

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

ZWE 002 / 0311 / OBS 046
Acts of intimidation / Death threats
Zimbabwe
March 24, 2011

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in **Zimbabwe**.

Description of the situation:

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about threats against Mr. **Bamusi Kasembe**, focal person in the Maramba community for Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZIMRIGHTS) and his assistant known as **Tongai**, and about the acts of intimidation against 11 researchers, among them Messrs. **Dzikamai Bere**, from the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum and **Admire Munava**, a member of ZIMRIGHTS.

According to the information received, on March 18, 2011, the 13 human rights defenders were travelling by combi from the capital Harare, through the Mashonaland East province. They were stopped by a roadblock manned by alleged ZANU-PF party loyalists (Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front) in the Maramba community, part of the Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe district.

The ZANU-PF activists, who were carrying stones, canes and logs, questioned the human rights defenders about their motives and threatened them that they will take action if they misbehave. The group managed to escape from the scene using a safer and different route. Mr. Bamusi Kazembe and his assistant had to spend the following night hiding in the bush. They feared to be attacked in their homes as they were death threatened by the ZANU-PF activists during the incident.

The team of human rights defenders was then working on a research in Mashonaland East province about the people's views on the results of the National Healing and Reconciliation process since the state political repression that followed the 2008 presidential elections and the possibility of an election due to take place later this year.

The Observatory is concerned that these threats and acts of intimidation form part of a continued harassment against human rights defenders in the country¹, in a political context more and more tense in consequence of the run-up to the referendum on the Constitution and the parliamentary elections due in 2011, and particularly against the civic groups promoting a free election process.

The Observatory strongly condemns these acts of intimidation and harassment against the 13 human rights defenders, and particularly fears for the psychological and physical integrity of Mr. Bamusi Kazembe and his assistant.

Furthermore, the Observatory calls upon the Zimbabwe authorities to immediately take the necessary measures to guarantee the protection of Mr. Bamusi Kazembe and his assistant as well as to put an end to any acts of harassment against all the human rights defenders in the country since they aim at sanctioning their human rights activities.

¹ See the Observatory's Urgent Appeal ZWE 001/0311/OBS 035.

Actions requested:

Please write to the authorities of Zimbabwe asking them to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Messrs. Dzikamai Mere, Admire Munava, Bamusi Kazembe and his assistant, members of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum and ZIMRIGHTS as well as all human rights defenders in the country;
- ii. Put an end to any kinds of harassment against members of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum and ZIMRIGHTS as well as against all human rights defenders in Zimbabwe;
- iii. Conform with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998 in particular:
 - its Article 1, which states that “everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”,
 - its Article 6 (a) and (c), which states that “Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others [...] to know, seek, obtain, receive and hold information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including having access to information as to how those rights and freedoms are given effect in domestic legislative, judicial or administrative systems; [...] to study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters”.
 - and its Article 12.2, which provides that “the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”;
- iv. More generally, ensure in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Zimbabwe.

Addresses:

- President of Zimbabwe, Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, Office of the President, Private Bag 7700, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe, Fax : +263 4 708 211 / + 263.4.70.38.58;
- Mr. Khembo Mohadi, co-Minister of Home Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, 11th Floor Mukwati Building, Private Bag 7703, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe, Fax : +263 4 726 716;
- Mrs. Terese Makone, co-Minister of Home Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, 11th Floor Mukwati Building, Private Bag 7703, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe, Fax : +263 4 726 716;
- Mr. Patrick Chinamasa, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, Fax: + 263 4 77 29 99 / +263 4 252 155;
- Mr. Augustine Chihuri, Commissioner General, Police Headquarters, P.O. Box 8807, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe, Fax : +263 4 253 212 / 728 768 / 726 084;
- Mr. Johannes Tomana, Attorney-General, Office of the Attorney, PO Box 7714,

Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe, Fax: + 263 4 77 32 47;

- Mrs. Chanetsa, Office of the Public Protector, Fax: + 263 4 70 41 19;
- Ambassador Mr. Chitsaka Chipaziwa, Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe to the United Nations in Geneva, Chemin William Barbey 27, 1292 Chambésy, Switzerland, Fax: + 41 22 758 30 44, Email: mission.zimbabwe@ties.itu.int;
- Embassy of Zimbabwe in Brussels, 11 SQ Josephine Charlotte, 1200 Woluwe-Saint-Lambert, Belgium, Fax: + 32 2 762 96 05 / + 32 2 775 65 10, Email: zimbrussels@skynet.be.

Please also write to the embassies of Zimbabwe in your respective country.

Paris-Geneva, March 24, 2011

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

- E-mail: Appeals@fidh-omct.org
- Tel and fax FIDH + 33 (0) 1 43 55 25 18 / +33 1 43 55 18 80
- Tel and fax OMCT + 41 (0) 22 809 49 39 / + 41 22 809 49 29