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GUNS & ROSES

Documenting the story of a country where the
gun leads the politics, where roses represent,
not love, but leaders who have lost their ideals,

**MONTHLY
MONITORING
REPORT**

**MAY
2021**



**ZIMBABWE
PEACE
PROJECT**

About Us

The Zimbabwe Peace Project is Zimbabwe's premier human rights monitoring and documentation organization.

OUR MEDIA PRODUCTS



Not your usual typical serious stuff. Positive Vibrations is a weekly offbeat video stories of positive change in communities where ZPP works, and beyond!



The voices of Zimbabweans come alive on THEVODCAST, a video or audio broadcast feeding into the human rights discourse of the day.



ZPP's prime human rights report comes every month and documents the prevalence of human rights violations in Zimbabwe.



ZPP's monthly newsletter published digitally and in print and is circulated nationally and reaches over 20k online.

OUR CAMPAIGNS



The Resist, Reject and Report Violence, or #RRRV2023 campaign features provincial analysis of the political temperature every month and sits in our Monthly Monitoring Report. #RRRV2023 also runs in real time on ZPP's social media platforms and seeks to create active citizens who report, resist and reject violence.

OUR COMMUNITY WORK



A safe space for women to discuss women's rights issues. Through the SHERO Circle platforms, ZPP draws out an issue-based women's rights advocacy thrust.



A platform where community members meet elected and traditional duty bearers to discuss key community issues in an environment of free expression, with the aim of building peace and coexistence.



A platform for young people to discuss issues affecting them and to raise awareness on human rights.

1.0 Executive Summary

Guns represent war, conflict, destruction and death and in Zimbabwe, the gun had led politics instead of the reverse. This month, we witnessed and report that there has been an upsurge in the political activities and with it there has been an increase in the violation of civil and political rights.

This month, the hand of the ruling Zanu PF in human rights violations became more pronounced. Last month, the party contributed to 22 percent of human rights violations perpetrators, and in May, there has been an increase, with the party contributed to 31.87 percent of human rights violations, closely following behind the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), which contributed to about 38 percent of all violations compared to 50 percent in April.

What this means is that the gun – or rather violence – continued to dominate the political space as the country heads for the 2023 elections.

The ZRP, which has played the role of enabling the selective application of the law in favour of the ruling party, ensured that only Zanu PF political party activities took place.

For example, on 22 May 2021, MDC Alliance officials intending to conduct their clean up exercise in Mutare were confronted by police officers from the Police Internal Security and Investigation (PISI) department who ordered the meeting to end while in Harare, police arrested opposition politician Jacob Ngarivhume as he conducted a cleanup exercise in Mbare.

The police's reluctance to arrest Zanu PF affiliated perpetrators of crime and human rights violations continued with one of the major cases being that of the assault of an MDC Alliance supporter by Zanu PF activists at Jairos Jiri Shopping Centre in Rimuka, Kadoma.

Zanu PF activists assaulted the victim because he had allegedly commented about the country's economic meltdown. The victim, who suffered a damaged ear drum during the assault, made a report to the police, but no arrests were made.

In addition to using harassment, intimidation and threats, suspected Zanu PF activists have also employed more brute methods and this month, an MDC Alliance Secretary in Mashonaland West, Tawanda Bvuma escaped an abduction attempt after two off-road vehicles blocked his car and he had to flee on foot. The assailants are believed to be state agents working with the ruling Zanu PF to intimidate opposition activists ahead of the 2023 elections. Bvuma is one of the opposition activists from Banket who were abducted in October 2008 and spent weeks incommunicado detention before being handed to the police in December 2008.

In essence, two years before the election, the human rights violations are already escalating and this only proves that once again, the gun is in charge.

This month, we also focus on the social inequalities in the education sector and the general social gaps that have resulted in young people engaging in crime and drugs. These inequalities and the resultant crime, drug abuse and problems in the education sector are on their own a human rights issue as they are a direct product of the government's inability to honour its socio economic obligations.

Our key findings show that the standards of education especially in the rural communities have gone down and in some schools, a single class can have over 60 children and this not only affects the quality of education, but also exposes the children to COVID-19.



In addition, with government not honouring its side of the obligations by providing the necessary support in the form of infrastructure and tuition material, schools are having to rely on parents, who are also overburdened due to the economic challenges. In other words, government has completely left the education sector on its own and the only contribution that government is making is paying the teachers. However, teachers are also crying foul over the meagre salaries they are getting resulting in the learners suffering the consequences. Most teachers are reported to be supplementing their salaries by offering extra lessons a situation that separates children coming from families that have and those coming from families that do not have as the lessons are charged in United States dollars.

In light of all this, the month of May, according to ZPP's monitoring of the human rights situation, is a month of guns & roses.

