

## Trade unions protests

Recent years, Ukrainian authorities have taken a harsh course towards the introduction of neoliberal policies resulting in “saving on people”, rapidly growing social inequalities, substantial decrease in living standards and review of the legislation aimed to deprive workers and trade unions of their rights.

Due to active mobilization of Ukrainian trade unions and massive solidarity support from international trade union movement during 2019-2020 anti-workers draft laws that liberalize labour legislation and restrict trade union rights and their participation in social dialogue at all levels were postponed or rejected.

However, in November 2020, the Government, taking advantage of quarantine restrictions on mass gatherings and public events, resumed the promotion of a number of draft laws with the same liberal norms discriminating workers' and trade union rights.

Once again, the onslaught on workers' rights made Ukrainian trade unions to mobilize and go to the street. On 2-3 December, trade unions protested against adoption of some draft laws considered in the Parliament, demanded to include their proposals to the State Budget 2021, particularly concerning wages and social benefits.

In Kyiv, two days in a row, several thousands of trade unionists marched through the centre of the city and held rallies near the building of the Parliament of Ukraine. FPU President Grygoriy Osovyi, presidents of national sectoral trade unions addressed the rallies and explained their demands. At the same time in regional centre throughout Ukraine local trade unions held rallies, pickets, marches and flashmobs

Trade unions demands included:

1. To protect workers and unemployed in times of coronavirus crisis, to take efforts to protect jobs, to compensate losses, to guarantee social support of vulnerable groups.
2. To provide for the increase of the level of minimum wage in the State Budget to UAH 6000 from 1 January and UAH 6500 from 1 July 2021.
3. In the State Budget 2021 to ensure adequate funding of frontline sectors, such as healthcare, education, public services, and provide for a real increase of wages of frontline workers.
4. To stop the advancement of draft laws that violate fundamental workers' rights and destroy the social protection system. To engage in a real social dialogue, including through the National Tripartite Social and Economic Council.
5. To freeze energy prices and communal services tariffs for the period of quarantine.
6. To settle wage arrears of UAH 4 billion. To introduce employers' financial responsibility for wage delays, to set up a guarantee institution.

7. To stop the total onslaught on trade union rights, including seizing their property.