



10 December 2017

#STANDUP4HUMANRIGHTS

Statement on the Occasion of the International Human Rights Day

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (the Forum) joins the rest of the world in commemorating the United Nations International Human Rights Day on 10 December 2017. This year's theme, '#STANDUP4HUMANRIGHTS' marks the beginning of a year of commemorating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which turns 70 in 2018.

The UDHR, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948, is celebrated as a historic document that laid the foundation for the UN human rights system. It undoubtedly inspired the recognition of human rights in international and regional instruments. 70 years after its adoption, the UDHR still lives on, immortalized in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of Zimbabwe as well as in that of several other UN member states.

This year's International Human Rights Day celebrations also coincide with the onset of the Forum's twentieth anniversary since its inception in 1998. On the occasion of this august day, the Forum reflects on the long and arduous journey it has travelled thus far in pursuit of the realization of all human rights for all in Zimbabwe. As part of that journey, the Forum takes note of the recent change in the presidium, which came after close to four decades.

The Forum therefore calls upon the new government to chart a new course for the nation towards greater respect for all human rights. We urge the new government to respect and promote the enjoyment of all human rights by all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, or political affiliation.

We also call upon the new government to embrace the spirit of the UDHR as embodied in this year's commemorative theme by creating a conducive environment

for all Zimbabweans to freely stand up for their rights. We wish to remind the new government of the crucial role the citizenry played in precipitating the current change through the exercise of the freedoms of expression, assembly and association. In this light, the Forum calls upon the new government to respect, promote and protect these fundamental freedoms, as well as all civil and political; economic, social and cultural; and environmental rights enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

The Forum also wishes to underscore the need for the new government to ratify all outstanding human rights treaties such as the UN Convention Against Torture in order to ensure that all the fundamental human rights are protected and guaranteed in Zimbabwe. We also call upon the new government to ensure the re-alignment of all laws to the Constitution of Zimbabwe and to urgently address current socio-economic challenges facing the country to enable the citizenry to enjoy an adequate standard of living.

The Forum recalls the flagrant human rights violations in Zimbabwe in 1998 when it came into existence and hopes that the coming of its twentieth anniversary will also mark an improvement in the protection and promotion of all human rights in Zimbabwe. We particularly call upon the government of Zimbabwe to implement all outstanding electoral reforms and to create an electoral environment conducive to the holding of free, fair and credible elections ahead of the 2018 harmonized elections.

As the Forum we continue on the journey towards a society, which promotes and protects all human rights of all people. We remain committed to the spirit of the UDHR and unwaveringly state that **WE STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS!**

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Members of the Forum

- Amnesty International-Zimbabwe
- Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
- Civic Education Network Trust
- Counselling Services Unit
- Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe
- Justice for Children
- Legal Resources Foundation
- Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe
- Media Monitors
- Non-violent Action and Strategies for Social Change
- Research and Advocacy Unit
- Students Solidarity Trust
- Transparency International-Zimbabwe
- VERITAS

- Women of Zimbabwe Arise
- Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender
- Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights
- Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust
- Zimbabwe Human Rights Association
- Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
- Zimbabwe Peace Project
- Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association

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