



# 2026 ITUC GLOBAL RIGHTS INDEX

THE WORLD'S WORST  
COUNTRIES FOR  
WORKERS



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# FOREWORD

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the ITUC Global Rights Index, the only comprehensive, global annual survey of the violation of workers' rights.

This year's Index underscores the mounting challenges facing a global labour movement that exists to protect the rights and interests of ordinary working people against the regressive policies of governments and businesses.

Among the most shocking data points in 2026 are a five-percentage-point rise in violations of free speech and assembly over the past year, a six-percentage-point rise in violent attacks against workers, and a three-percentage-point rise in attacks on civil liberties, including a dramatic rise in the number of arrests and detentions of workers and their representatives. The sharp spike in these indicators signals that the persecution of trade union leaders is becoming commonplace in an ever-growing number of countries.

Increasingly, we see new technology being deployed as a method of control, used to monitor, discipline and silence workers. We also see fewer governments consulting unions in good faith before amending or introducing labour laws.

In Europe and the Americas, workers' rights are suffering an alarming decline. Both regions registered their worst average country rating since the Index began in 2014, and the increasing influence of the far right is putting workers and unions at risk in countries such as Argentina and France – two out of four countries to be downgraded in 2026.

This year's results reinforce the ITUC's view that we are witnessing a global erosion of democratic principles – a “billionaire coup against democracy” – funded by the rich and delivered by far-right and authoritarian leaders. As profits are hoarded and taxes on wealth fail to materialise, the coup results in worsening living standards. The voices of working people – which should underpin democracy – are stifled, and there is a further concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few who undermine it.

As a snapshot of the violations of workers' rights, the 2026 Index exposes a pattern that the powerful would rather keep hidden: the systematic weakening of democracy through attacks on workers, unions and collective bargaining. From repression of strikes to the erosion of legal protections and the criminalisation of unions, these are not isolated incidents but part of a broader strategy to silence dissent and entrench inequality.



*Unionists in Nigeria face arbitrary detention, raids on their offices and an ongoing assault on their independence, marking the country as one of the 10 worst countries in the world for working people.*

The labour movement remains the world's largest democratic force, built on collective action and solidarity. At a time when democratic institutions are under sustained pressure, unions are not only defending rights at work but also safeguarding democracy itself. By organising, bargaining and campaigning together, working people have the power to reverse this erosion of rights and freedoms – and to build a more just, inclusive and democratic future for all.

## In 2026:

**Attacks on the rights to free speech and assembly were reported in 50% of countries – a record high for the Index and an increase from 45% in 2025.** During nationwide protests in **Indonesia**, over 4,000 protesters in multiple cities were detained and almost 1,000 charged for their participation in demonstrations. Trade union federations in **Togo** called for a general assembly in Lomé, but the assembly could not take place due to direct interference by the authorities.

**Authorities in 75 countries (50%) arrested or detained workers, a record high and up from 71 in 2025.** In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, President of the Intersyndicale de l'Office national des transports, Armand Osase, was arrested for demanding back pay for employees and managers at the national transport office (Société Commerciale des Transports et des Ports - SCTP). In **Iraq**, police arrested three demonstrators during a protest outside the Basra Oil Company where workers demanded permanent employment.

**The right to the legal registration of unions was impeded in 75% of countries, up from 74% in 2025 and the highest level since the Index began.** In the private sector in **Costa Rica**, forming a union has become virtually impossible as the authorities hold full discretion on registration. In **Namibia**, the Labour Commissioner refused to register the Public Service Union of Namibia (PSUN) as a representative of all workers as stipulated in its constitution.

**Workers suffered violence in 32% of countries, up from 26% in 2025.** **Israeli** forces raided the offices of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) in Nablus. The rise of the far right in Europe has increasingly translated into hostility directed at trade unions and their members.

**The right to strike was violated in 87% of countries – unchanged from the Index high of 131 countries reported in 2025 and 2024.** Migrant construction workers in **Saudi Arabia** were detained after protesting against the Masar (Mecca) project, as they had not been paid for months. Governments in Europe and South America are increasingly seeking to restrict the right to strike through the criminalisation of protest-related disruption to traffic during protests.



*A woman was treated after being hit with pepper spray during a "Workers Against Billionaires" protest in Los Angeles. The United States has seen a marked escalation in attacks on workers' rights.*

**Workers had no or reduced access to justice in 72% of countries, unchanged from the peak reached in 2025.** In **Cambodia**, global sportswear giant ASICS's supplier Wing Star Shoes fabricated criminal charges against union leader Chea Chan. Ali Mammeri, President of the Syndicat national des fonctionnaires du secteur de la culture et des arts (SNFC) in **Algeria**, was arrested without a warrant and reported being beaten and forcibly undressed in an attempt to extract a confession.

**The right to collective bargaining was restricted in 80% of countries (121), unchanged from 2025.** In **Germany**, Adidas left a collective bargaining agreement by downgrading its membership in the Federal Association of the German Footwear and Leather Goods Industry, thus avoiding being bound by collective bargaining obligations. Multinational Fyffes declined to sign a collective agreement in **Honduras** despite years of organising by seasonal fruit workers.

**Workers in three out of every four countries were denied the right to freedom of association and to establish or join a trade union, unchanged from**

**2025. Iranian** authorities intensified a crackdown against Kurdish teachers for their trade union activities. In **Haiti**, the management of Brana-Heineken attacked union freedoms through the harassment, intimidation and persecution of union leaders.

Trade unionists and workers were killed in **Angola, Colombia, Indonesia** and **Mexico**.

The 10 worst countries for workers in 2026 were: **Argentina, Belarus, Ecuador, Egypt, Eswatini, Myanmar, Nigeria, Panama, Tunisia**, and **Türkiye**.

The ratings of four countries worsened: **Albania, Argentina, France**, and **Panama**. Three countries improved their ratings: **Botswana**, the **United Kingdom** and **Uruguay**.

Seven countries have been placed on the “Watchlist” following a measurable increase in violations: **Guinea-Bissau, Israel, Liberia**, the **Philippines**, the **Republic of Moldova**, the **United States**, and **Zimbabwe**.

## Conditions deteriorate in two regions

Conditions for workers and unions at the regional level remain extremely challenging, with the ratings for two of the five global regions deteriorating in the past year. Europe and the Americas recorded their worst average ratings since the Index began in 2014.

The **Middle East and North Africa** remained ranked as the worst region for workers’ rights, with an average country rating of 4.68, unchanged from 2025. All 19 countries in the region violated the rights to collective bargaining, to form or join a union, and to register a union.

**Asia-Pacific** scored an average rating of 4.08, the same as in 2025. Workers were exposed to violence in almost half of the 23 countries in the region, while there was a rise in the number of countries arbitrarily arresting unionists.

**Africa** improved marginally to 3.91 from 3.95 in 2025. Almost all of the 43 countries in the region violated the rights to strike, collective bargaining, and to form or join a union.

The average country rating in the **Americas** hit its weakest since the Index began, worsening to 3.72 from 3.68 in 2025. Argentina and Panama entered the list of the 10 worst countries in the world for workers’ rights.

**Europe** continued to decline. The average national rating deteriorated to an Index low of 2.80 compared to 2.78 in the previous year. Workers in nearly three-quarters of the 41 countries in the region had their right to strike impeded.

## An index for freedom and rights

Established in 2014, the ITUC Global Rights Index gauges the state of workers’ rights in 151 countries, benchmarking national environments against international law. It excludes countries where information is scarce or cannot be verified in line with our methodology, but our ambition remains to cover all countries in the Index.

The Index is the only survey that provides a credible reading of violations and ratings for individual countries and regions. It is based on extensive research drawn from direct reporting from ITUC affiliates. This year, the research revealed three trends shaping the future of labour rights globally, which we illustrate and explore in the “Global trends for workers” section of this report.

- The targeting of prominent trade union leaders.
- The use of digital surveillance to monitor and discipline staff and track union organising.
- The lack of consultation with trade unions prior to labour law reforms.

## The fight for democracy

The 2026 ITUC Global Rights Index reinforces what we have known for some time – that we are facing a billionaire coup against democracy. The freedoms and rights that ordinary people rely on to maintain the most basic living standards and fair working conditions are under concerted attack by a tiny minority that is focused on the accumulation of wealth and power at the expense of all of us.

Billionaires across the world are colluding with political leaders, often on the right or far right, to consolidate power and eliminate rights. In this coup, unions are in the crosshairs because the workers they represent form the bedrock of democratic systems. Fighting for their rights from the frontlines of the economies they power, workers and their unions defend the very pillars of democracy, prosperity, and freedom.

The tactics vary, but those behind them share a common purpose: to stop democracy from delivering for workers. From undermining multilateral organisations to rolling back hard-won rights and freedoms, these strategies are designed to entrench power and silence workers' voices.

The violations and regressive trends in this year's Index show why, in 2026, workers and unions are fighting for democracy – for what matters most: our rights, our safety, our livelihoods, and, above all, solidarity.

Only through solidarity can workers overcome this coup against democracy to guarantee a future that works for everyone, not just the powerful few.

**Luc Triangle**  
**General Secretary**  
**International Trade Union Confederation**

*As Argentina marked 50 years since the 1976 Argentine coup with mass demonstrations honouring victims of state terror, it also entered the list of the 10 worst countries for workers. Milei's assault on the rights and protections of working people has triggered a regression in workers' rights that echoes some of the country's darkest chapters.*



# GLOBAL TRENDS FOR WORKERS

## Union leaders under attack: intimidation and repression escalate

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Governments around the world have a long history of targeting leaders of trade unions to foster an atmosphere of intimidation, threaten workers' right to strike and organise freely, and, ultimately, to weaken the political and economic power of the labour movement. Union leaders are harassed, attacked and arbitrarily detained or arrested for organising peaceful demonstrations, criticising policies and laws affecting workers' rights, and calling on workers to defend their rights.

In these hostile environments, unionists can be forced to flee their countries, as seen with leaders of the National Union of Afghanistan Workers and Employees (NUAWE) in **Afghanistan** and the Confederation of Trade Unions, **Myanmar** (CTUM) whose members remain exiled in fear of Myanmar's military junta.

Anecdotal evidence from ITUC affiliates in the past year suggests this trend is accelerating across the world and that governments are increasingly acting with impunity, targeting high-profile union leaders with little regard for the law. A record high number of countries – about half in the Index – have arrested or detained workers. Workers suffered violence in a third of countries, up from a quarter in 2025. They had no or reduced access to justice in almost three-quarters of countries surveyed.

In **Hong Kong**, former Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) Christopher Mung remains self-exiled, as he faces an arrest warrant, with his passport cancelled and assets frozen. In **Belarus**, unionists welcomed the release of Aliaksandr Yarashuk, Chair of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP), and Gennadiy Fedynich, former head of the Belarusian Radio and Electronics' Industry Workers' Union (REP), who had been imprisoned since 2022. However, the manner of

their release underscored the authorities' continued hostility towards workers and their representatives. In September 2025, just weeks before Yarashuk's scheduled release, the two unionists were deported to Lithuania, still wearing prison clothes and deprived of essential documents, including their passports.

### Mali

In October 2025, Cheick Oumar Diallo, a former member of the Malian water company, Société malienne de gestion de l'eau potable (SOMAGEP), was injured and abducted in public by men posing as policemen. Diallo had been arrested in 2024 for criticising the poor quality of water. He remains detained, incommunicado, in an unknown location. This case reflects a broader climate of repression of criticism through forced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and human rights violations.

### Venezuela

In November 2025, 74-year-old José Elías Torres, Secretary General of the Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela (CTV), was arrested during a police raid on his house. During his incarceration, neither his place of confinement nor the charges against him were made public. Torres requires daily medication, making this a grave human rights concern in a context where information about hundreds of detainees in the country remains scarce. Torres was finally released in February 2026.

### Hong Kong

Lee Cheuk-yan, the former General Secretary of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) who was convicted in 2021 for organising rallies during the 2019 mass protests for democracy and universal suffrage, remained imprisoned in 2025. In September



Visitors passed police at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Court as the trial of labour activists began in January 2026. Governments are increasingly using prosecution and detention to silence trade union leadership.

2021, he faced further charges for “inciting subversion” due to his role as Vice-Chair of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China (HK Alliance), which was accused of being a “foreign agent” by national security police.

## France

In December 2025, Sophie Binet, General Secretary of the Confédération générale du travail (CGT), was the victim of an unjust indictment following a complaint for “public insults” lodged by the ETHIC employers’ association after a national radio interview in January 2025, where Binet voiced legitimate criticism as part of a public debate, speaking out against major French business leaders’ recurrent threats to leave the country due to higher taxes and tighter regulations.

This case forms part of a deeply concerning trend of legal reprisals against French trade unionists. Binet is the fifth CGT representative in the last three years to face legal proceedings in retaliation for legitimate union work. Between 2023 and 2025, Sébastien Menesplier, Céline Verzeletti, Myriam Lebkiri, and Gérard Ré were

also summoned by judicial authorities. Menesplier, a former CGT leadership member, faced charges of endangering others by violating safety regulations. Lebkiri, a member of the leadership of the CGT, was summoned for damage to property and action against a publicly elected official.

## Algeria

In Algeria, prominent union figures often face arrest and long prison terms. Ali Mammeri, President of the Syndicat national des fonctionnaires du secteur de la culture et des arts (SNFC), was arrested without a warrant in March 2025, held incommunicado for four days, and reported being tortured and forcibly undressed to extract a confession. He was sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment for “glorifying terrorist acts” and sharing classified information under Algeria’s anti-terror law. In fact, he had merely been exercising the right to strike and sharing information on the government’s reprisals against unions with the ILO and exiled activists. In February 2026, an appeals court reduced the sentence to 10 years.

## Excessive digital surveillance targets workers

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Surveillance has become an increasingly common tactic used by governments and private companies to target union activists, track and disrupt organising efforts and strikes, and silence workers' voices.

The rapid development of digital technologies and artificial intelligence has equipped public authorities and employers with ever more intrusive monitoring tools. These technologies can scrutinise employees' social media activity, identify and flag workers discussing union matters, suppress union-related content by labelling it as spam or reducing its visibility, and infiltrate online workers' groups to monitor or undermine organising efforts.

The expanding use of AI-driven surveillance poses a serious threat to human and labour rights. It generates a chilling effect on workers' willingness and ability to organise and engage in collective action, undermining the exercise of freedom of association and the protection of workers' representatives as guaranteed under ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98. Beyond labour rights, such practices raise profound concerns regarding privacy, personal security, and civil liberties.

These repressive practices are not just limited to the most technologically advanced economies. Technology is enabling and accelerating state- and employer-sponsored repression wherever there is the will to use it against unions and workers.

### Ecuador

In 2025, Ecuadorian lawmakers introduced a law enabling surveillance without court orders, the interception of communications, the collection of private data, and defined threats in language broad enough to criminalise social protest and union activity. New laws also require civil society organisations to disclose members' personal information under threat of dissolution, affecting about 13,000 organisations, including unions. A prosecutorial resolution in 2025 also ordered the extraction of social media videos of union leaders' public statements.

### Ethiopia

In June 2025, Ethiopian police arrested Dr. Daniel Fentaneh, a gynaecologist and obstetrics resident at Bahir Dar University, and confiscated his phone and laptop. Dr. Fentaneh had played a prominent role in nationwide protests by healthcare workers demanding better working conditions and pay, and protection from harassment and political intimidation. He had shared information about the protests and the challenges faced by health workers through a popular Facebook page – “Dr. Debol” – which has since been deleted. In court, police accused Dr. Fentaneh of inciting and organising the strike through social media, claiming it resulted in loss of life. Despite the court granting police five extra days to support its allegations, Dr. Fentaneh remains in prison in Bahir Dar.

### India

Trade unions in India report that the government's anti-union tactics, including surveillance and monitoring of unionists' communications, contribute to a stifling climate of fear. The Confederation of Free Trade Unions of India (CFTUI) and the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) have denounced the use of state surveillance to arrest and detain union leaders. Unions say platform companies have deployed identity blocks, permanent account terminations, forced transfers, and threats of police complaints against workers suspected of union activity. In September 2025, a worker's account was blocked after she shared an experience of customer harassment. She was reinstated only after agreeing not to discuss the incident and to reveal the colleagues with whom she had shared the incident.

### North Macedonia

In February 2026, Federation of Trade Unions in Macedonia (SSM) President Slobodan Trendafilov and his family were targeted and monitored through recordings of their private lives published on social media. These recordings, including those of small children and family members who play no role in union activities, represent a gross violation of the right to privacy.

## Governments push labour reforms while shutting out unions

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The ILO supervisory bodies have consistently emphasised the importance of consulting all relevant trade union organisations on matters affecting their interests or those of their members. This not only leads to more effective policymaking and democratic processes, but it also helps to secure buy-in by allowing union voices to be heard.

In 2025, major labour law reforms were adopted in at least 21 countries. However, owing to the absence of effective social dialogue institutions or the marginalisation of independent unions by governments, not all reforms were developed in consultation with legitimate workers' representatives.

Several national unions, including in **Mexico** and **Uganda**, face persistent issues such as social dialogue bodies not being set up or not being operational. In **Mauritius**, the government unilaterally raised the retirement age for pension eligibility from 60 to 65 in 2025 without any meaningful consultation with unions.

Where there are functioning social dialogue bodies, in practice, consultations on labour often exclude union opinions in countries such as **Armenia, Benin, Cambodia, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Indonesia, Iraq, Latvia, Malawi, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, and Togo**. In **Peru**, the national labour and employment promotion council, Consejo Nacional de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo (CNTPE), is irregularly convened only for information sessions, not for effective social dialogue on substantive matters. The **Italian** government continues to dilute the voice of workers within social dialogue bodies by allocating seats to unions that are not representative and civil society organisations that do not have a mandate comparable to that of the social partners.

### Bolivia

In November 2025, the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) and other unions accessed leaked government plans to transfer workers from the oil, gas, and electricity sectors from the purview of the General Labour Law to a statute for public officials. Unions said this transfer would lead to the loss of social benefits, restrict the right to unionisation, and weaken union structures, potentially also indicating a first step towards privatisation.

Despite mass protests throughout 2025, the government continued its attempts to reform labour legislation. In February 2026, Labour Minister Edgar Morales Mamani said the general labour law (Ley General del Trabajo) was “very old and no longer fits our reality”. The COB denounced a “regressive assault” on workers' rights and declared a state of emergency within the labour movement in protest against the economic and social policies of the Rodrigo Paz administration.

### India

Unions report that a deterioration in government consultation over labour issues has accelerated under the rule of Prime Minister Narendra Modi since 2014. In February 2026, over 300 million workers in India participated in strikes called by the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions to protest the government's unilateral drafting and implementation of four labour codes. The codes centralise power and facilitate employers but curtail the rights of unions and workers. Unions warn they weaken collective bargaining, restrict the right to strike, and fail to promote social protection, fair wages, and job security. The Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), one of the country's largest unions, was not included in the tripartite forum, indicating a complete erosion of collective bargaining in the country.

### North Macedonia

Since 2025, the Federation of Trade Unions in Macedonia (SSM) and other unions have endured attacks orchestrated by the government in response to their campaign to increase the minimum wage. In January 2026, the SSM organised the “Great Workers' Protest” in Skopje against a lack of respect for social dialogue and the right to collective bargaining.

### Morocco

In September 2025, a law on the right to strike came into force in Morocco. Unions say the law restricts the right to strike by establishing excessive conditions, complex notification procedures, and potential sanctions against individuals organising and participating in strikes. The government has been criticised for drafting the law unilaterally, without meaningful consultation or social dialogue.



Photo: Aizar Raltes / AFP

*Retail trade union members marched in La Paz on 2 June, 2025, to protest rising living costs and shortages. Governments are increasingly adopting labour law reforms without meaningful consultation with trade unions.*

## Togo

In January 2026, Togo's main union federations called on the President of the Council of Ministers, Faure Gnassingbé, to reactivate the national council for social dialogue (Conseil National de Dialogue Social – CNDS), which had been dormant for months, arguing that its inactivity created a consultation vacuum and deprived social partners of a platform to present and negotiate demands. Unions have also criticised government restructuring that placed the Ministry of Labour under the authority of the President of the Council of Ministers, saying it weakens the ministry's role in facilitating dialogue. The suspension of the CNDS has limited the mediation of major disputes and the search for solutions to issues such as the rising cost of living and working conditions.

# AT A GLANCE

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the ITUC Global Rights Index. It documents violations of internationally recognised labour rights by governments and employers.

## THE WORST REGION IN THE WORLD

Middle East and North Africa

## THE 10 WORST COUNTRIES FOR WORKING PEOPLE

Argentina (NEW)	Eswatini	Panama (NEW)
Belarus	Myanmar	Tunisia
Ecuador	Nigeria	Türkiye
Egypt		

## Violations of workers' rights



**Right to strike**

87% of countries violated the right to strike.



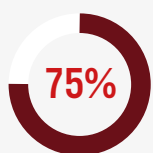
**Right to collective bargaining**

80% of countries violated the right to collective bargaining.



**Right to establish and join a trade union**

75% of countries excluded workers from the right to establish or join a trade union.



**Right to trade union activities (registration)**

75% of countries impeded the registration of trade unions.



**Right to justice**

In 72% of countries, workers had no or restricted access to justice.



**Right to freedom of speech and assembly**

50% of countries restricted free speech and assembly.



**Violent attacks on workers**

Workers experienced violence in 48 countries.



**Right to civil liberties (arbitrary arrests)**

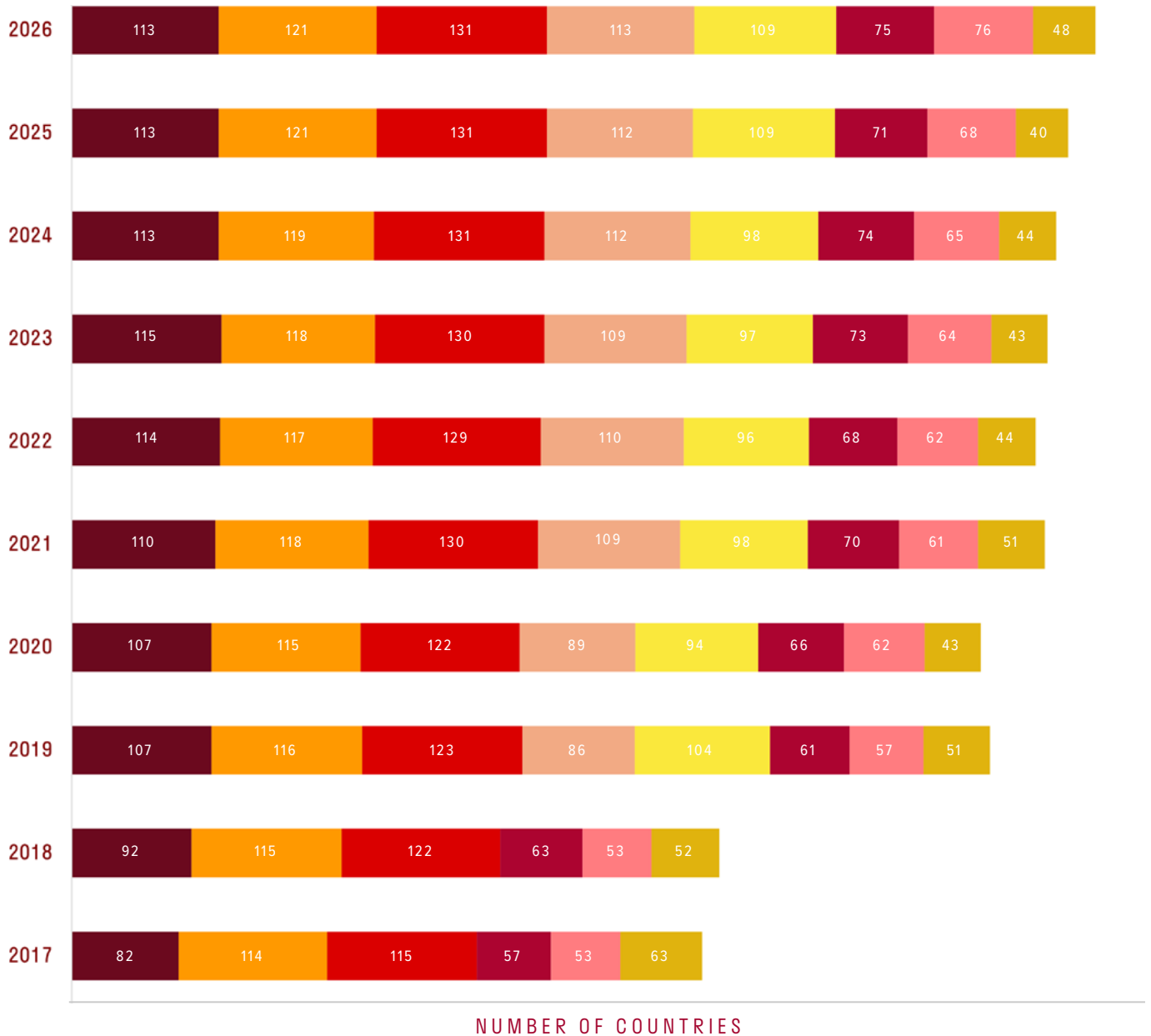
Workers were detained and arrested in 75 countries.



**Deaths**

Trade unionists were killed in four countries: **Angola, Colombia, Indonesia** and **Mexico**.

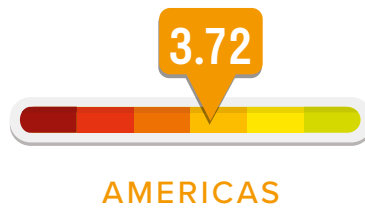
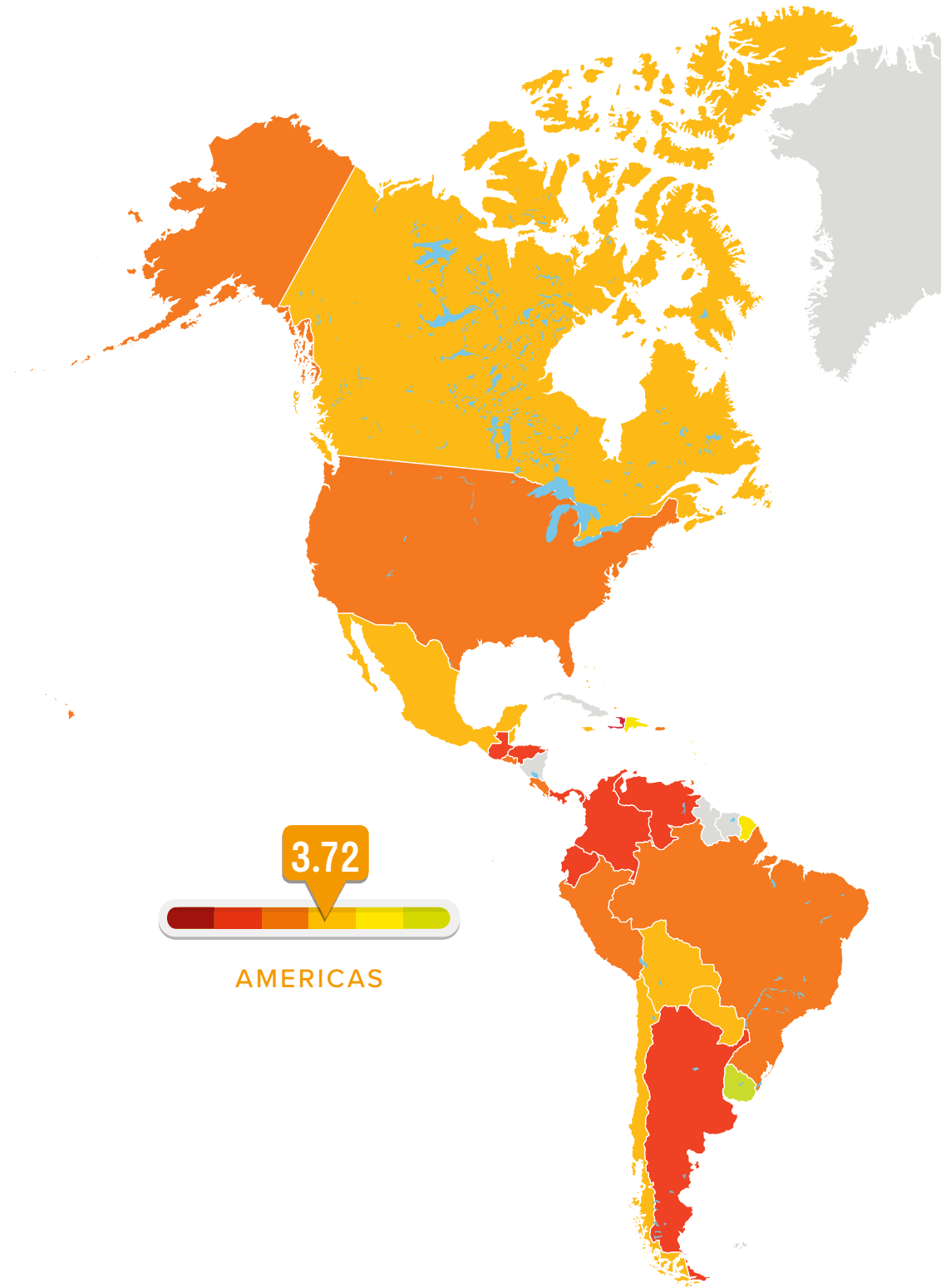
## 10-YEAR TRENDS: VIOLATIONS OF WORKERS' RIGHTS



- COUNTRIES WHICH EXCLUDE WORKERS FROM THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH OR JOIN A TRADE UNION
- COUNTRIES WHICH VIOLATE THE RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
- COUNTRIES WHICH VIOLATE THE RIGHT TO STRIKE
- COUNTRIES WHICH IMPEDE THE REGISTRATION OF UNIONS
- COUNTRIES WHICH RESTRICT ACCESS TO JUSTICE
- COUNTRIES WHICH ARBITRARILY ARREST AND DETAIN TRADE UNION MEMBERS
- COUNTRIES WHICH DENY OR CONSTRAIN FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY
- COUNTRIES WHICH EXPOSE WORKERS TO PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

This graphic shows how the state of workers' rights has deteriorated or improved across the eight indicators globally. Each year, the number of countries surveyed may vary slightly.

# THE 2026 RATINGS

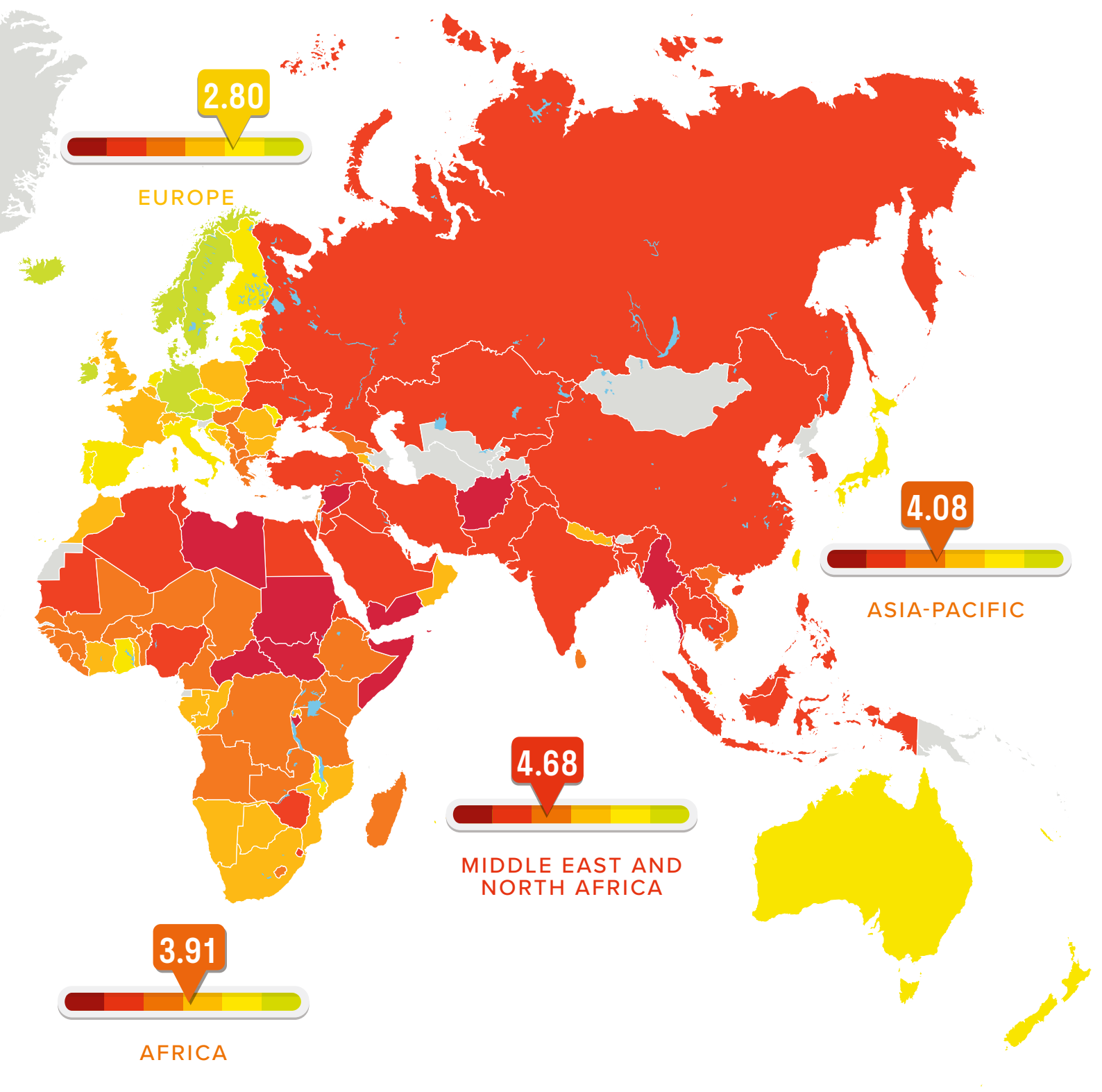


## WORSE RATING

COUNTRY	2026	2025
Albania	4	3
Argentina	5	4
France	3	2
Panama	5	4

## IMPROVED RATING

COUNTRY	2026	2025
Botswana	3	4
United Kingdom	3	4
Uruguay	1	2



# THE 2026 COUNTRY RATINGS



Countries listed in green are improving

Countries listed in red are worsening

## Rating 5+ NO GUARANTEE OF RIGHTS DUE TO THE BREAKDOWN OF THE LAW

Afghanistan	Libya	South Sudan
Burundi	Myanmar	Sudan
Central African Republic	Palestine	Syria
Haiti	Somalia	Yemen

## Rating 5 NO GUARANTEE OF RIGHTS

Algeria	Hong Kong	Pakistan
<b>Argentina</b>	India	<b>Panama</b>
Bahrain	Indonesia	Philippines
Bangladesh	Iran	Qatar
Belarus	Iraq	Russian Federation
Cambodia	Jordan	Saudi Arabia
China	Kazakhstan	Thailand
Colombia	Korea (Republic of)	Tunisia
Ecuador	Kuwait	Türkiye
Egypt	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine
Eritrea	Laos	United Arab Emirates
Eswatini	Malaysia	Venezuela
Guatemala	Mauritania	Zimbabwe
Honduras	Nigeria	

## Rating 4 SYSTEMATIC VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

<b>Albania</b>	Burkina Faso	Djibouti
Angola	Cameroon	El Salvador
Benin	Chad	Ethiopia
Botswana	Congo (Democratic Republic of)	Fiji
Brazil	Costa Rica	Georgia

## Rating 4 SYSTEMATIC VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

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Greece	Liberia	Sierra Leone
Guinea	Madagascar	Sri Lanka
Guinea-Bissau	Mali	Tanzania
Hungary	Niger	Trinidad and Tobago
Israel	North Macedonia	Uganda
Kenya	Peru	United States of America
Lebanon	Senegal	Vietnam
Lesotho	Serbia	Zambia

## Rating 3 REGULAR VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

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Albania	Congo (Republic of)	Nepal
Armenia	Côte d'Ivoire	Oman
Bahamas	<b>France</b>	Paraguay
Belgium	Gabon	Poland
Belize	Jamaica	Romania
Bolivia	Mauritius	Rwanda
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mexico	South Africa
<b>Botswana</b>	Montenegro	Switzerland
Bulgaria	Morocco	Togo
Canada	Mozambique	<b>United Kingdom</b>
Chile	Namibia	

## Rating 2 REPEATED VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

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Australia	Ghana	Netherlands
Barbados	Italy	New Zealand
Croatia	Japan	Portugal
Czechia	Latvia	Singapore
Dominican Republic	Lithuania	Slovakia
Estonia	Malawi	Spain
Finland	Moldova (Republic of)	Taiwan

## Rating 1 SPORADIC VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

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Austria	Iceland	Sweden
Denmark	Ireland	<b>Uruguay</b>
Germany	Norway	

## Workers' rights under pressure: more countries worsen than improve in 2026 Index

In 2026, the ratings of **Albania**, **Argentina**, **France**, and **Panama** deteriorated, while **Botswana**, the **United Kingdom**, and **Uruguay** improved. In a new Watchlist, the ratings of **Guinea-Bissau**, **Israel**, **Liberia**, the **Philippines**, the **Republic of Moldova**, the **United States**, and **Zimbabwe** are at risk of downgrade amid signs that conditions and rights for workers and unions are under sustained pressure.

While less marked than in 2025, the imbalance between worsening and improving ratings at the national level reinforces the long-term deterioration in workers' rights since the Index began. Six out of ten workers worldwide struggle in union-hostile environments characterised by the systematic violation of rights, or worse. The number of countries rated 5, where workers operate with no guarantee of rights, rose by two to 41 – more than a quarter of the countries included in the Index. There was no guarantee of rights due to the breakdown of the law in 12 countries – unchanged from 2025.

Uruguay entered the top-tier rating for the first time since 2021, joining seven European countries where workers face sporadic violations of their rights – the least repressive environment categorised in the Index.

### IMPROVED RATING

COUNTRY	2026	2025
Botswana	3	4
United Kingdom	3	4
Uruguay	1	2

### Positive reforms drive three upgrades

The ratings for **Botswana**, **United Kingdom**, and **Uruguay** improved due to positive changes in labour laws that strengthened workers' rights. Many of these reforms dismantled restrictive existing legislation and focused on establishing less stringent conditions for strike action and improving labour protections and union powers. These developments reflect the role of structured consultation with trade unions, demonstrating that inclusive social dialogue contributes to more worker-centred and effective labour reforms.

In 2025, under reforms led by President Duma Boko, **Botswana's** social democratic government brought its labour laws into line with ILO Convention No. 87 – ratified by 158 countries – which enshrines freedom of association and the right to organise. Botswana's rating improved to 3 from 4, its strongest ranking since 2016, signalling a change from the systematic violation of rights to regular violations of rights.

The Employment and Labor Relations Bill repealed the long-criticised Trade Disputes Act and the

Trade Unions and Employers Organizations Act. It establishes a robust social dialogue structure with independent resolution, ensures orderly collective bargaining, and safeguards the registration of unions. It enshrines the right to freedom of association, union autonomy, and the freedom of expression, and protects workers from anti-union discrimination.

The **United Kingdom** improved to 3 from 4, its best rating since 2022, after the Labour government passed the 2025 Employment Rights Act. The law repeals excessive restrictions to industrial action introduced in the previous Conservative government's 2016 Trade Union Act. The 2025 legislation removes minimum service level requirements



*The United Kingdom adopted the Employment Rights Act 2025, repealing restrictions on trade unions and modernising industrial action rules. As a result, the country's rating improved from 4 to 3.*

for some sectors, which threatened striking workers with dismissal and unions with claims for damages.

The new law scrapped requirements for an additional turnout threshold in some sectors as well as a simple majority in ballots and reduced the notice period for industrial action to 10 days from 14. Following an extensive campaign by the Trades Union Congress (TUC), electronic and workplace balloting will be allowed for all votes and elections, reducing dependency on postal ballots.

**Uruguay** returned to the top tier of the Index for the first time in five years as the long-standing “Broad Front” social democratic government demonstrated its commitment to a peaceful and tolerant approach to industrial action, particularly workplace occupations. Building on the spirit of 2020 legislation that guaranteed the right to strike, the right of non-strikers to continue to work, and the right of management to enter workplaces, the government has embraced a non-interventionist stance on workplace occupations. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security has used powers to convene conciliatory hearings, focusing on negotiation and dialogue to resolve disputes, avoiding the use of force and police evictions.

