

INTO
2021

FINDING OUR VOICES



**THE ZIMBABWE
PEACE PROJECT
MONTHLY
MONITORING
REPORT**

DECEMBER 2020



**ZIMBABWE
PEACE
PROJECT**



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2020 was, by all accounts, a very difficult year for Zimbabwe. The global COVID-19 pandemic went beyond being just a health issue and the Zimbabwean government conveniently used the outbreak as an excuse to clamp down on human rights in Zimbabwe.

For most of the year, state security agents were the major perpetrators of human rights violations and this was largely under the guise of the enforcement of COVID-19 lockdown regulations.

As the year 2020 ground to its end in December, the trend continued, with little prospects of a better situation in 2021.

In December, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), recorded 181 cases of human rights violations and the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), contributed to 27.57 percent of the perpetrators of these. The ruling Zanu PF party contributed 22.61 percent while the municipal police were at 16.54 percent and the Zimbabwe National Army, 7.9 percent. Machete gangs, who operate mostly in mining areas, contributed 2.39 percent of the violations. The affiliation of 15.26 percent of perpetrators was unknown.

The Zimbabwe Republic Police contributed to

27.57%

of human rights violations, followed by Zanu PF at

22.61%



In December, ZPP recorded 91 cases of harassment and intimidation, and 31 cases of discrimination during aid distribution, 21 cases of assault, two killings and two cases of torture. Harare topped the list with 44 incidents of human rights violations, followed by Manicaland at 28, Mashonaland Central at 26 and Mashonaland East, 25.

During the month, ZPP recorded five cases of political intra-party violence within Zanu PF and three cases within the MDC-T and one case within the MDC Alliance.

For the MDC-T and Zanu PF parties, this was mainly due to the internal electoral processes within the two political outfits.

In light of this, there is no doubt that Zimbabwe, in 2020 degenerated into worsened autocracy, characterized by covert and overt attacks on the people's civic and political rights.

