

CARIBBEAN CONGRESS OF LABOUR

President: David Massiah
General Secretary: Chester Humphrey



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The Grenada Technical and Allied Workers Union has for some time been engaged in a struggle for better conditions of employment for its members at the Grenada Breweries Ltd to be reflected in a new Collective Agreement effective 2010. These conditions include the granting of time-off to attend union activities, increase in travelling allowance, increase of 7% in salaries against the company's proposed 2.5%, increase in clothing allowance, meal allowance and overtime as it relates to week-end work and public holidays.

Information received, also accuses the company of preventing its workers from benefitting from the services on a proposed health clinic at its location which focussed on cardiovascular diseases and cancers in observance of Occupational Health and Safety week, earlier this year.

Because negotiations reached a deadlock, the Union called out its members on strike. Mediation talks under the chairmanship of the Labour Commissioner, begun on Friday 16 December. When no settlement could be reached the Minister of Labour intervened and an agreement was reached for workers to return to work by Monday night 19 December while discussions on the wage dispute continued with senior executives from the Brewery who are based in Trinidad and Tobago. The workers were locked out and on Tuesday morning 20 December about 100 of them were joined by President-General Chester Humphrey outside the Brewery when they proceeded to prevent a convoy of trucks loaded with brewed products and driven by scab labour from leaving the premises. This caused a major pile-up of traffic on the main highway and the police was summoned. Senator Humphrey was arrested for obstruction of traffic and failing to obey a lawful order from the police. He has since been released on \$3,000.00 (EC\$) bail and is due to return to court on 26 January 2012. The blockage continues with workers and unions preventing the delivery trucks from leaving the brewery. In the meantime the Hon. Glynis Roberts, Minister of Labour expressed her concern that the arrest of Senator Humphrey could worsen the industrial relations climate in Grenada. She said that "prospects for a settlement between the Brewery and TAWU were 'looking good' and she hoped the arrest would not hinder those prospects.

All correspondence must be addressed to the General Secretary

The CCL would like to echo the views expressed by Minister Roberts that it is "always a cause of deep concern when police intervene in workers' disputes and arrest anyone, particularly a union leader". The CCL also strongly condemns the use of riot police to break up a peaceful demonstration by workers, who were exercising their democratic rights in their country.

CCL further expresses its solidarity with the Grenada Technical and Allied Workers Union and urges its affiliates to similarly voice their solidarity.

David Massiah (Sen. Hon.)
President
Caribbean Congress of Labour