



Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC)

A special report on the most important
trade union rights and freedoms violations
recorded in the Arab region during the
COVID-19 pandemic period



October 2020

Introduction

The epidemic in the Arab region has not been limited to the Corona pandemic, but there appeared another epidemic that has been more deadly to humans. It is the persecution of workers under the pretext of protection measurements against the spread of the virus.

The International Trade Union Confederation of Global Rights Index indicated that the year 2020 is the worst in the past seven years in terms of blackmailing workers and violating their rights. The seventh edition of the ITUC Global Rights Index documents labour rights violations across 144 countries around the world, especially after the Corona pandemic, which has suspended many workers from their work during the current year.

The Middle East and North Africa have been considered the worst regions in the world for workers for seven consecutive years due to the on-going insecurity and conflict in Palestine, Syria, Yemen and Libya. Such regions have also been the most regressive for workers' representation and union rights. "In light of the emerging coronavirus (Covid-19), some countries have developed anti-worker measures and practices during the period of precautionary measures to confront the outbreak of the pandemic," said Sharan Burrow, The Secretary-General of the International Trade Union Confederation.

Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Honduras, India, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Turkey and Zimbabwe turned out to be the ten worst countries for working people in 2020 among other 144 countries that have been examined.

The second classification includes 27 countries with repeated violations of labor rights, and the third classification includes 24 countries with regular violations of workers' rights.

The fourth classification comprises 41 countries with systematic violations of workers' rights. Most of these countries are African and among which is Morocco.

The fifth classification of 32 countries, including Arab countries such as the UAE, Algeria, Egypt and Iraq, have been described as having no guarantee of workers' rights.

The last classification, with a 5+ rating, includes 9 countries that have been described as having no guarantee of workers' rights due to the breakdown of the rule of law. The nine countries are: Burundi, Palestine, Sudan, Central Africa, Somalia, Syria, Libya, South Sudan and Yemen.

After a careful review of the workers' situation in the Arab region, especially the member states of the Arab Trade Union Confederation, several violations have been recorded. For example, violations of workers' rights in the private sector in Morocco, Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia where employers exploited government measures to impose restrictions on industrial, commercial and agricultural activities to lay off workers in an arbitrary manner and stop the payment of wages.

Meanwhile, in Bahrain and Oman official letters were sent to the governments to replace foreign workers with local ones.

In the interim, violations of the rights of workers employed by foreign companies have been recorded as what happened in Mauritania and in Lebanon by the American University administration. Lebanon has topped migrant workers' violations against Ethiopian, Kenyan and Asian domestic workers. Algerian authorities continue to deport migrants from sub-Saharan Africa despite their assertion that the deportation is carried out in accordance with the law. In addition to the ugly cases of torture that have affected migrant workers in Libya, and the endless cases of acts of torture against Palestinian workers detained in inhumane conditions under the Israeli occupation authority.

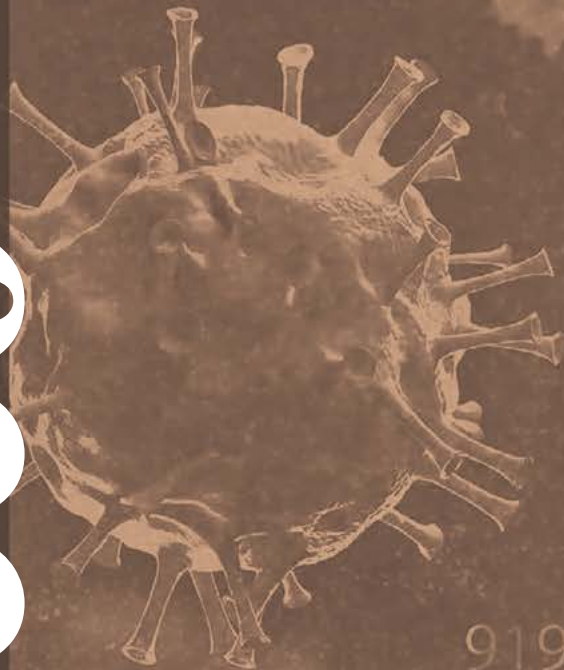
While in some countries like Egypt, violations based on political backgrounds continue to prevail and have reached the point of arrests, trials, imprisonment and fabrication of charges.

The Corona pandemic has mainly revealed the lack of health care and protection for workers, especially in the health sector, after the escalation in cases and number of deaths among workers in the private and public sectors.

It also turned out that Gulf workers were the most affected as the region witnessed waves of layoffs that affected hundreds of thousands, against the backdrop of the heavy losses these countries incurred due to the collapse of oil prices in conjunction with the outbreak of the virus. In other countries such as Iraq, Libya, Yemen and Lebanon, workers' pains have been exacerbated by social and security unrest, alongside the pandemic. The workers of Egypt and the Maghreb countries did not escape the guillotine of layoffs and cut back on salaries.

MOROCCO

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4 (Systematic violations of rights)



8145.5

91903

13090

1482.

Morocco

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4 (Systematic violations of rights)

Despite Morocco's leadership in the Arab countries, in terms of respecting workers' rights, and coming 4th in the ITUC international rating compared to the rest of the Arab countries, many violations have been recorded particularly after the spread of the Corona pandemic. The High Commission for Planning and Statistics in Morocco released a report last February confirming that nearly 95.3% of the Moroccan workforce are not affiliated with any union or professional organization. This means only 4.7% are union members with a clear majority for the Moroccan Labor Union, the General Union of Workers and the Democratic Confederation of Labor.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, violations of workers' rights took new forms such as violation of the right to organize. There have been many cases of arbitrary dismissal, forced labour, and work in dangerous conditions.

Moroccan Labour Minister Mohamed Amkraz admitted in a speech, while introducing a draft law to enact exceptional measures in favour of the employers involved in the National Social Security Fund and their authorized workers affected by the repercussions of Corona, that "more than 131000 companies have been affected by the Corona pandemic, which resulted in the suspension of one third of private sector workers from work." Amkraz said that out of the 216000 enterprises (companies) involved in the Social Security Fund, 131,955 have been affected by Corona, which is approximately 61% of the total number of enterprises. He mentioned that the number of suspended workers in the private sector has reached 808,199 workers from out of 2.6 million workers, which is 31%.

Violation of the right to organize

I. The "Amanour" Foundation in Morocco has expelled the union office of the Moroccan Labour Union and the strike has been held since last January. On January 21, The General Agent of Tangiers informed the striking workers with the decision to break the sit-in, warning them to use public force in the event of non-compliance. Commenting on this decision, the MLU-affiliated head of the union office said that it was the third time that the Judicial Commissioner visited the 500 affected workers in the sit-in, and informed them with the evacuation decision. He added that the basic demand of hundreds of the protesters is the return of the union representatives, the workers representatives and the workers whom the management decided to lay off starting January 21st without any legal reason. Consequently, the overnight-stay open strike started in all Amanour's branches in Tangier-Tetouan and Rabat. He confirmed, after more than seven months of suffering and displacement, that the decision to break the sit-in is rejected and that any attempt to disperse it by public force will only have to pass over their dead bodies. He indicated that the local authorities are closely aware of the developments of the file, and they know very well that the decision to lay off workers is an arbitrary decision. However, they have changed their position and chose to stand in the line of the company's management and offer workers as sacrifices.

II. The blatant violations in this field continued, mainly reflected in wage deduction of striking employees, abusive practices against trade unionists, the local authorities' refusal to receive legal files or to hand over the deposit receipt to many trade unions, the employers' refusal to recognize the union offices and dialogue with them, the expulsion of union officials and striking workers including many arrest and trial cases and the illegal shut down of factories to intimidate union work; the matter which has been addressed in the statements of our member organizations in the Arab Federation of Trade Unions, in addition to the Moroccan Association for Human Rights reports.

There was an absence of collective negotiation in most of the companies and sectors, considering the fact that social dialogue remained formal and sterile. Many of the previous commitments, including the April 26, 2011 agreement between the government and trade union centres representatives and employers remained unimplemented, in addition to many legitimate demands for wage earners which have failed to receive the anticipated response.

The government also hastened to take the decision to freeze promotion and employment in the public sector, and to impose deductions on the employees' wages for the benefit of the "Covid-19 Fund" in a compulsory and discriminatory manner, and in complete contradiction with the provisions of the constitution which stipulate that everyone, not only one group, should take part by means of solidarity and in proportion to the means available to them— Burdens and Costs Resulting from Pests and Natural Disasters (Chapter 40). In this regard, the government was called upon to withdraw this discriminatory and compulsory decision regarding the voluntary nature of contributing to the Covid-19 Fund.

III. Morocco has so far ratified less than a third of the nearly 190 international employment agreements issued by the International Labour Organization. This requires the country to ratify all of these agreements in force starting with the immediate ratification of Convention No. 87 on "Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize" which the government committed to ratify within the framework of social dialogue on April 26, 2011. The provisions of the constitution relating to labour rights remain weak, and the labour code and its related implementation decrees, despite its partial gains, marred by disadvantages whether at work stability, wages, the position and role of the union within the enterprise, or its devotion to injustice against agricultural workers. Moreover, the adopted restraining measures are insufficient to limit labour laws violations by employers.

Deprivation of wages

I. In a unilateral manner, the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises decided to postpone the activation of the second part of the minimum wage increase, which was agreed upon in the social dialogue meeting supervised by the government on April 25, 2019, and which extends for three years (2019-2021). At a time when private sector workers were waiting for the planned increase last July, the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises decided to present a "recovery" plan and decided to postpone the wage increases for next year under the pretext of the repercussions of the Corona crisis. The tripartite agreement provides for a 10 % increase in the minimum wage in the industrial and trade sectors over two years starting from July 2019 and 5 % in July 2020, and for 10 % over two years in the agriculture sector from July 2019 and 5 % starting from July 2020. In addition to increasing the family allowance by 100 dirhams for each child, maximum of three children, starting from July 2019.

II. Many members of the National Coordination of Professors, who were imposed to sign contracts, have fought harsh battles for inclusion in the civil services. They have been exposed to various forms of oppression, as described by Moroccan trade union organizations as well as the Moroccan Association for Human Rights, whether during organizing their peaceful marches or through arbitrary administrative procedures and withholding of wages. Human rights organizations have called on the government to expedite negotiations with representatives of these professors, and to improve the financial and working conditions for the whole faculty, in line with the UNESCO and the 1966 International Labour Organization recommendations related to the conditions of teachers and in a way that guarantees their rights and the rights of students of good public education.

“The pressure on public expenditures and investment in the financial laws, whether by freezing employee wages; reducing newly created jobs; and the shortage in the budgets of social

sectors, along with an increase in the income tax and value-added tax, reflected in family spending and on public deals directed at small enterprises, further deepens unemployment and job vulnerability. "

III. In terms of legal procedures related to freedom of association, Moroccan trade union organizations continue to demand the provisions of International Labour Convention No. 135, regarding the protection and providing facilities to workers' representatives, to be seriously incorporated into the Labour Code. They also call for the abolition of all provisions that impede the right to strike and freedom of association, foremost of which is Article 288 of the criminal law, which was kept in the draft of the criminal law, and the fifth chapter of the decree of February 5, 1958 regarding employees' exercise of the right to union, and it calls for strengthening guarantees that protect and respect the right to strike, expressing its rejection of any draft regulatory law on the subject aimed at restricting this right.

IV. The Moroccan Labour Union and the Democratic Confederation of Labour accused the Casablanca city council of being slow in paying the wages of cleaning workers. The two unions announced that they would stop collecting waste in Casablanca for two days, in early September, in protest for their non-receipt of their salary last August. A labour source said that the reason for the delay is the failure of the city council and the "Kazar" company to pay the dues of the two companies that directly supervise the cleaning work in Casablanca. The same applies to sanitation workers in Tetouan; the workers, invited by the regional union of the Moroccan Labour Union in Tetouan, organized a protest in front of the city council's headquarters against the non-payment of salaries for the month of September.

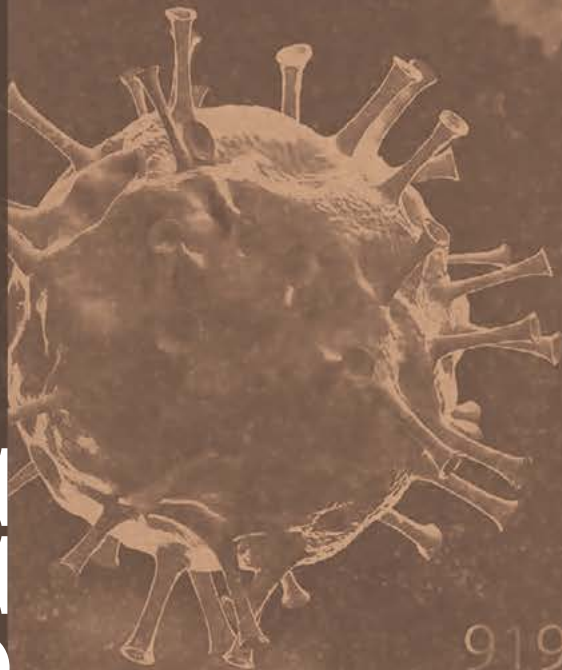
Arbitrary dismissal

I. Royal Air Maroc has embarked on implementing a plan to lay off a significant number of its employees due to the economic

repercussions of the Corona pandemic. 140 employees, including 65 pilots, have received notification of dismissal from work, and the company intends to reduce the number of its crew by one third within the framework of a complete scheme to reduce expenses, including some services, by cancelling a number of flights to Africa and selling or leasing a number of its aircraft. Despite the Moroccan government's approval to pump 600 million euros to the company's treasury, the company's management continued to implement a complete scheme under the title of restructuring that may take more than three years. The company has opened the door to negotiations with 160 employees over the age of 57 to urge them to voluntarily leave, pending the completion of the demobilization plan to eliminate 740 other jobs.

