

**ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM**  
**VIOLENCE MONITORING PROJECT**

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**The Unleashing of Violence:**  
**A report on political violence in Zimbabwe**

**Update for the week ending 19 May 2000**

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A report compiled by the Zimbabwe Human Rights  
Non-Governmental Organisations Forum

24 May 2000

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (also known as the “Human Rights Forum” has been in existence since January 1998. Nine non-governmental organisations working in the field of human rights came together to provide legal and psycho-social assistance to the victims of the Food Riots of January 1998.

The Human Rights Forum has now expanded its objectives to assist victims of organised violence, using the following definition:

“organised violence” means the interhuman infliction of significant avoidable pain and suffering by an organised group according to a declared or implied strategy and/or system of ideas and attitudes. It comprises any violent action which is unacceptable by general human standards, and relates to the victims’ mental and physical wellbeing.

The Human Rights Forum operates a Legal Unit and a Research and Documentation Unit.

Member organisations of the Human Forum are:

The Amani Trust

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

The Legal Resources Foundation

Transparency International (Zimbabwe)

The University of Zimbabwe Legal Aid Clinic

Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of the Offender

Zimbabwe Human Rights Association

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights

Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association

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## Introduction

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum was established to address the problems of the Food Riots in January 1998. It provided legal and medical assistance to people who were caught up in the associated violence. It includes the following human rights organisations: AMANI Trust, Legal Resources Foundation, Transparency International, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), University of Zimbabwe (Legal Advice Centre), Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association, ZimRights.

The politically motivated violence, which has spiralled in the past two months, is a matter of immense concern to all the members of the Human Rights NGO Forum.

The Human Rights NGO Forum has started a project to record and act upon cases of political violence and to support and unify the initiatives being pursued by individual members of the Forum. It began gathering statements from victims on 11 May 2000. The project has already received a large number of survivors' accounts of torture and beatings, as well as cases of murder. Together with the numerous reports of political violence in the press, these victims' accounts provide yet more evidence that the nation is under sway of brutal forces engaged in a war upon democracy. All the victims of violence who have been interviewed so far have accused Zanu (PF) supporters and war veterans of attacking them.

The information presented in this weekly report is a summary of the statements given by victims and witnesses. At this stage we have neither been able to verify the allegations made by victims, nor to establish independently that their statements represent a full and accurate account of events. Victims have also made reports to the police in some instances, but there have been few arrests. Many of those interviewed have had to leave their homes, sometimes deserting their families in order to escape death or serious injury. Houses have been burnt down and property destroyed or looted. Some victims are displaced, others are homeless; all are living in terror of another attack.

Every victim who reported political violence to the project could name several other people who had been similarly assaulted. Although all the interviewees are male, they have spoken of assaults upon their wives or other members of their families. Many of the victims have been severely injured, some maimed for life. Along with pain and fear, most have either lost their jobs or are unable to return to them. They are trying to find ways to survive and to pay medical costs and they and their families are in desperate need of immediate practical support. Many need trauma counselling. The physical wounds of the victims are often apparent and the NGO Forum has also seen the hospital records of some of the victims. Where necessary, the NGO Forum has arranged to have an independent medical assessment carried out by a forensic nurse.

At this stage, the NGO Forum is not able even to begin to estimate the number of people who have been affected directly by violence in the run up to the parliamentary elections. What is clear is that the violence has swept across the countryside and has affected huge numbers of people, particularly in Mashonaland East and Mashonaland Central. While some areas remain fairly peaceful, there are rural districts where whole communities have suffered and people have either fled their homes for urban centres, or have taken to sleeping in the bush at night. The violence now appears to be rising in certain high-density suburbs of Harare.

Office holders and supporters of parties in opposition to Zanu (PF) are the primary targets of political violence, in particular those belonging, or suspected of belonging to the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). A clear pattern is emerging of systematic searches and assaults upon members of the opposition. People whose political affiliation is not clear are not spared, with door-to-door searches for any evidence of opposition links now common. The campaign to crush opposition support among teachers has been particularly vicious. Election monitors and human rights activists, including many from

the Forum itself have also been targeted. In some areas it has become impossible for non-governmental organisation groups to hold meetings for fear of being invaded by Zanu (PF) supporters and war veterans who appear to regard all gatherings as suspicious.

The rule of law has become almost meaningless in today's Zimbabwe. For as long as the authorities continue to fail to either condemn or punish abuses which are being perpetrated in the name of Zanu (PF), it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the violence is sponsored or encouraged at the highest level of government. With every incident reported come further allegations that Zanu (PF) candidates and members of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) are directing attacks and housing and paying Zanu (PF) youths and war veterans to carry out the assaults. With every day that passes without firm action being taken to root out the perpetrators, these claims gain in credibility.

Not all the violence has come from Zanu (PF) supporters. There have been some reports of violent attacks by MDC members upon Zanu (PF) supporters in the high density areas of Harare and in a number of other parts of the country. The police have arrested MDC supporters in connection with some of these incidents.

The NGO Forum appeals to all political parties and their supporters to refrain from using force and to take precautions for their own safety in the run up to the 2000 elections. It is now beyond question that damage has been done to the electoral process as a result of violence. All efforts must be directed at identifying what can now be salvaged for democracy. It is in the interests of all Zimbabweans, whatever their political affiliation, that the few weeks left before the election be peaceful ones.

## **A Discussion of the Interviews from 11-19 May**

### **General comments**

The violence monitoring project has so far interviewed 21 victims of political violence. None of these were from commercial farms, although it is clear that farm workers have been among the worst affected by political violence and gathering their statements will be an important objective of the project. Supporters of United Parties (UP), Zimbabwe Union of Democrats (ZUD) and Zanu (PF) have also been victims of political violence and the project has begun research and interviews into some of these cases, which will be included in future reports. This week's update, however, focuses on the massive intimidation and brutality that has been directed at the active members of MDC, both in town and the countryside. All of those interviewed were targeted because of membership, or suspicion of links to the MDC. Several of those interviewed in the past week came from Harare, as well as some from Murehwa, Shamva, Bindura, Mberengwa and one from Wedza. The project has also been collecting reports of assaults and killings from several sources as well as press reports on political violence.

