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Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council

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### **Statement on the Arrest of Trade Union Activists and Police Disruption of Workers' Peaceful Demonstrations in Zimbabwe**

The Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) representing 22 major federations in 14 of the 16 Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) member states with a combined membership of about 6 million working men and women, strongly condemns the recent detention and disruption of peaceful demonstrations in the regional capitals of Zimbabwe that were scheduled to be held today on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018 organized by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

We have received disturbing reports that the ZCTU President Peter Mutasa, the Secretary General Japhet Moyo and over 35 trade union activists have been arrested and physically assaulted in Harare and other major towns countrywide as police brutally moved in earlier today to stop the planned nationwide protest by ZCTU and its general membership against the announced new tax regime in particular the 2 percent tax on electronic transfers and the rising poverty.

SATUCC takes the action by the authorities in Zimbabwe as a gross violation of fundamental workers' rights to organize, assemble and expression in Zimbabwe contrary to International Labour Organization Conventions 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize which the Government of Zimbabwe has ratified and has committed to uphold and implement.

It is saddening that once again the workers of Zimbabwe have been denied the right to organize, assemble and freely express themselves barely two months after the swearing in President Emerson Mnangagwa who proclaimed a new dispensation for the people of Zimbabwe and promised transformation from the previous President Robert Mugabe brutal administration which repeatedly violated workers rights with impunity.

SATUCC strongly condemns the action by the Government of Zimbabwe and stresses that workers rights as well as human rights in general should be respected and upheld.

SATUCC therefore demands that the Government of Zimbabwe should respect and safeguard the rights of all workers and public in Zimbabwe, and for our affiliate ZCTU to freely conduct trade union activities, defend and champion the rights of workers in Zimbabwe without restrictions and police brutality and harassment.

Finally, SATUCC demands the immediate unconditional release of all detained trade union leaders and activists including ZCTU President Peter Mutasa and Secretary General Japhet Moyo. Furthermore. SATUCC demands the immediate withdrawal of police and state security personnel currently surrounding the ZCTU offices country wide.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Austin C. Muneku', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Austin C. Muneku  
**Executive Secretary**

**11 October 2018, Gaborone, Botswana**