



**TRANSPARENCY  
INTERNATIONAL  
ZIMBABWE**

the coalition against corruption



# HUMAN RIGHTS AND CORRUPTION IN ZIMBABWE A PATH TO REFORM

Seminar Paper #3 2024

# About Transparency International Zimbabwe (TI Z)

Transparency International Zimbabwe (TI Z) is a non-profit, non-partisan, systems-oriented local chapter of the international movement against corruption. Its broad mandate is to fight corruption and related vices through networks of integrity in line with the Global Strategy. TI Z believes corruption can only be sufficiently tackled by all citizens including people at the grassroots level.

## Vision

A Zimbabwean society free from all forms of corruption and practices.

## Mission

To combat corruption, hold power to account and promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in all sectors of society.

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# Acronyms

CPI	-	Corruption Perception Index
CIO	-	Central Intelligence Organisation
CSOs	-	Civil society organisations
FAZ	-	Forever Associates of Zimbabwe
ICCPR	-	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IFFS	-	Illicit financial flows
PFM	-	Public Finance Management
MOFED	-	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MOPA	-	Maintenance of Peace and Order Act
MPSLSW	-	Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare
NDS-1	-	National Development Strategy
NPA	-	National Prosecuting Authority
PEPs	-	Politically exposed persons
PPE	-	Personal protective equipment
TI Z	-	Transparency International Zimbabwe
UNCAC	-	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNCAT	-	United Nations Convention against Torture
ZACC	-	Zimbabwe Anticorruption Commission
ZEC	-	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

# Executive Summary

This paper examines the current state of corruption and human rights in Zimbabwe, by analysing how the former impacts the latter and proposing actionable recommendations to address any challenges emerging from the impacts observed. Zimbabwe has faced persistent challenges related to human rights and systemic corruption, which have significantly hindered its socio-economic and political development. While the government has expressed intentions to improve governance and human rights, some stakeholders assert that the reforms have been slow and insufficient. This paper will outline key areas of concern concerning the topic, discuss international and domestic legal frameworks, and suggest strategies for fostering a more transparent, accountable, and rights-respecting governance system. As the major findings, the paper shows that the current context in Zimbabwe is characterised by systematic and endemic corruption which has a causal relationship with the violation of human rights. The two variables are mutually reinforcing, with different scenarios including human rights violations being a result of corruption; corruption because of human rights violations and the weaponisation of either human rights or corruption for specific reasons beneficial to the parties involved. The paper draws into specific human rights violations that have a relationship with corruption in the Zimbabwean context under both civil and political rights as well as socio-economic rights.

Reflecting on the drivers of corruption and human rights in Zimbabwe which include authoritarianism, lack of political will and weak institutions among others, the paper makes concrete recommendations to specific duty bearers. The recommendations are based on international standards, best practices, regional and international treaties ratified by Zimbabwe and the Constitution of the country. The recommendations evolve around strengthening the rule of law and judicial independence; security sector reform and strengthening accountability; combatting corruption and fighting human rights violations. The recommendations also consider the resource challenges facing the country, since the majority of the recommendations require will and are not premised on the availability of funds. This ensures the feasibility of the implementation of the recommendations.

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# Introduction

Zimbabwe, as with many other states which house some of the bottom billion citizens of the world suffers from two problems; systemic and endemic levels of corruption and significant challenges related to human rights. As a young democracy, rich in resources, the operating context mirrors a typical state in a vicious cycle of the resource curse, which is exacerbated by i. pervasive polarisation; ii. poor economic performance characterised by the centralised control of resources by a small economic elite and erosion of socio-economic safety nets; iii. Grand corruption instigated by political elites; iv. widespread human rights concerns and targeting of perceived dissenting voices<sup>1</sup>. These 4 critical contextual issues mimic a failed state, especially when one considers the weaknesses of various anti-corruption, human rights and economic institutions.

With such a complex background, it is difficult to attribute corruption to human rights violations and vice versa. This emanates from two challenges that immediately present themselves when exploring these encounters and such linkages. The first challenge is that human rights violations and corruption are inherently difficult to study empirically<sup>2</sup>. The reason for this is that they inhabit a realm of uncertainties, where they manifest in various ways as abstract representations of the horrific and the negative. Secondly, although they are factual and legal categories, their abstract and illusory nature – as well as the controversy and conflict they are embroiled in – make them less effective as analytical categories<sup>3</sup>. The paper is grounded on a complementary analysis of how practices that might be associated with corruption are linked empirically to human rights concerns. The aim is to explore, through empirical triangulations, the interrelatedness of corruption and human rights violations from different angles in what we shall call a ‘cross-sectoral comparison’.

Finally, it is important to remember that corruption, particularly in governance, undermines the social fabric of nations and can have devastating effects on human rights. In Zimbabwe, the impact of systemic corruption, exacerbated by authoritarian governance, has escalated to a point where it has become normal; in particular, the notion of corruption and human rights separately, are considered political discussions<sup>4</sup>, and hence viewed negatively as unpatriotic. This background is important, mainly because it affects the amount of information in the public domain relating to the subject under discussion, blurring the cause-effect relationship between the two factors. The audience of this policy paper is therefore encouraged to look at the evidence from a neutral standpoint.

## Background

### 1. Is Corruption a Problem in Zimbabwe?

Corruption in Zimbabwe is systemic and endemic, affecting all levels of government and public life. Corruption's entrenchment has led to a nationwide integrity deficit, normalising corrupt practices. Over the past decade, the country has attained low scores on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI), to the extent that some national documents such as the National Development Strategy (NDS-1) acknowledge that corruption is a major factor undermining the country's development.

#### Legal and policy framework<sup>5</sup>

Zimbabwe's legal framework to combat corruption encompasses a range of laws, institutions, and constitutional provisions designed to promote transparency and accountability. Central to this framework is the Constitution of Zimbabwe, adopted in 2013, which lays the groundwork for the rule of law and human rights protection. Key legislation includes the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act [Chapter 9:23], which criminalises various corrupt practices, and the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act, which ensures accountability in the management of public funds. The Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), established under the Constitution, plays a crucial role in investigating and preventing corruption across both public and private sectors. Furthermore, the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDPA) Act aims to enhance transparency in government procurement contracts. Zimbabwe is also a signatory to international agreements like the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), reinforcing its commitment to global anti-corruption standards. Given the foregoing, the country has the basic legal and policy framework to combat corruption. However, there are still some policy gaps, whilst full implementation of some provisions remains a cause for concern.

1 MD Lewanika - (2019) ZANU- PP's strategies in Zimbabwe available at [http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/4142/1/Lewanika\\_Campaigning-%20coercion-clientelism.pdf](http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/4142/1/Lewanika_Campaigning-%20coercion-clientelism.pdf); retrieved 29 October 2024  
2 Heywood, P. M. (2015). "Rethinking corruption: Hocus pocus, or reform imperative?" *Journal of Democracy*, 26(3), 69-83.  
3 Wood, R. M., & Gibney, M. (2010). "The Political Terror Scale (PTS): A re-introduction and comparison with CIRI." *Human Rights Quarterly*, 32(2), 367-400.  
4 Cingranelli, D. L., & Richards, D. L. (1999). "Measuring the impact of economic sanctions on human rights." *Social Science Quarterly*, 80(4), 687-701.  
5 For a detailed review- See TI-Z policy Policy Brief Series Volume 4 Issue 1 2024



## Manifestations of corruption from a human rights perspective<sup>6</sup>

**Political Patronage** - The political leadership of the country is supported and reinforced through a network of political alliances, allocating state resources to supporters while creating challenges for those with differing views. Corruption in the allocation of government contracts, and agricultural inputs is therefore common. Issues of concern include the politicisation of food and agricultural aid, especially at a time when the country is grappling with the socio-economic impacts of the Cyclone El Nino-induced drought.

**Mismanagement of Natural Resources** - The country is rich in natural resources, including diamonds, gold, and platinum. However, the exploitation of these resources has been marked by widespread corruption, including smuggling, embezzlement, and illicit financial flows (IFFs). The Marange diamond fields, for example, have been a site of large-scale corruption, with revenues allegedly misappropriated by political elites. Human rights violations in the extractive industry, result from the activities of politically exposed persons (PEPs).

**Bribery and Extortion** - Public service delivery has been impacted by bribery and extortion. Citizens are frequently required to pay bribes for basic services, such as obtaining a driver's license, accessing healthcare, or protection from the police to name a few. This affects citizen's enjoyment of their social and economic rights, including the right to identity.

**Weak Accountability Mechanisms:** At the heart of the country's challenges are political interference, lack of independence, and inadequate resources experienced by national anticorruption institutions, which prevents them from holding corrupt individuals accountable, as well as limiting the equitable distribution of resources.

## 2. Reflections on the Status Quo with Human Rights in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has been cited by various authoritative bodies as experiencing challenges with guaranteeing citizens their human rights. The human rights situation fluctuates in intensity mainly depending on the electoral cycle and area of interest to elites. Human rights violations take the form of systematic crackdowns on opposition party supporters, civil society organisations (CSOs), perceived political opponents and citizens at large. In some instances, the operating environment degenerates to a virtual state of emergency, based on the type and magnitude of violence against citizens and other actors. These developments have the potential for further deterioration if the situation is not addressed carefully and with a strong commitment to upholding the Constitution.

### Legal and policy framework

Zimbabwe is a signatory to several international human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights among other critical frameworks. Domestically, Chapter 4 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe<sup>7</sup>, adopted in 2013, guarantees a broad range of human rights and establishes mechanisms for accountability, such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA). However, despite these legal frameworks, enforcement remains a significant challenge. Constitutional provisions are often ignored or selectively applied, and the judiciary has been accused of bias, particularly in politically sensitive cases.

### Manifestations of human rights violations from a corruption perspective

- **Social and Economic Rights** - Zimbabweans continue to suffer from inadequate access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and clean water. The institutions charged with delivering on these rights such as local authorities, public utilities, and public health facilities to name a few. High levels of poverty, hyperinflation, and unemployment have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the country. One of the reasons preventing these institutions from delivering on citizens' social and economic rights is corruption. Local media reports and the Auditor-General's 2023 report reveal that some local authorities in Zimbabwe struggle to deliver services due to corruption and incompetence. This impacts youth significantly, restricting their access to essential services like healthcare, education, and employment-supporting infrastructure.
- **Political Repression** - Opposition parties, civil society activists, and journalists face intimidation, arrest, and violence. The political repression is sometimes linked to political forms of corruption such as voter suppression, and allegations of fraud.
- **Suppression of Freedom of Expression** - The government controls major media outlets, and restrictive laws such as the Maintenance of Peace and Order Act (MOPA) limit freedom of expression. Independent media and human rights defenders face harassment, surveillance, and legal threats. Freedom of expression and access to information are intertwined, because both are necessary for fostering an informed and engaged society. Freedom of expression allows individuals to share ideas, opinions, and information without fear, while access to information ensures that people have the knowledge they need to make informed decisions, participate meaningfully in public life and ultimately hold duty bearers to account.

<sup>6</sup> African Commission on Human Rights (2001). Case of the Social and Economic rights Action Center for Economic and Social Rights v. Nigeria. See Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013 available at <https://www.veritaszim.net/node/6427>

<sup>7</sup>

# Drivers of Corruption and Human Rights in Zimbabwe

At this stage, it is important to elaborate on the factors that fuel the persistence of human rights violations and corruption in Zimbabwe. Independently and in unison, some critical drivers push the persistence of human rights and corruption. It is vital to identify these drivers as the first step to come up with practical and sustainable solutions.

## Political Instability and Authoritarianism

The political environment in Zimbabwe has long been characterised by authoritarian tendencies, limiting the space for meaningful political competition and oversight.

