



Torture

Abductions

Arbitrary arrests

Enforced disappearances

Human rights abuse

Police brutality



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Louder

...security agents foil demo, but fail to silence the message

HARARE-On 31 July, the day Zimbabweans had mobilised peaceful protests against corruption and human rights abuses, Harare's streets were empty.

So were those in smaller cities and towns, as state security agents were deployed heavily to silence those seeking to speak out against worsening corruption and human rights abuses.

But, within days, the world was reverberating with a single message: #ZimbabweanLivesMatter, in signs of how the heavy-handed approach by the state failed to silence the legitimate concerns of the people.

Organiser of the July 31 protest, Jacob Ngarivhume, the leader of opposition party, Transform Zimbabwe, had been in jail for more than a week,

“Liberation for all our people in #Zimbabwe. We stand in solidarity with you. #ZimbabweanLivesMatter,”

accused of mobilising people to revolt against the government. Still, the message got through, and the world took notice of Zimbabwe's deteriorating human rights situation.

Across the globe, politicians joined music and film celebrities, footballers, rugby and cricket stars to use the hashtag #ZimbabweanLivesMatter to draw attention to the gross violation of human rights happening in Zimbabwe. Borrowing from the hugely successful #BlackLivesMatter that got trending after the killing of a black man by a white policeman, the Zimbabwean campaign went viral.

“Liberation for all our people in #Zimbabwe. We stand in solidarity with you. #ZimbabweanLivesMatter,” tweeted Grammy-nominated Jamaican reggae band reggae Morgan Heritage.

“I would say, ‘I’m praying for you’ ... but that’s a bit overdone, I’d rather just say, you’re on my mind

“I would say, I’m praying for you’ ... but that’s a bit overdone, I’d rather just say, you’re on my mind and I hope you will be victorious soon,”

and I hope you will be victorious soon,” said South African rapper, singer, songwriter, record producer, Kiernan Jarryd Forbes, professionally known as AKA. Like many other stars, he posted a series of tweets offering support to Zimbabwe's suffering masses.

Within a short period, the campaign had more than 700 000 tweets globally, trending in countries such as South Africa, United States of America and Australia.

“An injustice to one African should be an injustice to all Africans #ZimbabweanLivesMatter,” said prominent South African journalist, Mzilikazi wa Afrika in a tweet accompanied by a video of hordes of Zimbabwean police officers kicking a civilian.

“Fadzayi, Tsitsi, Julie, Terrence, Loveridge, and all the others in Zimbabwe’s protest may God give you strength and courage in your pursuit of freedom. #ZimbabweanLivesMatter,” tweeted Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the former president of Liberia.

She was referring to main opposition MDC Alliance political party spokesperson Fadzayi Mahere, prominent author, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Julie Barnes and several other people detained and charged for carrying placards on 31 July.

Prominent Zimbabweans, including music and sports stars joined in the campaign, despite the risk that comes with speaking out against human rights abuses in the southern African country.

“I and future generations deserve a better Zimbabwe. It’s not too much to ask for and that’s all we are asking for. Fix Zimbabwe for the sake of its people. As artists, we aren’t your enemies, we are in this together. #ZimbabweanLivesMatter,” tweeted Seh Calaz, a Zimdancehall star whose signature line “Bholato” has been turned into an anthem nationally.

“DJ Stavo and Friends just pulled the biggest Twitter Takeover of 2020. No One believed me when I said it’s a numbers game. When we United as one for the same cause the Process is unstoppable. #TTP #ZimbabweanLivesMatter,” tweeted DJ Stavo, one of Zimbabwe’s most successful music producers and professional Club disc jockeys. He was among the main drivers of the campaign.

Judges end Chin’ono, Ngarivhume’s detention

HARARE-Two High Court Judges have ended the lengthy detention of freelance journalist Hopewell Chin’ono and Transform Zimbabwe party leader Jacob Ngarivhume, who had been languishing in prison for more than one month after they were arrested in July for allegedly inciting people to revolt against President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s administration.

Chin’ono and Ngarivhume had spent more than one month while detained at Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison after they were arrested by Zimbabwe Republic Police members on Monday 20 July 2020 and charged with incitement to participate in a gathering with intent to promote public violence, breaches of peace or bigotry as defined in section 187(1)(a) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act as read with section 37(1)(a)(i) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act.

The award-winning freelance journalist and the opposition political party leader were also charged with incitement to commit public violence as defined in section 187(1)(a) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act as read with section 36(1)(a) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act.

