

# Zimbabwe: Arbitrary detention of journalist an assault on freedom of expression

Responding to the arrest and detention of Faith Zaba, editor of the weekly Zimbabwe Independent, on allegations of undermining the authority of or insulting the country's President Emmerson Mnangagwa, Khanyo Farisè, Amnesty International's Senior Researcher in East and Southern Africa, said:

"Amnesty International strongly condemns the arrest and detention of [Faith Zaba](#) for exercising her constitutionally guaranteed rights as a journalist. This is an assault on the right to freedom of expression and press freedom.

"Zimbabwean authorities must immediately release Faith Zaba and drop all charges against her as she is detained simply for doing her job. Journalism is not a crime. Authorities must allow journalists to carry out their work freely, safely and without fear of harassment, intimidation or reprisals.

"The arrest of journalists such as Zaba, and her colleague Blessed Mhlanga who was arbitrarily detained earlier this year simply for doing their job, are part of an ongoing pattern in which the criminal justice system is being misused to target independent media voices to instill fear and curb press freedom.

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"These tactics pose a significant threat to a free media in Zimbabwe and the public's right to information. Authorities must end the growing restriction on civic space in the country and allow everyone to freely exercise their human rights."

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## Background

Faith Zaba was arrested on 1 July and detained in Harare on allegations of undermining the authority of or insulting the President. According to her lawyer, Chris Mhike, the

charge relates to a satirical article published in the weekly's Muckraker column last Friday. Her bail application has been postponed to 3 July, pending a review of her medical record due to her ill health. Zaba's arrest comes after the recent arrest and lengthy detention of another journalist from the same outlet, Alpha Media House's head of news at HSTV, Blessed Mhlanga, who spent 72 days in pretrial detention.

