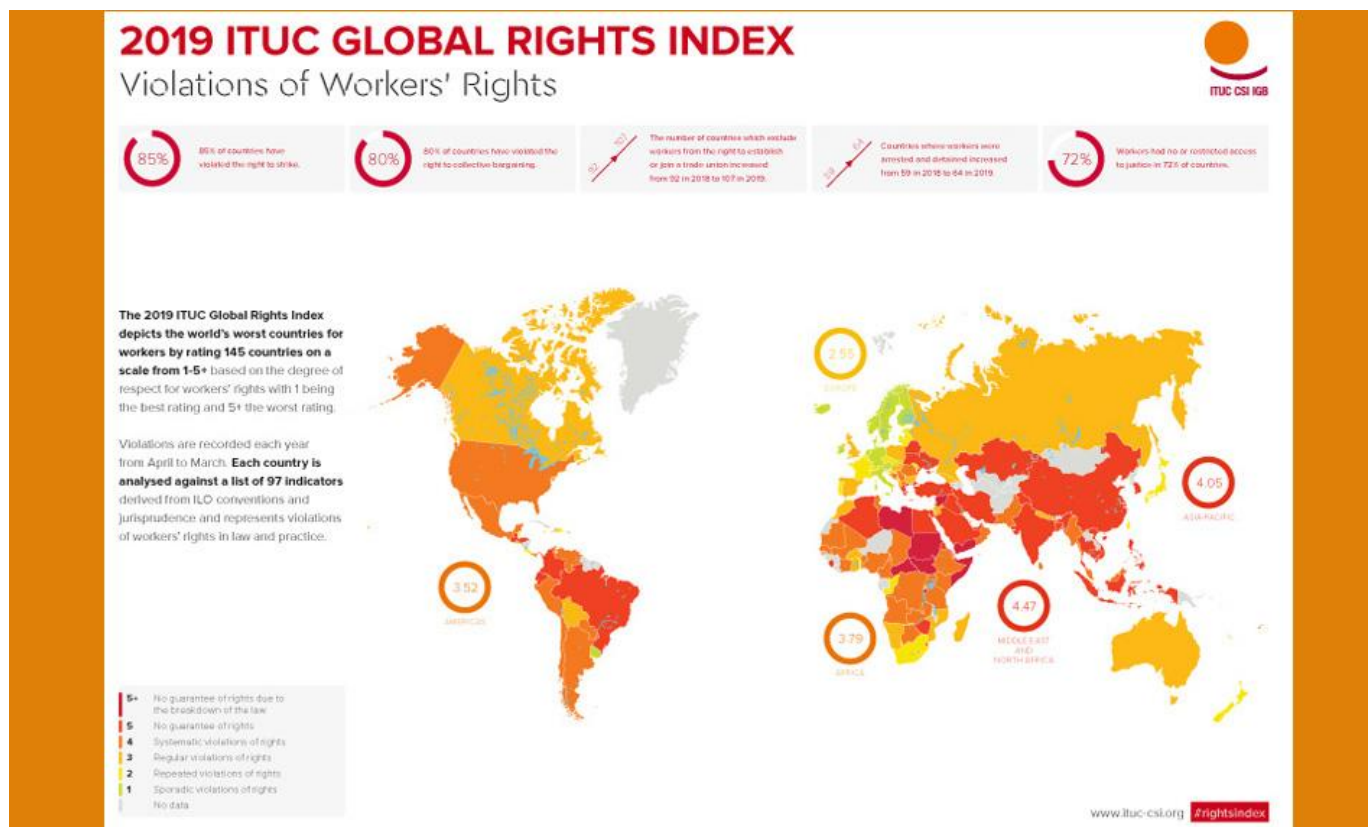


Report reveals worsening of workers' rights in Europe and across the world



(20 June 2019) The latest report on global trade union rights from the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) reveals a deterioration of workers' rights across the world.

The greatest increase in cases where workers were denied the right to establish or join a trade union was experienced in Europe where 50% of countries now exclude groups of workers, up from 20% in 2018

Overall, the number of countries which exclude workers from the right to establish or join a trade union increased from 92 in 2018 to 107 in 2019.

These data come from the sixth edition of the ITUC Global Rights Index which ranks 145 countries on the degree of respect for workers' rights.

The report found that: "conditions in Europe worsened in the last year due to an

increase in violent attacks against trade union leaders and a growing trend of charging and sentencing workers for their participation in strike action.”

Two European countries – Kazakhstan and Turkey – were among the 10 worst countries overall for workers in 2019. Turkey was also one of two countries – the other being Italy – where a trade union leader was murdered.

Abdullah Karacan, president of the Turkish rubber and chemical workers’ union Lastik-İş, was shot dead on 13 November 2018 while in Italy, Soumayla Sacko, a 29-year-old agricultural worker and trade unionist from Mali, was killed in San Calogero on 2 June 2018.

Eighty-five per cent of countries violated the right to strike and the report mentions two in Europe – Croatia and Georgia – as countries where court orders were used to stop strike actions.

The report highlights the fact that “Europe, traditionally the mainstay of collective bargaining rights, saw companies in Estonia, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain seek to undermine or circumvent workers’ rights.”

The key figures for Europe are:

- 40% of countries excluded groups of workers from the right to establish or join a trade union;
- 68% of countries violated the right to strike; and
- 50% of countries violated collective bargaining rights.

The ITUC found that in Belgium, France and Turkey a number of strike actions were brutally dispersed by police forces, and protesting workers were prosecuted and sentenced for their participation in strikes. Belarus and Kazakhstan continue to maintain their repression of independent trade unions.

European countries feature in five of the ITUC’s six categories covering those guilty of sporadic violations of trade union rights to those where there is no guarantee of rights.

Countries in the EPSU region by category

No guarantee of rights: Belarus, Greece, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Ukraine

Systematic violations: Bosnia and Hercegovina, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia

Regular violations: Albania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Spain and the UK

Repeated violations: Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Portugal and Switzerland

Sporadic violations: Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia and Sweden

Further information

The ITUC report can be found [here](#).

EPSU, with support from the European Trade Union Institute, has started to monitor restrictions on the right to strike in the public sector and 35 country factsheets are now available [here](#) with a summary article [here](#).

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