

URGENT ACTION

FEAR FOR SAFETY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

There is fear for the safety of Evan Mawarire, a pastor and leader of the #ThisFlag social media movement in Zimbabwe, who called for a national stay-away. He is being sought by the police after the Magistrates' Court dropped the charge against him and he was freed. Recently, human rights defenders and activists in Zimbabwe have been receiving threats and subjected to arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment and attempted abductions.

Evan Mawarire's life is at risk. #ThisFlag, a non-aligned social media movement which Evan Mawarire leads, staged a national stay-away in Zimbabwe on 6 July in protest of the deteriorating socio-economic conditions in Zimbabwe. This was meant to force the government to listen to its citizen's demands. The police summoned him to appear at Harare Central Police Station on Tuesday 12 July.

When Evan Mawarire presented himself at the police station, he was arrested and charged with 'incitement of public violence' under Section 36 of the Criminal Law Act. He appeared in court on Wednesday 13 July where this charge was changed to 'subverting a constitutional government' under section 22 of the Criminal Codification Act. The minimum sentence for this charge is imprisonment for a period not exceeding 20 years. However, Evan Mawarire was freed on the same day when the magistrate dropped the charge against him.

Evan Mawarire's wife saw a police vehicle with police officers in it passing close to their house twice on 14 July. In both instances, the police officers immediately drove off when they saw her. Prior to his arrest, Evan Mawarire shared a WhatsApp video on 8 July alleging that unknown men had tried to force him into an unmarked vehicle against his wish outside his home. Evan Mawarire has also received death threats via his telephone.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Urging Zimbabwean authorities to ensure the safety, personal security and wellbeing of Evan Mawarire;
- Reminding them that as outlined in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, all states have an obligation to prevent and investigate allegations of human rights abuses against human rights defenders, including violence, threats or any other arbitrary action as a result of the legitimate exercise of their work;
- Asking them to end the harassment, arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention of human rights defenders and activists and perceived opponents of the ruling party ZANU-PF.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 2 SEPTEMBER 2016 TO:

Minister of Home Affairs

Ignatious Chombo
Ministry of Home Affairs
11th Floor Mukwati Building
Cnr 4th Street and Livingstone Ave
Harare, Zimbabwe
Fax: +263 4 707 231

Salutation: Dear Minister Chombo

Commissioner General Police

Augustine Chihuri
Zimbabwe Republic Police
Police General Headquarters
Cnr 7th Street and Josiah Chinamano
P.O.Box 8807 Causeway
Harare, Zimbabwe
Fax: +263 4 253 212

**Salutation: Dear Commissioner
General**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe House 429 Strand WC2R 0JR, 020 7836 7755, Fax 020 7379 1167, Telexes 262014/262115, zimlondon@zimfa.gov.zw, zimebassy@zimlondon.gov.zw, www.zimlondon.gov.zw

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#ThisFlag is a non-aligned social media movement that uses the hashtag #ThisFlag. It was founded by Evan Mawarire, a pastor based in Harare, Zimbabwe. In April 2016, he posted a video online expressing his frustration at the state of the nation. In June 2016, he invited disgruntled citizens to sign an online petition to force Energy and Power Development minister Samuel Undenge to step down over allegations of mishandling public funds through tender irregularities.

Evan Mawarire successfully organised a national stay-away on 6 July with a majority of working Zimbabweans in both formal and informal employment around the country heeding his call to stay-away from work in a bid to make government respond to pleas for better governance. He called on people to stay-away from work peacefully and not to engage in any violence. There were however some acts of violence during the stay away especially in Bulawayo where government property was destroyed. Some demonstrators also burnt tyres on the roads.

After the stay-away, Evan Mawarire announced that he was asking Zimbabweans to heed his call for a second stay-away which would last for two days from Wednesday 13 July to Thursday 14 July. A day before the second stay-away on 12 July, Evan Mawarire was arrested and charged under Section 36 of the Criminal Law (Codification and reform) Act Chapter 9:23 for "inciting public violence and disturbing peace".

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