
Post-election violence leads to new waves of displacement in Zimbabwe (No. 5)

15 - 19 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 cases of displacement in Zimbabwe.

Previous updates on displacement caused by post-election violence in Zimbabwe can be found here: [No. \(1\)](#) , [No. \(2\)](#) , [No. \(3\)](#) , and [No. \(4\)](#) .

- The *Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights* reported that on or about 9 May 2008, the police rounded up displaced people who had sought refuge at the Methodist Church in Mufakose. They were forcibly loaded onto trucks and dumped at Mbare Musika, where they were ordered to "go back to where they had come from." ([Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, 15 May 2008](#))
- The *Zimbabwe Peace Project* reported that violence in Gokwe, including the murder on Sunday 11 May of a businessman known as Gomwe who was an MDC supporter, has forced locally accredited election observers and MDC supporters to flee.

The ZPP expressed its concern about the fate of family members of those people who are forced to flee the violence, saying that these relatives are vulnerable and themselves at risk of violence. ([Zimbabwe Peace Project, 14 May 2008](#))

- The daily updates by *Bulawayo Agenda* contain many reports of new instances of displacement:
 - BINDURA, 16 May
Eight Families from Chipadze and some from Chiwaridzo have fled 5km from their homes into the bush after receiving threats from so-called war veterans aligned to ZANU-PF. The families survive by sending individuals to get supplies of food for them. Amongst the affected are one man who has been going to work from the bush and children who have not been going to school.

- BULAWAYO, 16 May
A group of twelve men from Gweru, including six teachers, fled to Bulawayo on 15 May after being threatened by ZANU-PF supporters. The twelve have sought refuge in churches in Bulawayo.

Churches are struggling to cope with the large numbers of victims and to provide for their needs, including warm clothes, food and accommodation for the victims is concerned. Doctors for Human Rights are attending to children and women who need medical attention.

- MBERENGWA, 16 May
Two MDC polling agents have fled their homes after continuous threats by ZANU-PF youths and so-called war veterans aligned to the party. The two ran away after being told to publicly denounce the MDC.
- MBERENGWA, 15 May
Rupange, Mabika and Cheshange Schools in Ward 11 Mapiravana are deserted after teachers were assaulted by so-called war veterans on 14 May. Some of the victims arrived in Gweru on 15 May after fleeing the political violence.
- MBERENGWA WEST, 14 May
Five women and six men arrived in Zvishavane on 14 May after fleeing from Chingechuru Village in Ward 33 under Chief Mudavanhu where so-called war veterans are attacking MDC supporters.
- GOKWE, 14 May
Noel Muguti, the MDC parliamentary candidate for Gokwe Nembudziya, fled his home on 14 May after vicious assaults on opposition party members in the district.
- MATOBO, 13 May
The Silozwe MDC-Tsvangirai ward councillor, Ethel Nyamkuta, is in hiding as she fears that her life is in danger.
- LUPANE, 12 May
At a public meeting organized by Bulawayo Agenda in Lupane on Sunday 11 May, members of the audience expressed their concern that many people would not be able to vote in the run-off election on 27 June, because voters were hiding in constituencies where they could not vote. ([Bulawayo Agenda, 13, 14, 15 and 16 May 2008](#))

- Meanwhile, thousands of Zimbabwean refugees who had fled to South Africa were forced to flee again after a wave of attacks against foreigners hit Johannesburg. The violence first erupted in Alexandra township. By Monday 19 May, police reported that 22 people had been killed. Thousands of people sought

refuge in crowded community centres and police stations. In Reiger Park, a slum area in the city's outlying East Rand, violence again erupted early on Monday morning, with residents forced to flee as their homes were set alight. A volunteer at the Germiston Civic Centre stated that on Sunday night, more than 2,000 people had sought safety in the centre, which is near a squatter camp that was attacked in the East Rand, about 40km from central Johannesburg. In the downtown Cleveland area, where six were reported dead in overnight violence in the early hours of Sunday morning, a police spokeswoman said that at least 300 people were sheltering at the local police station.

More than 1 000 foreigners were being housed at the Alexandra police station. According to Neria Malefetse, spokesperson for the police station, the situation was becoming unbearable since space was limited. "Women and children are sleeping in the hallway and men are sleeping outside in tents. We are dependent on donations to feed the people and to get blankets against the cold." ([Mail and Guardian, 19 May 2008](#))

The Red Cross stated that they had recorded at least 3,000 cases of people across Gauteng who were now destitute. Spokesperson Freedom Ngubeni said most of the foreigners were "scared and terrified". Ngubeni said there was a shortage of food, clothing and blankets. Médecins Sans Frontières said the situation amounted to a humanitarian crisis. ([Mail and Guardian, 19 May 2008](#))

Sources

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- **Zimbabwe Peace Project**, *Information Alert*, 14 May 2008, [www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/5409AA07B966789EC125744E004D1445/\\$file/ZPP_14May2008.doc](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/5409AA07B966789EC125744E004D1445/$file/ZPP_14May2008.doc)