



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

President of Zimbabwe
Mr. Robert G. Mugabe
Office of the President
Private Bag
7700, Causeway, Harare
Zimbabwe

London, 29 April 2010

Dear President Mugabe,

RE: Women and Men of Zimbabwe Arise

The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales is the international human rights arm of the Bar of England and Wales. It is an independent body primarily concerned with the protection of the rights of advocates and judges around the world. It is also concerned with defending the rule of law and internationally recognised legal standards relating to human rights and the right to a fair trial.

The Bar Human Rights Committee (BHRC) is writing to express its serious concerns regarding reports received about the treatment of members of Women and Men of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA).

BHRC has been informed that on 15 April 2010, 70 members of WOZA were arrested by police officers from the Harare Central Police Station while they were participating in a peaceful procession outside the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority. Four hours after being arrested, 66 members were released. However, four members, namely Ms Jennifer Williams, Ms Magodonga Mahlangu, Ms Clara Manjengwa and Ms Celina Madukani, were detained for five nights and only released on 20 April. It is our understanding that no charges were pressed against the four women by the Attorney General's office due to lack of sufficient evidence.

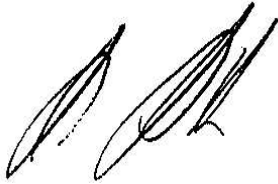
The BHRC calls to the attention of the Zimbabwean Government the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders,¹ which provides that all members of WOZA have the right the right to "promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels", further to Article 1 of the UN Declaration. As such, Zimbabwe has an obligation not to harass or discriminate against human rights defenders, and is also under a positive duty to "take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the...Declaration" (Article 12 of the UN Declaration). Further to this, the Resolution on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Africa² calls upon all Member States to promote and give full effect to the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of human rights defenders.

¹ Adopted by the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/144 during the 53rd session on 8 March 1999.

² Adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights meeting at its 35th Ordinary Session held from 21st May to 4th June 2004 in Banjul, The Gambia.

The BHRC therefore respectfully urge the Zimbabwean authorities to immediately and unconditionally put an end to all acts of harassment and imprisonment of members of WOZA and all human rights defenders in Zimbabwe, and provide legal protection to those who are legitimately exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognised by the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mark Muller', written in a cursive style.

Mark Muller QC
Chairman
Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales

Copies sent to:

- Mr. Khembo Mohadi, co-Minister of Home Affairs
- Mr. Giles Mutsekwa, co-Minister of Home Affairs
- Mr. Justice Johannes Tomana, Attorney-General
- Mark Canning CMG, British Ambassador to Zimbabwe
- Gabriel Mharadze Machinga, Ambassador of Zimbabwe to United Kingdom