Jordan

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4 (Systematic violations of rights)



8145.5

9190.3

1389.9

1482.

Jordan

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4 (Systematic violations of rights)

According to the Euro-Mediterranean Institute for Human Rights, official figures for absolute poverty levels in Jordan show that it is close to 635 dollars a month for a standard family consisting of approximately 4.8 individuals; and nearly two-thirds of workers in Jordan (66.1%), according to figures from the Social Security Corporation, receive \$ 700 of monthly salaries or less. The minimum wage has not been amended, despite a raise decision to \$ 367, however it has been suspended until the beginning of 2021.

The Workers House for Studies and Research estimates the loss of between 50 and 80 thousand jobs in various sectors due to Covid-19 as a result of workers' income being significantly affected by their temporary interruption of work. According to Jordanian studies offices, the number is expected to reach up to 400,000 workers. The deterioration of the economic situation in the country has resulted in the legitimacy of serious and unprecedented violations, some with governmental legitimacy that gave employers an excuse to commit many violations. "This year will be the worst on Jordan's workers due to the increasing violations they are exposed to in light of the Corona crisis and the state of loss suffered by tens of thousands of workers who have lost their jobs, and no longer have a source of livelihood for two months." The Jordanian Observatory said.

He added that the condition of workers in Jordan is "very miserable" in terms of losing large numbers of their job opportunities in the private sector, while thousands of day labourers suffer poverty and are no longer able to work as usual, given the lockdown imposed by the government since mid-March.

"Hundreds of labour violations have been recorded against workers, especially in private sector establishments, including those who have not received their salaries for two months, and companies that have taken advantage of defence decisions issued by the government and suspended workers' salaries, and others have reduced them by 30% and 50%, while large numbers of workers have been dismissed under the pretext of repercussions of the Corona pandemic." The Observatory added.

Reducing wages

I. The Jordanian government issued a notification on May 31, 2020, which allows the employers to terminate the services of workers in their facilities, and restricts the right to file a complaint only to Jordanian workers, not to foreigners.

The government report allows the owners of enterprises to harm reduce the salaries of workers without human consideration. It includes a 30% deduction of workers' wage from the salaries of the months of May and June. It also cancels the approval required for employers to deduct 50% of workers' salaries not assigned to work for them.

The report also allows the employer to reduce the worker's monthly wage by up to 60%, without requiring the approval of the Ministry of Labour or the worker, provided that the worker's wage after reduction is no less than 150 dinars per month. In addition, the report allows the employer to assign the worker who is not required to perform entirely or partially at the facility's headquarters or remotely work from home for a maximum of four hours per day, and the worker is not entitled to additional wage.

Jordanian Minister of Labour Nidal Al-Batayneh said in a press statement that the ministry approved the requests of 3,443 establishments, 1,647 of which to reduce wages for the month of April only for 55,911 workers. Meanwhile the ministry approved

the requests of 1796 establishments to reduce wages of 52,119 workers for the months of April / May. On the other hand, the requests of 261 establishments to reduce the wages of 16,787 workers have not been approved for many reasons.

He added that employers can still benefit from what was stated in Defence Order No. (6) and all affiliated instructions and decisions, especially the requests for maximum of 50% reduction in wages for the current month of May for workers who do not perform work in the institution entirely, partially or remotely— provided that what they will be paid is not less than the minimum wage.

Workers in a garment factory in the Hussein Bin Abdullah Industrial City in northern Jordan have recently gone on strike when the factory management of Chinese investors refused to grant workers the salary for the month of April.

II. The Jordanian Observatory monitored more than 600 complaints about some institutions having deducted the official holiday period from the salaries of employees and delivered only part of the March salary without explanations. Other institutions forced their employees to apply for unpaid leave for the entire period of the emergency government vacation, and some of them forced workers to take their annual leave during the vacation. He stressed that "some non-vital sector businesses forced some of their workers to work during the curfew period without movement permits, which subjected many of them to legal accountability."

The right to organize and strike

Dispute returned again in July following the Attorney General's decision to close the Teachers Syndicate, suspending its work for a period of two years and suspending the entire Syndicate Council including the acting head of Teachers Syndicate, Nasser Al-Nawasrah. Their arrest warrants contain criminal cases: "The investigative case related to the financial violations considered

by the Public Prosecutor of the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission, and the investigative case considered by the General Prosecutor of Amman related to the decisions issued by the Syndicate Council, which circulated on social media, and included inflammatory measures. Following the closure of the headquarters of the Teachers Syndicate and the suspension of its work for a period of two years, Amman Attorney General prohibited any media publishing and statements on the teachers' case. The security services arrested dozens of male and female teachers who attempted to sit in close to the fourth roundabout near the prime minister's building for several hours, and forcibly dispersed gatherings of protesters who carried out separate sit-ins in the Shmeisani area, the fifth roundabout, and Abdoun in the Jordanian capital Amman. The teachers called for a sit-in in front of the prime minister in protest against the measures taken against their union and the arrest of members of the Syndicate Council. However, the security forces closed the Fourth Circle area and prevented them from reaching the sit-in area due to COVID-19 measures to reduce the spread of the virus through physical distancing and preventing gatherings.

Forced labour

I. A survey of 710 workers and employers conducted by Workers House Study Center was based on Jordanians and foreigners; males and females in 7 governorates, and within three targeted economic sectors: agriculture, construction and services. It indicated that about 58.3% of total workers in organized and unorganized enterprises or projects receive their wages regularly without delay, compared to 41.7% of the employers who do not regularly pay wages.

It pointed out that 56.1% work more than 8 hours a day, 38.8% of whom are forced to work overtime, and so is the case for self-employed workers as 54.3% work more than 8 hours a day. The study also stated that 55.2% work overtime hours, 50.6% do not get paid weekly leave, and 54.7% of employers do not

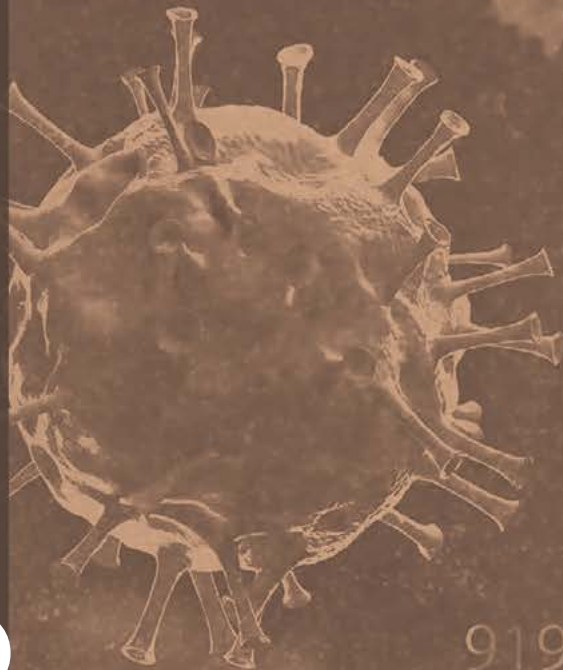
give informal workers paid weekly leave, while 52.8% of self-employed workers get one day weekly leave. With regard to the availability of occupational health and safety conditions, the study stated that only 23.5% of the total sample confirmed the availability of protective and safety equipment and first aid tools, indicating that 56.2% of workers in the construction sector do not have any means of protection and prevention or first aid tools, followed by the agricultural sector with 25.7%, while the services sector was the least committed to providing those means, compared to other sectors as the percentage of workers who did not have those means reached 18.1%

Occupational Health and Safety

I. On October 1, no less than 600 workers in Al-Fatih garment factory located in the Al-Dhaleel region were infected with the Coronavirus. In a statement, the Jordanian Minister of Health announced that the injured "are foreign workers from the country of Bengal ..." which cleared the way for describing the speech as racist, and the governor of Zarqa stated that "the Corona cases of the Al-Dhaleel factory do not mix with citizens and reside in isolated designated dwellings..."

Egypt

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 5 (Systematic violations of rights)



8145.5

9190.3

1399

1482.

Egypt

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 5 (Systematic violations of rights)

The epidemic crisis that struck the country revealed the grave suffering that private sector workers face, given that most of them work under difficult conditions without health or social insurance, and many of them are exposed to serious injuries and their work is terminated "with the stroke of a pen." A number of companies began to give compulsory unpaid leave, and reduce workers' salaries from 50% to 60% starting from last March, amid a clear abandonment by the government to protect their rights.

The unfair dismissal remains a danger that accompanies the private sector worker throughout one's life. Most workers in this sector do not have legal work contracts. Instead, they sign a resignation known in Egypt as "Form 6", which is a pre-signed resignation, ready to be activated at any time the employer wishes to dismiss any worker without giving reasons.

According to a statement by an official in the Egyptian Workers Union to media outlets, more than 70% of workers in the private sector of hotel and tourism; textile and food industries ;real estate contracting sector work without having formal employment contracts that preserve the minimum of their rights, and which in return expose them to dismissal at any time without prior notice. Such sectors were subject to closure.

Arbitrary dismissal

I. On 30 September, The Egyptian Public Prosecution referred 26 workers from "Orascom" to the Emergency State Security Court and accused them of "disrupting production and preventing the company from carrying out its work due to their protest during

the state of emergency which resulted in disrupting production in one of the private facilities: The National Company for Steel Industries. The trial penalty includes imprisonment and a fine of not less than 20,000 EGP and not more than 50,000 EGP. Influential parties from the company's management and its owners tried to fabricate the charge, for the 26 workers through a number of media outlets, of affiliation with the "Muslim Brotherhood Group", which is banned in Egypt.

Commenting on these charges, Dr. Essam El-Tabbakh, the defendants' lawyer, said that he "trusts the Egyptian judiciary," since "the case was fabricated in whole and in detail, and it was imposed by the company in order to reach the arbitrary dismissal of workers without a slightest loss."

Indeed, after the allegation of these records of arbitrary dismissal of workers, Al-Tabakh confirmed that the defendants have no hand in that fictitious case, and that he will provide all the defences before the court to drop all charges."

II. 70% of brick factories in Egypt (2000 factories), out of about 2850 factories nationwide, have stopped production and workers have been displaced due to the inability to pay salaries. The spokesperson for the Association of Brick Factory Owners attributed the main reason to "a decision to halt construction for a period of 6 months." He pointed out that the decision has negatively affected the interests of more than 350, 000 direct and indirect workers in this profession saying "I have not seen in my whole life such a crisis in this profession, which I have been working in since 1986."

III. Khatib and Alami Company for Consulting, Engineering Design and Project Management dismissed a number of employees while reducing the salaries of others under the pretext of Corona's effect on the company's conditions without informing or warning them. The Egyptian Labour Services House revealed that about 30 employees, including engineers, secretaries, and administrators in the two branches of the company in Nasr City

and Al-Mohandeseen, have filed complaints to the Council of Ministers and the Labour and Insurance Office to demand their financial dues, according to the law, when the company refused to pay them in full.

IV. The management of the International Group for Modern Paints “Mido Paints Company” in Burj Al Arab city in Alexandria have dismissed thirty-five workers without clear reasons. The workers responded by filing a complaint and recording evidence against the company’s management.

The facts of the story go back to last Ramadan, when the administration deducted all incentives, including work and duty allowances, and then deducted 15% of the basic wage, which prompted workers to file a complaint to the Ministry of Manpower in Alexandria. The Manpower office in Burj Al Arab refused to file the complaint and asked the workers to submit their complaint through the official website. This is a flagrant violation of one of the workers' rights stipulated in international treaties.

The Right to Organize

I. The workers of Horizon Investment and Industrial Development Company (Ceramica Granito) had dissolved their sit-in after a meeting with the group's general manager, during which he expressed consent to all the workers' demands, and promised actual implementation by the beginning of next January. Soon, union sources announced that the sit-in is continuing in light of the absence of redressing grievance of laying off 21 workers, including three members of the union: Mahmoud Hilal, Ibrahim Haddad and Muhammad al-Sayed Ratib. Granito workers had organized a sit-in on 6th August to protest against the administration’s neglect of their demands to increase wages, meal allowance and to disburse company’s profits which had not been cashed for three years.

