WeeklY BY-ELECTION REPORT

Introduction

With a few days to go before the by elections, Heal Zimbabwe has noted an increase in cases of human rights violations. The Traditional leadership institution continues to be at the centre of abuse by ruling party elites ahead of the by elections. In Chivi South for example several Village heads have been directed to join ZANU PF campaign team led by ward 24 Councillor, Christopher Muzvidziwa. Following this development, Village heads are convening regular meeting where community members are being threatened against voting for opposition party, Citizen Coalition for Change (CCC). This also comes after the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) conducted a meeting at Ngundu Secondary School where it implored political parties to stop abusing Village heads during their campaigns since they are mandated by the constitution to be apolitical. A similar incident was recorded in Binga North where the newly appointed District Development Coordinator, Leander Kapone directed all village heads during a meeting at Siyabuza Business centre to campaign for the ZANU PF candidate. Similar threats to Village heads were also issued by the ZANU PF Secretary for Administration, Obert Mpofu on 10 March 2022 AT Siyabuzuba Business centre. In other areas, Heal Zimbabwe has also observed that Village heads are being forced to convene meetings to mobilize supporters for ZANU PF candidates. This practice however, violates Section 281 of the constitution that highlights that Traditional leaders must not be members of any political party or further the interests of any political party.
Objectives

This Report seeks to:

1. Document cases of politically motivated human rights violations recorded during the month of February 2022 in Zimbabwe

2. Unpack systems of political violence in Zimbabwe with a special focus on key players and how the system is administered in constituencies that have by elections

3. Proffer bottom-up solutions from local community peace structures to safeguard against continued politically motivated human rights abuses.

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Binga District Development Coordinator, Leander Kapone directed all village heads during a meeting at Siyabuza Business centre to campaign for the ZANU PF candidate.

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Methodology

Heal Zimbabwe’s Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) Situation Room collects politically motivated and state perpetrated human rights violations through its network of 4 000 EWER members. Upon documenting the cases, Heal Zimbabwe provides emergency rapid response as well as identifying mitigation strategies. Outputs of these two processes were then combined together to generate this report. Below are detailed cases of human rights violations;

Chivi south

Ward 24 aspiring Councillor Christopher Muzvidziwa, on 1 March 2022, instructed Village heads such Madzivire, Gotoza (Anderson Gondongwe), Kutirai (Maxwell Kutirai, Manyumbudzo, Mangunju (Silas Mangunju) to be part of his campaigning team. Since then the Village heads have already started convening meetings and mobilizing voters for Muzvidziwa. At these meetings community members are being threatened with violence if they fail to vote for Muzvidziwa.

On the 2nd of March 2022, ZANU PF ward Chairperson Jetiel Chebanga threatened to torch Nicolas Tomu and other CCC youth members’ homes after they put up CCC posters for MP candidate Paul Musholo at Shindi Secondary school in ward 26. Chebanga went on to organise youths to disrupt any political meetings organised by opposition party, CCC.

Mt Darwin

On 10 March 2022, Tichaona Mutedza, a CCC supporter received death threats from a ZANUPF supporter Ngoni Makanya. He was told that since he had escaped political violence in 2008, ZANUPF was going to make sure he would not do so in 2023. Tichaona filed a report at Mukumbura Police Station but no arrests have been made.
Binga North ward 6
On the 8th of March 2022, newly appointed District Administrator Leander Kapone convened a meeting at Siyabuzuba shopping centre. He invited all village heads and directed them not to attend political rallies convened by opposition political party, CCC. He further told them to ensure that they get names of those who have registered to vote in their areas and make sure that on the day of elections they will vote for ZANU PF.

On the 10th of March 2022, ZANU PF Secretary for Administration, Obert Mpofu also convened a meeting at the same venue with Village heads. He told the Village heads that they were supposed to ensure that on the day of the election, community members from their villages would vote resoundingly for the ZANU PF candidate.

Harare
On the 8th of March 2022 Maxwell Dutuma (ward 26 CCC candidate) and Munyaradzi Makwana who reside in Highfields were severely attacked at Gazaland by ZANUPF youths. They were forcibly taken away as their car also got hijacked by ZANUPF youths. Maxwell was taken into police custody after reporting the case while Munyaradzi was admitted at Westview hospital.

On the 7th of March 2022, three MDC Alliance members Joseph Mutambwi, Tafadzwa Chamunorwa and Leonard Zowa were assaulted by three unidentified men while putting campaign posters in Kuwadzana. The three were also forced to remove their party regalia. They reported to the case to Kuwadzana 2 Police station (RRB number 5045831) and the police highlighted they will transfer the case to Southerton police station.

On 16 March 2022, ten students were arrested at the University of Zimbabwe for staging a demo where they were demanding for a reduction of fees. At the time of writing, they were still held up at Avondale Police Station.
Harare Central
In Harare Central, most of the CCC Parliamentary Candidate Murisi Zwizwai’s posters were either torn or defaced. Zwizwai’s posters have also been defaced and superimposed by the ZANU PF candidate’s posters in Eastlea. On 14 March 2022, ZANU PF youths were seen defacing CCC campaign posters in Arcadia.

Mbare
On 16 March 2022, ZANU PF members were forced people Matererini flats to contribute condolences money for one Jonathan Chidembo whom they said was an active ZANU PF member. They highlighted that people who fail to make the contributions were going to be assaulted and lose their vending stalls at Mupedzanhamo flea market.

Mbizo Constituency
In Mbizo Wards 11 and 12, CCC activists have continuously had their door to door campaigns disrupted by ZANU PF activists led by Tapiwa Muto. On 12 March 2022, ZANU PF activists led by Muto intimidated and disrupted a group of CCC activists who were having a meeting at Mbizo 4 Shopping Centre.

Epworth Constituency
Suspected ZANU PF activists have torn and defaced campaign posters for both the MDC Alliance candidate Zivai Mhetu and CCC candidate Eathrage Kureva in Glenwood Park. CCC candidate’s posters have also been removed at Overspill shopping centre.

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Distribution of Human Rights Violations

- Zanu Pf Structures: 10
- DDCoordinators: 1
- Police: 2
- Village Heads: 1

Summary of Violations

- Assault: 2
- Intimidation: 7
- Defacing of Campaign Materials: 3
- Arbitrary Arrests: 4
- Disruption of Political Meetings: 5

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Interventions

Heal Zimbabwe through its Human Rights Monitors (HRMs) dispersed across the country, continues to monitor and report cases of human rights abuses. The HRMs also play an early warning and early response role where they detect and manage conflicts before they degenerate into violence. Through Community Peace Clubs (CPCs), Heal Zimbabwe also mediates and transform conflicts by promoting tolerance and dialogue though convening dialogues that bring together parties from the across the political divide. Heal Zimbabwe through various social media platforms such as Whatsapp and Twitter continues to engage to promote political tolerance by convening dialogues with candidates in the by elections. In Epworth, Heal Zimbabwe partner, Epworth Peace Movement (EPM) continues to convene peace concerts and youth peace tournaments with the objective of encouraging young people to shun violence and promote political tolerance ahead of the by elections.

Conclusion

Heal Zimbabwe through its Human Rights Monitors (HRMs) dispersed across the country, continues to monitor and report cases of human rights abuses. The HRMs also play an early warning and early response role where they detect and manage conflicts before they degenerate into violence. Through Community Peace Clubs (CPCs), Heal Zimbabwe also mediates and transform conflicts by promoting tolerance and dialogue though convening dialogues that bring together parties from the across the political divide. Heal Zimbabwe through various social media platforms such as Whatsapp and Twitter continues to engage to promote political tolerance by convening dialogues with candidates in the by elections. In Epworth, Heal Zimbabwe partner, Epworth Peace Movement (EPM) continues to convene peace concerts and youth peace tournaments with the objective of encouraging young people to shun violence and promote political tolerance ahead of the by elections.