

Bikita By Election Count Down Update.

Heal Zimbabwe notes with great concern the growing number of human rights violations recorded this week (16 – 20 January 2017). Heal Zimbabwe has recorded a total of 36 human rights violations that include Intimidation with threats of violence and of withdrawal of food aid (18 cases), Forced attendance to political gatherings (8 cases), unfair distribution of food aid/vote buying (8 cases) and assault (2).

ZANU PF conducted its last campaign rally at Nyika growth point that was addressed by Vice President, Phekezela Mphoko on 18 January 2017. Zimbabwe People First (ZPF) also conducted a campaign rally at Nyika growth point on 19 January 2017 that was addressed by party President, Joyce Mujuru.

Heal Zimbabwe is greatly concerned with the escalation of intimidation, forced attendance and unfair food aid/vote buying in Bikita West. The organisation views the escalation of human rights violations in Bikita West as a hindrance to the conducting of free and fair elections and limits free participation of the voters. Heal Zimbabwe notes that the participation of village heads and coercion of villagers to attend political gatherings is a grave and serious violation of the constitution which provides for political rights where citizens should be free to participate, form or join political parties of their choice.

Heal Zimbabwe castigates the recent attack on National Constitutional Assembly candidate Madock Chivasa and Thomas Mudzamiri on the 17th of January 2017 by unidentified ZANU PF youths. The attack on the NCA candidate compromises the holding of free and fair elections.

Heal Zimbabwe implores the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and the Government to ensure that the environment is conducive for the holding of free, fair and peaceful elections and should also investigate and address cases of human rights abuses. **Below are the violations recorded this week:**

Bikita West Ward 9

On 20 January 2017, ZANU PF ward chairperson, Mukaro Kujongonya distributed rice at Bikita centre where he announced that the rice was only meant for ZANU PF supporters. He also announced that ZANU PF youths should write down names of people who are going to vote at every polling station in the ward.

Bikita West Ward 10

On 20 January 2017, ZANU PF ward chairperson, Ngoni Taruona distributed rice at Jaravaza business centre. Taruona announced that if people fail to vote for ZANU PF in the by election, ZANU PF shall unleash violence in the ward and ensure that no food aid comes into the area.

Bikita West ward 22

On 19 January 2017, ZANU PF candidate in the Bikita West by election Beauty Chabaya, distributed maize seed at Makondo Primary school. The maize seed distribution exercise was also attended by Buhera South legislator, Joseph Chinotimba. In his address, Chinotimba warned that if people fail to vote for ZANU PF, there was going to be violence in Bikita West constituency.

Bikita West ward 9

Ward 9 councillor Sabina Kudzongonya and ZANU PF ward chairperson Philip Dhliwayo on the 19th of January 2017 intimidated people during a food distribution exercise at Bikita Business Centre. The aid was from the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social welfare. Kudzongonya highlighted that all those who fail to vote for ZANU PF shall have their names removed from the beneficiary list. Philip Dhliwayo also urged people to vote for the ruling party and threatened them with violence if his party loses.

Bikita West ward 12

National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) candidate in the Bikita West by election, Madock Chivasa and his election agent, Thomas Mudzamiri were attacked on 17 January 2017 by 10 unidentified ZANU PF youths at Nyika growth point. Mr. Chivasa was assaulted with a gun on the face and sustained a deep cut on the forehead. He also suffered a fracture on his arm while Mr. Mudzamiri sustained broken ribs. The assault took place in full glare of people present at the growth point. The matter was reported at Bikita police station but no arrests have been made

Bikita West Ward 12

ZANU PF ward Chairman, Nicholas Chivende called for an aid distribution meeting at Chikukutu Primary School on the 17th of January 2017. At the meeting where fertilizer was being distributed, Chairman Chivende gave a speech and urged people to vote for Ms Chabaya if they wanted to continue receiving fertilizer. More than 500 people had turned up for the meeting with majority of them being women.

Bikita West ward 32

ZANU PF women's league chairperson Sheka Ushe and ZANU PF ward chairperson Charles Tirukai forced people in their ward to attend a rally on the 18th of January 2017 at Nyika growth point that was addressed by Vice President, Phelekezela Mphoko. The two gave a directive to all Village heads in the ward that they were supposed to ensure that everyone attends the rally. People were ordered to gather at Makotore Business centre where they were ferried to the rally. Ushe and Tirukai were compiling a list as people departed for the rally.

