



IS THIS FREEDOM?



**“She had lived through the wars
She didn't wanna go through it all again
She has seen injustice
She has seen corruption
She has seen racism
And any other kind of suffering
You can think about”**
Lucky Dube in the song, Is this Freedom

**THE ZIMBABWE PEACE PROJECT
MONTHLY
MONITORING
REPORT**

**AUGUST 2020
EDITION**



ZIMBABWE PEACE PROJECT

MONTHLY MONITORING REPORT



1.0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

An anniversary of brutality

For Zimbabwe, August 2020, has been the most complicated month. During this month, the ruling Zanu PF started off by celebrating two years after its contested electoral victory in August 2018.

Amid these celebrations, victims and families of those killed and injured when soldiers opened fire on unarmed protesting civilians on August 1, 2018, were still to get any recourse in the form of compensation, prosecution of perpetrators, or at the very least, an apology.

Ironically, August 2020, similarly to August 2018, started off on a bad note. In the same way six people were killed and injured by the army on August 1 2018, on August 1, 2020 the State had moved into full-time repression modern abducting, arresting and brutalising political activists and human rights defenders.

The month started off with activist Tawanda Muchehiwa having been abducted and missing, only to be dumped three days later after the High Court ordered the police to release him.

Several activists, including MDC Alliance spokesperson, Fadzayi Mahere, international award winning author Tsitsi Dangarembga, human rights activist Godfrey Kurauone and dozens others started off the month in police custody and while August 1 might have appeared like a hangover moment from the July 31 planned protests, it turned out that for government, the party was just starting.

Government, faced with a nation concerned about the mounting economic crisis, the crisis in the health sector, the restive, poorly paid civil service, the allegations of high level corruption and misgovernance, responded to these concerns with unmatched brutality marked by arbitrary arrests, abductions, torture and intimidation.

This invited international attention, and once again, Zimbabwe was on the spotlight for human rights abuses.

The #ZimbabweanLivesMatter campaign started early in the month and several local and international politicians, artistes, human rights defenders and citizens used this to air concerns about the deteriorating human rights situation in Zimbabwe.

Despite the overwhelming evidence of a mounting crisis, the Zimbabwean government continued to deny there being a crisis.

Instead of addressing the concerns, officials in government pulled the excuse that there were 'some foreign hands' behind the #ZimbabweanLivesMatter campaign and all the actions calling for government to end corruption and respect human rights.

As a result of this, the State security, were once again, and five months in a row, the major perpetrators of human rights abuses and this time in a bolder and less covert way.

In the month of August, ZPP recorded one case of a suspected politically motivated murder of Karoi councillor Lavender Chinguwo, 51 cases of assault, 29 cases of unlawful detention, two abductions, and 117 cases of harassment and intimidation.

As has become the trend, the state security agents were the chief perpetrators of human rights violations. In August, the police accounted for 42.65 percent of perpetrators, the army at 25.11 percent, unspecified state agents at 2.73 percent. In total state security agents are responsible for 70.49 percent of all violations this month. Political parties had their fair share of human rights violations, with Zanu PF leading the way at 12.92 percent, MDC Alliance at 2.52 percent and MDC-T Khupe at 0.32 percent.

