

ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM

POLITICAL VIOLENCE REPORT

February 2006

28 March 2006

A report by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

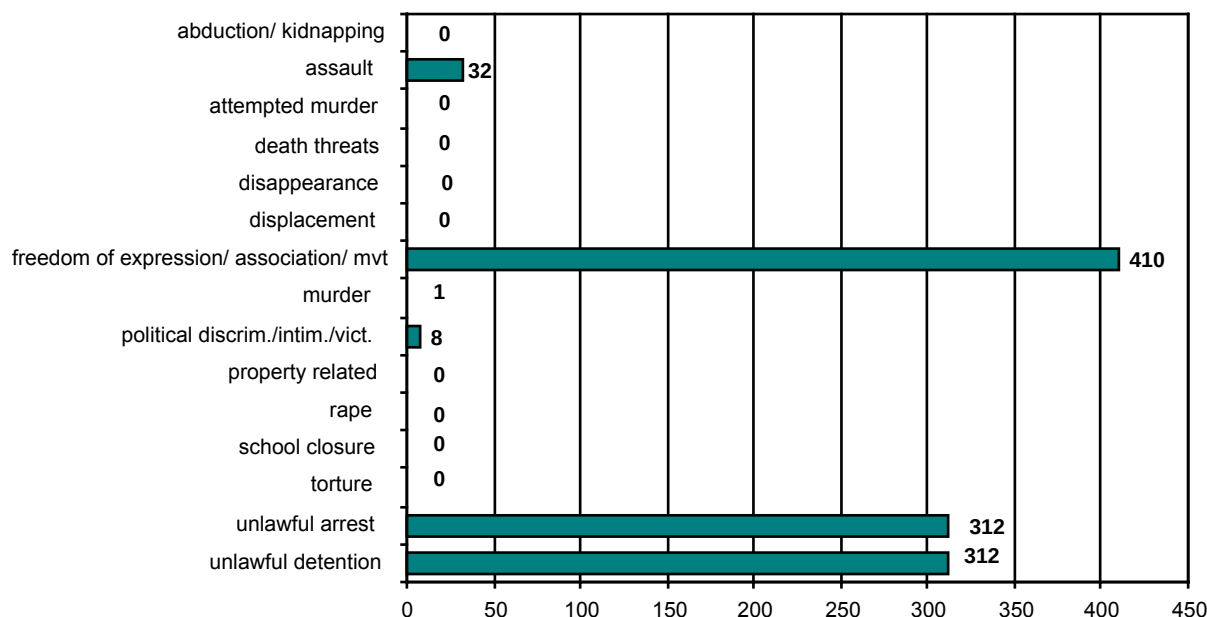
OVERVIEW

The month of February was awash with violations of human rights which included the wrongful death of an infant. The infant was shot by a police officer in Marondera during a scuffle with gamblers and died at Parirenyatwa Hospital two days later. The mother of the infant was also shot in the process. The Human Rights Forum deplores such tragic and unnecessary loss of life, especially in the circumstances outlined.

