



ZIMBABWE
PEACE
PROJECT

UNDER A DARKENING SKY

ZIMBABWE'S REGRESSION INTO REPRESSION & RECESSION

THE ZIMBABWE PEACE PROJECT

**MONTHLY
MONITORING
REPORT**

**JUNE 2020
EDITION**

1.0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

A COLD JUNE

In Zimbabwe, the winter season peaks in the month of June. But far from the usual cold weather the month brings, Zimbabweans across the country experienced a worsening economic situation characterised by price increases and inflation.



On the human rights front, the situation was no better, as the country continued to find itself sliding further into an undoubted military state as confirmed by the prevalence of human rights violations perpetrated by the police and the army with artless impunity.

For one Zimbabwean from Harare, who made a contribution while narrating an ordeal in the hands of the police, the beginning of the Covid-19 lockdown measures in April have meant nothing more than an excuse for the State to descend on its citizens with ruthless abandon.

“Things have been bad in Zimbabwe for a while and as a vendor I am used to the running battles with the police, but since April when the lockdown started, I have witnessed and experienced more harassment than ever before. June was the worst as for some of us in the informal sector attempted to start working again, day in day out, we have faced unending harassment but all we are trying to do is to earn an honest living,” she said.

Her ordeal is the story of many Zimbabweans, who according to Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) human rights monitoring records of June 2020, make up 4,211 of those who experienced harassment and intimidation, attempted abduction, torture, rape and sexual assault, attempted murder, displacement, unlawful detention and malicious damage to property.

The perpetrators of all these, are, in a worrying trend, the very same institutions that should protect citizens and give every Zimbabwean a sense of security.

For the third month in a row, the Zimbabwe Republic Police(ZRP) and the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) contributed the highest number of perpetrators and this is largely due to the way the two institutions have approached the enforcement of lockdown regulations.

“The soldier just started hitting me with the butt of his gun, accusing me of not having adequate papers to travel into the city centre...” narrated one resident of Harare.

This incident is not isolated. ZPP has recorded 101 cases of harassment and intimidation, 29 cases of assault and 27 cases of unlawful detention, and most of these have been under the pretext of enforcement of lockdown regulations.

The police and the army contributed to a combined 58.2 percent of perpetrators of human rights violations.

While the figure is lower than last month’s 63.46 percent, it still presents a worrying trend as it speaks to the continued use of the State security agents to commit human rights violations.

Harare, once again, had the highest number of violations at 82, followed from a distance by Masvingo’s 30 cases and Mashonaland Central’s 28 and Midlands’ 26.

The continuing trend of the police and the army being the chief perpetrators of human rights violations confirm that this is not just isolated incidents, but rather, a systematic and unfortunate regression of Zimbabwe into fully fledged repression, where citizens live in fear of the same agents they should look up to for protection.

Apart from the repression, the economic crisis has gone full circle, and in the month of June, exactly a year after the Finance ministry reintroduced the Zimbabwean dollar, the local currency virtually died after government announced they would be paying civil servants up to US\$75 to cushion them from the ravaging inflation, which has left the local currency virtually useless.

The war between government and its workers continues as labour unions have demanded full US\$ salaries of up to US\$500.00.

Government, which this month was implicated in high level corruption that led to the arrest of the Health minister Obadiah Moyo on corruption charges, has not shown willingness to make the lives of Zimbabweans better.

Moyo is being accused of illegally awarding a US\$42 million tender to Drax International for the supply of Covid-19 drugs and personal protective equipment fully aware the company was not a pharmaceutical but a consultancy firm.

