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Amnesty International

# MONTHLY ACTION

ACTIVISM TEAM, Amnesty International UK  
HRAC, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA



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NOVEMBER 2013

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## ZIMBABWE:

### Show solidarity with Zimbabwe's Human Rights Defenders

Zimbabwe has been a dangerous and challenging country to be a human rights defender for many years. Activists have been arrested, beaten, harassed and tortured for standing up for their rights and the rights of others. Ahead of the 31 July elections this year, there was a crackdown against civil society, which brought fears of a repeat of the violent 2008 elections. However, this year's elections, which returned President Mugabe to power, were largely peaceful, though considerable controversy arose over questions about the credibility of the election process. A new more human rights friendly constitution was agreed in March, but there is concern amongst human rights defenders as to whether they will be able to go about their critical work without interference. On 19 and 20 September many Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) members were beaten and arrested by police at peaceful demonstrations. WOZA leaders Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu were arrested on both days and Magodonga was also one of those beaten. These were the first WOZA demonstrations since the election.

Now is a key time for Amnesty supporters to show solidarity with Zimbabwe's human rights community, to encourage and motivate them to continue with their inspiring human rights work. On 28 November Amnesty will launch a report to mark 100 days since the formation of the new government, so we will use this hook to collect and distribute expressions of solidarity from across the Amnesty movement.

#### What you need to do:

Create a homemade poster, either individually or as a group, which we will pass on to human rights defenders in Zimbabwe. Included in this mailing is an ideas sheet to help you get creative!

**How big should our poster be?** Ideally they should all be A4, but A3 is also possible.

**Where should I send the posters?** Send your posters to: The Activism Team, Amnesty International UK, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA

#### What's the deadline for sending poster?

Please ensure your posters reach the AIUK office by 10 December.

#### What will AIUK do with the posters?

We will sort them into collections suitable for each of the organisations and individuals described on the next page. We will then send them on to Zimbabwe, to demonstrate our solidarity. The recipients will be able to share your posters with their staff and members.

We will also select a range of posters, which we will incorporate into a professionally designed poster. We will print these and send them to the offices of human rights activists across Zimbabwe.

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#### CONTENTS

- The guidance sheet
- Background information
- Creative ideas sheet

#### GOT QUERIES OR WANT TO DO MORE?

please contact

Activism Team on 0207 033 1675 or by e-mail at [activism@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activism@amnesty.org.uk)

for more info visit [www.amnesty.org.uk/zimbabwe](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/zimbabwe)

Download this action at: [www.amnesty.org.uk/resources](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources)

## Human Rights Defenders Programme

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### ZIMBABWE'S HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Below are examples of some of the organisations and individuals that have been affected by a crackdown against civil society in Zimbabwe. We will send your posters on to those listed below and other members of Zimbabwe's human rights community.

#### **Women of Zimbabwe Arise**

WOZA was founded in 2003 by Jenni Williams who is still joint leader with Magodonga Mahlangu. They campaign for basic human rights, do human rights education and repeatedly fall foul of Zimbabwe's repressive legislation. Many members have been beaten and arrested over the years on a regular basis.

#### **Zimbabwe Peace Project**

ZPP was founded during the election violence of 2000 and since then has monitored and reported politically-motivated violence. ZPP's director, Jestina Mukoko, was abducted, tortured and subsequently arrested in 2008 after ZPP criticised election related violence in 2008. Earlier this year ZPP's offices were raided and Jestina was arrested again.

#### **Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights**

ZLHR provides a critical service to victims of human rights violations as well as human rights defenders themselves. They are often the first port of call for targeted human rights defenders on the frontline. ZLHR have in turn have been targeted as a result of their critical work to defend human rights.

#### **Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum (Forum)**

The Forum is a coalition of NGOs concerned with human rights, especially in relation to organised violence and torture. The Forum has played an instrumental role in coordinating the response of civil society on threats to human rights. The Director, Abel Chikomo, is currently on trial for allegedly running an "unregistered" organisation.

#### **Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe**

GALZ supports the rights of the LGBTI community in Zimbabwe and calls for non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. GALZ members have been repeatedly victimised over the last twenty years. In 2012 their office was raided and several members experienced sustained harassment.

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

ZimRights works to improve human rights across Zimbabwe and has been targeted by the authorities on several occasions over the years. In December 2012 their Director, Okay Machisa and fellow worker Leo Chamahwinya were arrested and charged with 'publishing falsehoods and conducting an illegal voter registration'. They were later acquitted.

#### **Beatrice Mtetwa**

Beatrice Mtetwa is a leading human rights lawyer who has defended many high profile and lesser known human rights defenders and opposition political activists over many years. She has herself been beaten and earlier this year was arrested and charged with 'obstructing or defeating the course of justice' after she asked to be shown a warrant whilst police searched a property of a client.

### **WRITE FOR RIGHTS: Solidarity with WOZA and Beatrice Mtetwa**

WOZA's case will again feature in this year's Write for Rights Campaign. Your group will be sent all of the necessary materials to take action and show solidarity with WOZA's members. Beatrice Mtetwa will also feature as an extra case, additional to the main campaign. Contact the Activism Team on 020 7033 1675 from 1 November and ask for Beatrice Mtetwa's case sheet.

## MONTHLY ACTION

Background information

# Human Rights Defenders Programme

## Ideas Sheet

*"Amnesty is our big sister. When I'm in prison, if I know that someone, my big sister, is shouting for me, telling people about me, then I feel less distressed, less frightened, less alone."* Jenni Williams, WOZA.

The aim of this action is demonstrate personal solidarity with Zimbabwe's human rights defenders, to show that we are all part of the same global human rights community. This could be expressed from you as an individual, your family, your group, or your local community. You could use homemade pictures, handwritten messages, make something, use photos, or any other method as long as it is personal!

Below in the shaded boxes are some words that have been used by Zimbabwean human rights defenders when describing their work, the environment they operate in or what it means to have international solidarity. Here we have used 'collective' as an example of how these words could create other words or associations, which may help inspire you to develop your poster.

Others words or ideas may occur to you so please do use those: don't feel confined just to these if the creative spirit really moves you!

