

**SOMALI CONGRESS
OF TRADE UNIONS**



**الإتحاد العام لنقابات
عمال الصومال**

**Xiriirka Guud ee Ururada
Shaqaalaha Soomaaliyeed**

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The Hypocrisy of the International Trade Union Confederation

The contradictions inherent in international trade union politics are deeply troubling. Our interactions with Western entities have taught us that dissent from their agendas frequently results in being branded as a dictator, or an illegitimate organization. They propagate the notion that success is solely achieved through an alliance with them, and conversely, deviation spells failure.

From 2015 to 2018, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) lodged multiple objections against the Somali Congress of Trade Unions (SOCOTU), denouncing it as a government-controlled entity and deeming it "illegitimate." These accusations stood in stark contrast to the opinions of numerous Somali workers who supported SOCOTU's efforts. SOCOTU was established in 2011 and has 11 unions affiliated. SOCOTU consistently advocated for workers' rights.

Nevertheless, ITUC persistently undermined SOCOTU's efforts. During this period, SOCOTU had indeed collaborated with Somalia's Ministry of Labour to further the interests of Somali workers, a move that benefited Somali workers. SOCOTU has always strived to ensure that Somali workers can exercise their full spectrum of rights, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Core Labour Standards.

However, the political landscape in Somalia has shifted significantly since then. Following the establishment of a new government, the Ministry of Labour has seen a revolving door of two different ministers. Each has approached SOCOTU with demands for bribes as a precondition for cooperation. When SOCOTU declined these corrupt overtures, it faced what amounted to a declaration of war from the Ministry of Labor.

Consequently, the government has committed multiple infractions against workers' rights, such as obstructing the Decent Work Program, denying the right to peaceful demonstrations, freedom of speech, and barring participation in the International Labour

Conference. Moreover, the Ministry of Labour has explicitly severed ties with us and has resorted to indirectly soliciting bribes. In Mogadishu, trade union meetings were monitored and banned without prior approval of the Ministry of Internal Security, unionists were constantly under pressure, and union leaders were repeatedly intimidated by the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA).

Amid these clear violations of worker rights, the silence from the ITUC is deafening and puzzling. This silence raises urgent questions about the principles guiding international trade unions: Is the ITUC's response influenced by political considerations? Does it favor certain unions over others? This inconsistency might reveal a broader trend of international bodies selectively addressing workers' rights issues based on their strategic interests rather than on the principles of justice and fairness.

Despite challenges, Somali workers nationwide are asserting their rights by establishing autonomous trade unions. Their aim is to enhance their quality of life and safeguard civil, political, economic, and social rights for themselves and their families. SOCOTU remains committed to its role as a champion for union activists, advocating for worker rights, advancing human and union rights, conducting organizing training programs, disseminating information among union members, and offering assistance to unions facing difficulties.

Kind regards,

Hassan Abukar Abdullahi

Secretary of Communication

