

>>> "ITUC Press" <press@ituc-csi.org> 11.08.2008 15:51 >>>
INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC Online

147/110808

Georgia-Russia Conflict a Humanitarian Tragedy and a Threat to Broader Peace and Stability

Brussels, 11 August 2008 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC and the European Trade Union Confederation have expressed their grave concerns at the escalation of the conflict between Georgia and Russia, its impact on civilians and the deepening threat to stability in the region.

"We call upon all parties involved to observe an immediate and total cease-fire, and enter negotiations to bring an end to the conflict and to resolve the underlying issues which have led to it," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

Some 2,000 people are believed to have been killed in South Ossetia, and 100 or more in Georgia, with many more wounded. Ten members of the Dockworkers' Union in the Georgian port of Poti are reported killed and 15 injured. Tens of thousands of refugees are understood to have been displaced from South Ossetia and neighbouring areas, underlining the urgent need for a major humanitarian effort alongside peace talks.

ITUC affiliates in Russia (FNPR) and Georgia (GTUC) have both called on the international trade union movement to support efforts to put a stop to the fighting, and the ITUC is maintaining close contact with them.

"We are also appealing to the United Nations, to the European Union and to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to put their full weight behind the quest for a peaceful, negotiated end to this conflict," said Ryder.

Joint ITUC-ETUC Statement of 8 August
<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article2344&lang=en>

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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