

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC Online

151/210808

Swaziland: Trade Union Leader Arrested

Brussels, 21 August 2008 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC strongly protests against the arrest of Jan Sithole, secretary general of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU), by the Swazi authorities.

According to the information received by the ITUC, Sithole has been subjected to intense harassment following a recent march organized by trade unions and other civil society groups against the participation of Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and King Mswati III of Swaziland in a meeting of Southern African Development Community (SADC), which took place in Johannesburg on the 16th August 2008.

In a letter sent to the authorities, http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Arrest_of_Jan_Sithole_-21-08-08.pdf, the ITUC urged Prime Minister Dlamini to ensure the immediate release of Jan Sithole and guarantee that no charges are made against him. The ITUC called on the government of Swaziland to respect ILO Convention 87 on freedom of association and the right to organise, which Swaziland has ratified and is therefore obliged to respect.

The ITUC understands that Sithole has now been released from detention.

"Once again, Swaziland's rulers have demonstrated their authoritarian nature by this illegitimate and unacceptable harassment and arrest of a trade union leader in violation of fundamental rights enshrined in international law," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

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

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