



E-EQUALITY NEWSLETTER – SPECIAL EMERGENCY EDITION – JANUARY 2007

Urgent call to action on LGB Legislation

Following a vociferous campaign by religious organisations and scaremongering by parts of the media, there is now a danger that the Government will cave in and weaken the legislation coming into force in April to protect Lesbian, Gay and Bisexuals, (LGB) from discrimination in the provision of goods and services.

It is feared that the Government will provide wide exemptions from the regulations for religious organisations. This must not be allowed to happen and a trade union delegation has already met with Ruth Kelly to make it clear that it will not be acceptable for the legislation to be weakened. The LGB community is entitled to be treated and protected equally in this country.

To strengthen our campaign we would ask that you to write to, Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, to urge the Government to resist additional exemptions. Her contact details are at - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1159207>

and

Write to you local MP. If you are not sure who your local MP is you can find out at - <http://www.upmystreet.com/commons/>

Public Services Lobby – Tuesday 23 January

It's not too late for to join the trade union public services lobby of Parliament on Tuesday 23 January at Westminster. Transport can be arranged by your Regional Office, so if you would still like to attend contact your Amicus Regional Officer or Office.

This lobby is the chance for public sector workers to join together to let the Government and MPs know that they want to serve the public not shareholders or company owners.

More details about the Lobby are available at -
<http://www.amicustheunion.org/Default.aspx?page=4646>

ZIMBABWE WOMEN ARRESTED AND FINED

22 women were arrested on 15 January 2007 in Shurugwi for protesting against the poor salaries of their husbands working at ZIMASCO Mine, in the Midlands region of Zimbabwe. They were arrested between 1 – 2 pm whilst strategizing on whether to proceed with the demonstration without the Police sanction which they unsuccessfully applied for. Some of the women protesting had babies and some were pregnant. They spent the whole night in cells and were charged under POSA for illegally demonstrating in public. They were released on the 16th of January 2007 after payment of \$5 000 each as fine. This information has been received from ZCTU Central Regional Office and Mr. Gibson Chauke Associated Mine Workers' Union of Zimbabwe Branch official, Shurugwi, ZIMASCO Company.

Amicus would urge you to take action by contacting the Zanu-PF Government and the Zimbabwean Ambassador to the UK, Gabriel Machinga, protesting at the appalling treatment of these women. A draft letter to the Zimbabwean Government is below. If you would like to find out more about the Dignity! Period campaign which is sending sanitary ware to the women in Zimbabwe see - <http://www.amicustheunion.org/Default.aspx?page=3447>

Either print out (if faxing) or copy and paste (if emailing) this message and send it to the details provided below.

LETTER TO ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT

Zanu PF

I am writing because I am appalled and outraged to learn about the 22 women who were arrested on 15th January 2007 in Shurugwi for protesting against the poor salaries of their husbands working at ZIMASCO Mine.

The women were peaceful demonstrators and it is despicable that the Government has treated them this way. Some of the women protesting had babies and some were pregnant; it is atrocious that these people spent the whole night in cells. This treatment was made all the more deplorable by each protestor being fined \$5 000 ZD, an incredibly high and unfair punishment for these people who are living in poverty. The fact that they were charged under POSA for illegally demonstrating in public is outrageous due to the fact they applied for the Police sanction which therefore legally allowed them to strategize and hold the protest.

We stand in solidarity with all the ZCTU members and protestors at the ZIMASCO mine who were so heavily fined and unfairly treated by this arrest. These women deserve full compensation, the right to peacefully protest and an acknowledgement of the atrocities of the Government and police force. The Zimbabwean Government's draconian intolerance of critical opinion from members of the public, peacefully demonstrating against unfair employers is disgraceful and seeks not only to quieten dissent but also to cover up hardships faced by ordinary Zimbabweans.

With great concern,

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Send it to:

Fax : +263-4-774146

Email : zanupf@africaonline.co.zw

Please Bcc enews@actsa.org into all your correspondences, so that they can keep track on the action that is being taken. If you choose to fax your letter of support, please drop ACTSA an email to let us know.

From previous experience, faxing is the most effective way to act as Zanu-PF regularly changes their email address. If you do experience problems with sending the emails please do persevere, your actions are crucial!

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