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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

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Zimbabwe: More than 48 Trade Unionists Arrested during peaceful marches

Brussels, 3 December 2008: The ITUC strongly condemns and protests against the arrest of more than 48 and assault on a large number of ZCTU (Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions) leaders and members, including the arrest of Secretary General Wellington Chibebe.

According to the information received by the ITUC, The ZCTU organized peaceful marches to protest against the financial crisis in Zimbabwe by delivering petitions to banks. Mr. Wellington Chibebe and ZCTU President Lovemore Matombo managed to hand the ZCTU petition to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) Governor. In most parts of the country, workers managed to hand in petitions to the RBZ offices.

Chibebe was arrested, with 9 other people, while he was addressing workers just after the delivery. 10 others were heavily assaulted by the police in Harare. More than 25 have been arrested in Gweru and 6 in Zvishavane town.

"The violent police force behaviour in Zimbabwe is unacceptable" declared Guy Ryder, ITUC general secretary. "The physical integrity of those arrested must be respected and all must be released with no delay" he added.

In a letter sent

[http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Arrest_of_ZCTU - PTUZ Bank action2 - 03-12-08.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Arrest_of_ZCTU_-_PTUZ_Bank_action2_-_03-12-08.pdf) to the authorities, the ITUC urges the government to immediately release Mr. Wellington Chibebe and all others and drop all charges against them. The ITUC will report the arrest to the ILO Committee on freedom of Association. This matter of trade union repression will certainly be brought to all other supervisory bodies of the ILO.

Zimbabwe has ratified ILO Convention on freedom of association and the rights to organise. Under these conventions trade unions have a fundamental right to demonstrate against economic and social policies affecting their members.

Zimbabwe is suffering a severe financial and humanitarian crisis and is plagued by health epidemics like Cholera and HIV-Aids.

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

Video on the repression during a demonstration on 13 September 2006:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laziwOoA0XI>

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