

>>> "ITUC Press" <press@ituc-csi.org> 02/27/07 11:01 >>>
INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC Online

042/270207

Guinea - ITUC satisfied but remains vigilant

Brussels, 27 February (ITUC OnLine) The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) welcomes the outcome of the crisis provoked by the repression of the general strike launched on 10 January in Guinea. In a key development, President Lansana Conté has now appointed Lansana Kouyaté as Prime Minister with extended powers. Kouyaté, an experienced diplomat, was one of the names proposed by the trade unions to mediator Ibrahim Babangida, a former President of Nigeria who was heading a mediation mission despatched to Conakry by the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS).

At the same time, the ITUC will remain extremely vigilant in the days and weeks to come concerning the full application of the agreements reached on 27 January between the government and the national union centres, USTG-CNTG, ONSLG and UTDG. The ITUC, together with its affiliates in Guinea, has demanded the immediate release of all those arrested since the imposition of marshal law on 12 February, which the National Assembly decided to lift on Friday 23 February - a decision welcomed by the ITUC.

The ITUC also insists on the setting up of the Commission of Inquiry, foreseen in the agreements of 27 January, to investigate the violent repression of the protests accompanying the general strike and the state of siege. The repression claimed the lives of at least 120 people and has left hundreds of others injured. In a letter (link to letter) handed personally to Mr Babangida on Saturday, the ITUC reiterated the demands for the release of prisoners, the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry and that no repressive measures be taken against the strikers.

The ITUC congratulates the Guinean trade union movement on a victory for which it, first and foremost, deserves the credit. In a letter sent today to the ITUC's Guinean affiliates, General Secretary Guy Ryder congratulated them for their "perseverance, courage and determination in the struggle led on behalf of the entire Guinean people," adding that, "This success further strengthens the prestige of the enlarged Guinean inter-union group, and is shared by the whole of the African and international trade union movement, which has rallied to your side with great vigour.

The ITUC will maintain the contacts made with organisations such as the European Union, its member states, and the International monetary fund (IMF), urging them remain equally vigilant. It will also draw their attention to the importance of fully involving the Guinean unions in future aid initiatives for Guinea. It will, at the same time, thank the international community for its involvement in the Guinean crisis, and in particular the diplomats of the European Union and its member states posted in Conakry, who have shown courage and determination in their efforts to help ensure an end to the crisis.

Finally, the ITUC renews the call made to all its affiliates and partner organisations to assist in the efforts to offer and coordinate concrete and effective international trade union assistance for the reconstruction and strengthening of the structures and activities of the Guinean trade union movement.

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>

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