



ZIMBABWE
PEACE
PROJECT

OCTOBER
2024

MONTHLY MONITORING REPORT



ABOUT ZPP

The Zimbabwe Peace Project, ZPP, is a peace-promoting organisation that uses human rights lenses in peacebuilding, having established that the deprivation and abuse of human rights pose the greatest threat to peace in Zimbabwe.

The organisation was established in 2000 as a project of civil society and faith-based groups in response to the violence and human rights violations that characterised the political landscape of the time. These organisations were the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZIMRIGHTS), Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), Civic Education Network Trust (CIVNET), Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Zimbabwe Liberators Platform (ZLP) and Non-Violent Action and Strategies for Social Change (NOVASC). Over the years, the ZPP network of members has evolved as the network welcomed new member organisations while others have developed new thematic interests or have ceased to exist. Current member organisations are the Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace (CCJPZ), Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZIMRIGHTS), Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Women and Law Southern Africa (WLSA), National Association for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH) and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2024, the Zimbabwe Peace Project recorded a total 184 human rights violations from across the country, which affected 1996 victims. The violations included threats of violence (74), assault (9), unfair distribution of food aid (13), and malicious damage to property (12). There were violations related to restrictions of freedom, such as that of Assembly and Association (17) and of Expression (22). 19 violations were also recorded where victims were denied access to social services. Other notable violations were an abduction (1), an unjustified arrest (1), torture (1), forced displacements (2) and 9 violations of inhuman treatment.

787 women, including 3 females with disabilities, were affected by the violations in October while male victims amounted to 1204, including 2 persons with disabilities.

Of the documented violations, perpetrators affiliated to the ruling party ZANU PF contributed 48.47% with the Zimbabwe Republic Police standing at 23.01%. Other violations were committed by Municipal Police (7.67%), members of the Citizens Coalition for Change (4.29%). 12.27% of the perpetrators were not affiliated to any particular group or institution.

In our section on Towards sustainable Peace in Zimbabwe, ZPP commends the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) for their efforts in combating corruption and theft of government-sponsored food aid intended for vulnerable communities.

The Zimbabwe Peace Project is calling on the government to take action against human rights abuses by monitoring and investigating practices that enable these violations. Specifically, ZPP calls on the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission to investigate and prosecute perpetrators, looking into all reports of human rights abuses and hold those responsible accountable, as well as for the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) to strengthen its commitment to promoting administrative justice. This includes investigating abuses committed by public institutions and other actors. This ensures that the government and other institutions, or members who act on their behalf are held accountable for their actions, in line with Zimbabwe's Constitution.

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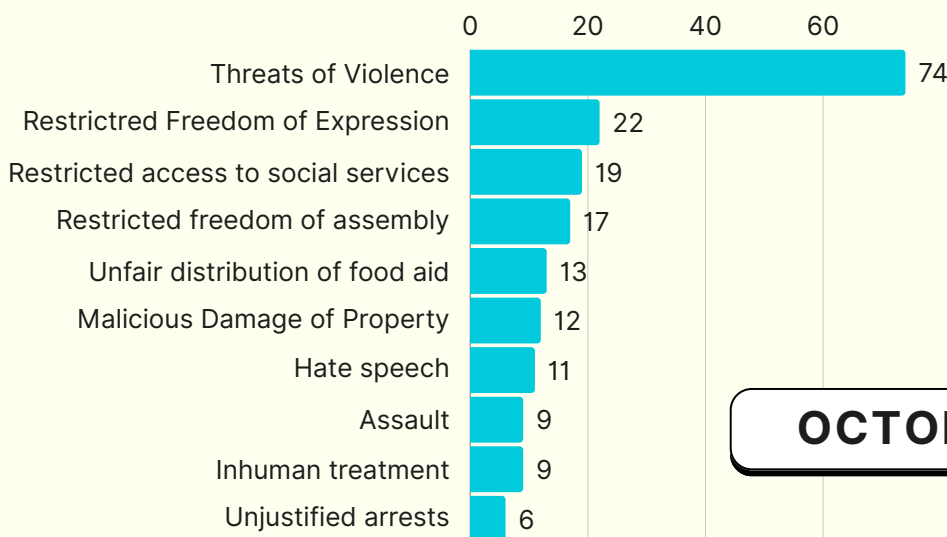
HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION

In October, ZPP documented 74 threats of violence, 1 abduction, 1 unjustified arrest, an incident of torture and 9 violations of assault. Threats of violence typically involve explicit or implicit warnings of physical harm or danger and the increase of such violations is a reminder of an urgent need to address such human rights abuses. Harassment and intimidation are pervasive issues in Zimbabwe, particularly in rural areas, where they significantly contribute to the denial of human rights. These unlawful practices are often perpetrated by individuals in positions of power, including traditional leaders (i.e chiefs and village heads) and law enforcement officials, and are frequently used to silence political opponents. In Buhera South, for instance, a village head, Ernest Muzokomba, and a local councillor, Denmore Maweni, threatened a male victim for commenting on unfair food aid distribution on Change Radio, a news channel aligned with the Citizens Coalition for Change. Despite the victim's denial, the village head insisted on punishment, further suppressing freedom of expression. The victim was also threatened with exclusion from government-sponsored aid programs. This blatant intimidation suppresses freedom of expression and assembly, guaranteed by Zimbabwe's Constitution. This is a concerning development, given the significant influence traditional leaders wield in rural areas, where 67% of Zimbabwe's population resides In a

different incident documented in Chivi, a headman also experienced harassment from Mr. Tyeni, District Development Coordinator Chivi, and Mr. Njini, a Councillor for Ward 8 for questioning instructions on the planned changes in payment of Rural Development Fund. The victim highlighted that paying the fund per head instead of per household would make people's lives more difficult, which not please the councillor and the DDC. The perpetrators then instigated youths to physically assault the victim and threatened to commission an investigation on his conduct which would potentially see him being stripped of his headman position and losing all government supported benefits. Such fear instilling tactics may further silence any dissent and curtail the enjoyment of freedom of expression among citizens.

Threats of violence, harassment, and intimidation have been used to suppress political opposition and silence human rights activists. In Headlands for example, a candidate for Ward 38 local authority by-election reported intimidation and harassment from ZANU PF supporters. In one of the incidents near Lawrenceedale Primary School, the perpetrators accused the victim of taking pictures, forcibly took his phone, searched him and physically harassed him before he was let go. Such tactics can have a chilling effect on free speech and assembly, undermining democratic processes.

To combat harassment and intimidation, the Zimbabwe Peace Project recommends that the Zimbabwe Republic Police, all state and non-state institutions mandated to fulfil, promote and protect human rights investigate and prosecute all perpetrators.



OCTOBER VIOLATIONS

POLITICAL DISCRIMINATION IN FOOD AID AND AGRIC-INPUTS DISTRIBUTION

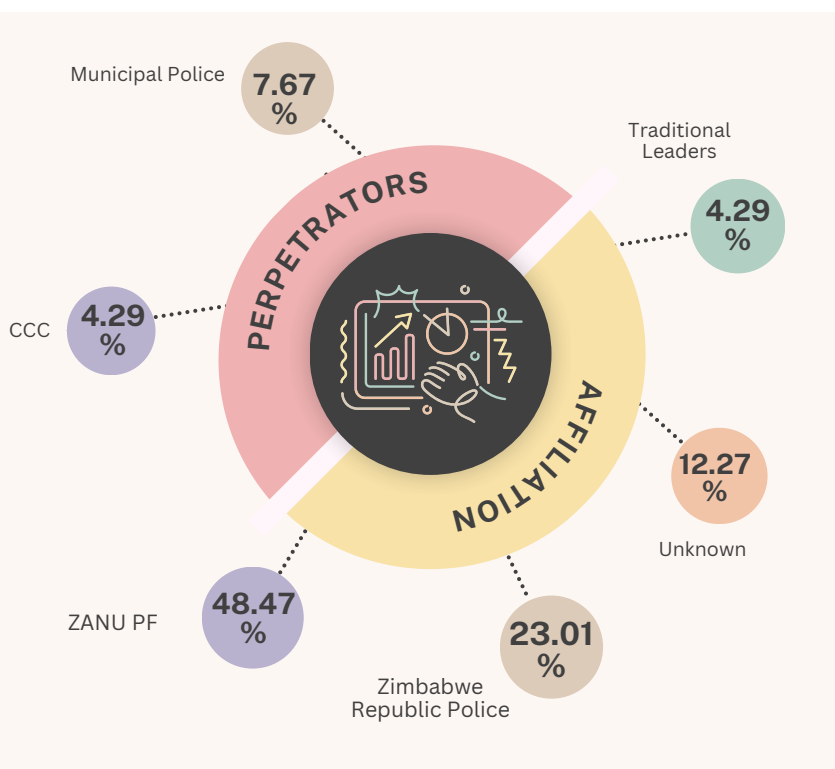
In October, political discrimination in government sponsored food aid distribution emerged as a pernicious tactic to manipulate vulnerable populations, perpetuating dynamic human rights violations. The Zimbabwe Peace Project documented 13 violations of such cases across the country. While the documented incidents are not exhaustive of the situation obtaining on the ground, the ruling party's control over food aid has continuously allowed it to weaponize hunger, denying assistance to opposition supporters and targeting perceived dissenters. This politicisation of food aid contravenes international human rights law, specifically the right to food, life, and freedom from discrimination. Rural communities, already struggling with poverty and El Nino induced drought, are coerced into supporting the ruling party or face denial of essential assistance. In several instances, community members are forced to chant party slogans and praise political leaders before they receive the allocated rations. Known opposition supporters are forced to publicly "repent", that is, publicly renouncing their support for the opposition and declaring their support to ZANU PF before they can access food aid. In Silobela Ward 23, a male victim who has been denied any form of government aid for the past years for his political affiliation was once again recently compelled to leave a meeting when Edwin Mwale, a ZANU PF branch Secretary

forced people to chant ruling party slogans before a distribution. After his inquiry on whether it was a political meeting or not, the victim was chased away.

The selective distribution of food aid also exacerbates existing social and economic inequalities, deepening the vulnerability of marginalised groups, including women, children, and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, partisan food aid distribution undermines the independence of traditional leaders, who are pressured to align with the ruling party, compromising their role as impartial custodians of community interests. This insidious manipulation of food aid perpetuates a culture of fear, repression, and impunity, undermining Zimbabwe's democratic foundations and the fundamental human rights of its citizens.

The heartbreaking reality of food aid exploitation in Zimbabwe is a stark reminder of the country's entrenched corruption and disregard for human rights. In areas like Manicaland, traditional leaders and politicians are colluding to hoard food aid, denying the most vulnerable citizens of their rightful assistance. A shocking example is the councillor in Ward 24, Buhera South, who diverted 40 bags of maize meant for the elderly, selling them under the cover of the night and allocating some to undeserving relatives. In some instances, food aid is distributed at night in most cases, to allow the corrupt to use cover of darkness to loot. This blatant theft and maladministration not only violate the rights of the poor and elderly but also perpetuate hunger and desperation. The Zunde Ramambo program, intended to support those in need, has been transformed into a tool for political manipulation and personal gain. The consequences are devastating: families go hungry, trust is shattered, and the most vulnerable are left to suffer. It's a stark reminder that the politicisation of food aid has real-life consequences, perpetuating inequality and entrenching poverty.

ZPP calls on all government entities involved in the social welfare of citizens to recognize the urgent need to address these human rights violations and ensure food aid reaches those who need it most.





BRUTAL ARBITRARY HOUSE DEMOLITIONS SPARK HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

The recent demolition of 30 houses in Ridgeview Belverde ward 5, Harare, has raised serious human rights concerns, particularly regarding the right to adequate housing and protection from arbitrary eviction. The victims, comprising 30 households, were left homeless and exposed to the elements, sparking outrage over the City of Harare's actions. Claiming the houses were built using unverified offer letters, the city authorities, accompanied by anti-riot police, vandalised the structures, citing previous demolitions and defiance by land barons. However, Minister of Justice Ziyambi Ziyambi revealed that no court order was obtained for the demolitions, violating Section 74 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which states that no person may 'have their home demolished without an order of court...'

The Constitution of Zimbabwe 2013 enshrines the rule of law and fundamental human rights and freedoms as founding values and principles. Specifically, Section 68 of the constitution guarantees the right to administrative justice, requiring that decisions be made in a procedurally fair, impartial and reasonable manner, while, section 28 protects the right to shelter. These provisions were blatantly disregarded in the Ridgeview Belverde demolitions highlighting the need for accountability and adherence to proper channels. ZPP is therefore concerned about the disregard for the human rights of the victims and the conduct of public officials in the demolitions and recommend that in the pursuance of 'efficient administration' all losses incurred by the victims, including emotional and material, be addressed urgently.

“ No person may be evicted from their home, or have their home demolished, without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances. ”

Section 74:
Freedom from Arbitrary Eviction



Towards sustainable peace in Zimbabwe



Photograph: Philimon Bulawayo / Reuters/Reuters, featured in The Guardian

The Zimbabwe Peace Project commends the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) for their efforts in combating corruption and theft of government-sponsored food aid intended for vulnerable communities. In a notable achievement, the ZRP arrested and prosecuted a Grain Marketing Board depot clerk and a Department of Social Development human resources officer for stealing 30 tonnes of wheat meant for drought relief in Ward 5, Matepatepa, Bindura District, Mashonaland Central.

This theft highlights the devastating impact of aid diversion on the poor and vulnerable. When aid is stolen, it denies those in dire need of assistance, exacerbating poverty, hunger, and desperation. The government must tighten security measures to prevent such incidents and ensure accountability by implementing robust controls to prevent theft and diversion of aid as well as enhancing accountability, prosecuting all perpetrators and ensuring transparency in aid distribution. By addressing aid theft and corruption, the government can uphold its commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of Zimbabwe's most vulnerable citizens.

The Zimbabwe Peace Project applauds the Ministry of Social Welfare's Department of Social Services for launching the cash for cereals programme, aimed at shielding urban communities from the devastating effects of El Nino-induced drought. This timely initiative registers vulnerable households in urban areas, providing them with essential cash assistance to purchase cereals and necessities, thereby mitigating food insecurity. With approximately 41% of the urban population facing food insecurity, as reported by the Zimbabwe Livelihood Assessment Committee, this programme is crucial in averting widespread hunger and supporting those in dire need. By addressing the pressing concerns of urban food insecurity, the government demonstrates its commitment to protecting the well-being of its citizens, particularly during times of crisis.

...10 Steps backwards

The Zimbabwe Peace Project continues to uncover disturbing trends in food aid distribution across the country, despite efforts to curb corruption and theft. A pervasive culture of political discrimination persists, with ruling party structures exerting significant influence over the selection and distribution of government-sponsored aid. This has led to traditional leaders and community members being overridden in determining who needs aid most, with some communities receiving no consultation whatsoever.

Only those supporting the ruling party often have access to food aid, while opposition supporters are frequently excluded. This partisan approach has devastating consequences for vulnerable families. Traditional leaders and other parties involved have been falsifying beneficiary numbers to receive more rations. For instance, a family of five allocated 7.5kg of grain per month may have their numbers inflated to receive excess grain, which is later sold or distributed among party loyalists. The cash for cereals program has also been compromised. In Bulawayo wards 11 and 16, beneficiaries using Eonet lines were instructed to re-register with new Netone lines, further marginalising already vulnerable groups. These actions undermine the integrity of aid distribution and perpetuate inequality.

The Zimbabwe Peace Project's findings underscore the need for urgent reforms to ensure aid reaches those who need it most, regardless of political affiliation. Transparency, accountability, and community-led distribution processes are essential to combating corruption and promoting equitable access to aid.

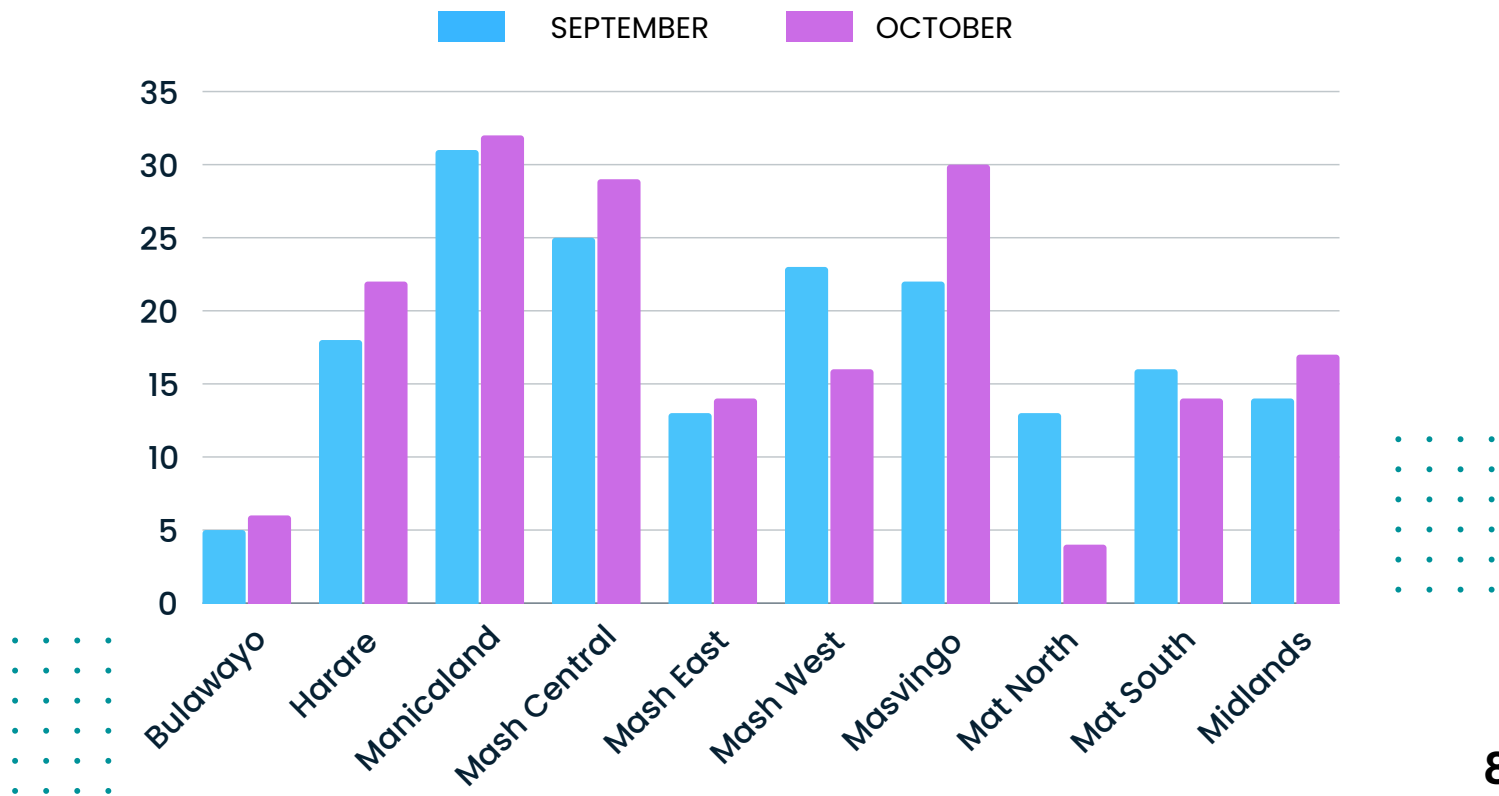


Harare

22 human rights abuses were documented in Harare Province. Notably, there were widespread incidents relating to restriction of social services such as water and health care services. In Glenview, residents are facing extortion and sexual exploitation to fetch water from boreholes, with those in power exploiting their influence. These incidents highlight the alarming politicisation of community development projects, including access to basic necessities like water. Meanwhile, in Epworth, expecting mothers are being forced to pay bribes to access essential healthcare services further perpetuating inequalities among the struggling communities. A disturbing case of torture has been reported in Mabvuku-Tafara, where a male victim was arrested and detained for over 24 hours at Mabvuku Police station for allegedly shouting derogatory statements against President Mnangagwa, sparked by frustration over failure to get a job at a cement manufacturing plant. In Seke, the distribution of agricultural inputs under the Pfumvudza scheme has been tainted by politics, with opposition members systematically excluded. This not only undermines the integrity of the program but also deprives vulnerable communities of critical support. These incidents underscore the need for urgent reforms to ensure accountability, transparency, and equal access to resources and services, regardless of political affiliation

Bulawayo

Bulawayo Province has faced significant challenges in October, with six documented human rights violations amidst high levels of food insecurity and limited access to water. The province's vulnerability to El Nino-induced drought has prompted the Department of Social Services to implement the Cash-for-Cereals program in wards 11-16. However, beneficiaries have expressed frustration with receiving ZiG, a currency not widely accepted by service providers. Furthermore, the exclusion of Econet line users has forced potential beneficiaries to open separate lines, highlighting systemic issues. This situation undermines efforts to support vulnerable families, emphasising the need for the Department of Social Development to address these challenges and ensure assistance reaches those in need. The World Bank has also reported similar concerns globally, with rising food insecurity affecting 713 million to 757 million people, and domestic food price inflation remaining high in many low- and middle-income countries. Effective solutions require a coordinated approach to address the root causes of food insecurity and ensure equitable access to essential services



Midlands

There was a slight increase in human rights violations in Midland, with 17 violations recorded in October, up from 14 in the previous month. Incidents of silencing of dissent or attempts to do so, and politicisation of aid have been reported across the province. In Ward 23, a male victim was taken in for questioning by police after inquiring about his exclusion from the beneficiaries list. Furthermore, approximately 20 households in Mberengwa East constituency were denied cattle feed aid by village heads solely due to their affiliation with the opposition party. Intimidation tactics were also employed, with village heads coercing community members to join the ruling party's local cells, accompanied by threats to remove non-compliant individuals from the government aid beneficiaries list. These actions undermine the progress made in inclusive aid distribution and highlight the need for safeguarding against conflicts of interest and ethical threats, ensuring that assistance reaches those who need it most

Mashonaland East

14 human rights violations were documented in Mashonaland East province. Drought-induced water scarcity is fueling conflicts among communities in Zimbabwe, with authorities denying villagers access to water sources. This situation is further complicated by reports of forced participation in political processes, particularly in Murewa District. Shockingly, school children were forced to participate in the Anti-Sanctions march, raising concerns about their rights and protection. In another disturbing trend, artisanal mining activities in Mutoko are disrupting education, with illegal mining taking place on school premises. This not only poses safety risks but also undermines the learning environment. It is therefore crucial for government authorities to investigate and take decisive action in ensuring the protection of children and promoting a safe learning environment where mining activities

However, there's a glimmer of hope as the government's school feeding program is providing relief to primary school learners who are receiving at least one hot meal a day. This initiative aims to cushion learners from the effects of the El Niño-induced drought and promote high nutrition levels. Schools have organised cabbages and soya chunks as relish to complement the mealie meal provided by the government.

Matabeleland South

In October, 14 human rights abuses were documented in Matabeleland South province. Notable trends were conflicts and maladministration of the government sponsored livestock feeding program. In Gwanda South Constituency, farmers face significant human rights challenges in accessing government-provided livestock drought relief feed. Although the feed is supposed to be free, farmers must cover transportation costs from Kwekwe, ranging from \$15 to \$20 per farmer, depending on distance . This requirement excludes those unable to afford transportation, as they are excluded from benefiting from the aid or end up getting less than allocated, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities thereby creating concerns on equitable access. Farmers with financial resources have been noted to purchase more bags, while others struggle to access the allocated five bags per month.

Mashonaland West

In Mashonaland West, 16 human rights violations were recorded, with widespread political discrimination being a major concern. Traditional leaders were at the forefront, making politically biased statements undermining the principles of equality and fairness. In Ward 10 of Hurungwe, Magunje West, village head Margaret Matamba was recorded to have excluded some victims from food aid distribution saying they must benefit from their CCC Party because they chose not to vote for ZANU PF. She is further accused of hoarding food aid, collecting 4 x 50 kgs of grain for a household with only 3 members, where only 7.5kgs are allocated for a family for a month. Cases of intimidation and harassment were reported, linked to political discrimination. There were incidents of restrictions on Freedom of Expression where overbearing political actors discourage others from expressing their opinions during community gatherings. Mashonaland West has experienced a significant number of human rights violations, recording 23 violations in the previous month. The Zimbabwe Peace Project urge authorities to address these issues and ensure that all citizens can exercise their rights without fear of intimidation or discrimination and there is equal access to government sponsored aid

Mashonaland Central

In Mashonaland Central, 29 human rights violations were recorded. Children are being turned away from schools due to non-payment of fees, effectively denying them their right to education. Meanwhile, in Chireya village, the Mwaka tillage farming program has become a tool for political discrimination, with only senior ZANU PF members granted access to vital farming equipment, leaving opposition farmers in the cold. The situation takes a darker turn with ZANU PF official Matola's brazen declaration that opposition members will be excluded from all government programs, boasting that ZANU PF controls the government, police, army, and indeed, the country itself. This alarming rhetoric has created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, perpetuating a culture of human rights violations. Reports of electoral fraud, including citizens being registered to vote in Mozambique's elections have also been recorded raising concerns about the integrity of Zimbabwe's democratic processes. These incidents underscore the urgent need for accountability, transparency, and protection of human rights in Zimbabwe.

Masvingo

The province recorded a high number of human rights abuses standing at 30, up from 22 in the previous month. Across the province, residents are struggling with a severe water shortage, forcing women to rely on uncovered wells for their daily needs thus degrading the human dignity of villagers. The dignity and disregard for human rights is exacerbated by cases of political intimidation and harassment, leading to instances of forced defection, where opposition supporters are forced to denounce their parties and support the ruling party in fear of victimisation. The intense political climate has also reignited conflicts within opposition parties, causing one victim who defected to ZANU PF to seek personal security measures after CCC supporters intimidated her and held flash protests at her home in ward 5 of St Mary's Chigovanyika. These challenges reflect broader concerns around high political polarisation and lack of tolerance, where restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and assembly create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. A male victim was confronted by four ZANU PF members at Muchakata business centre and was instructed to join the ruling party and publicly denounce his involvement with any opposition party. Failure to do would deem his family unfit to be considered for current Social welfare relief programs

Manicaland

The province recorded the highest number of violations, 32, in the reporting month. Communities in the province are facing numerous challenges that undermine human rights and democratic values.. The situation is further complicated by political intimidation, particularly in the run-up to the bi-election period in Headlands. Citizens are being coerced into associating with ZANU PF in ward cells, with traditional leaders and village heads implicated in theft of food aid and political discrimination in food aid and agricultural inputs. Youth militias have been involved in assaults on community members who raise concerns or queries particularly if excluded in the government sponsored aid programs. The right to education is also being compromised, as learners are turned away due to non payment of school fees. The politicisation of food aid and agricultural inputs has resulted in unequal distribution, with opposition supporters often excluded. These actions undermine the principles of democracy and human rights, perpetuating a culture of fear and intimidation. The role of traditional leaders in Zimbabwe has been a subject of debate, with concerns around their alignment with the ruling party and potential conflicts of interest. Ensuring accountability, transparency, and protection of human rights is crucial to addressing these challenges.

Concluding Note

The month of October witnessed a continued trend of human rights violations in Zimbabwe, perpetrated by various actors including political figures, the police and traditional leaders. These violations ranged from harassment, intimidation, and discrimination to denial of access to basic services and resources. The Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) documented 184 violations of human rights, highlighting the need for urgent attention and action.

ZPP therefore recommends increased accountability. The government should ensure that traditional leaders act in a non-partisan manner, as stipulated in the Constitution and traditional leaders Act. Additionally, the government must address economic challenges and provide essential services to all citizens, regardless of political affiliation. ZPP recommends that the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) should investigate reported human rights violations, hold perpetrators accountable, and provide reparations to victims. In the spirit of cultivating a culture of peace in Zimbabwe, ZPP urges all citizens to support community peace-building initiatives and for leaders to foster tolerance and peaceful coexistence among citizens. By implementing these recommendations, Zimbabwe can move towards a more just and equitable society, where human rights are respected and protected.

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