



W/O 3/93
CAMPAIGNERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
1992 - 2022

2022

ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

*A people-centered struggle
approach to human rights*



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Zimbabwe Human Rights Association

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2022

AT A GLANCE

Launch of the Shifting Power to the People Strategy.



Launch of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Village.



1267

new ZimRights members –
576 females, 691 males.



Introduction of a province-based sustainability strategy.

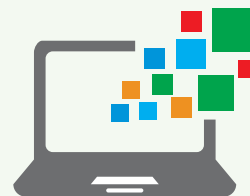


Launch of 6 publications including the new Members Handbook – We Believe in Human Rights.



91 466

followers on the online platforms.



Almost a century later, Mola in rural Kariba is now getting electricity following intervention by ZimRights.



Emergency support to

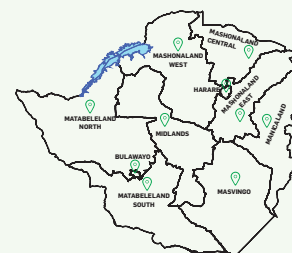
326

HRDs in distress.



2112

human rights interventions in 10 provinces.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The People-Centred Struggle Approach to Human Rights

ZimRights is redefining the human rights landscape in Zimbabwe with its Shifting Power to the People Strategy (SP2P) that puts people not only at the centre but in the leadership of the human rights struggle.

The adoption of the SP2P Strategy was the signal that it is no longer business as usual. The 2022 Annual Report is the first milestone since ZimRights adopted the SP2P Strategy. It marks a paradigm shift away from the top-down perspective of human rights, which casts citizens as passive recipients of rights handed down by the State. Anchoring on two pillars: **people-centeredness** and a **struggle approach to human rights**, ZimRights has rolled out the SP2P Strategy to shift active agency back to the people. The 2022 Annual Report unveils ZimRights' people-centred struggle approach to human rights.

Guided by the SP2P Strategy, ZimRights' **people-centred approach to human rights**¹ places citizens at the heart of human rights advocacy in Zimbabwe. ZimRights intensified its efforts to empower citizens to be the determinative players in setting, monitoring, and enforcing human rights standards. Driven by a **struggle approach to human rights**,² which affirms that human rights originated from and are ultimately guaranteed by legitimate resistance, ZimRights

grassroots human rights movement in Zimbabwe.

The 2022 Annual Report celebrates the growth of the grassroots human rights movement in Zimbabwe under the ZimRights banner over a period of thirty years, a milestone that defines history and seeks to influence the future. It is a growth spanning three decades of struggle and resistance. It positions an empowered citizenry as the main bulwark against threats to democracy, the rule of law, and the enjoyment of human rights in Zimbabwe. It also confirms through practical actions that the struggle for fundamental rights belongs to the people of Zimbabwe. By shifting power back to the people, ZimRights is replacing dependence on the state with local collective action as an effective means of preventing and redressing human rights violations.

The report also checks the pulse of human rights in Zimbabwe using the people's barometer of quality of life. The comprehensive assessment of the state of human rights in the country provided

1. On 24 March 2022, ZimRights adopted the Shifting Power to the People Strategy following 18 months of intensive dialogue sessions with local structures. Many lessons from local communities as well as other human rights groups across the world. See Human Rights Dialogue (1994–2005): Series 1, Number 9 (Summer 1997): Innovative Human Rights Strategies in East Asia: Articles: A People-Centered Approach to Human Rights.

2. Christof Heyns, (Springer 2001), A "Struggle Approach" to Human Rights. In: Soeteman, A. (eds) Pluralism and Law.

in this report goes beyond policy appraisal to examine the lived realities of the people in Zimbabwe. Building from the bottom up, the annual report systematically catalogues how human rights abuses manifest and affect people.

The report also captures ZimRights' efforts to translate human rights standards and norms into 'bread and butter' issues that directly affect the quality of life of Zimbabwean citizens. It also highlights the priority human rights issues identified by citizens in each of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe and points to locally owned and people-driven actions to address these issues.

ZimRights' foundation remains firmly established on its membership. Its decentralized implementation structure allows it to escalate human rights advocacy to national and international levels while maintaining an active connection with its structures and members at the provincial, district, ward, and village levels. Consequently, the 2022 Annual Report reflects ZimRights' expansive reach throughout Zimbabwe by consolidating the diverse voices of Zimbabweans from all walks of life across the country's ten provinces. The report captures first-hand accounts of human rights issues faced by people in their communities, as well as specific details about actions envisaged or undertaken by local ZimRights chapters to address human rights threats and violations.

During the reporting period 2021-2022, ZimRights consolidated its position as the largest grassroots human rights movement in Zimbabwe by growing its membership base of over 250,000 people. It also strengthened its community presence in all ten provinces of Zimbabwe. ZimRights expanded and deepened the reach of its programming to ensure that no Zimbabwean is left behind.

ZimRights reached citizens in high-density suburbs such as Zengeza, Dzivarasekwa, Mbare, Luveve, and Magwegwe. ZimRights members and secretariat also directly interfaced with Zimbabweans deep in rural communities like Sofa in Gwanda, villages in Mudzi and Uzumba, as well as informal settlements, farms, and mining towns throughout the country.

“

Guided by the SP2P Strategy, ZimRights' people-centred approach to human rights places citizens at the heart of human rights advocacy in Zimbabwe.”



ZimRights in Local Communities

Bulawayo Province

In Bulawayo province, topical on the people's human rights agenda were issues related to:

- poor service delivery,
- economic marginalisation,
- denial of political representation,
- police brutality, and
- the criminalisation of poverty.

Chitungwiza

Similar issues were also identified by citizens in Chitungwiza, who flagged as priority issues:

- poor service delivery,
- political violence,
- denial of political representation, and
- police brutality.

Harare Province

The human rights rally points defined by the people in Harare province included:

- the collapse of social services, and
- the right to education.

Manicaland Province

In Manicaland province, the people identified as priorities:

- service delivery,
- access to communal land;
- right to health,
- political intimidation and
- violence.

Mashonaland Central Province

In Mashonaland Central province, the people expressed their concern about a variety of human rights issues, including:

- shrinking civic space,
- the right to education,
- corruption in the police service,
- poor service delivery,
- politicization of farming inputs,
- child marriages,
- violence in mining areas,
- access to communal land,
- traditional leadership involvement in rights violations, and
- conflicts with oil exploration companies.

Mashonaland West Province

In Masvingo province, the people specified topical human rights issues, which included:

- internal displacements,
- labour rights violations,
- politically motivated violence,
- partisan distribution of agricultural inputs, and
- political capture of traditional leadership.

Matebeleland North Province

In Matebeleland North province, citizens expressed particular concern regarding:

- violation of the right to a clean environment,
- internal displacement, and
- partisan distribution of agricultural inputs.

Matebeleland South Province

Similarly, people in Matebeleland South province pinpointed issues of concern, including:

- unlawful evictions,
- corruption,
- police brutality,
- drug and substance abuse,
- child neglect,
- collapse in social services, and
- gender-based violence.

Mashonaland East Province

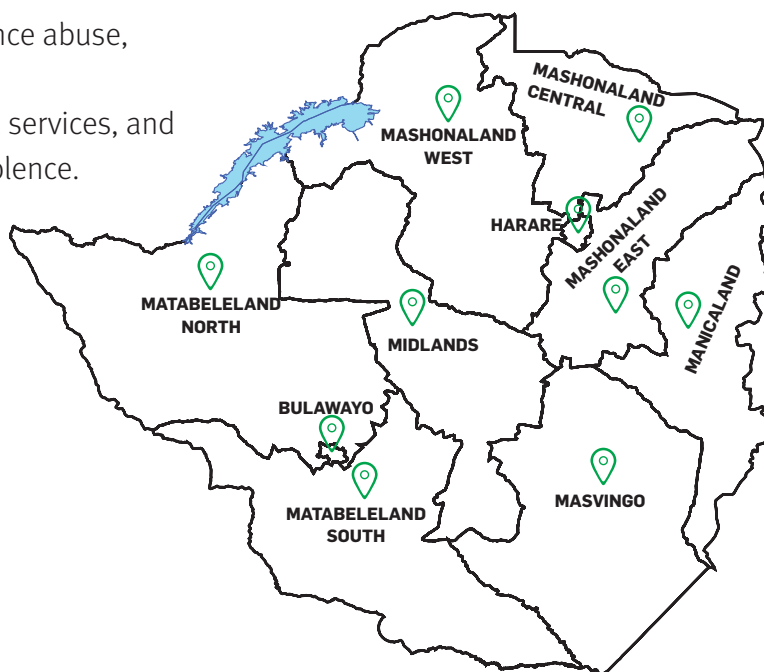
In Mashonaland East province, citizens raised concerns regarding:

- corruption,
- internal displacements,
- access to communal land,
- political violence,
- partisan distribution of agricultural inputs and food aid,
- access to national identification documents,
- abuse of power by traditional leaders,
- access to education,
- violation of political rights, and
- marriages.

Mashonaland West Province

In Mashonaland West province, people identified the following priority issues:

- civic participation,
- unemployment,
- poor service delivery,
- partisan distribution of agricultural inputs and food aid, and
- politically motivated violence.



National Human Rights Advocacy

As demonstrated in this report, ZimRights' SP2P Strategy is already paying dividends through the convening of a movement that defies partisanship and redefines the meaning of patriotism - a people-driven human rights movement that is home-grown and locally owned. By convening local communities to reflect and identify human rights priority issues, ZimRights has set in motion the process of meaningful inclusion of the people in setting the national human rights agenda.

The apparent similarities in the human rights issues raised by people in each of the country's ten provinces are a testimony to the fact that the challenges identified in each of the provinces transcend political affiliation, ethnicity, or tribe and are national issues. These issues are the rallying points upon which the ZimRights-led broad-based people's human rights movement converges.

ZimRights was able to successfully integrate the human rights agenda developed by citizens at the local level and escalate community-based human rights advocacy into its national program for 2022 through the following main interventions:

- Strengthening the Link between the National Human Rights Architecture and Local Communities.
- Strengthening the National Peace Architecture.
- Building a Culture of Constitutionalism: Hands-off the People's Constitution Campaign.
- Opening up Space for Women in Human Rights Leadership.
- Minority Rights Protection.
- Promoting the Rights of People with Disabilities (PWDs).



The flagship initiatives implemented by ZimRights as part of its national human rights advocacy include the following:

The Taking the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) to the People project

Is aimed at capacitating local communities to meaningfully engage with the ZHRC.

The Elections and Democracy Action Zone

To ensure the meaningful participation of citizens in elections and other democratic processes.

The Right to Peace Campaign

To build local peace structures aimed at advancing the right to peace in Zimbabwe.

The Youth Zone

To nurture the next generation of human rights advocates by providing opportunities for young people to engage in civic activities.

The Women and Human Rights Action Zone

To promote women's leadership in human rights advocacy.

The Minority Rights Protection Program

To protect the rights of minorities in Zimbabwe and further their interests.

The Promotion of the Rights of People Living with Disabilities initiative

To ensure the effective representation of people with disabilities in the decision-making processes.

Regional and International Initiatives

In 2022, ZimRights continued to carry out its mandate of articulating human rights issues affecting local communities at the regional and global levels. To effectively amplify citizens' voices at supranational levels, ZimRights targeted engagement with SADC and AU structures at the continental level and UN

mechanisms at the global stage. Strategic partnerships with key human rights actors, such as the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), and the University of Virginia, were leveraged to achieve this.

ZimRights' position remained consistent with its SP2P Strategy, which is based on shifting power back to the people.

Consequently, ZimRights' human rights advocacy at the regional and global levels

focused on creating spaces for citizens' voices to be heard and mechanisms to generate top-down pressure to complement the bottom-up pressure generated by the grassroots human rights movement to advance the promotion and protection of fundamental rights in Zimbabwe.

Knowledge Generation and Citizen Empowerment



In 2022, ZimRights developed a range of resources aimed at promoting active citizenship by encouraging people to take the lead in safeguarding fundamental rights and participate meaningfully in civic processes. Some of the key resources created by ZimRights during this period include:



The Great Gift of Active Citizenship: How the PVO Bill threatens active citizenship in Zimbabwe (January 2022)

A report that provides a comprehensive reflection on the Private Voluntary Organizations Bill and the role citizens can play to counter the shrinking civic space in Zimbabwe.



State of Peace Report (April 2022)

An annual Report which is a product of ZimRights' Right to Peace Campaign, aimed at taking stock of the state of peace in Zimbabwe.



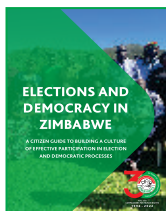
Rights and Traditions: Traditional Leadership, Politics, and Human Rights in Zimbabwe (July 2022)

A policy brief that unpacks the legal standards that regulate the conduct of traditional leaders, with a specific focus on the constitutional requirement for political neutrality.



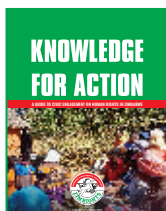
We Believe in Human Rights: ZimRights Members Handbook 2nd Edition (July 2022)

This revised handbook is an essential tool for ZimRights members, providing a roadmap for their work, updated tools, and resources.



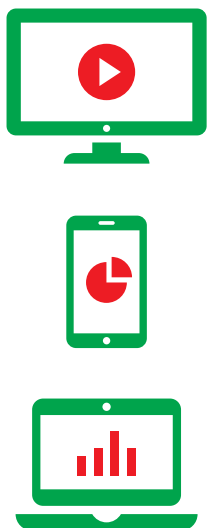
Elections and Democracy in Zimbabwe: A Citizen Guide to Building a Culture of Effective Participation in the Election and Democratic Processes (October 2022)

This manual aims to enhance citizen participation in elections and democratic processes in Zimbabwe.



Knowledge for Action: Enhancing Civic Engagement on Human Rights (December 2022)

The manual is a training and facilitation guide for ZimRights' Civic Education Process Facilitators to support their strategy to shift power to the people through the Action Zone Framework, focusing on disseminating human rights knowledge and empowering members and citizens to conduct their civic duties effectively.



Digital Activism

Throughout the reporting period, Zimbabwe leveraged technology to enhance the reach of its rights-awareness campaign and amplify its human rights advocacy efforts. In 2022, ZimRights prioritized digital activism to engage with citizens, implementing several digital initiatives, including:

Amalungelo Kodzero Knowledge Centre (AKKC)

A digital portal for human rights education launched by ZimRights in January 2022.

An Optimized Version of the ZimRights Website

A user-friendly online repository of easy-to-understand human rights information.

The Peoples Human Rights Manifesto Online

Coming up in 2023 is the interactive platform designed to host conversations and resources on the upcoming People's Human Rights Manifesto.

Vibrant Social Media Platforms

In 2022, ZimRights managed to effectively engage with citizens through such platforms as:



Looking Ahead

2022 was the year ZimRights unleashed its SP2P Strategy and it is in the spirit of shifting power to the people that 2022 became the year for consolidating the grassroots human rights movement in Zimbabwe. It was a year of disruptive thinking, a reconfiguration of how human rights advocacy, and a tipping point for ZimRights.

By putting people and their legitimate resistance to repression at the heart of human rights advocacy, ZimRights ushered in a people-centred struggle approach to human rights in Zimbabwe.

ZimRights convened citizens within their communities to define the human rights agenda and formulate concrete local strategies for the advancement of human rights. As a result, ZimRights grew exponentially as a people's movement, reached new terrains, welcomed new members, and embraced new technologies.

Looking ahead into 2023 and beyond, ZimRights is excited to see the people's movement in action. Through ZimRights' work, more and more citizens are becoming increasingly aware of their rights and are being equipped to serve as active citizens, defending fundamental rights and meaningfully engaging in all civic processes.

The 2023 elections, which lie ahead, present an opportunity for the people of Zimbabwe to reclaim their power by using electoral processes as a means to advance the people's collective interests. ZimRights plans to consolidate the people's demands into a '*Peoples Human Rights Manifesto*', which will effectively shift political power back to the people.

2022 was a watershed year for ZimRights. A critical mass is arising to demand the respect and fulfilment of all human rights in Zimbabwe and ZimRights is proud to be the convener of this unstoppable movement.

***A new epoch in human rights
advocacy in Zimbabwe has begun!***

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON



Takesure Musiiwa
ZimRights Chairperson

Welcome to our first Annual Report under our new strategy, the Shifting Power to the People Strategy (SP2P). This report emphasises the important work done by ZimRights communities across the country. It is a much more detailed report because it adopts a devolved approach that spotlights what was done in the communities ahead of the national reports. The SP2P emphasizes community leadership.

Why community leadership? Because a human rights reality in which communities are not part of the creative process that produces the outcome remains foreign and strange hence not owned by the community and not sustainable. ZimRights is thus not simply seeking to see a culture of human rights in Zimbabwe. ZimRights is seeking a human rights culture that is created through the leadership, not mere participation, of the communities.

Only when communities lead, can they fully own the culture and are driven to protect and sustain it. This is what Dr. David Kaulem meant during his keynote address at ZimRights' 30th anniversary on 17 November 2022 when he asked, *"How can people accept human rights as the first, among their many social identities? To see everything within the human rights lens."*

Watch the video here

 <https://youtu.be/Jx61wM3dsgk>

or scan the QR code.



At the same event, officially launching the Zimbabwe Human Rights Village, I said, *"Today, as we celebrate 30 years since our birth, we lay a new vision, of taking a bold step to challenge ourselves as the ordinary people of Zimbabwe to build a new village. In this village, we must commit to re-imagine the way civil society works."*

We must commit to re-think the role of the people. In the new village, the people are not ‘targets’ or ‘beneficiaries’, or ‘statistics.’ They are people. Everything we do as human rights defenders are not just projects – it is people’s lives. These are the values that we as Africans learnt growing up in the villages and we must embrace them today if our movement is to go beyond the next 30 years.”

The SP2P, dubbed ‘Tisu Anhu Acho’ strategy is a back to the roots strategy, back to the village, the small closely knit communities where human connection is authentic and intimate. These are the communities where Ubuntu thrives. In these communities, how do people protect what is important to them? The foundation is that they do not outsource the protection of their values. They do it themselves. Over the years, the international human rights discourse has become so powerful, almost suffocating out the role of communities.

As civil society, we almost caught the fever and slowly drifted everywhere else - East, West, South, and North - except the centre.

This report is an attempt to document how we have began the shift, under the SP2P, back to the most basic of human communities, reconnecting with their local value system and the power in their creativity, how they harnessed local innovations to drive the agenda for human rights protection.

Over the past 30 years, ZimRights has been organising in 11 regions across the country. In each of the regions, there are on average 7 local chapters, at least one in each district, with around 10 000 community activists that plug into the human rights discourse in various themes and communities.

A 2020 analysis of these themes during the membership audit led us to 8 main themes that we call ‘Actions Zones’. This report is thus structured to showcase our work across the 8 action zones as the arenas of action as well as across the geographical regions to show our reach. I hope the report gives you a good insight into our work in 2022.

I hope that this report is as relevant to our local champions as it is to our national stakeholders. I desire that when a member in Dotito picks up the report, their labour for human rights is fully accounted for. They must see their work in this report and celebrate its impact.

I therefore thank the Secretariat who went to great length to create an annual report like no other, capturing all the minute and grand efforts of all our members. It is these seemingly ordinary efforts that make our movement unique.

I thank every member of ZimRights, who in their own way has invested in creating a better world for us and for our children. This report is a tribute to all of you.

Takesure Musiiwa

National Chairperson

Zimbabwe Human Rights Association

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*Today, as we celebrate
30 years since our birth,
we lay a new vision, of
taking a bold step to
challenge ourselves as
the ordinary people of
Zimbabwe to build
a new village.”*

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Reflecting on Our Impact in 2022



Dzikamai Bere

ZimRights National Director

The year 2022 was a year of insane productivity as this report will show. It was also a year of high impact for ZimRights as the testimonies captured here will show. I would not have thought that it would be possible for us to deliver at such a magnitude within the first year of our Shifting Power to the People Strategy (SP2P).

Let us take a look.

In the year 2022, we have achieved a lot of things. Above them all, I will spotlight three achievements that I believe embody the spirit of the SP2P.

First, we have reconnected with the ZimRights membership much faster and deeper than our projections. Within the first 12 months of the SP2P, we can report here that we have welcomed 1267 new members into ZimRights. These are 576 females and 691 males, including 148 persons living with disabilities. Thousands more have renewed their membership. This is a vote of confidence and an acceptance that the power shift is real and authentic.

Secondly, the members themselves are taking action. In the year 2022, ZimRights implemented 136 individual human rights interventions in the 10 provinces of Zimbabwe. Out of the 136 interventions, 117 were implemented directly by the members of ZimRights with zero or limited involvement of the Secretariat. 47 000 people benefitted from these interventions.



1267

ZimRights new members

Perhaps our most touching testimony comes from Mola community in Mashonaland West where the Ba Tonga people, displaced from Kariba Dam in the 1950s during the construction are taking on development companies and the government for violating their socio-economic rights. There is real power in community action. But the real pride is in the fact that they are leading their own struggle for human rights.

There is some truth to the cliché that it is not a movement if it is not moving without you. The SP2P, powered by the 8-action zone framework, has had the effect of situating communities in zones of their strength. These arenas of action have triggered organic community responses to human rights violations in 2022. They allow communities to deliberately reflect on what it is that they care about and what actions to take to address the issues.

In line with the first two achievements, our third achievement that I wish to reflect on comes from our knowledge factory where we managed to create the necessary knowledge products for action. By December 2022 we had created 7 manuals out of 8 action zones. Among the 7 manuals, we are most excited about the 'We believe in human rights' membership handbook. For the first time in 30 years, we now have a membership handbook. In one place, a member of ZimRights has everything they need to know about their work as a human rights defender, giving them a clear understanding of their rights and obligations.

Another exciting knowledge product is the *Elections and Democracy Guide*, an essential tool most relevant for citizens who want to understand their role in making democracy work for everyone. Very relevant as we enter the 2023 election season.

As repressive systems improve in sophistication around the world, our activism too must become sophisticated. We must invest in knowledge, raising a generation of activists ready to tackle the most sophisticated repressive systems and defend human rights effectively, not mere rhetoric. Placards alone can no longer do it. We need more.

These are the three things that I am most proud of that our association has achieved in 2022 at a membership level.

As you go through this report, you will encounter these three in different spaces.

You will obviously notice that our report has changed. Our interventions are no longer lumped together. But they are broken down at provincial level, bringing out local actions and their impact. Throughout the country, you will notice that we have recorded in this report many human rights issues that our communities are dealing with. Juxtaposed to these issues are the actions that communities undertook to address those issues.

What we see here is the power of local organising – ordinary people coming together to respond to human rights issues. In 117 incidences, we see ZimRights members rising to the challenges of the moment. It is these 117 incidences that inspire us to believe that though the dark clouds of repression are building up across the world, human rights activists are pushing back.

Through small cracks, they are widening the opportunities to realise human rights for all. Every slight movement for rights is important. This is why Blaise Pascal said:



The least movement is of importance to all nature. The entire ocean is affected by a pebble.”

BLAISE PASCAL

There are pebbles scattered all over this report, giving wrinkles to mighty oceans of injustice.

From Plumtree border town where our Peace Action Committees (PACs) are challenging gender-based violence, confronting an abusive husband, to Nyamazizi where parents confronted school authorities to demand the right to education for their children.

From Dinde where communities are standing up to Hwange Colliery for destroying the environment, to Chimanimani where mothers are speaking out against child marriages. These actions, isolated as they may seem, are the stars throwing light in the caves of darkness, reminding the monsters that they shall find no rest, as long as communities continue to believe in their power. That though they possess no military might, their power is in each other, being together for a cause and the conviction that they are on the right side of history.

I hope that as you go through this report, you get as inspired by reading these stories as we were inspired in documenting them. I hope many more will be empowered to join the movement and add their small pebbles to the swelling oceans of justice around them.

Dzikamai Bere

National Director

Zimbabwe Human Rights Association
(ZimRights)



ABOUT ZIMRIGHTS

OUR BACKGROUND

ZimRights is Zimbabwe's first post-independence indigenous grassroots human rights advocacy organisation, registered as a Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO Reg No. W/O3/93.)

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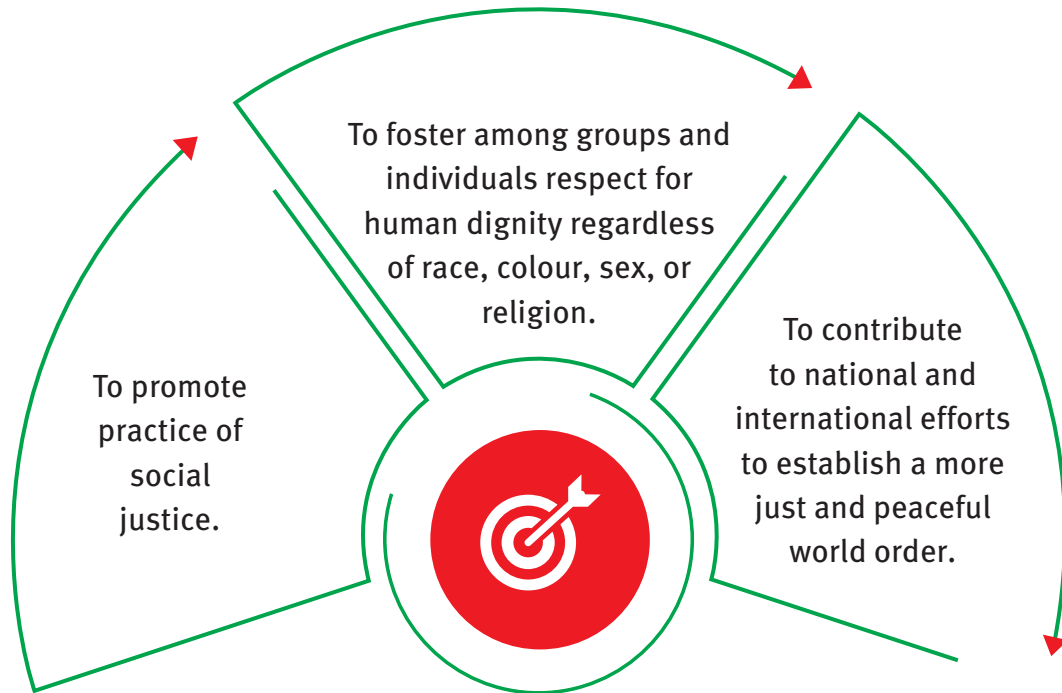
Since formation in 1992, we have built a movement for all Zimbabweans who believe in human rights, democracy, and accountability.”

