

Executive Summary – April 2005

The much anticipated March 31 parliamentary elections have come and gone, although the same cannot be said for the effects of the pre- and post-election events. The events unleashed immediately after the gradual announcement of poll results were mainly retributory in nature, with reports that both the country's major parties, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and Zanu PF took turns in perpetrating human rights violations, as this report will indicate.

Post-election retribution mainly occurred in the form of illegal evictions of perceived and known supporters and members of the MDC by suspected ruling party activists, especially in Manicaland.

Barely a week after the elections, 21 MDC members and supporters were allegedly displaced in Rusape (**Makoni East**) by Zanu PF youths and war veterans on the 2nd of April.

In **Binga**, NN of Zumana village was, on 14 April allegedly assaulted by a group of suspected ruling party activists led by MD, a local Zanu PF Councillor after being accused of having successfully campaigned for the MDC in the March general elections.

The clergy continued to be subjected to threats of expulsion, assault and other forms of political violence. In **Marondera East** for example, on 7 April, Pastor H was reportedly kidnapped and harassed by two Zanu PF youths TM and IG for participating in the elections as a ZESN local observer.

Some members of the country's uniformed forces reportedly continued to be sucked into the vortex of electoral and political violence. It was reported in **Dzivarasekwa** on 6 April that six MDC youths were allegedly harassed and intimidated by three unidentified uniformed police officers for wearing MDC t-shirts. The youths were reportedly reluctant to report the alleged incident fearing further trouble from the police. Also in **Kuwadzana** on April 1, MDC supporters were allegedly harassed and dispersed from celebrating their victory by thirteen uniformed police officers in Kuwadzana 4.

In Chipinge North, fresh farm invasions were reported. On April 2, farm 28 at Chapangayi belonging to a white farmer was invaded by an unnamed Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) Manicaland Provincial Manager allegedly with the help of a group of ZANU PF supporters. It was also reported that on the same day, war veterans, allegedly acting on behalf of Honourable Enock Porusingazi, the newly elected MP for Chipinge South allegedly invaded farm 34 Chipangayi owned by the MP.

Traditional leaders, as reports show, continued to throw themselves into the political fray, in breach of Section 46 of the Traditional Leaders Act. In **Nyanga** for example, on 22 April, headman M reportedly threatened MDC supporters at a 'kangaroo court' with expulsion from the village if they did not apologise to him and Zanu PF leadership for

supporting the MDC. He also threatened to withdraw “BEAM” (a government-sponsored education support scheme) and drought relief assistance to MDC members, so they say.

Also in **Gutu North**, on 1 April, DM, HJ and TM who were local observers during the March poll, were reportedly threatened with unspecified action by the kraal head SM after he failed to find their names in his register of people who had voted. The same kraal head was alleged to have summoned all villagers to a meeting in which he threatened all those who voted at polling stations not designated by Zanu PF with an array of punishments ranging from expulsion to the withdrawal of such potential benefits like rural electrification and access to cheap GMB maize, *inter alia*.

There were several reports of skewed food distribution against known or perceived MDC supporters in most parts of Matabeleland by Grain Marketing Board (GMB) officials working with traditional leaders a trend that continues to manifest itself in most parts of the country.