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ITUC-Africa condemns police's attack on striking Hwange Colliery mine workers' wives

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) strongly condemns the attack of the Zimbabwean police on protesting women in Hwange.

We learnt with disbelief, the cynical manner in which the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) handled a peaceful demonstration by the wives of miners at Hwange Colliery Company who were demonstrating on behalf of their husbands who have not been paid their salaries for the past five months.

ITUC-Africa is informed that the wives had walked for 20 km to the General Managers' office demanding their husbands' salaries but were met with the police who harassed and assaulted them leaving many injured in the process. Some had to be ferried to Hwange Colliery Hospital for treatment.

We strongly condemn the use of force and violence on unarmed civilians and ask that the government brings the perpetrators to book. It is our considered opinion that the women should have been offered protection by the police in the cause of their non-violent action which was meant to draw the attention of their spouses' employers to the economic and psychological difficulties and pains they and their children are subjected to as a result of the non-payment of their spouses' salaries.

ITUC-Africa implores the Ministry of Labor to support the Zimbabwean Trades Union Congress' intervention on behalf of the miners who are facing unjust treatment by their employers through the non-payment of wages. Every worker deserves a fair wage and the right to protest and proceed to an industrial strike action where employers fail in their duty.

ITUC-Africa represents 16 million workers in 48 African countries and has 94 national affiliates. The headquarters of ITUC-Africa is based in Lomé, Togo.

For further information on ITUC-Africa, visit www.ituc-africa.org

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