



**NATIONAL
TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE
WORKING GROUP
ZIMBABWE**

NPRC WATCH

August and September Consolidated 2020 Newsletter

NEWSLETTER

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In this Edition

The past two months have been marred with human rights violations that are reminiscent of Zimbabwe's dark history of violence. Worryingly, incidents of human rights violations have continued unabated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The prevalence of human rights violations, the use of hate speech and intolerance have only served to worsen the plight of Zimbabweans under the national lockdown. Early in August 2020, the #ZimbabweanLivesMatter movement emerged on various social media platforms and attracted global attention. The movement sought to raise awareness of the gross human rights violations that were being perpetrated by the Zimbabwean Government against its citizens. These violations include arbitrary arrests based on trumped-up charges, abductions, torture, and sexual assault of activists, journalists, and opposition party members that spoke out against corruption, bad governance, and human rights violations in the country. The movement caught the attention of prominent figures, celebrities, international human rights bodies and foreign governments. The South African government responded by sending an envoy to Zimbabwe to assess the situation. The envoy was expected to meet with government officials as well as civil society representatives, but at the last minute, scheduled meetings with civil society representatives failed to proceed. Another delegation was sent by the South African ruling party and that delegation similarly, the delegation failed to meet with other relevant stakeholders.

The NTJWG commends the initiative taken by Zimbabweans to call for the promotion and protection of human rights. Active participation by members of the citizenry is the key to solving the crisis in the country. However, the NTJWG notes with concern the lack of engagement by the Government of Zimbabwe. Of particular concern to the NTJWG is the government's position that there is no crisis in the country as it not reflective of the sentiments of the people of Zimbabwe. The NTJWG, therefore, urges the NPRC to resume the process of facilitating national dialogue as it is essential to providing a platform for the people of Zimbabwe to come together and formulate solutions to the nation's problems. Furthermore, the NTJWG urges the Government of Zimbabwe to refrain from downplaying the nation's problems and rather, pay attention to the issues highlighted by the people and make the necessary efforts to address them.

In this edition of the National Transitional Justice Working Group's (NTJWG) newsletter, we focus on the activities of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), commemorations of important transitional justice days and the activities of the NTJWG that took place in August and September 2020. As always we welcome your feedback and urge you to stay safe as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread.

NPRC ACTIVITIES

Commemorations: National and International Days National Heroes' Day Commemorations

On 10 August the NPRC published a statement in commemoration of National Heroes' Day. The NPRC urged the nation to remain tolerant of divergent backgrounds and to preserve peace as it celebrated those that fought for Zimbabwe's independence. To read the full statement please visit <http://www.nprc.org.zw/heroes-day-congratulatory-statement/>

International Day of Peace Commemorations

On 21 September, the NPRC joined the nation and the rest of the world in commemorating the International Day of Peace. The NPRC commemorated the day with the publication of a statement. In it, the NPRC noted that the commemorations provided an opportunity for it to re-energise its vision for a peaceful Zimbabwe for all. The NPRC stated that it would seek to achieve its objective by uniting all Zimbabweans and facilitating the nation's transition from a conflicted past to a peaceful and harmonious future. To read the full statement visit <http://www.nprc.org.zw/international-day-of-peace-shaping-peace-together/>. The NTJWG notes with concern the NPRC's lack of visibility in

the last two months. The NTJWG acknowledges the very difficult environment in which the NPRC has had to operate for most of the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the situation has made it difficult for the NPRC to go into communities and carry out its programs, the Commission needs to remain visible, particularly in times of crisis such as these. The NTJWG, therefore, urges the NPRC to increase its visibility and ensure that Zimbabweans remain informed of its activities and upcoming activities so as to enable effective participation from stakeholders.

