

Brussels, 22 February 2007 (ITUC OnLine): On the eve of a crucial meeting, planned for 23 January, during which the Guinean National Assembly could prolong the "state of siege" which has been in force since 12 February, the ITUC is gravely concerned at the evolution of the situation in the West African country. The ITUC demands the immediate lifting of the state of siege and the full implementation of the agreement signed on 27 January by the government and the social partners. This agreement provided in particular for the designation by the Head of State of a consensus Prime Minister and the putting in place of a Commission of Inquiry into the repression of the general strike, during which more than 120 people were killed by the country's security forces.

The ITUC reaffirms its full support for the position of the national trade union centres USTG, CNTG, ONSLG and UDTG, formally communicated in a letter to them on 19 February.

In light of repeated threats of arrest of trade union leaders and mass dismissal of strikers refusing to resume work on 26 February, the ITUC demands that the Guinean authorities give formal guarantees of security for the trade unionists and that they undertake to ensure no repression of the strikers. It has also relayed these concerns to the International Labour Organisation, and is in continuous contact with the diplomatic community in the Capital, Conakry.

The ITUC welcomes the announcement that a mission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which arrived in Conakry last Thursday and is headed by former Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida, will meet with the trade union leaders. It encourages all diplomatic missions and other potential mediators to meet them as well. The ITUC itself is in contact with international and regional institutions, including the European Union, African Union, ECOWAS, World Bank and also the IMF, with which it will meet in Washington DC on Monday to press its case concerning Guinea. Further international contacts are planned for the coming days in Paris, Brussels and other European capitals.

Founded on November 1 2006, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 304 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on +32 2 224 0204 or +32 477 580 486.

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