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Emergency Resolution in Solidarity with the Thai Railway Workers

ITF Asia/Pacific Railway Workers' Section Committee Meeting held on 29 and 30 July 2011 in Bangkok;

EXPRESSES ITS SERIOUS CONCERN over the decision of the Central Labour Court on 28 July 2011 supporting the rail management SRT's appeal to dismiss 7 national leadership of the ITF-affiliated SRUT (State Railway Workers' Union of Thailand) and to charge them with a damage suit of 15 million THB. According to legislation in Thailand, members of a bi-partite (labour management) committee of a state-owned enterprise cannot be sacked unilaterally. For this reason the management filed a case to the Central Labour Court in 2010.

REITERATES ITS SUPPORT towards the railway workers and their trade union SRUT who have rightly refused to operate unsafe trains in October 2009 after three major accidents took away lives of 7 passengers. In one case, the driver was on duty for 30 days with only a day's rest and the safety device on the train was not functioning.

FURTHER REITERATES ITS SUPPORT towards the 6 Hat Yai Branch leaders who are already dismissed by the management.

REAFFIRMS the ITF position that all workers engaged in essential services including the railways have the full right to strike actions as enshrined by the ILO Conventions 87.

FURTHER REAFFIRMS its position that safety device must never be regarded as a supplement in safe operation of the railways. In majority of the countries, trains are equipped with more than just a vigilance device.

RECALLS the lack of funding and chronic shortage of staff in the Thai Railways as background to these accidents. 90 per cent of trains did not comply with legislation. Only 20% of locomotive cars were equipped with a vigilance device. Based on a cabinet resolution in 1998, only 5% of the employees who retire at the age of 60 could be replaced. For this reason, many drivers worked continuously without proper rest and the accidents have taken place.

DEMANDS that some improvements to these issues that the previous government has announced as a result of trade union activities be fully implemented without delay.

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FURTHER DEMANDS the SRT management not to terminate illegally the employment of the 7 national leaders during the appeal process which the union will submit to the Supreme Labour Court within the next 15 days.

FURTHER DEMANDS the Thai government and the SRT management to stop their anti-union actions and build a sound industrial relationship and cooperation as they are the basis for promoting safer railways.

CALLS UPON the ITF and all its affiliates to express their solidarity with the SRUT by visiting the Thai diplomatic mission and deliver this ITF message within the next 15 days.

CALLS UPON the ITF to build wider solidarity with the ITUC and Global Union Federations (GUFs) as well as to consider an ILO Complaint.

CALLS UPON the ITF Railway Workers Section members to approach their rail employers where relevant to reflect our concern over the SRT's industrial relationship and safety policies.

CALLS UPON the ITF and its affiliates to use international forums of rail industry such as the forthcoming International Railway Safety Conference (Melbourne, 16 - 21 October 2011) to publicise this campaign.

Adopted unanimously on 30 July 2010 by the representatives of

Bangladesh Railway Employees League

Bangladesh Railway Sharmik League

All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF)

National Federation of Indian Railwaymen (NFIR)

Indonesia Railway Workers Union (SPKA)

Japan Confederation of Railway Workers' Unions (JRU)

Japan Railway Trade Unions' Confederation (JR Rengo)

Mongolian Railway Workers Union

Rail & Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) New Zealand

Pakistan Railway Workers Union Open Line

United Transport Workers Organisation, Philippines

Chinese Federation of Railway Workers Union, Taiwan

State Railway Workers Union of Thailand (SRUT)