



W/O 3/93  
Campaigners for Human Rights

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## PRESS STATEMENT

### **In Solidarity with the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference "The March is not Ended"**

16 August 2020

The Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) welcomes the Pastoral Letter issued by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) on 14 August 2020 titled, '*The March is Not Ended.*' The Pastoral Letter echoes the groans of the people of Zimbabwe who are suffering the effects of the current crisis as we have articulated in our many reports.

"The struggle in Zimbabwe," wrote the bishops, "between those who think they have arrived and those on the march has resulted in a multi-layered crisis of the convergence of economic collapse, deepening poverty, food insecurity, corruption and human rights abuses, among other crises in urgent need of resolution."

As the Bishops chronicle the tragic situation in Zimbabwe, they show solidarity with the poor who have no one to defend them in the current situation and call the society to show compassion. The Bishops reminded the government that servant leaders place the interests of their followers ahead of their self-interest and needs. The Pastoral Letter called for national dialogue within the National Convergence Platform (NCP)'s national settlement proposal.

As a grassroots movement of ordinary people who identify with this situation, ZimRights thanks the Catholic Bishops for their courageous and prophetic role in times of crisis in Zimbabwe.

We are however appalled that such a message of peace, solidarity with the poor and a call to dialogue has been met with hate and venom from the government of Zimbabwe. In a statement read by the Minister of Information Monica Mutsvangwa on 15 August 2020, the government chose to attack the bishops calling them 'evil' and 'genocidal'. The response did not address any of the issues raised by the bishops.

We are concerned at the use of hate speech against the bishops, especially the ethnic attack on the person, identity and dignity of the Archbishop of Harare Robert Ndlovu. We condemn this attack. It is unwarranted and unjustifiable.

We call upon the government of Zimbabwe to retract the hate-filled statement and urgently heed the call by the bishops for urgent dialogue before it is too late. Until there is a resolution to the multi-layered crises in our country, the march is indeed not ended.

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Registered as a Welfare Organization in Zimbabwe. W/O 3/93

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