

ZIMBABWE

*Hundreds of university students were unlawfully arrested or unlawfully detained during 2009-2012, and police and state security forces violently repressed several protests at universities. School teachers faced intimidation and death threats, and some schools were used as militia bases.*¹⁷⁶⁰

CONTEXT

Zimbabwe experienced ongoing political violence after the emergence in 1999 of the political party the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) to challenge Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) for power.¹⁷⁶¹ This violence was particularly intense during election periods.¹⁷⁶² According to a study by the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), one in two teachers surveyed had directly experienced political violence between 2000 and 2012.¹⁷⁶³ Most reported that this violence took place during the school day.¹⁷⁶⁴ The Student Solidarity Trust (SST) reported 211 cases of abduction and torture of university students from 2006 to 2010.¹⁷⁶⁵

In the build-up to the 2008 presidential elections and during their aftermath, attacks on teachers and teacher trade unionists, including killings, arrests, incarcerations, destruction of homes, torture and threats of violence, were reported.¹⁷⁶⁶ Many schools became sites for enforced political rallies in which teachers and head teachers were repeatedly and publicly threatened with death.¹⁷⁶⁷

The political situation changed in 2008, when Morgan Tsvangirai, of the MDC, and President Mugabe came to a power-sharing agreement that lasted until elections in July 2013, which Mugabe won by a landslide.¹⁷⁶⁸

During 2009-2012, there were incidents of political pressure on students and teachers and political use of schools, mostly implicating Zanu-PF supporters, but in one reported incident the MDC was involved.¹⁷⁶⁹

For example, pupils and teachers were ordered to attend a Zanu-PF rally held at Mount Carmel School in May 2011, forcing several schools in Manicaland province to shut on a weekday.¹⁷⁷⁰ In another incident, the MDC organized a rally at Pagwashi Primary School in the Cashel Valley of Chimanimani East that was allegedly disrupted by Zanu-PF supporters, creating a situation that police warned was volatile.¹⁷⁷¹

Schools were reportedly used in the Zanu-PF campaign against international sanctions, despite a government directive prohibiting it.¹⁷⁷² On one occasion, a senior education official in Chikomba district, Mashonaland East province, ordered that all schools be employed for signing an anti-sanctions petition and that head teachers act as unpaid polling officers to oversee the exercise.¹⁷⁷³

There are no recent figures for primary or secondary enrolment. In 2011, gross tertiary enrolment was 6 per cent and the adult literacy rate was 84 per cent.¹⁷⁷⁴

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

A compilation of media and human rights reports suggests numerous teachers faced harassment, expulsion, threats of political violence and death because Zanu-PF supporters accused them of supporting the MDC. In 2009, local militia and tribal leaders allegedly forced schools to provide them with offices and

appointed ‘youth coordinators’ and school prefects without permission from education authorities. In these positions, they allegedly intimidated teachers in school, leading them to fear for their security, and kept the youth militia informed of activities within the schools.¹⁷⁷⁵

In November 2010, PTUZ said Zanu-PF supporters led by war veterans were trying to ‘cleanse’ Mashonaland province of teachers after President Mugabe announced that elections might be held the following year. PTUZ cited the case of six teachers who were forcibly transferred to other schools in Zanu-PF strongholds and feared for their lives. There was a history of war veterans and Zanu-PF supporters accusing teachers of supporting the MDC and targeting them with political violence.¹⁷⁷⁶

In February 2011, the MDC alleged that war veteran leader Jabulani Sibanda closed schools across a whole district in Masvingo and forced teachers and schoolchildren to attend his pro-Zanu-PF meeting, where he said MDC members would be killed. He had reportedly used the same tactics in other parts of Masvingo, Mashonaland Central and Manicaland provinces over the previous year.¹⁷⁷⁷ The PTUZ confirmed that teachers in Gutu had left their jobs because of death threats from Sibanda.¹⁷⁷⁸

There were also several reports of Zanu-PF militia imposing their ideology on school curricula. In some cases, Zanu-PF leaders forced teachers to attend ‘re-education camps’, allegedly so that they could ‘experience the pain and suffering endured by liberation war heroes’.¹⁷⁷⁹ The threat of violence was ever-present, as Zanu-PF set up bases in some areas to intimidate, beat and torture people who refused to comply with their demands.¹⁷⁸⁰ PTUZ claimed that history teachers found it hard to teach the subject without being accused of attacking Zanu-PF and avoided teaching ‘true history’ for their own

safety.¹⁷⁸¹ In one case, a head teacher was told that war veterans were going to visit his school to teach history.¹⁷⁸²