Presentation of 2018 and 2019 NPRC Annual Reports to Parliament

The NTJWG notes that the NPRC Annual Reports for 2018 and 2019 were presented to Parliament on 3 and 8 September respectively. This is a welcome development as the presentation of these reports had been outstanding since March 2019 for the 2018 report and March 2020 for the 2019 report. The presentation of annual reports of the NPRC is a constitutional obligation as established in section 323 of the Constitution. The section obligates the NPRC to present an annual report to Parliament regarding its operations and activities no later than by the end of March of the year following the implementation of such activities. The NTJWG has been ceased with the outstanding reports and their subsequent presentation is a step in the right direction. The NTJWG is however concerned by the inordinate delay in presentation of both reports and implores the NPRC and Vice-President Kembo Mohadi who is responsible for the NPRC, to ensure that these reports are presented in a timely manner.

The NTJWG further urges the NPRC to publish both reports in compliance with its mandate, as said publication is still outstanding. The reports enable members of the public to remain abreast of the activities of the NPRC and to interact with them whilst contributing to their programs and activities. It is also critical that transitional justice stakeholders have access to both reports. Consequently, their publication ought to be treated as a matter of urgency.

NTJWG ACTIVITIES

Webinar in Commemoration of 1 August 2018

Two years have passed since the 1 August 2018 protests, during which the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the Zimbabwe National Army unleashed acts of violence against protestors. By the time the protests had been quelled, the military and the police had killed six people and injured twenty-two. The Montlath Commission of Inquiry was subsequently set up to inquire into the matter and to make appropriate recommendations so as to prevent and ensure that such an incident would not happen again. On 1 August 2020, the NTJWG hosted a radio program to reflect on the recommendations of the Montlath Commission of Inquiry and the progress made by the Government of Zimbabwe in implementing said recommendations. The panellists of the programme were Mr. Dzikamai Bere from the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, Mr. T. Godzi, & Mr. M. Manyeruke. During the discussions, the panellists highlighted that despite the State's claims that it had fully complied with the recommendations, the issue of compensation for the victims and holding to account of the perpetrators remain outstanding. The NTJWG calls upon the Government of Zimbabwe to comply with the recommendations of the Montlath Commission and to publicise the details of the actions it takes in fulfilment of the recommendations. Said action and transparency is important in demonstrating the State's commitment to honouring human rights and ensuring non-recurrence of violations such as those witnessed in 2018.

To access the radio program, visit https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=591182691565210&ref=watch_permalink

Commemorations of Important Transitional Justice Days

Press Interview in Commemoration of 1 August 2018
On 1 August 2020, The Standard Newspaper published an interview it conducted with Mr Antony Reeler the NTJWG Thematic

Leader on Institutional Reform and Dr Frances Lovemore, the NTJWG Thematic Leader on Reparations and Rehabilitation. The discussions in the interview revolved around what has been done, what is lacking, and what needs to be done to comply with the Montlath Commission's recommendations. Mr Reeler highlighted that there had been no credible attempt to implement the main recommendations of the Montlath Commission. This was concerning, as the establishment of the Commission had been necessitated by the shooting of unarmed civilians by the police and military personnel. He highlighted that there had been no reports of a credible investigation into the shootings or the responsible parties neither had any prosecutions taken place. Dr Frances reiterated the need for the victims identified by the Montlath Commission to be compensated for the losses they suffered as a result of the violence. She added that Zimbabwe needed a national conversation about its past and its future. Dr Frances further added that the citizenry deserved to participate in political processes without fear of violence or retribution. To read the full interview, please visit <https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2020/08/01/victims-wait-for-justice-two-years-after-killings/>



National Heroes' Day Commemorations

On 10 August 2020, the NTJWG joined the nation in commemorating National Heroes' Day. National Heroes' Day is an annual celebration in recognition of the sacrifices of those that fought to liberate the country. This year, National Heroes' Day was commemorated under the theme, "Remembering Our Heroes". In commemoration of the day, the NTJWG published a press statement, calling upon the Government of Zimbabwe to not merely commemorate the day, but to also put into practice the virtues of democracy and constitutionalism incumbent upon the State. The NTJWG also called for a broad-based national dialogue process and to establish a national vision that fosters unity and peace in the nation particularly in light of the current human rights crisis in Zimbabwe.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY COMMEMORATIONS

The NTJWG joined the rest of the world in commemorating International Youth Day on 12 August 2020. International Youth Day is celebrated on 12 August every year in recognition of the importance of the voice of the youth. Youth empowerment is a fundamental exercise as it enables youths to positively contribute to change in their communities. This year, International Youth Day was celebrated under the theme, "Youth Engagement for Global Action." Under this theme, the focus is enhancing youth engagement at community, national and global levels in order to ensure that processes at each of these levels are responsive to the needs of the youth and inclusive of their views.

