Press statement by the Rössing Nine

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Comradely greetings to all our comrades, workers, brothers and sisters around the world.

Rössing Uranium Ltd has been producing and exporting uranium oxide from Namibia to nuclear power utilities around the world since its inception in 1976 and the union movement got into focus, so much so that the struggle spilled back from South Africa back into Namibia. In 1978 the labour movement (union) was born at Rössing Uranium Mine when the oppressors tried to brutally suppress but did not succeed and they jailed the leaders under Administrative General (AG) proclamation 26.

The repression continued but failed to suppress the rising working-class movement. In 1984 the workers won the rights to organise the union movement and register trade unions. The culmination of those rights were contained in the 1992 Labour Act (Legislation), the pinnacle of labour rights in Namibia. The problem is while as the Namibian working class succeeded in winning these significant union and labour rights as was enshrined in the 1992 Labour Act and the 1990 Democratic Constitution of Namibia, the multinational corporation came down with a vengeance to nullify the unions and labour rights in its entirety.

The mechanisms used against the union movement and working-class rights were among others: privatisation, Labour judicial corruption, the return of the labour-hire through outsourcing, formalisation of labour-hire companies, etc. One of the reasons which facilitated the derogation of rights was the co-option of working-class leaderships into state structures. Endemic corruption furthered the historic weakness in the

struggle of the working class in that it failed to create a working-class leadership in its own name and for its own interest.

The historic significance of this struggle is that it pointed the workers to the end-goal by showing everyone the indispensability and the power of the working class, through the 1971 to 1972 general strike that brought the entire nation to a standstill and inspired the South African working class to rise up since 1973 until South Africa overthrew Apartheid in 1994,

The Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) was formalised in 1986. The Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) Rössing branch signed the first ever recognition agreement in Namibia on the 14thNovember 1988 that governs the relationship between the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) and Rössing Uranium Ltd., which is still in existence to date.

Under Rio Tinto as a majority shareholder in Rössing Uranium Ltd., as employees we were part of the greater Rio Tinto and labour relations were based on the existing laws. Although we had our difference, we still mutually coexisted and the Rio Tinto respected and complied with legislation, the internal policies and agreements. Rio Tinto understood the role of the union with regards to the Supreme Law of Namibia and Labour Act 11 of 2007.

This all started to change when Rio Tinto sold all its shares in Rössing Uranium Ltd. to China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) in July 2019. The CNNC management used every opportunity to suppress and threaten union rights by demanding to renegotiate among others the following agreements to less favourable agreements:

1. Procedural (Recognition) Agreement of 14 November 1988
2. Performance and Conduct Procedure (Disciplinary Code)
3. Recruitment Policy

4. Retrenchment Package Agreement
5. 5 Conditions of employment
    - Leave Days
    - Sick Leave days
    - Commutation system
6. Salary scales and structures
7. Medical Aid Provider

Their renegotiation attempts failed and this culminated in grave attacks on the Branch Executive Committee. Among the attacks are the exclusive unprocedural correspondences between the General secretary of MUN (Eben Zarondo) in which the Chinese General Manager instructed him to discipline the Branch Executive Committee, and when he failed to find any grounds or faults, CNNC Rössing Uranium Ltd. took the matter in their hands by unlawfully and illegally dismissing the Branch Executive Committee.

Between July and September 202, the management unlawfully and illegally suspended, charged and dismissed the Nine Executive Committee Members in their individual employment positions on witch-hunt and unfounded allegations against MUN (Mineworkers Union of Namibia) of allegedly leaking confidential information about the illegal employment of the 4 Chinese nationals in management to the media, breaching employment contracts, bringing the company's name into disrepute and dishonesty.

The illegal and unlawful employment of the Chinese was exposed by the media to the nation, drawing the attention of immigration control officers to investigate, arrest and detain them and a police case number CR08/08/2020 was registered upon the full establishment that they were indeed illegal and unlawfully working for CNNC Rössing Uranium Limited and for violating the Namibia Immigration Control Act.

The illegal and unlawful employees were then transferred to

Narraville Police Station to be held in custody and to be brought before court for prosecution. However, close to midnight that very day, an awful and disgraceful act happened in that, the accused were jail-broken on an instruction from some high-ranking government official. These instructions were illegal and unlawful, as the officials that dispensed the instructions are not part of the justice system, neither are they from the office of the Prosecutor General or the Police and no document or police bail was processed for their release, only instructions from above.

For the mine to dismiss an organ of the union is a compete renunciation of the laws of Namibia. What will be the full social, economic and political implication of this? It will mean that Namibia is not a sovereign state, there is no rule of law, and legal entities in Namibia are without any legal protection.

MUN Rössing Branch is the foundation and torch-bearer of the union movement in Namibia. These attacks on the union movement as expressed in the Chinese National Nuclear Corporation Rössing Uranium Limited situation echoes the capitalist attack on the union movement around the country and around the world.

As leaders of the workers' movement (union), we will defend the fundamental rights which Namibian workers have fought for more than a century and won,

The sad situation informs the way forward and the basic element of the program is as follows:

- The rebuilding and training of the working-class basic organisations and structures of the union, both national and international
- The rebuilding of national and international solidarity as the means of achieving such workers' organisations
- The rebuilding and r-affirming of the working-class movements for political power nationally and

internationally t avert the onslaught on the rights of workers.

The role of imperialism today as reflected in the Rössing example is to destroy fundamental rights and derogate social, economic and political relations and in particular the proper relations brought to bear on the working class worldwide.

We firmly believe that the only outstanding matter to resolve this increasingly destructive situation is the crisis of leadership in the working-class movement. We dedicate ourselves to work to resolve that crisis by building such a leadership nationally and internationally.

We thank our brothers and sisters who stand in solidarity; the Rössing Uranium Ltd. employees, MUN Walvisbay Salt Refinery, Namibia United Fishermen Association, AR movement, individuals and we further extend gratitude to our brothers and sisters internationally from the USA, UK, Brazil, Japan, Greece, Australia, Argentina and many others.

Your solidarity actions national and around the world is already a major step in realizing our program of action and change.

In solidarity

Injury to one is injury to all

The Struggle Continues

The Nine Dismissed Union Leaders