II. The Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Freedoms and Work Rights at the Center for Trade Union and Workers Services decided, during its weekly meeting, to issue two letters listing and defining the trade union committees that still have not come to light due to the Ministry of Manpower's intransigence and its procrastination in finalizing papers despite all examination and validity approval by the Ministry officials. The letters were also informing the Council of Ministers of all procrastinations and request their attendance to the tripartite meeting of the Capacity Building Program, carried out in partnership with the International Labour Organization to enable establishment of independent trade unions as the program sponsor.

ATUC website stated that that was decided in the presence of representatives of the workers' unions at the Adult Education Authority, drivers' services in Qalyubia and Al Gharbia, the General Syndicate of Pensioners, workers in the Egyptian Survey, Maps and Geographic Information Systems "under establishment", workers in localities in Menoufia "under establishment", and representatives of workers' offices by parties.

Deprivation of wages

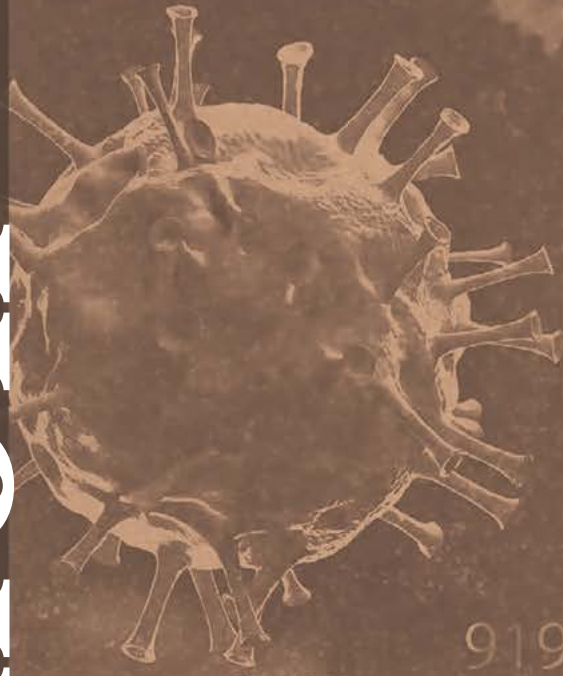
The Egyptian Trade Union and Workers Services House said that the management of Maridive Shipping and Petroleum Services in Alexandria has dismissed 21 workers without giving reasons. Recently, Human Resources employees, on behalf of the company's CEO, have contacted workers by phone and informed them of the management decision to terminate their services. They asked them to sign resignations and agree on their financial dues, which will be disbursed after submitting the required resignations.

The ATUC official website reported that the workers were surprised by the management's decision that workers should sign resignations first before determining the value of their financial dues. In addition, the management had decided to grant workers

their financial dues in unlimited instalments; half a month for the first five years, and a month for each year of service for the remaining period for each worker. The workers rejected the decision and considered it as procrastination and evading the payment of workers' dues. It prompted them to report 21 proof of violation as well as to file a complaint to Samouha's labour office against the company's management. According to the employees, the company argued its decision to business interruption and lack of the company's resources to cover the monthly wages and entitlements of employees.

Lebanon

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8145.5

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1482.

Lebanon

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4 (Systematic violations of rights)

The economic and financial crises that Lebanon is currently facing are not new, but the COVID-19 pandemic, which has recently hit Lebanon along other Arab nations and nations of the world, has made matters worse since it gave the Lebanese people and government many additional issues and challenges. The rapid collapse of the financial situation in Lebanon in the first half of the year has led to a total economic collapse, practically causing more commercial, industrial and tourist establishments to shut down, random layoffs of workers and employees, and undermining their rights under the pretext of financial bankruptcy.

It is not new to claim that 90% of the establishments that were already facing troubles surviving and relying on additional sales to cover for the missing liquidity in funds, are being threatened with either bankruptcy or shutting down. This issue has been the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting disruption has further exacerbated this issue. Moreover, the collapse of the national currency exchange rate has made matters worse as salaries lost more than 80% of their value. To make things worse, the huge rise in prices has negatively affected the ability of all residents ,Lebanese , Palestinian and Syrians, to afford living in a way which has widened the ratio of those affected by poverty to over half of the total population.

According to the figures released by the Social Security Fund, 37.5% of those authorized for work guarantee earn less than 1 million Lebanese pounds, which is below the highest poverty line set at around 1.5 million Lebanese pounds, while 86% of them earn less than 3 million pounds. It was also found that 21,450 workers have left the work market, while the employment movement has slowed down during the year 2020 by 71%.

The suffering of workers and employees in Lebanon has turned into domestic movements with demands of the people, the severity of which differed based on the policies adopted by each company in light of the economic crisis. There were those who lost their employment permanently and stayed home unemployed, while other boards of management relied on plans of deducting percentages up to 50% of their employees' salaries in an attempt to avoid complete closure, or granting them voluntary unpaid leave. Meanwhile, the majority of companies cancelled the bonuses which were given to employees in the past. In addition the majority of organizations paid their employees' salaries in the national currency according to the official exchange rate of 1515 Lebanese pounds at a time when the exchange rate in parallel markets exceeded 4000 Lebanese pounds at times. This in return decreased the value of the salaries to more than 70% of their values.

Deprivation of wages and forced labour

Over 250,000 stay-at-home workers, mostly consisting of women, African/Asian immigrants working in private homes, reside in Lebanon.

Immigrant domestic workers in Lebanon are trapped in a web woven by the kafala system, which is a care system that implies mistreatment for migrant domestic workers. The constant highlighting of the government's violations caused the announcement of the "unified contract" system which did not receive a warm welcome from trade union and human rights organizations.

I. At the beginning of last August, a number of Kenyan domestic workers started a protest in front of their embassy in the Lebanese capital demanding their secure return to their countries after they have been run out of options in light of the current severe economic situation that Lebanon has been living for the past

year and which was exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the massive explosion that occurred in the Beirut port and lead to the suspension of their wages. In response, the Lebanese Ministry of Labor issued a statement saying “A number of female domestic workers of Kenyan nationality held a sit-in in front of their country’s consulate in Beirut asking for their secure return to their homeland”. The statement added that the Ministry of Labor was following up on the issue in coordination with the Kenyan consulate and the human rights organizations concerned with foreign workers’ issues. The statement was concluded by referring to a coordinated meeting that would deal with effective solutions to ensure that the domestic workers leave for Kenya after completing the necessary procedures and steps to receive their rights from their employers.

II. Around the same month, Lebanese activists circulated a video clip of a Lebanese woman in a luxurious car dropping off her housemaid on the street in front of the Kenyan Consulate in the capital Beirut due to the worsening of the living crisis in the country, declining incomes and the lack of any social or legal insurance for foreign domestic workers. The video clip showed a group of domestic workers chasing the woman while she was driving her car. The video, which was taken by one of the passers-by was widespread ,showed the poor helpless maid weeping, while the anger of the other workers there was reaching its peak denouncing the lady’s behavior towards their fellow Kenyan who suddenly found herself without work or shelter.

III. All human rights and union reports describe the situation of domestic workers of African descent as very harsh. The Ethiopian worker “Bacallo” (on the condition of her anonymity to maintain her employment status), a 25 year old domestic worker in Beirut, stated that her employers left her outside the Ethiopian embassy’s gates without any explanation, salary or even passport. Many of her fellow Ethiopians have faced similar treatment over the past few months, and due to these circumstances an unknown number

of female domestic workers have committed suicide. Despite what “Bacallo” went through, she refused to reveal the names of those she works for hoping that one day after the crisis ends she would regain her job and her entitlements. She stated that her monthly salary which did not exceed \$300 represented a large part of the money that her entire family spent for living needs in Ethiopia.

V. A number of foreign workers belonging to ARAMCO waste collection company ,which specializes in waste collection in Mount Lebanon and some areas of Beirut, launched a protest in the company’s vicinity demanding their due payments to be made in US Dollars or at least be compensated for the currency difference in Lebanese pounds. The decline in the Lebanese pound’s value against the dollar, and the lack of liquidity in banks, due to the repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis have raised the exchange rate in parallel markets and the black market to more than 4200 Lebanese pounds, while the official exchange rate in banks remains constant at 1515 Lebanese pounds. Protesters raised their voices loudly in the company’s face demanding officials to grant the workers, mostly of Bangladeshi or Indian origin, their full rights. Note that they did not stop working despite the dangers posed by the pandemic. Tension rose between the workers, who numbered more than a hundred and the security forces as the protestors prevented trucks from leaving the company’s vicinity. Videos spread through social media showing the company’s reliance on large security forces to attack and suppress the workers, which was denounced by activists who quickly called for protests in solidarity with the foreign workers’ rights in front of the company’s offices in the Hamra area in Beirut. On its end, the ARAMCO company indicated in a statement that “Since November 2019, we have not received dues from the Lebanese state in US Dollars despite this being a violation of the contract we have signed with the government earlier.”

Arbitrary dismissal:

I. The American University of Beirut's administration conducted a collective dismissal of 1500 employees of its employees . They were thrown in the street without any respect for the laws of labour or social dialogue with worker representatives and their unions. The Lebanese media described the act as the “workers massacre” perpetrated by one of the oldest and most professional educational institutions in all of Lebanon. Despite having thousands of students, The AUB claimed it was no longer able to secure its employees' monthly salaries. The truth behind the administration's narrative has been questioned due to the institute's strong financial position and them having collected huge profits throughout the years. Moreover, they have not yet declared bankruptcy, and it is not known whether they have provided the Lebanese Ministry of Labour with the necessary financial statements or it was not made public. Also, the disbursement process affected low-paid employees and did not extend to senior employees, which amounts to tens of thousands of dollars per employee as revealed in the salary lists published on the media. The Lebanese organizations such as the Lebanese Observatory for Worker and Employee rights condemned this cruel and non-humanitarian behaviour holding the Ministry of Labour responsible. Among the responsibilities of the ministry is the imposition of proper compensation due to the disbursement operations and not being satisfied with the stipulation in the 50th Article of the Labour Law, which does not suffice to cover the expenses of the employee and their family for more than a few months should they receive this mediocre compensation. The American University of Beirut Workers and Employees Union also raised its voice rejecting these layoffs denouncing the mismanagement and excessive and indiscriminate disbursement of university fund and expressing its refusal of “employees and workers bearing the consequences of mistakes committed against the university and paying the price for violations they were not responsible for or benefit at all from”. In a statement,

the union confirmed that it had received a notification from the administration that more than 1500 employees had been laid off with the excuse of the financial and economic crisis that is afflicting the country and expressed its dependence “on the wisdom and expertise of the university president in dealing with the crisis ..”

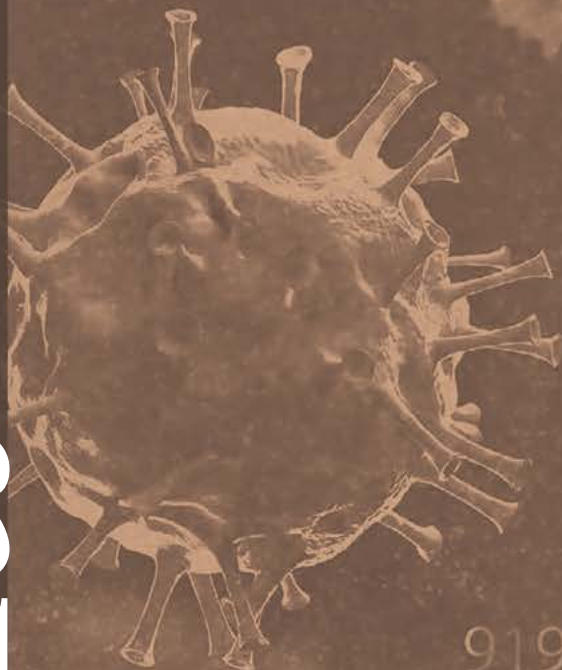
The secretariat of the Arab Trade Union Confederation released a detailed report on the group of laid-off employees describing the dismissal process as illegal and having suspicions of tampering in the list of laid-off employees; some of them emphasized that they were not involved in any dialogue and that the layoff process did not meet any professional standards or considerations. They also assured that the layoff process relied on partisan quotas for which workers, who did not belong to any political parties, paid for.

