

Update: Voter Intimidation on the Rise in Bikita West?

As we count down 6 days before the Bikita West by-election, intimidation is increasing in the constituency. Final mega rallies are scheduled to take place this week mainly by ZANU PF and ZIM PF. Between 12-15th January alone Heal Zimbabwe recorded 33 cases of human rights violations mostly perpetrated by ZANU PF against opposition members and the electorate in general. Intimidation constituted 69% of the total violations recorded followed by vote buying 19% and forced attendance to political gatherings recording 6%. Disrupted political gatherings and destruction of campaign material recorded 3% each.

Intimidation cases observed are mainly through harvesting of fear using past experiences of political violence, particularly the 2008 elections, which many people will never forget.

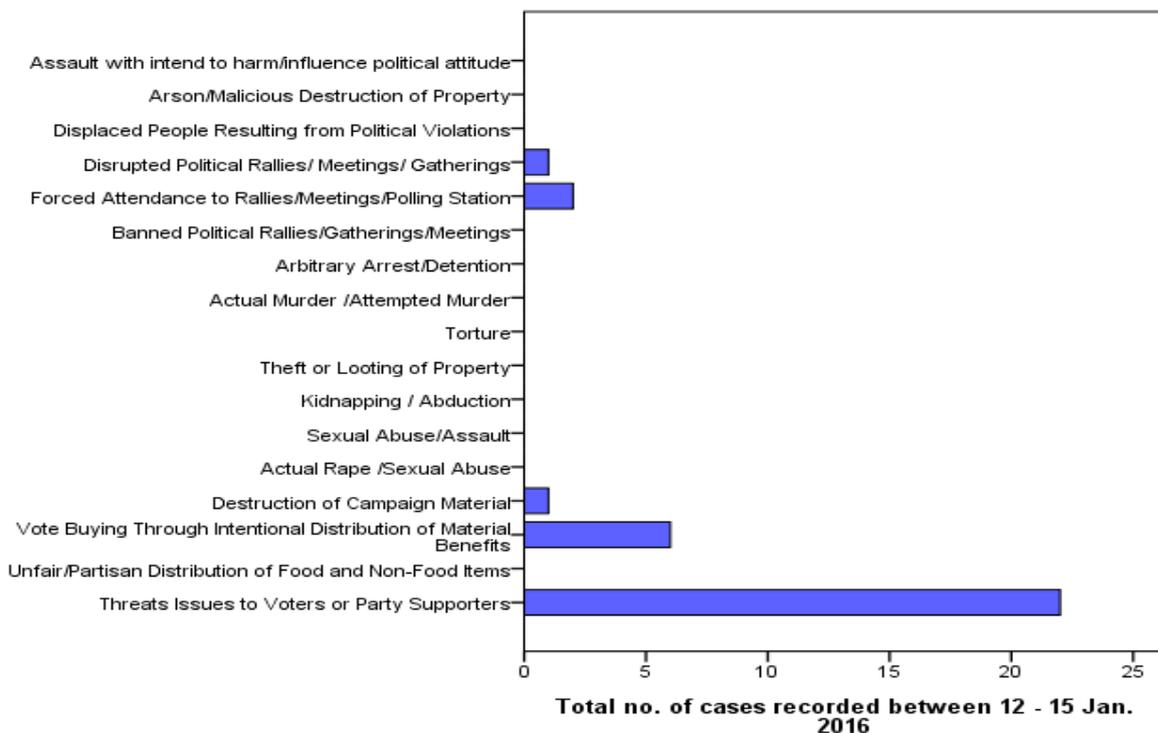


Figure 1: Number of Human Rights Violations Cases Recorded

Heal Zimbabwe recorded human rights violations in all the 11 wards in Bikita West constituency unlike in the last instalment observations ([published on 12 January 2016](#)) where 9 of the 11 wards had a record of violations. The continuous involvement of traditional leaders in mobilising citizens to political gatherings and in perpetuating political intimidation remains unacceptable as it is against the constitution (Section 281-282). However, it is plausible that there are no visible cases of torture, murder abductions and other gross human rights violations.

