



Monthly Monitoring Report

APRIL 2025

www.zimpeaceproject.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).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) documented a total of 93 human rights violations affecting 6059 individuals. The data reveals that threats of violence were the most frequently recorded type of abuse, reflecting an increasingly hostile and intimidating environment.

Other commonly reported violations included physical assault, unfair distribution of aid, and restrictions on access to essential services. More severe incidents, such as arbitrary arrests, torture, and abductions, though recorded in fewer numbers, highlight an ongoing erosion of civil liberties and the rule of law. Victims continued to experience infringements on their rights to freedom of expression, assembly, association, and access to social services, painting a concerning picture of the state of human rights across the country.

The affected individuals included 3096 women and 2963 men. Those targeted spanned various demographics, including informal traders, students, artisanal miners, and members of both ruling and opposition political parties.

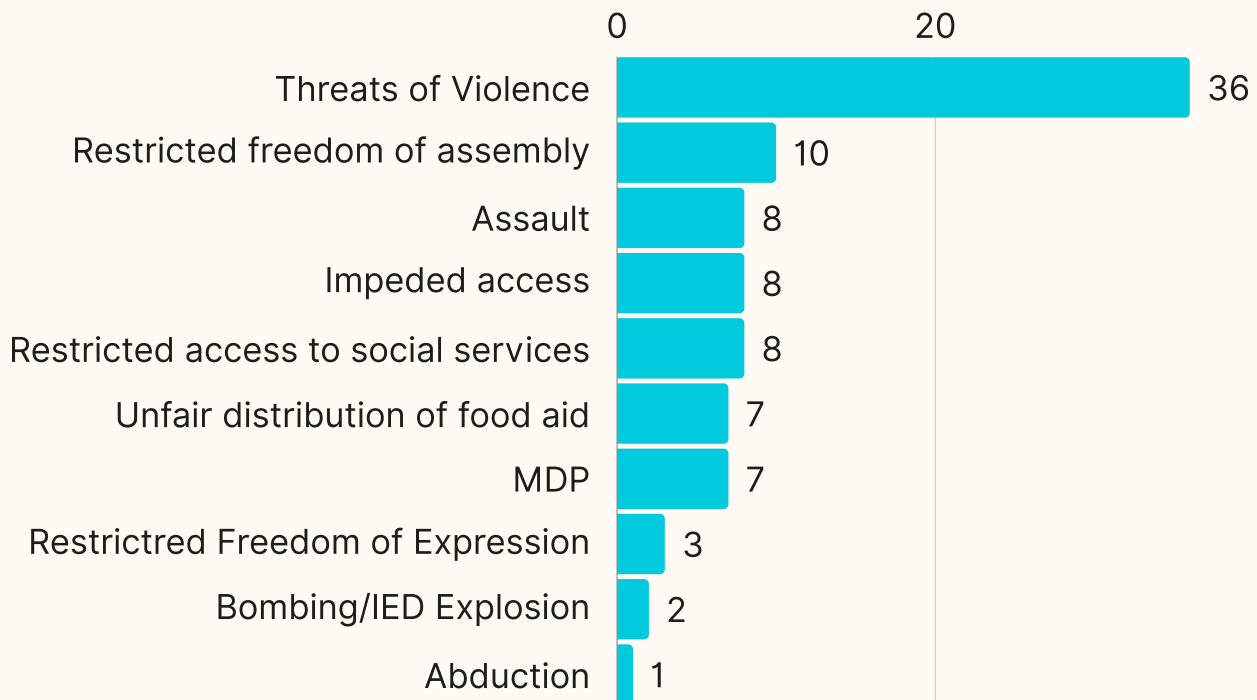
Analysis of the data indicates that individuals affiliated with the ruling party, ZANU PF, were responsible for 34.1% of the reported violations. The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) accounted for 24.1% of the perpetrators, while local councils were responsible for 15.64%. The Zimbabwe National Army contributed 6.41%, and government officials 4.62%. Members of the opposition Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) were responsible for 4.36% of the cases. Traditional leaders and members of the Forever Associates of Zimbabwe (FAZ) were implicated in 2.82% and 1.79% of violations, respectively. A further 6.15% of violations were committed by individuals not affiliated with any known political party or institution.

Geographically, Masvingo Province recorded the highest number of violations with 20 cases, followed by Harare Province with 14, mirroring patterns observed in March. Other provinces included Manicaland (12), Mashonaland Central (13), Mashonaland East (11), and Mashonaland West (12). Notably, the Midlands Province recorded a decrease in reported incidents, from 14 in March to five in April. Bulawayo (1), Matabeleland North (2), and Matabeleland South (3) reported significantly fewer violations.

Despite the worrying trends, the month also brought a positive development in the form of a High Court ruling affirming the constitutional right to strike by the University of Zimbabwe's Association of University Teachers (AUT). However, there were regressive developments in other sectors. Violations within healthcare institutions and the enactment of the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Act prompted a strong response from civil society organisations, which issued a press statement condemning the move.

