

A GUIDE TO YOUR RIGHTS

The Zimbabwean Bill of Rights



A Guide to Your Rights: The Zimbabwean Bill of Rights

ISBN: 978-1-7764116-7-2

© 2022

Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria and the
KAS Rule of Law Programme for Anglophone Sub
Saran Africa.

Designed by Judava Worx



The Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, is an internationally recognised university-based institution combining academic excellence and effective activism to advance human rights, particularly in Africa. It aims to contribute to advancing human rights, through education, research and advocacy.

www.chr.up.ac.za

Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) is a German Political Foundation that is committed to achieving and maintaining peace, freedom and justice through political education on a national level as well as on an international level with 111 offices worldwide. The KAS Rule of Law Program for Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa based in Nairobi has been actively promoting the rule of law, democracy and human rights in the region since 2006. Strengthening constitutionalism as well as the enforcement of basic human rights enshrined in the constitutions of Sub-Saharan Africa has always been among the main focus of the Program's work.





FOREWORD

We live in a world where we often hear talk about human rights, and may hear about how rights will help people to live lives that are dignified and free. In many countries, including in Zimbabwe, rights are protected in a constitution. This has the potential to give people in Zimbabwe great protection, as they can vindicate their constitutional rights in a range of different ways, including through the courts. Sadly, far too often, people have to struggle to enforce their rights. Sometimes this is the case because they have not been informed about all their rights, and sometimes it might be because they are not sure about what steps they can take to enforce their rights. This booklet is designed to help overcome these obstacles.

This booklet provides an easy-to-use introduction to understand what human rights are, where they come from, and what they mean for the citizens of Zimbabwe. Through this booklet, the Centre for Human Rights (Centre) and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) hope to help every citizen – hope to help you – know your rights and better understand how they protect you against actions that violate rights, whether by the government, by private entities like companies, or by other people, and how you can make these rights real.

The Centre and KAS are committed to supporting people's attempts to live in dignity and freedom. Both the Centre and KAS are convinced that providing people with information and help in understanding how to turn this information to action will help people enforce their rights, and ultimately live with more dignity. We are proud to be able to have worked together on this booklet, and we hope that it proves to be a useful tool in helping people enforce the rights that are protected in their Constitution.

Prof Frans Viljoen
Director
Centre for Human Rights
University of Pretoria

Dr. Stefanie Rothenberger
Director
Rule of Law Program for
Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung



Introduction	1
Constitutions: What are they?	2
The history of Zimbabwe's Constitution	4
What is in the Constitution?	8
Separation of powers and the three arms of government	10
The structure of the court system in Zimbabwe	12
What are rights and what do they mean to you?	15
Introduction to the Declaration of Rights	19
The Declaration of Rights at a glance	20
The Declaration of Rights: A summary	21
Claiming your rights	34
Conclusion	36
Organisations that can help you claim your rights	37

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Everyone in Zimbabwe has rights that protect and help them to live dignified and meaningful lives. These rights are found in the Zimbabwean Constitution.

Zimbabwe has had two constitutions since independence. The first Constitution came into force at independence in 1980, before being replaced in 2013 by a new constitution. The 2013 Constitution was accepted by the Zimbabwean people in a referendum. This marked a significant moment in Zimbabwe's history because it was the first time that the Zimbabwean people chose to change the

Constitution after Independence. The people in charge of writing the new constitution, known as the Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) held nearly 5 000 meetings in all the 1 957 wards in Zimbabwe, and the final proposed Constitution was passed by Zimbabweans through a referendum in March 2013. The 2013 Constitution is important because it places the rights of the people of Zimbabwe at its heart, and it provides the framework for a responsive and honest government, which people in Zimbabwe can hold answerable for its actions. This booklet will tell you how the Declaration of Rights (the chapter in the Constitution that contains human rights) can contribute to a 'new era' in Zimbabwe, and how the Constitution protects you and your community.

Using this booklet

This booklet is intended to provide you with an introduction to the Constitution of Zimbabwe, to tell you what your rights are and what they mean to you. It includes some significant court cases where people have claimed their rights and held others – particularly the government, but also private citizens – to account for their actions.

This booklet only provides you with a summary of the rights in the Declaration of Rights. If you want to read the Constitution as it is written, in full, you can find the full Constitution online by entering "Zimbabwe 2013 Constitution" into a search engine online, or by visiting this website:

https://parlzim.gov.zw/wpcontent/uploads/2021/07/Constitution-of-Zimbabwe-Amendment_No_20_-_14-05-2013.pdf

If you would like to find out more about a particular case that this booklet refers to, you can insert the name of the case into a search engine online, and you should be able to find the case.



(CREDIT: UN OHCHR)

CONSTITUTIONS: WHAT ARE THEY?

Most countries in the world have a constitution. A constitution is, in many countries, the highest law of the land. Every law in a country is governed by a constitution, and every action taken by the government of that country, must be in accordance with that country's constitution. Constitutions tell us what a country's government should do and what structure it should have, about the rights that people in that country have, and about how different government institutions, like the police, the courts, the parliament and the president, should function.



Constitutions often make clear the kind of society that a country wants to be. They reflect problems that a country has had in the past, and its hopes and aspirations for the future. Zimbabwe's Constitution makes clear the commitments that the Zimbabwean people think are important, in the Preamble, a section that comes at the beginning of the Constitution.





We, the people of Zimbabwe,
United in our diversity by our common desire
for freedom, justice and equality, and our
heroic resistance to colonialism, racism and all
forms of domination and oppression,
Exalting and extolling the brave men and
women who sacrificed their lives during the
Chimurenga / Umvukela and national
liberation struggles,
Honouring our forebears and compatriots who
toiled for the progress of our country,
Recognising the need to entrench democracy,
good, transparent and accountable
governance and the rule of law,
Reaffirming our commitment to upholding and
defending fundamental human rights and
freedoms,
Acknowledging the richness of our natural
resources,

Celebrating the vibrancy of our traditions and
cultures,
Determined to overcome all challenges and
obstacles that impede our progress,
Cherishing freedom, equality, peace, justice,
tolerance, prosperity and patriotism in search
of new frontiers under a common destiny,
Acknowledging the supremacy of Almighty God,
in whose hands our future lies,
Resolve by the tenets of this Constitution to
commit ourselves to build a united, just and
prosperous nation, founded on values of
transparency, equality, freedom, fairness,
honesty and the dignity of hard work,
And, imploring the guidance and support of
Almighty God, hereby make this Constitution
and commit ourselves to it as the fundamental
law of our beloved land.



