



20. 11.2023

**THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT OF GHANA (SMG) CALLS FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF  
DR. FRED M'MEMBE**

The Socialist Movement of Ghana (SMG) is deeply troubled by the shrinking democratic space and attacks on opposition voices in Zambia under President Hakainde Hichilema's populist government. Dr Fred M'membe, President of the Socialist Party (SP) of Zambia, was taken into custody on November 15th under suspicion of espionage. This happened after he spoke with journalist Musorowegomo Nukosi for a documentary about the recent elections in Zimbabwe.

The SP president has recently been the target of numerous charges and arrests, this being the most recent. He was detained in August on suspicion of libel and "acts intended to cause grievous bodily harm." In April, M'membe and other SP members were also taken into custody due to political unrest in the Serenje district, when SP cadres were attacked by supporters of the ruling United Party for National Development (UPND). The repeated arrests of Comrade M'membe in recent months seem to be an attempt by the desperate administration of Hichilema to suppress any dissent and maintain their grip on power. This is due to their inability to deliver on the numerous promises made to the Zambian people, including the hope of bringing about reforms.

Like many other African countries, Zambia has been following the economic prescriptions of Bretton Woods institutions for years, leading to a severe debt crisis. This crisis has resulted in a staggering 48% undernourishment rate, with 35% of children under the age of five being stunted. The value of the Kwacha has significantly dropped this year, leading to unbearable hikes in food and transportation prices. These economic challenges directly result from the development model that primarily adheres to the liberal framework imposed by foreign donors, often in collaboration with local elites.

The Socialist Party of Zambia, under the leadership of Comrade M'membe, has been a leading voice against the neoliberal agenda of President Hakainde Hichilema's government. The party has consistently highlighted the adverse effects of rising living costs, inflation, and the implementation of austerity measures imposed by international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The repeated arrests of Dr M'membe are not only a violation of his rights but also a clear indication of the Zambian government's authoritarian tendencies. These tactics suppress opposition voices and divert attention from the country's pressing socioeconomic issues. It's time for the government to listen to the people and address their concerns instead of resorting to undemocratic measures. The UPND government must unequivocally uphold the fundamental right to free expression and provide a safe and secure environment for opposition parties to operate without fear of intimidation.

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## **SOCIALIST MOVEMENT OF GHANA (SMG)**

The SMG demand the immediate release of Dr. Fred M'membe and the dismissal of all charges against him. We stand in solidarity with the Socialist Party of Zambia in their struggle for justice, free speech, and peaceful assembly. We condemn any attempts to suppress the voices of those advocating for the rights and well-being of the Zambian people. We urgently call for the protection and respect of the rights and freedoms of all citizens, regardless of their legal association, gender, or creed. The actions against Fred M'membe are not just an attack on an individual but a blatant violation of the fundamental principles of freedom of speech and the right of citizens to hold their government accountable.

We call on all progressive forces worldwide to unite against Zambia's repression and support the people's struggle for dignified living conditions, equality, and fundamental rights for all citizens.

Free Dr Fred M'membe now!

In solidarity,

Yaw Appiah-Kubi

***For General Secretary***