



**INTERNATIONAL  
LAWYERS ASSISTING  
WORKERS NETWORK**

8 August 2024

*Hon. Ziyambi Ziyambi  
Minister of Justice, Legal and  
Parliamentary Affairs  
Mgandane Dlodlo Building  
Cnr Samora Machel Avenue  
& Simon Vengesai  
Harare, Zimbabwe*

**Re: Serious Human Rights Violations in Zimbabwe**

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the International Lawyers Assisting Workers (ILAW) Network, which comprises over 1,300 workers' rights lawyers in over 95 countries, I write to express our serious concerns regarding the repeated human rights violations committed by state security forces against Zimbabwean human rights defenders, including trade union leaders. These violations were committed in the context of the upcoming 44<sup>th</sup> Ordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, which will take place in Harare on 17 August 2024. We call for the immediate release of those who have been arrested and the dropping of all criminal charges. We also expect the state to refrain from any further violations.

The following cases have come to our attention. On 31 July 2024, Robson Chere, Secretary General of the Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ), Namatai Kwekweza, human rights defender and Director of WELEAD Trust, Vusumuzi Moyo, human rights activist, and Samuel Gwenzi, politician with the Citizen Coalition for Change Party, were forcibly removed from a Victoria Falls-bound plane at the Robert Mugabe International Airport. According to court records, they were held incommunicado, denied access to both their lawyers and their relatives. Further, Robson Chere was subjected to severe physical abuse, as evidenced by disturbing photos of his injuries that have circulated on social media.

Similarly, on 2 August 2024, Jacob Ngarivhume, leader of the Transform Zimbabwe Party, Bruce Moyo, Nkulumane Ward 22 Councillor in Bulawayo, and Bishop Kevin Nyamakanga, were separately arrested at their respective residences on false allegations of plotting to incite public violence during the SADC Summit. They have been arbitrarily detained since. We are also aware of other arbitrary arrests and detention happening throughout the country.

**International Lawyers Assisting Workers Network  
1130 Connecticut Ave, NW  
Washington DC, 20036**



Further, on 7 August 2024, unidentified men scaled the walls of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, a civil society organisation operating legally in Zimbabwe, destroyed the closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras and then forcibly entered the organisation's offices.

The ILAW Network expresses its deep concern about the escalating human rights violations in Zimbabwe by state security agencies. The recent events in Zimbabwe clearly violate international and regional human rights law and the Constitution of Zimbabwe (which on paper is one of the more progressive in the region).<sup>1</sup> We stand in unwavering solidarity with all trade unionists, human rights defenders and citizens who are subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention and torture. These violations call into questions the government's commitment towards fulfilling its constitutional obligations under Section 44 of the Constitution, which is to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights and freedoms set out under Chapter 4, the Declaration of Rights.

Therefore, we request you to take the immediate actions:

1. Release all detained and to drop all criminal charges;
2. Conduct thorough investigations into the alleged human rights abuses, including those committed by state authorities;
3. Ensure accountability for perpetrators of human rights abuses as provided for under the Zimbabwean Constitution and the Criminal Law;
4. Publicly denounce the abuses of fundamental freedoms by state actors; and
5. Prevent further violations

We await your response on our concerns and recommendations.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Vogt  
Chair, ILAW Network

---

<sup>1</sup> See, Articles 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention 87 of the International Labour Organisation and Articles 10 and 11 of the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, to which Zimbabwe is a signatory. Further, these actions violate Zimbabwe's constitution, in particular Sections 58, 59 and 60 on the right to freedom of assembly and association, to demonstrate and petition and freedom of conscience, respectively.



**INTERNATIONAL  
LAWYERS ASSISTING  
WORKERS NETWORK**

cc: Southern African Development Community  
African Commission on Human and People's Rights  
UN Human Rights Council