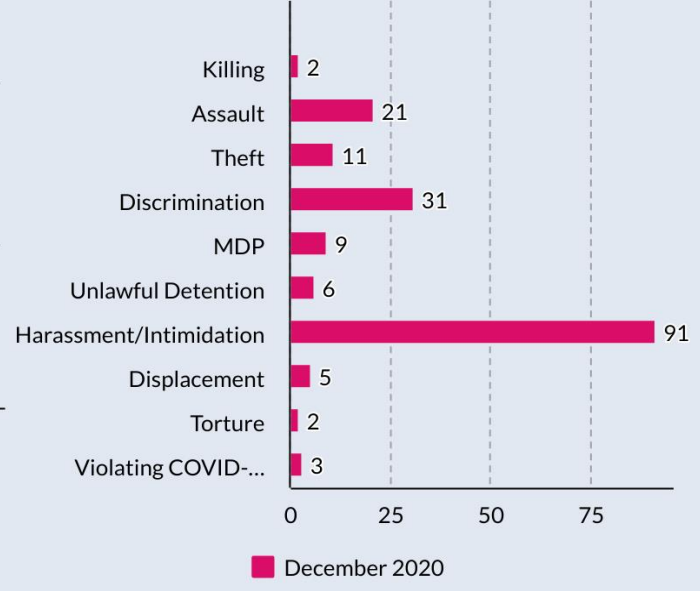
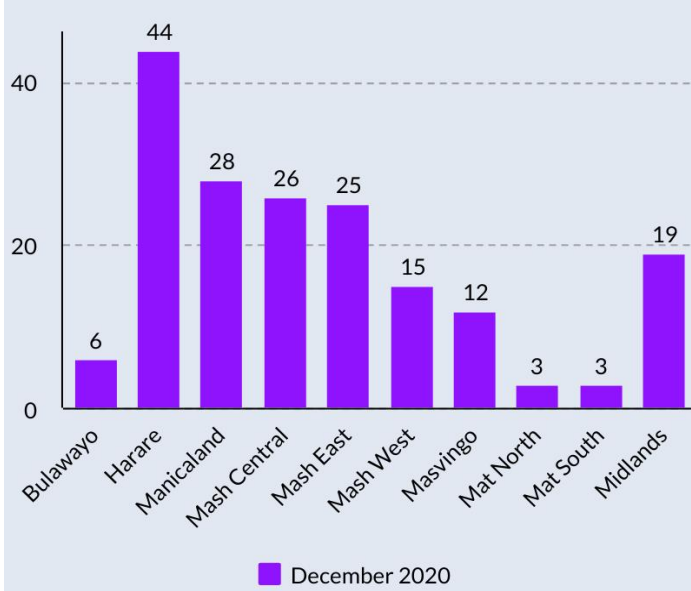
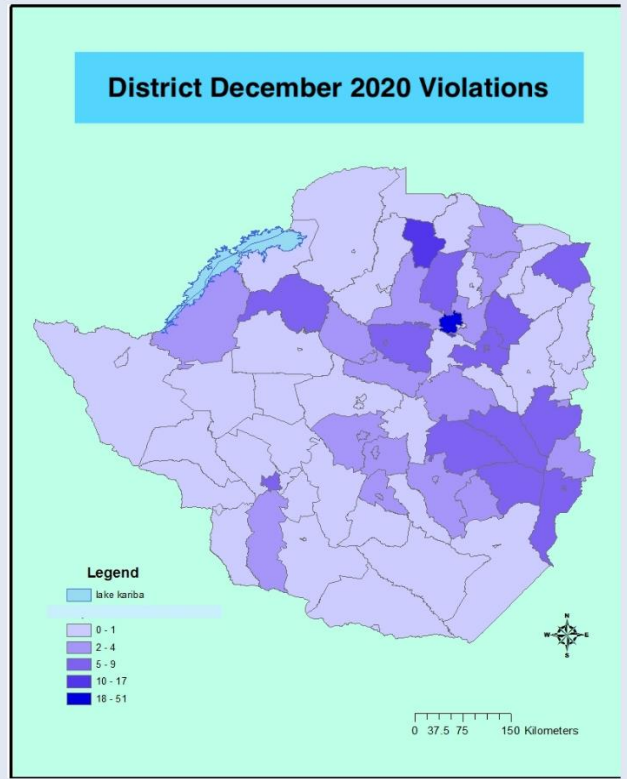
As 2021 takes shape, the human rights situation in Zimbabwe remains dire and the start of the year provides a chance for renewed advocacy for the return to constitutionalism and democracy so that the citizens who have been silenced find their voice again.

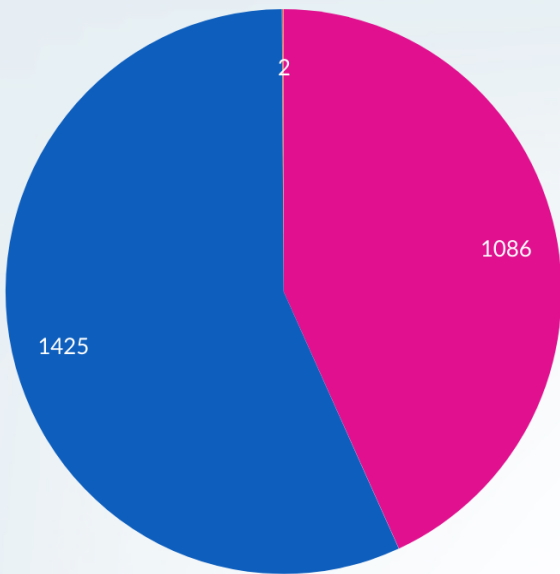
Residents of Warren Park D queue for water at a public water point. Urban areas have continued to experience crippling shortages of clean, safe and potable water. Pic Credit. Ruvimbo Muchenje. Pindula

Human Rights Violations Monthly Dashboard

Zimbabwe Peace Project

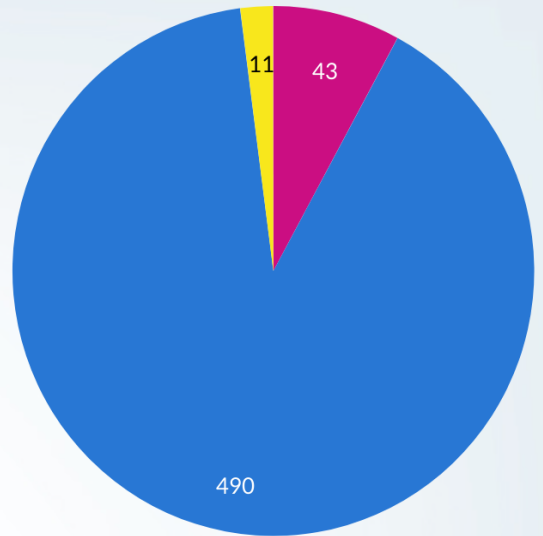
Report time frame: December, 2020





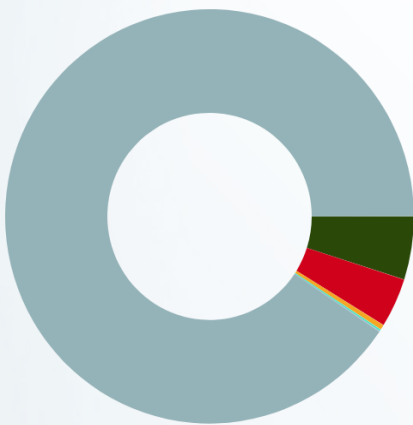
Female (43.22%) Male (56.71%) Unknown (0.08%)

Gender of December Victims



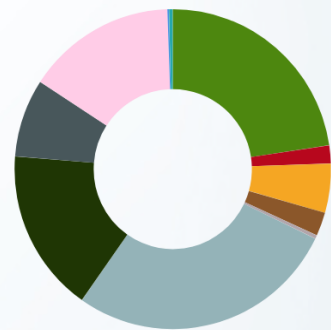
Female (7.9%) Male (90.07%) Unknown (2.02%)

Gender of December Perpetrators



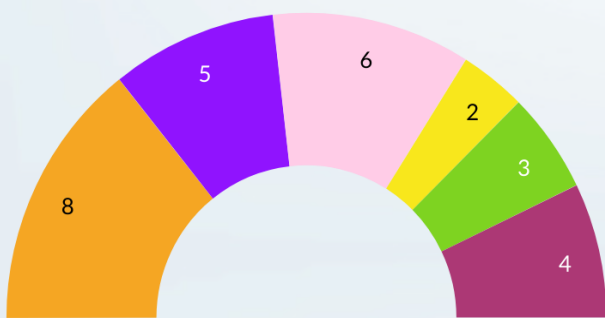
Zanu PF (4.93%) MDC Alliance (3.86%)
MDC-T Khupe (0.4%) Mthwakazi (0.16%) NPP (0.04%)
Unknown (90.61%)

December Victims Affiliation



Zanu PF (22.61%) MDC Alliance (1.84%)
MDC-T Khupe (4.96%) Machete Gangs (2.39%)
ZAPU (0.37%) ZRP (27.57%)
Municipal Police (16.54%) ZNA (7.9%)
Unknown (15.26%) Mthwakazi (0.18%)
State agents (0.37%)

December Perpetrators Affiliation



Manicaland (28.57%) Mash Central (17.86%)
Mash East (21.43%) Mash West (7.14%)
Masvingo (10.71%) Midlands (14.29%)

December Food & Other Aid Violations



MDC-A Zanu PF MDC-T

December Intra Party Violence

SUSTAINED POLITICAL INTOLERANCE

On 11 December, in Chegutu's Ward 22, violence broke out during a Zanu PF District Coordinating Committee (DCC) elections process. The violence, which involved Chegutu West Legislator Dexter Nduna was over the transparency or lack of it, of the internal voting process for candidates to represent the party at district level.

This was not an isolated event, as countrywide, intra-Zanu PF violence was witnessed during the party's DCC election processes.

For example, in Mbire District, Mashonaland Central Province, there was marked violence during the Zanu PF DCC elections held on 5 December. Some party members alleged there was rigging and inclusion of dead people and others who had relocated from the district on the voters' roll. This triggered violent clashes.

In addition to the violence, the Zanu PF DCC elections also resulted in partisan distribution of government inputs. One example is when Masvingo North, Ward 1 Councillor Kudakwashe Murambiwa distributed 5kgs of Pfumvudza maize seed only to those who had voted in Zanu PF DCC elections.

Across the political divide, as recorded by ZPP, there were incidents of intra-party and inter-party violence as the MDC-T – an offshoot from the MDC Alliance - prepared for its 27 December Congress.

In Mudzi North, Ward 10, MDC Alliance and MDC-T supporters clashed on 21

December during a meeting presided over by the MDC Alliance Mudzi District Organizing Secretary Paddington Sirivha. The meeting ended up violent with the party's former District Chairperson Peter Chabveka being accused of having joined the offshoot MDC-T.

The clashes were reported countrywide and they peaked at the MDC-T Extra Ordinary Congress held on 27 December in Harare.

In some of the scenes of the MDC-T violence, which have since gone viral on the internet, some of the congress delegates can be seen physically and verbally assaulting one of the MDC-T presidential contestants Thokozani Khupe and her supporters in what is a deliberate and open attack on women's participation in politics as a whole.

A case of inter-party violence was recorded in Mamina where Zanu PF youths led by David Maburutse kicked to the ground, pots of food that was being prepared by MDC Alliance youths who were canvassing for support to embark on a one million march in the area. Although the police were present, they could not intervene resulting in food (meat stew) being soiled on the ground. No arrests were made and this act disturbed the proceedings of the campaign.

All these incidents recorded by the ZPP point to a growing culture of political intolerance, which goes against the civil and political rights that are guaranteed in the Zimbabwe Constitution.

WE RECOMMEND

ZPP believes peaceful political contestation – as espoused in the Constitution and values laid therein- is the only progressive way to ensuring everyone, regardless of sex, ethnicity, tribe, and age, get their fair chance to enjoy their Constitutionally guaranteed civil and political liberties and participate in Zimbabwe's political landscape.

While we cannot dictate how political parties – being voluntary organisations that they are – conduct their business, we strongly condemn the use of violence in any form, as this only serves to perpetuate a culture of intolerance, which has no place in a country that is supposed to be a democracy.



DISASTER IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

A grade one pupil at Tafara Primary School in Chipinge East Ward 18 drowned after being swept away by a flooded gully river as she walked home from school.

Zimbabwe's rainy season often comes with flooding and other disasters in some areas and each year, government is never fully prepared, and never undertakes adequate measures to prevent the loss of life, property and the internal displacement of people.

In Binga's Lusulu area, heavy rains left over 200 people homeless after it destroyed over 30 homes.

While the government's Civil Protection Unit (CPU) responded by distributing maize to the victims, which was not enough as the victims required more social services and support.

It is, however encouraging that before Cyclone Chalane hit Manicaland during the last week of December, government, learning from its poor preparedness for Cyclone Idai in March 2019, initiated an evacuation process for those likely to be affected.

More than 700 people were evacuated in Chipinge and Chimanimani, and this helped save lives. Fortunately, when the Cyclone hit, it caused minimal damage and no lives were lost.

WE RECOMMEND

ZPP recommends that government strengthens its early warning systems and accords adequate resources to the CPU to be able to evacuate and manage floods and other disasters before they happen.

Government should also strengthen its post-disaster short and long term response mechanisms. This includes expending resources to cover all the arising humanitarian issues as well as towards the rebuilding of destroyed infrastructure.

Currently, some people affected by Cyclone Idai in 2019 are still living in tents and government should expedite the rebuilding of housing infrastructure for these and many other victims of disasters across the country.

In addition, government should consider relocation of citizens from areas such as some parts of Binga where floods hit every year.

DEMOCRACY OF DEMOLITION

10 December was International Human Rights Day, and just seven days before the day, over 100 families in Budiro were left without a roof over their heads.

This was after their homes, built on purported undesignated land- were demolished.

The City of Harare, with the help of the police, and armed with court orders, demolished 143 houses, leaving an estimated 715 people homeless.

The demolitions, which were the most severe in 2020, follow several such incidents and in all these, families were left internally displaced and vulnerable.

Sadly demolitions, like the Budiro one, have been a result of corrupt and illegal land sales as well as political contestation.

Ultimately, the human rights of the citizens will continue to be violated while the corrupt keep getting away without being punished.

Because of the huge housing backlog, desperate citizens are falling prey to land barons, most of whom are politically connected.

Ironically, Tembwe Housing Cooperative, part of which was demolished, secured land in Budiro in 2010 through council officials, and obtained certificate of incorporation as a housing cooperative.

