

URGENT ACTION

FEARS FOR SAFETY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

The director of a human rights NGO in Zimbabwe, Abel Chikomo, is at risk of arbitrary arrest and there is fear for his safety after he was summoned to the police station in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare. Recently, many human rights activists have been arbitrarily arrested and tortured.

On 10 March, officers from the Law and Order section at Harare Central Police Station visited the offices of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum and demanded to see the director, **Abel Chikomo**, who was not in the office. They demanded to see the organization's registration certificate and instructed that Abel Chikomo should report at the police station without fail by 11 March as he had "questions to answer." On 9 February, Abel Chikomo and two colleagues were unlawfully detained by the Law and Order Section for several hours and released without charge.

The threat against Abel Chikomo follows a recent upsurge in arrests of human rights activists, some of whom have allegedly been tortured while in the custody of the Law and Order Section of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP).

On 28 February, seven members of the campaigning organizations Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) and Men of Zimbabwe Arise (MOZA) were arrested in Bulawayo. They were arbitrarily arrested, detained and allegedly tortured while in the custody of the Law and Order section at Bulawayo Central police station. They were released on US\$50 bail after two days and are facing charges under the Criminal Law Codification Act.

In Harare, a group of 45 activists were arrested on 19 February after attending a lecture to discuss events in Egypt and Tunisia and charged with treason. They were detained by the Law and Order section at Harare Central Police Station. On 23 February one of the detainees, **Munyaradzi Gwisai** told the court that he and other activists had been tortured while in detention. Thirty-nine of the activists were freed by the court on 7 March.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- To the Deputy Commissioner-General of Police (Crime) expressing concern about systematic harassment and intimidation of human rights activists including Abel Chikomo and urging him to end these practices by the Law and Order Section of the ZRP. Urge him to ensure that officers from the section respect and protect all human rights in line with Article 1 of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-operating Organisation Code of Conduct for Police Officials.
- To the Officer in Charge of Harare Central Police Station urging them to end systematic harassment and intimidation of human rights activists including Abel Chikomo by officers from the Law and Order section.
- To the Officer in Charge of Bulawayo Central Police Station urging them to end systematic harassment and intimidation of human rights activists including WOZA members by officers from the Law and Order section.
- Ask both Officers in Charge to ensure officers under their command protect all human rights in line with Article 1 of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-operating Organisation Code of Conduct for Police Officials.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 APRIL 2011 TO:

Deputy Commissioner-General (Crime)

Innocent Matibiri
Zimbabwe Republic Police
P. O. Box 8807, Causeway
Harare, Zimbabwe

Fax: +263 4 253 212

Salutation: Dear Commissioner-General

Officer in Charge

Bulawayo Central Police Station
Zimbabwe Republic Police
PO Box 2329
Fife Street/ L Takawira Avenue
Bulawayo

Fax: +263 9 65763

Salutation: Dear Officer in Charge

Officer in Charge

Harare Central Police station
Zimbabwe Republic Police
Innez Terrace/ Kenneth Kaunda Av.
PO Box CY 154
Harare

Fax: + 263 4 754 176

Salutation: Dear Officer in Charge

Fax numbers function sporadically in Zimbabwe. These are the correct numbers, but if they don't work please persevere or resort to posting.

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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**AMNESTY
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