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South Ossetia: Peace Talks and Cease-fire Urgently Needed

Brussels, 8 August 2008 (ITUC OnLine): With tensions over South Ossetia deepening and the risk of the current fighting escalating into a major armed confrontation, the ITUC and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) have called on Georgia, Russia and the South Ossetians to pull back from the brink of conflict. Georgia has announced a full mobilization of its military, and its troops are reportedly involved in fighting in the South Ossetian capital Tskhinvali. Russia and Georgia have each accused the other of aggressive actions as the situation has deteriorated. Emergency discussions at the UN Security Council on Thursday night ended without agreement on a Russian-proposed statement.

"All the parties concerned need to cease military action and get back into talks immediately, and sort this out through dialogue and negotiation rather than through force of arms. Along with the devastating immediate consequences of any armed conflict, a failure to resolve the situation peacefully would have serious social and economic impacts in the region," said John Monks, general secretary of the ETUC and of the ITUC's Pan-European Regional Council.

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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