



SHARAN BURROW
PRESIDENT
PRÉSIDENTE
PRÄSIDENTIN
PRESIDENTA

GUY RYDER
GENERAL SECRETARY
SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL
GENERALSEKRETÄR
SECRETARIO GENERAL

His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Babaginda,
Chairperson of the ECOWAS Mission to
the Republic of Guinea,
c/o Novotel Conakry,
Republic of Guinea

By hand and telefax

TUR/JK

24 February 2007

Guinea – your current Mission as Representative of ECOWAS

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and of the 168 million workers whom it represents through its 304 affiliated national trade union centres in 153 countries, including all the Member of the Economic Community of West African States, it is my privilege to thank you for the efforts which you are currently leading in order to help bring a solution, through the ECOWAS mediation, to the deep crisis affecting our brothers and sisters in Guinea.

At the request of our affiliated organisations in Guinea, I am pleased to forward you the translation of an open letter which I have addressed just a few days ago to the Inter-Union Coordination of USTG-CNTG extended to the ONSLG and UDTG. It summarises our main concerns about the present crisis and reports on the steps which we have taken and continue to take following the return of a high-level international solidarity mission which I had the honour to lead in Guinea earlier this month. My letter also expresses the international trade union movement's full support to the Guinean trade unions in their legitimate demands for a full and immediate implementation of the 27th January Agreements signed with the Government. First and foremost in this respect is the realisation of two essential commitments contained therein, that is, firstly, the appointment of a Prime Minister with extended powers, Head of a consensus Government and acceptable to the Guinean people and trade union movement and, secondly, the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into the severe repression of the general strike, which has caused over 120 deaths so far, according to conservative estimates, as well as countless wounded, arrests and other, often very severe violations of fundamental human rights.

I should also like to add that the ITUC has followed with the utmost concern the latest developments in Guinea, in particular the National Assembly's refusal to extend martial law, yesterday, followed by the announcement by the Army Chief of Staff, General Kerfalla Camara, late last night, that he had issued instructions to all government officials to put an end to the general strike called by the country's trade unions. I cannot stress forcefully enough, Mr. President, that such a denial by senior military and state officials of fundamental trade union rights, including the right to strike, guaranteed by Guinea's Constitution and international labour law alike, is completely unacceptable to the international trade union movement. We are moreover extremely concerned that the above-mentioned announcement may result in further troubles and also lead to the arrest of trade union leaders, which would constitute a blatant disrespect of international law. We have shared these concerns with the Director-General of the

International Labour Organisation, Ambassador Juan Somavia, with whom we remain in constant contact and who in turn shares his own preoccupation with the United Nations at the highest level.

I would therefore very much appreciate it, Mr. President, if you could kindly forward to the highest level of Guinean State authorities the very serious preoccupation of the international labour movement concerning these matters. It has certainly not escaped your attention that the international community, including many Governments, international and regional organisations, is looking with hope and confidence at the very important ECOWAS mission which you are leading. Our best wishes for a successful outcome of your efforts accompany you in this challenging task.

Thanking you in advance for your attention to our concerns, I remain,

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Guy Ryder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'G' and 'R'.

General Secretary

Cc: Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General, International Labour Organisation, Geneva