

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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A Joint Appeal to African Leaders to address the human rights situation in Zimbabwe

Through the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) African Heads of State and Government have made a commitment to human rights and accountability in Africa. We are calling on African leaders to honour these commitments and end their long silence on human rights violations in Zimbabwe.

Today in Zimbabwe, hundreds of thousands of people are internally displaced and destitute, not because of a war, an earthquake or a tsunami, but because their own government has forcibly evicted them, demolished their homes, and destroyed their property and their livelihoods. These acts, totally unjustifiable under international law, have been widely condemned. However, African States have remained conspicuously silent and have not demonstrated the political will to respond to the human rights crisis in Zimbabwe.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Kofi Annan, has described Zimbabwe's mass evictions as "*a catastrophic injustice...carried out with disquieting indifference to human suffering*".

UN Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issues, Anna Tibaijuka, has reported that the government's Operation Murambatsvina directly affected 700,000 people, indirectly affected at least a further 2 million people and "*has precipitated a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions*".

Human rights are being further violated in the context of the humanitarian crisis. There is considerable evidence that the Government of Zimbabwe is unable or unwilling to ensure that those affected have access, at the very least, to minimum essential levels of food, water, shelter and medical care. It is denying victims the humanitarian help they so desperately need:

Thousands of people, including children, the ill and the elderly, are facing the rainy season with little or no shelter. The government is not providing basic shelter for those in need, and it is blocking the UN and churches from doing so; police have forced destitute people from churches at night.

More than four million people need food aid, but the government is limiting food aid distribution, having also blocked a UN appeal for humanitarian aid and forced tens of thousands to return to rural areas where food security is already low.

Tens of thousands need clean water and sanitation, but the government is restricting the work of aid agencies that are trying to assist.

Despite the already grave humanitarian and internal displacement crisis the government has continued to evict people; some families have been forcibly evicted and moved several times in the

past few months.

Zimbabwe's consistent failure to respect human rights has been well documented, including in reports published in 2005 by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issues. In the face of such clear, well-documented and large-scale violations, member States of the AU and UN have a duty to ensure that the recommendations of such regional and international problem-solving mechanisms are implemented in order to address the present deprivation of African citizens and deter such harmful practices in the future.

The silence of African States in the face of the grave suffering caused by forced evictions, in Zimbabwe and elsewhere on the continent, has created the regrettable impression of tacit approval of forced evictions as a policy option.

Today, we call on African States, individually and in their capacity as members of the AU, to:

Publicly express concern about the deteriorating human rights situation in Zimbabwe, including the human rights violations that have been a direct consequence of Operation Murambatsvina;

Publicly encourage and offer support to the Government of Zimbabwe to implement the recommendations contained in the reports of the ACHPR and the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issues, as a matter of urgency;

Place the human rights and humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe on the agenda of the AU January 2006 Assembly of Heads of State and Government;

Condemn the refusal of the Government of Zimbabwe to cooperate with the Special Envoy of the African Union Commission when he visited Zimbabwe in July 2005 and insist that he be allowed to return to Zimbabwe, fulfil his mandate and report to the AU on the situation of internally displaced people in Zimbabwe;

Call for the immediate lifting of all unnecessary restrictions on the provision of humanitarian assistance, including restrictions on the provision of temporary shelter.

Call for the provision of effective remedies for the victims of the mass evictions and demolitions and all other human rights violations, including access to justice, reparations, guarantees of non-repetition, compensation and restitution where possible;

Call for an end to impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations in Zimbabwe and for those responsible to be brought to justice;

Pledge to seek alternatives to forced eviction in their own jurisdiction.

We also call on African States as members of the UN to:

Give full support to the UN initiatives aimed at addressing the human rights and humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe and to put pressure on the government to allow independent human rights monitoring in Zimbabwe, including UN Special Rapporteurs.

In particular, we call on African members of the UN Security Council (Algeria, Benin and Tanzania) and those States that will become members in January 2006 (Ghana and Republic of the Congo) to allow the Security Council to be regularly informed on the situation in Zimbabwe, including the situation in respect of the UN's humanitarian access to displaced and vulnerable people.