II. In July, four trade unions held an arbitrary exceptional meeting in the city of Tripoli in solidarity with the workers of the “Holcim” trade union in the city of Chekka for fear of the dismissal of 1500 workers and employees from their jobs as a result of the shutting down of the huge factory. The meeting sent a message of solidarity from their unions to their fellow “Holcim” workers union in Chekka as some workers were threatened to be laid off due to the closure of the soil factory, one of the largest industrial plants in Lebanon. The four unions called on the Lebanese state and the Ministry of Industry to preserve this pillar of industry and its workers from losing their jobs and avoid the entry of workers into political settlement cases resulting from the deterioration of the economic and financial situations during the COVID-19 pandemic as per what the unions that signed the statement stated. Workers and employees of the “Holcim” cement production company in Al-Heri, Lebanon, protested inside the company’s vicinity where they gathered in front of their union center and in the presence of its president and members of the union’s council to reject the stoppage of work at the company’s quarry since

September 2019. The paused operations and inability to extract necessary materials for the production of cement threatens the closure of the company and the dismissal of workers and employees. The workers and employees at the protest insisted that their “demands are legitimate and they will not abandon them, and are willing to take any escalating steps necessary in the event they do not receive a response”. They also called on the prime minister and the concerned ministers to “make the correct decision regarding the companies and their workers and employees in a way that protects their and their families’ livelihood.”

Tunisia

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4 (Systematic violations of rights)



8145.5

9190.3

1399

1482

Tunisia

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4 (Systematic violations of rights)

The Tunisian government's decision to deduct one working day from the salaries of employees and the pensions of retired employees in both public and private sectors for the benefit of the state's budget caused widespread anger and frustration among workers, who demanded an explanation from the government on how they calculated deductions and determined the categories of workers included in the decision. This decision included all active private and public sector employees, as well as retiree pensions whose monthly income exceeds the minimum wage of \$144.

Employees accused the government of bypassing the text of their agreement with the Tunisian General Labour Union as what they deducted was worth more than one working day with the excuse of contributing to the national effort of resisting the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on the country's economy. They demanded clarifications from the Ministry of Finance in regards to the measures adopted to provide budgetary resources at the expense of employees who face increasingly more difficult living conditions due to high prices.

The Tunisian General Labour Union, in a statement, expressed its rejection of the successive statements of senior government officials and their calls for the Tunisian people to prepare for "painful measures", stating that "these statements violate the rights of employees and target the public institutions which have been enduring independently all of the burdens during this ordeal especially in the public health sector, at a time when some businessmen abandoned their national duty". The Secretary-

General of the Tunisian General Labour Union also disapproved the violation of the rights of a number of workers during the COVID-19 crisis, saying that the labour organization monitored numerous violations against workers, such as the trespassing of agreements, deductions in wages, arbitrary dismissals, and irresponsible instigations to resume work without providing occupational safety conditions in light of COVID-19, considering all of the previous as violations of the right to life, calling on the state to take all measures against those benefiting from the war against the epidemic using it to accumulate wealth. However, despite the union's efforts, many violations have been traced including the suspension of wages, mass layoffs and failure to respect predetermined work hours specified in work laws.

Deprivation of Wages

I. 58% of female agricultural workers in Tunisia are paid “slave wages” ranging from 4 to 6 US Dollars a day under the sun's scorching heat, while 30% of them earn less than \$4 a day and the remaining 12% earn more than \$6 a day. The study attributed the low daily wages to the insubstantial contractual nature and the government's failure to protect these social groups, noting that the study involved 600 samples of women working in the agricultural sector, and 300 farmers in 3 different states known for agricultural activities, namely Kairouan, Sidi Bouzid and Mahdia.

The Agency for Local Democracy in the city of Kairouan (central-eastern Tunisia) revealed the results of its study on the situation of women working in the agricultural sector in Tunisia, which stated that 66% of the surveyed farmers believed that women could do all agricultural work such as cultivating products; using mechanical machines; harvesting; using medicines and tree pruning. All of which are considered physically straining work for many of them. About 57% of the surveyed farmers

attributed the reasons for their dependence on female labour to the lack of a male workforce, and 27% considered that women are more productive in this field compared to men, while 16% of them stated that the reason for their dependence on women in agricultural work is their low wages compared to the wages of male workers.

II. Railway workers arranged a protest, demanding the provision of their wages and entitlements, in front of the Beja station and stopped the train linking the city of Beja (north of the country) to the cities of Capital Tunis and Ghar Dama (also in the north of the country) on Wednesday, September 16th .The assistant general clerk of the Regional Labour Union in charge of the public sector stated that the strike of more than 40 workers and their protest in front of the train was a result of them not receiving their wages despite the promises they had received from the Ministries of Transport and Finance, confirming that they have been experiencing financial difficulties with their families and children for the past two months. The general clerk of the railway union in Beja said that the workers will not allow the continuation of trips unless their situation is settled, condemning the railway company “Stravar” for their neglect of this situation, as he put it.

III. The Austrian oil and gas company OMV decided to reconsider working hours and reduce the wages of its workers and employees by 60%. The general manager of the company confirmed the desire to find solutions to resume productions which had been suspended since mid-July 2020 after the shutdown of the valve of the company “Trapsa” in the “El Kamour” area in the governorate of Tataouine and the suspension of fuel transportation. It is reported that the oil pumping station in “El Kamour” has been closed since July 17, 2020 in an escalating movement of protests by the region’s youth demanding for their rights to work and develop. The protesters refuse to allow the station to restart until the implementation of all the provisions of the “El Kamour” agreement which has been signed with the government since

June 16, 2017. It is worth noting that the Austrian company's decision was announced in the presence of the Tunisian Minister of Industry and Energy without any indication of an attempt to find a solution in favour of the workers and employees.

IV. Recently, the General Administration of Tunisian Airlines announced that it was forced to deduce 50% of the wages of its employees working abroad. The company stated in a surprising statement published on its official page that it had taken a number of decisions in an attempt to alleviate the financial burdens of the company during the inactive period and their lack of liquidity, including the deduction of 50% of the salaries of its employees in external agencies. The company stated that "this decision is extraordinary and temporary." due to the lack of revenues resulting from the suspension of air traffic, reassuring that it is temporary and saying "a rescue plan to ensure the continuation of the company's activities and the preservation of its jobs is being prepared, given its effective role in developing the economy in the country." The state aviation company stated that it will present the rescue plan which is being worked on to the supervisory authority as soon as it is completed. At the beginning of this year, the company began the implementation of a plan to dismiss 1200 employees over three years at a cost of 170 million dinars, which the company was supposed to fund, after the state failed to provide the necessary subsidies for the Tunisian Airlines rehabilitation program. In 2019, Tunisian Airlines announced a tender for the purchase of 5 new aircraft of the "Airbus a320neo" funded by financial leasing companies which will enter into operation in the first quarter of next year.

Absence of health safety precautions for workers

I. The regional health service in the Ben Arous governorate (south of the Tunisian capital) announced that the number of workers infected with the COVID-19 virus in the "Foricia" factory had increased to more than 150 infected people, confirming that

investigations and scans are continuing for all workers in the factory and those who were in contact with them, including their families. Labour sources attributed the COVID-19 virus leak to the absence of serious preventative measures that should have been taken by the company's management. A number of workers accused the health authorities of being lethargic when it came to conducting the necessary scans on the rest of the workers and their contacts. After the intervention of the Tunisian General Labour Union, the necessary scans were performed, later announcing that more than 400 people were infected by the virus. Despite the large number of those affected, work resumed in the factory amid the protest of workers, leading up to the Ben Arous region's mayor to issue a government decision allowing the resumption of the factory's production activity.

II. The National Union of Tunisian Nurses started a protest on the 30th of September and 1st of October calling for the creation of a scientific committee including all health frameworks and initiating a clear health protocol to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Union also called in a statement on Tuesday, 22 September 2020 for the approval of a comprehensive quarantine for a one week period, extendable, and the provision of suitable working conditions for health workers and frameworks, including equipment that matches the effort exerted and demanding for decent working conditions. The Union also insisted on "the need to pass laws that improve the professional and health status of nurses by creating a public administration for nursing, cancelling contracting and filling vacancies through direct assignment, as well as reconsidering grants, reviewing all social conditions and enacting a fundamental law.", according to the same statement.

III. Several factories and workers' gatherings in Tunisia recorded a significant spread of those infected by COVID-19 due to lack of respect for preventative and health measures. The Director-General of the National Observatory of New and Emerging Diseases said during an interview that the recently recorded

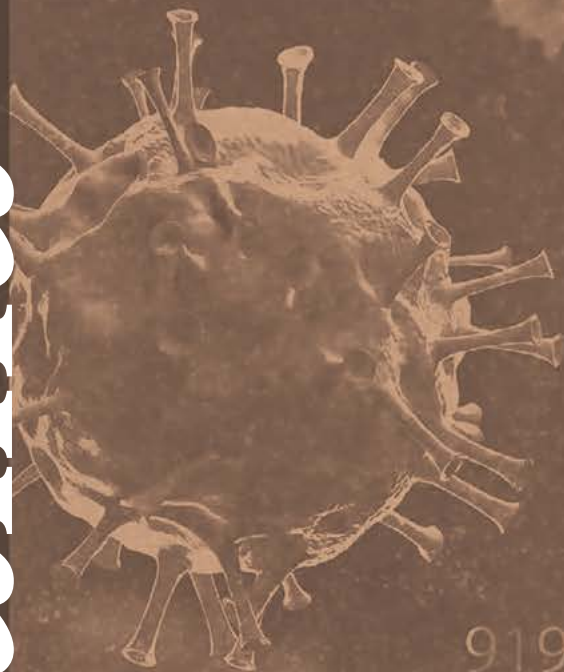
cases of infection are linked to gatherings of some workers in the workplace that are supposed to be subject to the application of strict health protocols intended to prevent or delay the spread of the infection, without indicating the responsibility of employers to assure that workplace health and preventative protocols are being implemented in the real world.

Arbitrary dismissal

The Executive Director of the Statistics and Quantitative Assessment Foundation, “Moez Hammami”, confirmed -on the side lines of a press conference held by the Joint Professional University for Tunisian Tourism in the capital, dedicated to presenting the results of a study carried out in partnership with the Statistics Foundation on the status of tourism institutions (except for hostels) during and after the COVID-19 crisis- that Tourism institutions such as travel agencies, tourist hospital centers and other institutions with the exception of hostels are facing a difficult financial situation due to the repercussions of the pandemic.

In this context, Hammami indicated that the institutions that went through financial difficulties due to the COVID-19 crisis had fired 70% of their workers, indicating that the tourism sector in Tunisia in general with the exception of hostels lost 32% of its workers and employees.

Mauritania



8145.5

91903

13090

1482.

The international rating according to the ITUC
Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4
(Systematic violations of rights)

Mauritania

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4 (Systematic violations of rights)

The right of organization and social dialogue

The Executive Office of the National Confederation of Mauritanian Workers issued a statement criticizing the shortcomings in the Mauritanian government's response to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic, saying "despite the passage of all this time and the measures and steps that have been taken, the results remained below the aspirations of citizens in general, and the productive forces that have had most of their activities disrupted in particular due to the precautionary measures..."

The union's member organization called on the government to "launch a comprehensive tripartite social dialogue, focusing on the effects of the pandemic to develop a solid vision for dealing with COVID-19, determining the requirements for coexistence with it with the goals of reducing its harm and to fulfil the commitments made by the Central Committee in regards to granting compensation to those with professions, limited incomes, street vendors and craftsmen, and allocating satisfactory subsidies to workers in the fields of health, security, education and the non-classified sector who were harmed by the precautionary measures, and to those whose employment necessitated their work beyond their official working hours or on their vacations, and the revision of policies currently adopted in the management of the pandemic fund, and a review of the composition of its supervisory committee towards achieving more transparency, inclusiveness, dynamism and justice, in addition to the prevention of conciliation deals related to the pandemic fund in order to avoid employers exploiting workers regardless of their health and safety conditions."

Forced labour and the discrimination between wages for local and foreign workers

I. A group of Mauritanian sailors issued a complaint to the President of the Republic Mohamed Ould Al-Ghazwani about what they considered discrimination in wages between them and foreign sailors. In a letter signed by this group aimed to the President of the Islamic Republic Of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould Al-Ghazwani, the Mauritanian sailors complained of the discrimination in wages as “their salaries do not exceed 6,500 ouguiya, equivalent to \$172, compared to a salary of \$1,500 for foreign sailors”. The complaint also revealed that it does not stop at the wide difference in salaries, but extends to the foreign sailors receiving specific percentages of profits. Despite the fact that the problem was presented previously to the Minister of Fishing and Maritime Economy and his pledge to find a solution, the distinction between the wages of local and foreign workers has unfortunately not been addressed. The letter also warned of a possibility of a full strike in case the situation continues. It’s important to note that the revenues of fishing in Mauritania reached an average of 220 million US dollars in 2019, and this sector is considered to have a high operational capacity of about 75 thousand workers in 2019.

II. The management of the Canadian Mining company “Kinross Taziart” violated the agreement signed with the trade unions in 2019 taking advantage of the repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis to prevent miners from resting, and increase the working hours without counting the additional hours in the wage scale provided that there is a wide gap between the salaries of Mauritanian workers and foreign workers in the Canadian company. This prompted workers to go on strike in early May, and work has stopped in this Canadian company which operates in gold mines in the state of Enchire, 250 kilometers north of the capital, Nouakchott since then.

