

Commissioner General Matanga
Zimbabwe Republic Police
Police General Headquarters
Cnr 7th Street and Josiah Chinamano Avenue
Harare
SIMBABWE

Commissioner General Matanga,

I am deeply concerned about the enforced disappearance and torture, including sexual violence, suffered by three female opposition activists of the MDC Alliance – Joana Mamombe, Cecilia Chimhiri, and Netsai Marova, – and the charges brought against them of gathering with intent to promote public violence and breach of the peace.

Following their arrest on 13 May, they were taken to Harare Central Police Station where they were asked to get into another vehicle under the pretext that they were being taken to Warren Park Police Station. Thereafter, the activists were forcibly disappeared for two days. There are credible allegations that, during this time, they were subjected to torture, including sexually assault. On 15 May, they were found abandoned in Bindura. In its press statement issued on 18 May, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission noted that the three activists were abducted, tortured and removed from protection of the law.

I am also concerned that the authorities have called their abduction fake without launching an investigation into their enforced disappearance from police custody, and the subsequent treatment they endured, capable of bringing those suspected of responsibility to justice. Instead, on 26 May, the authorities have charged the three women and deployed prison guards and police to their hospital and forcing them to wear prison clothing even though they were given bail.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally drop the charges against the three activists and end the harassment against them; Immediately launch an independent and effective investigation into the enforced disappearance of the activists from police custody and the sexual assault and torture they endured; and bring to justice in fair trials anyone suspected of criminal responsibility for the unlawful treatment of the activists.

Yours sincerely,