

URGENT ACTION

DROP CHARGES AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

On August 3, Zimbabwean human rights defender Bhekimpilo Mbedzi was granted bail by the High Court of Zimbabwe following his arrest on July 15, for posting a video on social media calling for protests against the recently enacted Constitutional Amendment Act No. 3. His release, however, is not unconditional. Bhekimpilo Mbedzi continues to face charges of ‘inciting an unlawful gathering’ with the State alleging that he failed to notify the relevant authorities of the event. The Zimbabwean authorities must immediately end the prosecution of and drop all charges against Bhekimpilo Mbedzi as he is being prosecuted 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 **Second 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
X: @NPAZim

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 ongoing prosecution of human rights defender, **Bhekimpilo Mbedzi**.

On July 15, Bhekimpilo Mbedzi was arbitrarily arrested and detained after he posted a video on social media calling for protests against the recently enacted Constitutional Amendment Act No. 3.

On August 3, the High Court of Zimbabwe granted Bhekimpilo Mbedzi bail of USD \$200. While I welcome this news, Bhekimpilo Mbedzi's release is not unconditional. He continues to face the charge of “incitement to conduct an unlawful gathering” which carries a penalty of seven years imprisonment.

I am concerned that Bhekimpilo Mbedzi is being prosecuted solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights. The misuse of the criminal justice system to target, harass, and intimidate individuals for peacefully expressing dissenting views or mobilizing others to exercise their right to peaceful assembly risks undermining civic space and discouraging the legitimate exercise of human rights.

I call on you and the authorities to end Bhekimpilo Mbedzi's prosecution 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.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The charges **Bhekimpilo Mbedzi** is facing 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 alleged 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" under Section 187 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, as read with Sections 7(1)(a) and 7(5) of the Maintenance of Peace and Order Act.

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 proposed 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. 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, 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: February 7, 2027

NAME AND PRONOUN: Bhekimpilo Mbedzi (he, him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/zimbabwe-human-rights-defender-arbitrarily-detained/>