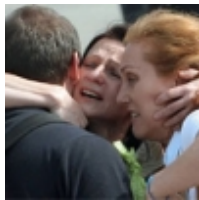


Onlines

ITUC-Online is a daily service providing press releases presenting the official positions adopted by the ITUC and its partner union organisations at international level.

ITUC welcomes release of Bulgarian medics from Libyan jail



Brussels, 24 July 2007: The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) today welcomed with relief the news of the release of five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor by the Libyan authorities. The seven have been in jail since 1999, charged and subsequently sentenced to death for allegedly infecting 393 children with the HIV/AIDS virus. They all returned to Bulgaria today, including the Palestinian doctor granted Bulgarian citizenship in order to facilitate his extradition.

Both the ITUC and its founding organisations the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) have consistently denounced the prosecution and sentencing of the six health professionals, protesting to Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi at the complete disregard for the international expertise demonstrating their innocence and the use of torture to extract confessions, as well as the appalling conditions in which they were held.

ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder today said he was "delighted that this eight-year ordeal is finally over" for the six innocent medical professionals and their families. He also praised the patient work of European Union Commission Benita Ferrero-Waldner in her negotiations with Libya, and above all the work to improve conditions for the hundreds of children with HIV/Aids.

Founded on 1 November 2006, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates.

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24/07/2007

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