

**PUBLIC**

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**Fear for safety**

**27 January 2006**

**ZIMBABWE**

**Arnold Tsunga (m), lawyer, human rights defender**

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Human rights defender Arnold Tsunga has received a credible warning that the Zimbabwe Military Intelligence Corps has been ordered to kill him. Amnesty International believes his life is in grave danger.

Arnold Tsunga is the chairperson of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) and a trustee of the radio station Voice of the People (VOP), whose shortwave transmitter in Madagascar broadcasts criticism of the Mugabe government which can be received in Zimbabwe.

On 26 January ZimRights was approached by a soldier of the Zimbabwean army who told them that the Military Intelligence Corps had been given orders to find Arnold Tsunga and kill him. Two days earlier Arnold Tsunga and five other VOP trustees had been arrested and taken to court on charges of unlawfully possessing broadcasting equipment without a licence; only the state-run Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings has a licence. All six were freed on bail.

Arnold Tsunga is a prominent lawyer, Acting Secretary of the Law Society of Zimbabwe, which regulates the country's legal profession. He is also Executive Director of the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR).

In the early hours of 18 January, two police officers and a soldier had come looking for Arnold Tsunga at his home in Mutare, a town in the east of Zimbabwe. When they were told that he was not there, they took his domestic workers to the police station. The workers were later released without charge after ZLHR lawyers intervened.

On 21 January, police from the Law and Order Section had come to arrest him at his second house in the capital, Harare. They did not find him, but arrested a ZLHR driver and a caretaker, for allegedly obstructing investigations when the two said they did not know where he was. The police searched the house and took away a photograph of Arnold Tsunga, without giving any explanation.

On 24 January Arnold Tsunga and other five trustees of VOP presented themselves at Harare Central Police Station where they were arrested, charged and taken to court. They were all released on bail and remanded to 10 February.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Human rights defenders in Zimbabwe operate under very restrictive conditions. The government of Zimbabwe restricts operations of human rights organisations through legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act and Private Voluntary Organisations Act. Critics of the government also have their freedom of assembly, expression and association limited through harassment and arbitrary arrests.

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

- expressing concern at reports that the Military Intelligence Corps has been ordered to find and kill Arnold Tsunga;
- urging the authorities to ensure that he is not harmed;
- calling on them to investigate the alleged threats and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to respect the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and allow human rights defenders to carry out their important work without fear.

**APPEALS TO:**Commissioner of Police

Commissioner Augustine Chihuri

Police General Headquarters, Police Headquarters, PO Box 8807, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

**Fax:** +263 4 726 084

+263 4 253 212

+263 4 728 768

**Salutation:** Dear CommissionerMinister of Home Affairs

Hon. Kembo Mohadi, MP

Ministry of Home Affairs, 11th Floor Mukwati Building, Samora Machel Avenue

Private Bag 505D, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

**Fax:** +263 4 726716**Salutation:** Dear MinisterMinister of Defence

Hon. Sydney T. Sekeramayi

Ministry of Defence, Defence House, Kwame Nkruma Avenue, Private Bag 7713

Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

**Fax:** +263 4 796762**Salutation:** Dear MinisterMinister of Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs

Hon. Patrick Chinamasa, MP

Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs

Corner House, Leopold Takawira Street, Private Bag 7704, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

**Fax:** +263 4 772999**Salutation:** Dear Minister**COPIES TO:**

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights

6th Floor Beverley Court, Corner Nelson Mandela Avenue and Fourth Street

Box CY 1393, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

**Fax:** +263 4 251 468

+263 4 723789

**E-mail:** zlhr@icon.co.zw

zlhr@lhw@icon.co.zw

Zimbabwe Human Rights Association

P. O. Box 3951, Harare, Zimbabwe

**Fax:** +263 4 707277**Email:** zimright@mweb.co.zw

and to diplomatic representatives of Zimbabwe accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 March 2006.