



Monthly Monitoring Report

AUGUST 2026

ABOUT ZPP

The Zimbabwe Peace Project, ZPP, is a peace-promoting organisation that uses human rights lenses in peacebuilding, having established that the deprivation and abuse of human rights pose the greatest threat to peace in Zimbabwe.

The organisation was established in 2000 as a project of civil society and faith-based groups in response to the violence and human rights violations that characterised the political landscape of the time. These organisations were the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZIMRIGHTS), Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), Civic Education Network Trust (CIVNET), Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Zimbabwe Liberators Platform (ZLP) and Non-Violent Action and

Strategies for Social Change (NOVASC). Over the years, the ZPP network of members has evolved as the network welcomed new member organisations while others have developed new thematic interests or have ceased to exist. Current member organisations are the Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace (CCJPZ), Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZIMRIGHTS), Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Women and Law Southern Africa (WLSA), National Association for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH) and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ).

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Report Human Rights Violations

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) August 2026 Monthly Monitoring Report presents a cross-sectional assessment of Zimbabwe's human rights environment, highlighting persistent violations, institutional shortcomings and the growing vulnerability of rights-holders. The 137 human rights violations (HRVs) documented during the month should not be viewed as isolated incidents. Rather, they point to recurring patterns of abuse, discrimination, coercion and failures by duty-bearers and other actors to uphold and protect fundamental rights and human dignity.

A total of 1,151 people were affected. 626 were males and 525 women, and among them 10 persons with disabilities as citizens experienced restrictions on their freedoms and access to rights, often in circumstances involving political, institutional or personal interests. The violations ranged from denial of social services, restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly, unjustified arrests and detention, forced displacement, violations of personal security and discrimination.

The profile of perpetrators remains a significant concern. ZANU PF members accounted for 30.85% of documented perpetrators, followed by local authorities at 14.95%, government officials at 14.95%, traditional leaders at 14.02%, and members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) at 11.21%. Other perpetrators included state security agents (3.74%), school authorities (1.87%), and artisanal miners (0.94%). In 7.47% of cases, perpetrators could not be linked to a specific organisation or institution.

Provincially, Manicaland recorded the highest number of violations with 25, followed by Harare with 20, Mashonaland Central 19, Mashonaland West recorded 16. Masvingo and Midlands both recorded 14 each, while Mashonaland East had 11, Matabeleland South 8, Bulawayo 6, and Matabeleland North 4.

In the 'Towards sustainable Peace in Zimbabwe section', ZPP commended the Parliament of Zimbabwe for the Zimbabwe Youth Model Parliament 2026. In "Ten Steps Backwards," this report examines two issues of particular concern: traditional leadership and the erosion of rights, including the abuse or politicisation of customary authority; and the protection of dignity and livelihoods during the removal of vendors from undesignated trading spaces. Both issues demonstrate how the exercise of authority, when unchecked by constitutional principles, can directly affect citizens' dignity, freedoms, livelihoods and access to justice. Ultimately, the August findings underscore the urgent need to strengthen accountability, ensure that all duty-bearers operate within constitutional limits, and place the rights, dignity and protection of citizens at the centre of governance and public action.

VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHT TO PERSONAL SECURITY

In August, 10 human rights violations relating to personal security were documented, with documented cases involving excessive use of force, assault, arbitrary detention and politically motivated violence. In Dzivarasekwa, Harare, a man was assaulted by two uniformed police officers near a public store after they accused him of resisting arrest over accusations of public drinking. In another incident, a man arrested for alleged obstruction reported being assaulted by police during the arrest, sustaining a broken hand, and was subsequently denied a medical report form despite requiring medical attention. In St Mary's, Chitungwiza, 5 residents were assaulted by men in ruling-party regalia for constructing houses on land reserved for ZANU PF supporters despite them being lawfully allocated land. The victims were threatened with removal on the basis of their party affiliation. Despite reports to the police, no arrests have been made, thereby violating their right to personal security and equal protection under the law.

