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H.E. Emerson Mnangagwa

President

The Republic of Zimbabwe

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**URGENT CALL TO SECURE CITIZENS' CIVIL LIBERTIES AGAINST ALARMING
VIOLENCE BY THE POLICE AND OTHER SECURITY FORCES OF ZIMBABWE**

Dear Mr President,

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa www.ituc-africa.org) writes to protest the repressive and vicious attacks by the Zimbabwe Police and other security forces against peaceful protesters demanding an end to the economic crisis faced by the country and a reversal of the over 200% increase in fuel prices announced by the government.

We are aware that the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) legitimately called for a three-day 'Stay Away' peaceful protest from 14 to 16 January 2019 in response to the government's announcement of steep fuel price increases that have worsened an already unbearable high cost of living situation in the country.

We are informed that on Monday, 14th January 2019, the police and military opened fire on peaceful protesters, injuring many, with reports of eight persons killed and over 200 arrested. The fierce crackdown has continued and is escalating with reports of heavy military and police presence on the streets and security forces arbitrarily assaulting citizens, including entering homes to drag out and beat people in an effort to instil fear and to clamp down on dissent. Furthermore, mobile and landline communications, the internet and social media were blocked for two days to prevent access to information and communication.

This highhandedness by the security forces demonstrates that the government is reneging on its duty to ensure that the country's social climate is free of violence and fear. The attempts to silence and punish dissent and to undermine the rights of workers and citizens to protest are brazen and unacceptable. Workers and citizens have the right to express their views on the government's economic programs, including through peaceful demonstrations in an atmosphere free of fear, intimidation, coercion, repression and violence.

We, therefore, call on your government to ensure that all attacks against workers, their trade union leaders and other citizens by the police and the other security forces cease forthwith.

We also urge Mr President to assure the immediate and unconditional release of those arrested and detained and to end the violation of the rights to freedom of association and assembly.

Further, we ask that your government accepts the call of the ZCTU for social dialogue in order that national stakeholders can be engaged in seeking solutions to current economic difficulties the country is facing.

Finally, in order to curb the incidence of the use of violence by the police and military against peaceful protesters, we urge your government to institute an independent judicial inquiry so that those found guilty can be punished as a deterrent to future perpetrators.

Yours sincerely,



Kwasi Adu-Amankwah
General Secretary, ITUC-Africa