



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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Press Release

FRENCH LED AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AGENCY ENDANGERS TRAVELLING PUBLIC IN AFRICAN SKIES BY DETAINING ATC STAFF AND USING UNQUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Air traffic controllers in a number of African Countries belonging to the French controlled Agence pour la Securite de la Navigation Aerienne (ASECNA) have been undertaking "Radio Silence" action from 29 July 2008 following a professional and industrial dispute with the organization. Air traffic controllers are now being harassed for finally deciding to strike, out of extreme frustration imposed on them by the ASECNA authorities following a prolonged and unsuccessful struggle to have their grievances addressed.

As a result of the present industrial action, some ASECNA authorities have reacted in a completely unjustifiable and vindictive manner by detaining the skilled air traffic controllers and placing non-qualified personnel at airports in an attempt to maintain air services.

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) strongly condemns ASECNA for its reaction which is a blatant disregard of international safety standards and disrespect to the travelling public in the skies over Africa. ASECNA's action is not only dangerous, but is also contrary to the international aviation procedures and will only result in a further deterioration of the safety standards within ASECNA's area of responsibility.

For more than 10 years the professional and hard working air traffic control staff throughout the ASECNA area have attempted to get the ASECNA authorities to implement the basic safety practices and operational procedures that are among the required international standards and also to improve their working conditions.

ASECNA has disregarded its international obligation of training air traffic controllers to achieve level-4 language proficiency. The organization has also ignored decisions made by member States of ASECNA related to entry qualification level for the profession and has deliberately delayed the introduction of ICAO Air Traffic Controller License. Furthermore, the air traffic controllers employed by ASECNA continue to be subjected to working conditions well below the standard of those of their colleagues in other parts of Africa and the rest of the third world. These actions by ASECNA have contributed to there being a significant shortage of ATCOs in ASECNA member states.

It is unacceptable that numerous agreed international safety standards continue to be ignored by ASECNA, compromising air safety and jeopardising the well being of the airline passengers in African airspace and airports under ASECNA control.

IFATCA calls upon ASECNA to immediately cease the repressive practices of some of its members, release those who have been unjustifiably detained, reinstate all of the air traffic control staff to the workplace and implement the international safety standards and agreed procedures. Failure to do so will further demonstrate to the world-wide aviation community the lack of responsibility of ASECNA and could lead to a further worsening of the already critical safety record of the region.

For more information please contact : office@ifatca.org, or +1 514 866 7040

IFATCA is the worldwide organization representing more than fifty thousand air traffic controllers in 133 countries. Amongst its goals are the promotion of safety, efficiency and regularity in international air navigation and the protection and safeguarding of the interests of the air traffic control profession.
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