

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC Online...

069/180408

ITUC Supports Action on Zimbabwe Arms Shipment

Brussels, 18 April 2008 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has expressed its full support to the International Transport Workers' Federation and its affiliate SATAWU in South Africa, following the transport union's declaration that its port members will not unload a ship currently in Durban harbour, carrying arms destined for the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe. The Chinese ship, the An Yue Jiang, is understood to be carrying some 77 tonnes of arms and ammunition, including millions of AK-47 rounds, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades, mortar tubes and mortar rounds.

"South African trade unionists have been in the forefront of international solidarity for the people of Zimbabwe and their trade union movement. This solidarity is critically important at a time when the Zimbabwean government, notorious for its appalling record of violations of trade union and other human rights, is showing every sign of manipulating the results of the recent elections", said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "The Mugabe regime has unleashed a new wave of violence against Zimbabweans who dare to stand up for their legitimate democratic rights, and the possibility that the dwindling but hard core band of Mr Mugabe's supporters could have access to more weapons to use against their own people is horrifying", he added.

SATAWU has also indicated that none of its members in the trucking sector would be prepared to move the cargo, and has called upon the ship to return to its home country. SATAWU is a member of the ITUC affiliate COSATU, which has voiced its concern that the Zimbabwean government "will violate human rights and use these arms against its opponents".

"The situation in Zimbabwe is deteriorating even further, with the economy on the brink of complete meltdown, and clear signs that the will of the Zimbabwean people, expressed at the ballot box, is being denied. We urge the international community, and Zimbabwe's neighbours in particular, to bring to bear the pressure needed to ensure a peaceful transition to full respect for democracy and the rights of Zimbabweans", said Ryder.

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

For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on: +32 2 224 0204 or +32 476 621 018.

You are currently subscribed to ituc-online as: Rainer.Gries@fes.de

To unsubscribe send a blank email to leave-ituc-online-333432T@forum.ituc-csi.org