



PRESS STATEMENT

April 26, 2017

During the past few days, the Bermuda Industrial Union has received several messages of support from our international affiliates regarding the upcoming court cases as a result of our President, Brother Chris Furbert, BPSU President, Brother Jason Hayward, St. Paul's AME Pastor, Rev. Nicholas Tweed and several BIU members being charged with:

(1) "On the 2nd day of December, in Pembroke Parish, advisedly prevented entry into the House of Assembly grounds, an act calculated to interfere with the free exercise by a minister of Finance of his duties or authority of his office as Minister.

Contrary to Section 97 (b) of the Criminal Code;
and

(2) on the 2nd day of December 2016, in Pembroke Parish, willfully obstructed police officer while such officers were acting in execution of their duty.

Contrary to Section 2 (n) of the Summary Offences Act 1926.

Brother Furbert, Rev. Tweed and others have elected for a Supreme Court trial, are scheduled to reappear in court on Monday, May 1, 2017, while Brother Hayward is scheduled to appear in Magistrates Court on Wednesday, May 3, 2017 for "discovery of evidence".

The BIU has received messages of support from the Caribbean, Kenya, Japan, Spain, Uganda, Russia, and Nigeria and of course the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. In addition to their messages of support to the BIU, our international affiliates have also written to His Excellency, Mr. John Rankin, the Governor of Bermuda, the Hon. Michael Dunkley, the Premier of Bermuda, and Mr. Michael DeSilva, Bermuda's Police Commissioner.

Below is a copy of the letter from the Grenada Technical and Allied Workers Union. Other unions expressed similar feelings in their letters to Messrs. Rankin, Dunkley and DeSilva.

"His Excellency Mr. John Rankin CMG

Governor of Bermuda

Government House

11 Langton Hill

Pembroke, HM 13

Dear Mr. Rankin,

I am writing on behalf **Grenada Technical and Allied Workers Union** to express our shock to hear that our brothers and sisters in Bermuda are now being prosecuted for peacefully protesting on December 2nd 2016 at the House of Parliament. We feel that this is nothing but an unwarranted attack on the rights of organized labour and their leaders by the powers that be in Bermuda.



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It cannot go unnoticed that the right to protesting at the gates of Parliament is one of the hall marks of democracy and it is only in **dictatorships and repressive political systems** citizens are prosecuted for this fundamental right.

We understand that during the protest the police pepper sprayed the protesters including seniors and that the protesters filed complaints with the Police Authority Board but to date there has been no action taken. In contrast our members in Bermuda are being prosecuted using an antiquated law for exercising their constitutional right.

Mr. Rankin we are calling on you as Governor of Bermuda who has authority over the police and the Department of Public Prosecutions to have these charges dropped and further call on you to launch a thorough investigation into the December 2nd 2016 peaceful protest including the pepper spraying incident.

Yours sincerely,

Cc: Hon. Michael Dunkley, Premier of Bermuda: mdunkley@gov.bm

Mr. Michael DeSilva, Commissioner of Police: mdesilva@bps.bm »

The Bermuda Industrial Union, the Bermuda Public Services, and indeed the Bermuda Trade Union Congress are appreciative of the international and local support that we have received to date.