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Mr. Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini
Prime Minister
The Kingdom of Eswatini
Mbabane
Eswatini

04 October 2019

Dear Mr. Prime Minister

Protest Against Severe Police Brutality Against Striking Public Sector Workers

The African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa www.ituc-africa.org) expresses its strong protest against severe Police brutalities meted out against striking public sector workers in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

We have received disturbing news of violent assault by the Eswatini Royal Police against striking public sector workers. We are informed that 17 workers are admitted to various hospitals in Manzini and Mbabane for various degrees of injuries, some near fatal. Reports indicate that this is the third time in a week that Police have attacked workers.

One of the injured in the recent attack is the National Public Service and Allied Workers Union (NAPSAWU) Manzini Branch Secretary General, Dumisani Nkuna. Reports allege that he was shot with live rounds of ammunition in the back, just close to the spinal cord and has since been admitted to the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital for intensive medical treatment.

ITUC-Africa strongly condemns these vicious and highhanded violent attacks against striking workers and denounces these tactics of violent repression and intimidation being deployed by the Eswatini Royal Police to cow workers and their trade unions.

Mr. Prime Minister, these workers were simply striking peacefully for a wage increase and should not be hounded and treated as criminals as the handling of the protests by the Eswatini Royal Police sadly suggests. We, therefore, call on you Mr. Prime Minister to direct the Police to respect and comply with the laid down rules of engagement in managing public protests as espoused in various continental and international instruments such as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (Article 10 – freedom of association; Article 11 – freedom of assembly and Article 12 – freedom of movement) and the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights (Article 20) that the Kingdom of Eswatini is signatory to.

Finally, Mr. Prime Minister, ITUC-Africa calls on your government to genuinely and effectively use the Joint Negotiating Forum to address the issue of wage increase demand by the striking

workers and their unions in a mutually satisfactory manner. In fact, we recall our recent audience with the King, His Majesty Mswati III on the sidelines of the 2019 ILO Centenary International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva, Switzerland where His Majesty spoke of the need to use dialogue to improve industrial relations. Mr Prime Minister, this is the time to use dialogue to resolve the issues responsible for the strike actions.

As we count on the swift and positive response of Mr. Prime Minister, we ask that you please accept the assurances of our high esteem.

Yours sincerely,



Kwasi Adu-Amankwah
General Secretary, ITUC-Africa