



global worker

FEATURE

The Middle East and North Africa

SPECIAL REPORT

Rio Tinto's unsustainable
corporate behaviour

PROFILE

Angeline Chitambo



Welcome to global worker



Jyrki Raina
General Secretary

“We are determined to give all it takes to produce a profound change in Bangladesh.”

Struggle for dignity

In Bangladesh, the Middle East and North Africa, as well as at Rio Tinto, IndustriALL Global Union is leading the struggle of workers for dignity and respect.

In April, the eight-storey Rana Plaza building collapsed near Dhaka in Bangladesh, killing 1,129 garment workers. This industrial homicide expedited negotiations on a legally binding Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh in the retail sector, led by IndustriALL and our sister organization UNI.

Following the first signatures by H&M, Inditex and C&A, more than 100 leading brands and retailers of the world have signed the historic Accord that will help make the Bangladeshi garment industry safe and sustainable in a major five-year project.

The participating companies have committed themselves to exhaustive inspections, finding funding for the necessary repairs of dangerous factories, and training for management and workers.

It will be a long and winding road, as problems with factories that have already been identified as unsafe show. Many difficult and unpopular decisions lie ahead. But we have to get rid of lethal factories making cheap t-shirts for Western consumers. Indeed, we hope that the ongoing compensation negotiations after Rana Plaza, Tazreen Fashions and Aswad could be the last ones.

IndustriALL will also continue to exert pressure to raise the US\$38 monthly minimum wage towards living wages; insist on an ILO-compliant labour law reform; and launch a major organizing project in cooperation with our partner organizations.

We are determined to give all it takes to produce a profound change in Bangladesh.

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, IndustriALL is supporting the development and growth of free and independent unions. In this issue of Global Worker, we tell you how.

In January 2011, Tunisian people overthrew the regime of president Ben-Ali in an uprising that marked the beginning of the Arab Spring. Unrest, revolutions and even wars followed in several countries in the region.

People had clearly had enough of poverty, unemployment, social injustice, lack of democracy and lack of hope for a better life. They were angry and took to the streets to demand a change.

Today, more than two years after the Arab Spring, we have seen changes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), but also deep frustration and disillusionment among people because of high expectations and broken promises. Dictatorship is not automatically followed by democracy. In a number of countries, the freedom of association is under threat.

IndustriALL is therefore taking very concrete action to safeguard union rights and help independent unions build capacity to grow in Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia and elsewhere in the region.

In this issue of Global Worker we expose human and trade union rights abuses by mining giant Rio Tinto. IndustriALL is building a counter-power through a global union network to make the company respect its workers. The struggle for dignity around the world will never stop.

Jyrki Raina
General Secretary

 @JyrkiRaina

IndustriALL Global Union

Represents 50 million workers across the supply chains in the mining, energy and manufacturing sectors at the global level.

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Our t-shirts are produced by unionized labour

Workers organized by IndustriALL affiliate, the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SACTWU), and employed at a Mazpah clothing factory in Cape Town produce IndustriALL's t-shirts.

“We are proud to say that it is the SACTWU members that have manufactured our IndustriALL t-shirts.”

Jyrki Raina

Over to you... Join IndustriALL on facebook, twitter, YouTube and flickr and share with your friends.



Check out industriALL's regional Facebook pages



Follow IndustriALL and Jyrki Raina on Twitter @IndustriALL_GU, @JyrkiRaina

Jyrki Raina @JyrkiRaina
Six months after #RanaPlaza - Brands must pay compensation NOW | #Industriall #UNI industrial-union.org/six-months-aft...

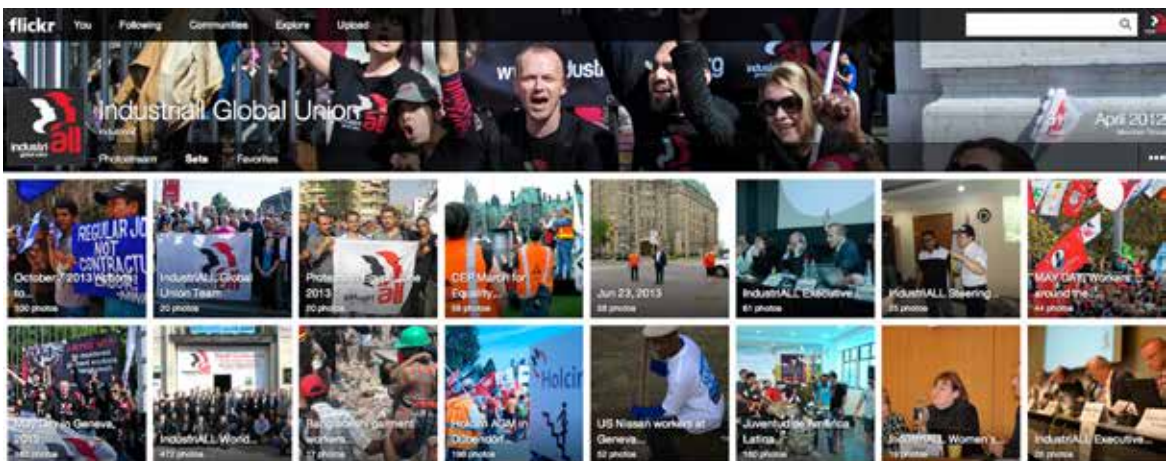
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Pictures of meetings and events can be found in their original size and can be downloaded free of charge. Please acknowledge their source in your materials.



www.industriall-union.org



MAIN PHOTO:
Garment worker in Accord factory
in Gazipur. *Abir Abdullah*

IndustriALL leading the struggle for Bangladeshi garment workers

report

TEXT
Tom Grinter

The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh is an historic breakthrough covering more than 2 million garment workers. Breaking from failed corporate-led social auditing of the past, under the Accord trade unions and multinational companies are working together to improve the precarious situation of garment workers in Bangladesh.

Over 100 brands and retailers, covering over 2 million workers in 1,600 factories, are now working together with IndustriALL Global Union and UNI Global Union. This broad coalition constitutes a critical mass of the garment sector. Together they have worked hard to set up the foundations to the Accord for the work on the ground in Bangladesh to be up and running by December 2013.

A number of key factors make this broad coalition new - its size; the seriousness of the legally binding commitments; and the central role of national and international trade unions. Trade unions as partners are the only actors able to ensure accountability and reliable monitoring of conditions and the inspection process. For too long the industry publicly relied on one-off safety audits in its factories, conducted by auditing companies that are created and funded by the brands themselves. Strong industrial relations in the industry can replace this model and conduct constant safety inspections in a context where workers are empowered to refuse dangerous work.

The work leading up to the Accord was made possible by the horrendous industrial disaster at Rana Plaza. On 24 April 2013 an eight-storey commercial building collapsed in Savar, a sub-district in the Greater Dhaka Area, the capital of

Bangladesh. As the death toll mounted each day to a final 1,129 the world's workers, consumers and media demanded change. The scale of Rana Plaza commanded systemic change, further than the usual call for local justice and strict sentencing of the local factory owner.

The industrial tragedy occurred at 9am, 24 April. The collapsed building, illegally constructed, contained five garment factories employing 5,000 workers. The five factories were Ether Tex, New Wave Bottoms, New Wave Style, Phantom Apparels and Phantom-TAC, producing for several well-known western brands.

On 23 April, the day before the collapse, large structural cracks appeared in the supporting pillars of Rana Plaza. But the building owner Sohel Rana and the garment factory owners ignored local authorities when they instructed a full evacuation. Workers were instead ordered to be at work early the following day in order to be at their workstations before the authorities arrived. A Rana Plaza garment worker had to work three days unpaid for every one workday missed, making workers reluctant to stay safe at home on 24 April. Managers at the Ether Tex factory threatened to withhold a month's wages of any worker who stayed away on 24 April.

On the day of the factory collapse, IndustriALL General Secretary Jyrki Raina said:

“This terrible tragedy highlights the urgency of putting a stop to the race to the bottom in supplying cheap means of production to international brands, a race in which hundreds of workers have lost their lives. Global clothing brands and retailers have a responsibility for their full production chains. Now it is time for them, suppliers and the Bangladeshi government to sit down with IndustriALL and its affiliates to agree on a safety program that will ensure this will never happen again.”

Major brands joined, more are following

In a rapid response to the Rana Plaza disaster, IndustriALL worked in a supply chain alliance with UNI Global Union that represents the unionised retail and commerce workers at the brands and retailers in the global north, to build the Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh. NGOs such as Clean Clothes Campaign, Workers' Rights Consortium, Maquila Solidarity Network, and the International Labour Rights Forum, have also played an important role.

Two of the world's largest clothing companies, H&M and Inditex, were the first brands to sign the Accord on 14 May. New company signatories are joining every week.

“The Accord is a source of pride for IndustriALL Global Union that will always be remembered as the achievement from IndustriALL's first year that announced to the world the power and ambition of this new trade union force”, says IndustriALL General Secretary Jyrki Raina. “Together we will make the Bangladeshi garment industry safe and sustainable.”

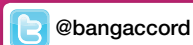
Preliminary discussions have taken place regarding the future possibility of expanding the Accord to other countries and even to other industrial sectors. Bangladesh is unfortunately not the only country in the world where garment workers work in dangerous conditions for poverty wages.



Over 100 brands and retailers, covering over 2 million workers in 1,600 factories, are now working together with IndustriALL Global Union and UNI Global Union.



The Bangladesh Accord offers brands and retailers the opportunity to clean up their supply chain and avoid further reputational damage through other worker deaths. Successful coordination will lay the way to similar work elsewhere.



TAZREEN FIRE

More than 120 workers died and as many were injured in a horrific fire at the Tazreen Fashion garment factory near Dhaka on 24 November 2012.

Visit the Accord website at www.bangladeshaccord.org

A dangerous factory was identified in the supply chain of Accord signatory Tesco in June. The Liberty Fashions case was not handled through the Accord as it came before the Accord mechanisms were established. Tesco, one of the largest brands to have signed the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, deserves much credit for its leading role in identifying the risk and cooperating with unions to ensure that workers were removed from harm's way.

When Tesco's inspection team discovered in June that factory 2 at Liberty Fashions was in an imminent danger of collapse, a process started to see whether the factory could be repaired and workers' jobs saved. A number of brands and retailers worked together and secured the payment of the salaries and Eid bonuses of workers. Unfortunately, after discussions in London, factory owner Mr Huq failed to come up with a credible plan. Liberty has accumulated 18 million dollars of debt and is in serious danger of closure. Sean Ansett, the Accord interim director, conducted talks with the BGMEA and also met with trade union leaders Roy Ramesh and Amirul Amin. Liberty Fashions workers are at the time of writing demonstrating for their owed salaries from the factory owner and a solution is yet to be found.

The Liberty case was successful in terms of getting workers safely out of a dangerous factory where a disaster could have occurred at any time. Although the Liberty case was not conducted under the auspices of the Accord, the new level of coordination and cooperation created through the Accord had a positive influence on the process.

IndustriALL Global Union's commitment to Bangladesh

In parallel to the work around implementing the Accord, IndustriALL action in Bangladesh is focussed around four other points, as committed to by the Executive Committee:

- Labour law reform to secure freedom of association
- Raising the minimum wage from US\$38 a month to reach living wage by 2015
- Launching a massive organizing project to ensure union presence in 4,500 garment factories
- Establishing a compensation model for victims of Rana Plaza and Tazreen



The IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC) groups affiliated unions into unified action under its elected general secretary Roy Ramesh. There is an enormous potential for organizing and growth for the garment worker unions. IndustriALL will now facilitate this in a major organizing project funded partly by the Netherlands Trade Union Confederation, FNV.

IndustriALL has long supported the calls of its Bangladeshi affiliates for a rise in the minimum wage for the sector in line with a living wage. The IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC) is united in its demand for an urgent increase in the minimum wage to well over US\$100 per month from the

current US\$38. On 21 September 200,000 Bangladeshi garment workers mobilized for three days in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country, calling for a living wage and strongly rejecting a derisory employers' wage offer in negotiations.

Recent attention has focused on discussions inside the wage board created by the government to recommend an increased sector-wide minimum wage. IndustriALL has criticized the absence of a trade union representative on the wage board. One spark that ignited the mass worker demonstrations in September was the inadequate proposal submitted to this wage board from the BGMEA and BKMEA employers associations in the sector of 3,600 BDT per month, a raise of less than 20 per cent.

IBC general secretary Roy Ramesh stated:

"The IBC has proposed to fix the minimum wages based on the Millennium Development Goals and the cost of living which is equal to around US\$120 per month."

Workers in the sector have directed their mobilizations' anger in the industrial areas of Gazipur, Savar, Tejgaon, Ashulia, Mirpur, Uttara, Badda, Dhaka at the influential BGMEA and BKMEA as those blocking a significant increase.

Progress of the minimum wage board has been very slow, and the BGMEA still seems to wait until November-December before agreeing on a deal. They apparently want first to travel with the ministry of labour to Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam to study the question of a living wage, and they would like to be sure of the willingness of brands and retailers to pay fair prices. In IndustriALL's recent talks with major brands such as Inditex, H&M and Primark, the brands have reiterated their clear commitment to higher minimum wages. Like many other brands they are willing to pay more, but so far there is no commitment from Walmart and its allies. Slow progress risks further unrest.

The campaign for labour law reform to make the Bangladeshi legislation ILO compliant is a vital priority. Anti-worker labour law has been a major barrier to organizing and collective bargaining. The reform process is strongly lobbied



PHOTO 1: At the site of the tragedy, families hold pictures of their loved ones and tell stories of what happened to them on the day of the collapse. *Abir Abdullah*

PHOTO 2: Banner containing the logos of most of the brands that have signed the Bangladesh Accord. *IndustriALL*

PHOTO 3: Major retail companies behind the global Bangladesh Fire and Safety Accord show their commitment to improving the lives of Bangladeshi garment workers at the kick-off meeting, held at the International Labour Organization in Geneva on 25 May 2013. *IndustriALL*

PHOTO 4: Firefighters rescue a worker from the rubble after the collapse of the eight-storey Rana Plaza building. *Kamrul Anam*

by national employers and international buyers, with constant pressure on the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to keep workers' rights at a minimum.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is leading the process to pressure the Bangladeshi government to enact proper labour law reforms. A high-level tripartite delegation of the ILO conducted an important mission in Dhaka on 1-4 May in the immediate aftermath of Rana Plaza. That mission set out an important ILO action plan including the following points:

- **Submission to Parliament during its next session, which is expected to be called in June 2013, of a labour law reform package. This should consider inputs of the tripartite partners and it should improve protection, in law and practice, for the fundamental rights to freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, as well as occupational safety and health.**
- **Implement, in full, the National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety in the RMG Industry in Bangladesh. Extend its scope to include structural integrity of buildings to improve health, occupational and structural safety and other vulnerable sectors, to be identified in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.**
- **Recruit, within six months, 200 additional inspectors by the Government and ensure that the Department of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Establishments will have been upgraded to a Directorate. It should have an annual regular budget allocation adequate to enable i) the recruitment of a minimum of 800 inspectors and ii) the development of the infrastructure required for their proper functioning.**

Compensations – setting a standard for the future

Compensation is a difficult but important area of work that involves numerous actors. IndustriALL is taking the lead and was able to secure the ILO as neutral chair of the compensation process following the Rana Plaza and Tazreen tragedies. Although compensating the victims' families and the injured workers of these industrial disasters is important in and of itself, the significance of this process is heightened by the possibility of setting a precedent for future deadly accidents.



