



STATEMENT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): Not yet Uhuru for African people and workers

Today, December the 10th marks the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adoption in 1948.

This day serves as an opportunity to recall that human rights are universal, indivisible, inalienable, interdependent and interrelated. Whilst their promotion and protection are imperative to uphold human dignity, the genuine respect and fulfilment of human rights are also indispensable for peace, democracy, and sustainable development.

However, this year, we have seen severe attacks on human rights on a massive scale in Africa. The spate of coups, especially in West Africa: in Guinea, Burkina Faso, Sudan, and Chad, failed ones in Niger, Guinea Bissau and Sao Tome and Principe partly strongly suggest that democracy and institutions that are supposed to uphold it are not delivering the much-needed dividends to constituents and constituencies.

In Sudan, the coup that hijacked the people's revolution ushered in a military rule that has degenerated the country into multiple severe crises: political, social, security, economic and humanitarian. The unjustified aggression and use of force on innocent civilians who have been demonstrating against the regime have continued to cause inconceivable human suffering, grave human rights violations and abuses resulting in the deaths of civilians. Women and girls have come under heinous attacks through repressive and restrictive policies in Sudan and many countries and have suffered disproportionately from human rights abuses in conflict settings. Freedom of Association for Trade Unions, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression online and offline, and freedom of the media remain under serious threat in Sudan and many African countries. ITUC-Africa has expressed deep concern about the further deteriorating human rights situation in Sudan and across Africa.

Peace and security should not be taken for granted. The ITUC-Africa also notes with growing concern the recent and growing use of harassment, censorship, arrest, criminal prosecution in closed trials, and harsh prison sentences to stifle free expression and

punish free association in many African countries. We stand with the trade unionists, journalists, lawyers, civil society activists, and others arrested for exercising their fundamental freedoms peacefully. We urge African governments to uphold the rights of all their citizens, as guaranteed by the African Charter on People's Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially Article 10 (of the Charter), which promulgates the Right to Freedom of Association and Article 21 (of the UDRH), respectively. In particular, we call on the military government in Sudan to rescind its decision to administer civil liberties for the people and workers. The government must respect the Supreme Court judgment that upholds workers' right to form and freely join trade unions of their choice.

This Human Rights Day is an opportunity for the community of nations to reflect on our international obligations and commitments that provide equitable treatment for all while providing security for our societies. The ITUC-Africa will continue to work with our affiliates and governments to achieve these goals.

ITUC-Africa commits to re-double its efforts to stand with and speak out for the oppressed workers and those under threat, wherever they may live.

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General Secretary.