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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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United Arab Emirates: workers sentenced to six months' imprisonment

Brussels, 14 March 2008 (ITUC OnLine): Forty-five Indian construction workers have been sentenced to six months' imprisonment under charges of holding illegal gatherings, vandalism, and violating public security following their participation in a strike last year for better working conditions.

The ITUC strongly protests against the verdict of the Dubai Criminal Court, a verdict that constitutes a strong violation of Convention 87 on freedom of association. According to the ITUC, Head Judge Jassem wanted to create a precedent and send a strong message to workers "who resort to illegal methods to get their rights from employers."

"These workers must be released with no delay," declared Guy Ryder, ITUC General Secretary. "Workers, and especially migrants workers in this particular case, must be free to exercise their rights to freedom of association and expression," he added.

In a letter sent to the ILO, International Labour Office, http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ITUC_request_for_ILO_intervention_UAE_13_March_2008.pdf the ITUC requested the Office's urgent intervention with the authorities of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates in order to secure the immediate release of the workers and to have the ongoing sanctions against them dropped.

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates.

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