



## **ZIMBABWE ELECTION 2013: Protecting Human Rights Defenders**



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### **Additional materials:**

Zimbabwe Election action card; Zimbabwe Election leaflet; 'Paper placards' with messages for solidarity photo action

## GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

# ZIMBABWE ELECTION 2013: PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

### CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

AIUK has a strong track record of working with human rights defenders in Zimbabwe. We have long campaigned to promote freedom of association, assembly and expression, and in particular have worked closely with grassroots women's rights organisation Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) since 2005.

WOZA activists have repeatedly been arrested by the Zimbabwe police while taking part in peaceful demonstrations to protest the worsening social, economic and human rights situation in the country. AIUK activists have taken numerous and varied actions over the years to demonstrate their solidarity with these women, and to demand that their rights be respected. Activists have written urgent appeals to the Zimbabwean authorities calling for WOZA activists to be released from detention; hand-made paper roses for WOZA activists to hand out during their peaceful demonstrations on the streets of Zimbabwe; and sent cards to the families of WOZA activists expressing support for the important work their relatives do. Activists have also sent appeals on behalf of other human rights defenders, such as Jestina Mukoko, director of the Zimbabwe Peace Project and Okay Machisa, director of ZimRights, when under attack for conducting their legitimate activities and simply exercising their right to defend human rights.

We know these actions have a positive impact. Human rights defenders have reported improved treatment in prison, and we observe releases and charges being dropped when the international spotlight is on them. This February saw the tenth anniversary of WOZA's first Valentine's Day demonstration - activists from across the UK gathered outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London, holding placards and red roses, to demonstrate solidarity, and WOZA leader Jenni Williams sent us this message:

*"Greeting from Women of Zimbabwe Arise. Valentine's Day 2013 signals a decade of work defending human rights in Zimbabwe by members. This work has been in a framework of great sacrifice in the face of escalating repression. Often times, WOZA has felt very lonely on the streets of Zimbabwe and in the war trenches between an elite dictatorship and the defenders demanding democracy and social justice. Amnesty members the world over has made that loneliness easier to bear by occupying our solidarity corner.*

*Amnesty members have spoken for us when we could not speak! They have helped send a clear message to the individuals and institutions that oppress us to respect Human Rights and those human rights are women's rights. WOZA value the friendship of Amnesty but ask that members strengthen their solidarity in 2013, a crucial year in Zimbabwe. Please help us demand the space to work without harassment and violence. Please stay in our corners as we face the escalating repression of highly contested political space. We need your love to make sure that the power of love can conquer the love of power. This year's theme is ONE LOVE, lets unite in love for our rights, lets fight together to enjoy them."*

As Jenni says, 2013 is a crucial year for Zimbabwe - as the country is due to go to the polls. The last time an election was held in Zimbabwe it was marred by extreme violence. We want to ensure that this bloodshed is not repeated.

This year, we will be stepping up our work on Zimbabwe, due to the risk of increased human rights violations in the context of the up-coming election. Human rights defenders play a critical role during elections - and they are often targeted. Our campaign focusses on supporting and defending these activists. We will be continuing to show our solidarity with WOZA, and widening our support to the broader human rights community.

This campaign is one of AIUK's four priority areas for 2013. Groups have already got involved through the February Monthly Action, and you will continue to receive information and new actions in the coming months. In this briefing, we want to share with you the detail of why this campaign is important, what we are setting out to achieve, how you can contribute to this change, and what support will be available to you in this campaigning.

### Historical context: the 2008 elections

Presidential elections were last held in Zimbabwe five years ago. The results of voting in the first round, in March 2008, were inconclusive: Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition party the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) received a higher percentage of the vote than President Mugabe, leader of ZANU-PF, but did not receive the necessary 50% to win outright. This outcome required a second round of Presidential elections to be held in June, in a runoff between President Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai. This sparked a wave of human rights abuses and ultimately led to Morgan Tsvangirai withdrawing from the vote.

## GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Between March and June 2008, over 200 people were killed, at least 9,000 were injured and 28,000 displaced. The violence, often carried out with impunity, was mostly conducted by security forces, war veterans and ZANU-PF supporters. There were also reports of inter-party clashes and retaliatory attacks by some supporters of the MDC. Torture and ill-treatment of opposition supporters was widely reported.

Human rights defenders came under intense pressure from the police, army, Intelligence services and from ZANU-PF supporters; they were arbitrarily arrested, detained, beaten, tortured, and had their offices raided. Some were forced to flee the country as a result of serious threats to their safety.

The election violence only subsided after a Southern African Development Community (SADC) backed agreement was signed. This intervention by Zimbabwe's neighbours brought the leading political parties together to form a power-sharing government (Government of National Unity). In the wake of the election violence, and even as the new government was forming, human rights defenders continued to be subject to arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, ill-treatment, harassment and intimidation.

### Recent developments

No date has yet been set for this year's election, but constitutionally it must take place by October 2013. Before the election can take place, Zimbabwe needed to hold a referendum on a new constitution. This referendum - seen as a 'test case' for the Presidential elections to come - happened on 16 March 2013, and Zimbabweans voted overwhelmingly in favour of the new constitution.

The referendum was generally conducted peacefully, but there were notable exceptions:

- One day before the referendum, in Harare's poor neighbourhood of Mbare, 9 MDC activists were attacked by a large group of people believed to be ZANU-PF supporters, as they put up posters calling for a 'yes' vote in the referendum. Seven of the activists needed medical attention after the attack. Two BBC journalists who were covering the referendum and present at this scene were also attacked and had their equipment broken.
- Also on 15 March, police violently broke up peaceful marches by WOZA activists in central Bulawayo. More than 1,000 people were there to launch WOZA's 'Vote Yes' in the referendum campaign. The previous day, WOZA activists in Harare had staged a peaceful protest without being stopped.
- On the day of the referendum (Saturday 16 March) four men, believed to be MDC supporters, were arrested in Kariba when they went to vote, allegedly for putting up posters near the polling stations the previous day.
- One man was arrested at a polling station in Masvingo for asking that police stay outside as he felt their presence in the station was intimidating him.
- In Harare's suburb of Glen View a woman volunteer with the Election Resource Centre was arrested for demanding results at about midday, before the close of the polls. By 6pm the woman was still in custody with lawyers attending to her.

In the last few months we have also seen further deeply worrying indications of the Zimbabwean authorities' apparent determination to stifle freedom of expression, limit access to information and prevent civil society from playing an active role in the upcoming elections:

- We have documented police raids on seven non-governmental organisations, at least five of which are involved in voter registration and other election-related activities.
- On 19 February, police issued a ban on all short wave radios in Zimbabwe. Following the announcement, police searched the offices of Radio Dialogue in Bulawayo and seized 180 radios and the station's manager, under section 182 of the Customs and Exercise Act.
- Early in February, the office of the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), a human rights monitoring organisation, was raided by police who had a warrant to search for 'subversive material and illegal immigrants'. They seized documents, smart phones and radios. On 20 February, ZPP was classified as a 'threat to state security'.
- On 7 March, ZPP Director Jestina Mukoko received a phone call from her lawyer, telling her an alert had been broadcast on state television requesting people to come forward with information about Jestina's whereabouts, as she was 'on the run from the police'. Jestina voluntarily went to a police station the following morning, where she was charged with a number of offences, including 'operating a private voluntary organisation without registration' - despite the fact that ZPP is registered under a deed of trust with the High Court.
- Prominent human rights lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa was held in custody for eight nights following her arrest on 17 March, before being granted bail by the High Court. On the morning of Sunday 17 March, Beatrice Mtetwa responded to the call of a client, Thabani Mpfu, who is a staff member in Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's office. When she arrived at his home, police were conducting a search. She asked to be shown the search warrant and told police that what they were doing was "unlawful, unconstitutional, illegal and undemocratic". Police did not show her the search warrant, and instead arrested her for "obstructing the course of justice".

# GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

## CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

Our campaign aims to exert pressure on key states which can help prevent or end violations against human rights defenders on one side, whilst strengthening the activists to be able to document and withstand any violations on the other. The two main objectives are:

**(1) That international pressure and solidarity on behalf of human rights defenders prevents, ends or exposes violations against them, and to reinforce their activism and resilience in the face of any repression.**

Human rights activists report the benefits they experience from international solidarity and activism, through urgent actions, online actions, and creative communications by our activists. Despite the intense repression of civil society activists in recent years, there is a vibrant human rights movement in Zimbabwe to whom we will extend our solidarity (beyond WOZA) and let them know we're standing with them. Some of these are detailed in the case studies on p.5 -6.

**(2) The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and international community pressure the Zimbabwean authorities to ensure elections are free from violence against human rights defenders and others.**

The power and responsibility for ensuring elections free from violence against human rights activists lies with the Zimbabwean authorities, in particular the way its security forces and police act. The UK has limited influence directly over the Zimbabwean authorities and efforts to exert pressure are sometimes portrayed by President Mugabe and state media as western, post-colonial interference in Zimbabwe. Nonetheless international pressure does count and it is right we keep attention on the authorities. However, we need to be tactical and use the most influential route to exert that influence. This lies with Zimbabwe's neighbouring countries who are allied through SADC. SADC was able to bring an end to the violence and a negotiated solution last time. We believe they have significant influence over the Zimbabwean authorities and could help ensure that the violence of 2008 is not repeated if they act now to secure human rights in the run up to the election. Just as our pressure from the UK must be exerted thoughtfully, so must the tone of this campaign be balanced. We do not support any of the political parties involved and do not want to demonize President Mugabe or any of the other party leaders. So our lobbying focus will primarily be on SADC. We will lobby them directly, via embassies/high commissions in the UK, through the Foreign Office and through the EU.

We are calling on SADC to:

- Deploy election observers, including human rights monitors, before, during and after the Zimbabwe elections
- Urge the Zimbabwean authorities to:
  - Undertake measures to ensure the 2013 elections are free from violence against peaceful human rights defenders, civil society activists and all supporters of political parties, before, during and after the elections.
  - Allow human rights defenders, civil society activists and all supporters of political parties to peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression, association and assembly.
  - Investigate all reports of political violence that occurs in the context of the 2013 elections and ensure the perpetrators are held to account for that violence.

The key states of influence in SADC that we are targeting include:

South Africa – influential within SADC; appointed to broker an agreement between the political parties last time; an economic powerhouse and media hub, it has strong domestic interest in peaceful elections as it has received 1.5 million economic migrants and refugees from Zimbabwe. More proactive on Zimbabwe since President Zuma came to power.

Mozambique – currently holds chair of SADC, so has potential to influence Zimbabwe. Question as to whether it has political will to take a strong line.

Tanzania – currently chair of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence & Security, which is responsible for peace and security in the region. President Kiwete has publicly criticized the situation in Zimbabwe.

Malawi – currently vice-chair of SADC and will assume chair of SADC in August. President Joyce Banda is generally seen as more 'human rights friendly'.

Namibia – currently deputy chair of SADC Organ on Politics, Defence & Security, an influential position. Will assume chair of this Organ in August.

# GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

## CASE STORIES

### Why focus on human rights defenders?

Human rights defenders can often play a critical role during elections as they monitor and document human rights abuses, share information about those abuses with a wider audience, and provide support for those whose rights have been violated. As a result, human rights defenders are often singled out for reprisals - intimidation, harassment, arrest and violence.

### Who are the human rights defenders?

Through this campaign we are seeking to improve the environment in which all human rights defenders, civil society activists and supporters of political parties operate. Here we introduce some of those human rights defenders who are committed to pursuing their vital work in Zimbabwe, despite the difficulties they face.

### Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP)

ZPP is an organisation which conducts human rights monitoring in Zimbabwe.



On 7th March 2013 Zimbabwe's state television ran announcements urging the public to call the police with any information about the whereabouts of Jestina Mukoko, Director of the ZPP [pictured left, with letters from AI members]. Jestina voluntarily reported to a police station the next day where she was charged with operating a private organisation without registration. ZPP is registered under a deed of trust with the High Court like most other human rights groups in Zimbabwe.

The ZPP have also suffered raids on their offices by police in February where they had documents and hardware confiscated. These acts are reminiscent of security agent's previous targeting of ZPP workers. In December 2008, Jestina and two staff were abducted and their whereabouts remained unknown for three weeks, during which time they were tortured.

### Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN)

ZESN is a coalition of NGOs formed to promote democratic processes.

On 19th February 2013 police officers raided the office of the ZESN in Harare. They were in possession of a warrant to search for 'subversive material, documents, gadgets or recordings and any illegal immigrants'. They seized documents relating to ZESN's projects and plans for observing the referendum on a new constitution. No arrests were made.

### Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)

WOZA is a grassroots organisation formed in 2003 to encourage women to stand up for their rights, and provide a united voice for them to speak out on issues affecting their day-to-day lives.

On 13 February 2013 eight members of WOZA, including leaders Magodonga Mahlangu and Jenni Williams [pictured right], were arrested outside the parliament building in Harare before being released hours later without charge. The women were arrested after police fired tear gas at the peaceful demonstration and beat protestors with baton sticks, injuring some. Those arrested were beaten by riot police while waiting for a police van to take them into custody.

The following day on 14 February, 181 WOZA members were arrested at a peaceful Valentine's Day demonstration in Bulawayo. They were calling on police to respond to complaints about police beatings and brutality.



## **GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

### **National Youth Development Trust (NYDT)**

On 4th February 2013 around 40 members of NYDT were arrested in Lupane, Matabeleland North. Two of them, Brilliant Goboza and Ray Ncube, were detained and charged with contravening the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act after allegedly being found in possession of voter registration receipts. They were later released without charge after an intervention from Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights.

Two days later police raided the offices of the NYDT in Bulawayo, searching for alleged voter registration certificates and other documents “containing information that may adversely affect” the State. There were no arrests but police confiscated documents.

### **Zimbabwe Human Right Association (ZimRights)**

On 13th December 2012, Leo Chamahwinya and Dorcas Shereni, a staff member and committee member respectively in local structures with ZimRights were arrested and charged with publishing falsehoods, fraud and forgery after allegedly conducting illegal voter registration. Dorcas Shereni was finally granted bail on 8 February.

Okay Machisa, the Director of ZimRights, was arrested on 14 January 2013 and detained on the same charges. He was eventually granted bail on 29 January after the High Court overturned an earlier dismissal of his bail application. Leo Chamahwinya was finally released on 18 February after he had repeatedly been denied bail.

### **Counselling Services Unit (CSU)**

The CSU is a medical clinic that provides counselling and referral to trauma victims.

On 5th November Fidelis Mudimu, Zachariah Godi and Tafadzwa Geza from the CSU were arrested during a raid on the organisation’s office and clinic by police officers and riot police searching for “offensive and subversive material”. A computer and confidential medical records were seized. The three men were taken to Harare Central Police Station. Two days later, and despite having produced any charges against them, the police illegally transferred all three men to Bulawayo Central Police Station. During the 400 kilometre journey between the two cities the three men were forced to ride on the back of an open pick-up truck without protection from the sun. On 8th November they were brought before a court and charged with “causing malicious damage to property”, relating to political graffiti that had been sprayed on a gate in Bulawayo. The charges against Fidelis Mudimu were dropped after it was proven that he was out of the country at the time of the incident, while Zachariah Godi and Tafadzwa Geza remain on remand.

## **ACTIONS**

There are three principal actions you can take from this campaign bulletin, with additional reading and materials available to learn more about the issues and ways of staying in touch with the campaign.

