

URGENT ACTION

ZIMBABWEAN TRADE UNIONIST UNDER THREAT

The home of 48-year-old Gertrude Hambira, a prominent female trade union activist in Zimbabwe, was attacked by three armed men on 3 November. Gertrude Hambira is now in hiding, fearing for her life.

On 3 November, the home of **Getrude Hambira**, the Secretary General of the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union (GAPWUZ) was attacked by three armed men who forced their way in. At the time of the attack Gertrude Hambira was not at home. However, her husband, Gertrude's elderly mother and the couple's children, including a five-year-old, were at home.

At around midnight, Gertrude Hambira's husband was woken by three men who had broken into the house in Milton Park, a suburb in the capital, Harare. When he confronted the men, they asked him about the whereabouts of his wife. He was pinned down by the intruders who threatened to shoot him when he called for help. One of the men fired a single shot into the roof of the house. The men took with them three mobile phones, US\$100 cash and some photographs of Gertrude Hambira with her children from a family photograph album. The armed men only left the house when a security alarm was activated, and Gertrude Hambira's husband was able to escape and alert a neighbour before calling the police.

The attack on Gertrude Hambira's home follows two similar attacks linked to state security agents in Harare in the previous week. On 27 October, Edith Mashayire, an employee of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) political party led by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, was attacked on the street in Harare by armed men believed to be state security agents. They reportedly told her that she was under arrest and started assaulting her with their guns, but they released her after she called for help from members of the public.. During the same week another MDC employee, Pascal Gwezere, was abducted by state security agents from his home. He was reportedly tortured by his abductors. He was later charged with breaking into a military armoury and undergoing military training in Uganda in 1999. These charges are widely believed to be trumped up.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of Getrude Hambira;
- Calling for an independent investigation into the circumstances around the attack on Gertrude Hambira's family home;
- Urging the authorities to investigate the attack and to end harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders and political activists by state security agents;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 DECEMBER 2009 TO:

Commissioner General of Police

Mr. Augustine Chihuri

ZRP Headquarters

P.O. Box 8807

Causeway

Harare, Zimbabwe

Fax: +263 4 253 212

Salutation: Dear Commissioner

Hon Giles Mutsekwa

Minister of Home Affairs

P. Bag 7703

Causeway

Harare

Zimbabwe

Fax: +263 4 707 231

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Getrude Hambira

Secretary General

GAPWUZ

Fax: +263 4 797 918

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Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Zimbabwe accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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