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Campaigners for Human Rights

## STATEMENT

# ZimRights Condemns the Extra-Judicial Killing of Civilians by the Zimbabwe Republic Police in Enforcing 2 Day Lock-down 8 April 2020

On 7 April 2020, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) was alerted of the death of one Bulawayo resident following an attack by a one of the police officers enforcing lock-down. ZimRights condemns mourns with the family of the deceased and condemns the brutality of the police in enforcing lockdown.

Members of ZimRights across the country have reported incidences of random police brutality on informal traders and people going up and about essential business. In other cases, police are reported to have rounded up people and bundled them in trucks, thereby exposing them to the COVID 19.

At this juncture, ZimRights wishes to remind the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) that the police service falls under Security Services provisions that are governed by Chapter 11 of the Constitution. Section 206 (3) states that protection of national security must be pursued with utmost respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms and the democratic values and principle enshrined in the Constitution.

The police in Zimbabwe have not been known for respecting human rights. Over the years, civil society has documented cases of police brutality. Last year in February 2019, the police allegedly tortured to death at least 1 person. Many others are tortured in silence. In that year again, the police were captured on camera assaulting protestors. Despite wide condemnation, the police continue to act with impunity. This is because perpetrators of human rights violation do not face justice for their conduct. Where there are no consequences for bad conduct, the deterrence effect of the law falls away. No one has been prosecuted for police brutality, hence the police continue to do break the law without hesitation. In other documented cases, the police officers who shoot civilians appear to get promotions for their bad behaviour. It can be argued that the perpetrator was rewarded for his conduct. This is evidence that police brutality is a case of systematic and structural violence. This has become a culture. Suspects are tortured. Protestors are beaten. It is a way of doing business.

ZimRights believes that as long as there are no consequences for perpetrators, this evil practice will not stop. There must be institutional consequences to the police service for their conduct. They must be prosecuted for the violations. The leaders of the police must be brought to book at answer charges for such a culture of violating section 206 of the Constitution. Secondly, there must consequences for the individual police officers who commit the violations. There must be sanctions against their continued employment. Additionally, there must be criminal charges against the officers. They must be made to pay compensation to the victims of their brutality. If these measures are implemented, there will be a change to the conduct of the police. Additionally, section 210 of the Constitution provides for an Independent Complaints Mechanism to receive complaints against members of the security services. This is an accountability measure which Parliament must immediately operationalise. In the absence of the Independent Complaints Mechanism, ZimRights through the community justice programme, encourages communities to approach the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission with any complaints they may have against the police and seek justice.

ZimRights mourns with the family of the deceased and calls on the ZRP to take immediate action against the police officer responsible for this deplorable conduct.

Issued by the ZimRights Information Department