## Attacks on rights deepen: four countries fall

The ratings of **Albania**, **Argentina**, **France**, and **Panama** deteriorated as workers and unions faced a wide-ranging assault, from the targeting of unionists and interference in union activities to regressive laws and the erosion of social dialogue.

**Albania** dropped to a rating of 4, its lowest score since the Index began and indicating the systematic violation of rights. Workers struggle to form independent, recognised unions. In 2025, Turkish-owned Tete Albania Tunnel and Mining refused to recognise union representation, blocked votes, and bypassed union negotiations. During a strike at the Spaç copper mine, the employer deliberately dragged its heels during mediation and questioned the legitimacy of the union.

Albanian workers also face persecution during industrial action. Police attacked and unlawfully detained striking miners at Spaç, including the chair of the mine's trade union council. A criminal complaint for organising the strike was lodged against trade union leaders, and the mine owner sacked 41 striking workers, replacing them with external miners.



CGT General Secretary Sophie Binet addressed a meeting in Montreuil on 4 February 2026. Authorities are increasingly using legal pressure and intimidation to deter union activity.

**Argentina's** rating fell for the second consecutive year into category 5, an Index low for the South American nation. This represents a sharp and unprecedented decline from category 3 to 5 in just two years – a fall from regular violations of rights to a situation where workers have no guarantee of rights. Far-right President Javier Milei has led a staunchly anti-union agenda since coming to power in 2023, undermining basic workers' rights, civil liberties and union activity. Argentina has moved into the list of the 10 worst countries in the world for workers' rights.

Mandatory minimum service levels will be enforced during collective bargaining disputes, with authorities able to set the minimum service levels and to enforce penalties for non-compliance.

Workers and unionists face systematic abuse and the shrinking of civic space. In August 2025, police arrested Federico Giuliani, Secretary-General of the Córdoba branch of the Asociación Trabajadores del Estado – Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina Autónoma (ATE-CTA A), with 14 other protesters. Following his release, Giuliani fled the country as a political refugee. Union offices, including the headquarters of the glassworkers' union, were infiltrated and vandalised.

**France** deteriorated to a rating of 3, its lowest score on the Index and its first decline since 2018. The fall follows a sustained deterioration of workers' rights, an increasingly hostile political atmosphere, and incrementally regressive government policy since nationwide protests against pension reform deeply shook the political landscape in 2023.

Since then, more than 1,000 Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) activists have fallen foul of state and employer crackdowns and a spate of violent attacks by far-right groups. CGT reported 250 cases of employer repression, 342 activists facing disciplinary proceedings, 62 incidents of union discrimination, and 180 activists or unions drawn into legal proceedings. Sophie Binet, General Secretary of the CGT, was indicted for voicing legitimate criticisms, during a radio interview, of French business leaders' threats to leave France over taxes and regulations.

The ongoing failure to conclude a new unemployment insurance agreement underscores the government's serious breach of genuine social dialogue. This is particularly concerning given the state's obligation to respect, protect and fulfil labour rights, yet in this

instance it pursued a course of action that undermined these fundamental principles. On 8 August 2025, the then prime minister, François Bayrou, issued a so-called framing letter to trade union organisations, seeking to impose restrictive parameters on what should be an autonomous negotiation between social partners. Force Ouvrière (FO) and the Confédération française démocratique du travail (CFDT) condemned this as unlawful state interference, and on 10 September FO referred the matter to the Council of State, challenging the government's attempt to impose binding conditions. Following this legal challenge, the government was compelled to withdraw the letter on 27 January 2026.

**Panama** dropped to 5, declining for the second year in a row to register its lowest Index rating. Workers and unions in the Central American country have no guarantee of their basic rights and face ongoing oppression from the state and employers. The country also moved into the top 10 worst countries in the world for workers' rights.

In 2025, the conservative, anti-union government of President José Raúl Mulino threatened to dissolve

Sindicato Único Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria de la Construcción y Similares (SUNTRACS), Panama's biggest union for construction workers – the latest in a series of moves to intimidate the organisation. The authorities wrongfully arrested SUNTRACS union members and their families, some of whom have been forced into exile. Marcelo Di Stefano, Organising Secretary of the ITUC Regional Organisation, the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) was detained and expelled from Panama in February 2026 after attempting to enter the country legitimately on union business.

The Mulino government declared a state of emergency in response to a general strike against social security reforms organised by banana workers. Police arrested and assaulted citizens without justification. Chiquita, the multinational banana company, fired more than 6,000 plantation workers. The government was subsequently compelled to introduce reforms and oversaw the reinstatement of most of the workers. A prominent union leader, Francisco Smith, was charged in connection with his role in the strike.

*Farmers protested outside Panama's Supreme Court in Panama City in July 2025. The country's rating fell from 4 to 5 amid escalating attacks on trade unions and civil liberties.*



## On the Watchlist: countries at risk of ratings decline

Conditions for workers and unions are deteriorating in Guinea-Bissau, Israel, Liberia, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, the United States, and Zimbabwe, putting their Index ratings at risk of downgrade in the years ahead, unless policymakers and businesses change course.

The authorities in **Guinea-Bissau** have a track record of systematically persecuting unionists and undermining workers' rights and union independence. Its rating of 4 is under threat following a military coup in November 2025. The military authorities then banned protests and strikes, targeted union leaders, and halted union-related radio debates. Unions face ongoing interference by the state. In recent years, attempts have been made to replace the leadership of the União Nacional dos Trabalhadores da Guiné-Central Sindical (UNTG-CS), the nation's biggest union, with a government-backed organisation. The legitimate, independent board of the UNTG-CS remains barred from its headquarters.

In 2025, Seni Djassi, the spokesperson for the Frente Social, which brings together two health sector unions and two education sector unions, was forced into hiding following threats of detention.

Since the start of its war in Gaza in 2023, **Israel** has significantly restricted freedom of expression and civic space to quell legitimate dissent. Once seen as one of the least oppressive environments for workers and unions in the Middle East and rated 2 as recently as 2022, Israel's rating of 4 is at risk – marking one of the most dramatic declines in the history of the Index. It has repurposed counter-terrorism laws to designate Palestinian civil society organisations as terrorist entities, with the threat of prison sentences of up to 25 years for leaders. Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government has also broadened offences that are punishable by death.

NGOs critical of the government face an 80% tax on foreign state funding and, in March 2025, ministers effectively revoked the registration of international NGOs operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In an unprecedented act of repression, 100 Israeli citizens were arrested and workers were dismissed for expressing solidarity with Palestinian civilians on social media.

Workers in **Liberia**, also rated 4, continue to fight for the most basic labour rights, such as the right to join or form a union and the right to strike, while employers act with impunity to crush union activity. Liberia risks slipping into the fifth tier of the Index if these conditions persist.

For example, the National Health Workers' Union of Liberia (NAHWUL) has yet to receive full legal recognition, despite being granted functional recognition in 2018. In 2025, more than 60 striking workers, including leaders from the National Union of Hospitality, Aviation, Communications, and Energy (NUHACE), were dismissed. Several were detained and charged, although many cases have since been dismissed or dropped. In July, a strike by National Beverages and Trust Services Company workers was met with severe police violence.

Private sector violations of labour laws and rights are rife. The Security Expert Guard Agency of Liberia (SEGAL) sacked 12 employees for attending a union-focused workshop in an effort to deter workers from initiating collective bargaining negotiations after legally forming a union. SEGAL has refused government directives to reinstate the workers.

The **Republic of Moldova's** place in the second tier of the Index hangs in the balance due to a culture of union busting and interference fostered by government and exploited by the private sector. The ILO has repeatedly warned Moldovan authorities about inadequate legal protection for workers and insufficient deterrents for employers.

In February 2025, JSC Regia Apă Canal Sorooca, the water and sanitation company serving the northern city of Sorooca, dismantled the company's union structure. Attempts to overturn the measure have proven unsuccessful and the government has failed to uphold the principle of union independence and the right to freedom of association. JSC Regia Apă Canal Sorooca was reported to have collected disaffiliation letters from workers, raising concerns that employees may have been pressured to withdraw from the union and calling into question the legitimacy of the process.

The **Philippines** has languished in the fifth tier of the Index since its inception. While certain positive changes made in 2025 have meant the country has moved out of the top 10 list of the worst countries



Photo: Jack Guez / AFP

*Shikma Bressler (right) led protests against the Israeli government's judicial overhaul. The country has seen a sharp contraction of civic space, with laws used to restrict civil liberties and target civil society, including trade unions.*

in the world for workers, measurable improvements have yet to be reported by unions. Last year, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. signed an order to provide guarantees to workers attempting to organise and to limit the role of police and the military in labour disputes. However, conditions remain extremely challenging for unions in a country where authorities have institutionalised “red-tagging” – the practice of labelling unionists as subversive communists – and where state harassment and intimidation of union leaders continue unabated.

The authorities have introduced more complex rules for union recognition, requiring unions to undergo and win a certification election – a regressive measure that makes organising significantly harder as it allows employers time to “persuade” workers against organising. The government has also set a “zero strike” target, directly undermining the right to strike.

Without demonstrable improvement, the Philippines’ sustained attack on workers risks a further downgrade in the country’s rating.

President Donald Trump has orchestrated an unprecedented and sustained attack on the fundamental rights of workers and unions, leaving the **United States of America**’s long-held rating of 4 under serious risk in the immediate future.

In 2025, Trump stripped collective bargaining rights from more than a million federal workers across more than 30 agencies – perhaps the biggest act of union busting in the nation’s history. The move, reserved in the past for emergencies, was portrayed by the Republican administration as being in the interest of national security. It means entire departments, such as the Departments of State and Justice, and even the Food and Drug Administration, are excluded from this basic right.

In early 2025, Trump illegally fired National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) member Gwynne Wilcox, leaving the board without the three-member quorum required to hear cases and stifling workers' rights to organise and engage in collective bargaining. Due to court wranglings, the NLRB remained paralysed throughout 2025. Trump also moved to dismantle the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, established by Congress to promote constructive labour-management relations among companies, workers and their unions, and to prevent costly and disruptive workplace disputes. The changes made by the current administration have led to millions of workers being left without access to justice.

Tens of thousands of immigrant union members have been stripped of their status and rights through the unlawful termination of various forms of rights-based protections and programmes, creating an intimidating and threatening environment for the exercise of labour rights and resulting in the loss of their jobs and livelihoods. This includes the use of immigration enforcement as a tool to quell the exercise of freedom of expression, assembly, and association by detaining or revoking the visas of workers who take action or express positions disfavoured by the government.

Over the past year, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has been implicated in serious violations of fundamental rights, including the use of excessive force and the targeting of workers and union representatives.

In June 2025, David Huerta, the President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) California, was injured and arbitrarily arrested during a union protest against an ICE raid in Los Angeles. Community leader Huerta, who has served the 750,000-strong SEIU for more than 25 years, was honoured as a "champion of change" by the Barack Obama administration for promoting citizenship and integration in the workplace.

The enforcement practices of ICE have contributed to an increasingly hostile and dangerous environment for workers and communities across the United States, characterised by the use of excessive force and intimidation. This context was starkly illustrated in January 2026, when Alex Pretti, an intensive care nurse and a member of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), was shot and killed by ICE agents in Minneapolis while responding to a community mobilisation to observe and protect individuals targeted by the Department of Homeland Security.

The harm caused by these militarised enforcement practices extends well beyond these high-profile cases, as hundreds of other workers and trade unionists have been arrested and deported or detained in life-threatening conditions without charges or due process. The coercive and threatening environment dramatically increases the risks of exercising protected rights by migrant workers, who represent nearly 20% of the US workforce.

**Zimbabwe** has ranked in the fifth tier – no guarantee of rights – since the Index began in 2014. The ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) is seeking to delay the 2028 elections by increasing presidential and parliamentary term limits. As workers and unions face continued state harassment and repression, Zimbabwe's rating is at further risk. The authorities have abused legal powers to suppress collective action and dissent, for example, through the use of digital surveillance laws. Union leaders from the education sector were arrested during strikes and protests for better working conditions and fair wages. The government also changed the law in 2025 to enable ministers to label advocacy-based unions as "political" or "high risk", which can lead to their deregistration and loss of access to international funding.

# WORST REGION IN THE WORLD



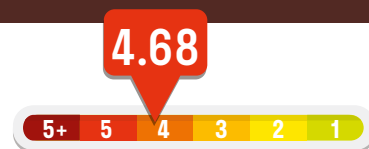
Middle East and North Africa:	4.68
Asia-Pacific:	4.08
Africa:	3.91
Americas:	3.72
Europe:	2.80

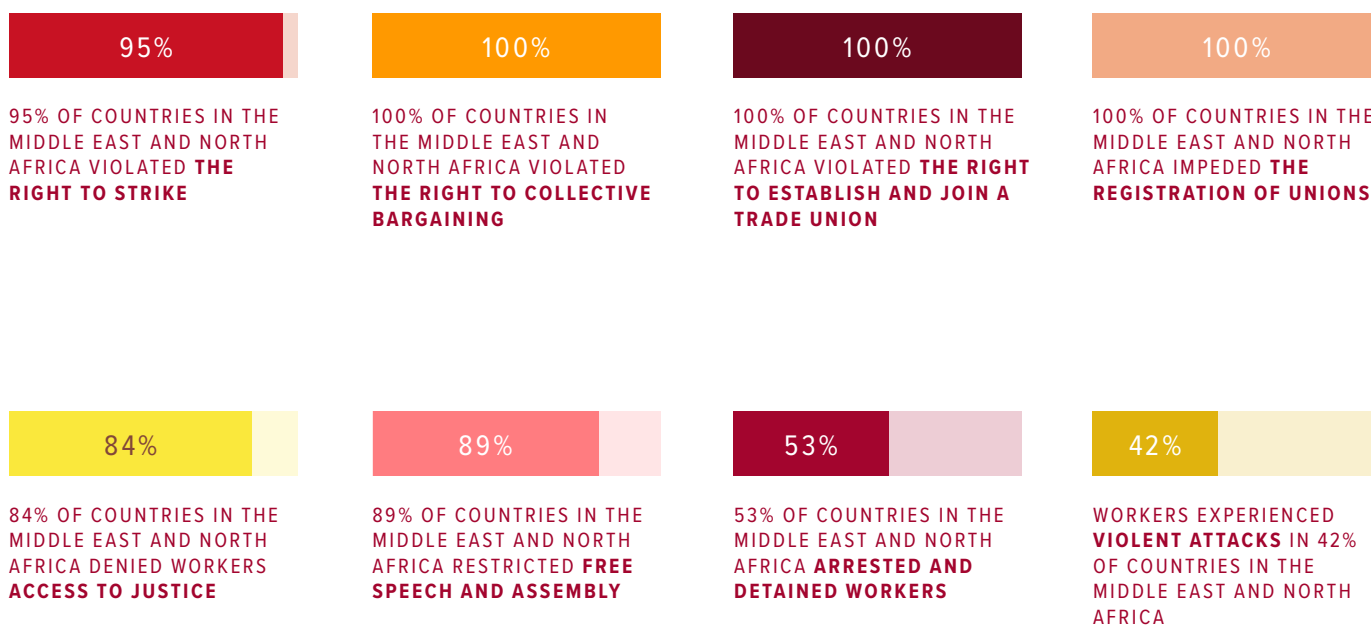


Photo: Fadel Samra / AFP

## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

*Across the Middle East and North Africa, workers are denied the right to organise, join trade unions or collective bargaining, leaving millions, particularly migrant workers, without fundamental labour protections.*





The Middle East and North Africa region has ranked as the worst in the world for workers since the Index began in 2014. In 2026, its rating held steady at 4.68, hovering above the all-time low of 4.74 set in 2024. All but four of the region’s 19 countries ranked 5 or 5+ in the Index. Every nation violated the right to collective bargaining, the right to establish and join unions, and the right to register unions. The right to strike, free speech and assembly, and access to justice were severely suppressed.

The regional environment for workers is marred by conflict and political instability. Four countries – **Libya, Palestine, Syria, and Yemen** – rated 5+, where the breakdown of the rule of law means there is no guarantee of labour rights.

The war in Gaza has crushed workers’ rights, unions, and economic activity across Palestine. By early 2025, Israeli forces had significantly increased checkpoints, roadblocks, and stringent permit regimes, all but cutting off access to cross-border employment. In August alone, more than 100 West Bank workers were arrested in Jaffa for lacking work permits, at least 30 Palestinian workers were detained in West Bank raids, and 14 Gaza fishermen were seized at sea. The Palestinian General

Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) estimates more than 12,000 workers have been arrested since October 2023.

In Gaza, Hamas suppressed independent union activity and established “loyalist” alternatives. In the West Bank, female workers faced exclusion, striking public sector workers were arrested, and the private sector persecuted union organisers.

In Yemen, government-controlled unions are fragmented and lack resources, while in Houthi-controlled areas, independent worker organisations are subordinated to loyalist structures. Workers, especially teachers, risked arrest or replacement for organising.

In Libya, independent unions faced severe restrictions or outright bans. Authorities in both western and eastern Libya targeted activists, migrant workers were barred from organising, and forced labour was commonplace.

After the Assad regime fell in Syria in 2024, hundreds of thousands of public sector workers lost their jobs without due process. Workers continue to face arbitrary dismissals and limitations on independent unions.

As the ratings of these countries attest, war and its aftermath are never in the interest of working people, and nowhere is this more evident than among the millions of migrant workers caught in the crossfire of the ongoing US-Israel conflict against Iran, which spans the Gulf region.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries collectively host nearly 35 million migrant workers – an average of 70 per cent of the employed population – the vast majority from the global south. These workers face acute risks during conflict, with limited means of escape. Language barriers, employer permission requirements, and legal discrimination restrict their access to information, shelter and evacuation channels, while workers from wealthier countries are often prioritised for evacuation. In the current conflict, migrant workers from Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh have been killed, with workers from at least 15 other nationalities injured in attacks across the region. These developments have laid bare and intensified entrenched structural deficiencies in labour protections within the region.

Millions of workers in the Gulf region are denied the most basic labour protections, including the freedom of association and organising. The kafala system of “sponsored” employment has come under sustained criticism for its abuse of migrant workers in countries such as **Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia**, and the **United Arab Emirates**. Saudi Arabia, rated 5, abolished its kafala system in 2025 to allow migrants to switch jobs and travel without employer consent.

In North Africa, authorities repressed independent unions and workers through a climate of fear and intimidation. In **Egypt**, the government reinforced the monopoly of the state-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) by blocking union registration and activity. In **Algeria**, independent unions and their leaders faced detention and prosecution. Regressive changes to legislation in **Tunisia** curtailed collective bargaining, suspended conciliation measures, and blocked union secondments and dues collection.

## Algeria

In July 2025, **Lounis Saïdi**, Secretary-General of the Syndicat national des cheminots (SNC), was arrested and sentenced to two years in prison for calling for an open-ended rail strike to protest deteriorating working conditions and low wages in the state railways. He also denounced the management’s interference in union affairs. A government-sanctioned assembly installed a compliant union leader who called off the strike, warning workers against causing “disorder”. Lounis Saïdi was acquitted in October 2025 by the Court of Appeal.



Photo: Noah Seelam / AFP

# NATIONAL STRIKE

4.08

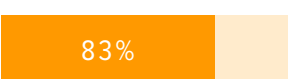
## ASIA-PACIFIC



Members of Indian trade unions took part in a rally during a nationwide strike in Hyderabad in February. Across Asia-Pacific, workers face systemic constraints on union activity, including barriers to registration, limits on collective bargaining and the criminalisation of labour activism in several countries.



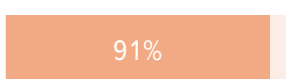
91% OF COUNTRIES IN ASIA-PACIFIC VIOLATED THE RIGHT TO STRIKE



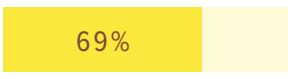
83% OF COUNTRIES IN ASIA-PACIFIC VIOLATED THE RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING



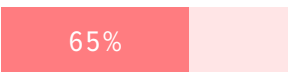
87% OF COUNTRIES IN ASIA-PACIFIC VIOLATED THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH AND JOIN A TRADE UNION



91% OF COUNTRIES IN ASIA-PACIFIC IMPEDED THE REGISTRATION OF UNIONS



69% OF COUNTRIES IN ASIA-PACIFIC DENIED WORKERS ACCESS TO JUSTICE



65% OF COUNTRIES IN ASIA-PACIFIC RESTRICTED FREE SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY



78% OF COUNTRIES IN ASIA-PACIFIC ARRESTED AND DETAINED WORKERS



WORKERS EXPERIENCED VIOLENT ATTACKS IN 43% OF COUNTRIES IN ASIA-PACIFIC



WORKERS WERE KILLED IN INDONESIA

The Asia-Pacific region is the second worst in the world for workers' rights, a position it has held since the inception of the Index. In 2026, the 23 countries in the region recorded an average rating of 4.08, unchanged from 2025 and halting a steady, if slow, improvement since its worst reading on record in 2022. About nine in 10 countries violated the right to strike and the right to establish and join a union, as well as impeding the registration of unions.