Zanu-PF supporters threatened at least one head teacher and two teachers because they accepted gifts or grants for their schools from political opponents of Zanu-PF. A head teacher at Mapor Primary School, Mutare North, fled, fearing for his life, when Zanu-PF came looking for him at the school after they learned that he had accepted funds under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) from an MDC-T senator.¹⁷⁸³ Two teachers left Chatindo Primary School in Nyanga North after Zanu-PF youths threatened them for accepting five rolls of barbed wire paid for by the CDF.¹⁷⁸⁴

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS

Although the exact number is unknown, human rights organizations found evidence of some schools being used as bases by militia groups, including Zanu-PF youth militia, in Masvingo province, Manicaland province and several other rural areas. In one incident, Zanu-PF youth militia allegedly camped at Chikurudzo primary and secondary schools in Masvingo North, causing fear among teachers and schoolchildren by threatening to set up torture bases on the premises.¹⁷⁸⁵ In another, a militia base was set up at Chifamba Primary School in Guruve South, Mashonaland Central province, where militia members conducted night patrols and political meetings and forced people to attend Zanu-PF events.¹⁷⁸⁶ In August 2011, Zimbabwean human rights groups indicated that some 200 youth militia members were being trained at Sherenje Secondary School in Manicaland province.¹⁷⁸⁷ War veterans and the Simudza Makoni youth group, allegedly linked to Zanu-PF politician Didymus Mutasa, also reportedly seized control of Rainbow Crèche in Rusape, forcing its staff to flee.¹⁷⁸⁸

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Reports suggest that police and security forces used excessive violence to quell student protests on several occasions, resulting in at least two deaths and 64¹⁷⁸⁹ injuries.¹⁷⁹⁰ For example, in September 2010, two students reportedly died after being brutally assaulted by security guards and ‘unknown assailants’ who sought to prevent students with unpaid fees from attending a graduation ceremony at Bindura University. Sixteen other students were injured, according to the Zimbabwe National Students’ Union.¹⁷⁹¹ In a separate incident, around 10 students from Great Zimbabwe University were reportedly beaten by police for pressing other students to join a boycott of lectures.¹⁷⁹²

The Student Solidarity Trust reported seven cases of abduction and torture of university students from January 2009 to July 2012.¹⁷⁹³ In one incident, two students were organizing a protest against high fees at Masvingo Polytechnic when Central Intelligence Organisation agents allegedly arrested and tortured them. The students then had to pay an ‘admission of guilt’ fine to be released.¹⁷⁹⁴

At least one academic was reported to have been tortured during detention by the Zimbabwean authorities. On 5 December 2012, a lecturer at Bindura University was arrested, put in solitary confinement and tortured for claiming in a research paper that police had been ordered not to arrest Zanu-PF members committing crimes during the 2008 conflict.¹⁷⁹⁵

According to the SST, 359 students were unlawfully arrested between January 2009 and July 2012 and 349 were unlawfully detained in the same period.¹⁷⁹⁶ It is not known how many of these cases overlap.

Zimbabwe: student arrests and detentions January 2009 to July 2012

Year	Unlawful Arrests	Unlawful Detentions
2009	124	128
2010	120	96
2011	52	62
2012 (January – July)	63	63
Total	359	349

Source: Student Solidary Trust

In February 2010, it was reported that ten students, including four student union officers, were arrested by police and security guards during a meeting to discuss grievances at the University of Zimbabwe.¹⁷⁹⁷ In another case, police detained five student leaders after one commented that President Mugabe was delaying political progress; the students were reportedly beaten while in custody, including with whips and batons.¹⁷⁹⁸

ATTACKS ON EDUCATION IN 2013

The PTUZ reported that teachers were intimidated with threats of physical harm into supporting a particular political party during the parliamentary and presidential elections in July. The union said that in Mashonaland Central province teachers were drafted into ZANU-PF structures and forced to campaign for the party against their will. On voting day, they were told that they should plead illiteracy so that they could be ‘assisted’ to vote by ZANU-PF supporters. In Mashonaland West, the teachers were forced to withdraw their membership from the PTUZ as the organization complained about the harassment of teachers.¹⁷⁹⁹ The Zimbabwe Election Support Network reported as an illustrative critical incident during the voting process the fact that some known teachers in Chimanimani East, Manicaland, asked for assistance to vote on election day.¹⁸⁰⁰ The African Union Election Observation Commission

noted that levels of voter assistance were high, with more than one in four voters ‘assisted’ in some polling stations at schools.¹⁸⁰¹

In two other incidents, student leaders were arrested for talking to students on campus. In January 2013, Zimbabwe National Students’ Union (Zinasu) secretary-general Tryvine Musokeri and two other Zinasu leaders were arrested at Harare Polytechnic for addressing a crowd of students. They criticized government failure to provide students with grants and loans.¹⁸⁰² In February 2013, a Gweru magistrate acquitted Zinasu president Pride Mkono and his deputy, Musokeri, on charges of violating the Public Order and Security Act after they were arrested for addressing students at Midlands State University the previous year.¹⁸⁰³

ENDNOTES ZIMBABWE

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¹⁷⁶⁴ Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), Political violence and intimidation against Teachers in Zimbabwe, Report prepared for the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), (Harare: PTUZ, 2012), 2.