In October 2019, the workers signed a three-year agreement with the company's management to resume work and end the dispute, but the company did not abide by the terms of the agreement according to the trade unions. The Canadian company's statement, in its response to the strike, was not devoid of threatening language, saying that "the strike will affect the workers' wages and the company's budget and at the same time it expressed its willingness to correct the situation in a clear contradiction and reluctance to fix the situation..."

Despite the Canadian company's stubbornness in responding to the demands of the workers and the stalling of negotiations between workers and the management of the company, the workers decided to suspend the strike in response to pledges from the Mauritanian government. The workers justified the suspension of their strike as a goodwill initiative and in response to the government's request to stop the strike in such circumstances despite the intransigence of the company's management and its persistence in denying past agreements. The Mauritanian government pledged, through the governor of the province of "Inchiri", to intervene and solve the problem with the administration as soon as possible. Some observers questioned the nature of this interference, especially as the matter relates to a violation of an agreement signed with the union party.

Arbitrary dismissal

I. In a clear violation of Articles 36 and 37 of the Mauritanian Labour Code, the management of the "Mauritania Logistics" company informed the Labour Inspectorate of the decision to refer 40 of its workers to technical unemployment. The main trade unions of the company issued a statement confirming the invalidity of the decision due to its lack of any legal basis and its violation of the labour code. The unions considered that the justifications for the decision are weak because the company

does not suffer from any serious economic difficulties or technical restrictions that disrupt its operations, which are the basic conditions set by the Labour Code for referral to technical unemployment. The workers stressed that “this decision and the negative consequences it will entail is a disaster by all standards that will exacerbate the situation of workers and their families in these exceptional circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic”. Workers’ representatives called on the company’s management to reverse its decision regarding referring 40 workers to technical unemployment.

II. The workers of the “Afro Port Abu Dhabi” company, which manages Nouakchott International Airport, went on strike after two months of trying to reach an agreement with the airport management for their rights. The workers were supposed to enter a partial strike, and they sent a letter noting that to the management, but one of the managers was fired afterwards due to his solidarity with the workers, and this accelerated the general strike of the airport workers.

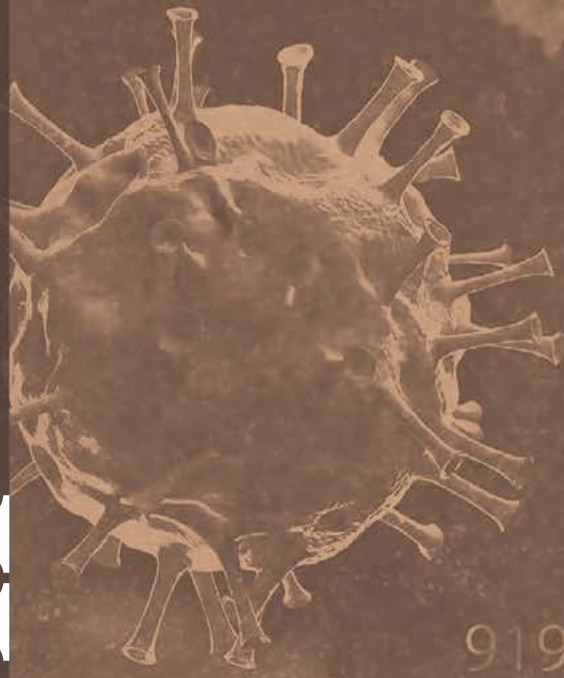
Sidi Mohamed El Amine, one of the workers participating in the strike, said in a media statement that the workers at Nouakchott International Airport are asking the Emirati company, responsible for managing the airport for transportation, for distance and risk bonuses; overtime bonuses; health insurance in addition to salary increases. He added that the workers reject the promises that the airport management made in order to convince the workers to end the strike after expelling one of the managers due to his solidarity with them, and returning him to his job as one of the conditions of ending the strike. The Mauritanian government had given the deal to manage Nouakchott International Airport to the Emirati “Afro Port” company in December 2018, indicating that the company would develop airport services and implement several investments in the country, including building hotels and a complex for aircraft maintenance.

III. Under the title “Rights are being taken away”, health sector workers in the regional hospital Atar, the capital of Adrar, have launched a protest due to the delay in the payment of workers’ late dues, including those related to night attendance and incentives since January.

A spokesperson for the workers expressed their intention to continue the strike, adding that the hospital administration did not leave them with any other options to retrieve their stolen rights, as he put it. He added, “this is after our attempts in various ways and with the several means available, leaving us only to strike”. A spokesperson for health workers in Atar added, “we filed a notice with the administration a week before August 13, 2020” and the case was not shown any interest.

Yemen

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 5+ (No guarantee of rights due to the breakdown of the rule of law)



8145.5

91903

13899

1482.

Yemen

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 5+ (No guarantee of rights due to the breakdown of the rule of law)

After the repercussions of the war and the spread of Cholera, the process of paying workers' salaries on a large scale across the country stopped. Yemen records dozens of violations against workers and employees on a daily basis, including denial of wages, delays in their payment, arbitrary dismissal, and suppression of any labour protest with intimidation and threats. The General Federation of Yemeni Trade Unions issued a statement directed to its trade unions throughout the country, in which it provided a comprehensive diagnosis for the situation in Yemen, highlighting the complexities of the on-going war on the entire Yemeni people and their working class. The text of the statement called on all trade unions to assume their responsibility in performing their national role and noble message, no matter how heavy the challenges and obstacles are in order to restore Yemen from the hands of those who tamper with its future and the capabilities of its people.

In the conclusion of its statement, the Union urged trade unions to continue the struggle to retrieve the rights of workers to receive their wages and to work with all national forces in order to stop the bleeding of the existing war and to stand in front of everything that would tear apart the social fabric in Yemen, whether regional or sectarian, and to support all existing efforts to tackle corruption.

Deprivation of wages

I. The UN envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, called on all Yemeni parties to an urgent meeting to discuss a solution to “disbursing the salaries of public sector employees from the revenues of oil derivative ships through the ports of Hodeidah”. In a statement, the UN envoy expressed his “grave concern about the shortage of fuel afflicting the areas under the control of the Houthis”. Griffiths called on the parties to “work urgently under his office to reach a solution that guarantees the ability of Yemenis to obtain their basic needs of fuel and oil derivatives and use the associated revenues to pay public sector employees’ salaries, based on the 2014 civil service lists.”

He added, “We have discussed in detail with the two parties to reach a solution that guarantees the achievement of my two priorities: ensuring the ability of Yemenis to obtain their needs of fuel and oil derivatives through the port of Hodeidah, and using the associated revenues to pay the salaries of public sector employees, which are very important and urgent priorities”. He urged “the parties to interact constructively, in good faith, urgently, and without preconditions, with the efforts made by my office in this regard”. Earlier last year, the UN envoy succeeded in alleviating the severe fuel shortage by agreeing on a set of temporary arrangements, which allowed the entry of about 72 ships with more than 1.3 million tons of commercial fuel imports to Hodeidah port between November 2019 and April 2020, which will positively affect workers and their families with the availability of income. However, the recognized government and the Saudi-led coalition returned to imposing restrictions on shipments after the Houthis disbursed unilaterally the revenues set aside in a special account in the Hodeidah Bank, in violation of the common understandings with the UN.

II. Thousands of workers are still deprived of their wages for a period of more than four years in some sectors and establishments in Yemen. Where, Ali Belkhdr, head of the General Federation of Yemeni Workers Trade Unions, sent a letter to the Prime Minister of Yemen, Maeen Abdul-Malik Saeed, asking him to consider the complaint and to intervene in order to disburse the wages of workers who have been suspended since 2016, with a review of the salary and wage scale after the latter lost any significant capacity to face the high cost of living and the unpredictable increase in prices. Thousands of workers faced the terror of unemployment after dozens of foreign companies had left the country due to the repercussions of the war.

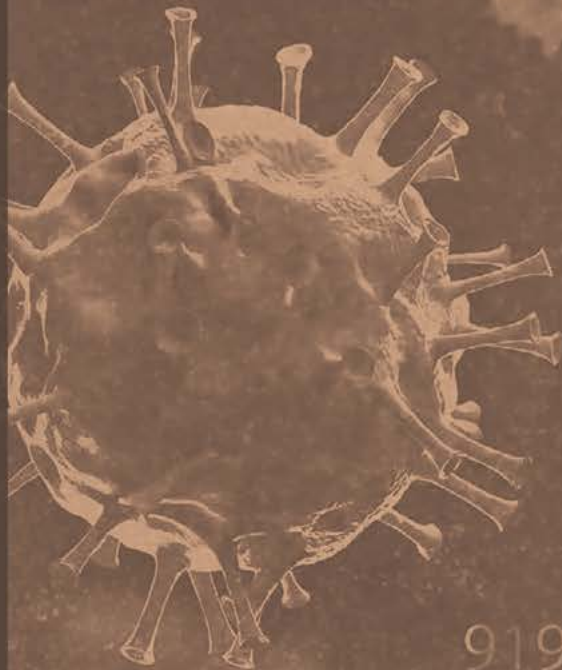
III. Workers at the Electricity Corporation in the Lahj governorate went on strike in protest against the delay in payment of their salaries as the workers accused the local authority of causing the deliberate delay of their salaries. A labor source inside the corporation revealed that the local authority violates the law in its dealings with the electricity corporation. In press statements, he indicated that the Lahj Electricity Corporation is financially and administratively independent from the local authority, adding that the local authority is accumulating new contractors without having the authority to do so, which led to the institution's financial imbalances and thus depriving employees and contractors of their dues. He also warned of the union's intention to escalate its strike if their demands are ignored.

IV. The Workers Union of the Aden School Book Printing Press announced that the workers' strike and protest will continue until their demands are met fairly. The Union president said that the protest in Al-Mansour is followed by a second protest for the workers of the School Book Printing Press Corporation in front of the Council of Ministers, and these protests and sit-ins will not stop until all the institution's dues are paid by the Ministry of Finance. He also insisted that the Union will stand firmly with the workers and will demand all their rights in all peaceful ways,

and will defend the survival of the institution and will not allow anyone to destroy it as they have destroyed the government facilities before in Aden.

Iraq

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 5 (No guarantee of rights)



8145.5

9190.3

1389.9

1482.

Iraq

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 5 (No guarantee of rights)

The right of organizing and social dialogue

Many federations and trade unions in Iraq are still complaining about the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs under the pretext of its lack of respect for union freedoms, being an important part of human rights and one of the most important corners of establishing social peace. They demanded the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to ensure the participation of all labour unions in activities and events related to workers' issues, inside and outside the country, and to participate in tripartite committees in accordance with the principles of social dialogue, with the rejection of any form of political or governmental interference in the internal affairs of trade union organizations and standing against any political agenda of any party working to disperse and weaken the trade union movement. They also affirmed the independence of federations and their freedom to establish their trade union organization, without tutelage or domination, and demanded the acceleration of the legislation of the trade union law for workers and employees in Iraq.

In the beginning of last September, a group of federations and trade unions condemned, in a statement, the practices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which they described as "an anti-union approach." The statement said "The ministry continues its procedures, positions and hostile approach in keeping the Iraqi trade union movement away from performing its role, standing in its way and marginalizing it deliberately and persistently from real and effective participation in the process of establishing social dialogue and social partnership in accordance with the basic principles of work and its eight agreements signed by

Iraqi governments, even though their implementation should be forced despite all the obstacles, difficulties and handicaps put in place by the Ministry of Labour. These eight agreements include the agreements 87 of 1948 and 98 of 1949, which guarantee the right and freedom of association and collective bargaining for all parties to the trade union movement without discrimination or bias to one union and or another in any way and away from the standards and conditions of any government or a specific ministry or government agency...".

The statement also added, "What the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has done and has been doing for quite a while-making amendments to Labour Laws No. (37) for the year 2015 and the Law on Retirement and Social Security for Workers No. (39) for the year 1971 and others despite all the means of protest, denunciation and rejection presented by the various labour conferences such as the conference of federations and trade unions, and through various means of direct and indirect communication against what this ministry has done and is doing in its complete refusal to deal with the parties of the trade union movement intentionally and insistentlly, and its approval of a single official union alone - does not represent all parties of the Iraqi trade union movement. What the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has done -according to an official document (Memorandum of Understanding) signed officially with the participation of the labour activities advisor in the regional office of the International Labour Organization, and as confirmed by the document of the National Program for Decent Work in Iraq signed between the parties to the social partnership (The Ministry of Labour, the Federation of Industries, and Workers' Organizations)- constitutes a flagrant breach and underestimation and a violation of the application of the Iraqi constitution and the Iraqi laws that have ratified the basic labour agreements of the relevant International Labour Organization, and this constitutes a clear threat which may expose our dear country to international

sanctions that we do not wish to be subjected to while there are economic, social, health and political crises contemporary being imposed on our homeland, our people and the loyal workers of our country, the builders of its present and its future”.

Arbitrary dismissal

I. In May of this year, dozens of workers in the Chinese "Petro-China" company initiated a protest to demand their return to work after the company's management laid them off without prior notice and without financial compensation. The workers set up tents in front of the company's headquarters in the Al-Kahla area in the Iraqi governorate of Maysan to protest their dismissal without the provision of reasons or the discussion of this decision with their representatives. This company is known for having a volatile social climate due to the numerous counts of its management's violations of workers' rights and its lack of respect for the approach of dialogue during a period in which Iraq is experiencing a severe economic and social crisis, which caused the outbreak of youth protests and resulted in dozens of victims.

II. The headquarters of the North Rumaila Oil Field Authority witnessed a demonstration of workers in the oil services of the foreign company "Service Oil," to protest against the dismissal of 220 workers, who were laid off by this company under the pretext of the financial crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Iraqi Labour Observatory conveyed a statement to Abdul Karim Abdul Sada, head of the General Federation of Workers' Trade Unions in Iraq, claiming that these workers' jobs are centered around reclaiming oil wells, and they were asked to stop working during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a date was set for their return to work, noting that they were not paid any salary for the whole period, and at the predetermined date they were not allowed to return.

III. The RBGC Services Company laid off a group of four of its workers, and one of the workers mentioned that the company granted them in the beginning of August 2020 a one-week leave for administrative reasons. After their enrolment, it was found that their entry permits were not working. After inquiring, they told them that there was a defect, and their permit was extended. After they re-joined, the company's management told them that their services had been terminated by order of the company's headquarters in Dubai. Another worker mentioned that all their attempts to obtain a response from the company explaining the reasons for the dismissal were unsuccessful. The company as well refused to provide them with an official letter confirming the termination of their services even though they have been working for the company for eight years and have not received any warning or punishment.

Denial of wages and absence of health safety and protection

I. The employees and contracted workers as well as daily wage workers in the health department in the "Dhi Qar" governorate receive low wages of less than \$100 despite the services they provide to people with COVID-19 and those with other diseases, and despite the issuance of Resolution 315, which provides for their transfer to ministerial contracts and the amendment of their salaries. Workers launched a protest in front of the Dhi Qar Health Department to demand improvement of their conditions and working circumstances in health institutions, and their right to obtain work contracts and hierarchical pay.

Reports indicated that many wage workers and employees have been working for up to eight years in health institutions, some of whom have been serving for up to 10 years, and the least of them has been working for no less than four years. It was also highlighted that employees and service workers in the

emergency wards and isolation quarantines play an effective role. They provide their constant services to COVID-19 patients and other patients, cleaning the corridors and quarantines in health institutions despite the dangerous and difficult conditions were also highlighted.

The General Director of the Dhi Qar Health Department, Dr. Abdul-Hussein Al-Jabri said in a press statement that their non-inclusion in risk allowances is caused by them being in the temporary contracts stage and that there is no legal clause enabling them to the mentioned right to obtain the aforementioned allowances and others. He promised that workers and wage employees will be included in the bonuses if the Ministry of Health orders it. The head of the Doctors Union in Dhi Qar, Dr. Abd al-Hassan al-Niyazi, stated that the governorate's doctors are still working under exceptional circumstances to confront Coronavirus as there are insufficient supplies to protect doctors and nurses from the transmission of the disease. He also pointed to the exacerbation of the problem of overcrowding and the acute shortage of clinical cover in hospitals after the allocation of Al-Hussein Education hospital for COVID-19 patients.

II. Medical and health personnel in the "Sulaymaniyah" governorate, last June, went on a comprehensive strike from working hours and working in hospitals and health centers as they have not received their monthly salaries. The head of the Health Professions Syndicate in Sulaymaniyah, Hawzen Othman, said in a press statement that "the health and medical personnel in Sulaymaniyah decided to go on strike and stop working due to the non-payment of their salaries by the regional government, although it played a powerful role in combating COVID-19 ..." He added that "the health personnel in Sulaymaniyah recorded 199 cases of COVID-19 among doctors, nurses and other workers in the health sector, but the regional government did not appreciate this effort".

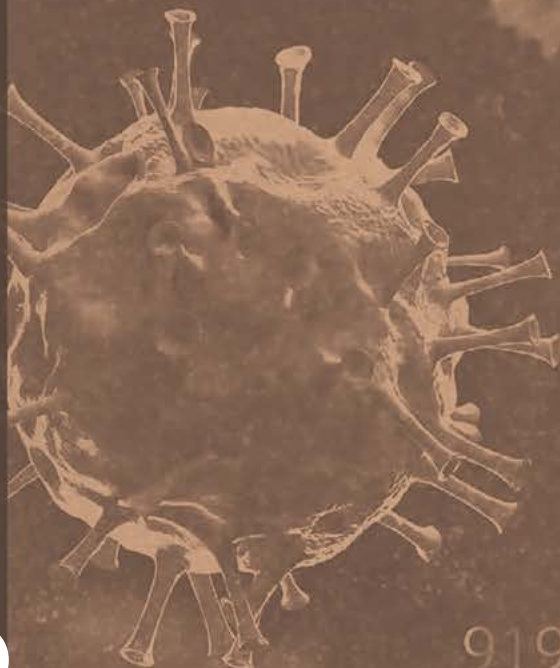
Eyewitnesses reported that “many hospitals have halted the reception of patients, while private hospitals for those infected with the COVID-19 suffer a shortage of health personnel as a result of the strike of doctors and health personnel”. Iraqi journalists and bloggers warned of “threats of a health disaster in Sulaymaniyah if the current situation continues without government intervention to pay the salaries of health personnel and give attention to the situation inside the city...”

III. Until July, demonstrations by the so-called "daily wages and contracts" holders in the Ministry of Electricity and the Ministry of Education lecturers at the gates of the Green Zone continued. The report of the Iraqi Labour Observatory stated that the security forces had disbanded the lecturers' demonstration in front of the Green Zone gate more than once by using canes. Fainting cases and injuries were recorded among the lecturers. The protesters adhered to their demands to have their salaries and the salaries of their colleagues in the remaining directorates in the governorates, which were delayed for a period of more than three months.

V. In early July, dozens of daily workers in the municipality of Diwaniyah renewed their demonstration that lasted for several days in front of the municipality building, demanding to be transferred to ministerial contracts in implementation of Cabinet Resolution No. 112 and the payment of backed-up salaries. One of the protesters mentioned that he has been working as a daily wage worker for three years, and some of his colleagues have been working for more than eight years, while another stated that the salary they receive as a wage earner is 22,000 dinars, which is a very low salary given that they have families and what they receive is not enough to live for one week.

Libya

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 5+ (No guarantee of rights due to the breakdown of the rule of law)



8145.5

91903

1389.9

1482.

Libya

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 5+ (No guarantee of rights due to the breakdown of the rule of law)

Criminal offenses against migrant workers

I. Social media has circulated many videos, documenting cases of torture of foreign workers, including workers from Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria and others. The most recent of these violations were videos circulated by activists on social media of the torture of Sudanese workers at the hands of a "Libyan gang". They were beaten and burned with fire to force their relatives to pay a ransom for their release, and local media reported that the Special Deterrence Force of the Ministry of Interior of the Libyan Government of National Accord "arrested four Libyans and freed eight Sudanese workers who were detained in the Qadahiya area - south of Sirte -". Director of the Astrolabe Center for Studies, Abdul Salam Al-Rajhi, believes that the violations against irregular migrants are not only committed by Libyans, but also by Africans of different nationalities, especially Sudanese and Chadians - as he put it - as they have an armed presence in the regions of Tazerbo, Sokna, Al-Qatrun, Umm Al-Aranb and some parts of Sabha, in southern Libya.

II. The United Nations officially called on Fayeaz al-Sarraj government in western Libya to investigate the violations documented in video clips regarding the detention of a group of Egyptian workers and the perpetration of violations against them. The United Nations Mission in Libya, in a tweet on the social networking site "Twitter", expressed its concern "about the arrest, detention and ill-treatment of Egyptian citizens in the city of Tarhuna".

The UN mission called on Al-Sarraj's government to "conduct an investigation" into these acts that may constitute a violation of international humanitarian law, "with regards to the prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment". In turn, the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States expressed, in a statement, "its condemnation of the incident of detention and ill-treatment of a number of Egyptian citizens" in Tarhouna. It came after a video had been spread on social media showing Egyptian workers standing and being forced to raise their hands while chanting after a person holding them phrases that insult the Egyptian President, as recorded in the video.

Violations against migrant workers

I. In September, Amnesty International, in a report on the conditions of migrants in Libya called "...the European Union to review its cooperation with the Libyan authorities in the file of migrants and refugees, considering the horrific violations discovered against them." The organization said in its report which it named "Between life and death: Refugees and migrants in Libya are trapped in a vicious cycle of violations" that "Libya, a country torn apart by years of war, has become an environment characterized by more hostility to refugees and migrants looking for a better life." The report stated that "instead of providing them with protection, they are met with a set of horrific human rights violations, and they are now unfairly blamed for the spread of the COVID-19 virus, based on highly racist and xenophobic views..."

II. The spokesperson for the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Stephane Dujarric, warned that the exacerbation of the crisis of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers is still continuing in Libya, and its intensity increased after an accident, which he described as the worst, which involved the drowning of at least 45 people including 5 children due to the explosion of their boat's

engine off the coast of Zwara, Libya.

Sea-watch spokeswoman Mattia Faye said in a statement that the organization had asked Italy and Malta to provide a safe port for 200 immigrants. The Sea-Watch ship managed to rescue and recover them, but did not receive any response, noting that many of the migrants on board the ship were in poor health. The medical coordinator of MSF, Barbara Dyck, described the migrants who were rescued as weak and confused, and many of them had symptoms of fuel inhalation, noting that more than 30 migrants suffered from severe hypothermia, warning that prolonging the stay of migrants at sea without having access to food, water or shelter will increase their risk of more serious health complications.

Health protection for workers

I. The General Syndicate of Libyan Doctors has expressed its concern about the conditions in which medical personnel work in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The union clarified, in a statement, that they received a written complaint from a doctor who was infected with COVID-19, and when she went to the hospital where she works, she hardly found someone to take the blood sample. It was shocking that she was asked to continue working on her shift in the ambulance department despite the emergence of all symptoms. The union indicated that the same doctor stated that she may have had the infection transmitted to her from patients or from her colleagues, doctors who work in isolation centers and take care of patients in the hospital.

The General Syndicate of Libyan Doctors published a list of the causes that led to a crisis within the medical staff, the most important of which is the lack of a place dedicated to taking samples from medical personnel that may be exposed to work injuries, with the need to create a special location to isolate

the infected medical personnel, secure treatment for them, and compensate them for their injury and infection during service.

II. In July, the director of the Libyan National Center for Disease Control, Badr al-Din al-Najjar, announced in a press statement that the numbers of COVID-19 infections among migrant workers had become catastrophic. What is extremely worrying is that there are dozens of injured people, whose health status has not received any attention, in addition to the Libyan National Center for Disease Control not knowing anything about the places where foreign workers gather.

The medical official described the epidemiological situation as "bad", in view of the increasing chaos that may lead to more than that, pointing out that both the citizens and the government failed to perform well. The director of the center also expected "a significant increase in the number of deaths, and that the epidemic would get out of control...", adding: "Citizens were committed in the beginning to the imposed measures, but the government's neglect and lack of thought about a clear mechanism for coping with the crisis, as well as the issuance of successive decisions extending the ban pushed people to violate it indifferent to the results..."

ALGERIA

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 5 (Rights are not reserved)



Algeria

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 5 (Rights are not reserved)

Inappropriate work

Many governorates in Algeria have witnessed protests by the social network and professional integration workers claiming professional and social demands. On top, they demand a reconsideration of their wages, which for some segments never exceed 5000 DZD equivalent to (39 USD) per month, in addition to calculating years of work on retirement. Moreover, the number of social network workers and holders of pre-employment contracts exceeds hundreds of thousands as former Abdelaziz Bouteflika's government has implemented this employment policy to soothe social congestion and absorb protesters' rage. However, up till now, there has never been a final resolution to such an insubstantial kind of employment.

I. In Tizi Ouzou, dozens of social network protesters have protested in front of the administrative headquarters of the State against what they called a "disdain" practiced against them reflected in low wages and ineligibility for several employability rights like "Corona Grant" for those working for the Health sector. Further, the protesters denounced the unsettlement of their position, although some of them have spent more than 25 years in insubstantial job positions.

II. Béjaïa Province, East of the Algerian capital, also witnessed a protest of pre-employment and social network workers demanding integration and the calculations of years of work on retirement, asking the government to fulfil their promise regarding this matter.

III. In front of Aïn Defla State headquarters, dozens of young

workers in the field of social network and social activity have organized a protest demanding their integration as employees in the different work positions they have held for years. The young protesters raised slogans rejecting their line of business' out dated status in the light of their low wages. They also denounced what they have described as injustice imposed on their segment. Social network employees, too, expressed their intention of continuing the protests until their demands are fulfilled.

