

Geneva, 3rd November 2016

Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif
Prime Minister
Government of Pakistan
Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Sent by email: info@pmo.gov.pk; mission.pakistan@ties.itu.int

IndustriALL Global Union calls upon the Government of Pakistan to respect workers' lives and ensure safe working conditions in shipbreaking yards

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing this letter to you as General Secretary of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org), representing more than fifty million workers in the mining, energy and manufacturing industries, including shipbuilding and shipbreaking, in some 140 countries worldwide, including Pakistan, to condemn in the strongest terms the horrific blast at the Gadani shipbreaking yard on 1st November 2016, and to call upon the Government of Pakistan to respect workers' lives, and ensure safe working conditions.

So far, 21 workers' dead bodies have been recovered and 70 injured workers were admitted in various hospitals. We are distressed to note that at least 15 more workers are in critical condition with 100% burns, and more than 150 workers are still trapped in the burning ship. We are also deeply disturbed to learn that the employers at the yard did not have adequate fire safety equipment, and even the fire fighters could not control the fire.

This accident once again demonstrates that shipbreaking workers in Pakistan are not safe. Affiliated unions of IndustriALL Global Union have appealed to shipbreaking employers and the governmental authorities on numerous occasions, calling on them to improve the safety measures at the shipbreaking yards. Even just two days before this accident, our affiliated union, the National Trade Union Federation of Pakistan (NTUF) and the Gadani shipbreaking workers held demonstrations at the Karachi Press Club on 30 October highlighting the inhuman working conditions, and demanding safety measures and respect of fundamental workers' rights.

Consistent negligence of safety measures and disregard for the rule of law by employers and authorities has made Gadani a killing field. It is not acceptable that the shipbreaking workers in Pakistan have to risk their life every day to earn a livelihood.

Therefore, we call on the Government of Pakistan to act swiftly to prosecute and punish those responsible for this industrial preventable accident, compensate appropriately all the victims, and ensure that all injured workers receive adequate medical treatment for life.

Furthermore, we urge the Government of Pakistan to take immediate steps to provide basic facilities including protective equipment, clean drinking water and hospital facilities at the Gadani shipbreaking yard.

The workers of Gadani should be guaranteed the right to safe, healthy, clean and sustainable working conditions. The government should strengthen supervisory mechanisms and jointly work with workers' representatives to ensure safe working conditions at the shipbreaking yards.

In this sense, we urge the Government of Pakistan to ratify the [Hong Kong Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships](#), which aims at ensuring that ships, when being recycled after reaching the end of their operational lives, do not pose any unnecessary risks to human health, safety and to the environment.

Yours sincerely,



Valter Sanches
General Secretary