His Excellency

President Emmerson Mnangagwa

Munhumutapa Building

Corner Sam Nujoma / Samora Machel

Harare

SIMBAMBE

Your Excellency,

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

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 Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) on 14-16 January in protest against a hike in fuel prices in Zimbabwe.

Rashid Mahiya, an activist and Chairperson of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition group was arrested on 26 February. Joanna Mamombe, the youngest female Member of Parliament (MP) with the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change Alliance(MDC-A), was arrested on 2 March whilst attending a parliamentary workshop. 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. Rashid was granted bail on 7 March and Charlton got bail on 8 March whilst Joanna was granted bail on 9 March.

They are awaiting trial.

I call on you to;

* Ensure that the 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 full 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,