



2nd July 2021

PRESS STATEMENT

ITUC-Africa supports the struggle for Human Rights and Democracy in Eswatini

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa www.ituc-africa.org) condemns the deployment of excessive and lethal force against peaceful protesters in Eswatini this past week. As at yesterday, 1st of July 2021, reports indicated that at least 20 persons had been shot dead by security agencies who are viciously cracking down on the protesters. Scores of protesters are hospitalised with varying degrees of injuries from gunshots.

ITUC-Africa expresses its deep condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a quick recovery to the injured ones.

We are informed that the peaceful protest started in the Manzini region of Africa's last absolute monarchy on June 20 when youth took to the streets demanding the right to democratically elect the Prime Minister. The protests escalated into violence and looting over the weekend when the government took a hard-line stance against the demonstrations and prohibited the delivery of petitions.

We call on the eSwatini State and its security agencies to protect peaceful protesters. We further urge the investigation, prosecution and sanctioning of security agents who have used excessive and disproportionate force against peaceful protesters.

ITUC-Africa further expresses concern about the growing climate of insecurity and its impact on the livelihoods of thousands of workers.

We remind the Eswatini government of its responsibility to uphold the African Union's Protocol on Democracy, Election and Governance, to which eSwatini is a signatory. Eswatini must conform with the requirement for Member States to respect the universal values and principles of democracy and respect for human rights.

ITUC-Africa demands the immediate and unconditional release all those who have been arrested for protesting and calls on the government to put a stop to the repression of

democratic forces. We urge the government to enter into genuine and constructive dialogue with the protesters with the view to overcoming the political impasse that is emerging and to undertake steps towards satisfying the yearning for democratic governance that is growing in Eswatini.

ITUC-Africa affirms its solidarity with the workers and people of Eswatini in their genuine struggle for human rights and democratic governance.

Kwasi Adu-Amankwah
General Secretary.