



ZIMBABWE
PEACE
PROJECT

WHO SHALL PROTECT THE PEOPLE?

When the State unleashes violence on people it is supposed
to protect, who shall protect the people

THE ZIMBABWE PEACE PROJECT
**MONTHLY
MONITORING
REPORT**

**JULY 2020
EDITION**



ZIMBABWE PEACE PROJECT

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1.0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

The state of paranoia

During the first week of July, Transform Zimbabwe leader, Jacob Ngarivhume announced he was galvanising support for a July 31 demonstration against corruption. His announcement immediately drew the support of the generality of Zimbabweans such that even on social media, the hashtag #31July was trending. This announcement came amid revelations of widespread corruption in government, including the Drax Scandal, where government unprocedurally shelled out US\$60 million Covid-19 supply contract to a shelf company called Drax without going to public tender.

This was followed by the revelation that top Zanu PF officials and sympathisers— including many who are still in government- had looted farm mechanisation equipment in 2008 and not paid back any cent. In that case, the question for the month of July would remain, who shall protect the people, when those assigned to protect them, are preying on them?

The situation, which came as discontent over economic mismanagement was rising, allowed for conversations on the demonstration to dominate the Zimbabwean online and offline spaces.

During this month, the cases of Covid-19 were rising sharply, and government announced stricter measures to restrict movement, including a 6pm to 6am curfew enforced by state security agents. The curfew was starkly similar to the one imposed by the colonial government during the liberation struggle.

Government, known for using brute force, did not attempt to deal with the concerns citizens were raising, but instead, got into a state of paranoia, and began a systematic targeting of individuals and issuing very strong threats to the people of Zimbabwe.

On July 20, police arrested Ngarivhume and Chin'ono, and ironically charged them for inciting violence, and at the time of writing of this report, the two are still languishing in remand prison after the State did all it could to deny them bail.

By the end of the month, and by July 31, the State's paranoia had reached unprecedented levels, and dozens had been arrested, hundreds brutalised, and Zimbabwe was in a state of fear, with the state security agents deployed in every part of the country, rural and urban.

The mass arrests, abductions and assaults targeted journalists, human rights defenders, opposition activists, and anyone who was courageous enough to utilise their constitutional right to self expression including international award winning author Tsitsi Dangarembga.



A soldier & a police officer beat up people at Gazaland in Highfields, Hre. Pic by S Tozvireva

This report documents and analyses the state of human rights violations during the volatile month of July, and as evidenced by the statistics, the month of July marked the peak of the State's violence on its people.

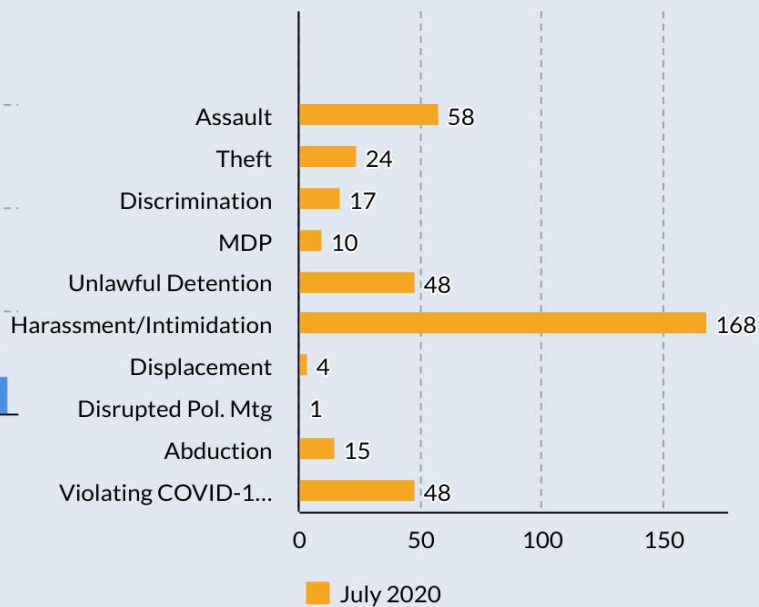
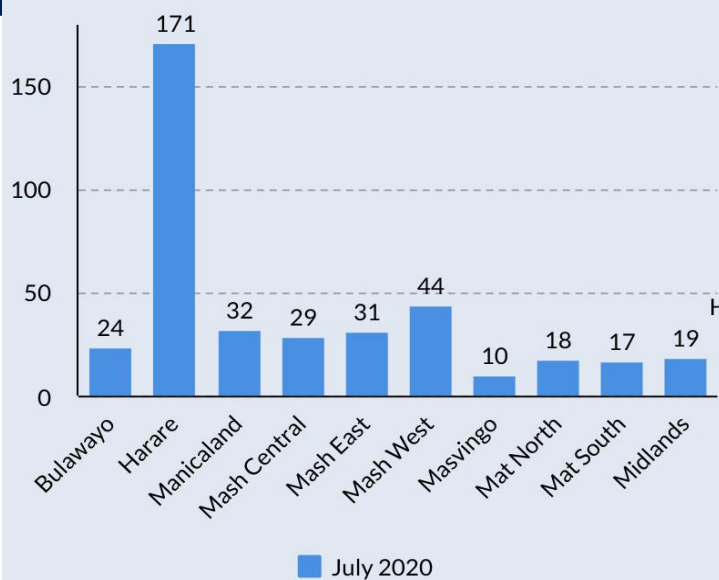
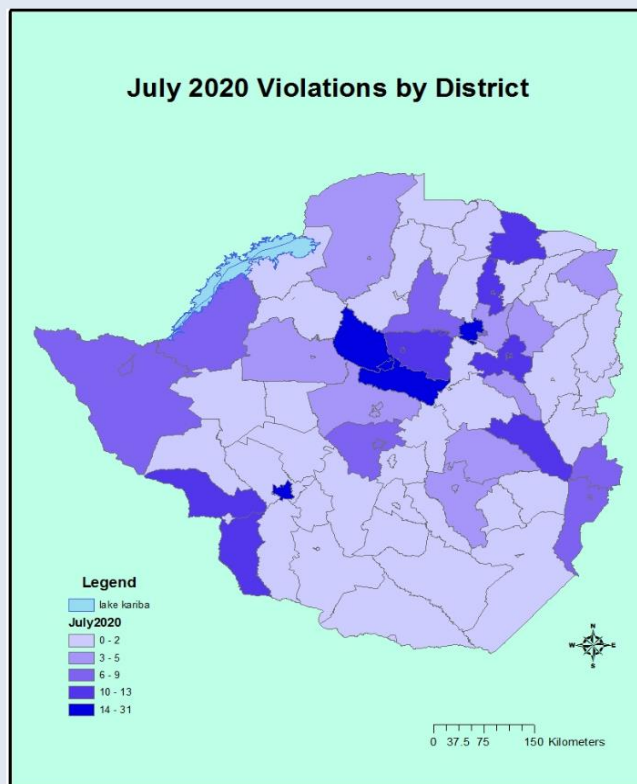
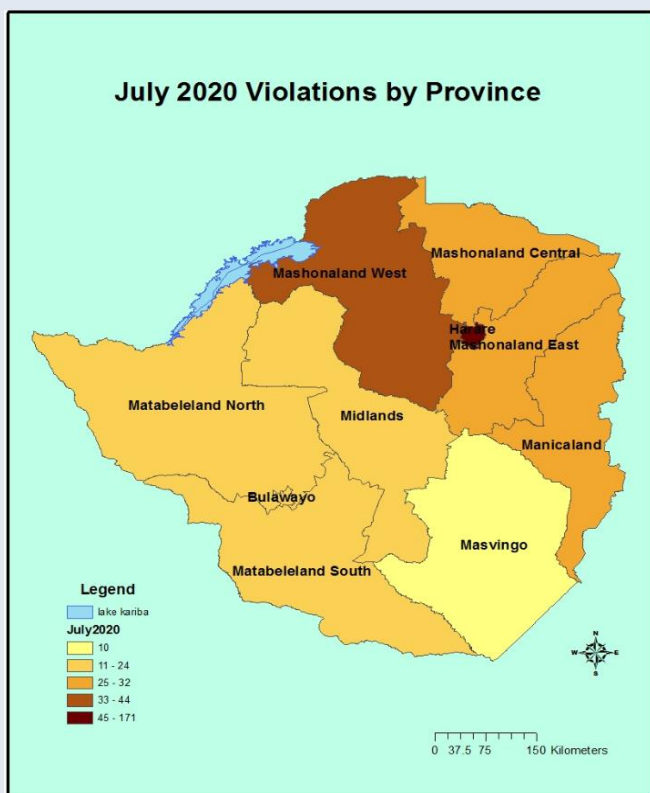
Once again, the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the Zimbabwe National Army topped the list of the perpetrators of human rights violations with a combined 80.66 percent.

