

# American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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August 11, 2010

Mr. Nouri Al-Maliki  
Prime Minister

Via Fax: 202-464-8815

Dear Prime Minister Al-Maliki:

On behalf of the 11 million members of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to express strong protests against the Ministerial Order, Issue 22244, of the Iraqi Government. This Order clearly violates trade union rights and unjustly limits the democratic aspirations of Iraq's workers.

As indicated from information the AFL-CIO has received, the Ministerial Order, issued by the Minister of Electricity, announces a sweeping ban on all trade union activities in the electricity sector. It prohibits Ministry officials from dealing with unions and instructs them to retract any benefits unions have negotiated with the ministry on behalf of workers in recent years. Furthermore, it orders the ministry, in coordination with the police, to close all trade union offices and take control of trade unions assets, properties, documents, furniture, computers, and even threatens potential legal action under an anti-terrorism law against workers that the ministry finds to be illegally resisting this order.

By organizing unions and bargaining for improved working conditions, Iraqi workers are trying to practice internationally recognized rights long denied to them by decades of dictatorship. Yet, instead of working with unions to build democratic labor management relations and to formulate new labor laws which live up to international standards, your government continues to implement anti-union labor laws and practices which originated in a far less democratic and less hopeful era of Iraqi history.

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The AFL-CIO urges your government to implement immediate and effective measures to guarantee the freedom of association in the electricity sector and across the country, for both public and private sector workers who are currently denied this right. As a member of the ILO, Iraq is bound by international treaties, including ILO Convention 87 on freedom of association.

We urge you to immediately take all necessary measures to stop this unjust government attack on worker rights. Further, we respectfully request the Prime Minister's office work with the government to cease the implementation of laws that restrict independent trade union organization and collective bargaining especially in the public sector, until such a time as the Iraqi legislature can enact new laws that live up to the promise of a new, democratic Iraq that Iraqi workers deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard L. Trumka". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard L. Trumka  
President

RLT/CF/ca