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COI QUERY RESPONSE

ZIMBABWE - INFORMATION ON MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY IN ZIMBABWE AND TREATMENT OF THEIR MEMBERS OR ANY OPPRESSION OF THEM BY ZANU-PF

The *Southern Eye* in March 2025 points out that: “MATABELELAND secessionist group Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP) has petitioned the United Nations (UN) and other bodies over crimes of humanity allegedly committed by the Zanu PF government on citizens. The petition to UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres was copied to the International Criminal Court, International Court of Justice and the African Commission on Human Rights and People's Rights, among others. The petition comes at a time when MRP member Mkhululi Jele is facing a charge of disorderly conduct in a public place. Jele was arrested for allegedly confronting Phakamani High School authorities over the harassment of pupils who protested tribal-aligned heritage studies.”¹

NewsDay Zimbabwe in January 2025 mentioned that: “THE Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP) has trashed plans by a Zanu PF faction to amend the Constitution and extend President Emmerson Mnangagwa's term up to 2030. Mnangagwa has repeatedly said he will not seek a term extension, adding that he would rest after his constitutionally-mandated two terms end in 2028. However, Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs minister Ziyambi Ziyambi recently announced that the party had set in motion plans to extend Mnangagwa's tenure following a resolution made at the Zanu PF National People's Conference in Bulawayo last year. In an interview with *Southern Eye* yesterday, MRP president Mqondisi Moyo said Zanu PF was being treacherous in its attempts to extend Mnangagwa's term beyond 2028. He said this was in contrast to Mnangagwa's promise to adhere to the two-term limit. “The President and leader of the ruling party has chosen not to exercise his authority to halt this unconstitutional push for an extended term.”²

CITE in December 2024 points out that: “The Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP), led by Mr. Mqondisi Moyo, has amplified the name *Mthwakazi* through its political ideology advocating for secession.

¹ Southern Eye (11 March 2025) MRP petitions UN over Zanu PF oppression

² NewsDay Zimbabwe (29 January 2025) Mthwakazi, CCC speak out against ED2030

While this has drawn attention to the term, it has also invited criticism from those who associate the name with separatist aspirations.”³

In October 2024 *NewsDay Zimbabwe* states that: “THE United Kingdom House of Commons has acknowledged receiving of a petition by the secessionist Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP) on Zanu PF threats to crush the movement, noting the concerns it raised. MRP president Mqondisi Moyo wrote to the Speaker of the House of Commons in Westminster, London, directed to Sir Lindsay Hoyle complaining about threats and human rights violations allegedly committed by the Zanu PF government on people from Matabeleland and his party activists. He said since January 2022, MRP members have faced arrests and detentions. “The recent threats on August 21 by Zanu PF national commissar Munyaradzi Machacha at the Herbert Chitepo School of Ideology to ‘crush’ the MRP and Mthwakazi people for advocating for the establishment of national borders separating Mthwakazi Republic from Zimbabwe confirms the onslaught,” Moyo said. He also indicated that there was an abduction attempt on March 10, while more than 30 suspected State security agents in military uniforms, police uniforms and civilian attire surrounded his residence around 12 midnight, intending to abduct him. “Also, there were arrests and detention of MRP activists and Ndebele people on politically-motivated charges. MRP members and supporters were being harassed and intimidated through threatening phone calls, surveillance and physical assaults,” Moyo said. “On February 14, 2022, 10 MRP activists were arrested during a peaceful protest in Bulawayo and on March 22, 2022, five MRP members were detained for 48 hours without charge. On January 25, 2022, MRP president Moyo received threatening phone calls from suspected State security agents.” Moyo said on April 10, 2022, MRP activists were followed by unknown individuals, adding that on September 5, 2019, the then Energy deputy minister Energy Mutodi declared Ndebeles as “foreigners” in their own country.”⁴