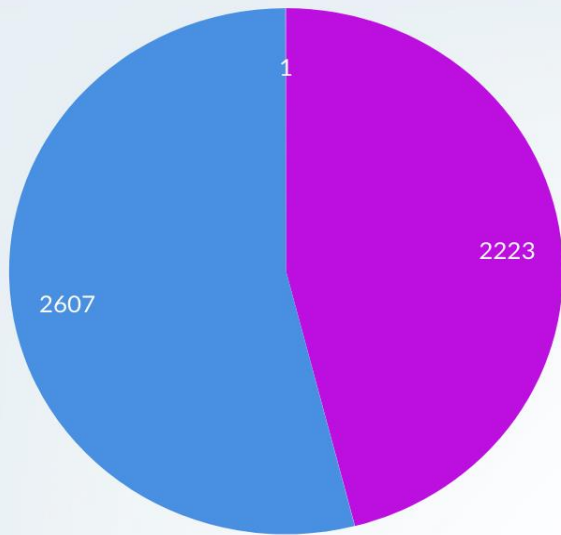
During the month, ZPP recorded 48 cases of unlawful detention, 68 cases of assault and 168 cases of harassment and intimidation, 15 cases of abduction and torture, with the majority of these being attributable to state security agents.

Human Rights Violations Monthly Dashboard

Zimbabwe Peace Project

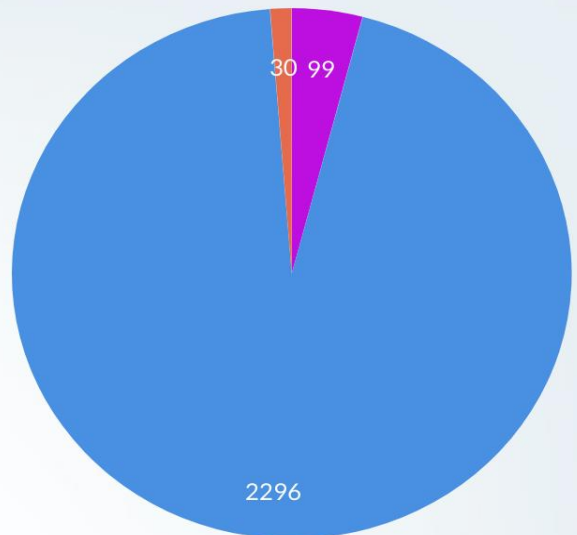
Report time frame: July, 2020





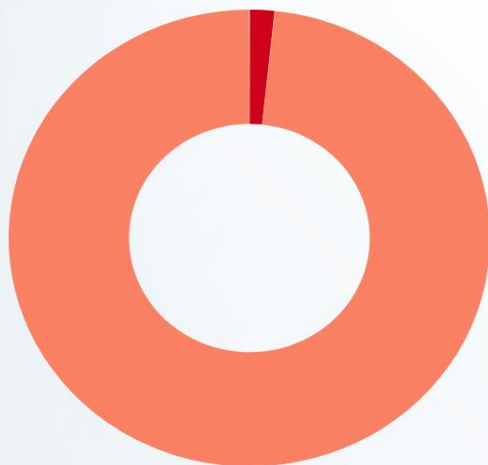
Female (46.02%) Male (53.96%) Male PWD (0.02%)

Gender of July Victims



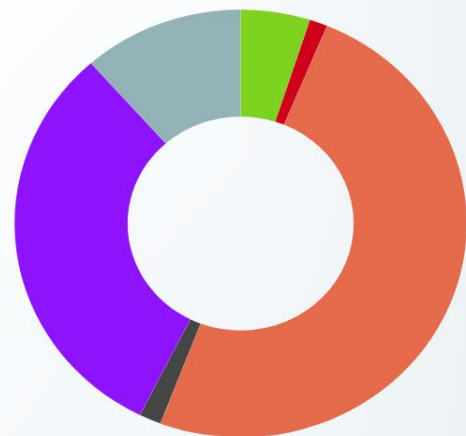
Female (4.08%) Male (94.68%) Unknown (1.24%)

Gender of July Perpetrators



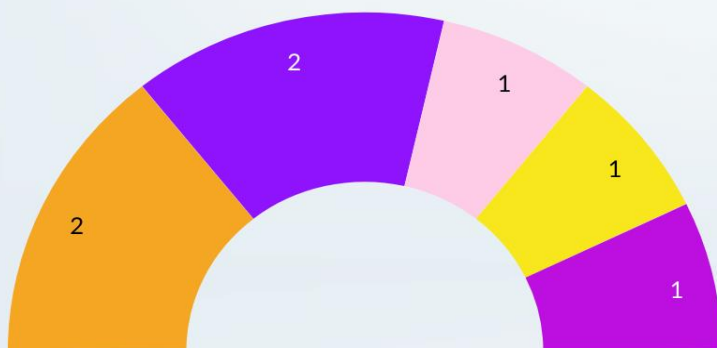
Zanu PF (0.02%) MDC (1.66%) Machete gang (0.02%) Unknown (98.3%)

July Victims Affiliation



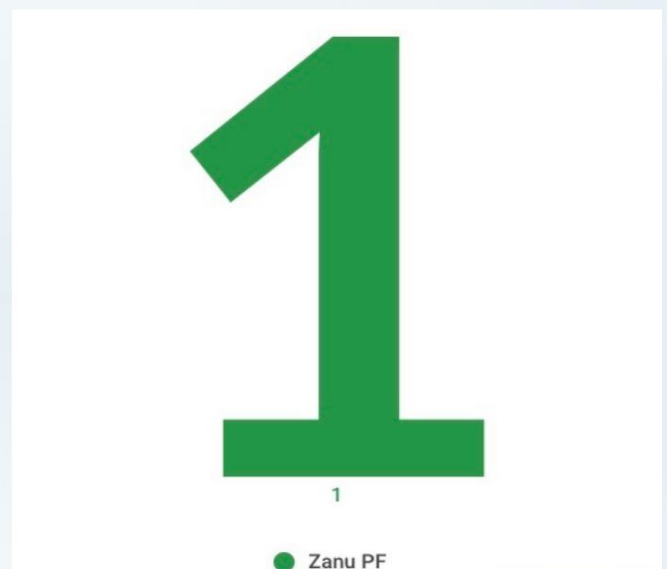
Zanu PF (4.97%) State agents (1.28%) ZRP (49.52%) Municipal Police (1.57%) ZNA (31.14%) Unknown (11.51%)

July Perpetrators Affiliation



Manicaland (28.57%) Mash East (28.57%) Mat North (14.29%) Mat South (14.29%) Midlands (14.29%)

July Food & Other Aid Violations



July Intra Party Violence



2.0. OVERALL ANALYSIS

2.1. HOPEWELL CHIN'ONO & HUMAN RIGHTS

THE BUILD-UP: On June 5, 2020, journalist Hopewell Chin'ono tweeted, "My life is in danger after Zanu PF attacked me personally through their spokesperson Patrick Chinamasa. I am a trained journalist, if I have said something that is not true, legal remedies are there."

This was after Chinamasa had made direct reference to Chin'ono's investigative journalism, which had unearthed a US\$60m scandal that involved the First Family.

Chinamasa had earlier said "Zanu PF has noted with concern the systematic well-choreographed and sponsored attacks on the integrity of the First Family by unscrupulous characters such as Hopewell Chin'ono this time targeting the President's son (Collins)"

This was a build up to everything that later happened in July 2020. Chin'ono, other journalists and media houses, notably [Zimlive](#), [The ZimMorning Post](#) and [The Zimbabwe Independent](#) went on to expose the deep-seated corruption, nepotism and misplaced priorities in government.

The other major scandal unearthed in June was that President Mnangagwa's close ally Kuda Tagwirei, who has all along pocketed millions of dollars through dodgy state contracts, was to buy a fresh fleet of buses, and sell them to government at a 100 percent profit of US\$54 million. Government showed no remorse for splurging taxpayers' money on misplaced, corrupt deals. The country's abandoned health sector was in a state of collapse and the lockdown restrictions had a serious negative impact on the majority who rely on informal work. The rich were getting richer, the poor getting poorer.

AN ANGRY STATE: It was on the basis of the analysis in 2.1 that the month of July started with the State in a state of apprehension and this was made worse by the announcement of the July 31 demonstrations.

The excesses of those in government were being exposed and the populace was not amused as the same government was failing to show commitment to meet its welfare obligations.

The government felt under siege and cornered, like one caught with their hand in the cookie jar.

Yet all people were asking for was accountability, transparency and those in government to do what they swore to do, and that is to serve the people of Zimbabwe with due diligence.

Instead, the government escalated its attacks on the very same people it is supposed to serve. To the cornered government, the Constitution or human rights did not matter anymore and citizens were now supposed to live in perpetual fear.

In essence, the State, during the month of July, deployed more state security agents mainly in urban areas, under the guise of Covid-19 lockdown regulations enforcement.

Throughout the month, ruling party and government took turns to issue intimidatory messages, which manifested in the subsequent crackdown on citizens expressing themselves.



WHAT THEY SAID AHEAD OF JULY 31

**"This time, no! Use any means at your disposal to defend yourselves and we are saying this unambiguously."
Zanu PF Acting Spokesperson Patrick Chinamasa's message to Zanu PF supporters**

**"...the intended reckless 'demonstrations' of July 31, 2020 are banned...Anyone who disregards this warning and proceeds to join the planned insurrection to steal power will be met by the full wrath of the law,"
Home Affairs minister Kazembe Kazembe**

**"I want to warn the organisers of this ill-fated demonstration that our security services will be vigilant and on high alert to appropriately respond to their shenanigans. "
Zimbabwean President Mnangagwa'**

**"People in Zanu ... are also ready to revenge when they are provoked,"
Zanu PF youth leader Tendai Chirau**



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2.2 OVERDRIVE AS JULY 31 APPROACHED

With such a background, and as July 31 fast approached, and the State had so far arrested Ngarivhume and Chin’ono, Zimbabweans continued to speak out.

In a state of panic, the State went into an overdrive.

Reports of harassment, arrests, threats, intimidation and abductions increased.

Human rights defenders and opposition political actors reported incidents of being trailed by unregistered vehicles, others had their homes ransacked by people who were clearly linked to the State.

Some of the cases include the break into Amalgamated Rural Teachers’ Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) leader Obert Masaraure’s home at 1 am by armed men who harassed his wife. Masaraure, whose organisation endorsed the July 31 demonstration, and has been leading the teachers’ industrial action for better working conditions, was not at home.

Former Zanu PF youth leader and Front for Economic Emancipation Zimbabwe (FEEZ) leader Godfrey Tsenengamu revealed that his family was attacked in Bindura.

Job Sikhala of the MDC Alliance also claimed he was being trailed by security agents and he subsequently went into hiding.

