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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

## ITUC OnLine

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### Chad: Root Causes of Instability and Conflict Still Unresolved

Brussels, 7 February 2008 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC remains deeply concerned at the risk of the violence in Chad re-igniting and escalating, with the potential for further loss of life and a deepening refugee crisis affecting hundreds of thousands of people. At least 100 people are believed to have lost their lives, and many of the several hundred wounded have gone for days without access to medical care. While the Chadian military appear to have regained control over the capital N'Djamena and other parts of the country, there is no sign that the underlying tensions have lessened.

The latest violence, with many of the several hundred heavily-armed men still believed to be in N'Djamena, has strong echoes of decades of conflict involving different rebel groups in the border region between Chad and Sudan, in particular in Darfur. Chadian President Idriss Deby has accused the Sudanese authorities of being behind the latest attack. Deby himself originally came to power in a coup backed by rebels from the border area.

“The international community must do everything possible to deal with the deeper origins of the violence as well as the immediate emergency produced by the events of recent days. The lack of democracy, massive corruption and human rights violations which characterise the regimes in Chad and Sudan in particular need to be tackled. If not, it is only a matter of time before the next outbreak of conflict”, said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The ITUC is especially worried at the consequences of the crisis for the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons living in camps in the border region. The delivery of essential food aid remains at risk, and the possibility of massive movements of refugees into neighbouring Cameroon is still a cause for concern.

“We understand that the leaders of the ITUC’s Chad affiliates are safe, and we salute their determination to promote democracy and respect for workers’ rights. There is substantial wealth, particularly in the oil sector, in Chad and its neighbours. Ensuring that all people, instead of a small privileged minority, share in the benefits of this wealth is essential in resolving the deep tensions which exist. Cosy arrangements between corrupt authorities and multinational companies which hold back economic and social development are a major part of the problem. Much better regulation of the activities of these companies is needed, as part of a comprehensive international response to deal with the root causes of instability and conflict in the region” said Ryder.

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates. Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org>.

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