



WTPZ Brief: Political Bases

Pre-election: May 30 – 24 July, 2018

Report Date: 27 July 2018

Introduction

We the People of Zimbabwe (WTPZ) has set up a structure of peace monitors, in which **7,700+** citizens across every province in the country are currently tracking and reporting incidents in their communities through the WTPZ call centre. This report is an analysis of these incidents over 7 weeks. Between 30 May and 27 July 2018, WTPZ has received 1701 incidents from 1114 calls.

Since 30 May, 2018, WTPZ has received reports of 14 political bases that have been erected in communities. Through WTPZ partners' extensive networks, these cases have all been triangulated and verified to be true.

What are political bases?

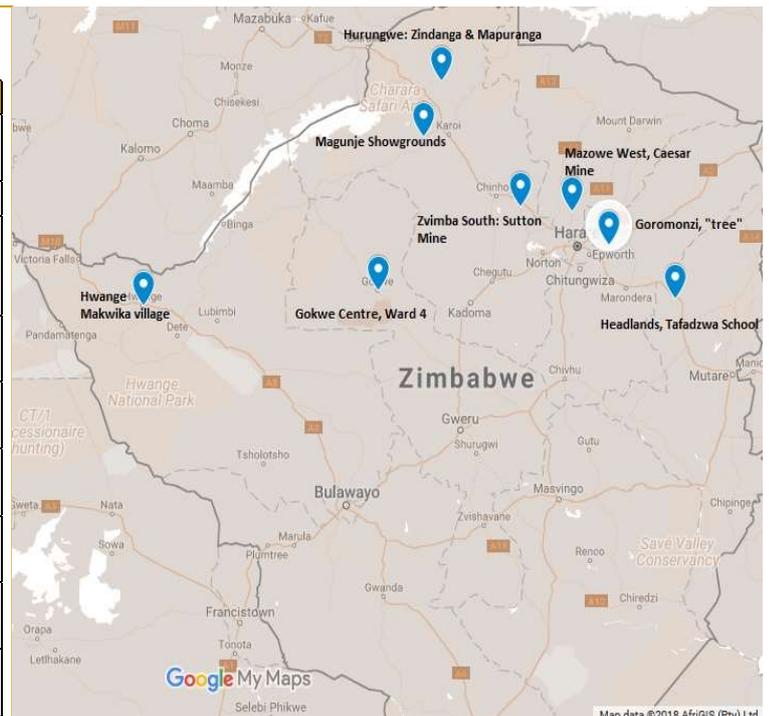
Political bases have featured in Zimbabwe's electoral history as centres of violence, intimidation and terror. They tend to be structures erected, buildings or public spaces occupied in the run up to elections. Bases are manned by political party structures and youths, mostly from the ruling party ZANU-PF.

Villagers have been forced to bases, particularly overnight, and forced to show support for ZANU-PF including through singing, declarations of support, and public beatings or humiliation. The presence of bases instills fear within communities; citizens have known people to be abducted, assaulted and tortured at bases.

Where are the political bases?

Political bases have been confirmed at:

Province	Constituency	Location
Mashonaland East	Goromonzi	Base at a tree
Manicaland	Headlands	Tafadzwa School
Mashonaland Central	Mazowe West	Caesar Mine; Dandamira Community Hall
Mashonaland West	Hurungwe Central	Mapuranga
Mashonaland West	Hurungwe	Zindangwa
Mashonaland West	Magunje	Showgrounds
Mashonaland West	Zvimba South	Sutton Mine
Matabeleland North	Hwange	Makwika Village
Midlands	Gokwe Centre	Ward 4





What activity has been reported at the bases?

- Reports indicate the presence of soldiers and war veterans at the bases that are being erected.
- Soldiers in Mazowe West, Zvimba South and Hurungwe Central have set up camps and are actively issuing threats should ZANU-PF not win the election.
- Community members recognize the early signs of areas that will turn into bases; similar patterns to previous election years in terms of how bases start, are located and are emerging. In Headlands, youth have been summoned by a ZANU-PF youth leader to come to a school, apparently for driving lessons. However community members are not convinced, and suspect that a base is under construction.

Zindanga, Hurungwe Central Mashonaland West

War veterans from the farms and other youths have set up a base there. They are calling people to meetings at the base and are threatening that there will be war in the country if people don't vote for ED and ZANU-PF in the coming elections. They are saying ZANU-PF will employ point 'B' plan if they lose the elections, which is war and instability in the country.

The names of those coordinating the bases are known and recorded.

Mapuranga, Hurungwe Central Mashonaland West

Three soldiers identified by locals to be based at 2.3 Infantry battalion at Magunje came and issued death threats to people at Mapuranga that if Ndiweni and ED of ZANU-PF does not win the constituency there will be terrible bloodshed in the area.

Sutton Mine, Zvimba South Mashonaland West

Armed soldiers camping in the Great Dyke mountains above Sutton mine came down and threatened youths who indicated that they won't vote for ED Mnangagwa in the coming elections. These soldiers always camp in these mountains every time there is a national election.

Conclusion: What are the implications?

History has shown that political bases have become centres for intimidation and acts of torture should violence erupt. The fact that there are reports of people setting up bases further emphasises that threats of violence should be taken seriously.

WTPZ is encouraging human rights organisations and observer missions to watch carefully for:

- Groups of people, particularly youths, congregating in areas for no apparent purpose. Bases will often be set up or moved rapidly, and there is often alcohol being consumed.
- Any reports of bases, particularly in the reported areas.
- Any reports of overnight vigils or 'rallies' which people are forced to attend.
- Any congregation in areas that have previously been used as bases.