



1. Please provide information on the situation for young women living alone, particularly in Harare.

No information was found specifically regarding the situation for young women living alone in Harare or Zimbabwe. Reports were found, however, providing general information on the situation for women in Harare and Zimbabwe.

It is noted that no information was found to update Country Advice ZWE36110 of 10 February 2010 regarding the situation for single women in Zimbabwe.¹ This advice notes that single women and mothers were significantly affected by the Government's Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order, or Drive Out Rubbish) in 2005, which involved the demolition of illegally built homes in shanty towns in Harare.

Situation for Women in Harare

Limited reporting was found regarding the prevalence of sexual violence and workplace sexual harassment of women in Harare. A survey conducted by Medecins Sans Frontieres Belgium-Zimbabwe and the University of Zimbabwe² (quoted by the *Daily News*³ in December 2011) found that 24 per cent of women surveyed in Mbarare (a suburb of Harare) had experienced sexual violence.⁴ An undated report by the *Social Institutions and Gender Index* indicates that women in Harare also experience high levels of workplace sexual harassment. According to the report, an estimated one-third of women working in and around Harare have been subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace.⁵

Situation for Women in Zimbabwe More Generally

Women in Zimbabwe experience discrimination and high levels of sexual and domestic violence.⁶ In 2011, the US Department of State noted that although the constitution and other laws in Zimbabwe prohibit the deprivation of fundamental rights based on gender, the

¹ RRT Country Advice Service 2010, *Country Advice ZWE36110*, 10 February

² An original copy of the report could not be found. Nature of the research conducted included a foreign language search of internet sources. Internal Tribunal databases, the CISNET database and publically available documents on the internet (including the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, European Country of Origin Information Network and Refworld) were also searched.

³ The *Daily News* is an internet newspaper published in Zimbabwe and the UK.

⁴ Masvingise, W. 2011, 'Stunning Sexual Violence', *Daily News*, 11 December
<http://dailynews.co.zw/index.php/news/34-news/5950-stunning-sexual-violence-against-women.html> - Accessed 26 March 2012

⁵ Social Institutions and Gender Index (undated), *Zimbabwe* <http://genderindex.org/country/zimbabwe> - Accessed 23 March 2012

⁶ US Department of State, *2010 Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, 8 April, p. 54
www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154377.htm - Accessed 11 April 2011

constitution ‘allows for the discrimination of women on the grounds of customary law.’⁷ The report does not provide any further information.

Reports by the US Department of State and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 2011, indicate that women experience societal and economic discrimination in the areas of access to education, health services, employment, and credit.⁸ Similarly, a 2010 report by the Africa for Women’s Rights Group⁹ (quoted by the UK Home Office) states that women in Zimbabwe continue to experience ‘obstacles to access employment’ and ‘inadequate access to health services’.¹⁰ Country Advice ZWE36110 of 10 February 2010 notes that single women were significantly affected by the Government’s Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order, or Drive Out Rubbish) in 2005, which involved the demolition of hundreds of thousands of illegally built homes in Zimbabwe’s shanty towns in Harare.¹¹

Sexual violence against women in Zimbabwe is pervasive. In 2011, the US Department of State reported that although Government statistics on rape are unavailable, anecdotal evidence indicates that during 2010 rape remained a widespread problem.¹² A 2010 joint report by UNICEF, CASS and the Zimbabwean Government, notes that between 2005-2006, 47 per cent of women in Zimbabwe reported having experienced sexual or physical violence.¹³ In its 2011 report, *Politically Motivated Violence against Women in Zimbabwe 2000-2010*, the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU)¹⁴ noted that rape is used as a political weapon against Zimbabwean women. According to the report, politically motivated violence (including rape) has been a consistent factor in every election between 2000 and 2010, particularly during the 2008 election. Women from both urban and rural areas experience such violence, irrespective of whether they are directly involved in politics.¹⁵

⁷ US Department of State, *2010 Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, 8 April, p. 54
www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154377.htm – Accessed 11 April 2011

⁸ US Department of State, *2010 Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, 8 April, p. 58
www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154377.htm – Accessed 11 April 2011; UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2011, *Human Rights and Democracy: The 2010 Foreign and Commonwealth Office Report*, March, p. 354
<http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/htcdn/Human-Rights-and-Democracy-The-2010-Foreign-Commonwealth-Report.pdf> - Accessed 23 March 2012

⁹ The original report by the Africa for Women’s Rights Group could not be located. Nature of the research conducted included a foreign language search of internet sources. Internal Tribunal databases, the CISNET database and publically available documents on the internet (including the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, European Country of Origin Information Network and Refworld) were also searched.

¹⁰ UK Home Office 2011, *Zimbabwe: Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 19 August, European Country of Origin Information Network website, p. 147 http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1314789598_zimbabwe-coi-report.pdf - Accessed 26 March

¹¹ RRT Country Advice Service 2010, *Country Advice ZWE36110*, 10 February

¹² US Department of State, *2010 Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, 8 April, p. 54
www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154377.htm – Accessed 11 April 2011. Also see: Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World 2010: Zimbabwe*
http://expression.freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom_in_the_world/2010/zimbabwe - Accessed 26 March 2012

¹³ UNICEF, CASS & The Zimbabwean Government 2010, *A Situational Analysis on the Status of Women’s and Children’s Rights In Zimbabwe 2005-2010: A Call for Reducing Disparities and Improving Equity*, Relief Web, p. 15 website http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ADAAAF5498C907248525785700717288-Full_Report.pdf - Accessed 23 March 2012

¹⁴ The Research and Advocacy Unit is an independent, non-governmental organisation. It aims to provide high quality research for policy change and is a member of the Zimbabwean Human Rights NGO Forum. The RAU consists of research and advocacy experts.

¹⁵ Research and Advocacy Unit 2011, *Politically Motivated Violence against Women in Zimbabwe 2000-2010: A Review of the Public Domain Literature*, August, Kubatana website
http://www.kubatana.net/docs/women/rau_politically_motivated_violence_lit_1108.pdf - Accessed 26 March 2012. For more information on politically motivated violence against women in Zimbabwe, please see: Research and

Domestic violence is also widespread in Zimbabwe. Despite the introduction of the *Domestic Violence Act 2006*, women continue to experience high levels of domestic violence. The limitations of the *Domestic Violence Act* are discussed at Question Two of this response. In 2011 UN Women reported that between 2000 and 2010, 30 per cent of women in Zimbabwe experienced physical violence [and 19 per cent of women experienced sexual violence] by their partner.¹⁶

It is noted, however, that traditional attitudes towards women are changing in Zimbabwe. The abovementioned joint 2010 report by UNICEF, CASS and the Zimbabwean Government states that there is a 'growing movement' in Zimbabwe to address gender inequities and challenge behaviours and attitudes that condone violence against women.¹⁷ Similarly, a joint 2010 report by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Zimbabwean Ministry of Labour and Social Services noted that traditional attitudes towards women are changing, as evidenced by public demands from men and women during the development of the new Zimbabwean constitution, for '50:50 representation in decision-making, education, and employment opportunities.'¹⁸

2. To what extent do the authorities provide protection to young women living alone, particularly in Harare?

No information was found specifically regarding state protection for young women living alone in Harare, or elsewhere in Zimbabwe.¹⁹ Reports were found, however, discussing state protection for women more generally in Zimbabwe. It is noted that most reporting about state protection for Zimbabwean women focuses on domestic violence.

Sources consulted indicate that the Zimbabwean Government lacks political will to address violence against women and that this has resulted in the under-resourcing and underfunding of programs designed to reduce violence against women. In 2012 the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA)²⁰ stated that the effectiveness of the *Domestic Violence Act 2006* has been 'hampered' by a shortage of Government resources:

In particular, the state has not availed the monetary and human resources required for the effective functioning of the Anti Domestic Violence Council [established in 2009 by the Zimbabwean Government to monitor the implementation of the *Domestic*

Advocacy Unit & Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights 2010, *No Hiding Place: Politically Motivated Rape of Women in Zimbabwe*, December, Kubatana website

http://www.kubatana.net/docs/women/rau_zadhr_no_hiding_place_101209.pdf - Accessed 26 March 2012

¹⁶ It is unclear from the report what is meant by the term 'intimidate partner' (i.e. whether it refers only to married couples or if it also includes defacto couples).

