



JANUARY 17, 2019

**URGENT INTERVENTION TO PROTECT PEACEFULLY PROTESTING WORKERS
AGAINST ALARMING VIOLENCE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE**

Your Excellency,

The African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa www.ituc-africa.org) calls for your urgent intervention with the Government of Zimbabwe to bring an end to the alarming and dangerous situation faced by the leaders and members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) for taking peaceful protest action against steep fuel prices that have worsened an already unbearable high cost of living in the country. The ZCTU called for a three-day 'Stay Away' from 14 to 16 January 2019 demanding an end to the economic crisis faced by the country and a reversal of the over 200% increase in fuel prices announced by the government.

On Monday, January 14 2019, police and security forces violently attacked peaceful protesters by opening fire on them, injuring many, with reports of eight killed and over 200 arrested. The fierce crackdown has continued with reports of heavy military and police presence on the streets and security forces arbitrarily assaulting citizens, including entering homes to drag out and beat people in an effort to instill fear and to clampdown on dissent. Furthermore, cell and landline communications, the internet and social media were blocked for two days to prevent access to information.

The Government of Zimbabwe has clearly reneged on its duty to ensure that the country's social climate is free of violence and fear. It is violently attacking protesters on the streets and individuals in their homes instead of protecting and guaranteeing their safety. Workers have the right to express their views on the government's

economic programs, including through peaceful demonstrations in an atmosphere free of fear, intimidation, coercion, repression and violence.

ITUC-Africa therefore requests your immediate intervention with the Government of Zimbabwe to demand an end to the violation of the right to freedom of association and to call for the safety of all protesters as well as the immediate and unconditional release of those arrested. The government must accept the call of the ZCTU for social dialogue in order to address the economic woes of the country.

We also call for an independent judicial inquiry into the excessive violence against protesters to be instituted without delay in order to punish guilty parties and to prevent the repetition of such rights violations.

Yours sincerely,



Kwasi Adu-Amankwah
General Secretary, ITUC-Africa