

TRADE UNION ACTION STOPS DEPORTATION AND DETENTION – FOR NOW!

STOP THE DEPORTATION OF ALPHONSUS UCHE AKAFOR MEFOR



“A victory for one is a victory for all, keep your struggle going, together let’s work in solidarity – tell the world how Biafrans are being persecuted and never be discouraged. I have a debt of gratitude to you all. I am Alphonsus Uche Akafor Mefor and Nigerian. I was scheduled to be deported to Nigeria on 1st March, but my solicitor and an unprecedented campaign stopped the deportation and my forced detention. I was freed from detention on 15 March.”

Paul Mackney, UCU General Secretary said, “This case is of particular relevance to trade unionists as he was due to speak at a forthcoming ‘No One Is Illegal’ Trade Union Conference (details below) of which UCU is a sponsor. He is a leading figure in the campaign group Asylum Voice who have campaigned against the abuses suffered by asylum seekers ... This coming together of General Secretaries of major trade unions in support of Alphonsus is unique and shows that the labour movement is committed to the defence of refugees and others threatened with immigration controls – and shows why the slogan “No One Is Illegal” is a demand for justice and basic human rights.”

Whilst in Nigeria Alphonsus was active in the struggle for Biafran independence. He was a member of the national liberation group MOSSAB (Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra) and was detained and tortured following attendance of a MASSOB meeting. He has continued to campaign in the UK to highlight the persecution of the Biafran people through the Biafran Actualisation Forum and the Biafran Liberation League who have in recent times organised high profile campaigns against the Nigerian Government. He faces imminent danger if he is returned to Nigeria. In spite of this he has been refused asylum.

Alphonsus does not argue that his case is different from that of others refused leave to remain. He does not argue that his case is exceptional. He asks for solidarity with himself and all others in his situation. What does make Alphonsus’ campaign different is that it is based on the trade union movement, five trade union General Secretaries (for the TGWU, NUJ, UCU, RMT, PCS), trades councils, and union branches who backed him when he was arrested without warning and imprisoned in an immigration camp. As a result of this unprecedented pressure combined with pressure by many community groups and the UK-based Biafran Liberation League he was released.

Alphonsus whilst living in Liverpool has helped organise other refugees in the group Asylum Voice which fights for asylum seekers and is fighting the government’s fast track to deportation system. He will speak at the No One Is Illegal trade union conference against immigration controls. However he still faces deportation and we must maintain the pressure until he obtains the justice we demand.

What you can do to help:

- Ensure your trade union at all levels resolves to support Alphonsus by also writing to Liam Byrne MP, Home Office, Peel Building 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF, quote HO ref : M1320887
- Set up local trade union based campaigns for Alphonsus and others under threat of deportation
- If you live in the Merseyside area attend Asylum Voice campaign meetings - contact asylumvoice@yahoo.ac.uk , asylumvoice.googlepages.com/index2.html
- Attend the March 31st conference 1-5.30pm St Anne’s School, next to St Annes Church, Overbury St, Liverpool 7