

May 18, 1990

ZIMBABWE

Release of detained politicians

Members of an opposition political party detained in the central Zimbabwean town of Gweru have been released without charge. (See *News from Africa Watch*, April 12, 1990.)

Paul Razika, election agent for the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) in Gweru in the recent general elections, was arrested on April 5 and detained without charge under powers granted to the authorities under a 25-year-old state of emergency. The allegation against him was that he was recruiting people to engage in armed opposition to the government and that he was passing information to hostile powers. On April 25 he was released without charge.

On May 2, three other ZUM members, Jonathan Nyathi, Jerry Phiri and Lovemore Reketai, were also detained. Paul Razika was rearrested shortly afterwards. Lovemore Reketai was released after a few days, but Nyathi, Phiri and Razika were detained under emergency powers on the grounds that they were recruiting people to engage in armed opposition. Under the Zimbabwean Constitution it is illegal for anyone to be redetained on the same grounds within 180 days.

It is alleged that while they were in police custody Nyathi and Phiri were denied adequate food. On May 15, they were released without charge. On May 17, Paul Razika was also released.

Relations between ZUM and the ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), have been tense in Gweru since an incident on March 24 when the ZUM candidate, Patrick Kombayi, was shot and seriously wounded, apparently by intelligence officials. Paul Razika witnessed the incident, which may be why he has been the victim of subsequent harassment.

Newman Ndelela, a ZUM candidate arrested after the elections, appeared in court in Bulawayo on May 15 on a charge of illegal possession of arms. He was remanded on bail to appear in court again on July 12. His case is more fully described in *News from Africa Watch*, April 12, 1990.

Thank you to those who wrote letters on behalf of these prisoners in response to our earlier newsletter. No further action is needed on their behalf.

Africa Watch publications on Zimbabwe:

- * Lawyer and opposition politicians detained (*News from Africa Watch*, June 13, 1989).
- * Release of Detainees (*News from Africa Watch*, July 4, 1989).
- * Trade unionists and politicians detained; Government closes university, arrests student leaders (*News from Africa Watch*, October 12, 1989).
- * Government defies courts to hold trade unionist, students; University reopened but student activity curbed (*News from Africa Watch*, October 23, 1989).
- * A Break with the Past - Human Rights and Political Unity, (Africa Watch Report, October 1989), 109 pages, \$9.00.
- * Harassment of opposition party members; Africa Watch calls for election safeguards (*News from Africa Watch*, March 21, 1990).
- * After the general election; Opposition politicians detained and beaten (*News from Africa Watch*, April 12, 1990).

Africa Watch is a non-governmental organization created in May 1988 to monitor human rights practices in Africa and to promote respect for internationally recognized standards. Its Executive Director is Rakiya Omaar; Richard Carver is Research Director; Alex de Waal is Research Consultant; Janet Fleischman and Karen Sorensen are Research Associates; Jo Graham and Ben Penglase are Associates.

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