ZimRights brings together ordinary people, who work together to advance the cause of human rights in Zimbabwe. Since formation in 1992, we have built a movement for all Zimbabweans who believe in human rights, democracy, and accountability. We have become a movement that transcends political loyalties and has in the past 3 decades brought human rights in places where it was taboo to talk about human rights and at a time when it was not fashionable to do so as well.

As an association, we have given birth to many initiatives and inspired active citizenry that has seen a flourishing human rights consciousness as well as proactive defence and protection of ordinary people's rights across the country. It is because of this legacy, that ZimRights has become the foundation for civic activism in Zimbabwe for many organisations that want to harness the power of the citizenry to advance human rights. Many of the human rights champions that our nation celebrates today are a testament to the legacy of ZimRights.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Our overall objective is captured in our PVO Registration. These are:

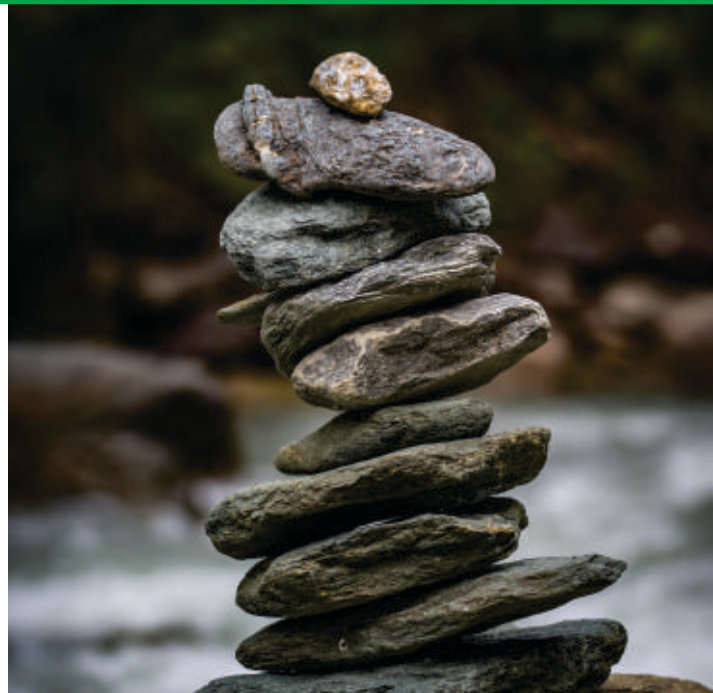


OUR VISION

In March 2022, we launched a new strategic plan which captures our vision. According to our new strategic plan, we envision a Zimbabwean society in which communities actively lead in creating and sustaining a culture of human rights.

OUR MISSION

To campaign for human rights in Zimbabwe through innovative, grassroots-based, and citizen-driven approaches.



OUR CORE VALUES

Our core values include community, activism, integrity and excellence.

Community



As a mass movement, ZimRights was founded upon the value of community. It is built around the ancient wisdom that together we can achieve more. With a membership of over 250 000, ZimRights is the biggest community of human rights defenders in Zimbabwe. Causing real change requires building a community of believers in a cause. This community must keep growing until it reaches a critical mass. But it is also a community of communities. Without this value, and an active belief in the power and beauty of community, ZimRights cannot exist. Everything else that ZimRights is, survives, moves and thrives within its communitarian nature.

Activism



Embedded in the tradition of community is the value and belief that activism matters. It mattered in 1992 when ZimRights was formed. It matters today when ZimRights is reconnecting with its roots. It has defined the story of ZimRights for 30 years. It is understood as tacking ACTION – positive progressive action for human rights. It can be raising a voice when there is silence about an important matter, it can be protesting when there is reluctance to address an important issue or taking corrective measures where wrong is being committed. What is key about this activism is that it is authentic activism that is powered by ‘CARE’ for our ‘COMMUNITY’. It is not activism if it is inspired by hate. Secondly, the ACTIVISM must be progressive. It is not activism if it is destructive like destroying property. The three key elements of authentic activism are: Progressive, Action, and Care.

Integrity



The work of human rights is an integrity project. We seek a society where leaders and citizens act with integrity. In doing this work, we must become what we are demanding. Integrity. This is a value that must cut through the ZimRights way of doing things. To use the language of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who said, *‘There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.’* This is true of human rights work. There is no path to integrity. Integrity is the path. This allows us to embrace our vision for the world as our lifestyle and way of doing business. We must create in our own spaces the same reality we demand from our leaders. In integrity, we must set an example. *“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”* Said, Gandhi.

Excellence



As pioneers in our sector, we must keep the bar very high in everything we do, aiming for nothing less than our absolute best. Human rights work is the labour of love as mentioned under activism but also it is about preservation of life. The dignity of life at its very best. As we fight for human rights, we bring to this struggle our best tools for the job because we understand what is at stake. There must be no compromise. Excellence is our signature.



***With a membership of over 250 000,
ZimRights is the biggest community of
human rights defenders in Zimbabwe.”***

OUR LEGACY

Today, ZimRights has grown to over 250 000 members (found across 242 communities, organised into 11 chapters) in all of Zimbabwe's 10 administrative provinces and aspires to grow even further as Zimbabwe's leading voice for human rights.

In building the country's biggest human rights movement, we have centred our work on building communities of action in the areas we are working in. Our members are active in national democratic processes like elections as well as local governance issues.

At least

 **86%**

of ZimRights members have participated in the past elections either as voters, observers for various observer groups, citizen observers or as election officials.

 **14%**

of them hold leadership positions in various spheres of community life.

Being a grassroots movement has brought us closer to the pulse of the nation. We have become the ears and the eyes of the communities across the country. We, therefore, have taken an active role in the cause of nation-building. Back in 1996, our members kickstarted the constitutional reform agenda. In 1998, together with other groups, we founded the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. Ever since, we have been instrumental in building a vibrant human rights movement with the establishment of a number of initiatives that included:

- the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP),
- the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN),
- Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC) among other vibrant civil society coalitions, (2000).

We embraced the national healing agenda at the inception of the coalition government of national unity (GNU) in 2009. We were part of the various civil society campaigns that led to the establishment of constitutional commissions such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). We have also facilitated critical conversations on nation-building, including on the national devolution agenda.

Our programmes over the years have built community resilience from violence, hunger, disease, and other disasters. More recently, we have worked through our 11 provincial chapters to support communities under COVID-19 pandemic. Our work with communities has brought us face-to-face with the ugliness of harmful power relations. In June 2020 the ZimRights National Council resolved to embark on a deliberate, inclusive leadership development process to include women and girls in all leadership structures as well as develop programmes dedicated to achieving gender parity in ZimRights leadership by June 2023. In addition, the Secretariat is now charged with developing programmes aimed at gender justice advocacy.

As we search for solutions to Zimbabwe's human rights challenges, our work endeavours to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure our interventions are sustainable and that they cover, from a local perspective, the broad national and global

challenges such as economic exclusion, diminishing natural resources, geopolitical instability, environmental degradation, and the multifaceted impacts of climate change.

To achieve this, we are part of the regional and global human rights movements. We have observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPPR).



PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

ZimRights is part of a wide network of human rights organisations and partnerships.



Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

ZimRights is a founding member of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. (The Forum). The Forum is a coalition of twenty-two human rights NGOs in Zimbabwe who, while having their own objectives, are concerned with the level and nature of organized violence and torture in the country perpetrated mainly, though not exclusively, by state agents and their ancillaries. It came into existence at the time of the Food Riots in 1998. ZimRights has supported the work of the forum in terms of local and regional advocacy.



Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC)

ZimRights is a founding member of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC). Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition is a conglomeration of more than 75 civic society organisations. It was originally formed in August 2001 as a collective response to the multi-faceted crisis of governance and legitimacy. These organisations work together to bring about democratic change in the country. Its membership draws from churches, women's groups, social movements, residents' associations, labour unions, human rights lawyers, teachers' groups and health professionals. ZimRights currently chairs the Coalition's human rights committee.



Zimbabwe Peace Project

ZimRights is part of the coalition that established the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) together with churches and other groups. ZimRights has been working with the ZPP on a collaborative basis to monitor the human rights situation in the country. ZPP works with ZimRights membership spread across 242 communities in Zimbabwe to monitor and document breaches of civil, political and socio-economic rights.



Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCodd)

ZimRights is a member of the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCodd). ZimRights works in partnership with ZIMCodd on socio-economic justice issues and to facilitate citizens' involvement in making public policy more pro-people and pro-poor.



Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission

ZimRights has worked with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) before in a number of projects. For example, ZimRights has supported the ZHRC by bringing its work closer to the community – as in the case of the Access to Documentation Campaign based on the ZHRC's report on Access to Documentation in Zimbabwe. ZimRights, using the *Working with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission Trainers Manual*, has trained 150 human rights watchdogs to identify, document, verify and report community human rights violations to the ZHRC.

Strengthened collaboration between the ZHRC and ZimRights in the prevention, mitigation and management of human rights violations within target communities. The ZimRights - ZHRC partnership was implemented through the development of a Joint Action Plan. ZimRights carried out Joint Human Rights Education and Awareness Training of Trainers Workshops and conducted joint Human Rights Quarterly Review Meetings by Regional Chapters with ZHRC.

International Federation for Human Rights

ZimRights is a member of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). FIDH is an international human rights NGO federating 192 organisations from 117 countries. Since 1922, FIDH has been defending all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (Southern Defenders)

ZimRights is a flagship ally of Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network. The Southern Defenders embodies an ironclad commitment to protecting human rights defenders (HRDs) in the face of attacks and shrinking civic space, both offline and online. It coordinates regional efforts to provide rapid, practical, comprehensive, and inclusive protection support to HRDs at high risk, defend civic space, and empower HRDs to mitigate the effects of repression. To this end, the Southern Defenders contribute to the respect and recognition of HRDs as legitimate actors and agents of social change with universally recognized and constitutionally guaranteed rights.



International Alliance on Natural Resources in Africa (IANRA)

ZimRights is a member of the International Alliance on Natural Resources in Africa (IANRA). IANRA is a network of non-governmental and community-based organisations, collectively striving for more just and sustainable use of natural resources in Africa. By combining community organising, research and evidence-based advocacy, its work aims to protect the rights of poor and excluded people to equitable benefits, that will lead to more inclusive development in Africa.



University of Virginia

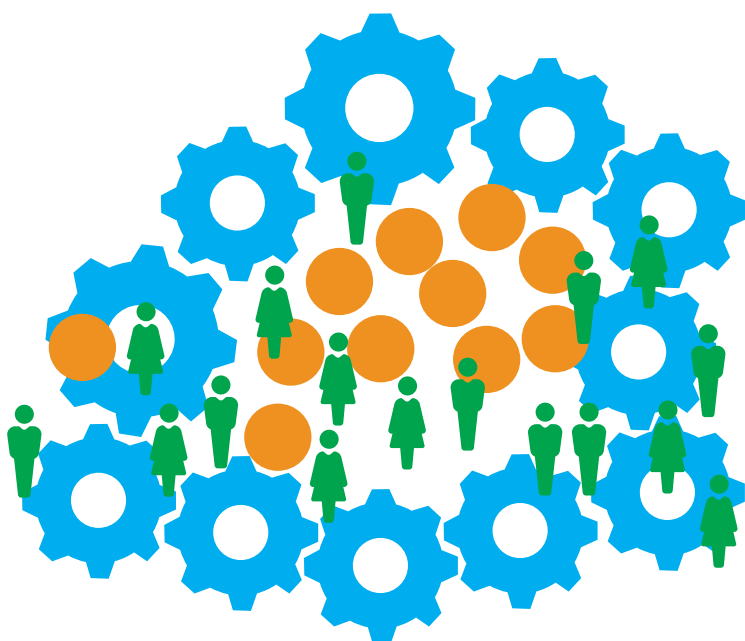
ZimRights in collaboration with the University of Virginia is running a Virtual Global Internship programme where students from the University of Virginia will be attached to ZimRights for a period of 8 weeks. This programme started in 2020. A total of 5 students have so far participated in the programme.



OUR STRUCTURE

ZimRights' highest decision-making body is the Annual General Meeting (AGM) composed of 8 members from each of the 11 regional councils, and the National Council led by the National Chairperson. Every 3 years, the AGM elects a National Council composed of 11 regional chairpersons, the National Chairperson, the Vice National Chairperson, the National Treasurer, and 7 other persons to bring the number to 21. The National Director is an ex-officio member of the National Council.

The National Council is the association's most supreme organ outside the AGM charged with implementing the resolutions of the AGM. The National Council, in other words, is the Board of ZimRights. It executes its mandate through six committees. To run its daily programmes, the association has established a Secretariat that is headed by the National Director with its Headquarters in Harare and regional offices in Masvingo and Bulawayo.



242 Chapters

Across the 11 provinces, ZimRights has a total of 242 Local Chapters at an average 22 Chapters per province.



11 Provinces

Across the whole country, ZimRights has 11 Provincial chapters, separate but connected.



250 000 Member

ZimRights has over 250 000 members across the country.



ZimRights' highest decision making body is the Annual General Meeting (AGM) composed of 8 members from each of the 11 regional councils, and the National Council led by the National Chairperson.”

MEET OUR 2021 - 2023 MOVEMENT BUILDERS



Takesure Musiwa
National
Chairperson



Themba Chivheya
Vice National
Chairperson



Jannet Kanavete
National
Treasurer



Phillip Muketiwa
Mashonaland West
Chairperson



Joyce Mhungu
Masvingo
Chairperson



Musa Moyo
Bulawayo
Chairperson



Entrance Takaidza
Committee
Member



Sarah Njanji
Committee
Member



Mildred Muzanechita
Manicaland
Chairperson



Liberty Nyadome
Mashonaland East
Chairperson



Silas Mupeta
Chitungwiza
Chairperson



Takawira Mashingaidze
Harare
Chairperson



Dzikamai Bere
National
Director



Kelvin Nzimba
Management
Committee Member



Lagos Maphosa
Committee
Member



Gladman Mazwi
Mashonaland Central
Chairperson



Zanele Nyathi
Management
Committee Member



Isaac Chamonyonga
Committee
Member



Merjury Makunere
Committee
Member



Malven Daka
Matebeleland North
Chairperson



Panganai Murime
Management
Committee Member

#BeTheChampion4Rights

**Why should you stand with
us for human rights?**

Because human rights are everything.

Human rights are the world we live in. And the world
our children will live in. Without human rights, our
world is nothing and humanity perishes.



Priscilla Mashinge
Midlands
Chairperson

MEET OUR SECRETARIAT



Rumbidzai F. Moyo
Membership Coordinator



Kenneth T. Magwada
Media & Advocacy
Specialist



Yeukai Gezah
Community Engagement
Officer



Faith Mamutse
Receptionist



Amos Madzanire
Finance Officer



Celia Mukwewa
Project Officer



Tsitsi Tambura
National Bookkeeper



Olivia Mbofana
Administrative Secretary



Permanent Ngoma
Regional Manager: Masvingo
and Matebeleland Regions



Dr. Martin Maeresa
Monitoring & Evaluation
Specialist



Leo Chamahwinya
National Programs
Coordinator



Dzikamai Bere
National Director

LEGAL STATUS

ZimRights operates as an association, governed by its own Constitution. It is also registered as a private voluntary organisation under the Private Voluntary Organisations Act. The Registration Number is W/O 03/93. You can view the Constitution and the Registration Certificate on our website.

THE SHIFTING POWER TO THE PEOPLE STRATEGY (SP2P) 2022 – 2026

In March 2022, we launched a new strategy, the Shifting Power to the People – ZimRights Reset Strategy: 2022 to 2025 (SP2P Strategy). Through SP2P, we are reconfiguring the human rights landscape in Zimbabwe by shifting back to the people the active agency to demand and defend

fundamental rights.

Our SP2P strategy spotlights and optimizes ZimRights role as the scaffold upon which the grassroots human rights movement in Zimbabwe is able to **convene, mobilize and take collective action** to advance the enjoyment of all human rights by all citizens. The SP2P strategy builds a national human rights movement from the ground up by empowering individuals and local communities. Through the **8 Action Zone Framework**, the SP2P strategy creates tools to strengthen the power of local organising and leverages the power of the masses to achieving sustainable positive human rights impact.

THE ACTION ZONE FRAMEWORK



The SP2P strategy aims to build a critical mass to deliver high impact in human rights advocacy by empowering citizens to meaningfully engage in and effectively influence all civic processes in Zimbabwe. It connects capacitated and motivated people with governance processes to ensure that the people wield political power.





INTRODUCTION

This ground-breaking report ushers in the epoch of a **people-centred, struggle approach to human rights in Zimbabwe**, powered by ZimRights' **Shifting Power to the People Strategy (SP2P) 2022 - 2026**. It captures ZimRights' disruptive thinking to shift power back to the people and marks a significant departure from the top-down approach to human rights. Moving away from viewing citizens only as inactive rights-holders, the report demonstrates the work done by ZimRights to shift active agency back to the people. It gives account of how empowered local communities are able to define their own human rights agenda and execute decisive actions to address the human rights challenges they face.

The report captures the reconfiguration of human rights advocacy in Zimbabwe by clearly establishing the connection between local human rights initiatives and ZimRights' lobby and advocacy work level at the national, regional and global levels.

It confirms that ZimRights embodies the people's human rights movement and that the Secretariat exists to support the membership.

The report begins by providing a broad contextual analysis of the human rights situation in Zimbabwe and then catalogues the human rights priorities identified by local communities in each of Zimbabwe's ten provinces. It also showcases ZimRights' products, including publications and digital platforms produced in 2022, which are critical tools for empowering citizens and promoting citizen activism. The report concludes by reflecting on the milestones achieved in 2022 and providing some outlooks for the next year and beyond.

As the inaugural report of the SP2P age, this report shifts the focus away from only viewing the activities of the ZimRights Secretariat to provide a panoramic perspective of ZimRights as a grassroots people-driven human rights movement. The report is built up of provincial narratives of ZimRights members who are citizens acting on the ground to address human rights issues.

It would be impossible to capture all the work done by our members throughout the country in 2022. However, this comprehensive report is an earnest attempt to provide an overall impression of the immense efforts of our members by recording some seminal initiatives in two to seven districts in each province.

The report reflects a people-defined human rights agenda, which forms the basis for the People's Human Rights Manifesto (PHRM), an initiative envisaged for 2023. ZimRights' rigorous community engagement in 2022 stimulated locally owned conversations concerning the human rights situation in Zimbabwe, and the PHRM will escalate this into collective action in 2023 to ensure that elected officials serve the people's interest and facilitate the enjoyment of all human rights by all citizens.

As a result, this report remains a living document as it signifies the community consensus and records the rally points, which prompt community activism to tackle human rights issues going into the future. It embodies the people's human rights agenda and precipitates community dialogue and collective action.

ZimRights plans to build on this report to roll out initiatives to galvanize citizen empowerment through rights awareness into community activism. This is the mission of the SP2P strategy - to see communities in action, taking a lead in creating and sustaining a culture of human rights in Zimbabwe.

As you go through this report, we hope you will witness our communities in action. It is our hope that this report paints a clear picture of the people-centred struggle approach to human rights, which is beckoning on the horizon in Zimbabwe. As we enter the year 2023, we look back at the past year as the tipping point of the grassroots movement in Zimbabwe. The launch of the SP2P strategy not only catalysed the people's human rights movement but triggered seismic changes to the human rights landscape in Zimbabwe. The people's human rights movement is rising, and ZimRights is proud to be an enabler of this momentous tide.

We hope this report will challenge you to join the people's human rights. To learn more about how you can join and support the movement, please visit our website at www.zimrights.org.zw

“

The report reflects a people-defined human rights agenda, which forms the basis for the People's Human Rights Manifesto.”



CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

In 2022, Zimbabwe's human rights situation continued to deteriorate as the government intensified efforts to restrict civic space through the fast-tracked Private Voluntary Organizations Amendment Bill. Poor service delivery continued to erode the quality of life of most Zimbabweans and attacks on fundamental freedoms increased as the country geared for imminent elections.

ZimRights documented several cases involving arbitrary detention, unlawful interference with privacy, and attacks on the independence of the judiciary. There were restrictions on free expression and media, including violence, threats of violence, and unjustified arrests or prosecution against journalists, censorship, and substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association. Gender-based violence, including crimes involving violence or threats of violence against women and girls, and significant restrictions on workers' freedom of association were also reported.

There were also several cases of violence perpetrated by various criminal gangs among artisanal miners popularly known as makorokoza.

What was particularly worrying about the several cases of human rights violations documented by ZimRights during this period was the lack of accountability for perpetrators and redress for victims. The culture of impunity persisted as very little was done to investigate, prosecute, and punish perpetrators of human rights abuses, while the government made no meaningful efforts to provide reparation to victims. Corruption remained endemic, manifesting in all its forms at all levels, from petty corruption involving public officials soliciting bribes from citizens to grand corruption in the higher echelons of government.

Impunity was most prevalent in cases involving politically motivated violence. Security forces, including police, military, and intelligence officers as well as civilians who committed human rights abuses in the furtherance of the interests of the ruling party, almost invariably evaded accountability.

Nonetheless, it is notable that the government took steps toward establishing an independent complaints mechanism to investigate allegations of security forces misconduct, as called for in the constitution. In July, a bill to set up the Zimbabwe Independent Complaints Commission became law. However, the actual commission was not setup.

Despite recommendations of the Motlanthe Commission of Inquiry Into the 2018 Post-Election Violence and an August 2022 High Court ruling mandating the government to pay compensation to victims of state-sponsored violence such as Zakeo Mutimutema, the government has not paid significant compensation to victims or their families.

The government intensified usage of arbitrary arrest and detention as tools of intimidation and harassment, especially against political activists, civil society members, journalists, and ordinary citizens asserting their rights. For instance, in July 2022, a local journalist reported that 80 opposition supporters were arrested while campaigning in Masvingo during the March by-elections.

Frequent charges levelled against government critics included incitement to violence and illegal gatherings. Most of the arrest individuals were usually detained for one or two days before being released without being formally charged. However, political prisoners and detainees did not receive the same standard of treatment as other prisoners or detainees. There were reports of police physically abusing political activists and journalists while in detention. For example, on May 7, police arrested and allegedly assaulted journalist Blessed Mhlanga in Chitungwiza. Blessed Mhlanga and Chengeto Chidi were arrested after they photographed police attempting to arrest an opposition member of parliament, Job Sikhala. The arresting police officers also reportedly attempted to break the journalists' phones in a bid to destroy the footage of Sikhala's arrest. Police also reportedly

arrested Moses Hakata, a bystander, for attempting to dissuade the officer from assaulting Mhlanga during the arrest.

During the same period, the police continued to enforce COVID-19 safety regulations selectively by targeting vendors and other informal workers. The clampdown on citizens engaged in various life-sustaining activities in cities and towns negatively affected the livelihoods of already impoverished persons and their families.

The police also arrested opposition members of parliament Job Sikhala and Godfrey Sithole for public order offenses following the June 14 clashes between ruling party and opposition supporters in Chitungwiza. Subsequent to Sikhala's arrest, the police also arrested 14 more local opposition members between June and September. At the time of compiling this report, Job Sikhala remains in pre-trial detention in Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison after being denied bail by the courts on several occasions.

Furthermore, police and supporters of the ruling party continuously undermined the right to freedom of peaceful assembly by disrupting political rallies and attacking members of the Citizens' Coalition for Change (CCC) party. On 27 February, a gang of alleged ZANU-PF youths armed with machetes, beer bottles, iron bars, spears, and bricks violently disrupted a CCC rally in Kwekwe. A CCC supporter, Mboneni Ncube, died after the marauding assailants stabbed him, and at least 17 other individuals were seriously injured. No meaningful efforts were undertaken by the police to investigate and arrest the perpetrators of these crimes.

On 17 March 2022, Godfrey Karemba, a CCC supporter, was assaulted by members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) in the capital, Harare, ahead of the March parliamentary by-elections. The ZRP justified the assault in a statement that said he was “*engaging in unsanctioned political activities in the Harare Central Business District*”.

On 12 September 2022, the police also arrested 14 students at the University of Zimbabwe after they embarked on peaceful #FeesMustFall demonstrations against the university’s steep tuition fee increases. Twelve of them were released late on 13 September after paying fines equivalent to USD 3.31. The remaining two appeared in court on 14 September and were released on bail. Five more students were arrested on 14 September and were taken to Avondale police station where they were charged with “*disorderly conduct*”.

ZimRights also observed that hundreds of thousands of residents in Harare, particularly in areas such as Chitungwiza and Epworth, continued to face a potable water crisis three years after a deadly national cholera outbreak. It was apparent that authorities in most major towns and cities have failed to ensure that citizens have access to clean water.

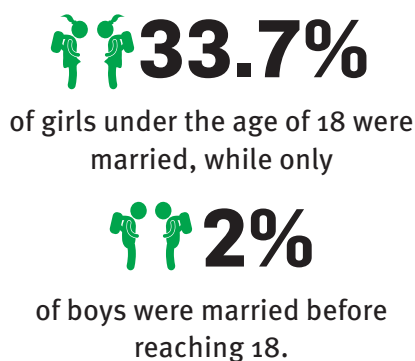
Several factors contributed to the water crisis, including corruption, insufficient investment in water infrastructure, lack of maintenance, and poor management of water resources. Perennial droughts affecting Lake Chivero and the seemingly incessant political tensions between the central government under the ruling party

and the opposition-controlled city council also fuelled the water crisis. Water shortages, poor sanitation facilities and the lack of waste collection services, increased the risk of waterborne diseases, such as cholera and typhoid.