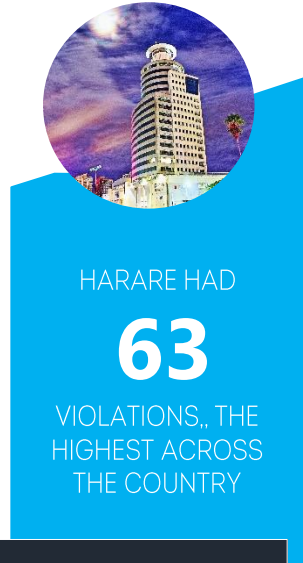
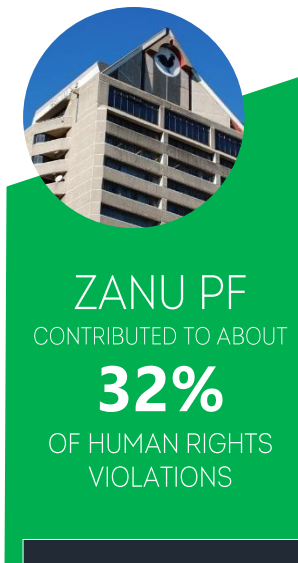
Rules apply, but only to some...



During the unveiling of the Mbuya Nehanda statue, over a thousand Zanu PF supporters gathered in direct violation of COVID-19 regulations that restrict gatherings to only 30 people. In the month of May, only Zanu PF managed to conduct events and all other political players were barred even when they complied with the COVID-19 regulations.
PIC: NEWSHAWKS

1.0.1 SUMMARY OF VIOLATIONS

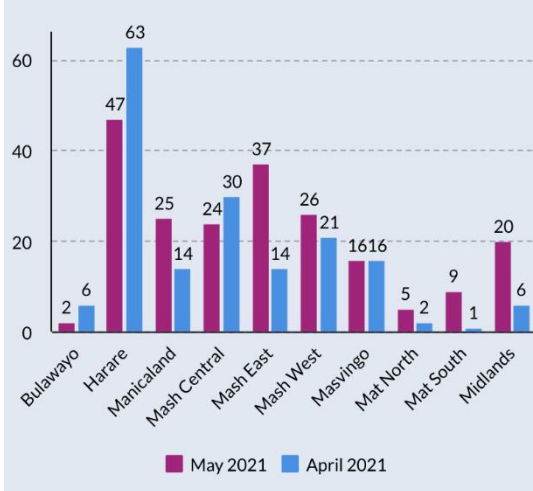
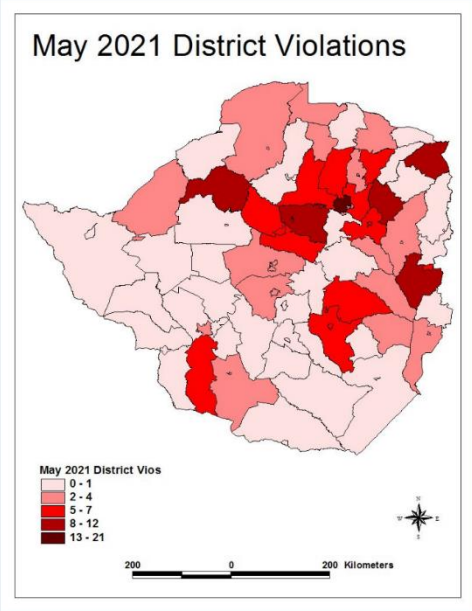
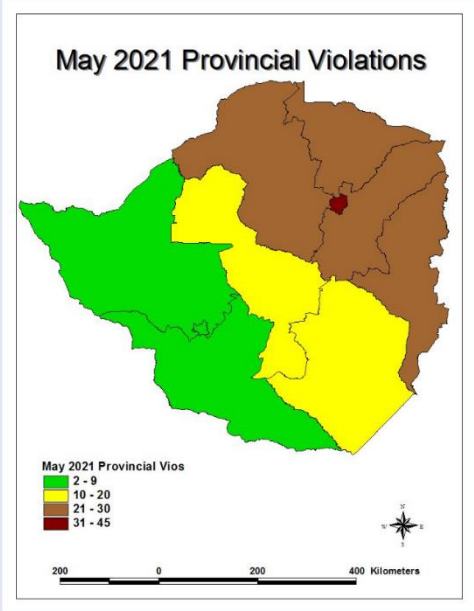
In May, ZPP recorded 117 cases of harassment and intimidation, which continue to be politically motivated. The Zimbabwe Republic Police continues to expose the need for security sector reform as its officers contributed to 21 cases of unlawful detention. The political space remained constricted with 19 cases of assault and four, of malicious damage to property being largely attributed to inter party violence targeting mostly MDC Alliance supporters. This is evidenced by the fact that Zanu PF contributed to above 38 percent of perpetrators of violations compared to the MDC Alliance’s two percent. Harare recorded 47 cases of human rights violations, the highest, followed by Mashonaland East, which recorded 37 cases.



