



Organised Violence & Torture Report
FEBRUARY 2017

By the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

ACRONYMS

CBD	Central Business District
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
GALZ	Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai
NAVUZ	National Vendors’ Union of Zimbabwe
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
OVT	Organized Violence and Torture
UYO	Unemployed Youth Organisation
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZimPF	Zimbabwe People First
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police

Introduction

Zimbabwe's political terrain continues to be defined by violence. As preparations for the 2018 harmonized elections gather momentum, cases of inter party violence were reported and documented. The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and the Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) were reported as the main perpetrators of violence. The country is currently under threats of constitutional amendments. The Government seems to be determined to go ahead with the proposed amendment of Section 180 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the first proposed amendment since the Constitution came into force on August 22, 2013.¹ The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.1) Bill seeks to change the appointment procedure of the Chief Justice, deputy Chief Justice and the Judge President of the High Court. Public hearings in this regard were done in February and if this amendment sees the light of the day, it will undermine all the current efforts to promote constitutionalism in Zimbabwe and compromise the independence of the judiciary.

On the economic side, the prevailing economic environment is making it difficult for the Government to adequately fulfill the realization of economic, social and cultural (ECOSOC) rights. The right to education continues to be undermined by school heads that send children home over non-payment of school fees. During the month, the Forum received reports on Holy Rosary school head in Mvurwi in Mashonaland Central who threatened to chase pupils home over non-payment of fees.

The right to health was also under threat following the nurses' and doctors' strike over salaries and working conditions. Public hospitals were grounded to a halt; the sick were turned away while some hospitalized patients were discharged.

The distribution of food aid continues to be distributed along partisan lines. During the month, Heal Zimbabwe Trust reported that 76% of the violations reported from 01-17 February 2017 were of withdrawal from food aid beneficiation.²

Service delivery in most towns and cities remains a challenge with poor waste management and erratic water supplies. Some towns like Mabvuku in Harare have not had tap water for the past 20 years exposing residents to unsafe alternative sources of water.

¹ In December 2016, the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs proposed to amend Section 180 and gazetted the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 1) Bill of 2016 published in General Notice 434 of 2016.

² See Heal Zimbabwe Human Rights Violations in Zimbabwe hotspot areas- weekly alert- 1-17 February 2017

Summary of Violations

In February 2017, **20** new victims of Organized Violence and Torture (OVT) were reported and documented from across the country. The Harare Municipal Police and the ZRP continued with their clampdown on vendors in Harare. Running battles between vendors on one side and municipal police supported by ZRP anti-riot squad on the other were reported on three occasions this month and all the victims of this operation were brutally assaulted and had their wares confiscated. It appears that Municipal Police now indiscriminately assaults vendors irrespective of whether they resist arrest or not. These unwarranted attacks appear to be hardening the vendors as they are becoming more militant.

Reports of inter party violence were also received and documented as political parties commenced preparations for the 2018 harmonized elections. From the documented cases, ZANU-PF supporters were the main perpetrators while supporters of the opposition political parties namely the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T), the Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF) and Transform Zimbabwe (TZ) constituted the victims. While perpetrators of violence against opposition party supporters have in the past enjoyed unlimited impunity, three ZANU-PF youths namely Blessing Chinyengetere, Togaraseyi Roronzi and Anyway Chandaengerwa who attacked members of Transform Zimbabwe at a clean up campaign in Chitungwiza were arrested, charged with public violence and will appear in court on 23 March 2017.

Cases of police brutality are also on the rise. More than half (54%) of all the cases documented from the 1st of February 2017 are victims of police brutality. There is also an increase in reports of abuse of ordinary citizens on the roads by the ZRP.

The table below summarises cases of OVT for February.

NB: The following notes should be put into consideration when reading these cases:

- *Human rights violations contained in this report are derived from statements made to the Forum's Public Interest Unit, its member and partner organisations.*
- *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 reprisals.*
- *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 Forum directly or through its members is meticulously documented and included in the report.*

TABLE 1: Reported Incidents of OVT February 2017

Date	Violation	Violation Narration	Number of victims	Perpetrator
01 Feb	Torture & arbitrary arrest & detention	Three people were severely assaulted by members of the ZRP in Harare's Central Business District (CBD) following a clash involving vendors, Municipal and ZRP police officers. The three victims, two vendors and a member of the public who was caught in the melee were apprehended by plain-clothes police officers who assaulted them on the spot. They were taken to Harare Central Police Station where police officers assaulted them again and immediately arrested them on public violence charges.	3	ZRP
06 Feb	Assault	An MDC-T member who had been involved in campaigning for his party was waylaid and assaulted by ZANU-PF youths at Goromonzi Business Centre. The assailants accused him of being a foreigner who was turning people against ZANU-PF.	1	ZANU-PF supporters
09 Feb	Assault	Two unknown men attacked a Zimbabwe People First office bearer at her house in Chitungwiza. The perpetrators barged into her house and asked for ZPF party receipt books. She failed to produce them and was pushed to the floor then assaulted with a hard object.	1	Unknown
11 Feb	Assault	Nicholas Magaya, Kudakwashe Chikwana and Farai Justice Chitukudza, all members the Transform Zimbabwe political party sustained injuries when they were attacked by ZANU-PF youths in Chitungwiza while on a clean-up campaign at Makoni Shopping Centre.	3	ZANU-PF Supporters
11 Feb	Assault	Harare Municipal Police assaulted two (2) vendors who ply their trade in the Harare CBD. The vendors resisted to hand over their wares and were therefore severely assaulted. They presented serious soft tissue injuries.	2	Municipal Police
18 Feb	Assault	Two ZANU-PF supporters at Gora Shops in Harare South Constituency assaulted an MDC-T activist. The victim was discussing the bad economic situation prevailing in Zimbabwe when local ZANU-PF youth leaders attacked him. He presented facial and head injuries.	1	ZANU-PF Supporters
19 Feb	Torture	A 19 year old male youth was grabbed by a police officer by the neck and nearly suffocated him at Southerton Police Station in Harare. The victim's uncle had refused to pay US\$40 to the policeman as fine for an obscure traffic offence. He also could not let them impound the car. The boy was then attacked to force the uncle to surrender the car keys, which he subsequently did after noticing that his nephew was in absolute danger. .	1	ZRP
23 Feb	Assault	Four municipal policemen in the CBD Harare attacked a male vegetable vendor. They found him selling his wares along the street and assaulted him with booted feet and fists. He was handcuffed and taken to the municipal police depot where he was released without charge.	1	Municipal Police
23 Feb	Assault	Three municipal policemen assaulted a woman who sells fruits and vegetables along Robert Mugabe road in Harare. They	2	Municipal Police

		twisted her arm and kicked her with booted feet several times in the back. She was assaulted on the spot and the perpetrators took away her wares.		
25 Feb	Torture	Anti-riot police at Parirenyatwa Hospital assaulted Linda Masarira a civil society activist. The activist in the company of four other women activists had gone to observe the situation at the hospital during the doctors' strike action. They were attacked by the police whilst taking pictures of what was going on at the hospital. She sustained serious injuries and was admitted at the Avenues hospital.	5	ZRP

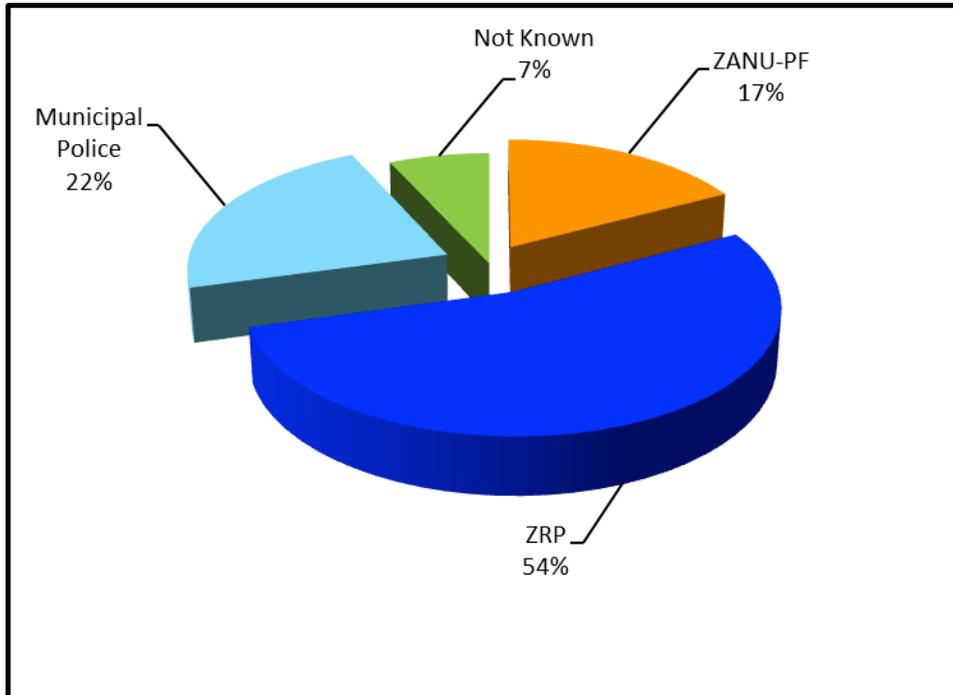
Nature of violations

Violations during February were mostly in the form of torture, assault, arbitrary arrest and detention. The nature of the violations, the victims and the perpetrator category are shown in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: Cumulative Nature of violations January – February 2017

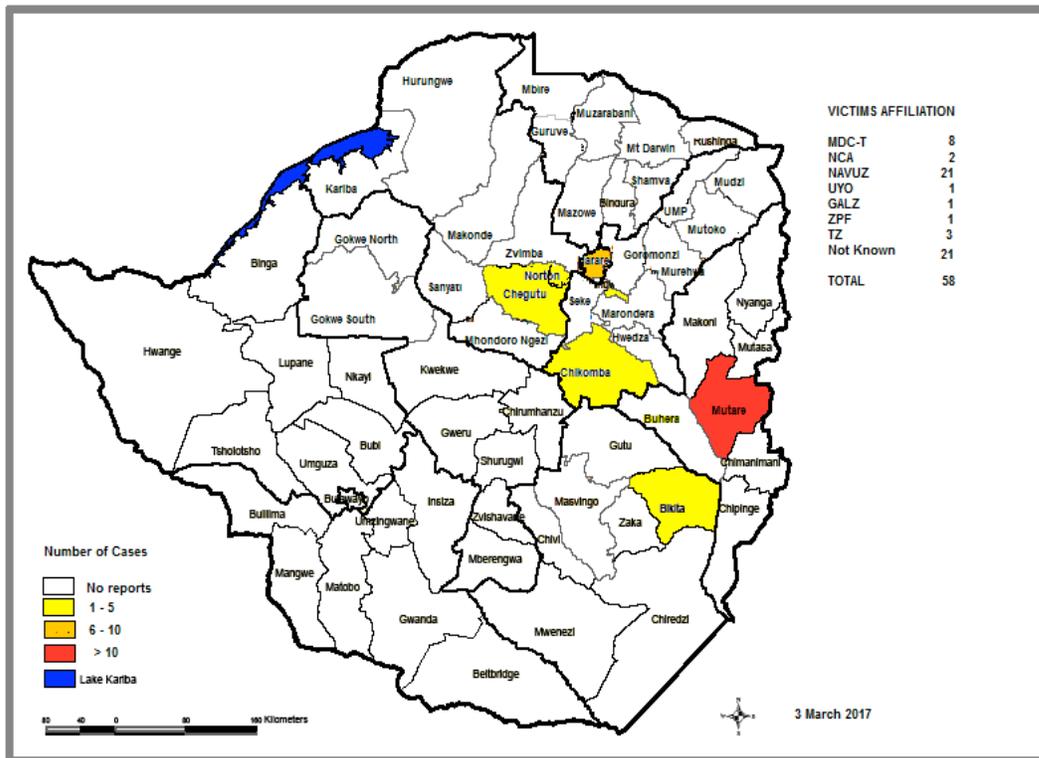
Nature of violation	No of victims	Perpetrator category
Torture	23	ZRP
Assault	22	Municipal police, ZANU-PF supporters, and unknown
Arbitrary arrest & detention	4	ZRP
Harassment & intimidation	1	ZANU-PF Supporters
Violation of the right to equality and non-discrimination	1	Unknown

Figure 1: Perpetrators of violence by institution affiliation 1 January to 28 February 2017



The ZRP were the main perpetrators of violence accounting for 54% of the violence, followed by ZANU-PF, which accounted for 17%, the Harare Municipal police 22% and unknown accounted 7%.

FIGURE 2: Political Violence: New Cases by District: 1 January to 28 February 2017



Conclusion

The continued violation of human rights suggest a lack of commitment by the State to promote, protect and fulfill the realization of human rights of all in accordance in domestic, regional and international treaties. The government must also ensure that justice is done to the victims by bringing all perpetrators of rights violation to book irrespective of their institutional affiliation.