

Stop Harassment of Human Rights Defenders

End Date of this action

12/15/09

Artist and community activist, Marlon Magwaza, was harassed and threatened by ZANU-PF youths after he organized a community cultural event that had prior clearance from the police. The event was conducted to promote peace and tolerance. He was shoved by the police before being taken to the police station where he was detained for about seven hours. The arrest took place after ZANU-PF youths alleged a participant at the event had 'insulted' President Mugabe.

Targets

Ambassador Mapuranga
Zimbabwe Embassy
1608 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington DC
20009

Please also write directly to:

Mr Augustine Chihuri, Commissioner-General of Police Zimbabwe Republic Police General Head Quarters PO Box 8807 Causeway Harare, Zimbabwe Fax: + 263 4 253 212 Salutation: Dear Commissioner-General Chihur	Officer-in-Charge Borrowdale Suburban District Police Station Borrowdale Road P O Borrowdale Harare, Zimbabwe Salutation: Dear Officer-in-Charge,
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Sample Letter:

Dear Ambassador Mapuranga,

I am concerned about the harassment and intimidation of **Marlon Magwaza**, an artist and community activist in Hatcliffe, by ZANU-PF supporters with the apparent acquiescence of the police officers at Borrowdale police station.

Marlon Magwaza was reportedly threatened by ZANU-PF youth members on 3 October 2009 after he organised a community cultural event with prior clearance from the police. The cultural event was intended to promote peace and tolerance in his community. The ZANU-PF youths accused him of being a supporter of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). He was subjected to some shoving before the ZANU-PF youths took him to Borrowdale police station where he was detained for about seven hours after the youths alleged that a participant at the event had 'insulted' President Mugabe. He was released after the intervention of his lawyer.

On 4 October, police officers picked up Marlon Magwaza from his home in Hatcliffe and detained him at Borrowdale police station for about three hours before releasing him. Police also visited his home several times since his release.

The treatment of Marlon Magwaza by the ZANU-PF supporters and the subsequent attempt by the police to charge him for 'insulting the President' amounts to a violation of his right to freedom of expression as guaranteed in Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As you may know, Zimbabwe is a state party to the two international human rights treaties.

I am concerned to note that police appear to be taking orders from ZANU-PF supporters to arrest people perceived to be opponents of that party. Such conduct by the police compromises their ability to enforce the law in an independent and impartial manner. It is also not consistent with the letter and spirit of the Southern Africa Regional Police Chiefs Co-operation Organisation's Code of Conduct for Police Officials.

I am therefore urging you in your capacity as representative for Zimbabwe to insist the **Commissioner General of Police and the Officer-in-Charge of Borrowdale police station** investigate this matter and take all necessary measures to guarantee Marlon Magwaza's personal safety in his community and allow him go about his work as an artist and community activist without interference from ZANU-PF supporters or any other political organisation.

Yours sincerely,