

Press Statement on Police Violence  
“Crushed But Not Destroyed”

We, the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance, hereby register and express our shock and disgust at the violent and barbaric attack on law abiding citizens by the police as they were praying for peace in the Church of the Nazarene in Glen Norah, Harare on 9 April 2011. As an organization of Christians who believe that the Church has a responsible role to play in Zimbabwe, particularly in promoting peace we were directly involved, with other church groups and civil society organizations, in organizing this prayer service for peace whose theme was “Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called sons of God” Matthew 5:9.

The service was intended to be a commemoration of the 11 March 2007 prayer rally in Highfields at which church, civil society and political leaders were brutally assaulted and arrested by the police. This event led SADC to initiate meetings which resulted in the signing of the Global Political Agreement by the three leaders of Zimbabwe’s main political parties and subsequently to the formation of the Inclusive Government. However, despite the formation of this government, politically motivated violence has continued to be the order of the day in Zimbabwe. The police, who are supposed to be the nation’s peace-keepers have, on most occasions, refrained from arresting the perpetrators but arresting and even further assaulting the victims.

The congregation in the Church of the Nazarene is estimated to have been 600. Among them were 4 bishops and 36 respected pastors of various churches and denominations. As they were calling upon God to bring peace to our beloved Zimbabwe armed riot police, who were shouting obscenities, arrived and started to throw teargas into the church causing pandemonium among the surprised worshippers some of whom were women with babies, children and the elderly. This was a clear and shameful desecration of God’s house.

As worshippers rushed out of the smoke filled church, some by the door and others through windows, the police pounced on them and beat them without mercy. Many were seriously injured. In all 14 people were arrested

and taken to Harare Central Police Station where they were charged with “causing public violence”. After spending the weekend in police cells they were released and told that they would be called by way of summons. Nine of them were in pain and had to be taken for medical examinations and treatment. Two elderly members of Zimbabwe Christian Alliance, Bishop Paul Isaya aged 73 and Rev. Paul Mukome aged 65, who are faithful servants of God were singled out, arrested and beaten thoroughly all over their bodies. They sustained serious injuries for which they are receiving medical treatment.

The motto of the Zimbabwe Republic Police is Pro lege, pro patria, pro populo or “For the law, the nation and the people”. Their actions in Glen Norah are clearly in violation of their charter and motto. This was a clear violation of freedom of worship, expression and association. Zimbabwean law does not even require churches to seek for permission before holding church meetings and services. It is regrettable that our law enforcer has become the chief law breaker. It is obvious that the attack on innocent worshippers the police were carrying out a partisan political agenda.

We, therefore, call upon the ZRP to be non-partisan and to really serve the people of Zimbabwe as their motto says. We believe now is the time for reflection and reform on the part of the police.

As Zimbabwe Christian Alliance we shall not be deterred from our just cause by any manner of violence or oppression. With Paul we say, “We are hard- pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed, always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body “ (2 Corinthians 4:8-10). We will, therefore, continue to pray and work for peace and justice as God commands.

Ends.

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