



Press statement

Norton reports a surge in pre-election violence

14 October 2016

As the Norton by-election impends Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) is gravely concerned by the increasing incidences of politically motivated violence in the constituency.

Norton residents acknowledge existence of political violence and rising tensions owing to the call by Minister of Youth Patrick Zhuwao for National Youth Service trained youths to meet in relation to the Norton by-election. Incidents have involved supporters of independent candidate, Temba Mliswa and Ronald Tinashe Chindedza of Zanu PF.

Last weekend eighteen-year-old Natasha Nyikadzino was abducted from her home when the perpetrators failed to locate her mother Ronika Nyikadzino who is on Mliswa's campaign team. Natasha was later released and tells a harrowing story. In another incident a Zanu PF youth, Tafadzwa Chimbuzi, was violently attacked and sustained a deep cut on his tongue. Chimbuzi was admitted at Katanga clinic.

These incidents and the tension in the constituency all point to the need for multi party liaison committees becoming a part of people's lives and not only being put in place towards an election. Long-standing committees become conflict resolution mechanisms.

One church elder, who requested anonymity for fear of victimisation, said only two groups seem to be clashing. "The groups that are fighting know each other because they were once supporters of the same party. We do not condone their behaviour but we are saying involving the Border Gezi youths may not be the solution," he asserted.

ZPP therefore implores all contesting parties to respect the rights of citizens who have just over a week to exercise their constitutional right. The ZPP calls on Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to intervene accordingly in order to curb politically motivated violence in Norton ahead of the by-election on 22 October 2016.

The Norton seat fell vacant when Christopher Mutsvangwa was expelled from Zanu PF.

If you are concerned about acts of violence in your community ZPP encourages you to get in touch with us on Hotline and WhatsApp numbers +263 774 883 406 and +263 774 883 417

Zimbabwe Peace Project

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