



Zimbabwe
HUMAN RIGHTS
N G O F o r u m

POLITICAL VIOLENCE REPORT

APRIL 2008

June 2008

A report by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

OVERVIEW

This report documents cases of politically motivated human rights violations that occurred soon after the 29 March Harmonised Elections in Zimbabwe up to the end of April 2008. The violations occurred in an environment and context where ZANU PF suffered a defeat in the parliamentary and the local council elections. Just before the elections the heads of the army, the police and the prison service, had said in public that they would not serve any President other than President Mugabe. The President also proclaimed, at a ZANU PF rally around the same time, that voting for the MDC would be wasting one's vote. A number of reports on the post March election period and violence in Zimbabwe have been produced by various human rights organisations, thus this report will not purport to cover all the violations or incidences recorded countrywide but will place more emphasis on the cases that have been reported to the Human Rights Forum.

According to the cases that have been received by the Human Rights Forum and its members, political violence was more widespread in rural areas than in urban areas in April. However some cases were recorded in the high density areas of Harare and Chitungwiza. For instance it is alleged that soldiers went on the rampage in mid – April beating innocent civilians in these areas for allegedly participating in MDC celebration parties. Furthermore and surprisingly, the violence in April was largely confined to areas where ZANU PF won more seats for Parliament causing the Human Rights Forum to conclude that the violent retribution was because of President Mugabe's dismal showing in the Presidential elections.

The Human Rights Forum, through its Public Interest Unit, members, partner organisations and through the press has recorded 783 cases of politically motivated violence in April. However, the statistics below are based on a sample of 550 cases which had all the details that we routinely use to analyse data. The rest of the cases reported to us did not record the provinces and constituencies where the incidents occurred, a critical component in establishing and analysing the trends of where the violence occurred. As can be seen from the table below, the majority of the cases came from the three provinces of Mashonaland East, Central and West.

Bulawayo	Harare	Mash Cent	Mash East	Mash West	Manicaland	Masvingo	Midlands
1	150	128	165	38	57	9	2
0.1%	27.3 %	23.3%	30. 0%	6.9%	10.3%	3.1%	0.3%

The month recorded 412 displacements wherein the victims were forced to leave their homes on the grounds that they were MDC supporters. Such reports were received from all around the country but mainly in the Mashonaland provinces. In this report 10 cases of extra-judicial killings and 17 death threats were recorded. The reported deaths occurred in the Mashonaland provinces and other parts of the country. 11 schools were closed as ZANU PF militias set up bases in parts of Mashonaland and Manicaland. 560 cases of torture were recorded and 550 assaults. 712 transgressions against freedom of association, movement or expression were recorded and 783 of political discrimination.

The Human Rights Forum notes with great concern the very high number of torture cases in April. The definition of torture is internationally set and very clear and it points to the involvement of state operatives, sponsorship and acquiescence. The Government of Zimbabwe cannot continue to deny that these violations have occurred, nor justify its failure to fulfil its obligation to protect its people.

Furthermore, the records that informed this report also point to a huge involvement of private individuals identified as ZANU PF supporters, youths or members of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association. The Human Rights Forum notes that the argument that these bodies are not part of state machinery and therefore takes away the ZANU PF led Government of Zimbabwe's liability for ZANU PF supporters' violent and illegal acts, does not hold water. The victims who have reported their ordeals perpetrated by Zanu PF groups and war veterans have clearly identified and outlined details which point to the acquiescence or involvement of the Government of Zimbabwe directly or indirectly. The involvement, negligence and complicity of the state can be seen from such acts as;

- Members of the ZRP sending away victims coming to report cases of violence to them.
- The subsequent arrest of those people who have reported cases of politically motivated violence at police stations.
- The presence of Zimbabwe National Army and Zimbabwe Republic Police officers during some of the reported violations.
- The use of state property such as vehicles to transport the alleged perpetrators to places where violence has been recorded.

In any case, the Government of Zimbabwe is not only responsible for protecting people against human rights violations perpetrated by the State or its officials, but also against similar violations by private individuals.

In this report there are certain traits and characteristics which have been attendant on the incidents reported to the Human Rights Forum which rebut the denials by the Government of Zimbabwe that the violence is a case of over zealous youths and villagers getting out of hand. The information and evidence that is in possession of the Human Rights Forum points to a situation of an organized and well-orchestrated plan of action to annihilate the MDC party structures countrywide and to instill fear in the electorate before 27 June Run -off.

These characteristics were noted in an alert produced by the Human Rights Forum soon after the 29 March elections when the violence escalated. The Human Rights Forum maintains that after a careful analysis of the reports to the end of the month of April, the situation remains unchanged. The characteristics of the violence remain as follows:

- All reports show that the violence has been disproportionately one-sided, and against the MDC and other groups not supporting ZANU PF;
- All reports show that the violence attributed to ZANU PF is different from the violence attributed the other groups, both in the scale and in the nature;
- The violence attributed to ZANU PF shows evidence of systematic torture, abductions, disappearance, summary executions and extra-judicial killings, and this is very rarely the case with violence attributed to other groups such as the MDC;
- The systematic torture shows a strong associations with officials of the State – members of parliament, the police, the CIO, and other officials – as well as an association with groups closely affiliated to the ZANU PF political party – “war veterans”, youth militia, ZANU PF youth, ZANU PF supporters, ZANU PF party officials, etc;
- The evidence shows there are plausible allegations of the involvement of senior party and government leaders, and there are many statements from victims implicating such persons;
- There is no, or very little evidence, of any attempt by the executive or organs of the State to proactively deal with the violence;
- The evidence suggests, to the contrary, that there are an enormous number of examples of hate speech, and encouragement to violence and lawlessness by virtually all members of the executive, the parliament, the party, and the supporters of the ZANU PF party.

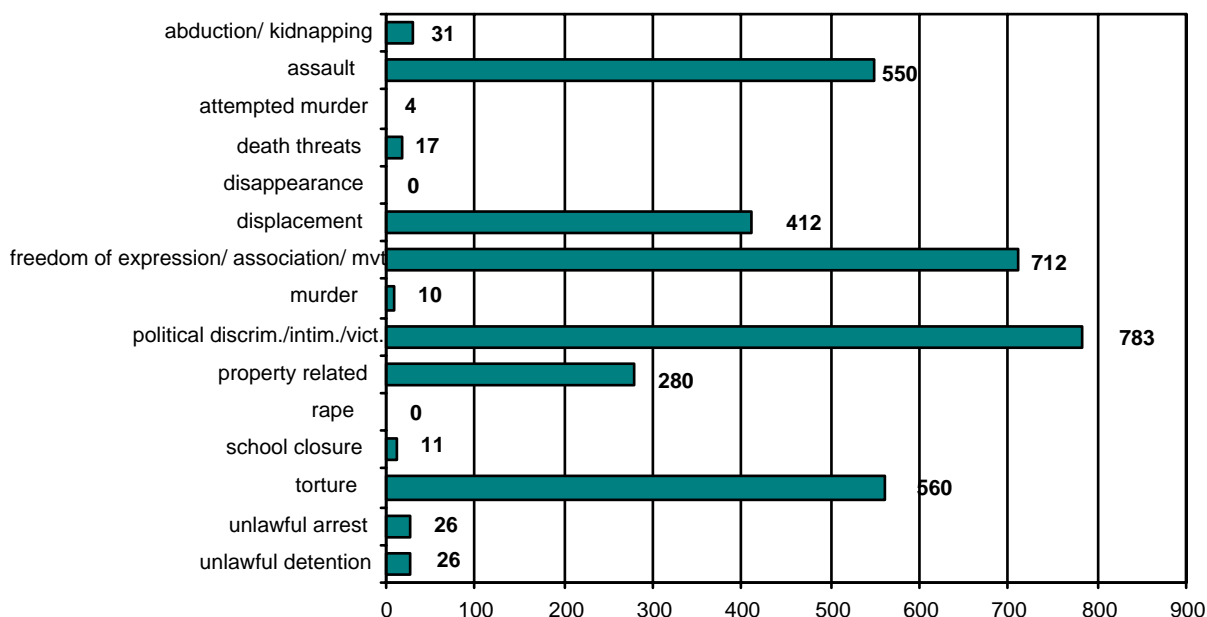
The Human Rights Forum maintains its long-held stance that the prevailing and past politically - motivated violence in the country would have influenced the electorate in terms of how they would have cast their votes in the impending Presidential Run-off. The huge displacements that have resulted from the state- sponsored political violence which also have largely influenced the polls in that the voting system only allows voters to cast their ballot where they are registered. This will have substantially disenfranchised voters come 27 June.

In all the negative circumstances that accompany the up-coming elections, including the gross violence against perceived opposition voters, it is absurd to suggest that the election could possibly be free and fair. The Human Rights Forum impores the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, SADC and the international community, to recognise this and record their concerns accordingly.

NB. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum would like to apologise for the late publication of this report. This is due to the unprecedented increase in cases of politically related violence in the month of April and the pressures and threats under which human rights non-governmental organisations have operated in the recent past.

Please note that cases that informed this summary will be posted on our website www.hrforumzim.com in due course.

Totals: 1 April – 30 April 2008



Cumulative Totals: 1 January –30 April 2008