IndustriALL has been pushing for a proposed compensation model in the negotiations with brands and retailers sourcing from Rana Plaza. There are variants of the model and a certain degree of flexibility. The priority is that a decent level of compensation be paid out as a matter of urgency, and that a mechanism and precedent can be established to avoid long delays in the future.

International experts have presented the negotiations with best practices for the establishment of a compensation fund, overseen by a multi-stakeholder committee, which could be created through an agreement by all the parties involved. A durable solution will need to be found in partnership with brands, ILO, the Bangladesh government, BGMEA, Bangladeshi unions and the NGOs. The sincere hope is for a solution to have been found by the time this publication goes to print.

A number of brands, such as Walmart and Gap, refused to come to the negotiating table, while others needed a push. So far British brand Primark has taken the lead in the response by ensuring that 3,630 families and injured will have received full six-month salaries until the end of October. Primark also made available their local banking infrastructure in Bangladesh to deliver any funds that are made available on an emergency basis.

Denouncing the absentees at the 11-12 September compensation talks in Geneva, IndustriALL Assistant General Secretary Monika Kemperle stated:

“The disregard of the absent brands for the plight of workers in Bangladesh whose lives have been destroyed by the avoidable accidents at Tazreen and Rana Plaza is shocking in the extreme. Empty promises and direct untruths since the Tazreen fire and the Rana Plaza collapse all so that these Western multinationals can avoid making payments that amount to a minute percentage of turnover.”

The bottom line in Bangladesh is that the multinationals can afford the small price of transforming the conditions in their supply chain. Without systemic change in each of these action areas workers will continue to toil in slave labour conditions, earning poverty wages, without the right to join a union. IndustriALL will continue to lead the fight to bring the changes that Bangladeshi workers need and deserve, and to make the industry safe and sustainable.

 @industrial_GU

LIVING WAGE

A living wage is the minimum income necessary for a worker to be able to meet basic needs, such as housing, clothes and food. Poverty wages have a devastating impact on workers. From Africa to Asia and Latin America the Living Wage is a global issue and central to the Decent Work Agenda. IndustriALL is campaigning on this issue with its affiliates.

Read more on www.industrial-union.org

Action on Bangladesh:
visit www.industrial-union.org/action-on-bangladesh
to stay updated on new developments

PHOTO 5:
Human Chain at Rana Plaza on 23 October 2013.
Abir Abdullah

Merger in Canada creates super union

Two of IndustriALL Global Union's affiliates in Canada, CAW and CEP, have joined forces to form a new trade union, Unifor. The new Canadian super union represents 300,000 workers in industry and services. New president Jerry Dias pledges focus on organizing and communities.

1 September 2013 saw the creation of Canada's largest private sector union when IndustriALL's Canadian affiliates CAW and CEP joined forces at a founding convention in Toronto to form Unifor. Unifor represents 300,000 members in a wide range of sectors including manufacturing, energy, forestry, services, telecommunications and transportation.

More than 2,500 elected delegates from the Canadian Auto Workers union (CAW) and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) voted to create the new super union. The statutes received 96 per cent support from the founding convention. The convention elected Jerry Dias as national president, Peter Kennedy as secretary-treasurer and Michel Ouimet as Quebec director. Unifor's executive board has 25 members, of which 44 per cent are women. That is well over women's 28 per cent share of the membership.

Jerry Dias began his working life in 1978 at de Havilland Aircraft (now Bombardier Aerospace), and was elected shop steward later that year. He became the local president before moving to the national office in 1993 to coordinate the aerospace sector. Before he was elected president of Unifor, Dias was assistant to the CAW president.

"We want a Canada that treats every person with decency, respect and security. A Canada that values the workers who produce the wealth, rather than devaluing and sacrificing us," Dias said in his keynote speech.

Taking organizing policy to the next level

The convention adopted an innovative organizing policy. One new element is the introduction of "community chapters". Through these community chapters new groups of workers may join Unifor even if they do not yet belong to a recognized bargaining unit. The new trade union has plans for structures to allow students, retirees and unemployed to become members. Unifor will dedicate 10 per cent of its income, or 10 million Canadian dollars, annually to organizing new members.

Unifor will carry on the tradition of social unionism of the CAW and the CEP. This political action means broad engagement in communities, participation in issue campaigns, and involvement in elections to raise issues and support to candidates who agree with them.

The convention gave a rousing farewell applause to CAW president Ken Lewenza and CEP president Dave Coles who both retired.

In his greeting, IndustriALL General Secretary Jyrki Raina praised the tradition of global solidarity provided by the founding organizations:

"In a globalized world without borders, we need to work together more than ever. I am confident that Unifor will continue to support our sisters and brothers in Colombia, Mozambique and elsewhere."

COUNTRY:
Canada

UNION:
Unifor

profile

TEXT:
Petra Brännmark

PHOTO BELOW:
Jerry Dias, Unifor President, at founding convention in Toronto 1 September 2013. Unifor



 @UniforTheUnion
@JerryPDias

UNIFOR

Since the merger between the Canadian Autoworkers Union, CAW, and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, CEP Unifor is Canada's largest private sector union. The 300,000 members are found in communications, transportation, energy, resources, manufacturing, and services. Jerry Dias was elected as the union's first national president at the founding convention in September 2013.

More information is found on www.unifor.org



Marcio Pochmann

interview

TEXT:

Valeska Solis

TRANSLATION:

Chris Whitehouse

MAIN PHOTO:

IndustriALL



Coordinated industrial policies are essential for Latin America and the Caribbean

In a world of precarious work and increased outsourcing, industrial policies are a way of protecting workers and their rights. According to Marcio Pochmann, economist, researcher and professor at UNICAMP (Campinas University) and president of the Instituto de Investigación Económica Aplicada from 2007 to 2012, South American countries need to have a common strategy in order to face the increasing global competition.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Brazil has the biggest economy in Latin America and is the seventh biggest in the world. Marcio Pochmann sees several reasons why Brazil is in this position. One is democratization, the country has enjoyed 30 years of representative government, and another is economic growth.

“The redistribution of income and increased employment between 2004 and 2005 encouraged economic expansion and got the economy moving,” says Marcio Pochmann.

After the crisis in 2008, economic recovery began in developing countries such as China, India and Brazil. According to Pochmann, Brazil is the engine of the Latin American economy and its economy has the potential to be among the five biggest in the world. In recent years, Brazil has been one of the major beneficiaries of world economic growth. The nation has accumulated wealth by exporting minerals, oil, coal, beef and soya to Europe and Asia.

“Industrial development depends on having a global strategy, so policies should have a coordinated international and not just a national perspective.”

Instituto de Investigación Económica Aplicada is an economic research institute in Brazil.

What is the current situation in Brazil and Latin America?

“Latin America lived through a long period of neoliberal policies, which were applied in different ways. This was detrimental to society and the economy and severely limited Latin America’s development prospects. However, post-neoliberal alternatives, applying different models, have emerged in the 21st century. The Bolivarian tendency in countries such as Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador has provided timely and interesting options for countries with a large agricultural sector. The situation is different in Uruguay and Argentina because these countries have a much more complex society that gives scope for constructing post-neoliberal alternatives. This is, for example, different to Venezuela, which has a large oil production and export capacity. There is also the Brazilian experience, which is different to that of Venezuela or Argentina. This is because Brazil has a very large industrial sector, and its recent investment in the oil industry has put the country into an excellent position.”

