

Zimbabwean trade unionists in hiding

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Two Zimbabwean trade unionists have gone into hiding after receiving threatening phone calls. The callers identified themselves as members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO).

The ZRP and CIO officers are reported to have accused Edward Dzeka and Joyce Muwoni, who are officers of the General Agriculture and Plantations Workers Union (GAPWUZ) in the farming town of Chegutu, of organising workers to take part in the job "stay away" demonstration in the town and on the surrounding farms.

Members of the ZRP and CIO also called at the GAPWUZ offices on 4 April and enquired about the whereabouts of the two unionists. They later visited the home of Edward Dzeka, who is also the district chairperson of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), in Chegutu.

Some of the ZRP and CIO officers making the alleged threats are known to the trade unionists. They are believed to be targeting leaders of trade unions following the 3 to 4 April national job "stay away" demonstration organised by the ZCTU.

Edward Dzeka was previously arrested with 10 other trade unionists on 13 September 2006 for organising peaceful protests under the ZCTU. The 11 trade unionists were reported to have been tortured by members of the ZRP at Chegutu police station. They are currently on bail after being charged under the Public Order and Security Act (POSA).

Amnesty International understands that Edward Dzeka and Joyce Muwoni are being threatened for exercising their rights to freedom of association and assembly by organising a peaceful demonstration as part of GAPWUZ and the ZCTU. Amnesty International is deeply concerned about their safety and calls on the police and CIO to guarantee their safety.

For further information, please see:

Trade unionists at risk in Zimbabwe (Feature, 2 April 2007)

<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/zwe-020407-news-eng>

Zimbabwe: End harassment, torture and intimidation of opposition activists (Press Release, 28/03/2006)

<http://news.amnesty.org/Index/ENGAFR460072007>

Take action: Stop harassment of activists in Zimbabwe <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/zwe-220307-action-eng>