

COVID-19 REALITIES



NANGO newsletter documenting COVID-19 outbreak in Zimbabwe.

High Court orders suspension of accreditation process

High Court judge Justice Happias Zhou on 3 June 2020 ordered the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) to suspend its accreditation process following an urgent application instituted by the Zimbabwe Online Content Creators Trust (ZOCC).

Justice Zhou said the ZMC should also not proceed with implementation of its proposed new categories for accreditation.

In granting the interim relief sought by ZOCC, which was represented by lawyer Chris Mhike of Atherstone and Cook, the court said accreditation may only proceed after completion of ongoing consultations with the applicant (ZOCC) and other relevant stakeholders.

Background

ZOCC filed the urgent chamber application on 25 May 2020, seeking an order for suspension of the ZMC's accreditation process which was set to commence in Harare on 26 May 2020.



In its application, ZOCC said the matter was urgent because the accreditation process by the ZMC was set to proceed on the basis of categories that are not provided for at law.

ZOCC said the ZMC should suspend the accreditation process and also be interdicted from implementing the proposed new accreditation categories.

“Accreditation may proceed after the completion of the ongoing consultations with the applicant (ZOCC) and other relevant stakeholders,” reads ZOCC’s application.

ZOCC said the court’s timely intervention in protecting the media at large and the applicant in particular, would give practical effect to the provisions of the Constitution, namely Section 61’s freedom of the media and Section 62’s access to information.

“Considering the respondent’s determination to go ahead with a flawed accreditation process even after efforts by the industry at resolving the matter amicably, it seems clear now, that the only other remedy that is available to the applicant is the intervention of this honourable court on an urgent basis,” reads part of the application.



IN THIS ISSUE

Forum condemns attacks on its members

Right of peaceful assembly in Southern Africa in the context of COVID-19

“Mshika-shika” back on road amid lockdown order

Helplines

Forum condemns attacks on its members

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (the Forum) is a coalition of 20 human rights organisations operating in the country to advance the cause of human rights.

On 22 May 2020, the Forum delivered a petition to the Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage and the Commissioner-General of Police calling for investigations and decisive action on, among other violations, the abduction and torture of the Honourable Member of Parliament (MP) for Harare West constituency Joanna Mamombe, and two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance youth leaders Cecilia Chimbiri and Netsai Marova. On 4 June 2020, the Minister of Home Affairs delivered a statement in which an update on the investigations of the case was given. In the process, statements were made which compel the Forum to respond on account of its mandate, and the petition it submitted.

The Forum notes with dismay, shock and repugnance the mention of three of its members, by Minister Kazembe Kazembe, in his press statement on 4 June 2020. The statement insinuated that the abductions are fake, and mentioned our three members in a manner meant to create association with the allegations of fake abductions.

Firstly, we categorically state that the Counselling Services Unit (CSU) is not an “opposition aligned NGO” as claimed by the Minister, but an apolitical entity recognised and operating in terms of the laws of Zimbabwe. Secondly, at no point did the abducted trio visit or interact with CSU on the fateful day. The Minister chooses to identify CSU as having offices “in the Kopje area” and “in the vicinity of Fidelity Life Towers”, thus suggesting that the trio must have been at CSU as they “spent

close to 30 minutes” in that area. Several organisations, including government offices, are based in the Kopje area, and we are at a loss as to why the Minister chooses to mention CSU. Further, CSU is not “an appendage” of any institution, and is a member of the Forum in its separate persona.

Our members are not “avid critics of government”, but lawful entities that exist for constitutional causes. Collectively and individually, we have responded to human rights abuses and rendered services to victims, including legal services to many who are wrongfully charged and end up being acquitted in criminal courts. The three torture victims, as with any other citizens of Zimbabwe, are entitled to medical doctors of their choice, and medical doctors have the right to freedom of profession, trade or occupation in terms of section 64 of the Constitution. This includes the right to treat the trio.

