

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine
148/040811

Syria: stop the state-organized massive murder

"For nearly five months, the Assad regime has been massacring its own population and in recent days the massive military assault in several cities is a horrifying confirmation of the total illegitimacy of this regime and its denial of any tiny bit of humanity", said Sharan Burrow, ITUC general secretary. "The ITUC welcomes the UN Security Council's statement condemning human rights violations and the use of force against civilians. The ITUC urges the international community to take action now to ensure that more peaceful protestors and others civilians are not killed. Concerted international action is needed now, in coming hours. As each hour passes, the results are more violence, repression and deaths", she added.

Human rights groups say at least 140 people have been killed in the Syrian unrest since Sunday, mainly in Hama, adding to a civilian death toll believed to be more than 1,600 since March 15.

Residents of Hama, 210 km north of the capital Damascus, said tanks have shot their way into the central square of the city of 800,000 people. Intensive shelling for three days is part of the regime's increasing attempt to crush massive anti-government protests in Hama, with a hospital among the buildings coming under attack. According to the BBC, some families in Hama have buried their dead in parks or in the gardens of their own homes because they are afraid to go out. Activists said troops were firing machine guns at worshippers heading out to mosques.

There have also been reports of intense shooting in the eastern city of Deir al-Zour, and of tanks storming the eastern town of Abu Kamal, on the border with Iraq, which activists say has been under siege for about two weeks.

At least six people have been killed in a suburb of Damascus, the Syrian capital, reports said on Tuesday, after a renewed wave of protest marches were held following nightly Ramadan prayers. According to Reuters, security cars with machine guns assembled on a roundabout in the Erbin suburb in the city before firing on civilians.

"Foreign reporters as well as humanitarian and human rights organisations must be allowed to work. The Syrian people's desire for basic freedoms and social justice are fully legitimate. Those responsible for this massacre will be accountable, according to the international law" concluded Sharan Burrow.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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