

Students union says 40 beaten, arrested while attending general council meeting

NewZimbabwe by Darlington Gatsi

24th July 2024



SEVERAL students were left nursing serious injuries Wednesday after the Zimbabwe Republic Police disrupted their gathering in Harare.

Members of the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) were holding their general council when riot police officers disrupted the gathering.

During the raid, more than 40 students were reportedly beaten before being taken into police custody.

ZINASU spokesperson Tatenda Kutsirayi told NewZimbabwe.com that some students were released after paying fines, but their leader Emmanuel Sitima is still detained by the police.

“We were having a general council meeting in which all general councillors of ZINASU from across the country attended. The council meeting was disrupted by the Police militantly. Over 45 students were arrested. Most of them were forced to pay fines.

“The national president Sitimah is still detained at Harare Central police station. We have a lot of students who suffered severe injuries, some cracked bones,” said Kutsirayi.

The arrests of ZINASU members follow the detention of several Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) members in June, who were apprehended after holding a meeting at a private residence in Harare.

These actions have sparked outrage from the opposition supporters who accused President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s administration of cracking down on dissenting voices.

Kutsirayi said the arrest of the ZINASU members points to the shrinking of the democratic space in the country.

“It clearly shows that the civic space has been confirmed sealed and completely shattered by the regime in Harare,” he said.

ZRP spokesperson, Commissioner Paul Nyathi said the arrest emanated from the violence that had erupted at the council meeting.

He added that the students of destroying infrastructure at the ZESA training center where the meeting was held.

“The Police were only called in after violence erupted amongst the ZINASU group. The violence led to the destruction of ZESA and State property.

“As a result, Police were called in to come and maintain law and order. This is on record and can be confirmed by ZESA officials.

“The Zimbabwe Republic Police therefore dismisses a statement by human rights lawyers and civic organizations as well as social media posts alleging that it is the Zimbabwe Republic Police which caused the violence,” said Nyathi.

<https://www.newzimbabwe.com/students-union-says-40-beaten-arrested-while-attending-general-council-meeting/>