



Press release – PARIS, Oct 12nd, 2017

Mr. Lewis Mwape, Executive Director from Zambia Council for Social Development (ZCSD), an IFP member, and five other leaders of Civil Society and Human Rights under arrest



Lusaka – October 12nd, 2017 - On September 29th, 2017, the Executive Director from Zambia Council for Social Development (ZCSD), Mr. Lewis Mwape and five other leaders of Civil Society and Human Rights were arrested and charged by the Zambia Police.

The arrest occurred after they staged a protest demanding for accountability in which **42 fire tenders were acquired at a cost of \$1million each**, a transaction which has been seen by the majority to be corrupt as the cost of the trucks is said to be too exorbitant for the type and quality of trucks delivered.

The 6 leaders have since been given police bond and are scheduled to appear in Court on October 27th, 2017.

However, their arrest has been roundly condemned by a cross section of society and is seen as **“a suffocation of the right to assemble and freedom of expression which is guaranteed in our Republican Constitution”**, said Pascal Bwalya, Head of Programmes at the ZCSD.

“This is also an attempt to instill fear through intimidation by using state police, as a move meant to further close civic space and suppress the citizens voice demanding for transparency and accountability in the use of public resources in the face of growing poverty and inequality”, according to Mr. Bwalya.



[IFP, the International Forum of National NGO platforms](#), of which ZCSD is a member, has publicly disseminated a solidarity message condemning the unwarranted actions of the Zambian police as undemocratic and a violation of the fundamental rights to assembly and freedom of expression.

In recent years, civic space and rights of association, peaceful assembly and freedom of expression are under attack all over the world, and this threatens the health of democracy and societies everywhere. Our role at the IFP, along with our members, is to publicly challenge shrinking of civic space globally and to insist that the human rights of people everywhere are respected”, says Mr. Santibañez, IFP chairman.

The serious difficulties being experienced by civil society activists at present in Zambia are just another example of the kind of heavy-handed tactics that are being used to try to restrict their freedom to act on behalf of their communities. These tactics include repressive legislation, restrictions on funding, heavy administration burdens, the exclusion of CSOs from participation in public policy-making, and even the use of violence, threats and even murder concludes Mr. Santibañez.

Please share this message widely and join the IFP and its members in our fight for democracy and the defense of the rights of people everywhere.

About IFP

IFP is a Global Network of 64 engaged national platforms and 6 regional coalitions which gather over 22 000 NGOs promoting transformative political, economic and social change to achieve a fair and sustainable world for all.

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About Zambia Council for Social Development (ZCSD)

ZCSD is a membership based organisation, created in 2015, with a membership of more than 150 NGOs which are spread in all of Zambia's 10 provinces. Its mission is to promote and facilitate sustainable, socio-economic development through collaboration and networking among Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), partners and other stakeholders.

www.thezcsd.org

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