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Solidarity with Brazilian unions  
Defending Dilma and Lula  
15 April 2016

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## TUC backs Brazilian unions in opposing elite coup attempt

TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady has joined 120 other global and national trade union leaders from 34 countries around the world in solidarity with the Brazilian trade union movement. The Brazilian unions are demanding an end to the judicial and political coup being attempted by the elite forces who ran Brazil under a military dictatorship before democracy was restored in 1985.

The letter reads:

Dear comrades,

Brazil is experiencing a turning point for the survival of democracy. Conservative sectors use the judiciary and big media conglomerates to persecute former president Lula and his family with a sordid campaign of lies and accusations without evidence.

The fight is between the party of exclusion, which is headed by neoliberals who want to return to government, and the party of inclusion, which for 13 years has been promoting justice and social inclusion and income distribution in our country.

In order to derail the candidacy of the labor leader, Brazilian media, led by only six families, echo misinformation and enhance massive manipulation and distortion of facts. Nonetheless, they will never erase reality: Lula was the most popular, democratic president of the Republic. He is an example of selflessness, a driving force and a collective symbol of achievement of the working class and the poor.

Because of the international relevance of this ongoing political struggle and consequences of what happens in Brazil for progressive sectors all over the world; we are proposing this international petition and request your support:

### **IN DEFENSE OF LULA, SYMBOL OF SOCIAL STRUGGLE AND INCLUSION**

Since the beginning of resistance against civilian and military dictatorship in the late 1970s and ensuing redemocratization of Brazil, the name of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva became example of determination, a symbol of social struggle and justice for the working class and especially for the poorest.

Whether in charge of historic strikes that shook the foundations of the military regime or in dealing with harassment and abuse of its police forces, Lula has always shown discernment and serenity to move forward, propelling the best of each and all to build a new time, contributing to the founding of the Workers Party (PT) and CUT-Brasil and in the fight for democratic freedoms.

As years passed, the metal worker leader became president. His two terms in office were considered by all landmarks of economic growth, with an emphasis on employment and income distribution. With rapid social improvements, the Brazilian GDP became the seventh in the world. There was real increase of 53.6% in the minimum wage and more than 15 million new formal jobs were generated, which removed 40 million Brazilians out of extreme poverty.

During his government, more than six million domestic employees - historically marginalized second-class workers in Brazilian society - had their rights recognized to match those of other workers.

With determination, Lula has prioritized Latin American integration and the strengthening of ties with African countries. The aim was for more equitable international relations without despotism or subservience, welcoming refugees with open arms, thus strengthening self-determination of peoples, holding firm the banner of understanding and peaceful coexistence in a world at war.

We therefore denounce this sordid and irresponsible campaign led by conservative groups who use the judiciary and the media to persecute a former Brazilian president and his family. The same old dominant class which more than once supported former dictatorships and all sorts of misgovernment against sovereignty and democracy is now attempting to taint the reputation of a most relevant Brazilian so as to derail his presence in the national political arena and implement a neoliberal backlash, privatizing the State and excluding common people ("commoners").

In confidence in the exemplary life course of Lula, we raise our voice against attempts of coups d'état ever again.

Key signatories along with Frances O'Grady include:

- João Antonio Felício and Sharan Burrow – President and General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation
- Hassan Yussuff – President of the ITUC Americas and also of the Canadian Labour Congress
- Víctor Báez – Secretary General of the ITUC Americas
- Vagner Freitas – President of CUT Brazil
- Juruna Carlos Gonçalves – Secretary General of Brazil's other main trade union confederation, Força Sindical
- Hugo Yasky – Secretary General of the CTA Argentina

- Cathy Feingold - AFL-CIO
- Solly Phetoe – COSATU Assistant General Secretary
- Kwasi Adu Amankwah - ITUC Africa General Secretary
- Luca Visentini – General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation
- Philip Jennings – General Secretary of UNI global
- Fernando Lopes – Assistant General Secretary of IndustriALL
- Jan Willem Goudriaan – General Secretary of the European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU)
- Laurent Berger, General Secretary of CFDT France
- Arzu Cerkezoglu, General Secretary of DISK Turkey

Others come from the trade union movements of Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay