

GNT BULLETIN

RAISING STANDARDS FOR DOCK WORKERS

September 2011

NEWS ROUND-UP

Dockers around the world are taking action as part of the GNT campaign to secure better standards in ports. Here's the latest news...

A week long strike by crane operators in the port of Luka Koper, Slovenia ended in success with port management agreeing to an overhaul of safety regulations. Workers took action with the support of their ITF-affiliated union after negotiations over health and safety and job security broke down. ■



Continues on page 2

GNT INTERVIEW

This month we're speaking to ITF Arab World Secretary Bilal Malkawi about the latest GNT campaign activity in the region...

Q What's the situation with GNTs in your region at the moment?

A We started working 3 years ago on the GNT terminals in our region where we have APMT, DPW and Eurogate. None of the terminals were organised or had any collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), but through the ports of convenience work programme (POC) we have seen encouraging results.

In Aqaba in Jordan we now have a strong union that has a CBA and holds elections. 90% of workers in the APM terminal there are unionised along with half of the 3000 workers at the nearby public port. In Morocco, workers in the APM terminal in Tangier won a CBA after a series of industrial actions. There are also now strong unions at the DPW terminals in Algeria, in Bahrain and in Suez City which is the latest port to be unionised.

Meanwhile in Egypt workers at port Said now have bylaws, an acceptable CBA and board elections. These came about after the revolution in the country when the ITF supported the APMT workers through the GNT campaign so they could declare an independent union.

Find out more about Bilal and the rest of the dockers' section team by visiting the ITF dockers' website www.itfglobal.org/dockers/about

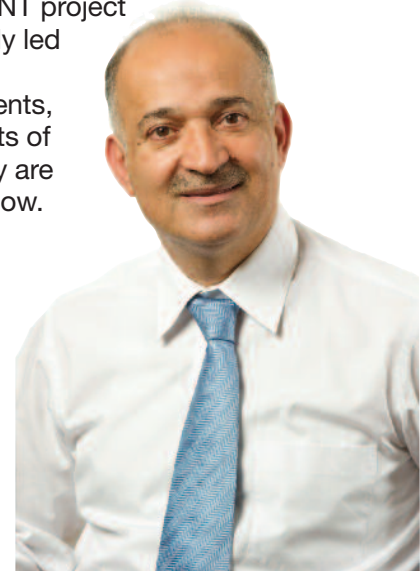
There are still areas where more work is needed to help with union building. At the APM terminal in Salala Oman there is so far only a workers committee.

Q The GNT campaign focuses a lot on sharing information and experiences from around the world - why is that so important?

A Sharing information and building networks between GNT ports is so important. In the Arab World region, building active networks has been key to our gains and successes. Among APM terminals, the active network helped in building the union in Port Said. Their brothers in Aqaba shared their experiences and their collective bargaining agreement with them. Solidarity as well among the unions in ports operated by APMT has played a major role.

Q What feedback are you getting from affiliates about the campaign?

A All affiliates are in daily contact with us and frequently communicating between themselves. They agree that the GNT project has already led to great achievements, the benefits of which they are enjoying now.



News continued...

Privatisation at the port of Mombasa in Kenya has been halted after strike action was staged by 6000 workers. A meeting was called between the government and the ITF union representing the dock workers. The proposal to sell the port to private investors is opposed by workers and the local community because of concerns about potential job losses and casualisation of workers. ■

Dockers in the Eurogate, Tangiers terminal, a close neighbour of the APMT terminal in Morocco, staged a 24-hour strike over working conditions and rates of pay. They say there's been a lack of response from port management over demands for improved health and safety standards and they are prepared to take further action if no negotiations are organised. ■

Get more on these stories and the rest of the news from ports and terminals around the world at: www.gntdockers.org/news

To send us your news and campaign updates email the GNT campaign team at: gntdockers@itf.org.uk or speak to the communications coordinator at your port.

Sign up to My ITF at www.itfglobal.org for more campaign updates.

YOUR PORT PIX



Get involved! Send us photos of you and your colleagues and they'll be posted on the GNT website and could even appear here in the bulletin. Email your photos to: gntdockers@itf.org.uk



Dockers at Port Said, Egypt

QUICK QUIZ

Fill in the grid so that every number from 1 to 9 appears in any order in:

- * Every vertical column
- * Every horizontal line
- * Every 3 by 3 subsection of the grid.

This is your bulletin so let the GNT campaign team know what type of quizzes you'd like to see here.

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ASK THE GNT TEAM

In each GNT bulletin we're giving you the chance to ask the GNT campaign team a question about the campaign or a related issue. If you've got a question, email it to the team at: gntdockers@itf.org.uk and it could be featured in our next bulletin.

Question: "I work in a state owned port. I don't understand why workers should be against privatisation. Surely it's good to have your port operated by a big global company (like a GNT) as they have money to pay decent wages." Anon

Answer: The ITF isn't against privatisation as a rule. Bids by private companies to take over ports must be taken on a case by case basis. If a GNT is taking over a port there are lots of issues to consider. Global operators are competitive so they are always looking to cut costs which could mean job losses. There could also be fewer experienced workers being hired on permanent contracts in favour of casual, inexperienced, non-unionised labour, which is cheaper. There is the further issue of where the positive results of the operations go. Are the profits used to reinvest in the terminal and local community and to pay reasonable wages, or do they go straight into the operators' pockets?



ACTIVIST PROFILE



Wilmer Esteves, second from right

Every month we speak to someone who's been involved in the GNT campaign. This month it's Wilmer Esteves, general secretary of the Sindicato Único de Trabajadores Marítimos y Portuarios del Callao (SUTRAMPORPC) in Peru.

Q There has recently been a big victory for workers at the port of Callao - tell us about the background to this?

A During the early 90s there was a political regime of terror against the union's port workers from the main ports in Peru, especially at the port of Callao. There were union persecutions, disappearances, and attacks on workers by armed agents. These actions marked the beginning of a deregulation of loading and unloading services in the ports, resulting in a violation of the labour rights of port workers.

After years of tireless struggle by the ITF-affiliated SUTRAMPORC, last November the Peruvian courts ruled the union had the right to have a collective agreement to protect against their rights to acceptable working conditions. However, several stevedore companies did not respect the ruling and continued with their anti-union politics.

The workers were eventually victorious though as in June this year, following a 3 year legal battle, a collective agreement was agreed and endorsed by the Peruvian parliament. The deal provides workers with weekly payment of wages and social benefits.

“We need unity between every worker and every member of the union to fight for workers' demands”

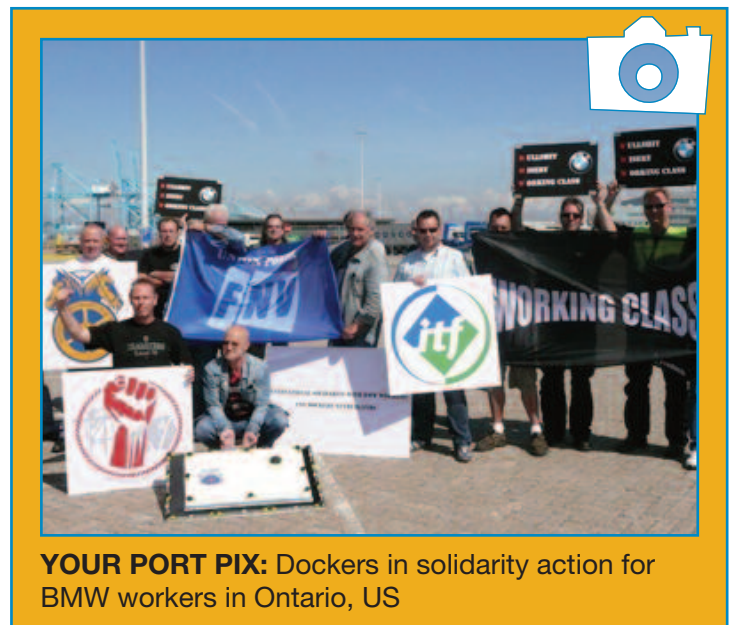
Q Do you think the current situation in Peru reflects the situation in the region as a whole?

