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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

Syria: Use of Chemical Weapons is Inexcusable

Brussels, 26 August 2013 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC is calling for the United Nations to complete a speedy and thorough investigation into the use of chemical weapons in Syria, as details of the death and injury toll from last Wednesday's attack on the rebel-held Ghouta area emerge. Local hospitals have informed Médecins Sans Frontières that around 3,600 people have been treated for apparent neurotoxic symptoms, and that 355 of them have died.

"This is the fourth, and most serious use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict. While the Assad regime delayed approval for the UN inspection visit, the UN team should try to establish the full facts of the deployment of these horrific weapons, including any indications as to who carried out the attack," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

Assad's forces subjected the area to heavy artillery bombardment in the days following the attack, reinforcing suspicion that it was responsible. Syria is one of only seven countries to have refused to sign the UN Chemical Weapons Convention.

"The international community must step up the quest for a political settlement to end the violence in Syria, and has to act urgently to stop any further use of these appalling weapons. The people responsible for these chemical attacks must be brought to justice," said Burrow.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 156 countries and territories and has 315 national affiliates.

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