

**ZIMBABWE Human rights defenders, lawyers, teachers and other residents of
Chimanimani**

Police and supporters of the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), have been harassing and assaulting people living in Chimanimani, in the eastern province of Manicaland, particularly those whom they believe to be supporters of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). They are also assaulting and intimidating human rights defenders and other observers in an apparent attempt to prevent news getting out. The local police and intelligence officers from the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), have arbitrarily arrested and tortured people they perceive to be MDC supporters and have tried to prevent lawyers from seeing them in custody. Those responsible for these human rights abuses appear to enjoy complete impunity, and Amnesty International fears that the abuses will continue and will go unreported and unpunished.

People trying to document political violence have also been targeted. On 5 April MDC member Talance Barara was arrested by Chimanimani police and CIO officers as he and three other MDC members were on their way to photograph the site of a burnt-out homestead belonging to an MDC supporter. Talance Barara was released after 24 hours, charged with "theft of a solar panel". The charge appears to be without foundation, and no further action on it is expected.

Michael Shane Kidd was arrested the following day, apparently because he had given a camera to Talance Barara and the other MDC activists. He was taken to the CIO offices, which are in the same building as the Chimanimani police station. At the station Kidd was allegedly beaten with clenched fists by the senior officer in overall command of the station. Although Kidd later tried to report the assault the desk officer at the station ignored him. Instead the senior officer who had beaten Kidd lodged a report that Kidd had assaulted him, and Kidd was taken into a cell. Shortly afterwards approximately seven people, including the senior police officer and the senior CIO agent in Chimanimani came into Kidd's cell, attempted to intimidate him and then assaulted him again.

Although Kidd's lawyer arrived at the police station on the day he was arrested he was not allowed to see him until the following day. Kidd told his lawyer that his head was "swimming" after the assault. On 8 April a court ordered that Kidd be released. A subsequent medical examination confirmed that his eardrum was ruptured. Following a complaint lodged by Kidd's lawyer at a different police station, the senior officer in charge of Chimanimani police station was charged with assault, but he has not been suspended from duty.

On 26 April the home of the senior CIO officer in Chimanimani was apparently firebombed. The following day at least 19 people were reportedly arrested by police. Five of them, including Michael Shane Kidd and Talance Barara, were detained until 14 May, when a court granted them bail.

On 28 April two lawyers had tried to see some of the men in Chimanimani police station. The police would not let them in. The senior police officer, who had previously assaulted Kidd, and the CIO officer whose home was apparently burnt, threatened them, allegedly at gunpoint. The lawyers were afraid to return to the station afterwards. The next day another lawyer managed to get in and see

the men, who told him that they had been tortured. They had been hosed with cold water, and had urine thrown over them.

Teachers in Chimanimani have also been threaten with death, assaulted and harassed. In May the magistrate's court in the provincial capital, Mutare, ordered ZANU-PF supporters accused of terrorising teachers at Matendeudze primary school in Chimanimani not to visit the institution or the homes of the teachers. Despite this ruling many teachers in the area believe they are in grave danger.

Human rights defenders and journalists reporting on the political violence in Chimanimani have also been harassed and intimidated. In January 2002 ZANU PF supporters "ordered" officials from the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) to give up their work in Chimanimani. Since then ZimRights have found it very difficult to operate in the area.

Zimbabwean journalist Peta Thornycroft, who writes for the British *Daily Telegraph*, was investigating reports of a campaign of retribution against MDC supporters following the March 2002 presidential election, when she was arrested by police and CIO officers in Chimanimani on 27 March. She was only released after 72 hours, when a court found no grounds for her detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The human rights violations described for Chimanimani are typical of those being perpetrated by ZANU-PF supports across Zimbabwe, in what has been described as a campaign of retribution against MDC supporters following the March 2002 presidential elections. Biased and unprofessional policing has also been reported country-wide.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing serious concern at the level of politically motivated violence in Chimanimani;
- expressing concern about reports that police and CIO officers in the area have intimidated and tortured people known or believed to be MDC supporters, including Talance Barara and Michael Shane Kidd, and urging the authorities to order a prompt and impartial inquiry;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the police carry out their duties in a professional and impartial manner;
- urging the authorities to ensure that journalists, human rights monitors and other observers can work freely in Chimanimani, without any abuse of their human rights.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon John Nkomo, Ministry of Home Affairs
11th Floor Mukwati Building, Private Bag 7703
Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

Fax: + 263 4 726 716

Salutation: Dear Minister

The Officer Commanding, Manicaland

Senior Assistant Inspector Rudo Muchemeyi
Provincial Police Headquarters, PO Box 188, Mutare, Manicaland, Zimbabwe

Salutation: Dear Inspector

Police Commissioner

Mr Augustine Chihuri, Police Headquarters,
PO Box 8807, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

Fax: + 263 4 253212

Salutation:Dear Commissioner

The Hon Dr Nicholas Goche, Minister of State for National Security,
4th Floor Chaminuka Building, Box 2278, Harare, Zimbabwe

Salutation:Dear Minister

COPIES TO:Human Rights Organizations

Amani Trust, PO Box 5465, Harare, Zimbabwe

ZimRights, PO Box 3951, Harare, Zimbabwe

and to diplomatic representatives of Zimbabwe accredited to your country. Please also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Australia, Nigeria and South Africa accredited to your country. These three Commonwealth countries will review Zimbabwe's suspension from the Commonwealth next March.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.