Citizens should become more conscious of their surroundings in order to protect themselves from violence and intimidation. We anticipate a further increase on intimidation cases and a surge in forced participation in political gatherings given the number of scheduled mega rallies in the next few days. Political canvassing will intensify in these campaign finishing days. We also implore political parties and independent candidates to campaign peacefully

and desist from using violent strategies that are likely to compromise the participation of Bikita West voters. Below are detailed cases of violations.

BIKITA WEST BY-ELECTION HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION CASES

Bikita West ward 5

ZANU PF ward chairperson, Nhamo Bhuru is forcing people to attend ZANU PF rallies taking place in ward 5. On 14 January 2017, Bhuru who was in the company of ZANU PF youths embarked on a door to door campaign forcing people to attend a ZANU PF meeting at Pfulajena ward centre. At the meeting, Bhuru took pictures and identity card numbers of people who had come and gave them fertilisers. Bhuru announced that the pictures and identity card numbers that he had taken was going to help ZANU PF to know the candidate that people were going to vote for in the by election.

Bikita West ward 9

Former ZANU PF District chairperson, Claudius Zakaria Nhongonhema deceptively called for a food aid distribution meeting at Ushe Primary School on 14 January 2017 with the intention to write down the people's names as part of ZANU PF election intimidation process. Upon arrival at the meeting, Nhongonhema with the help of fellow ZANU PF youths, began writing down peoples' identity card numbers. When people asked the reason for this, Nhongonhema announced that he was going to personally check their names on the voters roll. He also announced that anyone whose names would not appear on the voters roll, will not receive any food aid. Nhongonhema also said that those who were not going to vote will have their names submitted to the ZANU PF offices at Nyika growth point.

Bikita West Ward 22

ZANU PF members Theonas Gondo and Phillip Ticharava on the 14th of January 2017 issued threats of violence to citizens in ward 22. Both embarked on a door to door campaign telling people that anyone who would not attend any ZANU PF campaign meeting called for ahead of the by election would be assaulted and have their houses burnt.

Bikita West Ward 10

On 14 January 2017, Bikita South Legislator, Jeppy Jaboon, held a meeting at Hozvi business centre where he distributed fertilisers to ZANU PF members only. At the meeting he said that if people fail to vote for ZANU PF candidate, Beauty Chabaya, ZANU PF will take matters into its own hands and unleash a terror campaign in the ward. All perceived opposition party members who had attended the meeting were denied fertilisers.

Bikita West Ward 10

On the morning of 14 January 2017, ZANU PF ward chairperson, Ngoni Taruona with the help of ZANU PF youths embarked on a door to door campaign forcing people to attend a rally Hozvi Primary school. The rally was a campaign rally which was to be addressed by

Bikita South Legislator, Jeppy Jaboon. The youths told people that if they failed to attend the rally, they were going to be assaulted and have their houses burnt down.

Bikita West Ward 19

ZANU PF candidate in the by election, Beauty Chabaya distributed fertilisers at Makondo Primary School on the 14th of January 2017. At the rally she announced that the fertiliser was only for ZANU PF members. At the same meeting, a man who only identified himself as a ZANU PF District Executive member announced that if Beauty Chabaya loses the by election, there was going to be bloodshed in Bikita West Constituency. Chabaya also announced that everything that she was doing in Bikita West has the blessing of President Mugabe.

Bikita West Ward 23

ZANU PF District chairperson, Nicholas Chivende is conducting door to door campaigns threatening people with violence if they fail to vote for the ZANU PF candidate in the by election, Beauty Chabaya. On 14 January 2017, Chivende moved around the ward with several youths taking down people's numbers and their identity card numbers. They also announced that they were going to use the names to check if people were registered voters. This they said would enable them to know people who would fail to vote for Chabaya.