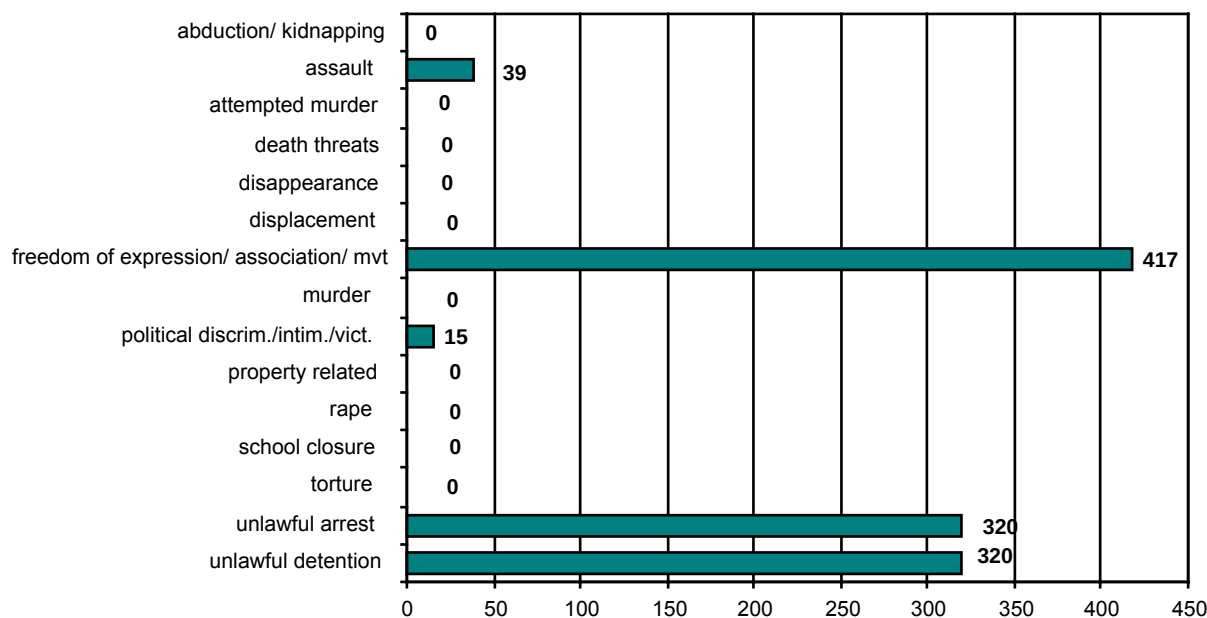
A total of 1070 cases of human rights violations were recorded in the month. Human rights most violated were the freedoms of expression, association and assembly. The sharp increase in violations was due to a number of demonstrations that took place in the month of February. Women from Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) held demonstrations on 13 and 14 February in Bulawayo and Harare respectively. 181 were arrested in Bulawayo and 60 in Harare. Students, mainly from state sponsored tertiary institutions, held several demonstrations across the country over the sharp increase in tuition fees by the government. This resulted in the arrest of several student leaders who were also subjected to assault and unlawful detention. The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) held a demonstration in Harare on 21 February and 43 of its members were arrested. It is with regret that the Forum notes that in all of these demonstrations, the police assaulted some of the demonstrators.

On 5 February, an apparently innocent person was arrested, assaulted and unlawfully detained for five days by members of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). This took place allegedly at the instigation of the wife of a General with the ZNA. The victim was accused of stealing from the company belonging to the wife of this General. He was only released on 10 February after the intervention of a lawyer and when the prosecutor declined to prosecute for lack of evidence. The Forum deplores such abuse of power as a means of settling personal vendettas by people who appear to consider themselves above the law.

Totals: 1 February 2006 – 28 February 2006



Cumulative Totals: 1 January 2006 – 28 February 2006



The graph should be read along with the table depicting the monthly totals of violations from 1 January 2006 to 28 February 2006. The total quantifiable number of victims reported in February 2006 is 500.

Key Abbreviations

AIPPA – Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

PTUZ – Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe

BSA - Broadcasting Services Act

UMP – Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe

CIO – Central Intelligence Organisation	ZANU PF – Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
MDC – Movement for Democratic Change	ZCTU – Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
MP – Member of Parliament	ZNA – Zimbabwe National Army
ZPS – Zimbabwe Prison Service	ZRP – Zimbabwe Republic Police
NAGG - National Alliance for Good Governance	ZNLWVA – Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association
NCA – National Constitutional Assembly	ZIMTA – Zimbabwe Teachers Association
OVT – Organised Violence and Torture	ZUPCO – Zimbabwe United Passenger Company
POSA – Public Order and Security Act	

Sources: The information contained in this report is derived from statements made to the Public Interest Unit of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, statements taken by a network of human rights activists and newspaper reports,

Notes to the tables:

Torture:

All cases of torture fall under the definition of torture according to the general definition given in the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment.

The four elements of torture are:

- 1 **Severe** pain and suffering, whether physical or mental
- 2 **Intentionally** inflicted
- 3 With a **purpose**
- 4 By a state official or another individual acting with the **acquiescence of the state**.

Those individuals referred to in point # 4 include the ZRP, ZNA, ZPS and the ZNLWVA (as a reserve force of the ZNA) and by any other grouping when directly sanctioned by the state.

Unlawful arrest and detention:

Arrest by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) with no reasonable suspicion that an offence has been committed. Detention thereafter for a period exceeding 48 hours without access to redress through the courts or subsequent release without charge.

Abduction/kidnapping:

A kidnapping by a member(s) of an organised group that is not the ZRP, political party, ZNLWVA, ZNA, MDC, Zanu PF etc

Disappearance:

Kidnapped persons whose whereabouts remained unknown at the time of reporting. Their whereabouts have still to be ascertained through follow up reports or further investigation.