Prosecutors alleged that Chin’ono and Ngarivhume incited people to revolt against President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s administration during some anti-

government protests called for on 31 July 2020. On three occasions, Magistrate Ngoni Nduna and



Free at last...Hopewell Chin’ono and Jacob Ngarivhume

Magistrate Trynos Utahwashe together with High Court Judge Justice Tawanda Chitapi denied Chin’ono and Ngarivhume bail after they petitioned the courts to be set free.

But on Wednesday 2 September 2020 Justice Siyabona Musithu ordered the release of Ngarivhume from prison after granting him RTG\$50 000 bail and imposing some stringent conditions which include banning him from posting messages on his Twitter handle @jngarivhume pending the finalisation of his matter and to report

three times every week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at a local police station until his matter is finalised.

Ngarivhume was also ordered to surrender his passport with the Clerk of Court at Harare Magistrates Court and to continue residing at his given residential address until his matter is finalised.

In arriving at the decision to set free Ngarivhume, Justice Musithu faulted Magistrate Utahwashe for erring and misdirecting himself on 21 August 2020 in refusing to release the opposition politician on bail as there was a change in circumstances from the time he appeared for his initial bail hearing on 22 July 2020.

The Judge ruled that the state had failed to adduce evidence supporting its opposition to the release of Ngarivhume on bail on the basis that there was a formation called #31 July Movement which intended to carry out nationwide protests beyond 31 July 2020.

Justice Chitapi also set free Chin’ono on RTG\$10 000 bail and similarly imposed some stringent conditions such as restricting the freelance journalist from posting on his Twitter handle namely @daddyhope or create any Twitter account for the use of inciting the holding of mass demonstrations for whatever purpose until his case is finalised.

Justice Chitapi, who ruled that Magistrate Nduna misdirected himself when he denied Chin’ono bail on 24 August 2020 after initially dismissing his first freedom bid on 24 July 2020, ordered the freelance journalist to report at a local police station two times every week on Mondays and Fridays, surrender title deeds to his residential property, continue residing at his given residential address and to surrender his passport with Clerk of Court at Harare Magistrates Court.

Tsitsi's walk for change

...arrested, harassed and detained, author Dangarembga steps up campaign



Targeted...Tsitsi Dangarembga and Julie Barnes

Picture Credit: Auntony Zinyange

HARARE-Almost daily and alone for the past months, renowned author Tsitsi Dangarembga would leave her house in one of Harare's leafy suburbs, carry a placard and march in her neighbourhood.

Few cared to join her. But she continued.

With messages such as "We want better, reform our institutions, and "Free Hopewell, Free Jacob Ngarivhume", the placards revealed some of Dangarembga's deepest aspirations: justice and a better life for all Zimbabweans.

"I think that is a very right motive to have, it is a good thing to live by and work for," she was to say on 1 August, while walking out of Harare Magistrates Court after spending the night in police cells.

The author of the bestselling and awarding winning novel, "Nervous Conditions", was arrested on 31 July and detained together with Julie Barnes, a colleague, in Harare as they marched with their placards and wearing masks and observing social distancing.

Dangarembga and Barnes, who were represented by Chris Mhike, Alec Muchadehama and Paidamoyo Sauroombe of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), were charged with participating in a public gathering with intention to promote public violence, breach of peace or bigotry.

They were among more than 60 people arrested for engaging in localised, low key protests after security agents sealed the city centre, where the main protests were expected to take place.

The author's arrest drew global attention and condemnation, with over 100 African writers petitioning for her release and for the Southern African Development Community and the African Union to speak out against human rights violations in Zimbabwe. "It's good to get some fresh air," said Dangarembga outside the court after she was

released on bail. She immediately expressed her worries about the state of affairs in Zimbabwe. "The government is making it hard for us to enjoy basic rights. Section 59 does exist and does (allow for) the right to demonstrate and petition peacefully. But it seems it is very difficult to do that practically because you run the risk of being arrested," she said.

For her, the call for protests on 31 July and the subsequent #ZimbabweanLivesMatter campaign were a chance to galvanise the nation, and the world, against corruption and human rights abuses happening in Zimbabwe and force the government to change course.

"Friends, here is a principle. If you want your suffering to end, you have to act," she tweeted on the day of the protest and before her arrest. "Action comes from hope. This is the principle of faith and action," she said.

Unshaken, Dangarembga has continued rallying Zimbabweans to the call for action even after her arrest and detention. Together with other human rights defenders, she is supporting an initiative to promote "solo demos". These would involve people carrying placards and walking solo in protest. As her ordeal shows, such an action still carries risks.

"Friends, if you are feeling brave, do a 1 person demo... If you are not feeling so brave, you can take a picture inside or in the yard. You can cover your face, too," she tweeted on 5 August, before adding a word of caution, "Please remember walking in your neighbourhood carries risk of arrest. Let's do it!"

The 61 year-old is also aware that the journey to freedom could be long and Zimbabweans need to own the struggle and keep fighting.

"Let us keep working for reform in Zimbabwe. It is ours too," said Dangarembga, who has been nominated for the prestigious Booker Prize for her new book "This Mournable Body, a sequel to Nervous Conditions".

Abducted, tortured and then exposed to COVID-19

HARARE-"Who sent you?" "How much were you paid?" "Who are you going to meet?" The questions rained on Human Rights Defenders Terrence Guta and Loveridge Chinzvende amid bouts of torture from state security agents after being suspected of being part of anti-government protesters.

The ordeal started at around 14:30 on 31 July when Guta and Chinzvende were abducted by some unidentified men in a white Nissan double cab vehicle while they were walking in Harare's Strathaven suburb. After parking at the gate of Mabelreign Girls High, another vehicle arrived and two men carrying pistols disembarked before ordering Guta and Chinzvende to lie down.

Guta was hit on the forehead with the butt of a gun causing an open wound on his head which started to bleed. The two men then forced Guta and Chinzvende into the backseat of their vehicle, took away their phones and started assaulting them using clenched fists. The men demanded that Guta and Chinzvende unlock their phones so that they could go through them. It turned into a life-saving moment as Guta managed to send out an SOS before handing the phone back to one of the men who went through it for about 10 minutes. Following the SOS sent by Guta, lawyers and other HRDs began a campaign to locate the two.

Meanwhile, blindfolded, the torture, both physical and psychological, continued for several hours before they were taken to Harare Central Police Station. There, more torture awaited Guta and Chinzvende. At around 19:00hrs, Guta and Chinzvende were then detained in deplorable conditions overnight at Harare Central Police station, despite having not yet been charged for committing any offence. They were not informed of the reason for their detention.

"The toilets were not functional and covered with urine; there was no sanitiser or running water to wash hands despite the country facing the COVID-19 pandemic; the bed was a concrete surface with no mattress and the blankets were dirty," said their lawyer Doug Coltart of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. Guta and Chinzvende were only informed of the charges they were facing the following day, where they were taken to court and set free on bail by Magistrate Ngoni Nduna.

UN raises concern over Zim abuses

NEW YORK-United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, António Guterres, has spoken out against the situation in Zimbabwe, calling on President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government to respect the fundamental rights of citizens in statements that highlight the impact of the #ZimbabweanLivesMatter online campaign.

In a briefing held early in August, the Office of the Spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General said Guterres was particularly concerned with the situation in Lebanon, where a blast killed more than 130 people, the hunger in Sudan, COVID-19 amidst conflict in Syria and human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. Guterres' office said the Secretary-General has been following "with concern" developments in Zimbabwe.

"He urges the government of Zimbabwe to ensure the protection of all fundamental human rights, notably the freedom of opinion and expression and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, in accordance with Zimbabwe's human rights obligations. He also calls on all political actors and civil society to resolve issues peacefully through inclusive dialogue," said his Office while briefing journalists at the UN headquarters in New York, in the United States of America.

Guterres joined other respected global voices in raising concern about the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe. Apart from Guterres, The Elders, a group of "independent global leaders working together for peace, justice and human rights" and founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007, used the #ZimbabweanLivesMatter hashtag to call for an immediate end to human rights violations.

"With reports of arrests, beatings & abductions in Zimbabwe, The Elders call for an immediate end to violence, & emphasise the fight against #COVID19 should be rooted in respect for human rights. As the scale of #ZimbabweanLivesMatter shows, dialogue & reform are urgently needed," tweeted The Elders.

AUC Chairperson urges authorities in Zim to uphold rule of law and protect human rights

Addis Abba, Ethiopia: 7 August 2020. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Moussa Faki Mahamat is following closely political developments in Zimbabwe as the country mounts concerted efforts in response to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cognisant of the existing harsh socio-economic situation in the country, the Chairperson urges the Zimbabwe authorities to respond to the pandemic ensuring that the national response is premised on human rights as enshrined in the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The Chairperson is concerned about reports of disproportionate use of force by security forces in enforcing COVID-19 emergency measures. He implores the authorities to exercise restraint in their response to peaceful protests. The Chairperson further encourages the government

of Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law allowing for freedom of the media, freedom of assembly, freedom of association and the right to information. Violations of these rights are a breach of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

In this regard, the Chairperson welcomes the appointment by South African President and current Chair of the Union, HE Cyril Ramaphosa of two special envoys to Zimbabwe, namely former Cabinet Minister Dr Sydney Mufamadi and former Speaker of Parliament Ms Baleka Mbete, both from South Africa.