UN Women 2011, *2012-2012 Progress of the World's Women: In Pursuit of Justice*, p. 137

<http://progress.unwomen.org/pdfs/EN-Report-Progress.pdf> - Accessed 22 March 2012

¹⁷ UNICEF, CASS & The Zimbabwean Government 2010, *A Situational Analysis on the Status of Women's' and Children's Rights In Zimbabwe 2005-2010: A Call for Reducing Disparities and Improving Equity*, Relief Web, p. 23 - Accessed 23 March 2012

¹⁸ UN Development Programme (UNDP) & The Zimbabwean Ministry of Labour and Social Services 2010, *2010 Millennium Development Goals Status Report Zimbabwe*, UN Development Programme website, p. 19

<http://www.undp.org.zw/images/stories/mdg/mdgreport2010.pdf?3a1ed061a28f8a5e62fd4865066ea7fa=ayuodyv> - Accessed 26 March 2012

¹⁹ Nature of the research conducted included a foreign language search of internet sources. Internal Tribunal databases, the CISNET database and publically available documents on the internet (including the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, European Country of Origin Information Network and Refworld) were also searched.

²⁰ The Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA) consists of women lawyers from public, private and NGO law practices in Zimbabwe. The core functions of the ZWLA include women's rights advocacy, legal education training and legal aid.

Violence Act 2006]... victims of domestic violence have also reported that their efforts to use the Act have been hampered by a chronic shortage of application forms for protection orders, counselling services and shelters for victims.²¹

Similarly, in 2012 CEDAW commented on the lack of shelters for domestic violence victims developed by the Government:

The Committee is again concerned that only one shelter for women victims of violence has been established by the State party in the country (the other two shelters were established by NGOs), and that this is not exclusively for women victims of domestic violence.²²

In 2011 the US Department of State indicated that as a part of an effort to address crimes against women, the Zimbabwean Government has allocated resources to increase awareness about domestic violence. For example, during 2010 the Government ran a public awareness campaign about the *Domestic Violence Act* and several women's rights groups worked with law enforcement officials to provide training and literature on domestic violence.²³

The capacity of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) to protect women against crimes – particularly domestic violence – is undermined in some cases by unwillingness to apply the law and adequately investigate crimes committed against women. In its *2010 Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe* report, the US Department of State reported that the authorities 'generally consider' domestic violence to be a private matter and 'usually' only arrest an offender for assault if there is physical evidence of the abuse.²⁴ According to the abovementioned 2012 ZWLA report, many women surveyed claim that the 'general attitude' of male police officers discourages them from reporting cases of domestic violence.²⁵

Reports were found indicating that the ability of the state to protect women against politically-motivated violence is limited, particularly when the perpetrator is a ZANU-PF member. The abovementioned 2011 US Department of State report indicates that police are unwilling to act on reported rape cases that are associated with political violence.²⁶ In its 2008 report, *Seeking Justice for Zimbabwe*, The Enough Project²⁷ stated that during the last elections in 2008, the police did not intervene in situations where MDC members were attacked, as the police 'are clearly aligned to ZANU-PF.'²⁸ In 2009, Aids-Free World²⁹

²¹ Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association 2012, *Zimbabwe Civil Society's Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee*, January, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights website, p. 31

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/ZCS_Zimbabwe51.pdf - Accessed 22 March 2012

²² Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 2012, *Concluding Observation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Zimbabwe*, 1 March, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights website, p.5 <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-ZWE-CO-2-5.pdf> - Accessed 22 March 2012

²³ US Department of State, *2010 Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, 8 April, pp. 13-14 www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154377.htm – Accessed 11 April 2011

²⁴ US Department of State, *2010 Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, 8 April, p. 55 www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154377.htm – Accessed 11 April 2011

²⁵ Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association 2012, *Zimbabwe Civil Society's Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee*, January, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights website, p. 11 http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/ZCS_Zimbabwe51.pdf - Accessed 22 March 2012

²⁶ US Department of State, *2010 Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, 8 April, p. 54 www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154377.htm – Accessed 11 April 2011

²⁷ The Enough Project is an advocacy group based in Washington DC. The Project consists of policymakers and activists and campaigns against genocide and crimes against humanity.

