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國際運輸勞連

International Transport Workers' Federation
Federación Internacional de los Trabajadores del Transporte
Fédération Internationale des ouvriers du transport
Internationella transportarbetarefederationen
Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation
Международная федерация транспортников
الاتحاد الدولي لعمال النقل

Mr Scott Kirby
CEO, United Airlines

Via email: scott.kirby@united.com

Ref: OGS/SMC/jm

5 May 2020

Dear Mr Scott Kirby,

Recently announced pay and benefit cuts targeting all full-time IAMAW members at United Airlines

I write you today on behalf of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), which represents nearly 700 transport trade unions from 150 countries with a total membership of around 20 million working men and women. Our affiliate the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW) has informed us that United Airlines decided to initiate forced layoffs, which the IAM states is in breach of their contracts, while taking billions of US taxpayers funded airline bailout funds.

According to our information, the carrier will cut the pay and benefits of all full-time IAMAW members at United Airlines. Needless to say, these measures will severely hurt United Airlines' employees and their families.

Like our affiliate IAMAW, the ITF also recognises the need for airlines to save money in these extremely challenging times. From the very early days of the global pandemic, the ITF and its aviation affiliates have been fighting, together with airlines, for government aid to help support the global airline industry. On 21 April 2020, the ITF and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) issued a [joint statement](#) calling for support from governments to the aviation industry, to protect jobs and ensure that air services can be maintained.

However, unfortunately, we understand that these recently announced cuts are not utterly about saving money. We can see this from the fact that United Airlines has categorically refused to engage with the IAMAW in cost-saving discussions. The IAMAW believes and explains in detail that engaging in social dialogue would provide the carrier with the same amount of financial relief without feeling the need of cutting workers' contracts or the CARES (the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act.

As you may know, against this backdrop, the IAMAW is considering all possible legal options, including filing a lawsuit against United Airlines to stop this unilateral action and protect its membership. If the IAMAW opts for this option, the ITF and its aviation affiliates all around the world will not hesitate to provide legal support and lawful solidarity to their brothers and sisters who work for United Airlines.

Quite contrary to the current path United Airlines is set on, a climate of trust, built through social dialogue is essential to the effective implementation of measures to address the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. Strengthened respect for, and reliance on, mechanisms of social dialogue creates a strong basis for building resilience, and the commitment of employers and workers to painful but necessary policy measures. This is

particularly key during times of heightened social tension. The International Labour Organisation's (ILO's) Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation (No. 205) emphasises, in particular, the importance of social dialogue in responding to crisis and the vital role of employers' and workers' organisations in crisis response.

Furthermore, the recommendation emphasises the key role of consultation and encouraging active participation of employers' and workers' organisations in planning, implementing and monitoring measures for recovery and resilience. It additionally underlines the necessity of recognising the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98).

As highlighted in the ITF-IATA joint statement, there is no doubt that as employers and unions we can navigate our way through this crisis only by working side by side. On the other hand, unilateral and socially irresponsible responses to the crisis, will increase tensions, lower trust, and most probably lead to intensified conflict in the near future.

The ITF will continue to closely monitor the situation.

I look forward to your positive response on these urgent and important matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen" followed by a stylized flourish.

Stephen Cotton
General Secretary

CC:

Sito Pantoja, IAM General Vice President

Joseph Tiberi, ITF Civil Aviation Chair

Michael Klemm, President, IAM District 141

United Holdings, inc. Board of Directors