



Zimbabwe
HUMAN RIGHTS
N G O F o r u m

POLITICAL VIOLENCE REPORT

March 2008

24 April 2008

A report by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

OVERVIEW

Being the month in which the 2008 Harmonised Elections took place, March saw a rise in political tensions and an increase in inter-party violence. Although the pre-election environment recorded lower levels of incidences of politically motivated violence as compared to the election periods of 2000 and 2002, pre-election violence remains a worrying trend in Zimbabwean politics. Pre-election violence has been used in the past Zimbabwean elections as an instrument of influencing election outcomes and this, among other administrative irregularities, has marred the electoral process in Zimbabwe.

Organised violence and intimidation of the opposition was rife in the run up to 29 March. Groups of thugs, mainly but not exclusively belonging to the ZANU (PF) party, terrorised and harassed residents, supporters and purported supporters of their opponents. There was a lot of tension, intimidation and violence in perceived opposition strongholds such as Mbare and Epworth where members of the ZANU (PF) party used coercion to try and win the support of the electorate. Of grave concern is the degrading manner in which some of these attacks were carried out. Of note are the incidences in Epworth in which two women were stripped of their MDC party regalia leaving them half naked.

As documented in this report, also of grave concern was the partisanship and selective application of the law by the police in favour of the ZANU (PF) party. It is reported that armed police officers in Mbare watched as ZANU (PF) supporters pelted MDC members in clear disregard of their duty to serve and protect all Zimbabwean citizens. Members of the police force have also been reported to have effected arrests of MDC supporters at the instigation of ZANU (PF) youths without prior investigation, and have refused to effect arrests on ZANU (PF) members. Such partiality by the ZRP has contributed to the unlevel political playing field and has in the past influenced outcomes not only of electoral but also judicial processes in which members of the opposition have sought restitution.

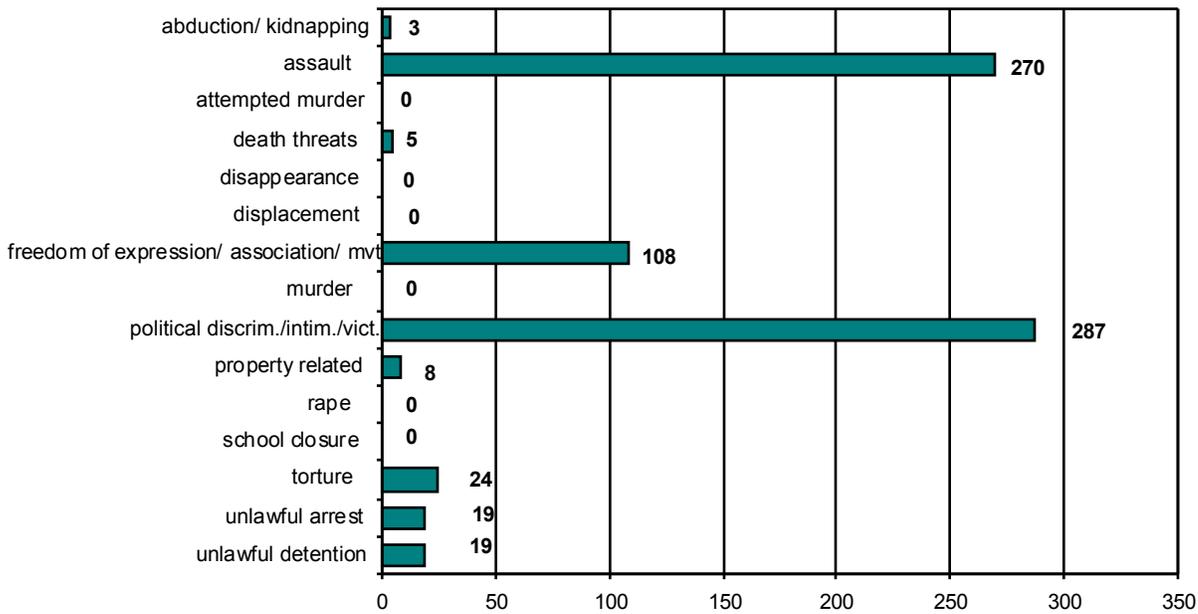
Trends from previous pre-election periods reveal that ZANU (PF) youth militia, the police, the army and intelligence service have, been the main perpetrators of politically motivated violence. In their attacks these groups have used weapons ranging from gun butts, logs, iron rods and even broken bottles. In the 2008 elections the ripping off of MDC t-shirts has also been common on victims that have been attacked whilst putting on MDC party regalia. The month of March saw a total of 24 cases of torture being recorded by the Forum. Most of these incidences have been perpetrated by ZANU (PF) supporters against members of the opposition as retribution for not supporting the ruling party. Also of significance are the high figures of 287 recorded incidences of political intimidation, victimisation and discrimination as well as 270 incidences of assault. ZANU (PF) supporters also mainly but not exclusively carried out these violations.

