

**MONTHLY
MONITORING
REPORT**

FEBRUARY
2020



**ZIMBABWE
PEACE
PROJECT**



“Some animals are more equal than others”

Executive Summary

The month of February recorded violations of civil, political, social and economic rights totalling 195 violations with Mashonaland Central recording the highest number of violations at 53, followed by Harare at 33. Of the violations recorded 54.3% were cases of harassment and intimidation targeting citizens. The police recorded the highest number of perpetrators (54.8%) followed by the Zanu PF at 22.9%, unknown affiliation 9.3%, MDC 6.1% and municipal police 4%. ZPP continues to note a disturbing trend of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) occupying the highest percentage of perpetrators of human rights violations. There was a significant drop in cases involving the Machete wielding gangs. This can be attributed to the response by the police in dealing with the gangs. They contributed 1.5% of the perpetrators in the month under review down from 22.2% recorded in January.

The Ministry of Finance proposed the re-introduction of subsidised garrison shops to cushion members of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) which triggered an outcry among citizens who are enduring economic hardships. This was viewed as preferential treatment of some civil servants.

In his monetary policy statement, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) governor Dr John Mangudya assured the nation that the de-dollarisation process was on course and would take five years to be completed. This was however not in tandem with the licensing of seven Zuva fuel service stations to trade in United States Dollars (USD); a move that points to re-dollarization.

A spontaneous protest by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Provincial Youth Assembly members was recorded in Harare Central Business District (CBD) on 19 February. The youths were violently dispersed by anti-riot police who fired teargas. In Chitungwiza clashes between the police and MDC youths were reported in St Marys, Zengeza 2 shopping centre and at Huruyadzo business centre on 29 February resulting in some citizens sustaining serious injuries. In Masvingo there were skirmishes between police and MDC supporters who had gathered at the Masvingo High Court in solidarity with the MDC Deputy National Chairperson Job Sikhala. He was acquitted of charges of subverting a constitutional government.

Introduction

The adage, “*it never rains but pours*” plays out in the lives of Zimbabweans on a daily basis. The more things change, the more they remain the same and the more the lives of citizens become tougher. The beginning of a new year is ideally supposed to give citizens a glimmer of hope but not so for Zimbabwe where nothing seems to be working. Natural disasters added agony to the already hard pressed citizenry with areas such as Binga and Luveve (Bulawayo) experiencing floods and flash floods respectively. According to an International Organisation for Migration (IOM) report ([IOM Situation report](#)), 215 households were affected by floods in Binga and 33 of these completely destroyed. Infrastructure that includes roads and school buildings were destroyed thereby adding hardships to a district that is already ill equipped and under developed (read [Section 56: A case of Binga](#)). It is unfortunate that a bridge that links the Chimanimani East community to Biriiri Hospital was destroyed by heavy rains on 12 February. The bridge had initially been swept away by Cyclone Idai in March 2019 and repaired. Communities in Zimbabwe seem to be facing one calamity after another.

The economy did not show any sign of improvement, if anything, the situation worsened. The parallel market rate of the USD against the local currency, ZWL reached a high of 1:30 at the end of February; triggering price increases with the price of bread increasing from ZWL18.50 to ZWL 21. Electricity tariffs also increased from ZWL157 to ZWL186 for the first 200units. These increases are not being backed by corresponding salary adjustments for workers and will only serve to strain citizens even further.

The drought continued to be felt across the country in both rural and urban areas. Queues of citizens seeking to purchase mealie meal continued, with the government announcing it would soon adopt a coupon system to ensure that the vulnerable access subsidised mealie meal ([video of citizens queuing for mealie meal](#)). The Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, Ms Monica Mutsvangwa announced that a data base compilation process was at an advanced stage. The questions among citizens include how an individual gets registered on the database and whether or not all deserving citizens, even those not affiliated to the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (Zanu PF) will benefit from the subsidy.

