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ALLEGATIONS REGARDING INFRINGEMENTS OF TRADE  
UNION RIGHTS RECEIVED UNDER COUNCIL RESOLUTION  
277 (X)

Communication received from the International  
Confederation of Free Trade Unions 1/

In accordance with the second paragraph of the operative part of Economic and Social Council resolution 277 (X), the Secretary-General has the honour to bring to the attention of the Council a communication dated 19 September 1956 from the General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Brussels, Belgium, alleging infringements of trade union rights in Saudi Arabia.

Letter dated 19 September 1956 and annexes

"I have the honour to submit to you information on an anti-strike law which was issued by the Government of Saudi Arabia in June 1956, and on measures which that Government took to suppress a strike of petroleum workers.

1/ This communication contains allegations regarding infringements of trade union rights by Saudi Arabia, which is a Member of the United Nations but not of the International Labour Organisation. The Secretary-General, therefore, on 11 October 1956, transmitted a copy of this communication to His Royal Highness the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia. In accordance with Section (C) (1) of Resolution 277 (X), he enquired whether the Government of Saudi Arabia would consent to the forwarding of the communication to the governing body of the ILO for consideration as to referral thereof to the Fact Finding and Conciliation Commission on Freedom of Association.

"I am enclosing English and French copies of a press release containing this information.

"I am also enclosing, for your information, a copy of a translation from Arabic into English of the text of the anti-strike law.

"It appears to me that this particularly grave case of violation of labour rights deserves the full attention of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and I should be grateful if you would submit this information to the Council for action."

"Annex 1 Dated 10 September 1956

**"ICFTU CALLS SAUDI ARABIAN ANTI-STRIKE LAW 'FEUDAL REACTION'**

The General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, J.H. Oldenbroek, said today that the ICFTU will protest in the strongest terms against the anti-strike law, which he termed 'the worst kind of feudal reaction', recently promulgated by royal decree in Saudi Arabia. The ICFTU is taking action through the United Nations to secure the repeal of this reactionary measure.

The decree, the text of which has just become available here, prohibits employees of concessionary companies and of firms engaged in public utility work from leaving or stopping work by agreement among three or more workers. Offenders are liable to imprisonment for not less than one week. Anyone inciting such employees to leave or to stop work is liable to imprisonment for not less than one year.

These workers may also not take part in any demonstration or strike, even without prior agreement, on pain of a prison sentence of not less than one year, while persons inciting such workers to demonstrate or strike are liable to two years' imprisonment.

The minimum sentence laid down for employing force, threat, or damage to property in connexion with the above-mentioned offences is two years' imprisonment; those inciting others to the use of force, etc., are liable to imprisonment for at least three years.

Employers are authorized to dismiss any employee penalized under this decree. Provincial governors (amirs) are empowered to compel employers to do so, as well as to deport offenders to any place and for such time as the amirs deem fit.

This decree appears to have been inspired by a recent strike of workers of the Aramco Petroleum Company in protest against the excessive employment of foreign labour in disregard of a standing agreement.

"Annex 2

"Royal Decree No. 17/2/23/2639, dated 2 Dhu al-Qa'dah 1375 (11 June 1956)  
as follows:

With the help of God and his support,

We, Sa'ud ibn 'Abd al-'Asiz, King of Saudi Arabia,

In order to satisfy the requirements of the public interest, and in order to insure the continued operation of economic utilities benefiting the public in a regular manner free from adverse influences, and in order to preserve public order. Have ordered the following:

Article I

It shall be prohibited for employees and workers of concessionaire companies and for employees and workers of private firms performing work of a nature benefiting the public or undertaking a public project for the Government to leave or to discontinue work if this is done as a result of an agreement among three or more of them. Violators shall be given a sentence of not less than a week's imprisonment.

Any person who incites the employees and workers referred to above to leave or to discontinue their work whether the incitement is by word, deed, sign, writing, drawing or by any other device, even should this (incitement) not lead to their leaving or actually stopping work, shall be given a sentence of not less than a year's imprisonment.

Article II

It shall be prohibited for employees and workers of the companies and firms referred to in Article I to take part in a demonstration or a strike with intent to press demands or reaffirm demands made earlier, even should their participation in such action not be the result of prior agreement. Violators shall be given a sentence of not less than a year's imprisonment.

Any person who incites the employees and workers referred to above to demonstrate or strike, whether the incitement is by word, deed, sign, writing, drawing, or by any other device, even if this should not lead to a demonstration or a strike, shall be given a sentence of not less than two years' imprisonment.

Article III

Any person who employs force, assault, terror, threat, damage (to property) or any other illegal method of violence, whether with intent to facilitate the committing of any of the violations referred to in the two preceding articles, or with intent to prevent the employees and workers referred to in the two preceding articles from continuing their work, or with intent to coerce them into stopping work, or with intent to compel the directors of the companies and firms mentioned

in the two preceding articles to employ or refrain from employing any employee or worker, or compel (the directors to order employees and workers) to stop work, shall be given a sentence of not less than two years' imprisonment.

Any person who incites others by word, deed, sign, writing or by any other device to commit any of the violations referred to in the first paragraph of this article, even should this incitement not lead to the actual committing of a violation, shall be given a sentence of not less than three years' imprisonment.

#### Article IV

The employer may discharge the employee or worker who has been penalized for committing any of the violations referred to in the three preceding articles.

#### Article V

The amir of the province in question may decide, when necessary, to compel the employer to discharge any employee or worker who has been penalized for committing any of the violations referred to above. The amir may also decide to deport any person who has been given a sentence in connexion with the committing of such violations from the province where the violation occurred or from the province where he was employed to a place that the amir shall determine and for a period of time which the amir may deem fit.

#### Article VI

The President of the Council of Ministers shall implement and carry out this order, effective this date (11 June 1956)."

(Signed): Sa'ud

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