THE HISTORY OF ZIMBABWE'S CONSTITUTION

After the post-election violence of 2008, political parties in Zimbabwe agreed that a new constitution was necessary, and the Zimbabwean Parliament formed a special committee to draft this new constitution. This was not Zimbabwe's first constitution - the first Zimbabwean Constitution was introduced after independence in 1980, after the Lancaster House Agreement, which led to Zimbabwe's internationally recognised independence. This Constitution was changed frequently over the years, and many people thought that it had been changed to benefit people in power. These changes happened without the people of Zimbabwe having a say.



There were several attempts to change the constitution over the years of Zimbabwe's independence. In 2000, a new constitution was proposed, and the Zimbabwean people were allowed to vote on whether to accept it or not. Nearly 55% of Zimbabweans voted not to accept this proposed draft. Many people think that the draft was rejected because it gave too much power to the president.

In 2007, another attempt was made to draft a new constitution, but this was also unpopular, and it was discarded before the Zimbabwean people even got to vote on whether whether to accept it or not. After the 2008 election violence, a new process began, involving a range of political parties and representatives of traditional authorities. This process consulted people from all over Zimbabwe, including political parties and civil society and held public meetings where ordinary Zimbabweans could provide their views. The committee held nearly 5 000 meetings in all of the 1 957 wards in Zimbabwe, and these meetings were attended by more than 700 000 people. The public meetings were an important part of the process, as the new constitution was intended to reflect the thoughts and priorities of all Zimbabweans.

Although this new constitution was meant to have been completed by August 2010, the process of consultation and deliberations delayed the process, and it was only in January 2013 that a final draft of the new constitution was completed. The final draft included a Declaration of Rights, which protects the rights of everyone in Zimbabwe.

Although some people felt that the constitution primarily reflected the views of the political parties, Zimbabweans had the opportunity to decide for themselves, as every eligible voter was allowed to vote in a referendum that was held in March 2013. A majority of eligible voters in the country voted in favour of the proposed constitution. The new Constitution became the foundation of Zimbabwe's legal system. It is intended to protect the human rights of all in the country, and to make sure that the people of Zimbabwe live in an open and democratic society.

“The new Constitution is a positive development with the potential to increase ordinary people’s enjoyment of their basic rights ... Not only is the world watching whether the country has truly turned the corner on this historic day, but millions of people in Zimbabwe hope that this new Constitution will usher in a new political order where human rights are respected and protected.”



**- Noel Kututwa,
in 2013**

Why did the 2013 Constitution represent a 'new era'?

In the past, including before independence, Zimbabwe's legal system were used to benefit the powerful, often at the expense of those who were without power in the country. The 2013 Constitution seeks to change this. The Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe made this clear in 2020, in a case called *Chironga and Another v Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and Others*. The Court stated that "one of the crucial elements of the new constitutional dispensation ushered in by the 2013 Constitution is to make a decisive break from turning a blind eye to constitutional obligations ... public office bearers ignore their constitutional obligations at their own peril." The Constitution is one of the mechanisms that is meant to help transform the Zimbabwean society, to hold the State to account, and to create a society that is fair and in which everyone has the ability to fulfil their potential.

CASE STUDY: THE CONSTITUTION IS THE SUPREME LAW OF THE COUNTRY

No law, practice, custom or conduct of anyone, including the State, can be inconsistent with the Constitution

The 'new era' in Zimbabwe is one where the State can be held to account, and where the Constitution is supreme. This was emphasised in the case of *Mawere v Registrar General and Others*, which was heard by the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe in 2015.

The Constitution states, in section 36, that every person born in Zimbabwe with a Zimbabwean parent, or any of their grandparents was a Zimbabwean citizen by birth or descent, is a Zimbabwean citizen by birth. In this case, the person before the court was born in Zimbabwe in 1960, to Zimbabwean parents. At some point, he acquired South African citizenship. When he tried to get a new Zimbabwean national identity document, because he had lost his, he was told that he would have to renounce his South African citizenship or the document would not be issued. However, because the Constitution says that people like him, born in Zimbabwe to a Zimbabwean parent, automatically have citizenship, this was wrong. The Constitutional Court made clear that no law or action of the State can be against the Constitution. In this case, it meant that the man was automatically considered a Zimbabwean citizen, and that anyone preventing him from exercising his rights as a citizen would be acting unconstitutionally. Any law in Zimbabwe which attempts to prevent people like Mr Mawere from exercising their rights as a citizen would be unconstitutional. This included receiving a national identity document.

This shows that the Constitution has the power to restrict what the State can do, and can prevent Parliament from passing any law that is contrary to the contents of the Constitution.

Although a lot of effort went in to finalising the Constitution, this does not mean that it should never be changed. In fact, the Constitution itself contains a procedure that allows for the Constitution to be amended. This has a lot of different steps, and includes a ninety day notice period of any amendment, the public being given the chance to give their views on the amendment and, after all of this, two thirds of the Parliament and the Senate voting to approve the amendment.



(CREDIT: UN Women Zimbabwe)

WHAT IS IN THE CONSTITUTION?

Everyone, no matter how rich or how influential, has to act in accordance with the Constitution and must respect the rights of others. The Constitution says:

“This Constitution is the supreme law of Zimbabwe and any law, practice, custom or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid to the extent of the inconsistency”.

It also says:

“The obligations imposed by this Constitution are binding on every person, natural or juristic, including the State and all executive, legislative and judicial institutions and agencies of government at every level, and must be fulfilled by them”.

This means that everything that happens in Zimbabwe should be in line with the Constitution, and it means that everyone, including the State, should abide by the Constitution.

The Constitution consists of 18 Chapters. Each chapter deals with a different element of life and governance in Zimbabwe.



(CREDIT: SDI Zimbabwe)

THE ZIMBABWEAN CONSTITUTION: CHAPTERS

- Preamble
- Chapter 1 – Founding Provisions
- Chapter 2 – National Objectives
- Chapter 3 – Citizenship
- Chapter 4 – Declaration of Rights
- Chapter 5 – The Executive
- Chapter 6 – The Legislature
- Chapter 7 – Elections
- Chapter 8 – The Judiciary and the Courts
- Chapter 9 – Principles of Public Administration and Leadership
- Chapter 10 – Civil Service
- Chapter 11 – Security Services
- Chapter 12 – Independent Commissions Supporting Democracy
- Chapter 13 – Institutions to Combat Corruption and Crime
- Chapter 14 – Provincial and Local Government
- Chapter 15 – Traditional Leaders
- Chapter 16 – Agricultural Land
- Chapter 17 – Finance
- Chapter 18 – General and Supplementary Provisions



As you can see from the titles of the different chapters of the Constitution, the Constitution has an impact on all elements of life in Zimbabwe, including making clear the 'National Objectives' of the country, which are found in Chapter 2 of the Constitution. These objectives are designed to help everyone in Zimbabwe lead "prosperous, happy and fulfilling lives" by creating a "sustainable, just, free and democratic society." Everything that is in the Constitution is important, but this booklet will focus on Chapter 4, the Declaration of Rights, which lists and describes the "Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms" that people in Zimbabwe have. If you would like to read any of the other chapters of the Constitution, you can consult the full Constitution.