The pre-election period also saw incidences of clashes between the two MDC factions. This report documents the attack on a member of the MDC (Mutambara) by members of the MDC (Tsvangirai) faction. Also of note is the mobilisation of thugs by prominent government officials, to beat up and intimidate opponents. Hubert Nyanhongo, the Deputy Minister of Transport and Energy, who has been implicated in other incidences of inciting violence, reportedly declared Harare South a no go area for the opposition and led a group of ZANU (PF) youth in an attack against MDC supporters who were on their way to a rally. The Human Rights Forum deplores such actions of intimidation by any political party or individual and calls upon all political players to exercise political tolerance.

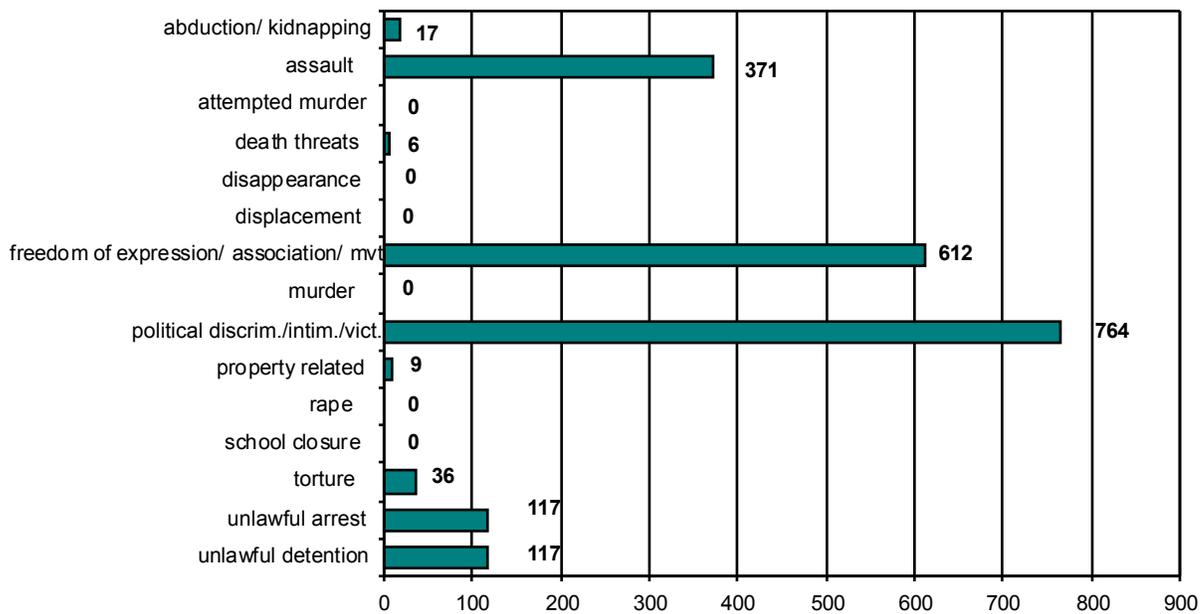
The tense and anticipative environment that prevailed during the pre-election period set the tone for an even more volatile post-election environment. A day after the elections reports of attacks on those celebrating, or purported to be celebrating the victory of the candidates of their choice, were made. It is alarming that the violence and intimidation has continued even after the voting process. The SADC Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections specifically provide for the free participation of political parties, the public media and voters in the electoral processes of their country. This participation is to be without coercion or intimidation and the ruling party must not be permitted to use state resources to gain unfair advantage in the election. These conditions have been breached by the Zimbabwean government as some of the cases documented in this report show. The ruling party has neglected the core democratic principle that Zimbabweans have the right to freely choose whom to elect into government¹. This has thereby tainted the credibility of these elections.

¹“Can the elections be free and fair in the current environment?” Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 2008

Totals: 1 March – 31 March 2008



Cumulative Totals: 1 January –31 March 2008



The graph should be read along with the table depicting the monthly totals of violations for March 2008 on page 15.

Key Abbreviations

AIPPA – Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act	WOZA – Women of Zimbabwe Arise
CIO – Central Intelligence Organisation	ZANU PF – Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
MDC – Movement for Democratic Change	ZCTU – Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
MP – Member of Parliament	ZNA – Zimbabwe National Army
NAGG - National Alliance for Good Governance	ZPS – Zimbabwe Prison Service
NCA – National Constitutional Assembly	ZRP – Zimbabwe Republic Police
OVT – Organised Violence and Torture	ZNLWVA – Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association
POSA – Public Order and Security Act	ZIMTA – Zimbabwe Teachers Association
PTUZ – Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe	ZUPCO – Zimbabwe United Passenger Company
UMP – Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe	ZINASU – Zimbabwe National Students Union

Sources: The information contained in this report is derived from statements made to the Public Interest Unit of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, its members and statements taken by a network of human rights activists and newspaper reports,

Notes to the tables:

Torture:

All cases of torture fall under the definition of torture according to the general definition given in the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment.

The four elements of torture are:

- 1 **Severe** pain and suffering, whether physical or mental
- 2 **Intentionally** inflicted
- 3 With a **purpose**
- 4 By a state official or another individual acting with the **acquiescence of the state**.

Those individuals referred to in point # 4 as state officials include the ZRP, ZNA,

Unlawful arrest and detention:

Arrest by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) with no reasonable suspicion that an offence has been committed. Detention thereafter for a period exceeding 48 hours without access to redress through the courts or subsequent release without charge.

Abduction/kidnapping:

A kidnapping by a member(s) of an organised group that is not the ZRP, ZNLWVA, ZNA, ZPS and the ZNLWVA (as a reserve force of the ZNA).

Disappearance:

Kidnapped persons whose whereabouts remained unknown at the time of reporting.

Property related

These are incidents in which property rights have been violated. This includes arson, property damage and destruction and theft.

Cases of Political Violence

Note: The identities of victims whose names have not been published in the press and are not public officials are protected. This is done in order to protect the victim from further violence, intimidation and possible recriminatory attacks.

The purpose of this report is to record the nature of the politically motivated violence and intimidation that continues to prevail in the country. The Monthly Political Violence Reports are primarily based on victims' accounts, accompanied by medical evidence where possible, obtained from member organisations of the Forum and other partner organisations. Use is also made of press reports.

The Report cannot be considered as the exhaustive record of all incidents of politically motivated violence in Zimbabwe in the period under review. Nevertheless, every incident reported to the Human Rights Forum directly or through its members is meticulously documented and included in the reports. Care is also taken to record the incidents in the language in which they were reported to the Forum.

The situation prevailing in the country is such that it has not been possible to verify all of these accounts. The Human Rights Forum has done what it can to verify the reports, and is satisfied that the vast majority of them are substantially true. It is also not possible to rule out whether a victim's account is exaggerated or contains inaccuracies.

All reports derived from the press are denoted with the symbol Σ .

BULAWAYO

Bulawayo East

8 March 2008

Three members of WOZA were briefly detained and 50 had to receive medical attention after they were brutally assaulted by riot police during a march to commemorate International Women's Day. It is reported that about 1,000 members, including Men of Zimbabwe Arise (MOZA), took part in the event on the streets of Bulawayo. The march was peacefully in progress when a police officer approached the participants as they arrived near the offices of the *Chronicle Newspaper*, where they intended to disperse. As they attempted to do so, riot police appeared from behind the march and a signal was given for them to beat the protestors. Eva Tanyanyiwa from Pumula, was reportedly beaten to the ground by two police officers. They dragged and pulled her towards a police vehicle where she fainted. Jenni Williams the National Co-ordinator for WOZA went to assist her, pleading with the police to release her since she was seriously injured. This led to her arrest. Coordinator Magodonga Mahlangu joined them in solidarity and was detained as well. The 3 were taken to Bulawayo Central Police Station where their details were recorded. The remaining members regrouped and began marching towards the police station to support those who were detained. But before they reached the station riot police caught up with them and continued the assaults. Those in detention were released without charge after about 30 minutes.

17 March 2008

Three male victims report that they were apprehended by CIO agents while putting up MDC campaign posters at Anchor House, and forced to eat the posters before being released.

