

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: AFR46/5896/2017

16 March 2017

### **Zimbabwe must end enforced disappearances and guarantee respect for freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly**

#### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Zimbabwe***

Harmonising domestic laws with international human rights treaties to which Zimbabwe is a party and the 2013 Constitution, as recommended during the review,<sup>1</sup> would guarantee individuals in Zimbabwe the enjoyment of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Regrettably, four years on this process is not complete, leaving the authorities, in particular the police, enforcing old laws in contravention of the Constitution.

Amnesty International welcomes Zimbabwe's accept of the recommendation to investigate all cases of politically motivated violence, including the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of human rights defender Itai Dzamara, and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.<sup>2</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2017 marked two years since his disappearance, however, there has been no progress in establishing his whereabouts. Amnesty International is concerned that police reports provide no substantive detail except to confirm that investigations into Dzamara's disappearance are underway. Amnesty International has consistently called on Zimbabwe to establish an independent judge-led commission of inquiry with powers to subpoena witnesses and whose findings are made public, and to ensure that those suspected of being implicated in Dzamara's disappearance are brought to justice in fair trials.

In order to protect all those at risk and end the culture of impunity, the authorities must ensure that those suspected of criminal responsibility for abductions and enforced disappearances are brought to justice. In 2016, Amnesty documented five cases of activists abducted, tortured, dumped out of town and left for dead. Some were later found in police custody, including Itai Dzamara's younger brother, Patson Dzamara.

During the review, Zimbabwe committed to end ungrounded arrests and detentions and the use of excessive force, torture, intimidation and harassment.<sup>3</sup> The government must ensure that civil society, the media, and political opposition activists are able to exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly free from intimidation and harassment. Amnesty International regrets the misuse of the criminal justice system to persecute human rights activists, in particular the continuous harassment of clergymen Pastor Evan Mawarire and Pastor Patrick Mugadza.

---

<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Zimbabwe, A/HRC/34/8, recommendations 131.1-131.3 (Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Ghana), 131.5-131.21 (Australia, Iran, Germany, Congo, Philippines, Uganda, Egypt, Thailand, Togo, France, Czech Republic, Mauritius, Maldives, Israel, Netherlands, Tunisia, South Africa).

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/34/8, recommendation 131.64 (USA).

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/34/8, recommendation 131.63 (Ukraine).

**Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Zimbabwe on 16 March 2017 during its 34<sup>th</sup> session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered an oral statement. Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on Zimbabwe: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr46/4639/2016/en/>

Public Document

International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK  
[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

\*\*\*\*\*