SEPARATION OF POWERS AND THE THREE ARMS OF GOVERNMENT

Zimbabwe's Constitution recognises that countries often face a problem when one person or one institution has too much power. It is easy for people in such situations to abuse their power, and to undermine the rights of others in that country. When one person or one institution has too much power, it is hard for anyone to stop abuse of such power. One of the ways that the Constitution protects against anyone in government abusing their power, or the government as a whole abusing its power, is by dividing power amongst different branches of government. Each branch of government exercises some powers of the State, simultaneously with the other branches of government. There are three different branches:



The Legislature (Chapter 6 of the Constitution), which consists of members of the Senate and of the House of Assembly, makes the laws and oversees the functioning of the Executive.

The Judiciary (Chapter 8 of the Constitution), which consists of the courts, as well as the judges and magistrates who interpret the laws.

The Executive (Chapter 5 of the Constitution), made up of the cabinet (all of the ministers) and the president, puts the laws into effect and ensures the laws are upheld.

Each of the three branches of government is independent of the others, and each one is as important as the others. They check each other's power - no one person or branch of government can do whatever they want, which means that it is much harder for people to abuse their power. This separation of powers is very important for the protection of rights. As we will see in our case examples, there are often very important reasons to hold people with power to account.

CASE STUDY: SEPARATION OF POWERS HELPS PREVENT THE ABUSE OF POWER

The separation of powers helps ensure the State acts constitutionally

In 2016, Mr Saunyama, as an authority representing the Harare Central Police District, banned all public protests in Central Harare. He was able to do so because section 27 of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) allowed people in specific government positions to ban demonstrations. If the person thought it necessary to prevent public disorder, the ban could be renewed over and over again. This section of POSA was challenged in the Constitutional Court in 2018, in the case of *Democratic Assembly for Restoration and Empowerment and Others v Saunyama and Others*.

The Constitutional Court noted that the right to demonstrate forms part of the foundation of a democratic state. This right is important as it protects people's ability to express their opinions. Rights can be limited, including the right to demonstrate. However, limitations need to be carefully considered. In this case, section 27 of POSA gave too much power to the government to limit the right - it could take away people's right to demonstrate for as long as it wanted. This was unconstitutional. This meant that the law had to be changed, and the powers of the State had to be restricted. The Constitutional Court gave the legislature 6 months to change the law so that it was constitutional, which would require the law to give more protection to the right - for example, one way that the legislature could protect the rights would be by inserting a section that would prevent a ban being renewed. The Constitutional Court allowed the legislature the space to decide the changes it would make.

This case shows how the courts and the Legislature interact in Zimbabwe. Courts make sure that the Constitution is upheld, and guide the people passing law - the Legislature - about what goes against the Constitution. In this case, the Constitutional Court was careful not to make the law itself, and gave the Legislature 6 months to pass a constitutional law.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURT SYSTEM IN ZIMBABWE

The Judiciary plays a vital role in the protection of the rights of people in Zimbabwe. The Judiciary has the obligation to provide justice to everyone in the country. Everyone should be able to have their case considered by a judge or a magistrate who is committed to hearing the matter impartially and to applying the law equally to everyone.

There are five different types of courts in Zimbabwe. Each court has a different role to play in the justice system. Taken together, the courts in the country attempt to ensure that everyone can have their disputes settled quickly and fairly.



(CREDIT: ICJ Zimbabwe)

The court structure

- **Customary Law Courts** are courts presided over by a Chief or a Headman, who can hear any case that involves the application of customary law – the law that is based on customs and practices in Zimbabwe, that form part of people's culture.
- **Magistrates' Courts** hear the majority of cases in Zimbabwe, both criminal and civil, and hear appeals from the Local Courts. There are 56 Magistrates' Courts in Zimbabwe, across the country. There are limits on the matters that a Magistrates' Court can hear, and if a dispute involves a large amount of money or a serious crime, the Magistrates' Court might not be appropriate. The Magistrates' Courts are the appeal courts for appeals against decisions made by the Customary Law Courts.
- **The High Court of Zimbabwe** can hear all criminal and civil cases, as well as appeals from the Magistrates' Court. The High Court has four permanent seats, in Harare, Bulawayo, Masvingo and Mutare, and also has regular hearings (three times a year) in Gweru and Hwange.
- **The Supreme Court** is the highest court of appeal in Zimbabwe for all matters except constitutional matters (which must be heard in the Constitutional Court). When someone receives a decision from the High Court that they think is wrong or unfair, they can appeal to the Supreme Court.
- **The Constitutional Court** is the highest court for all constitutional matters, including the interpretation of any provision of the Constitution and the determination of whether a matter is constitutional or not. Only the Constitutional Court can decide on a dispute relating to the election of the President or Vice President. All decisions of this court are final.

The court structure

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the highest court for every legal matter that doesn't raise a constitutional issue.

Constitutional Court

The Constitutional Court is the highest court for all constitutional matters.

The Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court are the highest courts, but deal with different legal issues.

If a matter is heard in a High Court, it can be appealed to the Supreme Court or, if it involves a constitutional issue, the Constitutional Court.

High Court

If a matter is heard in the Magistrates' Court, it can be appealed to the High Court.

Magistrates' Courts

Many disputes are heard by the judiciary for the first time in the Magistrates' Courts. These courts are often easier to access and are cheaper. Some disputes might start in the High Court.

Many disputes are heard by the judiciary for the first time in the Magistrates' Courts. These courts are often easier to access, and are cheaper. Some disputes might start in the High Court.



Customary Law Courts

Customary Law Courts are local courts, dealing with matters with a cultural basis.

WHAT ARE RIGHTS AND WHAT DO THEY MEAN TO YOU?

The rights of every individual are an important part of the Zimbabwean Constitution. Many of these rights are found in the Declaration of Rights, Chapter 4 of the Constitution.

What is a right?

A right is a 'legal entitlement' – something that someone can claim. Human rights are a particular kind of right. They are rights that every human has, simply because they are human. A human right could include an entitlement to be free from the state interfering in a person's life – for example, by demanding that the state should not violate that person's privacy – or it could be an entitlement to demand something from the state, like access to healthcare.

EXAMPLE

A right can be something that requires the State to do something:

"I have the right to a fair trial"

If someone has a right to a fair trial, it requires the government to provide all of the things that make a legal process fair, which includes the right to be presumed innocent, the right to remain silent, the right to have a trial start reasonably quickly, and to have a legal representative, amongst many other things. The State needs to ensure that all of the requirements are provided to everyone who faces a trial.

Or it may require the State to not do something:

"I have a right not to be tortured"

The State cannot torture anyone and must make sure that no one in the country tortures anyone else.



(CREDIT: KB Mpfu / ILO)

By protecting human rights in a constitution, a country shows its commitment to its people and to being held responsible for its actions. The protection of human rights ensures that individuals and communities in a country have the ability to protect themselves from the actions of others, whether they are threatened by the government or by other people. Every person in Zimbabwe has rights that come from the Constitution. They also have obligations. These obligations include the requirement that everyone respect the rights of others, and that they abide by the constitutional values in their own lives.

The indivisibility of rights

There are a range of different rights in the Declaration of Rights, including, amongst many others, the right to life, the right to privacy and the right to freedom of expression. None of these rights are more important than others. Every right is essential in order for people to be able to live a dignified life – so every right is equally important.

The rights fit together like a puzzle. They rely on each other, otherwise they would not be fully realised. The rights in the Declaration of Rights are designed to create the foundation for everyone in Zimbabwe to live with dignity, and to have all of the freedoms necessary to live lives that are dignified and meaningful, and that they have the opportunity to realise their potential.

Limiting rights

Although the rights in the Declaration of Rights are important, sometimes there are situations when it is impossible to avoid limiting a right. When this happens, Section 86 of the Constitution makes clear that there are a number of things that must be considered. This includes that, when a right is limited, the right must only be limited to the extent that it would be “fair, reasonable, necessary and justifiable in a democratic society”.



Section 86 of the Constitution tells us how to decide whether a limitation is “fair, reasonable, necessary and justifiable”. It requires that a person deciding whether a limitation meets this standard consider the nature of the right, the reason why the right is being limited, and whether it is necessary to limit the right in question in order to achieve the purpose that is sought to be achieved by the limitation – the Constitution allows for limitations of rights if it would be in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, and public health, amongst several other things. It is also necessary to consider whether there was a better way to achieve the purpose that a right was limited for, one that would not limit the right, or would limit it less.



There are some rights that cannot be limited in any situation. These rights include the right to life (although, as will be discussed later in this booklet, the Constitution allows some exceptions noted in the Constitution), the right to human dignity, the right not to be tortured or subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right not to be enslaved or placed in servitude, and the right to a fair trial. This booklet will talk about these rights, and other rights in the Declaration of Rights, later in this booklet.

CASE STUDY: RIGHTS SHOULD ONLY BE LIMITED TO THE MINIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE

Everyone retains rights, even when some elements have to be limited

In the case of *Democratic Assembly for Restoration and Empowerment and Others v Saunyama and Others*, which was discussed earlier, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) was an Act that contained a section that allowed the authorities to ban demonstrations for a month, and this ban could be renewed over and over again. It was claimed that Section 27 was not a fair limitation of the right to demonstrate.

The Constitutional Court noted that this right is extremely important. It allows people to express their opinions. However, even though it is an important right, it can still be limited, but only to the extent that the limitation is fair, necessary, reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society.

In this case, the section 27 of POSA would completely remove the right to protest – and the authorities could remove the right permanently by renewing the ban. This limitation went too far and could not be found to be “fair, reasonable, necessary and justifiable in an open and democratic society.” This meant that Section 27 was unconstitutional. A new law was needed, which would limit the powers of the State to restrict the right to protest. This shows that rights can only be limited, but only when it is absolutely necessary, and that limitations must be carefully crafted in order to be constitutional.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided examples of situations where rights can be limited on the grounds of public health. For example, after the outbreak of COVID-19, people could not assemble or move freely due to public health and safety reasons. One such limitation was that at one stage people could not gather in groups of more than 100. As discussed, when a right is limited like this, it must be clearly determined why it is necessary, fair, reasonable and justifiable for the limitation to occur, and that the limitation only limits rights to the extent that it is absolutely necessary to do so.



(CREDIT: KB Mpofu / ILO)

INTRODUCTION TO THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

The Declaration of Rights tells us about the rights that every person in Zimbabwe has, about how they can claim these rights, and about the situations where the government can limit rights. Because everyone in the country, including the State, is bound by the Declaration of Rights, these rights protect people from having their rights abused by the State and by other people.

Why does Zimbabwe protect human rights?

Amongst the Founding Values and Principles found in Section 3 of the Constitution are “fundamental human rights and freedoms”, “recognition of the inherent dignity and worth of each human being”, “recognition of the equality of all human beings” and “gender equality.” These values and principles are a promise to every person in Zimbabwe: A promise that they should be treated in a manner that respects these values.

By protecting human rights, the Constitution and the Declaration of Rights help people protect their dignity, and their right to be treated fairly and equally. The important position given to “human dignity, equity, social justice, equality and non-discrimination” and the fact that there is a Declaration of Rights in the Constitution shows Zimbabwe’s commitment to its people.

What rights are in the Declaration of Rights?

There are a number of rights in the Declaration of Rights, all of which are designed to make sure that everyone in Zimbabwe has their dignity protected and feels valued as a human being. Some rights require the State to take action and provide people with help, while others are designed to make sure that the State does not interfere with people’s lives.

This is a summarised version of the rights in the Declaration of Rights. To read these rights as they stand in the Constitution, you can find them in the full Constitution:

https://parlzim.gov.zw/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Constitution-of-Zimbabwe-Amendment_No_20_-_14-05-2013.pdf.

or Chapter 4: The Declaration of Rights online:

[https://www.zhrc.org.zw/your-rights/#:~:text=The%20Declaration%20of%20Rights%20\(sometimes,rights%20and%20therefore%20legally%20binding](https://www.zhrc.org.zw/your-rights/#:~:text=The%20Declaration%20of%20Rights%20(sometimes,rights%20and%20therefore%20legally%20binding)

THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- 48 - The right to life
- 49 - The right to personal liberty
- 50 - The rights of arrested and detained persons
- 51 - The right to human dignity
- 52 - The right to personal security
- 53 - Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- 54 - Freedom from slavery or servitude
- 55 - Freedom from forced or compulsory labour
- 56 - Equality and non-discrimination
- 57 - The right to privacy

- 58 - Freedom of assembly and association
- 59 - Freedom to demonstrate and petition
- 60 - Freedom of conscience
- 61 - Freedom of expression and freedom of the media
- 62 - Access to information
- 63 - Language and culture
- 64 - Freedom of profession, trade and occupation
- 65 - Labour rights
- 66 - Freedom of movement and residence.
- 67 - Political rights

- 68 - Right to administrative justice
- 69 - Right to a fair hearing
- 70 - Rights of accused persons
- 71 - Property rights
- 72 - Rights to agricultural land
- 73 - Environmental rights
- 74 - Freedom from arbitrary eviction
- 75 - Right to education
- 76 - Right to healthcare
- 77 - Right to food and water
- 78 - Marriage rights

There are also special protections for particular groups of people contained within the Declaration of Rights:

- 80 - Rights of women
- 81 - Rights of children
- 82 - Rights of the elderly
- 83 - Rights of persons with disabilities
- 84 - Rights of veterans of the liberation struggle



THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS: A SUMMARY

Every number below relates to a section of the Constitution. The Declaration of Rights consists of five parts, each containing a number of sections.