According to the Harare Residents Trust, they allocated land to their members.

“However, in 2014, an identified council Town Planner Priscilla Charumbira allegedly demanded that they pay US\$45 000 in order to have their housing stands regularised. Council allegedly wrote their names down, and assured the stand owners that their stands would be regularised. However, things changed after they refused to pay the US\$45 000. Charumbira allegedly initiated through identified proxies to establish Tembwe Housing Cooperative and offered it the same land as Tembwe Housing Cooperative.”

It must be noted that shelter is a social right that every citizen should access and enjoy



***“It was heart breaking to see women breaking down and one asking what she does with a two month old baby in the rainy weather. It was not just inhuman but cruel to subject citizens to demolishing their homes while they watched hopelessly,”
Jestina Mukoko, the
ZPP National Director***

WE RECOMMEND

The Zimbabwe Peace Project urges government and local authorities to regularize land ownership in urban areas and to root out corruption, which is the major cause of such incidents, which often leave citizens as the victims. Where demolitions are really necessary, affected individuals must be given long enough vacation notices so that they can plan on time.



COVID-19 ACCOUNTABILITY TRACKER

This is the second edition of the monthly COVID-19 Accountability Tracker.

The Accountability tracker analyses and assesses government's commitment towards dealing with COVID-19 and its effects. This is because COVID-19 has gone beyond being just a health issue as it has affected the socio-economic and political situation in the country and beyond.

PFUMVUDZA & OTHER AID

Four months into the distribution of inputs under the agricultural scheme, Pfumvudza, ZPP has recorded cases of discrimination of those perceived to be supporters of opposition political parties. From August to December, ZPP recorded 158 cases of aid discrimination and this was observed mostly in Masvingo, Mashonaland West and Mashonaland Central provinces with ruling party officials, and elected and traditional local leaders influencing the process to make it partisan. In some incidents recorded by ZPP, Zanu PF officials used Pfumvudza inputs to campaign during the party's DCC elections. This practice will result in increased food insecurity as those sidelined might not be able to afford maize seed and fertilisers from retail outlets.



EDUCATION & SCHOOLS OPENING

Schools closed on 18 December, and for the four months they had been open, government did not provide adequate COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and ZPP observed that there was no strict monitoring process to assess for adherence to protocols in schools. By the day of closing schools, more than 300 students had tested positive for COVID-19 and there was a fear that returning students would infect parents with the virus. Subsequently, after schools closed, cases of COVID-19 took an upward spiral. With cases of COVID-19 rising critical questions have to be posed; does the country have adequate facilities to accommodate patients in all parts of the country. While the government had been talking about facilities being upgraded to be COVID 19 compliant it seems more and more people were not able to get beds in these facilities contributing to increased number of deaths.

ZPP urges government to prioritise the education sector and avail resources to ensure that learners attend lessons in a safe environment when schools eventually reopen.

Government should also avail resources for adaptation in the education sector, in case schools cannot physically open doors to all students due to the pandemic. Students in both rural and urban areas must be able to continue with their education and avoid losing time like what happened from March.

COVID-19 ACCOUNTABILITY TRACKER

REOPENING OF BORDERS

Starting December, Zimbabwe opened land borders to the public. The process was marred by reports of the use of fake COVID-19 certificates. As the festive season approached, the main border between Zimbabwe and South Africa, Beitbridge, was congested and people spent days waiting to cross. Five people reportedly died in separate incidents due to unclear circumstances as they waited to cross the border.

The mass movement across the borders for the festive season appeared to have triggered a spike in COVID-19 cases amid reports there was widespread corruption at the ports of entry, and some used fake letters or simply paid immigration officials for entry into the country. This was made worse by the non-existence of a clear policy on COVID-19 certification standards.

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

On December 31, Information Secretary Nick Mangwana tweeted that Zimbabwe's public COVID-19 centres were overwhelmed as cases continued to rise.

With the private facilities charging up to US\$2500 for a ventilator, and the cases of COVID-19 continuing to take an upward spiral, the poor have been left on their own, unable to access not just COVID-19 services, but general health facilities. Lived realities by citizens have shown that sick individuals are struggling to get admitted in hospital or access ventilators due to the increase in numbers. This exposes government's ill preparedness to fully fight the virus and ensure citizens who contract the virus access medical care.