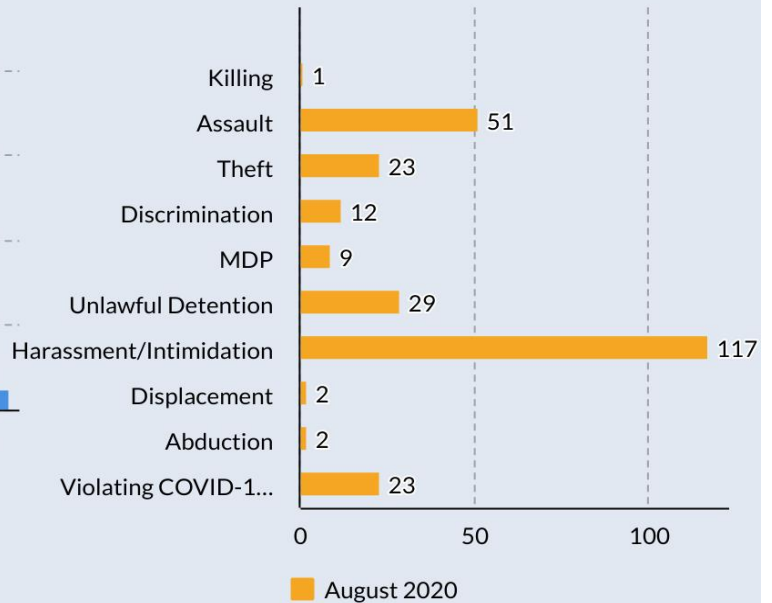
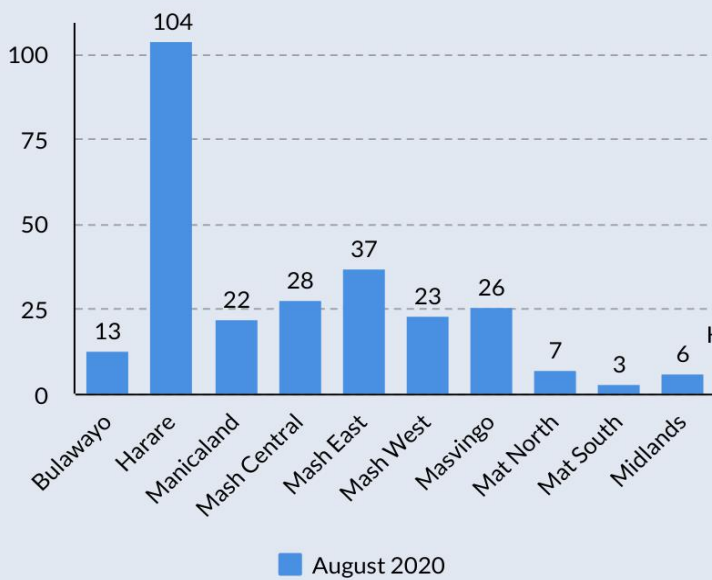
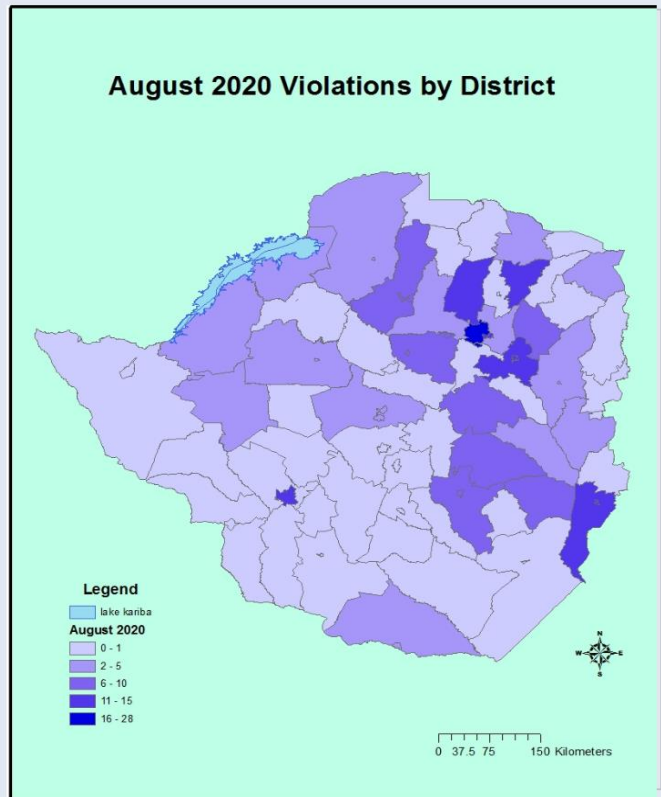
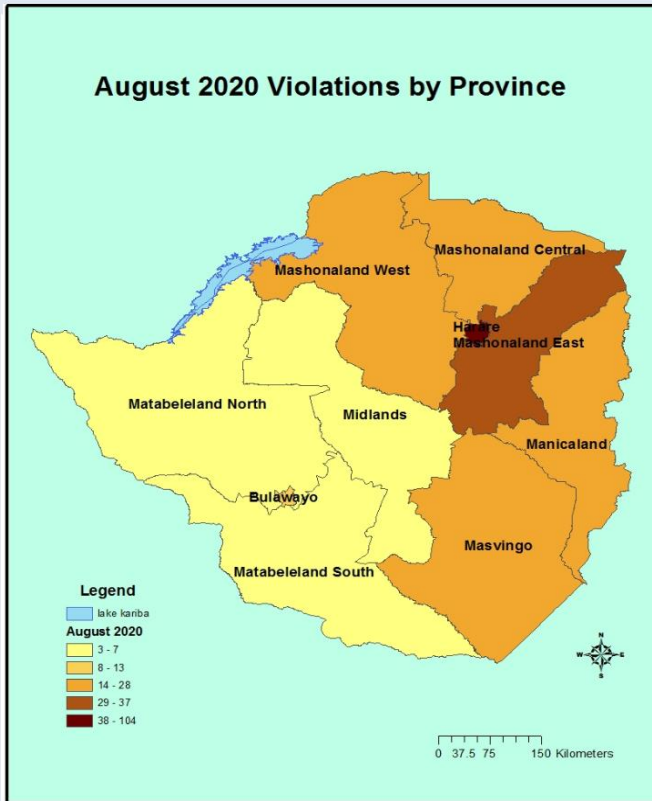
MDC Alliance supporters faced the most victimisation, with 10.91 percent of the total victims being affiliated to the party. 0.12 percent of victims are affiliated to Zanu PF, while 0.06 percent are MDC-T Khupe supporters. 88.9 percent of the victims are of unknown political affiliation, and the majority of them were victimised as part of the State's random and clandestine clampdown on civilians. In total, ZPP recorded 269 human rights violations in August, with the majority of these (70.49 percent) being perpetrated by State security agents. At this stage, we ask,

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Human Rights Violations Monthly Dashboard

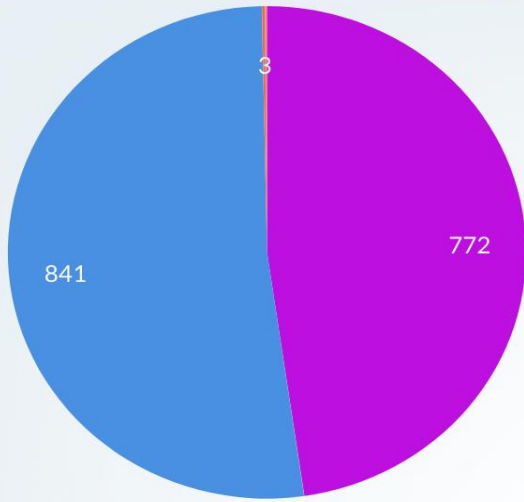
Zimbabwe Peace Project

Report time frame: August, 2020



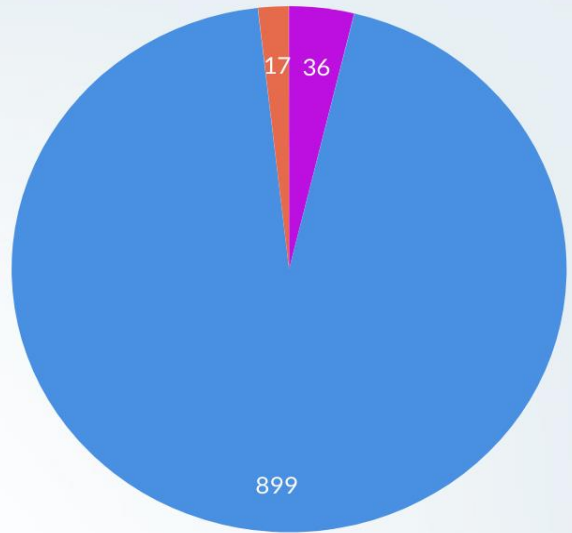
August Provincial Violations

Types of Violations - August



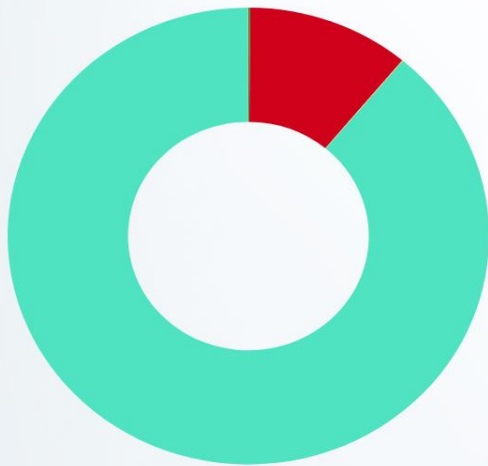
Female (47.71%) Male (51.98%) Male PWD (0.19%)
Female PWD (0.12%)

Gender of August Victims



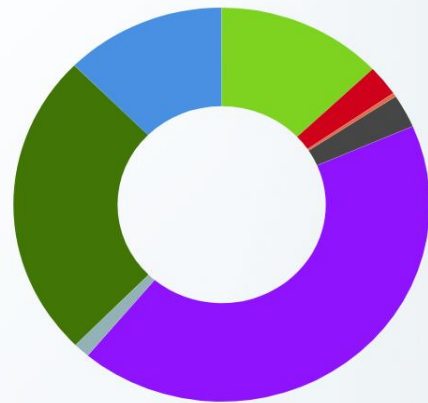
Female (3.78%) Male (94.43%) Unknown (1.79%)

Gender of August Perpetrators



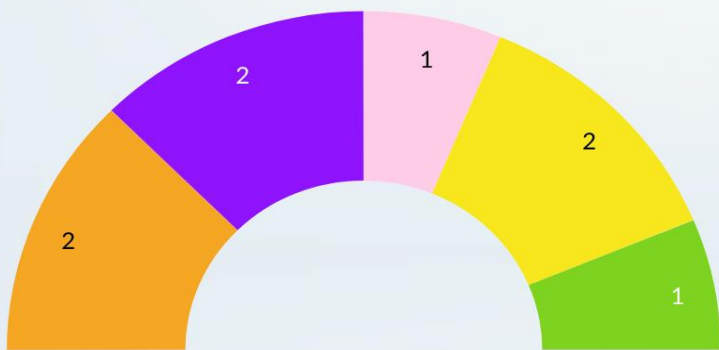
Zanu PF (0.12%) MDC Alliance (10.91%)
MDC-T Khupe (0.06%) Unknown (88.9%)

August Victims Affiliation



Zanu PF (12.92%) MDC Alliance (2.52%)
MDC-T Khupe (0.32%) State Agents (2.73%)
ZRP (42.65%) Municipal Police (1.26%)
ZNA (25.11%) Unknown (12.5%)

August Perpetrators Affiliation



Manicaland (25%) Mash Central (25%)
Mash West (12.5%) Masvingo (25%) Mat North (12.5%)

August Food & Other Aid Violations





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2.0. OVERALL ANALYSIS

2.1. AUGUST ALL OVER AGAIN

The beginning of the month was characterized by renewed crackdown on people's freedoms. This was after, on July 31, government deployed state security agents to thwart an anticipated demonstration against corruption. Over 70 activists were arrested for either holding one- person demonstrations where they just held a placard denouncing corruption and calling for the respect for human rights, or for simply being out walking.

With Zimbabwe in the international spotlight again, this August was reminiscent August of the past two years.

In August 2018, the army shot people in the streets, and a year later, on August 16, 2019, police used brute force to thwart an MDC Alliance demonstration in Harare.

What was different about August 2020 was that this time, there was greater consensus that the government had shredded the Constitution and tossed it into the bin, rolled sleeves and got itself prepared to a bare-knuckle fight with its people and below are some of the reasons to explain this:

1. On August 4, President Mnangagwa, in an unexpected speech, declared that his government was facing "many hurdles and attacks" and that "the bad apples who have attempted to divide our people and to weaken our systems would be flushed out". This clearly explained the source of the process to crack down on citizens who were simply expressing their disquiet over the situation. The President's statement was in stark contrast to what he said, ironically, in August 2018, on his inauguration. "Today the Republic of Zimbabwe renews itself. My government will work towards ensuring that the pillars of the state assuring democracy in our land are strengthened and respected," he said then.
2. As President Mnangagwa made his statement, promising to 'flush out' 'bad apples', the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights was representing over 20 people arrested over the thwarted July 31 demonstrations. The dozens arrested were facing charges related to inciting violence, and for some, violating Covid19 lockdown regulations. Once again Covid19 was used as a pretext to limit people's freedoms as has been happening since April. On the same day, activist Tawanda Muchehiwa, abducted on July 30, was recovering after having endured three days of torture. He later published details of his abduction, which linked the State to the act. [Watch the video here](#) and [read his account here](#)
3. In addition to the local Civic Society Organisations, the United States, United Kingdom, European Union and others who issued statements condemning the repression, the local clergy, under the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC), published a Pastoral Letter, titled, "the March is not ended". In this statement, ZCBC called out government to uphold the law and stop the apparent abuse of power. In response, government chose to target and launch a tribal attack on the Archbishop of Harare, Robert Christopher Ndlovu, accusing him of being evil minded and misguided. The ZCBC received local and international solidarity. This episode clearly showed that government had resolved not to listen to the people's genuine concerns, and instead, was on a path to 'flushing out' any voices that were courageous enough to speak out against the repression.
4. In addition to keeping journalist Hopewell Chin'ono, opposition political leader Jacob Ngarivhume, and MDC Alliance youth leader Godfrey Kurauone detained, and denying them some of their basic rights, government arrested MDC Vice Chairperson Job Sikhala. His court appearance was filled with dramatic episodes of police brutality targeting those that had gone to court in solidarity with him. [Watch one of the videos of the brutality here](#). At one point, the police briefly detained Sikhala's lawyer Jeremiah Bamu.