Bikita West Ward 11

On 14 January 2017, ZANU PF called for a meeting at Guru polling station. Before the meeting, people had been told that they were supposed to check if their names are on the voters roll. When people arrived, they were shocked to find out that the meeting was a ZANU PF campaign rally. The meeting was addressed by Chegutu Legislator, Webster Shamu. He ordered village heads who were present to ensure that people vote for Beauty Chabaya. Village heads who were present at the meeting include Ndambani, Guru, Mukumbirirwa, Chifire, Makoni, Mutindi and Mabhachi. The Village heads were also ordered to submit names of all people in their villages. Shamu then produced a copy of the voters roll and started calling out names of people who appeared on the voters roll and gave them ZANU PF campaign shirts. Shamu also urged people to vote resoundingly for Chabaya and then announced that in the event that she loses, ZANU PF was well prepared to deal with anyone who would not vote for Chabaya.

Bikita West Ward 19

Opposition part MDC-T had a meeting at Makondo Primary School on 14 January 2017. While the meeting was underway, ZANU PF candidate in the by election, Beauty Chabaya who was in the company of several ZANU PF youths invaded the venue of the meeting and started chanting slogans. This disrupted the meeting as the MDC-T meeting had to be momentarily stopped. While this was happening, five ZANU PF youths were compiling names of all people at the meeting. The youths announced that in the event that Chabaya

loses, they were going to use the list to target houses that they were going to burn. In the end, the MDC-T was forced to cancel the meeting.

Bikita West Ward 10

ZANU PF ward chairperson, Ngoni Taruona addressed a rally at Jaravaza Primary school on 14 January 2017. At the rally he announced that if Chabaya loses the election, ZANU PF was going to unleash violence worse than that experienced in the 2008 violent elections. Taruona also announced that the ZANU PF national leadership had given him the go ahead to also work with soldiers and the police to hunt down all people who fail to vote for Chabaya.

Bikita West Ward 11

ZANU PF Chegutu East constituency legislator, Webster Shamu convened a meeting at Beardmore polling station on 14 January 2016. At the meeting he tasked all Traditional leaders to write names of all people in their villages and submit to him. At the same meeting, ZANU PF youths were writing down names of people present at the meeting and announced that they were going to use the list to check people who will be voting on the day of the by election. The youths also took pictures of all people who had attended the rally.

Bikita West Ward 12

ZANU PF candidate in the Bikita West by election, Beauty Chabaya held a campaign rally at Chikukutu Secondary school on 14 January 2017. Initially people had been told that they were going to receive fertilisers, but as the rally started, people were shocked after Chabaya started chanting slogans. In her address, Chabaya said that if she loses the by election, she will ensure that no food aid comes into the ward. At the same meeting, ZANU PF youths were taking names of people present at the rally.

Bikita West Ward 9

ZANU PF ward chairperson, Phillip Dhliwayo held a campaign rally aimed at drumming up support for ZANU PF candidate, Beauty Chabaya on 14 January 2017 at Nyemba Primary school. Dhliwayo also announced that since Nyemba Primary school was a polling station, he was going to ensure that on the day of the election, ZANU PF youths will be stationed at the polling station taking down names of people as they voted. He said that this would help him know people who would have not voted for Chabaya.

Bikita West Ward 9

ZANU PF Politburo member, David Parirenyatwa, who is also Minister of Health and Child Care addressed a ZANU PF campaign rally at Ngodyore Primary school on 14 January 2017. Parirenyatwa urged people to vote for Beauty Chabaya and promised that ZANU PF will build more hospitals in Bikita West. As this was happening, ZANU PF youths were taking down names of people at the rally.

Bikita West Ward 9

ZANU PF chairperson Philip Dhliwayo, ZANU PF Youth chairperson Fungai Taruona and ward 9 councillor Sabina Kudzongonya called for meeting on the 12th of January at Bikita Business Centre. They had announced that the meeting was going to be a fertiliser distribution meeting. At the meeting Taruona urged people to vote for ZANU PF in the by election and said that ZANU PF youths were ready to “deal” with anyone who would fail to vote for ZANU PF. Councillor, Kudzongonya also announced that if people fail to vote for ZANU PF, she would ensure that no food aid comes into the ward.

