

15 August 2008

We, the undersigned, stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe who continue to suffer severe violations of their human rights.

We recognise that attempts are being made by Zimbabwean political parties, the Southern African Development Community, the African Union and the United Nations to address the political and economic situation. However, we are deeply concerned about the continuation of torture and other ill-treatment, and harassment and intimidation of political and human rights activists, even since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by political parties on 21 July.

We are also concerned that important questions of justice and impunity were not explicitly tackled in the MoU, suggesting that these issues will not be dealt with in the talks between the political parties.

We add our voices to the increasing number of civic and political leaders, activists and ordinary citizens in condemning the events in Zimbabwe which have brought untold suffering to its people. The ongoing political violence, suppression of fundamental human rights and the failure of governance which has directly contributed to the impoverishment of the people of Zimbabwe must be addressed now.

The present government has brutally suppressed democratic dissent and persecuted political and human rights activists in callous disregard of the rights enshrined in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

We believe that the people and civil society of Zimbabwe must have the full support of the international community, in particular from African countries.

To this end, we call upon:

(i) African leaders at all levels – pan-African, regional and national – and their institutions to urge the Government of Zimbabwe to immediately end serious human rights violations in the country and publicly denounce and call for the cessation of all political violence.

(ii) The African Union, in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community, to take all necessary steps to address the human rights situation in Zimbabwe including by calling on Zimbabwe to allow the deployment of independent human rights monitors and to establish an independent commission of inquiry into the political violence.

(iii) The AU and SADC to urge the political leadership in Zimbabwe to seek a solution to the current political crisis in an inclusive process that embraces civil society, and in a spirit of reconciliation and dialogue. Nevertheless, no amnesties, pardons and similar measures should be granted that would prevent the emergence of the truth, a final judicial determination of guilt or non-guilt, and full reparations to victims and their families.

iv) The AU and SADC to call on the Government of Zimbabwe to repeal restrictive legislation and practical impediments upon the functioning of the independent media that prevent people from exercising their right to freedom of expression, including accessing information. All restrictions which unduly constrain the activities and expression of independent civil society in Zimbabwe must also be withdrawn without delay.

Signed,

Amnesty International (Benin)

DITSHWANELO -The Botswana Centre for Human Rights (Botswana)

RESOCIDE: Civil Society Organisation Network for Development (Burkina Faso)

Pan African Lawyers Union (Cameroon)
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (Egypt)
Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Service (Egypt)
Bright Africa Youth Association (Egypt)
Media Foundation for West Africa (Ghana)
African Development Programme (Ghana)
FEMNET (Kenya)
Transformation Resource Centre (Lesotho)
Plain Truth (Liberia)
The Institute for Policy Interaction (Malawi)
Council for NGOs in Malawi (Malawi)
Amnesty International (Mauritius)
AMODE (Mozambique)
SAVANA (Mozambique)
Governance and Development Institute (Mozambique)
WLSA (Mozambique)
Forum for the Future (Namibia)
Legal Assistance Centre (Namibia)
PEACE (People's Education, Assistance & Counselling for Empowerment) (Namibia)
Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (Namibia)
Namibia Development Trust (Namibia)
Namibia NGO Forum (Namibia)
Katutura Community Radio (Namibia)
Citizens for an Accountable and Transparent Society (Namibia)
Breaking The Wall of Silence Movement (Namibia)
CaCoPEd (Namibia)
Alliance for Credible Elections (Nigeria)
FACT (Rwanda)
Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base » (Rwanda)
Amnesty International (Senegal)
Association des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture (Senegal)
Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (Senegal)
Le Comité Africain des Educateurs aux Droits Humains (Senegal)
West Africa Refugees and Internally Displaced People Network (Senegal)
Groupe Agora de Recherche pour l'Education aux Droits de l'Enfant et à la Paix (Senegal)
Africa Policy Issues (South Africa)
Conflict Resolution and Development (South Africa)
University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society (South Africa)
Institute for Security Studies-Cape Town (South Africa)
Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa (ACT-Southern Africa) (South Africa)
International Crime in Africa Programme (ICAP) at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in South Africa (South Africa)
Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (South Africa)
Eritrean Movement for Democracy and Human Rights (South Africa)
Tri-Continental Human Rights Film Festival (South Africa)
Meltwater News (South Africa)
CANGO (South Africa)
Swaziland Coalition of Concerned Civic Organizations (South Africa)
Southern Africa Human Rights NGO Network (SAHRiNGON) (Tanzania)
Legal and Human Rights Centre (Tanzania)
Tanzania Network of women Living with HIV and AIDS positive woman (Tanzania)
Women Wake Up (WOWAP) (Tanzania)
Tushiriki-Mbeya (Tanzania)
Orphans and Vulnerable Children Care Centre (Tanzania)
East Africa Law Society (Tanzania)
Children Dignity Forum (Tanzania)
Matumaini Mapya (Tanzania)
Concern for Development Initiatives in Africa (Tanzania)
Amnesty International (Togo)
Carrefour de Développement (Togo)

Regard Sur l'Humanité (Togo)
RENAAL (Togo)
EJUBES (Togo)
Dimension Sociale Togo (Togo)
CIFRAD (Togo)
HURINET (Uganda)
The Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (Uganda)
Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (Uganda)
Uganda National NGO Forum (Uganda)
Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (Uganda)
Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (Uganda)
International Council on Social welfare (Uganda)
East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (Uganda)
The Southern African coordinator Legal Assistance Network (Zambia)
True Christian Youth Outreach of Zambia (Zambia)