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Building a sustainable human rights culture together!

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EXECUTIVE NOTE



As the August 2026 general elections draw near, the Human Rights Commission has stepped up its efforts to protect fundamental rights and freedoms.

The launch of the second phase of the Early Warning

and Early Response System on 5th March 2026 provides a platform for the reporting of incidents of political violence and swift response by the Commission and its partners.

To ensure meaningful citizen's participation in the electoral process, the Commission is also promoting access to information by providing oversight on the implementation of the Access to Information Act No. 24 of 2023, including awareness-raising and capacity building activities for information holders and requesters.

At the same time, the Commission has intensified nationwide stakeholder sensitisation activities to enhance understanding and appreciation of fundamental rights and freedoms related to

elections. These activities are targeted at political parties, law enforcement agencies, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations and the media in all the provinces.

The Commission also continued engaging law enforcement institutions to enhance compliance with human rights standards. These engagements are critical to ensuring continued collaboration with key justice sector institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Happy reading.

Mbololwa Wamunyima (Ms.)

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HRC-Z, UNDP sign EWER Phase II Agreement



HRC-Z Director General, Ms. Mbololwa Wamunyima (Fifth from left) poses with UNDP Resident Representative, Dr. James Wakiaga (6th from left) and Staff from both HRC-Z and UNDP after signing the EWER System Letter of Agreement.

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a Letter of Agreement to implement Phase II of the Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) System aimed at strengthening mechanisms for preventing violence, protecting human rights and supporting democratic governance in Zambia.

The agreement was signed on 5th March 2026 at the HRC-Z Headquarters in Lusaka and forms part of the Deepening Democracy Project (DDP), which seeks to enhance the monitoring, reporting and response to emerging human rights risks, particularly in the context of electoral processes.

Speaking during the signing ceremony, HRC-Z Director General, Ms. Mbololwa Wamunyima, said the agreement represented an important step in strengthening the longstanding partnership between the Commission and

UNDP.

She noted that the signing of the agreement was not merely a procedural milestone but a reaffirmation of the shared commitment by both partners to advance democratic governance, strengthen institutions and promote and protect the rights and freedoms of all persons in Zambia.

Ms. Wamunyima recalled the successful pilot phase of the EWER System implemented in 2021 under the “Strengthening Democracy in Zambia Project”.

The system was designed to identify, report, analyse and respond to threats and incidents of violence during the electoral process.

Through the EWER System online reporting platform, the Commission received and processed 328 cases related to threats or incidents of political violence during the 2021 General Elections. The reports were submitted from all ten

provinces of Zambia within two months of the system’s launch in July 2021, demonstrating both the relevance of the platform and the public’s confidence in the Commission as an independent national human rights institution.

The Director General disclosed that the pilot phase contributed significantly to strengthening the capacity of the Commission.

“Hosting the system supported the expansion of the Commission’s presence across the country, with new provincial offices established in Central, Muchinga, Luapula and North-Western Provinces, enabling the Commission to now maintain offices in all the 10 provinces. Additionally, the recruitment and deployment of 86 monitors across 81 districts strengthened the Commission’s operational footprint and improved its ability to monitor and respond to human rights concerns in communities,” said Ms. Wamunyima.

Further, the EWER System Situation Room facilitated structured information sharing and collaboration among key stakeholders, allowing for coordinated and timely responses to incidents that threatened citizens' rights, public order and democratic participation.

The second phase of the initiative came at a critical time as the Commission intensified preparations for the general elections and as Zambia continued to implement constitutional and electoral reforms.

"As a Commission established under Article 230 of the Constitution, our mandate compels us not only to react to violations but to prevent them. Early warning and early response mechanisms are therefore central to fulfilling our constitutional responsibilities," she said.

Meanwhile, UNDP Resident Representative, Dr. James Wakiaga, said the signing of the agreement marked a renewed commitment to preventing violence and strengthening democratic resilience through early detection and timely response.

He explained that Phase II of EWER System would focus on strengthening the system through the reactivation of the EWER Situation Room at the HRC Headquarters, the provision of mobile phones to field monitors to improve reporting, and training programmes aimed at building



HRC-Z Director General, Ms. Mbololwa Wamunyima (Left) shakes hands with UNDP Resident Representative, Dr. James Wakiaga after signing the EWERS Letter of Agreement.

the capacity of HRC staff and partners.

The new phase would also enhance public awareness through community outreach, radio programmes and digital platforms to ensure citizens are informed about reporting channels, including the toll-free line and online platforms.

Dr. Wakiaga emphasised the importance of adopting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach involving oversight institutions, security agencies, civil society organisations, tradi-

tional leaders, youth networks and community groups.

