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**Zimbabwe: Violence against peaceful demonstrators must stop immediately**

*In the wake of the violence surrounding Saturday's 1 April demonstration in Harare, Amnesty International today expressed its concern that the Zimbabwean government should not condone political violence.*

*"Acts of violence create a climate of fear where individuals are unable to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and association," Amnesty International said. "This can also jeopardize the prospect for free and fair elections."*

*The international human rights organization today calls on President Robert Mugabe and Home Affairs Minister Dumiso Dabengwa to publicly commit themselves to ensure:*

*respect for the right to freedom of expression in Zimbabwe;  
demonstrations are policed with the minimum use of force, in accordance with international standards;  
police response to situations of potential or actual violence is impartial and prompt, both in terms of law enforcement and investigations;  
police officers refrain from threatening or intimidating unarmed and peaceful demonstrators in their exercise of the rights to freedom of speech, assembly and association;  
an independent commission of enquiry is set up to identify the perpetrators of Saturday's violence with the aim of bringing them to justice.*

*Amnesty International will continue to monitor the human rights situation in Zimbabwe in the context of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Though no date is set yet they are expected to take place in May or June.*

ENDS.../

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**For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London,  
UK, on 44 171 413 5566 or visit our website at <http://www.amnesty.org>**