**Japan** continued to impose legal restrictions on strikes in specific sectors, while in **Bangladesh, Cambodia, India** and **Indonesia**, strikes were suppressed through police intervention, legal barriers and other repressive actions. Bangladesh, Japan, **Pakistan** and **Thailand** actively restricted workers' ability to join or form unions, while India and the **Republic of Korea** maintained registration systems that effectively functioned as permit regimes. Cambodia, India, Indonesia and **Sri Lanka** weakened or circumvented meaningful collective bargaining and social dialogue. Union busting practices were widespread in countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, **Malaysia**, Pakistan, the **Philippines**, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka.

## Systematic state repression of unions

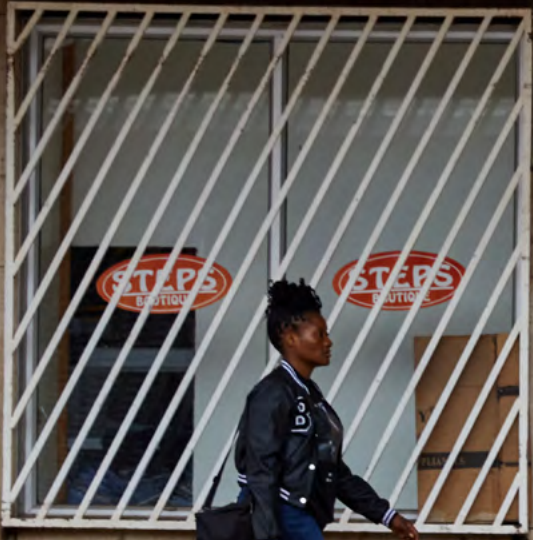
The Asia-Pacific region was rife with examples of the oppression and victimisation of workers and union representatives. Regimes in **Hong Kong** and **Myanmar** silenced independent unions and dissent through the prosecution and persecution of union leaders and activists. In Cambodia, India, Pakistan and the Republic of Korea, activists faced arrest, detention, or imprisonment. Police attacked and threatened workers in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Myanmar in an effort to suppress their rights to protest and organise. India and Indonesia arbitrarily denied permits for demonstrations, while the Republic of Korea imposed legal restrictions on assemblies.

## Unions hail legal reforms in Bangladesh

Bangladesh (5) moved out of the top 10 list for the world's worst countries for workers' rights. In November 2025, the interim government in Bangladesh led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus reduced barriers to forming trade unions – a long-awaited reform made possible by the fall of Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian regime in 2024. Previously requiring the consent of 20% of the workforce, unions can now form with the support of as few as 20 workers, depending on the size of the company. The reforms introduced 120 days of paid maternity leave, explicitly included domestic and agricultural workers in provisions for union rights, welfare, and social security, and brought shipbreaking under labour regulations. However, freedom of association remains restricted due to other regulatory obstacles and employer pushback.

## Historic win for unions in Korea

In the Republic of Korea, unions secured historic reforms to the Trade Union and Labour Relations Adjustment Act after more than a decade of campaigning. The amendments expand the definition of "employer" to hold prime contractors and client companies responsible for bargaining with non-regular workers; broaden the definition of "labour disputes" to include restructuring, layoffs, and relocations; and limit employers' ability to demand crippling damages for strikes. The changes will empower unions to negotiate more effectively, protect workers from retaliation, and give non-regular and subcontracted workers clearer legal avenues to defend their rights.



3.91

# AFRICA



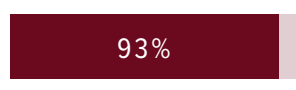
Across Africa, workers face repression for collective action, including arrests, police violence, retaliation against strike action, and persistent attacks on trade union organising.



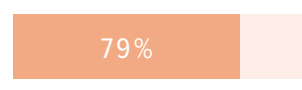
93% OF COUNTRIES IN AFRICA VIOLATED **THE RIGHT TO STRIKE**



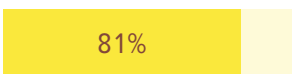
95% OF COUNTRIES IN AFRICA VIOLATED **THE RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**



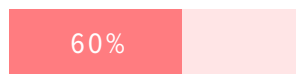
93% OF COUNTRIES IN AFRICA VIOLATED **THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH AND JOIN A TRADE UNION**



79% OF COUNTRIES IN AFRICA **IMPEDED THE REGISTRATION OF UNIONS**



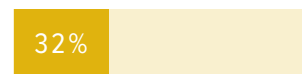
81% OF COUNTRIES IN AFRICA **DENIED WORKERS ACCESS TO JUSTICE**



60% OF COUNTRIES IN AFRICA **RESTRICTED FREE SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY**



42% OF COUNTRIES IN AFRICA **ARRESTED AND DETAINED WORKERS**



WORKERS EXPERIENCED **VIOLENT ATTACKS** IN 32% OF COUNTRIES IN AFRICA



WORKERS WERE KILLED IN **ANGOLA**

Africa retained its long-standing ranking as the third worst region for workers in 2026 with an average country rating of 3.91, a slight improvement on last year's 3.95 and aided by **Botswana's** upgrade to 3 from 4. The reality for most workers and unions across the region remains extremely challenging: nearly all 43 countries violated the right to collective bargaining, the right to strike, and the right to establish and join a trade union.

In **Benin** and **South Africa**, police repeatedly used force against strikes and sit-ins, while in **Kenya**, workers experienced harassment and physical assaults across multiple sectors. Arbitrary arrests and detentions of trade unionists were reported in **Angola**, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, and **Zimbabwe**. In Angola, **Liberia**, **Mozambique**, and Zimbabwe, strikes faced police brutality and arrests, while in **Guinea-Bissau**, the military regime banned strikes and demonstrations. In Benin, **Burundi**, Kenya, South Africa, and **Togo**, striking workers were punished with unfair dismissal and replacement.

Workers in Burundi, **Mauritania**, Mozambique, and **Rwanda** had to contend with barriers to freedom of association, while union busting was commonplace in Kenya, **Lesotho**, Liberia, **Madagascar**, **Senegal**, South Africa, **Uganda**, and Zimbabwe. Authorities de-registered unions in several countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, **Ethiopia**, **Mali**, **Namibia**, **South Sudan**, and Zimbabwe.

In **Nigeria**, workers and unions endured attacks on trade union independence, arbitrary arrests, and systematic union busting, while in **Eswatini**, repression of trade unions, political violence, and the systematic dismantling of workers' rights persisted without restraint.

## Madagascar

In April 2025, two union representatives of the Confédération des Syndicats des Travailleurs Malagasy Révolutionnaires (FISEMARE) in Madagascar, Jean-François Diza and Thierry Boutoufotsy, were dismissed and imprisoned for collecting signatures during a collective bargaining drive. This entirely lawful union activity was interpreted by the employer, maritime company SMMC, as an act inciting unrest and was filed as a criminal complaint. The SMMC asked employees to confirm that the unionists had misled them, demanding they revoke their signatures.

## Ethiopia

In June 2025, Ethiopia arbitrarily suspended the Ethiopian Health Professionals Association (EHPA) after a month of strikes by public healthcare workers for better working conditions and pay. The suspension, imposed by the Authority for Civil Society Organisations (ACSO) under the pretext of procedural non-compliance, was widely criticised as politically motivated and aimed at silencing the association's advocacy for health professionals. The Ministry of Health also ordered the striking workers to return to work or face legal action. During the dispute, workers were unfairly dismissed, faced threats and intimidation, and risked being replaced.



3.72

# AMERICAS



Demonstrators marched in Santiago on 1 May 2025. Across the Americas, workers face worsening violations of collective labour rights in a region that remains the deadliest for trade unionists.



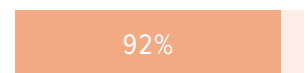
88% OF COUNTRIES IN THE AMERICAS VIOLATED THE RIGHT TO STRIKE



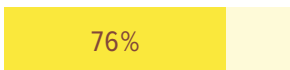
76% OF COUNTRIES IN THE AMERICAS VIOLATED THE RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING



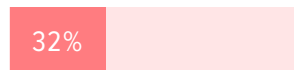
68% OF COUNTRIES IN THE AMERICAS VIOLATED THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH AND JOIN A TRADE UNION



92% OF COUNTRIES IN THE AMERICAS IMPEDED THE REGISTRATION OF UNIONS



76% OF COUNTRIES IN THE AMERICAS DENIED WORKERS ACCESS TO JUSTICE



32% OF COUNTRIES IN THE AMERICAS RESTRICTED FREE SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY



53% OF COUNTRIES IN THE AMERICAS ARRESTED AND DETAINED WORKERS



WORKERS EXPERIENCED VIOLENT ATTACKS IN 24% OF COUNTRIES IN THE AMERICAS



WORKERS WERE KILLED IN COLOMBIA AND MEXICO

The average country rating in the Americas region deteriorated for a third consecutive year to 3.72, its worst reading on record, from 3.68 in 2025. The regional decline was driven by downgrades for **Argentina** (from 4 to 5) and **Panama** (from 4 to 5). Both countries joined the top 10 list of the worst countries in the world for workers' rights. **Uruguay** returned to the top tier of the Index – an exception in a region largely characterised by union repression and exploitation. The region remained the deadliest for workers and their representatives, with extra-judicial killings recorded in **Colombia** and **Mexico**. About nine out of 10 countries violated the right to strike and impeded the registration of unions. Workers were arrested or detained in roughly half of the 25 countries in the region.

**Canada** intervened repeatedly with ministerial orders and binding arbitration to halt strikes, and Panama repressed strikes by teachers and banana workers. In **Ecuador**, union leaders were targeted ahead of a nationwide strike. Broader anti-government protests, such as those in Argentina and **Bolivia**, were violently repressed by police, leading to injuries among protesters and arbitrary arrests. Governments also attacked freedom of speech and assembly, directly affecting labour organising. Argentina proposed new restrictions on protests, Bolivia criminalised roadblocks, Panama curtailed public protest, and **El Salvador** narrowed civic space with legal restrictions under a state of exception.

Freedom of association was obstructed in several countries, including **Costa Rica** and El Salvador. In Argentina, authorities interfered in union affairs and conducted mass anti-union layoffs, while in **Haiti**, union leaders were targeted with dismissals and intimidation. In **Honduras**, agricultural workers and their representatives were stuck in prolonged disputes over union recognition with their employer, while in **Guatemala** and **Chile**, union representatives faced retaliation for their organising efforts. In the **United States**, collective bargaining rights were revoked for large numbers of federal workers.

## Chilling case of disappearance in Mexico

The leader of the Confederación de Trabajadores de México (CTM), Juan Francisco Palacios Murillo, has been missing since 13 June 2025. Earlier in June, during a demonstration against the breach of agreements related to the construction of a public building, Murillo denounced threats from members of organised crime groups urging him to withdraw. The Prosecutor's Office confirmed that his disappearance was forced and carried out against his will.

According to a 2025 ILO report, the Americas region shows significant challenges to real and effective social dialogue. This situation is further aggravated by low rates of unionisation and the limited coverage of collective bargaining, which weaken the effectiveness of social dialogue. In most countries in the region, only 25 per cent of workers on average are covered by collective agreements.

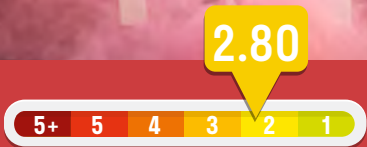
## Big brother in the 'land of the free'

The Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) wields excessive surveillance powers in the United States through sophisticated tools, including apps that agents can use to identify individuals and determine their immigration status. Another app scans irises, while other software enables access to location data. ICE also conducts surveillance on social media using AI-driven tools to collect information on individuals through their social media presence.

The country's expansive surveillance and data collection practices raise serious privacy concerns and threaten freedom of speech and expression, creating a climate of intimidation for migrants and activists, including workers with immigration status. In March 2025, Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a member of the International Association of Sheet, Metal Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART), was deported to a maximum-security prison in El Salvador without due process, justification, or appeal. He had fled to the US and gained legal status in 2019 due to gang threats and extortion in El Salvador.



# EUROPE



Workers took part in a march during a general strike in Turin, Italy, in December 2025. Across Europe, workers face increasing constraints on the right to strike, the criminalisation of industrial action, and weakening social dialogue, alongside rising cases of union busting and attacks on trade unionists.



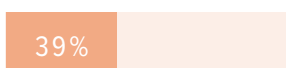
73% OF COUNTRIES IN EUROPE VIOLATED **THE RIGHT TO STRIKE**



56% OF COUNTRIES IN EUROPE VIOLATED **THE RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**



41% OF COUNTRIES IN EUROPE VIOLATED **THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH AND JOIN A TRADE UNION**



39% OF COUNTRIES IN EUROPE **IMPEDED THE REGISTRATION OF UNIONS**



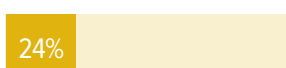
56% OF COUNTRIES IN EUROPE DENIED WORKERS **ACCESS TO JUSTICE**



24% OF COUNTRIES IN EUROPE RESTRICTED **FREE SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY**



34% OF COUNTRIES IN EUROPE **ARRESTED AND DETAINED WORKERS**



WORKERS EXPERIENCED **VIOLENT ATTACKS** IN 24% OF COUNTRIES IN EUROPE

Europe's average country rating deteriorated for a fourth year in a row to an Index low of 2.80 in 2026 from 2.78 in 2025. This reinforces a trend of decline in workers' and union rights across the 41 countries that make up the continent (including Central Asia). Downgrades for **Albania** (now rated 4) and **France** (from 3 to 4) put downward pressure on the region's average score, partially offset by an upgrade for the **United Kingdom** (3).

About three-quarters of countries in the region violated the right to strike, including Albania, **Croatia**, **Portugal**, and **Spain**. **Belgium** and **Italy** criminalised participation in lawful strikes through road-blocking offences, while in France, unions had to mobilise against proposed law reforms aimed at weakening strike protections. **Finland** and Spain imposed excessive restrictions through essential service or minimum service rules, while in **Türkiye**, union leaders continue to face judicial persecution and charges of terrorism for their trade union activities.

Collective bargaining was hampered and social dialogue was denied in about half of the countries in the region, including **Germany**, the **Netherlands**, and **Sweden**, while Finland moved to abolish social dialogue institutions.

Freedom of association was restricted in four out of 10 countries. Albania delayed union congress registrations, and union busting practices were reported in **Armenia**, **Estonia**, the Netherlands, **Poland**, **Serbia**, **Slovakia**, and Spain. In **North Macedonia** and Türkiye, union members were dismissed, pressured to resign, or undermined by yellow unions (those dominated or influenced by the employer) and state repression.

There were violent attacks or intimidation against unions in about a quarter of the countries. In Italy, the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL) offices in Rome were targeted, and union premises in France were vandalised, while unionists faced death threats.

Trade unionists were arbitrarily arrested, detained, or imprisoned in about a third of the countries. In Türkiye and **Ukraine**, union leaders were placed under house arrest. In **Belarus**, the regime continued to imprison independent unionists.

## Italian court rules against order to halt strike

In January 2026, an Italian court ruled that the Minister of Transport's injunction, which forced workers back to work during the November 2023 general strike, was unlawful. The court found that the government's heavy-handed response breached the lawful right to strike, enshrined in 1990 legislation. It ruled that there were no grounds of necessity or urgency to justify the intervention. The ruling further clarified that the order was not intended to safeguard the public – whose needs were already protected through minimum service requirements – but rather to limit the political and social impact of the strike in the absence of any genuine emergency.

## Armenia

In Armenia, "isolated" company-level unions in public bodies are reportedly endorsed and operated by public officials. These "yellow unions" do not pursue legitimate goals for workers and restrict their ability to negotiate. Legitimate unions such as the Union of State, Local Governments, and Public Service Employees of Armenia (USLGPSEA) highlighted interference in union affairs and employer control throughout 2025. At the Shengavit District Office in Yerevan, management disseminated pre-filled withdrawal applications to union members, among other pressure tactics, to persuade employees to withdraw from the union.

# 10-YEAR TRENDS: REGIONAL RATINGS



# THE WORLD'S 10 WORST COUNTRIES FOR WORKERS

Each year, the ITUC Global Rights Index rates countries based on their compliance with collective labour rights and documents violations by governments and employers of internationally recognised rights. These are the 10 worst countries for working people.

*Turkish police detain a protester during a May Day rally in Istanbul, Türkiye, in May 2025. Union busting and the suppression of freedom of association remain widespread, placing Türkiye among the world's 10 worst countries for working people.*





# ARGENTINA - NEW

## WORKING PEOPLE FACE:

- Legal reforms that weaken collective bargaining
- Anti-protest powers that stifle freedom of expression
- Union busting in the private and public sectors

*For the second year running, Argentina's rating has worsened, dropping from category 4 to 5 and placing it among the world's 10 worst countries for working people. The Milei government's assault on trade unions and civil liberties continues to take a severe toll on working people.*

Argentina enters the list of the 10 worst countries for working people following its downgrade to category 5 – the second consecutive annual deterioration in its rating. Under the far-right government of President Javier Milei, conditions for workers and unions have grown increasingly repressive and hostile.

Since coming to power in 2023, Milei has pursued an anti-union agenda that dilutes workers' rights in favour of the private sector, from dismantling social dialogue structures to labour reforms that undermine union negotiators and the right to protest. The private sector, emboldened by the state, has intensified its suppression of union activity.

### Milei's concerted attack on labour and expression

The Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT) has condemned Milei's Labour Reform Bill as a "direct attack on workers' fundamental rights, grounded in an ideological framework that treats labour as a cost to be minimised rather than a human right protected by the constitution and international treaties". The bill imposes mandatory minimum service levels for a broadened range of "essential services" during collective bargaining and introduces limitations on agreements that undermine workers' ability to negotiate fair terms.

Milei has introduced a wave of repressive anti-protest orders that give security forces broad powers to use force and the threat of legal claims for damages as a deterrent

against legitimate demonstrations, including strikes in "productive" zones. State repression resulted in injuries to at least 1,350 people during protests in 2025, including retired workers and union members. Federico Giuliani, Secretary-General of the Córdoba branch of the Asociación Trabajadores del Estado – Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina Autónoma (ATE-CTA A) was arrested during a police crackdown in August 2025. After his release, Giuliani fled Argentina as a political refugee.

### Union busting and employer hostility

Employers in Argentina engage in union busting and exploitative practices with impunity. Manufacturer Lustramax filed for a preventive crisis procedure despite reporting significant profits. Disregarding the mandatory conciliation process, it laid off workers, including union representatives, and brought police to its factory to quell a workers' assembly. Workers have denounced outstanding bonuses and months of social security contribution arrears.

Argentinian courts ruled that mass layoffs at the national social security administration (Administración Nacional de la Seguridad Social - ANSES) were discriminatory – a chilling confirmation that the government is seeking to weaken union representation in the public sector. The Sindicato de los trabajadores y trabajadoras de la ANSES (SECASFPI) reported that 84.6% of the laid-off workers were its members. Milei has slashed tens of thousands of public sector jobs as part of ideologically driven austerity measures.



Photo: Solidarnast

# BELARUS

## WORKING PEOPLE FACE:

- Political persecution and unjust imprisonment
- Dangerous, forced labour as punishment
- Forced deportation of trade unionists

*(From left) Released trade unionists Maksim Senik, Siarhei Antusevich, and Aliaksandr Yarashuk endured lengthy imprisonment in penal colonies and prisons in Belarus, one of the world's 10 worst countries for working people.*

Belarus retains its position among the 10 worst countries for workers' rights. The systematic persecution of independent trade unions and unionists continued in 2025 as authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko began his seventh term in power. The ILO invoked Article 33 of its Constitution against Belarus, a rarely used measure aimed at ensuring compliance by countries that repeatedly flout its recommendations. However, Belarusian authorities refuse to recognise the mandate of the ILO Special Envoy.