The Chairperson reaffirms the African Union's commitment and support to the government and people of Zimbabwe in their endeavour to deepen democracy in the country, in line with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.



Dozens of people arrested as govt suppresses protest

Bulawayo-Police arrested more than 60 people, as security agents moved to suppress the 31 July protest aimed at pushing government to act against corruption and respect citizens' fundamental rights.

Members of Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) mounted a massive clampdown days before the actual protest to arrest those who were mobilising the protest action.

The arrests spread across the country – from Bulawayo to Harare, Mwenezi, Chegutu, Shamva, Kwekwe, Zvishavane and Chipinge – and targeted people who were simply exercising their constitutional rights.

In Bulawayo, ZRP members and other enforcement officers arrested Advent Mathuthu, Amandlenkosi Mathuthu and Tendai Masotsha a day before the protests on allegations that they had generated and distributed some flyers promoting the protest scheduled for 31 July.

Mandlenkosi and Masotsha were later released without a charge preferred against them, although Tawanda Muchehiwa was then abducted by some unidentified people who are suspected to be state security agents and tortured and held *incommunicado* until a High Court Judge ordered his release.

Advent appeared before Bulawayo Magistrate Tinashe Tashaya on charges of inciting public violence. Magistrate Tashaya set Advent free on bail.

Mzingaye Matthew Thaka also appeared before the same Magistrate on public violence charges after being arrested for holding a one-man demonstration.

The state alleged that he carried a placard calling for the release of detained freelance journalist, Hopewell Chin'ono and Transform Zimbabwe party leader, Jacob Ngarivhume. Thaka was also arrested

for calling on government to respect the rule of law. In court, prosecutors told Magistrate Tashaya that the 21 year-old man, who was represented by Lison Ncube of ZLHR incited some members of the public through staging a demonstration.

Another Bulawayo resident, Collen Dhlamini, who operates a printing service, was arrested for allegedly printing flyers mobilising the 31 July protest. Dhlamini, who was represented by Mehluli Dube of ZLHR, will be summoned to appear in court.

In the same city, 31 year-old Sanele Hanana of Bulawayo was summoned by police officers following a break-in at her residence by some people carrying guns who were looking for her husband who is an activist. Hanana, went to the police station accompanied by her lawyer Kholwani Ngwenya of ZLHR, where a statement was recorded from her.

In Plumtree, in Matabeleland South province, police officers arrested Nhlalo Ndlovu, Precious Sibanda, Ephraim Ndlovu, Thabo Tshangule, Mudisi Moyo and another person only identified as Xolani on allegations that they were inciting people to protest and charged them with malicious damage to property.

The six, who were represented by Jonathan Tsvangirai of ZLHR, were released on summons with the police indicating that they will summon them to appear in court at a date to be advised.

In Zvishavane, in Midlands province, ZRP members arrested Givemore Makandire and charged him with contravening section 36 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act for allegedly inciting public violence through printing flyers promoting a protest scheduled for 31 July.

In Kwekwe, in Midlands province, ZRP members arrested 40 year-old Tinei Siziba and charged him with disorderly conduct as defined in section 36 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act for allegedly wearing a mask written #zanupfmustgo.

Siziba was represented by Brian Dube of ZLHR.

In Harare, Paula Besa, a resident of Sunningdale suburb was arrested and charged with incitement to participate in a gathering with intent to promote public violence, breaches of peace or bigotry.

ZRP members claimed that the 26 year-old Besa, who was represented by Tapiwa Muchineripi of ZLHR, staged a protest in Arcadia suburb, where he allegedly held some placards inscribed "Respect our Constitution", "You can ignore or kill us but you will regret" and "Hope is our hero".

In Chegutu, in Mashonaland West province, Edward Dzeka and Isheanesu Chimunyemba were arrested and charged with participating in a gathering with intent to promote public violence, breach of peace or bigotry. The duo was represented by Douglas Chikwangwani of ZLHR.

In Masvingo, police officers arrested Henry Chivhanga, a disability rights activist, who is the Director of Disability Amalgamation Community Trust and charged him with making unnecessary movement. Chivhanga was represented by Collen Maboke of ZLHR.

