



Martha Tinny MOLEMA
President
Présidente

Akhator Joel ODIGIE
General Secretary
Secrétaire Général

Route Internationale d'Atakpamé
Centre FOPADESC Agoè – Nyivé
B.P. : 4401 – Tel.: 00228 22 25 03 90
LOME - TOGO
Email: info@ituc-africa.org
Web: www.ituc-africa.org

JOE AJAERO AWARDED ARTHUR SVENSSON PRIZE FOR TRADE UNION RIGHTS 2026

Brussels, Belgium – 16 April 2026

At the ITUC Global Pre-International Labour Conference (ILC) Meeting held in Brussels, Comrade Joe Ajaero, President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), was today announced as the recipient of the Arthur Svensson International Prize for Trade Union Rights 2026.

The announcement was made by Frode Alfheim, President of the Norwegian trade union Styrke, who commended Ajaero's steadfast commitment to defending workers' rights under extremely difficult conditions.

Ajaero is being recognised for his uncompromising leadership and courage in advancing workers' rights in Nigeria, where he has faced sustained intimidation, including arrest, threats, abduction, surveillance, and violent attacks.

"Joe Ajaero is a courageous and principled leader who stands up for workers under extremely challenging circumstances. He is a thoroughly deserving recipient of the Arthur Svensson Prize," Alfheim stated.

A long-standing figure in Nigeria's trade union movement, Ajaero has played a pivotal role in strengthening the voice of workers and defending civic space. Under his leadership, the Nigeria Labour Congress, the affiliate of ITUC-Africa, has actively resisted union-busting practices, advocated for improved working conditions, and challenged the erosion of civil liberties.

Despite ongoing attempts to silence trade union opposition, Ajaero has continued to mobilise workers and advance the cause of social justice.

The Arthur Svensson International Prize for Trade Union Rights is awarded annually to individuals or organisations that have made an outstanding contribution to the promotion of trade union rights globally. The prize carries a monetary award of NOK 500,000.

The official award ceremony is scheduled to take place in Oslo, Norway, on 10 June 2026.

This recognition marks a significant moment for the African trade union movement, highlighting the resilience and determination of its leaders in the ongoing struggle for workers' rights and dignity.

Issued from Lome, Togo, 16th April 2026, by Akhator Joel Odigie, General Secretary, ITUC-Africa.