It must be emphasised that the interviews taken are merely a small random sample but they indicate that violence is now an endemic problem in rural areas and is beginning to affect some urban residents. They also provide further substance to the claim that there is a central authority directing the violence. They show consistencies of method, language and operation of the attackers in different parts of the country which appear to be beyond coincidence. While the victims all identified their attackers as supporters of Zanu (PF), including ex-combatants — sometimes because of their T-shirts — they often did not recognise them as local residents. In the words of one witness, the troublemakers are being "imported". A number of victims accused Zanu (PF) representatives, including parliamentary candidates of instigating or sponsoring the violence. Frequently there was either suspicion or evidence of CIO involvement in the assault.

Groups which seem to be led by "war-veterans" have established makeshift camps, often in public buildings, Zanu (PF) or ZexCom offices (the offices of the war veterans) or are operating from bases in nearby farms. There are reports that in general these camps are where Zanu (PF)

supporters sleep, eat and drink. They send out raiding parties from their base to hunt down opposition members, sometimes bringing them back to administer beatings and torture. These groups are functioning as a militia, which many allege are being paid for intimidating, beating and even killing MDC supporters at standard rates.

In Mashonaland East, the ZexCom offices at Murehwa growth point is a known torture house, Chipesa Farm in Marondera is also a centre for the planning and implementation of violence. In Mashonaland Central, a building belonging to a Zanu (PF) member in Mount Darwin has been occupied by Zanu (PF) youths who are said to be under the command of local CIO officials. The army came in and broke up the unit which had been responsible for widespread violence in the surrounding villages several weeks ago, but there are now reports that the youths have moved back in. In Karoi, the Zanu (PF) offices in the high-density suburb of Chikangwe are being used to house a militia who chant slogans and sing all night, bringing opposition members for beating there. In front of the offices is a small improvised grave which has written on it: "Rest in peace, Morgan Tsvangirai." Another camp has been established at the Magunje growth point, behind the shop of the parliamentary candidate, Mark Madiro. Other Zanu (PF) parliamentary candidates who have been accused repeatedly of harbouring the attackers or providing transport for them include Gladys Hokoyo of Budiriro, Harare; Sabina Themhani of Mufakose, Harare; Nicholas Goche of Shamva, Mashonaland Central. Saviour Kasukuwere the parliamentary candidate for Mount Darwin has been accused of directly assaulting MDC supporters.

It is worth noting that the violence broke out simultaneously in several areas. Most people date the first attacks in their area date from around 13 April, although the assaults in Harare are more recent. The attackers regularly demand that MDC members surrender their T-shirts and party cards; that they name other MDC supporters in the area; and that they publicly renounce their MDC membership and join Zanu (PF). In several instances they have threatened to "cut off the head" of an MDC member. Weapons commonly being used include sjamboks, axes, knobkerries, rubber truncheons and sticks. There are increasing reports of guns being used, mostly AK 47s and 303 rifles. Petrol bombs are being thrown at cars, property and people. Torture techniques involve beatings with electric cables, beatings on the soles of the feet, tying of the penis and electric shocks.

The police have taken little or no action to protect MDC supporters in the majority of cases, although MDC supporters have reported some of these incidents to them. Although some MDC members interviewed admit involvement in fights with Zanu (PF) members, the statements gathered should help to dispel the myth perpetuated in the state media that MDC supporters are causing most of the violence.

## **Targeting Party Activists**

### **CIO Involvement**

Most interviewees were active members of the MDC who had been systematically singled out for attack. Their names have been changed in this report for security reasons.

Mr Deve is a youth district chairman for MDC in Kambuzuma, Harare. He survived torture and assault at the hands of men he alleges are CIO operatives. He is now in fear of his life and unable to return to his home. On 28 April 2000, following an MDC meeting and a drink in a local bar, Mr Deve was walking home when he was seized by a gang of six men. They were armed with a gun and were driving a Mazda 626. They said: "You think you are clever, you MDC people are now behaving like you are already ruling the country." Mr Deve says he recognised one of the men who lives in his local area and "is from the President's office."

Mr Deve was abducted and beaten in the car, then taken to waste ground, where he was forced to lie down. He was held down by four of the men, while the fifth inserted a wire into his penis and anus. He remembers little after this, since, he explained: "I fainted and they left me for dead."

Mr Deve came round eventually and managed to reach the roadside, where a passerby took him to the police, who then called an ambulance. He says that members of the CIO came looking for him at the hospital. Mr Deve was medically examined and has injuries consistent with the torture described. He is due to have an operation, but there is a chance that he may never be able to have children. At present he is in much pain and deeply anxious following threats and a break in at the place he had sought refuge. He spoke of the continuing threats to his life:

These people are coming looking for me now. They are phoning my brother in Mutare. They even know where he stays and the phone number and they also know where my cousin stays in Hatfield. They are just including everyone, thinking birds of a feather flock together. One of my sisters has been harassed. Three young brothers have been harassed.

### **Rural Militia**

The situation in rural areas is acute, with the MDC organisers in the frontline of a campaign to destroy the party in many areas. Attacks upon MDC activists are now very common.

The story told by Mr Ndlovu from Murehwa was typical of what is happening in the rural areas. The 75-year-old chairman of Musani South was fortunate to escape in time when he saw a gang of some 100 Zanu PF supporters approaching his house on 9 May, around 4:45 pm. They came in a lorry and two pick up trucks to his house, but Mr Ndlovu, who had already been beaten by war veterans only a month earlier, saw them and immediately fled. His wife however was determined to find their grandson whom she thought was still at their house. The little boy had run home, but Mrs Ndlovu was still there when the attackers arrived. Pointing a gun at her head, the Zanu (PF) supporters demanded she hand over her husband's T-shirts and books related to MDC. They confiscated MDC manifestos and T-shirts and then, demanding to know where Mr Ndlovu was, they marched his wife to a bus stop at Musami mission, forced her to lie down and then beat her with sjamboks and chains.

