



ITUC International Trade Union Confederation  
CSI Confédération syndicale internationale  
CSI Confederación Sindical Internacional  
IGB Internationaler Gewerkschaftsbund

**Akiko Gono**

President  
Présidente  
Präsidentin  
Presidenta

**Jonathan Molapo,**  
**Group Chief Executive Officer**  
**Massmart House,**  
**16 Peltier Drive,**  
**Sunninghill Ext. 6,**  
**Sandton 2157,**  
**Republic of South Africa**  
[Jonathan.Molapo@massmart.co.za](mailto:Jonathan.Molapo@massmart.co.za)

**HTUR/ZM**

**14 March 2023**

**ITUC condemns the mass dismissal of striking workers at Massmart/Walmart**

Dear Mr Molapo,

The ITUC, which represents 200 million workers in 168 countries, including South Africa, condemns your company's mass dismissal of approximately 400 striking workers demanding a living wage and improved working conditions.

We are reliably informed by our affiliate, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) of the action taken by your company and are deeply concerned that you have elected to bypass South African laws on dispute settlement and resorted to victimising workers for exercising their rights to freedom of association and expression. Your company has also flouted the responsibility and sustainability goals that it claims to uphold, these being to 'prioritise people and the planet' and contribute to the UN's sustainable development goals. In fact, you are breaching SDG 8 on 'Decent work and economic growth'.

The actions your company has taken contradict the responsibility of enterprises to respect internationally recognised human rights and labour standards, as set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Furthermore, the attack on striking workers is a violation of the ILO's Convention on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, C87 and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, C98. The two conventions protect workers against acts of anti-union discrimination already being perpetrated by your company.

We remind you that the International Labour Organization's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) protect the right of every worker to realise the principle of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, including the right to form or join a trade union of their choice. In this regard, the ILO has held that "*The dismissal of workers on grounds of membership of an organization or trade union activities violates the principles of freedom of association*"<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> ILO, Compilation of decisions of the Committee on Freedom of Association (2018). Parra 1104.

Given that Massmart/Makro is a Walmart subsidiary in South Africa, your company's behaviour is also contrary to Walmart's Supplier Standards<sup>2</sup> and Human Rights Statement<sup>3</sup>, which commits Walmart to promoting and respecting human rights, including freedom of association and collective bargaining, in its global supply chain.

We demand that you engage with our affiliate COSATU in the resolution of this dispute, in line with their letter of 2 March 2023, and that you unconditionally reinstate all the 400 dismissed workers.

We hope and trust that your company will respect and fulfil internationally recognised human and labour rights responsibilities to which you have voluntarily committed, as well as the obligations to respect the laws of South Africa regarding the right of workers.

We urge you to engage in constructive social dialogue to ensure a speedy resolution of this dispute.

Yours sincerely,



Owen Tudor  
Deputy General Secretary

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<sup>2</sup>[https://corporate.walmart.com/media-library/document/standards-for-suppliers-english/\\_proxyDocument?id=0000015c-e70f-d3b4-a57e-ff4f3f510000](https://corporate.walmart.com/media-library/document/standards-for-suppliers-english/_proxyDocument?id=0000015c-e70f-d3b4-a57e-ff4f3f510000)

<sup>3</sup> <https://corporate.walmart.com/esgreport/governance/human-rights#respect>