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His Excellence Mr. Robert G. Mugabe,
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TUR/JS

20 February 2008

Nine PTUZ leaders and activists arrested

Dear Mr. President,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), representing 311 affiliated member organisations, with a total membership of 168 million workers in 156 countries and territories, including Zimbabwe, strongly protests against the abduction of nine Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) activists, including the President Raymond Majongwe on 19 February 2008.

We have been informed that the nine PTUZ activists were abducted by Zanu PF youths in the morning of 19 February when distributing flyers on the crisis in the education system. They were subsequently taken to the police station where they were subjected to severe beating. We understand that the beatings were so brutal that five had to be hospitalized, two with serious fractures. Although we have been informed that they were all released yesterday, it would seem that a police presence remained at the hospital. At the time of writing no charges were leveled against them.

The ITUC condemns all police violence and violence by members of the ruling party against peaceful trade unionists. The PTUZ trade unionists were merely carrying out legitimate trade union activities, such as addressing the working conditions of teachers.

The government of Zimbabwe is under an obligation to respect legitimate trade union activities protected under ILO Convention 87, ratified by Zimbabwe. It is high time that the government of Zimbabwe starts honouring its international commitments and respecting its own citizens.

The continuing harassment and intimidation of trade union leaders and activists is closely followed by the international trade union community, in particular by our African affiliates that condemn the behavior of your government.



I urge you to order an investigation into this brutal attack on peaceful trade unionists and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice. I also urge you to ensure that there be put a stop to the escalating use of police violence in your country. The ITUC will soon be sending additional information to the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association concerning the many violations of trade union rights that occur in Zimbabwe, and will include this latest attack on peaceful trade unionists.

I trust that you will pay proper attention to this serious matter.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary