

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

144/14909

Zimbabwe: Three Trade Unionists Arrested During a Peaceful March

Brussels, 14 September 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC strongly protests against the arrests of three trade unionists during a commemoration march on 12 September. According to the information received by the ITUC through its Zimbabwean affiliate the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), the peaceful march was organised to commemorate 13 September 2006, when ZCTU leadership and activists were brutally assaulted while in police custody, including the President Lovemore Matombo, Secretary General Wellington Chibebe, 1st Vice President Lucia Matibenga and 2nd Vice President George Nkiwane.

Although the High Court issued an order allowing the commemoration, the police went ahead to disrupt the proceedings. According to the police, they did not have enough human resources to control the crowd. However, hundreds of armed riot police were present on Saturday 12 September. The three activists were arrested but were later released without charge.

"The repression of peaceful gatherings in Zimbabwe is unacceptable," declared Guy Ryder, ITUC general secretary. "Zimbabwe has ratified key ILO Conventions on freedom of association and the right to organise, so it has a clear obligation under international law to allow trade unions the right to freedom of assembly. Trade unionists were arrested and prevented from carrying out their activities peacefully, even as the ILO Commission of Inquiry into violations of fundamental workers rights there is ongoing," he added.

In a letter http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ZCTU_arrests_Sep_remembrance_14-09-09_2.pdf sent to the authorities, the ITUC urges President Robert G. Mugabe to take all necessary measures to ensure that the rights of workers are respected.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 157 countries and has 312 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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