

ITUC OnLine

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2010 International Day Against Racism and Xenophobia

Brussels, 22 March 2010 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC is taking the opportunity of the International Day Against Racism and Xenophobia to recall that racism and xenophobia constitute serious violations of human rights and to urge governments, employers and trade unions around the world to promote respect for diversity and multicultural interaction and to actively combat discrimination based on ethnic backgrounds, nationality or colour of skin and to be extra vigilant in these times of global economic crisis that provide a breeding ground for unfettered extreme expressions of racism and social exclusion and an increased societal tolerance for them.

The financial crisis is still very destructive in terms of employment. Respect for diversity in the workplace is essential, especially when important gaps remain in society, such as discrimination in the world of work.

Discrimination at work is a principal form of racial discrimination. While trade unions fight for decent work for all, migrant workers are all too often victims of discrimination. Italy has recently been the theatre of extremely violent incidents against migrant workers, in particular in the city of Rosarno, a clear indication of rising xenophobia and growing racist tendencies in parts of Europe. "The situation of those workers in Italy and the abuse, discrimination and exploitation is an alarming reminder that racism is still a widespread evil," added Ryder.

In Thailand, a large number of migrant workers face detention and forced deportation. The majority face deportation to Burma, where they are likely to be faced with severe repression from the military regime.

Racism, discrimination and xenophobia allow slavery to persist in Western Africa, where certain castes are still enslaved by their traditional masters and new forms, such as bonded labour and human trafficking, spread rapidly due to uninhibited globalisation.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 155 countries.

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