



**NUMSA demands the immediate and unconditional release of Dr. Fred M'membe by
Zambian police
11 August 2024
Press statement**

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) demands the immediate and unconditional release of Dr. Fred M'membe, the President of the Socialist Party of Zambia. Dr. M'membe has been jailed by Zambian police and is being detained at the Twin Palm Police Station in Lusaka since the 8th of August. He has been arrested and charged with seditious practices and the charges are related to an article that was posted on his Facebook page, where he was exposing the corruption of the Zambian government under the leadership of President Hakainde Hichilema. Almost a year ago, (9 August 2023), NUMSA issued a similar statement condemning the Zambian government for arresting Dr. M'membe on 'trumped up charges'. He is clearly a victim of harassment by a paranoid, intolerant state.

Dr. M'membe is not the only politician who has been harassed by the Zambian state. Opposition leaders have reported cases of abduction and assault at the hands of police, including Mr Emmanuel Mwamba, who is the former Zambian Ambassador to South Africa and also a senior leader in the Zambia opposition party, the Patriotic Front, claimed he was abducted, arrested, physically assaulted by police, and detained for days, before being released. According to a report by the [BBC](#) in May, Honourable Emmanuel Jay Banda, a member of the opposition, and a Member of Parliament was allegedly abducted and assaulted. Other leaders of the Socialist Party of Zambia and their families too have faced harassment and physical assault.

Dr. M'membe was refused bail and has spent the weekend in jail. The party has been consistently vocal about exposing the corruption in Hichilemas government. Dr. Cosmos Musumali the General Secretary of the Socialist Party says the party views the arrests as a form of 'intimidation' by the state but they will not be deterred. They say Dr Fred is in 'high' spirits despite the conditions he is facing.

Dr Fred M'membe is an advocate of the Supreme Court, Constitutional Court and High Court of Zambia. He is a member of the International Bar Association and sits on its taxes committee, a member of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, the Southern African Lawyers Association and the Law Association of Zambia. He is also a journalist who founded and edited The Post, a daily newspaper established in Zambia in 1990. He managed and edited it for 26 years until the government ruthlessly closed it in 2017. The newspaper had an office in Havana for eleven years.

NUMSA stands in solidarity with Dr. M'membe, the Socialist Party and the people of Zambia. We condemn the Zambian government for abusing its power and for silencing opposition parties. Intolerance of opposition politics is one of the hallmarks of an autocratic state.

NUMSA is warning the Zambian state that we are watching them and we have noted how the state is reacting with increased violence against opposition leaders, and dissenting voices.

ENDS

Issued by Irvin Jim

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