Bikita West wards 30

ZANU PF ward chairperson Simon Muchafa called people for a rally on the 14th of January 2017 at Bikita Minerals recreation hall. The rally was attended by Bikita south legislator for Bikita West Jeppy Jaboon, ZANU PF candidate Beauty Chabaya and ZANU PF politburo member, Josiah Hungwe. Jaboon and Hungwe emphasised that the people should declare themselves illiterate on the day of the by election so that they can be assisted by ZANU PF youths whom they said will be deployed at every polling station on day of the by election. Fertilisers were also given to people who had produced registration slips at the meeting. Jaboon also announced that ZANU PF had compiled serial numbers on the registration slips and said that this would help them identify people who would vote for ZANU PF.

Bikita West Ward 12

ZANU PF youths forced people who were coming from the church to wear ZANU PF party T-shirts on top of their church uniforms. This took place on the 14th of January 2017 at a Roman catholic church at Nyika Growth Point. Unidentified ZANU PF youths went and waited at ST Marys Church waiting for congregants who were having a gathering. As congregants left the churchman PF blocked the church gate and forced people to wear ZANU PF shirts on top of their church uniforms.

Bikita West Ward 12

Councillor Tadios Wafawarova and ZANU PF district chairman Nicholas Chivende called people to receive fertilizers at Chikukutu Primary school on the 15th of January 2017. Upon arrival the people were told that the distribution of fertilizers was postponed to a later date which was to be advised. The distribution exercise was then converted into a ZANU PF campaign rally. People were then forced to purchase ZANU PF membership cards if they wanted to receive fertilisers and food aid in the future. Chivende ordered the people to vote for ZANU PF candidate Beauty Chabaya in the coming by election if they wanted to receive any aid from government.

Bikita West Ward 12

Posters belonging to National Constitutional Assembly candidate Madock Chivasa were defaced in the area close to Chikukutu primary school on the 15th of January 2017. The posters were removed by ZANU PF youths.

Bikita West ward 9

On 12 January 2017, an unidentified man who was chanting ZANU PF slogans was forcing people to give him serial numbers from registration slips at Ushe Primary school. The man was also collecting the names, identity card numbers. Upon being asked why he was collecting peoples' names, he disclosed that he had been given the directive to compile names by ZANU PF candidate, Beauty Chabaya.

Bikita West ward 12

Chief Mupakwa called all ward 12 Village heads to his homestead on the 12th of January 2017. He ordered them that they should ensure that people in their villages vote resoundingly for ZANU PF in the by election. He highlighted that he had received a directive from the Minister of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, Saviour Kasukuwere that all Village heads who disobeyed will be stripped of their titles.

Bikita West ward 32

ZANU PF ward Chairperson Sheka Ushe and fellow ZANU PF member, Yeukai Kunedzimwe on the 12th of January 2017 called people for a rally at Makotore Business centre. Village heads were given a directive that they were supposed to mobilise people for the rally. At the meeting, people were forced to purchase ZANU PF membership cards which were costing \$3. The rally was also attended by Bikita South Legislator Jeppy Jaboon and ZANU PF politburo member Josiah Hungwe. Jaboon announced that all the people should go to their polling stations where ZANU PF youth have been deployed to take details from registration slips. He further highlighted that the people should declare themselves illiterate on the day of the by election. He highlighted that this process would assist ZANU PF to know people who would have voted against ZANU PF. Jaboon also announced that if people fail to vote for ZANU PF, they should remember the 2008 political violence.

Bikita West Ward 11

On 12 January 2017, ZANU PF candidate in the by election, Beauty Chabaya held a campaign rally at Mukubvu ward centre. At the rally, she distributed fertilisers and announced that if she loses the election, she will ensure that there is no food aid that comes in the area. She also highlighted that in the event that she loses, ZANU PF youths should not be blamed if they launch a terror campaign in the area.