“The new government fund will mean increased investment in health and education. This was an important outcome of the wave of social protest in June this year when large demonstrations were held across Brazil. These post-neoliberal models are anti-neoliberal but there are also important differences between them.”

What was the significance of these demonstrations for the development in Brazil?

“The demonstrations were very important for breathing new life into the democracy in Brazil. It was good for the country that people went out on the streets to call for change. They were calling for improvements to public services, to the quality of education and health, something that the markets cannot offer. So this protest from the streets has been essential for the development of Brazil.”

Speaking of the demonstrations, what is your opinion of the proposed Law 4330?

“Outsourcing is a fact, not only in Brazil. Outsourcing is related to precarious work and I think it is essential to legislate or regulate on this matter. However, the majority proposal does not deal with the central issue of outsourcing. So there is a serious risk that the proposal will do nothing to improve the quality of employment and could mean more precarious work, including in sectors where precarious work is not yet common.”

What is your opinion of the industrial sector in Latin America?

“Industrial production is very important and I think South American countries need to coordinate industrial policy. There is a lot of competition, with an increase of manufacturing in Asia, especially China. At the same time, the new energy matrix may help the United States to recover, all of which could make it more difficult for South American industry to develop. It could even lead to an industrial decline in Latin America. So it is essential for our region to develop a co-ordinated industrial policy.”

“Industrial development depends on having a global strategy, so policies should have a coordinated international, and not just a national, perspective. For example, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay could coordinate their oil, shipbuilding and other industries. They could coordinate their entire productive system.”

Could such coordination help to combat precarious employment?

“Yes. One example of this is Mercosur, in which there is still competition but which is also becoming a forum for cooperation. Competition often leads to the disappearance of productive sectors in some countries. China has managed to organize a productive system that benefits its population and that has strong links with neighbouring countries. It imports many products and exports many products.”

I don’t think it is appropriate for Brazil, for example, to have a trade surplus with neighbouring countries. It should diversify and develop its relations with its neighbours. Precarious and informal work would be less widespread if there was less concern about competing. Competition can be harmful because it is all about low costs, which means keeping wages down. However, precarious employment continues to be a way of competing and is a practice also widely used in Latin American countries.”

What role can trade unions play in coordinating industrial policy?

“The trade unions are very important, not only for the consolidation of democracy, but also as standard bearers for the future. The unions cannot just look in the rear mirror when driving their car, because that would mean looking backwards. The unions must look forwards. On the one hand, there is a change in the working class, the importance of new information and communication technologies is increasing and this means new workers. Another issue is that workers don’t join unions, they do not have contact with unions. So the unions need to attract new workers to strengthen their position, their reform agenda and their demands in order to promote economic and social progress in their countries.”

Do you think Brazil is consolidating its position? Is it comparable to Argentina?

“Brazil is a bit different to Argentina. If Argentina were an animal, it would be one that can build political majorities more quickly and change direction more quickly. Brazil is more like an elephant, which moves more slowly and takes longer to build political majorities, but which can achieve more solid results. Despite all the difficulties, Brazil is now going in the right direction, and should not return to its previous policies. There is a feeling that change and the fight against inequality and precarious work are essential elements for the consolidation of democracy.”

“The trade unions are very important, not only for the consolidation of democracy, but also as standard bearers for the future.”

TEXT & PHOTOS:
Kemal Özkan, Ahmed Kamel,
Jim Catterson, Carol Bruce

LOCATION:
Middle East and
North Africa

feature

MAIN PHOTO:
Protests across Egypt
calling for the resignation
of President Mohammed
Morsi on 30 June, 2013.
IndustriALL

PHOTOS OPPOSITE:
Workers of Bahayra Company
for Land Reclamation,
demand their salaries at
the picket line in Egypt.
IndustriALL



In the wake of the Arab Spring

The Arab Spring has irrevocably changed the political and social landscape in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). MENA is a priority region for IndustriALL Global Union, and these past 18 months have provided key moments with opportunities to build unions and promote social and economic rights of workers. But recent developments also show a worrying trend when it comes to fundamental trade union rights.



Workers have been given promises about democracy, human and trade union rights, but too often there is little to show in reality. Cases from Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria clearly show that peaceful freedom of association is under heavy pressure. A new Law on Associations adopted in Algeria in 2012, for example, fails to protect the freedom of association by limiting access to foreign funding and complicates the registration of new and existing organizations.

IndustriALL, together with its affiliates, continue the struggle for democracy in the MENA, fighting for the respect of human and trade union rights.

Organizing and campaigning in Egypt

The dawn of the Arab Spring paved the way for a new trade unionism in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The region witnessed the emergence of new independent unions, not least in Egypt.

A wave of privatization in the late nineties marginalized a large portion of the labour force and resulted in severe layoffs. In 2004, Egyptian workers started an unprecedented phase of struggle for freedom of association and better living and working conditions. Between 2006 and 2008, hundreds of wildcat strikes were conducted outside of the formal union structures. Workers of Misr Mahalla Textile and Spinning Company, the largest factory in the MENA region employing around 22,000 workers, led the struggle. A series of strikes by workers in other sectors followed, opening for the foundation of the first-ever independent union in Egypt, the Real Estate Tax Authority Union in 2008. On 30 January 2011, independent unions gathered in Tahrir Square declaring the foundation of the Egyptian Federation of Independent Unions (EFITU). The EFITU immediately called for a general strike to increase the pressure on Mubarak's regime to resign.

Since the beginning of the revolution on 25 January 2011, IndustriALL has closely followed the political developments in Egypt, as well as the implications for trade unions and workers. IndustriALL supports independent unions in Egypt through education, organizing and campaigning in order to build stronger unions.

With the support of the solidarity center of AFL-CIO (the American Confederation of Labour) and the ITUC, IndustriALL has held four seminars with independent unions since the beginning of 2013. The first planning and assessment seminar took place in Cairo with 50 participants from IndustriALL's industrial sectors. The seminar welcomed leaders of the Egyptian Democratic Labour Congress (EDLC) and EFITU, as well as representatives of ILO, ITUC and FES. The participants discussed key challenges facing their unions, such as non-recognition, state intervention and barriers over collection of union dues.

The project continued with three more seminars on capacity building of the new unions. In Alexandria, the 25 participants of the second seminar focused on the energy sector. During the two-day seminar, participants



The dawn of the Arab Spring paved the way for a new trade unionism in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).





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were able to express their challenges as independent unions in oil, electricity and mining industries in Egypt. This included subcontracting, employers' resistance of non-recognition for independent unions, companies' approaches on employing agency workers and refusing to make decent work contracts.

Mahalla El Kobra city, the home of Egypt's textile and garment industry, hosted the national seminar focused on the challenges of textile workers. Participants from various branches of the industry bore witness to the large number of layoffs and early retirement experienced by the textile and garment industry in Egypt since the 1990s. This is due to economic restructuring, privatization and widespread corruption as many factories stopped work due to poor management. There is a need to establish national mechanisms to face privatization and to restart the inactive factories, as well as applying modern and efficient management in state-owned factories. The lack of organizing capacity in the private sector and absence of collective bargaining need to be countered.

Sadat city is one of the fastest growing industrial cities in Egypt. The city hosts foreign and national private enterprises, a number of which benefit from the "Qualified Industrial Zones agreement between Egypt, Israel and the USA". This is where IndustriALL held the fourth seminar; supporting youth-dominated independent union movement. Workers received training on collective bargaining skills, as well as raising their knowledge on recent developments on labour and trade union laws.

Within the framework of the IndustriALL special program several groups of workers have been inspired to found unions, and then joined larger regional and national structures. IndustriALL has recently affiliated the General Trade Union of Electricity and Energy as the first independent union affiliated from Egypt.