During the third week of July, there was a suspicious break-in at the offices of the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR).

ZADHR has been at the forefront of calling out government’s failure to ensure the right to health, especially during this period of Covid-19.

Municipal police and Zimbabwe Republic Police officers brutally attacked ZPP staffer Tinashe Njodzi as he tried to rescue the organisation’s Media and Communications Officer, Tapiwa Zivira, a duly accredited journalist, who was filming an incident in Harare.

To sanitise the crackdown, the police, in a Rhodesian government style, published a list of ‘wanted persons’ and appealed to the public to turn them in, a few days before July 31. The list contained names of human rights defenders and opposition political leaders. The police followed up by making statements on state media and social media platforms, claiming those on the list were wanted for inciting violence.

This was clearly meant to intimidate the activists – who had been on the forefront of calling for the demonstrations- and leading the protests. Two days before July 31, the State went into full steam suppression of rights by restricting movement, especially into urban areas. Zimbabweans reported increased deployment of soldiers and the police and more than ever before citizens were in fear of their own government.

A TROUBLED NATION

The health delivery infrastructure is so dilapidated that “unborn children and mothers are dying daily.” In one painful case, seven out of eight babies suffered still births in one night at Harare Hospital

The World Food Program has projected that the number of Zimbabweans facing food insecurity could reach 8.6 million by the end of the year and that is estimated to be 60 percent of the population.

Inflation has remained high, at over 786 percent.

Zimbabwe is now considered one of the four most food-insecure countries in the world, alongside Yemen, Somalia and South Sudan. The IMF says Zimbabwe has the highest inflation rate in the world; and it estimates that the country’s economy will shrink 10.4% this year, following a 12.8% contraction last year.

At a time of diminishing GDP and skyrocketing inflation, the security forces have seized control of the economy and financial policymaking.



Armed soldiers patrol a street in Harare, Friday, July, 31, 2020. Zimbabwe’s capital, Harare, was deserted Friday, as security agents vigorously enforced the country’s lockdown amidst planned protests. Police and soldiers manned checkpoints and ordered people seeking to get into the city for work and other chores to return home. (AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi)



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2.3...THE EVE OF JULY 31

On the eve of July 31, ZPP received more and more cases of human rights violations. State security agents deployed throughout the country unleashed terror on citizens going about their business. The police and the army blocked people from entering virtually all city and town centres in the country. Rural service centres were not spared, and soldiers were more present in rural areas than in urban areas.

On the same day, ZPP reported that Tongai Mnangagwa was training Zanu PF youths 'for retaliation' against 31 July protesters in Harare South, where he is a Member of Parliament. [The link to the video is available here](#)

ZPP received more disturbing reports, images and videos of systematic harassment, assaults and abductions throughout the day in what was a clear attempt to stop people from exercising their right to protest. *The links to some of the images and videos are on the sidebar to the left.*

On the night of July 30, police in plain clothes besieged the home of journalist Mduzuzi Mathuthu and arrested together three nephews of Mathuthu. The other nephew, was seized from police custody by military intelligence and dumped severely tortured on August 2 after the High Court had ordered the state security agents to release him. In this disturbing video, [which can be viewed here](#), Muchechiwa shows the injuries inflicted on him by his assailants, who to this day, are yet to account for their actions.

Several other activists were abducted on the night of July 30, and by the morning of July 31, with the State security agents out in full force, it was clear the government was prepared to do anything to stop any action.

Police officers and soldiers, armed with guns, sjamboks and all forms of ammunition, were stationed at major streets corners, intersections and junctions in rural and urban Zimbabwe.

The State was, once again, prepared to devour its own children for simply asking for food and an end to corruption.



