

ZADHR
Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights

15 April 2007

Update on Assaults, Torture and Health Rights Violations Since 11 March 2007

The Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights remains concerned by continued allegations of organised violence and torture being perpetrated by security forces on Zimbabwean citizens throughout the country. We have witnessed an increase in the number of persons presenting with injuries reportedly sustained from assault and torture inflicted during the course of arrest, during raids on the victim's homes and while in police custody.

Since the 11th of March 2007 at least 49 persons have required hospitalisation as a result of their injuries whilst an additional 175 have been treated and discharged. ZADHR is deeply concerned at the level of force being used, which is resulting in serious injuries. These included:

- Soft tissue injuries (moderate to severe) - 182 individuals
- Head Injuries - 4 individuals
- Fractures - 11 individuals with fractures to the arms, legs and ribs including 3 with multiple fractures.
- Gun shot wounds - 6 individuals including that resulting in the death of Gift Tandare,
- Other (including swelling, bruising, lacerations) - 34 individuals

We condemn the forced removal from a private hospital of 8 persons being treated for injuries sustained in police custody on 31 March 2007 despite permission granted by the Magistrate's Court allowing them access to such treatment having been obtained. The 8 were still in need of treatment in hospital when they were forcibly removed without the consent of those treating them. Previously, while in police custody, all medical access had been denied. Such behaviour by security forces continues to intimidate health workers who treat victims of organised violence and torture and to hinder the ability of victims to have access to health care without fear.

ZADHR reiterates that all persons have the right to access the best possible medical care when injured during the course of their arrest or while in police custody and urges the Government to take steps to ensure that this right is respected, protected and fulfilled.