

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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### Defection of Syrian Prime Minister Weakens Assad's Grip on Power

Brussels, 6 August 2012 (ITUC OnLine): The defection of Syrian Prime Minister Riyad Hijab to the opposition has severely weakened President Bashar al-Assad's grip on political power, but the armed conflict raging across the country shows no signs of abating. Hijab, who had served as Prime Minister for just two months, left Syria for Jordan, describing Assad's regime as "killing and terrorist".

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said "The Prime Minister's defection underlines just how ruthless and morally corrupt the regime is. Although this is a huge political blow to Bashar al-Assad, there is no sign of any let-up in the fighting. The appalling toll of death and injury continues to mount, and the longer the fighting continues, the harder it will be to reconstruct the country and overcome the divisions to build a new Syria based on democracy and respect for the rule of law."

Disturbing new evidence of how foreign migrant workers are being caught up in the conflict is emerging, with tens of thousands still in the country unable to return home. Many of them, mostly female domestic workers, come from South-East Asia. To date less than 10% have been evacuated to the Philippines, Indonesia and other countries of origin, and the trafficking into Syria continues.

To read the dramatic story of Domestic Worker "Elena's" Escape from Syria, see:  
<http://www.ituc-csi.org/syria-domestic-worker-elena-s.html>

Philippines ratifies ILO Convention 189 see: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/domestic-workers-convention-comes.html>

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 308 national affiliates.

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