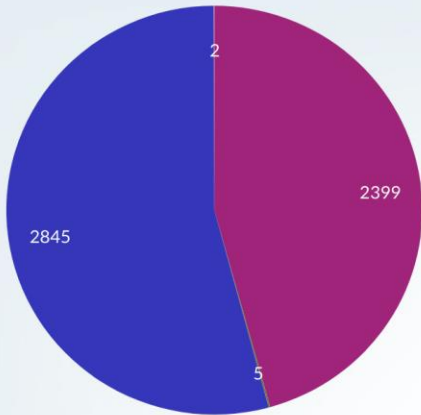
Violations infographic

Human Rights Violations Monthly Dashboard Zimbabwe Peace Project

Report time frame: May, 2021

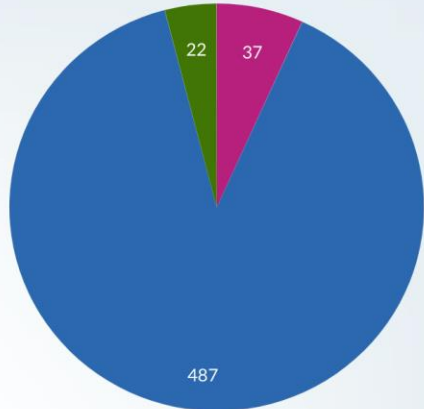


Violations infographic



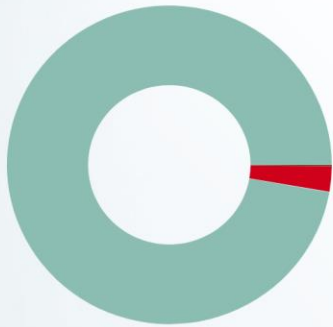
Female (45.69%) Female PWD (0.1%) Male (54.18%) Male PWD (0.04%)

Gender of May Victims



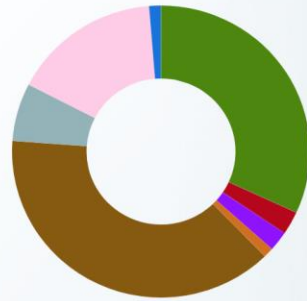
Female (6.78%) Male (89.19%) Unknown (4.03%)

Gender of May Perpetrators



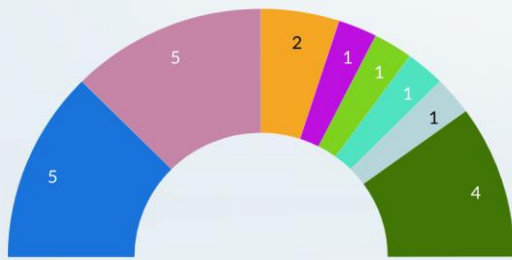
Zanu PF (0.11%) MDC Alliance (2.61%) Transform (0.02%) War Vet (0.02%) General Citizens (97.24%)

May Victims Affiliation



Zanu PF (31.87%) MDC Alliance (2.56%) MDC-T Khupe (2.2%) Machete Gangs (1.1%) ZRP (38.46%) Municipal Police (6.41%) Unknown (16.12%) State agents (1.28%)

May Perpetrators Affiliation



Manicaland (25%) Mash Central (25%) Mash East (10%) Mash West (5%) Masvingo (5%) Mat North (5%) Mat South (5%) Midlands (20%)

May Food & Other Aid Violations



2.1 The Guns



One cold afternoon in May, right in the centre of Harare, a series of banging gun fire tore into the silent, desolate metropolis.

Pigeons nearby flurried into the grey sky.

The dull sound of the canon rang 21 times, spitting plumes of thick white smoke into the air.

This was to mark the unveiling of a statue monument built in Harare city centre to honour a spirit medium and a hero of Zimbabwe's struggle for emancipation, Mbuya Nehanda.

Mbuya Nehanda, together with Kaguvi are said to be spirits that led the first battle of the Zimbabweans against the white settler regime in the late 1890s and they are said to have predicted the independence of the country from Britain.

Zimbabwe's independence came more than 80 years later after the two had been killed by the colonial regime.

More than 120 years later, the guns, which Nehanda predicted would lead the country's road to independence, were fired to honour her.

Ironically, Mbuya Nehanda's statue was placed a couple of metres from two different sites where soldiers shot Wisdom Mapere and Andy Manyeruke on August 1, 2018.

One of the darkest moments of Zimbabwe's post-independence history, August 1, 2018 marked a bloody beginning of the tenure of President Emmerson Mnangagwa, whose government commandeered soldiers to shoot unarmed protesters in the streets of Harare and six were killed.

On that day, the gun led politics. But that was not the first, or the last time.

Zimbabwe's politics has always been led by the gun.



Even during the 1980 elections, there were accusations of voter intimidation by ZANLA guerrilla cadres, sections of which were accused of not having assembled in the designated guerrilla assembly points as required under the Lancaster House Agreement.

This was the beginning, and 40 years down the line, the military- or rather the gun – has always led the politics of the country.

So, it was ironic that as the statue of Mbuya Nehanda was being unveiled at a cost of millions of dollars, and the guns fired in her honour, the victims of Zimbabwe's politics of the gun were yet to get any recourse, if at all any apology.

To add a little more perspective to how the politics of the gun have contributed to Zimbabwe's tattered human rights record, here is a brief chronology of key events.

