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## **Zimbabwe must release 83 activists detained at peaceful demonstration**

Amnesty International has called on the Zimbabwean authorities to release 83 activists arrested during a peaceful demonstration in the capital Harare on Monday.

The members of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) and Men of Zimbabwe Arise (MOZA) were arrested after they marched on the country's Parliament to highlight concerns around community safety and police behaviour in Zimbabwean communities.

They are all being held at Harare Central Police Station.

"These arbitrary arrests and unlawful detentions are clearly aimed at restricting the rights to freedom of expression and assembly," said Michelle Kagari, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Africa Programme.

"Those detained must be released immediately and unconditionally or otherwise charged with a recognisable crime."

At noon on Monday, 600 members of WOZA and MOZA took part in the march, which was organized to commemorate International Peace Day on Tuesday.

Two WOZA members addressed the group outside the Parliament and described violence that had taken place over the weekend during consultation meetings for Zimbabwe's current constitutional review process.

They called on the Zimbabwean police to allow freedom of expression without violence and to arrest those who perpetrate or threaten violence.

Demonstrators handed police a list of demands addressed to the Zimbabwean police, the Police Commissioner and the co-Ministers of Home Affairs.

When police began arresting some of the demonstrators, other demonstrators climbed into the waiting police truck in a display of solidarity with their colleagues.

Twenty-five of the demonstrators, including those who had handed themselves in voluntarily, were then transported to Harare Central Police Station.

A further 58 members of WOZA and MOZA then marched from Parliament to Harare Central Police Station and handed themselves in, also in an expression of solidarity.

No charges have yet been brought.

"This incident is a worrying example of what can happen when Zimbabweans try to make their voices heard during the current constitution making process," said Michelle Kagari.