

STATEMENT

Day of action for Zimbabwe socialists

Monday 21 March 2011, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 17 March 2011).

Zimbabwean dictator Robert Mugabe is continuing a crackdown on all dissent, and among the recent victims are six socialists who could face the death penalty for the "crime of holding a meeting to watch news coverage of the revolutions in North Africa.

Forty-five people were arrested in the raid on the meeting, which was called by Munyaradzi Gwisai, a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe's law school, general coordinator of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) of Zimbabwe, and a former member of Zimbabwe's parliament. After days in prison, during which some of the detainees were tortured and all were subjected to harsh treatment, most of the arrested were released—but six people remained behind bars on charges of treason.

As this statement was being published, we learned that the six had been granted bail, though at a cost of U.S.\$2,000 each, which is an enormous sum in Zimbabwe. According to reports, the six have been released.

SIX PEOPLE in Zimbabwe are now imprisoned on charges of treason for organizing a meeting to discuss the mass movements in Tunisia and Egypt. For this "crime," they face a possible death sentence. They have been tortured and are now in solitary confinement.

An international day of action to demand their release will be held on Monday, March 21, when they are scheduled for a court hearing.

Our message is simple and urgent: We demand that the government of Zimbabwe drop all charges and release them immediately.

Plans are underway for demonstrations in a number of countries. We urge concerned people everywhere to join us in organizing meetings and demonstrations in solidarity with the prisoners. Please translate and distribute this appeal as widely as possible. Let us know what you are doing at the contact addresses below.

The worldwide significance of the struggle to free the Zimbabwean prisoners is reflected in a recent statement of support from the Congress of South African Trade Unions: "The Egyptian and Tunisian experience have inspired many workers and poor people all over the world to stand up and demand an end to dictatorship, corruption and injustice of whatever kind."

The arrest and prosecution of the six may seem like only the latest round of repression by Robert Mugabe's government against opponents. But it is also an attack on the spirit of Tahrir Square, which has inspired people all over the world. The six prisoners include trade unionists, intellectuals and activists in the struggle for women's rights. The effort to suppress them—and even to kill them, whether by execution or through torture and denial of medical treatment while in custody—is a vicious assault on all of us.

March 17, 2011

South Africa endorsers:

Anti-Privatisation Forum
Amnesty International
CIVICUS
Democratic Left Front
Freedom of Expression Institute
Lawyers for Human Rights
MDC Johannesburg Youth Assembly
South African Municipal Workers Union
Zimbabwe Treason Trialists Solidarity Committee

U.S. endorsers:

Africa Action
Campaign for Peace and Democracy
Campaign to End the Death Penalty
The Dorothy Day Catholic Worker House (Washington, DC)
Edge of Sports
International Socialist Review
The Nation
New Politics
The Progressive
Socialist Worker
Washington Peace Center

WHAT YOU CAN DO

To learn more about the six prisoners and the struggle for their release, see the Free Them Now! website [\[1\]](#), the Solidarity with Zimbabwean Political Prisoners website [\[2\]](#), and the Facebook group (open to non-Facebook users) Calling for the Release of Zimbabwean Activists [\[3\]](#).

To endorse the March 21 actions, please send a message to both of these addresses: zimtreasontrial@gmail.com and solidarity.freethemnow.com.

Sign and circulate a petition calling for the release of all the activists. Donate to the “Free the Zimbabwe 45” fund to contribute to the legal defense of the activists, as well as support for their families.

Send an urgent e-mail to Zimbabwean officials calling for the immediate release of the remaining six activists—Antonater Choto, Welcome Zimuto, Eddson Chakuma, Tatenda Mombeyarara, Munyaradzi Gwisai and Hopewell Gumbo.

Include these e-mail addresses in the “To” line: info33@zimbabwe-embassy.us, consular@zimbabwe-embassy.us, gapare@zimbabwe-embassy.us, mhute@zimbabwe-embassy.us, goora@zimbabwe-embassy.us, chinoingira@zimbabwe-embassy.us, masoso@zimbabwe-embassy.us, nyamapfeni@zimbabwe-embassy.us and mukupe@zimbabwe-embassy.us.

Forward your message separately to these supporters of democracy, so they have a record of who has appealed to the regime: socialismfrombelow@gmail.com, ashley_fataar@yahoo.co.uk, shanthabloemen@gmail.com.

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.freethemnow.com/>

[2] <http://solidaritywithzimbabwe.blogspot.com/>

[3] <http://www.facebook.com/login.php>