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REPORT

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ZIMBABWE
PEACE
PROJECT

One Year On: Shattered Hopes and Promises

August 26 marked the anniversary of President Emmerson Mnangagwa's inauguration into office. Zimbabweans had very high hopes for his administration, buttressed by his election promises that living conditions for many will improve to much better levels than those experienced during President Robert Mugabe's 38 year rule. One year on and Zimbabweans have found themselves in a worse situation than before.

August has particularly been characterised by a drastic upsurge in human rights violations largely brought on by the call for demonstrations by Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leadership in some of the major cities of the country. The period leading up to the planned demonstrations was characterised by a sharp increase of violations such as intimidation, abductions, torture and assault of mostly MDC, civil society activists and artists.

Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) has, over the past few months, reiterated the need for progressive and open dialogue by leading political and other actors as well as all segments of society in a bid to avoid conflict. Challenging living conditions such as the increasingly difficult economic conditions, severe power cuts, skyrocketing prices of basic commodities were noted as triggers likely to lead to widespread clashes. Sadly, this has come to pass and there are strong indications that this volatility will increase going forward. On the other hand the state has countered criticism with persecution of perceived critics.

This was particularly apparent in the month of August. MDC called for demonstrations in Harare (August 16), Bulawayo (August 18) Gweru and Mutare on August 19 and 20 respectively. Days leading up to the demonstrations were characterised by a sharp increase in abductions, torture and assaults. The state prohibited demonstrations planned for Harare through an order on the 15th of August, asserting that there were indications that the planned demonstrations would be violent. MDC reacted by filing an urgent chamber application seeking to quash the ban, but Justice Joseph Musakwa ruled against them stating that they should have lodged their appeal at the Magistrate's Court. The citizens who had responded to the call for a demonstration in Harare waited patiently for the High Court to deliver its decision on the matter. When the ruling of the court eventually filtered, police descended heavily on the protesters most of whom were still seating waiting for the way forward. Several protesters were injured while many more were arrested when riot police violently dispersed them. Most of those arrested have been denied bail since their detention.

The demonstration calls also triggered the police to mount road blocks that are a reminder of the situation prior to November 2017 during former president Robert Mugabe's era. For several weeks travelers have been harassed at check points. They have been subjected to searches and those without Identification documents have been detained. The situation with the police and the upsurge in abductions, torture and assaults are a reminder of how promises made in the aftermath of November 2017 and the run up to the July 30 elections have all become a pipe dream.

Depressed economic conditions continue unabated. Minister of Finance and Economic Development Mthulisi Ncube announced his Mid-Term Budget Review on the 1st of August which sadly did not bring much joy for most Zimbabweans. He announced that the economy is forecasted to contract, reviewed upwards the fuel import tax from 16-40% for diesel and 19-45% for petrol, increased toll gate fees, route authority and operators' license fees among other issues. These price reviews will add a further squeeze on Zimbabweans, the majority of whom have not received salary increments in a long time, and this has particularly riled civil servants and other workers in the private sector.

This was notable when Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) organised a demonstration dubbed "Pay Day Funeral" at the Ministry of Finance Offices to protest the meagre salaries that they earn. The group intended to hand over a petition to the Ministry to express their grievances but were forcefully removed from the premises and charged with 'Criminal Nuisance'.

19¹ people were abducted during the month of August while from its own monitors ZPP had picked 14 abductions, a sharp increase from the total of four such violations which were recorded during the months of March to July 2019. Harare Metropolitan Province recorded the highest number of abductions and torture with 9 violations followed by Bulawayo with 4 and 1 in Midlands.

In Bulawayo tensions were high due to the planned MDC demonstrations which failed to take off after police issued a prohibition order. The city also faced a potentially volatile situation when Chief Felix Nhlanhlayamangwe Ndiweni was convicted and sentenced to 18 months in Khami Prison on charges of destruction of property of one of his subjects. Police were heavily deployed in the city in anticipation of protests, with helicopters continuously hovering over the city.