The *Bulawayo 24 News* in September 2024 mentioned that: “The Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP) has called on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to intervene in what it describes as a crackdown on its members and pro-democracy activists in Zimbabwe. The MRP also sent petitions to several regional and international leaders and organizations, including South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union, the African Commission of Human and People's Rights, Minority Rights Group International, International Crisis Group, and Amnesty International, highlighting similar concerns. In a petition to the OHCHR dated August 29, MRP leader Mqondisi Moyo detailed ongoing harassment and intimidation targeting the party and its supporters. “Recent threats made on August 21, 2024, by Zanu-PF's Munyaradzi Machacha, head of the Herbert Chitepo School of Ideology, to ‘crush’ the MRP and Mthwakazi people for advocating the establishment of national borders separating the Mthwakazi Republic from Zimbabwe are deeply troubling,” the petition stated. The MRP claims its members are facing constant harassment, threatening phone calls, surveillance, and even physical assault. According to the petition, peaceful protests and assemblies are being brutally suppressed, leading to injuries, deaths, and displacements. The party also accused government officials of promoting hate speech and vitriol against both the MRP and Ndebele people, fostering a culture of hostility.”⁵

In September 2024 the *Southern Eye* reported: “THE Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP) has sought the intervention of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) protesting a crackdown against its members and other pro-

³ CITE (10 December 2024) Mthwakazi: What’s in a Name?

⁴ NewsDay Zimbabwe (11 October 2024) UK receives MRP petition on Zanu PF threats

⁵ Bulawayo 24 News (13 September 2024) Mthwakazi Republic Party petitions ICC, UN over rights abuses in Zimbabwe

democracy activists.”⁶ It further pointed out: “The petition alleges that MRP members and supporters faced constant harassment, threatening phone calls, surveillance and physical assault.”⁷

The *Zimbabwe Situation* in June 2024 notes that: “MTHWAKAZI Republic Party activists, who were jailed for violence and bigotry say their incarceration hardened their resolve to continue with the restoration of Mthwakazi State. They said this during a welcome party organised by their party in Nketa on Saturday after being released from Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison on Saturday. One of the ex-convicts Mongameli Mlotswa, who is MRP’s national chairperson, described his two-year incarceration as a curve in the journey of life to liberate the people of Mthwakazi. “They arrested me as the chairperson of the party, it’s just a curve on the way. In every struggle there is always a cross to carry. We will continue with the struggle, the ill-treatment that we suffered in jail will not deter us, this is a movement or a revolution, whoever is arresting us is making things worse. There is a lot that we learnt in jail, even pastors preach saying people must cater for those in prison, but they do not know the experience in jail,” Mlotshwa said.”⁸

The *Zimbabwe Situation* in May 2024 reported that: “MTHWAKAZI Republic Party (MRP) national youth treasurer Lwazi Khanye was on Tuesday this week reportedly arrested in connection with the party’s recent raids of apostolic sect shrines in Bulawayo. The raids began on April 24 and have been ongoing since then, the party said yesterday. In a statement yesterday, the MRP information department said Khanye was picked up at his workplace on Tuesday by officers from Bulawayo Central Police Station, adding that he was released. “Bulawayo Central Police picked up Khanye at his workplace and they were questioning him about the clean-up campaigns MRP has been doing in Bulawayo in the past weeks,” the opposition party said. “Khanye was detained at Bulawayo Central Police Station from 8am and was released after a docket was opened. He was given orders to visit the State the next day with the lawyer for a statement.” MRP president Mqondisi Moyo yesterday said Khanye was charged with contravening the Cyber Security Act.”⁹

In May 2024 *News Day Zimbabwe* states that: “MTHWAKAZI Republic Party (MRP) national youth treasurer Lwazi Khanye was on Tuesday this week reportedly arrested in connection with the party’s recent raids of apostolic sect shrines in Bulawayo. The raids began on April 24 and have been ongoing since then...”¹⁰

In March 2024 *Bertelsmann Stiftung (Germany)* mentioned the MRP: “Although the population is largely split into two ethnic groups (Shona and Ndebele), there are no major political actors or movements seeking secession. However, decades of discrimination against the Matabeleland provinces have led to the resurgence of the Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP), which seeks to create a sovereign state free from Shona political control. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the party represents only a minority position. This sentiment is reinforced by the fact that the Gukurahundi massacres in the 1980s, during which an estimated 20,000 people were killed, have never been resolved.”¹¹

Freedom House reported in 2024: “Groups such as Mthwakazi Liberation Front (MLF) are blocked from conducting memorial meetings for victims of the 1980s Gukurahundi massacres. The MLF is regarded by the government as a secessionist political party, and its leaders have faced persecution.

⁶ Southern Eye (12 September 2024) MRP petitions ICC, UN over rights abuses

⁷ ibid

⁸ Zimbabwe Situation (3 June 2024) Jail strengthened us: MRP ex-convicts

⁹ Zimbabwe Situation (31 May 2024) Mthwakazi youth leader ‘arrested’ over apostolic sect raids

¹⁰ News Day Zimbabwe (31 May 2024) Mthwakazi youth leader ‘arrested’ over apostolic sect raids

¹¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung (Germany) (19 March 2024) Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI) 2024 Country Report – Zimbabwe, p.5

However, the Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP) fielded candidates in Matabeleland and Midlands during the 2023 general elections.”¹²

The Zimbabwean (United Kingdom) in August 2023 mentioned that: “In 2020, nine Mthwakazi Republican Party members were jailed. Other activists and citizens who protest against or criticise the government have been arrested, unconstitutionally denied bail, and detained in horrific prison conditions, sometimes for months.”¹³

The *Asylum Research Centre (ARC)* in October 2022 reported that: “In second largest city Bulawayo, security forces 10 March arrested nine members of opposition Mthwakazi Republic Party who were protesting police raid on home of party leader Mqondiso Moyo previous night.”¹⁴

The *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum* in 2022 stated: “On 10 March 2021, Bulawayo Central Police Station officers fired live shots to disperse Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP) activists who had stormed the station protesting over the alleged harassment of their leader Mqondisi Moyo by state security agents.”¹⁵ It also reported: “In August 2021, members of the MDC-A, led by Joseph Mpofu, threw stones at the house of a Mthwakazi Republic Party member who had just hosted a political meeting at his house.”¹⁶

BBC Monitoring Africa reported in March 2022: “Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa has threatened to “shorten” the lives of individuals calling for an independent state in the south-wes, privately-owned Zim Online website reported. Speaking on 24 March at a campaign rally in Chitungwiza, the Zanu-PF leader singled out the small Mthwakazi Republic Party, which campaigns on a platform of a breakaway state covering parts of the Midlands and all of the Matabeleland provinces.”¹⁷

In *Voice of America News* from 2018 it was reported: “Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP) youth, who protested at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in Bulawayo while President Emmerson Mnangagwa was attending a church service saying he was part of the Gukurahundi massacres of the 1980s, were on Sunday allegedly beaten up by armed soldiers and police.”¹⁸

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¹² Freedom House (29 February 2024) *Freedom in the World 2024: Zimbabwe*, p.4

¹³ *The Zimbabwean (United Kingdom)* (29 August 2023) *Zimbabwe election: Poll heist closes door on economic recovery*

¹⁴ Asylum Research Centre (ARC) (October 2022) *Zimbabwe: Country Report*, p.84

¹⁵ Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (23 June 2022) *State of Human Rights Report 2021*, p.34

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.39

¹⁷ BCC Monitoring Africa (25 March 2022) *Zimbabwean president warns separatists*

¹⁸ *Voice of America News* (1 January 2018) *Zimbabwe Soldiers, Police Beat Up 10 Protesting Mthwakazi Republic Party Activists*

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