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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

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President and CEO, Korea Airport Service  
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Our ref: CA/GMR/mha

17 July 2019

Dear Sirs,

### **Unfair labour practices at Korea Airport Service (KAS)**

I am writing to you today on behalf of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). As you may know, we are a global trade union federation of 670 trade unions in 147 countries, representing 18 million workers. We represent workers in all areas of transport including all sectors of aviation.

We wish to express our concern about unfair labour practices against leaders of the KPTU Air and Sea Port Transport Division, Korea Airport Service (KAS) Subcontracted Workers' Branch (hereafter, 'Union Branch') and ask for your intervention to find a positive solution to this problem.

We understand that Korean Air's subsidiary Korea Airport Service (KAS) runs Korean Airlines' ground operations and that KAS contracts out cabin cleaning services to EK Manpower. KAS sets labour costs in its contract with EK Manpower, effectively determining cabin cleaners' wages and conditions. Cabin cleaners, who are paid at minimum wage levels and have been organising since 2017 in order to improve their conditions.

We have become aware of a number of issues of anti-union behavior from KAS and EK Manpower in retaliation to work-to-rule and strike actions by the Union Branch at the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019. EK Manpower filed a civil suit against 12 union branch officers for a total amount of KRW 110 million (USD 930,000) and that the bank accounts of these low-wage workers have been frozen despite the fact that the civil suit is still pending.

Further, we have learned from KAS meeting documents that KAS provides 'consulting' on personnel issues and has directed EK Manpower to take actions to isolate the Union Branch leadership and to weaken the

union, which is deeply concerning.

KAL and KAS should be aware that the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association has several times issued recommendations criticising the use of claims for damages against peaceful industrial actions by employers in South Korea and warned against the use of in-house subcontracting companies as a means to avoid responsibility for bargaining by parent companies (ILO CFA Case 2602, Case 1865, Case 3047). The actions taken against the cabin cleaners' Union Branch and its leaders go against the spirit of these recommendations.

In addition to this, on 12 April, the workers filed a complaint with the Ministry of Labour against KAS for unfair labour practices, and then began a protest encampment in front of the KAL headquarters on 17 April. They are also engaging in work-to-rule actions and preparing to escalate their tactics.

Recognising the involvement of both KAS and EK Manpower in this issue, we call on you both to take all necessary steps to stop unfair labour practices against the Union Branch and its officers. In particular, we call on you to ensure that all claims for damages against union leaders are dropped and their bank accounts unfrozen. Further to this, we call on you to engage with these workers in good faith in the spirit of the ILO recommendations and to come to an amicable solution between all parties. Should you both fail to do so, we will support KPTU and the Union Branch in any further escalation they deem necessary.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabriel Mocho Rodriguez', with a stylized, cursive script.

Gabriel Mocho Rodriguez  
Civil Aviation Section Secretary