

URGENT ACTION

MEDICAL DOCTOR FOUND ALIVE BUT TORTURED

On 19 September 2019, Dr Peter Magombeyi, a medical doctor was found alive and disoriented, dumped about 33 km outside of Harare, Zimbabwe in a village called Nyabira. Dr Magombeyi was abducted on the night of 14 September 2019. He said he was held in a basement where he was tortured. There are fears that he was injected with an unknown substance by his abductors. The government accused him of faking the abduction and tried to prevent him from seeking medical treatment outside the country. It is feared he may be arrested and charged for “faking an abduction” upon his return to Zimbabwe.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*His Excellency President Emmerson Mnangagwa
Munhumutapa Building
Private Bag 7700
Causeway, Harare
Zimbabwe
Email: info@opc.gov.zw*

Your Excellency President Mnangagwa

*On 19 September 2019 medical doctor **Peter Magombeyi** was found alive and disoriented, 33 km out of Harare after being abducted on 14 September 2019, from his home in Harare. He had previously served notice to the Minister of Health and Child Care that doctors across the country would go on strike. There are fears that he may have been poisoned by his abductors and he is currently seeking further medical treatment in South Africa. The government has also accused him of faking the abduction.*

I am concerned by the authorities' statement that Dr Peter Magombeyi faked his abduction. The authorities have legal obligation to respect and protect Peter's right to life, liberty and personal security. Peter has the right to seek and choose adequate medical attention, including from outside the country.

I therefore urge you to:

- ***Ensure that the Minister of Home Affairs thoroughly, impartially and effectively investigates the circumstances of the abduction of Peter Magombeyi and ensure that those suspected to be responsible are brought to justice in fair trials;***
- ***Guarantee the safe return of Peter Magombeyi without fear of harassment, intimidation or arbitrary arrest;***
- ***Take the necessary steps to ensure thorough, impartial and effective investigations of all cases of enforced disappearances in Zimbabwe, and ensure that those suspected to be responsible are brought to justice and that the victims and their families have access to justice and effective remedies, which include restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.***

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 30 August 2019, the Zimbabwe Hospital Doctors Association (ZHDA) served a notice to the Minister of Health and Child Care, as well as the Permanent Secretary for Health, that doctors across the country would not report for work starting from 3 September. They cited poor salary, as well as lack of success by the association in reaching a settlement with the employer. The letter was signed by Dr Peter Magombeyi, as the Acting President of ZHDA. As a result, he received threats from suspected members of the Central Intelligence Organisation, including a warning that they would abduct him if he continued to organise the strike. One of the screenshots, with a locally registered number, said (loosely translated) *'do not say I didn't warn you. Keep on being stubborn. You will be taken by a whirlwind. We are getting close now'*.

Zimbabwe doctors, who earn the equivalent of about \$40 USD per month, against a regional average of \$1500 USD, are on strike to press for better wages, equipment and medication in state hospitals. The public health system has deteriorated over recent years due to economic mismanagement. Doctors have consistently raised concerns about the lack of medical supplies, lack of funds for the health sector, as well as poor working conditions.

On 14 September Peter was abducted from his home in Harare's Budiro suburb at around 10 pm by three unidentified armed men. He was later found alive on the evening of 19 September in Nyabira, 33km out of Harare. When found he appeared disoriented. The Zimbabwe government has been quick to dismiss his abduction as fake. The government spokesperson, who is also the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Nick Mangwana, called Dr Peter Magombeyi a 'retrograde liar' on Twitter.

On Monday 23 September, doctors recommended he seek medical assistance in South Africa. He was detained at the airport until the plane departed. On 24 September his father took the matter to court, where the High Court ruled that he was entitled to leave the country since he is not under arrest. On the same day the police prevented him from leaving hospital, in defiance of the High Court order. On 24 September the police filed an urgent chamber application challenging the High Court order, which was heard on 25 September. They stated that he was not fit to travel, therefore he could not leave the country, and that they would need to prepare adequate travel security for him if he were to seek medical treatment in South Africa.

The police had detained him at a local hospital in Harare. The High Court dismissed the application brought by the police and immediately ordered he be released and allowed to travel. Fears remain that Peter might be arrested upon his return, as the state accuses him of faking his abduction.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Shona
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 5 November 2019
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Dr Peter Magombeyi (He/Him)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS: Zimbabwe House, 429 Strand, Covent Garden, London WC2R 0JR

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr46/1059/2019/en/>