

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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## Zimbabwe: Alarm Over Intimidation of Witnesses to ILO Inquiry

Brussels, 23 April 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has expressed alarm over the reported intimidation of potential witnesses to an International Labour Organisation Commission of Inquiry by Zimbabwe's notorious Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). The Commission, a high-level procedure of the UN agency which deals with labour issues, was initiated due to the appalling track record of the Mugabe regime on labour rights, which has singled out the country's trade union movement for especially forceful repression over a period of several years.

Potential witnesses to the Inquiry have been approached by CIO operatives, seeking to intimidate them in order to stop them testifying to the Inquiry. One trade unionist was detained by the CIO and subjected to threats. Following this person's release, they were shadowed by unidentified persons.

"A pattern of harassment and intimidation is emerging, and we have genuine fears for the safety of the potential witnesses. The regime, or rogue elements under its direct responsibility, appears to be trying to undermine the conduct of this highly important Inquiry. It must stop doing so immediately, and the international community must take the steps necessary to ensure that those concerned are able to testify without fear for their own safety or that of their families and colleagues," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries and territories.

<http://www.ituc-csi.org> <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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