

Egyptian Democratic Trade Unions Congress

Declaration of Principles

In our belief in the right of all Egyptian workers in forming their unions freely and building them independently.. in the right of each worker to choose a union he finds satisfactory... to enter or leave it.. and in the right of each union to remain standing independently or join the federation that concurs with its aims.. in our belief in labour freedoms for which leading workers have struggled for.. demanded and paid for in advance through imprisonment and dispersion.. in the right of forming independent unions that have remains – throughout long years- a goal and a dream.. before it became a reality on the ground, seen by all.

In our bias towards the workers and employees of Egypt.. all paid labour in the four corners of our lands.. those looking for employment and those working irregular jobs that include no security or stability.. those who long for suitable stable work and fair work relations and a wage that is sufficient for their demands and their children's human needs.. those who demand bread, freedom and human dignity and social justice.. through the right to treatment that actually heals and a suitable house not polluting the air and lit with electricity that does not get cut. To be provided by clean water and sewage system network; the right to job security and social security and a social security umbrella that guarantees dignified living upon retirement or disability.

In our bias for social justice that guarantees most of the Egyptian people a dignified life and a suitable work opportunity and open the closed doors of hope in front of everyone.. Social justice of that cannot be achieved without the empowerment of social parties in terms of expressing their interests and negotiate them.. without owning the organizational tools necessary for group negotiations foremost among them is the truly independent union.

In our belief that social dialogue and collective negotiations are the only ground upon which a stable democratic society can grow... and activating them is the only savior from disruptions of unforeseeable consequences and from tendencies towards violence and extremism that are unleashed by the lack of social balance and the absence of the mechanisms necessary for dialogue and social argument between the different social sectors and strata. Mechanisms of organization, lobbying and negotiation through which all social groups can express their interests and practice their influence in the organized method of participation in forming policies or at least influencing them and amending them.

In appreciation from us for the major challenges that are faced by the independent union movement at the moment and that we have reached a crossroads from which several routes branch out and choices are confused and positions differ. In our trust in the just nature of our cause that tips the scale on our side – despite everything- and that the strength of independent unions are in their genuine experience and its roots

that stretch far into the history of the Egyptian labour movement – despite years of discontinuity and decades of restricting freedoms- manifested in the strong unions that are still able to perform their role despite the handicaps it faces and in union workers biased for labour freedoms- they are not few- compared to previous periods of our history.. Strength in the union freedoms promise that is besieging its governmental opposers who have been resisting it for over a decade.

In our assessment the calls that the labour scene witnesses at the moment for the unification in one union are dangerous because they are – in reality – masked calls for the subordination under the banner of the “governmental” General Federation of Egyptian Trade Unions and give up the principles of labour freedoms.

The unity we desire or strive for is based on freedom. A unity that is decided upon according to the free will of unions not by laws or logistical procedures. We also intend to convince workers to join our union but we strongly object any form of forced membership or compulsory joining – no matter how convincing. No one can take the calls for unity with the “governmental” federation with good intentions prior to the discussion in the parliament of the law organizing union organizations while some governmental parties practice considerable pressures on independent unions and they are explicitly asked to join this union.

Yes for every form of labour unity based on freedom of choice.. if union freedoms were guaranteed to everyone and no for every form of acquisition or forced joining no matter how it was shrouded with allegations of unity.

We announce, stemming from our conviction in the importance of coordination and joint work between all those calling and striving for labour freedoms, the founding of the Egyptian Democratic Trade Unions Congress that aims and works for the issuance of the law for labour organizations that guarantees all labour freedoms especially:

- The right to form unions without restrictions, conditions or guardianship of any administrative party
- The right of each worker to choose the union he wishes for and his unrestricted right to join it or leave it
- The unrestricted and unconditional right to form regional and sectorial unions and nationwide unions as well as the right of each union to choose to join or leave federations.
- The right of the union or federation members (their general assembly) solely to draft their constitution (the basic statute) without intervention from any party and without the imposition of any model or specific rules.
- The right of the members of the union or federation to choose their representatives and their executive committees through direct elections without the intervention of any party or imposing a particular model or rules on them
- The independence of unions from the government and from the intervention of any administrative party in their affairs.

We reject the draft law of labour organizations presented by the government and demand its amendment in accordance with the Egyptian law (article 76) and the international labour standards and conventions as ratified by the Egyptian government especially Convention N. 87 and particularly the following:

- Article 2 of the "issued terms" that includes and inequality between the "governmental" Egyptian Trade Unions Federation [ETUF] and independent unions, and we demand that all their affairs be organized on the same bases.
- Imposing a particular model of unions (the pyramid model of the governmental federation) as the only model of labour organization.
- Imposing the model of the statute and riding the general assemblies of labour organizations of their capacities, particularly many of the rules of union work such as the conditions of memberships, terms of nomination to the executive bodies, the duration of the union cycle, the particular date to hold elections and the activities of the unions.. Etc.
- Imposing conditions that restrict the formation of unions and federations particularly the exaggerated number of members – unfeasible.
- Administrative interference in the affairs of unions
- Expropriating the right of unions in receiving support from the international trade unions that they belong to and pay membership fees to

Our Congress – with its clear aforementioned aims- opens its doors and welcomes the participation of any labour organization that shares its aims whether it was a member of any federation – except the ETUF "governmental federation"- or not. It has to be:

- An active and democratic labour union performing its role
- A labour organization that is biased clearly for the right of workers to build their unions and their organizations freely in order to express their interests and defend their rights and whose representatives are not involved declarations contrary to these principles
- A labour organization that was tainted and whose representatives were not tainted by one of the deals in which labour rights were compromised and did not close deals with the "governmental federation"
- A labour organization that does not take contradictory stands and does not confuse supporting the government with belonging to the homeland and does not justify merger with the "governmental federation" under claims of unity.

Our Congress welcomes the supporting membership of prominent labour leaders and unionists as well as experts and people interested in labour affairs once they adopt its principles and abide by its convention.

On Friday 29/9/2017

1. The Real Estate Tax Authority Union
2. The General Union of Workers in the Prosecution Offices and Courts
3. The General Union (independent) of workers in Egypt Telecom
4. The General Union of Workers in the Public Free Zone "investment" Port Said
5. The independent Union for Al Minya quarry workers
6. The independent Union in the General Authority for Adult Education
7. The independent Union of Workers in the Underground
8. The independent Union of Exxon Mobil Egypt
9. The independent Union of Cotton Club Company
10. The independent Union workers in Nile Lenin Group
11. The independent Union of Workers in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina
12. The independent Union of Pharmacists
13. The independent Union for workers in Kafr El Dawar Mebara
14. The independent Union for Al Shefaa Hospital.