¹ Recorded by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum -a network of human rights organisations to which ZPP is a member, whose mandate is to keep an eye on the human rights situation

Case File Highlights

Abductions, torture and assaults surged in the month to unprecedented levels since January. These violations were largely targeted at mainly MDC party members, human rights activists and even comedians by alleged state security agents. One case that was widely reported is that of Tatenda Mombeyarara, a Coordinator with Citizens Manifesto, who was abducted on 13 August and severely assaulted then left for dead in a bushy area in Hatfield. Mombeyarara was tortured while being interrogated about a workshop he attended in Maldives in early May 2019. He sustained a broken leg, fractured hand and bruises, while a caustic liquid was poured on him. Mombeyarara was one of the seven Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) who were arrested in May for attending a workshop organised by the Centre for Applied Non-Violent Action and Strategies (CANVAS) in Maldives.

MDC activists were largely targeted for organising demonstrations in the month of August. In one incident MDC Ward 1 Chairperson of Chitungwiza St. Mary's Constituency Gerald Fokisa's home was besieged by unknown assailants who attempted to abduct him on 14 August. The assailants broke the front door and destroyed a side window in an attempt to abduct Fokisa but eventually failed. So widespread have been the abductions and assaults that anyone critical of government risks being in the dragnet. Comedian Samantha Kureya, popularly known as 'Gonyeti' was abducted from her home in Mufakose on 21 August. Kureya was abducted at night by assailants who assaulted, tortured and dumped her in Crowborough, Kuwadzana. Her colleague, Sharon Chideu (aka Maggi) narrowly escaped abduction as she had been warned to move to safety. Chideu has also received death threats for her work.

Abductions had another dimension, where ZPP received reports that after police dispersed protestors in Harare on 16 August, a group of unidentified individuals abducted and took them to Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (Zanu PF) offices. A 32-year-old man was abducted from Mbuya Nehanda Street at around midday, as well as a couple who were going about their business in the city. The victims were taken to Zanu PF offices where, together with about a dozen other citizens, were beaten using logs, baton sticks, open hands and fists. Some victims were allegedly given knives and catapults before being handed over to the police at Harare Central Police Station and accused of demonstrating against government.

Intimidation was also a notable violation closely linked to abductions, torture and assaults which occurred during the course of the month. Citizens were largely intimidated in order to deter them from participating in MDC demonstrations. On 16 August at Murewa South Wuyu Wuyu Business Centre, Zanu PF Ward 18 Councillor Gilbert Dandahwa forced villagers to convene at the business centre. Dandahwa threatened villagers from the Ward with eviction if they participated in MDC- called demonstrations. Villagers were warned to desist from being used as agents to revolt against a constitutionally elected government. On the same day in Mazowe Central Ward 8 at Nzvimbo growth point, two MDC youths were denied access to a Zupco bus. Zanu PF supporters led by Vongai Mucheruzza forcibly removed them from on-board the bus accusing them of trying to go to Harare to participate in demonstrations.

An intimidation tactic was also evident when marching soldiers were noted in Gweru and Masvingo. This show of force was done during the period of planned protests, possibly to deter people from participating.

August is perennially a problematic month as it is the time when people are coerced into paying funds for commemoration of Heroes Day. ZPP received reports of people being forced to contribute funds for Heroes Celebrations in Mashonaland Central, Guruve South (Chiyangwa Village Ward 11) and Mbire district. Some government officials have also been using their seniority to force subordinates into contributing funds for the commemorations. In Zaka Ward 8, District Registrar Cuthbert Mataruse forced his 12 subordinates to pay ZWL\$10 each, stating that those who failed to comply would be turned away from work.

Victimisation has been recorded by ZPP as people are increasingly intolerant of dissent and in some instances easily get triggered into violence. This is even evident where ruling party members who have expressed reservations over some government actions have been targeted and victimised by fellow party members. On 15 August during a funeral wake of a Zanu PF activist in Chegutu West near Pfupajena Township in Ward 9, a fight broke out between two Zanu PF supporters. One supporter complained about the grinding economic challenges and that President Emmerson Mnangagwa has failed to stabilise the economy, however another Zanu PF activist then interjected and said, *‘Bamudiki nyaya dzamuri kutaura monogona kuzodzimirira here? Because kutaura kwenyu kuchaita kuti tikurovei’* (Can you stand by what you are saying, because we will beat you up for such utterances). The supporter stood his ground resulting in the two men shoving each other before others intervened to stop the conflict.

