



Zimbabwe - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 1 May 2012

Information on the current security situation in Zimbabwe.

In March 2012 the *Zimbabwe Peace Project* states commenting on events of February 2012 that:

“Politically motivated human rights violations are now on the rise with 413 incidents having been recorded up from the 365 witnessed during the month of January.” (Zimbabwe Peace Project (28 March 2012) *ZPP Monthly Monitor: February 2012*)

A report in April 2012 produced by the *United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office* commenting on events of the preceding year states that:

“A culture of impunity is widespread in Zimbabwe. Victims of politically motivated violence are rarely able to rely on the police to pursue justice on their behalf.” (United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (30 April 2012) *The 2011 Foreign & Commonwealth Office Report - Zimbabwe*)

A paper issued in September 2011 by the *Local to Global Protection* notes:

“In Zimbabwe, the political crisis has had a profound impact on all aspects of life. It is therefore not surprising to find that people identify a mixture of political and livelihoods issues as the key threats that they face.” (Local to Global Protection (September 2011) *Local Protection In Zimbabwe*)

This research paper also states:

“There is a widespread fear in Zimbabwe of political violence; but just as important is the high level of societal violence.” (ibid, p.32)

This documents also notes:

“While political violence can occur at any time, the levels of violence are synchronized with the political calendar.” (ibid,p.32)

This survey paper also states:

“It was clear from the interviews that the great majority of political violence is by or in support of Zanu-PF. The perpetrators of violence include organized militias of ‘war veterans’, and members of the security forces. But most typically, violence comes at the hands of gangs of youth. These gangs are organized by politicians from both sides of the political divide, but they have been a particular hallmark of Zanu-PF. With extremely high levels of youth unemployment, incentives to participate in political violence are typically minimal: a small amount of cash, or a few bottles of beer.” (ibid, p.33)

This report also points out that:

“...violent political periods are characterized by high levels of impunity.” (ibid, p.34)

It is also noted in this report that:

“...much of the violence is only peripherally related to politics; and politics and the impunity it confers is often used as a convenient cover for something else: settling old scores, gaining commercial advantage, or plain corruption and opportunism.” (ibid, p.34)

In 2012 a report issued by the *Bertelsmann Transformation Project* points out that:

“Political disagreement and stalemates between the coalition partners still make economic and desperately needed political reforms merely a distant vision of the future. Under the so-called Global Political Agreement (GPA), ZANU-PF and MDC agreed to jointly work on electoral as well as a constitutional reform, to bring an end to human rights abuses and to the limitation on civil rights. Yet although the two parties under the MDC umbrella constitute the majority in the assembly and Morgan Tsvangirai has assumed the post of prime minister next to President Robert Mugabe, the MDC has not been able to curb the power of ZANU-PF. The latter managed to keep a tight grip not only on the country’s resources but also on the security forces. It continues to uphold its patronage system and to harass political dissenters at all levels.” (Bertelsmann Transformation Project (2012) *Zimbabwe Country Report*, p.2)

This report also notes:

“Mugabe and ZANU-PF have relied heavily on war veterans and youth militias to resolve conflicts over power, and these groups are prone to violence and have been ideologically indoctrinated. Large parts of Zimbabwe’s rural areas are under the de facto control of these forces. The government’s district administrative system and police are not only unable to do anything against these forces, but have increasingly assumed the role of agents of their violent rule.” (ibid, p.6)

This report also states:

“Despite the power-sharing agreement between ZANU-PF and MDC, civil rights have continuously been restricted in Zimbabwe by repressive laws, the encroachments of security forces and by violent attacks by ZANU-PF supporters and militias on MDC members, opposition activists and ordinary people.” (Ibid, p.12)

A document published by *Human Rights Watch* in January 2012 commenting on events of 2011 notes:

“State security agents, police, and ZANU-PF supporters have been implicated in beatings, arbitrary arrests, and harassment of members of the MDC, cabinet ministers, human rights activists, and journalists, deepening the pervasive climate of fear in the country.” (Human Rights Watch (22 January 2012) *World Report 2012, Zimbabwe*)

A report issued in February 2012 by the *International Crisis Group* notes that:

“ZANU-PF retains full control of the security apparatus...” (International Crisis Group (6 February 2012) *Zimbabwe’s Sanctions Standoff*)

The *Economist Intelligence Unit* in January 2012 states in a survey that Zimbabwe:

“...also scores very poorly in the functioning of government category: the military and paramilitary groups are often used as a tool of suppression...” (Economist Intelligence Unit (9 January 2012) *The political scene: Democracy index: Zimbabwe*)

A report published in March 2012 by the *United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth* notes:

“The human rights situation in the first quarter of 2012 was relatively calm compared to the peak of abuses witnessed in 2008. However, we received reports from NGOs and civil society groups of continued incidents of politically-motivated violence/harassment targeting Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) activists and civil society.” (United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth (31 March 2012) *Human Rights in Countries of Concern: Quarterly Update on Zimbabwe, January to March 2012*)

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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