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5. To expose the collusion within the justice system, Sikhala, upon being detained together with Chin'ono and Ngarivhume at Chikurubi Maximum prison where dangerous criminals are kept, stated that he had received death threats from a senior prison official. [Read the full story here](#). For Ngarivhume and Chino'ono, the ordeal was no better. The two were denied confidential access to their lawyers and access to the food they need based on their dietary requirements, and at some point, they endured the cold August nights without jerseys after prison officials claimed the ZPCS did not have jerseys. ZPP, together with ZimRights and the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum later in the month donated jerseys and PPE to the prisons. [Watch video of the donation here](#)
6. During the same month, a court issued an order barring top human rights lawyer, Beatrice Mtetwa, from representing Chin'ono. This was received with great concern by various jurists and lawyers' bodies, who felt this was an unwarranted attack on the legal profession and an attempt to deny Chin'ono his Constitutionally guaranteed right to legal representation. In addition to being barred, Mtetwa faced several hurdles in discharging her duties, including one well publicised incident when police attempted to bar her from entering the Harare Magistrates' court, as can be seen in [this video](#).
7. State security agents also exhibited a sheer thirst to target women activists. During this period, activists such as Heather Mpambwa (20), Noxolo Maphosa(23) among others, were targeted. Mpambwa was arrested for 'undermining the authority of the president' via a Whatsapp message. This charge has long been used to silence and intimidate citizens from expressing themselves. Maphosa was abducted by suspected security state agents on August 7, and was dumped near her place of residence that evening, badly injured and traumatized. [Watch a video of her narrating her ordeal](#)
8. In addition to the human rights abuses targeting political and human rights activists, Covid19 continued to be a critical human rights issue. The country's health sector remained incapacitated to deal with Covid19 cases, and all other healthcare needs. ZPP documented the poor state of a quarantine centres in Harare, where those held there did not have access to food, and were living in squalid conditions. [Check out the full story here](#)
9. ZPP also continued to receive disturbing news of partisan aid distribution and in one of the cases, in Matabeleland North, Mzola Central, the Ward 4 Councillor, Kenvison Ncube was accused of politicising the government's social welfare aid. One of the victims was an 80-year old man, who was denied food aid and was labelled a 'traitor' for not supporting the ruling Zanu PF. In Mutasa Central, women spoke out about the increasing vulnerability. "...this lockdown has been very hard on us. Our children look to us for everything...we have nothing. Our daughters are also at risk due to lack of access to sanitary pads..." said one of the women from Mutasa. Their story is typical of the experiences of women across the country, as government continues to fail to give adequate social protection. The last that was heard of government dishing out Covid19 relief funds was when Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube announced government was giving out ZWL300.00, which is an equivalent of three US dollars.
10. August 30 was the International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearances and ironically, during this month, two cases of abduction were recorded, and in both cases, the State's involvement was apparent. The two cases of Maphosa and Muchehiwa brought to light the realisation that government is yet to be prepared to deal with the many unresolved cases of enforced disappearances, torture and abductions.
11. To show the extent to which civil liberties are no longer existing in Zimbabwe, village vendors in Murehwa were arrested and fined after cheering main opposition MDC Alliance leader Nelson Chamisa, whose vehicle convoy had made a stop-by at one of the vending sites along Mutoko Road. They were charged with obstructing the free flow of traffic!