The Monetary Policy Statement announced by the RBZ ([watch video](#)) revealed that 50% of total bank deposits are tied up to about 200 entities in a country of more than 13 million people. This could explain the root of the exchange rate manipulation as money is held by just a few. The statement also revealed that the diaspora is still sending remittances with plus or minus USD 635 million coming through each year; an indication of how Zimbabwean families are relying on those abroad for sustenance. With such a significant contribution to the national fiscus, enjoyment of the right to vote by those in the diaspora would only be fair; which is not the case under the current Zimbabwean voting system. The RBZ governor also alluded to the fact that the country is on track in its de-dollarisation efforts and would require five years to fully de-dollarise. This however is not in sync with the action of the RBZ who licenced seven Zuva fuel service stations to sell fuel in USD.

The reintroduction of subsidised garrison shops¹ for the uniformed forces, with the rest of the citizenry expected to make do with the expensive goods in shops comes across as an effort by the government to appease the military power broker. In order to fund these shops, civil servants will have a 2,5% deduction from their salaries for the servicing of a Government Employees Mutual Savings (GEMS) fund. The civil servants have however been given an option to opt out of the fund.

There were fewer incidences of human rights violations by the machete wielding gangs after the security sector conducted operations to deal with the menace. In Penhalonga, Manicaland province, security agents conducted an operation termed “chikorokoza chapera” (the end of artisanal mining) which however resulted in some innocent citizens being caught in the melee. The machete gangs are still terrorising communities. In Chakari, smaller but cunning terror groups have sprouted under the name “zvikuturu” (puppies) and they target women and vendors. In Kwekwe there have been reports that rival gangs sometimes clash at Kwekwe Hospital thereby causing panic, fear and despondency among staff and patients. In Chinhoyi a woman was murdered by her boyfriend who is a member of a machete wielding gang.

On 19 February, the MDC youths embarked on a spontaneous protest in Harare’s CBD against the deteriorating economy and were violently dispersed by the anti-riot police. Street battles were reported and civilians who were not involved in the protest were also affected. On 29 February there were clashes between anti-riot police and MDC youths in Chitungwiza. Zanu PF youths had threatened to demonstrate at the MDC Deputy National Chairperson's house in St Marys resulting in the MDC mobilising youths to counter the move.



The clashes resulted in some civilians getting injured. Roads were barricaded with stones and tyres were burnt. The police responded by throwing teargas canisters and indiscriminately assaulting citizens. A total of 13 people were arrested in connection with the violence. The Zimbabwe Republic Police displayed heavy handedness in dealing with these incidences. Two teargas canisters were thrown into a house in Manyame resulting in near suffocation of one of the occupants.

Photo 1: A Chitungwiza resident holding a canister that had been thrown into their house ©ZPP

The freedom to peaceful assembly and association remained a dream for citizens, particularly MDC supporters as police banned some of the party’s planned rallies. On 21 February, the police banned

¹ These are shops with subsidised goods and are located in army barracks

the MDC Women's Assembly rally slated for Harare's Warren Park D Suburb at Pfukwa shops but earlier during the month, the First Lady Auxillia Mnangagwa convened a mini rally in Mbare which was escorted by the police.

