

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Zimbabwe: Calls for investigation into killing of activist and release of peaceful protestors**

Amnesty International today demanded an immediate investigation into the killing of Gift Tandare, a Zimbabwean activist shot dead by riot police yesterday at a demonstration in Harare.

The organization also expressed serious concern for the welfare of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leaders Morgan Tsvangirai, currently in detention at Borrowdale Police Station, and Arthur Mutambara, detained at Avondale Police Station. Both have been severely beaten while in police custody.

Other leaders, including Tendai Biti, the Secretary General of the Tsvangirai-led MDC; Grace Kwinje, the Party's Deputy Secretary for International Relations; and Nelson Chamisa, spokesperson for the MDC, have also sustained severe injuries while in police custody. Grace Kwinje is reported to have lost part of her ear as a result of the beatings.

Amnesty International called for all detainees who engaged in non-violent protest to be released immediately.

"We are calling on the Zimbabwean government to immediately release all those arrested for peaceful protests," said Kolawole Olaniyan, Director of Amnesty International's Africa Programme. "The killing of Gift Tandare must be investigated immediately and the perpetrators brought to justice. The government must also guarantee the safety and well-being of all those in police custody. All detainees should be given immediate access to their lawyers and medical care."

The killing of Gift Tandare took place during a protest against a police ban on all peaceful demonstrations in Harare's low income suburb of Highfield. The demonstration was organised by the Save Zimbabwe Campaign.

Lovemore Madhuku, chairperson of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), is in detention at Malborough Police Station and has also been severely beaten while in police custody. He reportedly has a broken hand and head injuries, for which he has received medical care.

Several protestors are reported to have sustained injuries following excessive use of force by riot police, who were attempting to disperse the demonstrators. Amnesty International fears that those in police custody may be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment by police.

According to reports, over 50 people were arrested at the demonstration and remain in detention.

The state media has also reported that three policemen also sustained injuries while dispersing the protestors.

Lawyers have been denied access to all those in detention except for Lovemore Madhuku and Grace Kwinge.

The organization added that those arrested for engaging in violent protest should be guaranteed a fair trial.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned by the severe restrictions of freedom of expression, assembly and association following the blanket ban on rallies and demonstrations from 20 February to 20 May 2007.

Under Section 27 of the Public Order and Security Act, which is being cited by police to implement the three-month ban, public demonstrations can only be prohibited for a specified period 'not exceeding one month'.

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566  
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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