

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## Zimbabwe: Unlawful suppression of independent media

Amnesty International is calling on the Zimbabwean authorities to uphold the rule of law and restore the fundamental right of Zimbabweans to freely express themselves. The call comes as the Zimbabwe police continue to ignore a High Court order directing them to vacate the premises of independent newspaper, the *Daily News*.

"The failure of the police to uphold court orders undermines the legitimacy and authority of the courts and the rule of law in Zimbabwe", Amnesty International said.

The *Daily News* has been closed since September 2003 when the Supreme Court ruled that the newspaper was publishing illegally because it had not registered with the state-controlled Media Information Commission (MIC), a requirement of the 2002 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). The police took up occupation of the *Daily News* offices on 19 December 2003, just hours after an Administrative Court ruled that the newspaper should be allowed to resume publication. On Friday 9 January 2004 the High Court ordered the police to vacate the premises.

Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed serious concern about the use of national legislation to suppress freedom of expression and silence dissent in Zimbabwe. Many of the provisions of newly enacted legislation such as the AIPPA directly contravene Zimbabwe's national Constitution and international human rights standards. In recent months the Zimbabwe authorities have stepped up attacks against independent media outlets and journalists.

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