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## INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

### ITUC Online...

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#### ITUC and ITF Call on Angola and Namibia to Refuse Zimbabwe Arms Shipment

Brussels, 22 April 2008 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC and the International Transport Workers' Federation are writing to the Presidents of Angola and Namibia calling on them to refuse to allow an arm shipment destined for Zimbabwe to be unloaded at their ports. The arms are part of a cargo aboard the Chinese-owned ship An Yue Jiang, which left Durban harbour at the weekend after the ITF-affiliated South African Transport Workers' Union refused to allow it to unload. The ship departed in spite of a Durban High Court ruling that the arms should be put under the control of the Sheriff of Durban, and is believed to be heading for either Namibia or Angola, having been refused permission to dock in Mozambique. ITUC and ITF affiliates in Angola, Namibia and elsewhere in southern Africa are on alert for the ship.

"We are deeply concerned at the possibility that the Mugabe regime could get its hands on these weapons and use them against Zimbabweans who do not support Mugabe's ZANU-PF party, which is clearly trying to manipulate the results of the March 29 elections", said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

Opponents of the regime and Zimbabweans suspected of not voting for ZANU-PF have been subjected to a renewed wave of violence in recent days, with reports of up to ten killed by thugs allied to ZANU-PF and many more injured. The ITUC-affiliated Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, backed by South African affiliate COSATU and others in the region, has called for international solidarity action to stop the arms reaching the country, and has requested the official All China Federation of Trade Unions to take supporting action in the country of origin of the shipment, China.

In a further development, the South African courts have also ordered that the ship's cargo, which also includes materials other than arms, be impounded following a case brought by German development bank KfW IPEX-Bank which is seeking compensation for unpaid debts incurred by the Mugabe government over a loan to a state-run company.

"The ITF and its affiliates in the region are monitoring the situation very closely, and will maintain pressure on the governments concerned and the ship's owners until the arms are either placed under the control of the Sheriff of Durban, or returned to the country of origin. The international trade union movement will not let up in its campaign to support democracy and workers' rights in Zimbabwe", said ITF General Secretary David Cockroft.

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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