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Chile: trade union demonstration brutally repressed



Brussels, 31 August 2007: The ITUC, which has two affiliates in Chile, the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) and the Central Autónoma de Trabajadores (CAT), has strongly condemned the Chilean government's repression of a peaceful nationwide demonstration called for 29 August by the trade union confederations to demand social security, decent wages and respect for collective bargaining rights.

Thousands of Chileans took to the streets to demand more equal distribution of the country's wealth and welfare assistance for least advantaged. Despite the government's promise to respect the right to protest, the demonstration was violently repressed.

The employment situation in Chile is highly unstable. Inequality and lack of opportunity are a growing source of discontent. The Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) and the Central Autónoma de Trabajadores (CAT), which represent the majority of the unions in the country, called on the people of Chile to voice this discontent by peacefully demonstrating on 29 August. Over 260 demonstrators were arrested. In a letter http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/protesta_sindical_y_represion_29._08.pdf to the Chilean authorities, the ITUC called on Michelle Bachelet and her government take every measure to ensure that these violent acts of repression are not repeated and to provide all its citizens with a share in the benefits of the country's economic success. "The Chilean people must be given the right to decent work and a decent life. The Chilean government must assume its responsibilities in this respect," said Guy Ryder.

Founded on 1 November 2006, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates. Website: www.ituc-csi.org
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