In Chakari at Patch-way Business Centre, Zanu PF youths fought due to a misunderstanding over prevailing economic woes and MDC demonstrations. Three Zanu PF activists were listening to Studio 7 when they disagreed on the brutality the police used to crush the MDC demonstration. One supporter was assaulted by two others after he said government had money to contain demonstrations but was failing to provide basic services to its people.

In Nyanga North, the Manicaland Provincial Committee member, Moses Gutu was attacked at his farm by suspected fellow party members. This attack came after the outspoken Zanu PF member suggested that the party should redistribute farms and give those who had passion for farming. Gutu also called for accountability in government funded agriculture projects including Command Agriculture where inputs are reportedly misappropriated. Gutu, his wife and 14 year old son were taken to Nyanga District Hospital for treatment of injuries sustained during the attack.

The persecution and victimisation has reached concerning levels considering that if one makes a fair criticism or observation they will be penalised for their expressions. Chivi South Legislator, Hon. Killer Zivhu has been recommended for expulsion by the ruling party for ‘treacherous behaviour’. This was after he appealed to First Lady Auxillia Mnangagwa and Advocate Nelson Chamisa’s wife Sithokozile Chamisa, to urge their husbands to put their differences aside and dialogue to find common ground in order to improve living conditions of Zimbabweans.

There is an increasingly polarised environment in Zimbabwe. As the country grapples with many challenges, there is an increased temperature of intolerance and anger among citizens. In one disheartening incident in Mbire Ward 7, an MDC activist was forced to pay a fine for burying his brother, who was also an MDC supporter, under Chief Chitsungo’s jurisdiction. On 1 August, Chief Chitsungo, Village Head Madyiripanze and Kraal Head Makuwirere compelled the resident to surrender a cow as punishment for burying his brother without seeking approval. They reportedly told him that he failed to advise the Chief and his court that he was burying a traitor under their jurisdiction.

During a three day Young Women’s Forum, a Civil Society Organisation, engagement meeting held in Masvingo town at the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU) Hall, politically motivated squabbles dominated the meeting leading to its postponement. During the opening session, an MDC member narrated the torture she had gone through, perpetrated by Zanu PF members. One Zanu PF supporter interjected saying

that it was not necessary to share her story, then all hell broke loose as supporters from both political parties began hurling insults at each other. The chaotic scenes could not be contained leading to the postponement of the engagement.

In Muzarabani North Ward 1 at Gunduza shopping centre one Manzini, a known Zanu PF activist and Agricultural extension officer, threatened to unleash violence on a villager's children for moving around in MDC regalia. The incident occurred on the 10th of August. Manzini besieged the villager's homestead on a mission to assault the two children as he had identified them the previous day in possession of an MDC beret. He reportedly rebuked them and further warned that their actions will not go unpunished.

Food and other Aid distribution discrimination continues to be a thorn in the flesh for many Zimbabweans who are dependent on the aid. Received reports indicate that the partisan distribution of food and other aid is continuing. In Buhera South Ward 33 under Chief Chamutsa in Mushati village, Zanu PF Councillor Success Nkomo announced that a new system had been introduced for people to work in order to receive their food aid. This tremendously disadvantaged deserving groups such as the elderly, chronically ill and those with other vulnerabilities who mostly likely cannot work and thus cannot access needed aid.

In Buhera West Ward 5, villagers were told to contribute ZWL\$5 and give the funds to Jane Ziki, a Zanu PF chairperson to facilitate transportation of the maize to their area. Sadly, Ziki has vanished with the funds and two weeks have lapsed with no food aid being delivered, leaving them in even more dire circumstances.