¹⁷⁶⁵ Norwegian Students’ and Academics’ International Assistance Fund (SAIH), The Language of the Police Batons: Attacks on Teachers and Students in Zimbabwe (SAIH, 2012), 15.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Education International, “Zimbabwe: Two teachers dead, three more missing,” 20 June 2008; Andrew Moyo, “7 teachers killed in political violence: Report,” 2 July 2009; Zimbabwe Oh My Zimbabwe, a film directed by Ingrid Gavshon, which includes interviews with teachers who have been tortured, Angel Films, <https://vimeo.com/80124195> (password: angel22).

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¹⁷⁶⁸ “Zimbabwe profile,” BBC News, last updated 26 September 2013.

¹⁷⁶⁹ Moses Matenga, “Keep out of schools, politicians told,” Newsday, 15 May 2011; and Zimbabwe Peace Project, Early warning report on politically-motivated human rights and food related violations, June 2009, 10.

¹⁷⁷⁰ Moses Matenga, "Keep out of schools, politicians told," *Newsday*, 15 May 2011.

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¹⁷⁷⁶ "Zimbabwe Teachers Face Fresh Political Violence," *Radio VOP*, 3 November 2010.

¹⁷⁷⁷ Irene Madongo, "Jabulani Sibanda shuts down schools for ZANU-PF rally," *SW Radio Africa*, 1 March 2011; Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, "Schools shut down for Zanu-PF rallies," *Kubatana.net*, 2 March 2011.

¹⁷⁷⁸ "Gutu Teachers Flee Violence," *Radio VOP*, 4 March 2011.

¹⁷⁷⁹ Zimbabwe Peace Project, "Summary on Politically-Motivated Human Rights and Food-Related Violations," July 2011, 4-5.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹⁷⁸¹ Violet Gonda, Sandra Nyaira, "Zimbabwe Teachers Union Says ZANU-PF Forcing History Syllabus on Schools," *VOA Zimbabwe*, 1 September 2011; Vladimir Mzaca, "Union accuses Zanu-PF of distorting history in schools," *The Times Live*, 4 September 2011.

¹⁷⁸² Chengetai Zvauya, "Stop meddling in education – Coltart," *Daily News Live*, 9 March 2011; Lance Guma, "War vets demand to teach history in schools," *SW Radio Africa*, 10 March 2011.

¹⁷⁸³ Zimbabwe Peace Project, "Summary on Politically-Motivated Human Rights and Food-Related Violations," June 2011, 14.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Zimbabwe Peace Project, Early warning report on politically-motivated human rights and food related violations, June 2009, 11-12.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Zimbabwe Peace Project, "Summary on Politically-Motivated Human Rights and Food-Related Violations," March 2011, 7-8.

¹⁷⁸⁷ Jonga Kandemiiri, "Zimbabwe rights groups say Zanu-PF youth militia training in secondary school," *VOA Zimbabwe*, 24 August 2011.

¹⁷⁸⁸ Zimbabwe Peace Project, "ZPP Monthly Monitor – September 2012," 5.

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¹⁷⁹³ Student Solidarity Trust correspondence with Clemence Manyukwe, September 2013.

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¹⁷⁹⁶ Student Solidarity Trust correspondence with Clemence Manyukwe, September 2013.

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¹⁷⁹⁸ US Department of State, 2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Zimbabwe (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 11 March 2010).

¹⁷⁹⁹ Raymond Majongwe, Secretary-General, PTUZ, interviewed by Clemence Manyukwe for Education under Attack 2014, 9 September 2013.

¹⁸⁰⁰ Zimbabwe Election Support Network, Report on the 31 July 2013 harmonized elections, 84.

¹⁸⁰¹ African Union Commission, Report of African Union Election Observation Mission to the 31 July 2013 harmonised elections in the Republic of Zimbabwe, para 67, 18.

¹⁸⁰² Statement by ZINASU information department, 21 January 2013.

¹⁸⁰³ Statement by ZINASU information department, 18 February 2013.