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Gaza: End of Fighting Opens Opportunity for Real Peace and Justice

Brussels, 19 January 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The cessation of fighting in Gaza opens a vital opportunity to build a just and lasting peace, which both Israel and Palestine must seize, in order to end the cycle of conflict and ensure justice for the Palestinian people. The international community must do its utmost to help ensure that this happens, and needs to mobilize a massive humanitarian and reconstruction effort for Gaza.

"Nothing can bring back the hundreds of completely innocent victims whose lives were taken from them. There is not a moment to lose in re-starting negotiations to achieve a just settlement to the conflict, to make sure that no more innocent lives are lost in the future," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

Urgent and large-scale humanitarian relief must be a priority for the international community, to help medical services cope with the thousands of wounded and enable people to begin to rebuild their shattered lives. Reconstruction of the thousands of destroyed and damaged buildings and other infrastructure needs to take place without delay, and the blockade of Gaza has to be lifted to allow its economy, already on its knees before the fighting, to develop.

"United Nations Resolutions set out the principles for achieving a just and durable peace, with two sovereign and democratic states living side by side. These Resolutions must now be implemented in full and with urgency. Guarantees of long-denied justice for Palestinians, and security for all in the region, will be critically important if real progress is to be made, and if the horrendous events of these last weeks of fighting are never to be repeated," said Ryder.

The second shipment of trade union humanitarian aid to Gaza, due to arrive this Wednesday, includes urgently-needed supplies provided from the ITUC solidarity appeal and delivered via the ITUC/ITF humanitarian effort in coordination with their Palestinian and Jordanian affiliates.

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 316 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>

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

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