
Post-election violence leads to new waves of displacement in Zimbabwe (No. 4)

8 - 14 May 2008

Following the elections in Zimbabwe on 29 March 2009, Mugabe's ZANU-PF party has unleashed a campaign of state-sponsored terror to punish MDC activists and voters who are suspected of having voted for the opposition. The violence is resulting in new waves of internal displacement in Zimbabwe.

Below is a list of reports of new displacement in Zimbabwe from 8 - 14 May 2008.

Information on internal displacement caused by post-election violence in Zimbabwe from 29 March to 24 April 2008 can be found [here](#); information on developments from 25-29 April can be found [here](#); and information on developments from 30 April to 7 May can be found [here](#).

- In a report released on 14 May, the *Enough Project* stated that over 6,700 people had been displaced by post-election violence ([Enough, May 2008](#)).
- According to the General Secretary of the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe, Gertrude Hambira, up to 40,000 farm-workers and their families have fled their homes because of the violence. "They have been attacked by a group of militias wearing army uniforms," said Hambira. "They have been accused of voting for the opposition. Most of them are either on the roadside or sheltering at some farms." Ms Hambira said that people were being targeted in rural areas which voted for the opposition. "This population represents what might be termed the swing vote between the traditional [opposition] MDC strongholds in urban areas and the Zanu-PF strongholds in the rural areas," she said. The army has denied allegations that it is involved in the violence.

Hambira said the government was acting as if it were a crime to back the opposition. "We have had security agents going out to the farms, addressing the farm workers. Some of them saying that we need to discipline you because you voted for the opposition. It's really bad," she told a news conference in Johannesburg. Four hundred workers were hiding in the bush and three are still in hospital after being assaulted, she added. ([BBC, 8 May 2008](#), [Reuters, 8 May 2008](#))

- According to Justice for Agriculture (Jag), 142 out of the remaining 400 white-owned farms in Zimbabwe have been attacked since the 29 March elections. "It's ongoing so they are going to displace more people," said John Worsley-Worswick

,JAG's. He added that attacks on farm workers had escalated in the past week. ([Associated Press, 8 May 2008](#), [Reuters, 8 May 2008](#))

- According to the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, more than 2,700 teachers have fled or have been evicted from classrooms. Teachers, who served as nonpartisan supervisors at polling stations, have been systematically singled out, with 496 questioned by the police, 133 assaulted by thugs and 123 charged with election fraud, according to the Union. Teachers who worked for the opposition also said they had been attacked. ([International Herald Tribune, 8 May 2008](#))
- The Zimbabwean NGO Bulawayo Agenda reported that so-called war veterans and ZANU-PF militia are setting up camps in various parts of rural Matabeleland, as part of a systematic and well-coordinated violent election campaign ahead the run-off in Zimbabwe's presidential elections. Bulawayo Agenda documented a number of specific instances in which people have had to flee:
 - Teachers were reported to have fled the Makhovula area (Lupane), after so-called war veterans and ZANU-PF militia had set up a camp at Ndlovu Secondary School in Ward 15.
 - War Vets and militia have set up base in the Silozwe area of Matopo. A number of people, including the local councillor from the MDC (Tsvangirai) party and members of Matopo Agenda are among several people who have been threatened with death and whose homes have been burnt down. The MDC councillor has fled to Bulawayo. Her relatives, including an elderly woman and several young children were reported to be sleeping in the surrounding mountains at night for fear of attacks.
 - A number of people were reported to have fled the Mashala area into Hwange Town, for fear of ZANU-PF militia and war veterans. They are said to have taken refuge in the offices of the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice.
 - Ten families from the Jambezi area near Victoria Falls were reported to have fled: they have taken refuge at Catholic Churches in Hwange. ([Bulawayo Agenda, 6 May 2008](#))
- On 8 May, the head of a team of regional election observers charged by South African president Thabo Mbeki to investigate claims of violence in Zimbabwe referred to the destruction of homes in the post-election violence. "We have seen it, there are people in hospital who said they have been tortured, you have seen pictures, you have seen pictures of houses that have been destroyed and so on," said Kingsley Mamabolo, the leader of the eight-person team. ([The Zimbabwe Guardian, 8 May 2008](#))

Sources

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