The neighbouring house which belonged to Mr Ndlovu's brother was burnt down and the family lost everything. Although both Mr Ndlovu and his brother made reports to the police, when they asked what protection they could be given, the police simply said: "If you surrender to these people its much better."

Mr Ndlovu left Musani for Harare the day after the incident, but his wife was reportedly still receiving threats and property had been stolen from the house. Mr Ndlovu also described a previous incident in which his grandson was beaten. He says schools in the area have been closed and that the Brother at the mission has been forced to give up his car to the Zanu (PF) supporters. Ndlovu believes the men behind all of these attacks are "camped at the Shanuwe restaurant in Musani growth point ... under the command of an Ndebele ex-combatant called Ncube." He also accuses the local Zanu (PF) leadership of involvement in this violence.

The chairman of Macheke district MDC also narrowly escaped a crowd of Zanu (PF) supporters who said they had come to "get me and chop off my head." He believes that they were led by ex-combatants from Marondera, Mutoko and Murehwa, under the command of a man called Garwe and that their intention was to take him to their base at Fault Farm, Marimatombo. He is currently in Harare, awaiting news of the security situation in Macheke. He described the attempted assault on 14 May:

During the day, more than 100 of them arrived, Zanu (PF) supporters and ex-combatants. They were armed with axes, sticks, catapults, machetes and bicycle chains. There was one group coming from the south, one from the north and one from the west. They tried to block the way to the police station. They said they had come to “get me and chop off my head.” They shouted: “He’s there, get him.” I was in the garden. I was running to the police station. On the way I saw another group of guys coming from the front. They were wearing Zanu (PF) T-shirts. As I reached the Mutare road a bus was passing and I managed to get it to stop and I asked if I could have some assistance. I got on. Then their car dropped some people in front of the bus and they started to hit the bus. They were saying: “We want him, make him get down.” The driver moved the bus bit by bit to the police station. Then I managed to get off and run inside. The police started to give me a hand. They told me to hide in the radio room and I went in there.

### **Urban Militia**

In Budiriro, Harare, there has been a spate of abductions and torture at the surgery in Budiriro 4 belonging to war-veteran’s leader, Chenjerai Hunzvi, as well as reports of retaliation by MDC members. One MDC supporter, Takundwa Chipunza, is known to have been killed by Zanu (PF) supporters inside or near the surgery. The NGO Forum has interviewed several people from Budiriro who say they were captured and taken to the surgery. They have given consistent accounts of the activities and identities of the militia which has its base there. They have been medically examined and bear physical scars of their torture and have the accompanying emotional problems. One of the first to be captured was Mr Matongo, aged 38, who lives near the surgery and runs a small hardware business there. He is an MDC member and following severe beatings, he revealed some information about the structures of MDC in the area. He was kept inside from 11 am until 7 pm. He described the perpetrators.

All the time they were beating me with electrical wires. There were about 120 war veterans and Zanu (PF) supporters. They spoke both Shona and Ndebele. Both men and women beat me. They beat me with the kind of electrical cord used by ZESA (the electricity company). They were beating me on my back and some of the women were using bottle tops (metal) to pinch the skin around my groin.

It was the same three men who beat me each time and three ladies. The ladies were using their hands to slap me. There was an officer and a commander in charge. The officer was from Matabeleland, an Ndebele man known as Dube. The other man was an old man, more than 50 years old, a war veteran. He was from Manicaland, but he was just known as the “Commander”. There were also some who said they were CIO there, but they didn’t carry a card.

Other victims of the torturers at the surgery said that there were many Ndebele and Venda speakers among them and confirmed that they had come from all over the country. One identified himself as a soldier from Mutare, while another group were from Gutu.

27-year-old Mr Saidi from Budiriro admits taking part in a fight against the Zanu (PF) supporters at Hunzvi’s surgery on 16 May, the same date that Chipunza of the MDC was killed there. He argues that the fight was begun by Zanu (PF) supporters who stoned an MDC meeting near the surgery and that the MDC members then chased Zanu (PF), fighting with them near the surgery. He says a number of the group at the surgery were armed and that the battle ended when one of them shot at him. His leg was injured. He then heard the attackers turn on Chipunza. His account goes on as follows:

After we ran away the youth were chasing us. Then Chipunza found that it was free and he ran out. As he got out he didn’t know where the Zanu (PF) youth were. He ran straight into them. They shouted the captured man is out. That’s why they didn’t capture me. They were too busy beating him. Later we found he was dead.

## **Rooting Out Opposition Supporters**

The account given by a resident of Murehwa, a successful peasant farmer in his 50's, illustrates how flimsy the basis for an attack may be. Mr Maregere is not an opposition member, but he says: "People are threatening my life, claiming that I am a leader of an opposition party. The only reason Maregere could find to explain why he has become a target was that several months ago, when attending a funeral in Harare, he was given 20 MDC T-shirts by a relative. He took them back to his home village and distributed them, pleased to hand out what he viewed as "something to wear". This was the extent of Maregere's political activity, so when last week Maregere heard a rumour that he would "lose his head" he thought it was a joke. Since then, his family has suffered a brutal assault and lost their home and possessions.

The incident happened on the evening of 15 May, when Maregere was away. When he returned the following morning, he found that his wife had been badly beaten by Zanu PF supporters. The elder three of the Maregere's six children and a cousin were also assaulted and their home and crops had been burnt to the ground. The Zanu (PF) supporters, armed with pickhandles and sjamboks, had arrived at the house demanding to know Mr Maregere's whereabouts. When they found he was not at home, they began an aggressive interrogation of his wife, beating her throughout. One of the gang threatened to kill her. The group then went through the village searching for Maregere and beating other villagers and relatives. Another interviewee witnessed the burning of Maregere's home. He was ordered to empty his bag and show his "MDC things". He was beaten with pickhandles and he had visible wounds on his back at the time of the interview. When they found he had nothing of a political nature, he was robbed.