VIDEO:

[Soldier whips civilians near Harare CBD, July 30, 2020](#)



VIDEO:

[Police brutalise motorists, July 30, 2020](#)



VIDEO:

[People being bundled into an army truck to God knows where](#)



Armed soldiers patrol a street in Harare, Friday, July, 31, 2020. Pic by Shepherd Tozvireva, The Standard

[IMAGES: SOLDIERS PATROLLING THE STREETS OF GWERU, JULY 30, 2020](#)



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2.4 TERROR ON JULY 31



Zimbabwean Booker nominated novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga, centre, and a colleague Julie Barnes hold placards as they are arrested on July 31, 2020 in Harare. (ZINYANGE)

On the morning of July 31, State security agents were still mounting blockades to all major shopping centres and metropolis.

The State was in a dilemma. After announcing that Zimbabweans were free to go about their business as there was no demonstration, government still did not want to see people gathering, even for daily business.

Again, the same government did not want a total shutdown as in itself, it was a form of protest.

In the end, the day turned out into a shutdown that was powered and engineered by the state itself.

Movement was strictly restricted. Even rural centres failed to open for business.

With the State having conducted the first stage of thwarting the demonstration by targeting perceived organisers, focus was now on those who attempted to demonstrate.

In addition to the numerous cases of brutality, over 60 people were arrested by the end of the day on July 31. These include award winning author Tsitsi Dangarembga, MDC Alliance spokesperson Fadzayi Mahere, student Panashe Sivindani, who went missing before being found at a police station in Bulawayo, Disability Amalgamated Community Trust (DACT) activist, Henry Chivhanga.

But even those who did not protest were caught up and ZPP recorded worryingly gruesome acts of assault on citizens across the country. Once again, the poor were the target, and suffered most at the hands of the State that has continued to wantonly violate human rights

Essentially, July 31 became the climax of human rights violations during the month of July as the State had built up to this by capacitating the State security agents partly under the guise of enforcing the lockdown and maintaining law and order.

Post July 31, it is clear that the State security apparatus is stronger, and as witnessed, has continued to use all means, including unlawful methods, to crush dissent. Meanwhile the economy continues to sink, and the generality of Zimbabweans are sliding into further poverty.

The State has indicated, and is implementing its promise to protect itself by crushing on the same people it is supposed to serve.

The question still remains, who will protect the people?



VIDEO:

[A soldier and a police officer brutalise a woman in Highfields, Harare, July 31, 2020](#)



VIDEO:

[Interview with a victim of July 31 State Security violence against civilians](#)



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I wish to thank everyone who tweeted, made calls and prayed for Tawanda's safe return. He was tortured in unspeakable terms, but he remains resolute. He's now getting the medical attention he so badly needs. He's a strong lad and will pull through. We demand justice! – *Journalist Mduduzi Mathuthu*

"Friends, here is a principle. If you want your suffering to end, you have to act. Action comes from hope. This the principle of faith and action,"

Award-winning author
Tsitsi Dangarembga

3.0 VIOLATED, BUT THEY SPEAK OUT

This month, ZPP features accounts by some of the individuals who have suffered human rights violations.

GUNS & SJAMBOKS FOR PEACEFULLY PROTESTING

An account by Fadzai Mahere, MDC A spokesperson: We had written placards that read "No Violence," "I am protesting peacefully," "Babies' Lives Matter," "Covid Kills, So does corruption," "FreeZimbabwe," "I have a dream," and "EndHunger". When we were making these placards, we joked that each placard represented each person's little prayer or wish for Zimbabwe. It was a gloriously sunny, blue-skied day but the air was thick and ominous...

Moments after we left the house, a vehicle without a number plate was following us and taking pictures. We continued walking. Courage does not mean you're not afraid. It means that you face your fears and choose to act in spite of them.

..We continued up a main road, peaceful and socially-distanced. We continued chatting. Firm in the conviction that we were innocent and had nothing to hide or run away from, we went to a coffee shop at a shopping centre. They followed us there too.

We observed from a distance that the persons in plainclothes were now changing into police uniforms. We telephoned David Drury who arrived with Emma Drury. As they arrived, riot police had flooded the shopping centre, armed with AK rifles. This scene was unfamiliar in this part of town. We remained seated until they started pointing at me "uyo, uyo." They charged at us. I asked why and what the charge could possibly be if we were under any sort of arrest. "Inciting public violence!" the officer yelled as another leapt over the barricaded entrance to the coffee shop.

