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**Report of July 16 – 22  
1 week prior to elections**

# Elections Trends Report

Pre-election: 16 – 22 July, 2018 Weekly Report (1 week prior to elections)

Report Date: 24 July, 2018

## Introduction

We the People of Zimbabwe believe that all citizens of Zimbabwe have the right to choose their political leaders in an atmosphere of peace. Our vision is to unite and mobilise Zimbabweans to ensure a peaceful, free and fair election in 2018, as the foundation for a better future. We the People of Zimbabwe believe a peaceful election will create a Zimbabwe in which a culture of peace replaces a culture of fear and enables community development.

We the People of Zimbabwe project is tracking trends in the pre-election period. This paper reports on trends of organised violence and torture (OVT) and electoral malpractices 1 week prior to the 2018 harmonised elections and how these have impacted on people within their communities.

## Reports of violations

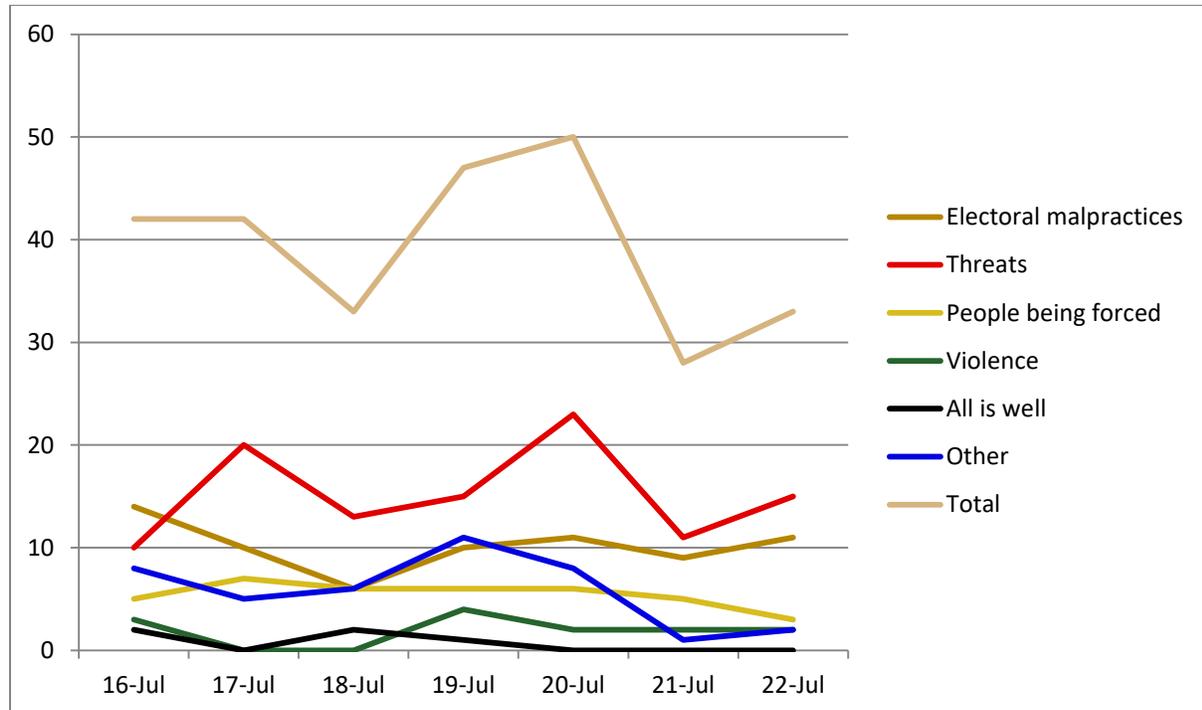
Reports were made from 188 people who interacted with the We the People call centre, giving an average of 26.9 reports per day. 5 reports were “all is well”, leaving 183 calls with reportable incidents, 9 less calls than the previous week. A total of 270 violations were reported.