## **Assaults upon Teachers and Civic Activists**

Attacks upon teachers are not only directed at opposition supporters, but appear now to be part of a policy against those who have the capacity to inform their communities. It may also be that educated individuals are regarded as a threat because they are capable of exercising their choice at the ballot box without succumbing to the belief which is spreading across some rural communities that Zanu PF will know which individuals have voted for the opposition, and will target them after the elections.

The two teachers interviewed by the project last week were both involved with the opposition, but they were also able to speak of the intimidation which has affected their colleagues as well as of their own experiences. Mr Mpofu described the assaults upon teachers at Chitimbe school in UMP, Mashonaland East. He is a supporter of MDC, who had helped the party to campaign on one occasion. He left the province for Harare when the violence began, but his car which was left behind was burnt. He also told of how his two friends, both teachers, were badly beaten and left for dead. The wife of one of them was raped. Some of the perpetrators were arrested, but later released having been fined \$500 for common assault, although the man suspected of rape is thought to be still on remand. A teacher from Shamva, who is also an MDC member reported a series of attacks which ended with his home being burnt down. He has had to leave the area for Harare in fear of his life.

Many teachers have had to flee their homes and take emergency leave from their jobs. Schools in some areas are unable to function as a result. A project monitor in Mashonaland West reports that Mudzimu Secondary School has not been opened because of threats to the teachers. A number of schools in Mashonaland East have also been affected.

An incident described by a staff member of Amani Trust who is working on an agricultural project in Mount Darwin confirms just how vulnerable teachers are to accusations of opposition involvement.

At the time of the referendum, when the NCA papers telling people to vote no came round, Mr Madhuku, who is an ex-teacher and can read and write well was explaining to people in the group to say what this paper was about. He was a strong supporter of Zanu PF who was tortured during the liberation struggle, but the war vets were annoyed by the 'no' vote, that is why they accused him. It was organised that they would come and beat him and his family so someone warned him not to sleep at home. He spent two nights sleeping in the bush with his family. He was made to do the toyi-toying with the youth for two days it was about 8 kms and he is an old man. Then the youth said to him: "We have tried to find out all the accusations but have failed." He told the youth they were free to search his house. But they found nothing. They didn't beat him. His daughter was accused of tearing down a poster for the Zanu (PF) candidate, Mr Dokora. She was usually schooling in Chinoyi and was there on holiday. They told her "isn't that the same as killing a person, tearing down a poster." She denied it.

Those working for human rights organisations are equally viewed as a threat to Zanu (PF) support in some areas. The ZimRights representative in Mashonaland East described how his brother, also a member of ZimRights was picked up by the war veterans and Zanu (PF) supporters who are operating from the ZexCom offices in Murehwa centre. This office has been named as a notorious torture house and militia camp by several other people from Murehwa where suspected opposition supporters are taken on a regular basis.

They picked up my brother. They were suspecting I am a very important opposition member in Marondera. They were asking him where I was. They beat him and were hitting him under the foot. They whipped him and he had some lacerations on his back. He was released and spent some time in hospital. He identified one guy from the President's Office who was among the attackers. Later, when they realised they had made a mistake, this guy went and apologised to my brother. I have approached the police about the matter.

## **A Summary of Reports of Political Violence made to the Human Rights NGO Forum from 13-19 May 2000**

It should be noted that this is not in any way a comprehensive report of political violence which has occurred in the period, rather it is a selective view of cases which the project has been researching. Many of the incidents listed below took place some time ago, but are listed here as they were reported to the project in the week under review. They are ordered by the date on which the incident occurred. Some of the reports were made directly to the project by victims or witnesses—several of these have received prior or subsequent press coverage. Other cases are being noted here as reports which have yet to be verified either by the project or by other sources, as far as we are aware. The project has not detailed cases relating to threats and intimidation or destruction of property as these too numerous to document.

### **Extrajudicial Killings**

**13 May 2000:** Sgt Alex Chisasa was killed at 9:30 pm, by a gang of 5-6 on the Jack Quinton bridge near his home in Mupinge, **Chipinge area**. He is thought to have been beaten to death with an iron bar. Chisasa was stationed at Chisambange police station. His killing is thought to have been political as immediately before the incident he was drinking beer in the township, dressed in civilian clothes. He was publicly criticising the political strategy of Zanu (PF) and the party's use of war veterans. His death was brought to the attention of the project, but no further details are available at present.

**16 May 2000:** Takundwa Chipunza an MDC supporter from Budiro, Harare, was killed, allegedly by Zanu PF supporters, 12 of whom have been arrested and are on remand until 5 June.

## **Torture**

**21 April 2000:** MDC members were drinking at Wasara-Wasara beerhall in Gokwe, the Midlands, around 9:45 pm. They were approached by about 20 Zanu (PF) youths and “war veterans” and one of them was abducted. He was taken to their office at the council building, where he was brought before around 200 Zanu (PF) supporters. He was then tortured with electric shocks and beaten on the soles of the feet at gunpoint. The assault was led by a war veteran named Shenje.

**28 April 2000:** An MDC member was tortured, allegedly at the hands of CIO operatives in Kambuzuma, Harare. He has given a detailed statement of his ordeal.

**8-16 May 2000:** Three people interviewed said they had been tortured at Chenjerai Hunzvi’s surgery in Budiriro between these dates. Each claimed to have seen other people being tortured inside—there are unconfirmed reports of four more victims. Takundwa Chipunza, who died of beatings outside the surgery, is also suspected of having been tortured at the surgery.