²⁸ The Enough Project 2008, *Seeking Justice for Zimbabwe: A Case for Accountability Against Robert Mugabe and Others 1981-2008*, July, p. 7 <http://www.enoughproject.org/files/Justice%20for%20Zimbabwe.pdf> - Accessed 23 March 2012

similarly noted that the association between the police and ZANU-PF means that in some instances, police fail to investigate reports of women allegedly raped by ZANU-PF members:

Testimony given to AIDS-Free World further claims that the Zimbabwe police force helped to ensure impunity for the rapes [allegedly committed by ZANU-PF members during the 2008 election]. In every instance, the police failed to adequately respond to the crimes. Of the thirty-one women who attempted to report their rapes to the police, thirteen said that the police either did nothing at all or explicitly refused to write a report. Another five reported that the police took a report but did not investigate the crime in any way. The effect of this is severe for victims: without a police report... a criminal prosecution is impossible.³⁰

In its 2011 report, *Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, the US Department of State provided general information on the effectiveness of Zimbabwean police. According to this report, a lack of training, resources and a culture of impunity undermine the effectiveness of the police force:

[During 2012] the lower ranks of the police were poorly trained and underpaid. The entire force was ill-equipped in both operational and administrative resources. Severely depleted human and material resources, especially fuel, further reduced police effectiveness in both deterring and responding to criminal activity during the year... Security forces were rarely held accountable for abuses... Court orders compelling investigations into allegations of abuse [by security forces] were routinely ignored by authorities. .. Government efforts to reform the security forces were minimal, and training was rarely provided.³¹

²⁹ Aids-Free World is an international advocacy group based in the US, Canada, African, the Caribbean and Europe. Its campaigns include addressing HIV/AIDS, homophobia, sexual violence and women's rights. Aids-Free World is sponsored by Tides Centre: an America non-profit organisation linked to the Tides Foundation, a family of organisations that aim to promote progressivism.

³⁰ Aids-Free World 2009, *Electing to Rape: Sexual Terror in Mugabe's Zimbabwe*, SW Radio Africa website, p. 26 <http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/23919945-Electing-to-Rape-Final.pdf> - Accessed 23 March 2012. Also see: Aids Free World 2009, *Zimbabwe's 2008 Election Featured Systematic Rape*, 10 December <http://www.aidsfreeworld.org/Newsroom/Press-Releases/2009/Zimbabwes-2008-Election-featured-systematic-rape.aspx> - Accessed 23 March 2012

³¹ US Department of State, *2010 Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, 8 April, pp. 13-14 www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154377.htm - Accessed 11 April 2011

Resources

Aids Free World 2009, *Zimbabwe's 2008 Election Featured Systematic Rape*, 10 December <http://www.aidsfreeworld.org/Newsroom/Press-Releases/2009/Zimbabwes-2008-Election-featured-systematic-rape.aspx> - Accessed 23 March 2012

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Chibaya, M. (undated), 'Poverty Fuels Sexual Abuse: Report', *The Standard* <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/component/content/article/71-health-a-fitness/33143-poverty-fuels-sexual-abuse-report.html> - Accessed 22 March 2012

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Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World 2010: Zimbabwe* http://expression.freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom_in_the_world/2010/zimbabwe - Accessed 26 March 2012

Masvingise, W. 2011, 'Stunning Sexual Violence Against Women', *Daily News*, 11 December <http://dailynews.co.zw/index.php/news/34-news/5950-stunning-sexual-violence-against-women.html> - Accessed 22 March 2012

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<http://progress.unwomen.org/pdfs/EN-Report-Progress.pdf> – Accessed 22 March 2012

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http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ADAAAF5498C907248525785700717288-Full_Report.pdf - Accessed 23 March 2012

US Department of State, *2010 Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, 8 April
www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154377.htm – Accessed 11 April 2011

Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association 2012, *Zimbabwe Civil Society's Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee*, January, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights website
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/ZCS_Zimbabwe51.pdf - Accessed 22 March 2012