Property related

These are incidents in which property rights have been violated. This includes arson, property damage and destruction and theft.

Cases of Political Violence

Note: *The identities of victims whose names have not been published in the press and are not public officials are protected. This is done in order to protect the victim from further violence, intimidation and possible recriminatory attacks.*

The purpose of this report is to record the nature of the politically motivated violence and intimidation that continues to prevail in the country. The Monthly Political Violence Reports are primarily based on victims' accounts, accompanied by medical evidence where possible, obtained from member organisations of the Human Rights Forum and other partner organisations. Use is also made of press reports on politically motivated violence. The Monthly Political Violence Report cannot therefore be considered as the exhaustive record of all incidents of politically-motivated violence in Zimbabwe in the period under review. Nevertheless, every incident reported to the Human Rights Forum directly or through its members is meticulously documented and included in the reports. Care is also taken to record the incidents in the language in which they were reported to the Forum.

The situation prevailing in the country is such that it has not been possible to verify all of these accounts. The Human Rights Forum has done what it can to verify the reports, and is satisfied that the vast majority of them are substantially true. It is also not possible to rule out whether a victim's account is exaggerated or contains inaccuracies.

All reports derived from the press are denoted with the symbol Σ .

BULAWAYO

Bulawayo North-East

13 February 2006

One hundred and eighty one (181) human rights defenders, under the banner of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), Bulawayo were arrested in Central Bulawayo as they were dispersing from a peaceful protest. The detainees were charged with violating section 24 of the Public Order and Security Act for participating in an unsanctioned procession, which charges they deny. Those arrested were exposed to heavy rains and the harsh elements as they were detained in the open police courtyard at Bulawayo Central Police Station for several hours before being moved to cells at around 22:30hrs. Among those who were incarcerated were fourteen infants. It is alleged that the first five arrestees who were picked up at Causeway Post office were taken to Central Police Station and subsequently assaulted.

15 February 2006

Two hundred students from three Bulawayo colleges, including NUST, Bulawayo Polytechnic and United College of Education were briefly detained when they engaged in a protest with government security against tuition fee hikes by the government. After some screening the police remained with 21 who were charged with malicious injury to property and public violence.

HARARE

14 February 2006

Over twenty uniformed police, armed with baton sticks, and some sporting full riot gear, arrested sixty women from WOZA as they had gathered in the city centre as part of a peaceful protest against social

and economic injustice facing women in Zimbabwe today. The women were rounded up and loaded into trucks marked "City of Harare Municipal Police" to be taken to the Law and Order section at Harare Central Police Station. A public interest lawyer from a human rights organization who attended to the distress call, was harassed, verbally abused and finally arrested and bundled into the truck with his clients. Amongst those detained was a considerable number of elderly women, as well as a young child of around 4 years of age. It is reported that thirty of the women were beaten with open palms on the back and made to take off their shoes and hit on the soles of their feet with boots. The women who were arrested were made to stand from 2pm to 10pm and forced to sit in the sun and forbidden to use the toilets or drink water as the policemen reportedly said it was better to let prostitutes and vendors use the facilities and not WOZA detainees. The police on duty also denied the women food remarking that they were in a war and therefore should not eat; as a result many fainted from of hunger. It is further alleged that one of the cells had to accommodate 38 women including those with children and they were forced to stand all night long. Some of the women were unable to take medication such as ARV's because they had no food.

21 February 2006

Forty-three demonstrators were arrested when they tried to march to President Robert Mugabe's offices on his birthday to demand a new Constitution. The 43, all members of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), were taken to Harare Central Police Station where they were detained. It is reported that all but one were women. It is alleged that some of the demonstrators were assaulted by the police.

23 February 2006

A director with a non-governmental organization was harassed by officers of the Law and Order Section of the when they visited her at her offices. Prior to this visit by the police, an article had appeared in a local daily newspaper implicating her as one of the co-authors of the Operation *Murambatsvina* report by Anna Tibaijuka. The report was viewed as damning and damaging to the country by the government. On the basis of this information, it is appears that police officers visited the victim to question her further on the allegations arising from the article and that they also questioned her on her work and the organisation's funders. She was able to ascertain her right to silence and privacy through the intervention of her lawyers, with which she reported the police left her offices to apparently seek clarification from the source of the article.