Masvingo Urban Ward 4 Councillor Godfrey Kurauone was arrested by ZRP members on 31 July when he went to Masvingo Central Police Station accompanied by his lawyer Martin Mureri of ZLHR to present himself as part of his bail reporting conditions on a case of insulting President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

Kurauone was charged with criminal nuisance as defined in section 46(2)(v) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act for allegedly posting a video on an unnamed social media platform on 20 July while singing a song with the lyrics "Ichava nhoroondo kana tandererwa kubvisa Mnangagwa."

In Karoi in Mashonaland West province, Joel Zilala was summoned by police officers for interrogation over a report that he allegedly filed to the law enforcement agents requesting that ZANU PF

party spokesperson Patrick Chinamasa be arrested and prosecuted for inciting public violence and disturbing peace. Zilala, who was accompanied by his lawyer Unite Saizi of ZLHR, reported at ZRP Hurungwe District Headquarters, where he left his personal details as requested by the law enforcement agents. Lawyers were not spared.

Human rights lawyer Obey Shava was arrested and detained at Harare Central Police Station together with his clients who include Harare West legislator Hon. Joana Mamombe, Cecillia Chimbiri and Netsai Marova at a checkpoint mounted near the ruling ZANU-PF party headquarters.

Shava, Hon. Mamombe, Chimbiri and Marova were on their way from Harare Magistrates Court to Harare Central Police Station, where the three victims of abduction and torture were scheduled to report to the law enforcement agents as part of their bail conditions.

Shava, Hon. Mamombe, Chimbiri and Marova, who were represented by Harrison Nkomo of ZLHR, were detained for close to four hours and subjected to an identification parade, where a soldier alleged that Chimbiri verbally attacked her resulting in her being charged with disorderly conduct and released into the custody of her lawyer.

Shava, Hon. Mamombe and Marova were later released from police custody without any charge preferred against them.

In Mt Pleasant suburb, some ZRP members besieged the residence of Regis Chawatama, a lawyer, where they demanded to search his house for some placards allegedly inscribed with offensive and anti-government material.

However, the ZRP members left the residence without conducting the search as Chawatama's lawyer Kossam Ncube of ZLHR challenged them to produce a warrant of search and seizure authorising them to do so. The arrests of people continued in the relentless clampdown.

ZLHR secures release of protest detainees

HARARE-As police swooped on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) moved swiftly to protect the rights of dozens of those who had been thrown into detention and managed to secure the release of many of them.

Among those whom ZLHR managed to get freed on bail was renowned author Tsitsi Dangarembga and her colleague, Julie Barnes, who had spent a night in detention and charged with participating in a public gathering with intention to promote public violence, breach of peace or bigotry as defined in Section 37(1)(b) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act.

Magistrate Ngoni Nduna also set free lawyer and opposition MDC-Alliance party spokesperson Advocate Fadzayi Mahere, who was arrested and detained together with six other Harare residents: Tinotenda Muskwe, Tinashe Murapata, Jessica Drury, Nyasha Musandu, Josse Lotter and Simon Drury.

The Magistrate ordered Advocate Mahere and the six other protesters to pay RTG\$5 000 bail and to report at various Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) stations once a week on Fridays, not to interfere with state witnesses, continue residing at their given residential addresses and surrender their passports until their matter is finalised as part of bail conditions.

Terrence Guta and Loveridge Chinzvende, who were also arrested on the day of the protest in Harare were granted RTG\$5 000 bail each. One of those freed on bail, Paul Besa, a resident of Sunningdale



Freed...Lawyer Fadzayi Mahere and some Harare residents arriving at Harare Magistrates Court

suburb, was arrested by some ZRP members who claimed that he held some placards written "Respect our Constitution", "You can ignore or kill us but you will regret" and "Hope is our hero". Another Harare resident Phillip Chamunorwa Ndengu of Glenview suburb was also arrested on 31 July by ZRP members who charged him with incitement to commit public violence as defined in section 187(1) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act as read with section 37(1)(a) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act alternatively incitement

to commit public violence as defined in section 187(1)(a) as read with section 36(1)(a) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act. In Bulawayo, Panashe Vongai Sivindani was set free on RTG\$2 000 bail after she appeared at Bulawayo Magistrates Court answering to similar charges. With police continuing with the clampdown, and many HRDs still in detention, the job is far from done for ZLHR, whose lawyers are working round the clock to protect people's rights that are enshrined in the Constitution.