### Persecution of opponents and union leaders

Following talks with the United States in March 2026, the Lukashenko regime pardoned 250 political prisoners: 235 were released in Belarus, while 15 were deported to Lithuania.

In October 2025, 73-year-old Aliaksandr Yarashuk, Chair of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) and ITUC Vice-President, and 66-year-old Gennadiy Fedynich, former head of the Belarusian Radio and Electronics Industry Workers' Union (REP), were released as part of a group of 52 political prisoners. Imprisoned since 2022, their passports were confiscated and they were deported across the border.

More than 1,000 political hostages remain in Belarusian prisons, among them at least 20 union activists, such as 70-year-old Vatslau Areshka, a REP activist, who has become almost completely blind while serving an eight-year sentence at penitentiary IK-22, known as "Wolf Holes". Areshka is denied appropriate medical care and relies on fellow inmates for daily support. Human rights groups have condemned the prison's failure to address his needs.

### Forced labour and show trials

In October 2025, the UN Special Rapporteur on Belarus, Nils Muižnieks, documented pervasive discrimination and harassment on political grounds in the public and private sectors, as well as the use of hazardous forced labour for little or no pay as punishment for those unjustly incarcerated. Muižnieks deplored the wholesale destruction of union rights in the country.

The autocratic regime has continued to weaponise trials in absentia against union representatives. Maksim Pazniakou, acting President of the BKDP, is wanted in Belarus and in the Russian Federation for participating in international forums and raising awareness of union repression.



# ECUADOR

## WORKING PEOPLE FACE:

- Police and military brutality during strikes
- State espionage and detention
- Government interference in union affairs

*Workers held a rally in Quito in September 2025, mobilised by unions against insecurity and the policies of President Daniel Noboa's government. Ecuador remains among the world's 10 worst countries for working people.*

Since rising to power in 2023, the increasingly autocratic government of Daniel Noboa has pursued a systematic offensive against unions and civil society in Ecuador, from the criminalisation of union leaders, regressive legislation, and digital surveillance to interference in union affairs. This anti-union environment was epitomised in the government's repressive response to legitimate national protests over the cost of fuel.

### State crackdown on nationwide strike over fuel prices

In September 2025, the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE) and allied trade unions called a nationwide strike following the government's decision to remove a vital diesel subsidy – a move that drastically increased the cost of living, especially for working-class communities. During the 31-day strike, demonstrators staged roadblocks and marches across Ecuador.

The government responded with a violent suppression of the fundamental right to protest, deploying police and military forces who attacked demonstrators with tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition. According to the Alliance of Human Rights Organisations of Ecuador, this left two protesters dead, 473 injured, 12 missing, and 206 detained.

The state launched a criminal investigation against the presidents of the Frente Unitario de Trabajadores

(FUT), the Unión Nacional de Educadores (UNE), the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indígenas, Negras y Montubias (FENOCIN), and the Federación de Estudiantes Universitarios del Ecuador (FEUE) for the alleged attempted disruption of public services. The authorities summoned UNE's Andrés Quishpe and FUT's Edwin Bedoya to provide statements for organising marches and issuing public statements in support of the strike – acts that merely represented the lawful exercise of their rights. Prior to the strike, state agents were found to be monitoring and harassing union and Indigenous leaders.

### Meddling in union affairs

The government maintained a blanket refusal to register sectoral unions, leaving workers unable to organise at the branch level. In July 2025, a government order granted authorities sweeping powers to intervene in union affairs, including drafting statutes, conducting elections, managing membership rolls and administering resources. It was repealed in January 2026, following union pressure, but the government has announced a replacement order expected to maintain an equally restrictive approach.

In October 2025, the state prohibited organisations from taking action against mining projects, imposed mandatory registration in a centralised digital database, enabled denial of registration on public order grounds, and created powers to freeze funds considered "suspicious."



# EGYPT

## WORKING PEOPLE FACE:

- State monopolisation of unions
- Impossible barriers to union registration
- Risk of arrest on terrorism charges for organising

*Egypt remains among the 10 worst countries for working people in 2026, where workers' rights are not guaranteed. Authorities continued to obstruct independent trade unions, with workers facing dismissal, arrest or other reprisals for organising and engaging in collective action.*

Egypt remained among the 10 worst countries in the world for workers' rights. The military-backed authoritarian regime of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has continued to enforce the monopoly of the state-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) by obstructing the registration of independent trade unions, with at least 14 unions unable to operate as of 2026. This leaves workers across the country without access to independent representation.

### Restricting independent union activity

The government imposed excessive documentation requirements, delayed or denied registration certificates, and refused to register any new union where one already exists in the same enterprise or sector. Membership thresholds for forming federations remain excessive and unrealistic, requiring at least 15,000 members across 10 unions. The Egyptian constitution, which states that no profession may have more than one representative union body, is frequently cited to deny legal status to multiple unions representing diverse worker interests and viewpoints, entrenching the ETUF monopoly.

Workers who attempt to form independent unions or engage in collective bargaining face dismissal or transfer, and activists risk arrest or terrorism charges for organising. State interference in union elections and governance is pervasive and systematic. The climate of fear and retaliation means hazardous workplaces and unfair practices are commonplace, to the detriment of workers.

### State repression of strikes

While the constitution appears to protect peaceful strikes, they are not tolerated in practice. The 2013 Protest Law and security decrees are used to prohibit gatherings considered to "impede work". Only strikes organised by ETUF-affiliated unions are considered lawful, leaving workers with no safe avenue to contest grievances.



# ESWATINI

## WORKING PEOPLE FACE:

- State repression and intimidation
- Routine union busting
- No social dialogue or freedom of expression

*TUCOSWA members continue to demand rights for their members amid an atmosphere marked by trade union repression, intimidation, retaliation and job insecurity. Eswatini remains among the 10 worst countries for working people in 2026.*

Eswatini is a country frozen in time and in place, characterised by entrenched union repression, political violence, and the systematic dismantling of workers' rights, with little accountability or reform. Workers and union activists are victims of retaliation and intimidation, while facing the risk of job loss: fixed-term contracts are weaponised against unionists. Trade union recognition is disregarded with impunity, and the government in Africa's last remaining absolute monarchy maintains a complete refusal to engage in social dialogue.

### Unrelenting union harassment

The Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT), the only teachers' union in Eswatini and one of the oldest unions in Africa, has faced a sustained government harassment campaign. SNAT President Mbongwa Dlamini has been suspended from his teaching position since 2022 as a tactic of intimidation against his union activities. Teachers are banned from speaking about democracy. Parliament is debating a law that would ban unions from government buildings and make it illegal to present a petition.

### Rampant union busting

Union busting is routine in Eswatini. At the state-owned Eswatini Electricity Company, management helped form a parallel union representing less than 10 per cent of the workforce and granted it full bargaining rights. The legitimate affiliate, the Swaziland Electricity, Maintenance and Allied Workers Union (SESMAWU), holds over 90 per cent membership, but has not been granted recognition as the representative agent.

Seasonal contract workers in the Eswatini Sugar Association were intimidated into withdrawing their membership from the Swaziland Agricultural and Plantations Workers Union (SAPWU). During the takeover of United Plantations Company by the Public Service Pension Fund, union shop stewards were dismissed. The management of Eswatini Plantations designated a section of employees as "staff" to make them ineligible for SAPWU membership, aiming to force workers to join a government-supported union.



# MYANMAR

## WORKING PEOPLE FACE:

- Arrests and exile as political refugees
- State efforts to undermine independent unions
- Persecution via digital surveillance

*Under Myanmar's military junta, workers and trade unions face a sustained crackdown on their rights and freedoms. The country remains among the 10 worst countries in the world for working people in the 2026 Global Rights Index.*

In Myanmar, the military junta's assault on workers and trade unions has accelerated. Over five years since the coup, 69 unionists remain imprisoned, 30,000 people have been arbitrarily arrested or detained, more than 3.5 million have been forcibly displaced, and forced labour has become widespread in industrial zones.

In June 2025, the International Labour Conference invoked Article 33 of the ILO Constitution against Myanmar's military junta – a rare measure reserved for the gravest situations – calling for an end to financial flows to the regime.

### Arrest of Daw Myo Aye

In July 2025, 56-year-old Daw Myo Aye, leader of the Solidarity Trade Union of Myanmar (STUM), was forcibly arrested at her home in Yangon, and STUM's office was raided, with laptops and mobile phones seized. Her daughter, Chue Thwel, and several STUM staff members were also arrested, while all STUM offices – including those of affiliate organisations – were sealed.

Aye was released in October 2025, but the charges against her were reinstated. She was ordered to sign a bond with two guarantors and pay 30 million MMK (US\$736), requiring her to maintain 'good behaviour'

for six months. Nine other STUM members remain detained, including Aye's daughter. Other unionists remain in exile as the junta has designated these groups as terrorist organisations.

### Government-backed union to suppress workers

The military regime has created a parallel, illegitimate trade union structure, the Myanmar Labour Confederation, to replace independent unions like the Confederation of Trade Unions in Myanmar (CTUM) and the Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar (IWMF).

### State surveillance: digital repression

Myanmar's military has used digital surveillance to restrict freedom of assembly and association, targeting trade unions, human rights defenders, journalists, civil society, and marginalised groups. Authorities link individuals' physical presence to their digital identities through AI-powered facial recognition, licence plate recognition, and CCTV systems in major cities, turning public spaces into sites of constant monitoring and repression. As of November 2025, thousands have been arbitrarily arrested or detained for their online activity.



Photo: Adekunle Adebisi

# NIGERIA

## WORKING PEOPLE FACE:

- State interference in union activities
- Union busting and “yellow” unions
- Arrests and intimidation

*Civil society groups and the Nigeria Labour Congress joined forces to peacefully protest growing insecurity in the country. Nigeria remains among the 10 worst countries in the world for working people.*

Nigeria joined the 10 worst countries for workers in the 2025 Index. Workers and unions continued to face attacks on trade union independence, arbitrary arrests, and systematic union busting.

### Occupation of union offices

The labour rights situation in Edo State has deteriorated sharply since December 2024, when the state government forcibly occupied the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) Secretariat in Benin City with hired thugs and police, locking the building and imposing its own candidate as head of the NLC in place of the duly elected chairperson.

The situation escalated further in August 2025 when the Edo State House of Assembly passed a motion urging the NLC leadership to halt plans to inaugurate a caretaker committee for the Edo State Council, despite having no constitutional authority. When the NLC team arrived in Benin City to conduct the inauguration, the secretariat remained under lock, surrounded by state forces and hired thugs reportedly acting on the Governor’s orders. Faced with the threat of violence, and after being chased across the city, the committee

was inaugurated discreetly at an undisclosed location. The secretariat remains under illegal occupation, with the legitimate leadership denied access.

### Union busting

Nigerian employers regularly engage in union busting. MTN Nigeria denies certain categories of workers the right to join the Private Telecommunication and Communications Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PTECSSAN), their union of choice. Daewoo Nigeria has refused to allow workers to join the union of their choice in violation of Nigerian labour law. Dangote Refinery has mandated workers to join a management-backed union, dismissed workers for joining the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), and created yellow unions to circumvent genuine collective bargaining.

### Arrests

Members of the National Association of Plant Operators of Nigeria (NAPO) were detained in Port Harcourt on charges widely alleged by union representatives to be fabricated for demanding their rights within the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Train 7 project.



Photo: Man in Remedy/AFI

# PANAMA - NEW

## WORKING PEOPLE FACE:

- Victimisation of unions and activists
- Excessive state responses to strike action
- Arrests and abuse

*Workers marched through Panama City in May 2025, defying a government crackdown on labour rights and attacks against union leaders. Panama has entered the world's 10 worst countries for working people.*

Panama is a new entry among the 10 worst countries for workers' rights, following its downgrade to category 5 – the second consecutive year of deterioration in the country's rating. President José Raúl Mulino has intensified efforts to repress the right to strike and freedom of expression, while state forces have targeted union leaders. Employers, including internationally recognised brands, have flouted labour laws and basic rights with impunity.

### Concerted attacks on SUNTRACS and its leadership

The Mulino administration's campaign against the Sindicato Único Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria de la Construcción y Similares (SUNTRACS) intensified. SUNTRACS, the country's largest construction workers' union, representing 85,000 members, was threatened with dissolution in July 2025, the latest step in Mulino's efforts to restrict mass mobilisation, suspend constitutional rights and target striking workers. In October 2025, 17 search and arrest warrants were executed at the homes of union executives and their family members, reflecting the government's deliberate strategy to intimidate union leadership and destabilise the union.

### Expulsion of TUCA's Marcelo Di Stefano

Underlining the Panamanian government's hostility to unionists, Marcelo Di Stefano, Organising Secretary of the ITUC Regional Organisation, the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA), was detained and expelled from Panama in February 2026. He was

visiting the country legitimately to participate in a union seminar and an ILO tripartite mission.

### Crackdown in the banana sector

In April 2025, the banana worker unions Sindicato Industrial de Trabajadores de Productores Bananeros Independientes (SITRAPBI) and Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Industria Bananera, Agropecuaria y Empresas Afines (SITRAIBANA) organised a general strike, involving about 7,480 mainly Indigenous workers, demanding social dialogue and opposing an increase in employee social security contributions. Within a month, the Mulino government declared a state of emergency. Police detained citizens without lawful justification, and internet access was cut, hindering the documentation of abuses. The Panamanian Ombudsman's Office reported 104 cases of abuse – including excessive force, beatings, prolonged handcuffing, and tear gas exposure – and 92 cases of detention without cause.

In the aftermath of the protests, banana giant Chiquita dismissed more than 6,000 workers. President Mulino intervened and persuaded Chiquita to bring back 5,000 jobs by February 2026; however, unions were excluded from the negotiations. In 2025, Mulino also introduced long-overdue reforms for banana workers, increasing pension benefits and improving support for those injured on the job. However, shortly after the law was signed, the General Secretary of SITRAIBANA, Francisco Smith, who had met with Mulino to discuss the reforms, was arrested on charges related to the strike.



Photo: Chedly Ben Ibrahim / Nurphoto via AP

# TUNISIA

## WORKING PEOPLE FACE:

- Drastic weakening of collective bargaining
- Hostile environment for protests
- Attacks on union operations

*A demonstrator raises her hand, calling for the release of imprisoned opposition figure and lawyer Abir Moussi during a rally outside UGTT headquarters. Tunisia remains among the 10 worst countries in the world for working people.*

As Tunisia slides further into autocracy under President Kais Saïed, the authorities have continued a systematic campaign to weaken unions and radically undermine the rights of workers and labour activists. In 2025, the right to collective bargaining and social dialogue came under sustained attack, while unions and their leaders faced intimidation and disruption.

### Social dialogue under threat

A draft Finance Law tabled in October 2025 removes wage negotiation from the scope of collective bargaining – a significant escalation in the erosion of workers’ rights. The suspension of conciliation commissions and the paralysis of the National Council for Social Dialogue have effectively dismantled the mechanisms necessary to ensure stable labour relations. Between August and October 2025, negotiations were suspended across key sectors, while union secondments – the practice of allowing workers to take time away from their regular duties to carry out union functions – and the collection of union dues were halted.

In August 2025, the government cancelled meetings with the Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (UGTT) concerning strikes in the pipeline transport and agricultural sectors. The UGTT denounced the unilateral and unlawful decision as a serious violation of the principles of social dialogue.

### State sabotage of union operations

The withdrawal of union leave, the cancellation of representative authorisations, and threats to stop union dues reflect deliberate state efforts to undermine union capacity. In August 2025, following the government’s revocation of union leave, the UGTT announced a major protest. Prior to the protest, government supporters organised a counter-rally, culminating in an attempted attack on UGTT headquarters. The government’s unilateral cancellation of union secondment in the public sector reversed decades of established practice, stripping dozens of officials of full-time union roles and disrupting operations across education, health, and public utilities.

In July 2025, a three-day transport strike over wages and conditions was met with threats designed to deter future industrial action. Police were reported to have obstructed participation in pro-union protests, creating a chilling effect on mobilisation and restricting civil liberties.

### Government targets ITUC affiliate

For several years, the authorities have attempted to silence ITUC affiliate, the Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (UGTT), targeting the trade union movement, civil society, and any actor defending democratic freedoms. Senior UGTT leader Hfaiedh Hfaiedh was prosecuted and faced harassment and intimidation. The UGTT headquarters has also been subjected to attacks, amid calls for the union’s dissolution.



Photo: Damir Pournemati / Middle East Images via AFP

# TÜRKİYE

## WORKING PEOPLE FACE:

- Union busting and retaliation
- State violation of the right to strike
- Arbitrary arrests

Workers rallied in Kayseri, Türkiye, on May Day 2025, but the right to organise remains under sustained pressure. Türkiye continues to rank among the 10 worst countries for working people.

Türkiye retains its long-held position in the top 10 list of the worst countries for workers' rights. The government of authoritarian President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has a long track record of crushing basic labour rights. Union busting and violations of the right to freedom of association, for example, are regularly deployed as retaliatory tactics by the state and employers.

### A culture of union busting

In January 2025, workers at Digel Textile, a German-owned garment manufacturer, joined the garment-workers union, TEKSIF, after it was confirmed as the legitimate collective bargaining agent by the government. In response, four leading union members were dismissed without severance. Digel challenged the certification process and claimed TEKSIF had no majority. A further 15 members were fired in an attempt to silence their activism.

Metal-workers union Birleşik Metal-İş was certified as the official bargaining agent at SAG Hidrolik, an Italian-owned hydraulic systems manufacturer, in August 2025. The company responded by dismissing three union members without cause. Management threatened workers with factory closure if they did not resign from the union.

### Arrests and threats

At the state level, repression is more direct. In July 2025, President Erdoğan issued an order preventing a lawful miners' strike at state-owned Eti Maden, arguing it posed a threat to national security. The order postponed the strike for 60 days, which, under Turkish labour law, automatically transfers disputes to compulsory arbitration, bypassing the right to strike.

Following a solidarity strike by the education and science workers' union Eğitim Sen in March 2025, authorities placed its leadership under house arrest. The strike was called in response to the politically motivated arrest of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu. While their house arrest has ended, the union leaders face restrictive measures, including weekly police reporting requirements.

# MOST VIOLATED RIGHTS IN THE WORLD

The Global Rights Index tracks the key elements of workplace democracy, including freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, the right to strike, and the right to free speech and assembly, which together symbolise a healthy democracy.

These are the nine workers' rights that were most frequently violated over the past year.

## Threats to the right to strike

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The right to strike enables workers to collectively stop working to advocate for their rights, for example, to negotiate better pay and safer conditions. In 2026, strikes were restricted or banned in 131 countries (87%), unchanged from the 2025 report. This indicates that a significant majority of ILO member states are in breach of ILO Convention No. 87, which enshrines freedom of association and the right to organise, forming the basis for the right to strike.

The excessively broad interpretation of “essential services” and minimum service requirements has constrained industrial action in many countries, such as **Finland, Spain, and Sri Lanka**. Excessive procedural requirements and cooling-off periods have delayed or diluted strike action in **Belgium, Croatia, Mauritania, Morocco, and Namibia**.

Strikes were brutally repressed and workers were injured by police or arbitrarily arrested in **Algeria, Belgium, Cambodia, India, Iraq, Mozambique, Portugal, and Spain**. In **Japan**, public service workers who incite strikes face significant fines or imprisonment.

Employer interference has further undermined strike action, including the replacement of striking workers in Finland, **South Africa**, and the **United States of America**, or disciplinary sanctions and dismissals in **Burundi, India, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, and Togo**.

### Roadblocking

Governments in Europe and South America are increasingly seeking to promote anti-union sentiment and restrict the right to strike through the criminalisation of the occupation of public roads during protests or roadblocks.

In December 2025, the government of **Bolivia** tabled a law that criminalises the blocking of roads with penalties of three to six years imprisonment, or up to eight years for those who “promote, instigate, plan, organise, finance, collaborate or direct the blockades”. The law follows massive anti-government protests, which were brutally repressed by law enforcement. In **Italy**, 10,000 metalworkers from CGIL-FIOM, CISL-FIM,

and UIL-UILM in Bologna participated in a peaceful demonstration in June 2025 to demand the renewal of a collective agreement. Bologna’s Public Prosecutor’s Office applied for a criminal decree against three trade union leaders on charges of blocking roads.

