

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

South Africa: ITUC Condemns Lonmin Killings

Brussels, 17 August 2012 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has described the wave of violence at South Africa's Lonmin Marikana platinum mine as appalling, with as many as 36 killed yesterday when police opened fire on striking miners. 10 people had previously been killed in the past week as violence at the mine escalated.

"Every worker should be able to go to work knowing that their life and physical safety is guaranteed. We send our deepest condolences to all those who have lost loved ones, and plead for all those involved to renounce violence and solve the dispute peacefully. We trust that the South African authorities will ensure a full investigation into the Lonmin violence, both the appalling killings yesterday and the spiral of violence which led up to it. Those responsible must be brought to justice," said Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary.

Conflict within the mine between rival groups of workers aligned with different unions has intensified in recent weeks, along with episodes of violence elsewhere in the mining sector. On top of demands for better pay, abysmal living conditions for many miners have exacerbated tensions.

"The only way to resolve this situation is through negotiation and dialogue. We trust that intervention from the leadership of both unions, NUM and AMCU, as well as responsible behavior from the mine management which itself has a major responsibility for this situation, will bring calm and an agreed settlement that brings justice to all the workers," said Burrow.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 308 affiliated national organisations from 153 countries and territories.

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