2.1.1 The Guns: A bit of some history

To add a little more perspective to how the politics of the gun have contributed to Zimbabwe's tattered human rights record, here is a brief chronology of key events.

- In an attempt to annihilate political opposition from Matabeleland in the 1980s, the Zanu PF government, led by the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, with current President Mnangagwa as the State Security minister, is suspected to have killed an estimated 20,000 civilians in Matabeleland in what has now become known as Gukurahundi.
- In 1998, as the Zimbabwean economy was shrinking and the cost of living going up, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions organized protests, which were to culminate into food riots.

Dozens of people were shot killed by the police and the army, which was later called in to quell the protests. The army was involved in the post protest investigations, and went on to violate more human rights.

- In 2000, following the formation of the MDC and the start of a chaotic, violent and militia-led land reform exercise, elections were played out against the backdrop of renewed national liberation demands and Zanu PF stoking the fires of nationalism. Zanu PF's campaign was explicitly backed up by an army of war veterans and, implicitly at least, by the police and armed forces. Opposition political parties and human rights organisations at the time claimed that over 35 people were killed, and many more - about 5 000 - were reportedly harassed, beaten and forced to engage in partisan activities. Despite all this, the police did not make arrests and the army was also heavily involved in human rights violations.
- In 2002 presidential elections, the police, the army and intelligence department were among the major perpetrators of politically motivated violence. During the pre-election period, Zimbabweans were systematically deprived of many democratic rights, and were subject to a campaign of political violence instigated by the government through its state security arms, and the militia, and this resulted in more than 100 deaths, thousands of assaults, threats and widespread property destruction.
- Following a first-round election defeat by the opposition MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai in 2008, Zanu PF unleashed a wave of politically motivated violence across the country ahead of the second round presidential run-off election. During this period, senior army officials were deployed into rural areas and an estimated 200 people were killed while thousands of others were left with lifetime injuries.
- In 2017, the gun once again led the politics when the military – in collusion with a faction in the ruling Zanu PF, led a coup to oust long-time ruler Robert Mugabe and replace him with president Mnangagwa both as a leader of the party and Head of State. Ever since, the role of the gun in Zimbabwean politics has become much more pronounced and incidents that have happened prove that.
- On August 1, 2018, protests against the perceived delay in the release of the presidential election results ended with six people dead and several others injured when soldiers were deployed into the streets of Harare and used disproportionate force.
- In January 2019, 17 people died when the army was unleashed into the streets to quell a shutdown protest organized by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions.

All of 2020, soldiers were deployed to co-enforce the COVID-19 lockdown regulations and together with the police, they were responsible for the majority of the human rights violations that occurred.



2.1.1 The Guns: Our Observation

It is against such a background that the gun has played a role in the preservation of power for the ruling party, and in the process, it has been the cause of the human rights situation in the country, where the state security agents are the major perpetrators.

The erection of the Mbuya Nehanda statue is symbolic in many ways in that it should be a moment of reflection for Zanu PF and government that freedom from colonialism was meant to be freedom for all Zimbabweans. Instead, post-independence Zimbabwe has been marred by a constant consolidation of power by the ruling party such that human rights the reasons for the liberation struggle, have ceased to matter.

The recognition of civil and political and socio-economic rights by government is the only way Zimbabwe can walk out of its current political and economic challenges and with two years before a critical election, there is still sufficient time to undo the current militarized state of politics and institute robust reforms in line with the 2013 Constitution, which was voted for by over three million Zimbabweans. There is still sufficient time to undo the amendments to the Constitution and to undertake effective security sector reforms.

There is sufficient time to undo all the apparatus of political violence, among them, the National Youth Service.

In light of these observations, ZPP is rolling out a campaign to end violence in Zimbabwe's political space.

2.1.2 Our Campaign



As Zimbabwe draws towards another election, the gun, which has always preserved power at whatever costs, will become a critical factor and its role will become much more pronounced in Zimbabwe's civil and political space.

It is in light of this that ZPP launched a Resist, Reject and Report Violence Campaign, **#RRRV2023**, to document and expose perpetrators of politically motivated violence as well as to create an active citizenry that resists, rejects and reports violence. The reporting should be to the police who have the mandate to protect life and property but with the conflation of state and party citizens have lost confidence and trust in the institution of the police. ZPP encourages citizens to report to the police and also create awareness of the situation with CSOs like ZPP whose interest is to detect and report incidents and engage with institutions such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission which accepts complaints from citizens.

As part of its mandate of monitoring, documentation and peacebuilding, ZPP aims to contribute to a peaceful electoral process where citizens are empowered to reject powerful politicians who incite them to engage in politically motivated violence.



Provincial highlights

Mashonaland Central

In this province, following government's approval to re-introduce the Zanu PF-inclined National Youth Service (NYS), a militia that is historically known to be used as a tool of political persecution of opposition supporters in rural areas, some ruling party activists promised there would be violence ahead of 2023.

'JOIN ZANU PF BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE'

Zanu PF youths, citing the NYS, allegedly went around in some parts of Bindura, warning that any citizen who still supported the MDC Alliance were supposed to join to Zanu PF 'before it was too late.'

This comes on the back of alleged plans by government to set up a NYS training camp at a former military base in Bindura South, Ward 8 near Dengu village in Manhenga, about 4 km from Bindura town.

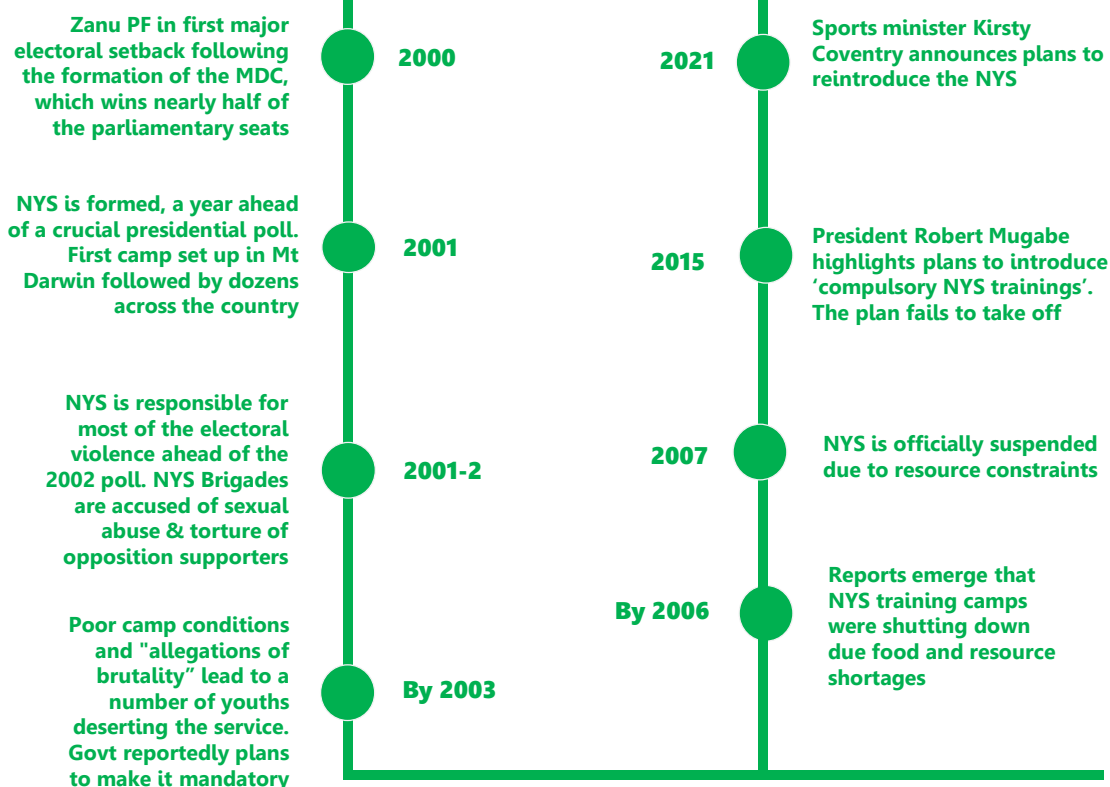
The news of the setting up of a NYS base and the increased political activities by the ruling party has continued to unsettle citizens around Bindura town.

The area is known for being a political hotspot during election times and in order to assess the levels of fear, ZPP conducted a brief survey and of the 55 people interviewed, 38 said they were apprehensive about the prospects of a violent election.

One of the citizens said:

Judging by what has happened since 2017 (when the coup happened) soldiers have been more openly used for political purposes. Now, adding to that, the Border Gezi (NYS) brigade is going to be there. This means there will be no breathing space for anyone who is not a Zanu PF supporter because if the party youths themselves could cause enough havoc, what about with the presence of Border Gezi, the army and the police?

'Border Gezi Youths' A brief history





Provincial highlights

Mashonaland East

As the country braces for another election, teachers in Mashonaland East are on the receiving end of the Zanu PF process of building its structures as they are being forced to actively participate in politics, which goes against their code of operation.

The Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) raised concern over the victimization of teachers by a Zanu PF official identified as Kahonde in Wedza. According to ARTUZ, Kahonde is moving around schools forcing teachers to form Zanu PF cell structures.

In some parts of Mashonaland East, there was heightened political activity, and the ruling Zanu PF party was in the process of setting up structures in communities in preparation of the 2023 elections.

