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President Emmerson Mnangagwa  
President of the Republic of  
Zimbabwe

Harare

October 11, 2018

O/R: 990/2018/SG/AK

Dear Mr. President,

**ITUC AFRICA condemns attack on ZCTU demonstrators and demands the immediate and unconditional release of arrested trade union leaders.**

I write on behalf of the African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa, [www.ituc-africa.org](http://www.ituc-africa.org)) to condemn the blocking of a peaceful demonstration by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the subsequent arrest of leaders of ZCTU. The ZCTU called the demonstration to protest austerity economic measures which continue to worsen living conditions for working people and their families.

We are aware that ZCTU informed the authorities of its intention to hold the peaceful demonstration and to present a petition of workers' demands to the Minister of Finance. Despite this prior notification and peaceful character of this trade union activity, the police violently cracked down on the ZCTU this morning to prevent the protest from proceeding. ZCTU President Peter Mutasa and Secretary General Japhet Moyo are reported to have been beaten and arrested together with 39 others in Harare, Mutare and Masvingo. In the meantime, the police is said to have cordoned off the ZCTU offices in Harare, placing staff members and others there under siege.

ITUC-Africa condemns this excessive use of force against demonstrators for expressing their protest against government economic measures and for making legitimate demands.

The government of Zimbabwe is duty bound to ensure that workers can exercise the right to freedom of association without the threat or use of violence against them or their leaders. The use of violence against peaceful demonstrators is in breach of Article 59 of the Zimbabwe Constitution and the provisions of the ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association that bind the Government.

We express our disappointment that the Government of Zimbabwe appears stuck in its practice of repressing workers' rights and the arbitrary application of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) to deny workers their right to undertake legitimate trade union activities. It is indeed regrettable that ten years after the institution of an ILO Commission of Inquiry, Zimbabwe continues to fail to honor its international commitment to guarantee the right to freedom of association to workers.

ITUC-Africa calls on your government to immediately and unconditionally release Peter Mutasa, Japhet Moyo and all other union leaders and activists who were arrested and to cause an investigation into the use of violence against the peaceful demonstrators. Those found responsible for this use of violence need to be appropriately sanctioned to curb the use of violence with impunity against peace loving citizens.

We will follow developments closely and hope the government will live up to its responsibility to protect citizens from violence.

Yours sincerely,



**Kwasi Adu-Amankwah**  
**General Secretary, ITUC-Africa**