ZPP continues to urge government to prioritise the health sector and decentralize the management of COVID-19 as well as to ensure that health facilities are adequately equipped to deal with all health needs.



WATER & SANITATION & PRISON CONDITIONS

In the November COVID-19 Accountability tracker, there was a positive High Court of Zimbabwe order that inmates of Chikurubi Maximum prison must get a daily supply of 60 liters of water per inmate. The order was granted to ensure the measures are enforced, as per an urgent chamber application was filed by serving prisoner Taurai Dodzo and Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum concerned about water shortages and diarrhea outbreak in the prison.

ZPP continued monitoring the situation and is concerned to report that there is no adherence to this court order and inmates still suffer from lack of access to water.

In addition, inmates are still crowded in cells, risking their health as COVID-19 cases spike. ZPP implores government and the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services to implement the High Court ruling and to ensure that inmates are not crowded in cells and to improve the living conditions of inmates.

COVID-19 ACCOUNTABILITY TRACKER



SELECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCKDOWN REGULATIONS

ZPP has noted with concern the continued selective enforcement of COVID-19 regulations, especially concerning gatherings. On 23 December the President held a rally in Chivi where thousands were gathered despite the maximum number of persons at gatherings being 100. On 27 December, the MDC-T held their extra ordinary congress in Harare where hundreds were in attendance, with no physical distancing in place (even resulting in one of the presidential hopefuls, Dr Thokozani Khupe testing positive to COVID-19). This being the case there have not been any visible steps to contact trace all those who were delegates at the Congress. Through out the months of November and December, the Zanu PF DCC elections were taking place despite the Minister of Health having suspended all by-elections under the pretext of preventing the spread of COVID-19. On 31 December, there were reports of celebratory gatherings in Mbare and an event allegedly organized by business mogul, Kuda Tagwirei. Earlier on, Information minister Monica Myutsvangwa had hosted a birthday bash, and visuals showed there was no social distancing and adherence to COVID-19 protocols.

Ironically, no action has been taken against the majority of these cases except for the Mbare one where police have started instituting arrests.

The question then becomes why make arrests in Mbare only; and why not the rest of the organisers of the other events?

If government is sincere in the fight against the pandemic, then a level of seriousness must be displayed in dealing with those who break the lockdown regulations. Politics must be put aside and everyone subjected to the same treatment; if Zimbabwe is going to win the battle against COVID-19.

ZPP calls on government to subsidise the PCR COVID-19 testing so that it is affordable to individuals; thereby decreasing cases of people who obtain fake certificates. At USD 60.00, the amount is way beyond the majority and by maintaining such a high cost government is not making it possible for most people to access testing. The test certificates must also be standardized to reduce numbers of individuals who present fake certificates at points of entry. Strict penalties must be imposed on anyone caught on the wrong side of the law; where these certificates are concerned. Citizens also must realize they have a responsibility to ensure they protect themselves and those around them; and lying about COVID-19 test will only expose everyone to the virus.

ZPP still implores government to strengthen its COVID-19 Experts Advisory Committee so as to ensure that decisions that are made are in the best interest of citizens and that the virus is not at all used as a way of gaining political mileage.

Considering the sudden surge in COVID-19 cases and related deaths since the re-opening of the borders to the public, government should consider keeping borders closed until such a time when it is safe to do so.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

As the curtain draws on 2020, it is apparent that Zimbabwe's political and socio-economic challenges will still haunt citizens as the government has many times displayed their unwillingness to listen to the voice of citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic is not making it any better, with poor citizens mostly affected by the deteriorated health care system. The continued partisan distribution of aid only serves to divide the nation further. ZPP believes that if the government commits to listening to diverse citizens' voices in 2021 and for once, introspect to see where things are going wrong, then prospects of a better Zimbabwe will be realized. There is no point of cracking down on dissent as the country gets into the new year; instead those voices, if given an ear to could make a big difference. Zimbabweans should be allowed to, once again, find their voices and contribute meaningfully to the fights against the many ills that the country finds itself in. It is important for government to be accountable, transparent, responsible and above all respect the rights of citizens especially at this time of the global pandemic.



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