To commemorate the day, the NTJWG published a press statement calling upon the youths of Zimbabwe to come together



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and peacefully engage the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure respect and protection of the rights of youths by government and its agencies and agents. The NTJWG further called on the Government of Zimbabwe to prioritise respect for human rights and the engagement of the youth in decision-making processes at all levels.

In recognition of the importance of the youth's voices in nation-building discourse, the NTJWG hosted a radio programme that was titled "Pushing for Youth Engagement in Transitional Justice Processes". The panellists were Farai Mahlangu from the Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust, Sandra Mpanyira from the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, and Dr Rev. Raymond Motsi from the NTJWG. During the discussion, the panellists called for the prioritisation of youth engagement and the participation of the youth in peacebuilding activities across the country. The panellists highlighted the need for an inclusive approach with the youth, particularly in matters affecting them. It was highlighted that such an approach ought not to apply to just peacebuilding activities but to all national processes. To listen to the program please visit <https://www.facebook.com/HStvradio/videos/316395582895034/>

International Day in Support of Victims of Enforced Disappearances Commemorations

On 30 August 2020, the NTJWG joined the rest of the world in commemorating the International Day in Support of Victims of Enforced Disappearances. The annual commemoration is an important reminder to States of their obligations to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of human rights violations and to ensure justice for victims in the form of acknowledgement, truth, justice, and reparations. To commemorate the day, the NTJWG published a press statement calling for an end to enforced disappearances, support for victims and their families and the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

Realising the need for increased discourse on this important issue and the importance of information dissemination, the NTJWG hosted a radio program in commemoration of the day. The panellists were Mr Alec Muchadehama, the NTJWG Chairperson, Mr Kennedy Masiye an international lawyer who represented Mr Itai Dzamara before his disappearance, Honourable Concilia Chinanzavana, a Member of Parliament and survivor of an enforced disappearance and Commissioner Chada from the NPRC. The issues raised during the program included the need for the NPRC to be more proactive in investigating cases of enforced disappearances. The NPRC also encouraged victims and families of victims of enforced disappearances to lodge their complaints with the Commission to enable it to act. To listen to the program please visit https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?extid=iqrf-PRD6E4rXGzh8&v=925947371226130&ref=watch_permalink



On 21 September, the NTJWG celebrated the International Day of Peace with the rest of the world. This year, the International Day of Peace was celebrated under the theme "Shaping Peace Together". The theme is particularly significant given the advent of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has made it clearer than ever that all people need to stand together in the face of adversity. To commemorate the day, the NTJWG hosted a radio program on Skyz Metro on 21 September and the panellists were Mr Wellington Nkawu, the NTJWG Thematic Leader for the Survivors' Group, Ms S Ndlovu, the NPRC's Matabeleland South Provincial Deputy Chairperson, and Ms Celia Mafu from the

Zimbabwe Human Rights Association. During the discussion, the panellists and listeners noted that genuine reconciliation efforts were key to fostering peace in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, it was noted that peace could only be facilitated if the perpetrators of past human rights violations acknowledged their wrongful actions and were held accountable for their actions.