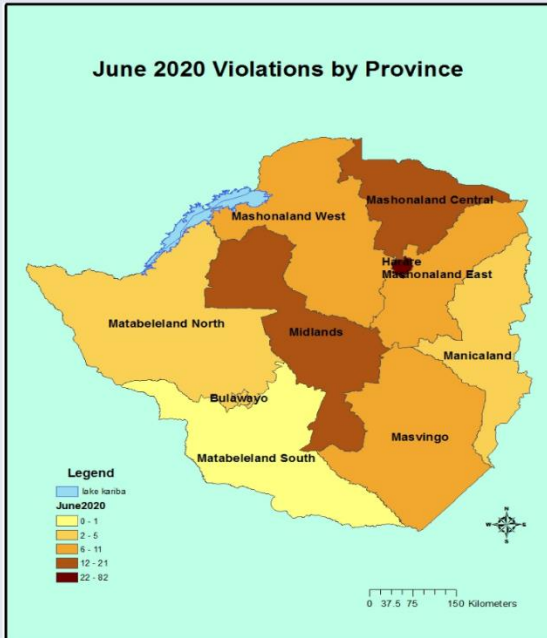
The informal sector continues to operate under strict restrictions, and civil servants continue to earn money that cannot buy even a pair of shoes. Furthermore, the promised US\$ payments, which are not going to be given out as direct cash, have not been disbursed. Consequently, in addition to regressing into repression, Zimbabwe has taken many steps into an acute economic recession that has impacted hugely on various socio-economic rights.

Human Rights Violations Monthly Dashboard

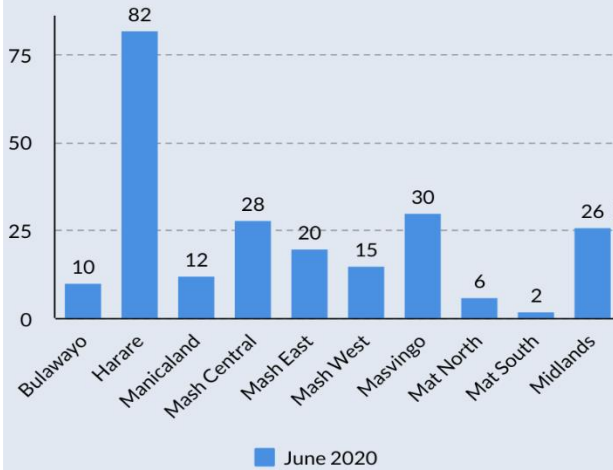
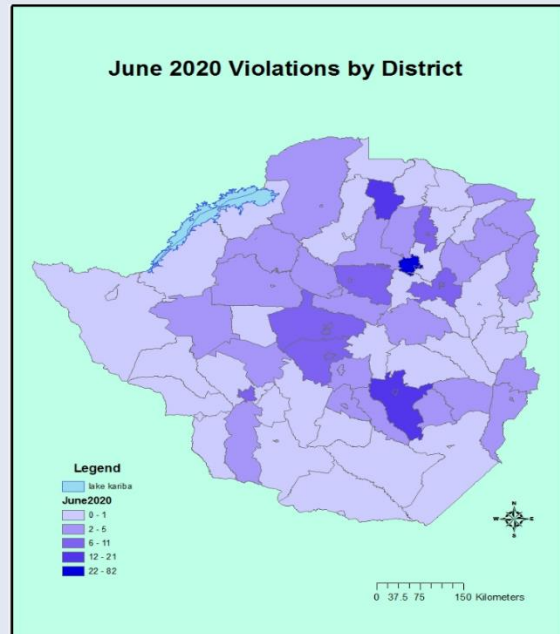
Report time frame: June, 2020

Zimbabwe Peace Project

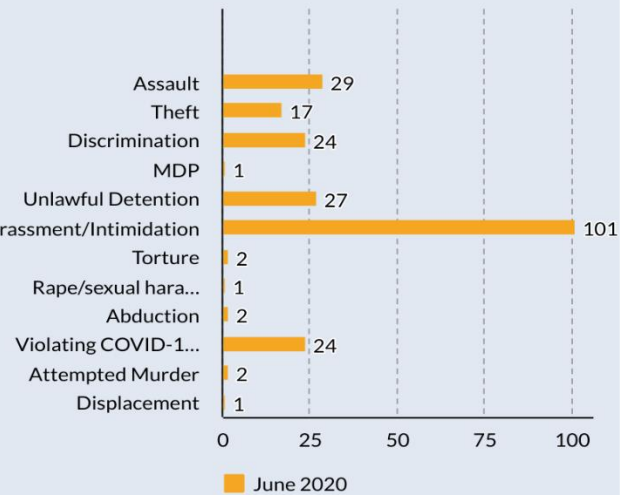
June 2020 Violations by Province



June 2020 Violations by District



June Provincial Violations



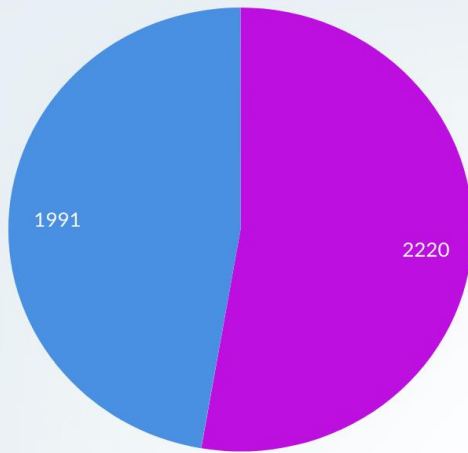
Types of Violations - June

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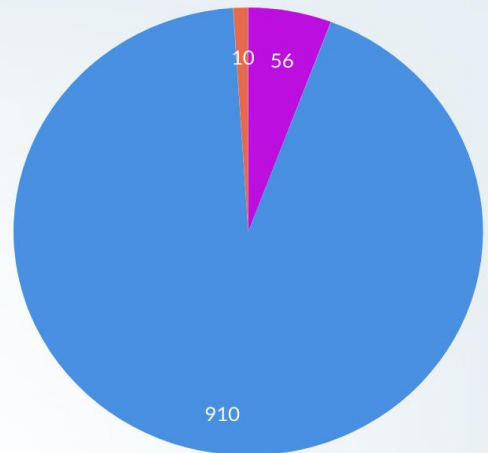
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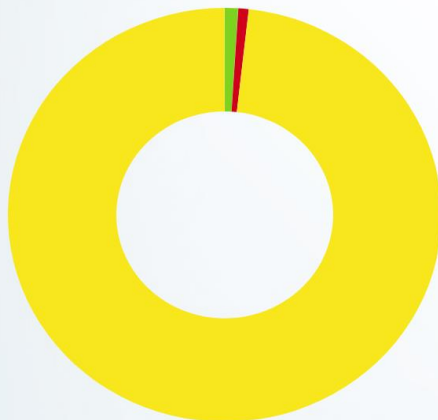
Female (52.72%) Male (47.28%)

Gender of June Victims



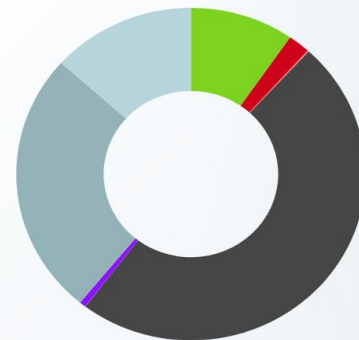
Female (5.74%) Male (93.24%) Unknown (1.02%)

Gender of June Perpetrators



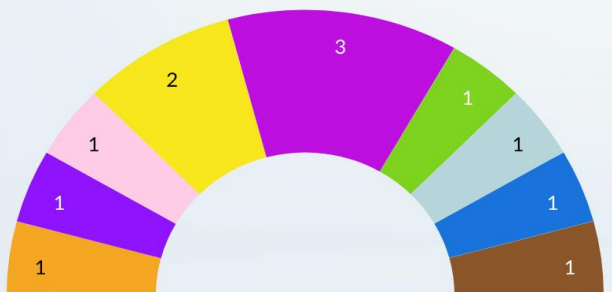
Zanu PF (1%) MDC (0.78%) Unknown (98.22%)

June Victims Affiliation



Zanu PF (9.63%) MDC-A (2.05%)
War Vets (0.1%) ZRP (48.57%)
Municipal Police (0.61%) ZNA (25.72%)
Unknown (13.32%)

