

# URGENT ACTION

## DETAINED ACTIVISTS AT RISK OF ILL-TREATMENT

**Two leaders of the social justice movement, Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), have been denied bail and remanded in custody until 6 October. The two women, who are both recovering from recent medical operations, were arrested on 21 September while on a peaceful march. Ten activists arrested at the same time have now been released.**

**Jenni Williams** and **Magodonga Mahlangu**, together with 10 other activists, were arrested on 21 September, after police in Bulawayo used excessive force to break up a planned peaceful march commemorating the United Nations' International Day of Peace. The march had been organised by the social justice movement, **WOZA**. Ten of the activists were released without charge when prosecutors refused to prosecute, while Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu were denied bail and remanded in custody for two weeks. They are being held in Mlondolozhi Prison. Lawyers are appealing to the High Court against the decision to deny bail. Amnesty International is concerned that the two activists' may not be accorded their right to a speedy and fair trial as previously, human rights defenders arrested on spurious criminal charges have been unreasonably denied bail. The state often invokes section 121 of the Criminal Procedures and Evidence Act to delay release of detainees by seven days. This law has been applied selectively against critics of government policies.

Amnesty International is also concerned about the ongoing harassment and intimidation of WOZA members and other human rights defenders in Zimbabwe who are exercising their right to peaceful protest. The organisation is further concerned about the potential ill-treatment of the WOZA activists while in detention at Mlondolozhi Prison. In 2008, Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu were subjected to ill-treatment by prison officials while detained at Mlondolozhi Prison.

Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu were charged with "kidnapping and theft" connected to an allegation laid by a former employee of WOZA who had been dismissed. According to WOZA, the former employee is suspected breaking into their offices stealing some property, including a generator and computers.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Urge the Chief Law Officer in the Office of the Attorney General to end the systematic harassment and intimidation of WOZA activists and their leaders by police authorities in Bulawayo. Urge her to allow the activists bail.
- Urge the Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs to end systematic harassment and intimidation of WOZA activists. Urge him to guarantee the safety of Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu while they are in custody.
- Urge the Chief Law Officer in the Office of the Attorney General and the Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs to ensure that the rights of the two human rights defenders are upheld during their detention and that they are accorded their right to a fair trial, including their right to bail.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 7 NOVEMBER 2011 TO:

#### Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs

Honorable Patrick Chinamasa  
Government of Zimbabwe  
New Government Complex  
P. Bag 7751, Causeway, Harare  
Zimbabwe  
Fax: +263 4 772999

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

#### Chief Law Officer

Office of the Attorney General  
Tredgold Building DSD  
P.O. Box 531  
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe  
Fax: +263 9 66824

**Salutation: Dear Mrs Cheda**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Name: Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu

Gender m/f: both female

Further information on UA: 288/11 Index: AFR 46/022/2011 Issue Date: 26 September 2011

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