PART TWO

RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

48 – **Life** – Everyone has the right to life, unless they have been sentenced to death in a court. The death penalty cannot be imposed on anyone who committed a crime when they were younger than 21 years old, on someone who is more than 70 years old or on a woman. Abortion is only allowed in particular circumstances, which have to be specified by the law.

49 – **Personal liberty** – Everyone has the right to freedom. This includes preventing people being detained or imprisoned without trial or to having their liberty taken away without a good reason. No one can be imprisoned because they cannot fulfil a contract that they entered into.

50 – **Rights of arrested persons** – If someone is arrested, they must be told why they have been arrested; must be allowed to contact their partner, a relative, a legal practitioner, or another person of their choice; must be allowed to access a legal practitioner or a medical practitioner if they want to, at their own cost; and must be told that they have these rights soon after their arrest. After someone is arrested, they must be told that they have the right to remain silent, and to appear before a court within 48 hours of their arrest, or as quickly as possible. Everyone has the right to challenge their detention in court. If people have not yet been convicted, they have the right to be released until their trial, subject only to restrictions that ensure they attend their trial, do not interfere with witnesses or evidence, and do not commit any other offence. Everyone, including people who have been found guilty and sentenced by a court, has the right to communicate and be visited by their spouse or partner, their relatives, their religious counsellor, their legal practitioner, and their medical practitioner, or by anyone else they want, subject only to limitations imposed by the prison. While being held, a person in detention must, at all times, be held in good conditions and must be treated with dignity. If someone is illegally arrested, they may be able to claim compensation.

51 – **Human dignity** – Every person is valuable and has dignity. They have the right to have this dignity respected by other people.

52 – **Personal security** – Everyone has the right to have their bodily and psychological integrity respected, and this includes being free from having violence inflicted on them by anyone else, including the State; to make their own decisions about reproduction; and not to have scientific experiments conducted on them without their full consent.

53 – **Freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment** – No one can be tortured or treated in a way that is inhuman or degrading.

CASE STUDY: EVEN WHEN BEING PUNISHED, EVERYONE'S DIGNITY MUST BE RESPECTED

Some groups are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, such as women and people in poverty

In 2019, in a case called *State v Chokuramba*, in the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe, a judge had to consider whether it would be constitutional for a child to receive corporal punishment after being found guilty of a crime. The Court held that, unlike in the past, the new Zimbabwean Constitution did not allow for corporal punishment. There are no exceptions to the right not to be tortured or subjected to cruel, inhuman or unusual punishment, and this includes the right to be protected from corporal punishment.

54 – **Slavery and servitude** – No one can be made a slave or kept in enslavement.

55 – **Freedom from forced or compulsory labour** – No one can be forced to perform forced labour.

56 – **Equality** – Everyone has the right to be treated equally, to be protected by, and to benefit from the law equally. Women and men have equal rights and the right to equal opportunities in all areas of life. Some of the ways that people risk being discriminated against are because of their race, colour, tribe, place of birth, ethnic or social origin, language, class, religious belief, political affiliation, opinion, custom, culture, sex, gender, marital status, age, pregnancy, disability, economic or social status, or because they were born in or out of wedlock. If someone is treated unequally because of one of these reasons, then the discrimination is considered to be unfair, unless there is a reasonable and justifiable reason.

CASE STUDY: EVERYONE SHOULD BE TREATED EQUALLY

The Constitution provides special protection to some characteristics that people have, including whether they were born in or out of wedlock

The Constitution makes clear that people should be treated equally. This right includes that no one can be discriminated against on the basis of whether they were born in or out of wedlock. In *Bhila v Master of the High Court and Others*, a man died without a will. He and his wife had four children together. After his death, it was found that he had three more children, born out of wedlock. The three children born out of wedlock claimed that they had the same right to inherit as the children from the marriage, noting that the Constitution, at section 56, prevented them from being discriminated against because they were born out of wedlock. The Court held that all of the children should be treated the same, regardless of whether they were born in or out of wedlock. It would not be fair to discriminate between them, and to prevent any of them from inheriting.

57 – **Privacy** – Everyone has the right to privacy, which includes the right not to be searched, to have their home searched, or to have their possessions taken away. Everyone also has the rights to deny other people permission to enter their premises, to have information about their health kept secret, and to have their personal communications kept secret.

58 – **Freedom of assembly and association** – Every person has the right to choose who they want to spend time with. No one can be forced to join an association or an organisation, or to attend a meeting or gathering.

CASE STUDY: FREEDOM TO CHOOSE IS A VITAL PART OF THE FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

No one can be forced to attend any political rally

A teachers' union was concerned that school children and teachers were being forced to attend political rallies. They claimed that the teachers and the children were given no choice, and that schools were made to be closed on the days of these rallies. The union claimed that this violated a range of rights, including their right to freedom of assembly and association. In *Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe and Another v Zimbabwe African National Union [Patriotic Front] and Another*, the High Court agreed with this, emphasising that no one in the country should be forced to attend any meeting or gathering, and that everyone had to choose whether or not to assemble and associate with others. Anyone forced to attend a political rally had had their rights violated, and the court ordered this to cease immediately. Although this ruling was overturned by the Supreme Court on appeal, the overturning was on different grounds.

59 – **Freedom to demonstrate and petition** – Everybody has the right to demonstrate and to present petitions but must do so peacefully.

CASE STUDY: FREEDOM TO DEMONSTRATE IS VITAL IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Any limitation of the right to demonstrate must be fair, reasonable, necessary and justifiable

In the case of *Democratic Assembly for Restoration and Empowerment and Others v Saunyama*, discussed above, the Constitutional Court made clear that the right to demonstrate was one of the rights that people fought for in the War of Liberation, and was one of the rights that formed part of the foundation of a democratic state. This right is important, and allows people to express their opinions. It can only be limited if it would be “fair, reasonable, necessary and justifiable in a democratic society”. In this case one of the judges, Justice Rita Makarau, remarked that “protests and mass demonstrations remain one of the most vivid ways of the public coming together to express an opinion in support of or in opposition to a position [...] Long after the demonstrations, and long after the faces of the demonstrators are forgotten, the messages and the purposes of the demonstrations remain as a reminder of public outrage at, or condemnation or support of an issue or policy”.