ZPP notes with concern the continued perpetration of politically motivated violence, coercion, and systemic abuses by both state and non-state actors. Human rights violations data collected by ZPP in April underscores an urgent need for institutional reform, enhanced accountability, and the implementation of protective mechanisms to safeguard the fundamental rights of all Zimbabweans. Without deliberate action to reverse these trends, the pursuit of sustainable peace, democracy, and justice remains critically undermined.

APRIL VIOLATIONS



POLITICAL INTIMIDATION AND THE EROSION OF CIVIC FREEDOMS IN ZIMBABWE

The systematic harassment, intimidation, and politically motivated violence targeting citizens, activists, and human rights defenders continue to pose a serious threat to peace and human rights accountability in Zimbabwe. During the reporting period, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) documented 36 violations related to threats of violence, affecting 3113 people (1535 women, 1578 men) across the country. These threats often escalated into physical violence, as reflected in eight cases of political assaults, in which 37 people were assaulted, and seven incidents of malicious property damage. These acts represent a clear violation of fundamental rights, including the right to personal security, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of expression, and protection from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

In the run up to the country's Independence Day on April 18, citizens experienced heightened harassment under the guise of fundraising efforts led by village heads and ruling party officials. In Mudzi North, every villager over 18 was coerced into paying US\$3, allegedly split between acquiring a ZANU PF membership card and contributing to provincial independence celebrations. Refusal to comply reportedly led to blacklisting from community development initiatives and food aid programs. This form of intimidation led to many citizens surrendering their freedom as their political rights were also trumped upon. Similar coercive tactics were reported in Marondera West, Wedza North, Shamva North, Seke, and Mutare North, with some efforts targeting school children and civil servants, violating their rights to free association and non-discrimination.

In more extreme cases, politically motivated violence intensified. In Glenview South, Ward 32, the homes of a former elected councillor and another activist were bombed days before a crucial by-election, damaging property and injuring residents. In Guruve South, Ward 7, a CCC activist's home was attacked with explosives, seriously injuring a family member. A black Ford Ranger vehicle without plates was seen circling the area prior to the incident, raising suspicions of targeted political terror. The victim also received repeated threats in the lead-up to the attack, largely for his suspected role in mobilising protests.



KEY VIOLATIONS

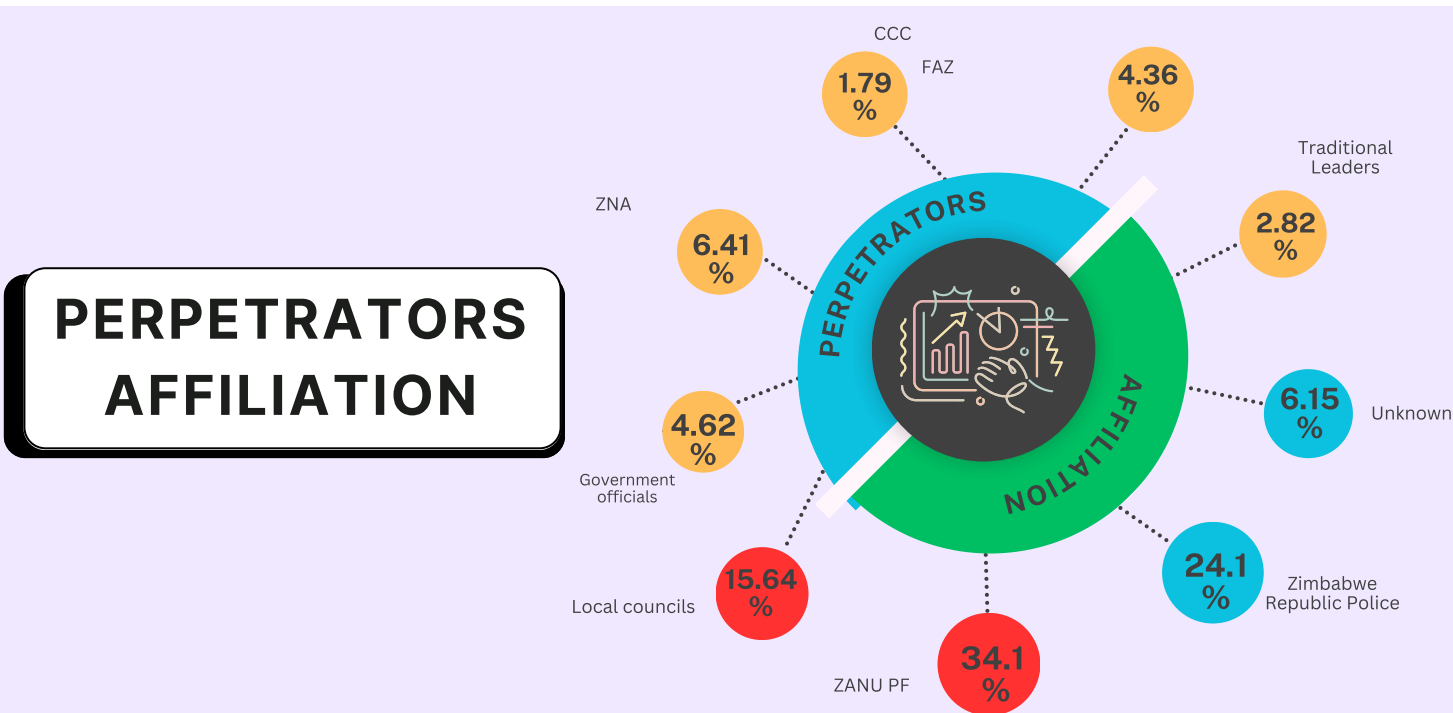
These acts point to an orchestrated campaign to instill fear, silence dissent, and deter civic participation. Victims are often unable to report due to fear of reprisal and lack of trust in law enforcement, which is frequently viewed as complicit or aligned with perpetrators. These incidents violate multiple provisions of the Zimbabwean Constitution, including Section 58 (freedom of association) and Section 53 (protection from inhuman treatment), as well as Zimbabwe’s obligations under international human rights law.

