Mr. Roman Golovchenko
Prime Minister
Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus
House of Government
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Republic of Belarus
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29 April 2022

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

The Australian trade union movement strongly condemns the arrest and detention in Belarus of at least fourteen leaders and representatives of the country's independent trade union movement.

We were informed that on 19 April 2022, the leadership of the Belarusian Congress of Trade Unions (BKDP) - the President of BKDP Aliaksandr Yarashuk, BKDP Vice-President Sergey Antusevich, SPM President Aleksandr Bukhvostov, SPB President Nikolay Sharakh – were arrested. We understand that many other colleagues were detained, including Yana Malash, Vitaliy Chichmarev, Anna Dus, Vadim Paivin, Mikhail Gromov, Igor Komlik, Vasiliy Beresnev, Gennadiy Fedynich, Dmitri Borodko and Irina But-Gusaim. Several others are still not reachable and their location is not known.

The trade union premises of the BKDP in Minsk and those of the Free Trade Union of Metal Workers (SPM) and the Union of Radio-Electronic Workers (REP) were searched. The security forces also searched homes of the many trade union leaders and employees. We understand that during these searches, many objects were apprehended, including computers, flash cards, personal documents, passports, bank cards – including those of family members – SIM cards of foreign mobile operators and trade union paraphernalia.

We demand the immediate release of all union leaders and representatives in detention and call on your government to drop all charges allowing unions to perform their activities in line with national legislation and the ILO Conventions ratified by Belarus.

Yours sincerely

Michele O'Neil
ACTU President

CC:
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