Our members have worked ceaselessly, including lending their expertise, in aid to the government-led fight against COVID-19. The mentioned CSOs in the Minister’s statement are long-standing, bona fide civil society organisations whose work speak for itself. With our members mentioned by name, we put on record our concerns for their safety and welfare, and it is our hope that these institutions and their personnel will remain untouched and unharmed. In a separate statement by ZANU-PF Acting Spokesperson Patrick Chinamasa on 4 June 2020, journalist Hopewell Chin’ono was also mentioned by name as a “false news peddler” and “detractor” allegedly targeting the first family. Our long memory and suffering reminds us that in the past, when individuals and institutions are named by high ranking government and ruling party officials as perceived adversaries, verbal and physical vilification follows closely behind.



Source: iHarare

The Forum is concerned with what appears to be non- exhaustive investigations into the abduction and torture of 3 leaders of MDC-A , leading to a statement meant to divert attention.

The persistent and ceaseless attacks on CSOs leaders, both through skulduggery approaches and persecution by prosecution are well-documented tactics in Zimbabwe. This flies in the face of rhetoric on the new dispensation. The State and its functionaries should desist from perceiving CSOs as adversaries, but as partners in the quest for good governance, rule of law, protection of human rights, and the welfare of the Zimbabwean people.

Finally, we register our concern over the State's attitude towards the case of the abduction and torture that was the subject of the press statement. The Forum is concerned with what appears to be non- exhaustive investigations, leading to a statement meant to divert attention. We note earlier statements by senior government and ruling party officials, that pre-emptively characterised the abductions as fake, and as having all the hallmarks of "other fake abductions". We note, for instance, that the Minister's statement fails to address the critical question of the conflicting statements issued by the police in the first two days of the abductions, including the confirmation by Police Spokesperson Assistant Commissioner Paul Nyathi of the arrest of the trio.

We invite the government to release the investigative report to the public, so that all concerned can dissect the report and make sense of what transpired in the investigators' view. This is important because abductions have become a standing practice in Zimbabwe, and it is important for citizens to know the truth behind this.

We have already seen the charging and arrest of the victims, and following these utterances by the government, it will not be surprising to witness further charges for "faking abductions" levelled against the victims in the following days – including those who have worked to assist the victims.

It is high time government stops having imaginary enemies, engaging in diversionary tactics, and delivers on its constitutional duty to ensure the safety, security and welfare of its citizens. When all around – the international community, CSOs, citizens - become enemies, it is time for self-examination. As the Forum, we remain committed to the cause of human rights per contracted in our Constitution and regional and international legal instruments, and to the cause of justice and peace.

(AI- Z), (CCJP- Z), (CIVNET), (CSU), (GALZ), (JC), (LRF), (MISA), (MM), (RAU), (TI- Z), (VERITAS), (WOZA), (ZACRO), (ZADHR), (ZIMCET), (ZIMRIGHTS), (ZLHR), (ZPP), (ZWLA)

Right of peaceful assembly in Southern Africa in the context of COVID-19

Recently, the World Health Organisation announced that COVID-19 will be with us for a long time. Its outbreak has already changed people's lives in myriad ways and continues to pose unprecedented challenges on the enjoyment of human rights.

Measures adopted by States to contain and manage the spread of COVID-19 have resulted in a proliferation of varying restrictions that affect the exercise of fundamental freedoms and human rights. Many States have adopted emergency measures including lockdowns, curfews and travel bans. Restrictions on movement and gatherings have meant that people cannot physically meet to collectively express themselves through non-violent gatherings including demonstrations, meetings, processions, strikes and rallies.

The impact of these restrictive measures on people's livelihoods coupled with cases of excessive use of force by law enforcement personnel has resulted in tensions and limitations of access to key services. There have been protests against COVID-19 measures that are likely to increase as people's livelihoods continue to be negatively impacted by COVID-19 restrictive measures amidst a climate of uncertainty regarding their temporal nature.

Furthermore, a number of countries in the region are scheduled to hold elections amid regulations that limit assembly. While restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly based on public health concerns are justified, if they, inter alia, meet the requirements of necessity and proportionality, there is also a risk that the public health emergency presented by COVID-19 could infringe on the rights of individuals to voice their grievances through peaceful assemblies. This includes clamping down on demands for accountability, improved social service delivery and expanding democratic space. Nevertheless, the holding of public gatherings and protests in the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly in the context of COVID-19 requires that individuals adhere to health protocols to prevent its spread.

Therefore, the offline exercise of the right to peaceful assembly in the context of COVID-19 requires a delicate balancing act between the rights of those that seek to benefit from it and the obligations of States to protect people from a health hazard.

At the same time, COVID-19 is presenting new opportunities to assemble online, but the limits and opportunities are still being defined. Furthermore, the limited access to the internet, including the cost of internet data in some countries, risks excluding those living in poverty.



Welfare of the youth and operations of CSOs during national lockdown

The National Association of Youth Organizations (NAYO Africa) is an umbrella body for youth organizations working in Zimbabwe. Its vision is to see a repositioned, redefined and enhanced role of youth in community, national, regional and international developmental processes. Its work seeks to redress the challenges that youth are facing and contribute towards their active participation in developmental processes through coordination, advocacy, mobilization, capacity building and information sharing initiatives.

Perturbed by the inaction/failure of the Government of Zimbabwe in establishing requisite social protection programmes that cater for the needs and welfare of the most vulnerable such as children, persons with disabilities, women and youth among others; the worsening economic situation which has heightened household poverty and the increasing arrests of youth political activists;

Noting with concern the indefinite extension of the National Lockdown, the classification of most Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as 'non-essential services' despite the fundamental roles that CSOs (Nairobi Outcome Document, 2016) play especially in this unprecedented fight against COVID-19; as independent development partners in poverty reduction, tackling inequality and progress towards Agenda 2030 and 2063 respectively and the lack of clear pathways on the resumption of normal economic activity within the country;

We thus make an urgent call and plea to the Government of Zimbabwe and its relevant Ministries to consider undertaking the following as part of measures to ameliorate living conditions and the

operating environment:



- The Government of Zimbabwe should increase financial support earmarked for youth associations and enterprises under the Youth Relief Fund as the current packages of ZWL \$5,000 and ZWL\$3,000 are neither sufficient to assist Youth in coming up with COVID 19 related interventions nor addressing issues related to their viability post COVID-19. However, the current efforts by the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation in conjunction with the Zimbabwe Youth Council (ZYC) to seek input from youth on the efficacy and accessibility of the Fund are commendable;
- The Government of Zimbabwe as part of its measures of relaxing the National Lockdown should consider CSOs as part of essential services given the important services they provide by way of complimenting Government efforts towards poverty reduction, addressing inequalities, ensuring access to services by all and as an interlocutor between the Government and citizens;
- The Government of Zimbabwe should establish a multi-stakeholder platform inclusive of civil

society actors that compliments current efforts of responding to COVID-19 with a broader mandate which seeks to address, among other aspects, social welfare of citizens especially for the most vulnerable groups, access to services for key populations and ensuring progress in the realization of Agenda 2030 and 2063 all which remain key in the development trajectory of Zimbabwe; and

The Government of Zimbabwe in liaison with non-state actors including the informal sector, should engage in a consultative process with heads of sectors on the resumption of economic activity setting clear pathways which allow for sufficient preparations and inclusive participation of the various sectors contributing towards economic growth.



- * BEFORE PUTTING ON A MASK, CLEAN HANDS WITH ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUB OR SOAP AND WATER.
- * COVER MOUTH AND NOSE WITH MASK AND MAKE SURE THERE ARE NO GAPS BETWEEN YOUR FACE AND THE MASK.
- * AVOID TOUCHING THE MASK WHILE USING IT; IF YOU DO, CLEAN YOUR HANDS WITH ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUB OR SOAP AND WATER.
- * REPLACE THE MASK WITH A NEW ONE AS SOON AS IT IS DAMP AND DO NOT RE-USE SINGLE-USE MASKS.
- * TO REMOVE THE MASK: REMOVE IT FROM BEHIND (DO NOT TOUCH THE FRONT OF MASK); DISCARD IMMEDIATELY IN A CLOSED BIN; CLEAN HANDS WITH ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUB OR SOAP AND WATER.

***PEOPLE SHOULD NOT SHARE ONE MASK!**

HOW TO WEAR A FACE MASK PROPERLY





Toll-free
08080219

Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. If you wear a mask, then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly.



COVID-19 WORD SEARCH

- Clean
- Contagious
- Coronavirus
- Cough
- COVID
- Fever
- Mask
- Spread
- Symptoms
- Wash

V U J N T D R X J Y X C O J D A X C C U
 Y R H S I O X S O H I V C Z M A C O U Y
 S F C V I Z K T Z K B E S P Y S R T T B
 X M O V Q Y Q R W J G O M I K O Z W T S
 N C O A C O Q A C Z Y U V D N E H K N Z
 J O A T Y S S K E J X P O A R P U I Q J
 W F W A P H Y D W C Y S V E U R F C D I
 C O U G H M O I Z M I I N R A V B N R C
 Y Z F E Z G Y M H B R Y T P N M O R Q P
 F G U Z U D X S W U U M A S A X Q M K X
 P E D D W J A W S U O I G A T N O C L H
 G G V J S Y R Y U Q H G Q W I F X Z O A
 D G B E Z Y B I K S A M I W S J M Z C I
 L L T J R Q K I I T E B K Y N P L I J D
 Q R V R S J Z R F O S W U R A G E D C Z
 N D G Z P R L C M S S P H P I A P K L V
 C C A B J H Q Y S P S V G W S Q K R E Q
 C M I K C C W O J H N K P J C H M R A Y
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 B Z F L C S R E W N D K O R F Q N Y I Z

COVID-19 WASHING YOUR HANDS

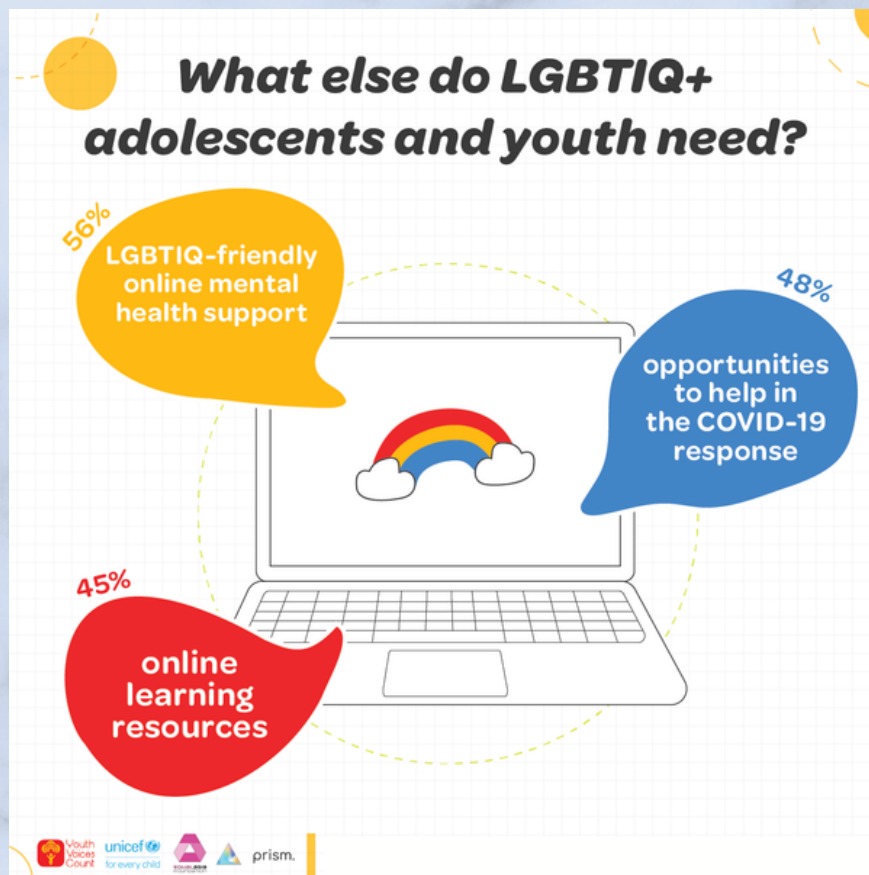
Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Follow these five steps—wet, lather (make bubbles), scrub (rub together), rinse and dry. You can sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.



#TheNewNormal



#TheNewNormal



COVID 19 REALITIES: LGBTIQ+

The COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing lockdown and other state-of-emergency measures in the country have disproportionately impacted the human rights, physical and psychological wellbeing of marginalised communities such as the LGBTIQ+. For example, the continued national lockdown has seen some LGBTIQ youths being forced to remain isolated in homes that are unaccepting of their sexual and gender identities. While, for many youths, who have not yet disclosed their identities, the long-term psychological impact of the lockdown will have detrimental effects in their lives. Youth Voices Count and UNICEF conducted a survey to inform country-level action plans led by UNICEF, noting that UNICEF focuses on supporting adolescents (10-19 year olds) and children, and to proffer recommendations to address health emergencies like this in the future.

“Mshika-shika” back on road amid lockdown order

Pirate commuter operators commonly known as mshika-shika are back on the road plying both local and district routes within the Midlands province amid the national lockdown order.

In the last COVID-19 address by President Emmerson Mnangagwa on 16 May 2020, he announced that Zimbabwe continues on level two of the lockdown for an indefinite period and most players in the transport industry had not been given the green light to resume operations.

“Kombis, Mshika-shika and taxis remain banned. Only ZUPCO contracted buses are allowed to ferry people” he said.

Investigations carried out by the publication revealed that Mshika-shika operators are charging ZWL \$5 for local routes in Gweru town. Gweru to Shurugwi costs ZWL \$30; Gweru to Zvishavane costs USD \$5. Gweru to Kwekwe costs USD \$2 and Shurugwi to Zvishavane ranges between ZWL \$50 to ZWL \$60. Gweru to Mvuma is pegged at USD \$3. Mshika-shika operators charge USD prices equivalent to black market rates.



File photo: An overloaded pirate commuter operator in Harare CBD . Source : ZiMetro News

One Mshika-shika operator, who refused to be named due to fear of criminalisation, said they are back on the road not out of mischief but due to increased poverty levels.

“We know very well that we are defying the lockdown order and in some instances we are not maintaining social distancing but our livelihood depends on ferrying people. If we have to run away from the police or exercise any other measures so that we are able to provide for our families, then this is our chance at survival,” said the operator.

When contacted for comment on how Mshika-shika operators are slipping through the police roadblocks undetected, the Provincial Police Spokesperson, Assistant Inspector Ethel Mkwende referred the matter to the traffic police department which could not be contacted for comment at the time of publication.

The author, Nozipho Rutsate, is currently doing her internship at NANGO Midlands Region and studying for a Master's Degree in Journalism and Media Studies at NUST.

Miriro Children Care Networks, an organization based in Retreat, Waterfalls and receiving support from Tzu Chi Foundation, is distributing food to vulnerable community members with a specific target on over 600 children, the elderly, people persons with disabilities, people living with HIV and other disenfranchised groups.

The feeding program has helped many vulnerable groups, however, Miriro Children Care Networks is appealing for donations in the form of personal protective equipment, hand sanitisers, mealie-meal, salt, cooking oil, fire wood, soup, vegetables and clean water. To aid the feeding program, the organization could benefit immensely if it had its own source of clean water at their premises.

In order to maintain hygienic conditions and curb the spread of the Coronavirus in the communities they serve, Miriro Children Care Networks has identified a need for information on the prevention of COVID-19 and clean and safe water and this could be addressed through drilling of about 30 boreholes to serve different communities. At the same time the organization is advocating for an increase in information dissemination on how communities can prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The summary and photos were provided by Tanaka Mutava, Executive Director of Miriro Children Care Networks.





Need help during the lockdown? Here are suggestions of who you can contact

COVID-19 related information: Toll Free 2019

To know your human rights: Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
24 hour National Hotline +263 772 257 247
Matabeleland/ Midlands +263 773 855 635
Manicaland/ Masvingo +263 773 855 718

To report gender based violence: 24 hour toll free lines
Musasa Project - 08080074
Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association - 08080131
Adult Rape Clinic - 0775 672 770
Shamwari Yemwanasikana Hotline 0772 607 384

To get legal advice: 24 hour toll free legal service helplines
Legal Resources Foundation - 08080402
Women and Law in Southern Africa - 0777 366 952
Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association - 08080131
Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights - 0772 257 247

For psycho social support: 24 hour toll free line for children in distress and COVID-19 information
Childline Zimbabwe - 116
Shanduko Yeupenyu Child Care
1049 Chiremba Road, Roman Catholic Church, Domboramwari, Epworth.
+263734806082 / +263772657424 \ Whatsapp:+263 734 498 816

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