



Monthly Monitoring Report

FEBRUARY 2025

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



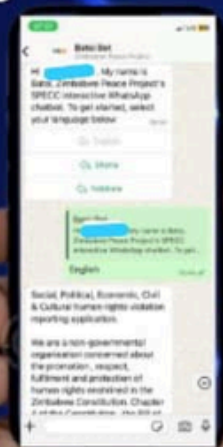
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) documented 117 human rights violations nationwide, impacting 7,292 people. The victims comprised 4,064 women, including 94 with disabilities, and 3,228 men, among them 77 with disabilities.

These violations included threats of violence, politically motivated assault, unfair distribution of food aid, and restrictions on freedom of assembly, association, and expression. Additionally, ZPP reported incidents of inhuman treatment, social service access restrictions, and arbitrary evictions. While most violations targeted politically unaffiliated citizens, specific groups affected included CCC members, informal traders, university students, ZANU PF members, and journalists.

Perpetrators linked to the ruling party accounted for 52.67% of all violations. Other responsible parties included local authorities (18.5%), Zimbabwe Republic Police (8.5%), government officials (4.61%), traditional leaders (3.16%), Forever Associate Zimbabwe (3.1%), CCC (1.7%), war veterans (1.21%), and religious leaders (0.24%). Notably, 6.31% of perpetrators had no identifiable affiliation.

In the section “Towards sustainable peace in Zimbabwe”, ZPP highlights the Zimbabwe Council of Churches’ statement on the Church and the Public space, which emphasizes’ ZCC commitment to remain true to promoting a better and inclusive future, one that will enable the nurturing of a culture of peace, justice, prosperity, and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

In the section “10 steps backwards”, ZPP expresses grave concern over the alarming erosion of freedom of expression, as evidenced by the arrests of journalists and the resultant chilling effect on the media and citizens. Furthermore, the organization notes a pervasive culture of intimidation and harassment perpetrated by traditional leaders and local political actors, which serves to stifle dissenting voices and undermine the fundamental right to free expression.

The human rights violations documented in this report are merely the tip of the iceberg, exposing a disturbing trend of blatant disregard for human rights in Zimbabwe. It is imperative that citizens and responsible institutions assume a proactive role in upholding, protecting, and promoting human rights nationwide, to stem the tide of impunity and ensure accountability for these egregious abuses.

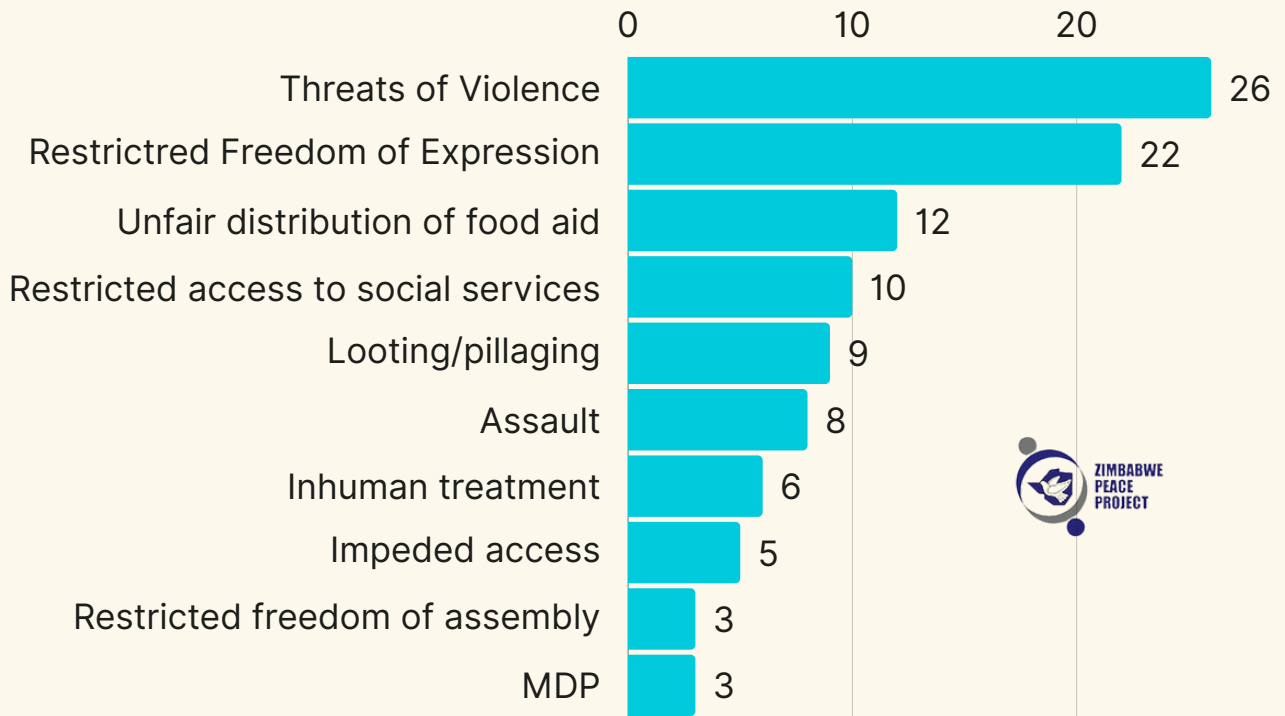
Contents

Key human rights violations.....	4
Towards Sustainable Peace in Zimbabwe	7
10 Steps backward.....	7
Provincial Outlook.....	8

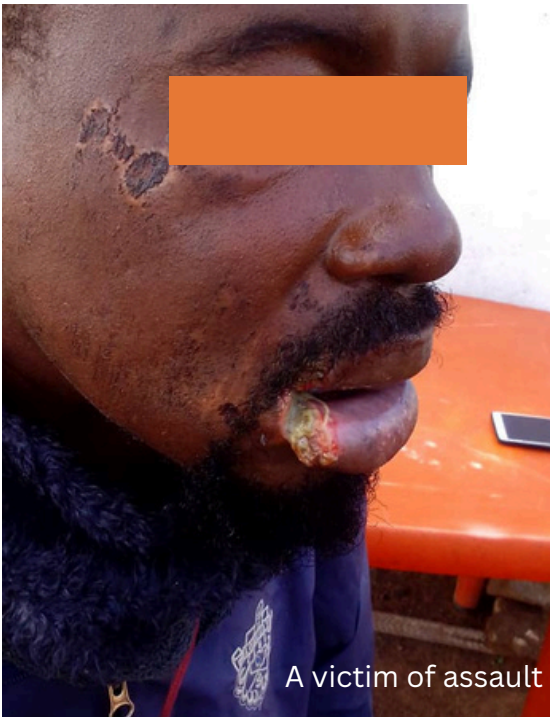
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FEBRUARY VIOLATIONS



