



**ZIMBABWE
PEACE
PROJECT**

DECEMBER --- 2024

MONTHLY MONITORING REPORT



image source: [NewZimbabwe.Com](https://www.newzimbabwe.com)

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).

Report Human Rights Violations



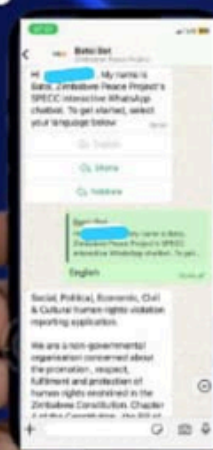
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Zimbabwe Peace Project documented a total of 95 human rights violations in the month of December, a significant drop in human rights violations from the previous month's 141. The violations included unfair distribution of food aid and agricultural inputs, threats of violence, assault, restricted freedoms of assembly and association, inhuman treatment, restricted freedom of expression and unlawful eviction. Other violations documented include looting and pillaging of public resources, restricted access to social services and unjustified arrests.

The violations affected 1460 victims, of which 646 were male and 814 females, including 2 with disabilities. Of the perpetrators, 38.79% were affiliated to the ruling party ZANU PF, while 15.76% were local authorities. Members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police contributed 11.52% of the violators. Other perpetrators included members and officials of the government of Zimbabwe (9.7%), artisanal miners (4.85%), traditional leaders (4.24%) and War veterans (2.42%). 12.72% of the perpetrators were not affiliated to any known group.

In our section, "Towards sustainable peace in Zimbabwe", the Zimbabwe Peace Project commends President Mnangagwa, Parliament, and human rights activists for their efforts in abolishing the death penalty. This development is a remarkable commitment to promoting human dignity, the sanctity of life and inspiring positive change.

The Zimbabwe Peace Project acknowledges the efforts by various stakeholders, independent commissions and human rights actors in promoting human rights accountability in Zimbabwe. However, a wide array of violations, committed by individuals and institutions, remain largely unresolved. This leads to repeated violations further prejudicing victims, depriving them of their rights and fundamental freedom, hence ZPP calls for the government's commitment to ensure all perpetrators of human rights are prosecuted.

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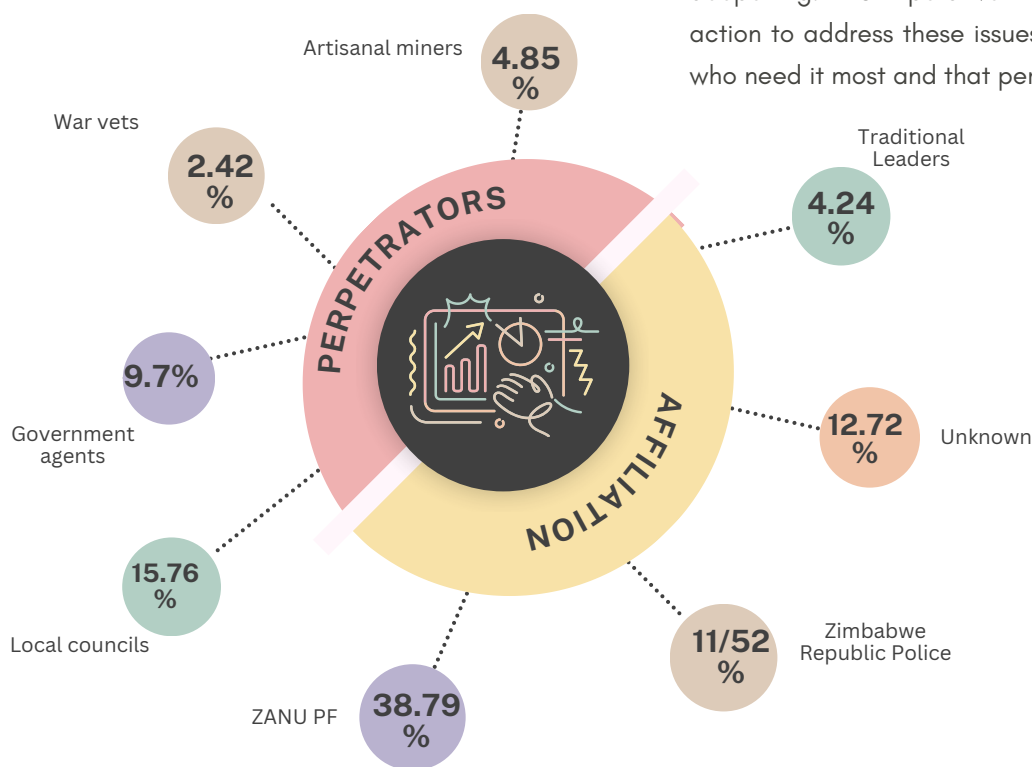
POLITICISATION AND MALADMINISTRATION OF FOOD AID AND AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

The continued politicisation of government sponsored food aid and agricultural inputs worsens the food insecurity among citizens in Zimbabwean communities. Additionally, theft and corrupt practices in the distribution and handling of the aid deprives potential beneficiary households of their right to food, further exposing them to hunger due to the effects of the El Nino induced drought. In December, ZPP documented 20 violations affecting 1200 victims (676 women and 524 men) related to the denial of food and agricultural inputs aid based on partisan affiliations, theft and mismanagement of such food aid and agricultural inputs.

Politicisation of aid is often conducted by political leaders and traditional leaders who discriminate against victims based on their political affiliation. Villagers, often members of the opposition political parties, or those non-ruling party and apolitical members of the society are often denied aid because they do not participate nor support political activities of ZANU PF hence viewed as deserving of the denial of aid. This violates not only the victims' right to food but a host of other fundamentals such as political rights and freedoms of assembly and association as enshrined in the constitution of Zimbabwe.

A 77-year-old widow in Bikita has been denied food aid and government-sponsored agricultural inputs by the ZANU PF ward leadership since 2023. The reason for this denial is allegedly punishment for her refusal to participate in a voting arrangement during the 2023 harmonized election day, where suspected opposition members were paired with staunch ZANU PF members. As a result, she has been blacklisted from receiving any aid. This incident is not an isolated one and highlights a concerning trend of human rights violations in Zimbabwe, where perpetrators use intimidation and denial of essential services to harness power and support for the ruling party. Other incidents of maladministration of food aid and discrimination based on political affiliation were documented in Mwenezi East, where the same 10 household beneficiaries, out of the possible 45 in a village, have benefitted consecutively in two distributions (September to October and the December to February). Ward 5 Councilor David Masvina, further instructed that the beneficiaries should not share their rations with other villagers, further causing divisions among the villagers as the beneficiaries were politically aligned to the ruling party.

The pervasive corruption and politicization of aid in Zimbabwe exacerbate the suffering of those most vulnerable to hunger. When essential resources like food and fertilizer are stolen or denied to those in need due to political affiliations or corruption, the consequences are devastating. The victims, often the poorest and most marginalized, are left to bear the brunt of this injustice, their hunger and desperation only deepening. It is imperative that the government takes decisive action to address these issues, ensuring that aid reaches those who need it most and that perpetrators are held accountable.



HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION

Harassment of citizens by political actors and traditional leaders is a widespread human rights issue in Zimbabwe, with far-reaching consequences for individuals and communities. This pervasive problem is characterized by intimidation, harassment, and sometimes physical assault, often perpetrated by individuals wielding political power or acting on behalf of political leaders.

In December alone, there were 5 violations of (politically related) assault (5 victims, all men) and 19 violations where 43 victims (11 women and 32 men) were threatened with violence were documented. These violations included incidents where political leaders intimidated victims. These findings suggest a troubling trend of political actors and traditional leaders using coercion and fear to exert control over citizens.

In Chiwundura, Midlands Province, ZANU PF members deployed to inform residents of a community meeting meant for selecting potential beneficiaries of food aid, deliberately visited houses of opposition members threatening victims not to attend. The perpetrators visited a male victim, a known opposition supporter, threatening him with "painful punishment" should he attend the meeting since the aid was 'meant for ZANU PF supporters only.'

In another incident, in the same district, a male victim was approached by nine suspected ZANU PF youths who ordered him to leave the business center immediately because he was allegedly campaigning against the extension of President Mnangagwa's reign to 2030. The victim was threatened with violence as the perpetrators promised to make the victim's stay a "very difficult time" in the area. The intimidation tactics, including threats of violence and retaliation, can cause significant emotional distress and fear. Such threats can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression, making it challenging for victims to continue their activism or even participate in everyday activities.

ZPP highlights that it is crucial to address the underlying factors to prevent harassment and human rights violations in Zimbabwe through strengthening institutions, promoting transparency and accountability, and engaging in community-led initiatives to challenge harmful social and cultural norms.



Towards sustainable peace in Zimbabwe



...as Zim abolishes the death penalty

Zimbabwe's abolition of the death penalty marks a significant milestone in the country's journey towards upholding human rights and respecting the sanctity of life. This progressive move demonstrates a commitment to aligning Zimbabwe's municipal laws with international human rights standards and values. By eliminating capital punishment, Zimbabwe promotes a culture of rehabilitation, restorative justice, and human dignity, ultimately contributing to a more just and humane society. President Emmerson Mnangagwa's signing of the Death Penalty Abolition Bill into law on December 31, 2024, marked a

significant milestone, making Zimbabwe the 127th country to abolish the death penalty. This move is particularly notable given that Zimbabwe hadn't executed any death row prisoners since 2005. The Death Penalty Abolition Act prohibits courts from imposing the death penalty, substitutes death sentences with alternative penalties, and ensures the re-sentencing of current death row prisoners, taking into account individual circumstances like time served and health conditions. The Zimbabwe Peace Project commends President Mnangagwa, Parliament, and human rights defenders for this milestone, demonstrating remarkable commitment to promoting human rights accountability and inspiring positive change.

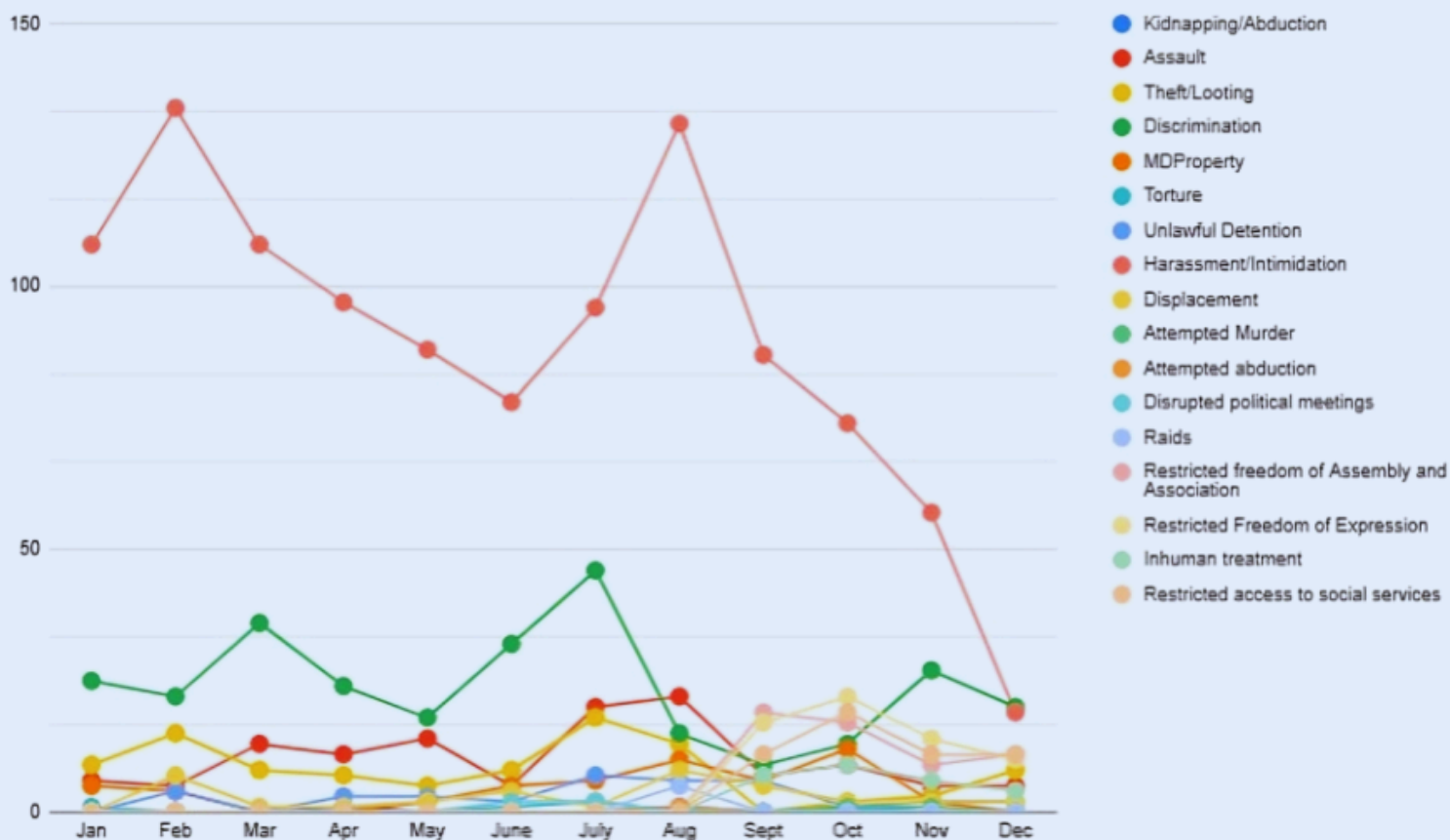
...10 Steps backwards



The donation of four metric tonnes of rice by President Mnangagwa to vulnerable citizens is commendable. However, the approach, where this food aid is being distributed to citizens by MPs and Senators, raises concerns about the politicization of food aid and its potential to cripple beneficiaries. By distributing aid through political channels rather than the social welfare system, the government may inadvertently create dependencies on political patronage rather than addressing the root causes of poverty. This can lead to a culture of dependency and undermine the dignity of recipients. Furthermore, the politicization of food aid can also perpetuate inequality, as those with political connections may receive preferential treatment. A more effective and sustainable approach would be to strengthen the social welfare system, ensuring that aid reaches those who need it most, regardless of their political affiliations.

2024 in review

2024 Human Rights Violations Data: ZPP

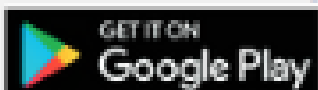


The Zimbabwe Peace Project's (ZPP) year-end report for 2024 paints a concerning picture of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, with a total of 1937 documented violations. Harassment and intimidation, assault, and violations of the right to equality and non-discrimination were consistently among the highest reported violations throughout the year. While some months saw a significant drop in violations, the persistent presence of these abuses is alarming. Notably, torture and unlawful detention spiked in August 2024 due to the government's crackdown on human rights defenders and political activists ahead of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit. Seasonal trends also emerged, with violations against freedom of assembly and association, as well as freedom of expression, surging during periods of high political tension. The ZPP's findings highlight the pervasive nature of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, with certain violations consistently appearing throughout the year. The correlation between political events and spikes in violations suggests a deliberate attempt to suppress dissent and opposition. To address these issues, it is essential to strengthen institutions, promote transparency and accountability, and support civil society organizations and human rights activists. The international community, including regional bodies like SADC and the African Union, must also play a more active role in promoting human rights and holding perpetrators accountable.

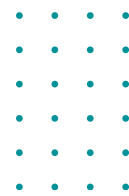
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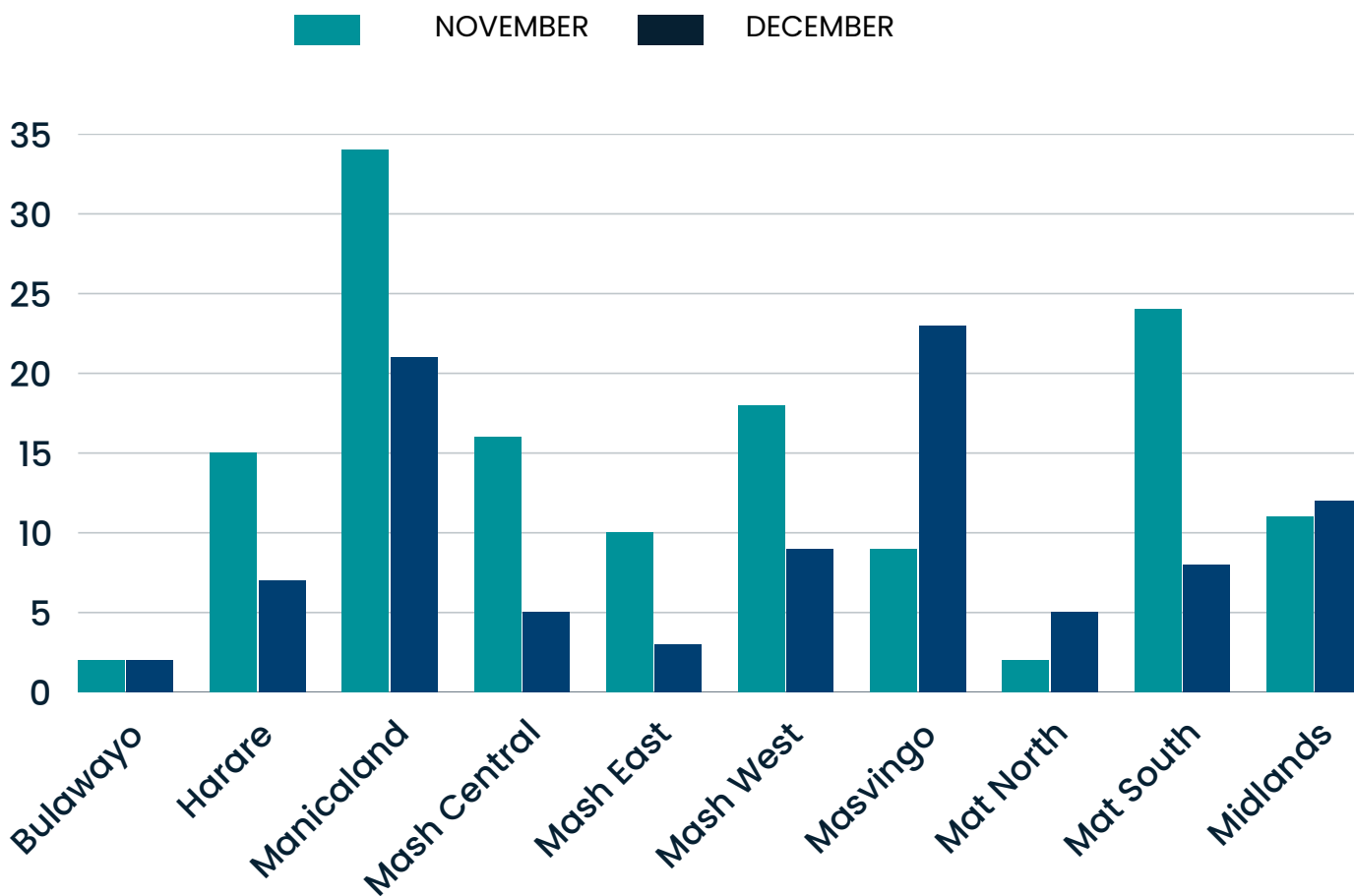
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DECEMBER PROVINCIAL VIOLATIONS



Concluding Note

The Zimbabwe Peace Project notes with concern that despite the reduction in numbers of the documented human rights violations, the situation regarding the disregard and violations of individuals’ freedom is still persisting in the country. To mitigate the human rights violations in Zimbabwe and promote accountability, it is essential to address the root causes of these abuses, which include political intimidation, corruption, and impunity.

ZPP urges the government to ensure that all perpetrators, regardless of their affiliation or position, are held accountable for their actions. This can be achieved by strengthening institutions, such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, and ensuring that they are fully accessible to Zimbabwean communities for complaints filing which will enable effective investigations and prosecution of human rights abuses. Additionally, promoting transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, as well as supporting civil society organizations and human rights activists, can help to create a culture of respect for human rights and the dignity of all individuals. Ultimately, a commitment to justice, equality, and human rights is necessary to prevent further violations and ensure that all Zimbabweans can live without fear of persecution or abuse.