

# **Solidarity Statement with The Socialist Party of Zambia and Comrade Fred M'membe**

We have heard from our comrades in NUMSA that a warrant of arrest has been issued for Comrade Fred M'membe of the Socialist Party of Zambia and that his wife and several workers connected to The Zambian Post Newspaper have been arrested in a violent raid on his house by scores of armed police.

This is the result of the Lungu government's determination to shut down an independent voice of opposition criticizing President Edgar Lungu, his Patriotic Front party and their followers.

It is an attack on freedom of the press, which is the cornerstone of any democratic society.

We agree completely with NUMSA, that as a working class party, "We have a responsibility to defend and advance democracy, human rights and full human freedom. We have a duty to defend and advance the interests of justice".

We wholeheartedly support the NUMSA call for workers internationally to show solidarity with workers fighting against tyranny and for democracy throughout Africa, and to boycott trade with Zambia.

Like NUMSA, we pledge our solidarity with all the working class and socialist forces in Zambia in general, and to the Socialist Party of Zambia in particular and to comrade Fred and The Post newspaper.

We support NUMSA in demanding the following from President Lungu of Zambia:

1. Stop, forthwith, the harassment of Comrade Fred, his wife and workers of The Post.
2. Fred M'membe's wife and all those detained must be released, immediately and unconditionally.
3. The warrant of arrest for Fred M'membe must be withdrawn immediately.
4. Ensure that Zambian tax authorities comply with the order to have The Post opened and operating normally, and to allow for the normal resolutions of the tax matters between the two parties.
5. The Mast must operate normally, without hindrance or harassment.

Bob Archer

Secretary WIRFI

20 February