

Press Statement on the 2025 Human Rights Day

Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP)

10 December 2025

The Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) stands in solidarity with the global human rights community in commemorating the 2025 Human Rights Day under the theme “**Human Rights: Our Everyday Essentials.**” This theme is a powerful reminder that human rights are not abstract ideals, but practical, daily guarantees that uphold human dignity, equality, and freedom. They are the foundation upon which just, peaceful, and democratic societies are built.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe is unequivocal in its commitment to these values. The Declaration of Rights (Chapter 4) affirms that every person is entitled to inherent dignity (Section 51), the right to life (Section 48), equality and non-discrimination (Section 56), personal liberty (Section 49), freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (Section 53), freedom of expression (Section 61), freedom of assembly (Section 58), and the right to a clean, safe and healthy environment (Section 73), among others.

Importantly, Section 44 imposes a clear duty on the State and every person, including juristic persons and private actors, to *respect, protect, promote and fulfil* these rights.

Guided by these constitutional principles and aligned with regional and international human rights norms, the Zimbabwe Peace Project reiterates its commitment to the protection of human dignity and the promotion of peace, accountability, and justice.

Grave human rights violation

In 2025 alone, ZPP has documented 1235 human rights violations affecting 44,853 people (24,476 women, 20,377 men including 659 PWDs) across the country. While these numbers provide only a partial picture, they reveal worrying trends of persecution and intimidation targeting ordinary citizens. Reports of abductions, torture, enforced disappearances, and inhuman or degrading treatment, whether in communities or places of detention, remain deeply concerning and constitute direct violations of Sections 51, 52, 53, and 49 of the Constitution. Although the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) has made commendable progress in investigating prison conditions, particularly issues of overcrowding, poor sanitation, and inadequate healthcare, much more remains to be done to bring the conditions of detention into alignment with constitutional and international standards, including Sections 51 (dignity), 76 (healthcare), and 50 (rights of arrested and detained persons).

Independent Commissions

ZPP applauds the ZHRC, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, and other independent commissions for scaling up outreach and awareness efforts this year. These institutions play a critical constitutional role under Chapter 12 in entrenching a culture of human rights, accountability, and good governance. However, we urge these commissions to shorten investigative cycles, strengthen enforcement mechanisms, and issue timely recommendations, particularly those that facilitate prosecution of perpetrators. Timely action not only ensures justice and redress for victims but also reinforces public confidence in independent institutions and the rule of law.

Service delivery

Across the country, citizens continue to grapple with deteriorating service delivery. Lack of access to clean and safe potable water, persistent refuse mismanagement, failing sanitation systems, and inadequate primary healthcare services undermine rights protected under Sections 73 (environmental rights), 76 (right to healthcare), and 77 (right to safe, clean water and sufficient food). Despite efforts by civil society and communities to hold local authorities accountable, service delivery remains inadequate and, in some areas, dire. This represents a systemic failure that must be urgently rectified to uphold constitutionally guaranteed socio-economic rights.

Violations in mining communities

ZPP is further concerned about escalating human rights violations in mining communities. Numerous cases of displacement, arbitrary evictions, disruption of schooling, loss of farming land, and even fatalities highlight severe breaches of the rights to property (Section 71), education (Section 75), administrative justice (Section 68), and environmental protection (Section 73). We call on all government agencies, including local authorities, traditional leaders, and mining regulators, to ensure strict adherence to environmental impact assessment (EIA) requirements, mining laws, and community consent processes. Natural resources must benefit local communities, not impoverish or endanger them.

Equally troubling are reports of foreign investors and companies subjecting workers and community members to physical, psychological, and economic abuse. Such conduct violates labour rights, as well as constitutional guarantees of dignity, equality, and personal security. These abuses must be condemned and prosecuted without hesitation. The law must apply equally and decisively, regardless of the perpetrator's nationality or economic influence.

As we commemorate Human Rights Day, ZPP underscores that building a peaceful Zimbabwe requires collective commitment. We call on the State to uphold its constitutional obligations under Section 44 and to advance a governance culture anchored in transparency, fairness, and accountability. We urge independent commissions, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary,

Parliament, traditional leaders, civil society, and private actors to work collaboratively to protect the rights of all persons.

In conclusion, ZPP reaffirms that human rights are not privileges, they are everyday essentials that must be safeguarded for all Zimbabweans. We call for strengthened institutional accountability, greater protection of vulnerable groups, accelerated reforms in the justice and security sectors, improved service delivery, and the promotion of dialogue and tolerance across communities. Zimbabwe's progress towards peace, development, and democracy depends on a strong human rights foundation. Let us all recommit, today and every day, to respecting, protecting, promoting, and fulfilling the rights that define our shared humanity and our constitutional identity.