Supporting organizations:

ANGOLA

Associação Justica, Páze Democracia (AJPD)

BOTSWANA

Amnesty International - Botswana

Ditshwanelo (The Botswana Centre for Human Rights)

Women in Law in Southern Africa - Botswana

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Association Africaine de défense des Droits de l'Homme (ASADHO)
Collectif des Jeunes du Sud-Kivu (COJESKI)
Comité Droits de l'Homme Maintenant
Fondation Bill Clinton
La Voix des Sans Voix
Ligue des Electeurs
Mouvement des jeunes et Etudiants pour la Patrie
Observatoire Congolais des Droits de l'Homme (OCDH)
Réseau Provincial de Défense des Droits Humains-Kin (REPRODHOC)
SADC-Youth Movement
Toges Noires

EGYPT

Afro- Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO)
The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights

ETHIOPIA

Initiative Africa (IA)

ERITREA

Human Rights Concern

GHANA

African Women Lawyers Association
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (Africa)
Media Foundation for West Africa
People's Dialogue for Human Settlements
The Arc Foundation

KENYA

Amnesty International - Kenya
Association of Media Women in Kenya
Basic Rights
Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Change
Hakijimii Trust
Independent Medical Legal Unit
FIDA Kenya
Kenya Medical Association Human Rights Committee
Kisumu Urban Apostolate Programmes - Pandipieri
Men to Men
Men for Gender Equality
OIKEDOME
People Against Torture
Release Political Prisoners Group
Social Reform Centre
Umande Trust
Young Women Leadership Institute

LESOTHO

Federation of Women Lawyers
Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA)
Lesotho Clothing and Allied Workers Union
Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations
Lesotho Durham Link

Lesotho Society for mentally Handicapped Persons
Lesotho Youth Federation
Media Institute of Southern Africa - Lesotho
NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Children
Women in Law in Southern Africa - Lesotho
Young Women Christian Association

LIBERIA

Amnesty International - Liberia

MALAWI

Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR)
Civil Liberties Committee
Institute of Policy Interaction (IPI)
National Media Institute of Southern Africa (NAMISA)
Women in Law in Southern Africa - Malawi

MOZAMBIQUE

Women in Law in Southern Africa - Mozambique

NAMIBIA

Association for Children with Language, Speech & Hearing Impairments (ClaSH) of Namibia
Big Issue Namibia
Clement Daniels Legal Practitioners
Katutura Community Radio 106.2 FM
Legal Assistance Centre of Namibia
Namibia Development Trust
Namibia NGO Forum
!Nara Training Centre
National Society for Human Rights (NSHR)
People's Education, Assistance and Counselling for Empowerment (PEACE) Centre
Sister Namibia
The Rainbow Project
Women Leadership Centre of Namibia

NIGERIA

Civil Resources Development & Documentation Centre (CIRRDOC)
Concerned Professionals (CP)
Gender Development Action (GADA)
Legal Defence and Assistance Project (LEDAP)
Prisoners Rehabilitation & Welfare Action (PRAWA)
Projekthope
Women Advocates Research & Documentation Centre (WARDC)

SENEGAL

Amnesty International - Senegal
Convergence Africaine pour la Democratie et les Droits Humanins (CADDU)

SOMALIA

Justice Watch Association (JUWA)
National Union of Somali Journalists
SADO
Somali Human Rights Defenders Network

SOMALILAND

Samotalis Coalition for Human Rights
Somaliland National Human Rights Network

SOUTH AFRICA

Action Support Centre
Action Support Centre and Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA)
Amnesty International - South Africa (AISA)
Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa (ACT-Southern Africa)
Association for Community and Rural Advancement (AnCRA)
Association of Rural Advancement (AFRA)
Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)
Centre for Rural Legal Studies (CRLS)
Coalition for Peace in Africa
Community Law Centre
Crisis Coalition Zimbabwe
Eastern Cape Agricultural Research Programme (ECARP)
Free State Rural Development Association
Heal Zimbabwe Trust
Karoo Centre for Human Rights
Land Access Movement of South Africa
Land for Peace
Lawyers for Human Rights - Stellenbosch Office
Legal Assistance Centre
National Land Committee (NLC)
Nkunzi Development Association
Peace and Democracy Project
Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) - University of Western Cape
Rural Legal Trust (RLT)
South Africa National NGO Coalition (SANGOCO)
Support Centre - ACTION for Conflict Transformation
Southern Cape Land Committee
Solidarity Peace Trust (SPT)
Southern African Women's Institute of Migration Affairs
Southern Africa Litigation Centre
TRAC Mupumalanga
Transkei Land Services Organisation
Treatment Action Campaign
Women on Farm Project
Zimbabwe Action Support Group
Zimbabwe Advocacy Campaign (ZAC)
Zimbabwe Exiles Forum
Zimbabwe Human Rights Lobby Group
Zimbabwe Political Victims Association (ZIPOVA)
Zimbabwe Torture Victims Project (ZTVP)

SUDAN

SIHA Network

SWAZILAND

Coordinating Assembly of NGOs (CANGO)
Women in Law in Southern Africa - Swaziland

TANZANIA

BEB Rural Development Option
Grassroot Initiative Support Trust
Media Institute of Southern Africa - Tanzania
Same Network of NGO/CBOs
Tabora Development Foundation Trust
Tabora Development Society
Tanzania Christian Farm Development Trust