Harare North

27 February 2006

Six University of Zimbabwe students were arrested after they attempted to peacefully meet with the Vice-Chancellor to address concerns pertaining to fees and other conditions at the institution. It is alleged that at the University two security guards assaulted the students with clenched fists resulting in injuries, one student being injured on the eye whilst another on the ear. One of the victims claims that he had his jacket torn and ZW\$ 6million stolen from him by unidentified security officers. Lawyers tried

to secure the release of these students who had not been formally charged nor had any charge preferred against them at the time of their arrest. The police are alleged to have misinformed the lawyers that they were taking the students from Harare Central Police Station to the UZ but they instead they took them to the condemned Matapi Holding Cells in Mbare, where the students spent the night. Those who were in need of medical treatment for injuries were reportedly denied access at the Central Police Station by the Officer Commanding Law and Order and the Officer Commanding Harare Suburban District who also refused to disclose the charge preferred against the students. It is further alleged that at Matapi Cells, the Officer in Charge, also refused the students medical treatment claiming that in using his police discretion he saw no need for urgent medical attention.

Harare South

08 February 2006

Six residents of Hopley Farm were reportedly attacked by a group of about fifteen men. The victims allege that on the date in question, a group of men came during the night to their different shelters at Hopley Farm and burst their doors open. The victims were assaulted with booted feet allegedly because they had agreed to be interviewed by researchers conducting a research on the effects of Operation *Murambatsvina*. Further allegations are that the manner of food distribution at the camp had something to do with these assaults. The victims claim that the previous month i.e January, when certain officials from a non-governmental organisation came to distribute food, they informed them about the corruption of a Social Welfare Officer at the camp who they maintain was giving food in exchange for sex. The officials invited them to lodge an official report, which they did. On return to Hopley farm, the victims discovered that the Social Welfare Officer was issuing threats to cause them to disappear. They confronted him and he denied the allegations. It turned out that only those who had made the complaint were assaulted on the date in question.

Hatfield

01February 2006

On the day in question, the victim was conducting research on the effects of Operation *Murambatsvina* in Epworth when she was allegedly apprehended by suspected members of the War Veterans Association. The victim reports that she was taken to the ZANU (PF) District Coordinating Chairman who was quick to voice his agitation at the fact that interviews were being carried out with a view to suing 'their government' and that this would not be allowed. The victim alleges that she was told that she would be taken to the District Administrator's Office to explain herself and also that she would be expected to disclose the identity and whereabouts of the other members of her team. It is reported that the DA was however absent, and her teammates were not nearby. She was then taken to the Epworth Police Station where it emerged that an officer wanted to know the names of all those who would be interviewed so that he would vet them to see if they needed assistance.

Mufakose

05 February 2006

A male victim endured unlawful arrest, detention and assault from 5 to 10 February on the pretext that he had stolen some money from the company where he worked. It is alleged that all this took place upon the instigation of the wife of a General with the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). The victim alleges that on 5 February whilst he was relaxing at home with his family, he saw a vehicle, which he positively identified as belonging to the wife of the Army General, approaching his house. It is alleged that some members of the ZNA disembarked from the vehicle and confronted him. He reports that the soldiers accused him of leaving Msasa Park where the company premises, from which he is alleged to have stolen the money, are situated and started assaulting him all over his body with booted feet and clenched fists. The assailants allegedly took a cooking stick and administered some assaults under his feet. It is also alleged that all of his family members were assaulted. After the assaults, the victim reports that he was bundled into the back of a truck and taken to Msasa Park. All this happened when it was raining heavily thereby exposing the victim to the rain all the way to Msasa Park. Further assaults are said to have taken place whilst at a certain house in Msasa Drive. Thereafter, the victim was taken to Msasa Park Police Station by the assailants. It is reported that the police officer indicated to the assailants that the victim had not committed any offence but the assailants are said to have threatened the officer stating that it was the Army General's instruction that the victim be detained overnight. On 6 February, the victim states that he was taken out of the cell but remained at the Police Station. For the whole day he was not given anything to eat or drink. The victim claims that he was later taken to a building in town where he was insulted and accused of stealing 522 million dollars. He was then taken to Harare Central Police Station where he was detained overnight. On 7 February, the victim reports that he was taken to Shamva to a farm belonging to the wife of the Army General. It is reported that after in-depth internal inquiries there was no proof of a fraud having taken place and that the charge was malicious, false and unfounded. Another charge of stealing 8 million dollars was introduced. On 8 February, the victim reports that he was taken to Murehwa Magistrates Court. At the Court, it is reported that the area Public Prosecutor declined to prosecute on the basis of lack of evidence and ordered the release of the victim. However, despite this instruction from the Public Prosecutor, the victim was detained on 8 and 9 February. He was only released on 10 February at around 1500 hrs after the intervention of a lawyer.