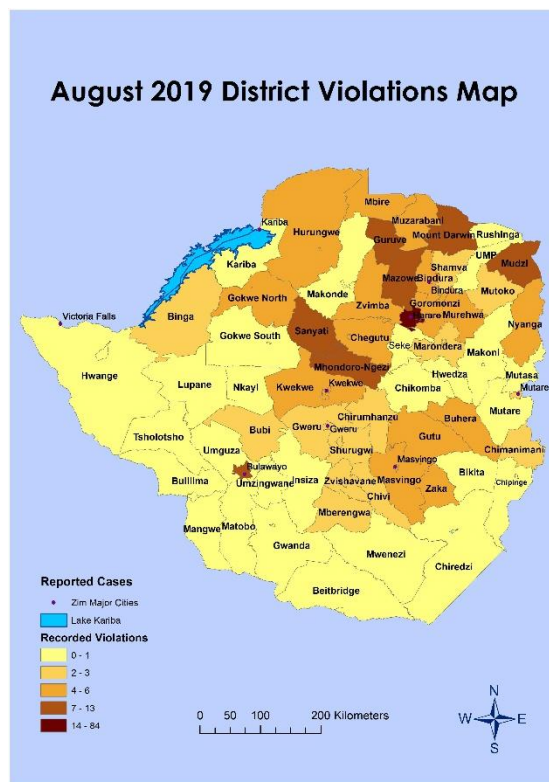
In Zaka East, food aid is being used for vote-buying. Clemence Chiduwa, an aspiring Zanu PF Parliamentary candidate paid for transportation of maize from Zaka Grain Marketing Board (GMB) to Ward 20. Councillor Walter Masaka confirmed that Chiduwa had provided transportation for their maize aid. Another Zanu PF member Wilson Charamba then threatened that anyone who does not vote for Chiduwa and Zanu PF in the impending by-election was to be permanently removed from the list of future beneficiaries.

In some cases, leaders in charge of distributing aid are diverting it to their own use. One such report was received from Shurugwi South Ward 18 where a Zanu PF Chairperson John Dube short changed villagers by distributing part of the aid then diverting the rest for his personal gain by either reselling or using it for food for work.

In Mt Darwin South Ward 26, GMB officials are reportedly conniving with local Zanu PF leadership to sell maize to ruling party activists. Party Chairperson Godfrey Dumbura and Councillor Paradzai Dzayo are accepting bribes so that they sign documents on behalf of dubious beneficiaries. The matter has been reported to the District Administrator (DA).

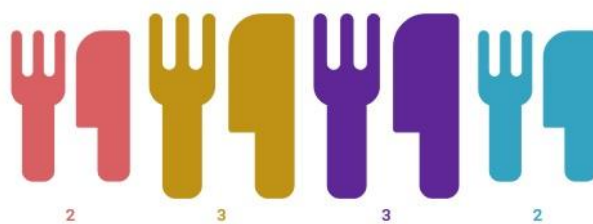


Dashboard of Statistics



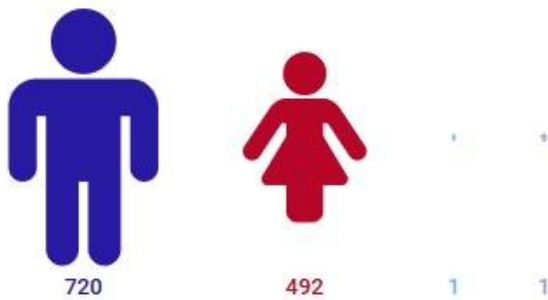
Distribution of violence by type across provinces

ACTS	Midlands	Byo	Mat. South	Mat. North	Masvingo	Manicaland	Harare	Mash. East	Mash. West	Mash. Central	TOTAL
Killing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rape/Sexual Harassment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kidnapping/abduction	1	4	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	14
Assault	3	2	0	1	1	1	23	1	4	1	37
Theft/looting	2	0	0	0	3	3	2	1	1	9	21
Discrimination	3	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	2	4	14
MDP	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	6
Torture	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	7
Unlawful Detention	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	5
Intimidation /harassment	11	4	2	5	13	10	35	16	14	27	137
Displacement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Attempted Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Attempted Abduction	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Banned Political Party Mtg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disrupted Political Mtg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	20	13	2	7	19	17	84	21	21	41	245

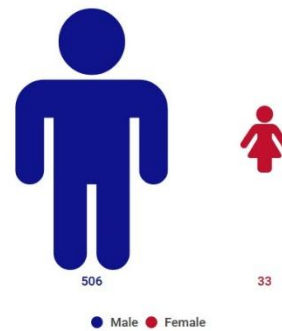


● Manicaland ● Mash Central ● Mash West ● Midlands

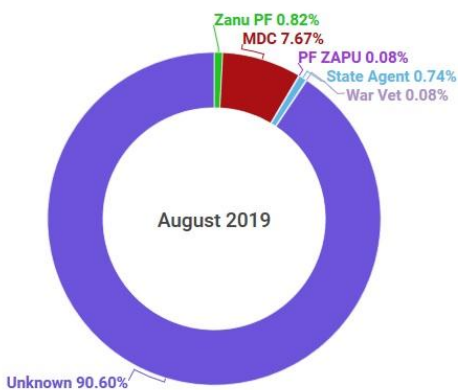
Food and Other Aid Violations



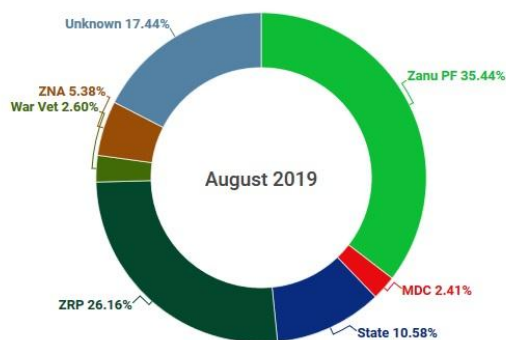
Victims by Affiliation



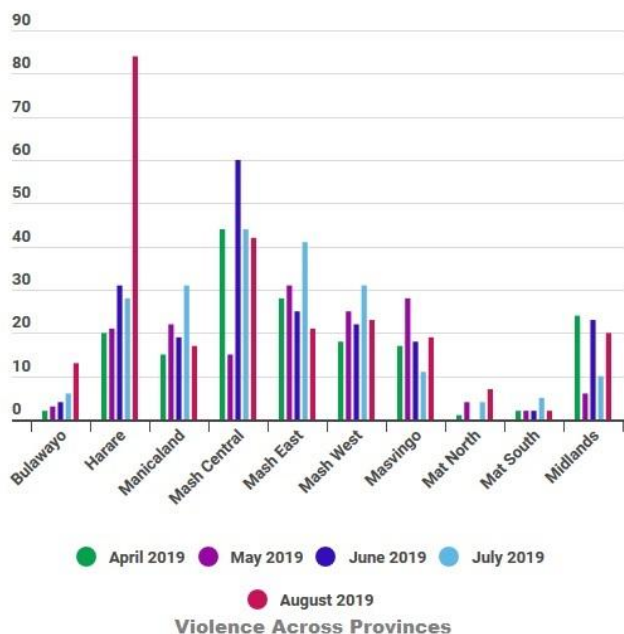
Perpetrators by Gender



Victims by Affiliation



Perpetrators by Affiliation



Violence Across Provinces



Intra Party Violence

Overall Analysis

ZPP noted with regret and trepidation the violent encounter perpetrated by riot police on protestors and the blatant disregard of due process by law enforcement agencies. ZPP recalls the recommendations by the Motlanthe Commission that “The Police should be given the skills and capacity to deal with rioters. They should also be trained to be professional and non-partisan.” Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services Nick Mangwana, highlighted that police have been re-trained in crowd control skills in order to avoid the loss of life and violent encounters such as that of August 1, 2018.

However, the response of the police during the January 2019 Shutdown protests as well as the recent August 16 demonstrations indeed reveal that the state still has a very long way to go before embracing progressive methods of policing. August 16 protestors were actually sitting on the ground and did not display any violent inclinations towards the police. Yet they were brutalised and severely beaten, something which flies in the face of government’s assertion that the police sector is being reformed. Progressive and non-violent policing strategies could have been implemented to disperse people from the streets such as water cannons, tear gas and even arresting offenders. The violent encounters which were beamed all over the world have portrayed the second administration as no better than former President Robert Mugabe’s rule.

This is also most apparent in the alarming abductions, torture and assault of activists and of those perceived to be critical of government. The Constitution has one of the most progressive Bill of Rights which provides for Freedom of Assembly and Association (Section 58), Demonstrate and Petition (Section 59), Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media (Section 61) as well as Political Rights (Section 67). Therefore citizens have the right to express their displeasure with current tough living conditions without the state deeming it a regime change agenda. Violence must never be the answer to quell dissent but only progressive engagement through dialogue can yield desirable results.

ZPP is aware that through the Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD) government had created a platform with the aim to depolarise the political landscape and promote unity and peace as per recommendations of the Motlanthe Commission. Furthermore, the Commission had recommended that political actors should be leaders in preaching unity and peace. ZPP prays that the POLAD becomes one of the many platforms ensuring that the process is broad based so as to ensure that it does not become an elite pact devoid of the myriad of issues at the heart of the problems of the many ordinary Zimbabweans. It is only when the many voices of

Zimbabweans are heard will there be progress in ironing out differences and resolving the deteriorating social and political conditions which seem to proliferate.

ZPP notes the continued reverting to the system of ruling through harvesting of fear. The show of might through marching soldiers in major cities certainly had the desired effect of intimidating people so that they do not protest. This is also at the backdrop of Deputy Minister of Defence Victor Matemadanda's comments that government will not hesitate to deploy soldiers to shoot protestors, and the recent commemoration of August 1, 2018 killings of 6 people while over 40 others were injured when soldiers were let loose against civilians. Despite recommendations by the Motlanthe Commission that 'all those responsible for alleged crimes on the 1st August 2018 should be prosecuted' ZPP notes that to date no one has been arrested and sanctioned for the killings. Violence perpetuated by the state, accompanied by impunity is fast leading Zimbabwe into a toxic, militarised and intimidating environment that has all the signs and indicators of the eruption of violent conflict. If people are victimised for expressing their views, Zimbabwe is well on a slippery slope of being democratic on paper but authoritarian in reality.

On the 12th of August Zimbabweans celebrated Heroes Day. This commemoration is very important as the country remembers sacrifices made by fellow countrymen in order to obtain the country's independence. It is thus disconcerting to note that for some, mostly rural communities, this period heralds a period of being harassed into contributing funds for the commemorations. Notable though is that this could be a celebration which Zimbabweans gladly donate to, if it were not shrouded in ruling party celebration connotations. During Heroes celebrations at Chimanimani District Heroes Acre, speaker after speaker at the function clearly stated that Heroes Day commemorations were a Zanu PF event. In Goromonzi North at Enterprise Country Club Ward 9 Heroes Day commemorations turned into a full blown Zanu PF rally as villagers were forced to chant slogans and denounce opposition political parties such as MDC.

ZPP is well pleased by Local Government, Public Works and National Housing Minister July Moyo's statement that Councillors and Traditional leaders will no longer be involved in distributing food aid. He noted that this is to ensure the vulnerable who need the aid benefit. This is a very progressive move and trust that the state will ensure it is successfully implemented so that the 5, 5 million rural dwellers in Zimbabwe who desperately need this aid are not deprived for political expediency.

Watchlist

Labour Union organisations such as ARTUZ, ZCTU as well as MDC have expressed a willingness to continue to protest the continued deterioration of living conditions. Considering the reaction by the state in the August demonstrations, ZPP anticipates that this will lead to more contention and conflict. ZPP continues to monitor and document the situation as it unfolds.

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has announced that Glenview South and Mangwe by-elections will be held on the 7th of September. ZPP has already begun to receive reports of violations and will continue to monitor the situation amid indications that the ruling party is drilling boreholes in Glenview South using the District Development Fund (DDF) in what is perceived as a vote buying gimmick considering the timing. On the 25th of August ruling party activists were also noted distributing rice to the public together with aspiring Glenview South candidate, Offard Muchuwi.

As the third school term beckons, ZPP is alert to the recent concession of fees increases by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. This comes on the backdrop of depressed economic conditions for the common man, which may likely lead to defaulting of school fees payments. It will be particularly difficult for those affected by the August 1 2018 violence as injured victims are failing to provide for their families and those who lost breadwinners are stranded with no one to pay their fees. Although government states that Ministries of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare have been tasked to help victims, a snap survey of the affected presents a dismal picture as more than 50% of the affected are neither aware of the fund nor have received any communication from government. ZPP hopes that government shall expeditiously compensate these victims as per their promise and will continue to monitor and document progress made in this regard.

ZPP calls for:

- Political leaders to move from their positions and consider the welfare of citizens who are hard hit by the deteriorating economy. Inclusive dialogue will help resolve the Zimbabwean crisis.
- Citizens to desist from a culture of using violence to solve disputes. An eye for an eye will lead to a blind nation. Zimbabwe has one of the most progressive Bill of Rights in the region and the state may do well to allow citizens to enjoy their rights fully.
- A genuine commitment and action in ensuring that food aid is distributed fairly and in a non-partisan manner.

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), and Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ).

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 officers in various units.