1.0 Introduction

On 27 March 2020, President Emmerson Mnangagwa issued a directive for a 21-day Lockdown starting from Monday 30 March 2020 as part of government’s measures to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. During the declaration, the President advised of the deployment of the security forces to enforce the National Lockdown. Given the possibility of human rights abuses being perpetrated by security forces in enforcing the directive based on August 2018 and January 2019 incidences, the Forum Secretariat and Forum Members have commenced monitoring and documentation of the Lockdown for possible human rights violations.

2.0 Methodology

The information contained in this report was compiled through reports received from the following Forum Members:
- Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights)
- Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP)
- Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)
- Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR)

3.0 General Environment

In the general environment, there was a sizeable number of people at Mbare Musika and the area near Magaba and Magarieta. ZRP officers and Harare City Council Police were cited in Mbare CBD patrolling the streets and urging citizens to stay at home. In areas such as Marondera,奔马 and Sakabva Market in Mutare, police forced traders to disperse crowds, who were buying basic commodities. In Macipia, Highfields, Mbare, Kuwadzana and Tafara in Harare, residents were seen queuing for water at community boreholes.

4.0 Attack on Journalists

2 cases of attacks on journalists were reported. 1 case involved the arbitrary arrest of journalist Kudzai Musungu was reported in Mutare. Police accused him of practising journalism without a press card. It was reported that the Police General Headquarters in consultation with the Ministry of Information Publicity and Broadcasting Service had relayed the information to all police stations that journalists can use the expired accreditation cards without hindrance.

In Mutare, student journalist, Tatenda Julius who is attached at Pungwe News (New Ziana) was arrested in the city’s residential suburb of Dangamvura while taking pictures related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown. The student journalist is being accused of practising journalism without a press card. The government needs to sensitise the uniformed forces on the role of the media, especially in the current efforts to arrest the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic.

5.0 Assaults

3 cases of assault were reported. 2 people were assaulted with baton sticks and booted feet by ZRP officers and Harare City Council Police were cited in Harare CBD near Kaguvi Street and Jason Moyo Avenue. 1 other case was reported from Harare CBD near Kuwadzana and Selous. 2 people were assaulted with baton sticks and booted feet by ZRP officers and Harare City Council Police were cited in Harare CBD near Kaguvi Street and Jason Moyo Avenue.

6.0 Potential Corruption

A video has gone viral on social media first shared by Twitter user @bbmhlanga where a crew member of a commuter omnibus stopped by the police is seen paying a bribe to one of the police officers.

7.0 Conclusion

While a National Lockdown is essential in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, some citizens did not heed the call to self-isolate, citizens need to realize the importance of the national lockdown and observe the principle of social distancing. In areas such as Marondera,奔马 and Sakabva Market in Mutare, police forced traders to disperse crowds, who were buying basic commodities. In Macipia, Highfields, Mbare, Kuwadzana and Tafara in Harare, residents were seen queuing for water at community boreholes.