

# ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ZCTU)

All correspondence should be  
addressed to the Secretary General

Email: [info@zctu.co.zw](mailto:info@zctu.co.zw)

Fax: (263) - 4 - 749256

Tel: 749253/793093/794742/794702



Ref:

No. 7 Jason Moyo Avenue  
2nd & 3rd Floor, Gorlon House  
P.O. Box 3549  
HARARE

15 August 2019  
For immediate release

## PRESS RELEASE

---

### SUBJECT: ABUDUCTION AND TORTURE OF CIVIC AND POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

---

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) is shocked by reports of the ongoing barbaric abduction and torture of civic and political activists that are reminiscent of the Mugabe era

Reports indicate that most are being abducted from their homes by masked heavily armed men who torture them and dumped them.

The ZCTU strongly condemns this barbaric act that is meant to instill fear in Zimbabweans and activists. As noted by the ZCTU earlier this year, these abductions come at a time when the NAZI-style disappearance of activist, Itai Dzamara is still fresh in our minds. We demand a thorough investigation of the latest abductions and those found guilty must be punished.

The ZCTU is worried that this 'New Dispensation' has become more dangerous than the Robert Mugabe regime as well as the notorious racist Rhodesian government of Ian Smith.

The ZCTU demands an environment conducive for freedom of association and assembly where every Zimbabwean can discharge his or her duties without fear of being arrested, tortured or abducted. .

Japhet Moyo

**SECRETARY-GENERAL**



15 August 2019

**Press Release**

**Statement on the Increasing Human Rights Violations Ahead of the August 16 Protests**

We the civil society organisations in Zimbabwe note with deep condemnation the increasing violation of human rights and threats of violence coming mainly from the state and its agents ahead of the planned August 16, 2019 protests. To date, 6 people have since been tortured by suspected state agents in relation to the planned protests being led by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

To begin with, we wish to affirm that we are non-partisan and hence not involved in any of the political processes taking place. We are committed to our watchdog role in defence of the fundamental rights outlined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe, particularly the Bill of Rights provisions. We bring specific focus to section 58 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which guarantees everyone's right to free assembly and association as well as the right to demonstrate and petition provided in section 59. Everyone in Zimbabwe is entitled to these rights, they are not a privilege from government. Any threat to interfere with such rights is hereby condemned as an attack on the Constitution. In the same spirit, we note that these rights must be exercised peacefully without interfering with the other political, civil, economic and social rights of others. In that regard, organisers of the August 16, protests have an obligation to ensure that their rights are exercised peacefully and that the right to life and protection of private property will be respected.

We reiterate that we do not anticipate to see the ghost of August 1, 2018 and January 2019 shutdown atrocities revisiting the country. The police have an obligation to maintain law and order and not to interfere with peoples' enjoyment of human rights. The same applies to the defence forces whose role is to protect life and not to take it. We regret that there are already indications based on circumstantial evidence that some suspected state security agents may have already started attacking human rights defenders, as well as political activists. Sadly, these developments remind us of the atrocities committed earlier this year in January. We denounce and condemn statements by senior government officials, particularly statements by Deputy Minister of Defence Victor Matemadanda which are a celebration of and incitement to the killing of civilians exercising their democratic rights. This is regrettable especially at a time when many families are still mourning their loved ones killed by soldiers in August 2018 and January 2019. We reiterate that peaceful demonstrations are part of the human rights and democracy fabric. Citizens should be allowed to voice their disgruntlements without fear of persecution, citizens should have trust in the role of the police and the military to protect them and ensure that peace prevails during the demonstrations.

In that regard, we note with regret that 6 people so far were abducted by suspected state agents in the evening of 13 and 14 August 2019, and they have been severely tortured and left for dead. One of the victims had a harmful caustic liquid poured on his body. During the torture the men accused the victims of being involved in organizing the August 16 demonstrations. Section 53 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe clearly states that no person may be subjected to physical or psychological torture. This position is reiterated in the Guidelines and Measures for the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Africa (Robben Island Guidelines) and Article 5 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. Article 5 protects every person's right to the respect of their



inherent dignity and prohibits all forms of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and/or punishment. Zimbabwe is a member state of the African Union and is therefore bound by the provisions of the African Charter. Section 52 of the Constitution also guarantees the right to personal security from violence emanating from public and private sources. These actions by suspected state agents are barbaric and must be condemned.

We call upon the SADC, the African Union, the United Nations and international community to condemn the unwarranted crackdown on civilians by the state. The Government of Zimbabwe has an obligation to respect human rights. The developments so far point to a real risk that the people of Zimbabwe's fundamental freedoms are once again in danger and this must be stopped before it gets out of control.

-ENDS-