



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe – ZWE37556 – Harare – White
Zimbabweans – Christians – South Africa –
Refugee applications
28 October 2010

- 1. Please provide current information of the treatment of white Christians in Harare, and especially in Dinolli, and information on whether there has been a change in the treatment between 2000 and the present.**

No information could be located on the situation in Dinolli.

Freedom House in its report *Freedom in the World- – Zimbabwe (2010)*¹) noted that although freedom of religion has generally been respected in Zimbabwe, church attendance has become increasingly politicized. In late 2007 the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe split along political lines and as a result there were restrictions on freedom of worship in several churches.

According to the *International Religious Freedom Report*² of the US Department of State for 2009, the population in Zimbabwe is estimated to be between 70-80 per cent Christian. The state exercised repression of religious leaders who were considered critical of its policies and continued to arrest and harass Anglican clergy and parishioners. This report states that the Zimbabwean government favours Nolbert Kunonga who is a ZANU-PF affiliated former Anglican bishop in Harare. In 2007 he formed the Church of the Province of Zimbabwe (CPZ). Below is a chronological list of recent reported incidents which occurred in 2009 and all of which involve members of the Anglican Communion:

- **On 21 May 2009:** after a disruption at an Anglican church in Kuwadzana, police accused the priest of stoning a police officer. During a weekly women's prayer meeting at the church, a Kunonga-affiliated priest had entered the church with a dog and told the women to leave. The Anglican priest then confronted the Kunonga priest and asked him to leave. The man returned with plain-clothed "neighborhood police" who beat up the priest at the church. The women attempted to stop the violence and then were themselves restrained by reinforcements of riot police. The Anglican priest was arrested and held in custody for several days until he was released on bail.
- **On 29 March 2009:** approximately 25 riot police prevented parishioners from entering the St. Francis' Anglican Church in the Glen Norah suburb of Harare. When the crowd did not disperse, police beat some church members with batons; police also beat a local councilor who attempted to peacefully resolve the situation. When the

¹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2010 – Zimbabwe*, 3 May. Online UNHCR Refworld – <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,ZWE,,4c0ceaca1a,0.html> – Accessed 20 October 2010 – Attachment 1.

² US Department of State 2009, *International Religious Freedom Report – Zimbabwe*. Abuses of Religious Freedom. 26 October - Attachment 2

priest refused to dismiss the 400-500 parishioners from the church lawn, he and three others were arrested for disturbing the peace. As police attempted to disperse the crowd, they threw tear gas and fired live ammunition into the air, ostensibly as a warning. However, one bullet struck a man in a house adjacent to the church, piercing his hand. The following day, the priest was further charged with inciting violence as a result of the gunshot wound. The court case began on June 16 and was continuing.

- **On 22 March 2009**, police arrested five members of the CPCA on criminal charges of malicious injury to property. The charges stemmed from a disturbance at an Anglican church in the Harare suburb of Tafara. When Kunonga supporters barred CPCA women from entering the church to conduct prayers, the CPCA women forced their way through the gate, causing it to fall off the hinges. During the scuffle, several church windows were broken as well. The Kunonga supporters called the police who arrested five CPCA parishioners whom they accused of breaking the windows and gate. The trial began on June 22 and is ongoing.
- **On 16 March 2009**, the priest at St. Andrew's Anglican Church in the Glenview neighborhood of Harare led parishioners to the church to hold a service. When police refused to let the parishioners enter the church, the priest led a service under a tree outside the church. Police attempted to disperse the group by throwing an estimated 20 tear gas canisters.
- **24 February 2009**, after a Kunonga-affiliated priest had locked church doors in Dzivarasekwa on January 13, February 10, and February 24 to prevent CPCA members from attending church, CPCA members advised the local police that Kunonga's priest was violating the church sharing arrangement. When the police refused to intervene, CPCA-affiliated women forced their way into the church. The Kunonga-affiliated priest subsequently filed a report alleging the CPCA members stole electrical cable. The women stood trial on June 23 and their case is continuing.
- CPZ priests and bishops forcibly asserted control of Anglican schools within the Harare province of the CPCA, sometimes with police assistance.
- **27 January 2009**. Kunonga loyalists have also blocked Anglicans from performing burials at the Anglican cemetery in Chitungwiza.³

The *UK Home Office Country of Origin Information Report* for 30 September 2010 notes that the Government resorts to the Public Order and Security Act of 2002 (POSA) to interfere with religious groups who are organising public prayer rallies.⁴ As the POSA requires religious organisations to register their intention to hold a public meeting in advance, once the police is aware of a proposed meeting, they exercise intimidation against the people and in this way prevents them from attending.⁵

An article published in June 2008 by Elizabeth Kendal, Principal Researcher and writer for the World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission (WEA RLC) indicates that the Government had begun to interfere in Anglican Affairs in 2001 and by 2008:

³ US Department of State 2009, *International Religious Freedom Report – Zimbabwe*. Abuses of Religious Freedom. 26 October - Attachment 2