COERCION AND INTIMIDATION: RISING THREATS OF VIOLENCE AND FORCED AFFILIATION



A victim of assault

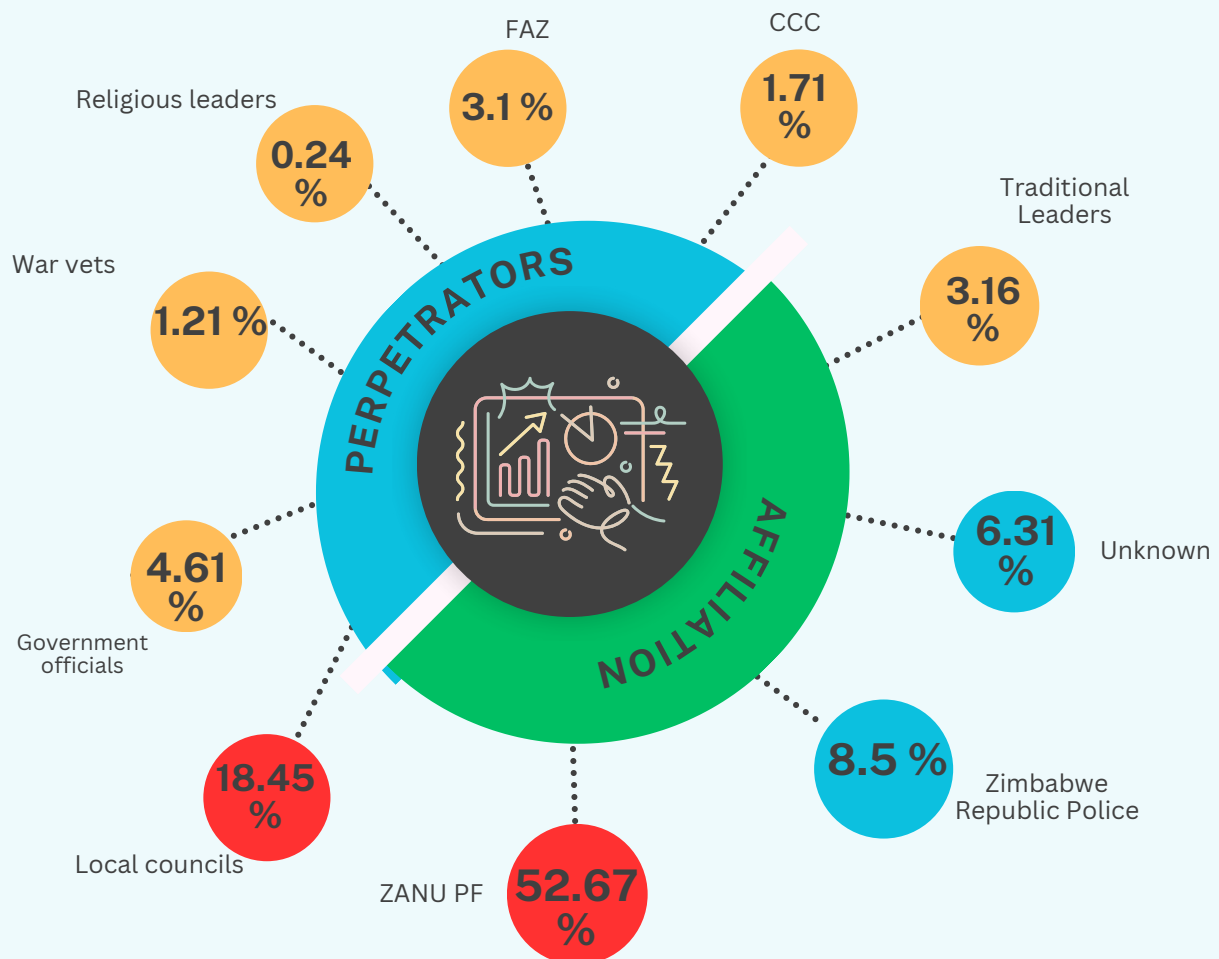
Zimbabwe is witnessing a surge in political violence and threats, fueled by the ruling party's agenda to extend President Mnangagwa's term beyond 2028. In February, 26 incidents of threats and 8 assaults were documented, highlighting the escalating tensions. 703 victims were affected by threats of violence, including intimidation and harassment, while 41 were affected by assaults. Intra-party violence is also on the rise, particularly within the ruling ZANU PF party, where clashes erupt during meetings and community gatherings. A stark example is the physical altercation in Ward 2, Kadoma, where two groups of supporters fought over the '2030 agenda'. Similarly, in Epworth, two CCC members were brutally assaulted by ZANU PF supporters for expressing opposition to the presidential term extension. The victims had earlier on been threatened by

the assailants to speak about the ruling party's agenda since they were not members. Victims were assaulted with metal rods and sustained injuries on the face, mouth and head, and had their phones taken away by the assailants. These incidents underscore the dangers of unresolved historical tendencies of using physical violence to settle political disputes, a common phenomenon during Zimbabwe's elections and politically charged periods. Such actions expose victims and the country to human rights violations, including inhumane treatment and breaches of personal security, contravening Sections 52 and 53 of Zimbabwe's Constitution.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION



The Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) noted a disturbing trend in various constituencies, where community members are coerced into attending ruling party meetings disguised as public gatherings to organize food aid distribution. These meetings, often chaired by ZANU PF leaders, are being used as vehicles for advancing the '2030 agenda' with a clear political agenda. 3 violations against freedoms of assembly and expression were documented affecting 55 victims. In Hurungwe West, village heads summoned meetings under the guise of food aid distribution, only to have ZANU PF leaders take charge. Similarly, in Mupandagwara village, a meeting jointly chaired by ZANU PF and FAZ leaders devolved into thinly veiled threats of violence, with ominous references to the 2008 violence. These incidents have instilled fear among villagers. In Guruve North, villagers were forced to attend a ZANU PF rally at Chipangura primary school, where Ward 5 Councillor Mike Kamuzonde addressed the gathering, replete with threats of punishment for non-attendance and criticism of the ruling party. These actions flagrantly contravene Section 58 of the Constitution, which guarantees citizens the freedom to associate and assemble with organizations of their choice, and explicitly states that no person may be compelled to attend a meeting or gathering.





FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION UNDER ATTACK

The Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) has documented a disturbing trend of suppressing freedom of expression and media freedom, with 22 violations recorded in the reporting month, contravening Section 61 of the Zimbabwean Constitution. 944 people were affected by this breach.

In Gokwe North, Councillor Mr. Mapani of Ward 27 summoned seven community members from Chidora District, forcing them to apologize for publicly opposing the 2030 presidential term. The victims were warned against repeating their actions, which constitutes a violation of freedom of expression and disregard for political rights.

Similar incidents occurred in other areas. In Chiwundura constituency, ZANU PF youths threatened individuals mobilizing support for demonstrations organized by war veterans demanding President Mnangagwa's resignation. In Gokwe Kabuyuni, Chief Chireya, known for supporting the ruling party, convened a meeting with 400 village heads. He instructed them to suppress free expression and warned villagers opposing the 2030 agenda that they would face punishment. These actions undermine the rights enshrined in the Zimbabwean Constitution, specifically Section 61, which guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the media. Incidents in Gokwe North, Chiwundura constituency, and Gokwe Kabyuni demonstrate a disregard for political rights and freedom of expression, with authorities using threats and intimidation to silence opponents of the 2030 presidential term. ZPP strongly emphasises the need for the government to respect the rights of journalists and media professionals to report freely and without fear of reprisal and protect all citizens' right to freely express themselves as well as exercise their political rights without any undue influence.

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN ZIMBABWE



The Zimbabwe Peace Project notes the Zimbabwe Council of Churches's statement on the Church and the Public space, which emphasizes 'ZCC profession of an 'unflinching resolve to remain true to its calling of prophetic presence that promotes a better and inclusive future, one that will enable it to continue nurturing a culture of peace, justice, prosperity, and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.' The statement further notes that it calls for the "church to be a light in the darkness, upholding human dignity."

In light of the shrinking civic space in Zimbabwe it is prudent that ZCC encourages the church "to speak out against injustice and to work to build a more just and equitable society." The statement also calls for the church to promote dialogue, understanding, and forgiveness, and to work to heal the wounds of the past, a key ingredient towards sustainable peace in Zimbabwe.

ZCC further emphasizes the critical importance of constitutionalism, the rule of law, and good governance in Zimbabwe. They highlight that the nation's constitution, designed to uphold justice and human rights, is being undermined, serving to protect and enrich a select few rather than the majority, hence the call for active civic engagement, urging citizens to responsibly exercise their rights and advocate for leaders who embody values of service and righteousness. ZPP greatly notes and appreciates' the church commitment to speaking with a prophetic voice in the public square, and to work to create a more just, peaceful, and prosperous Zimbabwe. Read the full statement [here](#)

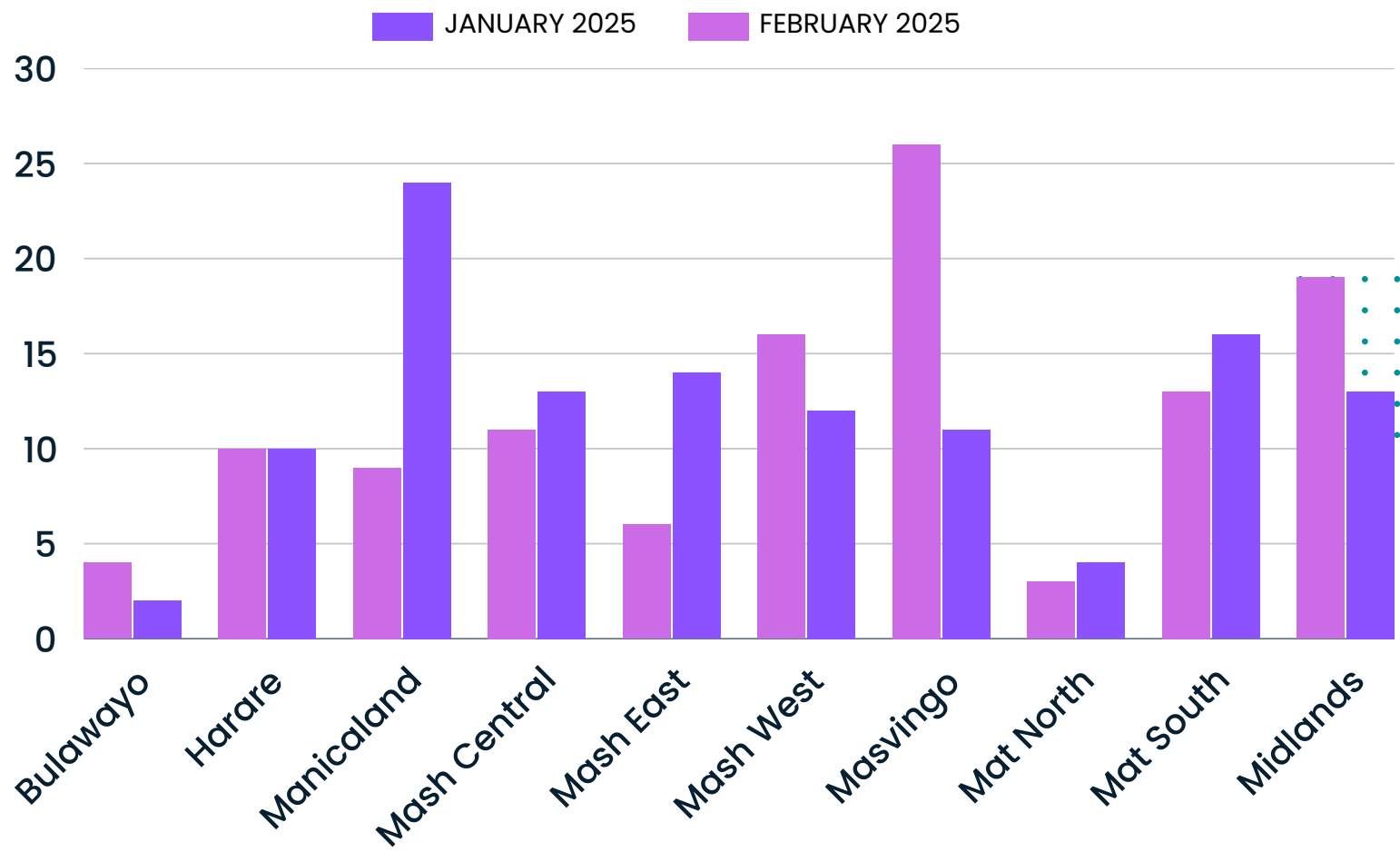
10 STEPS BACKWARDS



...an attack on freedom of expression.

The Zimbabwe Peace Project deeply regrets the government's attack on the fundamental freedoms of the people particularly on Freedom of expression. In February alone, 944 individuals were silenced and denied their right to express themselves. The government's exploitation of the law to suppress freedom of expression is deeply concerning. The recent arrest of journalist Blessed Mhlanga is a blatant attack on press freedom, aimed at silencing critical voices. Mhlanga's charges, allegedly inciting violence through data messages, stem from statements made by liberation war veteran Blessed Geza, highlighting the politicization of the law and suppression of dissenting voices. This arrest sends a chilling message to journalists and media outlets, warning them against reporting on sensitive topics or criticizing those in power. The unjustified denial of bail to these journalists further underscores the government's intent to muzzle dissenting voices. Zimbabwe's dismal ranking on the Press Freedom Index, 160 out of 180, is a stark reflection of this reality, with far-reaching implications for peace and democracy. By stifling free expression, the government undermines the foundations of a healthy democracy, where diverse perspectives and opinions are essential for informed decision-making and holding those in power accountable. This sets a perilous precedent, emboldening those in positions of power within communities to silence or muzzle dissenting voices as has already been seen in various communities where traditional leaders and politicians are threatening and harassing people who do not necessarily agree with their views. Such disregard for individuals rights and freedoms takes us ten steps backwards from creating sustainable peace in Zimbabwe.

PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



Mashonaland West

In Mashonaland West, ZPP documented 16 human rights violations involving a breach of the rights to equality and non-discrimination during food aid distributions, and freedom of assembly and association. In Hurungwe West for example, village heads, allegedly aligned with ZANU PF, are conducting meetings disguised as food aid distributions. These meetings feature ZANU PF district chairpersons and F.A.Z members promoting the 2030 campaign agenda, forcing villagers to chant slogans and denounce opponents as sellouts. Villagers are being intimidated, with threats of removal from food aid and pfumvudza beneficiary lists if they oppose the agenda. In other incidents, village heads used their positions to gather people for ZANU PF's political gain. There were incidents of politicisation of food aid where in Kariba government sponsored donation of rice to Kariba was distributed through the mayoral office, however, the distribution process was marred by partisanship, as Ward 12, a peri-urban area led by ZANU PF, was excluded from receiving rice. The reason cited was that the distribution was led by Mrs. Mary Chibi, a CCC councilor, who allegedly excluded the ward represented by Councilor Mr. Makanyaire, a ZANU PF member. This incident highlights the politicization of food aid, where support is withheld from areas perceived to be opposition strongholds.

PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Masvingo

This report also highlights Masvingo Province, which recorded 26 violations, up from last month 11. Key human rights violations have been reported in various wards, including Ward 16 of Bikita East, where Councillor Gladys Muchuchuru distributed wheat, but community members were unexpectedly asked to pay \$2-3 for transport, sparking discontent. Meanwhile, in Masvingo, the New Start Centre's closure has denied the local population, mostly women, access to essential health services, including cervical cancer screening, HIV and TB testing, family planning, and STIs treatment. In Charamba village, Zaka South Constituency, Wilson Charamba, a child care worker and VIDCO chairperson, denied a female victim her agricultural inputs from the Pfumvudza program, despite her contributing to the village levies and registration. Furthermore, community members in Gutu Central were coerced into attending ZANU PF meetings, where they were deceived into believing they needed to bring their national identification cards for fertilizer distribution. The meeting featured intimidating speeches, including one by Mrs. Musarurwa and Mr. Dandira, who advocated for President Mnangagwa's extension in power until 2030. Additionally, over 150 people were turned away from the Chiredzi Registry on February 13, 2025, due to a claimed lack of ink, highlighting the obstacles faced by citizens in accessing essential documents and services.

Harare

In Harare, 10 human rights violations were documented, including assault, intimidation and harassment and unjustified arrest. In Epworth, Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) supporters were assaulted by ZANU PF youths for opposing the 2030 agenda. The incident, a violation of the victims' personal security, highlighted escalating political tensions surrounding the ruling party's contentious "2030 agenda". Other incidents underscore the erosion of fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression. The case of journalist Blessed Mhlanga's unjustified arrest and prolonged detention demonstrate how political events can stifle free speech and media freedom. The court's denial of bail and prolonged detention sends a chilling message to journalists, warning them against reporting on sensitive topics or criticizing those in power. The wife of Blessed Geza, a war veteran who publicly demanded that ZANU PF must go, was repeatedly questioned on her husband's whereabouts by the Zimbabwe Republic Police's Criminal Investigation Department. During the questioning, she was subjected to intimidation and harassment.

Bulawayo

In Bulawayo Province, a relatively low number of human rights violations were reported (4 incidents), which include malicious damage to property. Although the National Youth Day celebrations on February 21st passed peacefully, isolated incidents of intimidation marred the event. ZANU PF youths coerced informal traders, including vendors, to attend the celebrations at the ZITF hall. Moreover, the city's deteriorating service delivery situation continued to undermine citizens' access to fundamental human rights, including the right to clean water and sanitation, as the provision of potable water remained inadequate as well as the right to a healthy environment, as poor waste management and lack of proper sanitation infrastructure posed health risks. The crackdown by local authorities in the city centre disproportionately affected vendors, who rely on informal trading to earn their livelihoods. The situation highlights the need for improved service delivery and protection of human rights, particularly for vulnerable populations.

PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Midlands

In the Midlands, 19 human rights violations were reported, highlighting a persistent disregard for people's freedoms. The violations included intimidation, harassment, and threats of violence, largely linked to the ruling party's contentious bid to extend the presidential term beyond 2028. Chief Chireya and Councilor Mapani in Gokwe North District's Kabuyuni Constituency used their powers to intimidate and threaten victims on account of their known or perceived opposition to the 2030 agenda. In so doing, they suppressed dissenting voices and undermined freedom of expression. Furthermore, constituencies like Chriumanzu South, Redcliff, and Gokwe Nembudziya saw persistent political discrimination in government-sponsored food aid distributions, disproportionately affecting hungry communities. Intimidation of individuals and liberation war veterans was also reported in Chiwundura, Shurugwi, and Gweru, as ZANU PF sought to silence dissenting voices opposing the extension of the President's term beyond 2028. These violations disregarded fundamental freedoms, including political rights, freedom of expression, assembly, and association, as well as the right to adequate food.

Mashonaland Central

Mashonaland Central witnessed 11 human rights violations, including forced attendance at a ZANU PF rally in Guruve North, where citizens were coerced into attending a meeting at Chipangura Primary School on February 15, 2025 highlighting the ruling party's continued disregard for citizens' rights to freedom of assembly and association. Furthermore, the burst of the slime dam at Ran Mine on February 20, 2025, released toxic substances into the environment, posing a significant threat to the health and safety of local communities. The potential contamination of borehole water sources is a major concern, as cyanide and other chemicals could seep into the water supply, making it hazardous for human consumption. To address these violations, it is essential to hold perpetrators accountable, ensuring that those responsible for forced attendance at rallies and environmental degradation are brought to justice. Additionally, immediate action should be taken to mitigate the damage caused by the slime dam burst and prevent further harm to local communities. Measures should be taken to prevent similar environmental disasters in the future, including regular inspections of mining facilities and enforcement of environmental regulations.

Manicaland

Manicaland saw a significant drop in human rights violations, from 24 in January to 9 in the latest reporting period. However, threats of violence, unfair food aid distribution, intimidation, and harassment persisted. Residents struggled to access social services. In Chimanimani East, ZANU PF's Brighton Dzakandwa intimidated community members, blocking their participation in school development programs due to their perceived opposition party affiliations. This suppressed dissenting voices and created a climate of fear, undermining freedom of expression, association, and assembly. In Ward 15, Chikanga Constituency, Councilor Charles Kavhenga and party chair Mildred Dangen misappropriated food aid meant for people with disabilities, denying them their rightful allocations and intimidating them instead.

PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Mashonaland East

In Mashonaland East, 6 human rights violations were documented, a drop from 14 the previous month, with notable incidents of political discrimination in food aid distributions and violations of freedom of assembly and association. A notable incident occurred in ward 16 Chamapango, involving corruption records against Councillor Garwe and ZANU PF district chairperson Elias Svowa. Community members were forced to bring new sacks for food packaging and pay \$1 per sack for transportation, highlighting corruption and exploitation of vulnerable communities, abuse of power, and violation of human rights, specifically the right to food and non-discrimination. This incident exacerbates poverty, erodes trust in institutions, and perpetuates inequality, emphasizing the need to hold perpetrators accountable, ensure transparent food aid distribution, and strengthen institutions and accountability mechanisms.

Conclusion

As noted in the report, the human rights situation in Zimbabwe is concerning, with 117 documented violations in February alone, affecting 7,292 people. The perpetrators are mostly linked to the ruling party, local authorities, and traditional leaders. To improve this dire situation, ZPP recommends to the government and the judiciary to uphold the rule of law and protect human rights and for the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission to ensure effective mechanisms for investigating and prosecuting human rights abuses. In the same light, ZPP further encourages the ZHRC to collaborate with stakeholders to review and reform laws that restrict freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

Matabeleland South

In Matabeleland South, a disturbing trend of partisan-based food aid distribution has been noted, with 13 documented human rights violations, including a case in Bulilima West ward 20 where 400 community members were excluded from food aid distribution for their alleged affiliation to opposition political parties. This blatant disregard for vulnerable populations' rights has severe consequences, exacerbating hunger and malnutrition, undermining the right to equality, eroding trust in institutions, and perpetuating poverty and vulnerability. To address these violations, it is essential to ensure transparent and fair food aid distribution based on need, hold perpetrators accountable, strengthen institutions' independence, and promote the right to equality and non-discrimination, guaranteeing all citizens access to essential resources regardless of their political affiliation.

Report Human Rights Violations



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