Lobengula-Magwegwe

28 March 2008

Σ.Newzimbabwe.com

Judith Mkwanda, the ZANU (PF) House of Assembly candidate for Lobengula-Magwegwe, was targeted by unknown assailants while she slept at 2AM when a petrol bomb was thrown into her house shattering windows and rupturing a section of the roof. She managed to escape unhurt with her family.

28 March 2008

Σ.The Standard

Simanzeni Ngwabi (16), was reportedly detained in police custody for more than a week after allegedly insulting the President. Zanu-PF youth militia effected a citizen's arrest on the vegetable vendor at a bus terminus in the city centre. She was handed over to the police by the youths who were pasting posters at the Esigodini terminus. Ngwabi was charged with "undermining the Authority or Insulting the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe" as listed under Chapter 9, Section 33 of the Criminal Law Codification and Reform Act.

Pelandaba-Mpopoma

28 March 2008

Σ.SW Radio Africa

Two members of WOZA were arrested and detained at Western Commonage Police Station in

Bulawayo. Shamiso Shumba and Sithembiso Sibanda were arrested as they were placing WOZA 'Stand up for your child' stickers in Matshobana. It is alleged that a member of Zanu (PF) reported them as damaging a vehicle. They were charged with criminal damage to property. These arrests follow the arrest of 8 members on Good Friday for putting up posters and stickers in Pumula. The 'Stand up for your child' campaign was being conducted to mobilise Zimbabweans to get out to vote and defend their vote. They were released without charge after spending 3 days in custody.

HARARE

Budiriro

16 March 2008

The MDC Chairman for Ward 43 in Budiriro reports that he was attacked by 4 suspected ZANU (PF) supporters for being a member of the opposition. He was coming from an MDC rally in Budiriro 1, when he was approached by the 4 men. He could not identify them as it was dark. He was hit with a broken beer bottle on the back of the head and lost consciousness for a few minutes. The victim was also assaulted with clenched fists while he was lying on the ground.

Epworth

9 March 2008

The male victim reports that he was attacked by a group of MDC (Tsvangirai) supporters while coming from a funeral. He had attended a ZANU (PF) rally earlier in the day. He was reportedly assaulted with a whip, fan belt, iron bar and golf-stick. He was also cut at the back of the neck and ear with what looked like a knife.

10 March 2008

Seven women, who were coming from an MDC rally in Epworth, were attacked by ZANU (PF) supporters who assaulted them and stripped two of them of their MDC regalia leaving the two women half naked. One of the victims reports that shortly after arriving home from the rally, a group of four ZANU (PF) supporters forced their way into her house and assaulted her with clenched fists and booted feet. The assailants then stripped her of her MDC t-shirt leaving her upper body exposed. She managed to escape from the assailants and was given something to wear by a neighbour. Another victim who had her MDC regalia stripped off her also reports that the assailants went on to strip her of the pair of shorts she was wearing underneath her skirt. The women were assaulted with clenched fists and booted feet and one of them with a golf club. Three infants, who were on their mothers' backs, were also assaulted.

20 March 2008

The female victim reports that she was attacked by a group of suspected ZANU (PF) supporters for wearing an MDC t-shirt. She was coming from Munyuki Shops when she saw a group of ZANU (PF) supporters coming towards her. She tried to flee but was kicked and fell to the ground. She was later assisted by passers by who took her to Dombo Clinic.

29 March 2008

A female victim was beaten up by ZANU (PF) supporters while celebrating the victory of the MDC in the Parliamentary Elections in Epworth. She and two friends were beaten with sticks and dragged on a tarred road resulting in her injuring her right arm and head.

Glen Norah

9 March 2008

Two MDC supporters report that they were attacked by a group of ZANU (PF) youths as they were coming from a campaign rally in Glen Norah C. The ZANU (PF) youths used clenched fists, booted feet and broken beer bottles to attack them. The assailants also tore off the MDC t-shirts they were wearing. The victims fled to the home of the MDC youth chairman for the area and he later accompanied them to the police station. A docket was opened for the case.

11 March 2008

The male victim, a member of the MDC (Mutambara) faction, reports he was attacked by members of the MDC (Tsvangirai) faction while putting up campaign posters. He was hit by a moving bicycle and assaulted with clenched fists.

Harare Central

Σ.Zinonline

21 March 2008

State security agents reportedly arrested and detained a local filmmaker, O'Brian Mudyiwenyama, for several hours for allegedly filming campaign posters of presidential aspirant Simba Makoni. Mudyiwenyama was arrested in central Harare while filming pictures for an upcoming movie, *Super Patriots and Morons*. The movie is adapted from a stage play of the same title that was banned about five years ago on the grounds that the play was a direct attack on President Robert Mugabe's administration.

5 March 2008

The male victim reports that he was assaulted and threatened by two police officers after being found in possession of election monitoring material. He was coming from an election monitoring workshop when he was stopped and searched by the two police officers. They took him to the Registrar General's Office for further interrogation, where upon they took him into a small room and told him to remove his shirt and shoes. He was then taken to a small space outside the room and forced to do press-ups and to crawl around the open area. He was also kicked, beaten on the buttocks with a gun but and slapped. He was released after two and a half hours.

Harare South

4 March 2008

Police at Waterfalls Police Station reportedly refused to arrest a group of ZANU (PF) supporters led by aman called Kanyema who were removing posters in the Harare south area. A report had been made by MDC supporters.

10 March 2008

A male victim reports that two ZANU (PF) supporters attacked him at his home. He was selling his wares at his home while wearing an MDC t-shirt. One of the assailants pinned him down while the other assaulted him with a golf club. He later managed to flee from them.

16 March 2008

The female victim reports that she had gone to Order Farm to attend an MDC rally when she and her colleagues were chased and threatened by ZANU (PF) supporters. She was traveling in a pick-up truck belonging to the MDC council candidate for Harare South when they saw a vehicle belonging to the Deputy Minister of Transport and Energy, Hubert Nyanhongo, trailing them. Nyanhongo reportedly got out of his car and told them that he did not want any MDC gatherings in his constituency, and threatened to call the anti-riot police. A group of ZANU (PF) youths in a car without registration numbers then arrived at the scene, and they began to chase the MDC supporters with the intention of assaulting them. The youths allegedly shouted obscenities and threatened to kill the MDC supporters. No one was assaulted.

Harare West

7 March 2008

An MDC activist in Harare West, was attacked as he was heading home after a letter delivery campaign. A car pulled up beside him and the men inside began taunting him for supporting Morgan Tsvangirai. A report was made at Westgate Police Station but the police failed to stamp the medical report request form as they claimed they had no rubber stamp.

Mbare*6 March 2008*

Σ.SW Radio

Police in Mbare reportedly arrested an MDC security official and two vendors in connection with a complaint that had been made against a group of ZANU (PF) youths. The group of ZANU (PF) supporters reportedly forced the police to arrest the three after the MDC security official named Ozius Ndhlovu went to Mbare Police Station to report that ZANU-PF youths were pulling down posters and defacing images of MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai. Ndhlovu was made to wait at the station for about 3 hours .

The ZANU (PF) youths reportedly arrived at the station while Ndhlovu was still there trying to press charges against them. They told the police to arrest Ndhlovu and 3 other people whom they had dragged in with them, claiming they were all defacing posters of the ZANU (PF) Presidential Candidate Robert Mugabe. The police reportedly resisted initially in order to investigate further, but the ZANU-PF youths allegedly became aggressive and threatened the police, saying their hesitance showed they were MDC supporters leading to the arrest of the three. The arrested vendors however reportedly insisted they were not MDC members and had not even registered to vote.

7 March 2008

Armed police officers in Mbare reportedly watched as ZANUF (PF) supporters pelted MDC activists who were attending a rally in the area. The watching police officers reportedly told people who had attended the rally that they would be arrested if they retaliated. Earlier in the day four MDC youths were allegedly attacked and kidnapped for pasting posters and giving out MDC fliers in the area. They were taken to the ZANU (PF) offices in Mbare and were released after four hours after the police intervened.

12 March 2008

ZANU (PF) members attacked seven MDC supporters while they were putting up MDC campaign posters. The ZANU (PF) youths were armed with catapults, stones, broken bottles and whips, which they used in the attack. One of the victims was assaulted until he lost consciousness. He was taken to Parirenyatwa Hospital by three police officers but did not receive treatment. Another victim lost a Nokia cell phone and Z\$100 000 000 during the attack.