ZimRights also made important observations concerning the rights of children in 2022. In March, the Marriage Amendment Act, which outlaws early and child marriage, was passed in parliament. However, despite this significant milestone, child marriages persisted.

According to ZIMSTAT, the national statistics agency, during this period



All this points to the need for the government to go beyond the mere enactment of laws, to take concrete actions to fight the scourge of child marriages in Zimbabwe.

The human rights situation in Zimbabwe during the year 2022 remained dire. However, the compounded crises of political repression and economic depression also presented an opportunity to grow and strengthen the grassroots human rights movement in Zimbabwe. The majority of citizens irrespective of political affiliation felt the bite of hostile socio-economic conditions in 2022. The decay and collapse of essential public infrastructure was apparent for all to see and the resultant poor service delivery affected Zimbabwe across the political divide.

Therefore, the need to improve the quality of life for all Zimbabweans became an even more compelling point of national consensus.

At the centre of all this, ZimRights work to engage, empower and mobilize citizens became even more critical. The year 2022 saw the birth of the SP2P Strategy. It was the tipping point of ZimRights as the main convener of the people human rights movement in Zimbabwe. Harnessing the same spirit and energy, which saw citizens taking it upon themselves to fix potholes in their local communities; ZimRights launched its SP2P Strategy.

A people-centred approach to human rights, which empowers citizens to define and act on human rights priorities, was necessary to close the gap between conventional human rights advocacy and the public discourse concerning ‘bread and butter’ issues. A struggle approach to human rights was also inevitable as communities became more active in directly solving the problems, they faced because of mounting governance failures.

The most significant lesson of 2022, was as eloquently expressed by the iconic musician Bob Marley:

“

***None by ourselves
can free our minds.”***



COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

ZimRights members throughout the country used the Bill of Rights outlined in Chapter 4 of the Constitution as a benchmark for the ideal quality of life that all citizens should enjoy. They convened in their local communities to assess the human rights situation in the country. Within the spaces for nonpartisan citizen's dialogue curated by ZimRights, local communities converged to identify pressing human rights concerns and develop strategies to tackle them.



HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in Bulawayo province identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Poor Service Delivery
- Economic Marginalisation
- Denial of Political Representation
- Police Brutality
- Criminalisation of Poverty

BULAWAYO

Bulawayo is Zimbabwe's second capital city, mainly referred to as the Cultural Capital due to its richness and cultural diversity. Founded in 1840, Bulawayo is also referred to as the City of Kings because it was the palace of the last pre-colonial Ndebele King Lobengula. In 1893, Bulawayo was occupied by the Pioneer Column and declared a town in 1894. Throughout the colonial history into independence, Bulawayo became the industrial hub of the country. Historically, Bulawayo has seen some tragic atrocities including the infamous Gukurahundi from 1982 to 1987.

Due to its population, Bulawayo on its own constitute a province. Bulawayo metropolitan province covers an area of about 546 square kilometres (211 square miles) in the western part of the country, along the Matsheumhlope River. The city's population is 665,940 according to the 2022 census. Bulawayo has 17398 members of which 8302 are females, 9096 are males, and 433 youths. In 2022 the province had 188 new members, 115 females and 73 males.

Despite paying ever-increasing rates, residents in Bulawayo province continued to experience poor service delivery. The city centre has been plagued by uncollected garbage, unattended sewage bursts, sporadic water supply, and unclean water. Residents in high-density suburbs such as Luveve, Magwegwe, and Cowdray Park were particularly acutely affected by poor service delivery throughout the year.



Picture of sewage overflowing into a house in Emganwini

While residents in low-density suburbs were able to drill boreholes as an alternative, residents in high-density suburbs were prohibited by city regulations from doing so, which affected low-income communities who could not afford alternative service delivery programs. The situation highlighted the inequality in access to basic services between different socioeconomic groups. The ensuing sections highlight the severity of the situation by zooming into some high-density suburbs within the province.

POOR SERVICE DELIVERY

i. Cowdry Park

ZimRights is currently following an issue in Cowdry Park where residents in area 15b are still feeling the brunt of **Operation Murambatsvina**.³ The government constructed houses for them under **Operation Garikai/Hlalanikuhle**,⁴ which were handed over to the local municipality for administration and implementation purposes in May 2009, including the provision of roads, water drainage, water supply, and sewerage reticulation systems. When the houses were constructed, the residents were allowed to build temporary blair toilets and septic tanks, which is against the city council by-laws that state that a 200 square metre yard must have a sewage system instead of a septic tank.

Currently, there are a total of 15,524 stands without roads, stormwater drainage, associated structures, sewage and water reticulation systems, and the estimated cost for providing such services is US\$46,052,200.

As the Bulawayo City Council failed to provide these services, there was an agreement that residents would pay \$50 per month towards the project, and the project was supposed to be completed by 2017. However, little progress has been made to date. During a visit by ZimRights to the area, residents expressed their frustration with the situation, with one resident who is a member of the ZimRights Peace Action Committee stating, *“We are sitting on a time bomb. We are currently using the bush toilet system, which increases the risk of waterborne diseases.”*



ZimRights National Director, Dzikamai Bere, meeting with the Cowdry Park Peace Action Committee

ii. Luveve Community

The situation in Luveve became worse in 2022. Luveve has unattended sewer bursts that have resulted in some members of the community developing health complications.

3. See : Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, 2005 and Human Rights Watch, Zimbabwe: Evicted and Forsaken: Internally displaced persons in the aftermath of Operation Murambatsvina, 1 December 2005.

4. Operation Garikai/Hlalanikuhle was the government of Zimbabwe's attempt to remedy the housing crisis arising from the destructive impact of Operation Murambatsvina. It is estimated that only a paltry 3,325 houses were constructed by the government compared to the 92,460 homes destroyed during Operation Murambatsvina.

Agnes Sibanda has been a resident of the area for more than 20 years. She recently fell sick with infected blood due to bacteria from a manhole inside her house.

The community of Luveve also experiences an erratic water supply. This water challenge worsens the health hazards posed by sewage bursts in the community. Despite the community spending most of the time without water, they continuously receive high water bills that do not match their domestic meter readings. Old Luveve is home to 420 households and the Mafakela section is the most affected by the sewage burst. This problem affects approximately 40 households that need a complete rehabilitation of their sewage system. There is also only 1 council clinic servicing wards 15 and 16, which is under-equipped and unable to provide adequate health care to the community.



The community of Luveve experiences erratic water supply and prolonged water shedding that lasts longer than expected.

Section 73 of the Bill of Rights provides for environmental rights, including the right to an environment that is not harmful to the health or well-being of citizens. The state has an obligation to take reasonable legislative and other measures to achieve the progressive realization of these rights within the limits of the resources available to it.

However, residents have often complained that the Bulawayo City Council does not prioritize service delivery in its budgeting process. In 2022, the council allocated 32% of its budget towards water, 6% towards sewage, and 21% towards health. The council must take positive steps towards the progressive realization of the rights set out in the constitution, and this should be reflected in its budgeting process. If the council has a specific obligation, it must not be just rhetoric but reflected in the budget.

REGIONAL INEQUALITIES AND ECONOMIC MARGINALISATION

Many people living in the southern region of Zimbabwe have complained that the region is being deliberately impoverished by the central government through a lack of investment in economic development and infrastructure. Bulawayo which used to be the industrial hub of the country has over time witnessed significant de-industrialisation.

Responding to questions at a media briefing held in Bulawayo in April 2022, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information Nick Mangwana is reported to have said the government was addressing inequality and marginalisation as envisioned in its mantra ‘*leave no one or no place behind.*’

“This actually coincides with the United Nations mantra as well the agenda 2063 and issues of the Sustainable Development Goals. If you check what has been happening in the last four years, you would naturally agree, there’s been a lot of development that has come through for formerly marginalised places,” he said.

“I would say there’s a lot happening in Binga, which unfortunately lagged behind in terms of development. Some of the biggest national

projects in this country are in Matabeleland North and South. The president has been here several times to push the revamping of Bulawayo industries which again speaks to issues of addressing marginalisation. Most of the community stations that were issued were in Matabeleland rather than anywhere else. I believe issues of Matabeleland are directly being confronted in a very inclusive way.”⁵

Several problems in the region stem from lack of adequate economic investment in the regional projects. In the report above, residents complain that there is no service delivery, a problem linked to lack of adequate water supply. In 2004, the government commissioned the Zambezi Water Project, which was expected to end the region’s perennial water problems. Almost two decades later, the project continues to stall. Other projects that residents continue to cite as evidence of economic marginalisation are the construction of the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), and Lupane State University, which seem to have stopped. The road linking Bulawayo and Victoria Falls is also in a bad state and the general state of roads in Matabeleland is deplorable.

Lack of economic development in the region is leading to brain drain as the region loses talent and skill to Harare, South Africa and Botswana.

In 2022 alone, an estimated

 **50000**

citizens migrated to other countries due to non-availability of economic opportunities.



“Economic marginalisation of the region is a continuation of Gukurahundi,” said a member of the Mthwakazi Republic Party at a transitional justice meeting convened by the National Transitional Justice Working Group (NTJWG). Residents believe the government keeps people in poverty in order to maintain control because it uses food aid to advance its political agenda. Economic marginalisation makes the enjoyment of all other rights impossible.

For example, where there is no food security and no water supply, the right to food and water is compromised. Where there is no economic development, unemployment will increase and it becomes impossible for young people to enjoy freedom of profession, trade or occupation. Where there is no economic development, crime and drug abuse increase and communities cannot enjoy peace. Economic marginalisation results in the wholesale erosion of fundamental rights.

5. <https://cite.org.zw/mangwana-on-marginalisation-govt-is-addressing-inequality-in-matabeleland/>

EVIDENCE OF REGIONAL MARGINALIZATION

i. Zambezi Water Project

The Matabeleland Zambezi Water Project is a project being carried out in Zimbabwe's arid Matabeleland North district with the goal to put an end to the ongoing water shortages that plague Bulawayo by delivering water from the massive Zambezi River to the city through a 245KM pipeline. The project is said to be 70% complete.

However, the construction work was suspended in August 2022 due to delays in the disbursement of funds by the national treasury. The prolonged delay in the finalization of the Zambezi Water Project has negatively affected local communities in the province. Construction workers have had their employment suspended and residents have been forced to resort to unsafe water sources.

According to Mr Siziba, the Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association Chairperson, *"Residents have been experiencing prolonged water shedding, life revolves around water and the shortage of water is negatively impacting people's lives and the economy as well because industries are shutting down due to the uncertainty of when will water be available thus impeding production. Hopes are that this project will not only benefit the residents of Bulawayo only but Mat-North as well. The residents will surely be cushioned by the completion of the project since the water will be available and in its clean state. It is a belief that the completion will no doubt positively impact the economy due to the green belt to be associated with it and industries may as well be revived and employment generated."*

ii. Deindustrialisation of Bulawayo Province

The de-industrialisation of the Bulawayo province has reached catastrophic levels with dire consequences for the country's struggling economy. Low-capacity utilization, working capital constraints, a sluggish approach to the growth of the city by politicians, and acute water shortages have contributed to the de-industrialization in this region of Zimbabwe. Since 2009, to date, more than 30 major manufacturing firms have closed shop, leaving more than 200 000 workers jobless.

The city of Bulawayo was once considered an economic hub due to its proximity to key regional markets in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia. The de-industrialization, which has affected the province, has led to brain-drain as residents have left the country in droves to search for greener pastures in neighbouring countries. Additionally, the resultant economic collapse had led to increased levels of crime, a spike in child marriages and transactional sex in the province.



Bulawayo was once considered an economic hub due to its proximity to key regional markets in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia."

DENIAL OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

The majority of wards in Bulawayo were orphaned when one of the MDC factions decided to recall elected councillors from the council. This led to the deterioration of social services.

A total of 8 councillors were ousted leaving a leadership vacuum in the following wards:

- Donald Mabuto (Ward 9),
- Lilian Mlilo (Ward 12),
- Concilia Mlalazi (Ward 18),
- Clayton Zana (Ward 19),
- Ernest Rafamoyo (Ward 20),
- Tinevimbo Maposa (Ward 21),
- Norman Hlabano (Ward 26) and
- Tinashe Kambarami (Ward 3)

While Ward 8 fell vacant following the death of the then incumbent councillor, Ronia Mudara in July.

Wards left without councillors saw worsened social services with some wards going for months without water. This was however rectified when ZEC finally held by-elections in March 2022.

Quite a number of issues have been flagged by Bulawayo residents under these wards. When pressed to comment on the expulsion of councillors Mayor of Bulawayo, His-Worship Mr. Solomon Mguni said *“the council understood the challenges faced by the residents but it could only assign caretaker councillors, as it was Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC)’s mandate to hold by-elections that would result in proper replacements”*.

VIOLATION OF FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

Section 58 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides that every person has the right to freedom of assembly and association. Section 59 of the Constitution also provides for the freedom to demonstrate and petition.

According to our members in the four districts within Bulawayo, these rights have been violated on several occasions. A significant number of citizens’ initiatives aimed at formulating collective action against the deplorable situation in Bulawayo province were disrupted by the police in 2022.

The Maintenance of Peace and Order Act (MOPO) which was passed by the Parliament of Zimbabwe in 2019 requires seven days’ notice for a demonstration and five days’ notice for a public assembly. The Act further gives the police powers to prohibit any such assembly or demonstration.

In a country like Zimbabwe where the police have proved to be partisan, MOPO has been applied selectively to favour the ruling party and silence any form of dissent against the government. Several cases of police arbitrarily disrupting peaceful citizens’ gatherings were reported in 2022.

The restriction of the fundamental freedoms of assembly and association was also enforced by the Ministry of Local Government within Bulawayo province. This was done through the illegal demand for a Memorandum of Understanding between the ministry and civil society organizations as a precondition to accessing local communities.

Threats of arrest or violence were also employed by state authorities and ruling party officials to dissuade the people from exercising their freedoms of association and assembly. For instance, in 2022, public hearings convened by the parliament of Zimbabwe, which included the PVO Bill and National Youth Service hearings were disrupted by alleged Zanu PF youth.



The attacks on fundamental freedoms severely affected citizens' participation in civic processes as people withdrew from the public sphere for fear of harassment."

Banning of the Voter Education Concert

Matebeleland region has been one of the regions in Zimbabwe with low voter turnout. This has been caused by a litany of reasons including low numbers of first-time voters, lack of IDs, politically motivated violence and arrests among other reasons. Before the Delimitation process, Civil Societies and other institutions were anticipating that the region could lose a significant number of constituencies and wards due to low numbers of first-time voters. It is against this background that Matebeleland civil Societies in partnership with Election Resource Centre (ERC) planned a voter registration concert which was supposed to bring prominent artists and a registration slip will get you in. However, after sharing the poster by political figures such as Hopewell Chin'ono and Fadzayi Mahere on different social media platforms, the event was politicised by the security personnel. This led to the cancellation of the event with security personnel pointing out that the event was going to be marred with violence despite them giving a green light prior.

Police Attempts to Stop the Launch of the State of Peace Report

Police tried to intimidate the ZimRights Bulawayo Community Engagement Officer on June 22, 2022, in an effort to stop the launch of the State of Peace Report. Two officials believed to be from the President's offices unannounced visited ZimRights office in Bulawayo and demanded detailed information about the planned activity including information on the attendees, organizations invited, and how frequently the organization held office meetings of this nature. In our view, this was uncalled for and pure victimisation of legitimate civil society organisations.

CRIMINALISATION OF POVERTY

Criminalization of poverty is the phenomenon in which poor people face higher consequences for the same actions as a wealthier person, due to their lack of financial resources. During COVID-19 lockdowns in Zimbabwe, the government allowed supermarkets to open while vending stalls and vegetable markets were closed. In Bulawayo, the police confiscated vegetables from 'illegal vendors.' This is becoming a serious problem in Zimbabwe. At ZimRights, we believe this is a violation of socio-economic rights. The worsening economic situation is pushing many people into the informal sector. Instead of innovating to build inclusive economies, in the year 2022, we saw a tightening of laws that criminalise and punish those who venture into informal activities for survival.



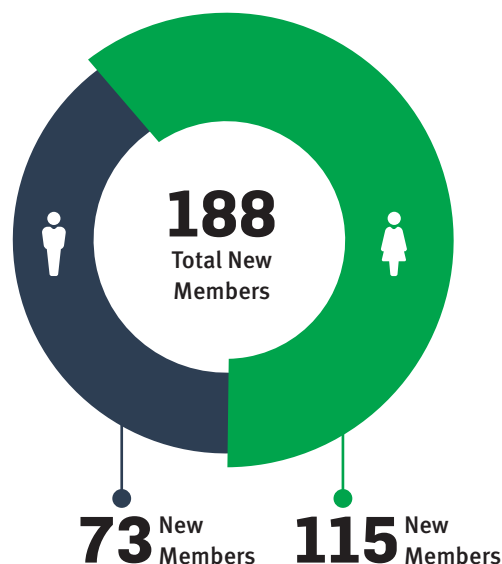
THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

In 2022, ZimRights was active in all four districts of Bulawayo. Our members worked in various spaces to address identified human rights issues. In total, there were 17 interventions by ZimRights in the Bulawayo province. Below we share some of our interventions.

Mobilisation

In 2022, we continued the work of building a critical mass. ZimRights has always maintained a presence in the province with over 18 000 members spread across all the districts of the province.

In 2022, 188 people joined ZimRights. 115 of them were females and 73 were males. As is our tradition, when new members join, an onboarding meeting is convened which gives new members a crash course on their upcoming work in and with ZimRights.



In Bulawayo, 2 onboarding meetings were held in Cowdray Park on the 25th of February and Luveve on 27 June 2022. The meetings were attended by 56 new members who received ZimRights welcome package which includes a membership card, handbook, and other resources according to the action zone which they choose to pursue. During the onboarding process, the new members committed to supporting their province in tackling human rights issues. Members noted that they were concerned with the state of the province, especially on service delivery.

Confronting Poor Service Delivery by the City Council

Bulawayo province is one of the provinces that is participating in the Right to Peace Campaign which saw the launch of two special reports - The State of Peace Report and the Rights and Traditions Report. The campaign established 4 Peace Action Committees in Bulawayo. The association went on through the Campaign to strengthen the capacity of Peace Action Committees to identify human rights violations in the community and push for better services from duty bearers. In August 2022, Members of the Cowdray Park Peace Action Committee (PAC), mobilised the community to engage Bulawayo City Council (BCC) so they collectively came up with a proposed solution to improve sanitation.

However, BCC highlighted that they did not have funds to install sewer in the houses as they had exhausted USD3,6 million they had allocated for sewage reticulation. The total value of the project is estimated to be around USD312 373. Residents then teamed up and agreed to contribute towards the completion of the project and each household was requested to contribute USD400.00.

By the end of 2022, the ZimRights Peace Action Committee had drafted a constitution and opened a bank account to start mobilising resources. The Peace Action Committee estimates that the project will take close to 10 months to be completed.

In October 2022, the Peace Action Committee drafted and submitted a petition to Bulawayo City Council. As a result of the petition, BCC called for an engagement meeting with committee members and affected community members to address the issues, where they promised to be more responsive in addressing the sewage bursts and availing more bowzers with water during water shedding. No concrete action had been taken by the time of the compilation of this report.

LAUNCH OF THE 2021 STATE OF PEACE REPORT



A State of Peace Report was produced and launched on 23rd June 2022 following consultations with citizens on their experiences on peace and cohesion in their communities. Through the report, community voices on the state of peace in the country were amplified.

The report finds among other things that there are no peace fundamentals in the communities to sustain *'the silence'* people are currently experiencing, and the people are uncertain about what the future holds. There was consensus across all the communities that participated in the report that elections in Zimbabwe presented a nightmare rather than an opportunity.

Many community members are expecting bloodshed ahead of the 2023 elections, and they attribute the violence to the violent nature of the ruling party. In addition to the violence, communities have no confidence in the electoral systems' capacity to deliver free and credible elections. Another major finding of the report is that communities are living on the brink as they live in a state of fragile (i.e., negative) peace. This was acknowledged by over 50% of the community activists. The State of Peace Report gained local and regional publicity. A South African newspaper, the Mail and Guardian, and a Zimbabwean newspaper, the Standard, made publications on the State of Peace Report following a successful launch in Harare and Bulawayo.

A local radio station in Bulawayo, the Radio Dialogue, also publicized the launch of the State of Peace Report. The report saw Traditional leaders, Members of Parliament, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), ward councillors, and civil society leaders coming together to discuss the findings of the report and to map a way forward on the challenges identified. The traditional leaders highlighted that there is a need for traditional leaders to be trained in their code of conduct. Political leaders pledged to influence their colleagues and ensure a violence-free 2023 harmonized elections campaign period.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR PEACE ACTION COMMITTEES

The training focused on human rights violations' monitoring, documentation and advocacy. Two capacity development trainings were conducted in Nkulumane on 19 March 2022 and Cowdray Park on 21 March 2022.

The initiative saw community members who are now able to resolve human rights violations that arise in their communities in a non-violent manner and are now able to peacefully co-exist within the community. Evidenced by ZimRights Peace Action Committee in Nkulumane where they documented a case of discrimination.

The committee discovered that the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) selection criteria were riddled with favouritism and corruption. This negatively affected orphans and vulnerable children who were denied their right to education. The committee saw that this had the potential to cause conflict in the community and then engaged the SDC to reverse and have intended beneficiaries benefiting from the programme.

TRAINING OF COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS



Human rights monitoring resulted in empowering participants with the capacity to document, monitor and act on human rights violations to better protect their rights. The training was conducted on 11 August 2022 in Bulawayo targeting all PACs. Participants that benefited from the training are now able to identify and document human rights violations and have gone forward to report these cases making use of the referral system with the assistance of the office.

This saw the Cowdray Park peace action committee writing a letter to the Civil Registry Department of Births and Deaths of the Registrar General Bulawayo after they had allocated only two days for mobile exercise to issue birth certificates in the community.

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY

On 24 June 2022, the National Transitional Justice Working screened a documentary, *“Untold Truths in Zimbabwe: Stories of Injustice through the Eyes of the Survivors.”*

The Documentary was screened at Ster Kinekor Movie Theatre Bulawayo from 12:30 pm-15:00pm in commemoration of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The National Director Mr Dzikamai Bere gave the opening remarks. In his opening remarks, Mr Bere said the screening of the documentary served as solidarity with victims of torture and human rights violations. He highlighted that the purpose of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture is to keep in perspective the need for the total eradication of torture and to bring the Convention against Torture (CAT) and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment to a full function.

The documentary increased awareness of the plight and lived experiences of survivors of Gukurahundi, 2005 Murambatsvina and election violence in Zimbabwe, as well as stirred conversation on what can be done to ensure survivors have safe places to discuss their experiences and map the way forward.

VOTE MOBILISATION

As part of efforts to mobilise citizens to participate in electoral processes, in the continuous voter registration campaign and to ensure citizen engagement, ZimRights complimented ZEC’s information and mobilisation efforts by rolling out the # 10X10 voter mobilisation strategy. Door-to-door voter mobilisers were deployed in Nkulumane and Pumula to encourage citizens to register to vote and subsequently, to vote.





HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in Chitungwiza identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Poor Service Delivery
- Political Violence
- Denial of Political Representation
- Police Brutality

CHITUNGWIZA

Administratively, Chitungwiza is not a province on its own. It falls under Harare. However, because of the bulging ZimRights membership in Chitungwiza and the seriousness of human rights issues in Chitungwiza, ZimRights recognises Chitungwiza as a province, giving it an equal vote in the ZimRights structures.

This is why this report captures Chitungwiza as a separate province. Chitungwiza is a satellite town on the South-Western side of Harare with a growing population of approximately 340 360 people.

ZimRights has two programming districts in Chitungwiza. These are: Zengeza (St. Mary's and Zengeza West) and Seke (Seke Urban and Seke Rural). Chitungwiza has 10267 members, of which 5116 are females, 5151 males, and 667 youths. In 2022 Chitungwiza had 55 new members, 30 females and 25 males.

POOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Chitungwiza has been experiencing poor service delivery for many years. This includes a lack of regular garbage collection, inadequate water supply, and poor road maintenance. The town's garbage collection system is poorly managed resulting in piles of uncollected waste scattered throughout the town. This has led to unhygienic conditions, with garbage piling up in residential areas, marketplaces, and public spaces. The situation is worsened by the fact that the town's landfill site is almost full and has not been decommissioned, leading to the accumulation of waste. The inadequate water supply system is also poorly managed, resulting in frequent water shortages and the spread of water-borne diseases such as Cholera and Typhoid. This has made life difficult for residents, who have to queue for hours to get water from communal boreholes or buy water from vendors. The town's roads are in a deplorable state, with potholes and cracks making driving a nightmare and the lack of streetlights also makes it difficult to navigate the town, especially during the night.



Rainy water collecting on roads up to people's doorsteps due to poor water drainage systems in Unity A Extension - ZimRights Media 2022

Chitungwiza residents have also complained about the poor, and dysfunctional drainage system which in rainy seasons only lead to water flooding in roads and people's yards. The government has not been helpful in attending to the problem as residents have raised many concerns with no action being taken. The residents are now forced to use the little money they have to try and unblock the drainage on their own. This is a big financial burden on families who are already struggling to make ends meet. *"The lack of action from the government has led to increased frustration and anger among residents,"* said a resident from Unity A Extension in Chitungwiza.

It is no secret that the opposition-led urban councils in Harare and Chitungwiza have had a tough time delivering basic services to their constituents. From water shortages to uncollected refuse and sewage bursts, the citizens of these areas have had more than their fair share of problems.

It's understandable that many people have been quick to blame the opposition councillors for the poor service delivery.

However, Deputy Minister of Local Government Marian Chombo admitted that the government is to blame for these problems. In a Senate hearing, she said: *"We have let you down and we cannot abrogate our responsibility to say it is the opposition Council that has done that."* This admission from the government is an important step in fixing the poor service delivery in urban areas. *"We all know what has happened, but we still must deliver the services to the ratepayers"*, said Chombo. Chombo highlighted that all the authorities are in a dire state as there are heaps of garbage and streams of the sewer. There has been constant politicking and blaming each other between the government and the opposition party over who is responsible for the poor services. The central government has been accused of constantly interfering in the functions of the local authorities and in some cases sabotaging it for political gains. It has, however, denied the accusations.