Table 1: Incidents reported 9-15 July		
Incidents	No of reports	Difference from previous week
People being threatened with violence	107	+2
Electoral malpractices	71	-17
People being forced to do what they do not want to do	38	+6
There has been violence	13	-6
Other: Police not acting	14	+8
Other: Trumped up accusations/ charges and arrests	8	n/a
Other: Bases erected	5	n/a
Other: Unable to report to police (access or fear)	3	-8
Other: Use of schools for political activity	3	n/a
Other: Suspicious people/activities	2	-3
Other: Use/ threats of children	2	0
Other (varied)	4	-2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>-11</b>



The number of reports received was similar to the previous week, suggesting that incidents are not decreasing as elections draw closer. The numbers of each type of violation were also similar, showing a clear ‘profile’ where threats of extreme violence are the most common violation, followed by electoral malpractices. Violence and people being forced were reported less often, but with consistent reports coming in each day.

Figure 1: Incidents by date –16-22 July



As with previous weeks, threats of violence continue to be the most common violation. Over half of the threats were of violence if people don’t “vote for ZANU-PF or ZANU-PF does not win”. A quarter of the threats were specifically towards people for supporting or voting for MDC Alliance. A number of threats were that violence will be worse than 2008, and will be conducted if there is a presidential election run-off. Most threats were of generalised violence or beatings, as well as threats of killings/ beheadings, eviction or expulsion from home and villages, soldiers moving in to enact violence, and abductions/ disappearances.

The reports of people being forced to attend rallies or to hand over personal information (including voter registration slips) were similar to previous weeks. A small number of reports were also received of people being forced to remove MDC regalia, and two cases of people being forced to vote in postal ballots.

Reported acts of violence were slightly less than last week but still consistent, with 13 reports throughout the week. ZANU-PF was involved in the violence in all cases but one, which involved an ex-soldier and political affiliation, was not stated. Acts of violence included beatings and assaults, wielding a weapon, physical fights and abduction were report.



Electoral manipulations were most commonly restricting villagers from government aid due to their political affiliation and defacing of campaign posters. Cases of vote buying and election-related intimidation were also recorded, including telling people that polling stations will be monitored through BVR information or cameras filming people. As with previous weeks, most of these acts were done publicly and in a brazen manner.

**Box 1: Illustrative narratives of violations**

*On the 16th of July a directive came from ZANU-PF that all primary schools should attend the ZANU-PF rally where ED was supposed to address the people. Children attended the meeting and people were told not to go out of Gomoguru Primary School where the meeting was being held. People began to try to find their way out to the point that they damaged the school fence. Soldiers began to beat people who were moving out while the president was addressing the congregation. Children did not attend lessons this day and soon after the rally was done the president left for Bindura. (Gokwe South, Midlands)*

*The caller was beaten by a group of ZANU-PF. He was attacked with the back of an axe in his head and others were just bystanders holding weapons. When they were asked what they were doing they said they wanted to discipline people. The other victim was beaten on account of leaning against a ZANU-PF poster. He was given a request for medical report from the police but could not get proper treatment because he could not afford the bills. The perpetrators are still there walking free and the police are yet to act on the report. (Zhombe, Midlands)*

*ZANU-PF perpetrators are calling people to gather under a tree and bring their national IDs. This is under the very same tree they used to beat people during the electoral violence period of 2008. The village head announced that he does not want any MDC Alliance member in his village. The caller is a survivor of violence during the 2008 he was beaten and assaulted and chased away from his home. People are now feeling intimidated. (Goromonzi, Mashonaland East)*

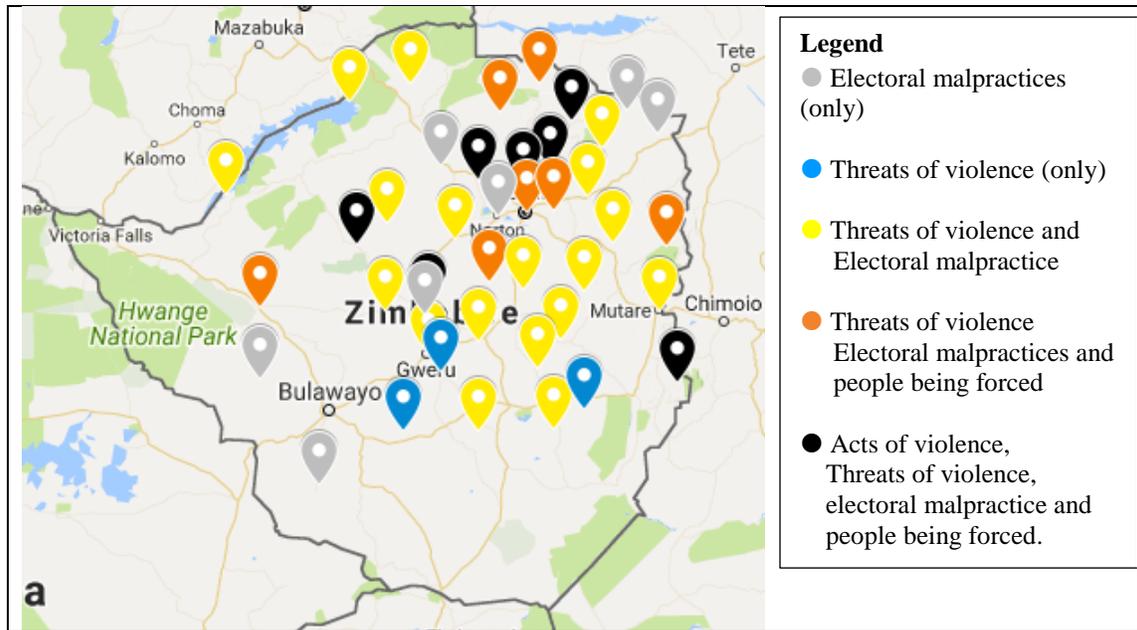
*ZANU-PF youths were threatening people who were wearing MDC Alliance regalia, telling them to remove the t-shirts or else they will be beaten up. (Chegutu West, Mashonaland West)*

*ZANU-PF contesting councilors and village heads who are supporters of the party are threatening people saying there will be violence if they do not vote for ZANU-PF. They also added that a person's vote will not be secret due to the biometric system that will be used. (Guruve, Mashonaland Central)*

*A ZANU-PF sitting councilor and aspiring councillor is denying known MDC Alliance activists farming inputs from the government. Today fertilizers were only allocated to ZANU-PF members and the councilor was even wearing ZANU-PF regalia whilst distributing the fertilizers. He claims they are the ones in power and they do as they please: MDC Alliance members should get allocations from their own party. (Nyanga North, Manicaland)*

*ZEC officers gave them envelopes with their names printed outside and were asked to vote for their candidate of choice. After casting ballots they had to put the papers back in the same envelope and ZEC officers took these envelopes. They are asking about their safety since they can be easily identified because their names were on the envelopes. (Bindura South, Mashonaland Central)*

Figure 2: Violation by location (for the week)



The mapping of incidents shows an overall wider spread of violations than the previous week, with incidents recorded in every Province except Bulawayo. Acts of violence were recorded in 4 Provinces.

There were 11 ‘hotspot’ districts identified over the week where 5 or more calls with incidents were recorded. Only 4 of these hotspot areas were the same as the previous week, showing that new areas with greater numbers of violations continue to emerge. However, of the 15 hotspots of last week, all but one continued to report one or more incident. One or more act of violence was recorded in 5 of these hot spot areas.

Table 2: Districts with 5 or more incidents July 16-22

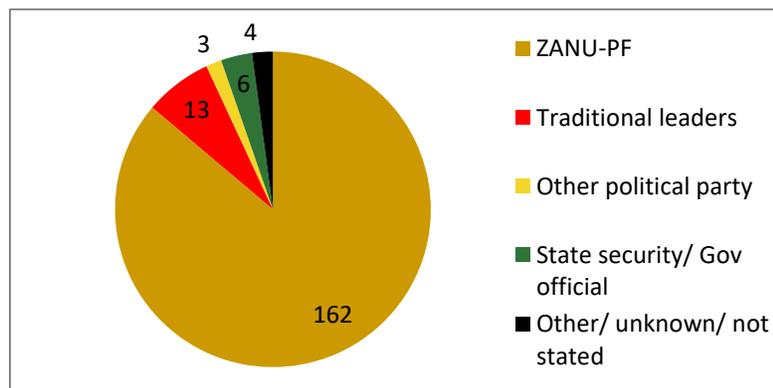
District	Total incidents
Bindura	6
Chegutu*	7
Chiredzi	6
Gokwe North	24
Guruve	16
Hurungwe*	6
Kadoma*	5
Kwekwe	8
Mazowe*	6
Mt Darwin*	7
Zvimba	6

\*these districts also reported at least one act of violence in the reporting week

The key perpetrators of violence continue to be supporters of ZANU-PF, with 86% of reports stating that ZANU-PF members were the key perpetrators. Whilst traditional leaders were not as frequently cited as the key perpetrators, their involvement in election processes was still evident in the reports, with 16% of reports noting that traditional leaders had some form of involvement as perpetrators, victims, or through being coerced to act in support for ZANU-PF.

Other political parties as perpetrators were featured in 3 reports.

**Figure 3: Perpetrator by number of reports 16-22 July**



**Table 3: Perpetrators reported 16-22 July**

Key Perpetrator	No of reports
ZANU-PF supporter	77
ZANU-PF youths	18
Village head	13
Candidate (ZANU-PF)	25
Chairperson (ZANU-PF)	13
Councillor (ZANU-PF)	10
War veteran	10
Member of Parliament (ZANU-PF)	5
Soldiers	3
Police	3
ZANU-PF official/leader	2
MDC	1
National People's Party	1
People's Rainbow Coalition (PRC) supporter	1
District Administration	1
School Headmaster	1
ZEC officers	1
Other/ unknown/ not specified	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>

The table above shows the key perpetrators identified by the caller, however as with previous weeks, many of the narratives describe several perpetrators working together, often with political and village structures working in tandem.



### Box 2: Illustrative narratives of key perpetrators

*When the MDC campaign team went on a door to door campaign it was discovered that the majority of the villagers had been threatened with violence if ZANU PF loses. This happened prior to President Mnangagwa's Lupane rally and so people were forced to attend the rally through intimidation. These violations were spearheaded by the MP and ward Councillor, both of the ZANU-PF party. This village is very remote, has limited network coverage and is far from the nearest police station so there are no means to communicate with the police. (Lupane, Matabeleland North)*

*ZANU-PF contesting councillors are disrupting MDC rallies by giving people food and fertilizers during days when MDC conducts their rallies. Hence due to this people do not attend the rallies but instead attend the food allocation program. The matter was reported at the police station to the Assistant Inspector who was reluctant in handling the case. (Chirumanzu, Midlands)*

*A ZANU-PF Chairman has given an order to his subordinates in villages to intimidate people. The ZANU-PF youths under his instructions are telling villagers that on the election day the Kraal head will have to lead his people to the polling station and everyone's vote will be recorded and seen by ZANU-PF party structures. Anyone who votes for MDC ALLIANCE will be assaulted together with their village heads. People are now afraid and most of them have disguised to be ZANU-PF members to ensure their safety. The peace champion who called said most of the cases he is receiving are difficult to report to the police as many of the people who are attending these meetings are afraid to come out because of fear of victimization as most of them disguise as ZANU-PF members. (Muzarabani, Mashonaland Central)*

*The caller was summoned by MDC District chairman after she was suspected of pushing MDC Alliance campaigns and ideologies. She was threatened to be beaten up and assaulted. (Magunje, Mashonaland West)*

State actors were named as perpetrators in six cases: three with soldiers being perpetrators, and three with police. There was no evidence from the call centre to suggest an increased movement of military as compared to previous weeks.

The action taken by police on reported cases continued to be tracked by the call centre, with all callers who reported an illegal act being strongly encouraged to report to the police. There were 14 cases where police did not act to reports or witnessing of incidents, and a further three where people stated they were unable to report to police due to fear or geographical inaccessibility. As such, 9% of calls reported issues in gaining a police response.

### Box 3: Illustrative narratives of actions by state security

*An ex-soldier followed the caller and his friend and assaulted them for being involved in politics. He was beaten severely, the case was reported to the police and no action has been taken. His face was damaged and he still hasn't been treated because he doesn't have police clearance. (Mhangura, Mashonaland West)*

*A man identified to be a soldier is helping ZANU-PF campaign in Mhondoro-Ngezi. He is making sure that people attend rallies and threatening violence if people do not know where to vote. (Chegutu, Mashonaland West)*

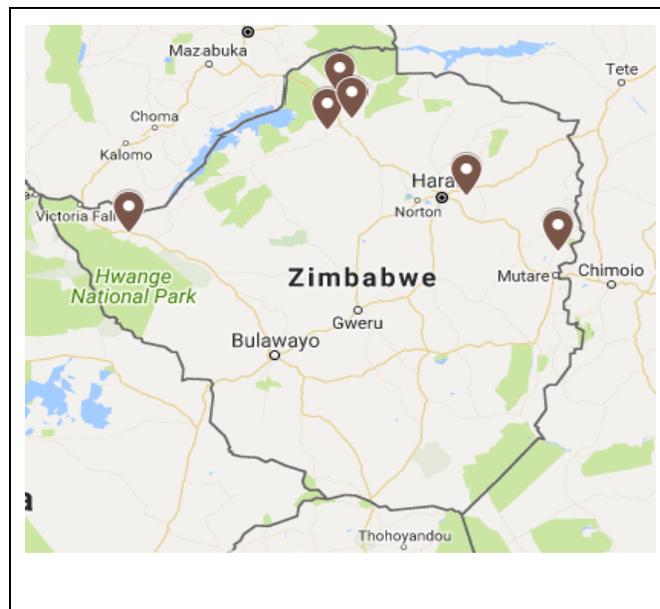
*Soldiers are threatening people to vote for ZANU-PF saying those who do not vote for ZANU-PF will be beaten up and their houses will be burnt down. (Gokwe North, Midlands)*

*Yesterday police officials were casting their votes without the ZEC officials. Violence broke out as people retaliated over the suspicious rigging process. (Bikita, Masvingo)*

An additional trend for the week was the reporting of setting up political bases. These bases were erected during 2008 by ZANU-PF as a means of intimidation, and to commit acts of violence including torture against the citizenry. Whilst no acts of torture in bases have been reported, the erecting of bases is a concerning trend which needs to be closely monitored.

Potential torture bases were reportedly set up in Hurungwe (Magunje Showgrounds, Zindanga and Mapuranga Village), Mutasa South, Hwange Central and in Goromonzi.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1 Bases reported 16-22 July**



**Concerning trends to follow:**

This week has seen a comparable number of incidents to the previous week, demonstrating that incidents are not reducing as elections draw closer. 78% of the calls were reporting incidents within 48 hours of their occurrence, demonstrating that violations are continuing at high rates.

There is no clear evidence that violations are at the directive of the state, with few reports against police or soldiers. However, there were high rates of inaction by police on reported violations, and this was also a week where 6 new political party bases were set up. There are now an even greater number of ‘hot spot’ areas which have experienced multiple violations. These factors together creates a very real risk for future violence, particularly given the number of threats of repetition of 2008 violence and violence should run-offs for the presidential election occur.

<sup>1</sup> Note: The verification of all reported bases has not yet been completed



With only a week to go before elections, the frequency and nature of violations suggest that calls for an election which is peaceful, free and fair are not being heeded. Citizens report feeling fearful and intimidated in the lead up to their elections, with disruptions to campaigns and to people's lives.

Ends//