

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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February 14, 2012

Mr. Salman Jaffar Al Mahfoodh
Secretary General
General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions
Manama, Bahrain

Via fax: +973-17-72-95-99

Dear Brother Salman:

On behalf of the over 12.2 million working men and women of the AFL-CIO, I send you greetings of solidarity on the first anniversary of the peaceful demonstrations for democracy and human rights held in your country last February. The hopes of Bahrain's majority for a more inclusive and democratic Bahrain expressed in those demonstrations unfortunately was met early on with brutal repression, turning what could have been an opportunity for national unity into a painful and dangerous rupture between the government and its people.

Today, the once-promising government attempts to step back from retaliatory measures and implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) report now appear to be less assured. Of great concern is the fact that certain trade unionists including leaders of teachers associations have and continue to face criminal prosecution and imprisonment for participating in strikes and demonstrations last year, and health care workers have been severely punished for caring for those wounded in the crack-down.

The AFL-CIO is aware that the government is in the final stages of approving revisions of the trade union act which could undermine compliance with international labor standards. These issues are cause for serious concern among human and labor rights organizations around the world.

Over the last year, the AFL-CIO has stood with the GFBTU in its valiant struggle to protect and promote worker rights and to engage in substantive, peaceful, and democratic dialogue to resolve the conflicts that have erupted in Bahrain. We salute your willingness and actions to build unity of purpose and action around universally accepted labor and human rights, through your commitment to dialogue even in the face of continuing provocations. We also note with great appreciation the solidarity the GFBTU showed to American workers in Wisconsin.

Rest assured that in the coming months and years, the AFL-CIO stands with you and the members and leaders of the independent labor movement in Bahrain in your brave and principled struggle for labor and democratic rights.

Sincerely,

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

Richard L. Trumka
President