COLLAPSE OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ZimRights community human rights champions received more than 25 cases of appalling service delivery in Chitungwiza. Services in Chitungwiza have been deteriorating at an alarming level. Refuse collection has been one of the greatest health hazards and life-threatening issues being experienced by people in St Mary's, Zengeza and some parts of Makoni. Sewage bursts have become the order of the day in most of the areas. Areas mainly affected by the sewage burst are Zengeza 1 near Rufaro, and Paradise in St Mary's closer to Dungwiza Primary School. Residents in Chitungwiza have also complained about a lack of reliable, potable and safe drinking water.

In 2001, service delivery nose-dived when the national government took away some revenue-generating functions from urban local authorities and gave them to the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA), a state-run enterprise, worsening an already fragile service delivery system. The decision was taken without the consent of urban local authorities. Neither were urban local authorities consulted. The water function reverted back to urban authorities in 2009. However, by then, most water supply equipment had either deteriorated or malfunctioned, diminishing the prospects for a sustainable service.

Another key service delivery issue being experienced by the people in Chitungwiza is solid waste management. The local has been failing to collect refuse which has seen the emergency and sprouting of illegal dumpsites in areas such as Chigovanyika, Zengeza, Unit L and St Marys putting residents at risk of diarrhoea and other hazards associated. The situation has also been worsened by an increase in unattended sewer bursts which has become a serious health threat, especially for residents who access groundwater (wells and boreholes for domestic purposes).

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Political violence is a tragic reality that has plagued many communities around Zimbabwe. Chitungwiza is no exception to this. The town has been the site of numerous incidents of political violence in recent years. The brutality of these incidents has had far-reaching consequences on the individuals, infrastructure, and the psychological well-being of the community. The impact of political violence in Chitungwiza cannot be overstated. Many individuals have lost their lives or suffered life-altering injuries as a result of political violence. Families have been torn apart, and the children have been left

orphaned. Those who have survived the violence are often left traumatised and struggling to come to terms with the horrors they have witnessed.

16 CCC political activists were unlawfully and arbitrarily detained in Nyatsime in June 2022. During the funeral of the deceased CCC activist Moreblessing Ali, violence broke out in the Nyatsime neighbourhood, prompting the arrest of the activists. The high-ranking officials who were also detained were Job Sikhala and Godfrey Sithole. The accused were repeatedly denied bail, and they weren't finally freed until after more than five months in remand prison. But while the outspoken Zengeza West MP's fight for release continues, Sikhala's protracted arrest continues to take centre stage.

During the CCC's door-to-door election campaign, former Chitungwiza City Council Mayor Lovemore Maiko was allegedly attacked and hurt by members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police. He was urgently rushed to the hospital for treatment. *"Police officers came in tore with crystal meth (Mutoriro) drunken Zanu PF members and attacked us when we were engaged in a peaceful door-to-door campaign for our ward & council By-Election candidate Lovemore Maiko,"* CCC senior official Job Sikhala claimed. This happened on May 2, 2022, when the country was getting ready to hold March 2022 By-Elections.

DENIAL OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

The residents of Chitungwiza have been living in fear and insecurity for quite a while now. The local authority has been sending security forces to evict people from their homes without compensation. This has led to many people losing their livelihoods and being displaced.

The local authority has also been imposing punitive taxes and levies on the residents, which has made life very difficult for them. In addition, the local authority has been denying the residents their political rights and representation. The residents are in fear of expressing their political affiliation because they would fall victim to police brutality and arbitrary arrests after being seen in support of the opposition party. This has led to a feeling of alienation and exclusion among the residents. The local authority has also been engaging in corrupt practices, which has further eroded the residents' trust. This was followed by the arrest of 8 Councillors in Chitungwiza by the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) for criminal Abuse of power in April 2022.

POLICE BRUTALITY

Chitungwiza has a reputation for police brutality. On July 29, 2013, police in Chitungwiza, brutally assaulted residents who were peacefully protesting the government's failure to provide adequate water and sanitation services. The police used baton sticks, tear gas, and water cannons to disperse the crowd, injuring dozens of people. This incident is just one example of the widespread police brutality that occurs in Chitungwiza. Chitungwiza up to now still suffers from water shortages, but residents cannot exercise their right of engaging in peaceful protests against the failure of the government due to fear and reprisals associated with such Actions.

Residents of Chitungwiza have long complained of the police's heavy-handed tactics, which include beatings, arbitrary arrests, and harassment. The police are often seen as being above the law, and their actions are rarely challenged. The government has done little to address the problem of police brutality, and the

situation has only gotten worse in recent years.

Moses Hakata, a Chitungwiza resident, was arbitrarily detained by ZRP officers on May 7, 2022, and was charged with disorderly conduct after attempting to stop law enforcement from assaulting a journalist. During the trial, the prosecutor Monalisa Karemba alleged in front of Chitungwiza Magistrate Rumbidzai Kabasa that during a by-election prompted by the recall of Chitungwiza Mayor Lovemore Maiko held on May 7, 2022, Hakata engaged in disorderly behaviour outside polling stations and allegedly told people to attack some ZRP officers and disobey their orders. Hakata claimed in his defence that he was detained while attempting to argue with ZRP officers about why they were mistreating and harassing Blessed Mhlanga, a journalist who was carrying out his job duties by reporting on the water crisis in Chitungwiza. He was represented in this matter by Tapiwa Muchineripi of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR). On August 23, 2022, Magistrate Kabasa found Hakata not guilty and was acquitted.

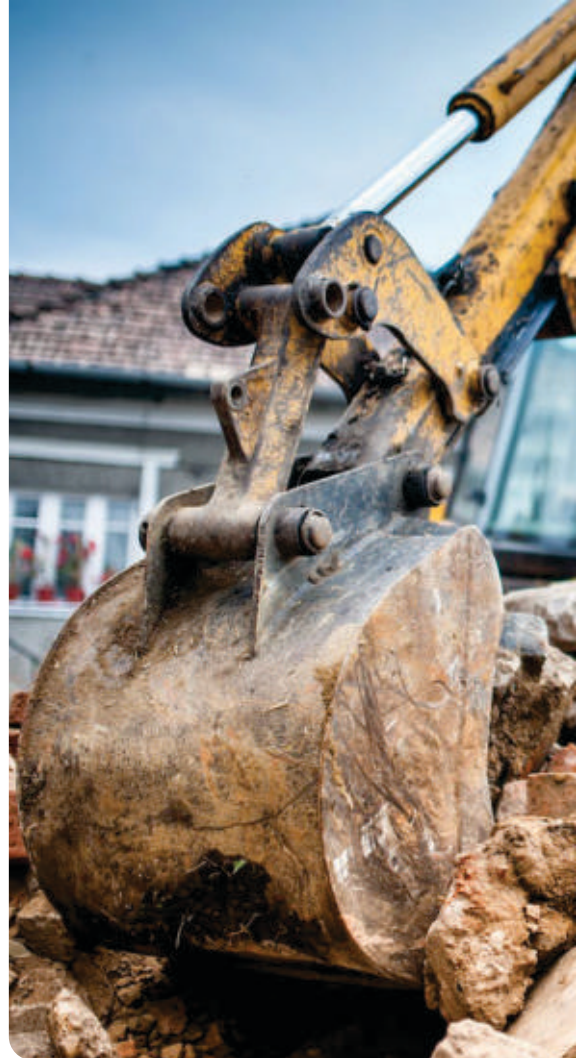


BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Demolition of Informal Structures

On the 11th of December 2022, Chitungwiza Town Council embarked on the demolition of illegal structures which include tuck shops and all the shops that were illegally constructed in illegal spaces. The demolition of illegal structures is reminiscent of Operation Murambatsvina (move to Rubbish) exercise that was illegally carried out by the government of Zimbabwe in 2005.

From Mount Darwin in the north and Beitbridge in the south, Mutare in the East, and Bulawayo in the west, no part of the nation was spared from the impact of what could be termed a slow-moving earthquake; every day the nation awakes to find more buildings have fallen around them, more families were displaced in the process. It is crystal clear that the Chitungwiza Municipality is in clear violation of section 71 of the constitution of Zimbabwe and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights article 11, to which Zimbabwe is a signatory. In terms of this covenant, no government can evict people without having made an alternative plan to house them.



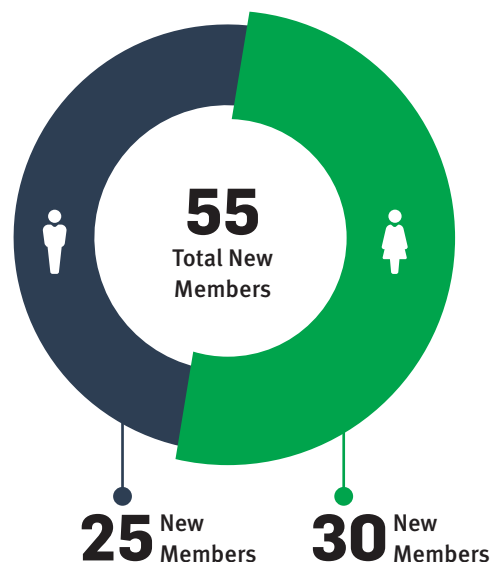
THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

In 2022, ZimRights was active in 2 programming districts of Chitungwiza. Our members worked in various spaces to address the human rights issues identified.

Mobilisation

In 2022, we continued the work of building a critical mass. ZimRights has always maintained a presence in the province with over 10545 members spread across all the districts of the province.

In 2022, 55 people joined ZimRights 30 of them were females and 25 were males. As is our tradition, when new members join, an onboarding meeting is convened which gives new members a crash course on their upcoming work in and with ZimRights.



SPEAKING UP AGAINST POLITICAL VIOLENCE

ZimRights castigated the arbitrary arrests of the Nyatsime 16 CCC political activists. The activists were arrested after violence broke out in the Nyatsime area in the wake of murdered CCC activist Moreblessing Ali's funeral. Job Sikhala and Godfrey Sithole were the high-ranking officials who were also arrested. The accused persons were denied bail on several occasions and only to be released after they had spent more than 5 months in remand prison. But it is Sikhala's continued detention which continues to hog the limelight as the outspoken Zengeza West Member of Parliament's quest for freedom goes on. ZimRights released a press statement that was featured in several news outlets.⁶

YOUTH COMMUNITY DIALOGUE MEETING

The youth dialogue platforms gave an opportunity for youth to engage on issues affecting their human rights and peaceful co-existence. According to information provided by ZimRights human rights monitors, Chitungwiza has become a political hotbed with several cases of human rights violations mainly civil and political rights being reported on a daily basis. In a bid to mitigate and transform conflict ZimRights has carried out a total of 2 youth dialogues in St Marys and Zengeza. The two dialogues were attended by a total of 76 participants. The dialogue meetings focused on promoting peaceful coexistence and sensitising the youth on their covenant role in promoting democracy and good governance. One of the participants had this to say *"Youth in Chitungwiza have been for a long time fence seaters and in the process relegated to the periphery of political appointments and*

processes, 2023 elections provide an opportunity for the youth to redeem themselves and claim a front seat in determining the political outcome of the elections." This was a strong message considering that youth who are below the age of 35 constitute 67.7% of the country's population yet this group has continued to bear the brunt of social, economic, and political exclusion, and vulnerability as witnessed through high unemployment, low levels of political representation and lack of opportunities. The youth who attended the dialogue meetings further lamented rampant drug, alcohol, and substance abuse as some of the major issues affecting the enjoyment of human rights in Chitungwiza. The organisation took the opportunity provided to sensitize and educate youth in Chitungwiza on the importance of their active participation in democratic processes and as a result, a total of 48 youth immediately registered as voters. The registered youth vowed to in turn mobilise other youth so that they can also register as voters.

HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING AND RESPONSE

ZimRights community human rights monitors are closely monitoring, documenting and observing human rights violations in Chitungwiza including violations being experienced by people in Nyatsime. Human Rights Monitoring is one of ZimRights' 8 action zones and this zone focuses on observing and monitoring human rights in communities.

A total of
36 
cases have been responded to by
ZimRights community human rights
monitors from Chitungwiza.

6. <https://www.pindula.co.zw/2022/06/12/zimrights-calls-for-investigation-into-the-killing-of-moreblessing-ali/>

Out of the 36 cases attended 20 cases were of political nature whilst 2 were child abuse, 3 were inheritance and 11 were service delivery. Out of the 36 reported cases 30 cases were successfully dealt with whilst 6 are still being processed with the hope of finalising them by the end of April 2023. The zone has helped communities especially those facing persecution and suffering from the effects of political violence to reintegrate back into the community. One of the victims of politically motivated violence who received humanitarian support in Nyatsime had this to say; *“Dai pasina ZimRights nhasi ndiripai nevana” (Had it not been because of ZimRights, where would I be with these children).*

SPORTS FOR PEACE TOURNAMENTS

Seeing the rising political temperatures in Chitungwiza, a sporting tournament was carried out on the 17th of December 2022 in Chitungwiza at Dungwiza Primary School. The Sports for Peace tournament was attended by more than 300 people including men, women and people living with disabilities.

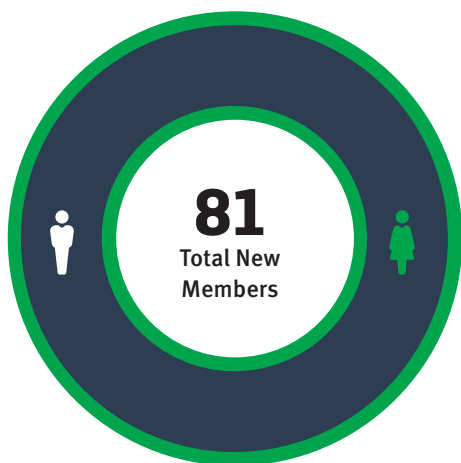
The main aim of the sports tournament was to educate the youth on issues of peaceful coexistence as well as encourage them to peacefully participate in electoral processes including voter registration. The sporting tournament was very successful as it managed to bring people from different political persuasions together. This helped to cool political tensions as well as promote inter-party and intra-party-political tolerance. Two teams competed for the trophy. The winning team was presented with a ZimRights branded soccer jersey and a soccer ball. As a consolation, the losing team also walked away with a soccer ball.





HARARE

Harare Metropolitan Province is the biggest of the 10 provinces in Zimbabwe. It houses the capital city of the country. The province covers 56 566 square kilometres. According to the 2022 Census Report, the population of Harare is 2 427 209 of which 1 267 666 of them are female. ZimRights has a presence in all of Harare's suburbs. According to the 2021 ZimRights database. ZimRights has a total of 18 977 members. A total of 81 new members joined ZimRights in 2022.



HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in Harare identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Lack of access to clean water
- Poor Roads
- Collapse of Public Health Facilities
- Right to Education
- Refusal Of Certain Notes as Legal Tender

LACK OF ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

Water woes continue to mount in Harare as most suburbs spent 2022 with erratic water supplies. This situation is a protracted one from as early as 2008 when the city experienced a deadly Cholera outbreak. However, in 2022, the availability of water remained dire and residents had to resort to unsafe water sources to meet their daily demands. Residents in High-density suburbs suffered much of the wrath of water shortage due to high population density and higher levels of poverty. Community boreholes that were introduced by the City Council have not done much to abet the situation. Long queues which often degenerate into physical fights among residents, characterised the community boreholes in 2022.

POOR ROADS

The current state of roads has affected traffic flow causing congestion and unnecessary traffic germ and accidents.



This has also seen public transport operators shunning routes or locations with bad roads. Potholes have become a common feature on most of the roads in Harare. ZimRights community human rights monitors have reported that potholes on the stretch of Harare Drive are very deep and as a result unsuspecting lorries driving at night are almost crashing into the walls of the houses along Harare Drive. *“The condition of the road is now worse. A further appeal was made directly to the Director of Works, promises were made and nothing was delivered,”* said one of the ZimRights members. Residents have teamed together to patch potholes in their areas, for example in Greendale residents patched roads, which were slowly

becoming a danger to road users. Residents singled out Court Road as one of the most dangerous roads in the suburb as it was pothole ridden while at the same time being a busy road, which leads to Courtney Selous Primary School.

The roads within communities in Kuwadzana, Dzivarasekwa, Mbare Glen View, Glen Norah, Budiro, Epworth and Hopley have been reported to be in a deplorable state. The condition is worsened by the rainy season making some homes and marketplaces inaccessible by car as giant pools of water manifest in the roads. In Epworth, people close to the quarry dam often have to abandon their cars when there are heavy rains. In Hopley, just like in many other emerging suburbs, there are no tarred roads and residents rely on community efforts to constantly repair the roads.

COLLAPSE OF PUBLIC HEALTH FACILITIES

ZimRights has also observed that public health facilities have drastically collapsed. In Epworth, community members indicated that the available public health centres do not have enough drugs and sometimes patients are forced to pay exorbitant fees for them to access medication. These public institutions are extorting extra payments from patients to access medical treatment. One participant testified to being told there was no medication only for the nurse to ask them to give her \$10 and the medication will be provided by the clinic. Mothers expecting to deliver babies have been affected the hardest, the lack of adequate medical care for pregnant women is resulting in many birth complications and cases of medical personnel negligence.

LACK OF ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION

In Hopley, community members expressed their concerns about the high number of children not attending school, especially the girls who then enter into early child marriages and child prostitution. Areas such as “Antony” have become a red zone as scores of young girls as young as 13 years always frequent the place for purposes of prostitution. This has exposed children to teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and early pregnancies. Young boys have also become drug addicts and in the process end up engaging in immoral activities including robberies and theft in order to finance the purchase of drugs.

Participants testified that it is not unusual to see scores of children of school-going age roaming around the streets and not attending school. The right to education is being violated and a generation of children in Hopley may go uneducated into adulthood. ZimRights also observed that the lack of government primary and secondary schools was contributing to this scenario. For example, the area has one public primary school, Tariro Primary School, which services an area of more than 60 000 people.

REFUSAL OF CERTAIN NOTES AS LEGAL TENDERS

In 2022, Residents of Harare bore the brunt of shops and some commuter omnibus operators refusing to accept ZWL20 notes as legal tender. This came months after traders and transport operators refused the ZWL5 and ZWL10 notes. This move, stemming from the increasing inflation, seemed to be a move to eliminate the need for bulky notes for a simple transaction. However, it shortchanged innocent residents who received salaries in ZWL denominations. Commuters felt much of the pinch as they could not use the notes to travel to and from work.

“

The right to education is being violated and a generation of children in Hopley may go uneducated into adulthood.”



THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

In 2022, ZimRights was active in several districts of Harare. Our members worked in various spaces to address the human rights issues identified. Below we share some of our interventions.

Youth Community Dialogue Meetings

A total of 105 youth from Harare Province participated in youth dialogue meetings that were convened in Hopley and Epworth in November 2022. The dialogue meetings provided the youth with a platform and an opportunity to discuss key issues affecting them including their role in community development and service delivery. The dialogue meetings also gave the youth an opportunity to discuss peer-to-peer voter mobilisation strategies in a bid to increase urban youth voter registration uptake. All the youth who attended the dialogue platforms were immediately conscripted into community WhatsApp groups as part of the ZimRights onboarding process. The WhatsApp groups that were formed have seen an increase in the number of youths who are now engaging in democracy and governance processes.

Engagement Meetings with City of Harare

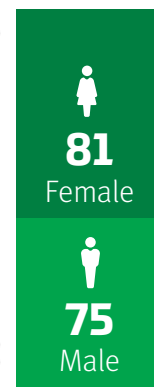
In collaboration with residents' associations such as the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA), Chitungwiza Manyame Residents Association (CAMERA), Harare Residents Trust, ZimRights members have started engaging local authorities in a bid to improve the road network and rehabilitation of roads in Harare. ZimRights members have attended meetings where the government has committed to help the council repair roads under the Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme (ERRP), which is already underway. The state funding will see potholes being patched on

major roads, improving major intersections such as the Lomagundi (Nemakonde) and Harare Drive, filter lanes added to Solomon Mujuru (formerly Kirkman Road) and improving the Harare Drive/Mutare Road traffic circle by adding filter lanes. Filter lanes have since been constructed along Samora Machel/ Bulawayo Road (Warren Park D and Kuwadzana traffic cycles).

Youth Peace Campaigns

A total of 156 (81 females, 75 males) youth were equipped to promote peace and shun violence as the country gears towards the 2023 harmonized elections. This was done through a number of youth-focused activities including the provision of necessary information and education materials. The peace campaigns are strategic and relevant considering that Zimbabwe will have harmonised elections in 2023.

YOUTH PEACE CAMPAIGN RATIO



Monitoring Political Rally Campaigns

ZimRights monitored political gatherings that were carried out in the province on 23 March 2022 by-elections and other subsequent electoral activities that were organised by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC).

Human Rights Monitoring and Response

Under the human rights monitoring and response action zone, ZimRights is capacitating its members to effectively respond to human rights violations that happen in their respective communities.

A total of 11 human rights monitoring visits were conducted and a total of 65 human rights violation cases were identified and reported. ZimRights has escalated some of the cases with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and other Chapter 12 independent commissions in a bid to increase citizens' access and interaction with Chapter 12 commissions.



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65

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Improving Access to Information

ZimRights has increased its digital print in a bid to increase and share information on various human rights issues. The organisation values that where there is knowledge spread, it becomes easier for communities to resist actions that infringe on their rights and pursue remedies in the available channels.

ZimRights Harare province set up Twitter and Facebook social media platforms to help disseminate human rights information as well as to amplify the local advocacy initiatives that they are undertaking.

By the end of 2022, the ZimRights Harare Facebook Page had 200 followers and had made 30 posts, on Twitter it had 47 followers.

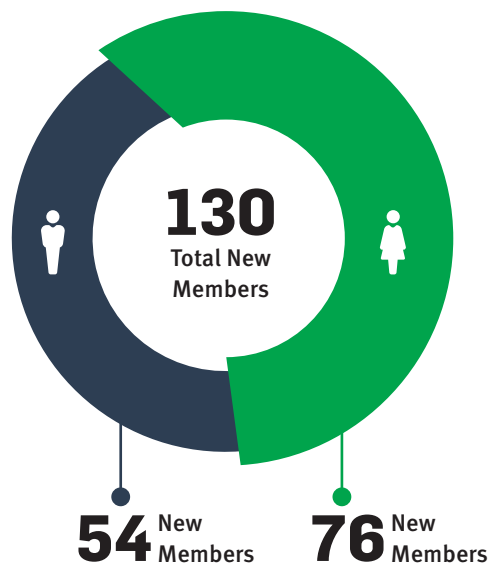




MANICALAND

Manicaland is found in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe and it is the second-most populous province, with a population of 2.037 million, as of the 2022 census. Manicaland was one of five original provinces established in Southern Rhodesia in the early colonial period. The province is endowed with the country's major tourist attractions, the likes of Mutarazi Falls, Nyanga National Park and Zimbabwe's top three highest peaks. Its economy is largely centred on industry and agriculture, particularly manufacturing, diamond and gold mining, timber, tea and coffee plantations, and tourism.

Manicaland has 38640 members, of which 21627 are females, 17013 males, and 2493 youths. In 2022 the province had 130 new members, 76 females, and 54 males.



HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in several districts of Manicaland province identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Service Delivery
- Access to Communal Land
- Right to Health
- Forced participation in political gatherings and voter intimidation
- Partisan distribution of food aid
- Human and Wildlife Conflict
- Child Marriages

SERVICE DELIVERY

High-density residential areas in Mutare have been severely neglected. Areas such as Sakubva, HobHouse, Chikanga and Garikai have seen a decrease in service delivery and attention to their communities. Roads in the Hilly HobHouse are cracking and disintegrating and the sewer and water systems are failing to meet the growing population.

In response, some communities are using social media to document and highlight glaring service delivery issues and this has yielded some response from the Mutare Town Council.

Communities also agreed to make service delivery issues central to campaigns in the upcoming elections.

ACCESS TO COMMUNAL LAND

Village heads in Nyanga District continue to arbitrarily deprive communities of the land. In Sedze village, around 10 families were facing evictions after the chief wanted to reserve the land on which they resided for pastoral grounds. A ZimRights community human rights defender intervened in the issue, advising the village head of the proper course of the law. The families were subsequently allowed to remain on the lands.

Chipinge has also been affected by land disputes – Community members in Maunganidze Village had community land sold to the Jekenisheni Church without consultation. The land was used by members to grow crops. Headman Maunganidze was the culprit in this case.

Villagers engaged with the Village Head who then engaged with Chipinge Rural Council which

allocated the temporary pieces of land as alternatives. This was done in violation of the Communal Lands Act.

RIGHT TO HEALTH

The right to health is not being adequately realised in the Mutasa district. Reports from the area showed that Hauna district hospital and local clinics such as Zindi clinics in Mutasa lacked adequate medical supplies and staff, which forced patients to travel long distances to Mutare for medical attention. This has negatively affected patients especially those suffering from chronic diseases since they are required to constantly visit Mutare General Hospital for their monthly medication. In addition, the aforementioned health facilities are hard to reach for villagers in peripheral areas like Nyamatorenje villager, where villagers have to traverse distances of up to 8 kilometres of rugged terrain to reach them.



ZimRights monitors in the area also noted that some Apostolic sects in the area were violating their member's right to access health care. Women and children bore the brunt of a lack of access to medical facilities.

One ZimRights member commented that *"We have had several cases of these apostolic sect women doing home deliveries because they are not allowed to receive maternal health care in proper clinics and hospitals. What is saddening is that their religion does not allow them to use contraceptives and they end up having many pregnancies within a short space of time"*. As a result, several women and infants lose their lives where they could have accessed basic healthcare.

Johanne Marange sect has been fingered as the main culprit in this issue that is also prevalent in many rural areas, particularly in Manicaland province.

CHIMANIMANI DISTRICT

ZimRights Community monitors also reported 5 cases of child marriages in the district. Child marriages occur when a person under 18 years of gets into marriage. This situation has mainly affected girls, who are married off before they attain 18 years. In Chimanimani, ZimRights monitors attribute this scourge to poverty, lack of access to basic education and harmful religious practices. One ZimRights member, Mr Panganayi Murime commented that young girls were being abused by older men who were luring them with trinkets. These men are usually Zimbabweans working in South Africa and Mozambique, who then take advantage of the girls' poverty. The families of the girls are also complicit in child marriages. Another ZimRights monitor also said that it was difficult to stop child marriages as some families still believe that marrying off their young children will be a ticket out of dire poverty. Besides all this, child marriages remain illegal in Zimbabwe.

THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

In 2022, ZimRights was active in several districts of Manicaland. Our members worked in various spaces to address the human rights issues identified. Below we share some of our interventions.

Community Dialogues on Human Rights

Under the Elections and Democracy action zone, a total of 4 dialogues were carried out in the province.

Under this activity, community members were given a platform to communicate and discuss human rights issues and have a chance to address duty bearers where possible. In Mutare, after community dialogues, members agreed to

use social media to hold the Mutare City Council accountable for poor service delivery issues. Community members started tagging the council where there were issues, for example in March 2022 after a deep pothole formed on the road leading to the CBD from Sakubva, the council was tagged and mentioned on the posts repeatedly that they ended up attending to the hole. Ironically the council took to social media to show the public that the issue was resolved.

Joint Human Rights Education and Awareness Workshops

The workshops in 2022 covered the following areas. Chimanimani, Macheke, Nyanga, Mutasa, Chipinge, Buhera, Dangamvura and Odzi.

The workshops increased information and skill dissemination in communities on the ways to tackle violations. In line with the S2P2 Strategy, ZimRights members were capacitated to become trainers and led and facilitated 8 training workshops in different areas in the province. A total of 258 community members were reached, 119 being male and 139 Female and 108 belonging to the youth age group.

Training of Trainers workshops on Human Rights

Under this intervention, 23 active human rights defenders were identified from Manicaland Province and were capacitated on training community members on pertinent human rights issues.

Community Advocacy Initiatives

Following the above interventions, ZimRights communities in the area embarked on community advocacy initiatives in their communities.

For example, in Chimanimani, ZimRights members, led by Mr Panganayi Murime tackled the issue of child marriages head-on by engaging Childline – which is a charity formed to defend and promote the rights of children in Zimbabwe through the provision of safe, confidential and child-friendly reporting mechanisms centred around a free 24-hour counselling service.



A training manual guided the capacitation process and the manual was utilized by the trained human rights defenders to train community members.

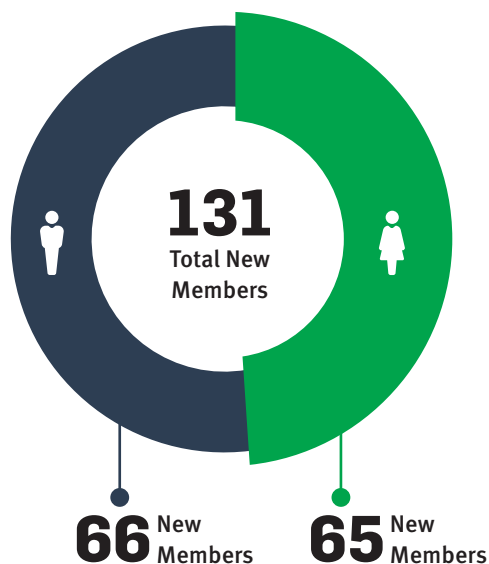




HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

MASHONALAND CENTRAL

Mashonaland Central province covers an area of 28,347 square kilometres and has a population of 1,384,891. Bindura is the capital of the province. ZimRights has a presence in all of the province's districts. According to the 2022 ZimRights database, Mashonaland Central has 14195 members, of which 6674 are females, 7521 males, and 1211 youths. In 2022 the province had 131 new members, 65 females and 66 males.



In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in Mashonaland Central province identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Shrinking Civic Space
- Right to Education
- Corruption of Police
- Poor Service Delivery
- Weaponization of farming inputs
- Child marriages
- Violence in mining areas
- Access to Communal land
- Traditional Leadership Violating Human Rights
- Conflict with oil Exploitation Companies
- Access to Water

BINDURA

Shrinking Civic Space

In June 2022, 4 members of the Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD) were arrested and detained for 2 days by the ZRP in Bindura. The four were charged with hosting a community meeting without police clearance, in contravention with the Maintenance of Peace and Order Act.

On that day, ZRP deployed heavily armed riot police and disrupted a peaceful and private stakeholder consultative meeting that IYWD was hosting. The meeting was attended by members

of local government in the province who had gathered to discuss issues of gender-responsive social service deliveries. The move by the police was in violation of the fundamental freedoms of assembly and association for Zimbabweans.

MBIRE

Right to Education

A Headmaster at Sangojena Primary imposed an additional \$6 on top of the examination fees required by the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC). This was ostensibly to cater for the transportation of desks and provide meals for invigilators. Sangojena School is not a ZIMSEC-accredited centre and their students have to write examinations at Mushumbi Primary School, which is located 10km away. Failure to pay the \$6 would prevent students from writing the exams despite them being registered with ZIMSEC.

GURUVE

Corruption in the Police

The Police force in Guruve district, in particular, those servicing Mupinyuri Village Ward 11 were reportedly practising open corruption resulting in a lot of criminals getting away with crimes after paying a bribe to the investigating officer and his superiors.

One participant reported a case of a man in Mupinyuri Village who committed murder and rape but has not been investigated because they suspect he paid off the police for freedom. This is a barrier to access to justice.

MOUNT DARWIN

Poor Service Delivery

In Dotito, the road network leading to clinics, schools and the tobacco sales floor was in a terrible state, which affected access to health, education and the economic livelihood of tobacco farmers in the community who needed to transport their goods to sales floors in Bindura. The community mobilized and engaged with the rural council, outlining their entitlement to a proper road network and the knock-on effect on the other rights. The road was fixed and access to services was restored.

Weaponization of farming inputs

In Nyamazizi, our members filed a report against the Village Head Mutyandaedza from ward 12 who was acting corruptly by deliberately excluding 5 community members from the Pfumvudza input's beneficiary list which was against the distribution requirements. The community members also engaged with the ward councillor who rectified the issue and instructed the village head to reinstate all persons who had been excluded.

RUSHINGA

Child Marriages

Rushinga remains the district with one of the highest child marriage cases in Zimbabwe. Our members recorded over a dozen cases of underage girls being married off to elderly men for cultural or religious purposes. The problem is rampant so much so that the Rushinga Rural District Council and National Government through the Ministry of Women's acknowledged the need to tackle the issue.

Some of the following factors were identified as contributing to the scourge of child marriages in the district were traditional practices such as kuzvarira (pledging into the marriage of a girl) where a girl child is married off even before birth.

The second practice called kuripangozi (appeasing avenging spirit) is a ritual of marrying off young brides to compensate for the death of a person who might have been murdered by a family member.

Another traditional practice that exposes girls to child marriage is chiramu (a practice whereby the husband of a sister or aunt has the privilege to play sexual games with a young sister or niece. Such flirtation may lead to pregnancy and when it happens, the perpetrator is forced to marry the girl.

Members gave testimony of a case of a 25-year-old boy who impregnated his niece 14-year-old. The boy then ran away before being apprehended by authorities. The issue was discussed by the Village Chief and there was a process to sanitize the pregnancy by payments of lobola.

Religion contributes to the issue and the practice of Child marriages is more prevalent in indigenous apostolic churches in Zimbabwe.

The practice of marrying off young girls is rampant because of a mix of tradition and religious practices. For example, young girls between the ages of 12 and 16 years are married off to elderly men in Johanne Masowe Shonhiwa church consequently becoming parents before the age of 18 years.

SHAMVA

Violence in Mining Areas

As a mining district, community members are affected by the violence which is perpetrated by the miners. In Shamva Town, the violence has gotten so out of hand that the community has imposed on itself a curfew to remain indoors once the sun sinks, to avoid being a victim of this violence. The biggest challenge for the community is that it is difficult to effectively solve the problem because they are being let down by the authorities. Reporting the groups to the police often results in violent retaliations and the police accept bribes to either release the accused or release information on who reported.

Further, it is also difficult to hold dialogues with these groups as many of the people are migrants from other towns who came looking for gold and often run away after committing heinous crimes. There were efforts to engage with the Police in Shamva who agreed to address the concerns but to date, no significant changes can be seen.

MAZOWE

Access to Communal Land

Community members in Mazowe Ward 9, have reported that the Ward 9 Councillor had taken away public land intended for a general hospital which he sold off as residential stands. The Councillor is alleged to be selling off the land without taking into consideration the proper legal channels. Other communities indicated that Village Heads are taking over pieces of land that communities have been using to grow their crops for generations and selling them illegally.

Traditional Leadership Violating Human Rights

The institution is reportedly violating the political rights of community members and village heads and headsmen were reported to be openly engaging in political activities which is in violation of the law which provides that Traditional Leaders should not be affiliated with any political party. They in turn threaten anyone in their village who is not affiliated to the same party as them, coercing villagers to associate themselves with one political party or run the risk of losing their homes or lives altogether.

Residents feel they do not freely enjoy and exercise their political and civil rights in their communities. One member testified that if you openly support the opposition, you will be targeted by other activists and at times violence unleashed on you.

MUZARABANI DISTRICT

Conflict with oil exploration companies

Participants in ZimRights Activities noted that since reports of the discovery of oil and gas in the area began, the community has witnessed increased tensions and conflicts.

Members witnessed the case of the Village head Muchedzi who was deposed from his post after he engaged the companies and highlighted that there was need for the companies to also consult community members before any displacements.

The case of the Village Head highlights the consequences of speaking out against injustice. Further, some of the mining companies have opened up gravel roads where there are graves, angering community members.

Access to Water

Muzarabani, North Ward 5, residents reported their challenge to clean water for many years. Residents raised the issue with council for the past three years and nothing has changed. The community especially women are affected by the long distances they have to walk to attain water.



THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

In 2022, ZimRights was active in all the districts of Mashonaland Central. Our members worked in various spaces to address identified human rights issues. Below we share some of our interventions.

Working with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission

Because of the prevalence of human rights violations in Mashonaland Central, ZimRights engaged with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and introduced the Working with the ZHRC Project. 8 human rights champions were selected to lead the engagement. A training Manual was developed, and a series of training workshops were done jointly with the ZHRC, to allow community members to utilise the ZHRC to find redress for the reported human rights issues. The issues the ZHRC failed to address, ZimRights took them further for alternative engagement. ZimRights monitors documented 7 cases of human violations which they then reported to the ZHRC one such case involved a Chiweshe a villager who was dispossessed of part of his communal land by members of the ruling party for being a member of the opposition CCC party. This matter is still under investigation.

PVO Bill Public Hearings

Gurube was selected as one of the few venues across the country to hold public hearings on the PVO Bill. A community dialogue meeting was conducted and ZimRights members brainstormed on the effects of the Bill and proposed recommendations to legislators. The community engaged traditional leadership and social welfare and came up with joint submissions on the bill amendment. The document was submitted to the parliament portfolio committee on public service, labour

and social welfare as part of written submissions on the Bill.

Community Dialogues on Human Rights

In Mazowe, through community dialogue and capacitation on human rights workshops, participants were given knowledge of the different avenues to explore and different levels of hierarchy to approach when a matter is stalling. Thereafter one member had their daughter assaulted and fondled they managed to seek justice through the steps they were given during the workshop. There was a police officer from Jumbo Police Station who witnessed the issue but initiated no action and the police station refused to investigate. The member then took a report of the incident and the conduct of the officer to Mazowe Police Station demanding to speak to only the officer in charge. In Mazowe the case was recorded and a docket was opened under case number CR212/03/22. The action was taken and the accused appeared in court and sentenced accordingly.

Joint Human Rights Education and Awareness Workshops

Freedom of assembly and abuse of office

ZimRights members lodged a report against Officer Moyo of the PISI section at Mvurwi police station, who was accused of abusing his office and authority by blocking a human rights workshop. The police were notified on the 27th of April 2022 about the scheduled workshop which

was pencilled for the 04 of May 2022. The officer gave a response which came on the 4th of May and said he was still enquiring if ZimRights' ban had been lifted when there was no such ban in the first place. The workshop was subsequently postponed. ZHRC noted the case and filed a report at Bindura HQ Station.

Training of Trainers on Human Rights Workshop

Human Right Quarterly Review Meetings with Regional Council Members

8 human rights champions met twice in February and May to discuss prevalent human rights issues in their communities and work out solutions to better respond to human rights violations.

Monitoring and Documentation of human rights. The ZimRights team conducted a visit to Mbire District. The case in relation was affecting Grade 7 pupils at Sangojena Primary.

The school had not yet been recognized by the Government as an examination centre thus, the exam class utilized Mushumbi Primary School facilities which is 10km away as an examination centre. A new Headmaster at Sangojena Primary imposed that on top of the examination fees the parents were required to pay an additional \$6 to cater for transportation of desks and invigilators and meals. The ZHRC intervened and assisted parents by writing a letter to the District Superintendent of Education (DSE) who removed the requirement.

ZimRights visited communities from Nyamazizi (wards 12 and 14) of Mount Darwin. The issue raised by the affected communities is related to the mining operations of Lafarge in their area.

In 2019, the mining company drilled 8 holes which were 150m long for sampling. Around 200 households will be affected by the Lafarge operations, through hazardous air pollution, noise pollution, water pollution and land displacements. The community, through the support of ZimRights, agreed to form an association named; Nyamazizi–Musonzwe Community Development Association to engage with Lafarge on a favourable solution for all parties affected.

Humanitarian Aid and Support to Victims of Human Rights Violations

On the 28th of June 2022, 4 members of the Institute for Young Women Development Team were arrested and detained for 2 days by the Zimbabwe Republic Police in Bindura, Mashonaland Central Province.



The four were released on the 1st of July and have been attending court sessions at Bindura Provincial Magistrate Court facing charges of hosting a community meeting without police clearance, in contravention of the Maintenance of Peace and Order Act.

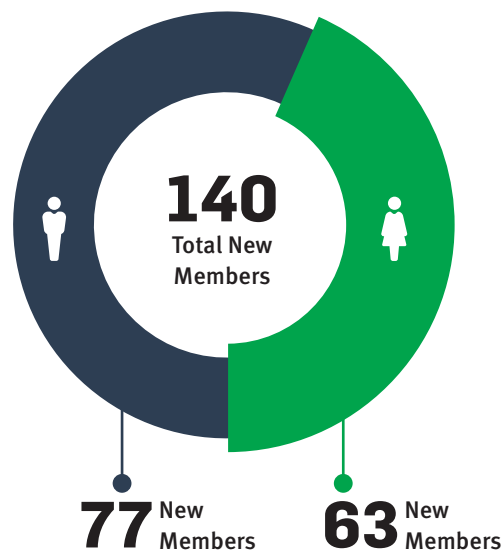
ZimRights assisted the communities in Mbire where Grade 7 pupils at Sangojena Primary their right to basic education was violated. The school has not yet been recognized by the Government as an examination centre. A letter was submitted to the District Superintendent of Education (DSE) who removed the requirement and allowed students to write their exams freely.



MASHONALAND EAST

Mashonaland East province has an area of 32,230 square kilometres and a population of approximately 1 731 181. Mash East has a relatively young population with just over 40% of the entire population below the age of 15. Large parts of the population are rural, though all districts in the province have an urban area. This makes access to services a challenge to the majority of the inhabitants in the province with services like electricity, running water, modern toilets, tarred roads, nearby schools and hospitals all being scarce to the rural dwellers.

The quality of life improves as we move from rural areas such as Mudzi and Uzumba to more developed areas such as Marondera and Seke districts. Mashonaland East has 12134 members of which 6805 are females, 5329 males, and 839 youths. In 2022 the province had 140 new members, 63 females and 77 males.



HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in Mashonaland East province identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Internal Displacements
- Corruption and abuse of Office by Public Officials
- Access to Communal Land
- Political Victimisation
- Partisan Distribution of Agricultural Inputs and Food Aid
- Partisan Distribution of Agricultural Inputs from the Government
- Access to Documents IDs and Birth Certificates
- Abuse of Power by Traditional Leaders
- Access to education
- Civil and Political Rights
- Child Marriages

GOROMONZI

Internal Displacements

In Goromonzi North Ward 16, the Goromonzi Rural District Council (GRDC) has been making attempts to arbitrarily take land away from settlers in 9 out of 32 villages in that ward. These are Yafele, Tapfumane, Mudzudzu, Takadii, Musonza, Muchemwa, Ngazimbi, Tafirenyika and Nemhara. In July 2022, The GRDC identified what they termed “*illegal settlers*” in these villages and issued them with letters notifying the recipients that they were “*illegal occupants*” to the land and the “*illegal occupants*”, would be fined US\$1,500 to be paid within three (3) months of receipt of the letter. Failure to settle this fee would result in the demolition of their homes and removal from the lands the settlers have occupied. Over 400 households stood to be affected and over 1000 community members faced land displacement.

ZimRights together with Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) wrote to GRDC, seeking clarification on the evictions and requesting for a more inclusive approach when dealing with communal land. The 3 months notice period has since lapsed and no cases of evictions or further letters from the GRDC have been reported.

MARONDERA

Corruption and Abuse of Office by Public Officials

The ZRP was singled out as the biggest perpetrator with appalling police conduct ranging from solicitation of bribes to cover crimes and abuse of office to intimidate community members or cover up criminal activity. The issue of police brutality was raised

by participants from the Marondera district who pointed out that the police are violent to vendors, beating them or chasing them and seizing their goods. Even after community engagements with the Police, the practice has continued and members pointed out this worsens towards election season when the allocation of vending stalls will be weaponized.

Access to Communal Land

Communities in Mahusekwa Ward 11 was disgruntled by the treatment of the Marondera Local Council on their communal lands. Several participants raised complaints about their ancestral land being expropriated without adequate compensation or consultation which is against the laws. One participant narrated how her land was taken by the council in 2015 and she was promised compensation but this has not yet materialized. ZimRights encouraged the communities to create Community-based structures such as residents’ councils which will be responsible for engaging with the Local Council whenever there are land disputes.

MUTOKO

Political Victimization

In Mutoko, issues of political victimisation were raised. A ZimRights member who participated in the public hearings, expressing their concerns during the PVO Bill hearing was targeted and openly threatened by political activists accusing him of opposing the government. Other members who attended ZimRights workshops were labelled as opposition supporters, and some lost their jobs and selling spaces on the market.

The specific case was reported to the Zimbabwe

Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and they have indicated that they are going to conduct investigations on the issue. The ZimRights members mobilised the community and approached the District Development Committee and Social Welfare Department on this issue. Some of the issues were resolved while others are still outstanding.

Partisan Distribution of Agricultural Inputs and Food Aid

In Mutoko district, the Headman in Ward 6 was engaging in partisan distribution of food aid whereby allocated resources were reserved for members of the ruling party despite the inputs being for everyone in the ward. At Corner Store, one of the Pfumvudza inputs distribution hubs, the ward councillor in the area has taken responsibility for the distribution resulting in massive corruption and political discrimination. Those in charge of the processes use ghost workers as recipients. ZHRC engaged with the complainants and perpetrators. Testimonies from ZimRights members show there have been some changes though the culture is still deeply rooted.

The issues emanating from Corner Store were reported to the ZHRC, who engaged with the complainants and perpetrators. Testimonies from ZimRights members show there have been some changes and lessened corruption though the culture is still deeply rooted.

MUREHWA

Partisan Distribution of Agricultural Inputs from the Government

Agricultural inputs were distributed by members of the ruling party who ended up selling the

inputs instead of distributing them for free. Corruption has infiltrated the distribution of agricultural inputs and only a few are benefiting from the program. In Murehwa Ward 3, at the Zute Hall distribution centre, a complaint was raised that the distribution proceedings are often hijacked by party politicians with recipients of inputs often asked to sing slogans and pledge allegiance to the ruling party before receiving their inputs. At times residents are forced to sign up for party membership despite lacking actual affiliation in order for them to receive inputs.

The matter was brought to the attention of ZHRC and they advised the complainants to approach the Department of Social Welfare which are the custodians of humanitarian aid. Further, they should update the ZHRC in the event that they fail to assist, in which case it will become a maladministration issue.

Access to documentation IDs and Birth Certificates

ZimRights Members in Mashonaland East have complained of the threat facing people in their communities, especially in remote places without access to National Documentation such as IDs and Birth Certificates. Lack of access to documents has become generational with parents who are lacking documents not being able to obtain documents for their children almost resulting in the next generation not obtaining documentation if the situation is not addressed.

With the upcoming election, this violates the right to vote since one cannot register without national documents. The Registrar's Office at Murehwa Centre has an unreasonable limit of 150 persons per day as the maximum who can obtain these documents. The office services the entire Murehwa and an intake of 150 people per

day has created a backlog.

ZimRights remains in constant communication with ZHRC on the issues of access to documentation. The commission undertook to take up the issue with Parliament and ZEC and put pressure for intervention. Several mobile ID and birth registration exercises carried out throughout the year are some of the fruits of these but many villagers remain disenfranchised from social protection mechanisms.

MUDZI DISTRICT

Abuse of Power by Traditional Leaders

The Village Chief in Mudzi South Ward 6 was reported to be abusing his power by handcuffing, assaulting and torturing respondents or defendants standing trial before his court violating Section 53 of the Constitution. The Chief in Ward 1 community had residents complain that the Chief was forcing them to contribute to the building of a Chief's courthouse and there were sanctions against community members.

In the first case, ZimRights and ZHRC engaged the District Development Coordinator on this matter who instantly intervened and resolved it. A police report was also opened. In the second case, ZHRC contacted the village head clarifying that it was not the citizens' duty to build infrastructure for traditional leaders. The Chief then made his requests voluntary.

Access to Education

The key issues concerned the learning conditions at Donzwe Primary School, in Mudzi South being the only school near Chiwaka Village. The student-to-teacher ratio was described as horrific with 100 students being

attended to by one teacher. This has led to children being rotated and going on half the learning days of the week, swapping between the groups divided into two. The participants also complained of the conduct of the school Headmaster Mr Makasa of turning away students from school, often pulling them away from class, and telling pupils in front of their peers not to come to school unless their fees are paid up.

ZimRights engaged with the headmaster on his conduct and encouraged him to exercise restraint about sending away students. The issue of learning conditions was raised with the relevant ministry and local education officers.

UZUMBA-MARAMBA-PFUNGWE DISTRICT

Civil and Political Rights

Our member reported that in Uzumba District wards 4 and 5 people are forced to join ruling party cells to receive social welfare food aid. Those who are not members of the ruling party are omitted from receiving the aid and openly told that their political affiliation is the reason why they haven't received any aid.

Human rights defenders were capacitated on documenting such cases and advised to report such issues to ZHRC and the District Development Committees which are responsible for welfare aid.

Child Marriages

The issue of child marriages remains prevalent in the district with the practice going on unchecked by authorities. Human rights monitors brought forward cases in Wards 3, 11, 4, 8, and 9 where 6 underaged girls were ceremonially married off to another family and have become wives and mothers at a very young age.

THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

In 2022, ZimRights was active in some of the districts of Mashonaland East. Our members worked in various spaces to address identified human rights issues. Below we share some of our interventions.

Community Dialogues on Human Rights

Under the Elections and Democracy Action zone, a total of 9 dialogues were carried out in the province, reaching out to 312 participants in total (143 males, 169 Females, and 112 youth). In the province, engagements with duty bearers, especially the Traditional Leadership yielded encouraging results and made an impact in some of the communities. In Mudzi and Mutoko, through dialogues village heads developed an appreciation of human rights and inducted several ZimRights members into Village courts as advisors.

Joint Human Rights Education and Awareness Workshops

To capacitate community human rights defenders to lead their communities in human rights issues, the workshops increased access to information and skill dissemination among the human rights defenders and introduced various ways to tackle violations. In line with the S2P2 Strategy, ZimRights members who were capacitated to become trainers went to lead and facilitate 4 training workshops in different areas across the province.

A total of 126 community members were reached, 69 being male and 57 Female, and 41 belonging to the Youth age group.

Human Rights Quarterly Review Meetings with Regional Council Members

8 human rights champions representing

ZimRights membership in the province met twice in February and May 2022 to discuss human rights issues in their communities and work out solutions to better respond to human rights violations.

These meetings yielded positive results as they provided a platform for ZimRights leadership to discuss the human rights situation prevalent in their Provinces and brainstorm solutions documented as possible actions by the ZHRC and any other stakeholders.

Furthermore, these meetings were utilized as a platform to reflect on the progress of implementation of the project activities in the regions and to make necessary adjustments so that the project remains relevant to the needs of the communities. During the meetings, a myriad of human rights issues would be raised by participants and an action plan adopted to tackle the issue.

Human Rights Monitoring and Rapid Response

Under the human rights monitoring and response action zone, ZimRights observed the March 26 By-election campaigns by assessing a Zanu PF rally at Rudhaka Stadium.

The monitoring team was deployed to Murehwa to verify and document a case of alleged child abuse by step-parents. The issue was brought to the attention of social welfare and after interventions custody of the child was given to

the biological mother.

The rapid response team made the following visits to the province:

1. Murehwa
2. Marondera

Human Rights Investigations

A visit was conducted in Goromonzi where over 1000 villagers face possible eviction from lands in 6 villages in Goromonzi. ZimRights assisted the villagers in conducting a survey and compiling their complaints. The matter was referred to ZLHR and a letter was sent to the GRDC to seek clarification on these processes and request for a more inclusive progression in handling the issues at hand. The matter is ongoing.