In Huruyadzo, Murambinda, Manicaland Province, a worker at a store was assaulted by three police officers after refusing to pay a bribe demanded by the policemen during a licensing inspection. The victim sustained an eye injury, was detained for three days and later released after being charged with an unrelated offence, raising concerns over excessive use of force, arbitrary detention and abuse of police authority. Similarly, in Buhera South, a male teacher was slapped by a police officer while attempting to make a police report about a missing-person and was subsequently detained after retaliating, raising concerns of arbitrary deprivation of his liberty. In Guruve South, a former opposition supporter was assaulted by ruling-party supporters at a shopping centre amid political tensions surrounding Constitutional Amendment Act (3) which he was accused of opposing before joining the ruling party. The victim sustained injuries to his ribs and ears and while the case was reported to the police, no action was taken, highlighting how perpetrators of politically motivated violence continue to enjoy impunity. In Bikita West, a woman was assaulted by a relative over her alleged support for an opposition party, with the matter subsequently suppressed by a traditional leader, seemingly protecting the perpetrator, a ruling party supporter, raising concerns over assault and unequal access to justice.

137
HRVs
August

1,161 victims



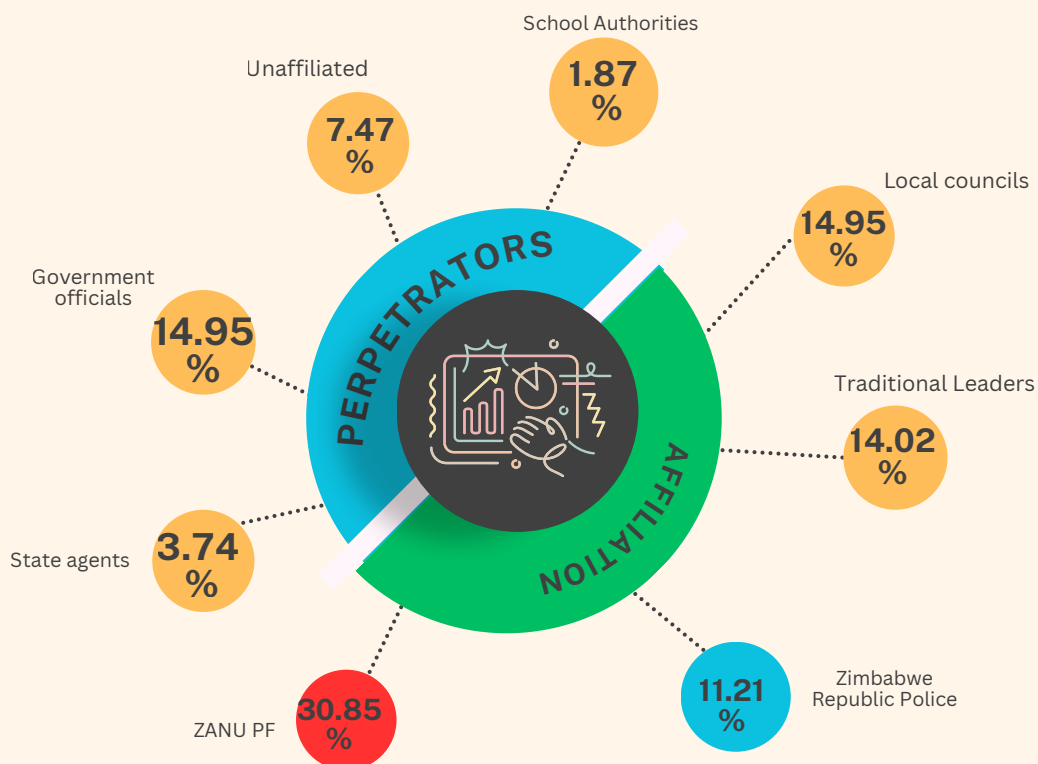
Victim sustained injuries after being assaulted by police

