

Platform for Concerned Citizens (PCC) and the National Steering Committee Towards an NTA.

25 November 2025

Statement about the deteriorating civic space

The Platform for Concerned Citizens (PCC) has been watching the increasing attacks on civil society organisations, students, and citizens in recent months, and notes the apparent lack of concern by the government over these.

The recent bombing of the SAPES Trust Seminar Room is probably the most egregious of these attacks, an attack that has all the hallmarks of domestic terrorism. It is remarkable that there has been no public comment about this by either the government or the security agencies tasked with protecting the state and its citizens. It is of concern that there has been no public statement from either the regional or international community. Any terrorist-type attack should be treated with the greatest urgency as such attacks are a serious threat to public safety. This recent attack follows a previous firebombing of the Pan Afrika Restaurant on 10 August 2023, just ahead of the elections, and with no perpetrator identified and desultory investigations by the state.

The PCC notes also with concern the continued closure of civic spaces and the interference with the constitutionally guaranteed rights to freedom of assembly, association, and speech. These are all well-documented in the reports by the Zimbabwe Peace Project over the past three months, but the PCC wishes to give but four examples: the disruption and de facto banning of press conferences in Harare and Bulawayo on 28 October; the disruption and de facto banning of a social meeting of the Amalgamated Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) on 22 November and the arrest of Emmanuel Mauya (Midlands Provincial Chairman, ARTUZ); the harassment and intimidation of ARTUZ National President, Obert Masaruare; and the abduction and torture of two students from Chinoyi State University.

It seems evident that these violations are responses to the dissent expressed widely around the country to the hugely unpopular proposal to extend the life of the presidency and parliament. This issue apart, we wish to point out that the government has committed itself to governance reforms under the debt relief strategy that requires adherence to constitutionalism, rule of law, and human rights. The example above, and the hundreds of others documented by the Zimbabwe Peace Project show complete disregard of this commitment by the government.

It is the right of every citizen and organisation to disagree with the government as is the case with the response to the so-called 2030 Agenda. It is the right of every citizen or organisation to hold public meetings or press conferences. It is the right of every citizen to be protected against abduction and torture. It is the responsibility of the state under the government to protect all these rights, to investigate all violations no matter who may be potentially responsible, and to prosecute those found to be responsible. Failure to do so is, at best, to fail the duty of care demanded by the constitution, and worse to suggest complicity. The government's legitimacy rests not only on elections, but on its adherence to the constitution, constitutionalism, the rule of law, and the defence of human rights.

Thus, the PCC calls upon the government to investigate the bombing and the abductions and torture, and to desist from interfering with citizens and civil society organisations exercising their constitutionally guaranteed freedoms.

We also point out that there is no objection to an attempt to extend the life of the presidency and parliament so long as there is no violation of the constitution and it is submitted to a national referendum.

Issued on behalf of the NTA Steering Committee,

Released by;

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