### **ACTION 1: Action card to Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa**

**Enclosed with this mailing are 5 copies of an action card** calling on Jacob Zuma – the President of South Africa and facilitator on Zimbabwe for the Southern African Development Community – to:

- Press the Zimbabwean authorities to take measures to ensure that the 2013 elections are free from violence;
- Press the Zimbabwean authorities to investigate all reports of political violence;
- Deploy election observers – including human rights observers.

Please **sign and return these cards to: Human Rights Defenders Programme, Amnesty International UK, The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA.**

We will then convey these signed cards on to the President of South Africa.

If possible it would be great if you can also use these action cards to engage others in taking action on this campaign. **Order more copies of the card:** phone TFS on 01788 545553 and give product code HRD001.

## GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

### **ACTION 2: Individual letters to key SADC targets**

In the February Monthly Action, we asked you to write directly to three key leaders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC): South Africa, Tanzania and Angola.

Now, please write to these additional important SADC targets:

- **Mozambique:** His Excellency Armando Emilio Guebuza, Presidente da República, Gabinete do Presidente da República, Avenida Julius Nyerere 1780, Maputo, Republic of Mozambique. Fax: +258 21 492065
- **Namibia:** His Excellency Hifikepunye Lucas Pohamba, President, No. 1 Engelberg Street Auasblick, Windhoek, P/Bag: 13339, Windhoek, Namibia. Fax: +264-61-24 5989
- **Malawi:** Her Excellency Mrs. Joyce Banda, President of the Republic of Malawi, Office of the President and Cabinet, Capital Hill Circle, Private Bag 301, Capital City, Lilongwe 3, Malawi.

For more information about the role and significance of these targets, please see the 'objectives' section of this briefing on page 4.

**Template letters** are provided at the back of this briefing. They are also available online at [www.amnesty.org.uk/groups](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups)

### **ACTION 3: Photo in solidarity with Zimbabwean human rights defenders**

We know that Zimbabwean human rights defenders appreciate your solidarity - just watch the film of Jenni Williams from WOZA, in the January 2013 update at [www.amnesty.org.uk/woza](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/woza)

To let Zimbabwean human rights defenders know that Amnesty supporters in the UK are standing with them at this critical time, we are asking you to take a photo of yourselves (preferably each group member individually) holding your choice of two messages: "HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ZIMBABWE" or "IN SOLIDARITY". These messages are available as 'paper placards' enclosed with this mailing, or you can download the PDF from [www.amnesty.org.uk/groups](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups) to print further copies.



#### **What to do:**

1. Use the message 'placards' enclosed with this briefing, or print out further copies from [www.amnesty.org.uk/groups](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups)
2. Take a photo of each group member holding their choice of message – **make sure that each person is happy for their photograph to be uploaded to flickr and shared with human rights defenders in Zimbabwe**
3. Go to <http://www.flickr.com/groups/2209794@N23/>
4. Click 'Join this group' (you will be prompted to sign in or create an account, if you haven't already)
5. Click 'Upload' – for each photo, 'add a description' to give the photo a caption (including the person's name), and click 'add to groups' and select the 'Solidarity with Zimbabwe' group which you have just joined
6. Click 'upload photo' to finalise the process
7. Please also email a copy to [activism@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activism@amnesty.org.uk)

Amnesty staff will share this link with the Zimbabwean human rights defenders we are in touch with, so that they can see all the individual Amnesty activists who are supporting them.

## GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

### FURTHER ACTIONS AND TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE CAMPAIGN

We will be issuing further information and actions in connection to this campaign over the coming months, both proactively and reactively. For example:

- Next month (June), we will be making available an **'activist pack'** containing lots of materials to help you in taking this campaign out to others in your local area
- Already in 2013 we have issued two **Urgent Actions** and one Further Information concerning human rights defenders in Zimbabwe – we anticipate that we may issue more if human rights defenders and others continue to be targeted

To stay in touch with the latest developments and actions:

- **Visit** [www.amnesty.org.uk/zimbabwe](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/zimbabwe)
- **Follow** @AmnestyUK on twitter
- **Sign up to the Southern Africa sub-region:** contact AIUK's Zimbabwe Country Coordinator [Maggie.Towse@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:Maggie.Towse@amnesty.org.uk)

### MATERIALS

In this mailing you have samples of the following materials:

- **Zimbabwe Election action card**, targeting President of South Africa Jacob Zuma (product code: HRD001)
- **Zimbabwe Election leaflet** (product code: HRD002)

To order more copies, phone TFS on 01788 545553 and quote the product codes given above.

#### Other useful resources:

- A **training workshop** *ZIMBABWE Elections free from fear: Protecting Human Rights Defenders* is available now – contact your local trainer or the Active Learning Programme on [training@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:training@amnesty.org.uk)
- On 15 November 2012, Amnesty issued a **Brief to SADC on harassment and intimidation of NGO workers by police** – this available at <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR46/016/2012/en>
- **All documents** issued by Amnesty's International Secretariat on Zimbabwe are available at <http://amnesty.org/en/region/zimbabwe>
- **Information and action on AIUK's campaign** is available at [www.amnesty.org.uk/zimbabwe](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/zimbabwe)
- A **short video** (3 minutes) of Jenni Williams from WOZA is available at [www.amnesty.org.uk/woza](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/woza)
- A short audio interview between WOZA activist Nolwandle Simunyu and AIUK HRD Programme Manager James Savage is available at <http://audioboo.fm/boos/1329577-nolwandle-from-women-of-zimbabwe-arise-how-your-voice-helps-us#t=0m0s>

#### Coming soon!

- We are producing an **activist pack** to help you in taking this campaign out to others – it will be full of materials designed for use on a campaign stall, including photos/posters for display, stickers, new actions, and more! This pack will be **available from the second week of June** (please do not order before this!). Product code: HRD003
- Our Zimbabwe research team are working on a **new report** concerning freedom of expression – this is due to be published in late May/ early June, and we will make it available then on our website [www.amnesty.org.uk/zimbabwe](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/zimbabwe)

## **GROUP CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

#### **INTERNAL – FOR GROUPS’ INFORMATION/ VERBAL RESPONSE ONLY**

**Q: When will the elections be held?**

A: The date has not yet been set, but it is most likely that they will be held sometime between July and the end of September. Parliament, according to Zimbabwe’s rules, should be dissolved by 29 June 2013 and then elections may be held at some point in the subsequent 3 months.

**Q: Why is Amnesty concerned about these elections in Zimbabwe?**

A: Since 2000 there has been a significant increase in human rights violations in the lead up to political processes. In particular, in the run up to the last election in June 2008 unprecedented levels of human rights violations took place, the majority of which were state-sponsored. About 200 people were killed, thousands were injured and tens of thousands fled their homes and even the country. In the last few months there has been a spate of arrests and targeting of human rights defenders by police - this is clearly a crackdown ahead of the elections.

**Q: But hasn’t the situation improved since the coalition government of National Unity came into power in 2009?**

A: In some respects yes that is the case. The economy has improved and some aspects of infra-structure, and health and social services are better, but many of the conditions that allowed human rights abuses to occur have not changed. The much needed security sector reforms have not occurred and the independence of police and judiciary have not been ensured. The perpetrators of previous election violence have never been held to account. All these factors have reinforced Amnesty’s concern about the forthcoming elections.

**Q. Who does Amnesty want to win the election? / If President Mugabe was no longer in power, wouldn’t the human rights situation improve?**

A. Amnesty takes no position on the politics involved in the election; we do not support or oppose any political parties, or have any interest in the outcome of the election. This campaign is about trying to prevent human rights abuses in the context of the election.

**Q: So what is Amnesty campaigning for then? Why the focus on Human Rights Defenders?**

A: Human rights defenders (HRDs) can often play a critical role during elections as they monitor and document human rights abuses, share information about those abuses with a wider audience, and provide support for those whose rights have been violated. As a result, human rights defenders are often singled out for reprisals - intimidation, harassment, arrest and violence. We are mobilising pressure and solidarity in support of these HRDs and the important work they are doing in difficult circumstances. We are also calling on Zimbabwe’s neighbours in the Southern African Development Community to use their influence to get Zimbabwe to ensure that the elections are free from violence. In particular, we are calling for Election Observers to be in Zimbabwe before, during and after the elections and that these observers should have a special remit to monitor human rights abuses, as well as the development of the election itself.

**Q: Is there anything that we in the UK can do? / Given the particular history and relationship between the UK and Zimbabwe, is there a danger that action from the UK will actually have a negative impact?**

A: There is a historical connection between the UK and Zimbabwe, and there is a wealth of interest amongst the UK public which offers a great opportunity to engage people in this campaign. Zimbabwean human rights defenders will appreciate expressions of solidarity from people around the world. However, the Zimbabwean government has not reacted well in the past to anything which could be perceived as post-colonial interference, and so lobbying directly from the UK needs to be tactical. Zimbabwe’s neighbours are better placed to exert positive influence. That is why Amnesty is targeting lobbying activity through those countries in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

His Excellency Armando Emilio Guebuza  
Presidente da República  
Gabinete do Presidente da República  
Avenida Julius Nyerere 1780  
Maputo  
Republic of Mozambique

Your Excellency,

As you know in 2013 Zimbabwe will hold general elections. Since 2000 there has been a significant increase in human rights violations in the lead up to political processes. In particular, in the run up to the last election in June 2008 unprecedented levels of human rights violations took place, the majority of which were state-sponsored. Over 200 people were killed, at least 10,000 injured and 28,000 displaced. Systematic torture and ill-treatment of supporters of the former opposition parties and anyone perceived as critical of the then government was documented by Amnesty International. Thousands of Zimbabweans were forced to flee to countries in the sub-region in order to escape the violence.

As well as political activists, human rights defenders were targeted with arrest, violence, detention and abduction. There has been no accountability for the vast majority of the human rights violations that occurred at this time. As a result, victims of the violence live in fear of a repetition in 2013.

I am deeply concerned by indications of a widespread crackdown on human rights defenders in recent months in which a systematic campaign of police led harassment and intimidation appears to have been set in motion. For example:

- Amnesty International has documented police raids on seven non-governmental organisations, at least five of which are involved in voter registration and other election-related activities.
- Early in February, the office of the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), a grassroots human rights monitoring organisation, was raided by police who had a warrant to search for 'subversive material and illegal immigrants'. They seized documents, smart phones and radios. On 20 February, ZPP was classified by the police as a 'threat to state security'.
- On 7 March, ZPP Director Jestina Mukoko received a phone call from her lawyer, telling her that an alert had been broadcast on state television requesting members of the public to come forward with information about Jestina's whereabouts, as she was 'on the run from the police'. Jestina voluntarily went to a police station the following morning, where she was charged with a number of offences, including 'operating a private voluntary organisation without registration' - despite the fact that ZPP is registered under a deed of trust with the High Court.
- Prominent human rights lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa was held in custody for eight nights following her arrest on 17 March, before being granted bail by the High Court. On the morning of Sunday 17 March, Beatrice Mtetwa responded to the call of a client, Thabani Mpofu, who is a staff member in Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's office. When she arrived at his home, police were conducting a search. She asked to be shown the search warrant and told police that what they were doing was "unlawful, unconstitutional, illegal and undemocratic". Police did not show her the search warrant, and instead arrested her for "obstructing the course of justice".

I am concerned that recent events are a forewarning of an increase in repression in the run up to the 2013 election. In this regard SADC's influence will be instrumental in preventing a repeat of the widespread human rights violations which took place in 2008. I urge you to continue to use your influence and key position as Chair of SADC to ensure that human rights defenders and others can exercise their internationally guaranteed rights to freedom of association, assembly and expression without fear of state-sanctioned persecution and threats to their safety.

I also call on you to press the Zimbabwean authorities to undertake measures to ensure the 2013 elections are free from violence against human rights defenders and all political activists and to investigate all reports of political violence where they do occur and ensure perpetrators are held to account. The deployment of election observers (including human rights monitors) before, during and after the Zimbabwe elections will be essential in preventing and exposing human rights abuses and I urge you to make strong calls for this as a pre-condition to the election.

Yours sincerely

His Excellency Hifikepunye Lucas Pohamba  
President  
No. 1 Engelberg Street Auasblick, Windhoek  
P/Bag: 13339, Windhoek  
Namibia

Your Excellency,

As you know in 2013 Zimbabwe will hold general elections. Since 2000 there has been a significant increase in human rights violations in the lead up to political processes. In particular, in the run up to the last election in June 2008 unprecedented levels of human rights violations took place, the majority of which were state-sponsored. Over 200 people were killed, at least 10,000 injured and 28,000 displaced. Systematic torture and ill-treatment of supporters of the former opposition parties and anyone perceived as critical of the then government was documented by Amnesty International. Thousands of Zimbabweans were forced to flee to countries in the sub-region in order to escape the violence.

As well as political activists, human rights defenders were targeted with arrest, violence, detention and abduction. There has been no accountability for the vast majority of the human rights violations that occurred at this time. As a result, victims of the violence live in fear of a repetition in 2013.

I am deeply concerned by indications of a widespread crackdown on human rights defenders in recent months in which a systematic campaign of police led harassment and intimidation appears to have been set in motion. For example:

- Amnesty International has documented police raids on seven non-governmental organisations, at least five of which are involved in voter registration and other election-related activities.
- Early in February, the office of the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), a grassroots human rights monitoring organisation, was raided by police who had a warrant to search for 'subversive material and illegal immigrants'. They seized documents, smart phones and radios. On 20 February, ZPP was classified by the police as a 'threat to state security'.
- On 7 March, ZPP Director Jestina Mukoko received a phone call from her lawyer, telling her that an alert had been broadcast on state television requesting members of the public to come forward with information about Jestina's whereabouts, as she was 'on the run from the police'. Jestina voluntarily went to a police station the following morning, where she was charged with a number of offences, including 'operating a private voluntary organisation without registration' - despite the fact that ZPP is registered under a deed of trust with the High Court.
- Prominent human rights lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa was held in custody for eight nights following her arrest on 17 March, before being granted bail by the High Court. On the morning of Sunday 17 March, Beatrice Mtetwa responded to the call of a client, Thabani Mpofu, who is a staff member in Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's office. When she arrived at his home, police were conducting a search. She asked to be shown the search warrant and told police that what they were doing was "unlawful, unconstitutional, illegal and undemocratic". Police did not show her the search warrant, and instead arrested her for "obstructing the course of justice".

I am concerned that recent events are a forewarning of an increase in repression in the run up to the 2013 election. In this regard SADC's influence will be instrumental in preventing a repeat of the widespread human rights violations which took place in 2008. I urge you to continue to use your influence and key position as Deputy Chair of the Organ Troika on Politics Defence and Security to ensure that human rights defenders and others can exercise their internationally guaranteed rights to freedom of association, assembly and expression without fear of state-sanctioned persecution and threats to their safety.

I also call on you to press the Zimbabwean authorities to undertake measures to ensure the 2013 elections are free from violence against human rights defenders and all political activists and to investigate all reports of political violence where they do occur and ensure perpetrators are held to account. The deployment of election observers (including human rights monitors) before, during and after the Zimbabwe elections will be essential in preventing and exposing human rights abuses and I urge you to make strong calls for this as a pre-condition to the election.

Yours sincerely

Her Excellency Mrs. Joyce Banda,  
President of the Republic of Malawi,  
Office of the President and Cabinet,  
Capital Hill Circle,  
Private Bag 301,  
Capital City,  
Lilongwe 3,  
Malawi

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