## **Assault**

**13 April 2000:** An MDC member from Bindura gave a detailed statement about an assault near Rushinga in Mashonaland Central on this date. He lost an eye as a result of a beating with an iron bar, allegedly at the hands of the Zanu (PF) candidate for Mount Darwin, Saviour Kasukuwere. He claims many others were beaten at the same time and the project is continuing to gather reports on this incident.

**15 April 2000:** An MDC member from Wedza reported injuries to his mouth and teeth following being ambushed and stoned by a gang of suspected Zanu (PF) supporters. He claimed that there have been several subsequent assaults upon MDC members in the area, including the local district chairman, who has now fled the area, and a youth whose leg was broken. He claims the perpetrators are not local, but are being organised by Zanu (PF) officials, brought in by them from the farms and housed at the growth point at weekends.

**17 April 2000:** In Gokwe, the Midlands, an MDC supporter, wearing a T-shirt, was stopped by seven Zanu (PF) youths who beat him with a beer bottle, fists and logs. The assault happened around 8:00 pm. The victim was left cut and bruised, but he managed to make his way to Gokwe police station. They refused to take a statement because “it was politically motivated.” He then went to hospital for treatment.

**18-21 April 2000:** The chairperson of MDC youth Mufakose, Harare gave a detailed statement saying he was living in fear and had been threatened repeatedly by men he believes were CIO operatives. He also alleged that there have been more than eight assaults upon MDC supporters in the suburb between. In one case an entire family and their lodgers were beaten. He said those responsible were well-known locally and were staying at the Zanu (PF) offices near the Gwonyambira bar in Mufakose.

**17-20 April:** A mob of Zanu (PF) supporters, war veterans and state agents came looking for of an NCA coordinator and ZimRights member in Nyadire Mission, Mutoko. When they failed to find him, they abducted his wife and child, threatened and insulted them and later released them. They then set up a camp at Nyadire Mission Farm, where they brought several local residents and beat them.

**17 April 2000:** Zanu PF supporters invaded an election monitors training workshop in UMP, Mashonaland East accusing participants of belonging to an opposition party. The following day, the Zanu PF supporters began burning houses and attacking local residents. One woman’s ear was cut off, another pregnant woman was badly beaten, a child was cut on the hand and several other people were badly beaten. Some of those attacked were UP supporters.

**24 April 2000:** An MDC member from Shamva gave a statement about an attack upon him by alleged Zanu (PF) supporters. His hand was broken by a knobkerrie and his head was cut twice with an axe. He was also beaten by sjamboks all over his body. He was left for dead. 21 houses including his own were destroyed on the same day. He claims that CIO operatives came to hospital looking for him, and he has had to leave the area.

**26 April 2000:** A teacher from Gokwe, the Midlands was severely beaten by Zanu PF officials, war veterans and supporters. He says “a prominent state security officer” accused him of being MDC and told him he was now in the hands of army generals. He was stripped naked, robbed, interrogated and beaten with a baton stick.

**8 May 2000:** A university student from Bindura, Alphonse Mushinyi, gave an account of an assault upon him by alleged Zanu (PF) supporters.

**9 May 2000:** Zanu (PF) supporters abducted an MDC member in Karoi, beat him severely and then left him unconscious on the outskirts of Chiedza township. He was badly bruised, but one of the Karoi hospital staff told him that: “we do not treat MDC people”. When the incident was reported at the police station, an officer there was reported to have scolded the victim, saying: “I once warned you not to participate in MDC activities, but you did not bother to listen.”

**9 May 2000:** War veterans and Zanu PF supporters occupied Pachedu farm belonging to Roy Bennett, an MDC candidate in Chimanimani. They began assaults upon farmworkers and local residents.

**10 May 2000:** An MDC youth reported arming himself with an iron bar and a bottle in order to take part in a “rescue mission” of MDC supporters who had been abducted and taken to Hunzvi’s surgery in Budiriro. He claims that on the way to attack the surgery, he was discovered by police, who set dogs upon him, found his weapons and then hit him in the ribs with baton sticks. He says he was detained for five days and placed in handcuffs and leg irons. A statement was also taken from another MDC supporter who was not armed, but was detained in the same incident.

**13 May 2000:** An MDC member from Macheke township was interviewed by the Forum. He reported being beaten on and chased from his home the following day.

**14 May 2000:** Zanu (PF) youths are alleged to have visited the home of two MDC members in Chiedza township, Karoi. When the targets did not open the door, the Zanu (PF) youths broke it down and attacked those inside. After a fight the youths retreated. The next day about 40 youths returned, surrounded the house and attacked the MDC members, one of whom was hit on the head with a stone. The house was damaged and property was stolen.

**14 May 2000:** An MDC member from Chinoyi was reading a newspaper at the Municipality offices when he was abducted and taken to a room in the municipality offices where he was badly beaten between 2-4:30 pm.

**15 May 2000:** A man from a village in Murehwa reported assaults upon his wife, three children and a cousin. Another man from the village also reported being beaten in the same incident.

**16 May 2000:** A Mazda truck full of Zanu (PF) youths came to Chiedza township in Karoi and in full view of the police, abducted the local MDC vice-chairman, who has not been seen since.

**16 May 2000:** Eamonn Oliver, the production manager of Border Timbers in Chimanimani was captured by Zanu (PF) supporters and forced to attend a rally. He was beaten repeatedly and ordered to chant Zanu (PF) slogans.

## Report on political violence

13- 19 May 2000

**This section gives a selection of newspaper reports during the reporting period. Some of the reports relate to incidents prior to 13 May.**

### **Murder, assaults and harassment of opposition members other than MDC**

The Secretary General of ZUD, Isaac Manyemba, had received death threats and members of his party have been harassed by Zanu (PF) supporters.

In Murehwa a female was assaulted by Zanu (PF) supporters for being a ZUD organiser and selling the party's cards and T-shirts and distributing it campaign materials. Her pregnant daughter was assaulted with sticks and fists by Zanu (PF) supporters as they looked for keys to open the wardrobe to search for ZUD materials.

In Mutare Ms P Chikukutu, ZUD parliamentary candidate for Mutare South, lost all her campaign materials to Zanu (PF) supporters. In Gokwe, Collen Nyoni, the ZUD parliamentary candidate for Gokwe Central was intimidated and harassed and her ZUD campaign materials and party cards were confiscated. His mother was threatened with eviction from the area by her headman because her son was supporting a party other than Zanu (PF). In Mbare West ZUD member Spiwe Jera was harassed and intimidated by Zanu (PF) supporters.<sup>1</sup>

James Chitongo, director of elections in the opposition United Party reported that two of their members had been killed by Zanu (PF) supporters and many others were severely assaulted wounded on the evening of 17 May. This had occurred in the in the northeastern district of Mudzi. The wounded included a local village headman called Mushayi and a child called Nyandoro who were severely beaten and left for dead by Zanu (PF) supporters. It was alleged that incidents of violence were taking place in that area almost every night. Police confirmed Wednesday's killings and said several people had been arrested in connection with the violence.<sup>2</sup>

### **Violence in Mutoko, Murehwa, Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe and Mudzi<sup>3</sup>**

Fifty three villagers, victims of political violence in Mutoko, Murehwa and Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe, have abandoned their homes and fled to Harare. The villagers abandoned their villages after either being attacked or receiving threats of violence from Zanu (PF) supporters and war veterans. Among them are schoolchildren. For the past week, the villagers have been sleeping at Mbare Musika bus terminus and at the Harare Railway Station in sad scenes reminiscent of the situation at the height of war of liberation in the seventies, when thousands lived in plastic shacks at Mbare Musika. Some have been given accommodation by well wishers. Yesterday, the villagers gathered at the ZimRights head office seeking refuge and food. "We spent the night in the bush and when I went to check the following morning, I heard the youths were still looking for me," Chipuriro said. "I sold a cow for \$1 000 to get bus fare to come to Harare." The family is now living at the home of United Parties Secretary for Welfare, Emy Ncube.

Simon Chikazi had his right hand in a sling yesterday after he was allegedly assaulted by Zanu PF supporters from Mudzi. Chikazi, the UP parliamentary candidate for Mudzi, said he ran away from home on Thursday last week after being warned that a group of Zanu PF supporters was coming for him. He left his family behind. "I don't have a permanent place to live and I am fearing for my family. I don't even know where they are and whether they are still alive," Chikazi said.

Rodwell Chichetu, an office orderly with the Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe council, said he left home on Thursday last week after getting a message that Zanu PF youths were looking for him. "I left at night and

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News 17 May 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Reuters report 18 May 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Daily News 16 May 2000.

slept in the bush. I could not take my family with me and I am concerned about their safety,” Chichetu said.

Their granaries have been destroyed and their livelihood is threatened.” United Parties, deputy secretary-general, Godwin Mutambirwa said: “We are disturbed by this violence. We are now scared of holding open meetings because our supporters will be targeted. These are the same people who used to feed the comrades during the liberation war. Now their only crime is that they have pointed out Zanu PF’s weaknesses.”

#### **Violence against civil servants<sup>4</sup>**

A wave of violence targeting civil servants and MDC) supporters has swept rural Matabeleland in the run-up to the parliamentary elections now set for 24 and 25 June. The deputy national chairman of ZimRights, Clement Moyo, said State security agents, war veterans and Zanu (PF) supporters were allegedly unleashing a reign of terror, especially in Plumtree district. Moyo said numerous people were taken to Plumtree hospital after being attacked in the night. He said one person was abducted after midnight and beaten up before being asked to identify houses of MDC officials. The man’s nightmare, Moyo said, began when 20 men, one donning a police uniform and armed with a pistol forced themselves into his house. After being severely assaulted and threatened with death, Moyo said, the man took the gang to another MDC member’s house. The rest of the group armed with axes and pipes beat up the MDC member and other supporters who were taken to hospital to be treated for injuries sustained during the severe beatings.

Moyo said the same group then proceeded to another area in Tshankwe where they beat up other people and told them to support Zanu (PF). He said there were widespread fears that schools might close because the violence was targeted at teachers. He said teachers were allegedly tortured at nearby Diba Primary School. At least five schools have been closed as a result of the escalating violence against schoolteachers. Zanu (PF) has accused schoolteachers of campaigning against the draft constitution.

“Violence is escalating in rural areas which will make it impossible to have free and fair elections,” said Moyo.

In Lupane the Matabeleland North regional chairman for ZimRights, Thokozani Sitsha, said elections monitors were being beaten up and harassed. He said the monitors’ training manuals and certificates had been confiscated. Sitsha said the victims were told by CIO operatives that ZimRights would get them killed. “They also threatened them with disappearances, accusing them of inciting people not to go to Zanu (PF) meetings,” said Sitsha.

#### **Political clash in Budiriro – report 1<sup>5</sup>**

One person died and 13 others were injured in clashes in Budiriro, Harare, on Tuesday night ignited after MDC youths allegedly started stoning a surgery belonging to Dr Chenjerai Hunzvi. Police had by yesterday arrested 30 people in connection with the violence, which also saw five buildings, including Dr Hunzvi’s surgery, damaged following stone and petrol bomb attacks in the suburb.

Riot police have restored order and a heavy police presence was keeping the peace yesterday.

The suspected MDC supporter, who died in hospital yesterday morning, has been identified as Takundwa Chipunza (38) of Budiriro 2.

Police and neighbours who witnessed the clashes described the violence as “terrifying”, especially since both parties allegedly chased away the police in order to settle their differences in a violent manner.

“Although some youths had come earlier on to stone Cde Hunzvi’s surgery, this was the first time that there had been clashes like that.” “The youths (MDC) and the war veterans appeared prepared for the

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<sup>4</sup> Daily News 17 May 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Herald 18 May 2000.

fights because they refused to listen to police appeals to stop the violence," said Mrs Mabvuka, who lives near Cde Hunzvi's surgery, where most of the violence occurred.

