

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Zimbabwe: Amnesty International regrets that Zimbabwe rejected recommendations to review and amend the Public Order and Security Act and to investigate reports of human rights violations related to the Presidential elections in 2008**

#### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Zimbabwe***

Amnesty International welcomes Zimbabwe's acceptance of recommendations to ensure the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission is compliant with the Paris Principles<sup>1</sup> and is provided with adequate technical and financial capacity.<sup>2</sup> The organization calls on Zimbabwe to immediately enact the necessary enabling legislation to allow the Commission to begin its work.

Amnesty International is disappointed that Zimbabwe rejected recommendations made by eleven States to review and amend the Public Order and Security Act (POSA).<sup>3</sup> Police routinely misuse POSA to block meetings of critics of President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party, and have used excessive force to break up peaceful demonstrations. Amnesty International and others have documented that the Zimbabwean authorities use the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act<sup>4</sup> to criminalize the rights to freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly. As a result, many human rights defenders currently face criminal prosecution for the legitimate exercise of their internationally guaranteed rights.

Amnesty International is dismayed that Zimbabwe rejected the recommendation to investigate reports of torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances related to the Presidential elections in 2008.<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International documented widespread unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment between March and July 2008. At least 200 people were killed and around 10,000 were injured. The majority of victims were supporters of the former opposition parties. The perpetrators remain free and continue to harass and intimidate the victims of these violations and their families. Many in Zimbabwe fear a repeat of the violence during future elections.

Amnesty International welcomes Zimbabwe's commitment to continue with measures to promote economic, social and cultural rights,<sup>6</sup> and encourages Zimbabwe to build on this commitment by also providing legal protection to all persons against forced eviction. Amnesty International also urges Zimbabwe to bring Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle, the only government programme launched to address the devastating effects of Operation Murambatsvina in 2005, in line with Zimbabwe's international human rights obligations. The organization also urges Zimbabwe to develop, in genuine consultation with affected

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/19/14, recommendations 93.6 (United Kingdom), 93.9 (New Zealand), 93.10 (Australia), 93.11 (France), 93.14 (Germany), 93.15 (Poland) and 93.17 (Thailand).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., recommendations 93.8 (Ghana), 93.9 (New Zealand), 93.10 (Australia), 93.16 (Malaysia) and 93.18 (Denmark).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., recommendations 95.39 (United Kingdom), 95.48 (Austria), 95.41 (New Zealand), 95.43 (United States of America), 95.45 (Australia), 95.46 (Canada), 95.52 (Mexico), 95.53 (Germany), 95.58 (Belgium), 95.59 (Denmark) and 95.62 (Spain).

<sup>4</sup> Mainly the Public Order and Security Act and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., recommendation 95.18 (South Africa).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., recommendations 93.24 (Burkina Faso) and 93.56 (Democratic People's Republic of Korea).

communities, a comprehensive human rights-based housing programme to address the housing needs of all victims of the 2005 mass forced evictions.

**Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Zimbabwe on 15 March during its 19<sup>th</sup> session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above. Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on Zimbabwe: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR46/016/2011/en>

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