



STATEMENT BY THE ZIMBABWE GENDER COMMISSION ON ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OF FEMALE STUDENTS BY TEACHERS AND NUNS AT MONTE CASSINO GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) is one of the five Independent Commissions established in terms of Section 245 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe and operationalised through the Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act [Chapter 10:31]. One of the Commission's functions, as provided in Section 246 of the Constitution, is to investigate possible violations of rights relating to gender.

On Friday the 15th of March 2019, local media reported on allegations of abuse of students by teachers and nuns at Monte Cassino Girls High School in Macheke, Mashonaland East province. The reports allege that one hundred and forty-five (145) students went to Macheke Police Station to raise a number of grievances against the school which include sexual harassment, verbal abuse and corporal punishment among others.

Section 81(1) (e) and (f) of the Constitution provides for the right to education and protection from maltreatment, neglect, sexual exploitation and any other form of abuse. Articles 3 and 4 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on Rights of Women in Africa, which Zimbabwe is a party to, provides for the right to dignity, life, integrity and security of person.

The Commission is disturbed by these serious allegations which indeed warrant full attention of the Commission. To this effect, the Commission has instituted its own investigation into the matter.