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COI QUERY RESPONSE

ZIMBABWE – OPPOSITION DURING ELECTIONS

In October 2024 the *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum* reviewing events of 2023 states that: “The year’s first politically motivated violence was documented as early as January 7, 2023. This set off what eventually became a restless year characterised by state-sponsored human rights violations. The proclamation of election dates heightened the situation as multiple election-related forms of repression were recorded. These ranged from abductions, torture, and arrests to outright killings. Opposition political activists, lawyers, members of civil society, and journalists were all under siege.”¹

A report issued in April 2024 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of 2023 includes stating that: “National presidential, parliamentary, and local elections held August 23-24 were widely reported to not be fair and free of abuses and irregularities.”²

In 2024 *Freedom House* reviewing events of 2023 states that: “While the MDC enjoyed considerable public support in the 2010s, postelection violence limited the opposition's ability to operate.”³

A report published in March 2024 by *Bertelsmann Stiftung* states that: “...the period from 1999 to 2008 was marred by state repression and severe human rights violations against MDC supporters and civil society. Subsequent elections were highly contested and extremely violent.”⁴

In February 2024 the *Carter Centre* states that: “...Zimbabwe’s elections since the country’s independence in 1980 have been characterized by the overwhelming use of violence and intimidation of voters and candidates, particularly by leaders and supporters of the ruling party and government security forces, including members of the army, police and the intelligence units.”⁶ The

¹ Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (7 October 2024) State of Human Rights Report – 2023, p.3

² United States Department of State (22 April 2024) 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe, p.13

³ Freedom House (2024) Freedom in the World 2024: Zimbabwe, p.4

⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung (19 March 2024) BTI 2024 Country Report Zimbabwe, p.4

2002 and 2008 elections, in particular, were conducted amid widespread political violence that resulted in the deaths and maiming of many Zimbabweans before, during, and after the elections...”⁵

A publication issued in August 2023 by *Human Rights Watch* states that: “Zimbabwe has a long history of election-related violence and serious human rights violations committed primarily, but not only, by the ruling ZANU-PF state security agents— including the army and police—and ZANU-PF’s political allies, dating back to the 1980s...”⁶

The *International Crisis Group* in September 2023 states that: “Zimbabwe has a history of electoral violence, with notable examples in 2008 and 2018”⁷

In September 2023 *Amnesty International* points out that: “Historically, violence has characterised the pre- and post-electoral periods in the country.”⁸

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International Crisis Group (17 August 2023) *What to Expect from Zimbabwe’s Tilted Polls*

⁵ Carter Centre (12 February 2024) *Final Report: Election Observation Mission - Zimbabwe Harmonized Elections, August 23-24, 2023*, p.17

⁶ Human Rights Watch (3 August 2023) *“Crush Them Like Lice”, Repression of Civil and Political Rights Ahead of Zimbabwe’s August 2023 Election*, pp.6-7

⁷ International Crisis Group (17 August 2023) *What to Expect from Zimbabwe’s Tilted Polls*, p.4

⁸ Amnesty International (29 September 2023) *Zimbabwe: Human rights under attack: A review of Zimbabwe’s human rights record in the period 2018-2023*, p.7

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