The revolution managed to change the regime, but has not been able to eliminate inherited policies and their repercussions. Recently, Egyptian workers from IndustriALL affiliates have faced several violations of

their rights. IndustriALL has campaigned on their behalf and brought the cases to the attention of the Egyptian authorities and public.

Since the foundation of the first Egyptian trade union structure in the late 1950s, Egyptian workers have been deprived of the right to freely organize outside of the official unions recognized by the government. A long struggle has resulted in the current discussions on the adoption of a new trade union law guaranteeing freedom of association. For the past two years, a number of drafts have been discussed and submitted to government and parliament. Due to conflicting interests of some of the groups that came to power following the overturn of the Mubarak regime, the law is still waiting to be adopted.

Egyptian workers, the ILO, IndustriALL and other Global Union Federations are urging the Egyptian government to issue the law as soon as possible. IndustriALL will continue to support Egyptian workers until they win the demands of their revolution: bread, freedom and social justice.



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New unity in Iraq as IndustriALL campaigns for fair labour law

Iraq still lacks legislation protecting workers' rights, guaranteeing freedom of association and governing industrial relations. In an effort to coordinate and consolidate forces, the new IndustriALL National Council was established in Baghdad on 10 July.

The current legislation, inherited from Saddam Hussein's regime, rules out the existence of labour unions carrying out free and independent labour union activity. It prohibits independent organizing and collective bargaining in both the public and private sectors, as well as prohibiting unions from holding funds, collecting dues, and maintaining assets. There are no provisions for the right to strike, and workers in essential services are explicitly prohibited from striking. In addition, harsh anti-union practices at workplaces through threats, intimidations, kidnappings, torture and murders are not uncommon.

Within the framework of the IndustriALL special program several groups of workers have been inspired to found unions, and then join larger regional and national structures.

PHOTO 1:

Protesters in Cairo's Tahrir Square calling for the resignation of President Mohammed Morsi. *IndustriALL*

PHOTO 2:

On 24 April, the Egyptian Democratic Labour Congress (EDLC), a new trade union centre saw the light in Egypt. *IndustriALL*

PHOTO 3:

Protests across Egypt calling for the resignation of President Mohammed Morsi on 30 June, 2013. *IndustriALL*

PHOTO 4:

Hundreds of workers protest against the South Oil Company in Iraq on 19 February 2013. *IFOU*

feature
In the wake of the Arab Spring

In spite of this adversity, Iraqi workers have managed to form their own unions. In the last few years, six Iraqi affiliates representing workers in oil, petrochemical and electricity sectors have joined IndustriALL, and there is a large interest for further affiliation.

Establishing the IndustriALL Global Union National Council by six Iraqi affiliates is a great step towards joining forces in fighting for trade union legislation.

While visiting Baghdad, IndustriALL met with Mr Osama Al-Nujaifi, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, Mr Nassar Al-Rubuiee, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, and Mr Kanna Yonadam, Chair of Labor and Social Affairs Committee at the Parliament, discussing the current legislation. Under local and international pressure, the Iraqi government has drafted a new labour law, far below the trade unions' ambitions.



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IndustriALL made it clear that the law must cover the public sector. Legislation should also make it easier to form a union by ensuring that requirements follow ILO norms and standards – trade unions must be allowed to determine and establish their own democratic structures, and the law must provide effective guarantees against interference in trade union movement by government and employers.

IndustriALL, in cooperation with International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Iraqi affiliated trade unions and national centres, campaigns for enactment of trade union legislation. For this purpose, IndustriALL and ITUC have sent a joint letter to the Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament.

Somalia

Offshore East Africa is one of the newest areas for oil and gas, and Somalia is one of the latest countries to attract the attention of large multinational companies. IndustriALL has been in interaction with the ITUC-affiliated National Centre in Somalia, Federation of Somali Trade Unions, FESTU, lending cooperation and assistance in organizing workers and defending workers' rights. FESTU is the first independent and democratic trade union centre in the country and has now ten affiliated trade unions.

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Libya

In 2011 Muammar Gadhafi's autocratic government ended after a six-month uprising and civil war. The main opposition group, the National Transitional Council, NTC, declared the country liberated and pledged to create a pluralist, democratic state. Following Libya's first free election in six decades the NTC handed over power to a newly elected parliament, the General National Congress, in August 2012. The country now faces many challenges including a plethora of armed groups who refuse to disarm. Libya is plagued by instability and is almost entirely dependent on oil and gas that account for over 95 per cent of its exports.

Armed guards, including rebels who participated in the civil war, were formed by the defence ministry to protect the oil industry. A tug-of-war with the former militiamen has ensued, with the guards responsible for recent strikes leaving only two of the country's oil terminals functioning and oil exports at just 160,000 barrels of oil per day (p/d). Production has fallen from 1.5 million to 500,000 barrels p/d. Oil sector workers, members of the Oil and Gas Sector Workers Union OGSWU, are reported to have protested outside Congress demanding that the government reopen the country's oil fields and export terminals.

IndustriALL makes strenuous efforts to be in support of the new unions in Libya, particularly in the oil industry. A number of multinational oil companies are active in the country, including the ones with which there are Global Framework Agreements (GFA).

Tunisia

The Arab Spring began in Tunisia and the trade unions of the General Union of Workers of Tunisia, UGTT, were at the forefront of the struggle. UGTT emerged as the key mediator of the revolution, winning trust from divergent political forces.

It was within the union that the committee which regulated the transition to the elections of 23 October 2011 was formed. The unions have also secured victories for their members and for workers in general, including permanent contracts for over 350,000 formerly temporary workers.

Two meetings in Amman, Jordan, brought together Arab trade union organizations affiliated to or associated with the ITUC, the Global Union Federations, Solidarity Support Organizations, and the ILO-ACTRAV.

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Tunisia is now in a political and economic crisis with growing terrorism, rising unemployment and a collapsing economy. Tunisia's ruling three-party coalition has turned to the UGTT to help break the political stalemate. UGTT has remained decidedly outside the control of the Islamist government, which has had to come to terms with the union's role and status. Recent discussions have seen the coalition agree to a one month timeline to finish the constitution and organize new elections, after which the government will step down.



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With over 500,000 members and a strong support-base in the rural areas where the revolution started, the UGTT is a powerful force. After the revolution it became a target yet again. On 4 December 2012, as the union prepared to commemorate the 60th anniversary of a former leader's assassination, its headquarters were attacked, wounding ten people. In response UGTT called a one-day national strike.

IndustriALL now has three affiliated trade unions, all members of the UGTT, in Tunisia. Tahar Berberi, leader of Fédération Générale de la Métallurgie et de l'Electronique is a member of IndustriALL's Executive and Finance Committees. With his assistance a joint affiliates' meeting and seminar is to be held in Tunis to discuss how the international movement can support the unions in the present situation.



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Palestine

IndustriALL has three affiliates in Palestine. All are industry federations of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, PGFTU, led by Shaheer Sae'd. Shaheer Sae'd is the 2011 winner of the prestigious Arthur Svensson International Award for Union Rights, an annual award from Industri Energi, IndustriALL Norwegian affiliate, commemorating a leader of the Norwegian labour movement.

The PGFTU and its member unions fight for trade union rights in Palestine, as well as for Palestinian self-determination. Many of IndustriALL's affiliates, particularly Belgian La Centrale Generale of FGTB, continues an extensive partnership with the petrochemicals union to support their struggle for social justice.

Arab Women organize

The Arab Women's Network runs under the auspices of the ITUC, bringing together women trade unionists. The aim of the network is to strengthen women's standing in the labour market and in trade unions across the region.

In May and June training was done in Egypt to discuss the deterioration of women's rights. The agenda also included the constitution and its impact on women, women and the labor market in Egypt, promotion and discrimination at work, child care needs at work and male domination in unions. Training has also been conducted for women in Morocco and Algeria.

