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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

Swaziland: Repression of trade union activities during the Global Week of Action

Brussels, 6 September 2013 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC strongly protests the repression of trade union activities during the Global Week of Action in Swaziland. Today, an international panel of experts will hear directly from workers about how labour rights violations impact their lives

On 5 September, the General Secretary of the Trade Union Congress of Swaziland, Vincent Ncongwane, was followed by ten police officers in plain clothes. Upon entering his office he was arrested and taken to the police station without any explanation or an arrest warrant. After three hours at the police station, he was put under house arrest. The government claims that he had attempted to instigate an illegal protest. However, TUCOSWA fully complied with Swazi laws by announcing a protest march for the Global Week of Action on 15 August 2013 to both police and the Commissioner of Labour.

According to the information received by the ITUC, police and military have threatened personnel at the venue of the Global Inquiry Panel and have been following staff from the ITUC, COSATU, FES/DGB and IndustriALL around the clock. "What is happening in Swaziland is totally unacceptable, said Sharan Burrow," ITUC General Secretary. "Trade unionists must be able to organise activities and exercises their legitimate role of defending workers without fear of being arrested and detained. We strongly condemn interference in trade union activities and protests during the Global Week of Action, and in particular the detention of Vincent Ncongwane, Alec Muchadehama, Paul Verryn and Jay Naidoo and Paliani Chinguwo," she added.

In a letter sent to the authorities, <http://www.ituc-csi.org/swaziland-repression-of-trade> the ITUC urges Prime Minister Sibusiso barnabas Dlamini to take all necessary measures to release Vincent Ncongwane and put an end to the repression of trade union activities, including the Global Inquiry Panel Swaziland. The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 156 countries and territories and has 315 national affiliates.

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