Bikita West ward 32

ZANU PF women's league chairperson, Sheka Ushe and ZANU PF ward chairperson Charles Tirukai on the 19th of January 2017 called all the villagers in ward 32 to receive maize at Makotore Business Centre. At the meeting, the two gave an order that no one was suppose to attend the Zimbabwe people First (ZPF) rally at Nyika growth point which was being held on the same day. Tirukai also warned people against attending the ZPF

rally and announced that he had deployed ZANU PF youths to attend the rally and compile a list of people present at the rally.

Bikita West ward 11

ZANU PF ward chairperson Peter Chifeva forced people to attend a rally that was addressed by Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko on the 18th of January 2017 at Nyika growth point. He ordered village heads to bring everyone under their jurisdiction. Chifeva threatened to remove them from their positions if they fail to bring everyone to the rally.

Bikita West ward 11

ZANU PF ward Chairman Peter Chifeva called all the villagers in ward 11 for a maize seed distribution exercise at Mangondo Secondary school on 19 January 2017. At the distribution exercise, two unidentified ZANU PF members addressed people and urged them to vote for ZANU PF if they wanted to receive more aid.

Bikita West Bikita ward 5

ZANU PF chairperson, Nhamo Bhuru forced people to attend a ZANU PF rally that was addressed by Vice President, Phekezela Mphoko at Nyika growth point on 18 January 2017. Bhuru told people that all those who attended had their names written down and ZANU PF shall use the list in future food aid distribution exercises.

Bikita West Ward 10

ZANU PF ward 10 Chairperson, Ngoni Taruona forced people to attend a rally at Nyika Growth point on 18 January 2017 that was addressed by Vice President, Phekezela Mphoko. On the morning of 18 January 2017, Taruona who was in the company of several ZANU PF youths carried out a door to door campaign forcing people to attend the rally. They told people that anyone who fails to attend the rally was going to have their names written down and denied any food aid. Taruona also announced that if ZANU PF loses the election, his party was going to unleash violence in the ward.

Bikita West Ward 9

Unidentified ZANU PF youths embarked on a door to door campaign on 18 January forcing people to attend a rally that was addressed by Vice President, Phekezela Mphoko at Nyika growth point. The youths told people that if ZANU PF loses the by election, they were going to "hunt down" all opposition party supporters in the ward and assault them.

Bikita West Ward 19

ZANU PF chairperson for ward 19, Beauty Ziwewe and several ZANU PF youths moved in the ward on 18 January 2017, threatening people that if they fail to attend a ZANU PF campaign rally at Nyika growth point they were going to be assaulted. The rally was addressed by Vice President, Phekezela Mphoko. Ziwewe also told people that if ZANU PF loses the by election, she was going to ensure that no food aid comes into the area.

Bikita West Ward 11

ZANU PF candidate in the Bikita West by election, Beauty Chabaya distributed fertiliser at Mangondo Secondary school on 19 January 2017. ZANU PF ward chairperson, Elliot Chiseva was also present at the distribution exercise and announced that if people do not vote for Chabaya, no food aid would come into the ward. Also present at the meeting was Chief Marozva who also announced that on the day of the by election, everyone should go and vote in the company of their Village head.

Bikita West Ward 12

On 18 January, ZANU PF District chairperson, Nicholas Chivende forced people to attend a ZANU PF campaign rally at Nyika Growth point that was addressed by Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko. Chivende together with several ZANU PF youths moved in the ward threatening people with violence if they failed to attend the rally. Chivende also told people that he had received the directive from the ZANU PF leadership in Harare to ensure that everyone attends the rally.

Bikita West Ward 32

On 18 January 2017, Village heads Rambakudzirwa, Mupandaguta, Ndongvedzenai, Mushengo, Magara and Rinashe forced people in their villages to attend a ZANU PF campaign rally at Nyika growth point that was addressed by Vice President, Phelekezela Mphoko. The Village heads told people that if they defied the directive, they will ensure that they do not receive any food aid that comes into the ward.

Bikita West Ward 9

Village head Mudavanhu Mundenga called for a meeting in the ward on 18 January 2017 and told people that they should all convene at his homestead on the day of the election. He said that he will then go with them to the polling station and ensure that they vote for ZANU PF candidate, Beauty Chabaya. He also warned people that ZANU PF youths will be stationed at every polling station in the ward writing down names of people as they vote..