The Zimbabwe Peace Project calls on the government to ensure accountability and impartial investigations and that law enforcement agencies must protect all citizens regardless of political affiliation. ZPP also calls on citizens and human rights actors to strengthen support mechanisms for victims in order to promote peace and uphold democratic values.

ABDUCTION AND TORTURE

On April 23rd in Harare Central, Ward 6, a disturbing incident of politically motivated abduction and torture was documented, highlighting serious human rights violations involving state actors. A former supporter of the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) was forcibly taken by two uniformed police officers in broad daylight. The victim was bundled into an unmarked vehicle and transported to an undisclosed location where he was subjected to physical torture. The assault was allegedly linked to his suspected involvement in political activities associated with war veteran and former senior member of the ruling party, Blessed Geza, implying a targeted crackdown on citizens opposed to the regime.

This incident represents a grave violation of several constitutional and international human rights protections. Most notably, the abduction and torture contravene Section 53 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, which guarantees freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Moreover, the involvement of law enforcement officials, who are constitutionally mandated to protect citizens, in the unlawful detention and abuse of an individual, points to a troubling pattern of state-sanctioned repression and gross misconduct. The victim was later released without charge, however, the impunity with which such acts are carried out underscores the broader climate of fear, intimidation, and political persecution, particularly against those aligned with opposition or alternative political views



TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN ZIMBABWE

In a significant win for human rights and labour freedoms in Zimbabwe, High Court Judge Justice Benjamin Chikwore affirmed the constitutional right to strike for the University of Zimbabwe's Association of University Teachers (AUT). This ruling not only protects AUT's freedom to protest—through singing, placard-waving, and peaceful gatherings—but also sets a progressive legal precedent for all trade unions and workers' movements in the country.

By accepting peaceful protest safeguards proposed by AUT and the police—including designated picketing areas and liaison protocols—the court has shown that

lawful dissent and peaceful assembly can coexist with public order, in line with the rights enshrined in Sections 59 and 65 of Zimbabwe's Constitution.

ZPP hopes that this ruling marks a turning point in labour rights jurisprudence. It should send a message that the right to protest is not a privilege for the few, but a protected constitutional right for all citizens, including public sector employees who have long faced intimidation and disruption during strikes as well as human rights activists who are concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in the country. As AUT legal advisor Munyaradzi Gwisai rightly noted, the judgment goes beyond the University of Zimbabwe, it fortifies democratic space across the entire labour sector. It is a timely reminder that respecting workers' voices strengthens governance, and that justice is best served when the law protects, not punishes, peaceful dissent.

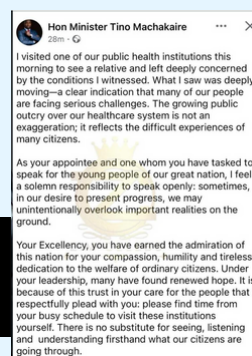
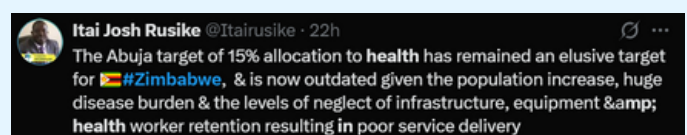
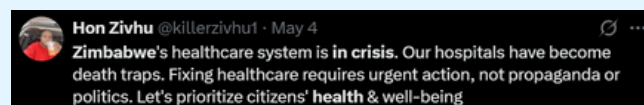
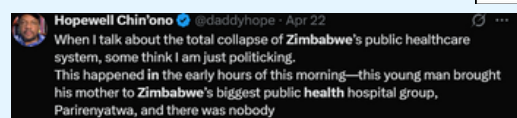
This ruling must now be applied consistently and fairly to ensure that no worker or union, or any other citizen is criminalised for demanding dignity, fairness, and accountability.



10 STEPS BACKWARDS

Concern over deteriorating healthcare services in Zimbabwe

The state of healthcare in Zimbabwe remains a pressing human rights concern, particularly as it relates to the right to life and access to emergency services. Several incidents have highlighted the tragic consequences of systemic healthcare failures, including cases where victims lost their lives due to the unavailability of ambulances, lack of essential medication, and inadequate medical attention. These deaths reflect a broader collapse in the public health infrastructure that disproportionately affects the poor and vulnerable as their only resort are the healthcare institutions closer and accessible to them. The situation in public hospitals is dire, and critical shortages of essential supplies further culminates in staff demoralization further compromising the right to healthcare. This crisis not only violates the constitutional right to health but also undermines peace and social stability, as the public loses confidence in state institutions to protect and uphold basic human dignity. The inability to guarantee healthcare as a fundamental service erodes trust in governance and fuels public frustration, deepening societal inequalities and tensions.



16 April 2025

We, the undersigned Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Zimbabwe, express great reservation on the enactment of the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Act, a draconian law that threatens to shut down civic space, criminalise CSOs legitimate activities, and undermine Zimbabwe's constitutional democracy.

This repressive legislation represents an unprecedented assault on civic space, the rule of law, and the fundamental freedoms enshrined in our Constitution and international human rights instruments to which Zimbabwe is a party.

Since the Bill was first gazetted in November 2021, the CSOs tirelessly opposed its progression through extensive and genuine engagement with all arms of the government and various commitments were made to improve the text of the Bill. At the time of enactment, CSOs engaged the Attorney General's Office with concerns as a precursor to a meeting with President Emmerson Mnangagwa. However, the engagement was not in good faith as the Bill was gazetted on 11 April 2025 prior to the promised engagement with the Executive. Preceding this, CSOs had made oral and written submissions to the Parliamentary Legal Committee, Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and participated in public hearings convened by parliament, as required by the Constitution. The issue of civic space was tabled as a critical agenda item in the Zimbabwe's Arrears Clearance and Debt Resolution Process, and submitted a formal position paper to the Ministry of Finance on 10 March 2023.

A significant milestone in CSOs advocacy was the meeting with President Mnangagwa on 17 March 2023, following which he temporarily withheld assent to the Bill, a hopeful indication of constructive engagement. At every stage, CSOs have advocated for regulatory reforms that respect the Constitution, preserve civic space, and ensure continued contribution to national development goals. However, the enactment of the PVO Amendment Act is a betrayal of dialogue and citizen involvement in governance.

CSOs recall the urgent letter from four UN Special Rapporteurs dated 17 December 2021, which warned that the Bill, now law, would "have grave consequences for the exercise of civil and political rights, including the right to freedom of association of PVOs in Zimbabwe." A follow up letter was written by the four UN Special Rapporteurs dated 27 November 2024 expressing great reservation on how the PVO amendments did not comply with Zimbabwe's United Nations treaty obligations. Following Zimbabwe's review by the United Nations Human Rights Committee, the government was encouraged not to enact the PVO Amendments in their current state as these were not in compliance with its treaty obligations provided in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The enactment of this law, and the removal of the clause on need to comply with the Financial Action Task Force Recommendations (FATF) in the preamble, especially after Zimbabwe was removed from the FATF grey list in 2022, demonstrates a wilful disregard of global guidance. FATF and UN Special Procedures have recommended that the need for compliance with the FATF Standards and Recommendations should not be used as a justification for closing civic space by any country.

The legitimacy of the legislative process that also led to enactment of the Act, in particular the public consultations mandated under sections 139 and 141 of the Constitution were fundamentally flawed. Public consultations in Harare, Chinhoyi, Gweru, and Masvingo were marred by violence and intimidation, forcing legislators to abandon proceedings and silencing the citizen's voices. At the same time, the Portfolio Committee recommendations, such as extending the transitional period to nine months, were ignored. Further, inconsistencies marred the legislative process, with amendments from the Committee stage omitted in the version that was passed by the Senate on 17 October 2024.

Given these flaws, the urgency to enact the law demonstrates suspicion by the state on the activities of CSOs. Contrary to this suspicion, CSOs in Zimbabwe have historically supported national development and human rights, from the liberation struggle to post-independence reconstruction.

Over the past 3 decades, CSOs have delivered humanitarian assistance and emergency relief, supported health, education, and social protection initiatives, empowered marginalised communities, including persons with disabilities, women, and the youths, and contributed to governance reforms and the protection of fundamental freedoms. Rather than recognising the role of CSOs as genuine development partners, this law seeks to stifle CSO operations and criminalise genuine contributions.

Given these concerns, CSOs urgently call upon-

The Government of Zimbabwe to:

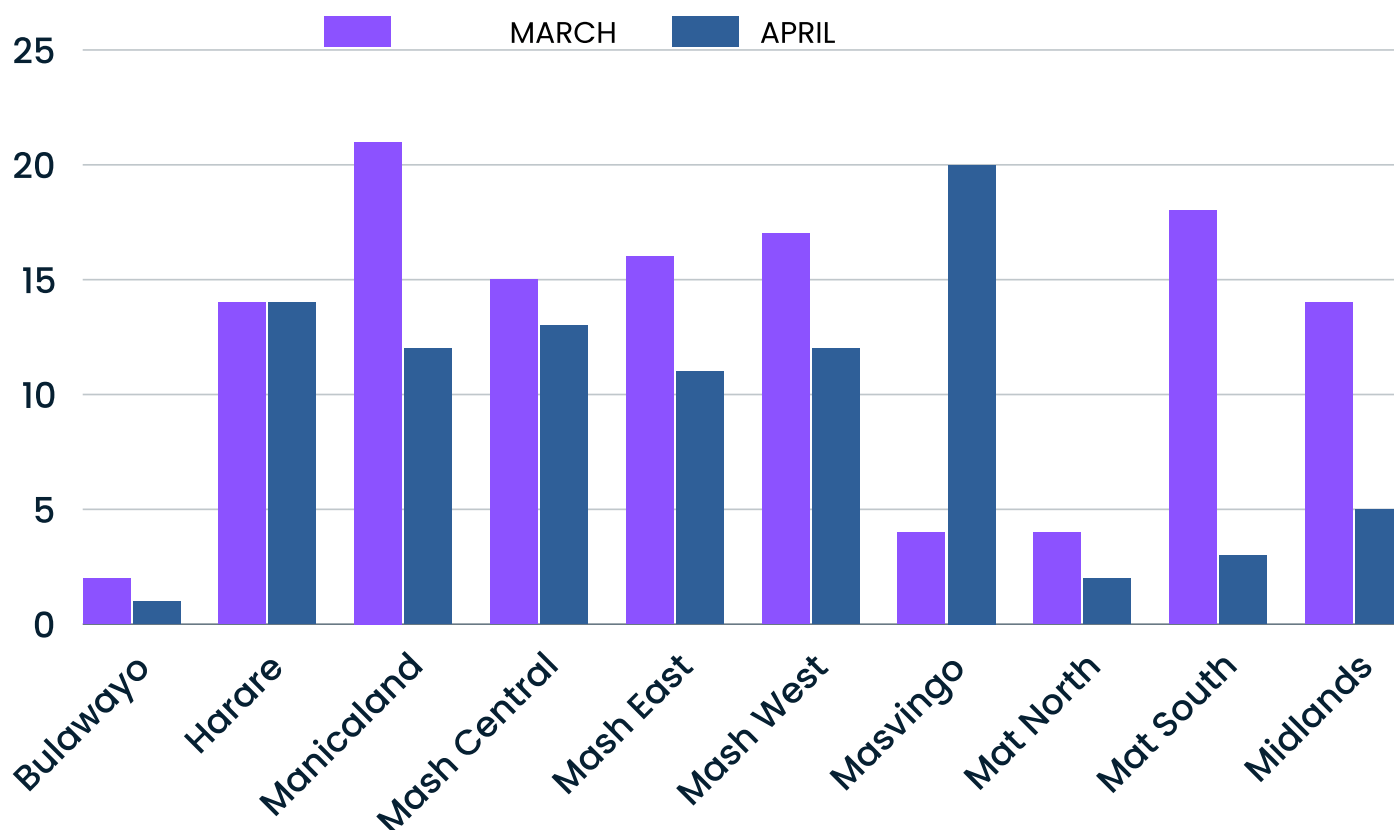
1. Repeal the PVO Amendment Act to safeguard civic space, constitutionalism and restore public trust.
2. Respect Zimbabwe's regional and international human rights obligations, particularly under the ICCPR, UDHR, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.
3. Commit to continued dialogue with all stakeholders aimed at creating an atmosphere, where CSOs can thrive and contribute meaningfully to the national development goals.

//ENDS//

List of Endorsing Organisations

1. Amnesty International - Zimbabwe 2. Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe 3. Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa 4. Bikita Residents and Ratepayers Association 5. Bulawayo Progressive Residents' Association 6. Bulawayo Vendors and Traders Association 7. Chitungwiza Residents Trust 8. Christian Legal Society of Zimbabwe 9. Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition 10. Conscious Development and Empowerment Trust (CODET) 11. Community Podium 12. Community Youths Development Trust 13. Community Tolerance Reconciliation and Development 14. Conscious Development and Empowerment Trust 15. Content Creators Network 16. Divine Foundation Trust 17. Gutu United Residents and Ratepayers Association. 18. Habakkuk Trust 19. Legal Resources Foundation 20. Media Alliance of Zimbabwe 21. Magamba Network 22. Masvingo Residents Forum 23. Masvingo United Residents and Ratepayers Alliance 24. Masvingo Centre for Research Advocacy and Development 25. Masvingo Media Center 26. Matabeleland Pulse 27. Nurse Aides Association of Zimbabwe Trust (NAAZT) 28. Simukai Residents Trust 29. Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network 30. South Western Region Gender Network 31. Sunshine Community Development Trust 32. United Chiredzi Residents and Ratepayers Association (UCHIRRA) 33. Varsity Social Hub 34. Veritas 35. Vimbainashe Trust 36. WELEAD Trust 37. Women's Academy for Leadership and Political Excellence 38. Women and Girls Matters Development Trust 39. Women's Institute for Leadership Development 40. Women In Governance and Peacebuilding 41. Youth Forum 42. Zimbabwe Democracy Institute 43. Zimbabwe Council of Churches 44. Zimbabwe Human Rights Association 45. Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 46. Zimbabwe Institute 47. Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights 48. Zimbabwe Peace Project 49. Zimbabwe Women Against Corruption Trust 50. Zimbabwe Trust 51. Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations

PROVINCIAL OUTLOOK



Harare

In Harare Province, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) documented 14 human rights violations during the reporting period, highlighting a troubling pattern of judicial repression, harassment, and politically motivated intimidation. Key among these was the continued denial of bail and the use of prolonged pre-trial detention as a punitive tool. Journalist Blessed Mhlanga of Heart and Soul TV (HSTV), who was arrested on 24 February 2025, was detained for 72 days before being released by order of the High court on the 6th of May 2025. Mhlanga is now facing joint charges with his employer under two counts of transmitting data messages allegedly inciting violence or property damage. In another stark example, 95 individuals arrested on 31 March for allegedly participating in a demonstration opposing President Emmerson Mnangagwa's continued rule beyond 2028 were denied bail and remain detained. They face charges of unlawful gathering with intent to incite violence. Beyond legal persecution, ZPP also recorded cases of harassment and intimidation of citizens, particularly in Seke and Epworth, ahead of the national Independence Day commemorations on 18 April. These coercive tactics included forced fundraising and threats for non-compliance, contributing to a climate of fear. Additionally, political tensions escalated in Glenview, where explosions damaged property in what was widely perceived as an intimidation tactic ahead of local by-elections. Collectively, these incidents illustrate a deepening erosion of civil liberties and the weaponization of state institutions to silence dissent and suppress fundamental freedoms.

Matabeleland South

ZPP documented three human rights violations, highlighting ongoing challenges in access to basic services. In Wards 3 and 5, the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) has failed to supply water, offering only excuses as communities continue to suffer. Residents are relying on rainwater, walking 3 to 4 kilometers to access distant boreholes, or resorting to buying water from private vendors for an average of 10 Rand for 20 litres. The province also witnessed malpractices in the distribution of government sponsored food aid in areas such as Matobo South. Despite the allocation being intended for a three-month period, only a one-month supply was distributed, with each recipient required to pay 25 rand to cover transport costs for a 50kg wheat allocation. The persistent failure of ZINWA and the financial burden placed on food aid recipients underscore the ongoing neglect of essential service delivery and the growing vulnerability of rural communities.

Masvingo

In Masvingo Province, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) documented 20 human rights violations that reflect a persistent pattern of economic, political, and social repression affecting vulnerable populations. In Gutu Central, informal vendors were subjected to harassment and had their goods forcibly confiscated, undermining their livelihoods and right to economic participation. Such actions not only inflict immediate financial losses but also exacerbate poverty and insecurity for already struggling families. In Chivi, wards 12 and 13, villagers faced threats of eviction to make way for an irrigation project, with no alternative land allocated for resettlement by the state, an act that violates the right to adequate housing and land tenure security. This has left affected communities in a state of fear and uncertainty, with potential long-term displacement and loss of ancestral homes. In Bikita South, the healthcare system was reported to be in a dire state, with medical facilities lacking essential drugs. This systemic neglect endangers the lives of patients, depriving them of their right to health and contributing to preventable suffering and fatalities. Political discrimination was also widespread, particularly in the distribution of food aid, where access was reportedly based on political allegiance, denying critical support to opposition-aligned or non-affiliated individuals. In the weeks leading up to the Independence Day celebrations, villagers across several areas were coerced into contributing funds under threat of violence or exclusion from future aid. These practices violate freedoms of association, expression, and personal

security, instilling fear and deepening divisions within communities. The cumulative effect of these violations is the erosion of trust in public institutions, increased social tensions, and a shrinking civic space, which altogether hinder sustainable peace, inclusive development, and democratic governance in the region

Manicaland

In Manicaland Province, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) documented 12 human rights violations reflecting the pervasive abuse of authority, political discrimination, and coercive practices that continue to undermine fundamental freedoms. On 25 April 2025, in Golowa Business Centre, Wendumba Village, Mutare North, a traditional leader was physically assaulted by villagers angered by the unfair distribution of social welfare wheat, revealing both the desperation in communities over access to basic resources and the breakdown of trust in local leadership. In Mutasa Central, Ward 15, Eri Mudzindiko blocked the appointment of a female villager as a village health worker despite the community's preference for her. He cited her alleged disrespect for ZANU PF and labeled her "stubborn," denying her the role in a clear act of political discrimination. The matter went unreported, reflecting fear or resignation in the face of political interference. Elsewhere in Mutare North, government ministries pressured public servants, including teachers at Chipfatsura Primary School, to contribute USD \$1 each toward funding the Independence Day celebrations. A letter endorsed by traditional leaders, including Headman Tafirenyika Solomon, was circulated to schools, demanding contributions in both cash and kind for the event at Gomorefu Secondary School in Mutare West. These actions constitute financial coercion and misuse of public service structures for partisan ends. Moreover, traditional leaders in Ward 11 openly violated Zimbabwe's Constitution by displaying political bias during national events. In the lead-up to Independence Day celebrations, villagers in multiple areas faced coercion to financially contribute under threat of violence or future exclusion from development aid. These coercive tactics foster fear, suppress dissent, and politicize basic community engagements, severely infringing on the rights to free association, equal participation in public life, and personal security.



The poster features a portrait of a young Black man on the left. On the right, the text reads: "DO NOT JUST WATCH" in small white letters, followed by "Report Human Rights Violations" in large white letters. Below this is the WhatsApp logo and the number "078 412 3456". A line of text says "Save our number and send a Hi to start your report". Further down is "Call us" above a red "HOTLINE" button with a white telephone handset icon. At the bottom are the numbers "0774883417" and "0774883406". In the top right corner is the ZPP logo. In the bottom right corner, a hand is shown holding a smartphone displaying a form for reporting violations.

DO NOT JUST WATCH

**Report
Human Rights Violations**

WhatsApp
 **078 412 3456**

Save our number and send a Hi to start your report

Call us

 **HOTLINE**

0774883417 0774883406

ZIMBABWE PEACE PROJECT

Mashonaland West

In Mashonaland West, ZPP documented 12 human rights violations that reflect the persisting climate of political tension, impunity, and disregard for citizens' rights. In a chilling incident that occurred just after midnight, homesteads of two ZANU PF supporters, a male and that of an elderly female villager in Chimbaga Village, were simultaneously attacked by a group of unidentified assailants. Although the exact motive remains unclear, it is strongly suspected that the violence was politically motivated, stemming from ongoing factional conflicts. In another troubling case, the Municipality of Chinhoyi, in collaboration with local ZANU PF members, destroyed smallholder maize fields in Alaska as part of a controversial cleanup operation ahead of the provincial Independence Day celebrations. Using heavy machinery, including graders, the authorities cleared the fields without any prior warning or consultation with the affected farmers, many of whom relied on those crops for food security and livelihood. No compensation was provided to the victims of this destruction, and although complaints were lodged with the police, law enforcement officials were reportedly reluctant to take action—illustrating a systemic failure to protect citizens from politically endorsed abuses. These violations highlight the multifaceted nature of human rights abuses in the region, where political rivalries manifest through violence and economic sabotage. The destruction of livelihoods and the use of intimidation tactics to settle political scores represent clear breaches of constitutional protections.

Mashonaland East

In Mashonaland East Province, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) documented 11 human rights violations, reflecting deepening concerns over political coercion, financial exploitation, and intimidation of citizens. In Mudzi North, villagers over the age of 18 were compelled to pay a total of US\$4 for purchasing a ZANU PF party card and funding the upcoming Independence Day celebrations. This enforced fundraising was orchestrated by local village heads and ZANU PF leadership, placing a significant psychological and financial burden on residents, many of whom are already economically strained. Similar coercion was reported in Marondera West and although reluctant, the community complied out of desperation due to hunger. In Wedza North's Ward 13, village heads attempted to collect money from every household to fund Independence Day events, leading to resistance from villagers who cited extreme poverty and inability to provide for their families. While overt threats were not issued, villagers were warned of blacklisting from aid programs if they refused to pay, an indirect form of coercion that violated their freedom of choice and right to assistance. These violations reflect a pattern of politically motivated coercion and manipulation, where public resources and national celebrations are weaponized to enforce party loyalty. The use of threats, financial exploitation, and fear to maintain political dominance not only violates basic constitutional rights such as freedom of association, expression, and protection from forced political affiliation, but also erodes the dignity and agency of vulnerable communities.

Midlands

In April, ZPP documented five human rights violations in Midlands Province, reflecting a notable decrease from 14 the previous month. However, despite the reduction in numbers, the nature of the violations indicates ongoing political tension and intimidation. At Gambiza Business Centre, in Chiwundura constituency ZANU PF youths interrogated residents, demanding they declare their allegiance to the ruling party. The orchestrated nature of the harassment was underlined by the fact that the youths were reportedly brought in from outside the Chiwundura area to avoid identification. Meanwhile, in Gokwe Sesame, ZANU PF chairperson Mashoko Darlington and his associates verbally threatened residents who did not attend the national Independence Day celebrations, accusing them of sympathizing with the non-ruling party figures, a perceived opposition movement. They vowed retaliation against those deemed disloyal. These incidents, though fewer in number, highlight the persistent use of intimidation to suppress dissent and control political loyalty. The forced pledges of allegiance to the ruling party, threats of retribution, and politicization of national events reflect serious breaches of constitutional freedoms, particularly freedom of association, expression, and political choice.

Mashonaland Central

In the lead-up to Zimbabwe's Independence Day celebrations on April 18, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) documented a troubling pattern of coercive fundraising practices that violate constitutional rights and perpetuate fear within communities. 13 violations were documented in the province. Residents were compelled to pay an average of USD\$2 per household toward the upcoming Independence Day event. The collections were enforced with intimidation, those who declined to contribute were branded as "sellouts," a label that carries significant social stigma and potential political retaliation. This practice undermines the citizens' right to free association and protection from coercion. Similar violations were recorded in Chomagora Village in Mount Darwin South, and in Shamva North. These practices reflect an entrenched culture of politicizing national events by leveraging state-aligned community structures, such as traditional leadership, to extract funds from vulnerable populations under duress.

Bulawayo

The province is marred by serious shortages of potable water. Residents in areas such as Nguboyenja, Makokoba, and Mzilikazi have endured prolonged periods without access to clean and safe water, a situation that gravely undermines their basic human rights and dignity. The erratic and often unannounced changes to the water-shedding timetable have created significant uncertainty, with some households going for several consecutive days without any water supply. In desperation, many residents have resorted to sourcing water from unprotected and potentially contaminated sources, placing their health at serious risk. This crisis directly contravenes fundamental human rights principles, particularly the right to water and sanitation as recognized in both Zimbabwe's Constitution and international human rights instruments, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The state has a clear obligation to ensure that all individuals have continuous, sufficient, and safe access to water, especially for drinking, cooking, and hygiene purposes. The failure to uphold this right disproportionately affects women, children, and the elderly, groups that often bear the brunt of water-related burdens within households.

Matabeleland North

There was generally a climate of fear and repression despite only two violations being documented in the province. On April 2, the ZANU PF Provincial youth officer Landi Mudimba, issued warnings of unspecified consequences to villagers suspected of supporting Geza, urging all village heads to shift their allegiance to the ruling ZANU PF party. Further escalating tensions, on April 22, during a gathering at the Binga District Center, District Development Co-ordinator Mr. Kabome threatened civil servants with disciplinary action if they participated in a stay-away protest allegedly linked to Geza. Kabome summoned the district public service officer and instructed him to monitor staff attendance, emphasizing that any absenteeism would be met with punitive measures. A team of inspectors was dispatched to public institutions to ensure compliance, and by the afternoon, operations across Binga District had resumed as normal. These incidents underscore the ongoing political coercion and misuse of public office to suppress dissent and enforce loyalty to the ruling party.

Conclusion

The overall picture in Zimbabwe reflects a deepening crisis of systemic political repression, veiled as community mobilization, where traditional leaders and public officials are increasingly complicit in suppressing civic freedoms and advancing partisan interests. This trend not only destabilizes local governance but also entrenches cycles of fear, inequality, and silence within communities. The exploitation of food aid as a mechanism for political control is particularly alarming, as it weaponizes hunger and undermines the constitutional principles of non-discrimination and equitable access to state resources. Combined with persistent patterns of threats, intimidation, arbitrary arrests, and coerced political participation, the current situation points to a coordinated erosion of democratic norms. These widespread abuses highlight an urgent need for robust electoral and governance reforms, especially to ensure the neutrality of traditional leaders and the depoliticization of public institutions and resources.

The Zimbabwe Peace Project urges civil society, human rights defenders, and all citizens to intensify advocacy efforts aimed at protecting citizens' rights, restoring accountability, and upholding democratic principles. Without decisive and sustained action, there is a grave risk that a culture of impunity and intimidation will become normalised, further eroding public trust in governance and jeopardizing prospects for sustainable peace in Zimbabwe.

