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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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General Strike in Republic of Guinea - Workers' discontent reaches climax

Guinea, 11 January 2007 (ITUC Online): An unlimited general strike has been launched in the Republic of Guinea. The action was called nationwide by the country's Inter-Confederal trade union grouping, founded by the national confederations CNTG and USTG and more recently joined by the ONSLG, the UDTG, and the union of shoe-shiners.

Commitments made in the agreements signed by the social partners in 2006 following the two national strikes have not been honoured, and hyperinflation is eating away workers' meagre wages. According to the inter-union group, the cost of a sack of rice, for example, has climbed from 26,500 FG francs in 2000 to 140,000 FG today. The unemployment rate has risen sharply.

Gross irregularities have been found in the management of public funds whilst poverty takes on ever more alarming proportions. The unions also condemn the head of state's interference in judicial affairs, with the release of persons responsible for the misappropriation of public funds triggering widespread discontent.

Trade union rights, guaranteed by ILO Conventions 87 and 98 are being flouted, seriously undermining trade union independence, as illustrated by the intimidation levelled against trade unions leaders attempting to defend their fellow citizens in the face of so much abuse.

The ITUC has been following recent events in Guinea very closely. "We should not forget," recalls Mamounata Cissé, Deputy General Secretary of the ITUC, "that last year's strike was also accompanied by serious threats against the country's main trade union leaders, giving rise an intervention by the Director-General of the ILO. This time, the Guinean affiliates of the ITUC have again reported cases of intimidation. The ITUC has manifested its solidarity with their struggle and, on 9 January, urged the Guinean head of state, Lansana Conté, to negotiate with the social partners to find a solution to their grievances."

Pressure from the international trade union movement is being stepped up and numerous trade union organisations from around the globe have joined the call for solidarity with the workers concerned.

Founded on 1 November 2006, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 304 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>

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