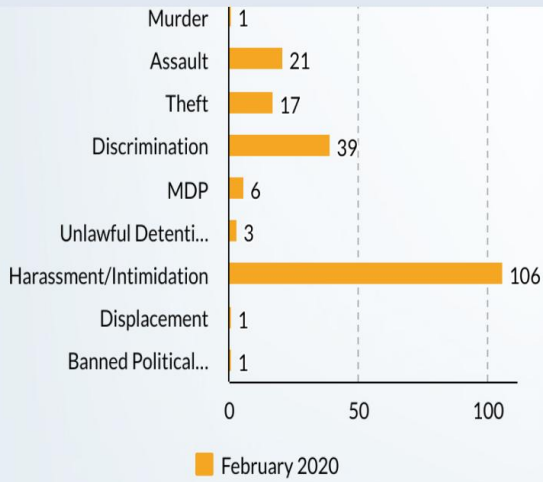
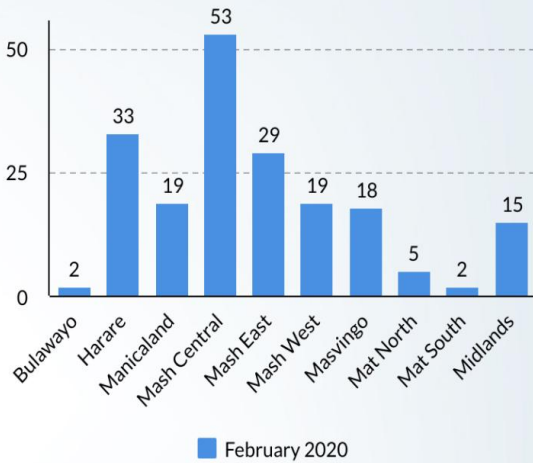
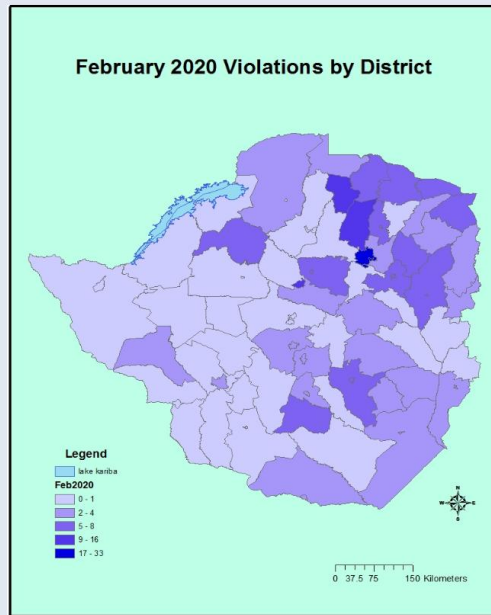
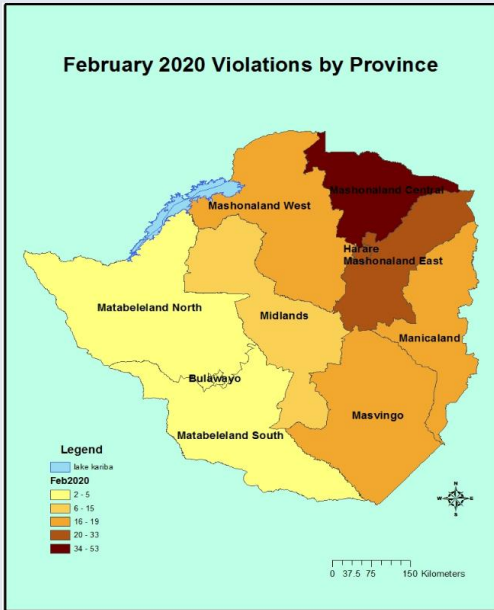
Reports of some traditional leaders who continued to violate provisions of Chapter 15 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe that prohibits them from getting involved in partisan politics were noted. Such behaviour compromises the administration of their duties which require that they govern in a non-partisan manner.

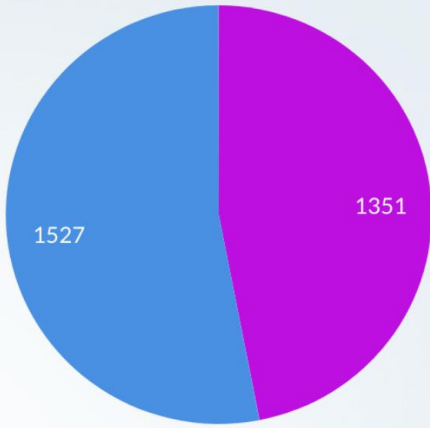
Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) recorded a total of 195 violations up from 185 in January. Food and other aid related violations remained high with a total of 38 such cases being recorded. The aid was largely from the Department of Social Welfare. Mashonaland Central province recorded the highest number of violations at 53, followed by Harare with 33.

