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## ZIMBABWE: AI CONDEMNS STATED POLICY OF SHOOTING "TROUBLEMAKERS" AND LOOTERS

Amnesty International today condemned the statement by Zimbabwe Minister of Home Affairs Dumiso Dabengwa that troops quelling disturbances will be carrying live ammunition and would not hesitate to shoot those engaged in looting or "troublemaking".

The organization appealed to President Robert Mugabe to ensure that human rights are not violated while the army and police restore order.

"Rather than giving carte blanche to the security forces to shoot and kill even in situations where there is no threat to life, President Mugabe should be making sure that all Zimbabweans are protected against unlawful killings, brutality and ill-treatment by police and military personnel," Amnesty International said.

"President Mugabe should also guarantee that the hundreds of people detained as a result of the disturbances are not ill-treated, and that prompt investigations are ordered into the deaths and injuries that have occurred in the context of the civil disturbances."

If soldiers are used for law enforcement purposes like police, they are also under the obligation to observe the United Nations (UN) standards for human rights, Amnesty International added. These include the principle that force should be used only when strictly necessary.

The intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life, according to the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

President Mugabe should know that even in the midst of civil disturbances, there remain basic international standards for the protection of human rights, Amnesty International said. The prohibition against arbitrary deprivation of life cannot be superseded by any declaration of the state of emergency, any order by a government minister, or any command of a superior officer to the police or army.