union leaders.

The wholesale attack on the unions was met with a strong response from the trade union movement. IndustriALL mobilized an international solidarity campaign #EveryDayCounts supported by UNI Global Union and affiliates worldwide.

Hundreds of photos from all over the world were posted on social media, and unions in more than 20 countries sent letters to the Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, calling for the release of the detainees. Trade unions protested and visited Bangladeshi embassies in over 16 cities, while a LabourStart campaign to free the jailed activists amassed more than 10,000 signatures.

Finally, on 23 February 2017, after two months of captivity, a tripartite agreement was reached between IndustriALL Bangladesh Council, the Ministry of Labour and the BGMEA, providing the release of the arrested trade unionists and garment workers, and all the cases against them to be dropped.

**However, despite the breakthrough, relations between factory owners, the government and trade unions in the Bangladeshi garment sector remain on a knife-edge. Just six months after the trade unionists had been released, 50 garment workers were badly beaten by a gang of thugs for taking part in a peaceful protest at sweater manufacturer, Haesong. The sit-in and strike outside the Korean-owned**





company's headquarters in Hizalhati, Gazipur, was organized by IndustriALL affiliate the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF).

Among those injured were the union's general secretary and vice-president who are both women. An NGWF organizer was kidnapped and released many hours later. Despite multiple requests, local police have refused to file workers' complaints about the kidnapping or the attacks.

**It is this impunity that makes trade union organizing perilous in Bangladesh.**

**THE PHILIPPINES**



People working in complex global supply chains are particularly vulnerable to rights violations, poor health and safety, and low pay. Accountability is low in what is a hidden workforce for multinational companies and trade unions often unwelcome.

Furukawa Automotive Systems, a Japanese-owned company in the Philippines makes car parts for major

automobile brands such as Toyota, Suzuki, and Nissan, from its plant in Lipa City, south of Manila.

Workers at Furukawa secured a victory in January this year after voting by a large margin to be represented by a branch of IndustriALL affiliate the Philippine Metalworkers Alliance (PMA). Close to 1,500 workers out of a workforce of 5,000 voted for a union, of whom more than 50 per cent are agency-hired or non-regular.

The fight for union recognition at Furukawa was gained with support of trade unions led by PMA, the Japan Council of Metalworkers' union, as well as global union federations and other organizations.

**However, despite the fact that PMA won the certification election, union-busting continues at the company.**

Another union, supported by the company, is delaying the process of collective bargaining by going to the labour court to claim that they have also members in Furukawa. Until the intervention of this union is resolved, there can be no negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement.

**COLOMBIA**

Like the Philippines, Colombia is ranked by the ITUC as one of the top ten world's worst countries for workers' rights, providing an easy environment for companies to attack trade unions.

TuboCaribe, owned by multinational steel producer Tenaris, manufactures steel tubes from a plant in the Caribbean port of Cartagena. After refusing to sign a new collective agreement with workers,

TuboCaribe sacked both the president and vice-president of the Workers' Union of Tenaris in Colombia (Sintratucar) in December 2017. TuboCaribe then refused to rehire twenty young people who had been working on rolling six-month contracts after they joined the union.

This prompted 100 more workers to leave Sintratucar for fear of losing their jobs. In contrast, these workers had their contracts renewed.

"The reason for my dismissal is the formation of the union," said Sintratucar president Walberto Marrugo. "Tenaris does not respect freedom of association. We are trying to annul the dismissals through the legal system but we will go to an arbitration tribunal and take other actions if necessary."



On learning of the dismissals, IndustriALL's Tenaris/Ternium Global Union Network launched a campaign in support of the dismissed workers and union leaders. Sintratucar held a series of protests and a mass meeting of members at the factory gates on 17 December. The meeting called on workers throughout the world to increase their pressure on the company by joining a Facebook campaign. Sintratucar also urged all Tenaris employees to make a video illustrating the company's union busting activities and to demand the reinstatement of the dismissed workers.

Following legal action by the union, the municipal justice of Cartagena ordered TuboCaribe to reinstate the vice-president of Sintratucar, Jairo del Rio, citing no just reason for his contract to be terminated. It was a key victory but the union's president Walberto Marrugo and the other young workers are still fighting for their jobs.

**RUSSIA**

**A recent decision by a Russian court to dissolve the Interregional Trade Union Workers' Association (ITUWA), has been described as a serious blow for independent unions in Russia.**



On 10 January 2018, the local court of Saint Petersburg ruled that IndustriALL affiliate, ITUWA, should be dissolved claiming the union had conducted political activities and received foreign funds.

ITUWA brings together 4,000 workers from the automotive and other industries. According to the prosecutor's office, the decision was based on ITUWA's solidarity support for truck drivers protesting against tax increases and the union's criticism of the government's socio-economic policies on its website.



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The court also included the inter-sectoral nature of the union's membership and activities as part of the reasons for its decision, as well as receiving foreign funds for taking part in joint workshops with IndustriALL.

Eight IndustriALL affiliates in Russia issued a joint statement in defense of ITUWA, which was sent to the State Duma, the Prosecutor's office, chairperson of the Supreme Court and the President of Russia. It said:

"The Saint Petersburg city court decision, in our opinion, not only blatantly violates the rights of workers and the trade unions representing their interests. It also moves the proper regulation of trade union

activities in Russia out of national and international legal frameworks."

ITUWA has appealed to the Supreme Court of Russia and is preparing for further trials.

## IVORY COAST

Not long after Moroccan energy group, Akwa, acquired an 80 per cent stake in Ivorian fuel distribution company Klenzi in December 2014, workers began to feel the full force of its anti-union policies.

**Klenzi has shown a complete lack of respect for the labour laws, the labour inspectorate and the Labour Ministry of Côte d'Ivoire in trying to oust IndustriALL energy affiliate SYNTEPCI.**

Trouble began in September 2015, when Klenzi refused to allow elections of worker representatives because it would have meant obtaining a list of candidates from SYNTEPCI and recognizing the union at the company. Eventually, following an arbitration meeting organized by the labour inspectorate in May 2017, Klenzi's CEO Ali Boutaleb refused to sign the minutes of the meeting.

After that, workers were subjected to all forms of threats and harassment to intimidate them leaving SYNTEPCI. After three employees refused to draw up a list of workers to target, the CEO himself wrote to employees on 5 July 2017 asking them to renounce their affiliation to SYNTEPCI. It soon became apparent the company was forcing employees to sign the letter under duress, which led SYNTEPCI general secretary, Jeremy Wondje, to make an urgent complaint to the labour inspector.



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The labour inspectorate called for a meeting between the parties on 3 August but Klenzi management failed to turn up. The workers who attended the meeting were sanctioned with written warnings for leaving work without permission.

After continuous intimidation one of the ten workers that had refused to sign the letter renouncing affiliation to SYNTEPCI, sent an SMS to his colleagues revealing that he had bowed under pressure, saying: "Hello comrades, truly I am weak, I couldn't hold out. I signed. My apologies."

**Out of the nine remaining employees who refused to sign the letter renouncing their affiliation to SYNTEPCI, eight have been fired.**

When the CEO's secretary also refused to sign, she was sent to work as a pump operator at the Tongon mine in Korhogo, where Klenzi delivers fuel.

On 31 January 2018, SYNTEPCI held a three-day strike to protest at the violations of freedom of association at Klenzi, as well as problems with other oil companies in Côte d'Ivoire. However, the situation remains unresolved.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Governments must recognize the legitimate and essential role of trade unions in redressing inequality, increasing prosperity and enlarging the tax base through higher wages. They must also do more to protect unions, says IndustriALL General Secretary, Valter Sanches:

**"Too much power in the hands of multinational companies - that indulge in union busting to protect their bottom lines - has negative impacts on entire communities and societies. Governments need to push back against corporate greed, and that includes defending the right of freedom of association through strong action."**

There is a glimmer of hope as a new generation of workers, faced with precarious work and low wages, realize that collective action is the best way of defending their interests. In 2017, there were 262,000 new union members in the USA, of whom 75 per cent were aged under 35. Some of the biggest gains came in organizing drives led by women and people of colour.

**"The more trade unions can grow by appealing to young people and women, the stronger they will be to counter union-busting attacks,"** concludes Sanches.

- 1 Participants at IndustriALL world rubber conference show solidarity for Kumho USA workers. *IndustriALL*
- 2 Solidarity from Kumho Tire local union reps of KMWU with workers in the US. *KMWU*
- 3 Representatives of IndustriALL and BWI in Geneva show solidarity for Kumho workers in US. *IndustriALL*
- 4 Korean trade unions celebrate the news of Park's departure. *KCTU*
- 5 SNATEGS union members pose defiantly following their release after being arrested by police on 20 July 2017 in Bejaia. *SNATEGS*
- 6 Mellal Raouf. *IndustriALL*
- 7 Activists in London call for jailed Bangladeshi workers to be freed. *IndustriALL*
- 8 Workers win recognition at Furukawa company in the Philippines. *PMA*
- 9 Sintratucar protest at Turbo Caribe factory gates. *IndustriALL*
- 10 Solidarity march for ITUWA in Moscow. *ITUWA*
- 11 SYNTEPCI members strike in Ivory Coast on 31 January 2018. *SYNTEPCI*





# profile

Union:  
**Mining and Metallurgy Trade Union of Kyrgyzstan (MMTUK)**

Country:  
**Kyrgyzstan**

Text:  
**Alexander Ivanou**

## ORGANIZING IS A WELL-DEFINED PRIORITY IN KYRGYZSTAN

Over last five years IndustriALL Global Union affiliate Mining and Metallurgy Trade Union of Kyrgyzstan (MMTUK) has grown from 15,000 to 27,250 members. The union leadership explains the outstanding results by strong union policies aimed at becoming more attractive to workers.

Trade union activities have three main focuses:

- ▶ Increasing trade union membership in existing organizations
- ▶ Creating new trade union organizations in the sector
- ▶ Expanding the union through mergers with trade unions in other sectors

The chosen strategy is paying off. In the mining and metallurgic sector there is a clear increase in working union members. In 2010, the union organized slightly more than half of everyone employed in the sector; two years later, trade union membership was up to 70.5 per cent. **It has continued to grow reaching 81.6 per cent in 2015, and finally achieving 84.1 per cent of workers employed in the sector in 2017.**

MMTUK is constantly working to improve the appeal for working people to join the union. One important way is spreading information about the union itself, its work and its achievements through mass media, including advertising on radio, television and the internet.

As advertising is expensive, the union created a competition for the best publication promoting MMTUK. The union also promotes its work through stands and banners in the streets, distribution

of flyers, organization of meetings with potential members.

**Uniting forces with other unions is another way of growing in strength. In the last five years, there have been two mergers; with the coal mine workers and the geology workers.**

For employees of the mobile operator Beeline, strength and a genuine internal democracy were the primary criteria when wanting to set up their own local branch of the MMTUK. This allowed the union to bargain for special tariffs for its members. The preferential mobile plan called “Profsoyuznyi” (for trade unions) became another motivational factor for workers to join MMTUK.

The union has had similar negotiations with banks for a special preferential interest rates on loans issued to trade union members.

“We are growing as a result of the work we are doing – constantly trying to address workers’ needs,” says Eldar Tadzibayev, president of MMTUK. “We provide traditional trade union representation at work through collective bargaining, improving health and safety, protecting workers’ rights and so on. At the same time, the MMTUK also provides additional services like legal support and consulting about issues regarding housing rights and domestic relations.”

The MMTUK is also gaining influence at the national level. In 2012, MMTUK established a national centre for research. The primary goal of the centre is to study and provide research on social and labour relations at both national and international levels, assist in improving working standards and conditions, help in implementing principles for decent work, equality, and respect of human dignity.

The centre is currently working on issues related to labour migration and the shadow economy. It is estimated that only 550,000 people out of the working age population of 2.2 million are officially employed. The centre is developing research on how to change the situation.



 [www.gmpk.kg](http://www.gmpk.kg)  
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# IndustriALL PLEDGE

## VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT AGAINST WOMEN:

- ✗ NOT IN OUR WORKPLACE
- ✗ NOT IN OUR UNION

UNIONS  
SAY NO TO  
VIOLENCE



**ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ARE UNACCEPTABLE!**

Violence seriously impacts women workers' lives around the globe, with sexual harassment its most reported form. Violence against women is a violation of women's human rights. It is an obstacle to gender equality. Violence against women at work is a core trade union issue affecting workers' rights, safety, health and dignity.

## OUR UNION PLEDGES:

-  To take a public stand against all forms of violence and harassment against women and to condemn all attitudes and actions that perpetuate sexism and violence
-  To take up the issue as a priority in our union and to allocate the necessary resources for activities aimed at preventing and combatting this violation of women's rights
-  To foster a culture of respect for women within our union by raising the awareness of our members, staff and officials and providing education on the importance of eradicating violence and harassment in the workplace and in our union
-  To encourage our members to actively take a stand against violence and harassment against women, especially in their own workplaces
-  To organize campaigns aimed at preventing and combating violence against women
-  To demand that governments enact and enforce laws to protect women from violence
-  To demand that employers develop policies against all forms of violence and harassment at work, and promote awareness among their employees on the devastating impacts of violence against women and the importance of eradicating it
-  To demand that employers develop concrete policies and procedures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women in their premises and supply chains, and establish safe mechanisms for women to turn to if they are assaulted or attacked at work
-  To include demands for the eradication of violence and harassment against women in our collective bargaining claims.