IndustriALL has taken the first steps to create its own women's network in the MENA region.

Democratic Arab Union League of ITUC – on the road to an Arab region trade union organization

Within the framework of the ITUC, a new trade union organization for the Arab region is being created. Two meetings in Amman, Jordan, brought together Arab trade union organizations affiliated to or associated with the ITUC, the Global Union Federations, Solidarity Support Organizations, and the ILO-ACTRAV.

Participants welcomed the proposed structure aimed at strengthening democratic trade unions and agreed to provide support during this critical time. A new, independent structure is regarded as essential for trade unions to be able respond effectively to the legitimate political and social aspirations expressed by the revolutions in the Arab region. A charter setting out the fundamental principles for action is being developed, emphasizing the struggle for freedom, social justice and equality.

PHOTO 5:
Hundreds of workers protest against the South Oil Company in Iraq on 19 February 2013. *IFOU*

PHOTO 6:
Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU) members Commemorate the World Day for Decent Work on 7 October 2013. *FESTU*

PHOTO 7:
Second ITUC meeting in Amman, Jordan. *IndustriALL*

PHOTO 8:
Rally opening of the World Social Forum in Tunisia, March 2013. *IndustriALL*

PHOTO 9:
Ahead of the World Social Forum in Tunisia, IndustriALL met with the government and UGTT unions to reconfirm its support for the democratic development process in Tunisia, March 2013. *IndustriALL*

Angeline Chitambo: Still Fighting On

There can be no doubt that Angeline Chitambo, President of the Zimbabwe Energy Workers Union (ZEWU) and IndustriALL Global Union Executive Committee member, is a woman of great strength. It has been a tough year for her but she has stood her ground in the face of blatant worker and trade union rights violations by the state owned Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA).

It all started when ZESA refused to comply with an arbitration ruling to implement the collective bargaining agreement signed off by the company on wage increases for 2012. ZESA suspended 135 workers, including Angeline and other union leaders for allegedly threatening strike action. ZESA then tried to use the reinstatement of the suspended workers as leverage to have the union agree to abandon the collective bargaining agreement, but ZEWU remained resolute.

After a long battle all of the suspended workers were reinstated except for Angeline, who was dismissed.

“From the start of this we were not alone and now when it is just me left out in the cold, IndustriALL continues to stand by me,” says Angeline. **“I never expected that I would get such support. The initiative taken by IndustriALL to help me and my union during this time has given me strength and courage to keep fighting.”**

ZEWU took the matter to labour court, which ruled that the charges against Angeline were unfounded and ordered her reinstatement. ZESA refuses to comply with the ruling, seeking to settle the matter by paying her to leave voluntarily.

Angeline, who has worked at ZESA for more than 26 years and served as Vice President of ZEWU from 2000 and then as its President from 2006, interprets the attempt to remove her as a move to undermine the union that has grown into a vibrant worker driven organization under her leadership. **“They see me as a threat because I have been pushing forward workers’ issues but I can’t leave like this.”** She adds with a laugh, **“I have said that I will accept being pushed out if they honour the 2012 collective bargaining agreement.”**

Angeline points out that in 2006 ZESA tried to violate the collective bargaining agreement but the difference was the response from workers. **“We had the biggest strike that ZESA has ever faced, it was considered illegal because we are categorised as essential services workers and denied the right to strike, but everybody participated and nobody could be victimised.”**

So what has changed? Angeline speaks of the demobilization of workers through state repression. A particular problem is the restrictions on gatherings that require police clearance. Employers use victimization to manipulate workers, resulting in a decline of worker ideology.

COUNTRY:
Zimbabwe

UNION:
Zimbabwe Energy Workers
Union (ZEWU)

profile

TEXT:
Aisha Bahadur

PHOTO:
IndustriALL



“Workers have an ‘each man for himself and God for all’ attitude. Without unity amongst workers, the labour movement is as good as dead in Zimbabwe,” Angeline says.

This has severely undermined the power balance in industrial relations, leaving unions without the ability to mobilize workers on their demands.

Again in 2013, ZEWU and ZESA are unable to reach an agreement in the collective bargaining. ZEWU wants a wage increase in 2013 to be applied to wages that include the gains won in 2012. With limited options available to the union to exert pressure, once again a legal route through arbitration must be pursued.

“Through the challenges I have faced in the last year, I have come to appreciate the importance of unity and solidarity. We have come together as unions from diverse sectors at a global level, but we can achieve so much more if we build unity amongst ourselves as affiliates at a country level. This is what I pledge to champion in IndustriALL, this will be my thanks for the support I have received,” concludes Angeline.

RIO TINTO UNSUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICE

Claiming to abide by good corporate practice, mining giant Rio Tinto's behaviour includes major disputes with trade unions, communities, regulatory authorities, as well as over indigenous people's rights.

TEXT:
Glen Mpufane, Armelle Seby

special report

MAIN PHOTO:
IndustriALL Global Union joined a diverse group of civil society activists, NGOs and community-based organizations in London to protest against Rio Tinto and Anglo American unsustainable business practices on the occasion of their Annual General Meetings on 18 and 19 April 2013.
Amy Scaife/London Mining Network

- ▶ Rio Tinto has its headquarter in the UK, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London and New York Stock Exchange listed company, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange. The company employs around 71,000 people in more than 40 countries.
- ▶ Rio Tinto's business is finding, mining, and processing mineral resources. Major products are aluminum, copper, diamonds, thermal and metallurgical coal, uranium, gold, industrial minerals (borax, titanium dioxide and salt) and iron ore. Activities span the world; represented in Australia and North America with significant businesses in Asia, Europe, Africa and South America.
- ▶ Rio Tinto is a profitable mining company that delivers consistent dividends to shareholders. Over the last five years, underlying earnings have exceeded US\$55 billion. On average, from 2008 through 2012—during a global financial crisis—Rio Tinto earned more than US\$30 million per day, or US\$1.26 million per hour.





In the midst of the worst global recession ever to hit the world in 2008, the mining industry experienced a commodity boom. This boom, driven largely by the growth of India and China, created unprecedented demand for coal, mineral resources and precious stones. Against the background of the financial crisis, mining companies continued to outperform the overall market, as consumer sector dependent on demand from developed economies struggled to recover. Most mining companies came through the crisis with robust balance sheets. However, the mining boom has not delivered for workers – mining is the most unsafe industry in the world, and it is tough work.

The Way we Work, Rio Tinto's global code of conduct, is promoted as an expression of good corporate citizenry and an expression of the company's values. Rio Tinto is considered by many ethical business rankings as leading in the mining sector, and it continues to enjoy high accolades by ethical indices such as the FTSE4good ethical share index. Yet Swiss-based REPRISK, a firm specializing in assessing the possible environmental, social, governance and reputational risks of companies, listed Rio Tinto as the sixth most controversial mining company of 2011.

Before being accepted as provider of the metals for the 2012 Olympic medals, Rio Tinto went through an audit and certification process. The company was subsequently the first to be certified as a responsible mining company by the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC), an organization of companies in the industry and which includes Rio Tinto as a founding member.

However, the certification attesting to the company's highest ethical, social, and environmental standards, raises questions about Rio Tinto's influence over the RJC. The London Olympics organizers were subjected to criticism for choosing Rio Tinto without following service provider protocols for auditing and certification. It also appears to have been a rushed-through process which conveniently made Rio Tinto the first mining company to receive this recognition.

The award was widely condemned by human rights NGOs, as well as by IndustriALL Global Union and its affiliates. IndustriALL joined thousands of activists around the world to vote for Rio Tinto as the worst company linked to the London Olympics in the Greenwash awards.