Harare provincial police spokesperson, Inspector Tendai Nembire, said the police were investigating what had caused the clashes. She said both parties were involved, giving contradictory evidence.

Police investigations so far show that, as a result of long-standing differences between the MDC youths and war veterans, the MDC youths had toyi-toyed to Cde Hunzvi's surgery, where they began throwing stones and chanting anti-Zanu (PF) slogans. This allegedly resulted in an orgy of violence which only ended following intervention by the riot police in the early hours of yesterday morning. The situation in the suburb was still tense yesterday, with a heavy police presence in areas where the violence was concentrated.

On 19 May *The Herald* reported that 17 more people were arrested by the police between Wednesday and Thursday in connection with the violent clash in Budiriro. This brings the total of people arrested to 47.

### **Political clash in Budiriro – report 2<sup>6</sup>**

Rival party supporters clashed in western Harare, leaving one person dead and 18 injured, police said Wednesday. Witnesses said the violence Tuesday night started when about 15 youths attacked Takudzwa Chipunza, who was believed to have been a supporter of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change party, police spokeswoman Tendai Nembire said. Chipunza died Wednesday at a Harare hospital from head injuries suffered in the attack. The overnight clashes occurred in the Budiriro township in western Harare. Four of the injured were in serious condition, Nembire said. Thirteen of those injured said they belonged to Zanu (PF).

Some clashes took place outside the office of Chenjerai Hunzvi. Fire bombs were hurled into two homes, gutting them. Opposition supporters smashed the windows of Hunzvi's offices, claiming that veterans had dragged their colleagues into the clinic last week and beaten and tortured them.

### **Incidents in Kwekwe<sup>7</sup>**

Two national executive committee members of the MDC had their houses burnt down in Kwekwe on Monday by suspected Zanu (PF) members camped at the party's Kwekwe district offices and Amaveni guest house. Abraham Mtshena, the MDC chairman for Kwekwe district, said his family was caught sleeping and, when they tried to escape, were badly beaten up. Blessing Chebundo, an MDC national executive member, was alone when the group petrol-bombed his house. He escaped through the back door. The arsonists were believed to be using two white Mazda pick-up trucks, with one bearing the registration number 619-212F. Police in Kwekwe have confirmed the incidents but said no arrests had been made so far.

Several other houses belonging to known MDC supporters had their windows smashed last week, especially in Mbizo and Amaveni high density suburbs. Mtshena said his wife and five children were severely assaulted with slashers and knobkerries when they rushed out of their burning house in Mbizo's Section 5. They were treated at Kwekwe General Hospital and discharged. Mtshena was not at home when the incident occurred. Chebundo's house in Newtown was still smouldering when *The Daily News* visited the area on Tuesday.

### **Incident in Chimanimani<sup>8</sup>**

MDC officials in the eastern town of Chimanimani told Reuters that five more MDC supporters had been abducted overnight and could be dead. "Five people have been abducted. We have reports that they have been killed, but we are still trying to confirm that," MDC organizer James Mundenda said by telephone.

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<sup>6</sup> Associated Press Report 17 May 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Daily News 18 May 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Reuters 17 May 2000.

He said the attack had taken place on a farm owned by Roy Bennett, a white farmer and an MDC parliamentary candidate.

### **Farm invasions and other reports<sup>9</sup>**

War veterans and Zanu (PF) supporters are alleged to have compiled hit lists targeting farmers, opposition party candidates and activists and civil servants, especially teachers, officials have said.

In addition, pro-government militias, propagandists and hired thugs have intensified their assaults of political opponents and waverers at all night rallies and liberation war-style kangaroo courts set up at invaded commercial farms, growth points and in remote villages. The new wave has cowed thousands into submission and forced some to flee to towns and cities for safety and security.

In its latest land invasions update, the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) said: Featherstone- There is intelligence gleaned at Rosarum Store near the Dunn's Farm that more farmers are targeted by a hit squad. Those involved have been informed and may evacuate for their safety. The report does not give further details on either the hit squad or the targeted farmers. But it is now known that owners of Portugal and Zanka Farms in the area were evacuated last week because of the threat. The invaders have already been to Nyambiri and Swallowfield Farms where they were checking for party cards among farm workers.

Save Conservancy. "It appears that out of discussions held with senior police officials in Chiredzi that on Masapas, Levanga and Senuko Ranches, says the report. There appears to be a separate militant group of war vets. They refuse to accept any instructions from the Governor, Dr Hunzvi or even the police for that matter. "As a result, war veterans were still occupying safari camps. Game Scouts are being given a hard time by the war veterans", says the report.

Villagers and teachers are arriving daily in Harare from rural Mashonaland, raising fears that new squatter camps might spring up soon on the fringes of the city. Already 53 villagers and their children are sleeping at Mbare Musika and at the main railway station after abandoning their homes in Mutoko, Mudzi, Uzumba, Maramba and Pfungwe. The CFU says there are reports of massive political violence in Maranda and Matibi 1 areas in Mwenezi. Hospitals and clinics are very busy. Three schools closed last week Wedza invaders started to building a house on the seed bed site on Rupaka Farm, while workers at Dean Farm were commandeered to a meeting at 10 pm last week and only returned to work at 7:30 the following morning. A beast was shot on Saltash on Tuesday and 17 cattle were slashed on Chakadenya Farm. Macheke/Virginia- "Workers at Chiringe Farm were assaulted on Tuesday night.

Excessive demands have been made on Nyagadzi but the situation was defused. The farmer on Glen Somerset was forced to sign over half of his farm. Through the Enterprise valley, says the CFU, demands for cattle, food, transport and interference with preparation for crops continues. Chinhoyi farmers were ordered to attend a rally on a nearby farm. The farmers were told to take their workers with them, and advised that a roll call would be taken at the rally.

