



# ZIMBABWE LAWYERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ANNUAL REPORT

# 2025

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## INTRODUCING ZIMBABWE LAWYERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (ZLHR)

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) is a non-profit law-based human rights organisation that was established in 1996. Our core objective is to foster a culture of human rights in Zimbabwe and encourage the growth and strengthening of human rights at all levels of Zimbabwean society through observance of the rule of law.

ZLHR is committed to upholding respect for the rule of law and the unimpeded administration of justice, free and fair elections, the free flow of

information and the protection of constitutional rights and freedoms in Zimbabwe and the surrounding region. We keep these values central to our programming activities.

ZLHR holds Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. We participate actively in the work of committees of SADC Lawyers' Association and have affiliate status with the International Commission of Jurists.

### Vision

A sustainable culture of equality, respect for human rights, constitutionalism and the rule of law for a just and democratic society.

### Mission

To protect and promote human rights through litigation, education and advocacy.

### Values

Professionalism, Independence, Integrity, Inclusivity, Human rights.

### Our programmes

Constitutional and human rights litigation  
 Institutional strengthening, capacity building and rights literacy  
 Research and advocacy

### Aims and objectives

To strive to protect, promote, deepen and broaden the human rights provisions in the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

To strive for the implementation and protection in Zimbabwe of international human rights norms as contained in important sub-regional and international human rights instruments.

To endeavour to find common ground with, and work alongside, other Zimbabwean groups, organisations, activists and persons who share a broadly similar concern for, and interest in, human rights.

To liaise and work with other human rights groups wherever situated but particularly in Southern Africa, and especially those closely linked to the legal profession.

To do all other things necessary to promote and protect human rights, the rule of law and separation of powers in Zimbabwe and the region.

## INTRODUCING ZIMBABWE LAWYERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (ZLHR)

### The Membership

ZLHR is a membership organisation comprising of 170 lawyers with a proven track record in, and affinity for, human rights protection and promotion. Members are drawn from all provinces of Zimbabwe and our numbers are steadily increasing. ZLHR members involve themselves in activities of the organisation on the basis of their interest in human rights litigation, legal and rights-based education, research and advocacy. They donate part of their time and services pro bono to the organisation's activities and programmes thus reinforcing the work of ZLHR secretariat in expanding our reach throughout the country.

### The Secretariat

The organisation's secretariat operates from three offices located in Bulawayo, Harare and Mutare. ZLHR's legal support extends to all ten provinces through the services of full-time lawyers and the support of its member lawyers in private practice. The secretariat is responsible for planning and implementing the core activities of the organisation.

### Governance

ZLHR's Board comprises 10 members (6 senior lawyers in private practice, an accountant, a human resources specialist, a medical doctor and an Executive Director in her ex officio capacity). Members elect a board at the Annual General Meeting. The board comprises national representatives and regional representatives for Manicaland, Midlands and Matabeleland.

## BOARD MEMBERS



Rudo Magundani  
**Chairperson**



Denford Halimani  
**Vice Chairperson**



Tonderai Chitere  
**Board Member**



Roselyn Hanzi (Ex officio)  
**Board Member**



Trust Maanda  
**Board Member**



Chris Mhike  
**Board Member**



Thembile Phute  
**Board Member**



Servious Dzvimbbo  
**Board Member**



Godfrey Nyoni  
**Board Member**



Norman Matara  
**Board Member**

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 2025



Rudo Magundani

**Chairperson**



Roselyn Hanzi

**Executive Director**

The civic space remained extremely constrained and restrictive and this was exacerbated by the passing of the Private Voluntary Organisations Amendment Bill (PVO Bill ) into law which mandated all organisations to register as PVOs. Despite this, ZLHR worked towards fulfilling its mandate of fostering a culture of human rights.

The human rights situation was a cause for concern with no human rights protective reforms being undertaken. HRDs continued to be targeted with arrest and communities continued to suffer human rights violations from the actions of state actors.

ZLHR offered diverse legal services to numerous groups, including human rights defenders (HRDs), women, men, non-binary individuals,

young people, persons with disabilities (PWDs), organisations, and marginalised communities. The litigation efforts were complemented by advocacy at national, regional and international level.

ZLHR continued to collaborate with like-minded human rights organisations to provide holistic support to victims of human rights violations. ZLHR services remained relevant and the organisation continued with its critical interventions and provided legal support and services in human rights cases around the country.

The success stories and challenges of ZLHR interventions have been captured in this year's annual report.

## TAKING STOCK OF 2025: OVERVIEW OF ZLHR'S INTERVENTIONS AND BENEFICIARIES

In 2025, ZLHR continued to protect and promote human rights through litigation, education and advocacy. Unfortunately on 11 April 2025, President Emmerson Mnangagwa signed the controversial PVO Bill into law resulting in sweeping changes to Zimbabwe's regulatory framework for civic groups and non-governmental organisations.

The law which was gazetted as an Act of Parliament gives authorities extensive powers to monitor and control the operations of PVOs, including the ability to scrutinise ownership structures, funding sources, and affiliations. Despite this setback, ZLHR continued to offer various legal services to HRDs, political activists, students, marginalised communities and individuals that were arrested, persecuted and prosecuted by the state.

The protection and promotion of human rights remained critical as Zimbabwean authorities continued to weaponise the criminal justice system. While there was a decrease in arrests and targeting of HRDs in 2025, government continued to target HRDs who freely expressed themselves or intended to demonstrate.

The state targeted journalists for carrying out their work, which was a violation of the right to freedom of expression and press freedom. As usual, the Criminal Law (Codification and

Reform) Act and Maintenance of Peace and Order Act were used to charge and prosecute HRDs. ZLHR offered emergency and follow-up legal services to HRDs.

On the other hand there was increased environmental rights violations, accompanied by development-induced displacements and unmitigated environmental degradation. ZLHR responded by asserting the environmental rights of communities, despite a weak regulatory environment and political interference.

ZLHR's efforts paid off across the country with statutory bodies punishing companies for not following environmental protection processes. ZLHR engaged in public interest and anti-impunity litigation to promote accountability and transparency.

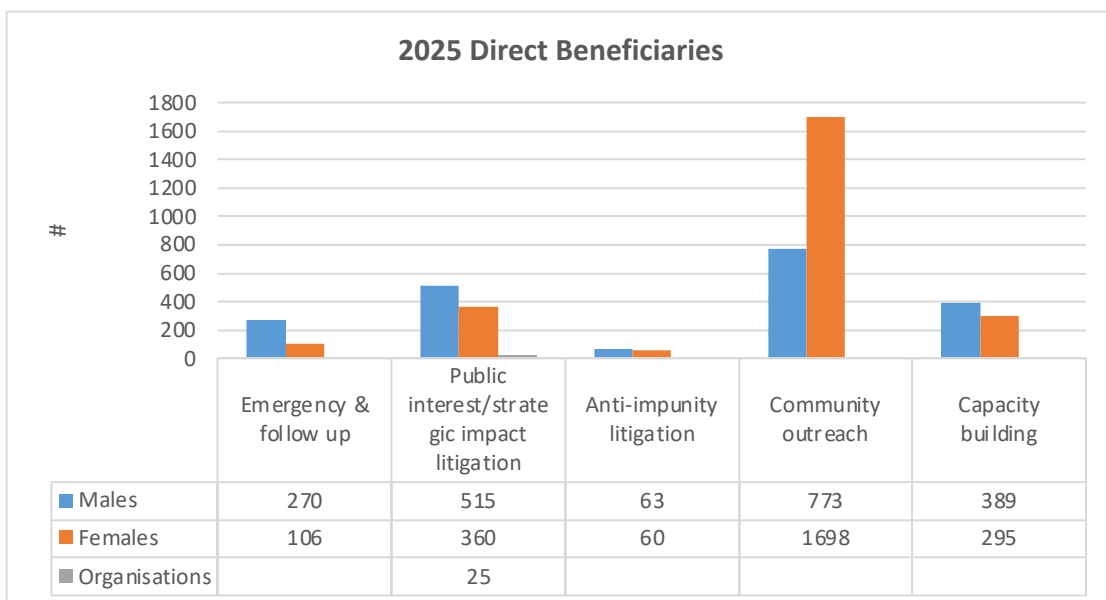
Communities were further empowered through human rights mobile legal aid clinics (MLCs), radio programmes and human rights materials to encourage them to participate in the human rights discourse.

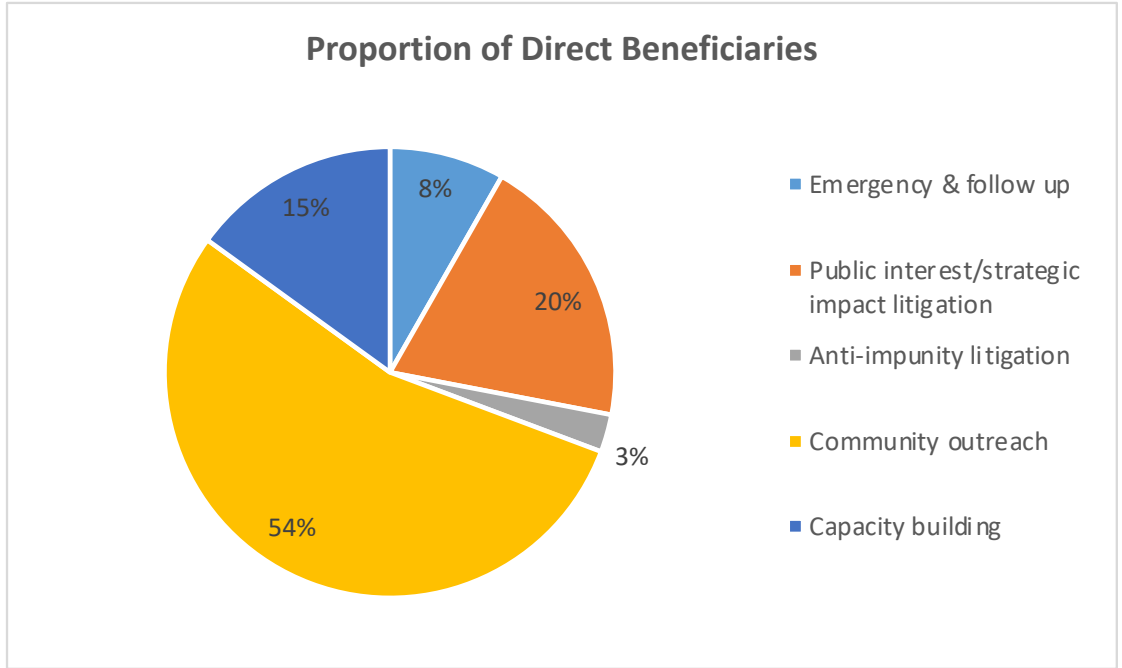
ZLHR produced and distributed copies of the Legal Monitor, the flagship ZLHR newsletter which amplified ZLHR's work in protecting and promoting human rights. ZLHR also continued various advocacy campaigns at national and regional levels.