Human Rights Violations Monthly Dashboard

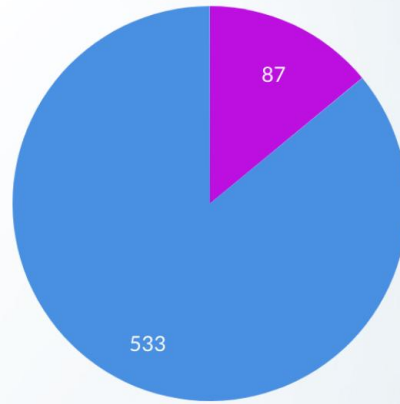
Zimbabwe Peace Project

Report time frame: February, 2020

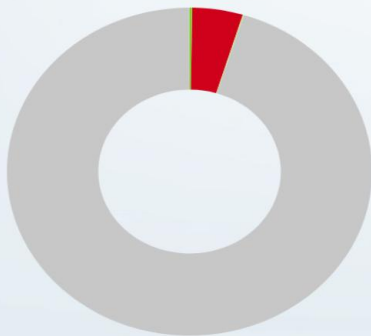




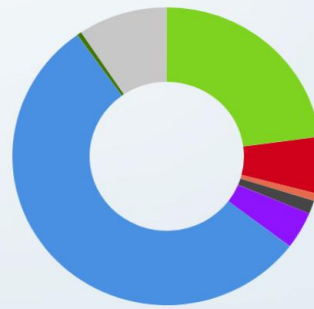
Gender of February Victims



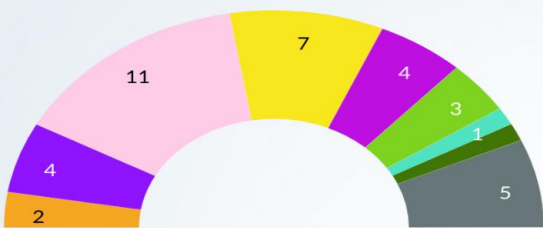
Gender of February Perpetrators



February Victims Affiliations



February Perpetrators Affiliations



February Food & Other Aid Violations



February Intra Party Violence

Overall Analysis

The reintroduction of subsidised **garrison shops** in an environment where the majority of citizens are finding it difficult to fend for themselves and their families is disturbing. The preferential treatment of the army indicates that some animals are more equal than others. Such decisions breed bitterness, anger and divisions in an already polarised society. With the human rights abuses that citizens have gone through at the hands of the army hardly dealt with, this is adding insult to injury as the perpetrator is rewarded and well taken care of while citizens have to absorb all shocks of the poorly performing economy. Garrison shops could be acceptable in an economy where the general citizenry is living comfortably and do not struggle to make ends meet. Although the 2.5% GEMS deduction has been said to be optional, it cripples civil servants who are already hard pressed by the socio-economic situation in the country. This move by the Finance Ministry comes at a time when the health delivery system in the country is still in shambles and reason dictates that priority would be on the resuscitation of such a crucial service especially in the face of the risk of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The issue of misplaced priorities is something that the government needs to look into. In 2019, Minister of Finance, Mthuli Ncube was on record proposing the launch of a space satellite when the economy was in a dire state; with at least 7.7 million people facing starvation². If Zimbabwe is to achieve national cohesion, such divisive decisions should be avoided.

The food shortages which have largely been attributed to the ongoing drought and economic hardships continue to make citizens dependant on food aid. It is unfortunate that this aid is manipulated despite access to food being a right that is provided for in Section 77 of the Constitution: in addition to equality and non-discrimination in Section 56 of the same Constitution. In the month of February ZPP documented 38 food and other aid discrimination violations where some citizens were denied aid because of their political or perceived political affiliation. Cases of traditional leaders participating in partisan and nepotistic food aid distribution processes continued to occur despite a directive from the Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare for them to refrain from aid distribution.³ In some recorded cases beneficiaries were forced to chant Zanu PF slogans; which is against the principles of food aid distribution. It is however important to note that in some cases villagers resisted such intimidation tactics.



