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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC Statement on Mali

Brussels, 24 January 2013 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has welcomed signs that some elements of the extremist insurgency in Mali are calling for dialogue and are now rejecting violence. People in the north of the country have lived in fear since the terrorists, including foreign militants, took control some 10 months ago, launching a wave of killings, amputations and floggings under a regime of terror aimed at women in particular. The apparent split within the 'Ansar Dine' movement follows the French military intervention, which has been welcomed by Mali's trade unions and other key groups in the country.

The possibility of dialogue brings hope that there could be a negotiated end to the conflict; however, this must not mean that the people are once again subjected to the violent rule of groups like Ansar Dine. Mali has an acute need for support to build democratic and effective government, and the international community including the UN and the African Union must help that to happen. Decades of neglect of Mali's economic and social development must be reversed, with the Malian people in charge of their own destiny and empowered to develop their own economy, create jobs and tackle the appalling deficits in health, education, and the other vital services which would enable families and communities to look to the future with confidence.

The ITUC unequivocally condemns those such as the WFTU who, under whatever pretext, have sided with the terrorists in Mali and called for the international community to turn its back on the Malian people. The ITUC will remain in close contact with its Malian affiliates, for further information and guidance, as the situation evolves.

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