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Tunisia: Imprisoned Trade Unionists Released

Brussels, 6 November 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has learned of the release, yesterday, of a group of trade unionists imprisoned on charges of public disorder, following protests in June 2008 over escalating living costs, corruption and unemployment in the Gafsa region of Tunisia. Thirty-eight protesters, including a local leader of the ITUC-affiliated UGTT, Adnane Hajji, and journalist Fahem Boukaddous, were sentenced to prison terms, in some cases of several years. The releases were ordered through a presidential pardon, issued to mark the 22nd anniversary of the accession to power of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

"We are pleased that Adnane Hajji and the others have been released from prison; however, the sentences against them still in effect stand. We call upon the Tunisian authorities to overturn the sentences and remove this unjust judicial stain against them," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 158 countries and territories and has 316 national affiliates.

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