



For immediate release

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Comprehensive thematic report on human rights violations in Zimbabwe 1996 – 2006: ARTICLE 19, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, International Bar Association and Redress

A coalition of international human rights organisations have prepared a comprehensive thematic report on human rights violations in Zimbabwe between 1996 to 2006, which is available on ARTICLE 19's website: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/reports/zimbabwe-human-rights-violations.pdf>

The report was submitted as a Shadow Report to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, in response to Zimbabwe lodging their first periodic State party report on the status of human rights protection to the Commission since 1996. Zimbabwe has failed to submit a periodic report for its 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th periodic reporting obligations, and has sought to prepare a combined report for each of these periods, that is 1996 to 2006.

The combined periodic report prepared by Zimbabwe gives a glowing account of Zimbabwe's record on civil and political rights and concludes that, despite financial and human resource constraints, "Zimbabwe has shown commitment to the protection and promotion of the human rights".

The Shadow Report provides a very different view of the status of human rights protection than that presented in Zimbabwe's own submission. Each of the five authors have carefully monitored the human rights situation in Zimbabwe since 1996, through research, testimonies and field work.

The Shadow Report seeks to ensure that all the information gathered by the authors is made available to the Commission to determine the status of human rights violations in Zimbabwe in the last ten years. It addresses the following issues:

- (i) human rights violations during the land ownership reform programme and Operation Murambatsvina ('Operation Drive Out Trash', the forcible clearing of slums across the country);
- (ii) Attacks on the rule of law;
- (iii) Torture and ill treatment;
- (iv) Violation of the rights of freedom of association and assembly; and

- (v) Violations of the right of freedom of expression.

It is to be hoped that the commissioners consider Zimbabwe's combined periodic report objectively and produce concrete recommendations to address the human rights situation in Zimbabwe, a country which continues to operate outside the African Union human rights framework.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

A copy of the periodic report submitted by Zimbabwe to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights is available here: http://www.achpr.org/english/info/news_en.html

For more information: please contact Sophie Redmond, +44 20 7278 9292, sophie@article19.org

ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.