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Côte d'Ivoire: The ITUC calls for an end to the violence and for respect for democratic principles

Brussels, 23 December 2010 (ITUC OnLine): The political crisis that has gripped Côte d'Ivoire since the second round of the presidential election on 28 November, held under the supervision of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations, is descending dangerously into violence.

According to reports received by the ITUC, over 50 people have so far died and around 210 have been injured as the result of clashes between supporters of the two candidates in the presidential election. A prolonged electoral crisis would also have a devastating impact on living and working conditions.

The workers and the whole population of Côte d'Ivoire demonstrated their desire for democracy by participating in large numbers in the second round of the election, intended to end the political crisis that has persisted since 2002. "We share the position of our African regional organisation ITUC-Africa," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow. "The violence must stop immediately. It is possible to find a way out of this terrible situation, which is having devastating effects on all the people of Côte d'Ivoire. Every effort must be made to prevent sectarianism, which will divide the people of Côte d'Ivoire, and to allow democratic principles to be upheld."

An important meeting is due to take place on Friday in Abuja (Nigeria), where an ECOWAS summit on the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire is to be held. It is the responsibility of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations to rigorously enforce the principles of legitimacy and legality in accordance with the wishes of the population of Côte d'Ivoire as expressed at the second round of the presidential election.

The ITUC has also appealed to the UGTCI and Dignité, its two affiliates in Côte d'Ivoire, to take active steps to promote a peaceful resolution to the crisis based on democratic principles and in accordance with the will expressed by the country's population.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 301 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>
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