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Zimbabwe: Human rights groups must not be banned

Amnesty International today expressed grave concern at reports that the Zimbabwe government plans to ban international human rights groups as well as the foreign funding of local organizations promoting rights in the country.

The measures are reportedly contained in a draft bill governing the operation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

"These reports indicate that as with other legislation introduced in the past two years, the government will use this new bill to silence critical voices and further restrict the right to freedom of expression. It is a clear attempt by the government to suppress dissenting views as parliamentary elections scheduled for March 2005 draw closer," Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International calls on the government of Zimbabwe to immediately repeal or amend all legislation which violates the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly and bring national legislation in line with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter and other international human rights standards.

At the opening of parliament on 20 July 2004, President Mugabe confirmed that new legislation governing the operation of NGOs would be introduced to replace the Private Voluntary Organizations Act.

Public Document

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