

Tuesday, 30 September 2014

Australian Unions in solidarity with Hong Kong Unions over democracy struggle

ACTU President Ged Kearney said Australian Unions stand in solidarity with Hong Kong workers in the fight for democracy.

“Australian Unions strongly condemn the Chinese Government for suppressing freedom of speech and freedom of assembly in Hong Kong,” Ms Kearney said.

“We further condemn the police for their violent attack on unarmed participants and the brutal suppression of peaceful protest.”

Thousands of people have joined and supported the peaceful gathering outside Hong Kong’s Government Headquarters that began on September 26th.

It follows the government announcement in August that candidates for the position of Chief Executive would have to be vetted and approved by a pro-business, pro-Beijing committee.

The protests were originally organised by the students’ federation and the Occupy Central coalition and have drawn increasing numbers of supporters.

The mainland Chinese government has harshly condemned the protestors’ demands and the “illegal” protests.

The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) has joined the fight for democracy, declaring “we cannot let the students fight alone” and has called for workers to strike in support of four demands:

- The immediate release of all the arrested
- An end to the suppression of peaceful assembly
- Replacing the “fake universal suffrage” formula with genuine political reform workers have been demanding
- The resignation of Chief Executive Leung Chun Ying

“It is a stark and sobering reminder that democratic freedoms cannot be taken for granted,” said Ms Kearney.

“Around the world, governments are seeking to suppress the rights of ordinary workers.

“Workers’ rights are human rights and trade unions worldwide need to be vigilant. Even in Australia we need to guard against the erosion of human and worker rights to which we are currently being exposed by the Abbott Government and conservative state governments.

“Australian Unions support the courageous actions of the HKCTU, which has been the backbone of the democracy movement, before and following Hong Kong’s return to Chinese rule.”

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