On 18 February a case of assault was reported in Chikomba East at Sengwe Township in Ward 27 where Zanu PF Coordinator Adonis Mandizha was assaulted by an MDC activist Shepard Manyame. A scuffle between the two ensued when villagers were waiting to receive food aid which had been mobilized by their Legislator, Honourable Sekai Nzenza. Just before the distribution Mandizha began to force villagers to chant Zanu PF slogans and this did not go down well with Manyame resulting in a tussle between the two. Mandizha suffered a broken nose, bled profusely and was rushed to Pokoteke clinic for medical assistance.

² <https://www.wfp.org/countries/zimbabwe>

³ <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2019/11/stop-politicising-food-aid-minister/>

On 8 February Zanu PF activists in Murewa North violated villagers' political rights at Ruware Magaba Shopping Centre Ward 30. During a food aid distribution exercise Zanu PF Ward Chairperson, Lovemore Mhuteyebani and former Zanu PF Councillor Sheppard Femai instructed beneficiaries to produce their Zanu PF membership cards. The request came after the two activists who were in charge of the distribution demanded that beneficiaries prove that they supported Zanu PF. They then harassed and intimidated villagers and took turns to demean MDC activists.

In communities such as Nhlanguano village in Tsholotsho South villagers were informed that the new mealie-meal coupon scheme is meant for Zanu PF members only. Jabulisa Mnkandla, a Zanu PF activist informed the community that opposition members who would want maize or mealie-meal coupons should first register with Zanu PF; and that without a Zanu PF card one would not benefit. Opposition supporters were warned and directed to either join the party or perish. ZPP urges the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services to ensure the correct information on the mealie meal coupons is disseminated across the county to avoid manipulation of information by some sectors of the country.

The continued discrimination in aid distribution further divides communities and is breeding ground for animosity and violent conflict. Food must never be used as a weapon against political opponents. The Department of Social Welfare must seriously look into ways of reducing incidences of politicisation of food aid in order to ensure that all deserving beneficiaries receive their allocation of aid.

On 9 February a villager was denied presidential inputs in Mudzi North in Musau Village Ward 17 under Chief Mukota. Zanu PF Ward 17 Chairperson, Makarutse denied the villager his inputs allocation because he had attended a funeral service for an MDC activist. He was then informed that he would not receive Presidential inputs and any other government aid in future as he was accused of singing MDC songs during the funeral and associating with MDC activists in a Zanu PF territory.

On 8 February, Chief Kasekete of Muzarabani South delivered a speech in favour of Zanu PF at Hoya Primary School in ward 17. The chief, ordered the village council of elders to call for an urgent developmental meeting. Villagers were forced to attend the meeting by village heads and Zanu PF leadership. Reports indicate that the agenda of the meeting changed when people had gathered. The chief, in his address praised President Mnangagwa and Zanu PF. He mocked the MDC, denouncing its President, Advocate Nelson Chamisa. He also threatened to deal with all opposition aspiring candidates citing that Muzarabani was a no go area for the MDC. MDC ward 17 and 18 Shadow Councillors were advised to leave MDC for Zanu PF to guarantee their safety. In addition, he threatened to introduce tough measures to deal with all village heads that support MDC and allow NGOs to hold meetings in their villages.

Historically, **traditional leaders** in their role as custodians of culture and tradition were highly respected individuals at the centre of instilling values of love, unity and peace within their areas of jurisdiction. The narrative has however since shifted with the manipulation of traditional leaders by politicians. Although the Zimbabwe Constitution clearly stipulates in Section 281 (2) that traditional leaders must not be involved in partisan politics, ZPP continuously receives reports where certain traditional leaders openly declare their allegiance to the ruling party and act in a partisan manner. Reports of certain traditional leaders not being transparent in how they handle levies

that are paid to them by villagers have been received. For instance, villagers in ward 25 in Makoni West Constituency were disgruntled by the way the headman of the area who is also a Zanu PF activist, Moses Zenda, failed to produce receipts for council levies which he had been collecting from his subjects for the past two years. A villager indicated that she was yet to get the receipts for the levies she had been paying and if she had money for transport she could have gone to Rusape to the District Administrator's Office to report the matter. Another villager echoed the same concerns of lack of transparency by the traditional leadership in the area which was now causing mistrust of the traditional leadership by citizens. When traditional leaders act in a partisan and non-transparent way they are compromised and lose the trust and respect of citizens. This erodes their ability to be peace makers particularly at a time when Zimbabwe requires measures to bring people together.

