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Statement By USW Pres. Leo W. Gerard **Removal of Malaysia from Human Trafficking Blacklist**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jul. 27) – Leo W. Gerard, International President of the United Steelworkers (USW) issued the following statement today on the U.S. State Department’s removal of Malaysia from its human trafficking blacklist.

“We condemn the politicization of today’s annual release by the State Department of the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report on efforts of countries to fight forced labor. One only has to look at Malaysia’s barbaric human trafficking record and continued labor rights abuses to understand this is a cynical attempt to whitewash the record of a country unfit to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

“The discovery two months ago in Malaysia of 139 enslaved migrant worker graves, plus documentation of what are millions of modern-day slaves who end up as prostitutes and domestic servants, but also working in the country’s export electronic and palm oil sectors is an outrage.

“Malaysia cannot be allowed to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal to get trade preferences, while cynically undermining American standards of human and worker rights. This maneuver should be immediately rescinded, or suffer a backlash that defeats consideration of the TPP as a legitimate agreement.”

The USW represents 850,000 workers in North America employed in many industries that include metals, rubber, chemicals, paper, oil refining and the service and public sectors. For more information: <http://www.usw.org/>.

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