# LEGAL SERVICES

ZLHR offered diverse legal services to numerous groups, including HRDs, women, men, non-binary individuals, young people, PWDs, organisations, and marginalised communities. ZLHR’s highlights were as follows:

- Direct beneficiaries: ZLHR assisted and supported 4554 (2010 males, 2519 females, 25 organisations) people and organizations through various services, including litigation, trainings and community outreach.
- Litigation support: 1399 (848 males, 526 females, 25 organisations) beneficiaries received litigation services and of these 376 HRDs were assisted in emergency and follow up support services.
- Community outreach and radio broadcasts: 2471 (773 males, 1698 females) people from rural and marginalized communities were reached through 19 mobile legal clinics (MLCs). ZLHR conducted 9 radio programs on pertinent legal issues affecting different communities.
- Capacity building: 573 stakeholders, including civil society organisations (CSOs), HRDs, lawyers and students were trained.
- Publications and information dissemination: At least ten publications were drafted and disseminated to stakeholders while 10 editions of “The Legal Monitor,” newsletter were published. ZLHR also released 56 information alerts and press statements, which were quoted by various online media.
- Advocacy efforts: The organisation utilised various platforms to advocate and address various human rights violations that bedevilled Zimbabwe. At national level ZLHR hosted meetings with Members of Parliament and government officials to address specific human rights issues such as right to identity. The organisation further participated at the Ordinary Sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) and United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) sessions.



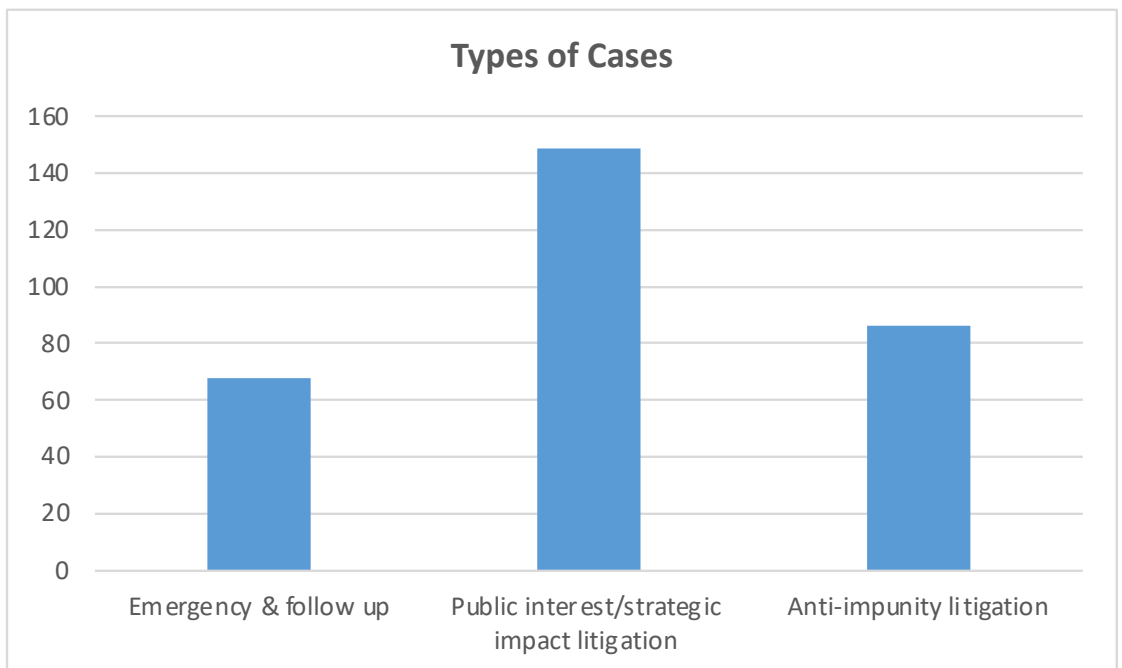


## ZLHR'S LITIGATION EFFORTS

ZLHR provided legal support to diverse target groups, including HRDs, political activists, students, lawyers, villagers, CSOs and members of the public who faced persecution and arrest for exercising their human rights. Legal services included emergency and follow-up services. ZLHR also engaged in various forms of litigation, including constitutional, strategic impact and public interest litigation to protect the civil,

political, economic, social, and cultural rights enshrined in the Constitution. In 2025, ZLHR took up more cases that protected communities whose environmental rights were violated mainly through illegal mining activities. ZLHR also sought justice for individuals who had been tortured and initiated legal actions against both state and non-state institutions as mandated by law through anti-impunity litigation.

