

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ARBITRARILY DETAINED

On July 10, human rights defender, Bhekimpilo Mbedzi, was arbitrarily arrested and is being detained after he posted a video on social media calling for protests against the recently enacted Constitutional Amendment Act No. 3. He faces charges of 'inciting an unlawful gathering' with the state alleging that he failed to notify the relevant authorities of the planned gathering. The Zimbabwean authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Bhekimpilo Mbedzi as he is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **UA 78.26**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Prosecutor General

Hon. Loice Matanda-Moyo

The National Prosecuting Authority of Zimbabwe
101 Kwame Nkrumah Avenue,
Harare, Zimbabwe

Emails: corporateaffairs@npa.gov.zw
npazcorporateaffairs@gmail.com

Send a copy of your letter to the address below

CC: Embassy of Zimbabwe in the United States

Ambassador David Douglas Hamadziripi

1608 New Hampshire Avenue, NW,
Washington DC 20009

Email: general@zimembassydc.org

Dear Honorable Loice Matanda-Moyo,

I am concerned about the arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defender, **Bhekimpilo Mbedzi**, who is currently facing charges of "incitement to conduct an unlawful gathering."

The charges arise from a video posted on Bhekimpilo Mbedzi's Facebook page on July 10, 2026, in which he encouraged members of the public to participate in a demonstration planned for July 31, 2026 against Constitutional Amendment Act No. 3. The authorities allege that he appeared in the video holding a placard reading "NO TO 2030" and mobilized people to participate in the demonstration without the required notification to the relevant authorities. He was subsequently charged with "incitement to conduct an unlawful gathering".

The use of criminal charges against individuals for peacefully expressing dissenting views or mobilizing others to participate in peaceful demonstrations risks undermining civic space and discouraging the legitimate exercise of human rights.

I call on you to immediately and unconditionally release Bhekimpilo Mbedzi as he is being detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human right and drop all the charges against him. I further urge you and the authorities to uphold and ensure respect for the human rights of everyone in the country including the rights freedom of expression, association, and to peaceful assembly as enshrined in Zimbabwe's Constitution and human rights treaties such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Zimbabwe is a state party.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Bhekimpilo Mbedzi, a human rights defender who is also the Matabeleland South provincial chairperson of the National Democratic Working Group (NDWG), was arrested after publicly expressing his intention to protest against the proposed constitutional amendments. On February 16, 2026, the Government of Zimbabwe announced the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 3) Bill, 2026 (H.B. 1 of 2026), formally initiating the constitutional amendment process under section 328 of the Constitution. The Bill proposes far-reaching changes to Zimbabwe's constitutional framework, including extending presidential and parliamentary terms from five to seven years, replacing direct presidential elections with election by Parliament, expanding executive influence over judicial and prosecutorial appointments, and abolishing constitutional commissions such as the Zimbabwe Gender Commission. Following its publication, the Bill entered the 90-day public consultation period, during which parliament was required to conduct public hearings and invite written submissions before debate and voting. However, the consultation process was widely criticized by civil society and legal experts as inadequate, with reports of intimidation, procedural irregularities, overcrowding, and the silencing of dissenting voices, raising serious concerns about compliance with constitutional due process and regional and international standards on meaningful public participation.

Even before the public hearings commenced, prominent critics of the Bill, including constitutional lawyer Professor Lovemore Madhuku and former Finance Minister Tendai Biti, were reportedly arrested, detained or assaulted, creating a climate of fear among those wishing to oppose the proposed amendments. Public hearings held from March 30, 2026 were marred by overcrowding, disruption and violence. In Harare, human rights lawyer Douglas Coltart was assaulted by suspected ZANU-PF supporters after attempting to make submissions, while in Bulawayo, opposition figures including David Coltart reported being denied the opportunity to speak despite arriving on time. On July 7, 2026, President Emmerson Mnangagwa assented to the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment) Act (No. 3), 2026 (Act No. 6 of 2026), following its passage by Parliament.

In the weeks following the enactment of the Act, civil society organizations, opposition groups, and activists reported plans to hold a peaceful march on July 31, 2026 to protest the constitutional amendments and call for their repeal. Reports also emerged of increased surveillance, intimidation, and arrests of individuals associated with the planned demonstrations, including the arrest and continued detention Bhekimpilo Mbedzi, who had publicly supported protests against the constitutional amendments.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: January 30, 2027

NAME AND PRONOUN: Bhekimpilo Mbedzi (he, him)