



WTPZ Brief: Security Forces

Pre-election: May 30 – 27 July, 2018

Report Date: 28 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 center. 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.

Security forces' past involvement in elections:

In previous election years, security forces including the police, soldiers and CIO have been reported to interfere in elections, including: Police refusing to accept cases against ZANU-PF perpetrators; unlawful detention by police and torture whilst detained; soldiers harassing, intimidating and beating people and abductions by CIO.

The combined effect is that many communities are distrustful of security forces, and the increase in their presence and visibility around election periods is intimidating. When asked if there are any “suspicious” people in their communities, peace champions have cited soldiers and known CIO members. Additionally, many communities are reluctant or even afraid to report cases to the police, having been victimised for doing so in the past.

Security forces' current involvement in elections:

For this election period, peace champions have reported:

Police	Military	CIO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 26 cases of ‘unable to report to police’: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13 were fear of victimisation by police ▪ 5 were the inaccessibility of the nearest station and ▪ 8 were cases where residents find it pointless to report to police ➤ 58 cases of police not acting on cases related to elections, of which 19 cases included police brushing issues aside or actively refusing to act on issues where ZANU-PF members were perpetrators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 23 reports of suspicious military presence in rural communities ➤ 6 incidents of direct intimidation by soldiers ➤ 2 incidents of violence by soldiers 	<p>Because of the secret nature of the CIO, they are difficult to recognise. Community members are however cognizant of their existence and report “suspicious” and “strange” people entering their communities, sometimes with unmarked cars and making unexplained movements or asking people who they will vote. 18 such reports have been recorded.</p>

1. Police: The poor relationship between communities and police on election issues has deep roots in previous elections, and may be more difficult for outside observers to detect.

A retired army officer who is also the village head and ZANU-PF ward chairman threatened a to shoot a woman in the head if she continues attending MDC rallies and meetings. Villagers are scared of these war-veterans and ex-militants and will not approach the police under any circumstances.
Bulilima East

...Villagers cannot report the matter to the police because of fear of being victimized.
Mt Darwin East

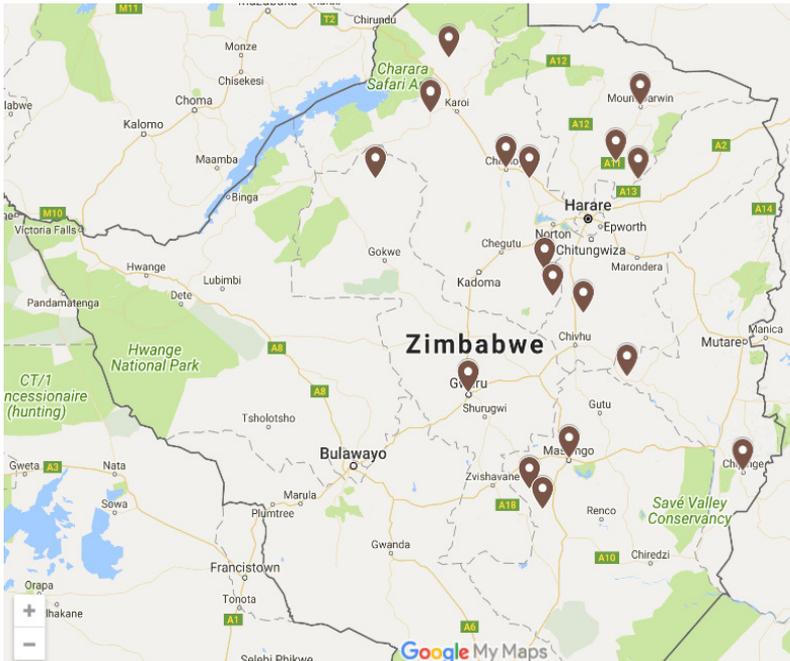
Afraid to report to police

Villagers are even scared to report to police because they reported the rape issues but nothing happened as they [the perpetrators] claim to be above the law.
Mt Darwin North



2. Military

The communities mapped below have reported uneasiness about the presence of soldiers, or harassment and intimidation by soldiers in the lead up to the election.



Soldiers: presence, involvement and impact on communities

WTPZ has received 23 reports of soldiers being present in communities and behaving in ways that range from arousing suspicion to intimidation and beatings.

The effect soldiers have on communities is profound, where their presence can cause unease, fear and re-traumatisation.

Residents of Manhenga village in Bindura South for example woke up to find soldiers had moved into a known Brigadier's house and are not leaving the compound. At an event there, soldiers assaulted several people and nothing was done about it.

In Chigumbura village in Magunje, residents said that for the first time they could hear soldiers practicing shooting with guns, and this was causing alarm.

Conclusion: What are the implications?

Military presence can cause fear and uncertainty in communities, due to the history of violent acts by soldiers during elections. WTPZ is advising all citizens to report matters to the police and to record as much detail as possible where police refuse to assist, for escalation to human rights lawyers and the Human Rights and National Peace and Reconciliation Commissions.

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

- Military presence in the days around and following elections
- Military and police conduct and interactions with citizens during and around elections
- Police response to any incidents or complaints at polling booths