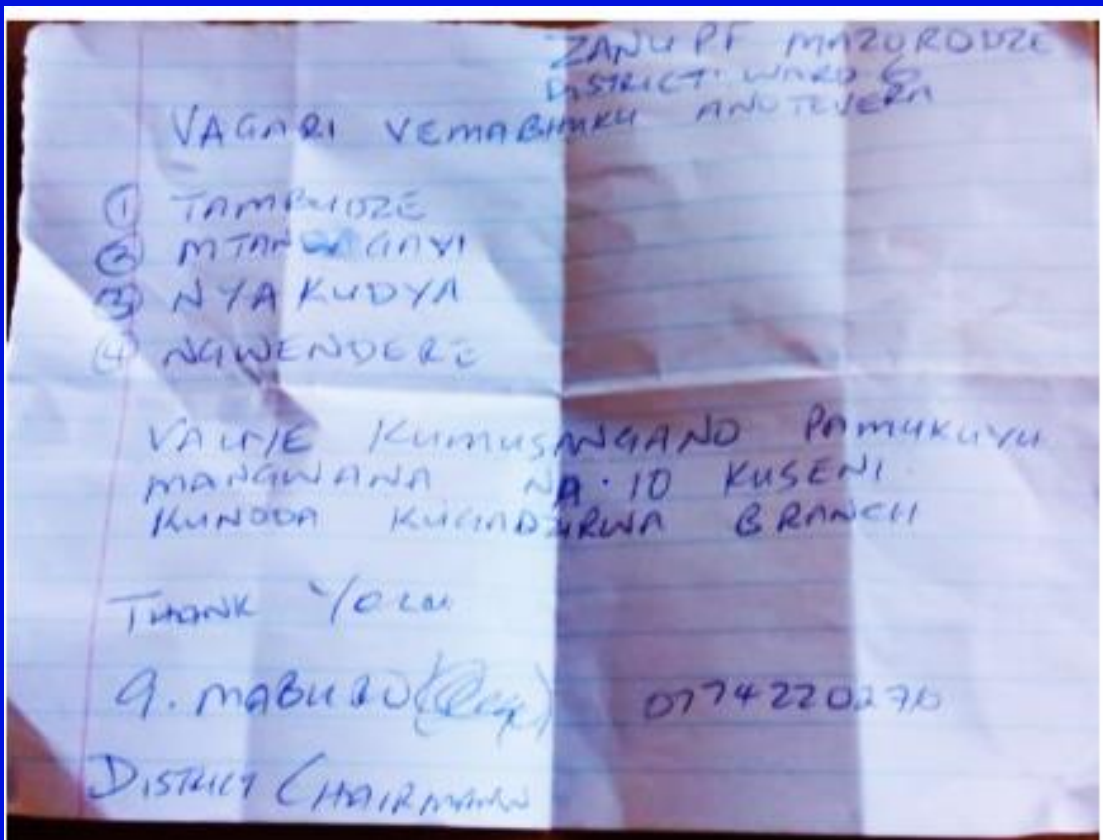
The processes were characterized by the violation of the freedom of assembly and association as ruling party officials coerced villagers to attend the restructuring meetings. In some instances opposition political party supporters were forced to denounce their affiliation and join the ruling Zanu PF party.

In Murehwa North, Ward 8, Chomupunga village, Zanu PF Chairperson Taurai Chindowa forced villagers to convene and during the meeting, he issued threats to the MDC Alliance Ward Chairperson Margret Chipuka, accusing her of 'supporting an opposition party in a Zanu PF territory and inviting MDC officials to the Ward.

This case is one of the reasons why the political participation of women is limited, especially in rural areas.

In Chinake Village, Mudzi North, a village head, Togo Kanyongo allegedly accused a person with disability of not supporting Zanu PF and used that to deny him access to aid from the social welfare department. The aid was in the form of crockery and garden equipment.

Some of the letters circulating in Mashonaland East, forcing villagers to attend Zanu PF meetings



A letter from a Zanu PF District Chairperson asking people to attend a meeting to set up a branch in Murehwa



MAY 2021



Provincial highlights

Mashonaland West

In Mashonaland West, there was a significant number of cases of inter-party violence targeting MDC Alliance activists and all the 26 recorded cases in May were civil and political in nature.

Zanu PF activists disrupted several MDC Alliance meetings and mobilization processes and this happened with collusion from law enforcement agents.

In some cases the MDC Alliance activists resisted the disruption of their processes and this only fueled the conflict.

The Mashonaland West MDC Alliance Secretary Leader Tawanda Bvumo escaped what could have been an abduction attempt near Chegutu.

Two off-road vehicles blocked Bvumo's vehicle as he travelled between Musengezi and Chegutu and he was forced to flee on foot, leaving his vehicle.

Other political activists who were the target of political intimidation and violence include MDC Alliance officials, Emmanuel Chinazvavana and Edward Dzeka.

On 25 May, Zanu PF youths convened a meeting at Waze Business Centre in Chegutu East and forced people to form cell groups, stating that their party was going to do everything to win the 2023 election.

Masvingo Province

In Masvingo Province, the highlight of the month is in Zaka, where there is an acute shortage of clean, safe and potable water and villagers are having to share the few available water sources with livestock and wild animals.

Eight villages, about 200 households are sharing a single water source that is Mupiri River, which only flows during the rainy season.

As part of the 2018 election campaign, the current Resident Minister Ezra Chadzamira had promised to drill a borehole to alleviate the water challenges but this was abandoned.

In addition, ZPP carried out an investigation which established that the Zaka Rural District Council is grossly incapacitated to meet its obligation to provide water and this is largely because of the politicization of local authorities, which has crippled service delivery.

Zaka West Ward 24 councilor, Stella Shambira said the area was depending on seasonal river water, since the borehole installed in the 1980s had collapsed.

Shambira further said that people from the area walk a minimum of 7 km to neighboring wards in search of clean water.

SHINE A LIGHT IN THE DARK

REPORT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN REAL TIME

Download the Specc App on your Android Device and it enables you to report human rights violations that you witness or experience ANYWHERE IN ZIMBABWE

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#RRRV 2023 RESIST | REJECT | REPORT VIOLENCE

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ZIMBABWE PEACE PROJECT

The Zimbabwe Peace Project monitors and documents human rights violations and works towards a Zimbabwe where there is peace, justice, dignity and development for all



MAY 2021



Provincial highlights

Harare

In May 2021 President Mnangagwa signed the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill (N0.2) into law, effecting 27 changes to the Constitution.

The amendment is seen as an attempt to prepare for the 2023 elections as it gives the President sweeping powers and whittles down the role of the judiciary and Parliament.

In the same month, President Mnangagwa renewed the tenure of Chief Justice Luke Malaba for the next five years, a move that was successfully challenged in the courts by Dr Musa Kika and the Zimbabwe Young Lawyers' Association.

Malaba is seen as an enabler of the Mnangagwa government and the post of Chief Justice is strategic for the 2023 elections.

The case is still ongoing as Malaba has continued to report for work basing his move on an appeal by the Judicial Services Commission. His decision to continue reporting for duty despite the court declaration has seen him being hauled before the courts with a contempt of court charge.

The whole fiasco has serious implications on the independence of the judiciary and its perception by the public. It takes away the citizens' confidence in the system and ZPP carried out surveys to find out the implications of this and these were some of the responses.

"The court system is a true test of a country's democratic values and as it stands, the courts now seem to belong to the ruling party and that does not bode well for citizens like us who rely on that same court system for the arbitration of criminal and civil cases."

"It appears the presidency is attempting to control everything including decisions made by judges. Just check how a lot of judgements on political and civil rights activists are deferred for some days. Is this not so that the judges consult the powers that be before they make judgements. What does that say about the independence of the judges?"

Bulawayo Metro

Zanu PF officials went on a door-to-door campaign in some of the suburbs promising that those who joined the party would get a bank card that would enable them to buy groceries and other essentials through the social welfare department. This is a clear politicization of the social welfare system, which should benefit all those in need regardless of their political affiliation.

During the campaign, the longstanding unresolved issue of Gukurahundi continued to emerge as some of those approached brought up the issue citing how the government was responsible for the killing of their relatives. The ZPP continues to implore government to resolve the Gukurahundi issue because for as long as the issue like many other phases of conflict remain unresolved, the country will be in perpetual conflict.

Matabeleland North

In Binga North constituency, it was reported that a Zanu PF activist identified as Siansipa refused to give government food aid to some MDC Alliance members and asked them to get it 'from their party president Nelson Chamisa.'

Siansipa, who is a campaign manager for Cephas Mudenda who has contested for the constituency in previous elections, went on to openly proclaim that ZanuPF was going to use food aid as a political weapon to punish those who did not join the party.

Midlands

Zanu PF has always manipulated and used the informal sector especially during election time. In the Midlands, Zanu PF activists grabbed several market stalls and have converted these into political party spaces where one needs to be a member in order to utilize them. The party has usurped the role of the council, which is supposed to oversee the allocation and management of the stalls. The issue was reported to the city management which later took the matter to the Midlands Province Minister of State and Devolution Senator Larry Mavhima. The matter is yet to be resolved. Some of the areas like the Mtapa market where these market stalls have been set up have become an eyesore and are a health timebomb in the making.

Manicaland

The referral of government employees to the ideological course at Herbert Chitepo School of Ideology in Vumba has continued to be the major highlight of the province. The concept is currently being employed by government countrywide and this is seen as an attempt to manipulate government workers to serve the interests of a political party instead of every Zimbabwean regardless of political affiliation.

3.0 The (Black) Roses



In the Dragonlance novel series, the black rose is the symbol for knights who have betrayed their ideals.

The Black Rose is known as a symbol of darkness, death, destruction and in some instances, it portrays knights who have betrayed their ideals.

In Zimbabwe, we have leaders, who have betrayed their ideals such that their priorities have become divorced from their mandate to serve the interests of citizens.

In light of that, we look at what our government has done in May versus the situation in the social services sector, particularly the education and informal sectors.

For who?

In May, government unveiled the statue of Mbuya Nehanda in the streets of Harare at a cost that was never made public. Supported by two steel arch bridges, the monument site straddles across and hovers over two major streets in Harare, that is, Samora Machel Avenue and Julius Nyerere Way.

In February, government blew about US\$100,000 to import galvanised steel for the bridge. The irony is that Zimbabwe, during its good economic days, could produce steel at the Zisco Steel plant in Kwekwe.

Zisco Steel has since collapsed due to mismanagement and corruption and multiple promises to resuscitate it have not materialized.