The framing of roadblocking as a criminal offence has also been misused by authorities in Belgium to suppress the right to strike. The offence of “malicious obstruction of traffic” was used to convict workers involved in strikes in the Port of Antwerp and at Cheratte Bridge. **Argentina** has instituted an anti-blockade protocol to maintain “public order in the event of road blockages”, which authorises the indiscriminate use of police force and the threat of legal liability for damages as a deterrent against legitimate social protest.

### Canada

In Canada, the government continued to invoke section 107 of the Canada Labour Code, which empowers the Minister of Labour to intervene in labour disputes and the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) to invoke binding arbitration. In August 2025, the government ordered a halt to a strike called by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) involving over 10,000 Air Canada flight attendants. The union remained on strike, which was declared unlawful, and the dispute moved to arbitration in January 2026. Striking workers of Canada Post and their union, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), were also issued back-to-work orders under section 107.

### Bangladesh

In April 2025, factory workers protesting unpaid wages and bonuses faced violent police suppression.



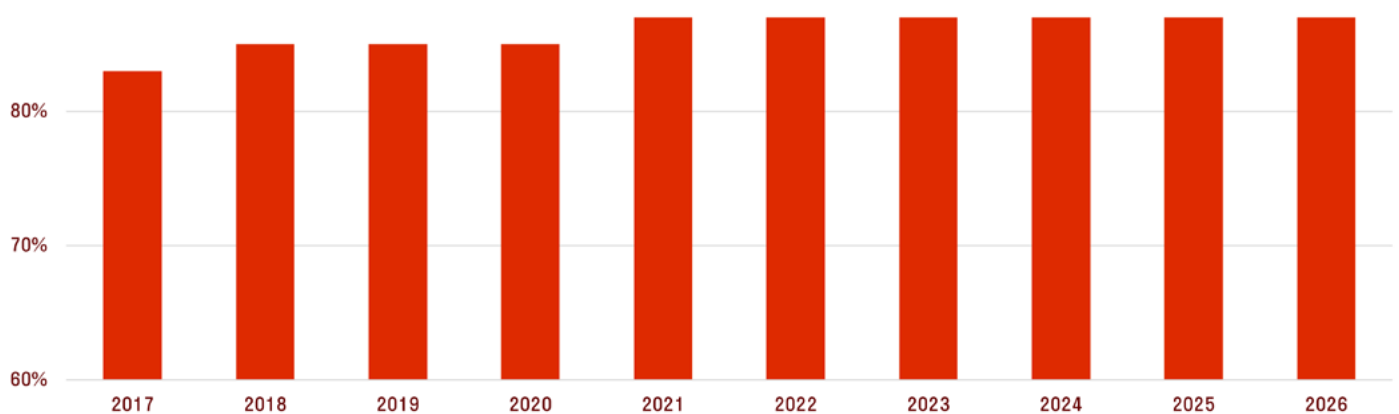
Trade unions in Quebec mobilised against legislation restricting the right to strike and weakening union autonomy. Canada is among the 87% of countries that violated the right to strike.

Workers from Apparel Plus EC Limited, TNZ Apparels Ltd, and Apparel Art Ltd gathered outside Ministry of Labour offices to demand their dues. The protest was dispersed using tear gas, resulting in injuries to many workers.

### Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, a country with a large migrant workforce, workers routinely faced retaliation for participating in protests and strikes. In November 2025, migrant construction workers were detained after protesting and staging work stoppages on the Masar (Mecca) project, having not been paid for months.

## 10-YEAR TRENDS: COUNTRIES WHICH VIOLATE THE RIGHT TO STRIKE



## Erosion of collective bargaining

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The right to collective bargaining enables workers to negotiate with their employer via a representative trade union. It is enshrined in ILO conventions. In 2026, this right was seriously curtailed or non-existent in 121 countries (80% of the Index) unchanged from 2025. Violations of the right to collective bargaining include acts of bad faith, delay tactics, or non-compliance by private and public sector employers.

Bad-faith bargaining and unilateral employer practices have been documented in **Burkina Faso, Canada, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Nepal, and Sweden**, including delays in negotiations, refusal to bargain, unilateral measures, or lack of consultation in restructuring processes.

Employers have refused to implement or have unilaterally modified collective bargaining agreements in **Cambodia, Colombia, Croatia, Kenya, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Serbia, South Africa and Zambia**. In **Mauritania**, about 2,000 dockworkers were fired by their new employer, SOGETRAP, reneging on a formally negotiated tripartite agreement.

In the public sector, workers face prolonged delays in negotiations, excessive rules for representation, and the termination of agreements by the public authorities. For example, in many public and para-public sectors in **Benin**, collective agreements are not honoured. In **Morocco**, 97% of workers are not covered by collective bargaining agreements due to a 35% representation threshold. Public health workers in **Côte d'Ivoire** have waited three years for a collective agreement after a 2023 strike over pay and conditions.

### Honduras

In February 2026, the Honduran government ordered Fyffes/Sumitomo to compensate predominantly seasonal workers and pay fines of almost US\$800,000 for labour rights violations at its melon farms in Choluteca. Fyffes subsidiaries Suragroh and Melon Export S.A. failed to pay overtime, bonuses, and social security contributions, amid inadequate occupational health and safety standards. Fyffes has declined to sign a collective agreement despite years of organising by workers, contesting the legal standing of the Sindicato de Trabajadores/as Agrícolas (STAS) and postponing negotiations.

### Sri Lanka

In May 2025, more than 1,400 workers at NEXT's Katunayake factory in Sri Lanka were dismissed via WhatsApp when the UK-based retailer closed the plant without due notice. The notice cited rising operating costs, despite the company reporting £1 billion in profits in 2024. The factory employed 1,416 of the company's 2,825 Sri Lankan workforce. Affected workers and their union, the Free Trade Zones and General Services Employees Union (FTZ & GSEU), have challenged the unlawful closure, which breaches a collective bargaining agreement signed in 2021 and renewed in 2023 – the only active CBA in the country's clothing industry.

### Germany

In September 2025, Adidas left the sectoral collective bargaining agreement in Germany by changing its membership in the Federal Association of the German Footwear and Leather Goods Industry from full membership to membership without collective bargaining obligations. Adidas had been criticised for paying a meagre amount above agreed rates while recording a gross profit margin of more than 50 per cent. As a global company, the repercussions of this decision are felt across the supply chains of every country involved in production and manufacturing, particularly those in Asia.

### Netherlands

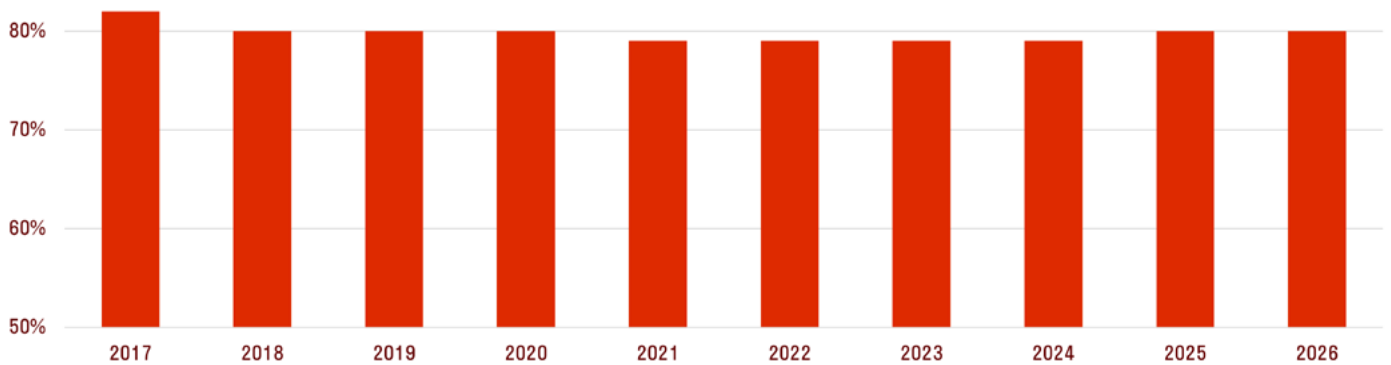
In 2025, ABU/NBBU, the employers' organisations representing temporary work agencies in the Netherlands, discontinued the long-standing practice of collective labour agreements with the Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV), Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond (CNV), and De Unie unions. In these negotiations, the unions aimed to secure better working conditions for temporary workers, who have long faced greater job insecurity and fewer protections. ABU/NBBU relied on exceptions to Dutch labour law that can only be secured through a collective labour agreement. As negotiations grew challenging, the employers chose to negotiate an agreement with reduced protection and poorer working conditions with a non-independent union with little or no membership in the sector.



Photo: Suscha Thelen / DPA, Picture-Allianz e AFP

Public transport workers took action in Cologne, Germany ahead of collective bargaining negotiations. Germany is among the 121 countries that violated the right to collective bargaining.

## 10-YEAR TRENDS: COUNTRIES WHICH VIOLATE THE RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING



## Blocked and excluded from labour protection

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The right to freedom of association enables workers to join and form independent trade unions to protect their interests without coercion. Under international labour agreements, ratified by 158 of 187 ILO members, all workers have the right to freedom of association and to organise. In 2026, 113 countries (75% of those in the Index) excluded certain categories of workers from this right, often based on their employment status – unchanged from 2025.

Domestic workers, temporary workers, those in the informal economy, and workers in the platform economy often fall outside the scope of labour legislation. In **Burundi**, the authorities refuse to register a union formed by workers in the informal sector. Laws in **Pakistan** do not guarantee the right to organise for agricultural workers, domestic workers, home-based workers or workers in the informal sector.

In 30 of the countries surveyed, including **Jordan**, **Mauritania**, **Qatar**, **Saudi Arabia**, and **Thailand**, laws prohibit migrant workers from establishing and joining trade unions, restrict their ability to hold office in a trade union, or infringe on their rights to engage in union activities.

In Special Economic Zones, including in **Bangladesh** and **Haiti**, workers are deprived of their right to freedom of association. Certain categories of public employees are denied the right by law in countries including **Japan**, **Morocco**, **Mozambique**, **Rwanda**, the **Bahamas** and **Türkiye**.

### Union busting

The practice of union busting has seen more and more workers blocked from forming and joining trade unions. It encompasses activities undertaken by employers to hinder the functioning of unions, and to disrupt or prevent their formation or growth. ILO Convention No. 98 enshrines the right of workers' organisations to adequate protection against any acts of interference by employers in their establishment, functioning, or administration.

This year, dismissals and reprisals against workers engaging in union activities have been documented in **Burundi**, **France**, **Iraq**, **Mexico**, **Peru**, **Serbia**, and **Spain**. Employer refusal to recognise legally formed unions or interference in their activities has been reported in **Belgium**, **Estonia**, **Hungary**, **India**, **Ireland**, **Pakistan**, **Poland**, the **Republic of Korea**, **Senegal**, **Sri Lanka** and **Zimbabwe**.

### Haiti

In Haiti, the management of the multinational drinks company Brana-Heineken has attacked workers' rights and union freedoms through the harassment, intimidation, and persecution of union leaders. One month after the election of the new Union Executive Committee, the company dismissed Jonas Louis, the General Secretary of the Syndicat des Travailleurs de la Brasserie Nationale d'Haïti (SYBTRANA) and Darline Forstal, the union's Communication Secretary, under the alleged pretext of low performance.

### Iran

In 2025, Iranian authorities upheld or intensified disciplinary rulings against Kurdish teachers for their trade union activities, including forced retirement, dismissal, permanent removal from public service, and exile. Omid Shah-Mohammadi and Majid Karimi, for example, were expelled from the administrative system and lost all state benefits, including pensions and social security. These measures followed the May 2024 elections of the Sanandaj Kurdistan Teachers' Union, after which newly elected members were targeted with what their unions believe were fabricated disciplinary cases. Legal experts and unions have condemned the rulings as politically motivated, disproportionate, and in violation of Iran's constitution.

### Lebanon

In 2025, Elsy Moufarrej, a journalist and union coordinator working at Murr Television (MTV) in Lebanon, was reportedly dismissed for her union activities as President of the Union of Journalists in Lebanon (UJL), raising concerns about discrimination against employees joining and participating in unions.



Photo: COTU-K

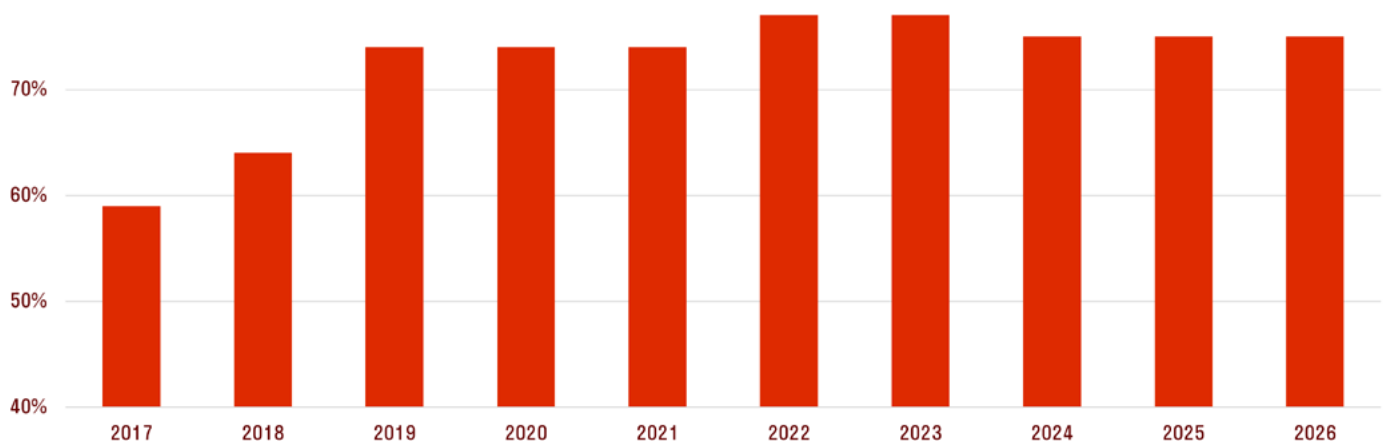
Trade unionists were able to mark May Day in Kenya despite ongoing restrictions. The country is among the 113 that violated the right to establish and join a trade union.

## Slovakia

In September 2025, workers at Amazon Slovakia established the trade union United Voice, affiliated with TOZ (Technologický odborový zväz – Technology Trade Union). When union representatives met with management to discuss workplace concerns, the company demanded a list of all employees who had joined the union — a request that is not permitted

under Slovak law. In November, long-time employee Ján Mizerák, who had worked at the Bratislava centre for 12 years, was dismissed upon returning from parental leave. TOZ has condemned the dismissal as unlawful retaliation, reflecting widespread intimidation of workers who exercise their right to organise.

## 10-YEAR TRENDS: COUNTRIES WHICH EXCLUDE WORKERS FROM THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH OR JOIN A TRADE UNION



## Restrictions on access to justice

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Access to justice and the due process of law are basic principles of the rule of law. In their absence, people are not able to have their voices heard, nor assert their rights. In 2026, the global picture was unchanged from 2025: in 109 out of 151 (72%) countries, workers had no or reduced access to justice, and due process was denied.

In countries such as **Hong Kong** and **Pakistan**, union activists face arbitrary arrest and unfair prosecution, often on spurious grounds, such as national security or terrorism. Workers seeking redress for rights violations face barriers including the declining accessibility and affordability of justice systems, complex procedures, delays, and weak enforcement.

### Côte d'Ivoire

In April 2025, in line with the law, teachers' unions in Côte d'Ivoire submitted a strike notice over demands including better working conditions and quarterly bonuses. Days before the strike, Ghislain Duggary Assy, Communications Secretary of the Mouvement des Enseignants pour la Dynamique de la Dignité (MEDD), was arrested at home by masked men and questioned by police without the presence of a lawyer. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for allegedly organising collective action outside the prescribed legal framework and "obstructing the operation of the public service". Other strike leaders were briefly detained, and the government declared the strike illegal, threatening sanctions, in breach of the nation's constitution.

### El Salvador

Since March 2022, El Salvador has maintained a "state of exception" that has enabled the mass detention of more than 85,000 people as part of the government's anti-gang campaign. Nayib Bukele's emergency regime has been criticised by human rights organisations. At least two detained unionists have died in state custody, including municipal worker José Leonidas Bonilla, and union activist Franklin Gabriel Izaguirre.

Several trade unionists remain imprisoned, including Sabino Antonio Ramos Cruz, executive committee member of the workers' union of the Panchimalco Mayor's Office; Dolores Victoria Almendares Alvarado, General Secretary of the municipal workers' union SETRAMUC in Cuscatancingo; Giovanni Aguirre López, municipal union member in San Salvador; and Misael Itamir Gómez, union activist from Ciudad Delgado.

### Cambodia

In Cambodia, global sportswear giant ASICS's supplier Wing Star Shoes fabricated criminal charges against union leader Chea Chan, resulting in his violent arrest and imprisonment for six months in early 2024. Although he was released, the factory's management kept him confined at work and segregated from the workforce. ASICS has refrained from taking a stand on this matter. In November 2025, after months of persistent work by Chan and the Cambodia Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU) and their engagement with ASICS through the Workers' Rights Consortium and the International Committee of Labour Lawyers Association of Japan, Chan received US\$50,000 in compensation, back pay, and was reinstated as union leader.

### Algeria

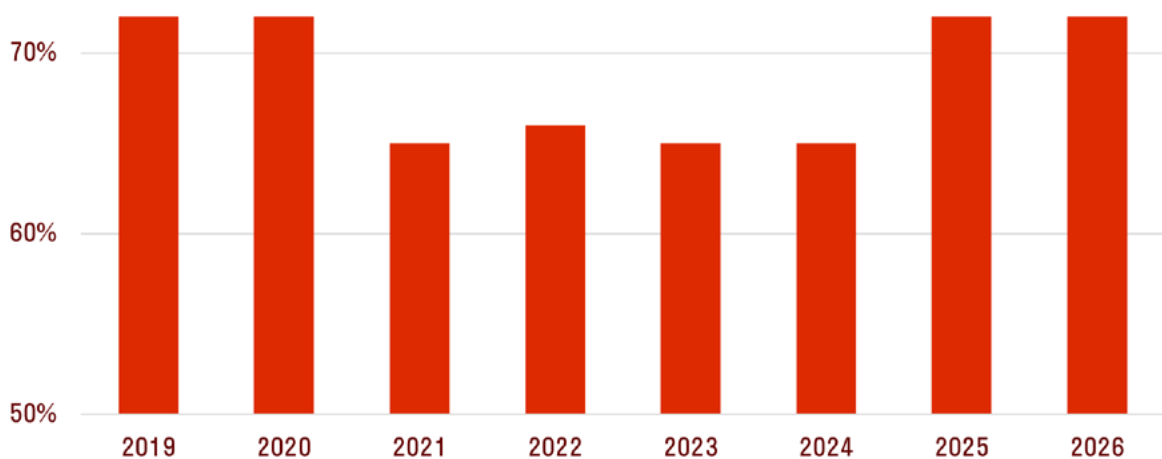
In March 2025, Ali Mammeri, President of the Syndicat national des fonctionnaires du secteur de la culture et des arts (SNFC), was arrested in Algeria without a warrant, held incommunicado for four days, and reported being beaten and forcibly undressed in an attempt to extract confessions. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison in October 2025. Mammeri, while exercising his right to strike and sharing information with the ILO about government reprisals against unions and exiled activists, had been accused of "glorifying terrorist acts" and disseminating classified information under Algeria's broad anti-terror law. In February 2026, an appeals court reduced the sentence to 10 years.



Photo: Marvin Pacheco / AFP

In San Salvador, thousands protested against emergency powers that allow arrests without a warrant. El Salvador is among the 72% of countries where workers lack full access to justice.

### EIGHT-YEAR TRENDS: COUNTRIES WHICH RESTRICT ACCESS TO JUSTICE



## De-registration of unions

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The right to official recognition through legal registration is fundamental to the right to organise, since this is the first step that workers' organisations must take to function efficiently and represent their members adequately. The right to organise is enshrined in ILO Convention No. 87, signed by 158 of 187 ILO member states.

In 2026, however, workers in 113 out of 151 countries in the Index faced legal obstacles to forming unions and practical barriers imposed by the authorities that impeded the registration of, de-registered, or arbitrarily dissolved unions. This rate (75%) reflects a worsening in conditions since 2025, reaching record levels.

