

## Zimbabwe COVID-19 Lockdown Weekly Monitoring Report 6 to 12 March 2021

### 1. Introduction

This report covers the period 6 - 12 March 2021. As of 11 March, the confirmed number of COVID-19 cases had increased to 36 377, with 36 new cases being reported on the same day. The death toll increased to 1 492, with 3 deaths being reported on the day. On 11 March, 118 frontline workers were inoculated with the Sinopharm vaccine bringing the cumulative total to 36 019.

### 2. Methodology

This report encompasses data gathered nationally by the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), Counselling Services Unit (CSU), and excerpts from a report generated by the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR).

### 3. Cabinet Decision Matrix (9 March)

Cabinet received a report on Zimbabwe's response to the COVID-19 outbreak from the Minister of Defence and War Veterans Affairs as the Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on the COVID-19 outbreak. Cabinet noted with great concern the increased number of people milling around the Central Business Districts and other public places, often without regard to COVID-19 regulations such as mandatory wearing of masks and social distancing. Cabinet directed law enforcement agencies to enforce the WHO protocol and national guidelines which remain mandatory. Cabinet also resolved that the opening of some public places attracting multitudes, such as casinos will be deferred until the consequences of the recent relaxation of lockdown measures have been fully assessed.

In terms of vaccination, Cabinet authorised the use of four (4) vaccines namely: Sinopharm, Sinovac (China), Covaxin (India) and Sputnik-V (Russia) after consultations with the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe (MCAZ). All private players intending to procure vaccines for their employees must procure only these registered vaccines.

### 4. General Updates

Doctors, through the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR), have expressed concern over the subdued uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine as frontline workers continue to shun the Chinese Sinopharm vaccine. According to ZADHR Chairperson, Dr Norman Matara, 35,000 people have been vaccinated in 3 weeks compared to 200 000 in Rwanda in four days. Meanwhile, the government has undertaken to vaccinate all teachers who are prepared to receive COVID-19 immunisation jabs immediately after schools reopen next week as authorities ramp up efforts to create a safe learning environment. The government is reportedly making efforts to procure more doses in preparation for the second phase of the national vaccination programme, which targets to inoculate lecturers at tertiary institutions, teachers and others at medium risk from the respiratory virus.

President Mnangagwa directed the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) to continue manning security checkpoints to ensure that only the designated Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO) continues to be the sole provider of public transport. He said private transport operators had abused government's empowerment initiatives extended to them over the years through charging unsustainably exorbitant fares and failing to provide good customer care. The President ordered the police to enforce Statutory Instrument 83 of 2020 with regards urban transport service provision. This comes at a time when the commuting public has been struggling to get transport to and from work. The few ZUPCO buses available are usually crowded leaving citizens susceptible to COVID-19.

Gweru police officers on Saturday descended on a Gweru cemetery and they arrested 76 mourners gathered to bury Tatenda Pasinyore. Pasinyore died at Gweru's Mutapa Police Station on 28 February after he was brutally assaulted by police who had arrested him for violating COVID-19 regulations. A post-mortem was carried out and the results are yet to be released to the family. However, in a surprise turn of events, police rounded up all mourners who were at the cemetery and detained them. Forum lawyers secured the release of the detained mourners.

## 5. Extra-judicial killing

On 26 February 2020 at around 11 am two soldiers, Vitalis Dube of Shamva and Terence Kagogoda, from Chipinge, together with their co-accused Maxwell Sithole, Onai Vimbani, Batanai Simango and Shingai Mhlanga assaulted and killed Gift Mahembe following an altercation. The soldiers are reported to have been enlisted by a family whose relative was allegedly assaulted by Mahembe. The soldiers allegedly assaulted Mahembe with open hands, booted feet, sticks and a baton stick several times all over his body. He was seriously injured and rushed to Mount Selinda Hospital where he was pronounced dead upon arrival. Mahembe's body was medically examined by Doctor Brian Makumbo who concluded that death was due to severe head injury secondary to assault.

## 6. Arbitrary Arrest

On 10 March, police officers arrested 5 members of Masvingo Residents Forum who had gathered at the Masvingo Civic Centre to submit a petition to Acting Town Clerk Edward Mukaratirwa. The petition mainstreamed service delivery issues chief among them the poor state of roads and water shortages. The arrested members were detained at Masvingo Central police Station. Masvingo Residents Forum members, Tamutswa Chikonyora, Leroy Tevera and Ester Tom, were charged with criminal nuisance and were released on 11 March after paying ZWL500 fine each.

## 7. Summary of Violations

The table below summarises COVID-19 related human rights violations documented by the Forum Secretariat and Forum Members from 5 January to 12 March 2021.

Nature of Violation	Number of Victims	Location
Assaults and Torture	26	Hwange, Binga, Bulawayo, Chipinge, Fig tree, Gweru, Mt Darwin, Harare, Beitbridge, Mutare
Arbitrary arrests	40	Gweru, Nkulumane
Attacks against journalists	6	Harare, Masvingo
Extrajudicial killing	2	Gweru

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