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Zimbabwe: Harassment of opposition continues

Amnesty International is appealing to the Zimbabwean authorities to uphold the rule of law and ensure that the rights of supporters and opponents of the government are protected. Amnesty International is particularly concerned for the safety of Roman Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube who has received death threats four times in the past week.

Amnesty International is concerned that President Robert Mugabe's history of inciting his followers to violence could lead to retaliation against known or suspected supporters of Zimbabwe's opposition political parties in the aftermath of the parliamentary election, Amnesty International said today.

"Threats of, and actual violence have been the hallmarks of President Mugabe's leadership. The new Zimbabwe after the elections must see a stop to such practises that result in human rights abuses," Amnesty International said.

On 29 June 2000 the President accused the Archbishop on national TV of having contributed to the ethnic voting in favour of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in Matabeleland.

Ncube is Archbishop in Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe and the centre of Matabeleland. He has always spoken out strongly in favour of social justice and against human rights abuses.

Amnesty International is calling on President Mugabe to respect everybody's right to freedom of speech and to stop using inflammatory

language, all threats of violence or other human rights abuses against his opponents.

Background

Zimbabwe held its parliamentary elections on 24-25 June. The official election result gave the ruling ZANU (PF) 62 elected seats, whereas the main opposition party MDC got 57. In the elections the MDC won almost all seats in the three Matabeleland provinces with sound majorities. In the 1980s the government of Mugabe and his ZANU (PF) party was responsible for massive human rights violations in these provinces in which thousands of people were killed.

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