CONCUSIONS

2.2. WHAT ALL THIS MEANS FOR ZIMBABWE

From the 10-point explanation in 2.1, backed by the statistics as summarised in the tables and in the executive summary, the following can be concluded about the turbulent month of August in respect of the human rights situation in Zimbabwe:

- The conflation of the State and the ruling party has reached the climax. As noted, pronouncements by Zanu PF officials are seen to take an effect on decisions made within state institutions. It is clear that the attacks on Chin’ono by Zanu PF acting spokesperson Patrick Chinamasa in June 2020 could have signalled the ruling party’s intentions to have the journalist persecuted by prosecution, and this played out in the way he and other like-minded political and human rights activists were arrested, denied bail and treated while in detention.
- Evidently, the statements by Chinamasa in July, where he called on party supporters to ‘fight back against the July 31 protesters’ play out in this month’s statistics, where Zanu PF contributed to a significant 12.92 percent of human rights violations, up from 4.97 percent in July.
- The judicial system in Zimbabwe is under siege from an executive that seeks to silence dissent and retain power at any costs. The denial of bail to human rights and political activists, the attempts to silence lawyers and judgements that local and international jurists have condemned all point to a worrying state of affairs in the justice system in Zimbabwe.
- The state security agents, who are supposed to protect citizens, have become fully fledged violators of human rights. Revelations of the work of the “Ferret team”, which is allegedly comprised of the police, the intelligence and the army, are enough to send chills down the spine of any Zimbabwean. The fact that this team is allegedly meant to use some of the most brutal and ruthless ways of dealing with anti-government activists leaves no one safe. It shows that the security sector is not there to protect citizens, but to prey on people while protecting the interests of the ruling elite.
- Government has unofficially, but effectively suspended fundamental freedoms, such as the right to free of expression, freedom of association, right to justice, right to health, right to social protection and others enshrined in the Constitution. The arrests, torture and abduction of people for simply expressing themselves have confirmed that Zimbabwe has become some kind of a ‘prison’. Government’s continued neglect of the health and social welfare sectors has left millions vulnerable. No attention has been paid to the reports by the World Food Programme that 6.8 million Zimbabweans face starvation. Healthcare workers have been on strike, justifiably asking government for a living wage, and their pleas have not been heard. Health institutions are too incapacitated to deal with Covid-19 and other diseases. And yet, the ruling elite has for itself state of the art private institutions where they can get treatment, ironically using the poor taxpayer’s money.
- The government is proving to be a non-listening government and can defend itself using any means, and any set of words. The reaction to the ZCBC statement and the subsequent statements expressing concerns over the deteriorating situation are testimony of that
- In all this, the shining light in the dark is the rise in citizens’ consciousness of their rights. Even those that have always chosen silence, began to speak out. The #ZimbabweanLivesMatter campaign has all but proved that citizens can still speak out and be heard beyond borders. At millions of tweets so far, and compelling evidence of the crisis that is unfolding in Zimbabwe, the campaign’s hashtag, which is cited at an average of every 5 seconds as observed by ZPP, has raised global awareness and invited international solidarity with the long-suffering people of Zimbabwe.



VIDEO:

Documentary
2yrs after
August 1, 2018
Shootings



VIDEO:

ZPCS top
official
appreciates
donation of
jerseys, PPE
to prisons



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2.3. RECOMMENDATIONS



2.3. WHERE TO ZIMBABWE?

There is no doubt that August 2020 marked a turning point in the Zimbabwean situation. As noted in this report, citizens, activists, the church, artists, women, men, children, the young and the old, got into a situation where speaking out was the only option, and in response, the government unleashed its most easily reachable weaponry – the judiciary, the state security, and its propaganda machinery. That was not helpful, as Zimbabweans, yearning to enjoy their freedoms, and hoping to see economic transformation, continued to speak out in the face of brazen brutality. In all this, it is therefore critical that the path this country takes, is towards nothing but a peaceful, conclusive resolution to the current human rights and economic challenges, and a solution where the ultimate winner are the people of Zimbabweans, the millions that deserve a respect of human rights, equal opportunities and a transparent and prosperous Zimbabwe. ZPP therefore recommends the following:

- While the announcement by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa that he is redeploying an envoy to meet all stakeholders in Zimbabwe are welcome, the situation, as highlighted in this report, requires that the envoy be as inclusive as possible. The governing party in South Africa the ANC has also indicated intention to engage its sister party Zanu PF. Zimbabwe's crisis is not about the politics only, neither is it an internal Zanu PF issue. The country's problems, as highlighted in this and previous reports, as well as in other submissions by various groups and individuals, are about the fundamental need to return to Constitutionalism, where, for example, the state security plays its role in protecting citizens, and does not act as an appendage of the ruling party, and where all citizens enjoy their rights within a situation of non-discrimination and equal opportunities. In that regard, it is therefore important that the envoy not only meets political players, but consult diplomats, civil society, church, special interest groups, the media, business and industry. Inclusivity helps to make their process to resolution get the ownership of the people of Zimbabwe, because without that, their mission becomes just another fishing expedition.
- ZPP commends the people of Zimbabwe for continuing to speak out, and recommends that this must not end. The solution to Zimbabwe's problems primarily lies with every Zimbabwean, and while there can be regional and international interventions, it takes every Zimbabwean to speak out, as only that can extricate the country from the current crisis. The #ZimbabweanLivesMatter and other pro-democracy campaigns should continue to shine the light on where the problems are.



ABDUCTED & TORTURED: Noxolo Maphosa shows her wounds and torn clothes after she was abducted, tortured and sexually assaulted by alleged state security agents in the aftermath of the July 31 protests

- ZPP recommends that the government of Zimbabwe be cognizant of their obligations towards the people of Zimbabwe. As a government, they have a primary responsibility to ensure that all citizens are protected from social vulnerability. The current situation where people are dying because of the neglect of the health sector cannot continue. The increasing hunger and poverty and economic malaise are unacceptable. Government should set its priorities right and ensure all citizens get adequate, affordable and accessible healthcare, and measures should be put in place to avert the hunger crisis. Government should fix the economy as the current economic challenges have become the biggest threat to the realization of fundamental human rights
- Government should implement security sector reforms. The current situation, where some obscure, mafia-style units are alleged to be embedded within the state security institutions are a cause for concern. Such units should be abolished as they do not have a place in what is supposed to be a democracy. The police and the army are there to protect people, and must act as such. Any individuals who commit human rights violations and crimes against humanity under the ambit of the country's state security institutions must be prosecuted.
- The executive and ruling party should respect the independence of the judiciary and the sanctity of the legal profession. Interfering in the work of judicial officers and lawyers is unacceptable and unconstitutional. The Constitution of Zimbabwe clearly specifies the separation of powers and those in power should respect that.
- As August has shown, Zimbabwe has a long history of human rights violations, and this cannot continue. The government should gather will-power to end the violations and to begin a genuine healing and reconciliation process, where perpetrators open up, and victims and their families can find closure.

Zimbabwe has a bright, prosperous tomorrow, and it begins today, and it starts with political will power, and citizen participation. Without that, the current situation will continue, and we will continue to ask, **IS THIS FREEDOM?**

IN HER OWN WORDS: NOXOLO MAPHOSA

"I called my friend and told her there were men following me. Just as I ended the call, they grabbed me from behind and took my phone. They forced me into a white Isuzu pick-up truck.

I was blindfolded and driven to a house where I was interrogated about the whereabouts of my uncle Josphat 'Mzaca' Ngulube, who is a political activist. I told them I did not know my uncle's whereabouts.

One of the men said I thought they were playing. He took out a knife and cut through my bra, leggings and panties. The men took turns to beat me on my legs and thighs with logs while I was naked.

***Maphosa has since fled to South Africa and there were disturbing reports that she had to seek refuge at a South African police station after vehicles, suspected to belong to Zimbabwean state security agents camped close to her new home in South Africa**



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ABOUT THE ZIMBABWE PEACE PROJECT

The organisation was founded in 2000 by church-based and human rights organisations.

The current members of ZPP are Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ), Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights), Civic Education Network Trust (CIVNET), Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ), National Association for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH) and Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA).

ZPP was established with the objective of monitoring, documenting and building peace and promoting the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts. The Zimbabwe Peace Project seeks to foster dialogue and political tolerance through non-partisan peace monitoring activities, mainly through monitors who document the violations of rights in the provinces.



© THE FRONT PAGE COVER DESIGN SHOWING THE ZIMBABWE MAP PORTRAYED AS PRISON STEEL BARS WAS DESIGNED AT THE zppinfo DESK