ZAMBIA

Anti Voters Apathy (AVAP)
Catholic Centre for Justice Development and Peace (CCJDP)
Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
Children in Need (CHIN)
Foundation for Democratic Progress (FODEP)
Justice for Widow and Orphans
Legal Resources Foundation (LRF)
Southern African Centre for Conflict Resolution and Disputes
Women in Law in Southern Africa - Zambia
Women for Change
Zambia Association for Research and Development (ZARD)
Zambia Civic Education Association

ZIMBABWE

Counselling Services Unit
Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ)
Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa (SAHRIT)
Legal Resources Foundation (LRF)
Media Institute of Southern Africa
Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe
Nonviolent Action and Strategies for Social Change
Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ)
University of Zimbabwe Legal Aid and Advice Scheme
Women in Law in Southern Africa - Zimbabwe
Women of Zimbabwe Arize (WOZA)
Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation (ZACRO)
Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights
Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET)
Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights)
Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
Zimbabwe Peace Project

INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International
Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE)
Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR)
CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation
Cordaid
FIAN International
Habitat International Coalition – Housing and Land Rights Network
Human Rights Watch (HRW)
International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute
Network for Social Justice (FAHAMU)

Trocaire

Endorsed by NGOs in Asia, Europe and Americas

Amnesty International – India

A'idun Group

Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ)

Arcilla Research

Asociación Agenda Mujeres, Lima-Perú

Asociación de la Vivienda Económica (AVE)

Asia Pacific Socio-Economic Research Institute

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law & Development (APWLD)

Associação De Moradores Do Jardim Nova Esperança I E li - Sumaré/Sp – Brasil

Associação Grão - Diversidade e Cidadania

Association for Youth and Cultural Organisation

Barka Foundation for Mutual Help

C.D.D.H – Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos, Brazil

Centre for Trade Union & Workers Services (CTWC)

Centro de Direitos Humanos de T.Otoni

Centro de Direitos Humanos, Brazil

Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales/Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS), Argentina

Centro de Estudos e Ação da Mulher Urbana e Rural - Brasil

Centro de Estudos e Defesa do Negro no Pará – CEDENPA

Charter on Poverty Issues (Canada)

Comité de Campaña por una vivienda Digna

Concordamos e assinamos esta Declaração Conjunta, Brazil

Condepe Conselho Estadual de Defesa dos Direitos da Pessoa Humana, Brazil

Corporación Humanas de Chile

Curitiba – Brasil

D.D.H – Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos, Brazil

Educational Assistance Organs Federation

Ensan Center for Democracy and Human Rights (Palestine)

Entidade APJ - Aprender Produzir Juntos

European Roma Rights Centre , Hungary

Faorlist e da Comissão de Direitos Humanos da Alepa

FDDCA_ Frente de Defesa dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente do Vale do Mucuri;

Federação de Órgãos para Assistência Social e Educacional (FASE) (*Social and*

FOCO - Argentina

Foro de Mujeres del Mercosur, Paraguay

Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais da Bahia- Brasil

Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais/Paraná, Brazil

Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais/São Paulo, Brazil

Habitat International Coalition - Latin America

Human Rights Council

Igreja Evangélica Projeto Vida em Volta Redonda

Instituição: Missionárias de Jesus Crucificado, Brasil

Instituto de Desenvolvimento e Direitos Humanos (IDDH)

Instituto de Estudos Sócio Ambientais - IESA

Instituto Palmas

International Development Exchange

l'Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture (OMCT)

LANUD – Instituto Latino Americano das Nações Unidas para a Prevenção do Delito e

Macapá - Brasil

MAM FUNDACIONAL, Peru

Mines, Minerals & People (mm&P) - India

Movimento Nacional de Direitos Humanos (National Human Rights Movement), Brazil
Movimentos Sociais de Teófilo Otoni
NASA - Núcleo de Ação Solidária à Aids, Brazil
National Alliance of HUD Tenants
National Economic and Social Rights Initiative, USA
Núcleo de Atendimento as Vítimas de crimes Violentos NAVCV
Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil, Brasil
Organização Ser Mulher – Centro de Estudos e Ação da Mulher Urbana e Rural - Brasil
Pastoral do Menor-Diocese de T.Otoni;
People's Movement for Human Rights Learning (PDHRE)
Peruvian Women Center Flora Tristan, Diverse Women Diary
Public Against Torture in Israel
SCANOVI - Associação de Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis Teófilo Otoni, MG-BRASIL
Social Rights Advocacy Centre, Canada
Tratamento do Delinqüente, Brazil
União Geral Dos Moradores Dos Bairros Vilas E Jardins De Curitiba E Região Metropolitana -
Vânia de Melo vValadão Cardoso
Zimbabwe Watch