

EI Africa Committee Meeting

20 - 22 March 2023,

Holiday Inn Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa

RESOLUTION ON THE SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The Education International Africa Regional Committee (EIARC), meeting on 21 and 22 March 2023,

1. Observing that the Government of the Central African Republic ratified all the 8 ILO Fundamental Conventions, including C87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise and C98 on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining;
2. Further observing that despite the ratification of these international treaties, workers' right to strike is not respected in the Central African Republic;
3. Noting that the attempt by teacher unions to effectively engage the Government on matters pertaining to working conditions, remuneration and other allowances, was disregarded by the Minister of Education (despite that on 23 January, the education trade unions filed a three-day strike notice, but no negotiation proposal was made by the authorities; that between 31 January and 2 February, teachers observed a three-day strike, followed by an eight-day strike from 21 to 28 February, again without any will from the government to open negotiations with the unions);
4. Alarmed by the reaction of the Government of the Central African Republic to teachers' demands for better conditions of work by arresting their union leaders as a result of carrying out their legal right by calling for a strike;
5. Concerned that following the decisions of the Syndicat National des Enseignants Autonomes de Centrafrique (SYNEAC, a member organisation of Education International), the Syndicat des Travailleurs pour le Développement (STD) and the Fédération de l'Enseignement Technique (FET) to renew their strike, the Minister of National Education threatened to punish teachers who observed the strike;
6. Profoundly shocked by the contemptuous attitude shown by the Education Minister of the Central African Republic towards teachers and their organisations;
7. Noting with relief that following EIRAF's call for immediate and unconditional release of the three leaders of Syndicat National des Enseignants Autonomes de Centrafrique (SYNEAC), Syndicat des Travailleurs pour le Développement (STD) and the Fédération de l'Enseignement Technique (FET) unjustly arrested in Bangui on 9th March 2023 by the police, the three union leaders were released but the challenge still remains;
8. Also welcoming the decision by the President of the Central African Republic to meet with education union leaders on Tuesday 14 March 2023 for discussions over their demands;

The EIARC urges the Government of the Central African Republic to:

9. Respect international labour standards, in particular ILO Conventions 87 and 98;
10. Engage in genuine and continuous social dialogue with the education unions in their legitimate struggle to improve teachers' working conditions and remuneration; and,
11. Stop victimising teachers and union leaders by threatening or arresting them for participating in strike actions.