In the villages, violence monitors have recorded eight cases of rape, 1 012 incidents of burns and attempted stranglings and 417 houses and properties have been destroyed. The monitors put the total number of violations to 5 078 as of last week.

The CFU said there were two new invasions on Rosalin and Verdun Farms in Harare South/Beatrice, Mafuti Farm in Ayshire, another unidentified farm in Gweru and Anthony Mitchell's Wayne Farm in Masvingo. Plans for wheat planting had to be abandoned at Kismet Farm in Doma, Kuti Estate and Hwanga Farm and in the entire Middle Save region. Land preparation for wheat, tobacco and tomatoes stopped last week in Banket, at Lions Den and parts of Chinhoyi. In Norton, a group of 150 Zanu PF supporters commandeered two tractors from Parklands Farm and threatened the owner. They went to plough on Kintyre and then proceeded to Aberdeen. The group then requisitioned diesel from Winson Farm and went on to Garvillin, said the CFU. There was building of huts on Rondor Farm in Chakari,

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<sup>9</sup> Daily News 18 May 2000.

pegging on New Begin and all workers on Blackmorevale Farm were told to get Zanu PF cards if they wanted land. Wicklow Farm in Selous has also fallen to 150 invaders. The owner of Hwanga and Bonya farms were ordered to remove their cattle before the end of May.

In Mwenezi, one farmer resisted an invasion by war veterans and Zanu PF supporters by openly telling them that the land he had would rather be shared by his workers than let it go to the invaders. The war vets moved off the farm. The situation was different near Gutu where 30 Zanu PF supporters moved into Blyth Farm and informed the owner that they had started to peg on Appin Farm, which also belongs to him. Appin Farm was designated for resettlement by the government two years ago. In Kwekwe a farmer was threatened and had evacuated his property for the time being. It appears that there is no solution to the intimidation and violence in this area.

#### **Incidents against nurses**

About 30 people allegedly abducted a nurse and two other people from Mnene Mission in Mberengwa on Monday. According to some nurses and teachers, three groups arrived at the mission at about 2.00 pm. They allegedly accused some nurses of being members of the MDC. They later abducted a male nurse, a temporary teacher and a Mutare Technical College student. The three people were allegedly taken to Texas farm about 20 km away where they were allegedly assaulted. They were brought back to the mission at 10.00 pm the same day. The groups promised to come back and clean up the place. Nurses they feared for their lives.<sup>10</sup>

A Mudzi Hospital doctor said many victims of political violence, including an official at Chimukoko Clinic, had been admitted. The clinic has since been closed.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Incidents against teachers**

About 30 people allegedly abducted a nurse and two other people from Mnene Mission in Mberengwa on Monday. Sources at the mission said that three groups of people wielding sticks allegedly terrorised nurses at the hospital. Teachers at the Mnene primary and secondary schools were also harassed, resulting in the abduction of a temporary teacher. According to some nurses and teachers, three groups arrived at the mission at about 2.00 pm. They allegedly accused some nurses of being members of the MDC. They later abducted a male nurse, a temporary teacher and a Mutare Technical College student. The three people were allegedly taken to Texas farm about 20 km away where they were allegedly assaulted. They were brought back to the mission at 10.00 pm the same day. The groups promised to come back and clean up the place. Nurses and teachers said they feared for their lives.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Mashonaland East**

DN 18 May

Reports reaching the Mashonaland East regional education office show that hundreds of teachers have left schools in the province because of insecurity and harassment from war veterans and Zanu PF supporters. Some simply stayed away when schools opened last week after pro-government youths launched a campaign aimed at flushing out the opposition. The campaign, led by war veterans, involves all-night rallies, a census of party card-holders and the introduction of brutal loyalty lessons for villagers and civil servants. "The situation in the province is tense, especially in Mudzi," said the regional education director, Chrispen Gundani. "Please be careful when you go there. I am very disturbed by the situation because students are losing out and teachers are being harassed and threatened. Students are losing out."

Unemployed youths, using the Zanu (PF) campaign card as a source of income, adventure and pleasure, are moving from door to door, village to village, herding hapless peasants to daily political meetings,

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<sup>10</sup> Daily News 17 May 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Daily News 18 May 2000.

<sup>12</sup> The Herald 17 May 2000.

villagers said. From Nharira, Sadza, Hwedza, Marondera, Musami, Murehwa, Mutoko through to Nyamapanda, village life has taken a dramatic turn the usual, serene rural scene has been transformed into a brouhaha of Zanu PF war song and dance aimed at infusing fear into the rural voter, once assumed to be loyal to President Mugabe for life.

Gundani said many schools now had insufficient teachers and reports of continued harassment reached his offices every day. "We have sent out education officers to negotiate with local politicians in affected areas. In some cases, there is nothing we can do but wait until the situation normalises so the teachers can go back to the schools," he said. Gundani said morale among teachers was very low. "Mnamba School in Murehwa was badly affected. Opening for the second term was delayed because teachers did not turn up. We had to negotiate with the local Zanu PF party leadership for things to normalise," he said. At the neighbouring Dombodzvuku primary and secondary schools, only a few teachers are conducting lessons. "On Thursday last week, only nine teachers turned up. At the moment only three-quarters of our teachers are present. The school has a total of 24 teachers," said one headmaster. At Chemhondoro School, secret service agents and war veterans held a meeting on Monday to diffuse the tense situation after teachers fled the harassment. In Mudzi, Mutoko and Murehwa, the situation looks like a repeat of the days of the liberation struggle. Those who fail to attend the meetings are harassed and accused of supporting opposition parties. Their houses are searched and, in some cases, property is stolen.

A crew from The Daily News attended one such meeting on Tuesday at Kurauone business centre and heard villagers being warned against supporting any other party except Zanu PF. At another gathering near the Nyamazera River in Murehwa, youths ordered villagers to invade farms in Macheke.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Daily News 18 May 2000.