



Zimbabwe
HUMAN RIGHTS
NGO Forum

Report on the Human Rights Violations
Documented on Day 1 of the
Zimbabwe Shutdown Protests

14 January 2019

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Introduction

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum on 14 January 2019 received reports of 79 human rights violations across the country during day 1 of the national stay away called for by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) to protest the increase in fuel prices. This followed the pronouncement by President Mnangagwa of a more than 200% fuel price hike. The nationwide stay away is expected to last three days. The stay away began with relatively isolated reports of civil disobedience except for the barricading of major roads leading into the CBD. However, as the day progressed, the protests became violent. Motorists, commuter omnibus drivers and citizens not participating in the protests were attacked. There were incidents of destruction of property and looting. Retail shops, fuel stations, and police stations were targeted by angry protestors.

The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) responded to the escalating violence through opening live ammunition injuring over 20 people, discharging water cannons, teargas and firing shots in the air. In Epworth, Chitungwiza and Glen Norah citizens were wounded, reportedly during the clash between the Police and protestors. There were reports of military personnel and police breaking into people's homes and randomly beating dwellers in Chitungwiza. In Kuwadzana, there was a reported incident of an unidentified man firing an AK47 assault rifle. This report captures reports documented on 14 January 2019 by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum.

2.0 Distribution of protests by location

Reports of protests were received from the following locations

Province	City, suburb
Harare	Chitungwiza
	Epworth
	Kuwadzana
	Mabvuku
	Glen Norah
	Glenview
	Kambuzuma

	Damafalls
	CBD
Bulawayo	CBD
	Sokusile
	Makokoba
	Pumula
	Nketa
	Lobengula
	Tshabalala
	Nkulumane
	Mpopoma
Masvingo	Yeukai
	CBD
Midlands	Kwekwe

3.0 Nature of Violations

Violation	Number of Violations	Alleged Perpetrators
Gunshot Wounds	26	ZRP Officers
Destruction of Property including Arson	10	Protestors / Unknown
Looting	7	Protestors
Arbitrary Arrest	12	ZRP Officers
Harassment/ Threat/ Intimidation	1	Protestors
Attack on Journalists	3	Protestors & ZRP Officers
Assault	4	Protestors
Attempted Enforced Disappearance	1	Unknown
Forceful entry and search	15	Military /Police

Safe Schools	Unknown	Protestors
Total	79	

4.0 Summary of violations

Gunshot Wounds

Law enforcement agents fired live ammunition into the protestors. 12 people reportedly have wounds consistent with gunshot wounds while an almost equal number reported being shot but were afraid to come out of their hiding place. Some people who were shot (36 year old woman) were not participating in the protests. In Epworth, 5 cases were recorded including a 36-year-old female who was allegedly shot in her right leg. Other such cases were received from Glen Norah (4 cases), Mabvuku, (1 case), Mabvuku (1 case), Kuwadzana (1 case) and Chitungwiza (2 cases). In Kuwadzana, an unidentified man was filmed firing an AK 47 rifle.

Looting

7 cases of looting by protestors were recorded in the Harare in Chitungwiza, Highfields and Bulawayo. ZRP is reportedly conducting door to door raids in high density suburbs of Chitungwiza and Highfields. The police are reportedly not in possession of search warrants.

Destruction of Property including Arson

9 cases of malicious damage to property were recorded. The protestors targeted fuel filling stations in particular Zuva Petroleum and ZRP stations - Mbudzi Roundabout Police Post and Makoni Police Station. ZRP vehicles were also targeted as witnessed in the destruction of 1 vehicle in Bulawayo and 2 vehicles at the Mbudzi Roundabout Police Post. VID Makoni was also attacked by the protestors. Commuter omnibuses and private vehicles were also targeted by the protestors.

Arbitrary Arrest

The Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) represented 12 people who were arrested by ZRP. 9 of them were in Mabvuku. Reports indicate that some of the individuals were not participating in the demonstrations but were picked up in dragnet arrests. In Epworth, 8 people were reportedly arrested for taking photos of the demonstration and assisting injured individuals.

Harassment/ Threat/ Intimidation

Protestors allegedly threatened to assault the headmaster of a school in Lobengula in Bulawayo for refusing to participate in the demonstration. It was reported that protestors chased away students and teachers.

Attacks on Journalists

3 cases of threats directed towards journalists have been recorded in Bulawayo (2) and Harare (1). In Bulawayo, protestors reportedly did not want the public to document the protests. In Harare, an independent journalist was reportedly threatened by ZRP officers for taking photos during the protest.

Assault

4 cases of assault were reported. 2 citizens returning from work were attacked by protestors and labeled as sellouts for not participating in the demonstration. 1 case was reported from Dzivarasekwa. 1 case was received from Chitungwiza where a vendor was assaulted whilst packing her wares at Makoni flea market.

Attacks on Centres of Learning

On 28 June 2018, the High Court ruled that disrupting education was a violation of the rights of children under section 58 of the constitution. Many schools, especially in high-density suburbs were forcefully closed by protestors. In some of the reported instances, teachers and students were threatened and harassed by the protestors. A number of threatening messages were circulating on social media threatening attacks on private schools.

Attempted Enforced Disappearance

On 14 January 2019 around midnight, a group of youths visited the ARTUZ President Obert Masaraure in what was suspected to be an attempt to disappear him. He managed to escape to safety. It is not clear who the persons are.

Forceful Search, Entry and Assault

The Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) received over 15 reports from residents in Harare high density areas who reported that soldiers and police were, in the evening of 14 January 2019, moving door to door, assaulting residents and forcing them to remove barricades in the roads. Residents reported that they were severely assaulted.

5.0 Conclusion

As the nationwide stay away continues to day 2, the Forum encourages citizens should exercise their democratic right to protest in a peaceful manner. The Forum deplores the use of live ammunition to control protests. Dragnet arrests are unlawful and many innocent people find themselves victim to such. The Forum will continue to monitor developments across the country.

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