ARBITRARY EVICTIONS AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT

In August, seven human rights violations relating to displacement and forced evictions were documented, involving the loss of homes through coercive and unlawful measures. In Hwange Central Constituency, Hwange, residents in the Cinderella area faced arbitrary evictions with enforcement agents violently using excavators to destroy property before occupants could remove their belongings. The sudden and coercive nature of the evictions left affected households, including children, without adequate alternative accommodation and created a persistent climate of fear among residents. More than 10 households were affected. In Bikita, Masvingo Province, mining activities by a Chinese-owned company resulted in the unlawful eviction and displacement of residents. The incident raises concerns over the right to adequate housing, security of tenure, due process, participation in decisions affecting communities, and access to justice and effective remedies.

UNJUSTIFIED ARREST

In August, five violations relating to unjustified arrests and deprivation of liberty were documented, involving arbitrary arrests, excessive use of police powers and denial of due process. In Huruyadzo, Murambinda, Manicaland Province, a bar worker was assaulted by three police officers during a licensing inspection after refusing to pay a bribe demanded by the officers. He was subsequently arrested and detained for three days on allegations of selling an intoxicating substance without a licence, but was later released, raising concerns over arbitrary arrest, excessive use of force and abuse of authority. In Harare, a man arrested for alleged obstruction of traffic reported that police officers assaulted him during the arrest, resulting in a broken hand; although he was later fined, he was denied a medical report form, hindering his immediate access to medical treatment and raising concerns regarding unlawful treatment in custody. In Emakhandeni, Bulawayo, police raided a private home during a prayer meeting and arrested 17 women associated with the National Democratic Working Group (NDWG), who had gathered to pray for an ill member. The arrests, carried out without any stated justification linked to criminal conduct, raise concerns over arbitrary arrest and interference with the rights to freedom of religion, assembly and association.



HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION

In August, nine human rights violations relating to harassment and intimidation were documented, including threats against political activists, community members, traditional leaders and villagers, as well as the use of political affiliation and administrative authority to intimidate or coerce communities. In Harare, a political activist associated with a newly formed pressure group opposing Constitutional Amendment Act No. 3 had threatening and abusive messages written on the walls of his home, including threats to kill him. In another incident in Harare, a leader of the associated civic group received a threatening message placed on his vehicle depicting a person holding a firearm and a skeleton, accompanied by a threat to burn him in his home, raising serious concerns regarding the right to personal security, protection from threats and intimidation, and freedom of political participation and expression.

In Mutare South, traditional leaders were pressured by local administrative authorities and ruling-party-linked councillors to compel villagers to pay an annual rural development levy, with threats that non-compliant households would be denied assistance with burials, traditional rituals and other services ordinarily facilitated by traditional leadership. Such threats constitute intimidation, abuse of authority and discriminatory denial of community services, particularly where access to essential social and cultural functions is made conditional on political or financial compliance.

In Buhera, Manicaland, villagers who petitioned against the operations of a Chinese-owned mining company faced threats, highlighting concerns over retaliation and intimidation that undermine the rights to petition, participation and freedom of expression. In Makonde, a female traditional leader faced threats of physical violence in connection with her leadership role and community land issues. In Maramba-Pfungwe, a village head threatened villagers with exclusion from government agricultural input schemes if they did not possess ruling-party membership cards and invoked Constitutional Amendment No. 3 as authority to punish opposition supporters, amounting to political intimidation, discrimination and interference with access to government assistance on the basis of political affiliation. In another case involving traditional leadership in Chiwundura, Gambiza, villagers were threatened with eviction for failing to contribute maize or money towards a traditional community programme.



Image: Zimbabwe Institute

Creating Space for Young Voices

The Zimbabwe Peace Project commends the Parliament of Zimbabwe and its partners for creating the Zimbabwe Youth Model Parliament 2026. Convened under the banner “Dare reVadiki / Inkundla yaBatsha,” the program is a commendable initiative that creates space for young people from across the political spectrum to engage with democratic processes. By exposing young people to parliamentary procedures, debate and decision-making, the programme can strengthen civic knowledge, dialogue, tolerance and the confidence needed for constructive participation in governance. Such platforms are important not only for developing future leaders but also for nurturing a culture of peaceful engagement and community problem-solving.

