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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

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Korea: Brutal attack against the Ssangyong Motors Branch workers

Brussels, 28 July 2009: In a letter (http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Protest_-_RE_police_violence_against_striking_workers_-_24-07-09.pdf) last week to Mr Lee Myung-bak, the president of the Republic of Korea, the ITUC condemns the brutal attacks against the striking workers of the Ssangyong Motor Pyeongtaek plant.

Since July 16, management at the plant has blocked all food from entering the factory.

On July 19, it began to disallow medical doctors and nurses from entering the compound.

At 10:00 am on July 22, riot police entered the factory compound with court officials and creditors who tried to deliver a forced eviction order. The police surrounded the paint factory where 800 workers are sitting in on the 63rd day of their strike.

Over 3,000 riot police and around 30 vehicles including water cannons, ladder trucks and helicopters have been mobilized for this operation.

"We are deeply concerned about the blockade on water, food, access to medicine and medical treatment for the workers as well as the constant battery with chemical substances including teargas concentrate dropped from helicopters", said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "These represent violations against basic human dignity",

Accounts and photos from the riot, taken by Korean trade unionists, showed an unacceptable level of unrestrained brutality exercised by the riot police.

The ITUC wants the government of the Republic of Korea to urgently end the brutal attack against the Ssangyong Motors Branch workers, to withdraw all pending arrest warrants and release all imprisoned union leaders related to this strike. It also urged the government to immediately begin negotiations with the Korean Metal Workers' Union to promote a peaceful resolution through dialogue.

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

Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org> <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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