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### **IJR Statement on the Zimbabwe Crisis.**

On the 11<sup>th</sup> March civic groups working under the umbrella of the church-led Save Zimbabwe Campaign, gathered in Harare to participate in a peaceful prayer meeting on the growing political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe. The response of the police was to disrupt the proceedings and arrest scores of participants.

The Institute of Justice and Reconciliation is deeply concerned at the violence and torture suffered by opposition and civic leaders and activists in Zimbabwe while in detention from 11-13<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

The brutality of the police force towards the detainees and the shooting of MDC activist Gift Tandare must be strongly condemned and the Government of Zimbabwe reminded of its legal and moral responsibilities to the citizens of Zimbabwe.

We note the South African government's expression of concern that the Zimbabwe government should be adhered to. We also hope that such concern will be followed by serious attempts to encourage a national dialogue within Zimbabwe, and a clear strategy to help bring this about.

The people of Zimbabwe are suffering under the rule of a regime that has shown an increasing lack of respect for their rights as citizens, in a rapidly deteriorating economy that daily undermines their dignity as human beings.

Along with other regional and international organisations we call on SADC, the AU and the South African government to work with greater urgency on resolving the tragedy that is unfolding in Zimbabwe.

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