



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note **Zimbabwe: Opposition to government**

Version 5.0

September 2021

Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into 2 parts: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note - that is information in the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw - by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- a person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- that the general humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules](#) / Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- that the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- a claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2013. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate and balanced, and to provide a range of views and opinions which are compared and contrasted where possible, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote. Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance and welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 13 Sept 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution or serious harm by the state and/or proxies of the state because of a person's actual or perceived opposition to the government (see [State agents and proxies](#)).

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection.
- 2.2.3 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and [Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.3.1 Actual or imputed political opinion.
- 2.3.2 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of an actual or imputed Refugee Convention reason.

- 2.3.3 For further guidance on the five Refugee Convention grounds see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Risk

a. Overview

- 2.4.1 Zimbabwe's economic and political situation is fragile. The ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) ousted its leader of 37 years – Robert Mugabe – in November 2017 and replaced him with his former Vice President, Emmerson Mnangagwa (see [Political context](#)).
- 2.4.2 The main opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has undergone a series of internal splits which began before the death of its leader Morgan Tsvangirai (in February 2018) and which continued after his death. The 2 current factions, the MDC-A and MDC-T, have engaged in infighting (see [Movement for Democratic Change](#)).
- 2.4.3 The ruling party is intolerant of organisations or persons who speak out against the government. Members of opposition political parties, such as the MDC, and other opposition groups, including civil society activists, journalists and health professionals, have been arrested or assaulted (see [Treatment of MDC](#) and [Treatment of other groups opposing the state](#)).
- 2.4.4 The majority of human rights violations are carried out by state agents (police and army) and state proxies (ZANU-PF), although a significant minority of violations involve unknown perpetrators. During 2020 and the first half of 2021, the police were the main perpetrators of recorded violations. The median proportion of violations committed by the police has increased from 29% in 2019 to 51% at the mid-point of 2021. Over the same period, the proportion of violations attributed to ZANU-PF has fallen from 35% to 19%. It is likely that COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, combined with the role of the police in enforcing the restrictions, has contributed to this trend (see [Perpetrators of human rights violations](#) and [Impact of COVID-19](#)).
- 2.4.5 The level of human rights violations across Zimbabwe has remained relatively constant throughout 2019, 2020 and 2021. The Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), a local NGO, recorded 2,790 violations in 2019, 2,825 violations in 2020 and 1,264 violations during the first 6 months of 2021, which is less than half of the 2019 and 2020 totals. Recorded violations range from harassment/intimidation (the large majority) to assault, unlawful detention and unlawful killing (see [Trends in type of human rights violation](#) and [Location of human rights violations](#)).
- 2.4.6 The violations recorded by ZPP are not evenly distributed across Zimbabwe. In the last full year for which data is available (2020), 30% of all recorded violations took place in Harare. The next highest proportion of violations was recorded in Mashonaland Central (14%) and Mashonaland East (12%). By contrast, the proportion of violations recorded in Bulawayo is lower (4% in 2020) and is in decline, accounting for 6% of violations in 2019 and 3% in the first half of 2021. Spikes in violations coincided with major incidents such

as the January 2019 fuel protests and the July 2020 attempted protests (see [Location of human rights violations](#)).

- 2.4.7 Many of the incidents in 2019 and 2020 occurred in the context of demonstrations and planned demonstrations, which were sometimes, but not always, organised, promoted or attended by the MDC or other opposition political parties such as Transform Zimbabwe. Demonstrations have also been organised by other groups, including teachers and health professionals, to protest against pay and working conditions. The majority of politically-motivated protests between 2019 and the mid-point of 2021 took place in Harare (see [Protests](#), [Treatment of MDC](#) and [Treatment of other groups opposing the state](#))
- 2.4.8 Following widespread unrest in January 2019 – in response to fuel price rises – attempts to organise protests later in the year, specifically in July and August 2019, were often blocked by the authorities. Restrictions on protests continued throughout 2020 and 2021 and were often enforced under COVID-19 regulations, with a number of planned protests prevented from taking place (see [Political context](#), [Treatment of MDC](#), [Treatment of other groups opposing the state](#), [Protests](#), [Impact of COVID-19](#) and [State intervention in protests](#)).
- 2.4.9 While the majority of the public approve of the government’s response to COVID-19, state security forces, including the police and the army, have been accused of heavy-handed and partisan enforcement of COVID regulations. Among the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)-recorded protests which did take place in 2019, 2020 and during the first half of 2021, there are no recorded cases of excessive use of force against protesters (see [Political context](#), [Treatment of MDC](#), [Treatment of other groups opposing the state](#), [Protests](#), [Impact of COVID-19](#)) and [State intervention in protests](#)).

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b. Trends in politically-motivated violence since 2008

- 2.4.10 In the case of [CM \(EM country guidance; disclosure\) Zimbabwe CG \[2013\] UKUT 00059 \(IAC\)](#), heard in October 2012 and promulgated in January 2013, (which modified the Country Guidance in [EM and Others \(Returnees\) Zimbabwe CG \[2011\] UKUT 98 \(IAC\)](#), heard in October 2010/January 2011 and promulgated in March 2011), the Upper Tribunal found that there was significantly less politically-motivated violence in Zimbabwe than had been described in the earlier country guidance case of [RN \(Returnees\) Zimbabwe CG \[2008\] UKAIT 00083](#), heard by the Asylum Immigration Tribunal in September/October 2008 and promulgated in November 2008, which followed the violently contested 2008 national elections.
- 2.4.11 ZPP data indicates that the recorded level of human rights violations in 2020 and 2021 is significantly lower than the level recorded in 2008 (when [RN](#) was heard), lower than 2010 (when [EM](#) was heard) and lower than 2012 (when [CM](#) was heard). The ZPP recorded a total of 2,825 human rights violations in the most recent full year for which data is available (2020). This is just over a quarter of the 10,703 incidents in 2010 and just over half of the figure of 5,096 in 2012. The 2020 figures are also much lower than the

23,755 incidents recorded in 2008. During the first half of 2021, the ZPP recorded 1,264 violations, which is less than half of the 2020 total of 2,825 (see [Total human rights violations](#)).

- 2.4.12 The overall trend of human rights violations documented by ZPP is broadly consistent with information from ACLED. The number of events recorded by ACLED during the same 4 years noted above (2008, 2010, 2012 and 2020) are 775, 194, 202 and 162, respectively. Whilst neither ZPP nor ACLED are likely to record every human rights violation or every event in any particular year, the data provides an indication of the scale and nature of violence annually and is comparable against itself year-on-year, so provides an indication of trends over time. The general trend is of a steep decline in incidents after 2008, followed by a more gradual decline or plateauing of incidents between 2009 and 2020. While spikes in violence do take place – such as during the fuel protests in 2019 – this has not affected the overall trend (see [Trends in human rights violations 2008 to 2021](#)).
- 2.4.13 Since 2012 there has also been a shift in the nature of recorded events. When compared against all events recorded in any particular year, the proportion of events categorised as ‘violence against civilians’ has fallen, while the proportion of events categorised as ‘protest’ and ‘riot’ has increased. As a result, recorded incidents after 2012 are more likely to be associated with a protest or riot than incidents before 2012 (see [Trends in human rights violations 2008 to 2021](#)).
- 2.4.14 For each year in the 11-year period 2010 to 2020, the majority of protests were peaceful and the percentage of protests in which the state intervened remained relatively constant at about 30% (see [State intervention in protests](#)).

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c. Political party opposition

- 2.4.15 The nature of the opposition to the government is wider than political party affiliation alone and reflects a general frustration among Zimbabweans with the government’s economic mismanagement and corruption. While MDC activists are involved in events such as protests, and members with a significant profile may be subject to arrest, events specifically linked to the MDC form a minority of the overall number of recorded incidents documented by sources. ACLED data for 2020 shows that 16% of events which involved an interaction between state agents and protesters or civilians contained a specific reference to MDC participation (see [Political context](#), [Protests](#) and [Treatment of MDC](#)).
- 2.4.16 Over the 2-year period between August 2019 and July 2021, the median percentage of victims of human rights violations recorded as having a known MDC-affiliation was 3.1%. Given that approximately 10% of Zimbabweans are members of the MDC and the MDC presidential candidate received 44% of votes cast in the 2018 election, the figure of 3.1% is likely to be an underestimate. The low proportion of recorded MDC-affiliated victims may be explained by a reluctance of victims to be identified as linked to the MDC (see [Victims of human rights violations](#)).

- 2.4.17 The MDC has a large membership, estimated at 1.5 million (out of a population – including children – of 15.7 million). The 2018 election results showed that over 2 million people voted for the MDC presidential candidate (with 44% of all votes cast). Support for the MDC is highest in Harare and Bulawayo (72% of all votes cast in Harare were for the MDC, 67% in Bulawayo) (see [Members](#) and [Supporters](#)).
- 2.4.18 In 2020, ZPP recorded 2,825 human rights violations. Given the large numbers of MDC supporters and members, compared against the relatively low number of recorded violations, the risk of being a victim of a violation based solely upon being a supporter or member of the MDC is very low (see [Movement for Democratic Change](#) and [Treatment of MDC](#)).
- 2.4.19 However, violations against persons who are affiliated with the MDC do take place. Many of the reported arrests, abductions and assaults involve MDC leaders and activists with a significant profile (see [Treatment of MDC](#)).
- 2.4.20 Given the absence of ‘very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence’ to depart from existing country guidance, (as per paragraph 47 of [SG \(Iraq\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2012\] EWCA Civ 940 \(13 July 2012\)](#)) the findings of [CM \(Zimbabwe\)](#) continue to apply:
- In general, a person returning to Zimbabwe from the UK who has no significant MDC profile, would not face a real risk of having to demonstrate his loyalty to ZANU PF (para 3(1)).
 - A person with no ZANU-PF connections who returned after a significant absence in the UK to a rural area of Zimbabwe (other than Matabeleland North or South) and is unable to demonstrate loyalty to ZANU-PF may attract adverse attention from ZANU-PF or the security forces which amounts to persecution. However, the situation is not uniform across all rural areas and there may be cases where an individual’s home is in an area where ZANU-PF is weak or absent (paras 3(2) and (3)).
 - In general, a person returning to rural Matabeleland North or South is highly unlikely to face significant difficulty from ZANU-PF or the security forces, even if the person is a MDC member or supporter. An exception to this is if a person can show that his home area is under the control of ZANU-PF (para 3(4)).
 - In general, a person can return to a low-density or medium-density area of Harare and face no significant difficulties (para 3(5)).
 - In general, a person with no ZANU-PF connections can also return to a high-density area of Harare and not face significant problems unless he has a significant MDC profile. A person with a significant MDC profile in a high-density area, may attract the adverse attention of ZANU-PF or the security forces (para 3(5)).
 - In general, a person returning to Bulawayo – even a person with a significant MDC profile – will not attract the adverse attention of ZANU-PF or the security forces (para 3(6)).

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d. Other groups opposing the state

- 2.4.21 In the case of teachers, in [CM \(Zimbabwe\)](#) the UT held that ‘Those who are or have been teachers require to have their cases determined on the basis that this fact places them in an enhanced or heightened risk category, the significance of which will need to be assessed on an individual basis.’ (paragraph 3(10))
- 2.4.22 As well as teachers, other groups which have been critical of the government include: health professionals, journalists, students, lawyers and civil society activists. Many of the recorded incidents are linked to involvement in (or, in the case of journalists, coverage of) demonstrations protesting against pay, working conditions and living costs. Recorded violations include arrest, assault, detention and abduction (see [Treatment of other groups opposing the state](#)).
- 2.4.23 Being a teacher, lawyer, journalist, health professional, student or civil society activist does not, in itself, establish a risk of persecution or serious harm. Each case must be considered on its individual merits. Factors to take into account include the person’s profile, activities, area of origin and proposed area of return. The onus is on the person to demonstrate that they face a risk of persecution.

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e. Politicisation of food and other aid

- 2.4.24 Incidents of partisan distribution of aid continue to take place and ZPP recorded a number of cases of politically-motivated restrictions on access to food and other aid. However, the number of recorded incidents is low, with a total of 270 incidents across Zimbabwe in 2019 and 258 in 2020, largely in rural areas. Incidents of food and aid violations in Harare and Bulawayo are rare. In 2019, 95% of food and aid violations took place outside of Harare and Bulawayo. In 2020 this figure was 96%. There are also processes in place to lodge objections against the unfair distribution of aid (see [Politicisation of food and other aid](#)).
- 2.4.25 Such treatment would not in and of itself be serious enough by its nature and repetition to establish a claim to asylum.
- 2.4.26 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state or proxies of the state, they will not, in general, be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities (see [State agents and proxies](#)).
- 2.5.2 For further guidance on assessing state protection see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Internal relocation

2.6.1 Although the person's fear is of persecution/serious harm at the hands of the state they may be able to relocate to mitigate that risk provided that the relocation would not be unreasonable.

2.6.2 In [CM \(Zimbabwe\)](#), restating [EM](#), the UT held:

'The issue of what is a person's home for the purposes of internal relocation is to be decided as a matter of fact and is not necessarily to be determined by reference to the place a person from Zimbabwe regards as his or her rural homeland. As a general matter, it is unlikely that a person with a well-founded fear of persecution in a major urban centre such as Harare will have a viable internal relocation alternative to a rural area in the Eastern provinces. Relocation to Matabeleland (including Bulawayo) may be negated by discrimination, where the returnee is Shona.

'Internal relocation from a rural area to Harare or (subject to what we have just said) Bulawayo is, in general, more realistic; but the socio-economic circumstances in which persons are reasonably likely to find themselves will need to be considered, in order to determine whether it would be unreasonable or unduly harsh to expect them to relocate.' (paras 3(7) and (8)).