June Perpetrators Affiliation



Harare (8.33%) Manicaland (8.33%)
Mash Central (8.33%) Mash East (16.67%)
Mash West (25%) Masvingo (8.33%) Mat North (8.33%)
Mat South (8.33%) Midlands (8.33%)

June Food & Other Aid Violations



MDC Zanu PF

June Intra Party Violence

2.0. OVERALL ANALYSIS

2.1 June 2020: When the economy becomes a human rights issue



Vending ... Informal traders use the space outside Mupedzanhamo market in Mbare, Harare, to sell second-hand clothes and fruits. Mupedzanhamo is currently under renovation after its closure under the Covid-19 lockdown measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus. Picture: Shepherd Tozvireva

June 1, 2020, marked 62 days after government imposed a lockdown, and put a complete restriction on the operations of the informal sector. For a country that has over 94 percent of its citizens in the informal sector according to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat), it meant more than two months of no income for citizens.

This, no doubt, increased the vulnerability and left those in the informal sector under pressure to start their operations, even when government still maintained strict restrictions.

This situation, coupled with a heavy-handed state security, contributed to many human rights violations, with those in the informal sector attempting to operate because they were left with no choice, and the state security sector reacting to that using unlawful methods.

Even when government announced that those in the informal sector could start operating, the strict measures, which include registration and ensuring sanitization of facilities for clients, were far out of reach of the majority of people who rely on very basic work such as vending.

This was at a time when the country's inflation surged to **785.55 percent**, according to ZimStat; and the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe pegged the monthly bread basket for a family of six at ZWL\$8,500, an amount that was beyond the reach of many in the informal sector.

In the end, the human rights violations witnessed were a result of an attempt by those who survive on informal work to get themselves out of the worsening poverty and vulnerability.

The situation was worsened by government's failure to provide social grants to the majority of those affected by the lockdown.

2.2 A health sector in intensive care

On 18 June, thousands of health workers in Zimbabwe downed their tools, demanding payment of salaries in US dollars, and this was only a day after government announced a 50 percent cost of living adjustment and COVID-19 allowances of up to US\$75.

In a letter to the Health Services Board, the workers said, “The Healthcare workers demand that salaries revert to the 1st of October 2018 digits that were quoted in USD which is a stable currency that can store value of that salary. In that way, pensions, savings, medical aid, funeral policies will not continue to be eroded”.

With most healthcare workers and generally all civil servants, earning an average of ZWL3,500, it means they cannot afford the basics with their salaries, which are being eroded by hyperinflation.

Government does not seem to move from its position that it is going to pay US\$75 and the Zimbabwe dollar salary, and what this deadlock means is that the health sector, which is already struggling due to the unavailability of essential medical supplies, has gone into intensive care.

ZPP witnessed and recorded dire situations, where for example in Mashonaland East, some local clinics were turning away patients with nurses citing incapacitation.

In some cases, nurses were reportedly not attending to patients or not showing up for work. Government is doing little to address and ensure that people’s health rights are not violated. The US\$75 allowances were also not disbursed but rather converted at the interbank rate, making situation even more dire.

In addition to the problems in the health sector, the statistics of Covid-19 took a gradual increase throughout the month, with many of them being attributed to returnees from neighbouring countries. Reports of inadequate facilities at quarantine centres continued to dominate, exposing government’s inability to deal with the situation, and leaving the country at greater risk of even more transmissions. As at 30 June 2020, the cases had topped 500 and continued to go up.

2.2.1 A brief price check

Prices of basic commodities continued to increase in Harare province during the state-imposed lockdown.

A survey conducted on 16 June 2020 in Highfields at OK and at Pick n Pay supermarkets, Machipisa showed that the prices of basic goods had increased by 2% from the previous week. At OK supermarket, salt, which had been below ZWL 50.00 increased to ZWL 57.99 for 500grams.

