

## ROHR donates clothes to victims of violence



ROHR Zimbabwe Organising secretary for Masvingo Province Mr Murambatsvina addressing villagers of ward 11 and 32



Ward 11 councillor Mr Rukweza handing out a blanket to a beneficiary

Villagers of Wards 11 and 32 of Bikita West constituency gathered on Friday around 1300hrs at Muti munyoro to receive a donation of clothes from a ROHR Zimbabwe team led by the National Chairman Ray Muzenda. The handover ceremony was attended by ward 11 Councillor Mr. Rukweza and ward 32 Councillor Mr. Zondai Chinanga.

Councillor Chinanga hailed the people of his ward for remaining resolute despite the suffering they went through during the March-June 2008 bloody election violence. He described the violence that characterised ward 32 as 'bloody.'

Vulnerable women and children were the worst affected as more often than not they were subjected to severe beatings as punishment when the intended targets were not found at home. Children missed school as they resorted to sleeping in the bushes in fear of their lives.

Mrs Evelyn Murerwa, Nyengetedzai Machiya, Eustina and Anna Chari, Gladys Tavengwa and Evelyn Maware were identified by the villagers present at the handover ceremony as some of the worst affected victims with threatening wounds that require urgent attention. The National Chairman for ROHR Zimbabwe, Ray Muzenda pledged medical assistance for all the villagers who sustained injuries from the organised violence of last year's elections. Those needing assistance were told to report to the ROHR Zimbabwe Masvingo Office, number 7 Robin House.

From the interviews that were carried out by ROHR Zimbabwe from the same occasion it emerged that most of the crimes of violence were committed by known people who reside in the same village. The most featuring on the list of the people who promoted acts of violence were Chief Marozva, and businessman and ZANU PF losing Councillor Candidate for ward 32, Mvuto.

Councillor Chinanga expressed gratitude to Martha Angelina Magwaza of ROHR UK Chelmsford branch for the donation of clothes and remembering the plight of the victims of politically organised violence.

Following an outburst by Mrs Eustina Chari who was brutally assaulted by ZANU PF supporters, that the national healing will never be achieved, it emerged that, before people can make constructive contribution to National Healing it is a pre-requisite to embark on education awareness campaigns on the available approaches to transitional justice which include restorative and retributive justice.

Societies emerging from a past painful legacy like Zimbabwe can try a number of transitional justice options hinged on the rule of law from which to reconcile people and communities to prevent future abuses of human rights. People need to be taught on the various transitional justice methods which include Criminal prosecutions, Truth commissions, Reparations and Institutional reforms.

ROHR Zimbabwe Masvingo Provincial Vice Chairperson, Mr. Timothy Ndongwe encouraged the villagers to remain law abiding citizens and refrain from taking revenge as that would induce them to the same levels of their assailants. He emphasised that although he too was a victim of political violence, it was foolish to seek justice outside the confines of the law.

Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe is a radical grassroots based organisation working towards promoting a culture of human rights through community mobilisation, capacity building and active responses to human rights challenges in Zimbabwe. As an organisation we believe in the incredible power of the community as a structure unit for people to defend, protect and champion their fundamental human rights and responding to issues that affect their daily lives.

Being aware of the role that was played by the jobless youths in acting as instruments of violence under the auspices of politicians, as an organisation we acknowledge the central role that the youths have to play in transforming the nation from a culture of widespread human rights abuses towards a democratic society that embraces differences in political activities and engagements at the same time upholding fundamental human rights and freedoms guaranteed under international law.

ROHR Zimbabwe is currently holding Leadership Development and Capacity Building Workshops in the country's ten provinces creating networks with communities, like minded organisations and individuals in the fight for human rights. Other projects underway include the Demand for Justice and Truth Campaign which is advocating for a holistic victim centred National Healing Process that captures three broad steps TRUTH, JUSTICE and COMPENSATION.

**NB Videos clips of the interviews with victims of political violence from ward 11 and 32 are available upon request.**

**From the information Department of Restoration of Human Rights (ROHR) Zimbabwe**

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