MASHONALAND EAST

Marondera East

15 February 2006

Σ. A senior police officer is reported to have fired shots which seriously injured a seven-month old baby, its mother and another person in Marondera during a scuffle with suspected gamblers. The baby is reported to have been strapped on to its mothers back. It is also reported that the bullet went through the woman's abdomen and injured the baby in the stomach. Another shot fired reportedly hit one of the suspected gamblers in the head. Reports are that the police officer who was in civilian clothes was patrolling Dombotombo suburb when he was requested by the public to intervene and stop a fight at Rusike Hostel. The policeman allegedly saw a group of people gambling and told them that they were under arrest for betting illegally. One of the suspected gamblers apparently challenged

the inspector and the exchange of words degenerated into a fight. It is further reported that as they wrestled, the inspector allegedly withdrew his service pistol and shot the man in the head. A second shot hit the woman and her child. Subsequent reports indicate that the child later died at Parirenyatwa Hospital on 17 February.

MASVINGO

Masvingo Central

21February 2006

Three ZINASU leaders and eight students were briefly detained by the police and were harassed. One of the student leaders is reported to have received treatment in Masvingo for a fractured leg, an injury sustained when the police attempted to arrest him. The students who had boycotted classes that day, gathered outside the office of the Principal. There was heavy police presence as the students attempted to demonstrate against the massive hike in tuition fees.

Full alphabetical list of reported deaths related to political violence 1 January 2006 to 28 February 2006 recorded indicating name, political affiliation, date of death, constituency and province.

TOTAL: 0

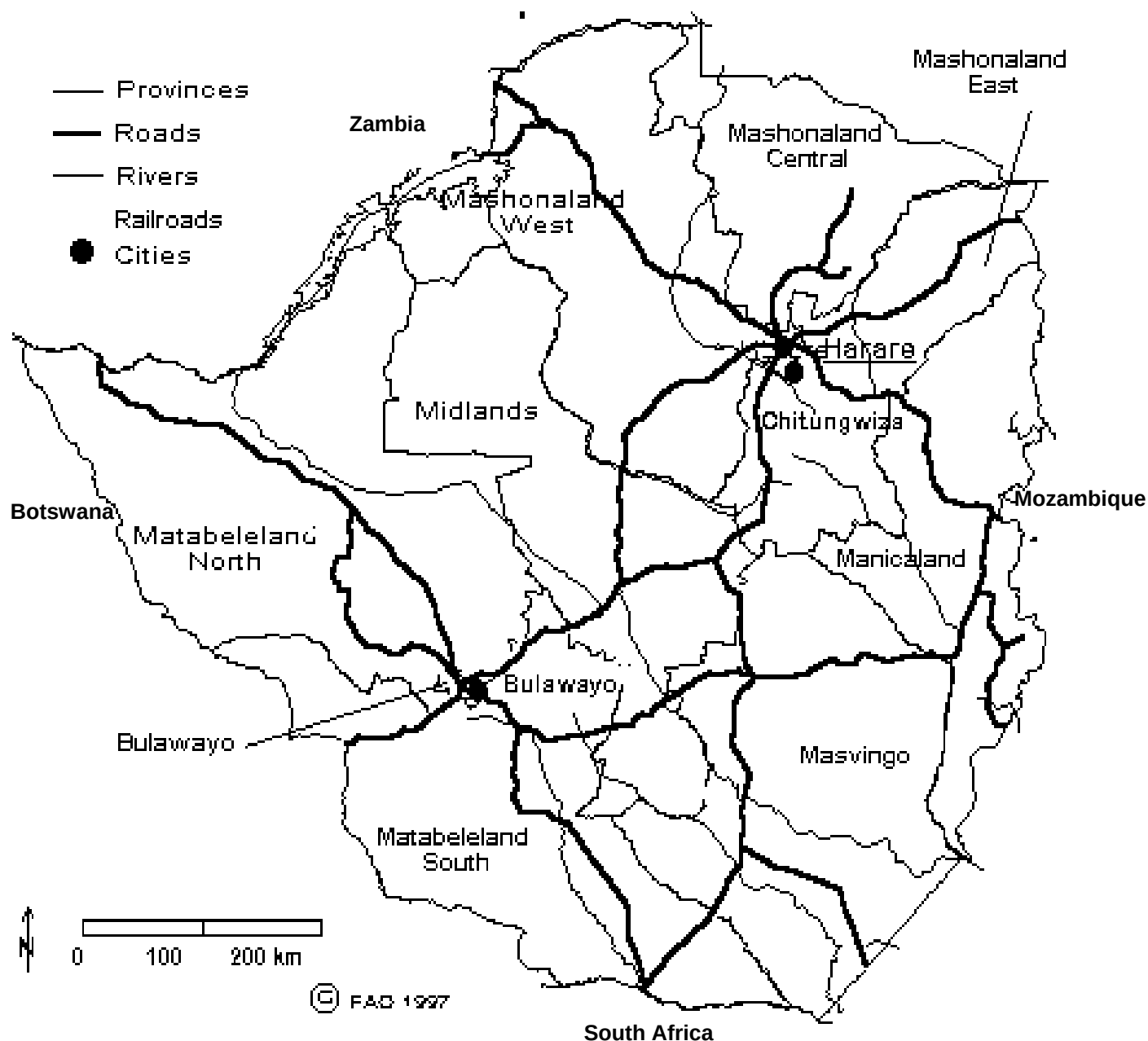
	MAIN EVENTS 2006
January	- Voice Of the People (VOP) Board of Trustees continue to be victimized by the police under the accusations of breaching the Broadcasting Services Act and in the process 2 employees of one Board member are arrested and detained without charges being preferred against them
February	- WOZA women hold demonstrations on 13 and 14 February in Bulawayo and Harare on the deteriorating state of the economy. - Students mostly from state tertiary institutions hold demonstrations over the increases in tuition fees. - NCA demonstrate for a new constitution on the birthday of the President viz 21st February. - President's birthday celebrations are held in Mutare on 25 February. - The MDC pro-senate faction holds its National Congress in Bulawayo.

