

SHARAN BURROW

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GUY RYDER

GENERAL SECRETARY
SECÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL
GENERALSEKRETÄR
SECRETARIO GENERAL

His Excellency Mr. Robert G. Mugabe,
President,
Causeway,
Harare
Zimbabwe

Fax: + 263.4.70.38.58

HTUR/SH

18 September 2007

Assault and detention of three ZCTU officials

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of its 168 million members in 153 countries and territories, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) firmly condemns the assault and detention of three officials of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). **Michael Kandukutu**, the ZCTU national Organiser, **Tennyson Muchepfa** from the National Engineering Workers' Unions, and **Justice Mucheni** from the Food Federation were heavily beaten and then abducted at about 12 noon on 17 September while distributing ZCTU flyers about the Stayaway due to take place on 19 and 20 September.

The three were taken to Mbare Police Station where they have been detained. The ZCTU informs us that it believes the assault was carried out by operatives of the Central Intelligence Organisation.

Mr, President, the ITUC has repeatedly had to protest to you about the constant harassment and brutal treatment of ZCTU members and leaders by your country's authorities. The three victims of this brutal assault were engaged in a legitimate trade union activity, distributing information about a peaceful protest against the devastating consequences of hyperinflation and mass unemployment on their members. This latest attack is clearly in violation of the principles of freedom of association, as enshrined in ILO Convention 87, ratified by your country. We strongly urge you to order their release immediately, and ensure that no charges are brought against them and no further harm befalls them.

The ITUC fully supports the peaceful stayaway planned by the ZCTU, and firmly recommends that the Government of Zimbabwe listens to the message of the workers of your country, and talks to their chosen representatives. Any attempt to repress this legitimate action, and any use of force, would be completely unacceptable and not in Zimbabwe's interests.

The appalling treatment of ZCTU leaders in September 2006, during a similar protest, is still fresh in everyone's memory, and drew widespread international condemnation. The

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international community will be playing close attention to the events of the next two days,
and your government's reaction to them.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary