

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE ZIMBABWE GENDER COMMISSION

ON THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY – 10 DECEMBER 2025

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) joins Zimbabwe and the global community in commemorating International Human Rights Day, celebrated annually on 10 December. This year's theme, "Human Rights: Our Everyday Essentials," reminds us that human rights are not abstract concepts they are the foundation of our daily lives. They shape how we live, work, speak, relate, and participate in society.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) affirms essential rights for women, men, girls and boys. As ZGC, we however note that patriarchal norms perpetuate the subjugation of women across socio-cultural, economic and political spheres at private and public level. While rights to Adequate standard of living (Article 25), Freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19), Education (Article 26) and Rest and leisure (Article 24), are upheld, women and girls find themselves marginalised from these rights which enable ordinary, everyday acts walking freely, accessing clean water, spending time with family, enjoying sustenance, learning and/or working with dignity.

ZGC, created under Chapter 12, Section 245 of the Constitution is an independent body mandated to promote and protect women's rights alongside those of men. Our main job is to promote gender equality, make sure the Constitution's gender rules are followed, investigate gender-related violations, and hold government and institutions accountable. We also recommend actions to fix gender gaps and teach the public about gender and human rights.

Our work is guided by Chapter 4, which contains all fundamental human rights and freedoms. Section 2, which reiterates supremacy of the Constitution outlaws any contrary 'law, custom, practice and conduct'; Section 17 urges Gender Balance, Section 56 on Equality and Non-Discrimination, Section 80 on the Rights of Women and Section 81 on The Girl Child . These laws make it clear that gender equality is not optional.

Even though progress has been made, many women and girls still face serious challenges such as gender-based violence, discrimination, limited access to justice, economic hardship, harmful cultural practices, online abuse, and low representation in leadership. These problems affect the basic human rights that everyone needs to live with dignity and safety. As a nation, we must continue working together to protect these rights and ensure equality for all.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission calls for the full implementation of Sections 17, 56, 80, and the Bill of Rights; zero tolerance for GBV with stronger accountability; better access to justice for survivors; increased economic opportunities for women and girls; gender parity in leadership and decision making; protection of digital rights and online safety; expanded human rights education; and stronger institutional accountability to the Constitution. We reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that all Zimbabweans especially women and girls enjoy their constitutional rights with dignity, freedom, equality, and safety.

For Gender Equality,

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