The initiative was supported by development partners, including the Governments of Denmark, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

Both the Commission and UNDP reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation in order to promote peace, protect human rights and safeguard democratic processes in Zambia.

Human Rights Commission to investigate “Sex for Adoption” allegations, as it calls for enhanced respect for human rights ahead of 2026 elections

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) has called for respect for human rights ahead of the August 2026 general elections, as it strongly condemns emerging reports of alleged sexual exploitation and violence against women in politics.

Speaking at the National Prosecution Authority (NPA) Prosecutors Conference held on 18th March, 2026, in Lusaka, Commission Chairperson, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo urged the victims to report all alleged incidents of “sex for adoption” for the Commission to conduct investigations and take appropriate action.

Dr. Sambo said the reported allegations, if proven, would constitute serious human rights violations that must be met with firm legal action.

She stated that the Commission on its part would invoke its statutory powers, including strategic litigation, to protect victims of sextortion, sexism, and cyberbullying if allegations are found to be true.

The Chairperson warned against inaction on the emerging allegation of



HRC-Z Chairperson Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo (left) during the National Prosecution Authority Prosecutors Conference in Lusaka.

“sextortion” as it would only promote impunity and increase the risk of reversing gains made toward promotion of women’s rights and inclusive governance.

Dr. Sambo reiterated the Commission’s concern over allegations of “sextortion” in a statement released to the media on 20th March, 2026.

“The Commission is appalled by such despicable acts of sexual exploitation and harassment against women, which constitute gross violations of women’s rights and have a profound and negative impact on women’s participation in politics. In the same vein, the Commission strongly condemns the use of misogynic language targeted at women on online media platforms by well-known and identifiable vloggers”, read the statement in part.

“The Commission is calling for immediate action to halt the spread of such sexist content on social media, as it perpetuates harmful stereotypes that undermine the integrity, participation and inclusion of women in politics. It should be noted that, in addition to undermining women’s credibility and reputation, the continued dissemination of gender-based misinformation may constitute an offence of cyber harassment or humiliation under section 22 of the Cyber Crimes Act, No. 4 of 2025,” the statement further stated.

Dr. Sambo said the Commission expected all political parties to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to sexual and gender-based violence and implement measures to create safe and inclusive environments for women, particularly during adoption processes.

Meanwhile, Dr. Sambo also called on

prosecutors to uphold professionalism, impartiality, and independence, cautioning against politically motivated prosecutions. She emphasized that prosecutorial decisions must be guided by evidence, legality, and public interest to maintain public confidence in the justice system.

Dr. Sambo observed that election periods often heightened the risk of human rights violation, especially against vulnerable groups, such as women, chil-

dren, and persons with disabilities.

She stressed the importance of safeguarding fundamental freedoms to promote free and fair elections, particularly the rights to life, personal liberty, freedom of expression, assembly and association.

Stakeholders at the conference echoed these concerns, highlighting barriers to women's political participation and the need for accountability within the justice delivery sector.

Justice Delivery institutions engaged on human rights compliance

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) engaged Justice Delivery institutions to enhance their compliance with human rights standards.

The engagements through courtesy calls paid by the Commission on the heads of key institutions in the justice delivery sector provided insights into the persistent challenge of ensuring protection of the rights of suspects and accused persons. They also provided an opportunity for HRC-Z to advance how law enforcement

agencies and related institutions can enhance respect for human rights in the performance of duties.

The Chairperson, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo, led the Commission in paying courtesy calls on the Drug Enforcement Commission, Department of Immigration, Judiciary, National Prosecution Authority, Zambia Correctional Service and the Zambia Police Service, which took place between 27th January and 24th February, 2026.

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The Human Rights Commission and Zambia Correctional Service Teams posing for a Group Photo during the courtesy call.

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She was accompanied by the Vice Chairperson, Dr. Felicity Kayumba Kalunga, Commissioner Panic Malawo Chilufya, Commissioner Laura Miti, Commission Director General, Ms Mbololwa Wamunyima and senior members of staff.

Speaking during the engagement meeting with the Drug Enforcement (DEC) Commission Director General, Mr. Nason Banda, on 27th January, 2026, the Chairperson said:

“The Commission has observed instances of pro-

longed pre-trial detention in drug-related cases. While recognizing that prosecutorial decisions fall under the mandate of the National Prosecution Authority, the Commission is aware that delays in taking suspects to court have, in some cases, been attributed to challenges such as delays in the availability of drug analysis and forensic reports within investigation dockets. The Commission is

keen to engage with the DEC to better understand the operational and systemic challenges affecting timely court appearances, with a view to identifying practical, human rights-compliant solutions.”

Noting the systemic challenges associated with pre-trial detention, Mr. Banda, said:

“The law needs to be revisited so that drugs can



Human Rights Commission Director General Ms. Mbololwa Wamunyima during the Courtesy Call at ZCS.



