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HTUR/JS

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Detention of President of GAPWUZ

Mr. President,

On behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) representing 170 million unionized workers in 157 countries and territories, I am writing to condemn the arrests of Assistant General Secretary Gift Muti and President Manjemanje Munyanyi of the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers' Union (GAPWUZ) yesterday.

Yesterday, the Police from the Law and Order section at Harare Central Police station visited GAPWUZ offices at 12.30 pm. and arrested the GAPWUZ Assistant General Secretary Gift Muti and President Manjemanje Munyanyi. The police said they wanted information on the video and the report, *If Something is Wrong*, which is an account of the atrocities committed during the government driven land reform since 2000. It documents farm workers testimonies of murder, torture, and violence perpetrated by the state.

Brother Muti was released later the same day but Brother Munyanyi remains in police custody at the time of writing. When the police stormed the GAPWUZ offices they said they were looking for GAPWUZ General Secretary Gertrude Hambira. She was out of office at the time of the raid and is now in hiding.

Already on Friday 19 February, she had been invited to a meeting at Harare's police headquarters and interrogated about the report and the organizations funding it.

During the interrogation the police and Central Intelligence Organisation stated that the report and documentary contained very serious allegations for which Sister Hambira should be "behind bars". Ms Hambira and her colleagues were eventually let go but the panel warned that they would call on her again.

Even after Sister Hambira went into hiding, police have continued to harass the organization's staff. Some staff members have received anonymous calls from people

threatening unspecified action against them if Sister Hambira does not come out of hiding. The police are currently interrogating every member of staff.

Gertrude Hambira was previously the victim of harassment and intimidation as a result of the report, and in November 2009 armed men forced their way into her home. She expressed continued concerns for her security, when she visited the ITUC shortly afterwards.

The ITUC condemns these latest incidents of trade union rights' violations, at a time when the March ILO Governing Body is about to examine the report by the Commission of Inquiry on Zimbabwe, testifying to serious violations of ILO conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of association and collective bargaining. It is a strong reminder that the creation of a new inclusive government has not removed the obstacles to the enjoyment of fundamental trade union rights.

We urge all members of your Government to commit to an in depth human rights reform and to implement urgently all the recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry which was communicated to your Government on 21 January 2010.

The ITUC urges you to release GAPWUZ President Manjemanje Munyanyi immediately and stop further harassment of GAPWUZ staff. It also urges you to stop further investigation of Ms. Hambira in connection with her legitimate activities as the General Secretary of the GAPWUZ and the production of the report *If Something is Wrong*.

The ITUC will follow the developments in this case very closely and will seriously consider all options to bring the violations to the attention of the international community, including the ILO supervisory mechanisms.

The ITUC hopes that you will pay prompt attention to this very serious matter and looks forward to your immediate action.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary

Cc: Prime Minister
The Embassy of Zimbabwe to Belgium
ZCTU