

# ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK

## PRESS STATEMENT

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12 March 2007

### ZESN CONDEMNS POLICE BRUTALITY IN HARARE

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) strongly condemns the fatal police shooting of Gift Tandare, an MDC supporter that took place on Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2007 at a **Save Zimbabwe** prayer gathering that was to be held at Zimbabwe Grounds in Highfield. This comes after the police, under the Public Order and Security Act [Chapter 11:17] (POSA) issued a statement prohibiting the holding of public demonstrations and rallies last month, which the Network condemned as undemocratic.

In a separate incident it is alleged that two more people were shot at the funeral of the deceased Gift Tandare early this morning, which further shows the state's continued disregard of the sanctity of human life.

In a situation where the police are ordinarily mandated to provide security to the citizens by the country's laws, it is shocking to note that our police caused the loss of life of the very citizens they are supposed to protect.

The mere use of live ammunition on unarmed civilians is an unwarranted heavy handedness by the police, which deserves all forms of condemnation. ZESN therefore calls the local justice system, regional and international communities to join hands in holding those responsible for the brutality and gross violation of human rights accountable. ZESN further, urges the police to exercise restraint in dealing with citizens.

ZESN is increasingly worried by the state's blatant disregard of the fundamental freedoms of expression and association in the country, which have closed the democratic space conducive for the holding of free and fair elections. It is the call for democracy that every citizen should take part in determining the destiny of his/her country through either association or expression of their desire.

A society with a closed democratic space often degenerates into civil unrests. It is ZESN's fear that such incidents will create an undesirable antagonistic relationship and deepen polarisation between the state and society.

ZESN therefore re-emphasises its calls upon the regulatory authorities to revoke prohibition orders on rallies, ensure the upholding of human rights and give respect to the country's judiciary system.

ZESN demands the respect for human rights and the opening up of democratic space by allowing **ALL** political actors to market their ideas and policies freely to the citizens, especially in view of the 2008 Presidential elections fever, which is gathering momentum.

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**PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE**

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