However, meaningful youth participation must extend beyond a model Parliament. The principles being promoted in the programme should be reflected in the everyday experiences of young people, in schools and universities, communities, civic spaces and political processes. Young people cannot be encouraged to speak, debate and participate in Parliament while facing restrictions, intimidation or persecution when they exercise those same freedoms in their communities or raise legitimate concerns about governance. Learning institutions, in particular, should remain spaces where freedom of expression, association and peaceful participation are protected.

The Youth Model Parliament therefore presents an opportunity to go beyond simulation and strengthen real, sustained and inclusive youth participation. Young people should be recognised not merely as future leaders, but as rights-holders and active citizens whose voices, ideas and concerns have a legitimate place in Zimbabwe’s present governance and peacebuilding processes.

Traditional leadership and the erosion of rights

Traditional leaders occupy a constitutionally important position in Zimbabwean communities, but their authority carries a corresponding duty to protect, not undermine, the rights of those under their jurisdiction. Section 281(1) of the Constitution requires traditional leaders to act in accordance with the Constitution and laws and to treat all people equally and fairly. Section 281(2) expressly prohibits partisan conduct and, critically, prohibits traditional leaders from violating fundamental rights and freedoms. Their functions under Section 282 include facilitating development, administering communal land and resolving disputes.

Yet recent evidence points to troubling departures from these obligations. ZPP's August monitoring documented cases in which traditional leaders demanded payments, threatened villagers with exclusion from government programmes, intimidated communities and facilitated political mobilisation. In Kagonda, village head Pedzisai Nyamukapa threatened to exclude villagers without ZANU PF cards from government input and claimed authority to punish opposition supporters. The problem extends beyond politics. In Chiredzi, villagers accused traditional leaders of coercive attempts to transfer ancestral land to third parties, while a 2026 case in Bulilima saw a chief and village heads face allegations of unauthorised land allocations.

The growing involvement of traditional leaders in coercive, discriminatory and arbitrary practices has consequences that extend beyond individual violations to the broader enjoyment of rights and freedoms. When villagers are threatened with exclusion from government programmes, denied customary assistance, pressured to make payments, intimidated over land or compelled to participate in activities against their will, their freedom of choice, equality, dignity, security of tenure and access to public services are undermined. Such practices are particularly harmful in rural communities where traditional leaders wield significant influence over land, dispute resolution, community resources and social life. More fundamentally, the conduct erodes the spirit of constitutionalism by placing customary authority above the law and weakening the principle that all public and traditional authority must be exercised within constitutional limits. Constitutionalism requires that power be constrained, accountable and exercised in accordance with the rights of the people. When traditional leaders use their authority arbitrarily, or allow themselves to be used to advance political or other interests, they undermine the rule of law and create a culture in which citizens may fear authority rather than rely on it for protection. The result is not only the violation of individual rights but a gradual erosion of citizens' confidence in constitutional institutions and the democratic values of equality, accountability and respect for human dignity. These cases raise concerns under Sections 44 and 56, which require respect for fundamental rights and equality, as well as Section 71 on property rights. Traditional authority cannot become a licence for coercion, discrimination or arbitrary deprivation. When customary power is exercised without accountability, it weakens dignity, security of tenure, equality and access to justice, and ultimately erodes public trust in traditional leadership itself.



