

**Secrétariat central Unia
GT International**

Weltpoststrasse 20
CH-3000 Berne 16
T +41 31 350 21 11
F +41 31 350 22 11
<http://www.unia.ch>



**Die Gewerkschaft.
Le Syndicat.
Il Sindacato.**

Poste CH SA

P.P. CH-3000 Berne 16

Secrétariat central Unia Weltpoststrasse 20 CH-3000 Berne 16

Panama Consulate General

Rue De Lausanne 72

CH-1202 Genève

conpanamasuiza@mire.gob.pa

To the attention of

His Excellency

Mr José Raúl Mulino

President of the Republic of Panama

Palacio de las Garzas, San Felipe

Panama

Her Excellency

Jackeline Muñoz de Cedeño

Minister of Labor and Labor

Development of Panama

Solidarity with the Trade Union SUNTRACS, its representatives and members

June 11, 2025

Bruna Campanello

international@unia.ch

T +41 31 350 24 15

Your Excellency

I am writing to you on behalf of the Trade Union Unia, which represents Construction workers in Switzerland and is an affiliate of the Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI), which represents 12 million members across 111 countries. We express our deep concern regarding the recent actions taken against our Panamanian sister union, SUNTRACS (Unified Union of Construction and Allied Workers of Panama). We urge your government to facilitate the immediate release of all detained trade unionists and to cease any actions that may be perceived as impeding the legitimate exercise of rights to organize and protest. We believe that initiating a constructive dialogue to address the social and labor concerns of Panamanian workers would be highly beneficial.

We request that any warrants for SUNTRACS leaders be reconsidered, and that measures be taken to allow the union's bank accounts to operate freely, and that its funds be made available. We seek the release of Mr. Jaime Caballero (currently held in a maximum-security facility), Mr. Genaro López, and all other detained SUNTRACS members and workers associated with protests concerning the Social Security Law Reform. We also respectfully request the termination of any mandates that have led Mr. Saúl Méndez (SUNTRACS General Secretary and BWI Deputy President) to seek asylum, and that concern Mr. Erasmo Cerrud.


We observe that following demonstrations against Law 462, involving SUNTRACS alongside teachers and banana workers, SUNTRACS' bank accounts were affected, and union leaders faced arrests. Despite clear directives from the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association (Report No. 409, March 2025) to uphold freedom of association, protect unionists, and ensure access to funds, these recommendations appear not to have been fully implemented.

These actions, including instances where union headquarters and cooperative offices have been reportedly impacted, are viewed as a serious challenge to the fundamental rights to organize, collectively bargain, and protest. This situation raises concerns regarding the principles of freedom of association and peaceful demonstration, which are enshrined in ILO Conventions 87 and 98, both ratified by Panama.

The BWI, alongside global workers, respectfully calls for a cessation of actions that may be seen as repressive towards SUNTRACS and its representatives, and for the full assurance of trade union rights throughout Panama, consistent with both national and international legal obligations.

Your country, as a signatory to ILO C87 and C98, is committed to upholding these fundamental international labor standards. Respect for freedom of association and the ability of trade unions to operate without undue interference are vital for a healthy and democratic society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bruna Campanello', with a stylized, cursive script.

Bruna Campanello
Member of the Executive Board of Unia
Head of the Carpentry Trade Sector