



Zimbabwe
HUMAN RIGHTS
NGO Forum

HUMAN RIGHTS NEWSLETTER

(JULY, 2019)

A Monthly Human Rights Newsletter of the [Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum](http://www.zimhrforum.co.zw) media@hrforum.co.zw | www.hrforumzim.com

Welcome

We start off by looking at the cocktail of controversial legal instruments which were gazetted in July 2019. First in line is the Freedom of Information Bill [H.B. 6 of 2019 (available for download [here](#)) which is one of the 3 proposed pieces of legislation to replace the much criticised Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). The Bill was gazetted on 5 July 2019, despite widespread criticism from MISA and MMPZ. The Government's long-awaited Marriages Bill, which is intended to consolidate our marriage laws and bring them inline with the Constitution, was also Gazetted on 19 July 2019. It can be viewed and downloaded [here](#). The Maintenance of Peace and Order Bill meant to replace the Public Order and Security Act was ruled as being unlawful by the Parliamentary legal Committee which found that some of the provisions of the Bill are unconstitutional.

Anti-Impunity Campaign

The Forum continued with its anti-impunity updates to lobby against impunity and to promote accountability in our security services. The Forum issued a total of 34 summonses on behalf of victims of human rights violations in Harare, Chitungwiza, Rusape, Chinhoyi and Marondera. The cases being pursued include cases of state brutality emanating from the January ShutDown protests.

Matabeleland demands proper devolution

The people of Matabeleland Region called upon the Government of Zimbabwe to immediately implement proper devolution during a joint Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (the Forum) and the Law Society of Zimbabwe (LSZ) validation meeting for a model Provincial and Metropolitan Councils Bill. Participants expressed hope that devolution of power would not remain a symbolic constitutional provision with nothing tangible on the ground. Read the full report [here](#)



ARTUZ Leader Challenges Media Lies

As the crackdown on Civil Society Organisations continue, the leader of the Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) Obert Masaraure was forced to take the media head-on after a newspaper, *The Patriot*, published an article he deemed to be defamatory. Masaraure who is a victim of abductions, torture and arrests was featured in an article published in The Patriot Issue 409 of June 28 – July 4 2019 entitled “*False Abductions ... the case of Obert Masaraure*” which purported that he was fabricating his abduction and torture by state security agents. The Forum's Public Interest Unit (PIU), issued a letter of demand for retraction to The Patriot on behalf of Masaraure who felt that the publicised statements were calculated to falsely and maliciously portray him as a liar, a fraudster and a 'cashvist'.

Paying tribute to a human rights icon

In commemoration of the Mandela Day, the National Transitional Justice Working Group (NTJWG) published a press statement on 21 July, 2019. Drawing on the contributions by Nelson Mandela, the NTJWG encouraged Zimbabweans to dialogue about difficulties facing the country to address the challenges Zimbabweans face today. You can read the full statement [here](#)

On Friday 19 July, 2019 the NTJWG hosted a radio programme on Star-FM entitled ‘The Role of Leadership in National Healing and Reconciliation Processes’ to explore the role of leadership in facilitating and catalysing reconciliation and healing processes, provide a platform for key transitional justice actors to extract lessons on leading transitional justice from lessons in other jurisdictions and to generate a practice note for Zimbabwe’s leadership in efforts at building informed political will in transitional justice processes.



Forum Courts Legislators to Enact an Independent Complaints Mechanism

The Forum presented a model Independent Complaints Mechanism Law to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Defence, Home Affairs and Security Services to bring to life an independent complaints mechanism in terms of Section 210 of the Constitution. The proposed model law envisages a complaints mechanism looking into the conduct of security services which include the Defence Forces, Police Services, Intelligence Services as well as Prisons and Correctional Services. The complaints mechanism will provide an avenue for redress to individuals who claim to have been adversely affected by the exceptional powers of members of the security services. Read the full report [here](#)

From our members

Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR) call upon equal distribution of medical goods

ZADHR issued a press statement on the partisan distribution of medical goods and services on 17 July 2019. The statement called on the government to properly equip health institutions in Zimbabwe and to get rid of structural barriers and partisan distribution of medical supplies for political expediency. The statement also called upon key stakeholders including the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate allegations of partisan distribution of medical supplies. The full statement is available [here](#)

Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) Promote socio-economic rights in communities

On 24 July, ZPP hosted a community dialogue at Chitsanga Hall in Chiredzi. The Dialogue was attended by representatives of the Gender Commission, National Peace and Reconciliation Commission, the general public, Zimbabwe Republic Police, the Chief and village Heads. Key discussions focused on the rights of children and special emphasis was on child marriages.

ZPP launched a Videography for the June Monthly Monitoring Report on 11 July for a summarised and interactive report on the current state of human rights. View the videography [here](#)

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) continues defending the defenceless

ZLHR came to the aid of Job Sikhala who was charged with subverting a constitutionally elected government. The total number of individuals facing this charge including Sikhala from January to July 2019 is now 21. On 11 July, ZLHR secured the release of MDC Youth Assembly Secretary-General Gift Siziba on \$1 000. Siziba was being charged with inciting public violence. On 12 July, ZLHR also represented Civil society leaders and human rights defenders including Beauty Rita Nyampinga, Sthabile Dewa, George Makoni, Tatenda Mombeyara, Gamuchirai Mukura and Frank Nyasha Mphahlo charged with subverting a constitutionally elected government.

On 25 July, ZLHR hosted Members of Parliament to advocate for the establishment of an Independent Complaints Mechanism provided for in Section 210 of the Constitution. The Independent Complaints Mechanism will receive and investigate complaints from the public about misconduct by security services and remedying harm caused by such misconduct. The Forum also presented their model Independent Complaints Mechanism Draft Bill.

Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET) takes the constitution to the people

ZIMCET ran a social media campaign under the tag, #KnowYourConstitutionZW as part of civic awareness campaign and education. The campaign included the following:

- Civic awareness campaign and education on the Marriage Bill 2019. The full report is available [here](#)
- Facts about the structure and conduct of civil service personnel as enshrined under Chapter 10 section 199 of the Constitution. Full report available [here](#)
- Has the Parliament of Zimbabwe done enough to safeguard Chapter 9 of the Constitution? Report available [here](#)
- Basic principles of public administration as enshrined in Chapter 9 Section 196 of the constitution of Zimbabwe available [here](#)

ZIMCET also met with Hon Minister of Justice Legal & Parliamentary Affairs at his office on 5 July with the view of initiating sustainable engagements for opening up of safe spaces for civic education and constitutional awareness in Zimbabwe.

Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) promoting justice at community level

On 18 July, LRF facilitated a community dialogue on the law and the courts at Chief Chiduku's Community Court in Rusape. The aim of the community dialogue was to promote access to justice in local courts. To broaden the scope of the access to justice initiative, LRF also undertook community outreaches in Hurungwe and Murehwa to promote access to justice through local courts. The main issues under discussion included the hierarchy of courts, role of traditional leaders, local court procedures, right to appeal and court fees.

On 12 July, LRF took Gender-based violence head-on by training community paralegals in Zvishavane on domestic violence and violence against women and girls.

Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Advocates for freedom of expression

In July, MISA stepped up their awareness campaign on the Freedom of Information Bill through a press release detailing the challenges in the Bill available [here](#). They also released a commentary on the Freedom of Information Bill available [here](#).

MISA in collaboration with The Centre for Applied Legal Research (CARL) and the Southern African Research & Documentation Centre (SARDC) conducted a series of training workshops on reporting on constitutional issues for journalists in Gweru and Bulawayo on 25 and 26 July respectively. The Full report is available [here](#)

Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) advocates for the rights of inmates

On 17 July, RAU hosted an evaluation meeting of the Rehabilitation of inmates in Zimbabwe Prisons in Masvingo to advocate for the realization of human rights and social services in Prisons. The meeting was attended by members from civil society, government and church representatives. Key issues that were discussed included the plight of people with disabilities in contact and conflict with the justice system, and facts about prisons in Zimbabwe which are available [here](#)



HUMAN RIGHTS NEWSLETTER

(JULY, 2019)

Follow us on Social Media



Suit 4, Number 1 Raleigh Street Harare

Te : +263 242 770177

Mobile/SMS/WhatsApp | +263 772151989

Toll Free | 8080 242/Netone 0801 2020

Email | admin@hrforum.co.zw

Website | www.hrforumzim.org

<http://www.hrforumzim.org/>