His Excellency

President Emmerson Mnangagwa

Munhumutapa Building

Corner Sam Nujoma / Samora Machel

Harare

SIMBAMBE

*Your Excellency President Mnangagwa,*

*I am concerned with the arbitrary arrest and trumped up charges against****Rashid Mahiya****,****Joanna Mamombe****and****Charlton Hwende****.*

*Rashid Mahiya, an activist and Chairperson of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition group**was arrested on 26 February and was freed on bail on 7 March. Joanna Mamombe, the youngest female Member of Parliament with the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change Alliance(MDC-A) was arrested on 2 March whilst attending a parliamentary workshop and has also been released on bail. Charlton Hwende, an MDC Member of Parliament for Kuwadzana was arrested on 5 March upon arrival at the airport in Harare after being out of the country since 21 December 2018 for medical treatment.*

*All three have been charged with ‘subverting a constitutional government’ which attracts a sentence of more than 20 years in prison in an ongoing government crackdown on human rights defenders, activists and opposition members. The charges are in connection with a three-day national shutdown called for by the Zimbabwe of Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) on 14-16 January in protest against a hike in fuel prices in Zimbabwe.*

*They are to appear in court; Rashid on 12 March, Joanna on 19 March and Charlton on 20 March.*

*I call on you to;*

* *Ensure that charges against Rashid Mahiya, Joanna Mamombe and Charlton Hwende are dropped immediately;*
* *End the crackdown on human rights defenders, activists and opposition members in Zimbabwe and ensure respect for the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and that the judicial system is not misused to persecute perceived opponents of ZANU PF, the ruling party.*

*Yours sincerely,*