60 – **Freedom of conscience** – Each person has the right to believe what they want to believe, and to practise their beliefs, in public and in private, alone or with others. Parents and guardians of minor children have the right to determine the religious upbringing of their children, but when they do this, they must not undermine the rights that their children have under the Constitution. Any religious community can establish an institution that gives religious instruction.

CASE STUDY: NO ONE CAN BE FORCED TO TAKE AN ACTION THAT VIOLATES THEIR RELIGION

Freedom of conscience means that honestly held beliefs should be respected

In 2020, the Constitutional Court held that school children could not be forced to take a pledge or to salute the national flag. The case of *Sangoni v Minister of Primary and Secondary Education and Others*, centred on a pledge which included the words “I salute the national flag.” All school children in Zimbabwe were made to recite on a daily basis, and Mr Sangoni claimed this violated his children’s right to freedom of education, as the religion of his children and his family placed a prohibition on secular objects being saluted.

The Constitutional Court held that the pledge was unconstitutional because it was compulsory. The Court noted that Mr Sangoni and his children had an honestly held belief that saluting the flag was against their religion. So, while there was nothing intrinsically unconstitutional about the pledge or about the salutation of the flag, if people had an honestly held belief, this had to be respected, and they should not be forced to take the pledge. The Constitutional Court emphasised that freedom of conscience is of vital importance in an open and democratic society, and the State and its representatives must make sure that honestly held beliefs that are in line with the Constitution are respected.



(CREDIT: Milla Deet)

61 – **Freedom of expression and freedom of the media** – Everyone has the right to express themselves freely, and to receive and share information. This includes artistic and academic freedom. The freedom of the press is an important part of the right to freedom of expression, and this includes journalists being able to keep their sources secret. Everyone can establish a broadcasting station, subject only to obtaining a licence from the State. All State-owned media should be allowed to decide what it broadcasts independent of government control, must be impartial, and must allow people to express different opinions. The freedom of expression does not include protection for expression that constitutes propaganda for war, incitement to violence, hate speech, harm to someone’s reputation or dignity, or an unjustifiable breach of a person’s right to privacy.



CASE STUDY: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS IMPORTANT FOR THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

Journalists need to be able to investigate and share information without fear of criminal sanction

In 2014, in the case of *Madanhire v Attorney General*, the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe considered whether the offense of criminal defamation was constitutional.

A defamatory statement is a statement that harms the reputation of someone, and that meets particular legal requirements. When someone is found by a court to have made a defamatory statement, the party whose reputation was injured can claim financial damages and other remedies from the person who made the statement. This means that the defamed person will be able to get justice. The issue in this case was that, in addition to the financial damages that the person might have to pay, the law also allowed for a crime - criminal defamation - which could mean that a person could go to prison for up to 2 years.

It was claimed that the possibility of going to jail would prevent journalists from expressing themselves and from publishing the results of investigations, for fear of going to prison. This would have a negative effect on expression and the flow of information in Zimbabwe. The Constitutional Court held that it was true that criminal defamation would limit the right to freedom of expression. The Court also said that the possibility of going to jail was disproportionate, and that because the person whose reputation was harmed could receive a financial award, criminal defamation was not necessary. This meant that the limitation of the right to expression was not necessary, and so the Constitutional Court declared criminal defamation unconstitutional.

62 – **Access to information** – Every Zimbabwean citizen or permanent resident, including the Zimbabwean media, has the right to information held by the State if that information would help promote public accountability. Every person in Zimbabwe has the right to access information held by anyone in the country, including the State, if that information would help access or protect a right. If someone finds out that the State has information about them that is untrue or incorrect, they have the right to have that information corrected or deleted.

63 – **Culture and language** – Everyone can use the language of their choice, and to participate in whatever cultural life they choose, but only if this is conducted in line with the Constitution.

64 – **Freedom of profession, trade or occupation** – Every person has the right to choose and carry out the profession, trade or occupation of their choice.

65 – **Labour rights** – Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and to be safe at work. This includes the right to be paid fairly, and to have just and equitable conditions at work. Everyone, except members of the security services, can form, join or participate in the activities of a trade union, which might include the right to strike, to sit-in, or to withdraw their labour – although the State might restrict these rights for people in essential services. Women have the right to be paid equally, and have the right to maternity leave, at full pay, for at least three months.

66 – **Freedom of movement and residence** – Every Zimbabwean citizen has the right to enter Zimbabwe and cannot be removed from the country. They also have the right to a passport or another travel document. Everyone who has the right to be in Zimbabwe has the right to go wherever they want and to live anywhere in the country, and to leave if they want to.



(CREDIT: KB Mpofu / ILO)

67 – **Political rights** – Zimbabwean citizens have the right to free and fair elections and to be able to make their political choices freely. Everyone over the age of 18 can vote in elections and referendums, and to stand as a candidate for public office. Zimbabwean citizens have the right to form or join a political party, to campaign for a political party or for a political cause, and to participate in activities that challenge or support the government’s policies. This right can be exercised alone or with other people.

68 – **Administrative justice** – When decisions are made that affect people, the decisions should be made quickly, in accordance with the law, and be fair. If someone’s rights or freedoms are negatively affected by a decision, they must be given written reasons for that decision.

69 – **Fair hearing** – Everyone accused of a crime has the right to a fair and public trial within a reasonable time, before an impartial court. If someone has approached the court to enforce their rights, they also have the right to a speedy, fair and public hearing, within a reasonable time. Everyone has the right to approach the courts to resolve their disputes, and to be represented by a legal practitioner.

70 – **Rights of accused persons** – Everyone accused of an offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, to be informed of the crime they are charged with, and to have enough time to prepare a defence. Everyone accused of a crime also has the right to a legal representative, and to be provided with a lawyer if they cannot afford one and need one to prevent an injustice. They have the right to remain silent, to not testify or incriminate themselves, and to have an interpreter, if their trial takes place in a language that they do not understand. Everyone also has the right to appeal against their conviction.



(CREDIT: George Hodan)

72 - **Rights to agricultural land** - The State may take control of land if that land is required for agriculture, for environmental reasons or for the relocation of people moved for environmental reasons. When this happens, the State does not have to pay compensation. The State can also acquire land for the resettlement of people in a programme of land reform, and when this happens, the State should consider the need to ensure that the people of Zimbabwe reassert their rights to, and ownership of, their land.