## Economic Decline

Decades of economic mismanagement, compounded by hyperinflation, high unemployment, and an unstable currency, have created conditions ripe for corruption, and therefore human rights abuses. The economic crisis has driven many Zimbabweans into poverty, making them more vulnerable to exploitation.

## Weak Institutions

While Zimbabwe has institutions tasked with upholding human rights and combating corruption, these bodies are often underfunded, lack independence, or are undermined by political interference.

## Lack of Political Will

Genuine reform in both the human rights and anti-corruption spheres requires political will, which has been lacking. The ruling elites have benefited from the status quo and have little incentive to implement meaningful change.

# Drawing the Nexus Between Human Rights and Corruption<sup>8</sup>

## Civil and political rights

The relationship between corruption and civil and political rights in Zimbabwe is significant and conspicuous. Appreciating these rights is essential, especially considering the country's historical context, status quo, and apparent ongoing challenges. Civil and political rights are at the core of the foundation of democracy. This being so, they necessitate citizens to express their opinions, participate in the political process and facilitate transparency and accountability of those at the helm of power. Further, these rights shield individuals from government overreach and the mismanagement of power. It must also be noted that social change and equality, are realised through civil and political rights by affording equal access to political participation and legal protections<sup>9</sup>. Respecting these rights creates a conducive environment for economic growth. Potential investors are most likely to find it more lucrative to invest in countries that protect individual rights and uphold the doctrine of the rule of law. More so, these rights enhances how a country is viewed on the global stage. This can strongly impact international relations and reputation<sup>10</sup>. Corruption can play a significantly large role in the stifling and disregard of these crucial rights.

8 3.Musanzikwa, M., 2013, 'Public procurement system challenges in developing countries: The case of Zimbabwe', *International Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Sciences* 1(2), 119-127. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijefm.20130102.18>

9 Davis, Kevin E. (2019). Corruption as a Violation of International Human Rights: A Reply to Anne Peters. *European Journal of International Law*, vol. 29, issue 4 (November), pp. 1289-1296.

10 Gathii, James Thuo (2009). Defining the Relationship between Human Rights and Corruption. *Journal of International Law*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 125-202.



1. **Elections and corruption** – The integrity of elections in Zimbabwe has been a concern not only nationally but internationally as well. It has become the norm for the election process to be stained by irregularities, corruption, intimidation of voters and opposition parties, allegations of using state resources to finance campaigns, harassment and violence<sup>11</sup>. This manipulation has effectively compromised the democratic process and facilitated rule without accountability. During the 2023 elections, it was reported and alleged that corruption heavily influenced the process. State funds are said to have been channelled towards systematic abductions, the setting up of infrastructure that aids violence and manipulation of the process. Of particular interest was the role of the Forever Associates of Zimbabwe Trust (FAZ), a shadowy organization linked to the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) mainly to campaign for the ruling party and its presidential candidate. This organization quickly aligned itself with the ruling party and took over the party's primary elections, in lieu of the long-ruling institution's commissariat and other relevant organs. It also emerged that the FAZ had been subsumed by the CIO and was allocated millions in mysterious funding. There have been allegations of these funds being from the state. FAZ played a significant role in the 2023 election through dirty tactics such as intimidation of voters, assault in some cases and disruption of peace at polling stations<sup>12</sup>. All this affecting the process of being free and fair. This facilitated voter suppression and can arguably point to possible election manipulation. Corruption can work as a tool towards stifling democracy and elections can be used to do so. The people of Zimbabwe have a constitutionally protected right, as per section 67, to free and fair elections and to make political choices freely. However, corruption being the cancer it is, can spread like wildfire and disregard such constitutionally afforded rights and freedoms as was done in the 2023 elections<sup>13</sup>.
  
