



23 November 2017

STATEMENT BY CNRG BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON THE RECENT ARREST OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS DURING OPERATION HAKUDZOKWI COMMEMORATION

The board of Directors of Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) wishes to set the record straight on the events that took place on Friday the 10th of November 2017 during the commemoration of Operation Hakudzokwi. Operation Hakudzokwi was a military crackdown on artisanal miners that reportedly left more than 200 artisanal miners dead in November 2008. The commemoration sought to remember those who died or suffered various forms of rights violations due to diamond mining in Marange as well as for survivors to narrate their stories. Over 3000 people attended the event, mainly from the local community.

CNRG, on 10 November, working in partnership with Bocha Community Diamond Trust and Chiadzwa Community Trust organized the 2017 commemoration which focused on violence against women. The Commemoration attracted over 3000 people which was a testament of the desperate cry for help by the people of this community. As a result of the important work of CNRG and other civic society organisations, including local Community Based Organisations (CBO) are doing in this community scores of villagers spoke freely about their tribulations – including ongoing brutality by security personnel of ZCDC.

The commemoration was disrupted by immigration officials with the back-up of Police who arrived and demanded to see foreign nationals allegedly to verify whether they had entered the country legally. When the foreign delegates who are members of People's Dialogue, of which CNRG is a member, presented themselves to the immigration officials they, together with 2 Bus drivers were taken to Bambazonke Police Station and later taken to Mutare Central Police Station. Although it was noted that all the foreign delegates were in the country legally the Police came up with an alternative charge of entering a restricted / protected area without a permit. CNRG Director Farai Maguwu was arrested when he went

to the Mutare Central Police Station to check on the activists who had been taken by Police and Immigration. They were made to pay a fine of \$100 each.

The presence of armed Police and immigration officials further traumatized the community members who were narrating the abuses they have suffered and continue to suffer at the hands of ZCDC personnel and police.

By cutting off the Marange community from the rest of the country and restricting entry in the community, government is violating the right to freedom of assembly and association as provided in Section 58 of the constitution. The right of people in Marange to choose who they can associate with has been severely curtailed.

This contradiction where a communal area that falls under several traditional leaders is declared a 'restricted area' created fertile grounds for abuse of the law which resulted in the disruption of a lawful and peaceful community gathering by immigration officials and armed Police. This violates Section 66(2) of the Constitution which provides for freedom of movement and residence.

By disrupting the meeting, government officials infringed the right to freedom of expression as enshrined in Section 61 of the Constitution.

As the Board, we commend and stand with the secretariat of CNRG and other civic bodies for standing with the affected mining communities in their quest for socio, economic, cultural and environmental rights. They continue to do this at a great risk to their personal security as evidenced by the heavy-handed response of the State to the Operation Hakudzokwi Commemoration

Trust Maanda

Chair of the Board, Centre for natural Resources Governance

Contact: Trust Maanda: 0772432646

Email: maandat@yahoo.com