



## **Statement on the physical fight between Honourable Memory Mbondiah and Honourable Temba Mliswa.**

Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) is an independent Commission established in terms of Section 245 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. One major mandate of the Commission is to receive and consider complaints from the public and to take such action in regard to the complaints as it considers appropriate.

On Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2021, the Commission, through its complaints handling unit, received a complaint on Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) from Honourable Memory Mbondiah in which the Member of Parliament is alleging that she was physically assaulted by Honourable Temba Mliswa. The complainant alleges that on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2021, the Parliamentary Accounts Committee (PAC) – a committee which the two honourable MPs belong to – sat for parliamentary business. It is alleged that due to the sensitivity of the subject which was being discussed, the debate became heated resulting in a violent brawl among the PAC members with Hon Mliswa at the center of it.

Hon Mbondiah further alleges that upon discovering that she was filming the brawl, Hon Mliswa then turned to her in an attempt to forcefully grab her iPad with an intention to delete the recording. As she refused with her iPad, Hon Mbondiah allegedly concealed her iPad inside her bra. Hon Mliswa allegedly went on to dig his hands into her bra, grabbing her breasts in the process. Hon. Mbondiah alleges she then punched him in the face in self-defense. The complainant further submits that despite her efforts to protect herself and her iPad, Hon Mliswa managed to grab the iPad which he then smashed on the floor.

The Commission would like to unreservedly condemn all forms of GBV regardless of who does it, to whom it is done, where and why. The Commission also reiterates the call for workplaces that are free of sexual abuse in line with ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. While the Commission acknowledges parliamentary privileges, it cannot ignore any acts of GBV especially when complaints are brought to it. The Commission would like to call upon all parliamentarians to behave in a manner that befits their status in terms of responsibilities and influence.

Zimbabwe is also grappling with the rising cases of Sexual GBV and with that background in mind, it is disheartening to receive a case of SGBV from among parliamentarians, themselves a people who should be exemplary in their actions, behaviours and attitudes. Parliament should be one of the safest places for women as a way of encouraging participation and representation of women in politics and decision making.

ZGC would thus like to:

- Call upon parliament to thoroughly investigate this particular case through applicable laws and take appropriate action in line with procedures;

- Call upon parliament to review its own rules and regulations with a particular focus on ways to ensure personal security and bodily integrity through outlawing violence and harassment in parliament;
- Appeal to all Zimbabweans to desist from violence as a way of resolving disagreements.

The Commission will conduct its own investigations into the complaint in terms of Section 246 (b) and (c) of the Constitution and Section 4 and Part 3 of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act {Chapter 10:31}.

*For more information, contact ZGC Chairperson, Margaret Mukahanana Sangarwe 0712214203/ 0772869214, and Chief Executive Officer Virginia Muwanigwa 0712899543/ 0772327955*