



#### GREEN EDITION

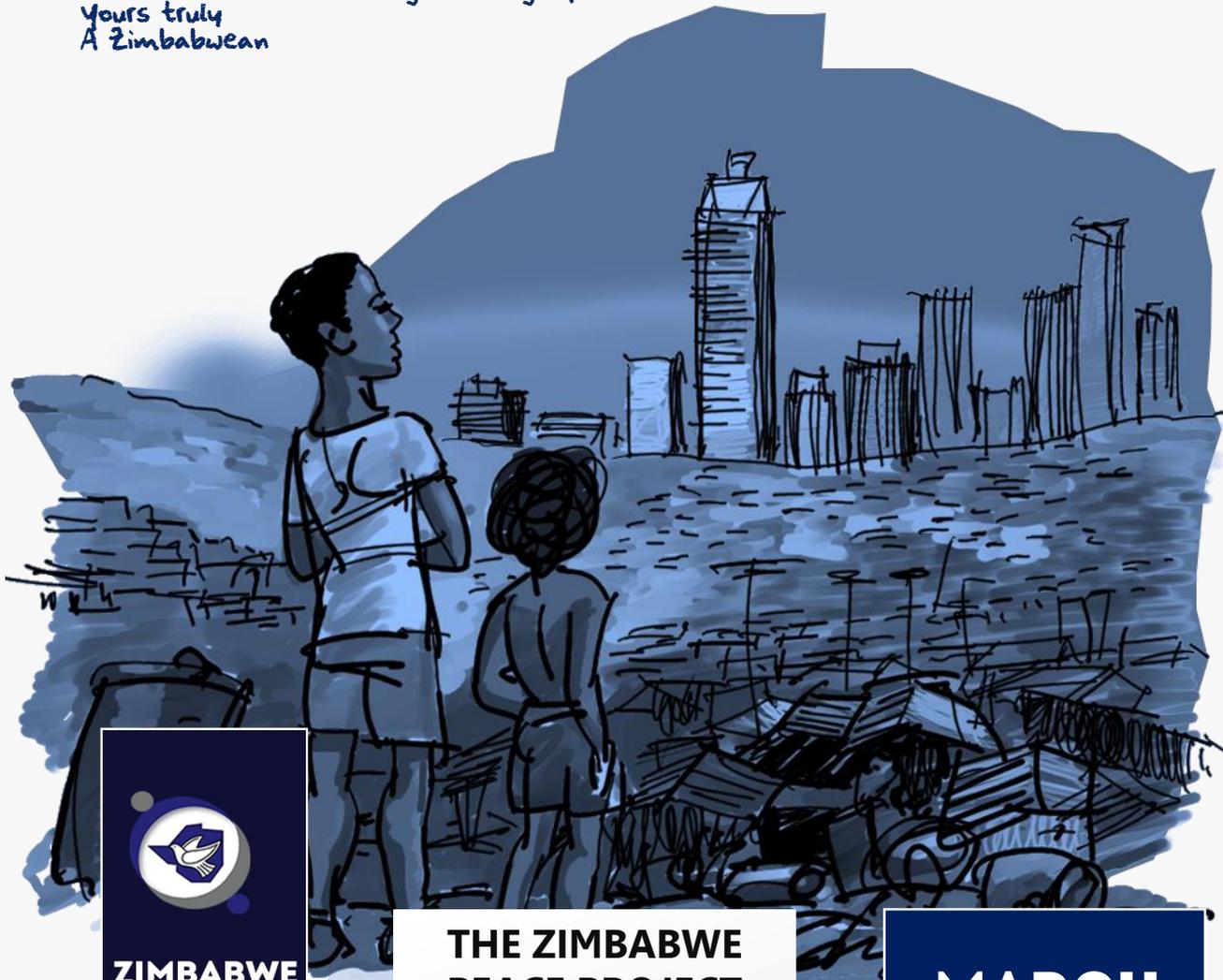
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# separate lives...