The demonstration by MDC youths in Harare's CBD and the Chitungwiza clashes are pointers to the agitation that is within the citizenry, particularly the youth. If government does not urgently address the bread and butter issues that citizens are grappling with, the country is likely to experience more pockets of such protests as citizens become more impatient. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) has indicated they are consulting their membership on possible actions meant to influence the government to accede to workers' demand for a living wage⁴. The MDC has also threatened mass protests across the country. Measures need to be taken to address the concerns of citizens. Already certain reports received by ZPP indicate that citizens in some areas no longer sit back and watch their rights being violated. In an incident received from Marondera Central, near Marondera bus terminus Frank Katsvairo, a state agent threatened and intimidated a vendor after he refused to pay a bribe for him to freely go about his vending. A brawl then broke out after Katsvairo

⁴ <https://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zctu-plots-living-wage-protests/>

tried to man handle the victim. Other vendors who witnessed the scuffle then intervened and assaulted Katsvairo who was then rushed to Marondera Hospital and has since left for Botswana for medical assistance. In a related case on 4 February villagers in Goromonzi North convened at Chinyika Primary School Ward 4 to receive drought relief aid, comprising of lentils, cooking oil and maize grain. A Zanu PF youth, Obey Murehwa whose father is a war veteran and a Zanu PF activist stole a box of cooking oil during the distribution. This angered other beneficiaries who then took the law into their hands and assaulted him with open fists.

Police's heavy handedness when dealing with citizens is a cause for concern. They indiscriminately assaulted citizens including those that were going about their business in Chitungwiza on 29 February. They conducted door to door operations assaulting citizens. This behaviour by the police is contrary to the provisions of the Constitution in Sections 51 and 52 which guarantee citizens the right to human dignity and personal security. In terms of Section 219 of the Constitution, the police have a duty to protect and secure the lives and property of citizens and uphold the Constitution of Zimbabwe. It is unfortunate that the law enforcement mechanisms exercised by the police have not been aligned with the mandate of the Police Service in Zimbabwe. There is a pressing and urgent need for the police to implement the recommendations of the Motlanthe Commission of Inquiry among them to reform particularly on crowd control mechanisms.

What to look out for...



1. The Constitutional Amendment (No.2) Bill which was Gazetted on 31 December 2019 and on 17 January 2020 has left Zimbabwean citizens with mixed reactions. A total of 27 amendments are being proposed. An analysis of the Bill can be accessed on the following link: <http://www.veritaszim.net/node/3855>. Citizens should look out for the publication of dates and venues for the Parliamentary public hearings on the Bill.

2. President Emmerson Mnangagwa announced on the 8th of February 2020 that the Independent Complaints Mechanism Bill will be enacted before the end of the year. The Bill is in accordance with Section 210 of the Constitution and it creates an independent and effective complaints mechanism for receiving and investigating complaints from members of the public about the misconduct by the members of the security

services. This development if implemented will ensure that victims have a mechanism to hold the State accountable for the various atrocities that are perpetrated by the security agents.

3. Protests are likely to persist as there are no clear steps being taken to resolve the socio-economic and political crises. The police's violent response to protests is likely to continue as history undoubtedly keeps on repeating itself in this context.

ABOUT ZPP

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 monitors, who at full complement stand at 420, constitute the core pool of volunteers, supported by four Regional Coordinators. The Regional Coordinators relate with the national office headed by the National Director and programme

In light of what Zimbabwe is experiencing, **ZPP calls for:**

- Full implementation of the Motlanthe Commission of Inquiry recommendations particularly on police's crowd control mechanisms.
- The Department of Social Welfare to adhere to the international standards on food and other aid distribution.
- The Ministry of Local Government should ensure that traditional leaders abide by the provisions of the Constitution.
- The government should address the socio- economic challenges that citizens are facing in a holistic manner that does not divide citizens and give a sense that some citizens are getting preferential treatment.