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| HE Barnabe Kikaya Bin Karubi  Ambassador for the DRC  Embassy of the DRC  45-49 Portland Street  London  W1W 7LD | date: 11 March 2014  contact: Bandula Kothalawala  direct line: + 44 20 7467 1257  email: bkothalawala@tuc.org.uk |

Dear Ambassador

Arrest of Mr Victor Umba Ilunga, President, National Union Delegation at SNCC

On behalf of the TUC General Council, I write to express our deep concern over the arrest of Mr Victor Umba Ilunga, president of the national union delegation of the Congolese national rail company, SNCC.

Mr Ilunga was detained by the security services on 24 February in Lubumbashi, where the General Directorate of the SNCC is based. No information has yet been provided as to where he is being held. Mr Ilunga’s arrest was connected with the strike staged at the Company since October 2013 over the non-payment of salaries for 68 months.

The Democratic Republic of Congo ratified Convention 87 on freedom of association and the protection of the right to organise (1948) on 20 June 2001 and is under an obligation to take every measure necessary and appropriate to guarantee the free exercise of trade union rights. The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association states that the detention of trade union officials or members for reasons connected with their activities to defend the interests of workers constitutes a serious violation of civil liberties in general and trade union rights in particular.

The TUC joins the international trade union movement in its condemnation of the arbitrary arrest and demands that the Congolese government ensure the unconditional release of Mr Victor Umba Ilunga, as well as the opening of a genuine dialogue between the parties involved, with a view to finding a solution to the crisis.

Yours sincerely

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FRANCES O’GRADY

TUC General Secretary