

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Madagascar: Call for a Lasting Democratic Solution to the Political and Social Crisis

Brussels, 30 March 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The international trade union movement has launched a strong appeal for a lasting solution to the political and social crisis that is taking a heavy toll on the workers of Madagascar.

The crisis was triggered on 13 December 2008, when the Communications Ministry withdrew the licence of a television station belonging to the mayor of Antananarivo, Andry Rajoelina. The move fuelled unrest, which finally led to the toppling of the government. The country remains in turmoil. A High Transitional Authority (HAT) has taken power but many have voiced protest, pointing out that the Constitution has not been respected.

Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC, has advised extreme caution: "The global crisis we are experiencing, as indicated by the latest estimates of the ILO, is set to plunge some 200 million workers into extreme poverty. Madagascar is among the world's least developed countries (LDCs). The social crisis is also at the root of the political crisis in the country and everything would point to the fact that conditions have worsened since December. Workers have been paying too high a price for far too long for all these vagaries."

The ITUC has launched a vigorous call for a democratic solution to the crisis, insisting that the trade unions (1) be fully involved in the negotiations to resolve the crisis and that, in addition to a return to Constitutional rule, solid social measures should be taken. It also called for the prosecution of those responsible for acts of violence such as those seen on 7 February when the security forces fired real bullets at demonstrators, killing 28 people and injuring over 200 others.

(1) The ITUC has four affiliated organisations in Madagascar: FISEMA, FMM, SEKRIMA and USAM.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries and territories.

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