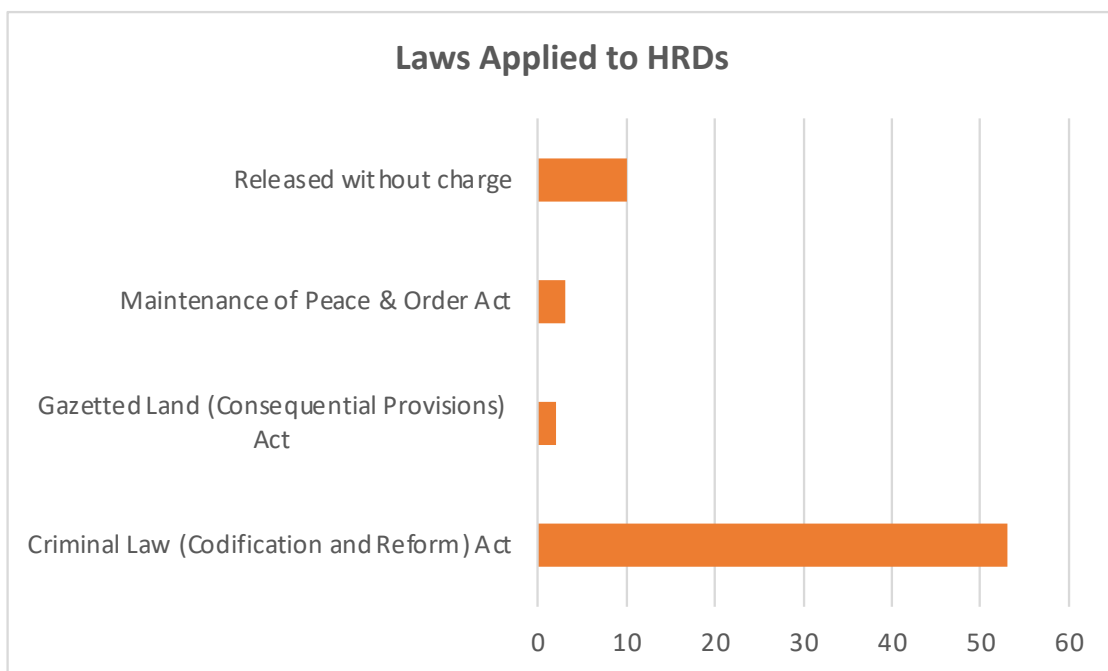
### Types of Cases Taken Up

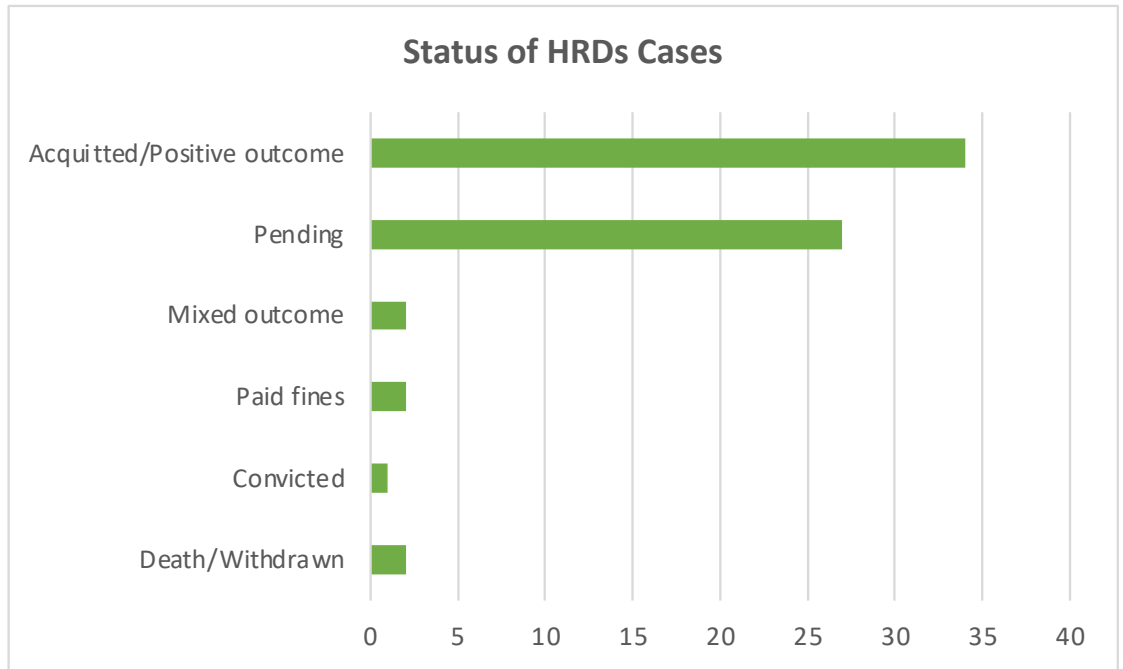


ZLHR provided essential legal support to beneficiaries who faced persecution for exercising their fundamental freedoms, including the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and petition. Through its legal services, the organisation protected these rights and safeguarded beneficiaries from malicious prosecution. ZLHR also pursued strategic litigation to enforce constitutional provisions relating to civil, political, social, economic and environmental rights. In addition, the organisation undertook anti-impunity litigation aimed at promoting accountability and supporting victims of torture to access justice.

Key highlights

- 303 cases handled in 2025 that benefitted 1399 HRDs, political party activists, students, lawyers, journalists, CSOs, villagers, trade union leaders and the public.
- Emergency and follow-up cases: 68 cases benefiting 376 individuals (270 males, 106 females).
- Public interest and strategic impact litigation: 900 beneficiaries (515 males, 360 females, 25 organisations) benefited from public interest, strategic impact and constitutional litigation.
- Anti-impunity litigation: 123 individuals (63 males, 60 females) were represented by lawyers to hold perpetrators including Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage, Zimbabwe National Army and Zimbabwe Republic Police accountable for their actions.
- A total of 526 (38%) of the beneficiaries in legal cases were women.





## CAPACITY BUILDING



Students attending a training session conducted by ZLHR

- ZLHR conducted 24 training sessions for CSOs, HRDs, lawyers, students and policymakers to enhance their understanding of human rights. A moot court session was conducted for law students from different universities in Zimbabwe.
- These training sessions benefitted 684 participants, comprising 389 males and 295 females.
- A total of 129 students received specialised training in human rights.
- 217 lawyers attended eight specialised training sessions aimed at improving their litigation capacity.
- Specialised trainings were conducted for HRDs to empower them on how to effectively assert their rights in line with the law.
- The various training initiatives heightened awareness of pertinent topics that contribute to the promotion of human rights.
- Among other benefits, participants gained a deeper understanding of human rights principles and their practical application.

**24**

Training sessions

**684**

Participants

**389**

Males

**295**

Females

## RADIO PROGRAMMES



*ZLHR lawyers during a radio programme hosted by Twasumpuka FM in Binga talking about the importance of legal services and the role of lawyers in protection and promotion of human rights*

ZLHR also empowered citizens through radio programmes that raised awareness about constitutional provisions, human rights and freedoms. These broadcasts complemented the MLCs initiatives and educated the public about their rights and protections under the Constitution.

- Nine radio programmes were conducted nationwide and equipped communities

with relevant knowledge regarding human rights as enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe and other international human rights instruments.

- Radio programmes enhanced public access to justice in cases of human rights violations and increased awareness of the available remedies for such violations.

## RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY



ZLHR undertook a variety of advocacy efforts at local, regional, and international levels to promote human rights in Zimbabwe.

- The organisation produced several position and policy papers on pertinent human rights issues including, Access to National Identity Documents in Zimbabwe and Gaps in Environmental Protection in Zimbabwe.
- ZLHR participated in strategic meetings, advocacy missions, and engagements with stakeholders, which included meetings with policymakers and government officials.
- The organisation leveraged its strong

presence on social media platforms such as Facebook, X and WhatsApp to disseminate information on human rights. It shared press statements, alerts, factsheets, newsletters, and infographics through these channels.

- Over the course of the year, ZLHR issued a total of 56 information alerts and press statements, documenting the human rights situation in Zimbabwe and, in some instances, providing real-time updates on developments in this area.

With regards to international and regional advocacy:

- ZLHR participated in the 83rd and 85th Ordinary Sessions of the ACHPR.
- ZLHR also attended sessions of the UNHRC.
- ZLHR also engaged in several strategic advocacy missions with various stakeholders.

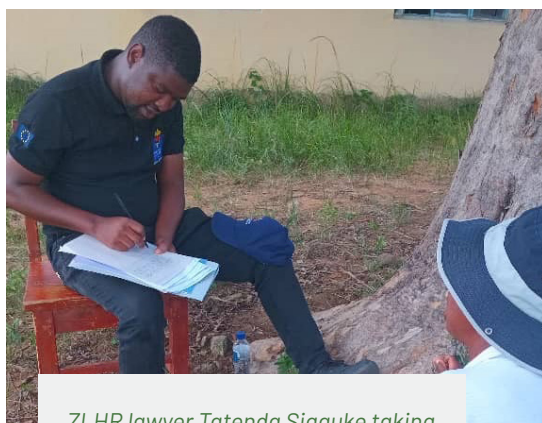


Information alerts and press statements

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH



*Some residents in Marange attending a ZLHR mobile legal clinic*



*ZLHR lawyer Tatenda Sigauke taking instructions from a potential client*



*ZLHR lawyer Emmanuel Chibwe attending to clients at a mobile legal clinic held in Mudzi*

- ZLHR implemented 19 MLCs across the country, benefiting women, PWDs, youth, men and other marginalised groups.
- The MLCs enhanced community knowledge of basic human rights and the Constitution of Zimbabwe and provided a platform for communities to seek legal aid on human rights issues affecting them.
- A total of 2471 individuals participated in the outreach programmes, comprising 773 males and 1698 females.
- Notably, 69% of participants were women.
- At least 286 participants received legal aid on human rights issues and were referred to appropriate service providers for further assistance.
- The outreach initiatives increased awareness of pertinent human rights issues that primarily affect communities.
- Participants gained knowledge on legal recourse available for accessing justice and seeking remedies for human rights violations.

19

Mobile Legal Clinics

2471

Participants

773

Males

286

received legal aid on human rights issues

1698

Females

## STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS



ZLHR Litigation Manager Tinomuda Shoko participating at a side event on enforced disappearances in the context of the defence of land, natural resources and the environment

ZLHR expanded its collaborative efforts with key stakeholders and partners through a range of activities, including:

- Engaging with international human rights bodies such as the UNHRC and the ACHPR.
- Participating in UN Working Group meetings.
- Attending networking conferences for lawyers, including the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Lawyers' Association meeting and the Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU) Annual meeting.
- ZLHR was invited to attend the Governance Sector Working Group meeting under Zimbabwe's Arrears clearance and Debt restructuring and resolution process.
- Collaborating closely with CSOs and community-based groups.

## SHOW CASES

### ZLHR secures landmark settlements for families of victims killed by soldiers



Jabulani Mhlanga of ZLHR assisted relatives of the Sibanda and Mpofu families, who got employed by ZNA

In a landmark legal victory, ZLHR secured settlements compelling the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) to compensate two families from Chisuma Village in Matabeleland North province whose relatives were unlawfully killed by soldiers five years ago.

The settlements, filed by ZLHR lawyer Jabulani Mhlanga and confirmed by the High Court in Bulawayo brought closure to the families of Morgan Sibanda and Dumisani Mpfu, who were both shot dead on 30 September 2020 by ZNA soldiers, who were on an official operation to enforce COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions at Chisuma Shopping Centre in Victoria Falls, Matabeleland North province in September 2020.

After years of court delays and stalled criminal proceedings, which saw one of the accused soldiers vanishing from custody before a scheduled court appearance on a different charge, ZLHR lawyers pressed ahead with civil suits demanding accountability and restitution from the army and the Ministry of Defence. Under a consent order, Langelihle Hadebe, Sibanda's widow, was offered employment as a casual worker at the army chalets in Victoria Falls, with a renewable two-year contract guaranteed until pensionable age.