IV. In the west side of the country, a group of social network employees protested in front of the headquarters of Tiaret Province to demand integration and provide job positions that (as they've expressed) restore their dignity. Protesters from different public institutions complained that some of them had to retire while being in the social network. One of the protesters claimed, "How would family providers live with such a salary that's equivalent to a daily wage for some other employees?"

V. In Mascara Province west of the country, tens of state municipal workers (Public Administration), who work for the national Social Solidarity Fund for local groups as school guards, have protested in front of the state headquarters in an attempt to get the authorities attention to pay their salaries since their salaries haven't been paid for several months. They also claimed that some municipalities have laid off some of them after their contract's expiry whereas in some other municipalities, workers continue to work after the expiry of their contracts.

VI. East of the country, Oum El Bouaghi Province has witnessed a protesting movement under the banner of "No Submission & No Turning Back, integration is a legal right" held by professional integration and social network workers. Tens of youngsters have also taken part in this protest demanding integration in their work positions and fulfilling prior promises of getting all their rights fully. Moreover, a delegation of the protesters has commuted to Skikda Province headquarters and handed over a statement with

their demands during a national stance including a number of states. In some provinces like Annaba Province, El Taref Province border state with Tunisia, it was kind of a symbolic protest as protestors have only handed their demands to state authorities. Meanwhile in other provinces, there have been intense protesters.

VII. In March of this year, Sonatrach's SB2 guarding and security personnel continued their series of periodic protests in front of the Aval, a Sonatrach company too, headquarters. The protesters held the banners and slogans of what they described as a "discrimination policy against them" demanding their integration in respectful positions after years of productivity with no benefits or privileges...", in contrast with their Sonatrach counterparts working in the same profession.

Occupational Health & Safety and Forced Labour

I. In May, a pregnant physician died of Covid-19 after the director of Bennani hospital at Ras El Oued; Bordj Bou Arréridj Province had refused to grant her maternity leave to stay at home. He made the decision regardless of the context of CM's decision granting precautionary leaves to pregnant mothers and minors under 10 of age to protect them from coronavirus' infection. This incident resulted in an outbreak of protests blaming the pregnant doctor's death (Wafa Boudissa) on the board. Under the public's pressure, the Ministry of Health arrested the hospital director and initiated an in-depth investigation into the causes of death.

II. The number of workers in the unregulated economy reached 4.6 million in June, nearly half of Algeria's total workforce, according to a report published by the Economic and Social Council of Algeria in September. The report said that the ratio of men employed in this sector is 81.2% while that of women is 18.8% marking that the portion of self-employed individuals has reached 12%.

The 4.6 million workers in the informal sector are at greater risk of facing Covid-19's infection than those in the regulated sector because of the difficulty of monitoring their application of precautions and various health protocols in the regulated sector.

III. At the beginning of October, Air Algerie General Airline maintenance workers decided to stop working for a day at Houari Boumediene International Airport, protesting against "the work conditions and pressures they suffer in the absence of the slightest sanitary conditions related to the health protocol." "We decided to stop working to protest against several points among which is the deterioration of work conditions due to the absence of the slightest health protocol," one of the protesters told the al-Khabar newspaper. "In a short time, two colleagues died with Coronavirus, and yet masks and hand sanitizers are absent from the workplace," he said. "The administration practices all kinds of pressures, such as transforming the system of work from working in regiments to administrative times so that they can dispose of wages as they please, even though the work has not stopped in the maintenance directorate," he said. Even the wages, the protester adds, have become known for delayed payment dates, which has created a bad situation.

Wage Deprivation

I. By the end of February, workers of the general paper and canning "Tonic Industry", located in Bou Ismail, Tipaza Province, West of the capital, initiated an open strike until all their demands are met. The chairman of the board of directors of the foundation promised to "pay workers within a week after the lifting of the freeze on the factory's account." The announcement by the trade union branch, which is under the umbrella of the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTT), followed the adoption of workers' demands that went on strike in a "spontaneous" move without union cover as a support for them. This was followed by an open

strike until all their demands are finally achieved: most notably monthly and regular wage payments according to a statement published by APS

Tonik workers had called for their late wages since December last year. They have called for "effective" solutions to ensure the group's continuity. The group is perceived as a national role model and employs more than 2,500 workers. Regarding the voluntary dismissal of workers, the representative of the Department confirmed in a statement to the official news agency, "The voluntary workers' permit was made in terms with the consent of the social partner, which is an agreement to refer a certain segment of workers to technical unemployment while maintaining the base wage for each worker until the financial situation of the factory improves for reintegration. "

II. On Thursday, workers at the Brothers Medahi Hospital in Ferdjioua, Northwest of Mila Province, organized a vigil inside the hospital square, expressing their deep dissatisfaction with the hospital's difficult work conditions and accumulated problems. Doctors, nurses, professional workers, administrators, and security & prevention agents caught in their radius also complained about the delayed payment of wages and grants.

III. Doctors, semi-medical staff, and workers at the Reference Hospital in Eastern Skikda Province launched a vigil demanding the clutch's dismissal due to his refusal to disburse the grant decided by the president to health workers. Simultaneously, the head of the union branch of the General Union of Algerian Workers assured that other various hospitals paid the grant to various workers. The workers have accused the administration of sabotaging all settlement attempts, consequently feeding the workers' rage. Therefore, workers decided with the trade union branch to protest in the square of the Reference Hospital as the clutch decided to stick to an unjustified rejection of disbursing the grant. This intransigence may further complicate the situation.

Union Trade Rights & Arbitrary Dismissal

I. Board of Cevital's Numilog Company acquired by Algerian businessman Issad Rebrab dismissed three board members of the newly founded union aiming for defending workers' rights under the management pressure, which workers described as "harassment, bully and incitement". This incident forced the workers to protest. The newly received Joint Higher Education Union denounced "the injustice practiced against workers of The Nimilaug Company of the Cevital Group". Especially that the workers had previously stood by the owner of the company when he was jailed. In their statements, several trade union organizations stressed their "unconditional solidarity with the company's affected workers, urging the administration to reappoint trade union members to take up their jobs, and show their respect to the laws by recognizing the workers' legitimate right to practice their union rights." They also called "all trade union members to defend the freedom of practicing their union rights everywhere, as it is the only way of achieving workers' demands". Many of the company's workers marched from the headquarters of Radio "Soummam" to Said Moqbel Square in Bejaia Province. The protesters said they were "suffering from the injustice of the administration as many of them were arrested for demanding their right to practice trade union rights." The company's workers' strike continued for several weeks demanding that international conventions and the Algerian constitution, which guarantees practicing trade union rights, should be respected.

II. In July, workers at the Algerian Post Office decided to hold a vigil in front of the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, followed by a march towards the Government Palace to demand the full implementation of the collective agreement, reconsideration of university graduates and possibility of promoting them for higher job positions equivalent to their academic qualifications, as well as preparing a transparent scheme for the reintegration of the Professional Integration Assistance System and subsidized

employment contracts. Then, the expulsion of trade unionist Sofian Kehal in mid-July triggered an immediate protest in front of the ministry's headquarters, followed by a peaceful march to the government palace.

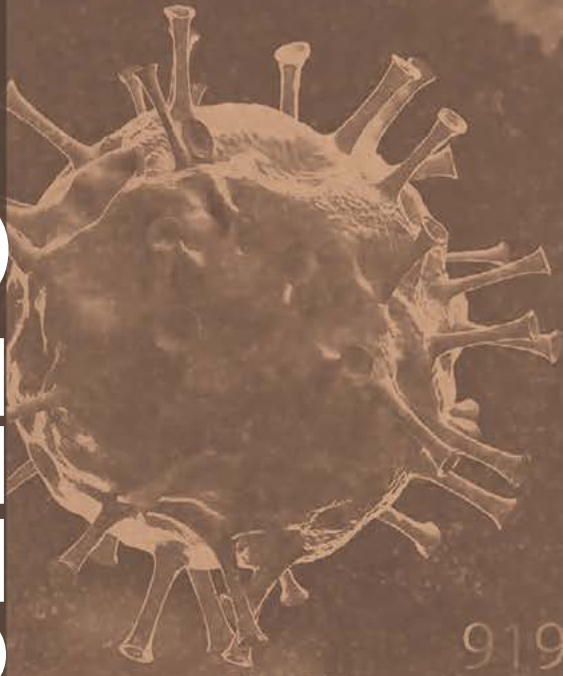
Belqasim Moazza, a basal trade unionist at the Oran court, received a suspension letter and an Algerian complaint against him without mentioning the charges. About a week later, Belqasim was informed of the termination of his suspension in exchange for being allowed half of his salary and his children's total grants without clarifying the reasons for the suspension and retraction.

Deportation of Unregulated Migrant Workers

Until October, Algerian authorities continued mass deportations of migrant workers from sub-Saharan countries. The Interior Minister declared that returning migrants (coming from 44 African countries) who have entered the country illegally would continue. The Algerian trade union organization, a member of the Union, has already filed a complaint against the Algerian authorities for violating several international obligations that were previously agreed on through labour agreements protecting migrant workers and their family members.

Palestine

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating +5 (Rights are not guaranteed for the deterioration of supremacy of Law)



8145.5

9190.3

1399.9

1482.7

Palestine

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating +5 (Rights are not guaranteed for the deterioration of supremacy of Law)

The Covid-19 pandemic around the world has exacerbated poverty, discrimination, conflict, and occupation. Yet, in Palestine alone, the pandemic has highlighted the Israeli system of oppression, domination, and racial discrimination against the Palestinian people, amounting to the crime of Apartheid. The Palestinians have a very limited chance of improving their destiny because of the suffocating Israeli occupation, which is deeply entrenched in all walks of life and dominating all aspects of Palestinian life. Throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Israeli occupation authorities continued to target Palestinian livelihoods indiscriminately during the Covid-19 pandemic, including repeated attacks on farmers, pastoralists, and fishers in the Gaza Strip.

The suffering of Palestinian workers continues as in Israel and illegal Israeli settlements; they work under difficult working conditions, lower wages less than their Israeli counterparts as well as the deprivation of health care and other privileges, among other discriminatory policies and practices of the Israeli occupation against them.

The Minister of National Economy announced the survey's results to measure the pandemic's impact on women working in small, micro, and medium businesses in Palestine. The survey shows that 95% of working women in Palestine were negatively affected by the epidemic. He added that 27% of women's jobs were closed, and 73% of women were able to keep their jobs from one to four months. Fifty three% of women consider laying off their employees providing women are the most difficult

group to earn income. Palestinian women were the most affected by the pandemic, with the least access to resources due to social and legal constraints. He noted that his ministry is working to raise its participation rate from 17%.

Exclusion of Palestinian Workers and Deprivation of Health Care

I. With the spread of the Corona pandemic, Israel has decided not to allow West Bank workers working inside the occupied territories to return to their homes, fearing infection. "But they did not care enough to place procedures managing their living conditions, and some of them even had to sleep in workshops in poor conditions."

"The occupation threw three Palestinian workers, who were infected with the CORONA virus, at the Palestinian Authority's checkpoints, without providing them with care nor treatment, and without even coordinating with the Authority..." said B'Tselem, a rights activist organization against the violations of the occupation. "Although 70,000 workers are allowed to stay inside Israel under the poor conditions provided. Many have gradually returned to their homes, fearing infection, or facing difficulties staying away from their families." The number of these has reached 20,000, all without health insurance, and those who returned did not receive any compensation for their unemployment or even a one-time financial grant, many of whom were laid off without any compensation as reported by the organization.

II. The occupation government has failed to ensure adequate housing, adequate food, clean water, and sanitation for Palestinian workers, as well as failure to conduct the epidemic test for them, preferring to get rid of Palestinian workers at checkpoints as soon as any symptoms of potential infection appear, without regard to their right of health, and there is no coordination to ensure

that they receive the necessary medical treatment if proven to be infected. This prompted 87 foreign and Arab human rights and trade union organizations, including members of the Arab Union, to publish an open letter to ILO's Director-General Guy Ryder calling on the organization to take urgent action to protect the rights of Palestinian workers and to ensure livelihoods and dignity for them and their families during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

III. The incidence of Covid-19 infection has increased as the Israeli occupation authorities have consistently prioritized economic considerations at the expense of Palestinian workers' inherent rights and dignity. As the epidemic began to spread, the Israeli occupation authorities allowed 60,000 Palestinian workers in Israel to temporarily reside in Israel for a maximum of two months during the emergency period, with Israeli employers mandated to ensure adequate housing, sanitation, and clean food for workers. However, Palestinian workers faced harsh housing conditions and were forced to sleep on construction sites or greenhouses. In addition, Palestinian workers were disposed of at checkpoints as soon as any suspected infection symptoms appeared, without prior coordination to ensure that they received treatment.

IV. Israel refused to conduct the Covid-19 test for Palestinian workers after its spread in March, and thus failed to take adequate measures to curb the spread of the epidemic in the Palestinian territories, and undermined efforts to contain the Palestinian Authority's epidemic towards returning workers. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, workers, their families, and related persons make up the majority of cases of Covid-19 in the West Bank.