⁴ UK Home Office 2010, *Country of origin information report: Zimbabwe*. Section 18.01 Freedom of Religion. UK Home Office website, 30 September – Attachment 3

⁵ UK Home Office 2010, *Zimbabwe. Report of fact finding mission to Zimbabwe. Harare 9 – 17 August 2010* p 11, Section 1:13. 21 September 2010 - Attachment 4

Religious liberty abuse [was] so severe and violent that “dissident” Anglicans – that is most Anglicans – in the capital, Harare, now risk death to meet together.⁶

This same article indicates that state-orchestrated violence against Harare Anglicans has intensified since January 2008 when the High Court ruled that Harare’s Cathedral was to be shared between pro-government Bishop Kunonga and Bishop Bakare, a non-government affiliated Anglican Bishop. In February 2008 Bishop Kunonga barricaded himself inside the Cathedral with members of the ZANU-PF youth militia. Since then the police has seized all Anglican property in Harare and “marked ‘dissident’ Anglicans as traitors”.

On 15 February 2009 Elizabeth Kendal reported that Mugabe’s police were attending churches throughout Harare and physically preventing members of the mainstream congregations from using church property. The chief police officer in Harare had sent a letter to Anglican churches ordering that only priests aligned with pro-ZANU-PF Bishop Kunonga be permitted to hold services.⁷

White Christians

There is scant information on the treatment of white Christians as distinct from black Zimbabwean Christians. There is no information available on the existence of a separate White Christian church.

As is detailed above those perceived to adhere to churches which are not supportive of ZANU-PF are adversely treated. According to the UK Home Office Country of Origin and Information Report of 30 September 2010, there are a ‘few thousand’ white Zimbabweans who now reside in Zimbabwe⁸; these are intimidated and subjected to verbal and physical threats by security forces.

An article from the *Anglican Journal* of 1 January 2000 confirms that there was racial tension within the church at that time:

Black priests in the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe say they are not allowed to baptize, marry or bury white parishioners.

At least four priests have resigned from their parishes in Harare because of alleged racism.

... Another priest, Godfrey Tawonezvi, told a local weekly newspaper that he had ministered at one parish for three years, "but I never baptized a white child, married white couples or buried any white person." He added that whenever the white rector was not available, white parents would hire white priests from other parishes to perform baptisms, some more than 160 kilometres away.

...

Another priest, Josphat Muzami, said he had attended a church wedding in a wealthy suburb of Harare and had been forced to move to a back row in the church.

⁶ Kendal, E. 2008, ‘We are being persecuted’ – Mugabe represses and persecutes Harare’s Anglicans’ <http://journalchretien.net/>, 28 June 2008 <http://journalchretien.net/16848-zimbabwe-we-are-being-persecuted?lang=fr> – Accessed 18 October 2010 – Attachment 5

⁷ Kendal, E. 2009, ‘Zimbabwe: totalitarianism blights the church’ World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission, 15 February. <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2009/s09020085.htm> - Accessed 12 October 2010 – Attachment 6

⁸ UK Home Office 2010, *Country of origin information report: Zimbabwe*. Section 19.05 Whites. 30 September – Attachment 4

He said that "as a priest I had to attend the wedding, and took one of the front seats. When I did this, my senior priest, who was white, then kindly told me that the wedding couple, who were also white, did not want a black face to appear on their video."⁹

2. Deleted.

3. Please provide information on which organisation administers the refugee visa regime in South Africa, and in particular in Durban. Can you provide any information on what the procedure is for applying for refugee status in South Africa?

South Africa has recognised refugees since 1993, and as there are no refugee camps. Asylum seekers live mainly in urban regions and manage largely without assistance.

According to the website of the Department of Home Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, refugee applicants can approach several centres for assistance, in Durban these are:

- **Refugee Centre:** 132 Moore Street, Durban.¹⁰
- **The Provincial Office** the Department of Home Affairs: Armstrong Avenue, La Lucia Ridge. La Lucia.
Postal address Private Bag x06. Durban North 4016.¹¹
- **Regional Customer Service Centre:** Armstrong Avenue, La Lucia Ridge. Durban North, 4016.¹²

Information on the procedures involved in seeking asylum in the Republic of South Africa is contained in the attached document titled 'General information about refugee and asylum seekers'.¹³ One is entitled to seek refugee status in South Africa and there is no charge for the application. There is a first interview at the Refugee Reception Centre to assess eligibility for consideration– which upon qualification the person is granted a Section 22 permit for a stay of up to three months; a second interview called 'Refugee Status Determination hearing' for an assessment of the claims has to take place – at this hearing the Section 22 permit is renewed and date-stamped. If there is a positive outcome of the 'Refugee Status Determination hearing' the person will be given a Section 24 permit which is valid for 2 years and which needs to be renewed no less than three months prior to its expiry date.