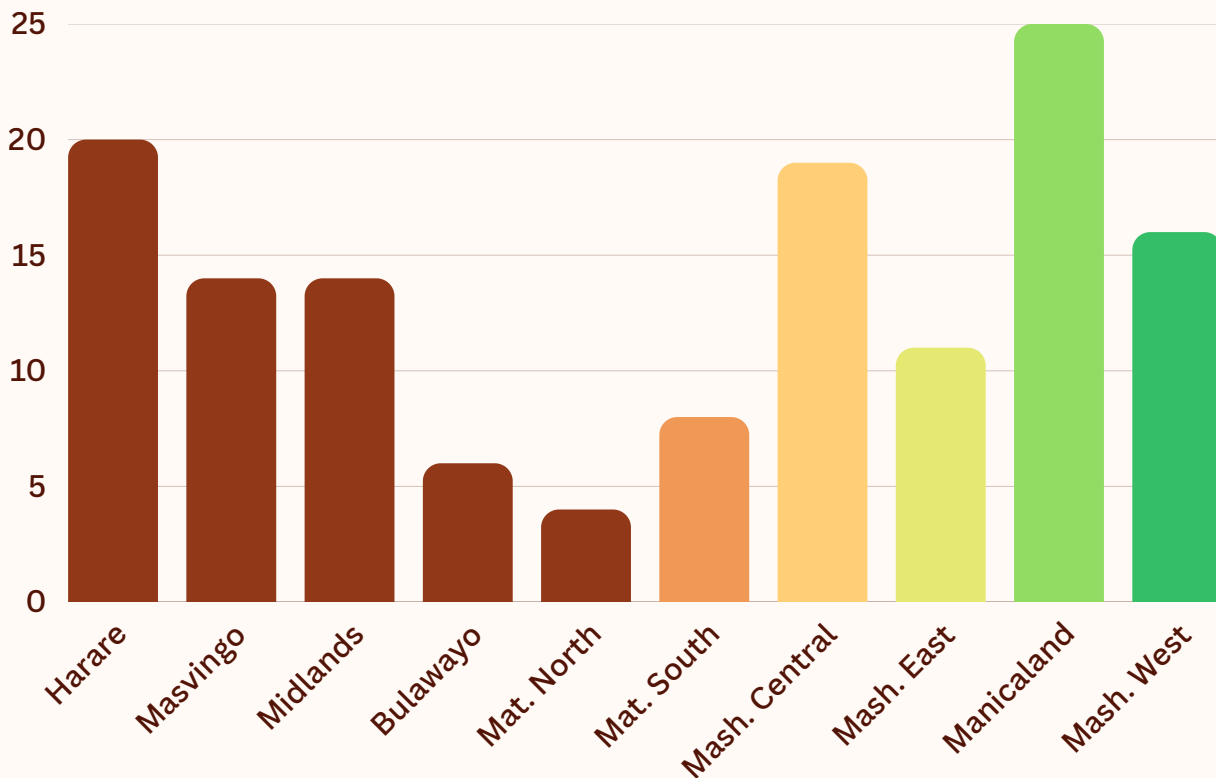
Vendors, enforcement and the protection of dignity

The government's directive to remove vendors from undesignated trading spaces has again raised concerns about how informal traders' livelihoods and rights will be protected during enforcement. While authorities have a legitimate responsibility to regulate public spaces, maintain order and ensure compliance with municipal by-laws, enforcement should not result in arbitrary displacement or the destruction of livelihoods without reasonable alternatives. Zimbabwe's Constitution protects human dignity under Section 51, equality and non-discrimination under Section 56, and requires administrative conduct to be lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair under Section 68. The Constitution also places obligations on the State, and local authorities to promote employment and economic empowerment.

Of particular concern is the conduct of law-enforcement officers during such operations. Reports have been noted of Municipal police officers harassing vendors and treating them inhumanely in the process of their work. Enforcement should be proportionate, professional and respectful, with no unnecessary use of force, harassment, confiscation or degrading treatment. The removal of vendors should therefore be accompanied by meaningful consultation, adequate notice and viable alternative trading spaces. Regulation of informal trade must uphold, rather than undermine, the dignity, livelihood and fundamental rights of the people it seeks to regulate.

PROVINCIAL OUTLOOK

—● HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS - AUGUST 2026



Manicaland

In Manicaland Province, 25 human rights violations were documented in August. Violations were related to forced displacement, political discrimination, excessive use of force, intimidation, access to water and environmental rights. In Buhera, police officers assaulted a community member during a shop licensing inspection, causing an eye injury, before detaining him for three days. The victim was subsequently released. A teacher in Buhera South was assaulted by a police officer and after retaliating against the assault, he was detained unprocedurally, raising concerns regarding personal security and arbitrary detention where law enforcers are expected to protect citizens. Villagers in Buhera also faced intimidation after petitioning against mining activities, potentially undermining their freedom of expression and right to petition. In Chipinge South, farmers were displaced from their land by Green Fuel, while the company expanded sugarcane production and constructed dams, diverting water from the Save River and subsequently depriving communities across five wards of access to water, affecting both households and livestock. In Mutare South, traditional leaders were pressured to enforce payment of development levies through threats to withhold essential traditional services. Meanwhile, Chikanga experienced prolonged water shortages and sewage-related health risks. Mining activities at Christmas Pass/Mashiri also raised concerns over environmental degradation, destruction of heritage, pollution, soil erosion and threats to biodiversity.



Harare

In Harare Province, 20 human rights violations were documented in August, with the most serious involving excessive use of force, threats to personal security, politically motivated violence, unlawful destruction of homes and denial of children's rights to identity. In Dzivarasekwa, two police officers were recorded beating and kicking a man who had questioned his arrest. In another Harare case, a male victim reported being assaulted by police while in custody, sustaining a broken hand, and subsequently being denied a medical report, further compromising access to healthcare and remedy. A political activist associated with a civic pressure group opposing Constitutional Amendment No. 3 received death threats written on his home while another leader received a threatening message on a vehicle, linked to suspected State security agents,



raising serious concerns over intimidation and freedom of expression. In St Martins, more than 30 households had their homes demolished by the local authority without adequate notice, resulting in loss of property and displacement. Two related cases at Parirenyatwa Hospital involved mothers being denied birth records for their children over an inability to pay a demanded fee, undermining the children's rights to identity and access to essential services. In St Mary's, five residents were assaulted by suspected ruling-party supporters and threatened with exclusion from their allocated homes because of their alleged opposition-party affiliation. Prolonged water shortages caused by burst and ageing infrastructure were also reported in Park Town and Mainway Meadows, while Epworth South residents reported shortages of essential medicines at local clinics.

Mashonaland Central

In Mashonaland Central, 19 human rights violations were documented in August, revealing an intersection of political discrimination, restrictions on civic participation, excessive use of force, and threats to livelihoods and public health. The most grave incident occurred in Mount Darwin, where a victim died after being shot twice by a Criminal Investigations Department officer while being transported to a police station following an arrest. The incidents highlight concerns over the use of lethal force by law enforcement in their conduct. In Bindura, a person arrested for insulting the President was denied bail and remained in remand custody. He remains in remand prison awaiting the authority to prosecute which is irregular, as no such authority currently exists. This violates the freedom of expression and the right to a fair trial. In Bindura urban, blasting at Rane Mine has caused damage to approximately seven nearby houses and generated excessive dust, posing risks to property, health and a safe environment. In Muzarabani South, two returnees from South Africa were discriminated against and denied government assistance because of their perceived opposition-party affiliation and were warned against political activism, by a traditional leader. Political coercion was also reported in Bindura North, where vendors were compelled to attend Heroes' Day commemorations at the expense of their businesses, while village heads under two traditional authorities were pressured to mobilise support for the ruling party or risk losing their positions. Collectively, these violations demonstrate how political affiliation and abuse of authority continue to constrain civic freedoms, access to public resources and livelihoods, while weak accountability compounds the impact on rights-holders.