## LETTER FROM AN ORDINARY ZIMBABWEAN

Dear President,  
Dear government official,  
You addressed us from your offices,  
You appeared so dapper,  
We watched you on television,  
We felt your energy and excitement,  
"The worst is behind us," you said  
You have told us this so many times,  
You say you think of us always  
Maybe you do, maybe you don't,  
But, do you feel like us too?  
Are you always hungry?  
Are you always without water?  
Are you always harassed while trying to earn a living?  
Are you poor like us?  
Do you struggle to feed, educate and clothe your family too?  
Or it is just that we are living separate lives,  
Because all we have ever known is things have been the same  
Perhaps there is a wall that has been built,  
And we have been shut out,  
Out of access to the honeypot,  
Perhaps someday we will find each other,  
But for now, it seems, we'll go on living separate lives  
Yours truly  
A Zimbabwean



**ZIMBABWE  
PEACE  
PROJECT**

**THE ZIMBABWE  
PEACE PROJECT  
MONTHLY  
MONITORING  
REPORT**

**MARCH  
2021**

**“I lost all my savings during the two months of not operating and now I will have to go through the struggle of getting the capital to restart my business. It is difficult,”**

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



When President Emmerson Mnangagwa announced that Zimbabwe was to ease COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, there was a sigh of relief from the generality of people, who had endured close to two months of a strictly enforced lockdown that barred those in the informal sector from operating.

Zimbabwe's informal sector is the largest employer and source of income in a country that has heavily de-industrialised over the past two decades.

According to a 2016 report by the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, over 85 percent of the country's active population is in the informal sector and the figure could have gone higher as the country continued to experience company closures and retrenchments over the past five years.

So, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Zimbabwe and the world at large, government imposed restrictions on the operations of the informal sector, further increasing the vulnerability of this large section of the population whose income is solely hinged on their informal work.

In its surveys carried out countrywide in January and February 2021, Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) asked Zimbabweans what they thought of the lockdown and the general responses showed that many wanted government to find ways of opening up the operating space for the informal sector.

“I am a vendor. I sell shoes. My profits are very little. So, if I do not operate, my family goes hungry. All I need is some space to operate within the COVID-19 protocols and I hope my government provides that...” a 27 year old Bulawayo father of two said in an interview in February.

So, when the announcement came, it was like what everyone was waiting for.

For some, as observed by ZPP countrywide, it might have come a little late. Some had already closed shop.

“I lost all my savings during the two months of not operating and now I will have to go through the struggle of getting the capital to restart my business and take it back to where it was before. It is difficult,” said a 36-year-old mother of three who used to run a canteen in Mutare's Sakubva suburb.

So, it was in this context that the month of March was marked by nationwide attempts by those mostly in the informal sector to restart their operations in an environment that still had a very pronounced presence of state security agents who used all forms and methods to stifle the informal sector.

In addition, those that had been left vulnerable by the COVID-19 restrictions and did not receive any form of social support found themselves on their own amid government pronouncements that the economic situation was set for better fortunes.

The healthcare situation remained dire, with the poor and vulnerable communities unable to access basic medical care let alone access to information on the COVID-19 vaccination process, which was launched in February.



So, even as some businesses reopened and people were back on the streets, the threat of a third wave of COVID-19 cases remained hanging in the air as government paid a blind eye to its responsibility to ensure that the generality of the population had all the resources needed to operate safely.

The situation pointed towards a state where those without, were living separate lives with those with.

## 1.0.1 SUMMARY OF VIOLATIONS

The fact that the general citizens were on their own is backed by the statistics of the human rights violations recorded in the month of March 2021.

The harassment of citizens by state security agents continued, and ZPP recorded 79 cases, with the police once again leading the list of perpetrators making up 37.61 percent of the perpetrators of the human rights violations logged in March 2021.

The municipal police in Harare contributed to 7.55 percent of the perpetrators.

The violations by the national and municipal police, ZPP noted in its documentation processes, was mainly due to the continued attempts to stifle the operations of those in the informal sector.

“Police continued with their patrols here and whenever they came, they confiscated our goods and made us pay fines for simply selling our wares. It is as if the full lockdown is still in place,” a vendor in Highfields said of the month of March.

ZPP recorded two killings, 18 assaults and 14 unlawful detentions, one case of torture and one case of attempted murder.

Politicisation of food and other aid remained prevalent across the country and ZPP registered 27 cases of food and other aid discrimination.

The ruling Zanu PF, which appears to have geared itself into election mode way ahead of the 2023 elections, contributed to a significant 16.77 percent of perpetrators of violations recorded in March 2021.

THE  
ZIMBABWE REPUBLIC POLICE  
CONTRIBUTED TO

**37.61%**

OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
VIOLATIONS.