73 - **Environmental rights** - Everyone has the right to a clean and healthy environment. This includes the right to have the environment protected by the State, for present and future generations, and this includes preventing pollution, promoting conservation and ensuring that development engages the need for environmental sustainability as well as promoting economic and social development.

74 - **Freedom from arbitrary eviction** - No one can be evicted or can have their home demolished without an order of court permitting the eviction or demolition.



(CREDIT: USAID Zimbabwe)

CASE STUDY: ALL DWELLINGS AND STRUCTURES ARE PROTECTED BY THE CONSTITUTION

People can only be evicted or have their homes demolished after a court has been consulted

The Constitution makes clear that a court order is required whenever someone is going to be evicted from their homes. In *City of Harare v Makungurutse*, a number of people living in Budiro 4 were evicted, and their homes demolished, without the State having approached the courts for permission. Four people in Budiro 4 who had not yet had their homes demolished were worried that the destruction could continue and affect them, and so sought an order from the courts that would emphasise that court permission was required before they could be legally evicted. The Supreme Court of Zimbabwe emphasised that any law that allowed officials to evict people or action by officials to evict people from their homes would be unconstitutional unless they had first approached a court.

This does not mean that no one can be evicted or have their home destroyed. However, a court will consider all of the relevant circumstances, and this will help prevent injustice.

75- **Education** – Every citizen and permanent resident has the right to basic education, at the State's expense. This includes adult education. Independent educational institutions are permitted, but must meet reasonable standards, may have to be registered, and cannot discriminate against people.

CASE STUDY: FREEDOM TO CHOOSE IS A VITAL PART OF THE FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

No one can be forced to attend any political rally

In *Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe and Another v Zimbabwe African National Union [Patriotic Front] and Another*, discussed above, the teachers' union was worried about children being forced to attend political rallies. But it was also concerned that the children's right to education was being violated – on the days of the rallies, the children would miss school. It was claimed that this was a breach of the right to education. The High Court agreed, as being forced to miss school would negatively impact the ability of the children to have an education.

76- **Health care** – Every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has the right to be able to access basic health-care services, and no-one can be refused emergency medical treatment at any health-care institution in the country. The State must take steps to increase the extent to which people can access their health-care rights.

77- **Food and water** – Everyone has the right to clean and safe drinking water and to sufficient food. The State must take steps to increase the extent to which people can access their health-care rights.



78- **Marriage rights** – Everyone who has attained the age of eighteen years has the right to found a family. No one can be forced to marry someone against their will. Adults have the right to marry someone of the opposite sex, provided both agree to be married.

CASE STUDY: CHILDREN – MARRIAGE IS RESERVED FOR PEOPLE OVER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS

Laws regarding marriage, like all other laws, must be in accordance with the Constitution

Zimbabwe had a law that allowed girls under the age of 18 years, but over the age of 16, to get married if they had their parents' consent. The Constitution says that all children – that is, everyone under the age of 18 – must receive equal protection from the law. While the Constitution provides no age limit on marriage rights, the right in Section 78 of the Constitution includes the right for everyone over the age of 18 to found a family. In 2016, in the case of *Mudzuru and Another v Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and Others* the Constitutional Court made clear that the right to found a family, limited to people over the age of 18 years, is intimately linked to the right to marriage, and must be limited to people over the age of 18 years. This interpretation would also meet the international legal obligations that Zimbabwe has undertaken. Accordingly, the Constitution prevented anyone, male or female, from being married if they were under 18. This meant that the law that allowed girls between the ages of 16 and 18 to be married was in conflict with the Constitution. The Constitutional Court made clear that no law can be contrary to the Constitution, and also considered the special protections that the Constitution gives to children, including the protection that every child should be treated equally. This meant boys and girls should be treated the same, and protected from the consequences of child marriage. The Court declared the laws that allowed children to marry could not be upheld in Zimbabwe.



(CREDIT: Ray White)

PART THREE

Elaboration of certain rights

80 – **Rights of women** – All women have the right to be treated with the same dignity as men, including having the same opportunities in political, economic and social activities. This includes the same rights as men for custody and guardianship of children. No laws, customs, traditions or cultural practices can violate the rights of women.

81 – **Rights of children** – Every child – a person under the age of 18 years – has the right to be treated equally, including the right to be heard, to a name and a family name, and, if born in Zimbabwe or a Zimbabwean citizen, to a birth certificate, which they must receive quickly. Each child has the right to be cared for by their family or their parents, or, if removed from their family, to appropriate care. No child should be exploited, made to work, treated badly, neglected, or abused. No child should have to fight in an armed conflict. Children should only be detained if there are no other options and should only be in detention for the shortest possible period of time. In every matter involving a child, the best interests of that child are of the greatest importance.

CASE STUDY: CHILDREN – EVERYONE UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS – RECEIVE SPECIAL PROTECTION

The Constitution gives children enhanced rights

The Constitutional Court emphasised how important it is for the rights of children to be protected in the case of *Kawenda v Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and Others*. A law in Zimbabwe prohibited sexual intercourse for people under the age of 16. However, the Constitution defines a child as everyone under 18 years of age, offering special rights and protections to all in this category. The law excluded all children between the ages of 16 and 18 years from the protection that children under the age of 16 received, and this was inconsistent with the Constitution. The Constitutional Court ordered for this law to be changed, so that all children – meaning everyone under the age of 18 years – were protected.

82 – **Rights of the elderly** – People over seventy years of age have the right to be cared for by their families and by the State, and to receive health care and financial support from State.

83 – **Rights of people with disabilities** – The State must take measures to ensure that people with disabilities are able to realise their full potential, including by taking measures that will help such people to become self-reliant, to live with their families and to participate in a range of activities, to be protected from exploitation and abuse, and to receive medical and other relevant treatments, which might include psychological treatment. People with disabilities should be able to access special facilities for their education, and to receive training from the State where they need it.

84 – **Rights of veterans of the liberation struggle** – All those who fought in the War of Liberation, assisted fighters in the War of Liberation, or who were imprisoned, detained or restricted during the liberation struggle, have the right to be recognised for their contributions to the liberation of Zimbabwe. This might include receiving a pension and being able to access health care.



(CREDIT: Gyan Gurung)

CLAIMING YOUR RIGHTS

The rights in the Declaration of Rights are designed to ensure that everyone in the country is protected against abuse and mistreatment. Any person whose rights are threatened can take action to enforce their rights – or can even take action to protect the rights of others.

There are a range of different ways to ensure that the rights in the Declaration of Rights are protected, but the most common way is to approach the courts. Courts can order the State or anyone to take measures to protect rights, can order compensation, or can order another solution that helps people whose rights and freedoms are threatened or violated. The courts are the ultimate protectors of rights. People can also obtain receive assistance in claiming their rights through other organisations, which can include organisations that are linked to the State and some that are independent.



