

**Zimbabwe COVID-19 Lockdown Monitoring Report
30 March 2020 – Day 1**

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 Atmosphere

In the morning, there was a sizeable number of people at Mbare Musika and the area near Magaba and Matapi flats. ZRP officers and Harare City Council Police were cited in Harare CBD patrolling the streets and urging citizens to stay at home. ZRP officers and anti-riot police officers were also cited in areas such as Kuwadzana, Hatfield, Chitungwiza and Bulawayo CBD among other areas. In Harare, police maintained a roadblock at Seke road and Bulawayo Road just after Longchang plaza. Traffic jams were also witnessed at these roadblocks which were set up to search vehicles and inquire the purpose of travel and barring those that did not provide evidence that they were essential services and therefore needed to get into Harare CBD. Similar roadblocks were also reported in Mkoba, Gweru and Bulawayo. Citizens in areas like Chitungwiza and Tafara were also seen walking around in the streets in large groups

In Gweru, Mutare, Chitungwiza and in Highfields, Harare it was reported that citizens joined supermarket queues to get some food supplies. In areas such as Marondera, Jerera and Sakubva Market in Mutare, police fired teargas to disperse crowds, who were buying basic commodities. In Machipisa, Highfields, Mbare, Kuwadzana and Tafara in Harare, residents were seen queueing 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 Kudzanai Musengi was reported in Gweru. Police accused him of practising as a journalist without valid accreditation. It was reported that Kudzanai Musengi was held at a checkpoint in Gweru and detained at Gweru Central Police Station before being released without any charge after an estimated 4 hours. Subsequently, the Zimbabwe Republic Police issued a statement stating that the Police General Headquarters in consultation with the Ministry of Information Publicity and Broadcasting Services 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 Danganvura 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 officers in the Avenues and surrounding areas for loitering and disobeying the national lockdown. 1 other case was reported from 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.

6.0 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 realise the importance of the national lockdown and observe the principle of social distancing and self-quarantine. It is also important for law enforcement agents to respect human rights and enforce the lockdown without using unwarranted violence and force. The following observations should also be urgently addressed:

- It has been observed that throughout the country, members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police on patrol do not have any protective gear and they are often packed tight in trucks, which puts them at risk of contracting and spreading the disease.
- The current water shortages being experienced in most high-density suburbs in the country exposes citizens at risk, especially when queuing for water at community boreholes. Local authorities and the Zimbabwe National Water Authority should provide a steady flow of water to citizens given the importance of social distancing and the need for hygiene.
- Citizens seem unaware of the importance of social distancing. There is need to further disseminate such through mass media for the benefit of citizens.
- The Forum calls for a thorough investigation of this incident and to ensure the officers are brought to book. The Forum calls upon law enforcement offices to conduct themselves with respect and dignity and uphold the law.

To Report Violations during the LockDown Get in Touch with Us



ZimHRNGOForum/



@ZimHRNGOForum/



0772232046



Tollfree

Econet: 08080242

Netone: 08012020