



W/O 3/93  
Campaigners for Human Rights

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## AFRICA MUST PROTECT THE VULNERABLE

### Statement on Africa Day, 2020

25 May 2020

Today 25 May 2020, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) joins the rest of the continent and the world in commemorating Africa Day.

The day, observed since 1963, when the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) – which later transformed to the African Union (AU) has always been an occasion to reflect on the continent's democracy and human rights progress.

To mark this day, ZimRights, an organisation with a national membership of over 250,000, restates its membership's position on the need for the respect of human rights in Zimbabwe as espoused in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. As a member of the African Union, Zimbabwe is bound by the provisions of the Africa Charter and all the regional instruments that take from the spirit of the African Charter. It must be noted that the day, which is supposed to be a moment of celebrating our Africanness, and the values that bind us as a continent, is coming at a time when the country is in the middle of a storm of what appears to be State sanctioned abduction of opposition party leaders and violence against women.

Additionally, this day in 2020 is happening when the world and the continent and world is struggling with the COVID-19 outbreak, which has left the continent vulnerable in its healthcare and the economies weaker and people more vulnerable.

If at all, the pandemic has exposed the African leaders' lack of investment in the critical social sectors like health.

Despite having less casualties than other continents, Africa has been the most unprepared continent, most of this owing to the deficiency of leadership, corruption and ineptitude of people charged with leading governments. The COVID-19 pandemic calls into practice the African value of ubuntu. For Africa to prevail over the pandemic, there is need for solidarity especially with the poor and the weak.

It is in light of this that governments of African countries, through the AU, need to reconfigure much of their long held perception of denying basic rights and this can be done through the following:

- Strengthen the capacity of their health institutions by prioritising the sector's ability to respond to COVID-19 and every other health service as this can ensure that Africans in every country enjoy their right to good health
- Build and sustain strong local institutions that enhance democracy and good governance, and it is only by doing so that Africa can develop, as Constitutionalism is the basis of every other indicator of development

Issued by the ZimRights Communications Department

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*Registered as a Welfare Organization in Zimbabwe. W/O 3/93*

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