



ZIMBABWE: ESCALATING VIOLENCE

“In Zimbabwe, ordinary citizens suffer under a tyrannical regime. The government has cracked down on peaceful calls for reform and forced millions to flee their homeland. The behavior of the Mugabe regime is an assault on its people -- and an affront to the principles of the Universal Declaration.”

– President George W. Bush



Zimbabwean police assault members of the National Constitutional Assembly demonstrating in Harare, July, 2007.

REGIME CRACKDOWN: 2007 is the worst year yet for defenders of freedom in Zimbabwe. Despite recent efforts by regional leaders to resolve the ongoing crisis, the assault against human rights and democracy by Robert Mugabe’s government has accelerated.

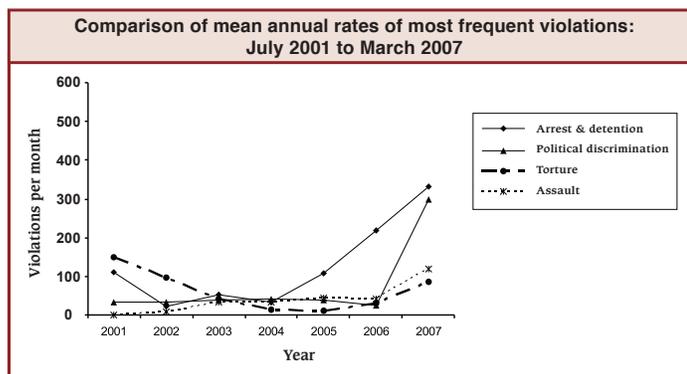
THE CONSENSUS: Numerous internationally recognized organizations agree that the Mugabe regime has failed to respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and note that human rights abuses, particularly political violence, are on the rise. Further, Amnesty International, Article 19, Human Rights Watch, the International Bar Association, and Redress, among others, contend that the Mugabe government has failed to protect rights set forth in the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights.¹

THE VICTIMS: The Mugabe regime has used Zimbabwean security and intelligence forces and youth militias to intensify its campaign against peaceful citizens exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association. Zimbabweans from all walks of life have been targeted, including the political opposition, democracy and human rights activists, religious leaders, labor unions, women’s groups, journalists, and students. Victims are attacked at locations across the country, including homes, workplaces, shopping centers, university campuses, peaceful rallies, and police stations.

6,000 VIOLATIONS AND COUNTING: Recent reporting from Zimbabwean NGOs suggests an appalling trend: Over 6,000 instances of human rights abuse have been reported since the beginning of 2007, with at least 500 violations occurring each month² and over 1,400 attacks against students alone.³

- **Disappearances and Abductions** Over 90 reports of politically motivated kidnapping and disappearance.²
- **Torture and Assault** 3,463 victims of torture and assault received medical treatment in 2007, nearly triple the 1,185 victims recorded in 2006.⁴ Victims report beatings with whips and cables, suspension, and electric shock.
- **Arrests and Detention** More than 1,200 cases, though few go to trial or result in conviction.⁵
- **Harassment and Intimidation** Over 3,000 incidents have targeted the political opposition, civil society, and ordinary citizens.²
- **Denial of Basic Needs** The Mugabe regime’s interference with humanitarian activities, partisan distribution of food, and refusal of medical treatment to victims of politically motivated violence continues.
- **Ongoing Repression** With over 2,000 complaints recorded, broad restrictions on freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association persist.⁵

ABUSES OF FREEDOMS IN ZIMBABWE: 2001-2007⁶



Sources: ¹Zimbabwe: Human Rights in Crisis, Shadow Report to the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Amnesty International, May 2007; ²Zimbabwe Peace Project; ³Students Solidarity Trust; ⁴Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights; ⁵Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum; ⁶Graph based on data from: *At Best a Falsehood, At Worst a Lie: Comments on the Zimbabwe Republic Police Reports “Opposition Forces in Zimbabwe: A Trail of Violence,”* Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum