

July 30, 2010

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Mr. Sheikh Hasina
Honourable Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Prime Minister's Office
Old Sangsad Bhaban
Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh

Dear Mr. Hasina:

We are writing to you, on behalf of the 250,000 members of the United Steelworkers in Canada, to express our grave concern regarding the unjust detention of Aminul Islam, who was held in NSI (National Security Intelligence) custody without any formal complaint on June 16, 2010.

We are also writing to urge your government to restore the status of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity's (BCWS) as a non-governmental organization (NGO) by allowing it to keep its registration with the NGO Affairs Bureau.

It is our understanding that the BCWS and Mr. Islam have been accused of inciting worker unrest. However, BCWS is an internationally-known and well-respected advocate for workers' rights with a strong record of credible research and professionalism.

The actions against BCWS call into question the Bangladesh government's sincerity and commitment to improving labour rights.

We respectfully call upon your government to:

1. Immediately withdraw the cancellation letter of June 3, 2010, and restore BCWS's NGO registration;
2. Investigate Mr. Islam's detention and torture and hold those individuals responsible accountable and ensure they pay appropriate reparation;

3. Ensure Mr. Islam receives the medical treatment he needs;
4. Provide Mr. Islam and all other BCWS staff members with assurances of their safety;
5. Instruct the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka to desist from seizing the office and property of BCWS; and
6. Instruct the Manager of the Mercantile Bank to desist from freezing the BCWS bank account.

BCWS is a vital voice for labour rights in Bangladesh. We are disturbed to see that local efforts to improve conditions for workers are being met with intimidation and repression by the government. We hope that you will resolve this situation immediately and recommit yourself to allowing labour rights organizations to operate freely without fear of reprisal in your country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Neumann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Neumann
National Director for Canada

KN/LR