

**A JOINT STATEMENT CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ZPP DIRECTOR,
JESTINA MUKOKO**

3 December 2008

We, the undersigned organizations, register our serious distress and concern on the news received this morning concerning the abduction of Zimbabwe Peace Project Director, Jestina Mukoko. Ms Mukoko was reported as having been forcefully taken from her home in Norton Harare, at 5am, this morning still wearing her nightdress. Her abductors are suspected CIO and police agents. The fifteen armed men were in plain clothes, driving a Mazda Familia with no registration plates. Mukoko's child, who witnessed the abduction, alerted fellow human rights organizations immediately and human rights' defenders are now checking at police stations in and around Harare to ascertain her whereabouts. We call for the immediate release of Ms Mukoko by Zimbabwean authorities. The Zimbabwe Peace Project has worked tirelessly over the last several years in systematically documenting violence and torture across the country through its network of Peace Monitors.

This development comes as the security situation in Zimbabwe continues to deteriorate, despite all political parties having committed themselves in the September agreement to ensuring that continued violations of human rights and the use of violence, abductions and torture will cease. The abduction of Jestina Mukoko follows the lifting of the ban on the operations of various civil society organizations. We condemn unreservedly the ongoing persecution of human rights defenders. As per the September 15 agreement, the ZANU PF regime has a responsibility to ensure that all state security structures respect the rule of law, that militia groups are disbanded, and that those responsible for these abuses are held to account.

The abduction of Jestina Mukoko is ample demonstration of the need for all stakeholders to intensify efforts to bring to an end the humanitarian and political crisis unfolding. We call on the South African government and other regional leaders to act decisively in this matter by demanding the immediate release of Jestina Mukoko and to further put pressure on the Zimbabwean government to abandon the use of terror and intimidation, and use every leverage at their disposal for the quick resolution of Zimbabwe's crisis.

Signed

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr)

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR)

Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa (IDASA)

Freedom House Southern Africa – (FHSA)

Heinreich Boll Foundation Southern Africa - (HBF)

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition South Africa – (Crisis Coalition)

Feminist Alternatives

Coalition for Peace in Africa, Western Cape

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ABDUCTED



Jestina Mukoko, the Director of Zimbabwe Peace Project, abducted on the 3rd of December 2008, 5:05am at her home in Norton, Harare by 15 armed men driving unmarked vehicles

Jestina Mukoko, a dedicated human rights activist and civil society leader, was born in 1957 in Gweru where she also grew up. She started her career as a teacher at Matinunura Secondary School in Mkoba (Gweru) before joining Zimbabwe Broadcasting Cooperation (ZBC) as a news reader. She later worked for Voice Of the People (VOP) .She also worked for Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET) as a Programmes Manager .Currently, she is the Director of Zimbabwe

Peace Project (ZPP), an organization that is involved in monitoring and documenting human rights abuses throughout the country.