



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

United Nations Human Rights Council
19th Regular Session, 27 February – 23 March 2012
Agenda Item 6

ICJ Oral Intervention on the Adoption of the Outcome Document of the Universal Periodic Review of Zimbabwe

15 March 2012

Check against delivery

Madam President,

Two years after the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) that led to a power-sharing government in Zimbabwe, human rights remain largely unprotected due to lack of respect for the rule of law and regular abuse of power by police, army, intelligence and other government officials. The lack of political commitment in the implementation of the reform envisioned in the GPA has hindered the restoration of the rule of law and respect for human rights in Zimbabwe.

The general human rights situation is marked by widespread instances of intimidation, harassment, and torture and ill-treatment of lawyers, journalists and voices critical of political leaders. The army, police, intelligence and judicial services continue to be abused to facilitate the arbitrary detention and torture and ill-treatment of human rights defenders. The recent repression on 8 February 2012 of a peaceful demonstration organized by Women and Men of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), and the arbitrary arrest of its members is just one amongst several incidents illustrating the frequently used practice of repression of the legitimate exercise of rights and freedoms.

Further, the Government of Zimbabwe has remained reluctant to investigate widespread abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture and ill-treatment, and enforced disappearances occurring during and after the 2008 elections. The Transitional Government has delayed undertaking fundamental reforms of the justice system, which, if implemented properly, could help break the cycle of impunity for past abuses.

The International Commission of Jurists urges the Government of Zimbabwe to:

- Halt the repression of legitimate activities by lawyers, journalists, human rights defenders and political opponents;
- Ratify the Rome Statute and immediately incorporate its provisions into the domestic legal regime; and
- Undertake effective legal and judicial reforms necessary for an independent and effective investigation and prosecution of gross human rights violations and crimes under international law.

I thank you.

Statement delivered by: Mr Xavier Rauscher, International Commission of Jurists

Further contacts: Mr Alex Conte, ICJ Representative to the United Nations
(alex.conte@icj.org) and Mr Clement Mavungu, ICJ Africa Regional Programme
(clement.mavungu@icj.org)