



**ITUC INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION CSI CONFÉDÉRATION  
SYNDICALE INTERNATIONALE  
CSI CONFEDERACIÓN SINDICAL INTERNACIONAL IGB INTERNATIONALER  
GEWERKSCHAFTSBUND**

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TUR/JS

21 August 2008

### **Arrest of Jan Sithole, President of the SFTU**

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), representing 168 million workers through its 311 affiliated national trade union centers in 155 countries and territories, including Swaziland, protests strongly against the arrest of the secretary general of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) Mr. Jan Sithole.

The ITUC has been informed that Mr. Jan Sithole has been subject to intense harassment following the recent SATUCC SADC March against the participation of Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and King Mswati III of Swaziland which took place in Johannesburg on the 16th August 2008.

Today on 21<sup>st</sup> August more than 30 armed police officers, led by Mr. Joseph Bhembe, raided the home of Mr. Sithole and arrested him. At the time of writing no charges have been made against him, but he is still in police custody. Mr. Sithole is in poor health and recovering from a major operation which took place in March this year. The ITUC is extremely concerned that his health could deteriorate by being kept in rough conditions while he is in police custody.

The ITUC condemns unequivocally all violence against trade unionists, and call on you government to guarantee the physical integrity of the detainee until his release.

We also want to remind you that under the jurisprudence of the ILO, freedom of speech and other fundamental freedoms are essential for the normal exercise of trade union rights. Trade union leaders have a right to comment on all issues that have an impact on



economic and social policies affecting trade union members. Under ILO Convention 87 on freedom of association and the right to organise, ratified by your country, you have an obligation to refrain from arresting trade union leaders carrying out legitimate union activities.

The international trade union movement is urging you to ensure the immediate release our colleague Jan Sithole and ensure that no charges are made against him. In the meantime, we urge you to guarantee his physical integrity and well-being.

The ITUC hope that you will pay prompt attention to this very serious matter.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary

Cc: The Royal Embassy of Swaziland to Belgium\_