

Sokwanele - Enough is Enough - Zimbabwe

PROMOTING NON-VIOLENT PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVE DEMOCRACY

Zimbabwe Election Watch

Issue 11: 21 November 2007

Executive Summary

THE 42nd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights is now underway in the Congolese capital Brazzaville with Zimbabwe's deteriorating human rights situation dominating the proceedings.

In his welcoming remarks, outgoing Commission Vice Chairperson, Commissioner Yassir Sid Ahmed El Hassan, set the tone when he described the situation in Zimbabwe as "alarming". (Ref: zimjournalists.com)

On November 16, SW Radio Africa reported that the MDC would make further representations to South African President Thabo Mbeki about the escalation of political violence and intimidation against its supporters. Secretary for Home Affairs Sam Nkomo said it was still impossible for the opposition to hold a public demonstration or political rally. The radio station noted that scores of MDC supporters had been arrested and assaulted in Chipinge, Mutare and Bulawayo for holding legitimate consultative meetings.

In this issue we include brief information on the latest report released by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum which expresses concern at the upsurge in politically motivated violence. It has recorded 2 333 cases of violations on freedoms of association, expression and movement from January to September 30.

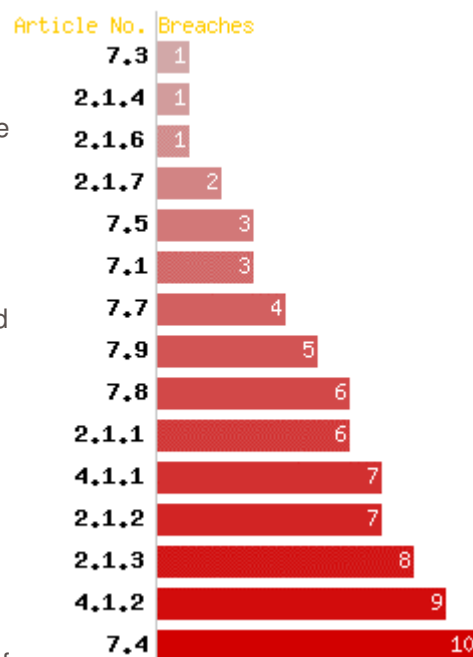
Similarly, a report released by the International Bar Association has found evidence of police torture, intimidation and illegal arrests which threaten the parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for March next year.

People living in rural areas continue to experience political repression, which remains rampant and under-reported. The safety and security of opposition supporters is under constant threat and during mid November, war veterans and Zanu PF militia severely assaulted a 59-year-old woman for wearing an MDC T-shirt and carrying an opposition party umbrella.

A 57 year-old activist from the pressure group Woman of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), who had been arrested on 10 different occasions and had been physically and mentally abused by the police each time, has died. Ninety-eight activists from WOZA and their male counterparts, who were protesting against escalating state sponsored violence, were arrested by the police earlier this month.

Fifteen opposition activists were abducted from a house belonging to an MDC member in Chipinge South and a police chief threatened to invoke the shoot-to-kill order against MDC activists if they went ahead with a planned rally in Chimanimani.

Breaches: Issue 11



Contentious developments on the election front include the appointment of five former government employees to positions of influence in the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. The appointments have been condemned by the opposition and civil society.

Zimbabwe's Defence Minister, Sydney Sekeramayi, has expressed confidence that the elections scheduled for next year will be free and fair. "The election will be held on schedule and as things are now in Zimbabwe the environment is quiet," he said.

However, a report in the Zimbabwean Newspaper (November 13) that Mr Mugabe's government is buying arms from China suggests a different scenario. According to the article, a shipment of heavy assault rifles, military vehicles and tanks, riot equipment, tear gas and rubber batons is being secretly moved through the port of Beira in Mozambique.

Zim Online reports that police officers who have recently undergone retraining in public control and management ahead of the elections confirm that military trainers as well as police instructors have taken them through rigorous and intensive physical and weapons handling drills.

The viability of independent newspapers is under serious threat after government ordered privately-owned newspapers to slash their cover prices to levels that could force them to close down.

War veteran leaders are being paid as much as Z\$100 billion, in one instance, for co-ordinating marches to drum up support for President Mugabe.

MDC cries foul over ZEC appointments

Source Date: 18-11-2007

The recent appointments of former government employees to positions of influence in the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) have been condemned by the opposition and civil society.

