
Zimbabwe
TUC support for email action
29 November 2008

British workers urged to support Zimbabwean unions' action over cash crisis

The TUC is calling on British trade unionists to show solidarity with Zimbabwean trade unionists in the run up to a day of action on Wednesday 3 December. That's the day when the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) has called on Zimbabweans to go to their banks to demand their money. A procession will be made to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe where the ZCTU leadership will deliver a petition to the Governor.

The ZCTU website says:

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) is calling on all workers in Zimbabwe to brace for action against the cash withdrawal limit that is being imposed by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and the current dollarisation of the economy.

- *Surely, after working hard for their hard-earned money, why are workers, being denied their money?*
- *Most shops are selling their goods in foreign currency, yet workers earn their salaries in Zimbabwean dollars. **SAY NO TO DOLLARISATION!!***
- *If shops continue to be allowed to sell goods in foreign currency, then let all workers be paid in forex.*
- *There is a serious outbreak of Cholera: There are no drugs, hospital staff have downed tools, some hospitals have closed signifying a collapse in the health delivery system.*
- *Workers are not being allowed to withdraw cash for medication.*
- *The Education System has collapsed: Teachers are no longer teaching. Our children's future is being compromised*

Sign up to the [e-mail action](#) on the Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) website and send a message of protest to the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

At the heart of the protest is a growing division in Zimbabwe between the rich, Mugabe-supporting elite who are increasingly using US dollars, and the mass of the

Zimbabwean people who are unable to withdraw from the bank sufficient Zimbabwean dollars to meet their daily needs.

As the country struggles with a mass outbreak of cholera and the prospect of famine, the ZCTU has protested about the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) decision to increase the amounts of foreign currency individuals and companies carry out of Zimbabwe with reservation.

Background

RBZ governor, Gideon Gono announced that individuals can now carry out of Zimbabwe US\$5,000, up from US\$1,000, while cross border traders from licenced foreign currency shops would be allowed to take with them amounts of up to US\$100,000.

A ZCTU statement at the time said "what is disturbing is that when it comes to local currency, the poor are discriminated while making withdrawals but the elite can take huge amounts in foreign currency outside the country ostensibly to buy goods for their shops.

"The ZCTU hopes and trust that this is not the start of a looting spree, as we suspect, by people who are jittery about the new political dispensation. There is need to strongly monitor the so-called foreign currency shops if we are to avoid a situation were people with licences externalize the scarce foreign currency."

The ZCTU General Council met on Saturday 20 September 2008, and gave the RBZ a seven-day ultimatum to address the current deepening cash crisis affecting the generality of Zimbabwean workers, or it will call for National Action.

A letter delivered to the Reserve Bank Governor, Dr. Gideon Gono noted with concern that ordinary Zimbabweans, particularly workers, are now finding it difficult to access their hard earned money from the bank. When they finally do so, the amount so withdrawn is not even enough to purchase two loaves of bread or meet the daily needs.

It also noted that ordinary Zimbabweans who can not use either the RTGS, cheque or electronic cards as a mode of payment, are being or have been reduced to paupers despite the fact that they do have money in the banks.

The General Council therefore resolved that cash withdrawal limits be removed completely or at least be adjusted to realistic levels that enable families to meet their daily needs. The RBZ has recently raised the limit from Zim \$50,000 to Zim \$500,000 but Zimbabwe's ever-increasing inflation rate has eroded that increase. The ZCTU has demanded that the RBZ should also allow employers to pay their workers in cash, including in US dollars.