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Gaza: Cycle of Violence Must End

Brussels 3 March 2008 (ITUC OnLine): With the Israeli army withdrawal from Gaza, the ITUC has called for the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible. Provoked by Hamas rocket attacks which reportedly caused the deaths of three Israelis and injuries to several more soldiers and civilians, the Israeli incursion resulted in the deaths of over 100 Palestinians, many of them civilians.

The ITUC views the Israeli response as a disproportionate use of violence, which, along with the continuing Hamas attacks, has set back once more the prospects of progress towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict. "Yet again, the main victims of the cycle of violence are innocent people including children. The Hamas rocket attacks must cease, and Israel must refrain from the kind of reaction which has cost so many lives in recent days", said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The unemployment rate in Gaza is believed to be around 80%, with more and more people falling into poverty and no real prospect of economic recovery unless peaceful negotiations move forward. The international community needs to do all in its power to help create the conditions for such negotiations.

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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