



## WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE ARISE TRUST (WOZA)

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Email: info@wozazimbabwe.org wozazimbabwe@yahoo.com  
Women for Women and with Women, across Race, Colour, Creed, Class or Political Persuasion.  
Empowering Women to be Courageous, Caring, Committed and in  
Communication with their Communities.

22nd November 2012

Officer Commanding Bulawayo Province  
Complaints Department or  
Community Relations Liaison Office  
C/o Zimbabwe Republic Police  
Southampton House  
**BULAWAYO**

### **Re: Bigotry, Tribal Insults, and Assault by Police Officer Mukoshi & ANOR on 13 November 2012**

Dear Sirs,

WOZA members have united to deliver this letter of complaint to the Zimbabwe Republic Police. We are doing this during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence and genuinely hope that you take us seriously and respect our right to peacefully protest. This complaint is due to the unlawful manner in which Reaction Police put down a peaceful protest near the Flea Market along 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue by H. Chitepo Street.

WOZA members, who continue to suffer from too many water cuts and usage penalties, decided to march to Mhlahlandlela Government Complex to deliver their complaint to the Ministry. Riot police, who we presume were under the command and orders of Inspector Chikozho of the Police Reaction Group based at Drill Hall, perpetrated violence against members. The police officers in question, who numbered approximately 12, drove a green Land Rover with Reaction Squad written on the vehicle. The vehicle was driving in the direction of H. Chitepo Street and the officers jumped from the vehicle and started to indiscriminately beat WOZA members. WOZA members were beaten harshly and without provocation. Three WOZA members had their shirts torn due to the forceful beating of baton sticks. In addition, four members underwent medical treatment and one suffered a fractured wrist.

As if the brutality of baton sticks was not enough, police officers lashed out with their mouths loudly, shouting insults and unnecessary abuse at WOZA members. WOZA members were proclaimed prostitutes and subjected to tribal insults, due to the simple fact that they dared to speak Ndebele. The insults shot out of the mouths of police officers like bullets from a gun. The officers refused to open the tail gate of the Land Rover and ordered the women to jump into the vehicle at a run, causing additional injuries. Mukoshi asked the now arrested women a question and warned them to answer in Shona – **'Do they have their own dams, and if not why are they asking for water?'**

Mukoshi, and his fellow officers, then carelessly opened still festering and unhealed wounds by ordering WOZA members not to speak to each other in the Ndebele language, saying that **'the Ndebele people were all killed off by Gukurahundi in the 1980s'**. Another discriminatory and deeply troubling statement confirmed a love for violence: **'this country was liberated by blood and only those who spilt blood can be the ones to talk.'**

Eleven WOZA women were arrested and driven to Bulawayo Central Police station, whilst being forced to sit down amongst the boots of the officers, they were subjected to frequent kicks. Upon arrival at Bulawayo Central, the Officer Commanding Chief Inspector Rangwani exercised a semblance of decency by refusing to detain those arrested, saying they should be driven back to where they had been arrested and promptly released. Little did he know, however, that his decency would be wasted by the driver of the Land Rover who then announced that he was dumping the 11 bruised and battered WOZA members in the bush at Ngozi Mine. But instead of the Ngozi Mine rubbish dumps, WOZA members were unceremoniously left at West Park Cemetery, along Victoria Falls Road, in order to 'make believe' they were corpses.

WOZA prays that Commanding Officers will understand that such actions and words by police officers who were officially on duty are highly discriminatory and unwarranted. WOZA has long highlighted the fact that there is a tribal element in the manner in which police in Bulawayo treat WOZA members. These sad and most recent events in fact confirm this discrimination by so-called "Peace Officers" in Bulawayo. PRG Inspector Chikozho also must be held accountable and responsible for what his officers carried out while on official duty.

WOZA calls for an immediate and transparent investigation into this incident. We also call for the arrest of police officer Mukoshi and his colleagues who participated in this violence, as well as the cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment that was inflicted on WOZA members. WOZA hereby provides the Bulawayo Province Command 7 days to investigate this matter and secure a proper arrest or we will have to take up the matter by other legal means. Alternatively, ZRP has a bad habit of giving the order to 'arrest and investigate'. This unlawful order could be issued as this is what ZRP normally does when a matter relates to WOZA members.

WOZA will not be turned away with request for us to make a formal complain because WOZA have made too many such reports. Even getting crime record numbers have not make the ZRP act on the unlawful behaviour of their officers in the past. We remember a complaint; Case number is IR 7900/11 about CPU officer in charge Sergeant J. Dzikiti. He insulted us by referring to a 'mothers body part,' which is a vulgar Shona swear word. To date, this instance has not been investigated and nothing has been done to discipline Dzikiti.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Williams  
Founder/National Coordinator  
Cc: Officer Commanding Bulawayo Central  
Cc: DISPOL  
Cc: PROPOL  
Cc: Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri  
Cc: Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights  
Cc: Southampton House Police complaints  
Cc: Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC)  
Cc: United Nations Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and Assembly

Signed as received .....

Name ..... Date .....

Signed as received .....

Name ..... Date .....