

PUBLIC

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Unlawful detention/ fear of ill-treatment /  
possible prisoners of conscience (POCs)

19 November 2003

ZIMBABWE

**Lovemore Matombo (m), President Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU)  
Wellington Chibebe (m), Secretary General (ZCTU)  
Up to 50 trade union and human rights activists**

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned at the harassment and unlawful detention of Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) President Lovemore Matombo and Secretary General Wellington Chibebe as well as that of up to 50 trade union and human rights activists. They were arrested on 18 November in order to prevent them from staging a protest against alleged human rights abuses and the economic crisis in Zimbabwe.

Up to 100 trade union and human rights activists were arrested throughout the country on 18 November. In the capital Harare, approximately 50 trade union and human rights activists were arrested including Lovemore Matombo and Wellington Chibebe. They remain in custody, though most of those arrested in other parts of the country have been released. Wellington Chibebe and Lovemore Matombo were charged under section 7 (b) of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and made to pay fines. When they refused to pay the fines, they were returned to the holding cells. They have reportedly been put in separate holding cells from the other detainees.

The ZCTU has called for a nation-wide stay away on 20 and 21 November. It is feared that Wellington Chibebe and Lovemore Matombo will remain in detention as a result of the stay-away.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

On 22 October, up to 200 members of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) including NCA chairman Lovemore Madhuku were arrested as they gathered in Harare city centre to call for a new democratic constitution. They were held overnight under POSA which outlaws protests without police clearance.

Up to 200 trade union activists were arrested throughout the country on 8 October including Wellington Chibebe and Lovemore Matombo, to prevent them from staging a protest against high taxes and inflation in the country. The union activists were released on 9 October and made to sign 'warned and cautioned' statements. They were charged under section 7 (b) of POSA for committing miscellaneous offences.

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

- expressing serious concern over the harassment and unlawful detention of Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) President Lovemore Matombo and Secretary General Wellington Chibebe as well as that of up to 50 trade union and human rights activists;
- expressing concern for their safety and especially that of Lovemore Matombo and Wellington Chibebe who are being held in separate holding cells from the rest of the activists;
- calling on the authorities to either charge the other trade union and human rights activists with a recognizably criminal offence, on the basis of solid evidence, or release them immediately.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Home Affairs

The Honourable Khembo Mohadi

11<sup>th</sup> Floor Mukwati Building

Private Bag 7703

Causeway

Harare

Zimbabwe

**Telegram: Minister of Home Affairs, Harare, Zimbabwe**

**Fax: + 263 4 726 716 (please keep trying)**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Police Commissioner

Mr. Augustine Chihuri

Police Headquarters

P.O Box 8807

Causeway

Harare

Zimbabwe

**Telegram: Augustine Chihuri, Police Headquarters, Harare, Zimbabwe**

**Fax: + 263 4 726 084/ 235 212/ 728 768 (please keep trying)**

**Salutation: Dear Mr Commissioner**

**COPIES 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 31 December 2003.