Direct engagement cuts out trade unions

Rio Tinto prefers to avoid negotiations with mineworkers' unions and find solutions with the workers themselves instead of having a third party involved. They call the practice direct engagement. As articulated by David Peever, a senior company executive in 2012, legislation must take account of the need for 'direct engagement between management and the work force'. It is best to limit 'the influence of third parties in areas of the business in particular that are more properly the province of management.'

Since trade unions fall in the category of third parties, they have no place in Rio Tinto's world and are perceived as an obstacle and a threat to flexibility and the need for improved productivity. Rio Tinto

successfully de-unionised its workforce in Australia in the 1990s, becoming the first major mining company to place its workforce on individual contracts and refuse to deal with unions. At the time, Bell Bay was the first significant plant in Australia to stand without a recognised trade union.

But IndustriALL affiliate the Australian Workers' Union, AWU, scored a historic victory by winning back the collective bargaining rights at the Bell Bay plant in 2013. This was the result of two years of strategic and systematic trade union work.

Rio Tinto prefers to avoid negotiations with mineworkers' unions and find solutions with the workers themselves instead of having a third party involved. They call the practice direct engagement.

In 2012 events along the same lines unfolded in Alma, Québec, where 780 workers were locked out at an aluminium smelter. Workers were effectively being punished for rejecting management attempts to halve salaries and outsource the workforce. The lock-out lasted for six months, but after taking on the mining giant the United Steelworkers, USW, won the fight and saw a new collective agreement ratified.

In August 2013, Redpath Mongolia, a contractor that employs workers at the Rio Oyu Tolgoi copper and gold mine owned jointly by Rio Tinto and the Mongolian government, fired about 1,700 workers. The reason for firing the workers was never disclosed but was apparently linked to revenue sharing of the mine with the government of Mongolia. Turquoise Hill

Swiss-based REPRISK, a firm specializing in assessing the possible environmental, social, governance and reputational risks of companies, listed Rio Tinto as the sixth most controversial mining company of 2011.



LANDMARK JUDGEMENT AGAINST RIO TINTO IN MONGOLIAN COURT

Resources, a subsidiary of Rio Tinto, announced on 12 August 2013 that until “matters can be resolved with the Mongolian government and a new timetable has been agreed”, the funding and development of the mine’s underground expansion would be delayed. Redpath Mongolia was involved in the building of the underground portion of the mine.

In Australia, Rio Tinto has been involved in a run in with authorities over the future of the Gove alumina refinery in Australia, which employs about 1400 workers. In the midst of negotiations with authorities over the security of energy (gas) supply to the refinery and an apparent rejection of the government’s offer, Rio Tinto subsidiary Pacific Aluminium went ahead and warned Gove workers of an uncertain future. Chief Minister, Adam Giles said, while the Government had been conducting negotiations in good faith with Rio Tinto, “the Northern Territory Government is disappointed Rio Tinto has chosen to scare its employees by discussing curtailment of its Gove refinery before all its options have been exhausted and a final decision has been made”.

In New Zealand, IndustriALL affiliate the New Zealand Engineering, Printing & Manufacturing Union Incorporated (EPMU), brought a case to the courts that involved New Zealand Aluminium Smelters Limited, a Rio Tinto Alcan majority owned smelter. The company was ordered to pay back workers owed annual leave that they were legally entitled to but never received.

IndustriALL affiliate, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), endured a bitter dispute with Rio Tinto in 2010 at an exclusively owned subsidiary of Rio Tinto, the Borax mine in southern California. Rio Tinto attempted to impose new precarious contracts on workers that would have increased overtime, scrapped the seniority system in place at the time, given managers discretion to cut jobs and hours, and with little benefits for the workers. After the ILWU put the issue to a vote that unanimously rejected the new conditions, workers who turned up for work the next day found they were locked out by the company. The ILWU mounted a successful global campaign that forced Rio Tinto to withdraw.

Solidarity actions in Indonesia and Mongolia

In May 2013 the roof on a non-operational underground tunnel collapsed during a training session at the Freeport-McMoran’s Grasberg copper mine in Indonesia killing 28 miners. The accident, which can only be described as an industrial homicide, killed 28 members of CEMWU FSPKEP-SPSI. On 15-18 September, Andrew Vickers, chairperson of the mining sector at IndustriALL and General Secretary of CFMEU in Australia, led a high-level global solidarity mission to Indonesia to lend international support to CEMWU FSPKEP-SPSI.

The mission included delegates from the United Steelworkers of America and the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa. During the three days, the mission delegates met with the management of PT Freeport Indonesia, as well as government representatives from the Ministry of Energy, Natural Resources and Minerals, and the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration.

“We learned with horror that the cause of the accident was that the roof collapsed due to faulty lines along the rooftop and deterioration of ground support bolts. As such no one could be held accountable,” Andrew Vickers says.

The mission’s conclusion, supported by the CEMWU FSPKEP-SPSI, was that the cause of the accident was management negligence. No evidence of inspections or risk assessment performed before the accident could be provided.

Last year Sukhgerel Dugersuren of the Mongolian NGO Oyu Tolgoi Watch, addressed the Rio Tinto AGM on behalf of herders who live around the Oyu Tolgoi mine, saying that Rio Tinto was diverting the Undai River – the sole river that supports life in this Gobi desert region – without local community consent and the necessary government permits. It is on this site that Rio Tinto has chosen to dump its waste rock.

IndustriALL’s recent mission to Mongolia to investigate claims of unethical conduct on the part of Rio Tinto discovered that as a result of a flawed investment agreement signed by a former government, Mongolia will not reap the benefits from the Oyu Tolgoi mine for another 20 to 30 years.

A Rio Tinto worker was dismissed for protesting against discrimination over the remuneration paid to Mongolian employees. The unequal remuneration pay between Mongolian nationals and expatriates employed by Rio Tinto translate into a disparity of MNT 3 million for local Mongolian, to MNT 30 million for expatriates a month on average.

The Ministry of Labour has confirmed that Oyu tolgoi and Rio Tinto were in violation of Clause #8.1 of the OT IA “in the most blatant, wanton manner and never made a single step towards enforcing this obligation”. The Supreme Court ruled that the termination of the employment was unjust and unlawful.

The ruling of the Supreme Court was the final arbiter over Rio Tinto’s intransigence and arrogance to refuse two lower court judgements in favour of the employee. Rio Tinto took the matter on appeal to the Supreme Court and lost.

IndustriALL applauds this important victory, and Assistant Secretary General Kemal Özkan says:

“This is a huge victory not only for Sainkhuu Gantuya, but for all workers in Mongolia, especially at Oyu Tolgoi. This is a significant and important pushback against Rio Tinto, particularly in the context of IndustriALL Global Union’s global corporate campaign against Rio Tinto.”



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PHOTO 1:

IndustriALL and Swiss local union UNIA “Off the Podium” planned action at the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne Switzerland. May 14 2012. *IndustriALL*

PHOTO 2:

Activists protest against Rio Tinto and Anglo American at their Annual General Meeting, April 2013. *Amy Scaife/ London Mining Network*

PHOTO 4:

Olympic medals exposed at the Rio Tinto Annual General Meeting in London, April 2012. *IndustriALL*



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PHOTO 3:

IndustriALL

The current government is involved in a fierce battle with Rio Tinto to review the terms of that investment agreement. As described earlier, it is a battle that has resulted in the termination of 1,700 workers.

Rio Tinto and IndustriALL Global Union

IndustriALL finds Rio Tinto being in contravention of both national labour laws and international labour standards, which it claims to subscribe to. In order to address this untenable situation, IndustriALL and its affiliates have created a Global Network composed of its affiliates with a presence at Rio Tinto operations worldwide. The main objective and purpose of the Rio Tinto Global Network is to highlight and combat these violations.

