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ITUC-AFRICA STATEMENT ON THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa), like many in Africa and the rest of the world, has been following with great interest the political developments in Zimbabwe. We join our colleagues of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the workers and people of Zimbabwe in acknowledging the decisive intervention by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces in accelerating the 'second liberation' of the people of Zimbabwe from tyrannical rule.

ITUC-Africa recalls the struggles of the ZCTU and workers and their civil society allies from the early 1990s against one party rule and the imposition of neo liberal policies that eroded the social gains of the early post independence period in Zimbabwe and led to a continuing deterioration in the living conditions of the majority of Zimbabweans. In the period since, the situation in Zimbabwe has been one of continuing struggle by the popular forces for their democratic rights and socio-economic well being on the one hand, and on the other hand, mounting political repression by the Mugabe led ZANU-PF government and the worsening living conditions of the majority of the population. While the struggles of the people of Zimbabwe prevented President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF from establishing a constitutional dictatorship, the government managed to use its control over the state apparatus to abuse the civil liberties of its citizens, and undermine the functioning of democratic institutions.

The current intervention by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces therefore comes in the wake of many years of struggle and sacrifice by the workers and people of Zimbabwe for genuine democracy and social wellbeing. This must be foremost in the minds of all political actors who contribute to the resolution and stabilization of the current situation.

We salute the disposition and efforts of the Zimbabwean people, workers and their trade unions as well as their civil society allies thus far in the face of this development. They have all spoken loudly and eloquently that they want to see, feel and live real changes as against the derailment of their liberation struggle. They have poured out onto the streets in their numbers to demand that the current developments usher in these desired changes. We hear them clearly and support them.

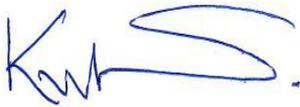
ITUC-Africa supports the demand of the ZCTU for an inclusive Transitional Authority with a defined timeframe.

We strongly urge the military to return to their basic function as defenders of the security and the territorial integrity of Zimbabwe and avoid electing themselves as supervisors of an inclusive and broad-based transitional government. The military must also strive to move away from appearing to be an arm of a political party bent only on serving the interest and benefit of that party to the exclusion of the larger interest of the people of Zimbabwe as a whole.

Further, we call on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) as well as members of the international community to commit to genuine assistance to an inclusive and broad-based transition government to successfully return the country to democratic civilian governance.

We implore all the actors and groups directly and remotely connected to the political development to work to ensure that the current situation does not degenerate into a violent one. No effort must be spared in ensuring the peace and physical integrity of the people, their communities and properties.

ITUC-Africa stands ready to mobilize support for the workers and their trade unions in their effort to make contribution towards the changes their people deserve and are seeking.



Kwasi Adu-Amankwah – General Secretary ITUC-Africa

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