Of the nine commissioners, five have served in various capacities in President Robert Mugabe's government, accused of manipulating previous elections....

ZEC spokesperson, Utoile Silaigwana said the appointments were made on merit rather than political allegiance....

But Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) spokesperson Nelson Chamisa (Tsvangirai faction), said the ZEC had been "impregnated" with Zanu PF functionaries to enable the party to manipulate next year's elections in its favour.

This, said Chamisa, was contrary to the Zanu PF/MDC agreement reached under South Africa-brokered talks to re-constitute the current ZEC, which the MDC has described as illegal.

"This whole electoral process has been 'Zanuised' and we are going to raise the issue with all the stakeholders. We can't afford to have another flawed plebiscite when people are suffering like this," Chamisa said.

The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) believes the appointments were a clear testimony that Zanu PF intended to rig the elections.

NCA national spokesperson, Madock Chivasa, said the appointments signalled that next year's elections would not be free and fair....

The NCA felt the present ZEC would not allow any opposition political party to form a government in 2008.

"Instead, what Zimbabweans will witness is a well stage-managed election in which President Mugabe will retain his post as the head of government," he said....

Source: Zimbabwe Standard, The (ZW)

Link to source: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/nov18a_2007.html

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.7: Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions ...
- 7.1: [The member state holding elections shall] Take necessary measures to ensure the scrupulous implementation of the above principles ...
- 7.3: [The member state holding elections shall] Establish impartial, all-inclusive, competent and accountable national electoral bodies staffed by qualified personnel ...
- 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

Political violence could mar Zim elections

Source Date: 18-11-2007

Rising political violence and human rights abuses could mar Zimbabwe presidential and parliamentary elections next year, political analysts and pressure groups said on Monday.

They said a report released at the weekend by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum showing an upsurge in politically motivated violence was the clearest indication yet that violence could still be used to influence the outcome of polls despite talks between the ruling Zanu PF party and the opposition....

Jacob Mafume, who is co-ordinator of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CZC) political pressure group, said rising violence was confirmation of Mugabe and Zanu PF's unwillingness to act to end political violence as well as their insincerity in the inter-party talks.

He said: "... they are telling their supporters that all you need to do is to be violent in order to win elections."

The overall total number of cases of violations on the freedoms of association, expression and movement recorded by the Forum from January to September 30 stands at 2 333.

Source: Zim Online (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=2305>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.1: [The member state holding elections shall] Take necessary measures to ensure the scrupulous implementation of the above principles ...
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...

- 7.7: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure that adequate security is provided to all parties participating in elections;
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...
- 7.9: [The member state holding elections shall] Encourage the participation of women, disabled and youth in all aspects of the electoral process ...

Police abuses threaten Zimbabwe poll – report

Source Date: 12-11-2007

There are few guarantees upcoming elections in Zimbabwe will be free and fair because of widespread police abuses, concludes a report by the International Bar Association....

The association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) said it found evidence of police torture, intimidation and illegal arrests, which threaten parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for March next year.

"Police officers are responsible for some of the most serious human rights and rule of law violations in Zimbabwe today," the report said.

"The ZRP (Zimbabwe Republic Police) has consistently shown disrespect and contempt for the law, lawyers, and judicial authorities to an extent that it has seriously imperilled the administration of justice and the rule of law in Zimbabwe," the report said....

The report called on Harare to establish an independent system of monitoring the police and urged leaders of the regional Southern African Development Community (SADC) political bloc to address police abuse as part efforts to resolve the crisis in Zimbabwe.

"Without policing that protects human rights, it will be difficult and perhaps impossible for the citizens of Zimbabwe to participate freely in any democratic process, including elections," said Professor Danny Titus, deputy dean of the law college at the University of South Africa and member of the fact-finding team.

Source: Reuters

Link to source: <http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnBAN751578.html>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.4: Regular intervals for elections...
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.7: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure that adequate security is provided to all parties participating in elections;
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...
- 7.9: [The member state holding elections shall] Encourage the participation of women, disabled and youth in all aspects of the electoral process ...

Rights groups say political repression in rural Zimbabwe still rampant

Source Date: 14-11-2007

Despite seeming progress in crisis resolution talks taking place under South African mediation, human rights groups say those living in Zimbabwe's rural areas continue to experience political repression which remains rampant and under-reported.

Reports released by member organizations of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum say opposition members in rural areas who are seen wearing items of clothing with the logo of the opposition, reading independent papers, or listening to independent radio stations such as VOA's Studio 7, are beaten up, or "severely punished."....

Village headmen and chiefs tell those who do not support the ruling party to look to Britain or Tony Blair, the former British prime minister, for land and food.

Zimbabwe Peace Project Director Jestina Mukoko told VOA's Studio 7 for Zimbabwe that more and more cases of repression in the rural areas are being reported as the build-up to 2008 elections gathers momentum.

Source: VOA News (USA)

Link to source: <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/Zimbabwe/2007-11-14-voa38.cfm>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.1: [The member state holding elections shall] Take necessary measures to ensure the scrupulous implementation of the above principles ...
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.7: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure that adequate security is provided to all parties participating in elections;
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...
- 7.9: [The member state holding elections shall] Encourage the participation of women, disabled and youth in all aspects of the electoral process ...

Zanu PF youths chase MDC supporters from homes

Source Date: 20-11-2007

Ruling Zanu PF youths have evicted scores of opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters in Bikita West in Masvingo province in a fresh wave of political violence to hit troubled Zimbabwe....

The Zanu PF youths allegedly told the MDC supporters to leave the area as they were supporting a "puppet party that wants to reverse the gains of the liberation struggle."

The evictions come hardly a fortnight after a delegation of the MDC told Home Affairs Minister Kembo Mohadi that Zanu PF had stepped up a campaign of violence against its supporters around the country.

"What disturbs us most is the fact that these villagers were evicted because of their political affiliation. They were never given a chance and defend themselves. This is a clear case of harassment being perpetrated by President Mugabe and his supporters," said Sitebele.

Source: Zim Online (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=2342>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

Chimanimani Police Threaten to Shoot-to-Kill MDC Activists

Source Date: 12-11-2007

An overzealous police chief on Sunday threatened to invoke the shoot-to-kill order against MDC activists if they went ahead with their planned rally at Nedziwa business centre in Chimanimani.

The officer-in-charge of Chimanimani police, identified as Inspector Banda deployed heavily armed officers to cordon off the venue of the MDC rally....

...Inspector Banda told them that as long as he remained officer-in-charge of Chimanimani the MDC would never hold a rally in the area. Fearing for the safety of their activists, the MDC called-off the rally and asked its supporters to disperse.

'Inspector Banda told us he had instructions from his superiors that no MDC rally was to be held in Chimanimani and made it clear his officers would shoot-to-kill anyone who disregarded that order. ...

The spokesman accused the police of being so inextricably bound to the ruling party that it would take years to get rid of the Zanu PF indoctrination from the police force.

Identified perpetrators: The officer-in-charge of Chimanimani police, Inspector Banda

Source: SW Radio Africa (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news121107/chimipolice121107.htm>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.7: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure that adequate security is provided to all parties participating in elections;
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

WOZA blame police for death of founding activist

Source Date: 13-11-2007

Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) pressure group has blamed police torture for the death of founding member and activist Maria Moyo. The 57 year old died on November 6 from pneumonia complications which WOZA say were worsened by her experiences in police custody.

Six members of the police Law and Order section allegedly burst into her Bulawayo home a few months ago and despite pleas from family members that she was ill, proceeded to drag her outside and bundled her into a vehicle with four other women from WOZA. The group was taken to Khami Dam outside Bulawayo, where they were interrogated, tortured and abused for five hours....

In just four years with the pressure group Moyo has been arrested ten times and on each occasion has been physically and mentally abused by the police. At the time of her last arrest her condition was deteriorating. Police are said to have only released her because they feared she might die in custody...

Source: SW Radio Africa (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news131107/woza131107.htm>

SADC standards breached

- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.9: [The member state holding elections shall] Encourage the participation of women, disabled and youth in all aspects of the electoral process ...

Dozens of Protesters Arrested in Harare

Source Date: 07-11-2007

Zimbabwean police on Tuesday arrested dozens of civic society activists for demonstrating against what the protesters described as escalating state sponsored violence against opponents and other dissenting voices.

Human rights lawyer Alec Muchadehama ... said: "Ninety-eight people are in police custody and the police are still arresting more people. They have not advised us of the charges they are preferring on the activists."

The arrested activists belong to the Women and Men of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA/MEZA) groups....

Source: Zim Online (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=2279>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
 - 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
 - 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
 - 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
 - 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
 - 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
-

Government targeting student leadership ahead of elections

Source Date: 15-11-2007

Student organizations have said they believe university officials are under government instruction to target influential student leaders and remove them from campuses around the country, ahead of the elections scheduled for next year.

