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## PRESS STATEMENT

### **Our strong and deep concerns about the banning of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and their activities in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe**

ITUC-Africa wishes to express and state her deep reservation and concerns about the recent information on the banning of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and their activities in Masvingo Province by the authority in that jurisdiction.

In recent times, especially under post-Arab spring revolutions, ITUC-Africa has observed that African governments have grown increasingly paranoia and intolerant to activities and roles of non-state actors within the spheres of national governance system. This ban by the Masvingo Province is a strong pointer to such growing state intolerance. Similar instances abound in Ethiopia where the government has introduced legislation to cripple NGOs funding and activities. We are also monitoring the trial by the Egyptian Military regime of NGOs and their officials charged with destabilisation activities in the country.

NGOs as members of the non-state actors' community have through their efforts organised and mobilised peoples and community in addressing the challenges of poverty, inequality and social justice deficits. They have come be regarded as agents and partners in progress.

Clearly, this directive violates the rights of non-state actors to participate and contribute to the processes of governance and development in that province. Indeed, this ban threatens the economic, social and political gains Zimbabwe has made under its renewed political and economic reconstruction efforts.

In anyway, we are quick to advise that the Masvingo authorities should explore legal processes in the claim, if any, it considers that certain NGOs and their activities infringed on the extant legislation under which they operate. To retort to outright whimsical banning of NGOs and outlawing their activities in such manner is

unfortunate and unacceptable as it negates the principles and tenets of the African Union Protocol on Democracy and Governance, which Zimbabwe is a signatory.

ITUC-Africa denounces this ban and call on the concerned authorities to take timely and necessary steps to rescind this directive.

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