



Organised Violence & Torture Report
MARCH 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
UNCAT	UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UYO	Unemployed Youth Organisation
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZimPF	Zimbabwe People First
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police

Introduction

Zimbabwe continues to face serious challenges on the political, economic and social front. The state of human rights situation remains unchanged and continues to be defined by rights violations. On the political front, there is a real threat of political instability and potential violence as the country prepares for the harmonized elections in 2018 as evidenced by the cases of political violence involving political party supporters. On the other hand State agents continue to resort to the use of torture as a means of punishment and intimidation of citizens. The government seem to have found an excuse for the continued use of torture by rejecting the recommendation by member States to ratify the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and its Optional Protocol (UNCAT) at the recent Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Zimbabwe in Geneva.

The economic crisis is making it difficult for the government to adequately fulfill the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. Food aid continues to be distributed along partisan lines¹. The month of March also witnessed the violation of freedom from arbitrary eviction, which is guaranteed in Section 74 of the Constitution. Villagers of Manzou Farm, Mazowe in Mashonaland Central were evicted and had their property demolished ostensibly to pave way for the First Family to establish a wildlife sanctuary.² Of concern is the fact that the evictions and property demolitions were carried out in contempt of a court order granted two years ago by the High Court of Zimbabwe barring the evictions. In spite of the granting of another court order on 23 March 2017, State agents continued with the demolitions thus undermining the rule of law in Zimbabwe.

Summary of Violations

In March 2017, **20** new victims of Organized Violence and Torture (OVT) were reported and documented from across the country. As political parties commenced preparations for the 2018 elections, six (6) incidences of inter party violence were recorded involving ZANU-PF and MDC-T supporters. Cases of torture continue to be documented. A total of five (5) incidences involving the use of torture by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) were documented. On a positive note in March no running battles involving vendors and the Harare Municipal Police aided by the ZRP were documented compared to January and February.³

¹ See the Zimbabwe Peace Project's January- March Monthly Monitoring Reports

² Since 2014, villagers in Mazowe had endured a torrid time with some unidentified personnel, accompanied by some State authorities that evicted the inhabitants and demolished their homesteads.

³ See the Forum's January and February Monthly OVT Reports

The table below summarises cases of OVT for March.

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 March 2017

Date	Violation	Violation Narration	Number of victims	Perpetrator
06 Mar	Assault & theft	Veronica Mangoti an MDC-T ward official was attacked by ZANU-PF youths in Chegutu town. The victim was organizing transport to carry her fellow party supporters to a rally addressed by their party president in Chinhoyi. She was wearing MDC-T party regalia at the time of the attack. The perpetrators assaulted her with fists and kicked her with booted feet. She lost her Samsung phone and shoes in the process. She reported her case of assault at Chegutu police station but the perpetrators are not arrested.	1	ZANU-PF Supporters
06 Mar	Assault	An MDC-T supporter was assaulted by eight ZANU-PF youths in the Magaba area in Mbare Harare. The perpetrators accused him of operating as a vendor in a zone designated for ZANU-PF supporters only. Though he reported the assault at Matapi police station no action was taken.	1	ZANU-PF supporters
07 Mar	Torture	Anti-riot police assaulted a male vendor during a National Association of Vendors Union- Zimbabwe (NAVUZ) organized demonstration in the CBD in Harare. The vendors were demonstrating against municipal and ZRP police officers’ harassment.	1	ZRP
07 Mar	Torture	Three villagers from Mola communal areas in Kariba district were severely tortured by members of the army. . One was assaulted by the soldiers for leaving a public road repair work before completion. The man had apparently worked for the whole day without food. Other villagers had advised him to leave early because his home was too far away from that point. The second one was falsely accused of stealing a cell phone and was taken to Chalala a fishing camp along Zambezi river where he was tortured together with the Chief’s son. The victims believe they were targeted because of their MDC-T activism. The police refused to record the cases against the soldiers.	3	ZNA
08 March	Torture	Members of the army in Mola heavily assaulted an MDC-T ward official. The victim had questioned the soldiers for distributing social welfare food aid at 0200hrs. This infuriated the soldiers	1	ZNA

		who then assaulted him.		
09 Mar	Torture	Mr. James Chikande a resident of Epworth was hit by a teargas canister fired by anti-riot police while coming from a beer hall. The canister caught him in the face. The police were engaged in some running battles with members of the public at the shopping centre. The matter was reported at Dombo Police Station in Epworth.	1	ZANU-PF Supporters
11 March	Assault	ZANU-PF supporters in Western Triangle Highfield in Harare assaulted Seven (7) members of the MDC-T party. The MDC-T supporters were carrying out a door-to-door campaign in the area when a group of ZANU-PF youths attacked them. The perpetrators claimed that the MDC-T supporters were supposed to seek clearance from ZANU-PF before embarking on their campaign in the area. The six men and one woman reported their case to the police but no action was taken.	7	ZANU-PF Supporters
19 March	Assault	Mr. Murambiwa Dzvengwe the MDC-T Glenview deputy Information and Publicity officer was attacked by suspected ZANU-PF supporters around 1500 hours at his market stall near Harvest House. He was coming from conducting a voter education exercise in Glen Norah when he was stuck by a knife on his left arm and just below his left ear.	1	ZANU-PF Supporters
23 Mar	Torture	Members of the ZRP traffic squad attacked a married couple in the Harare CBD. The rowdy police officers that appeared drunk were controlling traffic and hurling insults at pedestrians passing by. They called the woman a prostitute and slapped her in the face. The husband intervened to save his wife and they turned on him assaulting him with baton sticks, hands and feet. One of the policemen struck him with a tyre spike on the head taking out his eye in the process. The police then fled from the scene.	2	ZRP
27 March	Assault & theft	On 27 March, Lovemore Manyaira was approached by a group of men wearing ZANU PF t-shirts at his workplace at Magaba in Mbare, Harare. The group of men accused him of being an MDC-T supporter. Lovemore was then raided of two car axles and 5 rims of tyres amounting to \$230. The perpetrators were identified as Charles Jimure, Collen and Robert Mayor. The matter was reported at Matapi police station and legal action has been taken to sue the perpetrators.	1	ZANU-PF Supporters
27 March	Assault & theft	Jeffrey Magore of Mbare was attacked by a group of ZANU PF members in party regalia at his workplace in Mbare. The group looted 3 scotch carts, 40 tyres, 40 tyre rims and a tool box in his absence. The perpetrators accused him of being an MDC-T activist.	1	ZANU-PF Supporters

Nature of violations

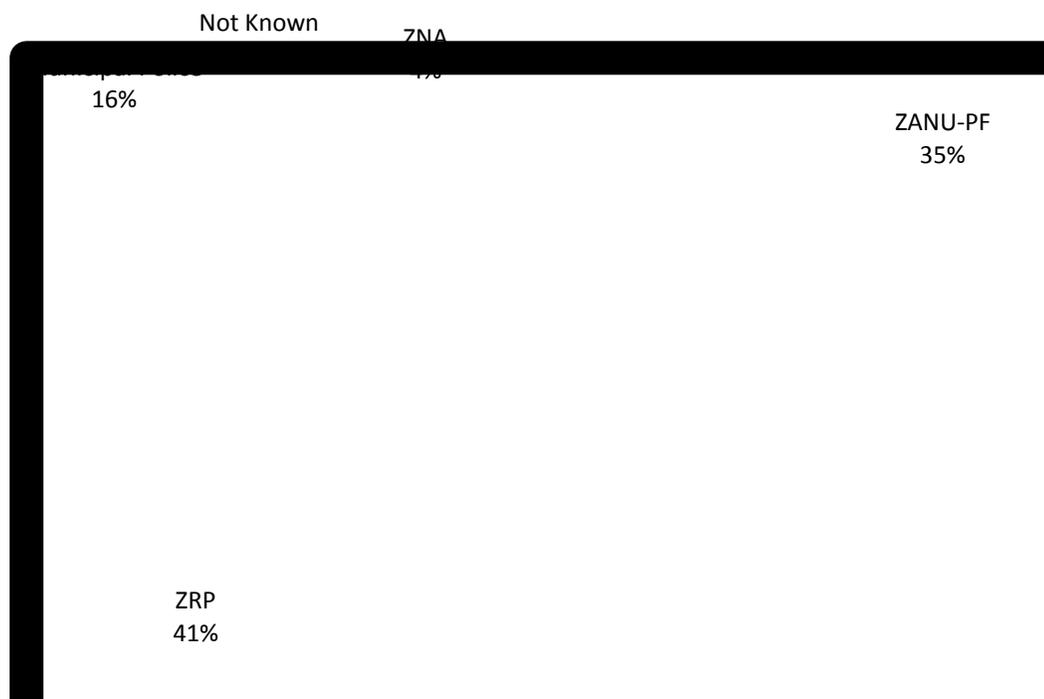
Violations during March were mostly in the form of torture, assault, and theft. The continued use of torture is a sad reality as the Government of Zimbabwe reneged on its commitment at the 2011 UPR of Zimbabwe to ratify the UNCAT and its Optional Protocol.

The nature of the violations, the victims and the perpetrator category are shown in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: Cumulative Nature of violations January – March 2017

Nature of violation	No of victims	Perpetrator category
Torture	31	ZRP
Assault	34	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
Theft	3	

FIGURE 2: Distribution of Perpetrators by Violator Institution 1 January to 31 March 2017



The ZRP were the main perpetrators of violence accounting for 41% of the violence, followed by ZANU-PF, which accounted for 35%, the Harare Municipal police 16%, ZNA 4% and unknown accounted 4%.

Conclusion

In light of the continued use of torture by State agents, there is therefore an urgent need for the government to reconsider its decision at the UPR on the ratification of UNCAT and its Optional Protocol. The lack of commitment by the government to ratify UNCAT and criminalize torture provides an excuse for the continued use of torture and brute force by State agents.