In **Belarus, Egypt, Hong Kong, Sudan, and Yemen**, the independent union movement has been wiped out by the authorities through arbitrary dissolution and illegal takeover. Workers have been deprived of their fundamental freedom to form and join unions of their own choosing.

In some countries, the state imposes, to various degrees, a trade union monopoly, and the government exercises control over the apparatus and functioning of trade unions, as in **China, Iraq, Laos, Libya, and Vietnam**.

### Namibia

In Namibia, the Labour Commissioner refused to register the Public Service Union of Namibia (PSUN) as a representative of all workers as stipulated in its constitution. This act was in breach of a 2025 court ruling that the union should be recognised based on the scope of workers defined in its constitution in matters where it had applied to be recognised as the exclusive bargaining agent.

### Costa Rica

In the private sector in Costa Rica, forming a union has become virtually impossible as the authorities hold full discretion on registration. Deadlines for registration can extend for months, generating confusion among affiliates and compromising the relationship between workers and employers. This allows employers to restrict workers' rights by failing to recognise unions.

### Hong Kong

In July 2025, Hong Kong's Trade Union Ordinance was amended to further restrict union freedoms. The changes mean unions can be denied registration on undefined national security grounds without the right to appeal beyond an expensive and inaccessible judicial review. It permanently bars individuals convicted of "endangering national security" from forming or leading unions, grants sweeping investigative powers to the Registrar of Trade Unions, and prohibits foreign funding without approval.

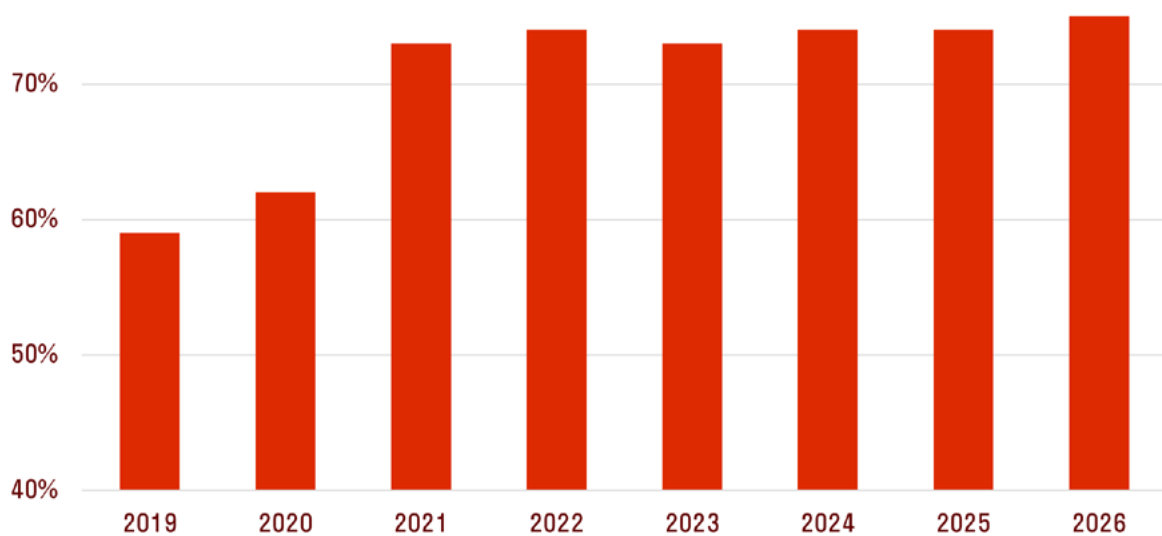
### Jordan

In July 2025, the Constitutional Court of Jordan declared the Jordanian Teachers' Syndicate Law No. 14 of 2011 and all its amendments unconstitutional, rendering the law null and void and effectively removing any legal basis for the existence and functioning of the education workers' union. The judiciary's declaration of illegality of a trade union forms part of a long-standing struggle by teachers' unions to perform their activities without retaliation.



People rallied in Omdurman for peace and security. Sudan's independent trade union movement has been effectively dismantled by state interference.

## EIGHT-YEAR TRENDS: COUNTRIES WHICH IMPEDE THE REGISTRATION OF UNIONS



## Attacks on freedom of speech and assembly

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The rights of workers and trade unions can only be exercised within the framework of a system that guarantees the effective respect of civil liberties and freedoms, which are vital to a democratic society. Freedom of assembly and freedom of opinion and expression are fundamental to the exercise of freedom of association.

In a record-high number of countries, workers and trade unions were stripped of these fundamental freedoms in 2026: 76 countries out of 151 (50%) violated workers' rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, up from 68 in 2025. This represents the fourth consecutive year of deterioration. Over the past year alone, violations of free speech and assembly rose by five percentage points, signalling an intensifying assault on workers' fundamental ability to organise collectively and to protest unfair, unsafe and undignified working conditions.

Permission for protests was arbitrarily denied in **India**, **Indonesia**, **Lesotho**, and **Madagascar**, while in the **Republic of Korea**, a legal amendment adopted in January 2026 prohibits assemblies within 100 metres of the Presidential Office, effectively curtailing demonstrations aimed at the government.

### Togo

In October 2025, three trade union federations in Togo – the Groupe des Syndicats Autonomes (GSA), the Synergie des Travailleurs du Togo (STT), and the Union Nationale des Syndicats Indépendants du Togo (UNSI) — called for a general assembly at the Agora Senghor in Lomé. However, the assembly could not take place due to direct interference by the Golfe Prefecture authorities. On the day of the meeting, union leaders were summoned by the Directorate of Public Liberties and Political Affairs (DLPAP) and the prefect and required to produce their union registration certificates. The DLPAP justified these measures by citing an alleged failure to inform the prefect or mayor in advance, citing an amendment to the 2011 law on freedom of assembly and public demonstrations. The DLPAP stated that all union meetings must comply with this requirement.

### Bolivia

In December 2025, union-led nationwide strikes and protests erupted across Bolivia after the government moved to eliminate long-standing fuel subsidies, a policy change that caused gasoline prices to nearly double. Confrontations with security forces escalated in La Paz as police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators, leading to violent clashes and reports of arrests and injuries among protesters. The unrest formed part of a broader wave of mobilisations against the government's austerity measures and economic reforms, which unions and social organisations argued would disproportionately affect workers and low-income communities.

### Indonesia

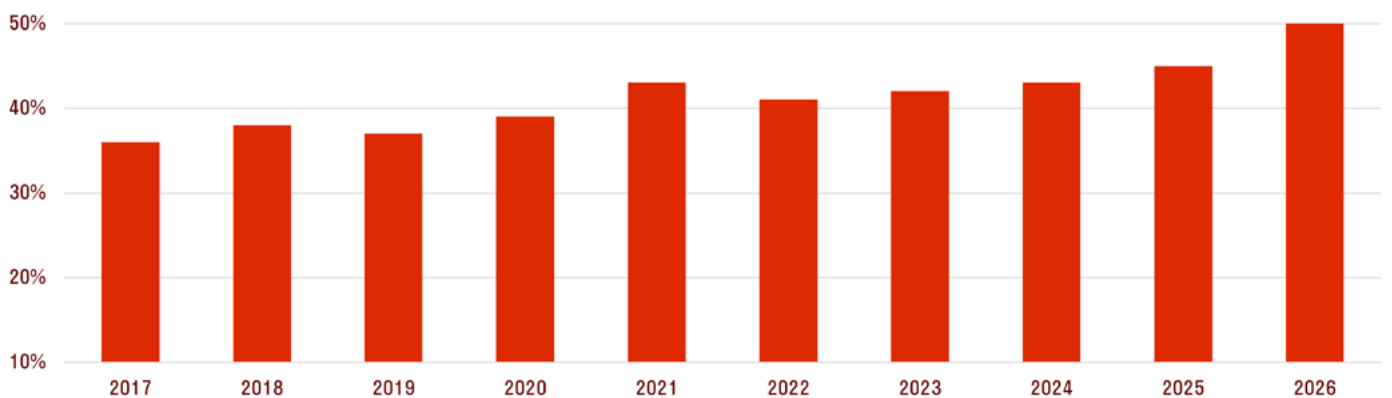
Workers and trade unionists in Indonesia were regularly exposed to violence, the excessive use of force, threats, and harassment during strikes, protests and collective actions. During May Day 2025 and subsequent mass demonstrations, police forces used batons, water cannons and tear gas, resulting in injuries and arrests, including among union members. During nationwide protests in August and September 2025, over 4,000 protesters in multiple cities were detained and almost 1,000 charged for their participation in demonstrations.



Photo: Bay Ismyo / AFP

Trade unions demonstrated in Jakarta for improved working conditions. Indonesia is among the 50% of countries where workers face violence and repression when exercising free speech and assembly.

## 10-YEAR TRENDS: COUNTRIES WHICH DENY OR CONSTRAIN FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY



## Arbitrary arrests, detentions and imprisonment (civil liberties)

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In 2026, workers in 75 countries faced arbitrary arrest and prison sentences for exercising their union freedoms. This level of persecution – involving about 50% of countries – is a record high for the Index, up from 47% in 2025, signalling that trade unionists are being persecuted in increasing numbers across the world.

### Angola

In August 2025, leaders of taxi drivers' associations were arrested in Angola as part of investigations into protests against rising fuel prices. The arrested activists were suspected of criminal association, incitement to violence, attacks on traffic safety and terrorism. Among the individuals arrested during the protests were Francisco Paciente and Rodrigo Luciano Camba, the President and Vice-President of the Angola National Taxi Association (ANATA), Francisco Eduardo, leader of the Angola Taxi Drivers Association (ATA), Rafael Ginga Inacio, leader of the Angolan Community Taxi Cooperative (CTCA), and Antonio Alexandre Freitas, leader of the Freitas Taxi and Motorcyclist Cooperative (CTMF).

### Democratic Republic of the Congo

In November 2025, National President of the Inter-Union of the National Transport Office Armand Osase was forcibly arrested and detained in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for demanding back pay for employees and managers of the national transport office (Société Commerciale des Transports et des Ports - SCTP). The office has been in conflict with its workers for a long time over the non-payment of wages, mismanagement, and arbitrary decisions without respect for statutory authorities. In October, Osase's employment had been unlawfully terminated.

### Republic of Korea

In February 2026, Korean police arrested 12 union members and supporters, including Ko Jin-soo, leader of the Sejong Hotel union affiliated with the KCTU Service Federation, during a sit-in protest at the hotel in Seoul. The protesters demanded the reinstatement of workers dismissed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Those arrested were charged with obstruction of a business and refusal to vacate the premises. The incident highlighted ongoing tensions between management and organised labour, with workers alleging harsh treatment.

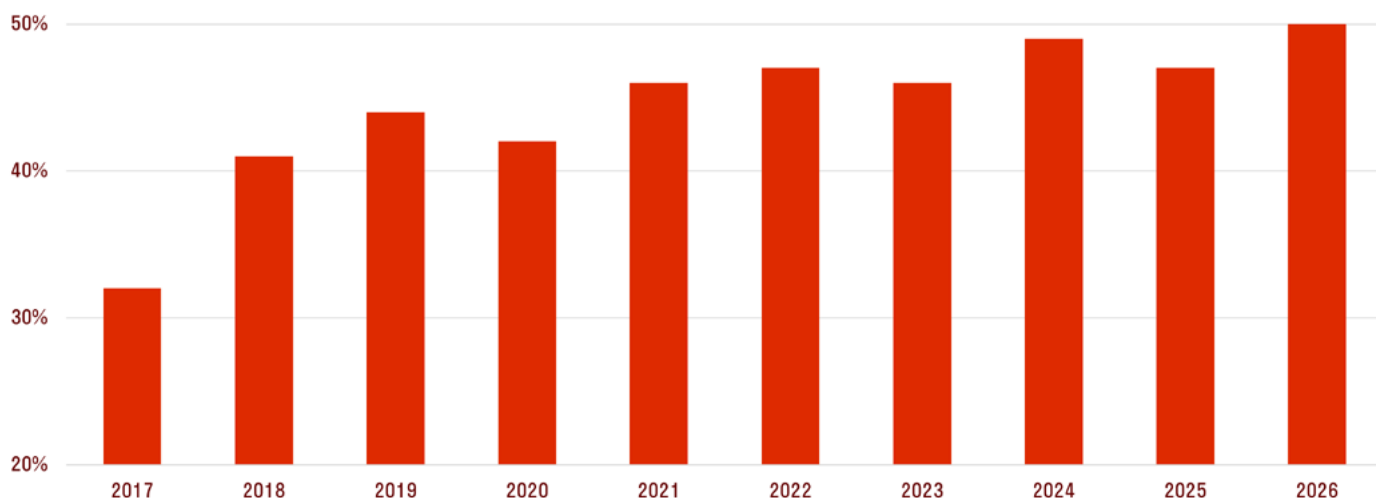
### Iraq

In February 2026, Iraqi police arrested three demonstrators during a protest outside the Basra Oil Company where workers demanded permanent employment. The protests were attended by dozens of former workers from Basra's Fluid Catalytic Cracking Unit (FCC) who had been mobilising for more than five months after 350 workers were dismissed. The police intervened to disperse the crowd and violently beat several protesters. The oil ministry has approved the reinstatement of the dismissed workers, conditional on a formal request from the company. Reports indicate that the company has replaced the dismissed workers with foreign staff.



Workers gathered for a May Day rally in Baghdad, Iraq, where strikes were brutally repressed, tripartite consultations were not respected, and dismissals and reprisals were used against union activists. Iraq is among the countries that impeded civil liberties.

## 10-YEAR TRENDS: COUNTRIES WHICH ARBITRARILY ARREST AND DETAIN TRADE UNION MEMBERS



## Violent attacks on workers

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Workers reported incidents of violence in 48 countries in 2026, nearly a third of those in the Index and a sharp rise from 40 in 2025. Several union offices were raided by police and state forces. The data further shows a six-percentage-point rise in violent attacks against workers, pointing to an escalating pattern of intimidation and repression targeting those who organise and defend their rights. Where violence occurs, unionists cannot operate freely, placing the rights and welfare of workers at risk.

### Attacks on union offices

#### India

In November 2025, seven unions in India were ousted from their lawful premises by the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC). SMC teams took over the offices, removed furniture, personal items, and files. The vacated office spaces were reassigned to municipal departments. Unions had been given notices to provide documents to the SMC regarding recognition letters, annual returns, membership details, and records of office-bearers.

#### Palestine

In October 2025, Israeli forces raided the offices of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) in Nablus (West Bank), ransacking and vandalising equipment, breaking doors, and detaining staff.

#### Ukraine

In June 2025, Ukrainian government agents and private security entered Trade Union House in Kyiv and ordered the staff of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU) to leave immediately, blocking access and taking control of the building and equipment. This move to undermine the work of the FPU was the latest in a string of government attacks on unions, including the house arrest of FPU President Grygorii Osovyi.

### Other attacks

#### South Africa

The South African Police Service (SAPS) and private security personnel opened fire on striking workers at the Centurion depot of Transpharm Pty. The strike had been called by the National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers (NUPSAW) in response to the company's unilateral decision to relocate operations from Tshwane to Centurion and Isando depots.

#### Nepal

In April 2025, Nepali police attacked and injured scores of teachers mobilised under the Confederation of Nepalese Teachers (CNT). The protest, which was conducted in a lawful and peaceful manner, had been organised to call for permanent employment and fair wages.

### Far-right violence in Europe

In recent years, the rise of the far right in Europe has increasingly translated into hostility directed at trade unions and their members.

#### France

In November 2025, the media and journalists branch of the French Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT) was targeted by far-right groups after publishing a guide for journalists covering far-right movements. CFDT reported a wave of online threats directed at union members via email and social media, illustrating the increasingly hostile digital environment for union representatives and media professionals defending democratic standards.

Evidence suggests that the presence of far-right elected officials in local administrations creates a chilling effect on union activity. According to a 2025 survey conducted by the CFDT Interco federation, unionists in municipalities governed by far-right officials can come under heightened pressure. Three unions reported restrictions on union resources, while two indicated the existence of a climate of fear or self-censorship among union representatives.

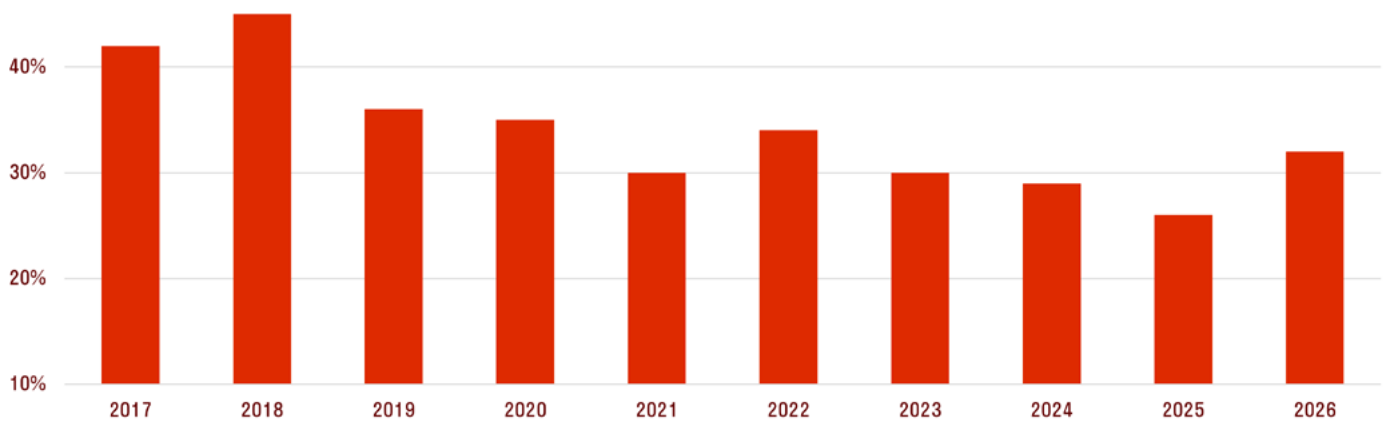


Israeli soldiers raided the offices of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) in Nablus, detaining staff, vandalising equipment and breaking doors. Palestine is among the 48 countries where workers faced violent attacks.

**Italy**

In January 2026, five bullet holes appeared in the windows and shutters of the headquarters of the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL) in Rome. The attack appeared to be a deliberate act of intimidation, as no neighbouring premises were damaged.

**10-YEAR TRENDS: COUNTRIES WHICH EXPOSE WORKERS TO PHYSICAL VIOLENCE**



## Deaths

As the public faces and defenders of workers and their rights, trade unionists are targets for violent attacks by the state and employers. This can include threats to life, harassment, verbal and physical attacks, and assassinations.

Too often, there is no justice for victims or their families. The killing of union leaders has a chilling effect on union activism and fosters a climate of impunity, which can leave workers defenceless.

In 2026, workers and trade unionists died for their trade union activism in four countries: **Angola**, **Colombia**, **Indonesia**, and **Mexico**.

### Angola

In Angola, at least 29 people were killed in July 2025 during a three-day taxi drivers' strike. The protests, organised by the Angola National Taxi Association (ANATA), were called to oppose a fuel price hike. Hundreds of protesters were injured and at least 1,214 people were arrested in the context of violent clashes between protesters and the police, vandalism, and looting.

### Colombia

In Colombia, Walberto Quintero Medina, Vice-President of the CUT federation's departmental committee in Cesar and an Executive Committee member of the SINALTRAINAL union for food industry workers, was murdered on 28 April 2025. He was shot at a public establishment in front of his friends and died in hospital. Medina's death joins a long list of crimes committed against union leaders and human rights defenders. Several SINALTRAINAL members have been murdered in the past 20 years.

On 16 December 2025, trade unionist Campo Elías Urrutía Vargas was murdered on his farm in Tauramena. He was a member of the National Board of Directors of Fedearroz, the national federation of rice growers, and the National Executive of the Aguazul committee of rice farmers.

### Indonesia

On 28 July 2025, Affan Kurniawan, an online motorcycle taxi (ojol) driver, was run over and killed by an armoured police vehicle during demonstrations in Jakarta, prompting an investigation by the National Commission on Human Rights. Video footage on social media showed that an armoured vehicle ran over the driver while the police were dispersing protesters near a residential area. According to one of the residents who witnessed the incident, the armoured vehicle kept moving forward after it sped through the crowd and hit the driver, who had fallen in the middle of the road.