"What are you doing? This is ridiculous. Why do you find it necessary to jump over the entrance?" Mr Drury asked the police in an attempt to de-escalate their disproportionate advance towards us. "We want to see the placards in your car."

The placard at the top when they inspected the car was the one that read, "No Violence" followed by the one that said "I am protesting peacefully."

Of course, they bundled all 7 of us up into the back of a police truck and charged us with inciting public violence anyway. We lay and sat on top of each other as we drove through a menacingly silent CBD to the Harare Central Police Station. When it comes to enforcing repression, all semblance of wanting to respect Covid 19 is thrown out the window. (This is an excerpt that details the moment up to the arrest. [The full account is here](#))

BRUTALISED FOR DOING MY WORK

A Narration by Tapiwa Zivira, ZPP Media and Communications Officer: While filming an incident at the flyover on Lytton Rd this morning (July 17, 2020), about six municipal police officers and two ZRP officers ran towards me asking me why I was filming.

They sounded so angry and threatening.

I didn't run, but produced my media accreditation card and continued to insist that I was a duly accredited media practitioner.

They didn't hear any of that and started punching me with fists an open palms, dragging me all over the place.

One of them had already wrestled my phone from my hand.

In no time, I was dragged into the awaiting municipal vehicle, together with an arrested truck driver I later learnt that the truck driver was being chased by municipal police officers, and one of them jumped onto the truck, but fell onto the ground and died.

In the truck were two ZRP officers and about six municipal police officers.

I asked them why they were so angry, savage and unprofessional.

They responded by heckling me and threatening me. I really wanted to understand the source of their anger.

I kept insisting that what they had done was unlawful and that I was going to take steps to seek recourse. As we got into the CBD, the municipal officers dropped off one by one.

By the time we got to Harare Central Police Station, the only people in the vehicle were the two ZRP officers and three municipal police officers.

The ZRP officers then asked me to get off the vehicle and here they began apologising for what they had done to me.

Everyone else had disappeared.

I told them I would lodge a complaint before leaving the station. No one was prepared to account for their actions. This is Zimbabwe, where impunity reigns.



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4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



With state security agents having contributed to over 80 percent of human rights violations, and having been the major perpetrators since the month of March, it is clear that Zimbabwe is going down the path of full-scale repression and more and more, as agreed to by the general population, democratic space is closing up and this requires serious introspection by those in government. They need to go to the drawing board, and be honest with each other on where they are getting it wrong, and only that is the beginning of the path to doing the right thing. Having done that, the following questions are what the government needs to ask itself and answer:

- Should the economy of Zimbabwe continue on a path to meltdown while everyone watches? No, government can do the right thing and prioritise an all-inclusive approach that will ensure all stakeholders contribute to the decision on economic policies and pronouncements.
- The economy does not work in isolation, and so government should ensure that it goes back to constitutionalism, and ensure that every Zimbabwean enjoys their rights as enshrined in the supreme law. It is only with the enjoyment of rights that Zimbabweans can meaningfully and actively contribute to the prosperity of the country. Abused citizens can only remain traumatized and despondent.
- Government should listen to the people's concerns, especially regarding corruption. July 31 was a momentous point of expression for Zimbabweans. They abhor corruption and all they want is transparency and accountability, and surely it will not take much for government to do that. If at all, it is the easy way, and it is the only win-win situation available. Zimbabweans need that and demand that. In any case corruption is making the majority suffer as service delivery to meet their socio economic needs is non-existent.
- State brutality on citizens must END! State security agents have a mandate to protect citizens without discrimination, and citizens deserve to feel safe around state security agents. Who will protect the citizens if the state security agents do not?

AN APPEAL TO SADC & AU: ZPP joins the growing calls for the intervention of SADC and the AU to help Zimbabwe get out of the deteriorating human rights situation.

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.