



Zimbabwe
HUMAN RIGHTS
NGO Forum

26 June 2011

**ZIMBABWE MUST RATIFY THE UN CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE
NOW!**

On 26 June 2011, the world marks the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. In commemorating this day, the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (the Forum) expresses its deep concern that past eras of organised violence and torture, such as Gukurahundi and the 2008 Elections, remain unaddressed. The likelihood of organised violence and torture being used at any future election is apparent as past perpetrators continue to enjoy impunity.

It is the responsibility of any state to protect its citizens by taking reasonable steps to prevent human rights violations. Using any means at its disposal, the state should carry out investigations, identify those responsible and impose appropriate punishment on perpetrators. The Forum deplores the failure by the Government of Zimbabwe to adequately honour its constitutional obligation to ensure that *“no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading punishment or other such treatment”* as set out in Section 15 of the Constitution. The failure by the government to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of murder, torture, abductions and politically motivated violence threatens the prospects of holding any free, fair and credible election. In the past torture has been used to influence voting patterns.

State agents have reportedly used torture as a means of illegally extracting confessions from accused persons. Political activists have allegedly also used

it, either with the support or acquiescence of the state, to obtain information from political opponents. Detainees have given accounts of indignities, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment endured in police custody.

The Forum thus implores the government to:

- a) Ratify the **United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**;
- b) Ensure that perpetrators of past violence are brought to account and measures are put in place to avert the repetition of such violence; and
- c) Honour its commitment to the full implementation of all the provisions of the Global Political Agreement.

Ends//