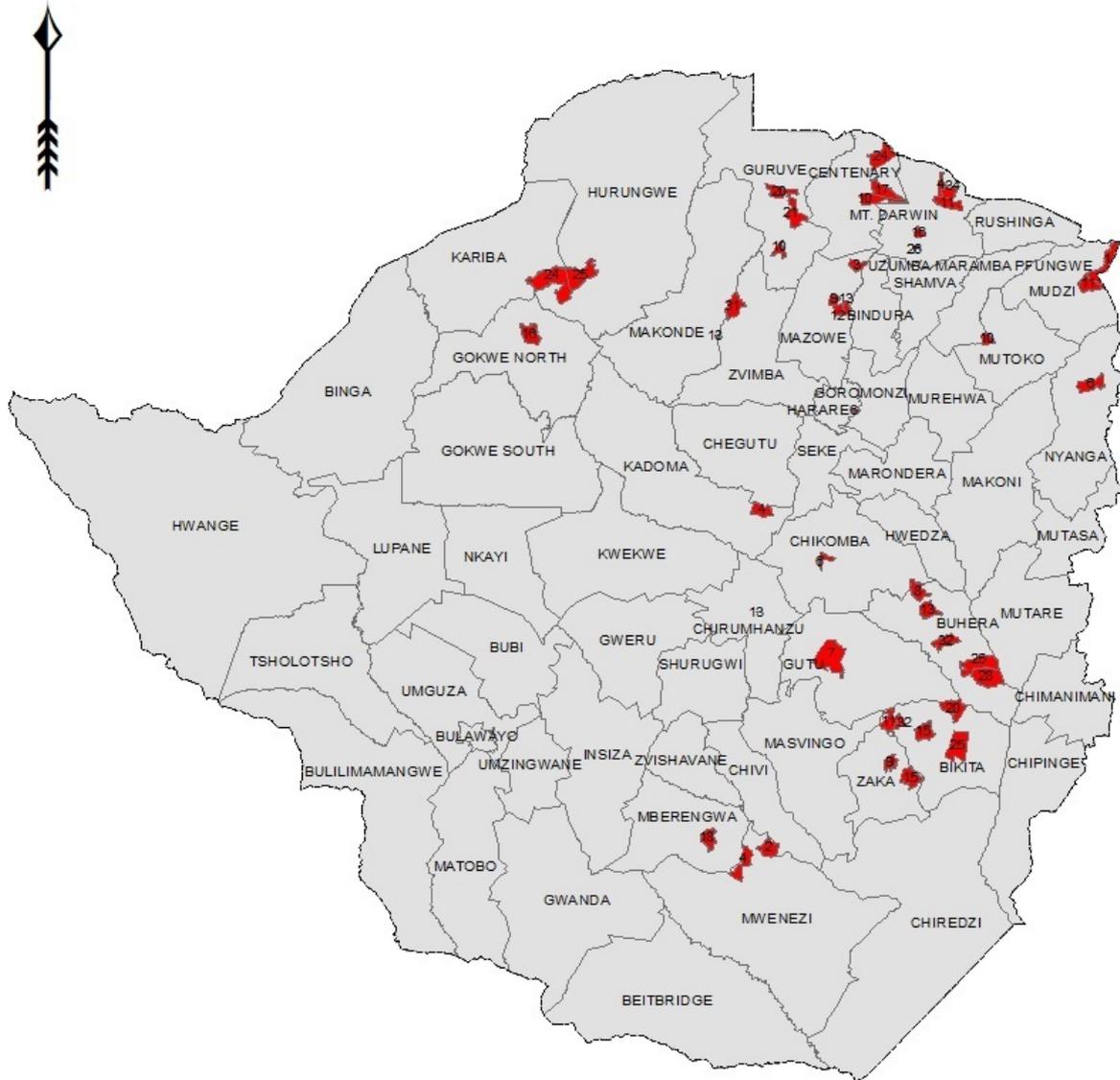


Heal Zimbabwe Environmental Assessment Report [June 17 - July 04]



Legend

- Wards where violations took place
- District

Produced By



Introduction

Heal Zimbabwe observed a decrease in overt violence across the country as compared to 2000 and 2008 political violence. However, there has been a steady increase in cases of intimidation, as elections draw nearer. During the BVR, most intimidation was perpetrated by ZANU PF District Chairpersons who commandeered Village Heads to intimidate people. In the run up to primaries and nominations, intra-party violence rose with violent schisms over positions both in ZANU PF and the MDC Alliance. Threats of the military intervening in the event that MDC Alliance wins the July 30 polls have taken the centre stage throughout the campaigning period, perpetrated mainly by ZANU PF activists and sustained by local leaders including Village Heads, war veterans and councillors. Partisan food aid distribution and threats of withdrawal of food and agricultural inputs aid have also skyrocketed during campaigns despite the fact that such aid in most instances is government funded. Sporadic incidences of violence have also been recorded from across the country. Worryingly, districts including Bikita, Mount Darwin, Muzarabani, Guruve, Mbire, Mazowe, Nyanga, Buhera, Mudzi, Mutoko, and Hurungwe have experienced notorious recurring incidences of intimidation..

From June 17 to July 04, the organization recorded 74 incidences, 12 of which included threats of the military intervening to wipe out opposition supporters and 3 of these incidences were directly perpetrated by people with military background. About 63.7% of the total perpetrators were ZANU PF activists and 10% were traditional leaders.

Key Players

Men recorded the highest number of human violations as perpetrators with hovering at 83 out of the 85 perpetrators. This is due to the fact that Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society and men have congested party positions especially on the positions of District Chairperson. Heal Zimbabwe also recorded 3 incidences being perpetrated and sustained by war veterans and military personnel (retired/active). A total of 8 serving Councillors and a Member of Parliament were implicated in our June reports. In all the 74 reports recorded, the military (intervening against opposition winner and supporters), as a threat or issued by people who served or serve in the military amount to 12 counts. One of the war veterans in Buhera explicitly stated that, "as war veterans, we will wage a war if Nelson Chamisa wins this election." A total of 5 ZANU PF Parliamentary candidates also committed some of the violations recorded in this period. 1 independent Parliamentary candidate was also implicated in defacing campaign material. One Council candidate from the Alliance was also reported intimidating independent candidates and their supporters in Mazowe stating that MDC Alliance will not allow independent candidates to receive food aid when it wins the coming election.

Much of the reports were directed on mass gatherings with only two incidences directed at individuals. Two of the reports were directed on individuals and they were all served in open violence. The cover page shows the distribution of violations across the country, for the period under review.

These players have thrived on the fact that the police and ZEC have not decisively intervened in the incidences. The ZHRC has also been numb on most political incidences and as Heal Zimbabwe we have raised red flags on approximately 70% of these incidences. This has led to the three being fingered as players, to all this matrix.

Recommendations

Heal Zimbabwe recommends that the Election Situation Room:

- Engage all major political parties and iron out the matters
- Engage with ZEC, ZHRC and the ZRP to find ways of assisting one another in effectively servicing their mandates, ahead of the much awaited election
- Facilitate for calls for peace at the local community level mainly in the notoriously recurring constituencies

Conclusion

The ESR was institutionalized at the right time. It must therefore swiftly deal with the rising fears by revisiting outstanding intimidation cases, even from the BVR. Communities that were meant to believe that this year's election will be done using computers and their faces were long captured and are grappling with fear, doubting the security and privacy of their vote, contemplating to cast their votes by themselves or seeking assistance. These were the nature of intimidation and fears that were raised during the BVR and yet failure to address these has long term effects that will discredit the peacefulness, freeness, fairness and credibility of the impending election. The military and traditional leaders' partisan conduct, and action as pillars of sustaining threats and intimidation need to be addressed.