

URGENT ACTION

CRACKDOWN ON ACTIVISTS IN ZIMBABWE

Human rights and political activists in Zimbabwe are facing a major clampdown, with over 60 currently held in detention and many allegedly tortured. In Harare, 45 people have been charged with treason and face the death penalty if convicted. More activists have been arrested in Bulawayo and Manicaland province.

On 19 February, **Munyaradzi Gwisai** and 44 other activists were arrested by police in Zimbabwe's capital Harare while holding a meeting to discuss events in Egypt and Tunisia. They were detained beyond the 48 hours prescribed by law and were told that they were being charged with treason just minutes before being taken to court on 23 February. If convicted of treason, they could face the death penalty. Munyaradzi Gwisai told the court that he and other activists had been tortured while in detention at Harare Central police station. The activists were denied access to their lawyers and medical treatment. The 34 men are now detained at Harare Central Remand Prison while the 11 women are detained at Chikurubi Women's Prison.

On 28 February seven members of the campaigning organizations Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) and Men of Zimbabwe Arise (MOZA) were arrested in Bulawayo. They were reportedly tortured at Bulawayo Central police station. They were released on 2 March on \$50 bail and must report to police twice a week. On 1 March, 14 WOZA activists were arrested during various meetings on social issues in Bulawayo and released the same day without charge.

In Manicaland, 23 villagers and their Member of Parliament, Douglas Mwonzora, have been in custody since their arrest in mid-February. They are accused of public violence following clashes between members of President Mugabe's ZANU-PF party and the MDC-T party, to which Douglas Mwonzora belongs. No ZANU-PF activists were arrested. The 24 detainees were granted bail on 21 February but the state used Section 121 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act (CPEA) to suspend the bail order, and extend the detention by another seven days. This section of the CPEA has been used in the past to prolong detention of perceived opponents of ZANU-PF.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- To the Attorney General of Zimbabwe and Commissioner General of Police expressing concern over the arbitrary arrests, unlawful detention and torture of Mr Munyaradzi Gwisai and some of the 44 activists arrested on 19 February after holding a meeting to discuss events in Egypt and Tunisia. Urge them to end abusing the law against perceived political opponents of ZANU-PF party;
- To the Attorney General urging him to drop the treason charges against the 45 activists arrested solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression. Urge him to immediately and unconditionally release them;
- To the Commissioner General of Police urging him to end arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention of human rights activists and perceived opponents of ZANU-PF. Urge him to investigate the allegations of torture and bring the responsible security agents to justice. Urge him to guarantee access to lawyers and medical treatment to all detainees including those allegedly tortured in custody.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 APRIL 2011 TO:

The Attorney General

Johannes Tomana
Government of Zimbabwe
P. Bag 7714, Causeway
Harare, Zimbabwe

Fax: +263 4 777049

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Commissioner-General of Police

Augustine Chihuri
Zimbabwe Republic Police
P. O. Box 8807, Causeway
Harare, Zimbabwe

Fax: +263 4 253 212

Salutation: Dear Commissioner-General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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