2.6.3 In summary:

- In general, it is unlikely that a person with a well-founded fear of persecution in a major urban centre, such as Harare or Bulawayo, will reasonably be able to relocate to a rural area in the eastern provinces
- In general, internal relocation from a rural area to Harare or Bulawayo is reasonable. In the case of the Shona ethnic group, relocation to Matabeleland (including Bulawayo) may not be reasonable, as they may face discrimination.
- In all cases, the socio-economic circumstances of relocation need to be considered to decide whether relocation would be unreasonable or unduly harsh.

2.6.4 Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person. While the onus is on the person to establish a well-founded fear of persecution or real risk of serious harm, decision makers must demonstrate that internal relocation is reasonable having regard to the individual circumstances of the person.

2.6.5 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction(s), [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.7 Certification

2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 13 Sept 2021

3. Political context

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 In a December 2019 report, the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) summarised the political landscape since 2000:

'Zimbabwe's economic and political environment continued to deteriorate throughout the 2000s. The international community reacted to ongoing land seizures, increasing political repression and a series of disputed elections by imposing targeted sanctions on its leadership, some of which remain in place. After a deeply flawed and highly violent national election process in 2008, internationally brokered negotiations resulted in the creation of a power-sharing Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009, with Mugabe as President and MDC [Movement for Democratic Change] leader Morgan Tsvangirai as Prime Minister. The political settlement temporarily stabilised the economy, courtesy in large part to a USD 400 million support package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and reduced the level of open political violence. Although marred by constant infighting, the GNU succeeded in introducing a new constitution in March 2013 that contained numerous human rights commitments. The GNU ended after Mugabe and ZANU-PF won respective victories in the July 2013 national presidential and parliamentary elections.

'A major split within ZANU-PF over who would succeed him as President marked Mugabe's final term in office, with Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa leading one faction and Mugabe's wife Grace the other, known as G40. In November 2017, Mugabe fired Mnangagwa and began purging his supporters from within ZANU-PF. Zimbabwe's military responded by staging an intervention and forcing Mugabe to resign, ending his 37-year reign in office. Mnangagwa assumed the presidency, and defeated the MDC's Nelson Chamisa in another disputed presidential election in July 2018... Initial hopes that the change of leadership would result in long-awaited improvements to Zimbabwe's political and economic climate have been tempered by further economic deterioration... droughts and natural disasters, the violent repression of several demonstrations by security forces, and an increasing intolerance of political dissent.'¹

3.1.2 In December 2020, the International Crisis Group produced a briefing based on a range of sources:

'Three years after a coup ended Robert Mugabe's rule, the situation in Zimbabwe has gone from bad to worse, as political tensions mount, the economy falls apart and the population faces hunger and COVID-19. Having signalled a desire to stabilise the economy and ease repression, President Emmerson Mnangagwa has disappointed. The state is arresting opponents who protest government corruption and incompetence. Meanwhile,

¹ DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Zimbabwe](#)' (page 29), 19 December 2019

government-allied businessmen are tightening their grip on what is left of the economy, while citizens cope with austerity measures and soaring inflation. Violence and lawlessness are on the rise. Fearing major unrest, or even another coup sparked by ruling-party divisions, Zimbabwe's most important neighbour, South Africa, is ditching its tolerant posture toward Harare.²

3.1.3 In a January 2021 publication covering the events of 2020, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported 'Zimbabwe's human rights situation continued to decline in 2020 under Emmerson Mnangagwa's presidency. Unidentified assailants, suspected to be state security agents, abducted and tortured more than 70 critics of the government during 2020. Security forces also continued to commit arbitrary arrests, violent assaults, abductions, torture and other abuses against opposition politicians, dissidents and activists.'³

3.1.4 On 5 January 2021, Kubatana, a Zimbabwean civil society organisation (CSO) and non-government organisation (NGO) forum, published an article by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (ZHRNGOF) in which ZHRNGOF commented on the impending national COVID-19 lockdown (scheduled to run from 5 January to 4 February 2021):

'The Forum takes cognisance of the increase in deaths and confirmed positive cases of COVID-19, which total 15265 confirmed cases and 380 deaths as of 3 January 2021. It is pursuant to these saddening statistics and a potential threat to the health and safety of citizens that the Forum welcomes the announcement of the national lockdown. However, the Forum is highly concerned with the likely possibility of human rights abuses being perpetrated by State security forces in the enforcement of the national lockdown regulations. Our concerns stem from experiences of the first national lockdown that ran from 30 March to November 2020 where 932 cases of organised violence and torture were documented by the Forum, most of which were carried out by State security forces. The recorded cases included incidents of abductions, assaults and torture, arbitrary arrests, and attacks against journalists. The use of disproportionate force against civilians and cases of solicited bribes were also observed during this period.'⁴

3.1.5 In a March 2021 report covering the events of 2020, Freedom House stated:

'The Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has dominated Zimbabwean politics since independence in 1980, in part by carrying out severe and often violent crackdowns on the political opposition, critical media, and other sources of dissent. President Emmerson Mnangagwa took power in 2017 after the military intervened to remove longtime president Robert Mugabe amid factional divisions within the ruling party. However, the new administration has largely retained the legal, administrative, and security architecture it inherited from the Mugabe regime, and it has stepped up repression to consolidate its authority.'⁵

3.1.6 In July 2021, the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) published its annual report (covering the events of 2020) and

² ICG, '[How South Africa can nudge Zimbabwe toward stability](#)', 17 December 2020

³ Human Rights Watch, '[World report 2021: Zimbabwe](#)', 13 January 2021

⁴ Kubatana; ZHRNGOF, '[A call to uphold human rights and observe the law during...](#)', 5 January 2021

⁵ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the world 2021: Zimbabwe](#)', March 2021

stated: 'The human rights situation in Zimbabwe did not improve in 2020. The human rights monitoring group, Zimbabwe Peace Project, recorded 2,825 human rights violations in 2020, similar to the total in 2019. The majority of violations were due to heavy-handed policing of COVID-19 regulations by the Zimbabwe Republic Police, as well as targeted abductions, arbitrary arrests, and detentions linked to planned protests in July.'⁶

- 3.1.7 An Afrobarometer survey of 1,200 Zimbabwean adults, which took place between 16 April 2021 and 1 May 2021 (published in June 2021), found: 'Large majorities say the government is performing badly on creating jobs (91%), keeping prices stable (78%), improving living standards of the poor (75%), and other issues.'⁷

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3.2 Election results

- 3.2.1 In a March 2021 report covering the events of 2020, Freedom House stated: 'A presidential election, alongside parliamentary and local polls, was held as planned in July 2018. Mnangagwa was credited with 50.8 percent of the vote, followed by MDC Alliance candidate Nelson Chamisa with 44.3 percent and MDC-T candidate Thokozani Khupe with 9 percent...

'ZANU-PF won 180 of the 270 National Assembly seats in the 2018 parliamentary elections. The MDC Alliance won 87, and the MDC-T won 1 via proportional representation. An independent former ZANU-PF member and the National Patriotic Front, a ZANU-PF splinter faction, each took one seat. In the Senate, ZANU-PF secured 34 elected seats, the MDC Alliance took 25, and the MDC-T took 1...

'In March 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that Chamisa was not the legitimate opposition leader, replacing him with MDC-T leader Khupe. Khupe subsequently recalled 31 MDC Alliance legislators of both houses as the year progressed, forcing them to surrender their seats in what observers considered a ZANU-PF attempt to fracture the opposition. Another 15 MDC Alliance members reportedly defected to the MDC-T by October to retain their seats.'⁸

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Section 4 updated: 13 Sept 2021

4. State agents and proxies

4.1 State agents

- 4.1.1 The US Department of State (USSD) human rights report covering events in 2020 stated:

'The Zimbabwe Republic Police maintain internal security. The Department of Immigration and police, both under the Ministry of Home Affairs, are primarily responsible for migration and border enforcement. Although police

⁶ FCDO, '[Human rights & democracy. The 2020 FCDO report](#)' (page 68), July 2021

⁷ Afrobarometer, '[Country direction and economic situation...](#)', 17 June 2021

⁸ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the world 2021: Zimbabwe](#)', March 2021

are officially under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Office of the President directed some police roles and missions in response to civil unrest. The military is responsible for external security but also has some domestic security responsibilities. The Zimbabwe National Army and Air Force constitute the Zimbabwe Defense Forces and report to the minister of defense. The Central Intelligence Organization, under the Office of the President, engages in both internal and external security matters.⁹

- 4.1.2 Bertelsmann Stiftung stated in their 2020 Zimbabwe report (covering the period February 2017 to January 2019): ‘The civilian leadership in Zimbabwe only possesses partial electoral legitimacy while the military, the police and the intelligence agencies are partisan and occupy a central role in government decision-making.’¹⁰

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4.2 Proxies

- 4.2.1 According to BBC Monitoring, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) – later renamed as ZANU-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) – has been the ruling party of Zimbabwe since the country gained independence from the UK in 1980. Zanu-PF was led by Robert Mugabe until 2017 when he was replaced by Emmerson Mnangagwa.¹¹

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Section 5 updated: 13 Sept 2021

5. Data sources

5.1 Use of datasets

- 5.1.1 In order to understand the level and nature of human rights violations in Zimbabwe, and also to identify trends over time, this CPIN has drawn upon data collected by two organisations: the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) and the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).
- 5.1.2 ZPP and ACLED have been chosen for several reasons. Firstly, their information is publicly available and easily accessible. Secondly, their approach to cataloguing data is different, thereby widening the type of analysis which can be performed. Most importantly, both sources provide a systematic log of violations and events over a continuous time period. (ZPP produces consecutive monthly reports, while ACLED logs events daily). This means that the information collected by the two sources is more quantifiable than other pieces of evidence, such as reports and articles, which are often piecemeal in coverage. The ZPP and ACLED data can therefore be used alongside the qualitative evidence to provide a more complete picture of the current situation and also provide context to how the situation has changed over time.
- 5.1.3 As detailed below, the ACLED and ZPP datasets do not contain exactly the same information and therefore cannot be directly compared against each other. This is because of differences relating to what type of data is

⁹ USSD, ‘[2020 country reports on human rights practices: Zimbabwe](#)’ (section 1), 30 March 2021

¹⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung, ‘[BTI 2020 Country Report – Zimbabwe](#)’ (page 10), 29 April 2020

¹¹ BBC Monitoring, ‘ZANU-PF’, subscription only, 26 March 2021

collected, how the data is collected and how it is categorised. ZPP data, for example, compiles reports from primary sources – witnesses of events – whereas ACLED collates secondary data, such as media reports. In addition, the types of human rights violation recorded by ZPP are different to the categorisation of events performed by ACLED.

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5.2 Zimbabwe Peace Project data

5.2.1 [Zimbabwe Peace Project \(ZPP\)](#) is an NGO which was founded in 2000 by religious and human rights organisations. According to ZPP's August 2020 report:

'The current members of ZPP are Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ), Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights), Civic Education Network Trust (CIVNET), Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ), National Association for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH) and Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA).'¹²

5.2.2 ZPP produces monthly monitoring reports which document: 'the prevalence of human rights violations in Zimbabwe.'¹³

5.2.3 ZPP categorises incidents by location, type of incident, and the affiliation of the victim and the perpetrator. Categories of human rights violations recorded by the ZPP include: killing, assault, unlawful detention, discrimination, abduction, harassment/intimidation and malicious damage to property (MDP). While the majority of the information collected by ZPP relates to violations committed by state and proxy-state perpetrators such as the Zimbabwe Republic Police, Municipal Police, Zimbabwe National Army and ZANU-PF, ZPP also collects information on violations committed by non-state perpetrators, for example, violations committed by MDC members during internal MDC conflicts.

5.2.4 The exact methodology ZPP uses to record and verify violations is not set out in its monitoring reports. ZPP provides a telephone helpline, email and mobile phone App for citizens to report violations and also has a network of monitors. In its monthly March 2020 edition, ZPP stated:

'The Zimbabwe Peace Project seeks to foster dialogue and political tolerance through non-partisan peace monitoring activities, mainly through monitors who document the violations of rights in the provinces. The monitors, who at full complement stand at 420, constitute the core pool of volunteers, supported by four Regional Coordinators. The Regional Coordinators relate with the national office headed by the National Director and programme officers in various units.'¹⁴

5.2.5 The ZPP was emailed by CPIT to clarify its methodology but no response was received. Whilst ZPP is unlikely to record every human rights violation in any particular year, the data will provide an indication of the absolute levels

¹² ZPP, '[Monthly monitoring report](#)' (page 10), August 2020

¹³ ZPP, '[Monthly monitoring report](#)' (page 2), May 2021

¹⁴ ZPP, '[Monthly monitoring report](#)' (page 10), March 2020

of violence in any given year. Furthermore, comparing ZPPs own data against itself year-on-year, will mean that any observed trends over time are likely to be reliable indicators of relative changes in violations.

- 5.2.6 In its May 2021 report, ZPP introduced the option of using an App: ‘...to report human rights violations that you witness or experience anywhere in Zimbabwe.’¹⁵ It is possible that the introduction of new user-friendly means to report violations – such as the App – may increase the number of reported incidents compared to the period prior to the introduction of the App.

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5.3 Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project

- 5.3.1 Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project ([ACLED](#)) is a non-profit organisation which collects information on reported political violence and protest events. ACLED researchers assess 4 types of sources when compiling the database: traditional media, reports by international institutions and NGOs, local partner data and new media (for example, Twitter and WhatsApp).¹⁶

- 5.3.2 ACLED methodology includes a process of cross-checking how information is coded and included in the dataset and: ‘ACLED data are collected each week after individual researchers have scrutinized the information from reports; they are then aggregated and revised by the first coding reviewer, investigated and cross-checked by the second reviewer and then event notes and details are inspected by the third and final reviewer.’¹⁷

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Section 6 updated: 13 Sept 2021

6. Perpetrators of human rights violations

- 6.1.1 The table below has been compiled by CPIT using data from ZPP’s monthly monitoring reports. The table shows the monthly median proportion of violations, split by perpetrator, during 2019, 2020 and the first half of 2021.

Perpetrator	2019*	2020	2021 Q1+Q2
ZANU-PF	35%	17%	19%
Police	29%	44%	51%
ZNA	5%	11%	3%
MDC	2%	2%	2%
Other**	5%	2%	2%
Unknown	15%	17%	15%

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*Excludes June 2019 as ZPP data was not available

¹⁵ ZPP, ‘[Monthly monitoring report](#)’ (page 16), May 2021

¹⁶ ACLED, ‘[FAQs: ACLED sourcing methodology](#)’ (page 1), no date

¹⁷ ACLED, ‘[ACLED methodology](#)’ (page 1), no date

¹⁸ ZPP, Monthly monitoring reports for January 2019 to June 2021, see [Bibliography](#)

**'Other' includes war veterans, militia groups, machete gangs and the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO)

6.1.2 A review of the table by CPIT indicates that:

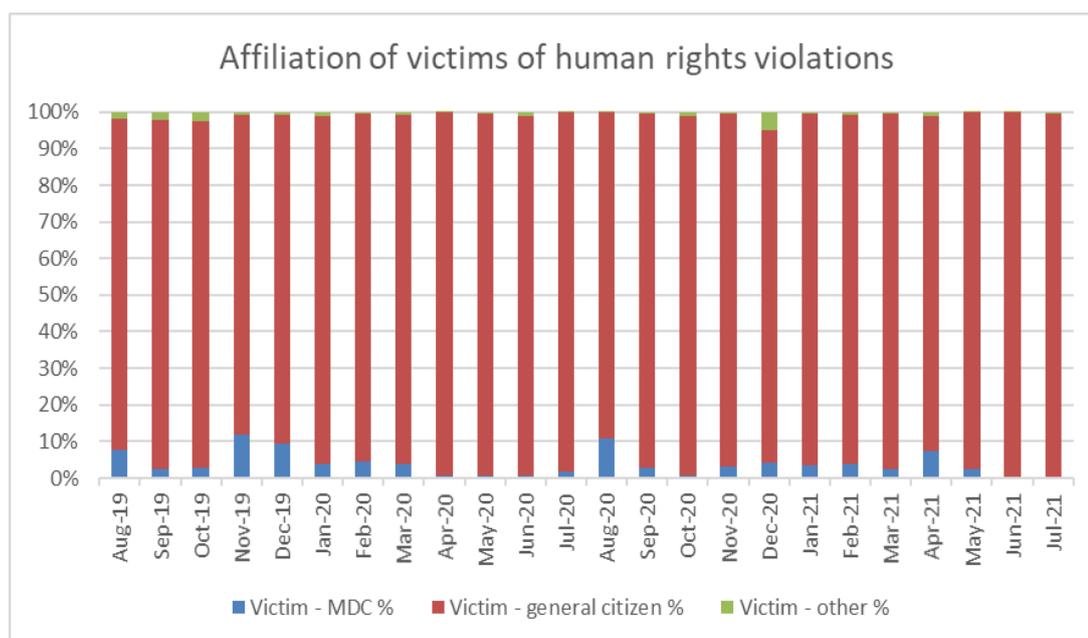
- During 2020 and the first half of 2021, the police were identified as the main perpetrators of recorded violations.
- The median proportion of violations committed by the police has increased from 29% to 51% between 2019 and the mid-point of 2021. Over the same period, the proportion of violations attributed to ZANU-PF has fallen from 35% to 19%.

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Section 7 updated: 13 Sept 2021

7. Victims of human rights violations

7.1.1 The graph below has been compiled by CPIT using data from ZPP's monthly monitoring reports¹⁹. The graph shows the affiliation of victims of human rights violations recorded by ZPP over the 2-year period from August 2019 to July 2021.



7.1.2 A CPIT review of the data indicates that the vast majority of the victims of human rights violations over the 2-year period have been recorded by ZPP as having an unknown affiliation (general citizens). Between August 2019 and July 2021, a median of 96% of victims had no known affiliation to a political party. In 21 out of the 24 months shown in the graph, the proportion of victims with no known affiliation is above 90%.

7.1.3 The graph indicates that after 'General Citizens' the next largest category of victims of human rights violations are individuals affiliated with the MDC. This proportion varies over the 2-year period with the highest percentage recorded in November 2019 (11.8% of victims had an MDC-affiliation) and the lowest percentage recorded in July 2021 (0.23% of victims had an MDC-

¹⁹ ZPP, Monthly monitoring reports for August 2019 to July 2021, see [Bibliography](#)

affiliation). Over the 2 years for which data is shown, the median percentage of victims with an MDC affiliation has been calculated as 3.1%. For the first 7 months of 2021, the equivalent figure is 2.6%.

7.1.4 In October 2019, ZPP provided the following explanation for the high proportion of victims with unknown affiliation: ‘The state repression is also highlighted by the fear of victims to reveal their political affiliation. 94.65% of victims of cases recorded in October 2019 were not comfortable with sharing information about their political persuasion.’²⁰

7.1.5 In its May 2020 monthly report, ZPP provided an alternative explanation for the high proportion of victims recorded as having no political affiliation:

‘Central to this is the State’s reactive methods in dealing with the COVID19 crisis, the shortages, and the apparent heavy-handedness of the security forces deployed to deal with the lockdown, and the resurgence of food and other aid discrimination.

‘The State’s aggressive and indiscriminate response to citizens attempting to access scarce basic commodities, mainly mealie-meal and water can help explain why the political affiliation of 99.3 percent of the victims of harassment and assault is neither Zanu PF, MDC or any political party.’²¹

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Section 8 updated: 13 Sept 2021

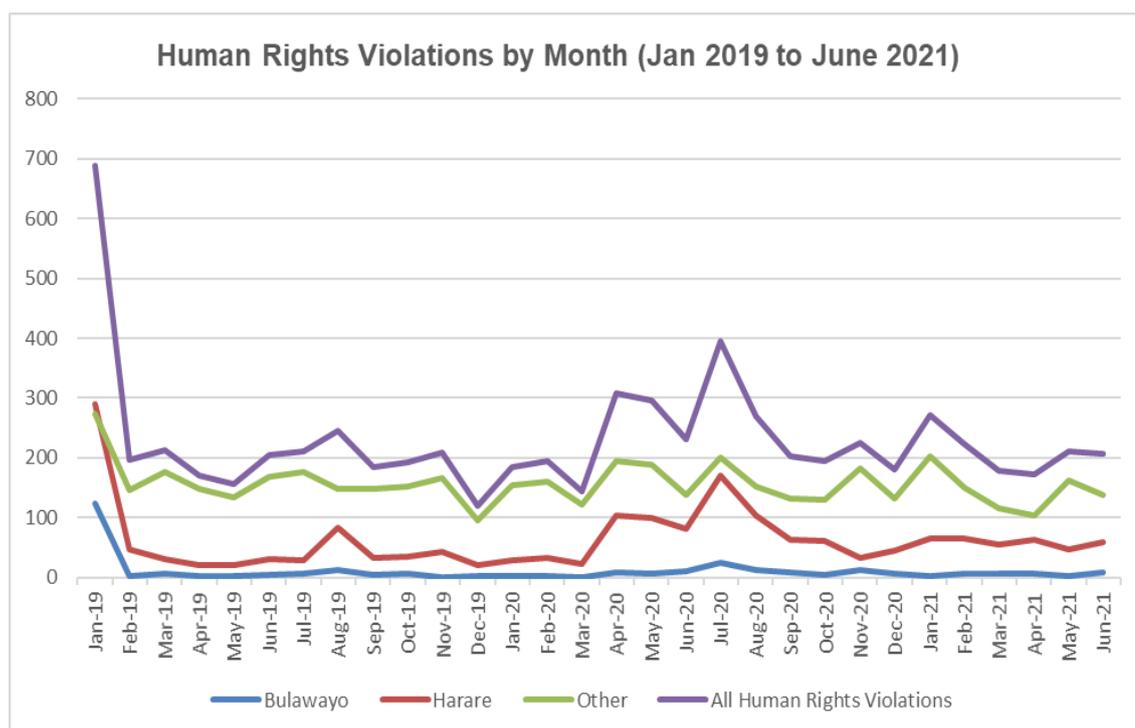
8. Location of human rights violations

8.1.1 The graph below has been compiled by CPIT from data extracted from ZPP’s monthly monitoring reports for 2019, 2020 and 2021²². The graph shows the total number of human rights violations recorded by ZPP over the period, split by province.

²⁰ Zimbabwe Peace Project, ‘[Monthly monitoring report](#)’ (page 5), October 2019

²¹ ZPP, ‘[Monthly monitoring report](#)’, April 2020

²² ZPP, Monthly monitoring reports for January 2019 to June 2021, see [Bibliography](#)



*Spike in cases in January 2019 coincides with the fuel protests.²³ Spike in cases in July 2020 coincides with attempted protests.²⁴

8.1.2 The table below has been compiled by CPIT and shows the number and proportion of human rights violations recorded by ZPP, split by province, for 2019, 2020 and the first half of 2021 (January to June)²⁵.

Province	2019	2019%	2020	2020%	2021 (Q1+Q2)	2021% (Q1+Q2)
Bulawayo	175	6.3	99	3.5	34	2.7
Harare	679	24.3	844	29.9	357	28.2
Manicaland	252	9.0	251	8.9	154	12.2
Mashonaland Central	492	17.6	388	13.7	177	14.0
Mashonaland East	341	12.2	325	11.5	153	12.1
Mashonaland West	298	10.7	277	9.8	141	11.2
Masvingo	237	8.5	272	9.6	100	7.9
Matabeleland North	45	1.6	86	3.0	23	1.8
Matabeleland South	41	1.5	51	1.8	25	2.0
Midlands	230	8.2	234	8.3	100	7.9
Error/rounding in ZPP data	0		-2			

²³ ZPP, [‘Monthly monitoring report’](#), Jan 2019

²⁴ ZPP, [‘Monthly monitoring report’](#), July 2020

²⁵ ZPP, Monthly monitoring reports for January 2019 to June 2021, see [Bibliography](#)

Total	2790	100	2825	100	1264	100
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8.1.3 A CPIT review of the table indicates that the total number of violations has remained steady over 2019, 2020 and 2021. The mid-year figure for 2021 is 1264 violations, which is less than half of the 2019 and 2020 totals. In 6 out of the 10 provinces, the proportion of violations remained unchanged between 2019 and 2021 (within a boundary of +/- 1%). The 4 exceptions were Bulawayo, Harare, Manicaland and Mashonaland Central. The proportion of violations recorded in Bulawayo and Mashonaland Central has fallen (from 6.3% in 2019 to 2.7% in 2021 for Bulawayo, and from 17.6% to 14.0% in Mashonaland Central). The proportion of violations recorded in Harare and Manicaland has increased (from 24.3% in 2019 to 28.2% in 2021 in Harare and from 9.0% to 12.2% in Manicaland).

8.1.4 The table below has been compiled by CPIT using data from ZPP's monthly monitoring reports for 2020. The table shows the number and percentage of human rights violations by province and the estimated number of violations per 100,000 people. The population figures are estimates, based upon projections calculated by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2015.

Province	Number of violations recorded in 2020	Violations as a % of all violations in 2020	Pop ⁿ estimate 2020	Pop ⁿ as a % of the country's pop ⁿ	Violations per 100,000 pop ⁿ
Bulawayo	99	3.5%	776,953	4.9%	12.7
Harare	844	29.9%	2,587,005	16.4%	32.6
Manicaland	251	8.9%	2,129,513	13.5%	11.8
Mashonaland Central	388	13.7%	1,402,579	8.9%	27.7
Mashonaland East	325	11.5%	1,615,464	10.3%	20.1
Mashonaland West	277	9.8%	1,826,039	11.6%	15.2
Masvingo	272	9.6%	1,761,869	11.2%	15.4
Matabeleland North	86	3.0%	891,726	5.7%	9.6
Matabeleland South	51	1.8%	796,555	5.1%	6.4
Midlands	234	8.3%	1,939,044	12.3%	12.1
Error/rounding in ZPP data	-2				
Total	2825	100	15,726,747	100	18.0

26 27

8.1.5 The table allows a comparison of the proportion of violations recorded in each province against the proportion of the population in each province. If

²⁶ ZPP, Monthly monitoring reports for January 2020 to December 2020, see [Bibliography](#)

²⁷ ZIMSTAT and UNFPA, '[Population projections thematic report](#)', August 2015

violations were equally distributed across Zimbabwe, then the proportion of violations in each province would be expected to match the proportion of the population living in each province. A CPIT review of the data indicates that 3 provinces recorded a proportion of violations higher than the provinces' population share. This effect was most pronounced in Harare, which was the location of around 30% of all violations in 2020 but which accounts for 16% of the total population. The other 2 provinces with a disproportionately high share of violations were Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland East.

8.1.6 For Zimbabwe as a whole, the number of recorded violations per 100,000 people was 18.0. The estimate by province varied between a low of 6.4 in Matabeleland South and 32.6 in Harare.