(CREDIT: USAID Zimbabwe)

There are a number of organisations created by the Constitution, that are linked to the State, that are designed to help ensure rights are protected. These organisations are created by Chapter 12 of the Constitution, which is called titled “Independent Commissions Supporting Democracy.” These institutions include the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, amongst others. It is important to note that the Constitution protects the independence of these organisations. This means that they cannot be controlled by any other government body. The reason that the independence of these bodies is so important is that the various commissions often have to ensure that the government is acting constitutionally. Being independent helps the commissions to meet their obligations, as well as to meet the other aims listed in the Constitution, which includes the aim of entrenching human rights and democracy, and in ensuring transparency and accountability in public institutions.

These bodies are mandated to assist people whose rights are threatened or violated. All of the organisations have a specific focus – for example, the ZHRC can investigate suspected abuses, and has a number of powers which it can exercise to make sure that threats to, or violations of, rights end and that rights are realised, including through progressive realisation.

Other organisations, like non-governmental organisations, can help people claim their rights. These organisations frequently engage with the government in order to protect the rights of people in Zimbabwe, and may help to take cases to court or to resolve matters outside court.



(CREDIT: USAID Zimbabwe)

CONCLUSION

The point of knowing your rights, of knowing about the Constitution, is for you to be able to lead a dignified life, to have the opportunity to fulfil your potential as a human being. But these rights come with responsibilities. Each of us needs to make sure that we hold the government to account, and to make sure that government fulfils the obligations that the Constitution imposes on it. This includes ensuring that the government does not violate our rights or violate the rights of others in Zimbabwe. Each one of us has a responsibility to treat other people with the dignity and the respect they deserve. If we think our rights should be respected, we need to respect other people's rights.

The Constitution has a vision of the society that Zimbabwe can be. Progress has been made in realising this vision. But there is still much to do, still so many steps that need to be taken in order for everyone in Zimbabwe to enjoy their rights. By monitoring the government, and by exhibiting the constitutional values in our lives, each of us can bring this vision closer to coming to life.



(CREDIT: Heifer Zimbabwe)

ORGANISATIONS THAT CAN HELP YOU CLAIM YOUR RIGHTS

State-linked organisations

High Court of Zimbabwe

Harare

Address: Mapondera Building, Corner 3rd Street and Samora Machel Avenue, Harare

Telephone: +263 242 250 784-5/242 250 805

Bulawayo

Address: Tredgold Building, Cnr Forth St/Leopold Takawira, Bulawayo

Telephone: +263 29273600/3

Mutare

Address: 10 Robert Mugabe Road, Mutare

Telephone: + 263 20 2061476 or +263 20 2061467

Masvingo

Address: Cnr Robert Mugabe Street and Leopold Takawira Street, Masvingo

Telephone: +263 39 2262081 or +263 39 2262358

Legal Aid Directorate

Harare

Address: 6th and 7th Floors, Century House, Harare

Telephone: +263 24 279 7911/4

Bulawayo

Address: Block C, 5th Floor, Mhlahlandlela Government Complex, Bulawayo

Telephone: +263 29 277 294 or +263 29 277 542/3/4

Chinhoyi

Address: Old Government Hospital, Government Complex, Chinhoyi

Gweru

Address: Room 2068, 2nd Floor, Governor's Entrance, Government Complex, Gweru

Telephone: +263 54 227 887/8

Masvingo

Address: Passport Building, Masvingo

Telephone: +263 39 261 281/181

Marondera

Address: 7 5th Street, Marondera

Mutare

Address: 24C Avenue, Mutare

Telephone: +263 20 694 701/64071

Gwanda

Address: Office No 4, 5, 7 & 8, 1st Floor, Pumulani House, Gwanda

Telephone: +263 284 24625/11

Hwange

Address: 24 Coronation Avenue, Hwange

Telephone: +263 81 282 0216/7

Web: <https://justice.gov.zw/departments/legal-aid-directorate>

National Peace and Reconciliation Commission

Harare

Address: 7th Floor, First Mutual Building, 99 Jason Moyo Avenue, Harare

Telephone: +263 242 792 676-9 or +263 242 791 757

Bulawayo

Address: 6th Floor, First Mutual Building, Cnr 9th Avenue and Joshua Nkomo Street, Bulawayo

Telephone: +263 292 701 01/5

Email: [info@nprc.org.zw/](mailto:info@nprc.org.zw)

Web: <https://www.nprc.org.zw/>

Twitter: @NPRCZim

Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission

Harare

Address: 144 Samora Machel Avenue, Harare

Telephone: +263 242 705 268/426

Bulawayo

Address: 49 J. M. Nkomo (between 3rd and 4th Avenue), Bulawayo

Telephone: +263 29 2264 170-73

Hotlines: +263 771 838 656 or +263 786 602 035

Email: info@zhrc.org.zw

Web: www.zhrc.org.zw

Twitter: @zhrc365

Zimbabwe Gender Commission

Physical address: Pax House, 89 Kwame Nkrumah Avenue, Harare, Zimbabwe

Telephone: +263 024 2701101 or +263 24 225 0296

Email: info@zgc.co.zw

Web: www.zgc.co.zw

Twitter: @GenderZimbabwe

Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission

Physical address: 872 Betterment Park, Mt Pleasant, Harare

Telephone: +263 242 369 602 or +263 242 369 605

Email: reports@zacc.co.zw

Twitter: @ZACOnline

Non-governmental organisations

Legal Resources Foundation

Toll-free legal advice helpline: 08080402

SMS assistance: +263 787 108 721

Physical address: 16 Oxford Road, Avondale, Harare

Telephone: +263 242 251 171/4

Email: pa@lrf.co.zw

Web: www.lrfzim.com

Twitter: @LRFZimbabwe

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights

Physical address: 103 Sam Nujoma Street, Harare

Telephone: +263 867 700 5347 or +263 242 705 370 or +263 242 708 118

Email: info@zlhrl.org.zw

Web: www.zlhrl.co.zw

Twitter: @ZLHRLawyers

Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association

Toll-free number: 08080131

Harare

Address: 17 Fife Avenue, Harare

Telephone: +263 242 708 491 or +263 242 706 820

Email: zwla@zwla.co.zw

Bulawayo

Address: 134 J Tongogara Street, Cnr 14th Avenue, Bulawayo

Telephone: +263 988 7186 or +263 988 7187

Email: zwlabyo@zwla.co.zw

Web: www.zwla.co.zw

Twitter: @ZimWomenLawyers