At Pick n Pay, super refined mealie meal costing ZWL 280 increased to ZWL 384.99, Rice which was charged at ZWL 115 for a 2kg packet increased to ZWL 199.99 at OK shops and ZWL 179.99 at Pick n Pay. Reports also confirm that cooking oil was withdrawn from shelves at Pick n Pay but the previous day the product was seen on display.

In the last survey, carried out on 25 June prices of basic commodities had increased again. At OK Marimba and at Belvedere Trading Centre, the price of bread formally increased by 2% from ZWL 68.00 to ZWL 90.00 for Bakers Inn (family loaf) while the usual loaf was priced at ZWL 70.00.

So, in June, the country experienced three waves of price increases.

2.3 Season of senseless arrests, abductions?

Following their abduction, the three MDC officials, Joanna Mamombe, Netsai Marova and Cecilia Chimbiri were re-arrested, this time being accused of ‘faking their own abduction.’ The three spent 10 days in detention after being initially denied bail. They have not been given a chance to tell their own side of the story as government suspiciously keeps a lid on the case.



On June 22, Zimbabwe National Students Union (Zinasu) Vice President Talent Madava and Lionel Shayahama, Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) students, were briefly held by CID officers at Chinhoyi Central Police station, three days after students at the university had displayed placards in a lecture, demanding the release of the three MDC youth leaders.

This, together with the arrests and abduction of human rights activists, lawyers and opposition activists, escalated in the month of June.

During the Constitutional Amendment Bill public hearings, police arrested human rights activists Namatai Kwekweza together with her colleague, Vongai Zimudzi on June 19 after they went to Ministry of Justice holding placards denouncing the amendment.

More than ever before, Zimbabwe was under a darkening sky, and exercising one's Constitutional right can land them in the hands of the police, or worse, abductors.

2.4 Embracing the fight for the right to water

On June 9, ZPP launched its survey report on the right to water, which focused on Bulawayo, Chegutu and Harare.

The report came at a time when the right to water was under the spotlight considering that central and local government has failed to provide clean, potable water in line with the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

The survey showed that the right to water was not being realised since government does not prioritise funding to support water reticulation infrastructure. The launch of the report, aimed at lobbying government to prioritise the right to water, came at a time when Bulawayo recorded deaths from typhoid in Luveve and the crisis is still ongoing. [Click here to go to the report](#)

3.0. CASE FILES

Nzvimbo, Chiweshe : 24 June 2020 : One Mr Shambare (business person) and his workers were assaulted by five plain-clothed police officers in Mazowe Central at Nzvimbo Growth point in Ward 8. Reports confirm that the officers disguised themselves as customers before visiting Shambare's grocery shop to purchase goods. The officers who are suspected to be members of the CID department reportedly produced some torn ZWL bank notes including bond notes of which the employees at the shop rejected. The officers then rounded up the employees and started beating them with batons. They also demanded to see the shop owner and upon arrival, Mr Shambare was also assaulted. The officers accused the shop owner of influencing all business persons in the community to reject bond notes. The police details then drove Shambare and his employees to Chombira police station where they dropped them for questioning before leaving the camp. It is suspected that the officers who beat them were not from Mazowe because they quickly left the police post after dropping the victims.

Mashonaland East : Zanu PF Ward Councilor for Mutoko South Hoyuyu Mangondo Corner Store Ward 26 is alleged to be annexing villagers' agricultural land. It is alleged that, on 25 June Zanu PF Ward Councilor Medicine Musakwa began forcefully taking villagers' land and turned it into commercial residential stands. Musakwa is working with strong political accomplices who among them are the District Secretary Onismos Nyagano and a local business man identified as Rongesheni Marongedza. Villagers were left stunned since part of the land that was taken is villagers' grazing paddocks.