Mashonaland West

In Mashonaland West, 16 human rights violations were documented in August. The province documented an unprecedented fatal transport disaster in Lake Kariba involving a government run ferry where 97 people lost their lives after the ferry capsized. The tragic accident raised serious concerns over safety and accountability as the government-operated Mbuya Nehanda ferry sank while carrying about passengers way over the stated capacity of 90. The incident raises serious concerns over the right to life and the State's duty to provide safe and adequate public transport, particularly for communities dependent on the ferry. At Chinhoyi University of Technology, 11 student activists were detained and interrogated by campus security before being handed to police and charged with disorderly conduct while attempting to hold a peaceful meeting. Their arrest and prosecution raised concerns over freedom of assembly, association and expression. In Zvimba West, five families were evicted from land they were occupying without compensation, raising concerns over security of tenure, due process and protection from arbitrary displacement. In Kadoma, vendors had their flea-market stalls demolished by the local authority without prior notice, affecting their livelihoods and raising concerns over property rights and due process. A female traditional leader in Makonde district, in Chipfuwamiti also faced threats and intimidation linked to their leadership and land disputes, raising concerns over personal security and gender-based intimidation.

Masvingo

In Masvingo Province, 14 human rights violations were documented in August, with key violations relating to forced displacement, political coercion, assault and denial of access to justice. In Bikita, mining activities by a Chinese-owned company led to unlawful evictions raising concerns of the absence of adequate due process and effective access to justice. In another case, in Bikita West, a female victim was assaulted by a relative, a member of the ruling party over alleged support for an opposition political party. Although the matter was reported to traditional leadership, it was discouraged from proceeding further, raising fears of perpetuating immunity of party members. In Mwenezi North, a male victim, who had returned from South Africa was compelled by traditional leadership to chant ruling-party slogans during community meetings as a demonstration of political loyalty. The victim was forced to repeat the slogan several times after initially refusing or failing to do so and was instructed to practise before the next meeting. The incident highlights the violations of freedom of expression, political choice and participation, and protection from political coercion and intimidation.

Mashonaland East

In Mashonaland East, 11 human rights violations were documented in August, reflecting a concerning trend of political coercion, discrimination and the politicisation of access to government programmes and community resources. In Maramba-Pfungwe, a village head threatened to exclude villagers without ruling-party membership cards from government agricultural inputs and invoked Constitutional Amendment No. 3 as authority to punish opposition supporters. In Murewa North, a ruling-party official threatened participants at a community meeting that the ward belonged exclusively to the ruling party and that opposition supporters should leave the area, failure to do so will be met with unspecified consequences. Such pronouncements instill fear and threaten the peace of community members. In Wedza Ward 26, households were compelled to contribute 15kg of grain and additional money to a traditional community programme, with those who failed to contribute threatened with exclusion from government agricultural inputs and other programmes. The documented incidents point to a broader pattern in which political affiliation and compliance with local authority demands are being used as conditions for accessing public resources and participating freely in community life.

Midlands

In Midlands Province, 14 human rights violations were documented in August. Incidents showed a pattern of restrictions on political participation, discrimination based on political affiliation, and coercive use of traditional and party structures to control access to livelihoods and public programmes. In Gweru Central, police prevented opposition-linked activists from holding a public meeting at the Gweru Sports Club, denying them their freedom of assembly and political expression. At Svisvi Primary School, a prospective political aspirant was prevented from making a planned donation after a ruling-party official assumed the role of guest of honour, illustrating the politicisation of community development initiatives and public institutions. In areas under Chief Chiwundura and Acting Chief Gambiza, villagers were threatened with eviction if they failed to contribute grain or money towards Zunde reMambo, raising concerns over coercion, security of tenure and abuse of traditional authority. In the same area, ruling-party officials compelled villagers to register with party structures and pay subscriptions, threatening to exclude non-members from an upcoming title-deed registration programme, thereby undermining equality and non-discrimination and access to property rights. In Gokuda, a young person was excluded from employment opportunities at a new Chinese-owned mine because of perceived opposition-party affiliation, raising concerns over political discrimination and the right to equal access to employment opportunities. Overall, the violations indicate increasing politicisation of public spaces, traditional leadership and access to economic opportunities, limiting citizens' ability to participate freely and enjoy rights without political conditions.

