



Zimbabwe
HUMAN RIGHTS
NGO Forum

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Alert

INDISCRIMINATE ARREST AND TORTURE OF VENDORS

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The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (the Forum) is concerned by the unwarranted clampdown on vendors by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) in Harare Central Business District that has resulted in the arbitrary arrest and torture of vendors. Arbitrary arrest, torture, and the propensity of the ZRP officers to use brutal force on citizens is a violation of an individuals' self-worth and the right to personal liberty, human dignity, personal security and freedom from torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment; rights that are all protected in the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

On 30 January 2017, Gershem Wakapira, a vendor was picked up by members of the ZRP while selling his wares along Kwame Nkrumah Street. He was taken to Harare Central Police Station where he was severely assaulted all over his body whilst his head was covered by a sack. He was later dumped outside Harare police station with severe body injuries. Gershem is currently admitted at Avenues clinic.

In another incident, on 31 January 2017, another vendor, Kudakwashe Makarutse and ten (10) others were arrested and severely assaulted by police while selling their wares close to Harvest house. Kudakwashe was released to enable him to seek medical attention for a broken leg. He is currently at Avenues clinic.

Torture is a crime prohibited under regional and international law. Although the Zimbabwean Constitution outlaws torture, the government has not yet criminalized it, neither has the government ratified the United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) and its Optional Protocol. The lack of commitment to the ratification of UNCAT has resulted in the continued use of torture by State agents.

The Forum therefore urges the Government of Zimbabwe to investigate all allegations of human rights violations and prosecute and punish acts of torture to bring justice to the victims. The police must also respect citizens' rights and follow due processes in the conduct of their duties.



Gershem Wakapira admitted at Avenues clinic



Kudakwashe Makarutse admitted at Avenues Clinic