Chikomba West: On 28 June ten villagers were denied social welfare rice in Chikomba West at Ringa Business Centre Ward 19. It is alleged that, social welfare rice was politicized by Zanu PF legislator Mangwiro John Chamunorwa. The politicization was exacerbated by Zanu PF supporters who were used to create the beneficiaries register. Residents suspected to be MDC supporters were subsequently denied. Beneficiaries loyal to the ruling party perceived to be vulnerable were given six cups of rice. The distribution was not conducted fairly; in some cases only six villagers in a village of twenty households benefited

THE JUNE 26 CENSORSHIP

The State-linked Zimpapers suspended the station manager of its talk radio station, CapiTalk FM, for airing a once-off programme called 'Ending Torture and Impunity in Zimbabwe' on June 25. The programme was part of the commemorations of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, which comes every June 26 of the year. The journalist who anchored the programme was also slapped with a three-week suspension. The programme, which featured various civil society leaders and victims of torture, including ZPP National Director Jestina Mukoko, was stopped from continuing halfway through. The programme was sponsored by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, of which ZPP is a member. Zimbabwe has a long history of state sponsored abduction and torture. Civil society organisations have since started a campaign codenamed #StopCapitalk, in protest against the brazen attempt to stifle freedom of expression.



FROM THE COMMUNITIES

The generality of Zimbabweans, as documented by ZPP in June, rejected the amendment of the Constitution, citing, among other reasons, the fact that it was too early to amend a constitution that is yet to be fully implemented, and that the proposed amendments sought to entrench the powers of the president, and were an assault on democracy. Below is a summary of the submissions made:

- The Bill is a threat to the independence of the judiciary. For a country that is reeling from a phase where the judiciary has been abused to achieve political ends, the bill seeks to make the situation worse. Zimbabwe needs strong institutions, not those that are based on loyalty to the political powers. The amendment excuses the executive from being accountable and transparent as it allows for the overriding of parliament in approving international deals. The Bill vests sweeping powers into the office of the president
- The Bill is a reversal of the gains that were made seven years ago when over 94 percent of 3.3 million Zimbabweans overwhelmingly voted for the current constitution.
- The majority of Zimbabweans also questioned the rationale behind amending the Constitution when all of its provisions were yet to be fully implemented and many laws are yet to be aligned. Citizens also implored government to fast-track the alignment of laws before any process to amend the constitution.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted in this report, Zimbabwe is sliding into full autocracy, characterized by artless arrests and abduction. This is happening as the economic situation becomes dire with each day, and government appears unprepared, or perhaps unwilling to deal with the situation, which has left every ordinary Zimbabwean exposed to poverty. In more ways than one, as illustrated in this report, Zimbabwe is under a darkening sky, and it requires every citizen's effort to advocate for the return and respect of basic rights, and to ask government to play its role in enhancing the economy and ensuring all citizens are accorded their political, economic and social rights. This cannot continue.

In light of this, ZPP recommends the following:

- Government should prioritise fixing the economy as it has become the biggest threat to people's socio-economic rights. An inclusive approach should be followed to ensure that everyone contributes to making decisions about the economy. In addition, separation of powers should be implemented. The suspected interference of the Joint Operations Command, which if true is worrying; securocrats are not expected to interfere in economic affairs or any other civilian affairs for that matter. [See the story here](#)
- Government should prioritise its workers, and accord them a living wage, as failure to do so impacts on the fundamental rights to health and education. Government should also look into the plight of the people in the informal sector, persons with disabilities, and ensure they get adequate social support.
- Arbitrary arrests should stop, and government should respect the people's rights to assemble, petition and associate, and should not interfere in such. More importantly, any democracy thrives on a nation that enjoys freedom.
- There is need for concerted efforts in fighting the entrenched impunity, and this requires political will and genuineness at government level, otherwise there is will be more loss of confidence in institutions. Those that break the law, whether as the police army, or government officials, should be arraigned and go through the due criminal procedure. Only by doing so can government restore confidence and get the needed foreign investment .
- In the interests of the public and interests of its own credibility, government should conduct itself in a transparent manner when investigating cases like the abduction of the three MDC youth leaders and other related cases. As it stands, the only narrative of what transpired is coming from government, and the victims have not been able to tell their side of the story. Unless government is complicit, it should just be as transparent.

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.