Wage Deprivation

I. At the beginning of this month, October, the union of workers at Al-Ahli Hospital in Hebron announced in a statement the start of a series of protests and the disruption of work inside the hospital after exhausting all solutions to solve the workers' wage payment issue. The union said that the administration did not respond to its addressed payment sheet regarding the salaries due. They added that the protest would continue all throughout the week, with the possibility of escalation if the administration does not meet their legitimate demands.

II. The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK) revealed in July that two Turkish-based companies are violating the rights of employees in their branches in Palestine, according to a statement issued by the Turkish Federation. Adnan Serdaroğlu, general secretary of DISK, said that L.C. Waikiki, -a clothing company- and Flo- a shoe store chain- pay their employees' low salaries and force them to work overtime without pay. Serdaroğlu pointed out that the poverty line is 3,000 Israeli shekels in the West Bank, yet these companies pay a salary of 2,000 shekels for their workers, according to the General Union of Palestinian Trade Unions. He added, "Companies have forced workers to work overtime on holidays since November 2019, but they have not paid overtime, and it has not stopped there. With the outbreak of the coronavirus, workers were placed on unpaid leave until they were forced to resign by waiving their rights."

Physical Abuse and Torture of Workers

1- In August, a video was posted on social media showing Israeli soldiers torturing and harassing Palestinian workers and stealing their money South of Hebron. In a statement, Palestinian organizations called on the United Nations and its relevant

agencies and bodies to launch an international investigation into the crimes of the occupation against Palestinians, including ongoing violations of human rights, international laws and regulations, and to provide international protection to the inhabitants of the occupied State of Palestine. They also mentioned in the statement that "The international community is obliged to implement and ensure the execution of the international laws and conventions signed, notably the Fourth Geneva Convention, which, in the Palestinian case, criminalizes the occupation and hold it accountable for its daily crimes against Palestinians on land, people and holy places."

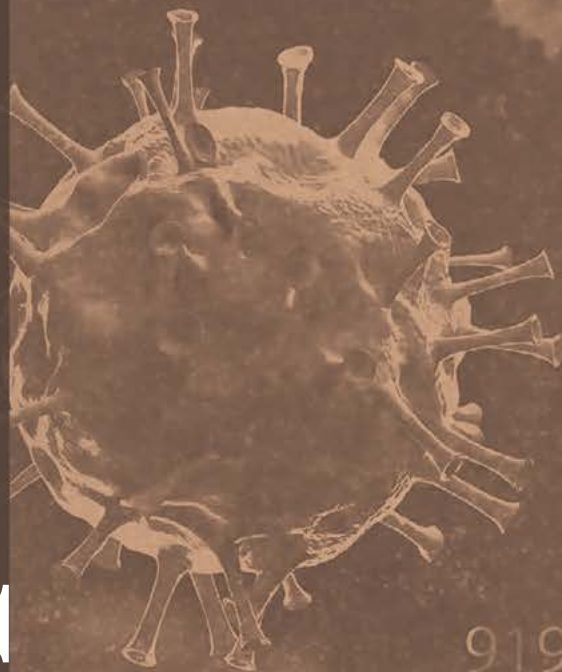
Arbitrary Dismissal

The General Union of Palestinian Trade Unions announced the first census of workers affected by the Corona pandemic. The census concluded the loss of 50,000 Palestinian workers their jobs after a large-scale lay-off of various sectors and professions resulting from the Corona pandemic lockdown. The organization, a member of the Federation, said that its legal departments in various provinces had received hundreds of complaints, especially from workers in the daily and construction sectors, tourism services, hotels, restaurants, lounges, and beauty salons.

The Union called for a strategy to save and support these sectors after the Corona pandemic, which is threatening all economic sectors' to collapse. Furthermore, they called on the ILO and other international trade unions to contribute to solving the workers' problem. The Federation called on the Ministry of Labour, the Chambers of Commerce and the Employers' Union to cooperate in opening a social dialogue for this social protection law calling on every worker who has been laid off or given unpaid leave to go to the Union to solve his problem.

Oman

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4 (Systematic violations of rights)



8145.5

9190.3

1399

1482.

Oman

The international rating according to the ITUC Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rating 4 (Systematic violations of rights)

Health Safety and Pay

In April, the General Union of Oman Workers, through their Twitter, said that "the number of monitored violations continues to increase to include several humanitarian aspects of workers, some of which relate to minimum living requirements such as adequate housing, food, and wages." The Union has monitored continuous violations of the rights of Bahraini and foreign workers in the private sector. The Union also added that "Private sector institutions need to do more to protect the national and foreign workforce, commit to wages' pay, and ensure that the necessary health standards are met at the workplace and residence. Moreover, they should raise workers' awareness of precautionary measures issued by the competent authorities."

The Union also explained in a statement that it had been notified of "violations of service termination notice, deduction of wages and forced exit on unpaid leave, stressing that the Union is following up on the cases monitored in cooperation with the competent authorities to take the necessary action. They also call on all employees to provide them with any violations or irregularities they are subjected to in the context of the application of the procedures and measures related to the pandemic.

The President of the General Union of Workers of Oman confirmed in an interview with Al-Watan website that the union has monitored many violations related to salary reduction, layoffs, and forced unpaid leaves of some companies, contrary to the legal procedures in this regard. He expressed surprise that some

national companies, which have been in existence for decades and have benefited from the subsidies, facilities, and privileges provided by the Government for years, have laid off Omani employees, a few weeks after the outbreak of the Coronavirus began, noting that these institutions should assume their national duties at this stage and contribute to the efforts to overcome these conditions with minimal losses.

Arbitrary Dismissal

I. With the beginning of the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, March, several companies began mass layoffs of workers, and the General Union of Workers of Oman, confirmed that "the number of companies that laid off Omani workers or reduced their salaries amounted to 10 between medium and large companies. Solutions were found for the number of employees in an agreement between the worker and the company. Furthermore, the President of the Union pointed out that "there are signs and indications that some companies are going to lay off their workers under the pretext of the current situation, which is why a statement is issued demanding that all workers subjected to a salary reduction or arbitrary lay off contact the Union so that they can reach a consensus that serves both parties and ensure the that the employee is not abused.

II. A number of employees in Oman's telecommunications sector faced the spectre of layoffs and severance. As Omani media websites pointed out that the issue of young Omanis was looming, a story of young people working in the telecommunications sector, some of whom had begun the journey of Ooredoo projects with Ericsson Oman (the company implementing Ooredoo's telecommunications network construction projects at the time) more than ten years ago.

After the suspension of Ooredoo's construction permit procedures, the company notified the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of the transfer of 16 Omani employees who had been working with them for many years on the site acquisition and station construction project for Ooredoo, and requested that they be transferred to The Oman Towers Company as the one who will own the project and will build communications towers for all operators in Oman, based on Article (48) of the Labour Code, which stipulates "the commitment of the employer to whom the project has been fully or partially transformed to the employment of the national workforce, with the same advantages and financial incentives." The interventions did not yield any result despite the General Directorate of Labour Welfare intervention based on a complaint from Huawei, which demands the application of article 48 bis of the Manpower Act. All parties were included at the meeting table, namely the Ministry of Manpower, the General Workers Union, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, Oman Towers, The Omani Telecom Company (Ooredoo), Huawei Company, and the President of Huawei Workers' Union, with representatives of the employees.

The Ministry of Manpower decided to confirm the survival of employees and transfer all employees to Huawei. All present parties attending the meeting signed the minutes. Yet, Huawei representatives refrained from signing for their lack of approval and confirmed the project will be transferred again. However, the Ministry was determined to implement what is in the record, and the meeting was terminated.

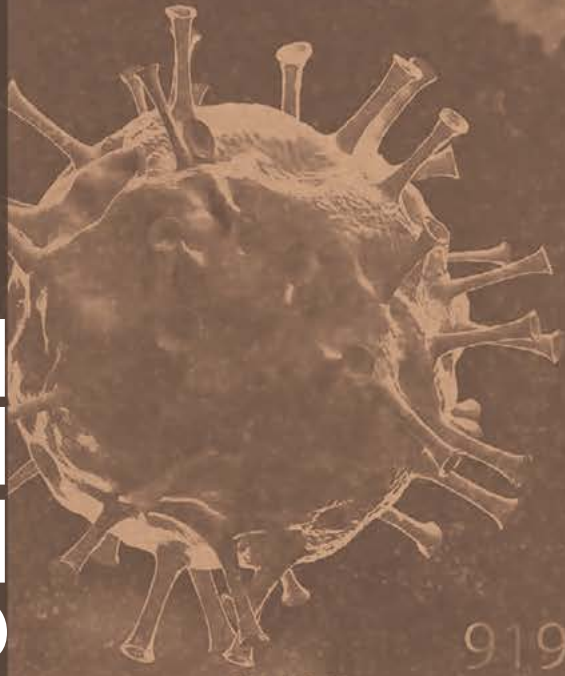
Since that day, these young people have been under the pressure of suspended salaries. Five employees were notified last week of the termination of their services from United National Telecommunications Company. Although the case has been circulated in the competent authorities' corridors for months, they have not been able to solve the problem.

III. By the end of February, the number of laid-off workers, due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, reached approximately 355 workers from a construction sector company due to the completion of its work from the project assigned to it. It was agreed between the Ministry of Manpower and the General Union of Workers of Oman and the company to transfer all workers with different occupations, jobs especially with the same wages and benefits to another project, provided that the new company provides housing, food, and transportation to the workers who moved. The Omani Human Rights Commission said that it had allocated the termination of services to 430 workers in a construction sector company as they found that the matter had been settled by agreement between the Ministry of Manpower, the General Union of Oman Workers, and the company by obliging the company to pay the equivalent of three months' total wage for the 298 employees. Moreover, the company pledged to prioritize their employment if it obtained work opportunities in other projects. In addition to the Ministry of Manpower seeking employment opportunities for them, it was also agreed that the company would be obliged to retain the other 132 employees and not to lay them off.

Cases of difficulty in transferring foreign labour to another employer have been observed---for many reasons presented in the non-compliance of employers in terms of wage payments, in addition to early termination of employment contracts before expiry. Moreover, the lack of employment due to unjustified conditions taking the form of demanding huge amounts of money from the worker or the employer.

Bahrain

The international rating according to the ITUC
Global Rights Index for the year 2020: Rank 5
(Rights are not guaranteed)



8145.5

91903

13099

1482.

Bahrain

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Migrant Labour Layoffs

- The Bahraini Ministry of Interior followed the same approach as the rest of the Arab Gulf states, calling on the provinces to establish a mechanism of action to ensure the reduction of the intensity of foreign labour in their areas of residence, especially the areas described as "random" and unregulated. It also called for distributing them to some government establishments, such as schools, sports clubs, youth centers, and any other government establishment, according to the governors.

On 23 March, 2020, a number of Bahraini MPs made an urgent proposal to the government, represented by the Labour Market Regulatory Authority, to give illegals time to rectify their situation and leave Bahrain to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. On 2 April, the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (CMA) launched a grace period to correct the situation of workers in violation of various categories.

A number of international organizations said in recent reports that migrant workers in Bahrain are generally subjected to discrimination and violations from Bahraini society, stressing that hundreds of thousands of migrant workers, mostly from South Asia, face exploitation and violation of rights in Bahrain, despite government reforms intended to protect them

Wage Deprivation and Arbitrary Dismissal

I. At the beginning of July, a group of Bahraini employees of an engineering and industrial services company filed a collective

complaint to the private sector secretariat of the General Union of Bahrain Trade Unions after the company gave them a dismissal notice effective at the end of June. The number of employees dismissed by the company reached 16 employees.

Years of service at the company for dismissed employees ranges from nine to 22 years of service, including engineers and site supervisors. One dismissed employee said that it all started with delaying salaries since the beginning of 2018, when salaries were delayed for more than 15 days. He also added that the delay is not limited to Bahraini employees only and the total salary arrears range from two to four months. The staff complained that this sudden dismissal came after two years of patience with salary delays despite heavy monthly commitments. Not to mention that some of them consequently had accumulated loan interest in addition to financial responsibilities and life's harsh costs. The injustice, pointed out by the employee, could not be accepted and some migrant workers had to resign as salary delays continued.

II. In July, the General Union of Bahrain Trade Unions rejected the on-going efforts to alter pension systems, considering this as an infringement of workers' pension rights in public and private sectors and a clear violation of their earnings, which must be kept out of the conflict. In a statement, he stressed that all adopted international labour standards refuse to prejudice any acquired rights for workers and retirees. He added that those on-going efforts to stop the estimated 3% annual increase in pensioners' earnings are an infringement on pensioners' rights; a large segment of them do not meet their basic living needs and find it very difficult to cope with the waves of inflation and high prices in addition to the removal of subsidies on electricity, water, fuel and meat, and imposing VAT on many other goods and services.