Rio Tinto must be held accountable for its conduct and behaviour. Rio Tinto has enormous resources to drag out disputes with individual trade unions in collective bargaining negotiations. It has resources to lobby for its interests with legislative process that are aimed at addressing some of the excesses of its practices. Rio Tinto succeeds in portraying a practice of good corporate governance and sustainable development.

Workers organized by IndustriALL affiliates have been subject to Rio Tinto's worsts form of abuse. IndustriALL affiliates have on many occasions, separately and individually, responded to these attacks with the might of organized labour and global solidarity. Organized workers cannot be defeated. In 2014, IndustriALL and its affiliates are coordinating a comprehensive response to Rio Tinto's unsustainable behaviour. This corporate campaign involves a broad alliance of civil society actors such as NGOs, communities and other global union federations. The objective is to force a seismic shift in Rio Tinto's relationship and attitude towards trade unions, and to recognize trade unions as formal counterparts.

RIO TINTO AND PRECARIOUS WORK IN MADAGASCAR: A WAY TO AVOID RESPONSIBILITIES

Rio Tinto's actions in Madagascar illustrate the company's strategy to use outsourcing to reduce operation costs and to escape from its responsibilities as an employer. Communities and workers pay the cost. Rio Tinto's voluntary commitment to the OECD Guidelines on Multinationals and the UN Guiding principles on Business and Human Rights appears to be a facade. Rio Tinto claims no responsibilities, while this policy generates clear adverse impact in its supply chain.

QIT Madagascar Minerals (QMM) is a joint venture between Rio Tinto (who owns an 80 per cent stake) and the Government of Madagascar. Since the end of 2008, the joint venture has been producing limonite near Fort Dauphin, in southern Madagascar.

In July 2013, QMM ended its contract with the security company OMEGA Risk Solutions. Instead, they opted for two cheaper security companies, Protech Service and G4S, naming cuts in operation costs as the reason for terminating the contract.

300 workers were collectively dismissed with merely one month's notice. When IndustriALL Global Union affiliate, the Fédération des Syndicats des Travailleurs de l'Energie et des Mines (FISEMA), tried to engage in social dialogue with QMM regarding the breach of duties concerning social planning for the dismissed workers, the company's response was flat - it refused to enter into a dispute as the matter concerned human resource management of a subcontractor.

In August 2013, a regional tripartite labour committee was established to facilitate the dialogue between the workers and OMEGA. As a result of this committee, mediation agreements on the collective labour dispute of former employees of the company OMEGA were concluded. However, representatives of the FISEMA expressed their reservations in relation to the agreement because of procedural irregularities in the process. Regional tripartite labour committees are not allowed to conclude such agreements. In this kind of negotiations workers are allowed to be represented by their elected staff reps. In this case only two reps were participating in the negotiations. The workers' representatives were not provided with all the relevant contracts and information prior to the process. But maybe more astoundingly, the QMM was not represented as an employer but acted as one of the mediators.

A proposal was made to 85 per cent of the dismissed workers to be hired by the new security companies. It was also proposed that the remaining workers would have access to relevant training. The dismissed workers who are hired by the new security companies are earning 20 per cent less than they were earning when employed by OMEGA. By October 2013, no training had yet been provided to the remaining workers, and these workers are today unemployed with no social planning. There is no longer an on-going social dialogue and OMEGA is no longer present in Fort Dauphin. FISEMA has tried to make an appeal to the Labour Inspectorate and the Labour Court, only to be given the answer that as the employer, OMEGA, is absent there is no possibility of appeal.

The case in Madagascar is a far cry from Rio Tinto's public commitment to conduct its activities in compliance with environmental, health, safety and the well-being of its employees and the community. A commitment repeated in the establishment convention of QMM: "QMM SA undertakes to carry out its various activities in the environmental, health, safety and well-being of its employees and the community."

The case in Madagascar is not an isolated case; Rio Tinto is increasingly resorting to outsourcing, leading to the casualization of labour in many of its operations.

PHOTO:

The Fédération des Syndicats des Travailleurs de l'Energie et des Mines (FISEMA) at Rio Tinto operations at Fort-Dauphin distributed flyers on 7 October to mark the World Day for Decent Work and their current struggle concerning the settlement of the mass dismissals in the plant. FISEMA



COUNTRY:

Georgia

UNION:

Trade Union of Metallurgy,
Mining and Chemical
Industry Workers of Georgia
(TUMMCIWG)

profile

TEXT:

Ilya Matveev

PHOTO:

TUMMCIWG



“Believe it or not, I spend only two nights a week at home. The rest of the time I travel around the country and talk to workers,” says Tamaz Dolaberidze, TUMMCIWG president.

In 2010, when Tamaz was elected president, the union had merely 1,500 members – today it counts 5,000 in its ranks.

In the last three years, TUMMCIWG has been organizing workers at large mining and chemical plants. Local unions have been created at the Zestafoni Ferroalloy Plant, the Chiatura processing plant, the Hercules metallurgical plant in Kutaisi, and several others.

“The labour market in Georgia is extremely deregulated and employers have very few obligations to abide by. This situation gives collective agreements a crucial importance, although it’s very difficult to get to the point when they are signed,” Tamaz explains.

GEORGIA: successful organizing in difficult conditions

With its abridged 2006 Labour Code, subject to an ILO complaint, and multiple rights violations, Georgia is a difficult place for union organizing. And yet, in just three years the Trade Union of Metallurgy, Mining and Chemical Industry Workers of Georgia (TUMMCIWG) has more than tripled its membership.

Organizing a plant starts with a careful study of its workforce. The union then tries to establish contacts, holding meetings at the entrance of the plant. Union activists visit workers at home and try to get them to join the union. When around 20-25 new contacts are established, the TUMMCIWG invites these workers to a workshop. Within two or three months it begins to show who are the potential leaders, who then start building the new union.

“Both internal and external organizing is important”, says Tamaz. **“Not all organizing efforts are successful, but this is the only way forward.”**

However, there is a widespread resistance to organizing. At the moment, the union is struggling with the employers at four plants. At Georgian Manganese, a metallurgical company, collective bargaining begun in January 2013. The union prepared a draft collective agreement, and both sides were ready to sign it. But at the last moment the management rejected the agreement, which prompted a workers’ strike.

At another company, the GTM Group, several union activists were fired the same day as the union was created. The union president was verbally abused by the general director and escorted off the plant premises. The union filed a court complaint in response to the treatment endured.

But despite these difficulties, the TUMMCIWG is steadily growing and signing new collective agreements.

Tamaz Dolaberidze, the man behind TUMMCIWG’s success, started his career as a worker at a chemical plant in 1992,

while simultaneously studying in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. He joined the labour movement in 2003, and after becoming the Georgian Trade Union Confederation’s representative in one of country’s regions, Tamaz moved on to become the assistant president of TUMMCIWG. In 2010 he was elected president of the TUMMCIWG.

Now Tamaz looks to the future. **“The most important thing is that there are 10,000 unorganized workers in the industry, most of which are Chiatura miners”** he says. **“The union will strengthen its communications work and fight for collective agreements at all the plants. Another important goal is to change the whole ideology of union work; to talk more about rights and less about material aid to workers.”**

TUMMCIWG and IndustriALL Global Union

In Georgia’s difficult circumstances IndustriALL lends as much support as possible to TUMMCIWG. IndustriALL general secretary Jyrki Raina has sent several letters to Georgian companies, condemning their anti-union practices. Tamaz plans to sign a Global Framework Agreement with Georgian Manganese, and IndustriALL’s role in this is also crucial.

“Our union advances day by day, and IndustriALL’s help in this is very important,” says Tamaz.

IndustriALL affiliates take action to STOP Precarious Work



www.industriall-union.org/stop-precarious-work