A It reflects the success of global solidarity; previously, it was evident that operating companies abused workers' rights. This situation has made other dockers and maritime workers in the country wish to assert their labour rights. They look for international support and solidarity as in Callao to achieve the national integrity. Together with the ITF Americas Regional Office and the ITF dockers' section, we are planning strategies to organise all dockers and maritime workers. Students of labour laws at universities are studying SUTRAMPORC's struggle, also, the actual Peruvian government has recognised our union for our achievements.

Q What would your message be to workers who are facing struggles at their own ports around the world?

A Firstly, we need unity between every worker and every member of the union to fight for workers' demands. It is also important that all members have an executive board with real leadership, because they are the leaders, despite many setbacks and obstacles, they know the best way to achieve union objectives.

In addition we need perseverance, dialogue, training and education on unions. Finally, we have to trust in the ITF, because thanks to its global solidarity, we can achieve many things.



YOUR PORT PIX: Dockers in solidarity action for BMW workers in Ontario, US

INDUSTRY HEADLINES

A snapshot of the latest industry developments...

Hong Kong-based GNT HPH has taken over operation of a third container terminal at Sydney's Port Botany. HPH won a US\$1 billion contract to run the terminal in 2009. It potentially means a huge rise in profits for the company. ■

Container volumes increased 15% in 2010 as the port industry recovered much quicker than expected from the economic downturn. Consultants Drewry say the industry will also grow quickly over the next 5 years, and have singled out Eastern Europe as the fastest growing region. Meanwhile figures show the 'big 4' GNTs now have a combined market share of 45%. ■

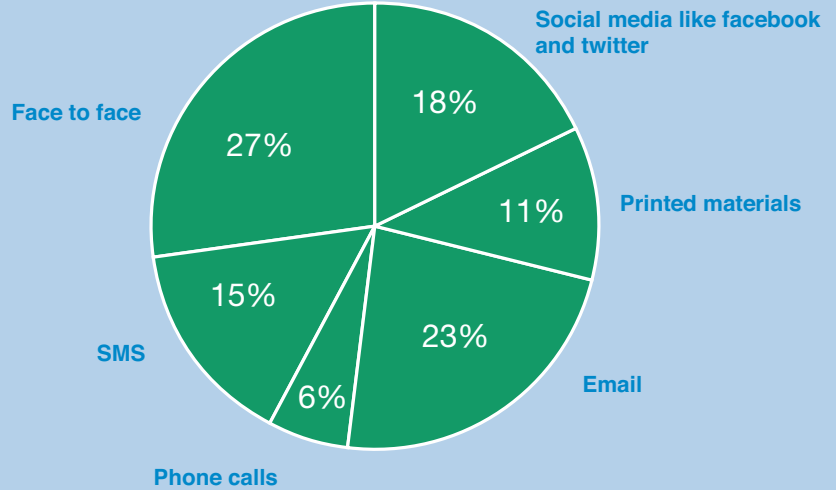


GNT PSA International has been awarded a contract to develop, operate and manage a second container terminal at the King Abdul Aziz Port in Dammam, a key gateway port on the Arabian Gulf. PSA has made the gain through a joint venture company formed between them and the public investment fund of Saudi Arabia. Workers are likely to be unprotected at the terminal as Saudi doesn't recognise unions. ■

It is with sadness that we announce the death of US union leader and one-time ITF dockers' section Chair John M. Bowers. The 88 year old - who led the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) for 20 years, passed away at his home on Long Island on Sunday 21 August.

YOU TOLD US

This month we've been finding out how port workers stay in touch with their friends and colleagues. We asked a selection of workers from ports across the world how they communicate.



The focus of the GNT campaign is on sharing intelligence, successes and ideas on how to organise in multi-national operated ports. Finding out the best way to make contact with potential network members is really important. The information can be used to let more dockers know about the work being done to raise health and safety standards and working conditions in ports around the world.

Let the GNT campaign team know how you communicate with friends and colleagues at your port by emailing gntdockers@itf.org.uk or speak to the communications coordinator at your port and they can pass on the information.



YOUR PORT PIX: ITF inspector Paolo Siligato visiting the port of Luka Koper

Hand the GNT bulletin out at your port and spread the global campaign message.

Join the network and be part of something BIG!