ZANU PF  
CONTRIBUTED TO

**16.77%**

OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
VIOLATIONS

ZPP RECORDED

**14**

CASES OF UNLAWFUL  
DETENTION

## THE POWER OF SOLIDARITY

In the face of being evicted to pave way for a Lucerne grass project Dendairy, a dairy company, villagers in Chilonga continued to speak, daring government to approach them.

While the law that had been put in place to evict the over 12000 families from their ancestral home near Chiredzi has been suspended, there is need for more interventions to ensure the protection of the people of Chilonga.

ZPP, which has peace building initiatives in Chilonga, visited the area and documented the villagers' concerns as part of efforts to build a wide solidarity base in support of the people of Chilonga.

- [WATCH HERE THIS VIDEO, WHERE A CHIEF DARES GOVT ON THE EVICTIONS](#)

Widowed Florence Chibaya Gwanetsa said she no longer had the energy to start clearing land for agriculture if she is moved to another place.

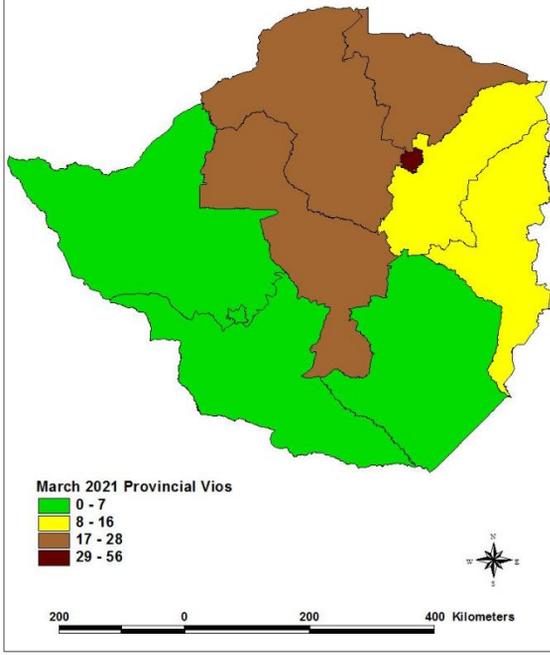
- [WATCH VIDEO AS SHE SPEAKS HER HEART OUT](#)

# Human Rights Violations Monthly Dashboard

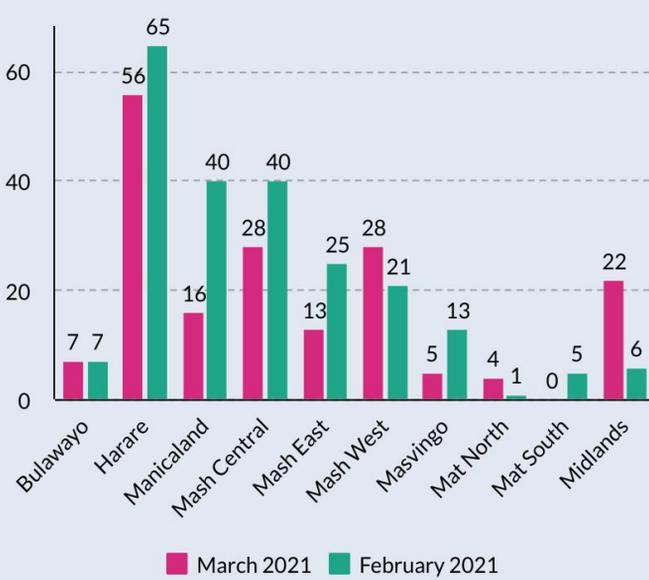
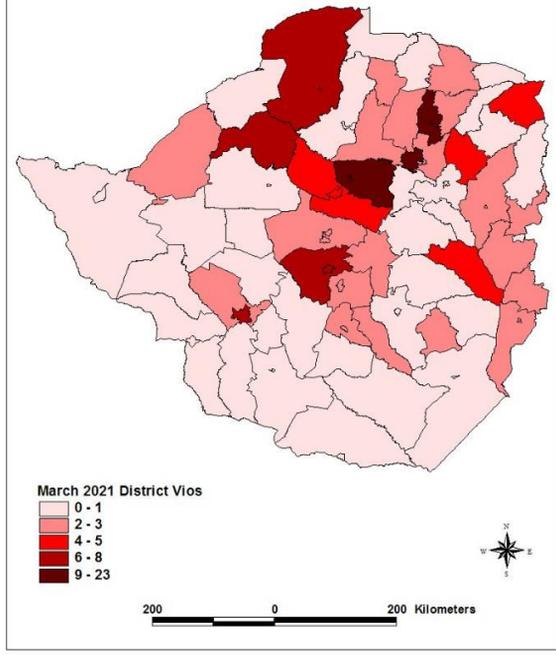
Report time frame: March, 2021

Zimbabwe Peace Project

March 2021 Provincial Violations



March 2021 District Violations



March Provincial Violations

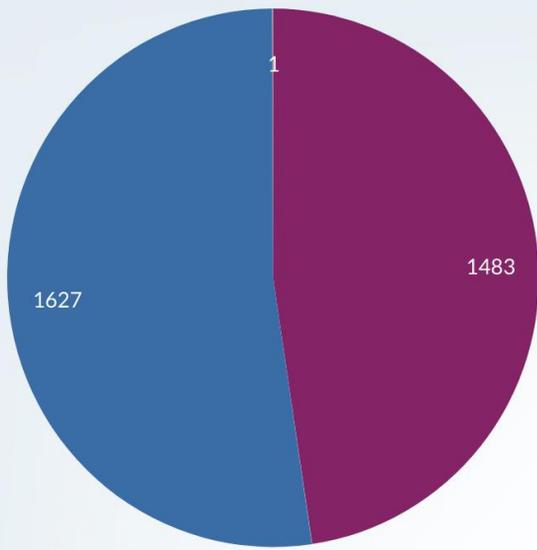


March Types of Violations

## VIOLATIONS UNPACKED

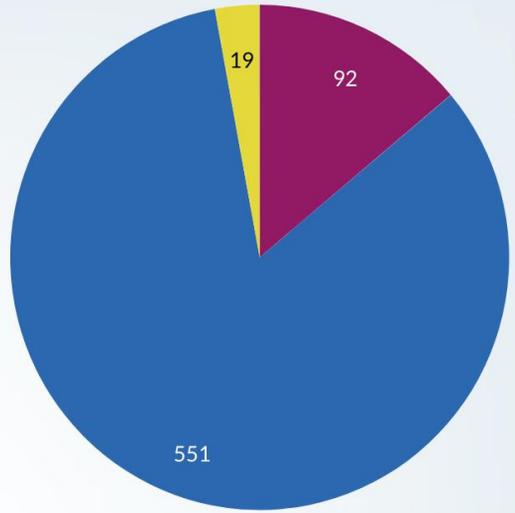
ZPP this month recorded 221 human rights violations, 83 of which were harassment and intimidation of citizens, mostly by the police deployed to enforce the lockdown. The organisation recorded two killings, two attempted murders, one abduction, 21 cases of unlawful detention, and 35 cases of assault, most of which are attributed to state security agents.

Harare recorded the highest violations at 65, followed by Manicaland at 40 and the Matabeleland region recorded the lowest number of violations as indicated in the maps below.



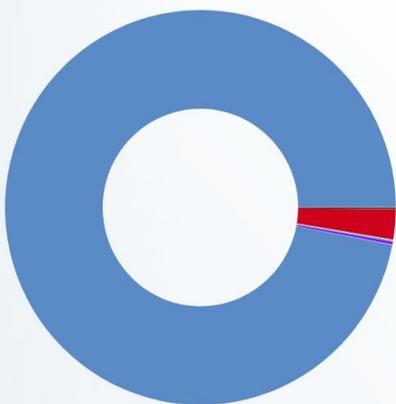
Female (47.67%) Male (52.3%) Male PWD (0.03%)

**Gender of March Victims**



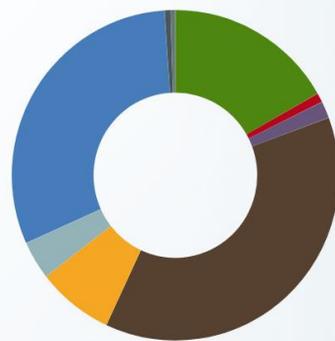
Female (13.9%) Male (83.23%) Unknown (2.87%)

**Gender of March Perpetrators**



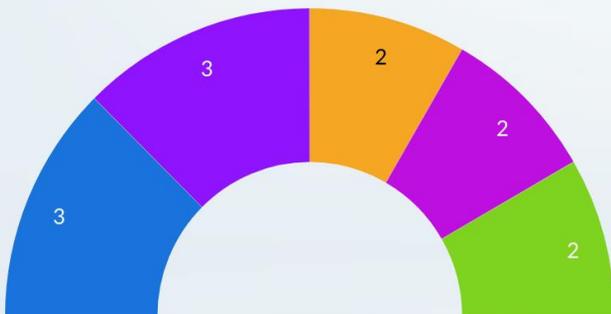
Zanu PF (0.13%) MDC Alliance (2.48%)  
MDC-T Khupe (0.03%) Mthwakazi (0.13%)  
ZRP (0.26%) ZNA (0.03%) Unknown (96.95%)

**March Victims Affiliation**



Zanu PF (16.77%) MDC Alliance (0.91%)  
MDC-T Khupe (1.66%) ZRP (37.61%)  
Municipal Police (7.55%) ZNA (3.78%)  
Unknown (30.66%) State agents (0.6%)  
War Veteran (0.45%)

**March Perpetrators Affiliation**



Manicaland (25%) Mash Central (25%)  
Mash West (16.67%) Masvingo (16.67%)  
Midlands (16.67%)

**March Food & Other Aid Violations**



Zanu PF  
**March Intra Party Violence**



## 2.2 DEEPENING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

*Their life, so far as they knew, was as it had always been. They were generally hungry... There was nothing with which they could compare their present lives: they had nothing to go upon except Squealer's lists of figures, which invariably demonstrated that everything was getting better and better.*  
**A quote from Animal Farm Chapter 10**

In the month of March, the easing of lockdown regulations after two months of stringent restrictions laid bare the gross social inequalities existing in the country.

This was made worse by the fact that throughout 2020, lockdown restrictions had caused consistent disruptions to economic activity.

The poor, hardworking citizens who live from hand-to-mouth and have no savings had endured two months with no income or social support from government.

Urban households suffered the most, economically, and according to a January 2021 ZIMSTAT, 90 percent of nonfarm businesses, which skew toward urban areas, indicated that they faced a drop in revenue or did not receive any revenue at all.

So, even as businesses began operating, the impact of the two months of lockdown had relegated many into further poverty as reported in a [World Bank country overview last updated on March 23 2021](#).

The pandemic and its impact disrupted livelihoods, especially in urban areas, and according to the World Bank, added 1.3 million to the extreme poor.

World Bank estimates suggest the number of extreme poor reached 7.9 million in 2020, which is about half of Zimbabwe's population.

"Surveys indicate that nearly 500,000 households have at least one member who lost their job in 2020, causing many to fall into poverty and worsening the plight of the existing poor," reads part of the World Bank report.

The impact of the lockdowns also affected the education sector, and less than 30 percent of school-going children in rural areas engaged in education and learning during pandemic-related school closures, compared with 70 percent for urban children, according to the World Bank.

In the health sector, the unavailability of adequate medication, coupled with lack of investment in health infrastructure, contributed to a decline in the coverage and quality of essential health services.

The World Bank reports that decreases in the frequency and timing of antenatal care visits may cause a further deterioration in maternal and infant mortality indicators.

According to the World Bank, the disruptions caused by the pandemic will continue to weigh on economic activity in Zimbabwe, limiting employment growth and improvements in living standards.

In light of this, ZPP, throughout the month of March, focused on assessing access to social rights among Zimbabweans.

In addition to the poor civil and political rights record the country has registered over the past year, the deterioration of the social services sector has become one of the biggest human rights issues in Zimbabwe.

This is evidenced by the disparities in incomes between the elite and the general population.

For example, the general civil servant's monthly salary – which is the benchmark of general incomes for the ordinary workers in other sectors—is worth an equivalent US\$200.

In the absence of affordable, adequate and accessible public healthcare services, many Zimbabweans are forced to seek healthcare from private institutions whose charges are beyond the reach of many.

For example, a local medical aid institution requires about US\$60 in subscriptions per month per individual and this is beyond the reach of many.

At the end of January, ZIMSTAT reported that the cost of living continued to rise and an ordinary family of five now required an average of ZWL\$24 935 to cover its monthly expenses.



## 2.3 SILENCING DISSENTING VOICES

The economic challenges currently bedeviling in the country are a cause of concern as there does not seem to be an end in sight. Despite the easing of lockdown restrictions which have allowed informal traders to start operating, citizens continue to struggle.

Government has failed to take meaningfully, effective steps to combat the hunger and water crises; this will likely lead to mass protests and civil disobedience in the near future if not addressed as a matter of urgency.

Since January 2021, the Government of Zimbabwe has launched systematic and coordinated attacks on human rights activists using law fare; a path they always take when under pressure. Government has continued to accuse activists of inciting public violence in order to destabilise the country through coordinated demonstrations ahead of the 2023 elections- despite Section 59 of the Zimbabwean Constitution clearly providing for the right to demonstrate and petition. It has become increasingly clear that the law is being used by government to herald and justify the persecution of citizens whose crime seems to be wanting to exercise their right to demonstrate and petition. is demonstrating for a better Zimbabwe.

This was most evident when opposition and pro-democracy campaigner, Makomborero Haruzivishe was arrested on 18 February 2021.

Haruzivishe was arrested at gunpoint by state security agents who allegedly threatened to shoot him. The agents allegedly wanted to take him to an undisclosed location but were forced to drop him off at Harare Central police station after Haruzivishe screamed hysterically.

He is convicted with incitement to commit public violence, and resisting arrest. He faces up to 20 years in prison.

MDC Alliance activists staged a flash protest outside the Harare High Court on 25 February 2021 demanding Haruzivishe's release after he was denied bail. The more than 50 picketers hoisted placards with messages "Free Mako Now" to "Stop Judicial Capture."

The activists also called for the resignation of Police Commissioner-General Godwin Matanga before dispersing dramatically in a choreographed fashion. Haruzivishe's arrest and detention is reflective of a politically-motivated legislation that only seeks to suppress civil and political rights.

Further, it shows the progressive emasculation of 'independent' institutions established to guarantee citizens enjoy their rights. Many analysts are concerned about the judiciary in particular the lower courts where rights of citizens such as the right to bail is stifled. In most cases it is always at the higher courts that the rulings of the lower courts are reviewed and the accused granted bail

The absence of an independent and impartial judicial branch of government implies that there is little or no recourse available to everyday citizens who oppose the government.

This is evidenced by the denial of bail of activists seen to be anti government.

On March 5, MDC Activists Joana Mamombe and Cecilia Chimbiri were arrested after they appeared for their routine reporting at Harare Central Police. The two were allegedly arrested for addressing a press conference the previous week in solidarity with Haruzivishe.

The arrest of activists across the country is a clear sign of criminalisation of human rights activism, which is a proverbial smack in the face of democratic society ideals.

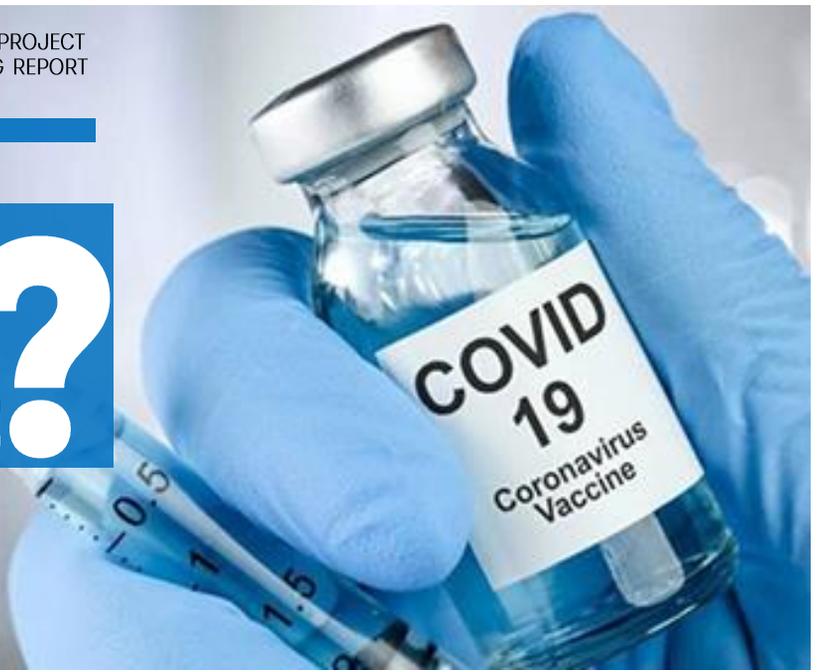
The continued deferment of bail ruling judgement and detention essentially deprives the activists of their freedom and sends a clear, stern message that critics of the government will be dealt with firmly, and within the 'confines of the law.'

In other words, the weaponisation of the law is a trend that is growing and causing a lot of uneasiness especially where those with dissenting voices are concerned.

Following a period of hope by citizens in the socio-economic transformation of the country when lockdown restrictions were eased, these hopes were quickly shattered as nothing seems to have changed and there is no end in sight.

In light of this, ZPP calls for an immediate end to the use of law fare by government to silence dissent and punish critics of the government. In addition, civil liberties and rights as enshrined in the Constitution, including the rights to assembly, demonstration and petition and association, should be respected

## 2.4 WHO GETS THE VACCINE?



In February, Zimbabwe joined the rest of the world and started its first phases of the COVID-19 vaccination programme following the acquisition of vaccines from China.

This brought renewed hope in the country.

However, during the month of March, the programme did not take off across the country.

The gap between the rich and the poor was exposed here as the vaccine was yet to get to the rural and the poor urban communities

The acquisition of the vaccines in Zimbabwe has been shrouded in secrecy, and lack of transparency and people's trust, as government has so far only informed citizens that it acquired the vaccines, but did not state the terms and conditions under which that happened. After two batches of donations up to 400 000 doses the country has reportedly procured in excess of one million doses.

In addition, there has been glaring discrepancies in the allocation of the vaccines to places outside Harare.

For example, it was reported that Kariba rural district received only 512 vaccines.

In some towns, as established by ZPP, only the elderly and essential workers are getting the vaccine and yet in Harare, anyone who visits the major centres among them Wilkins Infectious Disease and Parirenyatwa Hospitals can get the vaccine.

The programme has since moved to local council clinics but there is still an information gap as at some centres, healthcare workers are claiming that only the elderly, those with chronic illnesses and essential workers can get the vaccine.

There have been reports that some individuals – connected to government- have been illegally selling fake COVID-19 vaccine certificates and while some have been arrested, the issue raises serious alarm over the lack of clear due diligence measures in the management of the vaccination process.

There is also inadequate information on the effects of the vaccines to some key population groups such as pregnant women and breast feeding mothers.

## OUR OBSERVATIONS

ZPP observes that there is a great need to deepen advocacy to have government provide adequate awareness on the accessibility, availability, distribution and safety of the vaccines. The information distribution should be decentralised so that the general citizens can make informed decisions when they get the vaccines.

Government needs to do more to gain public trust on which vaccines to use for various groups of people, and should make sure there is equitable distribution.

## THE GOVERNMENT POSITION

The Chief Co-ordinator of the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Office of the President and Cabinet, Dr Agnes Mahomva, said the roll out plan is dependent on the reception of vaccine and government will continue to review the progress and will make decisions based on that.

Mahomva said that they are following the manufacturers's specifications and guidelines that do not allow those under 18 to get the vaccine.

"We are guided by the manufacturers and the science used to determine who gets the vaccine or not."

Mahomva said they were happy with the current progress as the numbers were increasing.

As ZPP, we continue to implore government to increase their efforts to raise more awareness on the vaccination process and to ensure that information is translated to all languages and is packaged in a way that is friendly to Persons with Disability.



## 2.6 LOCKING DOWN CIVIL SPACE

The threat on the work of civil society organisations has remained high following government's pronouncement that they were to deregister some civil society organizations.

Public Services and Social Welfare Minister Professor Paul Mavima announced that the government had published names of civil society organizations to be de-registered.

While the list has not been made public, there is a wide possibility that government will use this as an opportunity to clamp down on civil society that are working to hold government to account.

Government and ruling party officials have always accused civil society organisations of all sorts of things, including that they are working against the State.

In November, Zanu PF Acting Spokesperson, Patrick Chinamasa said Zanu-PF was to use its parliamentary majority to tighten screws on 'civic society organisations and the opposition.'

This is because civil society organisations, especially those that work towards furthering human rights and holding government to account, have effectively exposed some of government's excesses.

Although not directly linked, following Mavima's utterances, Zanu PF youths besieged Heal Zimbabwe Trust offices in Harare accusing the organisation of 'enslaving young people.'

Government has also announced that it is drafting the Zimbabwe Patriotic Bill, which amongst other things, aims to criminalise what is termed a "campaign against" national interests and the peddling of "falsehoods" which undermine Zimbabwe's national interests.

If enacted, the law gives government the permission to snoop into private communications between citizens and officials of foreign governments.

According to government and the ruling party, the law is meant to "deal" with citizens who propagate 'negative' information to foreign governments.

Ironically, patriotism, which is love for one's origins, can still be expressed by being critical to any individual or institutions that undermine the development of one's community.

According to the Constitution, democracy, peace and respect for human rights and the rule of law are amongst Zimbabwe's national interests.

It is therefore within the rights of any Zimbabwean to criticize their own government, especially when that government undermines the national interest, and this is enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe, which guarantees freedom of expression

ZPP believes that it is every citizen's patriotic obligation to speak out against human rights abuses and to raise public awareness both locally and internationally, of the human rights violations in Zimbabwe and to hold the Zimbabwean government accountable.

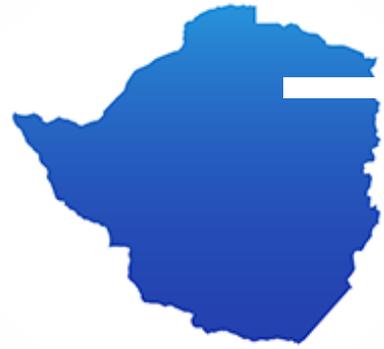
### OUR OBSERVATION:

If the government goes ahead and enacts a law that bars citizens from engaging foreign governments to raise awareness on the country's human rights record based on international conventions and treaties Zimbabwe is party to, the law would not only be contrary to the basic values of international co-operation, but it would also be ultra vires local, regional, continental and international laws Zimbabwe's party to.

Such rights are enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

They are also protected in the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

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GOVERNMENTS



## 2.7 CASE FOCUS

During the month of March, the Midlands Region was dominated by the violation of civil and political rights, where those that are not part of Zanu PF party did not get access or freedom to conduct their own activities.

The relaxation of the lockdown regulations exposed the selective application of the law as those in the ruling party were allowed to gather in large numbers.

Zanu PF openly flouted the 30 people per gathering restriction.

Examples of these are in Headlands and Kwekwe Central constituencies where Zanu PF officials presided over gatherings of more than 100 party supporters, risking people contracting the corona virus. On the other hand, opposition supporters were arrested in Chivi when they tried to convene their own meeting which had the stipulated maximum of 30 people.

In Mashonaland Central cases of politicians threatening the police have been recorded in the past and this seems to continue occurring. In March 2021, Zanu PF Central committee member John Nhamburo is alleged to have threatened Mvurwi police over the arrest of three Mvurwi town council officials who are facing fraud charges.

The arrested trio were Sheri Nyakudya (Town Secretary), Letwin Watambwa (Housing and Community Services Officer) and Simbarashe Kambare (Housing Clerk). When the three were arrested Nhamburo is said to have demanded their release saying the party image will be damaged as Mvurwi council is run by MDC Alliance.

Nhamburo who reportedly owns several stands in Mazowe which he acquired on party ticket is said to be protecting his stands that were not acquired procedurally. On 5 March a high powered party delegation was allegedly sent by Nhamburo to Mvurwi police station and before that Nhamburo had called police officers ordering the release of council officials claiming that their arrest would put the image of the party into disrepute. The case highlights brazen abuse of law enforcement who will be otherwise doing their job.

On 21 March about 40 villagers in Murehwa North were forced to convene in Mutsvairo Village Ward 16 for a 'developmental meeting'. It is alleged that, Zanu PF Councillor Mhangarai Milton Chinake forced villagers to convene before he openly told MDC Alliance activists to denounce their party or risk being denied government aid. During the meeting an MDC activist was told that he was not welcome to come to village meetings and his name should be removed from all government assistance programs.

On 14 March a case of arson and right to personal security was reported in Mudzi North in Musiyani Village Ward 10. It is alleged that, a Zanu PF activist identified as Stanley Joseph reportedly torched a villager's house under unclear circumstances. ZPP interviewed the victim, who said she believed her house was torched because she is a known MDC Alliance activist. Property and food worth hundreds of dollars was destroyed. No arrest was reported.

In Nkulumane Constituency, Ward 22, some Zanu PF activists are already in election mode, denying perceived opposition supporters, access to some basic services such as public water. A ruling party activist identified as Sharon Dube allegedly intimidated citizens who had come to fetch water at a borehole in the ward. Dube said that opposition supporters had up to August 2021 to use the borehole and after that, only Zanu PF supporters will be allowed to get water from public water points as the ruling party would have commenced its campaigns.

*Please note, these cases are just a few of the many that ZPP has extensively documented. For the full details of all cases, get in touch with ZPP on [zppinfo@myzpp.com](mailto:zppinfo@myzpp.com)*