She began working for the ZNA on 15 September 2025, five years after her husband's death. In a similar case, the ZNA offered and agreed to employ Mollen Mnkandla, a relative of the Mpfu family, under a two-year renewable contract until retirement age, a settlement endorsed by the court and implemented in September 2025.

The two cases are part of ZLHR's anti-impunity campaign that has seen the country's leading law-based organisation intervene on behalf of victims of human rights violations committed by both state and non-state actors to foster accountability and promote a culture of respect for human rights.

### **Chitungwiza Residents Trust (Chitrest) v Chitungwiza Municipality**



*Human rights lawyers Paidamoyo Saurombe, Tinashe Chinopfukutwa and Kelvin Kabaya represented CHITREST*



*CHITREST Executive Director Alice Kuvheya*

A landmark judgment by the Constitutional Court affirmed the constitutional protection against arbitrary evictions and the destruction of property without a court order, as provided for under section 74 of the Constitution. Representing the Chitungwiza Residents Trust, ZLHR successfully argued that the actions of local authorities, specifically Chitungwiza Municipality in demolishing houses without first obtaining a court order were unconstitutional.

In its ruling, the Constitutional Court held that sections 32 and 37 of the Regional, Town and

Country Planning Act, which the municipality relied upon to issue certain enforcement orders, are inconsistent with constitutional protections and have outlived their usefulness. The Court therefore directed that these provisions be repealed or realigned with the Constitution.

### ***Media Alliance of Zimbabwe & Zenzele Ndebele v Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs & another***

On 13 June 2025, the High Court declared section 22A(3) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Amendment Act, commonly known as the Patriotic Act, constitutionally invalid.

The Court found that the provision infringed several fundamental rights protected by the Constitution, including the right to freedom of assembly and association under section 58, freedom of expression and media freedom under section 61, political rights guaranteed under section 67, and the safeguards relating to revocation of citizenship provided under section 39.

The ruling underscores the importance of judicial review as a mechanism for safeguarding human rights and ensuring that legislation remains consistent with constitutional principles.

### ***Mellisa Chiyangwa v Commissioner-General Zimbabwe Prisons & Correctional Services & Others***

Melissa, who was heavily pregnant and classified as a high-risk patient, was detained at Chikurubi Female Prison on theft charges.

During her detention, she was denied access to her preferred healthcare providers and missed critical medical appointments. Her lawyers filed an urgent application challenging the prison's restrictive policy on access to private medical care.

On 6 August 2025, the court granted interim relief, allowing her to access private medical services. The ruling underscored the importance of safeguarding the health, dignity, and rights of pregnant women in detention.

### ***Esther Vongai Zimudzi v Stanley Chimanihira (Acting Chief Seke)***



*Obey Shava and Obey Chitowamombe represented Zimudzi*

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The High Court ruled in favour of Esther Vongai Zimudzi after she held traditional leaders accountable to their constitutional obligations. The High Court ordered Chimankire to retract his partisan statements in support of the ruling ZANU PF political party.

The High Court mandated the Minister of Local Government to disseminate the judgment through the National Council of Chiefs. By 25 August 2025, Chimankire had published a retraction in the state-run, The Herald newspaper.

***Gift Kapere & Jonathan Chimufombo  
v Labenmon Investments (Pvt) Ltd &  
Daniel Mlalazi***



The High Court fined Labenmon Investments, a Chinese-owned cement company, US\$3,000 for contempt of court after it continued operations in Hurungwe, violating an existing court order. On February 4, 2025, Justice Philda Muzofa ordered the company to cease work at its cement plant in Magunje pending investigations by the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) regarding breaches of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Certificate. Local villagers, represented by Gift Kapere and Jonathan Chimufombo, filed a contempt application on February 26, accusing the company of willfully ignoring the court order.

Subsequently, the EMA imposed a US\$5,000 fine for environmental violations. On September 30, 2025, Justice Muzofa ruled in favour of the villagers, mandating an immediate halt to operations and imposing additional sanctions on Mlalazi.

***Masvingo United Residents and Ratepayers Alliance  
(MURRA), Kudakwashe Mago v City of Masvingo & Others***

The High Court ordered the City of Masvingo to halt operations at a hazardous dumpsite threatening the health of local residents. On June 24, 2025, Justice Sunsley Zisengwe prohibited the city from using the Runyararo West dumpsite for waste disposal and mandated the EMA to enforce this order.

The implementation of the order will be postponed until December 31, 2025, allowing the local authority time to transition to the Cambria Farm landfill facility. This ruling followed a legal challenge by the Masvingo United Residents and Ratepayers Alliance (MURRA) and local resident Kudakwashe Mago, who contended that the continued use of the dumpsite violated residents' constitutional right to a safe environment.

### ***Tyra Chante Naidoo v Principal Director of Immigration and Others***

In a case concerning the constitutional right to freedom of movement, ZLHR assisted Tyra Chante Naidoo, who faced difficulties when entering Zimbabwe using her South African passport. Although she was born in Zimbabwe to a Zimbabwean mother, immigration officials treated her as a visitor and informed her that her permanent residence status had been nullified. She was further advised that she would need to pay US\$500 to obtain dual citizenship.

Due to the burdensome requirement of repeatedly renewing her stay, Naidoo sought legal assistance from ZLHR and filed an application in the Bulawayo High Court. On 19 June 2025, the court ruled in her favour, declaring her a Zimbabwean citizen by birth and directing that her South African passport be endorsed to reflect her right to reside in Zimbabwe without restriction.

