



Zimbabwe – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 8 November 2016

Whether young men (men in their late teens and early 20's) in Zimbabwe and Bulwayo in particular - were targeted by ZANU-PF members to join the Zimbabwean Army from 2008 to 2013. Whether young men, and in particular men who are MDC supporters, were threatened or harassed by the authorities and/or ZANU-PF supporters because of their refusal to join the Army.

A report from Human Rights Watch, in a section titled “Background” refers to recruitment into the Zimbabwean army as follows:

“Human Rights Watch investigations indicate that it is largely the security sector leadership that is openly partisan towards ZANU-PF and benefitting from political patronage; the rank and file of the security forces remains independent and professional. To ensure that ZANUPF partisanship is entrenched within the lower ranks of the security forces, the leadership of the security forces in May 2012 scrapped all recruitment requirements, opting instead for recruitment on the basis of subscription to vague national values which in practice are largely subscription to ZANU-PF policies. There has been widespread concern expressed in the media and by civil society activists that this was designed to facilitate direct recruitment of unqualified ZANU-PF youths into the security forces. Human Rights Watch investigations also indicate that recruitment into the army, CIO, and prisons services clandestinely takes place through ZANU-PF aligned provincial governors across the country, all of whom are appointed by President Mugabe on the ZANU-PF platform.” (Human Rights Watch (4 June 2013) *The Elephant in the Room: Reforming Zimbabwe’s Security Sector Ahead of Elections*, pp.10-11)

A report published by the International Crisis Group, in a section titled “The Security Sector: Unyielding to Reforms?”, states:

“At the beginning of 2012, the army and police began an unbudgeted national recruitment drive. Army officials justified it as necessary to strengthen national security, but standard recruitment criteria were allegedly ignored and most of those selected were ZANU-PF supporters, including former youth militia.” (International Crisis Group (6 May 2013) *Zimbabwe: Election Scenarios*, p.20)

An article from the Zimbabwean government owned newspaper The Herald quotes Major General Martin Chedondo as follows:

“Every army intake is going to recruit potential soldiers from every village in all the country’s provinces. ‘This is a directive that we are going to strictly adhere to. In the areas where there are shortcomings be it academic, body make up, body mass index of particular society we are making exceptions and adjustments to accommodate them,’ he said. He said previously there used to be complaints from people who were failing to join the army. These

complained that they were left out because they fell short of the required weight and height that would enable them to carry heavy military weights. Maj Gen Chedondo said continuous soldiers' training will ensure that they remain loyal, diligent and be the nation's shining beacon in terms of national defence. 'Now that soldiers are being recruited from every village, we want to see a village that will go against national values. We will not tolerate sellouts who would want to share the national cake with foreigners who were once our enemies and attackers,' he added." (The Herald (13 May 2012) *Army changes recruitment policy*)

A 2008 Amnesty International report states:

"Amnesty International today warned that the violence in Zimbabwe is reaching crisis levels, and revealed that 'war veterans' are forcibly recruiting local youths to attack perceived supporters of the opposition MDC (Movement for Democratic Change). 'Those who refuse to commit violence are assaulted and accused of being MDC supporters by the "war veterans",' said Simeon Mawanza, Amnesty International's Zimbabwe researcher. Eyewitnesses told Amnesty International that large numbers of ZANU-PF supporters and 'war veterans' are assaulting perceived MDC supporters in Mberengwa district in Midlands province and Mazowe district in Mashonaland Central. In Mberengwa, a large gang of ZANU-PF supporters -- most of them youths forcibly recruited by 'war veterans' -- are going around attacking homes of people suspected of voting for the MDC in the 29 March 2008 elections. A similar gang was reported by an eyewitness in the Chiweshe area in Mazowe district." (Amnesty International (15 May 2008) *Zimbabwe: Violence reaches crisis levels; youths forcibly recruited*)

A report from the now defunct UK-based SW Radio Africa states:

"A squad of ZANU PF militants, who were behind last year's election violence, is moving around the Mudzi district forcibly recruiting innocent youths to join the notorious 'green bomber' militia. Our correspondent Lionel Saungweme reports that between the 12th and 14th of October dozens of villagers below the age of 35 were rounded up in the Chinake, Chatima, Murenyi and Denga areas of Mudzi. They were taken to Nyamapanda near the border with Mozambique and told they would undergo 'unspecified' training." (SW Radio Africa (19 October 2009) *ZANU PF begins forced militia recruitment in Mudzi*)

An article posted to the internet archive Zimbabwe Situation states:

"Zanu PF militia led by Sipho Musarurwa last Friday forced male students at Sotisi High School in Gutu North, Masvingo province to register for Zanu PF militia training upon completion of their examinations. All male students in 'O' and 'A' Levels at the school were forced to supply their names, age and names of their headmen by Musarurwa's group. Efforts by the headmaster and teachers to stop the process failed. The terrified students were told to prepare for Zanu PF militia training once they completed their examinations in December." (Zimbabwe Situation (23 November 2010) *Students forced to register for Zanu PF militia training*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to

the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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