

**UN Watch Statement for UPR on Zimbabwe  
19th Session, UNHRC, 15 March 2012  
Delivered by Hillel Neuer**

Thank you, Madam President. In debating the report that is before us today, I am reminded that in 2005, I was invited by CNN to debate human rights issues with then-Ambassador of Zimbabwe to the United Nations, Boniface Chidyausiku.

Seven years later, despite many announcements of changes, I regret that the people of Zimbabwe continue to face the same if not worse violations of their basic human rights.

What emerges from the report is that, as in 2005, the Zimbabwe government continues to deny its citizens the minimal guarantees of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Now, the government has claimed, in paragraph 6 of the report, that it provides “independent institutions, legislation and policy frameworks aimed at protecting and promoting the human rights of its people.”

How can this be true, however, when Jestina Mukoko, a human rights activist and head of the Zimbabwe Peace Project, testified across the street this week, at the human rights summit organized by UN Watch and 20 other NGOs, as follows:

During the 2008 elections “the country was plunged into chaos as supporters of the opposition were hunted like they were some wild animal with a prized body part. Most human rights activists were conscious of the possible risk of detention, and most of us would not sleep in our homes.”

Similarly, the government of Zimbabwe states in paragraph 15 that ratification of the Convention against Torture was “under active consideration by the Government.”

Yet Jestina Mukoko, herself a victim of torture, called upon the Zimbabwean government to “put an end to extrajudicial killings of those who hold different views and opinions... [and] do away with enforced disappearances and torture.”

In paragraph 9, Zimbabwe says that their laws limiting basic civil liberties are “fair and constitutional mechanisms to regulate the conduct of meetings in a democratic State.”

Yet how can this be true when Jestina Mukoko’s testimony made clear that “For most people just a reminder of the past atrocities by their former perpetrators, many of whom still walk the streets scot free, is enough to make them afraid. The monitoring of civil society organizations in the human rights sector is gaining momentum.”

Zimbabwe’s human rights abuses must come to an end. It is time to heed the voices of democracy. Thank you, Madam President.