

>>> "ITUC Press" <press@ituc-csi.org> 11.06.2008 17:09 >>>

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

113/110608

Zimbabwe: Heavy Criticism of Mugabe Regime at ILO Conference, Anti-union Violence Continuing

Brussels, 11 June 2008 (ITUC OnLine): Zimbabwe has come under heavy criticism from the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards at the International Labour Conference currently taking place in Geneva. The Committee, comprised of government, employer and trade union representatives, expressed deep concern at the surge in trade union and human rights violations, including the recent arrests of Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) leaders Lovemore Matombo and Wellington Chibebe, and the regime's "massive violence against teachers". It also deplored the government's refusal to accept ILO assistance to improve the situation, and called on it to immediately halt all arrests, detentions, threats and harassment of trade union leaders and their members, to drop all charges against them and to provide them with compensation.

The Committee also called for governments to consider submitting a complaint against Zimbabwe under Article 26 of the ILO Constitution, and for an ILO Commission of Inquiry, the highest level ILO investigative procedure, to be established. The report of the Committee will be presented to the ILO Conference plenary for adoption this Friday.

Violence and intimidation against trade unions is continuing inside the country, as supporters of the regime clamp down on unions in advance of the re-run of the presidential election. Supporters of the ruling party and so-called "war veterans" stormed the offices of the ZCTU-affiliated Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) in Gokwe on 9 June and severely beat local union official Moses Mhaka, having already abducted and detained a member of the union for nine hours. Mhaka's identity card and other personal documents were stolen by the ZANU-PF thugs, who also ransacked the union's office.

Meanwhile, trade unions from throughout English-speaking Africa and other Commonwealth countries, at a meeting of the Commonwealth Trade Union Group (CTUG) in Geneva on 8 June, pledged to intensify pressure on the Mugabe government, in light of the continued anti-union repression. Unions throughout southern Africa recently blocked an arms shipment intended for Zimbabwe from being offloaded at ports, and pressure on governments in the region from trade unions and others in civil society to take a stronger stand against Robert Mugabe's regime is intensifying.

See also:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Renewed_attacks_against_the_PTUZ_10-06-08.pdf

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates. Website: www.ituc-csi.org

For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on +32 2 224 0204 or +32 476 621 018.

