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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

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Democratic Republic of Congo: Three Trade Unionists Under Arrest

Brussels, 18 March 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The International Trade Union Confederation has strongly protested against the arbitrary arrest and judicial harassment of Mr Nginama Malaba, president of the Congolese trade union centre CCT (one of the ITUC's affiliates in Congo), and two other trade unionists. The three detainees have been tortured and mistreated by the authorities.

The trade unionists were arrested in January, after signing a memorandum denouncing the misappropriation of public funds by the Ministry of the National Economy and Trade and demanding the reassignment of bonuses on revenues as well as the payment of incentive bonuses to the staff at the ministry.

The president of the CCT, now charged with the forgery of documents, was deprived of the right to see a lawyer, to receive visits from his family and access to basic medical care until mid February, when he was transferred to the penitentiary and rehabilitation centre of Kinshasa, the CPRK.

"The plight of trade unionists in the Democratic Republic of Congo is extremely worrying," said Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC. "There can be no justification for a policy of repression. Trade unions play an essential role in all democracies," he added.

In a letter to the authorities

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/09-03-18_Trois_syndicalistes_detenus.pdf, the ITUC urged the Congolese government to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of the three trade unionists and to take every measure necessary to ensure that trade unionists in the DRC can exercise their rights without fear of reprisal or the violation of their fundamental rights.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>

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