



Zimbabwe Activist Brief

Amnesty International has documented unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment, including beatings, as well as harassment and intimidation of mainly Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters and human rights defenders in Zimbabwe following elections on 29 March 2008. By the end of May dozens of people had been killed and over 1600 people had been treated for injuries sustained from politically related violence. A week prior to the run-off elections on June 27, Amnesty International revealed that 12 bodies have been found in various areas of Zimbabwe. Most of the victims appear to have been tortured to death by their abductors. Human rights groups in Zimbabwe have been unable to document all the cases of violence as their movements have been severely restricted and some of them have fallen victim to the on-going violence.

The bulk of the human rights violations have been perpetrated by supporters of the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party and members of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War

Veterans Association (ZNLWA) (generally known as "war veterans"). State security organizations, in particular the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) have been unwilling to act against these perpetrators – allowing them to kill, torture, assault and burn homes and businesses of suspected MDC supporters with impunity. In fact, in some cases authorities have instigated or even directed attacks by these groups.

Amnesty *"is particularly concerned about apparent retribution attacks against opposition supporters in rural areas, townships and farms across the country. Victims allege that they have been assaulted by soldiers, police, so-called 'war veterans' and supporters of the ruling party, ZANU-PF, and have been accused of not having voted 'correctly'."*

Irene Khan
Secretary General of Amnesty International

In early June, the government of Zimbabwe banned field operations by humanitarian aid organizations. These restrictions will not only expose millions of people to hunger but also serve as a means for the government to prevent aid workers from witnessing sharply increased levels of state-sponsored political violence taking place in the country since presidential and parliamentary elections were held on March 29.

The government of Zimbabwe's months-long campaign of terror and violence against civilians has led opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai to pull out of the run-off presidential election against President Robert Mugabe still scheduled for June 27.

Human Rights Concerns

- Harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders
- Human Rights violations perpetrated by the Zimbabwe Republic Police, army, youth militias, and so-called "war veterans" with the apparent complicity of the government
- Torture, ill-treatment, and the lack of access to lawyers and medical personnel while in detention
- Restrictions of freedom of assembly and association
- Use of excessive force by state agents
- Denial of food aid to individuals and regions of the country perceived to support the political opposition
- Arrests of and attacks on journalists and violations of the right to freedom of expression
- Lack of an independent judiciary and the deliberate failure of the government to persecute violations of human rights

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Online Action Center

Stop the violence in Zimbabwe

www.amnestyusa.org/page.php?id=422

Urgent Action

UA 153/08: Protect activists of *Women of Zimbabwe Arise* (WOZA)

www.amnestyusa.org/actioncenter/actions/uaa15308.pdf

Summer Solidarity Action

Send messages of support and solidarity to *Women of Zimbabwe Arise* (WOZA)

www.amnestyusa.org/iar

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Report on post-election violence

Zimbabwe: A trail of violence after the ballot (June 2, 2008)

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/pdf/trailofviolence.pdf>

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