They referred to the escalating assaults, arrests and evictions of student leaders at major universities as evidence of this campaign....

McDonald Lewanika, a coordinator with the Student Solidarity Trust, said ... "What is happening cannot be viewed outside the context of elections that will be taking place in this country next year, a couple of months from now. What we have is a process whereby different university authorities are weeding out people who they think are critical of the government of Zimbabwe within the students' movement and throwing them off campus so that they will not be able to influence anything where students are concerned, during that critical period."...

A strong statement released by the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) said in part: "The government of the day seems to be at unease because the students, as the general populace, are fast losing their patience and cannot wait for a change in governance."

Source: SW Radio Africa (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news151107/students151107.htm>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.9: [The member state holding elections shall] Encourage the participation of women, disabled and youth in all aspects of the electoral process ...

Private newspapers under threat

Source Date: 16-11-2007

The viability of independent newspapers is under serious threat after government this week ordered privately-owned papers to slash their cover prices.

The National Incomes and Pricing Commission (NIPC) ordered the Zimbabwe Independent and the Financial Gazette to reduce prices from \$600 000 to \$150 000.

The Independent's sister publication, The Standard, was also directed to reduce its cover price. The directive comes after police arrested the chief executive of the Zimind Publishers, Raphael Khumalo, and Financial Gazette CEO Jacob Chisese last Friday on allegations of increasing prices of their newspapers without NIPC approval.

Khumalo and Chisese were quizzed over the increases. They were summoned to appear before the NIPC at Runhare House on Monday and told to revert to the old price of \$150 000, an amount they say cannot cover their costs.

Khumalo said the directive could lead to closure of the newspapers that are already struggling to survive because of escalating costs of fuel, labour, ink, and newsprint.

It currently costs about \$950 000 to print a single copy of the Independent, he said. "A newspaper is not a basic commodity. It seems that when all the media laws have failed to get the newspapers closed this new crackdown could finally force private newspapers to shut down," Khumalo said....

In approving the \$150 000, the NIPC used the state-owned Sunday Mail as its benchmark. Privately-owned newspapers however argued that their cost structures were different from those of the state-owned newspapers which get subsidised fuel....

In his column (in the state-owned Herald newspaper) on October 26, NIPC chairman Godwills Masimirembwa included the Independent among "enemies of the people"...

Identified victims: Raphael Khumalo, CEO of Zimind Publishers and Jacob Chisese, CEO of the Financial Gazette

Source: Zimbabwe Independent, The (ZW)

Link to source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711160606.html>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 2.1.7: Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions ...
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...

Govt misleads world on media freedom

Source Date: 18-11-2007

Recent government actions concerning the private media are part of hoax intended to mislead the international community ahead of the European Union-Africa Summit in Lisbon, Portugal, The Standard has learnt.

President Robert Mugabe is expected to attend the EU-Africa Summit next month and the government is anxious to present a façade of relaxing the draconian media environment, ahead of the meeting so that Mugabe is not put in the dock over harassment of the private media.

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) yesterday said the appointment of a committee (on November 14) to re-look into Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) - publishers of The Daily News and The Daily News on Sunday - by the Minister of Information and Publicity, lacked a clear mandate on how this would be accomplished.

"The individuals selected have questionable credentials, if one goes by their personal and institutional views. The committee chairperson, Chinondiyachii Mararika is a prominent State media columnist who has written widely in The Herald (and) Charity Moyo once/or is still working in the External Affairs section of Zanu PF," MISA said.

While the Minister of Information and Publicity says the committee was put in place "in the true spirit to demonstrate a democratic and liberalised media", MISA-Zimbabwe says the true spirit of democracy would be to repeal the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and all undemocratic media laws that have shackled the operations of the media and enjoyment of freedom of expression rights in Zimbabwe....

"This ANZ issue, coming as it does, against a background of the arrests of The Financial Gazette's Jacob Chisese and Hama Saburi and the Zimbabwe Independent and Standard's Raphael Khumalo on 9 November 2007, demonstrates a government still determined to repress independent media voices."....

"It is in this environment that ANZ might be relicensed by the committee, knowing very well that the economy itself and the new tactics by the Incomes and Pricing Commission might as well maintain the ANZ off the news stands....

Source: Zimbabwe Standard, The (ZW)

Link to source: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/nov18a_2007.html

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...