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Three workers and one spouse seriously injured in shootings

Mr. President,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents over 170 million workers through its 312 affiliates in 157 countries and territories, including Zimbabwe, writes to you to protest the firing of shots this morning against workers in Shabanie Mine in the mining town of Zvishavane.

Three mineworkers, one woman and two men, and a wife of a mine worker have been shot and injured at Shabanie Mine in the mining town of Zvishavane. They are now being treated at White Hospital in Zvishavane under police guard but their relatives are being refused access to them.

The four were participating in demonstrations on 24 September over the non-payment of salaries since January 2009. The action by the workers started over three weeks ago on 7 September, but the mine officials have been unwilling to address the matter. An undisclosed number of workers have also been arrested while trying to visit their injured colleagues in hospital.

Over the past week the workers have been threatened with dismissal by security agents forcing them to return to work. In the process some were assaulted in their homes.

The ITUC has also received reports that 23 trade union leaders were dismissed by Zimasco after participating in collective action on 17 June and that subsequent requests for peaceful solidarity marches against their dismissals were denied.

The ITUC is very alarmed at these reports, and would like to remind you that the ILO Commission of Inquiry is currently examining violations of trade union rights in Zimbabwe. The ITUC has no other choice but to provide the details of these trade union violations to the Commission of Inquiry.

The ITUC would urge your government to take immediate steps to address the ongoing violations of trade union rights in your country.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary