



PRESS RELEASE

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Zimbabwe: Right to Know Violated

It's been more than two weeks since Zimbabweans went to the polls to elect a legislature and President. But instead of the outcome of the elections, Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF party led by President Robert Mugabe has delivered harsh crackdowns and stonewalling to the electorate.

Defeat can be hard to accept, "but at the very least, the people of Zimbabwe have the right to know the result of their vote," says the Executive Director of ARTICLE19, Dr. Agnes Callamard. The government of Zimbabwe is obligated under the International law "to conduct an election and to let the people know those they've chosen to lead them."

ARTICLE19 urges Zimbabwe's government to heed the calls of Zimbabweans, the 2008 first extra-ordinary SADC summit of Heads of State and Government, and the international community "to comply with the rule of law and SADC Principles and Guidelines governing democratic elections."

It is in the interest of Zimbabwe and the southern African region that President Mugabe adheres to electoral procedures as set out in Zimbabwe's electoral law and release the result of the election immediately. "In the event that a run-off is needed, that must also be conducted according to accepted norms and standards." ARTICLE19 strongly urges Zimbabwean authorities to back away from chaos and violence and move towards reason and the rule of law in settling the outcome of this election.

Notes to Editors:

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- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organization that works globally 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.