

**Van:** ITUC Press <press@ituc-csi.org>  
**Verzonden:** maandag 29 september 2014 11:48  
**Aan:** ITUC Online  
**Onderwerp:** Hong Kong: Workers Strike in Support of Student Democracy Movement - ITUC OnLine

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

Hong Kong: Workers Strike in Support of Student Democracy Movement

Brussels, 29 September 2014 (ITUC OnLine): Workers from across Hong Kong have responded to a call from trade union centre HKCTU to join strike action in support of democratic reform, as security forces continue their violent repression of peaceful protests led by students.

Striking students have received strong support from Hong Kong's teachers' union, some 500 academics have signed a statement of support and workers from other sectors have joined strike actions and delivered support to protesters.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said, "China's plan to allow a few billionaires to choose who will rule Hong Kong is anti-democratic and in breach of China's 1997 undertakings on Hong Kong's future. It will entrench a corrupt feudal system where oligarchs have all the power and working people are squeezed between prohibitive living costs and the naked greed of a tiny and all-powerful elite. We call on the Chinese authorities to open discussions with Hong Kong citizens on how to respect the democratic right of the people of Hong Kong to decide who can be voted into office."

Dozens of people have been injured and some 80 arrested as police attacked peaceful sit-ins with batons and tear gas. Tens of thousands of people joined demonstrations over the weekend.

Protesters have been calling for the resignation of Hong Kong's Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying and for the Legislative Council to refuse the plan announced by the authorities in Beijing on 31 August to only allow "approved" candidates to run for high office.

"The ITUC fully supports the Hong Kong trade union movement in its demand for democracy and social justice, and we will do all we can to back their legitimate cause," said Burrow.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 161 countries and territories and has 324 national affiliates.

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