

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: AFR 46/017/2006**

**14 September 2006**

**UA 247/06**      **Fear for safety/ Ill-treatment/ health concern**

**ZIMBABWE**      **Lovemore MATOMBO (m), President of Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU)**  
**Wellington CHIBHEBHE (m), Secretary General of ZCTU**  
**Lucia MATIBENGA (f), First Vice-President of ZCTU**  
**Hundreds of members of the ZCTU and Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)**  
**Five babies**

---

Amnesty International is gravely concerned by credible reports that members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), including those named above, have been beaten at Matapi Police Station in the capital, Harare. They were transferred to Harare Central Police Station on 14 September. Hundreds of members of the ZCTU and women's organization Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) are also reported to be detained in Harare and other urban centres in Zimbabwe. Members of ZCTU and WOZA are being held in a number of police stations, without access to lawyers, adequate food and medical care. Five babies are thought to be detained along with their mothers, who are WOZA members. There are serious concerns for the health and safety of all those held.

On 13 September in Harare, Lovemore Matombo - ZCTU President, Wellington Chibhebhe - ZCTU Secretary General, and Lucia Matibenga - First Vice-President of the ZCTU, were arrested while attempting to engage in peaceful protest about deteriorating social and economic conditions in Zimbabwe. Other ZCTU members were also arrested and detained in Harare, Beitbridge, Bulawayo, Mutare and other urban centres. On the eve of the protests, on 12 September, in an apparent pre-emptive action, police had also reportedly arrested a number of ZCTU leaders at their homes and offices in Rusape, Gweru, Chinhoyi and Kariba. Many of them are still thought to be in detention in deplorable conditions.

On 11 September, over 100 WOZA members were reportedly arrested ahead of a planned peaceful sit-in at Town House in Harare, to protest against deteriorating services in the capital city. Over 100 members of WOZA, and five babies, have reportedly been detained since 11 September at various police stations, including Harare Central Police Station, Rhodesville Police Station and Mbare Police Station in Harare, and Makoni Police Station in Chitungwiza. Among those arrested and detained at Harare Central Police Station was a pregnant woman who reportedly became unwell while in police custody. Her whereabouts and condition remain unclear, and police have failed to keep her lawyer informed of her situation, despite numerous requests.

Amnesty International understands that all those held have been detained as a consequence of exercising their right to peaceful demonstration. Amnesty International believes that all those detained for engaging in peaceful protest should be immediately released.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Human rights defenders operate in Zimbabwe under very restrictive conditions. The government of Zimbabwe restricts operations of civil society through repressive legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Miscellaneous Offences Act (MOA). Police across Zimbabwe reportedly denied ZCTU organisers permission to hold peaceful demonstrations on Wednesday 13 September 2006 after being notified – a requirement under the POSA.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing serious concern at reports of assault and ill-treatment of ZCTU members and urging the police authorities to investigate these reports and bring to justice those responsible;
- expressing concern at reports of the prolonged detention of WOZA members, including babies and a pregnant woman;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that all those detained have access to lawyers, food and medical care;
- calling for the immediate release of all those arrested and detained for engaging or attempting to engage in peaceful protest;
- reminding the authorities that human rights defenders have a right to carry out their legitimate activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms).

**APPEALS TO:**

Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri  
Zimbabwe Republic Police  
Police Headquarters  
PO Box 8807

Causeway  
Harare, Zimbabwe  
**Fax: +263 4 253 212**  
**Salutation: Dear Commissioner**

Officer-in-Charge of Matapi Police Station  
C/O Provincial Officer Commanding  
Harare Province  
PO Box CY154  
Harare, Zimbabwe  
**Fax: +263 4 753 501**  
**Salutation: Dear Officer-in-Charge**

His Excellency President Robert G Mugabe  
Office of the President  
Munhumutapa Building  
Samora Machel Avenue/ 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Box 7700  
Causeway  
Harare, Zimbabwe  
**Fax: +263 4 734 644**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

Women of Zimbabwe Arise  
PO Box FM 701  
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions  
PO Box 3549  
Famona  
Harare, Zimbabwe

and to diplomatic representatives of Zimbabwe accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 October 2006.