1000+

Villagers faced eviction
in Goromonzi



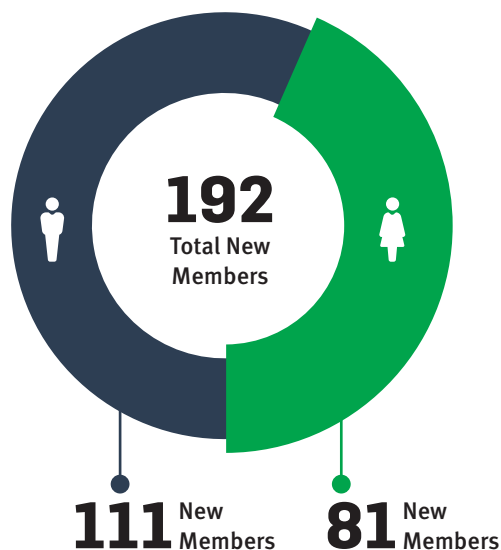


MASHONALAND WEST

Mashonaland West Province is the second largest province in Zimbabwe with an area of 57 441 square kilometres and a population of 1 501 656. Chinhoyi is the capital of the province. It is further subdivided into seven administrative districts namely:

- Chegutu,
- Hurungwe,
- Kariba,
- Makonde,
- Mhondoro-Ngezi,
- Sanyati, and
- Zvimba.

Mashonaland West has the highest number of water bodies, offering huge opportunities for irrigation, fish farming, and water sports. Mashonaland West has 17978 members comprising 8754 females, 9224 males, and 1321 youths. In 2022 the province had 192 new members, 81 females and 111 males.



HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in Mashonaland West province identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Poor Citizens' participation in the country's Democratic Processes
- Poor service Delivery
- Lack of transparency in the distribution of Agricultural inputs for Citizens
- Denial of Political Rights for Citizens
- Politically Motivated Violence

CHEGUTU

Poor Citizen Participation in the Country's Democratic Processes

ZimRights community monitors observed that youth participation in civic activities was lacking in the area. This was mainly seen in the March 26 by-election as well as the public hearings on the feedback on the 2022 National Budget. Lack of trust in political systems in the country. Criminalisation of the right to demonstrate and freedom of association were cited as some of the major contributors to this challenge.

KARIBA DISTRICT

In Kariba Urban, communities that interacted with ZimRights highlighted the following challenges:

Partisan Use of Public Resources

Community members complained that in August 2022, ZUPCO buses meant for the public, were temporarily withdrawn from plying the Kariba – Harare route because Nelson Chamisa of the Citizen for Coalition for Change (CCC) party was coming to address a rally at Nyamhunga stadium.

Lack of Access to Decent Shelter

Residents who interacted with ZimRights also bemoaned the lack of access to decent housing in Kariba Town. Some indicated that they had been on the housing waiting list for a long time but had not yet been given a chance to purchase residential stands. Residents bemoaned the politicisation of the Kasese residential stands an

area which they say has been informally settled and lacks basic amenities. Over the past decades, the ruling party has used Kasese as a bait to lure voters by promising them formalisation and new stands in the area.

Over the years, the area has remained underdeveloped and not decent for humans.

Lack of Consultation of the Community in Decision-making Processes

In Kariba Rural, community members cited a number of cases where they were not consulted in decisions that affected them. For example, they cited lack of consultation by safari operators and the Nyaminyami Rural District Council. Residents said, in many instances, they just wake up to see a Safari Operator demarcating boundaries in their areas without them having been consulted. What usually follows are community members clashing with these operators for trespassing.

Assault

In Mola, residents complained that at one point in October 2022, the Bumi Hills anti-poaching unit assaulted community members at Mola Shopping Centre, and this was done with the aid of people dressed up as members of the Zimbabwe National Army.

Poorly Resourced Schools

Community members also lamented poorly resourced schools. For example, at Mola High School, there is no science lab and no science teachers, as a result, only Arts and Commercial subjects are being conducted.

The school also has a shortage of Tonga teachers. The constitution recognises Tonga as one of the 16 official languages and the students in Kariba Rural are being deprived of the opportunity to learn their language academically.

Lack of Access to Tertiary Institutions

Like others, children from Mola, Siakobvu and the surrounding areas of Kariba Rural also harbour desires to access tertiary education. Tertiary education is instrumental in fostering growth, reducing poverty, and boosting shared prosperity. However, The Chinhoyi University of Technology is the closest tertiary institution to 8 for students from this part of Mashonaland West. However, the university is more than 300km away and also cannot cater for those who wish to enrol for vocational learning.

Lack of Access to Communication Facilities

Members of the Mola Community lamented their lack of access to communication facilities. Mobile network reception is virtually non-existent in the area and residents have to travel to specific spots where reception is available. This is done usually at the expense of their safety as the area is also frequented by wild animals.

“

Tertiary education is instrumental in fostering growth, reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity.”

THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

In 2022, ZimRights was active in all of the districts of Mashonaland West. Our members worked in various spaces to address identified human rights issues. Below we share some of our interventions.

Our most active action zone in Mashonaland West in 2022 was the Civic Engagement Action Zone. Several interventions were undertaken including voter mobilisation campaigns and dissemination of information for engagement with the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

In Mola, ZimRights conducted a Training of Community Human Rights Watchdog meeting and a series of Citizen Duty bearer engagements to encourage meaningful civic engagement between communities and their duty bearers.

These resulted in continued engagement efforts between Mola community members to improve access to socioeconomic rights in the area. As a result of these efforts, the Nyaminyami Rural District Council had rehabilitated 10km of the 39km road that links Mola to Siakobvu.

In addition, electricity poles were erected signalling the bringing of electricity to the area. Tonga as an academic subject was also introduced at Mola High School in 2022.

Voter Mobilisation Efforts

At least 2500 citizens were reached with information on voter registration and democratic participation. This was through the door-to-door village voter mobilisation campaign in Kadoma and a voter mobilisation roadshow in Kariba. mobilizers in the province now have adequate information and skills on voter mobilization and voter registration. 115 people were directly mobilised to register to vote ahead of the March 2022 by-election.

Provincial Masterclass Training on Civic Engagement and Constitutionalism

In Kariba 30 (15 male, 15 female) ZimRights members are now leading in orienting other members on civic engagement and promoting constitutionalism. More citizens are being mobilized to join the action zone. All participants received ZimRights' civic engagement manual which enables them to impart critical human rights information in their communities. This will see continued human rights monitoring and meaningful engagement on human rights issues.

Youth Shifting Power to the People Sports Gala

In Karoi, youths are increasingly taking the lead in human rights activism. The 7 youths who have been trained in the Shifting Power to the People Strategy (SP2P) are playing the lead in engaging more youth to join the human rights movement. This group has contributed in a big way to the growing ZimRights membership in Mashonaland West.

Youth for Peace Campaign

In Karoi and Kadoma, 155 members (84 female, 71 male) are leading a Youth for Peace Campaign. Through support from ZimRights, they have managed to use theatre to express themselves and sensitise their colleagues on the importance of peace.

Citizen Engagement with Duty Bearers

In Muzvezve Sanyati, ZimRights members are facilitating dialogue between duty-bearers and citizens to address pressing human rights issues. The members convened a meeting on the 15th of December 2022, bringing the community together to reflect on strategies to effectively monitor and respond to human rights violations in their communities. The meeting managed to link the community with other human rights service providers including the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC).



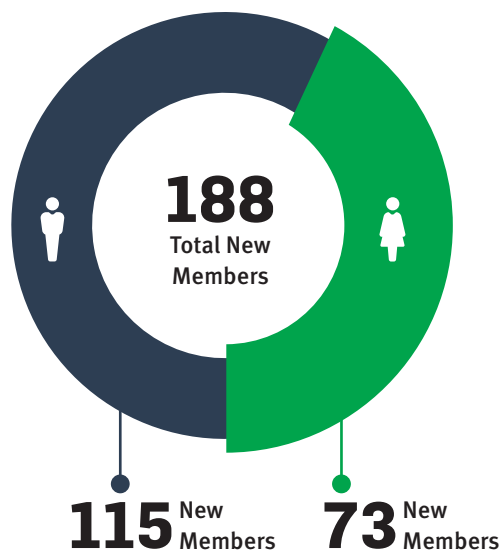


MASVINGO

Masvingo is one of the 10 administrative provinces of Zimbabwe, covering 56-566 square kilometres in the southeastern part of the country. It is further subdivided into seven administrative districts namely:

- Bikita,
- Chiredzi,
- Chivi,
- Gutu,
- Masvingo,
- Mwenezi and
- Zaka.

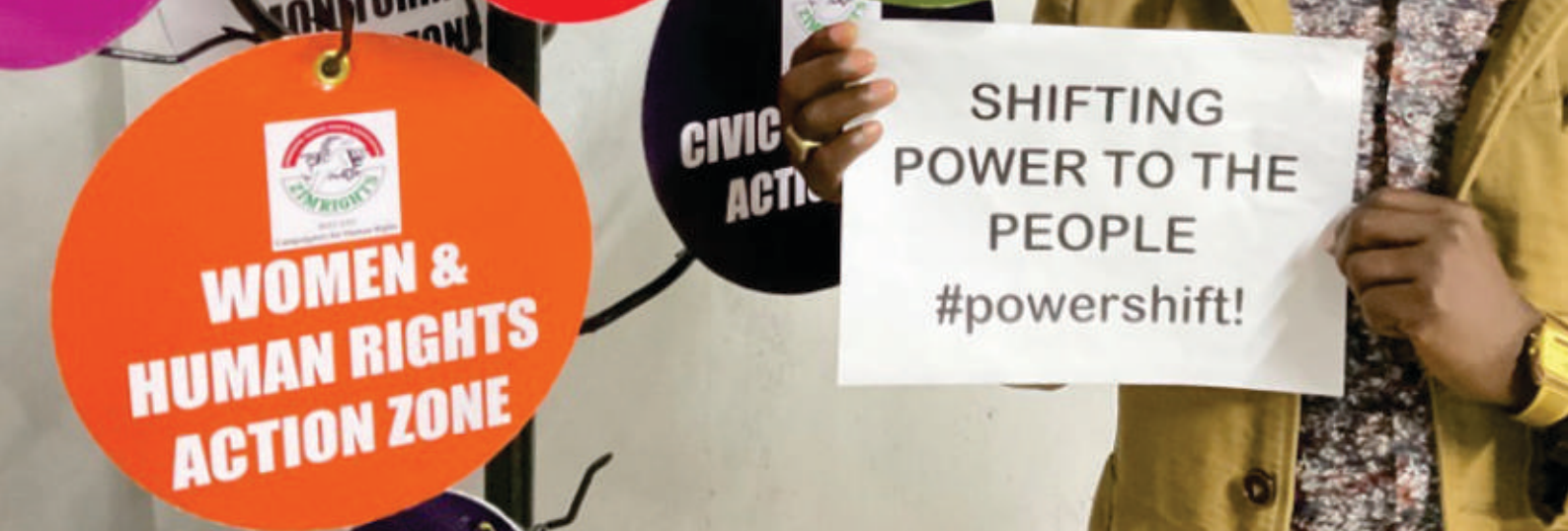
According to the 2022 Census Report, the population of Masvingo is 1,638,539 of which 875,002 of them are female. ZimRights has a presence in all of Masvingo's seven districts. Masvingo has 41457 members, of which 22732 are females, 18725 males, and 2470 youths. In 2022 the province had 188, 115 females and 73 males.



HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in Masvingo province identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Internal Displacement
- Violation of Labour Rights
- Political Violence
- Partisan distribution of Agricultural Inputs from the Government
- Rights and Traditions



INTERNAL DISPLACEMENTS

In the Hwicho Community, the Gutu Rural District Council is seeking to expand the Council land encroaching into communal land. In 2022, villagers received notices of displacement from their communal land. These villagers have lived in this area for all their lives. The displacements are a violation of the villagers' right not to be displaced from their homes as protected by section 74 of the Constitution. With the help of ZimRights, the Villagers have organized themselves to respond to the advances of the council. The villagers have questioned the council's actions. This has slowed down the advancement but has not stopped it. As late as October 2022, the Council was still pushing to evict the villagers.

VIOLATION OF LABOUR RIGHTS

In Chiredzi workers in sugar cane estates have aired their grievances on the unfair labour practices which they are being subjected to. There are concerns over late payment of wages, exceeding working hours without compensation and disregard for the workers' welfare. The workers are impacted in many ways depending on which department they are assigned to. This violates section 65 of the Constitution which guarantees the right to fair and safe labour practices and standards.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

In Gutu, opposition activists are complaining that ruling party activists are targeting their members with the intention to cause harm. Between October and November 2022, 6 known victims were assaulted by alleged ruling party youths who were armed with logs and machetes. Safety is not guaranteed for the victims as the police have been ordered not to arrest the perpetrators.

PARTISAN DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT

ZimRights monitors in Masvingo are reporting partisan distribution of agricultural inputs. These inputs are distributed by members of the ruling party who end up selling the inputs instead of distributing them for free. Corruption has infiltrated the distribution of agricultural inputs and only a few are benefiting from the program.

RIGHTS AND TRADITIONS

In violation of section 281(2) of the constitution, there are traditional leaders who have been appointed as chairpersons of political party structures in Bikita. As a result, there is increased active involvement of traditional leaders in politics who have already started threatening community members for failure to attend political meetings and to join the party.

THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

In 2022, at least 14 activities were carried out with at least 507 citizens benefiting directly. Below we share some of our activities:

Movement-Building-Onboarding Meetings

As part of our movement-building initiative, two onboarding meetings were held in Bikita and Masvingo Urban bringing in 58 new members to learn more about ZimRights and commit to work for human rights. New members received resources in their chosen areas of activism among the 8 action zones.

Capacity Building for Peace Action Committees

In Mwenezi and Bikita, ZimRights provided capacity building for 90 members who are members of the Peace Action Committees (PACs). This training included training in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. The essential tool shared with the PACs is the Right to Peace Manual.

Human Rights Monitoring

Masvingo witnessed a number of human rights violations in 2022. ZimRights worked to capacitate its members to undertake human rights monitoring and advocacy. The areas covered were Zaka and Masvingo Urban. 85 people benefitted from this initiative.

Human Rights Policy Advocacy

In 2022, several meetings were convened by various Parliamentary Portfolio Committees on different policy proposals. ZimRights members were active in many of these. In Masvingo and Chivi, 45 ZimRights members participated in public hearings on the PVO Bill and on the proposed National Youth Service.

ZimRights members condemned both laws as anti-human rights.

Community Dialogues on the State of Peace

In Mwenezi, the PAC convened 1 dialogue to reflect on the State of Peace. Members looked at the prevailing situation in the year, analysed the peace factors and made their contributions to the next State of Peace Report to be produced in 2023. 53 ZimRights members participated in the meeting.

Support for the Constitution Club

Under its Youth Zone, ZimRights continued to support the building of the next generation of human rights activists in Masvingo. This was done through support for a Constitution Club at Victoria High. The club has 20 members directly reaching out to about 100 students at the school. ZimRights provided the club with a handbook – Level Up to help the club organize its activities and recruit more members.

Masterclass on Civic Engagement and Constitutionalism

Moving from the High Schools into the communities, ZimRights convened a Masterclass on Civic Engagement and Constitutionalism in Chiredzi bringing together 17 participants. A special resource Guide to Elections and Democracy was shared with participants making them champions of constitutionalism.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES/ IMPACT IN THE PROVINCE AS A RESULT OF THE INTERVENTIONS

The interventions have increased the visibility of ZimRights in the province. This has also contributed to the growth of ZimRights members in communities.

Communities such as Zaka are already benefiting from the training on conflict resolution and transformation. As a result of the training, the Peace Garden Committee (PGC) in Zaka has resolved two boundary conflicts to date. The first involved parties in a dispute over a garden boundary and the second involved village heads in a dispute over village boundary. Both cases have been dealt with amicably after the ZRP, the local court and the local traditional leaders had failed to resolve the matters.

The Zaka PGC has also addressed conflicts involving livestock grazing in other people's fields. These are some of the cases that are quite common in rural communities and are a source of conflict among community members.

Owing to the platforms created by ZimRights, relations between community members and progressive duty-bearers have improved. This includes traditional leaders and councillors from different wards. The peace structures and other ZimRights members now have enhanced capacity to engage with duty bearers and to conduct constructive dialogues, particularly in Masvingo Urban. To this end, duty bearers are beginning to respond to issues presented for instance, on service delivery in different wards.

CHALLENGES FACED IN THE PROVINCE

The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) is already taking measures to restrict ZimRights operations in communities due to the threatening PVO bill. This is affecting the results that are intended to be achieved by some of the activities. The ZRP has been monitoring activities and has warned the ZimRights against discussing political issues with participants. However, they are not clear on what is political. Members of intelligence are being sent to monitor activities which intimidate participants and affect the quality of discussions that are held. Participants fail to freely express themselves in such a controlled environment.

ZimRights managed to provide engagement platforms with traditional leaders to sensitize them on the need to be politically neutral and not to be influenced by politics when executing their duties.

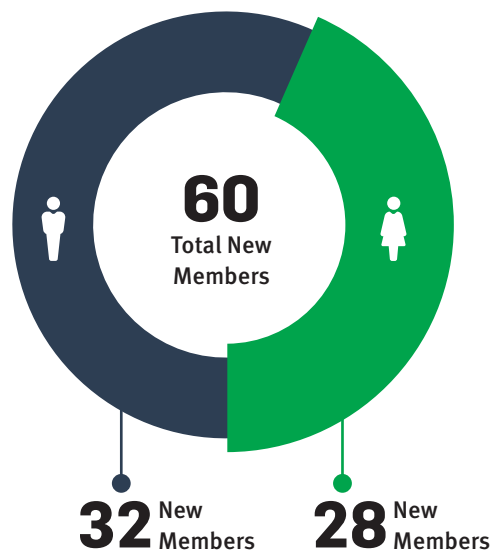
ZimRights managed to link Masvingo communities with national human rights institutions. Reported cases to the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) have increased in the year 2022. The ZHRC have indicated that they are going to conduct investigations on the issues reported.



MATEBELELAND NORTH

Matebeleland North covers 75 025 square kilometres in land size in western Zimbabwe. The province covers the northeastern parts of the country and stretches to the country's border with Zambia. Lupane is the capital of the province. It has a population of 827,626 as of the 2022 census it is the country's second-least populous province, after Matabeleland South, and is the country's least densely populated province.

Matabeleland North Province is home to Victoria Falls which is one of the seven natural wonders of the world, an international tourist resort and a celebrated historical area. Matebeleland North has 9358 members, of which 5051 are females, 4307 males, and 816 youths. In 2022 the province had 60 new members, 28 females and 32 males.



HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in Matebeleland North province identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Environmental Rights
- Displacement of people from their ancestral homes
- Discrimination and Partisan Aid Distribution

ENVIRONMENT RIGHTS

The community in Hwange is suffering from the effects of risky mining activities, including children and adults getting pneumonia and other respiratory illnesses like TB.

In Lusumbami, Hwange Colliery Company is conducting mining activities close to a school and residential area, resulting in mine blasts affecting children to the extent that they collapse at school. The residents around this area are also being affected by gaseous fumes as they have reached black shells which also cause coal seams and fires.

Hwange Colliery Company concession area has seen increasing underground coal seam fires presenting serious hazards for children. These date back to 2019 when several children were burned and swallowed by underground fires. The recent case was for Alisha a 9-year-old girl (2022) who was burnt up to waist level and she died.

DISPLACEMENT OF PEOPLE FROM THEIR ANCESTRAL HOMES

Mining operations by Beifer Investment has seen residents in Dinde facing eviction from their homes. The problem began in 2019 when Beifer Investment began coal exploration in the area without first addressing the local population.

DISCRIMINATION AND PARTISAN AID DISTRIBUTION

ZimRights has recorded cases of discrimination and partisan aid distribution. In November 2022, in Lupane there was a dispute over Intwasa farming program, a government project that is meant to provide farmers with inputs but only benefited those who support the ruling party.



THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

In 2022 ZimRights made 5 interventions in Matebeleland North with the participation of 241 ZimRights members. These were mainly in Lupane and Hwange. Below share some of our interventions.

Civic Engagement on Voter Mobilisation

Through the Elections and Democracy Action Zone, ZimRights has engaged the province, encouraging people to participate in electoral processes. This was done through the Data for Rights Initiative. Through the WhatsApp groups, ZimRights shared with communities the aggregated data on electoral issues, encouraging marginalised communities and under-represented groups to register to vote. A roadshow was held in Lupane in which more than 200 people participated.

Youth Civic Engagement

In 2022, ZimRights supported 1 Constitution Club at Zwangendaba High School. The club received a training and facilitation toolkit and membership handbook which helped strengthen the club's programming and outreach activities. In November 2022, the club hosted 10 December International Human Rights Day by convening a soccer and netball tournament with 6 teams participating in the local area. Incorporating theatre and music, the club ran an effective campaign against gender-based violence and child marriages. The club now has over 100 members.

In the same year, a new Constitution Club was opened at Lupane State University. ZimRights supported the incubation process which saw the launch of the new club with 20 members joining on the first day. Following the visit to Lupane State University by the ZimRights Secretariat, the Lupane Constitution Club committed to

upholding international days in relation to human rights as enshrined in the constitution. On the 11th of October 2022, the International Day of the Girl Child, the club hosted an online discussion on how to ensure that the girl child's rights are protected. On the 13 of October 2022, Breast Cancer Awareness Day, the club hosted another online discussion on the right to health in Zimbabwe with regard to cancer treatment.

Human Rights Monitoring and Response

Owing to the increase in human rights violations, ZimRights convened a masterclass on monitoring and documenting human rights violations. The masterclass conducted saw the capacity of human rights defenders in Hwange District being strengthened in relation to documenting, verifying and reporting human rights violations in their communities. The defenders pledged to engage community leaders on the human rights issues affecting their communities given that the communities feel the duty bearers are not responsive.

ZimRights will continue strengthening watchdog committees and community champions to be able to identify, document and report any human rights violations.

The watchdog committee led a community engagement with duty-bearers and presented Human rights violation issues in the community. The engagement dialogues have resulted in the community agreeing to pursue public litigation on the issue of Lusumbami.

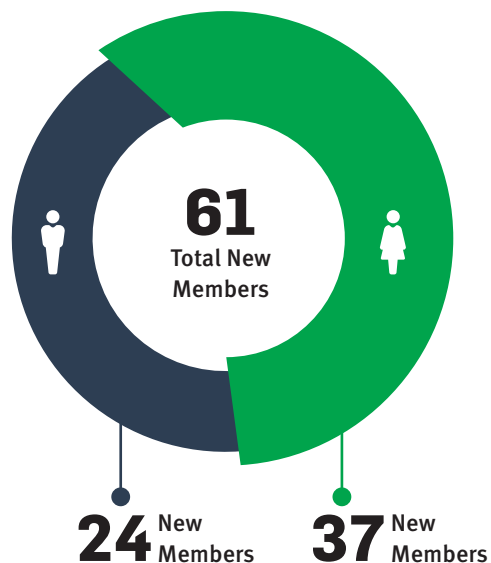


MATEBELELAND SOUTH

Matebeleland South is located in the southern part of the country sharing boundaries with Botswana and South Africa. It has a population of 760,345 people and a total of 54 172 square kilometres.

It is the country's least populous province. It is a gateway and corridor to most SADC economies and boasts of the busiest inland port of entry in Sub-Saharan Africa handling large volumes of traffic. ZimRights has a presence in all of the districts.

Matebeleland South has 20639 members, of which 11769 are females, 8870 males, and 1415 youths. In 2022 the province had 61 new members, 37 females and 24 males.



HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in Matebeleland South identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Unlawful Evictions
- Corruption
- Police Brutality
- Drug and substance abuse
- Child Abuse
- Collapsing of Social Services
- Gender-Based Violence

UNLAWFUL EVICTIONS

In the border town of Beit Bridge, former government workers received a notice to leave their residences in September 2022.

At first, the government had pledged to devise a payment schedule that would allow them to eventually acquire the residences. Sadly, up until the time of retirement, this never occurred. Six families who lived in the houses since the 1990s are affected.

CORRUPTION

Beitbridge border post is the busiest in the region. With the high traffic numbers, Beitbridge police have become notorious for corruption, demanding bribes from vendors in Beitbridge as well as cross-border traders. More than twice a week, the police make rounds, requesting ZAR120 from vendors.

POLICE BRUTALITY

Police corruption is usually followed by police brutality. On the 15th of November 2022, Blessing Alex Jones was attacked by a police dog and sustained leg injuries after he was said to have breached COVID-19 regulations.

DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

There is an increase in drug and substance abuse among the youths. When the community reports the cases to the police, they seem not to take any action. Known drug dealers are not arrested. The Peace Action Committee (PAC) in the area alleges that the police may be receiving bribes from drug dealers.

CHILD ABUSE

In Plumtree, ZimRights handled a case where two minors (a) grade 2 & grade 5 sibling who had been neglected by their parents and reduced to survive on human waste, cases were attended to by the Plumtree PAC (b) two other minors that were abandoned by the mother while she moved around nightclubs were moving around Plumtree town soliciting for food handouts.

COLLAPSING SOCIAL SERVICES

ZimRights members have reported a collapse of social services. Members of the community have tried to engage their Member of Parliament Madodana Sibanda on several occasions to attend community meetings to no avail. Members of the community expressed concern over him only being seen when soliciting for votes.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Several cases of gender-based violence were recorded in the province in 2022. For example, Mr. Nyathi, a state security officer, was reported for physically abusing his wife. Despite police reports, nothing was done to put him in custody because of his connections with the police.



THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

In 2022, ZimRights undertook 9 human rights interventions in Matebeleland South. These included onboarding meetings, capacity development for PACs, human rights monitoring missions, civic engagement, and human rights policy advocacy.

Movement-building

In 2022, the province welcomed 61 new members into ZimRights. Two onboarding meetings were held in Gwanda Urban and Dombodema. 51 people participated and received vital information on how they can be active citizens. The training covered the 8 action zones and shared resources for learning more about ZimRights.

Capacity Building for Activists

Three capacity-building engagements were held in the province. Two trainings for the Peace Action Committees were convened in Gwanda Urban and Plumtree. 73 people participated in both activities. One human rights monitoring mission was held in Plumtree with 24 participants. The Beitbridge PAC detected a case related to housing, as sitting tenants in government houses were issued with vacation orders, while the residents reported that the government had initially indicated that they would offer them an opportunity to purchase the houses they were occupying. The PAC supported the community to submit a letter to the Ministry of Local Government and Social Amenities, through the local office to the provincial office.

Human Rights Policy Advocacy

The province participated in two human rights advocacy initiatives. These were the public hearings on the PVO Bill as well as the National Youth Service. 60 ZimRights members attended the meetings and articulated ZimRights' position on both proposed laws.

Engagement with Duty Bearers

ZimRights members in Plumtree community engaged with the Department of Social Welfare on the issues of abandoned children, child labour and child marriages. The community called for accountability and responsiveness to the cases they had previously reported. The representative of the department acknowledged that in the past, they indeed had taken time to respond to cases reported by the community due to being short-staffed. A pledge to improve was made given that the situation at the department had since improved.

In Sofa, Gwanda Rural members of the Peace Garden Committee resolved an issue of theft of food meant for school children at Wabayi Primary School. The PGC brought together teachers, the community and members of the SDC. The issue was resolved peacefully. The sitting SDC was suspended, and a new committee was selected.

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The community called for accountability and responsiveness to the cases they had previously reported.”



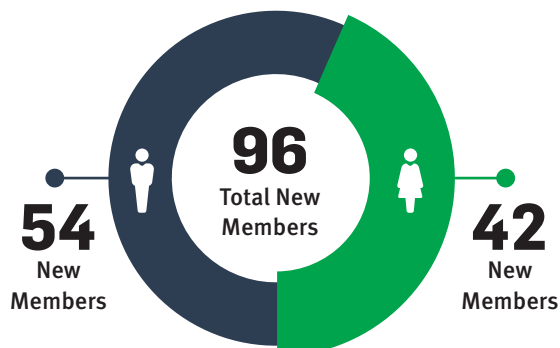
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WE ARE FOLLOWING

In 2022, local ZimRights community chapters in Midlands identified the following as topical issues on their human rights agenda:

- Abuse of Power
- Collapse of Social Service Delivery
- Low Voter Registration and Apathy
- Political violence and intimidation

MIDLANDS

Midlands Province is the epicentre of the country located at the heart of Zimbabwe spreads over Surface Area 49 166 square kilometres sharing boundaries with 6 Provinces. Its total population of 2,646,000 million according to the 2022 census results. It is the mineral hub of the country with 18 mined minerals and it is the second-highest producer of cotton. The province also has a blend of Shona, Ndebele, Tswana, Suthu, and Chewa among various other languages spoken in Zimbabwe. Its administrative capital is Gweru. Midlands has 38210 members, of which 20254 are females, 17956 are males and 2695 youths. In 2022 the province had 96 new members, 42 females, and 54 males.



ABUSE OF POWER

A traditional leader in Gokwe, Midlands province Chief Nemangwe was being accused of confiscating livestock belonging to his subjects on allegations of committing crimes relating to incest. The cases were being brought to the traditional chief's court and default judgements were being handed down. This was done in August 2022 despite the fact that the marriages were more than 20 years old. After receiving complaints from the human rights monitors in the province, ZimRights partnered with the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) and the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) to bring the matter to the courts. Civil Litigation commences and the chief was asked to return the cattle to the 18 families that were affected. ZimRights is now monitoring to see if the court order is going to be implemented. Going forward, ZimRights will engage the relevant stakeholders including the District Development Coordinator, the police and the traditional leadership to ensure that similar cases do not take place in the future.

COLLAPSE OF SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY

ZimRights members staying in Gweru and Kwekwe Towns have indicated that social service delivery is deteriorating. Water supply is erratic and there is no refuse collection. In January 2022, the situation also repeated in August 2022. Due to the erratic water supply, development partners have drilled boreholes in the high-density suburbs as a stopgap measure. While this is a welcome development, residents are now at risk of attacks by thieves and rapists as they have to queue at the water sources for up to midnight and early hours of the morning. Lack of access to water is a clear violation of the right to clean safe water as guaranteed by the constitution of Zimbabwe.

Those engaging in informal trading have indicated that there is not enough space to sell their products as the vending spaces are few and are allocated either through political party lines or corruptly. Over 300 vendors Informal traders operating at Mutapa market always have their livelihoods affected when the rainy season approaches. In February 2022 alone vendors were not able to operate from the stalls as they were affected by flooding. This has left the vendors with no income. The vendors need proper facilities and reliable water provision. ZimRights members are continuously engaging their elected leaders in the city to demand improved service delivery.

Health services provision has gone down. Residents in Kwekwe reported that at Kwekwe general hospital ambulance services are not being provided. When patients visit the hospital, they are asked to purchase consumables such as bandages. This hinders the most vulnerable groups from accessing health services as a right.

LOW VOTER REGISTRATION AND APATHY

ZimRights human rights monitors in Kwekwe, Chiwundura and Gokwe South are concerned with low voter turnout and apathy during elections. While the number of eligible voters in Midlands Province is more than 763 028, just above half are registered to vote. This is even more prevalent among the youth who have developed no interest in participating in the country's democratic processes. Lack of adequate information and lack of confidence in the institutions responsible for elections have been identified as the main causes of low voter registration and apathy. ZimRights champions in the province are now leading in conducting door-to-door mobilization activities to provide citizens with information on voter registration and the importance of democratic participation.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION

In the run-up to the by-elections that were done in March 2022, several episodes of politically motivated violence were experienced in Kwekwe and Gokwe. On Sunday 27 February 2022, violent attacks on the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) supporters resulted in the death of one supporter leaving at least 12 others injured. In Gokwe Centre violent clashes were also witnessed between the police and CCC supporters after the cancellation of the opposition party rally on short notice.

In the run-up to a by-election in Gokwe Kabuyuni elections, violent clashes were also reported on 25 August 2022 where at least 4 private journalists were assaulted while filming a motorcade of Zanu PF members who were blocking a road to a CCC rally.

THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING

There were 10 human rights interventions by ZimRights in the Midlands Province. These included civic engagement, capacity building and human rights monitoring. About 500 ZimRights members participated in these interventions.

Litigation

ZimRights engaged in civil litigation on a case between a traditional leader and his subjects in Gokwe Central. The traditional leader is accused of taking livestock from villagers based on baseless allegations of incest. With the assistance of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, the victims were able to get a spoliation order and the chief was ordered to return the castles he had illegally confiscated.

Engagement with duty bearers and stakeholders

On 18 May 2022 ZimRights champions in Gweru Midlands province conducted a breakfast meeting with three members of parliament and 11 ward councillors to discuss issues of service delivery, security sector accountability and legislative measures to protect citizens from security sector brutality.

The ZimRights champions highlighted that citizens in Gweru are facing service delivery challenges, especially with regard to access to safe drinking water and a clean environment. They highlighted that the council was not collecting refuse resulting in the mushrooming of dumpsites in the city.

Vendors highlighted that they were facing challenges with vending space. They noted that the vending space is not adequate and is not adequately resourced to cater for the needs of the vendors. This has resulted in the proliferation of illegal vending sites.

The human rights champions indicated that several citizens in the province have been victims of police brutality, especially during the enforcement of lockdown regulations. They also indicated corrupt police officers were collecting bribes from citizens who would have been found on the wrong side of the law. This has resulted in increased cases of corruption and rent-seeking by the security sector. illegal vendors also reported that they have been victims of security sector brutality as they are constantly being chased away from their vending spaces or else pay bribes in order to be allowed to sell.

Voter Registration Mobilization

ZimRights has capacitated its members in the communities to engage in community mobilisation in order to encourage citizens to register to vote and to participate during the delimitation exercise and to vote in by-elections and harmonized elections in the country.

The ZimRights mobilizers have been provided with information and skills to engage citizens to encourage them to participate in the country's democratic process. A total of 20 mobilizers were deployed in the province.

In 2022 the mobilizers reached a total of at least 2000 citizens around the province. Three roadshows were held in the province. One in Gokwe, another in Gweru and another in Zvishavane. Approximately 7 000 people participated in all the roadshows combined.

Human Rights Monitoring and Response

ZimRights members in the province are constantly involved in human rights monitoring to ensure that early response is provided whenever human rights violations take place. A watchdog committee has been established in Lower Gweru which is responsible for monitoring the human rights situation in the province for early warning and response.

Members of the watchdog committees have been trained on human rights monitoring and response including working with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and have been linked with human rights organizations providing other services such as psychosocial support, legal service and medical services to victims of human rights violations. The committees are also inclusive of members of marginalized communities such as women, youth and people with disabilities.

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Lack of access to water is a clear violation of the right to clean safe water as guaranteed by the constitution of Zimbabwe.”



COMMUNITY IMPACT

No Power for the People who Gave Power to the Nation: Mola Community's Struggle to Access Electricity

When we speak about human rights, for many it may sound like a buzz word until it touches us. Now, imagine how electricity has transformed our world today. Then imagine life without it. Without electricity, daily tasks are nearly impossible. Tasks like refrigerating food, working, and studying. Lack of electricity restricts the development of many communities. According to Hughes M (2018), access to electricity reduces poverty, increases opportunity, and improves health, productivity and living standards. *“Electricity powers devices that make daily living more efficient, freeing-up the populations time to grow the economy in other more creative ways.”* Hughes writes in the article *‘Why Access to Energy Should be a Basic Human Right.’*

For Zimbabwe, this great leap forward into the electricity age was made possible by the construction of the Kariba Dam which was completed in 1959 at a massive cost. The greatest this cost was the human cost; the displacement of the BaTonga people from their ancestral land and being resettled in an area that has not known electricity until June 2023.

The BaTonga people of Mola were giving development a chance when they agreed to be relocated. Paradoxically, the BaTonga of Mola stay a stone throw away from the Lake Kariba yet, for 64 years, they have never known electricity despite electricity pylons passing over their homesteads.

The BaTonga elders in Mola bitterly recall how they were promised heaven on earth – by the then colonial government – if they were to make way for Lake Kariba. Electricity, unfettered access to fisheries in the lack, royalties from safari operations were some of the promises that were given to the people. 64 years later, the people in Mola had no access to electricity and hopes were fading that it would come any time soon. In 2021, Mola community approached ZimRights to assist in terms of advocating for access to basic socio-economic services like electricity, better roads, and education facilities among others.

Speaking to ZimRights, one community members remarked how bitter they were as a community, *“We see pylons carrying electricity to places as far flung as Chiredzi. The electricity is coming from the Lake which contains the remains of our forefathers and part of our cultural heritage, yet we are living in darkness – it pains us.”*

After initial engagement with the community, ZimRights instituted a series of advocacy campaigns to sensitize the Mola community of their rights and to galvanise them into becoming proactive in terms of civic engagement. From 2021, 2 Human Rights workshops, 1 Duty bearer engagement, as well as 2 Civic engagement and 1 Training of human rights watchdog committee were instituted. In 2021, ZimRights helped formulate and register the Mola Residents Forum, which went on to become a vehicle for advocacy in the area.

In the same year, the resident's forum, with legal support from ZimRights, litigated against the lack of development in the area. Several entities were cited in the litigation process, and these include several government departments such as the ministry of energy and power development.

“Our belief is that it is totally repugnant and especially exclusionary for an entire district, one which is a producer of hydroelectric power, to go for years without electricity, the production of which has permanently and so far, negatively altered our lives,” said the Mola Residents Forum members in the court papers.

On the 8th of June 2023, their efforts paid off when the Minister of energy and power development, Honourable Zhemu Soda officially switched on electricity at Mola High School – bringing electricity to the community for the first time in 64 years.

Commenting on the sidelines of the switching on ceremony – Mr Chamboko, the Secretary of Mola Residents Forum said that they were happy as a community that they can now access electricity. Further he said that it was encouraging that the fruit of their advocacy was bearing fruit and that they would continue pushing for access to other services like fishing claims, better roads, improved communication and education in the area.

Electricity is not a luxury but a basic need in modern life. It is key to leading a dignified life. With electricity, the Mola community will have improved standard of living, improved access to the right to education, the right to health, and the right to decent livelihoods.



There is a growing global movement to consider electricity access as a human right. Electricity access is already well established within the framework of human rights, either as an implicit attribute of a pre-existing right, such as non-discrimination or sustainable development.

In a special report on Lebanon, Human Rights Watch (HRW) has concluded that access to electricity is critical to ensuring other basic rights, including but not limited to the rights to health, housing, water, and education, and should be recognized as a distinct human right.

Section 13 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe obliges the state to facilitate rapid and equitable development. It further obliges the state to ensure that local communities benefit from resources in their areas. While the switching on of electricity in Mola is a milestone, more still needs to be done for the community. The ZimRights experience with community gives hope that their determination will yield more results.



NATIONAL PROGRAMMES



NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

The collaborative work conducted by ZimRights and citizens at the community level feeds into ZimRights' national programmes. ZimRights amplifies the priority issues identified by local communities through engagement with national human rights mechanisms and other relevant institutions. Below are a few highlights of ZimRights' flagship national interventions for 2022.

STRENGTHENING THE LINK BETWEEN THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ARCHITECTURE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Constitution of Zimbabwe serves as the foundation of the country's national human rights architecture. In addition to guaranteeing human rights, the Constitution establishes key institutions and mechanisms mandated to promote and protect fundamental rights. Chapter 4 of the Constitution, known as the Bill of

Rights, provides for a full range of human rights, including civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights.

Chapter 12 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe also provides for the establishment of five Independent Commissions:

- the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC),
- Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC),
- Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC),
- National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), and
- Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC).

All of these Commissions serve the common ultimate purpose of supporting and entrenching human rights and democracy in Zimbabwe.

ZimRights' primary mandate remained anchored on ensuring that grassroots communities play an active role in the national human rights landscape. In 2022, ZimRights intensified its efforts to translate human rights norms into understandable and locally relevant terms. By articulating human rights standards in the language of livelihoods and quality of life, ZimRights made the Bill of Rights accessible to local communities. To complement this people-centred approach to human rights, ZimRights also connected grassroots communities with independent commissions and other relevant mechanisms within the national human rights system.

WORKING WITH THE ZHRC

In 2022, ZimRights continued its collaborative work with the Zimbabwe Human Rights

Commission (ZHRC), which has established offices in Harare and Bulawayo provinces, with plans to open an office in Masvingo in 2023. However, since the ZHRC currently only has offices in three out of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe, ZimRights recognized the need to connect communities with the ZHRC. To achieve this, ZimRights initiated two distinct projects: *'Taking the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission to the People,'* which ran from 2021 to 2022, and *'Enhancing the Promotion of Civil and Political Rights in Zimbabwe,'* which is scheduled to run from 2022 to 2023.

As part of its outreach campaign, ZimRights developed a tailor-made training manual called *'Working with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission'* to educate local communities about the role of the ZHRC. Through this initiative, ZimRights successfully engaged with communities in all ten provinces of Zimbabwe.

Under the programmatic pillar of Working with the ZHRC, ZimRights achieved several major milestones in 2022, including the following:

- Developing a Joint Action Plan with the ZHRC;
- Carrying out Joint Human Rights Education and Awareness Training of Trainers Workshops and conducting and jointly coordinating the Human Rights Quarterly Review Meetings by Regional Chapters;
- Implementing 12 key activities jointly with the ZHRC, and
- Training 150 human rights monitors to identify, document, verify and report community human rights violations to the ZHRC.

The effectiveness of ZimRights' initiatives is evident from the remarkable increase of over 60% in the number of human rights violation cases reported by community members to the

Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC). This impressive outcome clearly demonstrates the positive impact of ZimRights' efforts in empowering and engaging grassroots communities in promoting and protecting human rights.

COMPLEMENTING THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION (ZEC)

In 2022, ZimRights continued its longstanding partnership with the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), the entity responsible for managing national elections. ZimRights actively participated in electoral and election-related activities to support democracy and free and fair elections. Through the **Elections and Democracy Action Zone**, at the invitation of ZEC, ZimRights contributed to a delimitation stakeholder meeting and received voter education training by ZEC in May and September respectively.

To further support **voter mobilization and education**, ZimRights conducted voter education roadshows in Gweru, Kwekwe, Kariba and Hwange, collaborating with ZEC officials to educate communities on electoral issues. As part of its commitment to fair and transparent elections, ZimRights also participated in election observation missions, notably during the March 26 2022 by-elections and other subsequent by-elections held throughout the year.

ZimRights has further contributed to the advancement of democratic processes in Zimbabwe by producing a seminal publication titled *'Elections and Democracy in Zimbabwe: A Citizen Guide to Building a Culture of Effective Participation.'* This manual not only complements but also enhances ZEC's constitutional mandate to ensure the meaningful participation of citizens in elections and other

democratic processes.

STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL PEACE ARCHITECTURE

ZimRights' Right to Peace Action Zone is spearheading a ground-breaking initiative, the Right to Peace Campaign, which aims to foster sustainable peace by uniting communities and leaders at the local and national levels. The campaign aligns with ZimRights' vision of empowering communities to take ownership of building sustainable peace. This innovative approach is a valuable complement to the national peace architecture, which includes the ZHRC and the NPRC and is already making significant strides towards promoting and protecting peace in Zimbabwe.

The Right to Peace Campaign aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Realizing peace as a fundamental human right in communities.
- Promoting peaceful conflict resolution and transformation at the local and national levels.
- Facilitating community access to national peace mechanisms, such as independent commissions, to address issues of peace and human rights violations.
- Engaging independent commissions and government departments to be active participants in the social peace architecture.

By the end of 2022, ZimRights, through the campaign, had established various peace structures across Zimbabwe. These include the following:

Peace Action Committees (PAC):

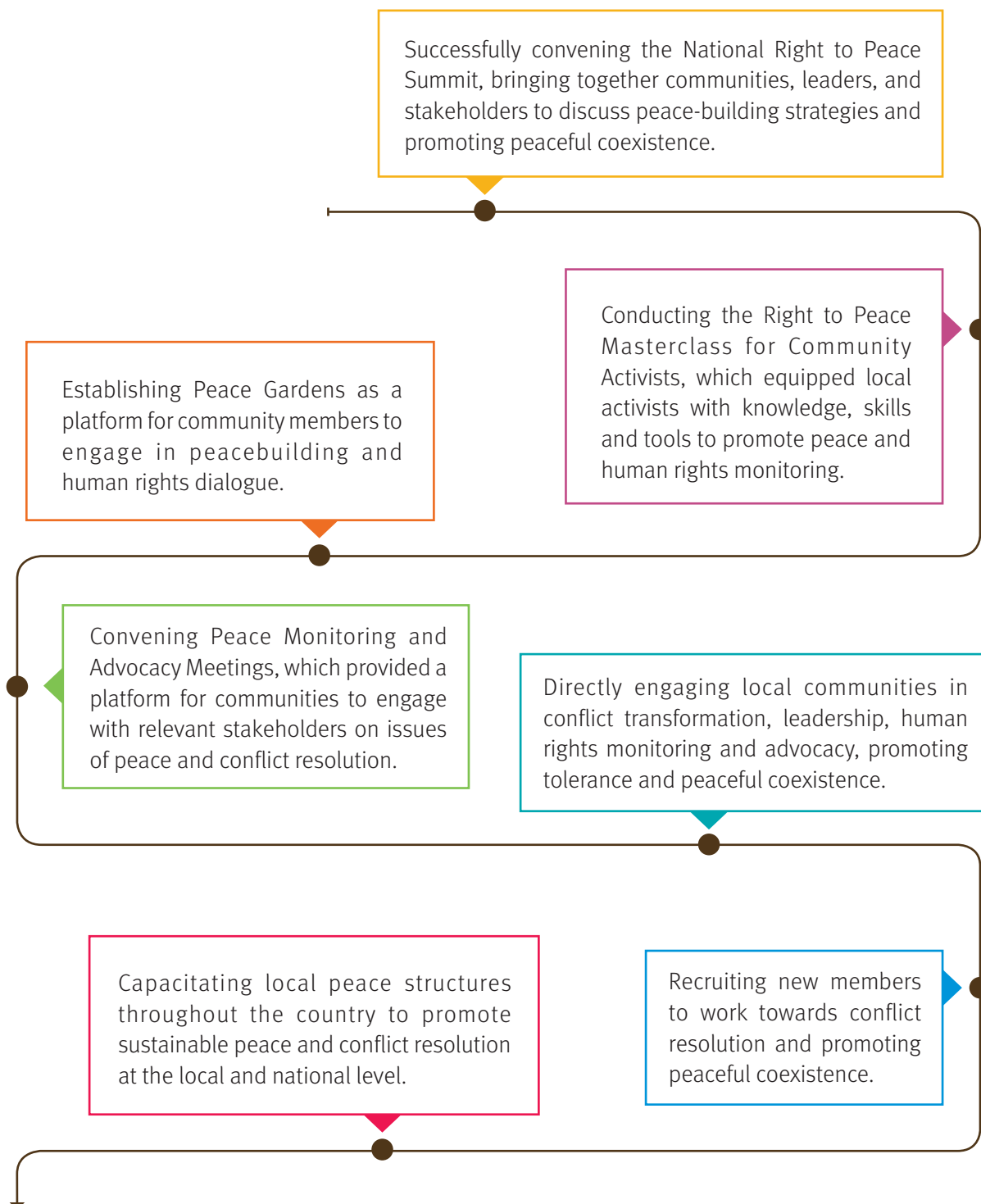
ZimRights has established the National Peace Action Committee, comprising representatives from ZimRights' 11 regional chapters. The Committee includes two representatives from each province, namely the Peace Action Coordinator and the Regional Chairperson. The Committee's primary objective is to develop a national framework for peace action initiatives.

Local Peace Action Committees (PACs):

By January 2022, ZimRights has established three local Peace Action Committees in three provinces – Masvingo, Bulawayo and Matabeleland South. These committees undertook various local initiatives, including peace monitoring, mediation, peace gardens, training and mobilization. Through peace gardens, local peace action committees brought together members of the community, encouraging them to work together while providing a platform for them to freely discuss issues affecting peace and human rights in their community.

The PACs also worked to support local participation in national peace initiatives. Through reflective sessions, the PACs contributed to the compilation of ZimRights' Annual Peace Action Report – The State of Peace Report.

ZimRights has achieved significant milestones as part of the Right to Peace campaign, which include:



BUILDING A CULTURE OF CONSTITUTIONALISM: HANDS-OFF THE PEOPLE'S CONSTITUTION CAMPAIGN



Mobilising young people for human rights

ZimRights' Youth Zone aims to nurture the next generation of human rights advocates by providing opportunities for young people to engage in civic activities and amplify their voices in democratic processes. In 2022, ZimRights conducted youth-oriented initiatives such as Youth Dialogues and Constitution Clubs, as well as integrating youth participation into all of its activities.

Youth Dialogues

Youth Dialogues serve to create a platform for intergenerational and peer-to-peer conversations on championing human rights, provide emerging human rights champions with a platform to exchange ideas and share stories essential to leading human rights advocacy in their communities and mobilize youth to be more proactive and take ownership of the human rights discourse.



Constitution Clubs

Constitution Clubs are student-led and aim to promote awareness of the Constitution of Zimbabwe and deepen the appreciation of constitutional values. This is in line with Section 7 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. The clubs are designed as co-curricular initiatives to complement the policy frameworks established by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, which aim to promote constitutional literacy among all

learners by integrating civic education into the national curricula.

The clubs allow students to learn more about the country's constitution through practical exercises, peer discussions, debates, art competitions, moot courts, training workshops, study trips, and many other activities. Currently, ZimRights supports 13 clubs from nine high schools and two tertiary institutions across the country, with a membership of around 300 young people.



OPENING UP SPACE FOR WOMEN IN HUMAN RIGHTS LEADERSHIP

Women and Human Rights Action Zone

ZimRights recognizes the importance of women's leadership and participation in human rights advocacy. Through the Women's Human Rights Group, ZimRights has worked to promote women's leadership in the promotion and protection of human rights at all levels.

ZimRights is committed to ensuring gender equality in all its structures and has set a target of achieving 50/50 gender representation in leadership at all levels. This is in line with the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, which calls for increased participation of women in decision-making processes related to peace and security. As of January 2022, four out of eleven ZimRights provincial chairpersons were women, which is an improvement from the zero women in provincial chairperson positions in 2021. The Women's Human Rights Group has also played a crucial role in mainstreaming women in the human rights discourse, allowing women to take up leadership positions in the fight for human rights.

MINORITY RIGHTS PROTECTION

ZimRights' commitment to grassroots organizing was demonstrated through their continued efforts to protect the rights of minorities. One example of this in 2022 was their support for the BaTonga community of Mola in Mashonaland West province. ZimRights worked to promote the socio-economic rights of the BaTonga in Mola and Siakobvu areas. In 2021, residents of Mola complained that they were effectively cut off from the rest of the country, as the area was inaccessible by rail or road.

However, with support from ZimRights, the Mola Residents Forum was able to advocate for and receive an upgrade of the roads in the area. ZimRights also assisted in the construction of new blocks for Kauzhumba Primary School, which was conducting lessons in the open, and the electrification of the area had begun by the end of December 2022.

PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS)

ZimRights is committed to promoting the rights of people with disabilities, and has taken steps to ensure their inclusion in the association's structures. In line with a National Council Resolution passed in 2021, ZimRights created a PWDS Council with representation in the National Council.

In 2022, ZimRights members took further steps to ensure the representation of people with disabilities in the association's decision-making processes. Eleven provincial representatives of people with disabilities were selected, and from these representatives, a male and a female were chosen to represent them in the National Council meetings held on the 16th and 17th of November 2022. This is a positive step towards promoting the participation of people with disabilities in civic engagement and human rights advocacy in Zimbabwe.

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***ZimRights is committed
to promoting people
with disabilities.”***

NATIONAL IMPACT

Walking In the Valley of the Shadow of the PVO Bill

The 1st of February 2023 saw the Private Voluntary Organisation Bill (PVO Bill) sailing through Senate, going one stage shy of becoming a law. The operations of CSOs – especially those in the democracy and governance sector faced sure death and with it the voices of human rights defenders, women rights advocates, children, young people, members of minorities and indigenous people, trade unionists and journalists.

