

Statement: Set up Independent Mechanism to investigate military human rights abuses

The Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) is alarmed by increasing reports of military officers violently attacking members of the public that have surfaced on social media. There have been alleged cases of military officers beating up members of the public with some cases being captured on camera. In Bindura, military officers allegedly destroyed a cell phone belonging to a woman after they caught her taking pictures of them at Chipadze Shopping Centre on 15 November. In another incident again at Chipadze Shopping Centre, soldiers harassed a man for wearing a t-shirt emblazoned with images of former President Robert Mugabe.

Military officers made up 24.4% of perpetrators of recorded cases in the ZPP November monthly monitoring report that records human rights violations compared to only 0,6% in the previous month. These ranged from physical assault to intimidation and harassment. The ZPP is challenging the ZDF to immediately investigate these cases of human rights violations that are not acceptable at any stage. If any members of the military are found perpetrating these incidents the ZDF is encouraged to take action and make this information readily available to the citizens who are now instilled with fear. The ZPP feels that the military should be in the barracks in line with the fact that they are the last line of defence.

Although the military has publicised numbers that members of the public can use to report officers' misconduct this is not enough as the military is not in a position to objectively investigate and deal with its own excesses. Section 210 of the constitution says an Act of Parliament should provide an effective and independent mechanism for searching and investigating complaints from members of the public about misconduct on the part of members of the security services and investigating any harm caused by such misconduct. In this regard according to our constitution the legislature has a mandate in this regard. The constitution guarantees personal security in section 52 and it is important for citizens to be sure of enjoying this right.

The ZPP impresses on the government to seriously consider the establishment of such an independent mechanism to investigate the increasing cases of abuse being perpetrated by the military. Parliament must move with speed before more harm is caused. The military are not equipped to deal with civilians and their continued presence in public spaces is a danger to the wellbeing of members of the public.

ZPP is a Non Governmental Organization that was founded in 2000 by a group of faith based and human rights NGOs working and interested in human rights and peace-building initiatives. ZPP has become a vehicle for civic interventions in times of political crises. In particular, ZPP seeks to monitor and document incidents of human rights violations and breaches of peace.

If you are concerned about acts of violence in your community, ZPP encourages you to get in touch with us on

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A Zimbabwe where there is Peace, Justice, Dignity and Development for all.

Mission: To work for sustainable peace through monitoring, documentation, advocacy and community peace building interventions with our members and partners