NTJWG on the Airwaves

Radio Program on Hate Speech

On 15 September the NTJWG hosted a radio program on hate speech in Zimbabwe. The program was necessitated by the realisation that hate speech has become a trend in response to dissent. Incidents of hate speech appear to be on the rise in Zimbabwe. The use of hate speech, in particular, by public figures such as government officials and politicians often incites violence against dissenting voices and poses a significant threat to peace in the country. The panellists on the program were Mr Bere from the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association and Mr Reeler, the NTJWG Thematic Leader on Institutional Reform. During the discussion, the panellists called for tolerance of divergent views and cautioned against the use of hate speech, which has often led to violence and untold suffering for countries such as Rwanda where the use of hate speech incited a genocide. To listen to this program visit https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?extid=cCViOGTGKZdtZFod&v=696803264515672&ref=watch_permalink

Radio Program on Memorialisation

The NTJWG hosted a radio program on Skyz Metro on 18 September to discuss memorialisation in a bid to advocate for the building of a comprehensive national memory of Zimbabwe's past. The panellists were Dr Rev Motsi, the NTJWG Thematic Leader on Memorialisation, Mr Sobusa Gula-Ndebele who is the former Attorney General of Zimbabwe and Mr Mbuso Fuzwayo, the Secretary-General of Ibhetshu Likazulu. The panellists noted that Zimbabwe's history had been monopolised and used to build a one-sided narrative of the past. It was noted that it was necessary to create a space wherein all Zimbabweans could share their past experiences and have them recorded and stored as part of national memory. Further to that, the panellists called for a policy framework that would guide the process of erecting and preserving memorial sites. It was noted that sites in places like Bhalagwe had been destroyed which further traumatised "Gukurahundi" victims living in the area.

NTJWG Publications

Statement on Building a Culture of Tolerance for Peace in Zimbabwe

Noting the recent surge in the prevalence of hate speech by politicians and government officials, the NTJWG published a press statement on 24 August, calling for tolerance and urging Zimbabweans to desist from perpetuating a culture of hate and intolerance.

Statement in Response to the President's Engagement with Matabeleland CSOs on Gukurahundi

Following engagements by President Emmerson Mnangagwa in Matabeleland to discuss the issue of "Gukurahundi"; the NTJWG published a press statement on 27 August noting with concern the exclusion of key stakeholders, such as the NPRC and other civil society organisations from these engagements, the latest of which was held on 21 August in Bulawayo. The NTJWG called on the President and the government to desist from inappropriately interfering with the legitimate exercise of functions that clearly fell within the purview of relevant independent Commissions.

The NTJWG also echoed the calls for national dialogue made by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference through its pastoral letter dated 14 August 2020.

11th Edition NPRC Watch Report Summary

On 20 September the NTJWG published a summary of the 11th Edition of the NPRC Watch Report. This summary is comprised of the highlights of the 11th Edition of the NPRC Watch Report which details transitional justice developments during the second quarter of 2020. Some of the issues covered by the report are; the scourge of corruption that has marked the second quarter, transport challenges brought upon citizens by the national lockdown measures which include the banning of public transport services by private actors and the increase of human rights abuses, particularly, politically motivated violence against opposition party politicians.



Complaint against Minister Monica Mutsvangwa

In a pastoral letter dated 14 August 2020, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference called upon the Government of Zimbabwe to facilitate peace and nation-building through inclusive engagement and dialogue. Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, Monica Mutsvangwa responded to the pastoral letter in an address made at her offices on 15 August 2020. The Minister's address was filled with hate speech and derogatory language that went as far as to label the ZC-BC's message as evil. In her address, the Minister launched a personal attack against the President of the ZCBC, Archbishop Robert Christopher Ndlovu, whom she singled out and accused of hoping "to sow seeds of internecine strife as a prelude to civil war and national disintegration". In response to this, the NTJWG lodged a complaint with the NPRC on 3 September requesting that the NPRC censure Minister Mutsvangwa and ensure that she retracts her hateful statements.

The NTJWG notes that the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association made similar complaints to the NPRC regarding utterances made by the ZANU PF Acting Spokesperson, Mr Patrick Chinamasa, for his utterances in anticipation of the 31 July 2020 protests. The NTJWG commends the initiative taken by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association and urges the NPRC to investigate these complaints and act without favour to ensure that the use of hate speech is curbed and that offenders are censured.



Please share with us your feedback on the content that we have just shared with you. To view or download the newsletter online click: <http://www.ntjwg.org.zw/publications.html>.



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