### ***Stanley Mabasa v Chiredzi Town Council & Others***

ZLHR assisted 43 residents of Chiredzi who had been denied ownership of residential stands they purchased under a high-density housing scheme in Makondo, Tshovani Township. The residents instituted legal proceedings against the Chiredzi Town Council, its Housing Director, and the Minister of Local Government, Hon. Daniel Garwe, after the council failed to fulfil its obligations regarding stands purchased between 2013 and 2014.

In their application filed on 19 May 2025, the residents represented by Ross Chavi of ZLHR submitted that many had made substantial payments and received offer letters. However, the council later stopped accepting payments and failed to respond to their repeated requests for allocation of the stands. On 23 June 2025, Magistrate Diana Masiyiwa ruled in favour of the residents and ordered the Chiredzi Town Council to allocate the residential stands within 90 days.



### ***Felix Mafondokoto v Minister of Defence & War Veteran Affairs & Another***

*Felix Mafondokoto and his lawyer Kossam Ncube of ZLHR*

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### **Michael Mundandishe v Commissioner General Zimbabwe Republic Police & Others**

*Passmore Nyakureba of ZLHR successfully  
represented Michael Mundandishe*



Justice Sijabuliso Siziba of the Mutare High Court directed the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS) to promptly enhance conditions in their holding cells, which currently pose severe risks to inmates' health. This ruling stemmed from an application by Mutare resident Michael Mundandishe, represented by Passmore Nyakureba from ZLHR.

ZLHR sought to safeguard the constitutional rights of inmates enduring inhumane conditions characterised by inadequate food, water, and sanitation, leading to potential disease and death. Justice Siziba condemned these conditions as "devastating" and detrimental to human dignity, emphasizing that such violations degrade individuals to a sub-human status. Mundandishe initiated this legal action after experiencing these dire conditions during his detention in 2024, determined to prevent others from suffering similarly.

### **State v Benjamin Tongo**

In a case highlighting the protection of the fair trial rights of persons with disabilities, ZLHR intervened to assist Benjamin Tongo, a young man living with a mental illness, who had been charged with robbery after allegedly snatching a handbag from a woman in Lalapanzi in August 2025. While appearing before the Mvuma Magistrates Court, Tongo displayed behaviour suggesting he was unable to follow the proceedings, including laughing hysterically during the hearing. This prompted the court to order a mental examination, which confirmed that he had an underdeveloped brain and was suffering from a mental illness. Despite this, he was remanded in custody without any

opportunity to be heard on bail. On 8 September 2025, ZLHR lawyers appeared in court on Tongo's behalf and requested the court to proceed in terms of section 10, read together with section 26 of the Mental Health Act, which provides for the stay of criminal proceedings where an accused person is mentally unfit to stand trial. The court subsequently stayed the criminal proceedings and released Tongo into the care of his mother for treatment and support.

### **State v Simangele Singa & 4 Others**

Five Hwange villagers, who had spent two nights in police detention following their arrest for allegedly protesting against the extraction of water from a communal dam by a Chinese-owned power generation company were set free by a Magistrate, who granted them bail. The five villagers were arrested on 1 October 2025 in Diki village, Hwange, Matabeleland North province. ZRP officers accused them of obstructing employees of Zhongjing Helli Energy, who were reportedly laying pipes to draw water from Kalope Dam, a key communal water source.

The arrests of the five villagers intensified tensions between rural communities and foreign-owned companies operating in Matabeleland North province. Residents of Diki village have accused Zhongjing Helli Energy of depleting their only reliable water source, warning that water extraction from Kalope Dam will worsen shortages for domestic use and small-scale farming. The arrest of the villagers have been condemned and described as part of a broader pattern of state suppression of environmental activism.

### **State v Nodeshah Maingehama & 5 Others**

On May 12, 2025, six students from the University of Zimbabwe were arrested for protesting against demanding urgent action to resolve a protracted lecturers' strike that affected learning activities at the institution. Lawyers filed an objection to the admission of guilt fines imposed on the students, arguing that their right to protest was protected by law.

They highlighted procedural errors in the court's handling of the case. The court ultimately set aside the convictions and ordered a refund of the fines. This victory reaffirmed students' rights to free assembly and expression, empowering them in future advocacy.

## **ZLHR HOSTS INTER-UNIVERSITY HUMAN RIGHTS MOOT COURT COMPETITION**



ZLHR hosted an inter-university human rights moot competition on non-discrimination and rights of PWDs which was attended by 21 participants mainly students and lawyers. The competition was centred on the fundamental right to education and equality for PWDs, a cornerstone of Zimbabwe's legal and social commitments.

Four university teams participated from Ezekiel Guti University, University of Zimbabwe, Great Zimbabwe University and Africa University with each represented by two students and their coaches. The competition built a foundation for future lawyers to champion the rights of students that have disabilities and engage in effective policy advocacy. For ZLHR, Moot Court Competitions are not just simulations, they are a platform for nurturing vital legal skills and future legal advocates for justice.

