



ZIMBABWE: Show solidarity with Zimbabwe's Human Rights Defenders



"When an activist makes the decision that they are going to take an action they have to balance the risk....When we formed WOZA we said that we needed a friend, a big sister, we needed an Amnesty International member, and the collective of members, to be able to give us solidarity, so that when we make that balancing act, and we look at risk, and we assess that risk, Amnesty will help tip the scale in making us active and making us do something and not just crying about it." Jenni Williams, WOZA founder

Contents

Page

Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe	2
Action 1: Solidarity Poster	3
Action 2: Write for Rights: WOZA and Beatrice Mtetwa	4
Resources	4

We hope you will feel inspired to take action on all of our campaigns but remind you that all actions are optional.

This mailing is also available to download at

www.amnesty.org.uk/youth

Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has been a dangerous and challenging country to be a human rights defender for many years. Activists have frequently been arrested, beaten, harassed and tortured for standing up for their rights and the rights of others.

Ahead of the 31 July elections this year, there was a crackdown against civil society, which brought fears of a repeat of the violent 2008 elections. However, this year's elections, which returned President Mugabe to power, were largely peaceful, though considerable controversy arose over questions about the credibility of the election process. A new more human rights friendly constitution was agreed in March, but there is concern amongst human rights defenders as to whether they will be able to go about their critical work without interference.

On 19 and 20 September many Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) members were beaten and arrested by police at peaceful demonstrations. WOZA leaders Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu were arrested on both days and Magodonga was also one of those beaten. These were the first WOZA demonstrations since the election.

Now is a key time for Amnesty supporters to show solidarity with Zimbabwe's human rights community, to encourage and motivate them to continue with their inspiring human rights work. On 28 November Amnesty will launch a report to mark 100 days since the formation of the new government, so we will use this occasion to collect and distribute expressions of solidarity from across the Amnesty movement.



WOZA leaders Jenni Williams & Magodonga Mahlangu with the 2011-12 Student Committee at Student Conference

Organisations and Individuals affected by crackdowns against civil society

Women of Zimbabwe Arise

WOZA was founded in 2003 by Jenni Williams who is still joint leader with Magodonga Mahlangu. They campaign for basic human rights, provide human rights education and repeatedly fall foul of Zimbabwe's repressive legislation. Many members have been beaten and arrested over the years on a regular basis.

Zimbabwe Peace Project

ZPP was founded during the election violence of 2000 and since then has monitored and reported politically-motivated violence. ZPP's director, Jestina Mukoko, was abducted, tortured and subsequently arrested in 2008 after ZPP criticised election related violence in 2008. Earlier this year ZPP's offices were raided and Jestina was arrested and interrogated for four hours before being released.

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights

ZLHR provides a critical service to victims of human rights violations as well as human rights defenders themselves. They are often the first port of call for targeted human rights defenders on the frontline. ZLHR have in turn have been targeted as a result of their critical work to defend human rights.

Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum (Forum)

The Forum is a coalition of NGOs concerned with human rights, especially in relation to organised violence and torture. The Forum has played an instrumental role in coordinating the response of civil society on threats to human rights. The Director, Abel Chikomo, is currently on trial for allegedly running an “unregistered” organisation.

Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe

GALZ supports the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community in Zimbabwe and calls for non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. GALZ members have been repeatedly victimised over the last twenty years. In 2012 their office was raided and several members experienced sustained harassment.

Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights)

ZimRights works to improve human rights across Zimbabwe and has been targeted by the authorities on several occasions over the years. In December 2012 their Director, Okay Machisa and fellow worker Leo Chamahwinya were arrested and charged with 'publishing falsehoods and conducting an illegal voter registration'. They were later acquitted.

Beatrice Mtetwa

Beatrice Mtetwa is a leading human rights lawyer who has defended many high profile and lesser known human rights defenders and opposition political activists over many years. She has herself been beaten, and earlier this year she was arrested and charged with 'obstructing or defeating the course of justice' after she asked to be shown a warrant whilst police searched a property of a client.

Action 1: Create a poster showing solidarity with Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe

The aim of this action is to demonstrate personal solidarity with Zimbabwe’s human rights defenders, to show that we are all part of the same global human rights community. This could be expressed from you as an individual, your family, your youth group, or your local community. You could use homemade pictures, handwritten messages, make something, use photos, or any other method as long as it is personal!

We will sort your posters into collections suitable for each organisation listed on the previous page. We will then send them on to Zimbabwe, so that the organisations will be able to share your posters with their staff and members.

We will also select a range of posters, which we will incorporate into a professionally designed poster. We will print these and send them to the offices of human rights activists across Zimbabwe.

What to do:

Create a homemade poster, either individually or as a group, showing solidarity with human rights defenders in Zimbabwe.

Posters should be **A4 or A3** in size, and should be sent to us no later than **Tuesday 10th December**

Completed posters should be sent to:

Anne Montague, Youth Coordinator
Amnesty International UK,
The Human Rights Action Centre,
17-25 New Inn Yard,
London, EC2A 3EA

by **TUESDAY 10th DECEMBER**

Action 2: Write for Rights - Solidarity with WOZA and Beatrice Mtetwa

WOZA's case will again feature in this year's Write for Rights Campaign. Your group will be sent all of the necessary materials to take action and show solidarity with WOZA's members. Beatrice Mtetwa will also feature as an extra case, additional to the main campaign. You can contact us from 1 November and ask for Beatrice Mtetwa's case sheet.



"Amnesty is our big sister. When I'm in prison, if I know that someone, my big sister, is shouting for me, telling people about me, then I feel less distressed, less frightened, less alone." Jenni Williams, WOZA.



RESOURCES

You can order the following free resources from Amnesty's mailing house by calling 01788 545553 and quoting the relevant product code:

Stickers ('Human Rights for Zimbabwe' and 'I Vote for Human Rights'), 15 per sheet: **HRD006**

WOZA Action Cards: **IAR056**

Don't forget - the WOZA case is also featured in the year's Write for Rights materials. Go to www.amnesty.org.uk/write for details.

GOT QUESTIONS?

If you've got any questions about the content of this mailing, including the suggested actions, please don't hesitate to get in touch. Our details are on the cover of this mailing.

Amnesty International

YOUTH GROUP ACTION