

UA 83/07 Fear of tortureZIMBABWE Edward Dzeka (m)] local organisers, General Agriculture
Joyce Musoni (f)] and Plantations Workers' Union

Trade unionists Edward Dzeka and Joyce Muwoni have gone into hiding, after threatening phone calls from the police, who want them to come in for questioning about "illegal" trade union activities. Edward Dzeka was arrested by the police in September and reportedly tortured. Amnesty International believes he and Joyce Musoni would be at grave risk of torture if arrested.

Edward Dzeka and Joyce Muwoni are local organisers for the General Agriculture and Plantations Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) in the farming town of Chegutu. Edward Dzeka is also the district chairperson of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). They went into hiding on 3 April after receiving threatening telephone calls from people who said they were officers of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). The ZRP and CIO officers reportedly accused the trade unionists of organising workers in Chegutu town and on the surrounding farms to take part in the national job "stay away" demonstration organised by the ZCTU on 3-4 April. ZRP and CIO officers called at the GAPWUZ offices on 4 April asking where the two trade unionists were, and later went to look for Edward Dzeka at his home in Chegutu.

Some of the ZRP and CIO officers allegedly threatening Edward Dzeka and Joyce Muwoni are known to the trade unionists. They are believed to be targeting trade union leaders following the national job "stay away" demonstration.

Edward Dzeka had been arrested with 10 other trade unionists on 13 September 2006 for organising peaceful protests for the ZCTU. The 11 trade unionists were reportedly tortured by ZRP officers at Chegutu police station. They have been charged under the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and freed on bail.

Amnesty International understands that Edward Dzeka and Joyce Muwoni are being threatened solely for exercising their rights to freedom of association and assembly by organising a peaceful demonstration as part of their work for GAPWUZ and the ZCTU. The rights to freedom of association and assembly are guaranteed under Section 21 of Zimbabwe's Constitution, Articles 10 and 11 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Zimbabwe is a state party.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Trade unionists in Zimbabwe operate in the face of severe repression. They cannot freely organise peaceful protests and risk being arrested and tortured by the ZRP and CIO.

On 13 March ZCTU officers Gilbert Marembo and Michael Kandukuti were assaulted by ZRP officers who had arrived at the ZCTU offices with a search warrant allowing them to seize all "subversive material" found on the premises. The officers were from the Law and Order Section of the Criminal Investigations department based at Harare Central police station. The assault was witnessed by lawyers from Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. Police later seized fliers on the planned job "stay away" demonstrations.

On 13 September 2006 in Harare, ZCTU President Lovemore Matombo, Secretary General Wellington Chibebe and First Vice-President Lucia Matibenga were arrested while attempting to engage in peaceful protest about deteriorating social and economic conditions in Zimbabwe. Other ZCTU members were arrested in Harare, Beitbridge, Bulawayo, Mutare and other urban centres. The day before the protests, in an apparent pre-emptive action, police also arrested a number of ZCTU leaders at their homes and offices in Rusape, Gweru, Chinhoyi and Kariba. (See UA 247/06, 14 September 2006, AFR 46/017/2006.)

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

- calling on the police and CIO to guarantee the safety of Edward Dzeka, Joyce Muwoni and other trade unionists in Chegutu who are being threatened;
- urging the police and CIO to immediately investigate the threats reportedly made to the trade unionists by ZRP officers, and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the police and the CIO to respect trade unionists' rights to freedom of association and assembly, guaranteed under Section 21 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, articles 10 and 11 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Zimbabwe is a state party;
- reminding the police and the CIO that torture is prohibited under international law, as well as under Section 15 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, and that those accused of torture will be held accountable.

APPEALS TO:

Provincial Commanding Officer Mashonaland West Province
Zimbabwe Republic Police
P O Box 292,
Chinhoyi
Zimbabwe
Fax: +263 6725370
Salutation: Dear Provincial Commanding Officer

Zimbabwe Police Commissioner
Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri
Zimbabwe Republic Police
Police Headquarters
PO Box 8807
Causeway
Harare
Zimbabwe
Fax: +263 4 253 212
Salutation: Dear Commissioner

COPIES TO:

General Agriculture and Plantations Workers' Union
PO Box 1952
Harare
Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
P.O. Box 3549
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 17 May 2007.*****