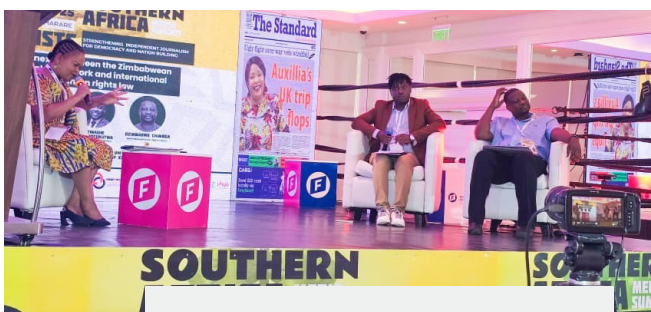
## HUMAN RIGHTS MARCH



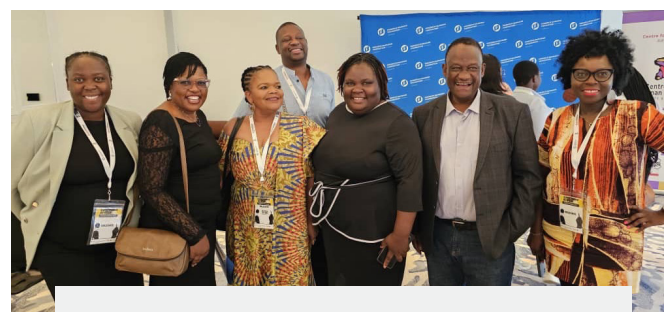
*Human rights defenders marching on International Human Rights Day*

On International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2025, human rights lawyers and defenders marched through central Harare calling for respect for the rule of law and an end to increasing human rights violations. The procession, organised by ZLHR, saw dozens of lawyers clad in their black gowns and joined by several human rights defenders. During the march, participants occasionally sang Bob Marley's Get Up, Stand Up while carrying placards demanding accountability from state institutions. Other placards denounced impunity and called for the enforcement of constitutional protections.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA MEDIA SUMMIT



*Southern Africa Media Summit Panels*



*Team ZLHR at Southern Africa Media Summit*

ZLHR participated at the Southern Africa Media Summit held in October 2025, which was a major regional event focused on strengthening independent journalism and which brought together journalists, media executives, and human rights defenders to discuss strategies to combat rising threats to media freedom, censorship, and financial sustainability.

ZLHR supported a panel discussion, where the human rights organisation collaborated with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and unpacked the link between the domestic legal system to the international human rights framework.

## KEEPING EVERYONE INFORMED

### Press releases/conferences

In response to the restricted and deteriorating human rights situation in Zimbabwe, ZLHR published 123 information alerts and press statements, which acted as an early warning indicator in flagging up human rights excesses in the country. The press statements were published in mainstream newspapers for wider circulation and were also circulated on ZLHR's mailing lists and on the organisation's social media platforms and assisted in conscientising citizens and spur them to assert their rights.

### Radio and Television Appearances

The media kept the spotlight on ZLHR's interventions to assist people in marginalised communities, who are pushing back against some violations committed by both state and non-state actors with ZLHR enjoying massive airplay on national radio stations and local and regional television stations educating people and explaining the safeguards provided under the Constitution, which protect them against exploitation of their rights, freedoms and property.

*ZLHR is exploiting its partnerships with community radio stations to reach out to and ensure access to justice to marginalised communities*



### Production of The Legal Monitor

ZLHR produced and published a total of 10 Legal Monitor newsletter editions, with 150 000 copies being printed and distributed across the country. As part of its innovation, one edition of The Legal Anti-Impunity Edition was also produced as a news broadcast edition and one edition of The Legal Monitor Community Interventions Edition was translated into vernacular languages namely Tonga and Ndebele.

*Some residents of Kalungwizi in Binga are keeping their community informed through accessing copies of The Legal Monitor newsletter*



### Impressions on social media

ZLHR consolidated its leading role of having the largest following on X among not-for-profit organisations in Zimbabwe with 183 468 followers in December, where the human rights organisations shared key information on the human rights situation to stakeholders and undertook some advocacy campaigns in Zimbabwe. On Facebook, who access and interact with the organisation's content on human rights, stood at 14 827.

## HONOURING ZLHR: AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

### NANGO Honours ZLHR

The National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) crowned ZLHR as the Human Rights Defender of the Year 2025. NANGO honoured ZLHR at an awards presentation ceremony held in November 2025 in Masvingo during the 15th edition of the NANGO Annual NGO Awards. ZLHR was voted as the winner of the Human Rights Defender of the Year Award after being nominated alongside Zimbabwe Human Rights Association and Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association.

ZLHR was recognised for standing boldly in defence of justice, offering legal support and protection to those whose rights are under threat. NANGO said ZLHR is one of the organisations that embody resilience and commitment in ensuring that civic space remains protected and inclusive.



*ZLHR Executive Director Roselyn Hanzi is joined by some CSOs leaders in celebrating after ZLHR won the NANGO Human Rights Defender of the Year 2025 Award*

## Sigauke Wins Walter Kamba Young Human Rights Lawyer Of The Year Award



*Tatenda Sigauke of ZLHR receiving the LSZ's Walter Kamba Young Human Rights Lawyer of the Year Award*

In December, the Law Society of Zimbabwe (LSZ) honoured Tatenda Sigauke, a programmes lawyer with ZLHR, as the Walter Kamba Young Human Rights Lawyer of the Year 2025 for his outstanding contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights in Zimbabwe. Sigauke was presented with the LSZ's prestigious award at the lawyers' regulatory body's annual Walter Kamba Rule of Law Lecture and Awards Dinner held in Harare in December.

In honouring Sigauke, LSZ said the legal practitioner had demonstrated a desire to work for the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. The human rights lawyer, who has interests in anti-impunity litigation and has represented several victims of human rights violations perpetrated by state and non-state actors in which they have been awarded compensatory damages, paid tribute to LSZ and his colleagues at ZLHR for tirelessly committing to defend, protect and promote human rights and to foster a culture of human rights in Zimbabwe.

## OUR PARTNERS IN 2025

European Union

French Embassy

Royal Netherlands Embassy

Royal Norwegian Embassy

The Students and Academics International Assistance Fund (SAIH)

Sigrid Rausing Trust

Trocaire Human Rights Consortium

Trocaire IATL

## OUR LEGAL ADVISORS

Shava Law Chambers

## OUR AUDITORS

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