For many Zimbabweans, the question is, for whose benefit was the statue made and were the priorities right when there is so much suffering among citizens?

In its countrywide surveys, eight percent of the people interviewed about the statue said they did not see the importance of erecting such an expensive monument when the country is failing to provide basics for its people.

In the same month, President Mnangagwa handed over 18 double cab trucks to chiefs at a ceremony held at a hotel in Harare.

Each truck costs not less than US\$35,000.

The news came at the same time it was revealed that the country's second largest city of Bulawayo only had six police service vehicles covering a population of 650,000.

Over the past year, government has spent millions of dollars for top military officers' vehicles and recently it was announced that President Mnangagwa was in the process of purchasing a new helicopter for US\$18 million, presumably ahead of the 2023 election campaign.

In July last year government purchased dozens of cars including Range Rovers and Toyota pick-up trucks worth more than \$40,000, each and were distributed to ambassadors and senior civil servants.

In June last year, government splurged millions of dollars on top-of-the-range vehicles, which include Toyota Hilux and Land Cruisers. Senior military officials and lieutenant-colonels, colonels and brigadier-generals were among officers who benefitted from the vehicle acquisition.

This, in many ways shows a trend, where government has proved that its priorities are in more ways, not about the general citizens because for whose benefit is spending millions of dollars on luxury items and monuments when the nation is in a situation where basic social service delivery is dead.

We take a look at some of the sectors that have been neglected in the next section of this report

3.2 Education

Knights who who careth not!

The right to education is guaranteed in the Constitution of Zimbabwe in Section 75.

Section 75 (1)

Every Citizen and Permanent Resident of Zimbabwe has a right to;

- (a) A basic state-funded education, including adult basic education;
- (b) and (b) Further education that the state must make available progressively through laws, and other measures

Section 75 (4) - The state must take reasonable legal and other measures, within limits of the resources available to progressively realize the right to education.

The government, as the guardian of people's rights, has an obligation to ensure that the right to education is fully realised and protected.

Zimbabwe recently adopted the Education Amendment Act, 2020, to align its Education Act with the country's Constitution. The amendment is a result of consultations about how every child could realise the right to free basic education.

However, this right is far from being fully realized considering that government has reneged on its obligation to ensure that learning spaces and environment are accessible and conducive.

A 2013 education infrastructure audit exercise found that the country had a deficit of over 2000 schools, a requirement that government has not met, eight years later and the situation is made worse by the fact that the same government is failing to provide adequate remuneration for teachers.

Our Observations

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the serious inequalities in the education sector as the few elites have managed to ensure their children continue with their education using online platforms while the rest, who are the majority, have been greatly affected by the long school breaks and even when they have had to attend school, the infrastructure is inadequate with some classes having up to 60 students.

The law provides for the rights of pupils with any disability. It is of great concern that the law places the responsibility on schools– not the state – to provide infrastructure for learners with a disability and this is subject to the availability of resources.

A majority of schools are financially constrained and have dilapidated infrastructure.

Learners with disabilities may have to wait until there are resources to give them access to educational infrastructure and services.

Once again, it shows the lack of commitment by government to provide equal access to education for students with disabilities.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) are very important and access to SRHR facilities and services is critical and is covered in the Education Amendment Act, which also states that there is supposed to be a sexual and reproductive health personnel at every school.

However, there is no regulation specifying who qualifies to be appointed to this role and this has budgetary implications for the government and as it stands there has been no commitment of funds towards that.

In many rural schools, clinics or health facilities are not easily accessible.

Government must take practical steps to move from rhetoric to reality

It is the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's policy that no child should be sent home from school for non-payment of fees.

However, it is the role of government, according to the Education Amendment Act, to provide learners with resources and facilities for learning, but again, this is subject to the availability of state resources.

Essentially and technically, the government could delay the realisation of the right on the basis of not having the required funds.

This has been noted countrywide, and there has been policy inconsistencies that have solely been a result of government's failure to meet its obligation to provide resources for learners.

Instead, they choose to splurge funds on vehicles and monuments.

I'm Super confident & Very Proactive

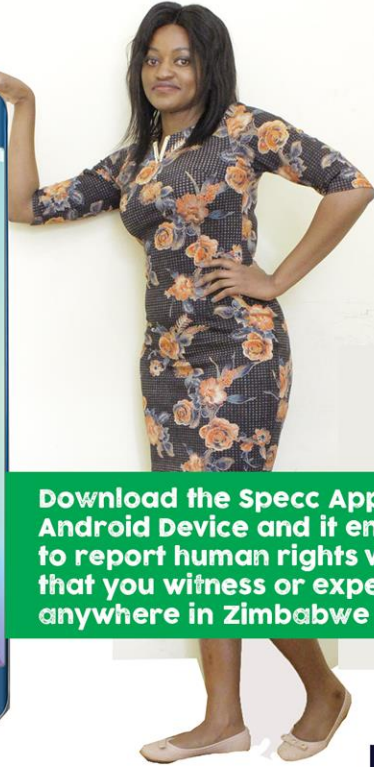
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