

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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COSATU Delegation Once Again Expelled from Zimbabwe

Brussels, 2 February 2005 (ICFTU OnLine): A delegation from the ICFTU-affiliated Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) which arrived today in Zimbabwe was immediately expelled by the country's immigration authorities. The planned 48-hour visit was intended to bring together COSATU representatives with their colleagues from the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), also an ICFTU affiliate. The purpose of the visit, led by COSATU General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi, was to discuss issues confronting workers in Zimbabwe and in the region in general.

Three months ago, a similar COSATU delegation was expelled from Zimbabwe, prompting the ICFTU to bring the issue before the UN's International Labour Organisation (ILO), as part of an ongoing case. The latest expulsion will also be added to this case.

The Zimbabwean government continues to repress trade union activities in the country. Representatives of the ZCTU and its affiliates are frequently harassed, beaten arrested and mistreated by the Mugabe regime's police.

This new expulsion of South African trade unionists comes two months before elections for the Zimbabwean legislature, planned for 31 March. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change has not yet decided whether it will participate in the elections.

"The ICFTU is determined to support the legitimate rights of Zimbabwean workers, in every way we can. This latest expulsion is a disgraceful violation of these rights", said ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers in 233 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

For more information, please contact the ICFTU Press Department on +32 2 224 0232 or +32 477 580 486.

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