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To:

Mr Kayode Egbetokun  
Inspector General of Police  
Louis Edet House  
Nigeria Police Force Headquarters  
Abuja, Nigeria

Tuesday, August 20, 2024

O/R.: 801/2024/GS/AK

Dear Sir,

**Condemnation of and Halt to the Systematic and Persistent Persecution of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) Trade Union Leaders in Nigeria**

On behalf of the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa: <https://www.ituc-africa.org/>), I am writing to express our grave concern and condemnation regarding the ongoing and egregious persecution of trade union leaders in Nigeria, specifically targeting the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and its President, Comrade Joe Ajaero.

It has come to our attention that Comrade Ajaero has been summoned by the Nigeria Police Force for interrogation on charges including "criminal conspiracy, terrorism financing, treasonable felony, subversion, and cyber-crime," as per the letter dated August 19, 2024, signed by ACP Adamu Mu'azu. This action, accompanied by threats of arrest, is deeply troubling and appears to be a blatant misuse of state power against trade union leaders exercising their fundamental rights.

This conduct contravenes several international and national instruments designed to protect workers' rights and freedoms as stipulated below:

- ILO Convention No. 87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948): Guarantees the right of workers to freely organize and protect their interests without interference from the authorities.
- ILO Convention No. 98 (Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949): Ensures that workers and employers are free to engage in collective bargaining without fear of reprisal.
- Nigerian's own Constitution under Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria protects the right of citizens to assemble freely and associate with others, including the formation of and membership in trade unions.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): Article 20(1) asserts the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR): Article 22 guarantees the right to freedom of association and the ability to join trade unions.

The recent actions against the NLC and its leaders, including the raid on their headquarters and the subsequent threats to Comrade Ajaero, are an affront to these established rights and freedoms. Such measures not only undermine the principles of democracy and the rule of law but also stifle legitimate dissent and undermine the role of trade unions in advocating for workers' rights and social justice.

ITUC-Africa call upon the Nigerian government and the Nigeria Police Force to:

1. Cease all forms of intimidation and harassment against trade union leaders and their members.
2. Respect and uphold the fundamental rights of workers to organize and voice their concerns without fear of reprisal.
3. Provide a clear and transparent account of the reasons for the police actions and ensure that these actions are in tandem with national and international laws.

Failure to address these concerns promptly will not only harm the reputation of Nigeria's commitment to international labour standards but also risk further escalation of tensions between the state and the trade union movement which can gravely affect the productivity of workers in Nigeria.

We urge you to take immediate corrective measures to restore trust and demonstrate Nigeria's commitment to respecting the rights enshrined in both national and international frameworks.

The African and international trade union movements are closely monitoring the situation in Nigeria and will take further and necessary actions to ensure the respect of the rights of workers, trade unions and their leaders in Nigeria and elsewhere. The harassment and intimidation **MUST STOP NOW!**

Sincerely,



**Akhator Joel Afolabi Odigie**  
**General Secretary**  
**ITUC-Africa**

Cc:

Cc:

- **President Ahmed Bola Tinubu, Federal Republic of Nigeria Abuja, Nigeria**
- **National Human Rights Commission, Nigeria**
- **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**
- **African Union Commission (AUC)**
- **African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)**
- **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**