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## **For immediate release**

### **Trade Unionist Cleaner removed from Ofcom following London Living Wage victory — Subject of Channel 4 News exposé barred from media regulator's premises after unsupported anonymous allegations of inappropriate behaviour — Colleagues prepared to strike in support of barred worker**

London, UK — 31st August 2018

Trade union activist and cleaner Teddy Bariqui Leiva has been barred by Ofcom from its headquarters at Riverside House in the Southwark Bridge Road.

Just twelve months ago, Mitie employee Leiva was named as part of Mitie's 'Team of the Year, following which he played an instrumental role in securing the London Living Wage for himself and his colleagues. Now, in what appears to be a remarkable act of apparent retribution, Leiva can no longer go to work, following a number of mysterious, anonymous and unspecified allegations about his conduct.

Leiva, who last October featured heavily in a Channel 4 News item on the capital's cleaning industry, has been barred from Riverside House following claims by Ofcom that he has behaved in an 'aggressive and detrimental' manner on multiple occasions over the last twelve months. Ofcom claims that their concerns over these 'consistent' and 'documented' incidents—incidents apparently serious enough to justify barring Mr Leiva from the premises—were raised with Mitie at the time they occurred. Yet at no stage was Mr Leiva advised of the allegations against him, and nor was he asked at any time to address his allegedly inappropriate behaviour.

Despite repeated requests, Ofcom has refused to provide any additional details of what can only be described as the alleged allegations. The regulator has elected instead to hide behind what it calls its confidentiality obligations, stating repeatedly that 'We do not discuss the nature of our relationships with any of our service providers externally'. Ofcom claims these confidentiality requirements prevent it from revealing exactly what Teddy is accused of, when the incidents are supposed to have occurred, or the identities of his accusers, claiming only that it has raised concerns regarding Teddy with Mitie on multiple occasions over the last year, and 'insisted' that the service provider conduct its own investigations in order to deal with the allegations appropriately. All further questions, it says, should be addressed directly to Mitie.

For its own part, Mitie appears to have carried out no such investigations, and have deemed the allegations worthy of just a first written warning. Teddy maintains that at no stage was any mention made of any concerns over his behaviour prior to his removal.

CAIWU London Organizer Danbert Vanzetti says the union is determined to oppose Teddy's removal. Mr Vanzetti insists that the decision to bar him is a political one, with its roots in last year's successful London Living Wage campaign. 'Mitie and Ofcom have both wanted to get rid of Teddy ever since CAIWU helped win the pay rise,' says Mr Vanzetti. 'They tried to dismiss him on false charges of aggressive behaviour right after the victory last year. They failed then, so now they're trying again. We plan to keep fighting for Teddy, and to keep protesting to highlight the way the government's media regulator treats its low-paid contract cleaning staff. If Teddy's misbehaviour was so serious,' Mr Vanzetti asks, 'why wasn't it properly investigated at the time? Why wasn't Teddy warned about it? And why does Mitie consider it worth only a first written warning while Mitie thinks it's serious enough to justify removing him from the building? Something about all this doesn't add up.'

Vanzetti says that Mr Bariqui Leiva's colleagues are prepared to strike if necessary to get him his job back. 'We're already in an official dispute with Mitie over Teddy,' says Mr Vanzetti, 'and in the next couple of weeks we'll be balloting our members at Ofcom about going on strike. There's huge support for Teddy, and his colleagues are really angry about the way he's been kicked out.' Mr Vanzetti says Teddy's colleagues know that if they ignore what's happened to him, none of them will be safe at Ofcom again. 'Every time they dare to stand up for their rights they'll risk getting kicked out on some spurious trumped up allegation of inappropriate behaviour. You have to laugh', says Vanzetti. 'Ofcom makes all these grand claims on its website about fairness, dignity and respect. Yet they're happy to remove a trade unionist from their building based on a handful of anonymous allegations, with no evidence that anything happened at all.'

CAIWU will be holding weekly protests in support of Teddy outside Ofcom HQ, Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA, every Friday until Teddy is restored to his job.

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**Notes to editor:**

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