

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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African Unions Lead Global Protests on Swaziland Independence Day

Brussels, 6 September 2012 (ITUC OnLine): African trade unions and other civil society organisations have led international protests against Swaziland's rulers on 6 September, the country's independence day. A 5 September picket in front of the Swazi consulate in Johannesburg was joined by 18 union leaders from across the continent, including Kwasi-Adu Amakwah, General Secretary of ITUC-Africa. National solidarity actions also took place in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Belgium, Germany and the UK.

The protests are part of a week of action on Swaziland, in response to the continuing suppression of the democracy movement there, including the banned national trade union centre TUCOSWA. Peaceful marches inside the country this week have been met with violent repression and arrests.

Swaziland is one of the last absolute monarchies in the world. About 60% of its population gets by on less than 1.25 USD per day, while King Mswati sends his family members shopping in Germany with his private jet. The country's economy is in tatters after almost forty years of "Tinkhundla" rule, after a state of emergency was established in 1973, giving the monarchy almost unlimited power. Political parties are banned, there is no press freedom or independent judiciary, and the king himself appoints the government.

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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