For Edrina Chaguta* the PVO Bill would reverse all that she gained from being a ZimRights member and as an avid activist, the proposed amendment would mean an end to her years of community activism. *“I have always been a human rights advocate for the past 28 years. For years I have confronted authorities, whether it is in demand of clean water, improved service delivery or freedom of expression, I have always chosen to speak truth to power and seen better results.”*

Chaguta is a ZimRights member who has benefitted immensely from interacting with ZimRights’ programmes. ZimRights, a grassroots organisation, for the past 30 years has been working with communities, equipping them with skills and tools to enable them to lead in creating and sustaining a culture of human rights in Zimbabwe. Chaguta has benefited from such trainings. She now attests to possessing working knowledge of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the ability to identify, document and report human rights violations as well as initiating local community advocacy initiatives.

For community human rights defenders like Chaguta, the gazetting of the PVO bill in 2021 heralded doom and gloom for the civic space that they operate in. The provisions of the bill, bordered on sheer incrimination of the operations of CSOs and human rights defenders.

It was hopeful determination that saw Chaguta mobilise other community defenders to argue against the PVO Bill, at the public hearings that were ran from 28 February to 4 March in 2022. *“I knew I had to participate in the hearings, our voice, no matter how small, had to be heard and regardless of what they would do with our voices we had to speak,”* recalled Chaguta. Her argument was simple, the PVO Bill was going to erode the people’s freedom of expression, of association and destroy the platforms for communities to self-organise and defend against human rights violations.

The public hearings were shrouded in controversy – being disrupted on several occasions by alleged ZANU PF activists, and with the Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare being accused of not correctly capturing the views of the people. The PVO Bill went on to sail through the National Assembly under controversial circumstances. On 1 February 2023, the Senate okayed the bill, bringing it one step shy of becoming law. The Constitution of Zimbabwe under section 131, sets procedures and timelines to be followed for a bill to become law. However, there has been silence as to the progress of the bill since the 1st of February 2023.

For Chaguta and other community human rights defenders, this delay has been the proverbial drop of water in a desert, bringing renewed hope that the bill may never see the light of day. They have been able to continue with their activities as human rights defenders. *“We continue to fight for clean water, for decent livelihoods and better education for our children. While we are wary of the PVO Bill, we are strengthened by the delay it being signed into law, more than ten months after it reached the second from last stage,”* said Chaguta, *“though we walk through its shadow, we fear no setback and continue to push back against assaults to our rights!”*

*not her real name

OUR REGIONAL AND GLOBAL FOCUS



OUR WORK WITH THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

ZimRights is a member of the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), an international human rights NGO that brings together 192 organizations from 117 countries. Since 1922, FIDH has been defending all human rights guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ZimRights has amplified the voices of local communities by working with FIDH to advocate for improvements in the human rights situation in Zimbabwe. In 2019, ZimRights, in collaboration with FIDH, spearheaded calls at the international level for national dialogues to put an end to the human rights crisis in Zimbabwe.⁷ ZimRights and FIDH followed this up in March 2020 with a joint statement, promulgated globally, condemning human rights violations, especially the attacks orchestrated by the state against dissenting voices in Zimbabwe.⁸

In 2022, FIDH commemorated its 100th anniversary, and ZimRights, represented by its National Chairperson, Mr. Takesure Musiiwa, participated in FIDH's 41st congress held in Paris from October 23rd to 27th, 2022. The congress addressed many human rights topics, including poverty, inequalities and strategies to strengthen human rights protection mechanisms at all levels.

ZimRights has leveraged its FIDH membership to connect grassroots human rights activists with the global human rights movement. Drawing solidarity and support from its membership in FIDH, ZimRights managed to bring the issues raised by local communities to the international stage.

7. <https://www.hrforumzim.org/zimrights-and-fidh-call-for-national-dialogue-end-to-human-rights-violations-in-zimbabwe/>

8. <https://www.zimrights.org.zw/zimbabwe-fidh-and-zimrights-deplore-persecution-of-dissenters/>

INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Embracing international solidarity: ZimRights is part of the FIDH centenary celebrations

ZimRights delights in being a member of international solidarity networks of human rights defenders. The ever-shrinking civic space at home and the rising persecution of human rights defenders in the region necessitates the need to grow national, regional and international solidarity networks. ZimRights is proud to belong to one such network, the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH).

In 2022, ZimRights had the opportunity to participate in the centenary celebrations for the FIDH. Since 1922, the FIDH has been defending all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. FIDH is an international human rights NGO federating 192 organisations from 117 countries.

ZimRights and FIDH have collaborated to defend human rights in Zimbabwe, for example, in 2019 they both called for a national dialogue to end the human rights crisis in Zimbabwe. In March 2020, they published a joint statement condemning human rights violation on the form of persecution of dissenters.

In 2022, FIDH was commemorating 100 years of existence. ZimRights, represented by its National Chairperson, Mr Takesure Musiiwa participated in the 41st congress that was held in Paris from the 23rd to the 27th of October 2022.

The Congress touched on many human rights topics including; strengthening international human rights mechanisms; Poverty, Inequality and Human Rights; Anti-rights movements as an offensive against the universality of human rights; Environmental crisis and human rights among others.

To top it all, ZimRights helped to adopt a new manifesto, titled Our Rights, Our Fight, Our Future. This manifesto seeks to challenge the world to reclaim the universality of human rights and make them effective for everyone, everywhere.

In the manifesto, the federation declares ten rights that address issues creating division, embedding poverty, and preventing people from living rich and dignified lives. The manifesto aligns with ZimRights' own manifesto '*The People's Human Rights Manifesto*' as well as the Shifting Power to the People Strategy which acknowledges the centrality of resistance in the struggle for human rights.

ZimRights continues to work for the defence, protection and promotion of human rights and seeks to see a culture of respect human rights in Zimbabwe and abroad.

OUR WORK WITH THE SOUTHERN AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK

ZimRights is a member of the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, and the relationship continues to grow through collaborative initiatives held in 2022. ZimRights and the Southern Africa Defenders Network hosted a successful side event at the 42nd Ordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, held on August 17-18, 2022, in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, under the theme *“Promoting industrialization through agro-processing, mineral beneficiation, and regional value chains for inclusive and resilient economic growth.”* The side event was well-attended by CSOs from the region and managed to unpack key issues that ultimately became part of the summit resolutions, including:

- 1 A call for SADC intervention to resolve the shrinking civic and democratic space, political violence, and proposed restrictive legislation in Zimbabwe and the region.
- 2 Encouragement for the government of Zimbabwe to reverse the introduction of the repressive PVO Amendment Bill, which threatens CSO existence and voices.
- 3 Urging SADC to deploy an observer mission to Zimbabwe to assess and monitor the human rights situation before the 2023 harmonized elections.
- 4 Discouraging Zimbabwe from using lawfare as a tool to silence opposition and decimate activism.

BROADER RESOLUTIONS OF THE SUMMIT

Social movements and progressive civil society organizations from the SADC Region were able to come up with resolutions that were explicitly pronounced in a communique that was handed over to the SADC Heads of States and Governments. The summit made the following resolutions:

- Express our collective solidarity with the people and civil organizations of the Democratic Republic of Congo in their quest to reclaim access and control of their natural resources in the face of extreme poverty and inequality, resource-driven militarised conflict, and unaccountable plunder of natural resources.
- Recognise the critical role that SADC leaders can play to address the challenges affecting the people of Southern Africa, in particular: extreme poverty and growing inequality, climate injustice, heavy public indebtedness, militarised conflicts, gender injustice, and the continued plunder of the Region’s natural resources through extractivism by Transnational Corporations. These challenges are at the heart of the unattended suffering of the majority of the Region’s people, more especially, women, youth, the disabled, mining-affected communities, and other vulnerable people.
- Understand the unique and historic opportunities for the people of the Region and their leaders to unite behind bold and transformative measures to address pressing challenges affecting the Region. These measures include basic income grants, universal healthcare, free education, and other social protection measures, which in

these times of profound economic crises are long overdue.

- Raise alarm at the profound impacts of climate change particularly on the lives and livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable people around the Region.
- Acknowledge the important measures approved by the Council of Ministers and/or adopted by the Heads of State and Government during the 42nd Summit, including The Non-State Actors Engagement Framework, costed national plans for implementation of the SADC Regional Strategic Indicative Development Plan; establishment of SADC Parliament, and the reaffirmation of SADC's principled position of non-Alignment to conflicts outside of the Region.

OUR WORK WITH THE INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) has worked with ZimRights over the years since the establishment of the Peacebuilding Network of Zimbabwe (PBNZ). In 2022, ZimRights worked with IJR to support the development of a SADC transitional justice strategy. On the 12th of May 2022, the ZimRights National Director, Dzikamai Bere delivered a keynote address at the *Regional Symposium to Foster the Domestication of the African Union (AU) Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP)* in the SADC Region. The Symposium was hosted by the Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) in collaboration with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR).

The keynote address focused on the theme of *"Putting Youth at the Centre of Transitional Justice in Southern Africa."*⁹ During his address on behalf of ZimRights, Mr. Bere stated, *"When we appreciate that the grave injustices that we are confronting today are a result of power being deployed towards the decimation of human dignity, then we must define our goal as transitional justice activists to see a power shift. We desire to see power serving the common good."*

ZimRights has been consistent in pursuing its SP2P Strategy at both the regional and global levels, advocating for power to be shifted back to citizens.

OUR WORK WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ZimRights has partnered with the University of Virginia to participate in their Virtual Global Internship program, which involves students from the university being attached to ZimRights for eight weeks. The program was initiated in 2020, and so far, five students have participated. One of the students who took part in the program shared, *"This program enriched not only my outlook on life but also my vision for my future career."*

This comment demonstrates how the internship program has enriched and benefited several University of Virginia students who have been attached to ZimRights. These students have also expressed their gratitude and highlighted the comparative advantages of being attached to ZimRights.

9. <https://www.zimrights.org.zw/bringing-down-the-towers-of-oppression/>

REGIONAL IMPACT

Standing up to Power: Six reasons to celebrate human rights defenders

While much of ZimRights work is in communities in Zimbabwe, ZimRights believes in solidarity with other activists across the world. In the year 2022, ZimRights was active in offering solidarity to other communities that are fighting for human rights. One such community is the eKhenana Commune in Ethekwini, South Africa which won the Human Rights Defender of the Year 2022. Our National Director Dzikamai Bere moderated the awards night and shares his reflections.

From 28 to 30 November 2022 the annual Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Summit was held in Lusaka under the theme, A Journey to Sustainability: Protecting Civic Space Through Strengthening Institutions for and Networks of Environmental and Human Rights Defenders in Southern Africa. I had the great privilege of representing ZimRights and the Summit's theme greatly resonates with our Shifting Power to the People Strategy (SP2P) Strategic Priorities that emphasise building a critical mass and achieving sustainability.

Following rich contributions from leading defenders across the globe, the highlight was the award ceremony which I had the privilege of moderating.

The Human Rights Defender of the Year 2022 went to the eKhenana Commune in Ethekwini, South Africa in recognition of their community organising in South Africa against land occupations and evictions. The eKhenana Commune is organised by Abahlali

baseMjondolo, a grassroots movement of over 100,000 people, organising against land evictions.

The award was received by Phumelele Mkhize, a brave young woman, a leader in the Commune who gave a powerful speech dedicating the award to members of the Commune who have continued to stand for their rights in the face of attacks and killings.

In presenting the award, Southern Defenders Executive Director Washington Katema said that this was the first time that the award went to a community and not to an individual, signifying the importance of strengthening collective approaches to defending human rights.

In opening the award ceremony, I reflected on why it is important to celebrate the work of human rights defenders.

There are basically six reasons for this ritual.

First, legitimisation. In a world that vilifies human rights defenders and criminalises their work, celebrating human rights defenders is a legitimisation process that says to all human rights defenders around the world — your work is legitimate. Keep moving. Continue defending.

Secondly, our world is full of despair and hopelessness. The people who violate human rights have the power of money, armies and military might.

When we look at the massive investments that are poured into violence, it is easy to despair and lose hope. Celebrating the work of human rights defenders is speaking of hope and inspiration in a world that is addicted to violence and hopelessness.

We say to each other, *“In this darkness, we see light. Yes, we see it in the eyes of each other. And we believe it, though the darkness pervades.”*

In that strain, thirdly, celebrating human rights defenders is a celebration of the labour of love. Defending human rights is the labour of love. We would not be able to do it so persistently if this work was not inspired by the love we have for each other and the care we have for our communities.

Fourthly it is an act of solidarity. When we stand up for each other, we build endless circles of love and strengthen each other in these battles. In a world in which authoritarianism is consolidating its hold on power, the poor people at the receiving end of authoritarianism have no one but each other. Celebrating each other is a powerful act of solidarity that is known to bring down the towers of oppression.

Fifthly it is self-care. Audre Lorde was right in saying, *“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political war-fare.”*

When we sit together and sing songs of love and struggle, we let our minds rest and forget the pain. We take time to care and love ourselves and the work we do.

“Where there is love,” the saying goes, “there is no labour. And if there is any labour, it is transformed into love.”

Finally, it is taking charge of the narrative. Stories of the work of human rights defenders do not usually make the headlines. Most of our defenders in the communities have no access to media platforms that magnify their work. In others, the narrative is controlled by the state with monopoly to the media. When we celebrate the work of human rights defenders, we get an opportunity to shape the narrative of the important work of human rights defenders.

In her keynote address at the awards ceremony, the United Nations Special Expert on the Enjoyment of Rights of People with Albinism, Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond said, *“When one human rights defender suffers, we all suffer. When one wins, we all win.”*

It was a fitting crowning of what has been a difficult year for human rights defenders in southern Africa, commemorating the solidarity that cuts across the borders. I offer my congratulations to all human rights defenders in the region for continuing to speak out against increasing authoritarianism in the year 2022. I offer my congratulations in particular to eKhenana Commune for showing us that when ordinary people come together to speak out against injustice, power does shift.

Those who violate human rights have the power of money, the police, and the armies. We the people have nothing but each other. As such, we must take every moment to acknowledge the important work that human rights defenders do in their small communities and beyond. We must tell brave young women like Phume that we see you and we stand with you.

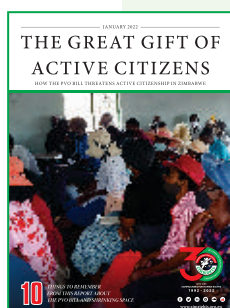
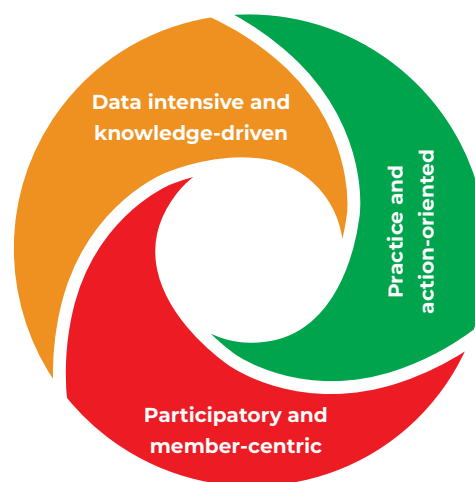
Together, we defend. Together we shift power to the people.



OUR KNOWLEDGE FACTORY

One of the three distinct characteristics of the SP2P is that it is data-intensive and knowledge-driven. In 2022 we continued producing quality knowledge products for our communities.

Data and learning will remain part of how the SP2P strategy has to be executed. In 2022, ZimRights produced the following publications:



JANUARY 2022

The Great Gift of Active Citizenship: How the PVO Bill threatens active citizenship in Zimbabwe

This report provides a comprehensive reflection not only on the Private Voluntary Organizations Bill but also on the broader issue of the shrinking civic space in Zimbabwe, emphasizing the need for active citizenship in countering this trend. To read the report scan the code.



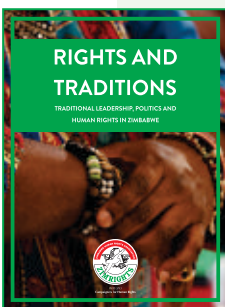


APRIL 2022

State of Peace Report

The Annual Report is a product of ZimRights' Right to Peace Campaign, aimed at empowering communities to demand and claim peace as a fundamental right. It emphasizes that citizens have a role to play in building sustainable peace in their communities, as peace is not only a right but also a responsibility. To achieve this, citizens need to understand the nature of peace, its threats, and how to neutralize them. The report highlights that without peace, it is difficult to observe human rights, and without human rights, development is compromised.

The 2021 State of Peace Report is especially relevant as Zimbabwe approaches a potentially violent 2023 election. To access the report, scan the code.

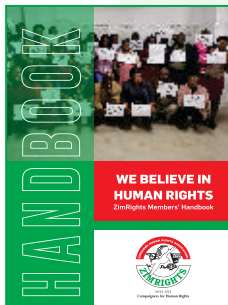


JULY 2022

Rights and Traditions: Traditional Leadership, Politics and Human Rights in Zimbabwe

This policy brief focuses on the role of traditional leaders in political affairs in Zimbabwe. It outlines the legal framework that governs traditional leadership in Zimbabwe and then proceeds to unpack the main functions of traditional leaders recognized by the law. Subsequent sections of the paper zero in on the legal standards that regulate the conduct of traditional leaders, with a specific focus on the constitutional requirement for political neutrality. To access the policy brief, please scan the code.

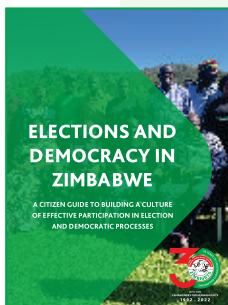




JULY 2022

We Believe in Human Rights: ZimRights Members Handbook 2nd Edition

This is a handbook for our members, which serves as an essential tool for understanding the association, providing a roadmap for the work ahead, tools to achieve the greatest impact as human rights defenders, and linking to other members of the movement. This is the 2nd edition of the handbook, where all aspects of the association have been revisited, changes have been explained, tools have been updated, and new resources have been added. To download the handbook, please scan the code.

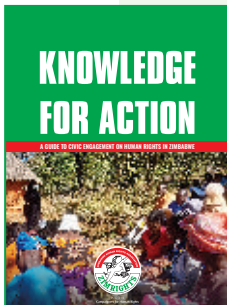


OCTOBER 2022

Elections and Democracy in Zimbabwe: A citizen guide to building a culture of effective participation in election and democratic processes

This is a manual aimed at supporting Zimbabwean citizens in consolidating a culture of human rights and enhancing citizen roles in elections and democratic processes. This is through ZimRights' belief that citizens play an important role in strengthening and growing a culture of democratic participation. ZimRights offers this guide as an additional investment to provide communities with essential information for citizens to understand and execute their civic duties effectively. To access the full report, scan the code.





DECEMBER 2022

Knowledge for Action:

Enhancing civic engagement on human rights

This manual serves as a training and facilitation guide for ZimRights' Civic Education Process Facilitators and is an essential tool to support ZimRights' strategy to shift power to the people through the Action Zone Framework. The manual directly aligns with the Civic Education Action Zone, which is one of the eight ZimRights Action Zones, focused on disseminating human rights knowledge through various knowledge-building, sharing, and dissemination processes, as well as capacity-building initiatives to empower ZimRights' members and citizens to effectively conduct their civic duties and actions.

“

Data and learning will remain part of how the SP2P strategy has to be executed.”



OUR DIGITAL PLATFORMS

AMALUNGELO KODZERO AND KNOWLEDGE CENTRE



Amalungelo Kodzero Knowledge Centre (AKKC) is a digital portal for human rights education hosted by ZimRights.

It is a pro-tomorrow approach to advancing human rights aimed at building a culture of human rights by deepening human rights knowledge in communities.

With advances in knowledge, the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the general ease of learning and reach that comes with digitisation, AKKC was established in January 2022 for the advancement of civic engagement and human rights education.

The AKKC advances the following objectives.

- Provide a one-stop centre for digital tools for civic engagement and human rights education.
- Provide collaborative space for community facilitators to share resources for human rights learning.
- Become a knowledge hub where human rights educators and communities interface for the advance of best human rights practices.
- Dissemination of human rights information for human rights activists across the country.

To enrol for the courses, one can follow this link,

[📄 https://www.akkc.org.zw/courses/](https://www.akkc.org.zw/courses/)

THE REVAMPED ZIMRIGHTS WEBSITE

In 2022, ZimRights revamped and modernised its website to ensure that it is user-friendly and serves as an online portal for human rights information, offering convenience to visitors. The website now also has a library of resources produced by ZimRights for the empowerment of citizens such as easy-to-read human rights reports, factsheets, human rights manuals and policy briefs, all of which are readily available to download free.

VIBRANT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

ZimRights has established a formidable online presence across multiple digital platforms, responding to the growing internet penetration rate among Zimbabweans.

According to the authoritative Digital 2022 report by Global Digital Insights, there are currently 4.65 million internet users in Zimbabwe as of January 2022, representing an impressive 30.6% of the total population.

By leveraging the power of digital technology, ZimRights has been able to overcome restrictions on physical meetings and expand its reach to communities where distance may have previously posed a barrier to engagement. This has resulted in greater inclusivity and enhanced interaction with its constituencies.

ZimRights has actively engaged its members and the wider Zimbabwean populace on a range of critical human rights issues, including peace-building, constitutionalism, human rights monitoring and documentation, and mobilizing for elections and voter education, among others. Its digital footprint is impressive, with a strong presence on various digital platforms that continues to grow and evolve over time as shown.



Whatsapp, approximately

 **15000**

people through community and national whatsapp groups.

Facebook

 **24944**

followers with an average post reach of 7000 people.

Twitter

 **49440**

followers with an average of 20 000 tweet impressions.

Instagram

 **1301**

followers.

LinkedIn

 **781**

followers and an average of 1000 impressions per month.

ZimRights has achieved a remarkable engagement rate of 850%, a clear testament to the effectiveness of its digital outreach strategies. Detailed analytics indicate that the organization's primary audience is within the age range of

18 - 65,

with a significant proportion of 65% being based in Zimbabwe, while 25% hail from the regional community, and the remainder residing in the diaspora.

THE CONCLUSION: LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

As we close the year 2022, reflecting on our achievements as an association gives us the courage to confront the future with courage and determination. We have no doubt that the year 2023 will be a tough one. Election years are difficult for Zimbabwe. But we are glad that we have made strides in 2022 that allowed us to consolidate our SP2P. We can only build on these achievements and hope to achieve more in 2023.

There are a few things that we need to celebrate as we close the year.

First, we celebrate that our turnaround as an association is complete. This turnaround started in the midst of COVID-19. Instead of allowing the COVID-19 pandemic to discourage us, we took it as an opportunity to reflect on new ways of working. In launching the SP2P, we have unleashed a revolution, not only for ZimRights but for civil society. With 250 000 members who believe in what we are doing, we are beginning to feel the energy of the movement consolidating itself. For that, we must celebrate.

Secondly, the launch of the Human Rights Village has set us on a trajectory that connects well with our legacy. Standing by the foundation stone at ZimRights House, we believe by launching the great leap into sustainability, we are answering the vision of the founders of the association who built a home for activists, knowing that the community will grow.

Finally, we honour with gratitude the partners who have continued to believe in the work we do. With limited funding and a lot of love for the cause, we have continued to forge ahead. This is a moment to pay that tribute even as we look into the future.

If you enjoyed the devolved nature of this report, share with us your feedback. If you did not, again, share with us that we can improve.

I wish us all a successful 2023.

A photograph of a person's hands holding a black pen over a laptop. The laptop screen shows a bar chart with five bars of increasing height. In the background, there is a white coffee cup with a black lid. The entire image is overlaid with a green gradient.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

For the period 1 January to 31 December 2022

	CONSOLIDATED	Donor 1	Donor 2	Donor 3	Donor 4	Donor 5	Donor 6	Donor 7	Donor 8	Donor 9	Donor 10	Donor 11	Donor 12	Other Income
INCOME														
Deferred income	76,727	28,054	18,262	1,382	9,254	270	19,066	87,149	-	15,524	3,980	12,400	-	-
Donation income	613,928	32,265	47,193	14,700	12,000	123,819	40,000	40,000	40,000	105,360	20,000	12,400	99,975	-
Interest Income	89	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	85
Management Fees	1,380	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,380
Membership income	3,530	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,530
Rental Income	5,425	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,425
Donation received-M/Vehicle	36,595	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36,595
Gift Shop	107	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	107
Other Income	4,564	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,564
Mileage claim from projects	7,495	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,495
	2,400	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,400
Total Income	752,238	60,319	65,455	16,082	21,254	124,089	19,066	87,149	40,000	120,884	23,980	12,400	99,978	61,580
PROJECT EXPENSES														
Project expenditure	527,680	56,234	56,659	12,029	17,664	103,773	16,575	69,399	7,334	103,180	9,143	12,136	59,454	4,100
Salaries and wages	340,035	47,296	30,669	6,619	15,314	67,348	12,555	43,268	7,334	50,326	7,548	12,136	39,621	4,100
	187,645	8,938	25,990	5,410	2,350	36,425	4,020	26,131	-	52,854	1,595	-	19,833	-
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES														
Internal Administration costs	146,900	4,075	8,797	4,272	3,504	11,465	1,944	11,237	2,454	14,337	1,805	-	39,591	43,419
Other Expenses/Membership exps	4,960	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,960
Surplus / (Deficit) from operations	2,887	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,887
	69,811	11	(0)	(219)	86	8,851	547	6,512	30,212	3,367	13,032	264	934	6,214
Represented by:														
Cash and bank	52,847	11	32	-	0	11,251	392	5,510	26,896	103	7,434	-	35	1,184
Trade Receivables	11,466	-	(32)	-	-	100	-	48	3,317	3,264	4,421	-	-	350
Staff Advances	1,148	-	-	-	-	-	155	922	-	-	71	-	-	-
Payables	(27,211)	-	-	(1,500)	-	(2,500)	-	33	-	-	(208)	-	(450)	(22,586)
Fixed Assets	179,869	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	179,869
Retained Earnings	(152,602)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(152,602)
Reserves Account	4,294	-	-	1,281	86	-	-	-	-	-	-	264	1,348	-
	69,811	11	(0)	(219)	86	8,851	547	6,512	30,212	3,367	13,032	264	934	6,214

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W/O 3/93

Campaigners for Human Rights



www.zimrights.org.zw