2. **Freedom of assembly, association and speech** – Corruption has directly affected the realisation of the rights to freedom of assembly, association and speech. In Zimbabwe, dissent is met with heavy repression, thus, creating a closed and tense environment. The rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly continue to be threatened. Alleged corruption within the government and judiciary has enabled selective enforcement of laws against dissenting voices. For instance, the arrests and prolonged detention of activists and opposition party members such as Hopewell Chin'ono, Jacob Ngarivhume, Job Sikhala and Namatai Kwekweza, illuminate the rot corruption breathes<sup>14</sup>. It can be said that these arrests were meticulously thought-out strategies to discourage speaking out against human rights violations, gatherings/protests against corruption and highlighting conspicuous flaws in the government's rule. Tied closely to the aforementioned, corruption within the judicial system completely disregards access to justice and the principle of equality before the law. Politically motivated cases which involve opposition party members, usually tend to share similar characteristics. Often, there is violence, torture, arbitrary arrests, delayed bail or denial of it and prolonged detention. Such trends raise questions concerning judicial independence which should never be questioned. The judicial process should never be misused, as this affects confidence in the judicial system and hinders justice<sup>15</sup>.
  
3. **Personal security and right to personal dignity** – The corruption in Zimbabwe has gravely hindered the rights to personal security and dignity from being realised and guarded. The misuse of public funds and the abuse of public offices have opened a Pandora's box. With a culture of heavy corruption being embedded in the country's DNA, this has necessitated law enforcement officials (security services personnel and the police) to pact with impunity. Corruption has bred a systematic decay which facilitates the use of excessive force and unorthodox means to stifle dissent. This has led to a plethora of cases relating to the abductions and torture of activists and opposition party members, extra-judicial killings and raids<sup>16</sup>. On the 1st of August 2018, Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) had running battles with citizens who had marched to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Headquarters (ZEC) and the National Elections Command Centre housed at the Rainbow Towers Hotel where election results were being announced. Along the way, the protestors clashed with the police, who prevented them from entering the hotel. As the chaos intensified, soldiers were deployed on citizens and dispersed the protestors with live bullets allegedly fired<sup>17</sup>. Three people lost their lives, and several were injured. In addition, in 2019 eight individuals were killed after the state deployed the army on civilians who were peacefully demonstrating against fuel price hikes. It is extremely disheartening that Zimbabwe has set such a precedent towards dissenting voices against the government. More so, corruption in Zimbabwe has led to the dilapidation of crucial services such as education and healthcare. Many Zimbabweans have no choice but to bear with highly degrading conditions as essential services are unavailable. During the COVID-19 pandemic, several allegations arose concerning funds meant for healthcare being embezzled. Multiple groups of Zimbabweans, especially<sup>18</sup> those outside of urban areas, and those in more poverty-stricken areas, were stripped of their dignity as they failed to access basic healthcare.

11 Sibanda, T. (2012). The ZIMBABWE Situation. Retrieved, 8(6), 2012.

12 Moyo, Z. (2024). Civil Society and the Party-state in Zimbabwe: Democracy, Hegemonies and Polarities. Springer Nature.

13 Duncan, G. (2024). Government and Political Trust: The Quest for Positive Public Administration. Taylor & Francis.

14 Ibid

15 Miller, G. P. (2004). Bad Judges. *Tex L. Rev.*, 83, 431.

16 Sachikonye, L. M. (2011). When a state turns on its citizens: 60 years of institutionalised violence in Zimbabwe. African Books Collective.

17 Ndakaripa, M. (2023). Civil society and peacebuilding in Zimbabwe's 2018 elections. *African Security Review*, 32(3), 294-310.

18 Shumba, K., Nyamaruze, P., Nyamubaya, V. P., & Meyer-Weitz, A. (2020). Politicising the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe: Implications for public health and governance. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 9(1.1), 270-286.

## Socio-economic rights

Socio-economic rights are rights which generally relate to ensuring that individuals have adequate basic needs needed to survive and lead a dignified life<sup>19</sup>. These rights include the right to food, shelter, healthcare, the right to work, having an adequate standard of living and social security.

1. **Economic rights** – The corruption in Zimbabwe profoundly affected citizens' enjoyment of their socio-economic rights. Testimony of this are the myriad cases where there has been gross mismanagement and misuse of state funds which has affected the delivery of services linked to this category of rights. The \$15 billion diamond revenue has already been mentioned above. In 2006 diamond reserves were discovered in the Marange area, leading to robust mining activity<sup>20</sup>. Multiple companies flocked to the area to extract the precious stone, including several state-owned companies. In 2016, it was reported by then-President Robert Mugabe that \$15 billion in revenue from the diamond fields had been misappropriated. The Parliament of Zimbabwe sought to inquire into the allegations but to no avail, as there was a lack of records to trace the money, and there was a possibility of government officials being in cohorts with foreign mining companies in misappropriation amongst other allegations. No doubt, the diversion of the diamond revenues meant that an opportunity cost was experienced in potential allocations to ministries that enhance citizens' realisation of their economic rights.

More recently, in June 2024, it was alleged that some prominent Zimbabwean businessmen violated Section 113 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act regarding the theft of trust property and Section 8(2) of the Money Laundering and Proceeds of Crime Act. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) is alleged to have paid Messrs. Chimombe and Mpofu US\$40 million to supply goats to support underprivileged communities. This was part of the Presidential Goat scheme, which was intended to introduce good genetics, enabling communities to upgrade the quality of their goats. However, it is alleged that the two diverted the funds for personal use, purchasing luxury houses and vehicles instead of delivering the promised goats. This means that the original goals of the goat scheme were never realised in line with the intended objectives.

2. **Right to health** – The right to health in Zimbabwe has been a topical issue for a long time, particularly, the inability of the government of Zimbabwe to afford its citizens this basic human right. The corruption that cripples Zimbabwe has destroyed the health system leaving millions unable to access medical services. There have been notable allegations regarding the annual budgets allocated to the health sector being hijacked by corrupt officials leaving public hospitals without adequate medication, short-staffed, inadequate food for patients and no water. For example, funds channelled towards combating COVID-19 were allegedly embezzled resulting in health front-line workers did not have adequate personal protective equipment (PPE). More so, there were reports of inflated procurement processes regarding vaccinations and PPE. It was alleged that companies with no prior experience were awarded tenders to procure medical necessities during the pandemic. This pointed to the allocation of tenders through personal relations as opposed to merit and experience. Instances such as the aforementioned illuminate the consequences that are brought about by corruption. It can be said that corruption has effectively reduced confidence in the public health institutions in Zimbabwe.
3. **Environmental** – Environmental rights have been completely disregarded due to corruption and greed in Zimbabwe. Communities are suffering from the effects which include environmental degradation, and terrible living standards without benefiting from mining activities being conducted. Mining, though crucial for a country's development, can be terrible for the environment, hence there is a need for balance. This balance is non-existent in Zimbabwe. There have been several allegations concerning the mining deals between the Zimbabwean government and China. Many Chinese companies are conducting mining activities across Zimbabwe.

There have been multiple reports of deals being struck with government officials, giving the Chinese mining rights which have left the environment in a bad state. The Marange fields were victims of extreme environmental degradation such as deforestation and soil erosion. All this occurred to enable a few corrupt individuals to fatten their pockets. In some of these towns, illegal miners are benefiting from the land and perpetuating violence and other gross violations making the environments unsafe. To add to the above, Zimbabwe citizens who live in mining towns do not reap the benefits of their land. They continue to be subjected to extreme poverty because mining interests take precedence over their livelihoods.

19 Liebenberg, S. (2005). The value of human dignity in interpreting socio-economic rights. *South African Journal on human rights*, 21(1), 1-31.  
20 Kusena, B., & Makombe, E. K. (2019). Sustainable Livelihoods and Artisanal Mining in Marange, Zimbabwe, 2006-2016. *Global Environment*, 12(2), 354-374.

4. **Displacements** – Land displacements have become a topical issue in Zimbabwe with thousands being removed from their ancestral land which they have been settled on for generations. There have been reports of corporations displacing citizens from communal land they have been settled on for years in cohorts with corrupt government officials and politically exposed persons (PEPs), without providing them with alternative settlements. These displacements trigger precarious living conditions for Zimbabwean citizens. The displacements have been necessitated through crackdowns on illegal occupation of land. Most families are instructed to evacuate as the land is coined “gazetted land” and belongs to the state. In Zimbabwe, all communal land belongs to the state. However, having allowed Zimbabweans to settle on this land for years and then asking them to arbitrarily evacuate without notice, in some instances, is inhumane.

For instance, in 2023, Two hundred families in Gwanda South were evicted from land they had occupied for 20 years<sup>21</sup>. The said land is alleged to be gazetted state land. The individuals allegedly occupied Enyandeni villages 1-9 in a farm which used to be called Ollingsblock. Cases such as this show the consequences displacements have on the livelihood of Zimbabweans. The Chiadzwa mine displacements are also another concrete example of how corruption harms citizens concerning displacements. It results in the violation of the rights to shelter, food and social security.

## Recommendations

Whilst it is clear that Zimbabwe has a progressive Constitution and supporting legislation aimed at reversing the tide of corruption and mass human rights, this policy paper has identified potential action points that should be considered. It is the position of this paper that addressing the intertwined issues of human rights violations and corruption in Zimbabwe requires a multi-faceted approach. As such, the following recommendations are proposed:

### 1. Strengthening the Rule of Law and Judicial Independence

These recommendations relate to the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs

- Strengthening the independence of the judiciary by reducing political interference in the appointment and dismissal of judges.
- Strengthening the capacity of judicial institutions to handle cases related to human rights violations and corruption impartially.
- Enhance legal protection for whistle-blowers, activists, and journalists who expose human rights abuses and corruption.
- Ratifying and domesticating the United Nations Convention Against Torture and its alternative protocols.

### 2. Security Sector Reform and Strengthening Accountability

This recommendation relates to Parliament and the Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage

- Reform the security sector so that it operates in a non-partisan manner, respecting human rights and the rule of law.
- Demystify human rights for officials in the security sectors, human rights vs patriotism vs regime change. Strengthen the recently established independent complaints mechanisms to investigate and prosecute human rights abuses committed by state security forces.
- Facilitate regular trainings with security sector on human rights, advocate for the overall review of the training content of security and health personnel to include human rights protection.

### 3. Combating Corruption

- The Treasury (MoFED) should increase funding to ZACC ensuring enough resources are available to investigate cases of corruption
- Parliament should amend the Anti-Corruption Commission Act [Chapter 9:22] to strengthen provisions around the independence of the Commission and to provide it with powers to prosecute cases of corruption. This allows the investigation of high-level corruption cases without fear of political reprisals and ensures the challenges identified between ZACC and the Prosecutor General are lessened.
- The Ministry of Mines and Mining Development should ensure greater transparency in the management of natural resources, particularly in the mining sector, by ensuring that mining agreements adopt a business and human rights approach. This will limit cases of corruption and human rights related to the mining sector, which have escalated over the last decade.
- The Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs should lead the ratification and domestication of international anti-corruption treaties and align national legislation with global best practices.

### 4. Human Rights Violations

- The Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage should ensure the protection and protection of citizens including human rights defenders, journalists and civic society leaders from state perpetrated human rights abuses.
- The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare should ensure the provision of a conducive environment for civil society organizations working towards human rights protection to operate freely, without fear of closures and unregulated requirements from District Development Coordinators among other gatekeepers.
  - The Ministry should also establish platforms for regular dialogue between the government, civil society, and international organizations to promote human rights and anti-corruption initiatives.
- Chapter 12 Commissions, as champions of human rights protection in the country should be strengthened to ensure their transparency and independence, in particular, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and the Independent Complaints Mechanism.

## Conclusion

Zimbabwe stands at a critical juncture in its political and economic development. Addressing human rights violations and corruption is crucial for restoring public trust, improving governance, and fostering sustainable development. This policy paper has outlined the key issues, contributing factors, and recommended actions that can lead to meaningful reform. The international community, civil society, and Zimbabwean leaders must work collaboratively to promote accountability, protect human rights, and create a more transparent and inclusive political system.

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