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Tibet: Repression must stop

Brussels, 18 March 2008 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC today expressed deep concern at the widespread violence in Tibet in recent days which has reportedly cost dozens of lives and the announced crackdown and "severe punishment" by the Chinese authorities of those they hold responsible for demonstrations and damage.

The immediate trigger for these events was the commemoration of a failed uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet, but its deeper roots have to do with decades of repression, denial of human rights, and developmental failure.

Tibet remains a neglected and impoverished backwater of the Chinese state and its workers are denied the wage levels and protections offered to ethnic Han Chinese as well as being subject to the general restriction of their cultural and religious freedoms.

"Recognition of democratic freedoms and human rights, autonomy for Tibet, and of the cultural rights of its people as well as serious approaches to its development needs are the way towards a durable settlement of this crisis", said ITUC General Secretary, Guy Ryder. "Repression must stop and demonstrators need to refrain from acts of violence and from targeting Han Chinese. The international spotlight will remain on the Chinese authorities throughout this Olympic Year and beyond and they have a real chance to prove to the world that they are ready to discard repression and denial of human rights and to take up a genuine commitment to democracy and the rule of law", he added.

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

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