### Mexico

On 4 August 2025, Mario Machuca Sánchez, union leader of the Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreros y Campesinos (CROC), was shot and killed in the parking lot of a car agency by assailants disguised as delivery workers from a digital platform.

In October 2025, Noé Pérez Urquidi, leader of the Confederación Autónoma de Trabajadores y Empleados de México (CATEM) in Salina Cruz, Oaxaca, was murdered by an armed commando in the parking lot of the Plaza Pabellón shopping centre.

In July 2025, union leader César Contreras, who served as General Secretary of the Unión Nacional de Transportistas del Cambio (UNTRAC), was shot dead in his office in Cancún. According to witnesses, two armed men entered his office, shot him, and fled the area.



DESCANSA EN PAZ

WALBERTO QUINTERO MEDINA

29 de abril de 2025

La CUT lamenta profundamente el asesinato de nuestro compañero Walberto Quintero Medina, vicepresidente de la CUT Cesar y directivo de Sinaltrainal Valledupar.

Desde la CUT expresamos nuestro mensaje de solidaridad y condolencias a sus familiares, compañeros y amigos.

Exigimos a las autoridades celeridad en la investigación y esclarecimiento de este lamentable hecho.





Protesters in Jakarta, Indonesia, demanded justice for Affan Kurniawan, a motorcycle taxi driver run over and killed by an armoured police vehicle during a trade union demonstration days earlier. Indonesia is among the four countries where trade unionists were killed.

# THE GLOBAL RIGHTS INDEX EXPLAINED

The ITUC Global Rights Index depicts the world's worst countries for workers by rating 151 countries on a scale from 1 to 5+ on the degree of respect for workers' rights. Violations are recorded each year from April to March. Countries where information on the situation of workers' rights is too scarce or cannot be verified following our methodology were not included in this year's analysis. However, the ITUC is working towards covering all countries in the ITUC Global Rights Index.

## 1. DOCUMENTING VIOLATIONS

The ITUC documents violations of internationally recognised collective labour rights by governments and employers. The methodology is grounded in standards of fundamental rights at work, in particular the right to freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike. Questionnaires are sent to 340 national unions in 169 countries to report violations of workers' rights by indicating relevant details. Regional meetings with human and trade union rights experts are held where the questionnaire is disseminated, explained and completed. The ITUC contacts unions directly by phone and email when it becomes aware of violations to confirm relevant facts. Legal researchers analyse national legislation and identify sections which do not adequately protect internationally recognised collective labour rights.

## 2. CODING OF TEXT

The text under each country in the ITUC Survey is read against a list of 97 indicators derived from ILO Conventions and jurisprudence and representing violations of workers' rights in law and in practice. A country receives a point for each time textual information corresponds to an indicator. Each point has the value of 1. After coding the text for a country, the number of points is added up to arrive at a total score.

## 3. RATING COUNTRIES

Countries are rated in clusters from 1-5+ depending on their compliance with collective labour rights. There are five ratings, with 1 being the best rating and 5+ the worst rating a country could get. The level of economic development, size or location of the country is not taken into account given that fundamental rights are universal and workers in all parts of the world must have access to them. A high-rated cluster means that workers in the country have no right to their collective voice due to government failure to guarantee rights.

# DESCRIPTION OF THE RATINGS



NO GUARANTEE OF RIGHTS DUE TO THE BREAKDOWN OF THE RULE OF LAW

NO GUARANTEE OF RIGHTS

SYSTEMATIC VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

REGULAR VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

REPEATED VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

SPORADIC VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

## 1 SPORADIC VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

Collective labour rights are generally guaranteed. Workers can freely associate and defend their rights collectively with the government and/or companies and can improve their working conditions through collective bargaining. Violations against workers are not absent but do not occur on a regular basis.

## 2 REPEATED VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

Countries with a rating of 2 have slightly weaker collective labour rights than those with a rating of 1. Certain rights have come under repeated attacks by governments and/or companies and have undermined the struggle for better working conditions.

## 3 REGULAR VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

Governments and/or companies are regularly interfering in collective labour rights or are failing to fully guarantee important aspects of these rights. There are deficiencies in laws and/or certain practices which make frequent violations possible.

## 4 SYSTEMATIC VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS

Workers in countries with a rating of 4 have reported systematic violations. The government and/or companies are engaged in serious efforts to crush the collective voice of workers, putting fundamental rights under threat.

## 5 NO GUARANTEE OF RIGHTS

Countries with a rating of 5 are the worst countries in the world to work in. While the legislation may spell out certain rights, workers have effectively no access to these rights and are therefore exposed to autocratic regimes and unfair labour practices.

## 5+ NO GUARANTEE OF RIGHTS DUE TO THE BREAKDOWN OF THE RULE OF LAW

Workers in countries with a rating of 5+ have equally limited rights as countries with the rating 5. However, in countries with the rating 5+, this is linked to dysfunctional institutions as a result of internal conflict and/or military occupation. In such cases, the country is assigned the rating of 5+ by default.

# LIST OF INDICATORS

## ITUC Global Rights Index List of composite indicators

The methodology is grounded in standards of fundamental rights at work, based on international human rights law, and in particular ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98, as well as in the jurisprudence developed by the ILO supervisory mechanisms<sup>1</sup>.

### I. Civil liberties

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#### A. Violations in law

1. Arrest, detention, imprisonment, charging and fining of trade unionists  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 119-159  
General Survey 1994 paras. 31-32  
General Survey 2012 paras. 59-62
2. Violation of trade unionists' basic freedoms (freedom of movement; rights of assembly and demonstration; freedom of opinion and expression)  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 190-201; 202-232; 233-268  
General Survey 1994 paras. 35-39  
General Survey 2012 paras. 59-62
3. Violation of trade unions' and trade unionists' right to protection of their premises and property  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 275-292  
General Survey 1994 paras. 40  
General Survey 2012 paras. 59-62

4. Lack of guarantee of due process of law and/or justice re violations nos. 1-3  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 160-189  
General Survey 1994 paras. 29-32  
General Survey 2012 paras. 60-62

#### B. Violations in practice

5. Killing or enforced disappearance of trade unionists  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 81-118  
General Survey 1994 paras. 28-30  
General Survey 2012 paras. 59-62
6. Committed against trade union leaders  
Violation of (5) is committed against a union leader
7. Other types of physical violence  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 67-118; 275-298  
General Survey 1994 paras. 28-30, 33; 35-39  
General Survey 2012 paras. 59-62

1. Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) and Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA). See in particular:

- The Compilation of decisions of the Committee on Freedom of Association (<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:70001:0::NO>),
- ILO General Survey 1994 on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining, 1994 ([https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09661/09661\(1994-81-4B\).pdf](https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09661/09661(1994-81-4B).pdf)) and
- ILO General Survey 2012 on fundamental Conventions ([https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_174846.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_174846.pdf)).

The list of indicators is adapted from David Kucera and Dora Sari. 2018. "New Labour Rights Indicators: Method and Trends for 2000-2015", International Labour Review (Accepted manuscript online: 9 MAR 2018).

8. Committed against trade union leaders  
Violation of (7) is committed against a union leader
9. Threats, intimidation and harassment  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 67-118  
General Survey 1994 paras. 28-30, 33  
General Survey 2012 paras. 59-62
10. Committed against trade union leaders  
Violation of (9) is committed against a union leader
11. Arrest, detention, imprisonment, charging and fining of trade unionists  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 119-159  
General Survey 1994 paras. 31-32  
General Survey 2012 paras 59-62
12. Committed against trade union leaders  
Violation of (11) is committed against a union leader
13. Infringement of the right to freedom of expression  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 233-268  
General Survey 1994 paras. 35-39  
General Survey 2012 paras. 59-62
14. Infringement of the right to freedom of assembly and demonstration  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 202-232  
General Survey 1994 paras. 34-39  
General Survey 2012 paras. 59-62
15. Restrictions to the right to freedom of movement  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 190-201  
General Survey 1994) para. 34  
General Survey 2012 paras 59-62
16. Committed against trade union leaders  
Violations (13) to (15) are committed against a union leader
17. Attacks against trade unions' and trade unionists' premises and property  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 275-292  
General Survey 1994 paras. 40  
General Survey 2012 paras. 59-62
18. Severity  
Widespread and/or systematic violation regarding violations re (5)-(17)
19. Lack of guarantee of due process of law and/or justice  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 160-189  
General Survey 1994 paras. 29, 31-32  
General Survey 2012 paras. 59-62

## II. Right to establish and join unions

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### A. Violations in law

20. General prohibition of the right to establish and/or join trade unions  
General Survey 1994 paras. 12, 93  
General Survey 2012 para. 51
21. Exclusion of specific categories of workers from the right to establish and/or join trade unions  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 315-418  
General Survey 1994 paras. 45-67
22. Restrictions on the freedom of choice of union structure and composition  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 472-513; 546-560  
General Survey 1994 paras. 79-90
23. Previous authorisation requirements for union registration  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 419-444; 448-471  
General Survey 1994 paras. 68-70  
General Survey 2012 paras. 82-87; 89-90
24. Union monopoly  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 475-501  
General Survey 1994 para. 91
25. Dissolution/suspension of legally functioning trade unions  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 979-1013  
General Survey 1994 paras. 180-188  
General Survey 2012 para. 162
26. Provisions in law allowing for anti-union discriminatory measures (dismissal, suspension, transfer, downgrading)  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1072-1185  
General Survey 1994 paras. 199-210, 213
27. Lack of effective legal guarantees against anti-union discriminatory measures  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1134-1162  
General Survey 1994 paras. 214-224  
General Survey 2012 paras 166-167; 173-193
28. Provisions in law allowing for interference of employers and/or public authorities  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras 1215-1219  
General Survey 1994 paras. 225-234  
General Survey 2012 paras. 194-196
29. Lack of effective legal guarantees against acts of interference  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras 1187-1230  
General Survey 1994 paras. 189-198  
General Survey 2012 para. 163
30. Right to establish and/or join federations and confederations and to affiliate with international organisations of workers  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1014-1071  
General Survey 1994 paras. 189-198  
General Survey 2012 para. 163
31. Lack of guarantee of due process of law  
Lack of due process regarding violations (20)-(30)

### B. Violations in practice

32. Serious obstacle to exercise the right to establish and/or join trade unions  
The vast majority of the population is excluded from this right in practice  
General Survey 1994 paras. 12, 93  
General Survey 2012 para. 51
33. Exclusion of specific categories of workers from the right to establish and/or join trade unions  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 315-418  
General Survey 1994 paras. 45-67
34. Restrictions on the freedom of choice of union structure and composition  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 472-513; 546-560  
General Survey 1994 paras. 79-90

35. Previous authorisation requirements for union registration  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 427-444  
General Survey 1994 paras. 68-70  
General Survey 2012 paras. 82-87; 89-90
36. Union monopoly  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 475-501  
General Survey 1994 para. 91
37. Dissolution/suspension of legally functioning trade union dismissal, suspension, transfer, downgrading)  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1072-1185  
General Survey 1994 paras. 199-210, 213
38. Anti-union discriminatory measures (including dismissal, suspension, transfer, downgrading)  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1072-1185  
General Survey 1994 paras. 199-210, 213
39. Committed against trade union leaders  
Violation (38) is committed against a trade union leader
40. Lack of effective legal guarantees against anti-union discriminatory measures  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1134-1162  
General Survey 1994 paras. 214-224  
General Survey 2012 paras 166-167; 173-193
41. Acts of interference of employers and/or public authorities  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras 1215-1219  
General Survey 1994 paras. 225-234  
General Survey 2012 paras. 194-196
42. Lack of effective legal guarantees against acts of interference of employers and/or public authorities  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras 1187-1230  
General Survey 1994 paras. 189-198  
General Survey 2012 para. 163
43. Infringement of the right to establish and join federations and confederations and to affiliate with international organisations of workers  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1014-1071  
General Survey 1994 paras. 189-198  
General Survey 2012 para. 163
44. Lack of guarantee of due process of law and/or justice  
Lack of due process regarding violations (32) - (43)

### III. Trade union activities

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#### A. Violations in law

45. Infringement of the right to freely elect representatives  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 585-665  
General Survey 1994 paras. 112-121  
General Survey 2012 paras. 101-107
46. Infringement of the right to freely draw up constitutions and internal rules and administration  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 561-584; 666-679  
General Survey 1994 paras. 108-111  
General Survey 2012 paras. 100,112-114
47. Infringement of the right to freely organise and control financial administration  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 680-715  
General Survey 1994 paras. 108, 124-127  
General Survey 2012 paras. 108-111
48. Infringement of the right to freely organise activities and to formulate programmes  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 716-750  
General Survey 1994 paras. 108-112, 124-127  
General Survey 2012 paras. 100,112-114
49. Lack of guarantee of due process of law  
Lack of due process regarding violations (45) - (48)

#### B. Violations in practice

50. Infringements of the right to freely elect representatives  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 585-665  
General Survey 1994 paras. 112-121  
General Survey 2012 paras. 101-107
51. Infringement of the right to freely draw up constitutions and internal rules and administration  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 561-584; 666-679  
General Survey 1994 paras. 108-111  
General Survey 2012 paras. 100,112-114
52. Infringement of the right to freely organise and control financial administration  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 680-715  
General Survey 1994 paras. 108, 124-127  
General Survey 2012 paras. 108-111
53. Infringement of the right to freely organise activities and to formulate programmes  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 716-750  
General Survey 1994 paras. 108-112, 124-127  
General Survey 2012 paras. 100,112-114
54. Lack of guarantee of due process of law and/or justice  
Lack of due process regarding violations (50)-(53)

## IV. Right to collective bargaining

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### A. Violations in law

55. General prohibition of the right to collective bargaining  
General Survey 1994 paras. 12, 93  
General Survey 2012 para. 51
56. Insufficient promotion of collective bargaining  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras 1318; 1322-1326; 1517-1567; 1569-1578  
General Survey 1994 paras. 235-236, 244-247  
General Survey 2012 paras. 166-167, 198-199
57. Exclusion of specific categories of workers from the right to collective bargaining  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1239-1288  
General Survey 1994 paras. 261-264  
General Survey 2012 paras. 168; 209
58. Exclusion/restriction of subjects covered by collective bargaining  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1289-1312  
General Survey 1994 para. 250
59. Compulsory arbitration imposed on collective bargaining  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1415-1419  
General Survey 1994 paras. 254-259  
General Survey 2012 paras. 246-250
60. Excessive requirements and/or lack of objective, pre-established and precise criteria for the determination/recognition of trade unions entitled to collective bargaining (including infringements to the rights of minority unions)  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1342-1403  
General Survey 1994 paras. 238-243  
General Survey 2012 paras. 224-240
61. Acts of interference in collective bargaining (including imposing the level of bargaining, discouraging time-limits, offering better working conditions through individual agreements)  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1420-1470  
General Survey 1994 paras. 244-249  
General Survey 2012 paras. 198, 200, 208, 214, 222-223
62. Violation of concluded collective agreements  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1313-1321; 1327-1341  
General Survey 1994 paras. 251-253  
General Survey 2012 paras. 201-207
63. Infringements of the consultation with workers' organisations  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras 1318; 1322-1326; 1517-1567; 1569-1578  
General Survey 1994 paras. 235-236, 244-247  
General Survey 2012 paras. 166-167, 198-199
64. Lack of guarantee of due process of law  
Lack of due process regarding violations (55)-(63)

### B. Violations in practice

65. Serious obstacle to exercise the right to collective bargaining  
The vast majority of the population is excluded from this right in practice
66. Insufficient promotion of collective bargaining  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras 1318; 1322-1326; 1517-1567; 1569-1578  
General Survey 1994 paras. 235-236, 244-247  
General Survey 2012 paras. 166-167, 198-199

67. Exclusion of specific categories of workers from the right to collective bargaining  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1239-1288  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 261-264  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 168; 209
68. Exclusion/restriction of subjects covered by collective bargaining  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1289-1312  
 General Survey 1994 para. 250
69. Compulsory arbitration imposed on collective bargaining  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1415-1419  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 254-259  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 246-250
70. Excessive requirements and/or lack of objective, pre-established and precise criteria for the determination/recognition of trade unions entitled to collective bargaining (including infringements to the rights of minority unions)  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1342-1403  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 238-243  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 224-240
71. Acts of interference in collective bargaining (including imposing the level of bargaining, discouraging time-limits, offering better working conditions through individual agreements)  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1420-1470  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 244-249  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 198, 200, 208, 214, 222-223
72. Violation of concluded collective agreements  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 1313-1321; 1327-1341  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 251-253  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 201-207
73. Absence of consultation with workers' organisations  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras 1318; 1322-1326; 1517-1567; 1569-1578  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 235-236, 244-247  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 166-167, 198-199
74. Lack of guarantee of due process of law and/or justice  
 Lack of due process regarding violations (65)-(73)

## V. Right to strike

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### A. Violations in law

75. General prohibition of the right to strike  
General Survey 1994 paras. 152-153, 170-171  
General Survey 2012. paras. 122, 140, 144, 159
76. Exclusion of specific categories of workers from the right to strike (including overly broad definition of essential services)  
General Survey 1994 paras. 154-160  
General Survey 2012 para. 127
77. Exclusion/restriction based on the objective and /or type of the strike  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 758-786  
General Survey 1994 paras. 165-168, 173  
General Survey 2012 paras. 124-126, 142
78. Excessive prerequisites required for exercising the right to strike  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 789-814  
General Survey 1994 paras. 170-172  
General Survey 2012 paras. 144-148
79. Compulsory arbitration imposed on strike action  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 816-823  
General Survey 1994 para. 153  
General Survey 2012 paras. 153-156
80. Provisions in law allowing for the suspension and/or declaration of illegality of strikes by administrative authorities  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions Paras. 907-913  
General Survey 2012 para. 157
81. Infringements of the determination of minimum services  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras 864-906  
General Survey 1994 paras. 161-162  
General Survey 2012 paras 136-139
82. Absence or inadequacy of compensatory guarantees for lawful restrictions on the right to strike  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 824-852  
General Survey 1994 paras. 164  
General Survey 2012 paras. 141
83. Interference of employers and/or authorities during the course of strike action allowed under the legislation (including back-to-work orders, hiring of workers during a strike, requisitioning orders)  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 917-926; 927-929  
General Survey 1994 paras. 163; 174-175  
General Survey 2012 paras. 149-152
84. Excessive sanctions for the legitimate exercise of the right to strike  
ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 951-976  
General Survey 1994 paras. 176-178  
General Survey 2012 paras. 157-160
85. Lack of guarantee of due process of law  
Lack of due process regarding violations (75)-(84)

### B. Violations in practice

86. Serious obstacle to exercise the right in practice  
Vast majority of population is excluded from this right in practice
87. Exclusion of specific categories of workers from the right to strike (including overly broad definition of essential services)  
General Survey 1994 paras. 154-160  
General Survey 2012 paras. 127, 129-135

88. Exclusion/restriction based on the objective and/or type of the strike  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 758-786  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 165-168, 173  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 124-126, 142
89. Excessive prerequisites required for exercising the right to strike  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 789-814  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 170-172  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 144-148
90. Compulsory arbitration imposed on strike action  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 816-823  
 General Survey 1994 para. 153  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 153-156
91. Suspension and/or declaration of illegality of strikes by administrative authorities  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions Paras. 907-913  
 General Survey 2012 para. 157
92. Infringements of the determination of minimum services  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras 864-906  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 161-162  
 General Survey 2012 paras 136-139
93. Absence or inadequacy of compensatory guarantees for lawful restrictions on the right to strike  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 824-852  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 164  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 141
94. Interference of employers and/or authorities during the course of strike action (including back-to-work orders, hiring of workers during a strike, requisitioning orders)  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 917-929  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 163; 174-175  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 149-152
95. Excessive sanctions for the legitimate exercise of the right to strike  
 ILO Compilation of CFA decisions paras. 951-976  
 General Survey 1994 paras. 176-178  
 General Survey 2012 paras. 157-160
96. Committed against trade union leaders  
 Violation (95) is committed against a trade union leader
97. Lack of guarantee of due process of law and/or justice  
 Lack of due process regarding violations (86)-(96)

# About the ITUC

**The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)** is a confederation of national trade union centres, each of which links trade unions in that particular country. It is the global voice of the world's working people. The ITUC represents 191 million workers in 169 countries and has 340 national affiliates.

**ITUC**  
**International Trade Union Confederation**

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