



W/O 3/93  
Campaigners for Human Rights

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## ZimRights Condemns the Torture of Civilians by the Zimbabwe Republic Police

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The Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) grieves with the young women who have become the latest victims of state terrorism in Zimbabwe.

On Wednesday 13 March 2020, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) abducted three opposition leaders at a roadblock in Harare. The young women are; Ms. Joanna Mamombe – a Member of Parliament for Harare West, Ms. Cecilia Chimbi – the National Vice Chairperson of the MDC Alliance Youth Assembly, and Ms. Netsai Marova – the Deputy Organising Secretary of the MDC Alliance Youth Assembly.

Following the arrest, the Police National Spokesperson Paul Nyathi was quoted in the Herald confirming this arrest, and said he was not aware of where they were being held.

The ZRP Official Twitter account issued a statement claiming the three were not in custody of the police, and this triggered fears of abduction.

On Thursday night, the three were found dumped near Bindura. Medical evidence suggests that the three were subjected to torture which may have included torture of a sexual nature. The victims report that they were abducted from Harare Central Police Station. This is evidence that whatever happened to them after the arrest was state sanctioned.

This event comes barely a week after police in Bulawayo tortured young women in Cowdray Park, Nokuthula and Ntombizodwa Mpofu accusing them of violating lockdown regulations. Early last month, again the police in Bulawayo beat to death a Bulawayo resident, also accusing him of breaking down lockdown regulations. This sharp increase in cases police brutality indicates the systematic nature of the crime requiring immediate intervention as more and more civilians become victim to this barbaric culture.

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

BULAWAYO OFFICE

MASVINGO OFFICE

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in article **Article 7** states that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This article has been incorporated in our Constitution in Section 53 which states that no person may be subjected to physical or psychological torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Under Zimbabwe's Constitution, freedom from torture is an absolute right. There are no derogations or exceptions to that right. Under no circumstances shall a person be subjected to torture.

Torture is a crime against humanity.

It is a crime that shocks the conscience of humanity. It strips the victim of their humanity. This is why international customary law makes it an international crime. Wherever torture is perpetrated, the whole world must be concerned because of its gravity. International law has been consistent in condemning torture and calling for its prosecution regardless of the jurisdiction of where it is committed. The experiences of three opposition leaders add to the growing litany of cases of torture against women in Zimbabwe, coming a few days after the Zimbabwe Republic Police tortured young women in Cowdray Park.

The entire ZimRights community is shocked by these barbaric acts by the government of Zimbabwe which are not only criminal but amount to state terrorism, due to their gravity. The horrific accounts by the victims tell the tragedy of a government at war with its people.

At a time when the government must be leading the nation in fighting COVID 19, it is regrettable that the security services have become a plague worse than the pandemic they are claiming to fight.

ZimRights is committed to ensuring that these crimes against humanity must not go unpunished. ZimRights holds accountable the Commissioner General Godwin Matanga for these heinous crimes and calls upon him and the entire leadership of the Police Service to produce and ensure the prosecution of the perpetrators of these crimes, failure to which the Commissioner General must resign from his position for violating section 206 of the Constitution. Section 206 of the Constitution obliges Zimbabwe's security services, under which the ZPR falls, to act with utmost respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms and the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution. By abducting civilians and subjecting them to torture, the Police Service has violated the national security provisions of the Constitution which they are obliged to uphold.

ZimRights stands with the victims and calls for justice without delay.

*Musiwa Takesure (Mr.)*

**National Chairperson**

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