28 March 2008

The male victim reports that he is the MDC (Tsvangirai) Treasurer for ward 3 in Mbare and was assaulted by suspected ZANU (PF) supporters while on his way home from a rally. He was reportedly confronted by a group of about 10 ZANU (PF) youths at Matagarika flats, who began assaulting him with a blunt metal object. He lost consciousness and was assisted by passers-by. The incident was reported to Matapi Police Station but no arrests were made.

Zengeza

13 March 2008

The male victim reports that he was attacked by a group of 4 ZANU (PF) supporters while coming from a meeting with the MDC House of Assembly candidate for Zengeza. He was in the company of 4 colleagues when they were approached by the ZANU (PF) supporters accusing them of assaulting their Chairman and pulling down ZANU (PF) posters. They were forced into a combi where they were assaulted with open hands, clenched fists and booted feet. They were driven to St Mary's Police Station where two of them were released on arrival. The victim and a remaining colleague were kept in custody and transferred to Harare Central Police Station after 2 days. They were released on 17 March 2008.

30 March 2008

Σ.Zimonline

Police reportedly arrested 13 opposition activists and two aspiring lawmakers in Chitungwiza after clashes that followed the Harmonised Elections. Parliamentary candidates from rival factions of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party and their activists were detained after clashes which left five people injured. Supporters of one of the candidates, Marvellous Khumalo, had reportedly concluded that they had won against the other candidate Job Sikhala and started celebrating, It is reported that as part of the celebrations they made a mock coffin with the words 'Rest in Peace Jobless' and went to Sikhala's house in St Mary's where they were intercepted by Sikhala's supporters, resulting in the clashes. The clashes left five people with serious injuries including one with a broken arm and another with a gash across his face.

MANICALAND

Mutasa South

3 March 2008

ZANU (PF) candidate for Mutasa South constituency Sherlington Dumbura and war veterans reportedly invaded a farm in the area and proceeded to beat up about 170 workers. They also allegedly stole 1200 litres of diesel, sheep, goats, cattle, and loaded them in a truck owned by Dumbura.

Buhera South

20 March 2008

Anti-riot Police reportedly assaulted MDC supporters who were attending a rally in Birchnough Bridge. The rally was being held close to where a ZANU (PF) rally was also being held. The police were apparently called in by the ZANU (PF) supporters on allegations that they were being provoked by the MDC supporters. There was a stampede of MDC supporters fleeing from the police resulting in injuries. A male victim reports that he was beaten three times on the right hand and also lost his glasses during the chaos.

MASHONALAND CENTRAL

Hurungwe East

29 March 2008

Themba Mliswa, the owner of Spring Farm, is said to have locked in his employees to stop them from voting. Some of the employees managed to escape and reported the matter to the police who in turn came to investigate, leading to the release of the other employees.

Shamva

12 March 2008

The male victim reports that he was attacked by suspected ZANU (PF) supporters for wearing an MDC t-shirt. He was coming from the Chakonda area to his home wearing an MDC t-shirt and carrying MDC campaign posters. A group of three men emerged out of the bush and began assaulting him. The assailants used clenched fists in the attack. The incident was reported to the police and the victim managed to identify two of the assailants as Perete Mazowe and Emmanuel, who are said to be known ZANU (PF) supporters.

MASHONALAND EAST

Mhondoro Ngezi

7 March 2008

The Chief election agent for MDC, Edward Chimedza, reportedly had the rear windscreen of his vehicle smashed by ZANU (PF) youths (Musa Vella, Mangoyi, Chigohonja and Mujuru) when he was coming from attending a rally. The incident was reported to the police and the group was arrested after two days.

Marondera West

30 March 2008

The ZANU (PF) District Coordinating Chairman and Brigadier Ambrose Mutinhiri allegedly led a group of ZANU (PF) youth to Landas Township and assaulted several MDC supporters. Four trucks were reportedly used to transport the assailants. Seven people were seriously injured during the attack. It is also reported that attacks by ZANU (PF) youth in the area were occurring regularly.

Marondera West

30 March 2008

Two male MDC supporters report that they were assaulted by suspected ZANU (PF) supporters while trying to view election results that had been pinned on a tree at Mahusekwa Growth Point. One of the victims reports that he was attacked from behind by one of the assailants identified as Foster Gwanzura, who tried to drag him to the ZANU (PF) post in the area. Both victims report they were assaulted with clenched fists. Both incidences were reported to the police.

MASHONALAND WEST

Zvimba West

14 March 2008

The MDC secretary for administration in Zvimba West, Edmore Goremasandu was reportedly attacked by ZANU (PF) youths namely Chigomamarwa, Moses Chigari, Rutendo Muguza and Amos Matibhiri for being a member of the MDC. The victim was able to escape the first attack but the group of ZANU (PF) youths persued him later that evening to his home. He however was not present at his home at the time but the assailants destroyed the window panes and doors of his home. They also took two pairs of trousers that belonged to him.

Makonde

23 March 2008

David Zungura, the MDC House of Assembly candidate for Mhangura and his campaign team, were assaulted by suspected ZANU (PF) supporters while on a door-to-door campaign in their area. The assailants used logs, booted feet and clenched fists in the attack. Their campaign posters and fliers were reportedly taken from them and their t-shirts burnt. They were also allegedly made to sing songs derogating Morgan Tsvangirai. Zungura lost his spectacles and an unspecified amount of cash. A report was made to Mhangura Police Station.

MASVINGO

Bikita West

Student activists Madock Chivasa, Hillary Zhou, Farirai Mageza, Simbai Chivasa, Tapiwa Mushati, Andrew Madziwa, and Vincent Chimwami, a Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) activist were arrested and detained at Nyika Police Station while distributing election campaign materials for a student campaign urging youths to vote. Simbai and Mardock Chivasa, Mageza and Madziwa were seriously injured and sustained dog bites. They were sent to Nyika Clinic for medical attention.

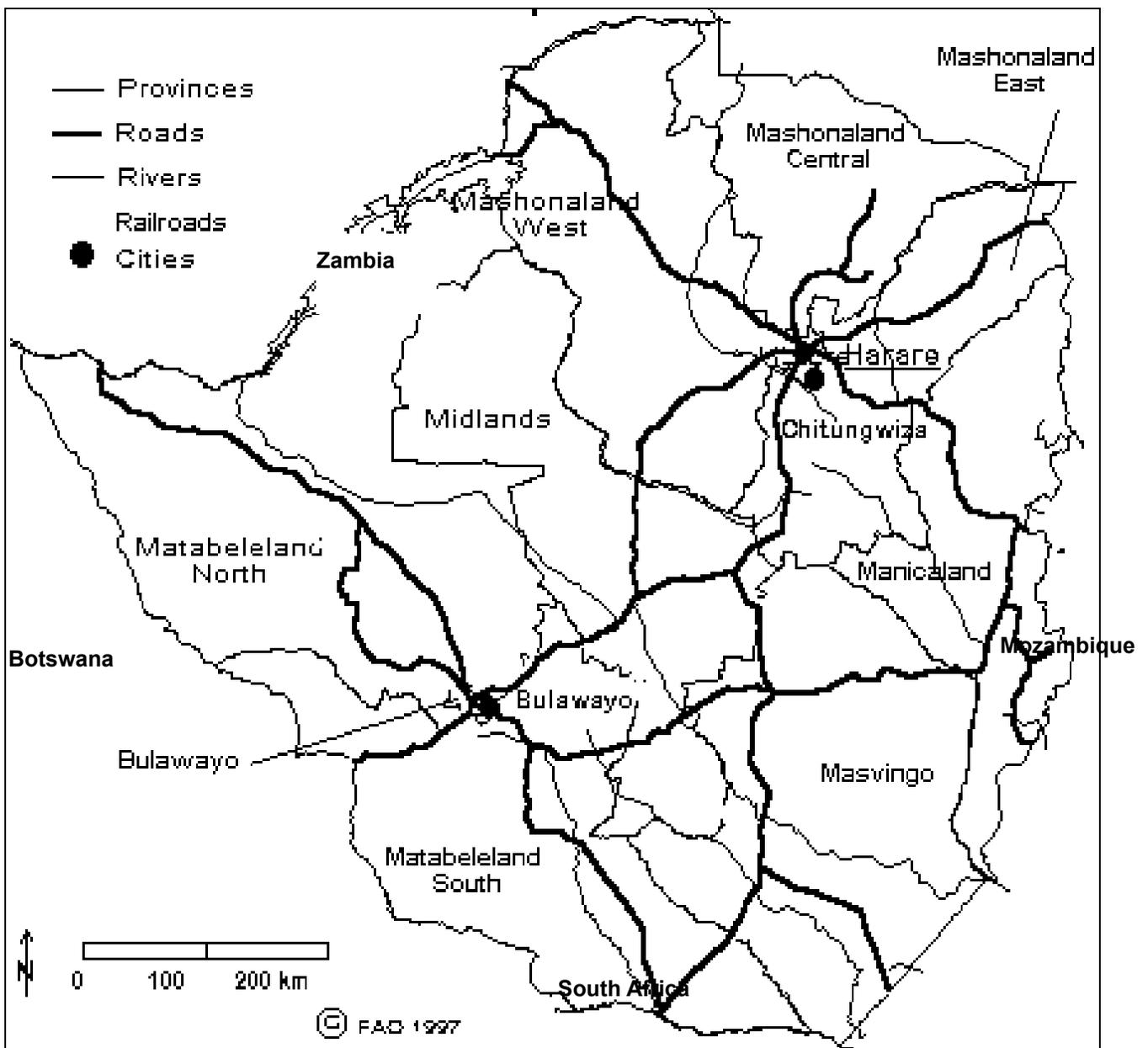
Monthly totals of human rights violations from 1 January 2008 – 31 March 2008

Table 1

	Jan	February	March	Total
Abduction/ kidnapping	3	11	3	17
Assault	56	45	270	371
Attempted murder	0	0	0	0
Death threats	1	0	5	6
Disappearance	0	0	0	0
Displacement	0	0	0	0
Freedom of expr/ass/mvt	94	410	108	612
Murder	0	0	0	0
Political Discrim/ intim/vict	67	410	287	764
Property related	1	0	8	9
Rape	0	0	0	0
School closure	0	0	0	0
Torture	2	10	24	36
Unlawful arrest	56	42	19	117
Unlawful detention	56	42	19	117
Monthly Totals	336	970	743	2 049

MAIN EVENTS 2008	
January	
22	MDC ' <i>Freedom March</i> ' is banned by the police.
23	Morgan Tsvangirai is picked up and detained by the police from his home in the early hours of the morning.
	MDC members are assaulted and arrested as they march towards Glamis stadium for a rally.
25	Members of <i>Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe</i> are arrested and detained following a peaceful demonstration.
February	
13	Student leaders are arrested and assaulted for demonstrating in Harare and Bulawayo.
	The MDC Tsvangirai faction Mabvuku Parliamentary candidate is arrested outside the party's headquarters allegedly for planning a demonstration.
19	Nine members of the <i>Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe</i> are abducted and assaulted by suspected ZANU (PF) supporters before being handed over to the police.
24	The MDC (Tsvangirai) Parliamentary candidate for Mhondoro/Ngezi is detained at Mubaira Police Station for 34 hours on allegations that his campaign team had used abusive language during a campaign session.

<p>March 8</p>	<p>WOZA demonstrates on International Womens' Day. Three members are assaulted and fifty are injured in assaults by anti-riot police.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Seven women are assaulted in Epworth while coming from an MDC rally. Two of them are stripped of their party regalia leaving them half naked.</p>
<p>29</p>	<p>Voting in the Harminised General, House of Assembly, Senate and Local Government elections takes place.</p>



The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (also known as the “Human Rights Forum”) is a coalition comprising 17 member organisations. It has been in existence since January 1998 when non-Governmental organisations working in the field of human rights joined together to provide legal and psychosocial assistance to the victims of the Food Riots of January 1998.

The Human Rights Forum has now expanded its objectives to assist victims of organised violence, using the following definition:

“Organised violence” means the inter-human infliction of significant avoidable pain and suffering by an organised group according to a declared or implied strategy and/or system of ideas and attitudes. It comprises any violent action, which is unacceptable by general human standards, and relates to the victims’ mental and physical well-being.”

The Human Rights Forum operates a Research and Documentation Unit and offers legal services to assist victims of organised violence and torture claim compensation from perpetrators through its Public Interest Unit.

Member organisations of the Human Rights Forum are:

- Amnesty International (Zimbabwe) (AI (Z))
- Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)
- Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ)
- Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa (SAHRIT)
- Legal Resources Foundation (LRF)
- Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)
- Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ)
- Nonviolent Action and Strategies for Social Change (NOVASC)
- Transparency International (Zimbabwe) (TI (Z))
- Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)
- Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of the Offender (ZACRO)
- Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR)
- Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET)
- Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights)
- Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR)
- Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP)
- Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA)

The Human Rights Forum can be contacted through any member organisation or through:

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