If the 'Refugee Status Determination hearing' determines that the application is unfounded, the case is automatically referred to the Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs (SCRA). The applicant then has 14 days to present his case. If the applicant fails

⁹ Mafundikwa, E. 2000, 'White Anglicans snub black priests in Zimbabwe', Anglican Journal, 1 January. <http://www.thefreeibrary.com/White+Anglicans+snub+black+priests+in+Zimbabwe.-a030071743> – Accessed 25 October 2010 – Attachment 7

¹⁰ Republic of South Africa. Department of Home Affairs 2010, Refugee Centres. Physical Address, undated. <http://www.dha.gov.za/> – Accessed 14 October 2010 – Attachment 8

¹¹ Republic of South Africa. Department of Home Affairs 2010, DHA Headquarters. Provincial Offices. undated. <http://www.dha.gov.za/> – Accessed 14 October 2010 – Attachment 9

¹² Republic of South Africa. Department of Home Affairs 2010, Regional Customer Service Centres. Undated. <http://www.dha.gov.za/> – Accessed 14 October 2010 – Attachment 10

¹³ Republic of South Africa. Department of Home Affairs 2010, General information about refugees and asylum seekers . Undated. <http://www.dha.gov.za/> – Accessed 14 October 2010 – Attachment 11

to present his case to the Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs (SCRA) and the decision of the Refugee Status Determination Officer is confirmed by the Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs (SCRA), then this person will be deported. An appeal to the Refugee Appeal Board is possible if lodged within 30 days of the rejection of an application. If a person fails to lodge an appeal then he or she will be deported – and runs the risk of arrest or detention whilst awaiting deportation.¹⁴

An article of 30 August 2009 indicates that the staff at the Home Affairs Office were sharply criticised by their Minister for having mishandled a case. The Minister said “people who work in those offices, [the] majority of them, [think] they rule the world”.¹⁵ The case which gave rise to criticism involved a young man who had no parents and was seeking Identity Documents. As the interviewer was not satisfied with the information provided he/she told the young man that he was lying, tore the papers and threw them at him, used derogative words which are usually used for foreigners and dismissed him. As a result of this incident, the young man committed suicide. The Home Affairs Minister stated that her office would not tolerate such behaviour in the future; she commented that the Department of Home Affairs “never had a proper culture of service”.

Attachments

1. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2010 – Zimbabwe*, 3 May. Online UNHCR Refworld – <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,ZWE,,4c0ceaca1a,0.html> – Accessed 20 October 2010.
2. US Department of State 2009, *International Religious Freedom Report – Zimbabwe*, 26 October.
3. UK Home Office 2010, *Country of origin information report: Zimbabwe*. UK Home Office website, 30 September.
4. UK Home Office 2010, *Zimbabwe. Report of fact finding mission to Zimbabwe. Harare 9 – 17 August 2010*. 21 September 2010.
5. Kendal, E. 2008, ‘We are being persecuted’ – Mugabe represses and persecutes Harare’s Anglicans’ <http://journalchretien.net/>, 28 June 2008 <http://journalchretien.net/16848-zimbabwe-we-are-being-persecuted?lang=fr> – Accessed 18 October 2010.
6. ‘Kendal, E. 2009, ‘Zimbabwe: totalitarianism blights the church’ World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission, 15 February. <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2009/s09020085.htm> - Accessed 12 October 2010.
7. Mafundikwa, E. ‘White Anglicans snub black priests in Zimbabwe’ 2000, *Anglican Journal*, 1 January.

¹⁴ Republic of South Africa. Department of Home Affairs 2010, General information about refugees and asylum seekers . Undated. <http://www.dha.gov.za/> – Accessed 14 October 2010 – Attachment 11

¹⁵ Dlamini-Zuma lashes home affairs department following suicide’; 2009, Mail and guardian Online, 30 August. <http://www.mg.co.za/printformat/single/2009-08-30-dlaminizuma-lashes-home-affairs-dept-following-suicide> - Accessed October 2010 – Attachment 12

<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/White+Anglicans+snub+black+priests+in+Zimbabwe.-a030071743> – Accessed 12 October 2010.

8. Republic of South Africa. Department of Home Affairs 2010, Refugee Centres. Physical Address, undated. <http://www.dha.gov.za/> – Accessed 14 October 2010.
9. Republic of South Africa. Department of Home Affairs 2010, DHA Headquarters. Provincial Offices, undated. <http://www.dha.gov.za/> – Accessed 14 October 2010.
10. Republic of South Africa. Department of Home Affairs 2010, Regional Customer Service Centres, undated. <http://www.dha.gov.za/> – Accessed 14 October 2010.
11. Republic of South Africa. Department of Home Affairs 2010, General information about refugees and asylum seekers. Undated. <http://www.dha.gov.za/> – Accessed 14 October 2010.
12. Dlamini-Zuma lashes home affairs department following suicide'; 2009, Mail and guardian Online, 30 August. <http://www.mg.co.za/printformat/single/2009-08-30-dlaminizuma-lashes-home-affairs-dept-following-suicide> - Accessed October 2010.