

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Zimbabwe: Trade Union President Arrested While On Tour in the Country

Brussels, 9 November 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has strongly condemned the arrest of ZCTU President Lovemore Matombo and two members of his staff, Michael Kandukutu and Percy Mchiso, for exercising their legitimate trade union activity.

According to the information received by the ITUC from its affiliate the ZCTU (Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions), the three trade unionists were arrested in the Victoria Falls District last night when Matombo was addressing members of the ZCTU. This meeting was the first stop in a tour of the country to meet ZCTU structures.

This arrest clearly violates legitimate trade union rights protected under ILO Convention 87 on the right to freedom of association and the right to organise, ratified by the government of Zimbabwe. On 3 November, an attack on the house of a council member of the ZCTU, Gertrude Hambira, was also reported.

“The climate of intimidation and harassment that remains in Zimbabwe creates extremely bad conditions for the trade unionists to exercise their rights,” said Guy Ryder, ITUC general secretary. “We hoped that the creation of an inclusive government with a commitment to human rights reform would have made severe trade union repression a thing of the past, but this does not seem to be the case,” he added.

In a letter http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Matombo_arrested_09-11-09.pdf sent to the Zimbabwean authorities, the ITUC advises President Mugabe that the ILO Commission of Inquiry will be informed of the latest serious violations of ILO convention 87, and urges him to immediately release Lovemore Matombo, Michael Kandukutu and Percy Mchiso.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 158 countries and territories and has 316 national affiliates.

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

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