The table below and the graphs on page 3 above depict the number of violations committed on the persons whose circumstances are described in the report. One individual may have been subjected to many violations and thus appear under several categories of violations.

Monthly totals of human rights violations from 1 January 2006 to 28 February 2006

	January	February
Assault	7	32
Abduction/ kidnapping	0	0
Attempted murder	0	0
Death threats	0	0
Disappearance	0	0
Displacement	0	0
Freedom of expression/ass/mvt	7	410
Murder	0	0
Political Discrim/vict/intim	7	8
Property related	0	0
Rape	0	0
School closure	0	0
Torture	3	0
Unlawful arrest	8	312
Unlawful detention	8	312

ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF ZIMBABWE



The **Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum** (also known as the “Human Rights Forum”) is a coalition comprising 17 member organisations. It has been in existence since January 1998 when non-Governmental organisations working in the field of human rights joined together to provide legal and psychosocial 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 inter-human 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 well-being.”

The Human Rights Forum operates a Research and Documentation Unit and offers legal services through the Public Interest Unit of the Legal Resources Foundation (formerly the Legal Unit of the ZHRF.)

Core member organisations of the Human Rights Forum are:

- Amani Trust (AT)
- Amnesty International (Zimbabwe) (AI (Z))
- Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)
- Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ)
- Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa (SAHRIT)
- Legal Resources Foundation (LRF)
- Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ)
- Nonviolent Action and Strategies for Social Change (NOVASC)
- Transparency International (Zimbabwe) (TI (Z))
- Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of the Offender (ZACRO)
- Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR)
- Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET)
- Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights)
- Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR)
- Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP)
- Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA)

The Human Rights Forum can be contacted through:

The Administrator, P O Box 9077, Harare – email: admin@hrforum.co.zw

The Public Interest Unit, P O Box 9077, Harare – email: legal@hrforum.co.zw

The Research Unit, P O Box 9077, Harare – email: research@hrforum.co.zw

Address: 8th Floor Bluebridge North, Eastgate, Harare; Telephone: 250511 - Fax: 250494

The International Liaison Office, 56- 64 Leonard Street London EC 2A 4JX– email: IntlO@hrforumzim.com
Telephone+44-20-7065-0945

Website: www.hrforumzim.com

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