

João Antonio Felício

President
Président
Präsident
Presidente

Sharan Burrow

General Secretary
Secrétaire générale
Generalsekretärin
Secretaria General

**The Honourable Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini
Prime Minister**

Kingdom of Swaziland

kunenejabu@gov.sz
dludlusp@gov.sz
mbingoli@gov.sz

HTUR/MG

3 September 2018

The ITUC strongly denounces the brutal police violence against workers engaged in legitimate trade union activities in Swaziland

Dear Mr Prime Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents 207 million workers worldwide, to strongly denounce the unlawful and brutal assault by the police against workers engaged in peaceful and legitimate trade union activities.

We have taken note of the fact that the police interfered with and started shooting at members of the Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT), who had peacefully gathered at their centre to discuss a way forward on the government refusal to review their salaries in the last two years. Maxwell Myeni, Secretary of the Trade Union Congress of Swaziland (TUCOSWA), Lavumisa Local Shopstewards Council and also a member of SNAT, was arrested at his home by the Police's Serious Crimes Unit on the 26th of August 2018 and brought to the Sigodweni Police Station, 145 kilometres from where he was arrested. He was released on bail on Monday the 27th after appearing before a Magistrate. He was unlawfully charged under the Public Order Act, and he will be appearing again in court on 12 September.

On 29 August 2018, while hundreds of trade unionists led by the Swaziland Democratic Nurses Union (SWADNU) marched towards the Ministries of Public Service and Health to deliver a petition, the police deliberately dispersed the peaceful march by attacking trade unionists with Tasers.

Also, on 30 August 2018, the Amalgamated Trade Union of Swaziland (ATUSWA) reported that more than 200 paramilitary police and correctional facility warders with riot shields and batons were deployed outside of a textile factory in Nhlanguano and reportedly fired gunshots at workers who were protesting about poor pay. During the clashes, the police beat up a journalist and demanded he delete photographs he had taken of them attacking and shooting at the striking textile workers.

The ITUC strongly denounces the blatant disregard for fundamental rights in breach of national and international law, and we call upon the government of Eswatini to immediately and unconditionally drop all charges against SNAT members for participating in a legitimate and peaceful protest action. The government should also instigate an investigation into the excessive and undue police violence,

prosecute those found responsible and provide remedies to those workers harmed, in line with its Code of Good Practice on Protest and Industrial Action.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. B.', written in a cursive style.

General Secretary