



Report to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights under Agenda Item  
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Statement on Torture in Zimbabwe

Honorable Chairperson, Commissioners, the Secretary of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and invited guests, torture has been used systematically in Zimbabwe by ZANU PF youth militia, war veterans and state agencies in order to thwart growing opposition against the government and the ZANU PF party. The last intersession saw some of the worst crimes of torture being committed against known and suspected MDC supporters as well as on supporters of the former Finance Minister Simba Makoni.

Most rural constituencies became no go areas as ZANU PF youth militias and war veterans set up torture bases at schools, shopping centers and other public places. The hand of the state was seen in many of the gruesome cases that were committed in the run up to the presidential election run-off. There were reports of collusion by state security agents such as the police, army and central intelligence officers with alleged ZANU PF supporters in setting up these terror bases. In the urban areas these bases were set up in the high-density suburbs where residents and public transport operators were harassed and forced to attend ZANU PF meetings as well as to put on ZANU PF regalia.

Between April and June alone the Human Rights Forum recorded a total of 653 cases of torture. Blunt violence, falanga (beating on the soles of the feet), burning with hot plastics and scalding with hot water were among the methods that were most commonly used to punish known and suspected MDC supporters. Torture was also used to extract information about the whereabouts of MDC activists from their relatives and spouses. These brutal attacks have left many maimed and even dead. It is against this background that the Human Rights Forum calls upon the African

Commission to actively engage the government for the eradication of torture in Zimbabwe as well as to urge the government of Zimbabwe to ratify and domesticate the Convention Against Torture.