



## News Release

March 29, 2010

for immediate release

### **ILO blasts anti-labour laws adopted by Saskatchewan**

*UN body instructs government of Premier Brad Wall to consult with labour and work out an acceptable solution to essential services legislation, union organizing votes and a labour relations board all parties can trust.*

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The International Labour Organization (ILO) has issued a stinging rebuke to the government of Saskatchewan, primarily over two pieces of anti-labour legislation adopted in 2008 (Bills 5 and 6).

The United Nations body has directed the province to go back to the drawing board and rewrite the laws in full consultation and cooperation with workers and labour groups affected.

In an unusually-pointed decision, the ILO – which is based in Geneva – has also instructed the Brad Wall government to keep ILO officials informed of corrective steps as they are taken to bring the province into compliance with international labour standards that Canada as a UN member country is bound to uphold.

“The ILO has told the Wall government that these laws clearly violate international law and the principles of freedom of association. The government has an obligation and a duty to consult meaningfully with those who are affected by the laws it intends to enact,” said SFL President Larry Hubich.

“SGEU is particularly pleased with the decision of the ILO and its impact on our collective bargaining. The outrageous and illegal use of designations to take away our members’ right to strike and force upon us collective agreements which do not reflect free and fair bargaining will be addressed through all means at our disposal including the courts if necessary,” said Bob Bymoan, president of SGEU.

“This government must repeal its regulations and honour our previous agreement. International law is not just about business. It’s also about human rights and it’s time the Wall government started to respect those rights,” added Bymoan.

“The ILO has also stated that the Labour Relations Board, which enforces both Acts, needs to enjoy the confidence of labour, and since the 2008 firings of the chair and vice-chair, those conditions do not exist. That’s another mess the ILO is calling upon the Wall government to fix,” added Hubich.

“Brad Wall’s government appears eager to go out of their way to ensure the province complies with international trade agreements. It’s time they respected and lived up to our international obligations to ensure labour rights and human rights are consistent with those of other modern democracies,” said Hubich and Bymoan.

The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association is referring the decision to the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. The Committee of experts is expected to meet in June and to issue a report on the government’s compliance in November.

**For more information, see the attached backgrounder.**

**For a complete copy of the decision, [www.sfl.sk.ca/labour\\_legislation.php](http://www.sfl.sk.ca/labour_legislation.php)**

The SFL represents approximately 95,000 workers from 37 affiliated unions across Saskatchewan.

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