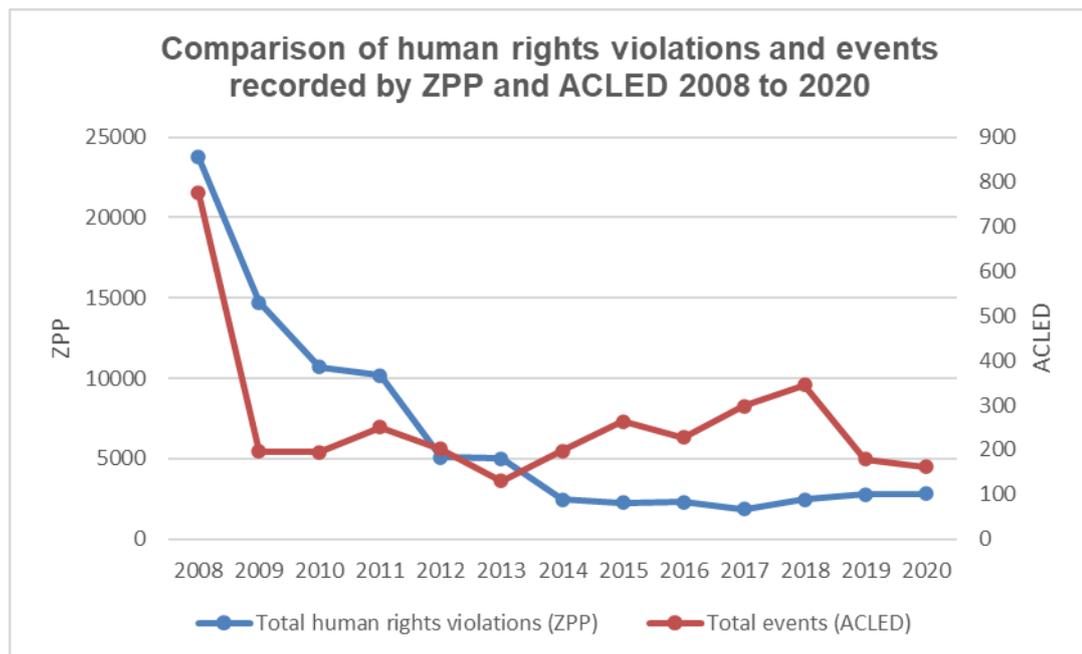
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Section 9 updated: 13 Sept 2021

9. Trends in human rights violations 2008 to 2021

9.1 Total human rights violations

9.1.1 The graph below has been compiled by CPIT and shows the total number of human rights violations recorded by ZPP for the period 2008 to 2020, together with the total number of events recorded by ACLED over the same period.



28 29 30 31

*ZPP data for 2015 is an underestimate as Aug 2015 figure is unavailable

²⁸ UK Home Office, '[Zimbabwe COI report](#)' (section 14.30), 25 March 2011 [ZPP data for 2008-2010, original source ZPP]

²⁹ FCDO, '[Corporate report Zimbabwe - Country of Concern](#)', 21 January 2015 [ZPP data for 2011-2013, original source ZPP]

³⁰ ZPP, Monthly monitoring reports for January 2014 to December 2020, see [Bibliography](#)

³¹ ACLED data downloaded from Data Export Tool, dataset available on request

- 9.1.2 A CPIT review of the graph indicates a downward trend in both the number of events (ACLEd) and number of violations (ZPP) recorded between 2008 and 2020. The number of events recorded by ACLED fell steeply between 2008 and 2009. The ACLED data then fluctuates between 2009 and 2018 before it drops in 2019 and 2020 back to a level similar to 2009. The ZPP data exhibits a sharp drop in violations between 2008 and 2009 followed by a steadier decline between 2009 and 2014, when the number of recorded incidents plateaus.
- 9.1.3 The ZPP data indicates that for each year, 2014 to 2020, inclusive, the total number of human rights violations recorded was lower than that for 2011 (when [EM](#) was promulgated) and also lower than 2013 (when [CM \(Zimbabwe\)](#) was promulgated). The ACLED data fluctuates between 2011 and 2020 but the overall trend is of little change, with the number of events recorded in 2020 falling in between the figures for 2011 and 2013.
- 9.1.4 Part-year figures for 2021 have not been included in the graph but are lower than would be expected, as compared against 2019 and 2020. Between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2021 (halfway through the year) the number of events recorded by ACLED (37) is less than a quarter of the total figure for 2020 (162) and 2019 (179). ZPP data for 2021 indicates a similar pattern. ZPP recorded 1,264 violations during the first half of 2021, which is less than half of the 2019 and 2020 totals (2,790 and 2,825 violations, respectively).

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9.2 Trends in type of human rights violation

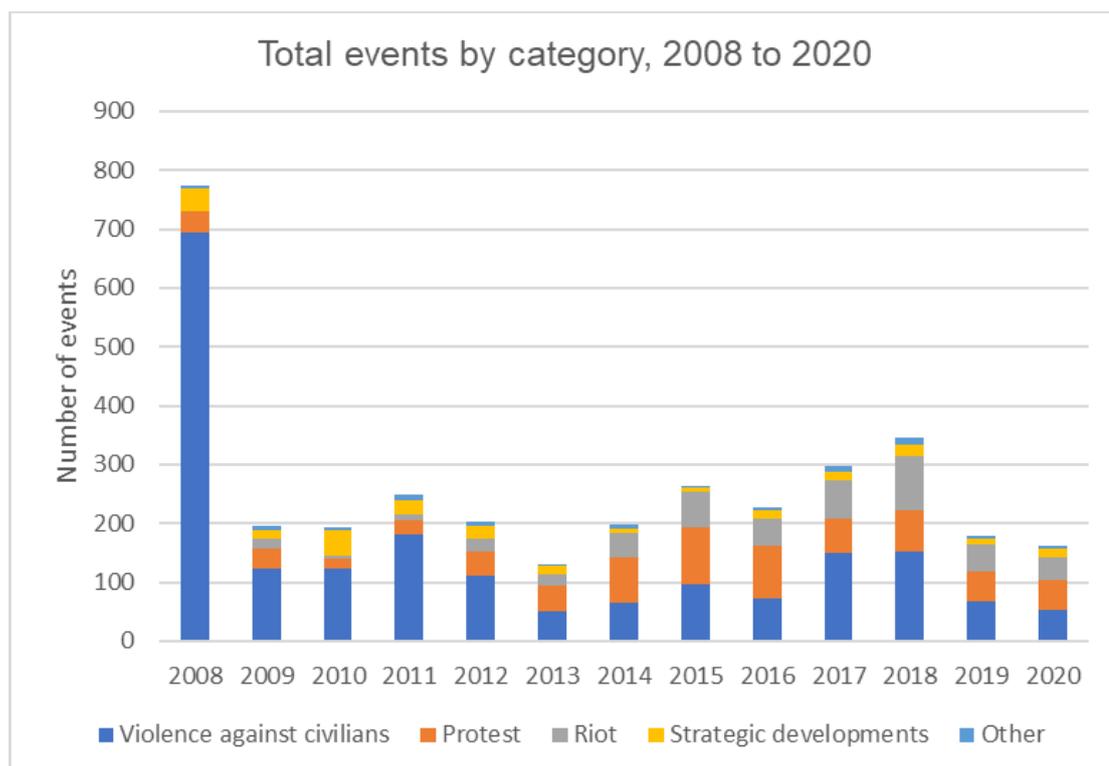
- 9.2.1 The table below has been compiled by CPIT from ZPP data and shows the total number of human rights violations recorded by ZPP in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014 and 2020, broken down by type of violation. Slight variations exist in the categorisations used by ZPP over the given time period and so the data has been re-categorised as required to enable comparisons to be made year-on-year. Data for 2019 has not been included as the breakdown by violation type is missing for June 2019.

	2008	2009	2010	2014	2020
Harassment/ Intimidation	12,593	7,865	6,839	1,680	1,280
Discrimination	366	1,314	1,033	383	351
Assault/ Torture	5,338	3,453	1,964	247	420
Sexual assault or harassment	84	72	24	0	12
Unlawful detention/ Arrest	514	284	91	15	179
Abduction/ attempted abduction	511	147	43	1	24
Killing/ attempted killing	223	18	1	0	29
Theft/ Looting	611	598	283	44	218
Displacement	2,508	680	281	32	24
MDP	1,009	294	136	21	108

Covid violation	0	0	0	0	177
Other/Unidentified/Error	-2	0	8	17	3
Total recorded human rights violations	23,755	14,725	10,703	2,440	2,825

32 33 34

9.2.2 ACLED records 6 main event types, of which 4 make up the vast majority of incidents recorded for Zimbabwe: violence against civilians, protest, riot and strategic developments (for example, high profile arrests). CPIT has used ACLED's data for the period 2008 to 2020 to produce the graph below showing the incidence of different event types³⁵.



9.2.3 Mid-year data for 2021 has not been included in the graph. For the 6-month period between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2021, a total of 37 events were recorded by ACLED. These events were categorised as: Violence against civilians (7 events), Protest (16), Riot (12) and Strategic developments (2).

9.2.4 A CPIT review of the graph (covering the period 2008 to 2020), together with the 2021 mid-year data, indicates 4 main points:

- From 2008 to 2012, violence against civilians constituted more than a half of all events in each year.
- From 2013 onwards (with the exception of 2017), violence against civilians constituted less than a half of all events in each year.

³² ZPP, Monthly monitoring reports for January to December 2014, see [Bibliography](#)

³³ ZPP, Monthly monitoring reports for January to December 2020, see [Bibliography](#)

³⁴ UK Home Office, '[Zimbabwe COI report](#)' (section 14.30), 25 March 2011

³⁵ ACLED data downloaded from Data Export Tool, dataset available on request

- The relative fall in incidents of violence against civilians has been offset by a relative increase in the number of recorded protests and riots.
- At the mid-point of 2021, the number of recorded events (37) is less than a quarter of the total figure for 2020 (162) and 2019 (179).

9.2.5 ACLED's category of 'violence against civilians' includes: '...attempts at inflicting harm (e.g. beating, shooting, torture, rape, mutilation, etc.) or forcibly disappearing (e.g. kidnapping and disappearances)'.³⁶

9.2.6 ACLED's category of 'riot' is defined as: '...violent events where demonstrators or mobs engage in disruptive acts, including but not limited to rock throwing, property destruction, etc.' Examples of behaviour categorised as 'riot' included: vandalism, road-blocking, burning tyres, mob violence and vigilante groups.³⁷

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9.3 State intervention in protests

9.3.1 ACLED defined a protest as: 'A public demonstration in which the participants do not engage in violence, though violence may be used against them.'³⁸ Not all protests recorded by ACLED are politically motivated. ACLED also includes non-politically motivated protests in its dataset in order to: '...capture the potential pre-cursors or critical junctures in a period of disorder.'³⁹

9.3.2 ACLED categorised protests into 3 types:

- Peaceful protest (no intervention)
- Protest with intervention (an attempt is made to disperse or suppress the protest but no serious or lethal injuries occur)
- Excessive force against protesters (intervention leads to serious or lethal injuries)⁴⁰

9.3.3 The ACLED Data Export Tool has been used to extract information on protests over the period 2010 to 2020. The graph below has been compiled by CPIT and shows the 3 different categories of protest recorded by ACLED and the percentage of protests which resulted in state intervention or excessive use of force.

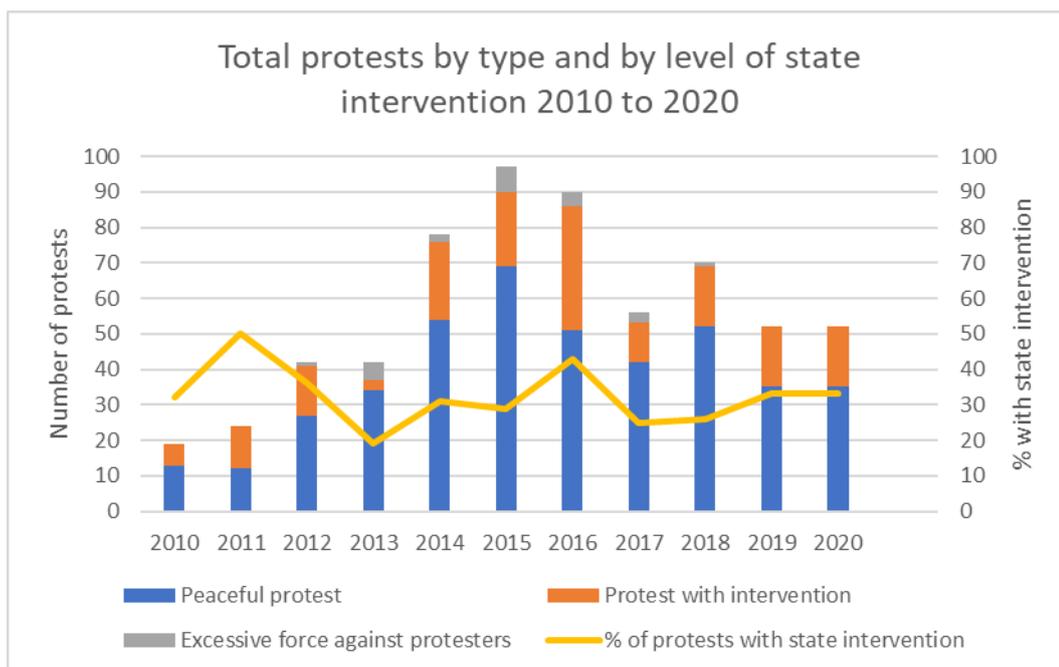
³⁶ ACLED, '[Codebook](#)' (page 12), no date

³⁷ ACLED, '[Codebook](#)' (page 13 to 14), no date

³⁸ ACLED, '[Codebook](#)' (page 13), no date

³⁹ ACLED, '[Definitions of political violence and protest](#)' (page 1), no date

⁴⁰ ACLED, '[Codebook](#)' (page 14), no date



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9.3.4 Mid-year data for 2021 has not been included in the graph. For the 6-month period between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2021, a total of 16 protests were recorded by ACLED. This is less than a third of the total number of protests recorded in 2019 (52) and 2020 (52). Of the 16 protests, 13 were peaceful, 3 involved an intervention and there were no instances of excessive force being used against protesters.

9.3.5 A CPIT review of the graph, together with the mid-year 2021 figures, indicates several points:

- There has been a trend towards an increasing number of protests over the period 2010 to 2020. The total number of protests recorded in 2010 and 2020 were 19 and 52, respectively, with the number of protests peaking at 97 in 2015.
- The data also shows that for each year in the 11-year period 2010 to 2020, the majority of protests were peaceful and – with the exception of a spike in 2011 – the percentage of protests in which the state intervened remained relatively constant at about 30%.
- In the 2 most recent full years, 2019 and 2020, and also the mid-year period between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2021, there were no cases recorded by ACLED of excessive use of force against protesters.

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Section 10 updated: 13 Sept 2021

⁴¹ ACLED data downloaded from Data Export Tool, dataset available on request

10. Opposition political parties

10.1 Overview of opposition political parties

- 10.1.1 In a March 2021 report covering the events of 2020, Freedom House stated: 'Political parties may generally form without interference. However, state media tend not to cover opposition parties, impacting their competitiveness.'⁴²
- 10.1.2 In December 2019 DFAT reported: '55 political parties competed in the most recent national election [30 July 2018]. Most of these parties were newly formed, had overlapping platforms, had little to no public profile nationally, and received negligible levels of voter support.'⁴³
- 10.1.3 DFAT also reported: 'The MDC is Zimbabwe's primary opposition party... The MDC's electoral heartland is the major cities, particularly Harare and Bulawayo, and the south-western provinces [Matebeland North and South]... MDC members join at the Branch level (for ordinary members) and are expected to attend party meetings and events for at least one year before elevation to the Ward level (for activists).'⁴⁴

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Section 11 updated: 13 Sept 2021

11. Movement for Democratic Change

11.1 Background and recent events

- 11.1.1 According to its official website, the MDC was formed in September 1999 and split into 2 factions in 2005. The larger faction was led by Morgan Tsvangirai and adopted the name MDC-T, whereas the smaller faction kept the name MDC. For the 2018 election the factions formed a coalition known as the MDC Alliance.⁴⁵
- 11.1.2 In April 2021, BBC Monitoring described the formation and composition of the MDC Alliance:
- 'In August 2017 an alliance of seven Zimbabwean opposition political parties was formed to contest the 2018 general election. Led by MDC-T leader Nelson Chamisa, it was named the MDC Alliance (Movement for Democratic Change Alliance). The following parties signed the initial agreement: the Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai led by Nelson Chamisa, the Movement for Democratic Change - Ncube (MDC-N) led by Welshman Ncube, the People's Democratic Party led by Tendai Biti, the MCD (Multi-Racial Christian Democratic Party), ZANU Ndonga (Zimbabwe African National Union Ndonga), Transform Zimbabwe and ZimPF (Zimbabwe People First) led by former diplomat Aggripa Mutambara.'⁴⁶
- 11.1.3 In June 2019, an Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response, based on a number of sources, described infighting between factions of the

⁴² Freedom House, '[Freedom in the world 2021: Zimbabwe](#)', March 2021

⁴³ DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Zimbabwe](#)' (page 29), 19 December 2019

⁴⁴ DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Zimbabwe](#)' (page 26), 19 December 2019

⁴⁵ MDC Alliance, '[Home page](#)', no date

⁴⁶ BBC Monitoring, 'Movement for Democratic Change Alliance', subscription only, 9 April 2021

MDC which included: 'Legal challenges in court over the control of the MDC-T name'.⁴⁷

11.1.4 On 7 January 2021, The Africa Report, describing itself as 'one of the leading news organisations on the continent'⁴⁸ (published by Jeune Afrique Media Group) set out the consequences of the factional dispute for the MDC:

'While the year 2020 will undoubtedly play an integral part in history - bringing the world to a halt as a result of the pandemic - Zimbabwe's politics will go down as an historic year for the Movement for Democratic Change, once a united front, now split into two: MDC-Alliance led by Nelson Chamisa, and MDC-T, led initially by Thokozani Khupe and now by Douglas Mwonozora.

'At the peak of the global pandemic in March 2020, a supreme court judgement ruled that the main opposition MDC-Alliance's rise to power was irregular. The court's ruling recognised Thokozani Khupe as the legitimate successor to the late Morgan Tsvangirai (the late MDC president) and interim leader of the party.

'But following a congress ruling on 27 December, Douglas Mwonozora was ruled to be head of MDC-T.

'A party recognised by the majority of supporters in Zimbabwe, 2020 was the year that the MDC-Alliance lost its leadership in the House of Assembly via the expulsion of its MPs and councillors (a total of 31 MPs), along with access to finances...

'As per the court's ruling, the 2020 financial year under the Political Parties [Finances] Act, saw the funds initially earmarked for the MDC-Alliance be handed to MDC-T (MDC-Tsvangirai), led at the time by Khupe.

'The opposition is clearly facing a serious challenge from an authoritarian regime, the ruling party Zanu-PF, that hopes to crush and fragment the opposition, inevitably destroying multi-party democracy in Zimbabwe, says UK-based Zimbabwean political analyst Alex Magaisa.

"The ruling party created the surrogate opposition MDC-T to essentially disturb the MDC-Alliance. It is not a fight between factions in the opposition, but a fight by the ruling party against the opposition to dismantle it and move towards a one-party regime," Magaisa tells *The Africa Report*...

'Thabitha Khumalo, MDC-Alliance national chairperson, describes events that affected the opposition party in 2020 as the death of democracy in Zimbabwe. Zanu-PF found a willing partner in the MDC-T to destroy the bigger objective of the opposition in favour of individuals who were open to benefitting from such a system.

'Khumalo says: "The MDC is working with the ruling party to stifle democracy in the country. Zanu-PF is motivated to dismantle the opposition, for them they would rather have a one-party state and they have found a willing partner through the MDC-T."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ IRBC, '[Zimbabwe: MDC including political status, organizational structure...](#)', 11 June 2019

⁴⁸ The Africa Report, '[About us](#)', no date

⁴⁹ The Africa Report, '[Zimbabwe: Will a divided MDC opposition keep the country safe...](#)', 7 Jan 2021

11.2 Members

11.2.1 In December 2019 DFAT reported: ‘The MDC’s current membership is 1.5 million nationwide.’⁵⁰ The DFAT report provided no information on whether this figure related to membership of one or both factions.

11.2.2 The MDC-Alliance’s official website provided no information on current membership numbers.⁵¹

11.3 Supporters

11.3.1 On 2 August 2018, the Commonwealth Observer Group reported the Presidential election results:

- Chamisa [MDC Alliance], 2.15 million votes (44.39%)
- Mnangagwa [ZANU-PF], 2.46 million votes (50.67%)⁵²

11.3.2 Data from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (adapted by CPIT in the table below) showed that the MDC Alliance candidate (Chamisa) won 4 out of 10 provinces in the 2018 Presidential election and the ZANU-PF candidate won 6. The table indicates that MDC support – as a proportion of all votes – is strongest in Harare and Bulawayo.

Province	Votes for Mnangagwa	Votes for Chamisa	Total votes (all candidates)	MDC Alliance support as % of all votes cast
Harare	204,719	548,895	765,983	71.7
Bulawayo	60,168	144,107	215,405	66.9
Matabeleland North	111,452	137,611	274,163	50.2
Manicaland	292,938	296,429	611,414	48.5
Matabeleland South	107,008	90,292	212,517	42.5
Midlands	352,027	257,960	631,261	40.9
Mashonaland West	314,541	220,111	551,453	39.9
Mashonaland East	334,617	189,021	535,458	35.3
Masvingo	318,964	171,438	509,523	33.6
Mashonaland Central	359,576	96,063	467,740	20.5

⁵⁰ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report: Zimbabwe](#)’ (page 26), 19 December 2019

⁵¹ MDC-Alliance, ‘[Home page](#),’ no date

⁵² Commonwealth Observer Group, ‘[Zimbabwe harmonised elections: 30 July 2018](#)’, 2 August 2018

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Section 12 updated: 13 Sept 2021

12. Protests

- 12.1.1 While some protests were organised by the MDC, or had the party's support, protests were also organised by other groups or organisations (see [Treatment of MDC](#) and [Treatment of other groups opposing the state](#)).
- 12.1.2 ACLED data for the years 2019, 2020 and mid-year 2021, has been used by CPIT to compile a table showing the number and location of recorded protests with an identifiable politically-motivated grievance.

Year	2019	2020	2021 (Q1+Q2)
Total recorded protests	52	52	16
Protests with an identifiable politically-motivated grievance (from CPIT interpretation of ACLED notes)	40	41	10
• Harare	27	22	6
• Bulawayo	4	9	1
• Matabeleland North	1	0	2
• Matabeleland South	1	1	0
• Manicaland	1	1	0
• Midlands	2	2	0
• Mashonaland Central	0	0	0
• Mashonaland East	1	2	0
• Mashonaland West	0	1	0
• Masvingo	3	3	1

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- 12.1.3 A review of the table by CPIT, indicates that the majority of recorded protests, with an identifiable politically-motivated grievance, took place in Harare (68%, 54% and 60%) in 2019, 2020 and the first half of 2021, respectively. For context, the population of Harare is approximately 16% of the country's population as a whole (see [Location of human rights violations](#)).
- 12.1.4 In December 2019 DFAT reported:
- 'Authorities significantly restricted the freedom of citizens to assemble and demonstrate throughout 2019. Although the MDC was able to hold nationwide rallies to mark the one-year anniversary of the 1 August 2018

⁵³ Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, '[2018 harmonised elections results](#)', no date

⁵⁴ ACLED data downloaded from Data Export Tool, dataset available on request

post-election violence, authorities have blocked most attempts to hold demonstrations in relation to the deteriorating economy. After initially accepting an application from the MDC to hold street demonstrations in Harare on 16 August 2019, the ZRP [Zimbabwe Republic Police] then issued a prohibition notice, claiming to have evidence that the protests would turn violent (it was subsequently revealed that the 'evidence' was the discovery of a cache of stones and other projectiles being hoarded by street children). Hundreds of police armed with automatic weapons, batons, and water cannon reportedly set up checkpoints on major roads and blocked access to MDC headquarters in Harare, while police used loudhailers to warn residents against participating in the demonstrations. After the High Court rejected an application by the MDC to overturn the ZRP's prohibition notice, riot police used tear gas and batons to disperse a small number of protesters who had gathered in defiance of the ban, with at least one person reported to have sustained injuries requiring hospitalisation. Authorities subsequently prohibited demonstrations planned for 19 and 20 August 2019 in Bulawayo and Gweru respectively.⁵⁵

12.1.5 ZHRNGOF's 2019 annual report, published in October 2020, covered the January 2019 protests and their aftermath, specifically violations perpetrated by the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) and Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP). The report did not specify the time period the figures related to:

- 17 fatalities
- 17 cases of rape and sexual violence
- 26 abductions
- 80 gun-related injuries
- 586 assault and torture cases
- 954 cases of arbitrary arrest/detention and other human rights violations [unspecified]⁵⁶

12.1.6 In the same report, ZHRNGOF commented:

'Between August 15 and 23, 2019, the MDCA [MDC-A] lined up a series of protests nationally against the government following which the Forum documented 75 cases of assault. On 15 August, 48 people were assaulted by anti-riot police officers with baton sticks at the corner of Jason Moyo and Second street in Harare of which 15 of the protestors were injured, The protestors were not posing any threat to police officers as they were seating [sic] down. On 19 August, 15 people were assaulted by police officers and soldiers with baton sticks and booted feet in Bulawayo during the MDCA protests while 12 people were assaulted in Gweru on 20 August.'⁵⁷

12.1.7 On 20 August 2020, ZimLive, an online news site, reported an attempt by a minor opposition party to organise a protest for 31 July 2020:

⁵⁵ DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Zimbabwe](#)' (page 26), 19 December 2019

⁵⁶ ZHRNGOF, '[State of human rights report 2019](#)' (page xi), 30 October 2020

⁵⁷ ZHRNGOF, '[State of human rights report 2019](#)' (page 33), 30 October 2020

'Before June 28, 2020, few Zimbabweans had heard the name Jacob Ngarivhume.

'But with a single tweet, the 42-year-old leader of the small Christian-based opposition Transform Zimbabwe party sent his political stock soaring.

"On the 31st of July I'm proposing a national demonstration. People are suffering so that (Emmerson) Mnangagwa can live out his fantasy to be a president. As a people, we need to think logically," Ngarivhume wrote on Twitter.

'A month later, just 11 days before the planned march, he would be arrested and accused of inciting Zimbabweans to carry out an unconstitutional overthrow of the government.

'He has twice been denied bail before his latest freedom bid which will be decided by a magistrate on Friday.

'The government deployed security services to block access to towns and cities to prevent protests from taking place. Dozens of people were arrested or abducted and tortured in a crackdown on dissent which the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference has described as "unprecedented".

'The demonstration may have been thwarted, but Ngarivhume's arrest together with journalist Hopewell Chin'ono entrenched a deep sense of injustice among Zimbabweans at home and abroad, leading to a global social media hashtag #ZimbabweanLivesMatter which has focused the world's attention on human rights abuses under Mnangagwa.'⁵⁸

12.1.8 On 31 July 2020 ZHRNGOF commented on the run-up to the planned protest:

'Since the call by opposition party leader Jacob Ngarivhume for the nation to come out and protest on 31 July 2020, a call which was made more than two weeks ago, the State has responded to this call with a heavy-handed approach in the guise of enforcing COVID-19 regulations. Prior to 31 July, several opposition party supporters, human rights defenders and labour leaders have been continuously persecuted by State security agents. The crackdown by State security officers has seen the arrest of investigative journalist Hopewell Chin'ono and Jacob Ngarivhume who were both arrested on 20 July and have been remanded in custody. The Forum, through its membership, has recorded at least 40 human rights violations related to the protests between 20 July to 31 July 2020.'⁵⁹

12.1.9 In July 2021, the FCDO's annual report (covering the events of 2020) stated: 'In July [2020], authorities took pre-emptive and heavy-handed action to prevent large-scale protests. These were fuelled by growing frustration following corruption scandals, imploding healthcare provision, and the collapsing economy. The authorities detained opposition politicians and journalists for encouraging participation in such protests, and cases against journalist Hopewell Chin'ono, and opposition politicians Job Sikhala and Jacob Ngarivhume, were continuing at the end of the year. The Government

⁵⁸ ZimLive, '[Jacob Ngarivhume: the unlikely Christian leader of Zimbabwe resistance](#)', 20 Aug 2020

⁵⁹ Kubatana; ZHRNGOF, '[31 July protest monitoring report – abridged version](#)', 31 July 2020

continued to use the legal system to silence critics, suppress opposition and discourage protest.⁶⁰

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Section 13 updated: 13 Sept 2021

13. Impact of COVID-19

13.1.1 On 19 July 2020, BBC News reported: 'More than 105,000 people have been arrested in Zimbabwe since March for violating regulations aimed at curbing the spread of coronavirus, police say. Around 1,000 were arrested in the last two days for "unnecessary movement" or for not wearing face masks... Critics accuse the government of using the measures to target the opposition and arrest activists, which it denies.'⁶¹

13.1.2 On 24 July 2020 the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued a statement:

'We are concerned at allegations in Zimbabwe, which suggest that the authorities may be using the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to clamp down on freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association... While recognizing the Government's efforts to contain the pandemic, it is important to remind the authorities that any lockdown measures and restrictions should be necessary, proportionate and time-limited, and enforced humanely without resorting to unnecessary or excessive force.'⁶²

13.1.3 In a September 2020 review of the COVID-19 national lockdown, ZHRNGOF reported:

'The 180 days national lockdown period was marred by violations of civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. The Forum recorded at least 920 human rights violations between 30 March and 18 September 2020. The consolidated statistics relate to abductions and torture, extrajudicial killings, assaults on citizens by law enforcement officers, attacks on journalists, unlawful arrests and gunshots. Other violations that could not be adequately quantified due to their high frequency include harassment, threats and intimidation. The lockdown was also marred by reports of violations on fundamental rights to dignity and rights not to be tortured, rights to water, food, medical services, access to information, and restrictions to freedom of expression, non-compliance with court orders and corruption.'⁶³

13.1.4 The violations recorded by ZHRNGOF during the lockdown period included:

- Assaults and torture including dog bites – 280 victims
- Attack on journalists – 20
- Unlawful arrests and detention – 538
- Abductions – 12

⁶⁰ FCDO, '[Human rights & democracy. The 2020 FCDO report](#)' (page 68), July 2021

⁶¹ BBC, '[Coronavirus: Zimbabwe arrests 100,000 for 'violations' of measures](#)', 19 July 2020

⁶² UN OHCHR, '[Press briefing on Zimbabwe](#)', 24 July 2020

⁶³ ZHRNGOF, '[180 days of what?](#)' (page 10), September 2020

- Extra-judicial killings - 4⁶⁴

13.1.5 On 3 June 2021, Bulawayo News 24 reported:

‘Heavily-armed police in Mutare [Manicaland] on Tuesday blocked and arrested over 20 Zanu-PF youth after they demonstrated against the city council for resisting their move to invade Sakubva vegetable and flea markets.

‘The youth led by secretary Danmore Mambondiyani had convinced hundreds of vendors and informal traders to besiege Sakubva vegetable and flea markets to force their opening after they were closed to curb the spread of COVID-19 last year.

‘But the move was thwarted by the police who stopped the march from Sakubva to the central business district, resulting in Mambondiyani and about 20 other youths being arrested.’⁶⁵

13.1.6 In the August 2021 edition of its monthly monitoring report, ZPP noted: ‘In Muzarabani [Mashonaland Central], police allegedly continued to deny the MDC Alliance clearance to hold meetings due to lockdown regulations but Zanu PF was holding its meetings regularly without disturbances.’⁶⁶

13.1.7 An Afrobarometer survey of 1,200 Zimbabwean adults, which took place between 16 April 2021 and 1 May 2021 (published in June 2021), found that a large majority approved of the government’s response to COVID-19: ‘...81% [of those surveyed] say it [the government] managed the response “fairly well” or “very well.”’⁶⁷

13.1.8 The same survey found that: ‘Half (51%) of citizens say it is justified for the government to temporarily limit democratic freedoms by postponing elections or limiting political campaigning during a health emergency.’⁶⁸

13.1.9 In addition, 72% agreed that it is justified for the government to temporarily: ‘Use armed forces/police to enforce public health measures.’⁶⁹

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Section 14 updated: 13 Sept 2021

14. Politicisation of food and other aid

14.1.1 In its February 2020 monthly report, ZPP described discriminatory practices around the distribution of food and other aid whereby: ‘citizens were denied aid because of their political or perceived political affiliation.’⁷⁰

14.1.2 The chart below has been compiled by CPIT using data collected by ZPP on incidents of food and other aid violations over the period 2019 to the first quarter of 2021, split by province. The chart indicates that the number of incidents of food and aid violations per quarter has fluctuated between 31 and 115. In addition, the majority of recorded incidents took place outside of

⁶⁴ ZHRNGOF, ‘[180 days of what?](#)’ (pages 10-11), September 2020

⁶⁵ Bulawayo News 24, ‘[Police block Zanu-PF youth demo, 20 arrested](#)’, 3 June 2021

⁶⁶ ZPP, ‘[Monthly monitoring report](#)’, August 2021

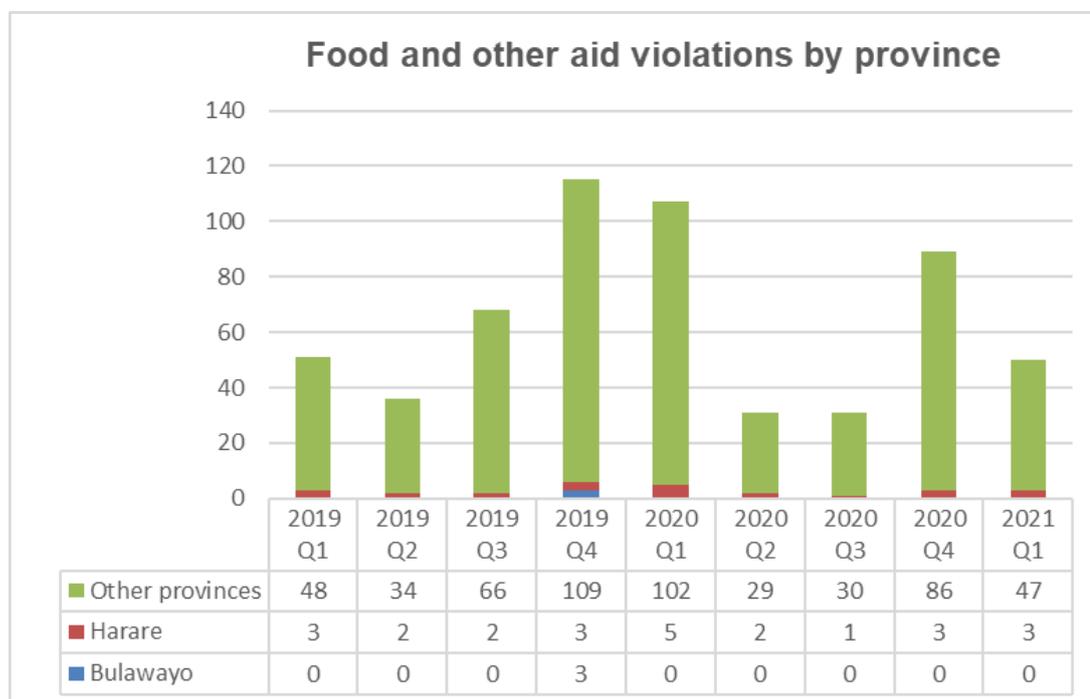
⁶⁷ Afrobarometer, ‘[Country direction and economic situation...](#)’, 17 June 2021

⁶⁸ Afrobarometer, ‘[Country direction and economic situation...](#)’, 17 June 2021

⁶⁹ Afrobarometer, ‘[Country direction and economic situation...](#)’, 17 June 2021

⁷⁰ ZPP, ‘[Monthly monitoring report](#)’, February 2020

Harare and Bulawayo (95% and 96% of food and aid violations took place outside of Harare and Bulawayo in 2019 and 2020, respectively). Bulawayo recorded zero aid violations in 8 of the 9 quarters covered by the graph.



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- 14.1.3 ZHRNGOF's 2019 annual report stated: 'On 18 October 2019 in Ward 11, Guruve South at Mupinyuri Primary School, ZANU-PF Councillor Samuel Machumi reportedly ordered village secretaries to compile a farming inputs database excluding perceived MDC Alliance supporters. Machumi stated that all MDC Alliance supporters should denounce their party first for them to benefit from government aid.'⁷²
- 14.1.4 In its February 2020 monthly report, Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) stated: 'In the month of February ZPP documented 38 food and other aid discrimination violations where some citizens were denied aid because of their political or perceived political affiliation. Cases of traditional leaders participating in partisan and nepotistic food aid distribution processes continued to occur despite a directive from the Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare for them to refrain from aid distribution. In some recorded cases beneficiaries were forced to chant Zanu PF slogans; which is against the principles of food aid distribution. It is however important to note that in some cases villagers resisted such intimidation tactics.'⁷³
- 14.1.5 The USSD human rights report covering events in 2020 noted: 'Government entities manipulated the distribution of government-provided food aid, agricultural inputs, and access to education and other assistance programs to exclude suspected political opposition supporters and to compel support for ZANU-PF. ZANU-PF supporters threatened to withhold food aid to

⁷¹ ZPP, Monthly monitoring reports for January 2019 to March 2021, see [Bibliography](#)

⁷² ZHRNGOF, 'State of human rights report 2019' (page 40), 30 October 2020

⁷³ Zimbabwe Peace Project, 'Monthly monitoring report', February 2020

citizens in Glenview [Harare], Mangwe [Matabeleland South], and Nyanga [Manicaland] during the period preceding each area's constituency by-election in 2019.⁷⁴

14.1.6 A March 2021 report by ZHRNGOF and ZPP stated:

'The ruling party ZANU-PF exerts undue influence over local government structures, such as Provincial Administrators, District Administrators and the Department of Social Welfare, which are involved in the distribution of food aid at local levels. This opens food aid distribution processes to political interference from ruling party functionaries such as local party leaders and activists, as well as war veterans and youth militias aligned to the party. The partisan control and distribution of aid enables ZANU-PF to bolster its electoral support whilst also punishing villagers who voted for opposition councillors. This significantly undermines the right to food for people who are perceived to be members or supporters of the opposition.'⁷⁵

14.1.7 And:

'There are mechanisms in place to handle complaints from people who have grievances about the distribution of food aid, including handling complaints about the partisan distribution of aid. There are also monitoring mechanisms put in place to check for partisan distribution of aid, but this has somehow not worked efficiently as shown in the discussions above. On the government side, there are monitoring teams from the national, provincial and district levels who are supposed to monitor food aid distribution and to investigate complaints raised at the respective ward distribution centres. District social welfare departments also handle and investigate complaints, but this has not been very successful given the overbearing influence of ZANUPF structures over local government structures, as discussed above. There are instances where people who have been discriminated against receiving food aid on partisan lines have raised complaints to local social welfare officers and they were ultimately given their food aid packages. But, in most instances, affected villagers choose not to complain for fear of being victimized by either village heads or ZANU-PF activities in their communities.

'On the other hand, NGOs have more effective monitoring systems and complaints handling (feedback) mechanisms that they use before, during and after food distribution exercises. Most NGOs have established help desks in food aid distribution areas which are manned by their field officers. They also set up suggestion boxes and toll-free numbers where aggrieved villagers can lodge complaints anonymously. The NGO field teams collect the complaints and they go on to investigate them. If the teams find out that there are villagers who have not been included on beneficiary lists, they go on to correct the anomaly ensure that deserving villagers receive their food aid packages...

'The NGO monitoring and complaints mechanisms are effective in terms of providing remedies and redress to people discriminated against during food aid distribution. But they can only work if the affected people are confident

⁷⁴ USSD, '[2020 country reports on human rights practices: Zimbabwe](#)' (section 1), 30 March 2021

⁷⁵ ZHRNGOF and ZPP, '[The Politics of Food...](#)' (page 18), March 2021

enough to use the mechanisms and they are not afraid of being victimized after they raise complaints.⁷⁶

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Section 15 updated: 13 Sept 2021

15. Treatment of MDC

15.1 Overview

15.1.1 The USSD human rights report covering events in 2020 noted:

‘There were reports of individuals arrested for political reasons, including opposition party officials, their supporters, NGO workers, journalists, civil society activists, and labor leaders. Authorities sometimes detained such individuals for one or two days and released them without charge. Political prisoners and detainees did not receive the same standard of treatment as other prisoners or detainees, and prison authorities arbitrarily denied visitor access to political prisoners. There were reports police beat and physically abused political and civil society activists while they were in detention.

‘Unlike normal criminal proceedings, which move from investigation to trial within months, prosecuting agents regularly took abnormally long to submit for trial cases involving members of the political opposition or civil society critics of the government. Hearings were sometimes scheduled when presiding judges were on vacation. Prosecutors in political cases were often “unprepared to proceed” and received numerous continuances. In many cases where authorities granted bail to government opponents, they did not conclude investigations and set a trial date but instead chose to “proceed by way of summons.” This left the threat of impending prosecution remaining, with the accused person eventually being called to court, only to be informed of further delays.’⁷⁷

15.1.2 ACLED data for 2019 and 2020, has been searched by CPIT to identify incidents in which the MDC is specifically mentioned in relation to an event involving state or proxy-state actors and protesters or civilians. The numbers in the table below refer to the number of events which included the search term ‘MDC’, not the number of individuals involved in the event. For example, a protest organised by the MDC will be recorded by ACLED as a single event, even though the protest may have involved more than one protester.

	2019	2020
Total events (involving interaction between state or state proxies and protesters or civilians)	94	83
Number of events with a specific reference to MDC involvement	10	13
% of events with MDC involvement	11%	16%

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⁷⁶ ZHRNGOF and ZPP, ‘[The Politics of Food...](#)’ (page 20), March 2021

⁷⁷ USSD, ‘[2020 country reports on human rights practices: Zimbabwe](#)’ (section 1e), 30 March 2021

⁷⁸ ACLED data downloaded from Data Export Tool, dataset available on request

15.2 Protests

15.2.1 The information below relates to state intervention in MDC-organised protests for the years 2019, 2020 and up to June 2021. The data has been extracted by CPIT using ACLED's Data Export Tool.

Date	Location	Protest details
14 Nov 2019	Harare	MDC youths gathered to protest against the Finance Minister 2020 budget presentation, in front of the Parliament in Harare. Police forces prevented protesters from proceeding and arrested several of them. [size=no report]
20 Nov 2019	Harare	Police charged with batons and used teargas to disperse protesters who gathered in Harare, for a rally organized by MDC. The rally was held notwithstanding the ban put by authorities. Several people were injured. Three journalists were assaulted by police. No fatalities reported. [size=no report]
14 Feb 2020	Masvingo	Police teargassed MDC Alliance members who were attending a court hearing in support of an MDC Alliance member in Masvingo. [size=no report]
19 Feb 2020	Harare	Police used teargas to disperse hundreds of MDC youth supporters protesting in Harare. They were demonstrating against rising poverty. [size=hundreds]
13 May 2020	Harare	MDC Alliance members demonstrated in Warren Park, Harare over the coronavirus lockdown and hunger and poverty in Zimbabwe. Three women from the organisation were allegedly arrested. [size=at least 3]
24 Aug 2020	Harare	Supporters of the MDC vice chairperson demonstrated outside the court in Harare during the case of the vice chairperson who was arrested on allegations of inciting public violence. Police used teargas to disperse the crowd, assaulted some supporters, and arrested three people. [size=at least 3]
22 April 2021	Harare	On 22 April 2021, MDC-T supporters demonstrated against their leader, accusing him of stealing from the party coffers, in Harare. Police quickly dispersed the demonstrators to enforce coronavirus regulations. [size=no report]

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15.3 Other violations

15.3.1 In July 2019 Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) reported:

⁷⁹ ACLED, '[Data Export Tool](#)', [search terms Zimbabwe and MDC], accessed 10 Feb 2021

'MDC National Vice-Chairperson Hon. Job Sikhala has been located in Masvingo after he was blind folded and moved from Harare by some Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) officers who arrested and charged him with plotting to overthrow President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government... Meanwhile, MDC Youth Assembly Secretary-General Gift Ostallos Siziba was set to appear at Harare Magistrates Court on Thursday 11 July 2019 after he was detained on Wednesday 10 July 2019 and charged with incitement to commit public violence.'⁸⁰

15.3.2 In December 2019, DFAT reported:

'There have been a number of recent cases in which unknown armed assailants (in most cases) have abducted, interrogated, and physically mistreated perceived critics of the government before subsequently releasing them. The MDC reported in late August [2019] that 26 officials had been subjected to such abductions and mistreatment. Examples include:

- 'On the night of 13 August 2019, unknown armed men abducted a political activist from his home on the outskirts of Harare, and severely beat him with metal rods on his feet and buttocks before dumping him. During the beating, the men accused him of being involved in the organisation of the protests scheduled for 16 August 2019. The activist, who was hospitalised following the attack, had previously been arrested (along with six others) in May 2019 upon his return from the Maldives where he had attended a capacity-building workshop on non-violent protest tactics...
- 'On the same night, unknown armed men abducted an MDC activist from his home in a Harare suburb before beating and dumping him.'⁸¹

15.3.3 In a January 2021 publication covering the events of 2020, HRW reported:

'In May [2020], three Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance activists, Cecilia Chambery, Netsai Marova, and member of parliament Joanna Mamombe, were abducted from police custody by suspected state agents after taking part in a peaceful protest in Harare... They were assaulted and sexually abused by their abductors. They were then dumped in Bindura, 80 kilometers from Harare. While receiving treatment for their injuries, the trio were arrested at the hospital and charged with making false reports about their abduction. At time of writing their trial was ongoing.'⁸²

15.3.4 In a press statement dated 2 February 2021, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) reported: 'Harare West constituency legislator Hon. Joana Mamombe and opposition MDC Alliance party youth leader Cecelia Chimhiri were on Tuesday 2 February 2021 detained at Chikurubi Maximum Prison after they were arrested by Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) members and charged with undermining police authority.'⁸³

⁸⁰ ZLHR, '[Blind-folded Sikhala located in Masvingo as police arrest MDC...](#)', 11 July 2019

⁸¹ DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Zimbabwe](#)' (page 44), 19 December 2019

⁸² Human Rights Watch, '[World report 2021: Zimbabwe](#)', 13 January 2021

⁸³ Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, '[Mamombe and Chimhiri Targeted Again](#)', 2 February 2021

15.3.5 In an update on 13 July 2021, the government-owned Herald news site reported:

'MDC-Alliance members - Joana Mamombe, Netsai Marova and Cecilia Chimбири - yesterday made another attempt to delay their trial on allegations of faking their abductions sometime in May last year when they appeared at the Harare Magistrates Court.

'The State led by Mr Michael Reza intended to kick-start their trial with its witnesses lined up to testify, but the trio through their lawyers refused arguing that their issues were still outstanding at the High Court.'⁸⁴

15.3.6 A September 2020 report by ZHRNGOF provided examples of violations by various actors during the COVID lockdown which involved people affiliated with the MDC:

- 'On 27 August, the MDC Alliance reported the extrajudicial killing of the party's Karoi District Coordinating Chairperson, Councillor Lovender Chiwaya (34) of Ward 4 Hurungwe Central.'⁸⁵
- 'On 24 July, MDC Alliance member Mazwi Ndlovu was assaulted by ZANU-PF supporters in Bulilima Ward 2 in Matabeleland South. It was alleged that ZANU-PF members assaulted him for querying a partisan maize distribution list. He was taken to Plumtree Hospital where he was further referred to the United Bulawayo Hospital. He passed away on admission in Bulawayo on 25 July.'⁸⁶
- 'MDC Alliance Youth Assembly Chairperson Obey Sithole was on June 2 arrested for participating in a flash demonstration in Warren Park during the COVID -19 lockdown.'⁸⁷
- 'Bulawayo MDC Alliance activist Takunda Madzana was a victim of torture at the hands of suspected State security agents, who snatched him from his home and left him for dead after severely assaulting him.'⁸⁸
- 'MDC Alliance spokesperson Fadzayi Mahere was arrested for protesting against the government on July 31. She was arrested at Groombridge, alongside six others and spent a night in jail, to be released on August 1 on ZWL5,000 bail each. They were charged for "unnecessary movement" in violation of the COVID-19 lockdown regulations.'⁸⁹

15.3.7 In January 2021, International Crisis Group (ICG) reported in its update for that month:

'Authorities continued crackdown on opposition and civil society through legal system. Authorities 8-11 Jan [2021] arrested investigative journalist Hopewell Chin'ono and two senior officials of Nelson Chamisa-led faction of main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-A), Job Sikhala and Fadzayi Mahere, on charges of "publishing or communicating

⁸⁴ The Herald, '[Mamombe in bid to delay trial again](#)', 13 July 2021

⁸⁵ ZHRNGOF, '[180 days of what?](#)' (page 11), September 2020

⁸⁶ ZHRNGOF, '[180 days of what?](#)' (page 11), September 2020

⁸⁷ ZHRNGOF, '[180 days of what?](#)' (page 97), September 2020

⁸⁸ ZHRNGOF, '[180 days of what?](#)' (page 46), September 2020

⁸⁹ ZHRNGOF, '[180 days of what?](#)' (page 95), September 2020

false statements prejudicial to the state” which carry maximum of 20 years’ imprisonment; in messages posted online, all three had accused police officer of killing baby in capital Harare.’⁹⁰

15.3.8 In its April 2021 monthly report, ZPP stated: ‘In Harare, Mabelreign police disrupted an MDC-Alliance Harare West Constituency Coordinating Committee meeting on 4 April and arrested and briefly detained former Ward 16 Councillor Denford Ngadziore. Two weeks later, on 24 April, police, without proffering any reason, disrupted another MDC Alliance provincial meeting in Epworth.’⁹¹

15.3.9 On 2 August 2021, online news site New Zimbabwe reported:

‘Police have arrested and detained Nyaminyami Rural District Council Ward 3 MDC Alliance councillor, Taiti Busumani for deliberately sidelining traditional leaders in developmental projects in the wildlife-rich area...

‘Busumani (36), was arrested last week at Mola Business Centre and spent three days in custody without charge, detained at Siakobvu Police Station.’⁹²

15.3.10 In an update on 7 August 2021, New Zimbabwe reported:

‘Police were left embarrassed Wednesday after National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) officials in Karoi declined to prosecute Nyaminyami Rural District Council (NRDC) ward 3 councillor, Taiti Busumani... saying the charges against him were non-existent at law...

‘MDC Alliance Mashonaland West provincial spokesperson, Blessing Mandava welcomed the outcome before accusing police of being partisan.’⁹³

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Section 16 updated: 13 Sept 2021

16. Treatment of other groups opposing the state

16.1 Overview

16.1.1 ACLED data for 2019 and 2020 has been searched by CPIT to identify events in which the categories of civilians referred to in the table below are specifically mentioned in relation to an incident involving interaction between state or proxy-state actors and protesters or civilians. The numbers in the table refer to the number of events which included the given search term, not the number of individuals involved in the event. For example, a protest by teachers against wages is recorded by ACLED as a single event even though the protest may have involved more than one teacher.

	2019	2020
Total events (involving interaction between state or state proxies and protesters or civilians)	94	83
Category		

⁹⁰ International Crisis Group, ‘[Crisis Watch - Zimbabwe](#)’, January 2021

⁹¹ ZPP, ‘[Monthly monitoring report](#)’ (page 2), April 2021.

⁹² New Zimbabwe, ‘[MDC Alliance Councillor Arrested For Snubbing Chief...](#)’, 2 Aug 2021

⁹³ New Zimbabwe, ‘[NPA Declines To Prosecute MDC Alliance Councillor](#)’, 7 Aug 2021

• Student	3	3
• Journalist	3	5
• Lawyer	1	2
• Teacher	4	5
• Nurse or Doctor	2	3
• Other activist	2	1

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16.2 Journalists

16.2.1 Bertelsmann Stiftung stated in their 2020 Zimbabwe report:

‘Section 61 (i) of the constitution of Zimbabwe provides for freedom of expression and the media... While initially under Zimbabwe’s new dispensation, there have been some encouraging signs of tolerance and respect for political freedoms, the space is now shrinking. Despite a constitutional guarantee of rights, several laws curtail that freedom. The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act criminalizes media work and freedom of expression, including prohibitions on insulting the president. The Broadcasting Services Act hinders the free establishment of broadcasting stations. The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act has made it difficult for journalists to investigate corruption and abuse of power, while Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation’s monopoly over the air waves has led to poor quality programs. Other notable acts include the Public and Order Security Act (Chapter 11:17), the Official Secret Act (Chapter 97), the Censorship and Control of Entertainment Act (Chapter 78), and the Privileges Immunities and Powers of Parliament Act (Chapter 10). The problem of bias of the state-owned media has continued to occur following Emmerson Mnangagwa’s ascendancy to power.’⁹⁵

16.2.2 In April 2020, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), a Paris-based NGO which defends freedom of information, stated: ‘Zimbabwe is currently Africa’s biggest press freedom violator in connection with coronavirus crisis, with no fewer than five arrests of journalists in the past 12 days...The five journalists were all arrested while covering the lockdown that went into effect on 30 March [2020] and was ordered by President Emmerson Mnangagwa with the aim of containing the spread of the virus.’⁹⁶

16.2.3 A September 2020 ZHRNGOF report which focused on COVID-related human rights violations stated:

‘Journalists Munashe Chokodza and Leopold Munhende were assaulted at Warren Park shopping centre by soldiers on the evening of 24 June on their way home from work....The two were assaulted with military whips at a shopping centre in Harare, despite media being classified as an essential service. Soldiers were beating up people to disperse them from the shops

⁹⁴ ACLED data downloaded from Data Export Tool, dataset available on request

⁹⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung, [‘BTI 2020 Country Report – Zimbabwe’](#) (page 10), 29 April 2020

⁹⁶ RSF, [‘Five Zimbabwean reporters arrested while covering coronavirus lockdown’](#), 10 April 2020

when the two journalists were stopped and asked why they were not respecting lockdown restrictions. They told the soldiers they were coming from work, produced their press cards but the soldier [sic] would have none of it.⁹⁷

16.2.4 In a January 2021 publication covering the events of 2020, HRW reported:

‘On the eve of the July 30, anti-corruption protests, security forces raided the Bulawayo home of Mduduzi Mathuthu. Mathuthuisa prominent journalist and editor of the online newspaper Zimlive. Failing to find him, they arrested his family members, including his nephew, Tawanda Muchehiwa. The security agents allegedly tortured Muchehiwa. The torture resulted in serious injuries, including extensive bruises and an acute kidney injury.

‘On September 18, Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) leader Takudzwa Ngadziore was attacked, assaulted, and abducted by unidentified men while addressing a press conference to protest the torture of Muchehiwa. He was later arrested by police on charges of inciting public violence.’⁹⁸

16.2.5 In a March 2021 report covering the events of 2020, Freedom House stated:

‘Journalists continued to face detention and arrest throughout the year. In May 2020, two journalists were arrested for violating COVID-19 lockdown measures when they tried to interview MDC members who alleged abuse at the hands of the authorities, even though journalists were considered essential workers. The two were bailed later that month. In late June, a freelance journalist working with Voice of America was reportedly charged with undermining the president’s authority and was released pending a trial, though police denied he was a suspect.’⁹⁹

16.2.6 In June 2021, the Zimbabwean arm of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) published its annual report (covering the events of 2020) and stated:

‘Following the declaration of Zimbabwe’s COVID-19 Regulations on 30 March 2020, the country witnessed an upsurge in the number of journalists that were harrassed, intimidated, assaulted and detained by members of the police and the army while covering their lawful professional duties.

‘Violations involving 52 media workers that include journalists, vendors and media students, were recorded during the year under review.’¹⁰⁰

16.2.7 And:

‘In a positive development, a panel comprising journalists, media lecturers and representatives of civic society, noted that while relations between the media and government had relatively improved, more still needs to be done to foster media freedom and the enjoyment of freedom of expression rights.

⁹⁷ ZHRNGOF, ‘[180 days of what?](#)’ (page 104), September 2020

⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch, ‘[World report 2021: Zimbabwe](#)’, 13 January 2021

⁹⁹ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the world 2021: Zimbabwe](#)’ (section D), March 2021

¹⁰⁰ MISA Zimbabwe, ‘[State of the media 2020 report](#)’ (page 10), June 2021

'The panelists who met in January 2020... noted that the current Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, Monica Mutsvangwa, is "proactive" in engaging with journalists...

'In a summary of their findings [covering the period November 2015 to January 2020]... the panelists said in some instances, the Minister had intervened to prevent "threatened" arrests of journalists conducting their lawful professional duties.

'It was noted that the ongoing engagements between the media and government was a positive departure from the animosity and suspicion that existed in the past.'¹⁰¹

16.2.8 In its February 2021 monthly report, Zimbabwe Peace Project stated:

'ZRP officers also arrested Kumbirai Mafunda, a freelance journalist inside Harare Magistrates Court, where he was covering the appearance in court of [activist] Haruzivishe. Earlier in the month, police in Machipisa, Highfields, Harare, had briefly detained NewsDay journalist Simbarashe Sithole.'¹⁰²

16.2.9 RSF, in an undated entry on its Zimbabwe country page, observed:

'Installed as president in November 2017 and then elected to the position in July 2018, Emmerson Mnangagwa, Robert Mugabe's former vice-president, pledged to reinforce the pillars of democracy including the media, which were harassed and gagged for 37 years under his dictatorial predecessor. However, Mnangagwa was notorious for suppressing dissent when he was national security minister and his first steps with regard to press freedom have been marked more by promises than anything like the concrete progress for which that journalists had hoped. Access to information has improved and self-censorship has declined, but journalists are still often attacked or arrested. The blocking of social media at the start of 2019, when major protests against a fuel price hike were being organised, shows that the regime has not renounced the use of cyber-censorship to prevent information from circulating. Hopes of journalistic renewal were further dampened in 2020 when Zimbabwe positioned itself between Nigeria and Uganda on the podium of Africa's most repressive countries with regard to the coverage of the coronavirus crisis. After helping to expose a case of overbilling for medical supplies to combat the pandemic, investigative reporter Hopewell Chin'ono spent most of the second half of the year in prison. His arbitrary detention was a glaring symbol of the government's failure to turn the page on the years-long predatory behaviour towards press freedom. The security apparatus has not yet lost the habit of harassing journalists and acts of intimidation, verbal attacks and confiscation of equipment are all still standard practice. The end of the broadcast monopoly long held by the state radio and TV broadcaster ZBC began to seem illusory when licences were granted to TV channels and community radio stations linked to military officers and the ruling party. Extremely harsh media laws are still in effect and, when new laws have been adopted, their provisions are just as draconian as those they replaced. Journalists are worried about a cyber-crime bill that is being drafted because it would allow the security

¹⁰¹ MISA Zimbabwe, '[State of the media 2020 report](#)' (page 8), June 2021

¹⁰² ZPP, '[Monthly monitoring report](#)', February 2021

apparatus to legally spy on private conversations. The army chief's reference to social media as a "threat to national security" has reinforced their fears.¹⁰³

16.2.10 The RSF website also noted that Zimbabwe is ranked 130th out of 180 countries in its 2021 World Press Freedom Index. However it also reported that no journalists, citizen journalists or media assistants had been killed or imprisoned in 2021.^{104 105}

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16.3 Civil society activists

16.3.1 In December 2019, DFAT reported:

'Unconfirmed statements by government officials put the number of [civil society organisations] CSOs operating in Zimbabwe at over 20,000. CSOs conduct activities on a wide range of social, cultural, political, and economic issues. A number of domestic and international NGOs investigate and publish their findings on human rights cases... Security authorities reportedly remain suspicious of the motivations of CSOs and see their activities as a threat to national stability, particularly in the wake of the January 2019 fuel protests. Following these protests, authorities charged an unprecedented 22 people (including prominent CSO leaders and activists) with subverting a constitutional government, which carries a penalty of up to 20 years' imprisonment. At least 10 individuals face treason charges, for which the death penalty is applicable... After the aborted August 2019 protests in Harare, authorities reportedly arrested 128 activists in Harare and an undisclosed number nationwide.'¹⁰⁶

16.3.2 In a March 2021 report covering the events of 2020, Freedom House stated: 'NGOs face restrictions under laws including the CLCRA and the Private Voluntary Organisations Act, despite rights laid out for them in the constitution. NGO leaders and members faced detentions, abductions, and continued scrutiny in 2020.'¹⁰⁷

16.3.3 Online news site Bloomberg reported on 4 August 2020:

'Protests against economic turmoil, arrests and human-rights abuses in Zimbabwe have moved online with a hashtag that's plays on the #BlackLivesMatter movement. The #ZimbabweanLivesMatter tag started after security forces blocked a street demonstration last week... President Emmerson Mnangagwa labeled [sic] the planned street protests an "insurrection" meant to topple his administration. In a televised speech on Tuesday, he said "dark forces" within and outside the country were undermining economic recovery. "The bad apples that have attempted to divide our people and to weaken our systems will be flushed out," he said.'¹⁰⁸

16.3.4 In its February 2021 monthly report, Zimbabwe Peace Project stated:

¹⁰³ RSF, '[Zimbabwe](#)', no date

¹⁰⁴ RSF, '[Zimbabwe](#)', no date

¹⁰⁵ RSF, '[Violations of press freedom barometer](#)', no date

¹⁰⁶ DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Zimbabwe](#)' (page 29-30), 19 December 2019

¹⁰⁷ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the world 2021: Zimbabwe](#)' (section E), March 2021

¹⁰⁸ Bloomberg, '[Zimbabwe Protesters Draw Inspiration From Black Lives Matter](#)', 4 August 2020

'Zimbabwean authorities on Friday 26 February 2021 arrested student leaders, juveniles and a journalist in a fresh crackdown on human rights defenders. First to be arrested by ZRP officers, were three students namely Richard Paradzayi, Paidamoyo Masaraure and Liam Kanengoni, who were apprehended at Harare Magistrates Court on allegations of unnecessary movement. Paradzayi, Masaraure and Kanengoni were detained at Harare Central Police Station.'¹⁰⁹

16.3.5 In its March 2021 monthly report, Zimbabwe Peace Project stated: 'Opposition and pro-democracy campaigner, Makomborero Haruzivishe was arrested on 18 February 2021. Haruzivishe was arrested at gunpoint by state security agents who allegedly threatened to shoot him.'¹¹⁰

16.3.6 Online news site Voice of America reported in April 2021: 'Zimbabwe's main opposition party says the government is again cracking down on critics with a prison sentence given to 28-year-old Makomborero Haruzivishe... His arrest after months on the run, follows an accusation that he incited violence in a protest demanding the government provide more support to poor Zimbabweans... Zimbabwe's government says the conviction of Haruzivishe — who has taken part in many anti-government protests — was legitimate and legal.'¹¹¹

16.3.7 On 27 June 2021, online news site Mail & Guardian reported: 'The community of Dinde in northern Zimbabwe is increasing its lobbying efforts to halt a coal mining project on ancestral land that is being explored by Chinese company Beifa investments. More than 100 civil society organisations have reaffirmed their support for the Dinde community following the court appearance of Dinde Residents Association vice-chairperson Never Tshuma last week. 'Tshuma appeared at the Hwange magistrate's court on 17 June for "inciting public violence" while protesting against the proposed coal project in April.'¹¹²

16.3.8 In an address to ZANU-PF members on 14 July 2021, reported by the government-owned Herald news site, President Mnangagwa said: 'As the election season unfolds, we are observing a notable number of NGOs diverting from their operational mandates to delve into political matters, that amounts to interference in the internal affairs of our sovereign country. 'My Government will not brook any such disregard for our laws and will proceed to de-register all organisations found in the wrong.'¹¹³

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¹⁰⁹ ZPP, '[Monthly monitoring report](#)', February 2021

¹¹⁰ ZPP, '[Monthly monitoring report](#)', March 2021

¹¹¹ Voice of America, '[Zimbabwe Court Jails Opposition Activist...](#)', 7 April 2021

¹¹² Mail & Guardian, '[Zimbabweans protest coal mine](#)', 27 June 2021

¹¹³ The Herald, '[Clock ticks for rogue NGOs](#)', 15 July 2021

16.4 Health professionals and teachers

16.4.1 In December 2019, DFAT reported:

'On the night of 14 September 2019, Dr Peter Magombeyi, the head of the Zimbabwe Hospital Doctors Association disappeared from his home. Dr Magombeyi subsequently reappeared on 20 September, after the government issued a statement of concern for his apparent abduction. Dr Magombeyi required ongoing hospitalisation after his return, with friends and colleagues alleging he had been poisoned during his abduction. Dr Magombeyi's involvement in the ongoing industrial action by doctors and nurses through 2018-19... led to widespread allegations that his abduction was state-orchestrated.

'The full facts of the recent abductions remain unclear, including the identity of the perpetrators. While the government's statement of concern in relation to Dr Magombeyi is a positive development, the government has yet to fully demonstrate its commitment to apprehending and prosecuting those responsible for the abductions, or to preventing any further incidents.'¹¹⁴

16.4.2 In February 2020, Newsday reported:

'Six parents and teachers in Mutoko were arrested on Thursday after staging a protest against the deterioration of standards in the education sector, before handing a copy of their grievances to government.

'The protest, which occurred at Mutoko Centre, shocked many as it was one of the few to be held within a Zanu PF stronghold.

'Some of those arrested were members of the Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe.'¹¹⁵

16.4.3 A September 2020 ZHRNGOF report which focused on COVID-related human rights violations stated: 'Not less than 35 nurses were arrested by State security agents for taking part in a strike over poor salaries and for demanding COVID-19 allowances during the lockdown. The disgruntled nurses were, however, released without charge following the intervention of the hospital leadership. The striking nurses were rounded up at Mutare General Hospital on June 19 [2020] and taken to Mutare Central Police Station.'¹¹⁶

16.4.4 And: 'A 33-year-old teacher was severely tortured by police from Senga Police Station who stormed his house while he was conducting private lessons for exam class students on July 28 [2020].'¹¹⁷

16.4.5 In December 2020, Bulawayo News 24 reported:

'A Masvingo magistrate has acquitted Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) president Obert Masaraure of violence charges but convicted the union's provincial gender and welfare secretary Sheilla Chirisamhuru of a similar crime.

¹¹⁴ DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Zimbabwe](#)' (page 44), 19 December 2019

¹¹⁵ Newsday, '[Mutoko protests: 6 teachers, parents nabbed](#)', 22 Feb 2020

¹¹⁶ ZHRNGOF, '[180 days of what?](#)' (page 135), September 2020

¹¹⁷ ZHRNGOF, '[180 days of what?](#)' (page 145), September 2020

'The two were arrested in June for participating in a demonstration demanding salaries in United States dollars at the Masvingo district education offices.

'They were facing charges of "participating in a gathering with the intent to cause public violence, breaches of peace or bigotry."

'Chisirimhuru was arrested at the launch of the nationwide salary protests on June 22 this year while Masaraure handed himself over at Harare Central Police Station and was whisked to Masvingo by detectives on June 26, where he spent the night in cells.'¹¹⁸

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¹¹⁸ Bulawayo News 24, '[Magistrate acquits ARTUZ leader, convicts another](#)', 19 Dec 2020

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Political overview
 - Recent history including election results
 - State agents and proxies
 - Political opposition groups, including infighting within the MDC
 - Non-political opposition groups
- Update to human rights violations since the previous CPIN (February 2019)
 - Human rights violations by type, target, location, victim and perpetrator
 - Impact of COVID-19
- Review of trends in human rights violations in the period between extant Country Guidance and present

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- Version 5.0
- valid from 14 September 2021

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: End of section

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