

**ZIMBABWE** **Opposition political activists**  
**Other residents and communities in Bindura constituency**

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Political activists, especially those supporting the main Zimbabwean opposition party, and other residents in Bindura constituency, Mashonaland Central Province, are being targeted and attacked as a parliamentary by-election on 28-29 July draws close. Amnesty international is concerned for their safety.

In recent weeks there has been an escalation of politically-motivated attacks, assaults and abductions in Bindura District. Although some clashes have reportedly involved both ruling party and opposition supporters, eyewitness reports indicate that most of the victims have been activists or supporters of the opposition *Movement for Democratic Change* (MDC), or residents and communities which do not openly support either party. They also indicate that armed activists and supporters of the ruling *Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front* (ZANU-PF) have instigated and perpetrated the violence in the majority of incidents.

According to reports, armed ZANU-PF supporters have made house-to-house searches for residents believed to be MDC supporters. In mid-June, Makundwei Motsi Muzavazi of the Musana communal lands area was assaulted by ZANU-PF supporters armed with chains and sticks, because they believed he was an MDC supporter. He required hospital treatment in Harare for injuries to his head. ZANU-PF supporters have also assaulted a number of MDC campaigning officials, including Felix Kunaka, Bindura district chairman for the MDC, Kifas Madzongere, Bindura District MDC youth chair, Tom Walter, the MDC district secretary, and Peter Mabika, deputy district chairman. They and other activists have been forced to flee into hiding, out of fear for their own safety and that of their families.

The police are failing to take adequate steps to arrest perpetrators and prevent incidents of violence and intimidation, and appear in some cases to have arrested opposition party activists in order to prevent them from campaigning. In addition, road blocks manned jointly by police, security police and ZANU-PF supporters are reportedly used to stop and search travellers for evidence of support for the MDC, thus hampering freedom of movement, for journalists, monitors, opposition activists and others involved in activities relating to the by-election.

On 11 July Reason Chikono and five other MDC youth activists were abducted from the Musana area and assaulted by a group of ZANU-PF supporters. After the group passed a police post, police officers intervened. Although the MDC youths were visibly injured, the police took no action against the ZANU-PF supporters holding them captive. On the contrary, they took Reason Chikono and the five other MDC youths into custody for questioning. They were brought before Bindura Magistrate's Court on 13 July on suspicion of involvement in clashes with ZANU-PF supporters. They were released on bail.

In some cases, MDC youth arrested by the police have alleged that they were assaulted at the time of arrest, including several members of a group of 19 MDC youth supporters arrested while putting up campaign posters. In a separate case, about 30 MDC youth activists were allegedly dropped by police some 150 km from Bindura and told to "campaign from here".

Scores of people have reportedly fled the Bindura area. Those who have fled include teachers, who are being particularly targeted as suspected MDC supporters, and other civil servants. Victims who have fled often do not wish to be named, out of fear of being marked as MDC supporters.

Amnesty International is concerned at the apparent impunity for perpetrators of politically-motivated attacks. The organization fears that human rights violations may continue in Bindura after the by-election, regardless of its outcome, and in connection with pending by-elections and the presidential elections due in early 2002.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The by-election in Bindura follows the death of Border Gezi, who died in a car accident on 28 April. Border Gezi won the Bindura seat for ZANU-PF in the June 2000 national elections, and was Minister of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation. The ZANU-PF candidate for the by-election is Elliot Manyika, the Governor of Mashonaland Central Province.

The Bindura area suffered serious political violence in the run-up to the June 2000 elections. On 1 May 2000, Matthew Pfebve, the brother of Elliot Pfebve, the MDC candidate at the time and in the current by-election, was abducted from the family's home village in Nyakatondo and killed, allegedly by armed ZANU-PF supporters. Elliot Pfebve's elderly father was severely injured at the same time. To date the perpetrators have not been brought to justice.

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

- urging the authorities to protect all persons in Bindura District from human rights violations, regardless of their real or perceived political affiliation;
- urging the authorities to ensure freedom of movement in the area for journalists, human rights monitors and observers at all times;
- urging the authorities to ensure that police officers carry out their duties in accordance with the international standards relating to public order policing and to the arrest and detention of all persons;
- calling for all killings, assaults and other serious human rights abuses to be promptly, impartially and effectively investigated;
- urging the President and government to act immediately to end human rights violations and to condemn public statements which could incite further abuses.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

The Hon. John Nkomo, Minister of Home Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Private Bag 7703, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

**Telegrams: Minister of Home Affairs, Harare, Zimbabwe**

**Fax: + 263 4 726 716**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Mr Augustine Chihuri, Commissioner of Police, Police Headquarters, PO Box 8807, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

**Telegrams: Commissioner of Police, Harare, Zimbabwe**

**Fax: + 263 4 728 768**

**Salutation: Dear Commissioner**

Assistant Commissioner Guyosi, The Officer Commanding,

Zimbabwe Republic Police, Mashonaland Central Province, Provincial  
Headquarters, Box 120, Bindura, Zimbabwe

**Telegrams: Commanding Police Officer, Bindura, Zimbabwe**

**Fax: + 263 71 6200**

**Salutation: Dear Sir**

President Robert Mugabe, Office of the President, Private Bag 7700, Causeway,  
Harare, Zimbabwe

**Telegrams: President, Harare, Zimbabwe**

**Fax: + 263 4 728 799 / 708 557**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

Newspapers:

The Editor, *The Herald*, PO Box 396, Harare, Zimbabwe

The Editor, *The Daily News*, PO Box 1040, Harare, Zimbabwe

Human Rights Organization:

Amani Trust, PO Box 5465, Harare, Zimbabwe

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 31 August 2001.