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Political Violence Report 1-31 December 2003

Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

January 16, 2003

Overview

ZANU PF youths are said to have continued to offer food in exchange for ZANU PF membership. In the Highfield constituency, party officials at distribution points were allegedly seen holding lists of names of ZANU PF members, and of those on the lists, only those with party cards had access to maize. Those who were not on the lists were ignored. Similarly, in the month of November, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum documented incidents that suggested that, in the absence of a pending election, ZANU PF was controlling access to food aid, denying those perceived to be MDC supporters access¹. Political discrimination along party lines has thus continued in the month of December and this is despite repeated government denials that it is not politicising the distribution of food.²

War veterans and ZANU PF youths are purported to be intimidating civilians, assaulting them and forcing them to attend rallies in an effort to retain support. In Mbare West, Chamunorwa, Kanyoka and Tanhira, MDC supporters claim that the youths assaulted them with sticks, electric cables, small whips and other weapons, and then force-marched them to ZANU PF offices in the area. This was seen as a way of punishing the victims for not being at a ZANU PF rally that was held in the area. In a related incident, about forty ZANU PF supporters are said to have damaged property at Francis Dhlakama's offices, after accusing him of usurping the powers of the Mayor by insulting the ZANU PF deputy Mayor of the city, Onias Mariyapera. Dhlakama is the MDC Executive Mayor for Chegutu. In UMP, Takawira Chipunza, an MDC supporter, claims that Godfrey Chikono, Bigboy Muroza, Shepard Mushamba and other war veterans assaulted him all over the body with sticks, chains and booted feet. He suspects that he was assaulted owing to his political affiliation.

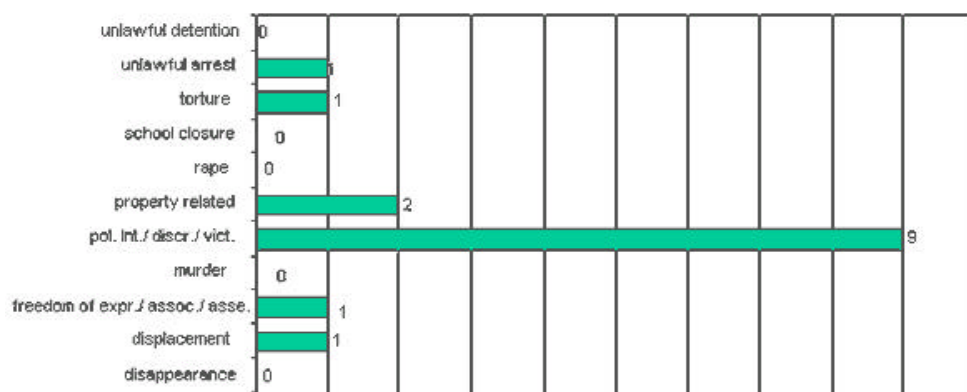
War veterans have reportedly continued their wave of farm evictions and property destructions. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum documented an incident indicating that, Joseph Mwale, a CIO official and other police officers, are said to have raided Charleswood farm owned by Roy Bennet, MDC MP for Chimanimani, rounded up everyone, and ordered all the farm workers to stop work and leave the farm immediately.

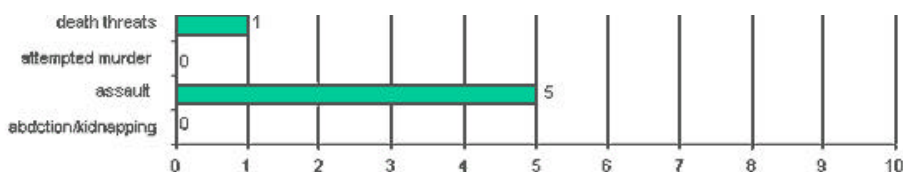
Two arms of the state, the ZRP and ZNA, have reportedly been accused by some residents of Mudzi of being discriminative, intimidatory and of disturbing the peace enjoyed in the area. Villagers claim that the soldiers, sent by the government to ostensibly tighten the control and distribution of the food to the residents, have disturbed the peace in the area and the smooth flow of grain distribution by confiscating the grain. In another incident, ZCTU officials suffered political intimidation at the hands of police officers, as they claim that riot police assaulted them while holding a meeting at Gorlon Building in Harare, on allegations that the meeting was politically motivated and illegal. However, the ZCTU members claim that the meeting was merely for consultation with teachers from across the country, clamouring for action to protect their interests.

MDC MP for Seke, Ben Tumbare-Mutasa, claims that police in Dema called him, harassed him and ordered him to stop a rally he intended to hold in the area despite having received a letter from Superintendent Chisoro on behalf of the officer commanding Marondera district, granting him permission to go ahead with the public meeting.

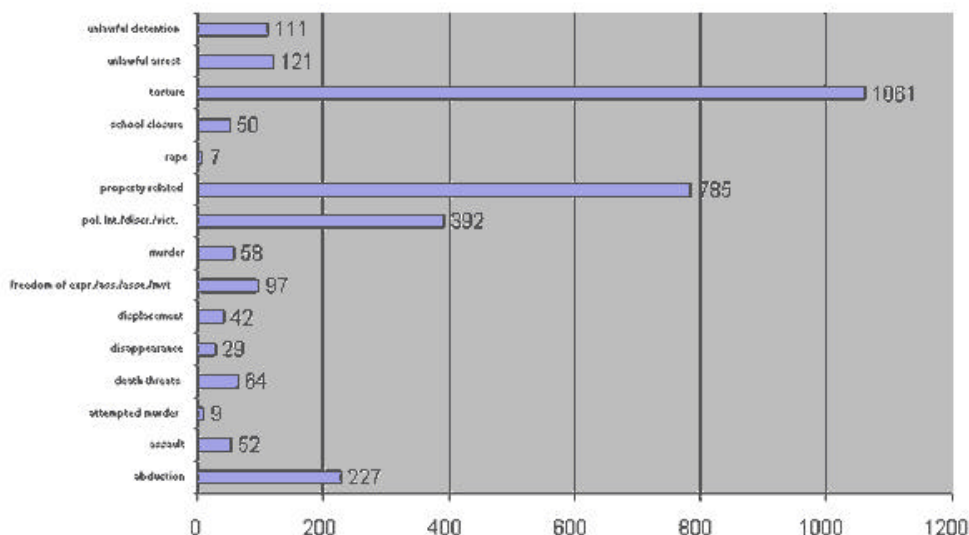
Overall, although slight statistical decreases in violence and torture are apparent, we would like to note that due to the festive season holidays, the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum was not able to document many incidents of political violence. This was because most of our partner NGOs, which form part of our source of information, were closed for the holidays. This therefore implies that, since all the cases included in this report are extracted from the press, the decrease in statistics for the month of December may reflect a lack of input from our normal source of information, rather than a decline in the types of political violence.

Totals 1 to 31 December 2003





Cumulative Totals 1 January 2002 – 31 December 2002



Sources: The information contained in the monthly violence reports is derived from statements made to the Legal Unit of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, CFU reports, newspaper reports, and statements taken by the member organisations of the Human Rights Forum.

However for this issue, information has been extracted from press reports only.

Note 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 organisation. 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.

Key Abbreviations

CIO - Central Intelligence Organisation

MDC - Movement for Democratic Change

MP - Member of Parliament

NCA - National Constitutional Assembly

UMP - Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe

ZNLWVA - Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association

ZNA - Zimbabwe National Army

ZRP - Zimbabwe Republic Police

Zanu PF - Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

1 Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum November 2002 report, page 2

2 The Daily News, 6 December 2002, page 2

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