Matabeleland South

In Matabeleland South Province, 8 human rights violations were documented in August, highlighting issues around access to justice, administrative fairness, abuse of traditional authority and insecure land tenure. In Umzingwane Ward 3, a victim was detained despite evidence indicating that they were not the actual perpetrator, while the alleged offender was released, raising serious concerns regarding arbitrary deprivation of liberty. In Umzingwane Ward 10, Mtshede, approximately 40 residents were denied documentation confirming their lawful occupation of residential stands despite having made regular payments to a local traditional leader over several years. It emerged that the payments had not been remitted to council because the land allocations were not formally recognised, leaving residents at risk of losing their homes and being required to make additional payments to regularise their tenure. The traditional leader's alleged concealment of the payments, together with the authorities' failure to adequately address the matter, raises concerns over administrative justice, transparency, accountability and the right to security of tenure. Overall, the cases demonstrate how failures in local governance and accountability can translate into serious rights violations, leaving communities vulnerable to wrongful detention, loss of property and arbitrary administrative decisions while weakening public trust in institutions responsible for protecting their rights.

Matabeleland North

In Matabeleland North Province, 4 human rights violations were documented in August. In Hwange Central, Cinderella, residents face evictions linked to failure to pay rent or electricity, with excavators used to remove roofs and doors while household property remains inside. The sudden and unplanned evictions by Hwange Colliery Company affected more than 10 households, leaving families without adequate shelter and creating fear of further displacement. In Umguzi Ward 4, residents of Mafanisa village are living in fear after a group of about 17 artisanal miners occupied an uninhabited homestead. The miners are disruptive, drinking, insulting residents and making excessive noise, while villagers were afraid to report or confront them because of perceived risks to their safety.

Bulawayo

In Bulawayo Province, six human rights violations were documented in August. Violations included arbitrary arrests and restrictions on freedom of assembly, association and expression. In Emakhandeni, police raided a private home during a prayer meeting and arrested 17 women after receiving intelligence that the gathering could have been political in nature. The arrests, without reported evidence of criminal conduct, raise serious concerns over arbitrary deprivation of liberty and interference with freedom of religion, assembly and association. At NUST, concerns were raised over the selective treatment of student organisations during orientation. While ZICOSU was allowed to display its political branding and have its insignia associated with student-funded activities, ZINASU was denied permission to display banners or wear its regalia. The differential treatment raises concerns over freedom of association and expression, political participation, and the right to fair and non-discriminatory administrative conduct. Meanwhile, Mpilo Central Hospital faced severe overcrowding and shortages of essential medicines, with patients forced to sleep on the floor due to inadequate bed capacity. These conditions raise concerns over the right to access adequate healthcare and dignified treatment.

Conclusion

The August findings point to a human rights environment in which violations are increasingly shaped by the misuse of authority, weak accountability and the politicisation of access to public resources and services. The involvement of political actors, local authorities, traditional leaders, police and other state and non-state actors demonstrates that rights violations are not confined to one institution or sector, but can occur wherever power is exercised without adequate safeguards. Particularly concerning is the impact on people in vulnerable or dependent positions, including rural communities, informal traders, political dissenters, families facing displacement and citizens seeking access to basic services. When access to livelihoods, government assistance, land, community resources or protection is made conditional on political loyalty, payment or compliance, citizens are effectively forced to trade their rights for survival, undermining equality, dignity, freedom of choice and meaningful participation. This trend also weakens constitutionalism by normalising the arbitrary exercise of power and diminishing confidence in institutions mandated to protect rights.

There is therefore an urgent need for duty-bearers to strengthen accountability and oversight mechanisms, ensure that enforcement actions are lawful, proportionate and procedurally fair, and provide accessible avenues for redress. Traditional leaders, local authorities and law-enforcement agencies should receive stronger human-rights and constitutional training, while documented violations should trigger timely investigations and appropriate remedies. Equally, communities must be empowered to understand and claim their rights without fear of retaliation. Protecting human rights must ultimately become a measurable responsibility of every institution and authority, rather than an obligation invoked only after rights have been violated.

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