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For Immediate Release

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**The Solidarity Center Condemns Attacks against the
Zimbabwe Trade Union Congress**
Union Leaders and Activists Beaten and Arrested during Peaceful Vigil

Washington, D.C., March 16--The Solidarity Center condemns the escalating attacks against unions and civil society organizations in Zimbabwe. As part of a continued effort to repress civic organizations, government security forces raided the headquarters of the Zimbabwe Trade Union Congress (ZCTU) and beat and arrested opposition leaders during a peaceful march and prayer vigil.

“Workers are marching to protest the violation of their fundamental human rights,” said Ellie Larson, Executive Director of the Solidarity Center. “With 1,700% inflation, workers are desperate to provide food and shelter for their families. The ZCTU represents these workers and is seeking a peaceful dialogue with the Zimbabwe government to find solutions to the economic and social crisis and to end the suffering of millions of workers.”

On Sunday, March 11, the ZCTU, the Movement for Democratic Change and other democratic civil society organizations, were severely beaten and arrested when they tried to attend a prayer vigil in a Harare township. One youth activist was killed. On March 13, police and national security officers ransacked the headquarters of the ZCTU. Three ZCTU staff members were assaulted and another arrested. The attack came at a time when the ZCTU was in discussions with the country’s Labor Minister and other government officials to find solutions to the increasing economic crisis.

“The Zimbabwe Government needs to respect fundamental worker and human rights in their country,” said Larson. “We call on the government to end the use of arrests and excessive force to silence the ZCTU and other opposition organizations.”

The Solidarity Center is a non-profit, global organization established to build and strengthen independent and democratic trade unions around the world. Working with unions, nongovernmental organizations, and other community partners, the Solidarity Center supports programs and projects to advance worker rights and promote broad-based, sustainable economic development.

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