The HRC Team led by Chairperson Dr. Sambo, paying a courtesy call on the Department of Immigration.

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be tested before conducting an arrest on someone and locking them up... just in case someone [who has been arrested] actually isn't carrying drugs."

Mr. Banda added that DEC remained committed to upholding suspects' right to the presumption of innocence. He affirmed DEC's continued collaboration with HRC-Z in addressing matters affecting suspects in drug-related offences.

At the Department of Immigration, the Chairperson raised concerns over the prolonged detention of prohibited immigrants who had served sentences or paid fines, contributing to overcrowding in detention and correctional facilities.

Immigration Department Director General, Dr. Japhet Lishomwa, cited the difficulties in verifying identities of undocumented immigrants and establishing helpful contacts in countries of origin as some of

the challenges that caused delayed repatriation of prohibited immigrants, resulting in their prolonged detention.

Dr. Lishomwa committed to ensuring that the Department upheld human rights in all its operations, adding that more safe houses and transit homes were needed to ensure victims of human trafficking were kept separately and away from correctional facilities and other places of detention.

The Commission Chairperson, Dr. Sambo, highlighted concerns over overcrowding during a courtesy call on Zambia Correctional Service (ZCS) Commissioner General, Mr. Frederick Chilukutu, on 28th January, 2026.

"We have established that at the moment, Nchelenge Correctional Facility in Lupula Province is servicing both Nchelenge and Kaputa Districts, thereby being severely overcrowded, with numbers of persons in

detention far exceeding its original designed capacity," said Dr. Sambo, noting that the situation was not different in other correctional facilities across the country.

"This has resulted in inadequate sleeping space, excessive strain on sanitation facilities, and heightened risks to health, safety, and security. The Nelson Mandela Rules require that accommodation for prisoners must respect human dignity, including adequate floor space, ventilation, lighting, sanitation, and appropriate sleeping arrangements. Similarly, Article 5 of the African Charter on human and peoples rights prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment," she added.

Mr. Chilukutu, disclosed that deliberate and sustainable interventions were being pursued to decongest prisons and correctional facilities.

"Chair, the issue of congestion in our facilities, especially Lusaka Central and Nchelenge as you have rightly observed, is of significant importance to us. We are very concerned about it," said Mr. Chilukutu, stressing that the Correctional Service was working round the clock to come up with practical measures of reducing overcrowding.



The Commission Chairperson, Dr. Sambo, (Left) with Zambia Correctional Service (ZCS) Commissioner General, Mr. Frederick Chilukutu during the courtesy call on ZCS.

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The Commission Vice-Chairperson, Dr. Felicity Kayumba Kalunga (Seated second from left) during a courtesy call on the Zambia Police Service Deputy Inspector-General (Administration), Ms. Charity Munganga (Seated in the middle).

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On 30th January 2026, the Vice-Chairperson, Dr. Felicity Kayumba Kalunga, led the Commission in paying a courtesy call on the Zambia Police Service Deputy Inspector-General (Administration), Ms. Charity Munganga.

During the courtesy call, a number of human rights concerns were raised regarding police conduct, including extra-judicial killings, torture, ill-treatment and over-detention of suspects.

Ms. Charity Munganga said allegations of police misconduct were taken seriously and affirmed the commitment of the Zambia Police to upholding the Bill of Rights.

Further, the Chairperson paid a courtesy call on the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Mr. Gilbert Phiri, on 2nd February, 2026. Dr. Sambo highlighted that delay in public prosecutions

impacted negatively on the rights of accused persons, particularly the rights to a fair trial, secure protection of the law and personal liberty.

The DPP stated that practical steps were being taken to improve efficiency, including the roll-out of a digital case management system that will enhance docket tracking and reducing case backlogs.



HRC Chairperson Dr. Sambo (Left) with Director of Public Prosecutions Mr. Gilbert Phiri during a courtesy call

The Commission wrapped up its engagement with

stakeholders in the justice delivery sector with a courtesy call on the Chief Justice, Hon. Dr. Mumba Malila, SC on 24th February, 2026.

Sharing the Commission's concerns regarding access to justice, Dr. Sambo outlined challenges that impacted the right to fair trial, such as prolonged pre-trial detention, frequent adjournments, delays in committal and case progression, missing or incomplete court records, and inadequate courtroom space and related infrastructure.

Hon. Dr. Mumba Malila, SC, said the Judiciary was adopting several measures aimed at making the courts more efficient, including the installation and operationalisation of a digital case management system.



HRC Chairperson Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo confers with Chief Justice Hon. Dr. Mumba Malila SC during a courtesy call

“Efficiency of the judiciary ensures the guarantee of the enjoyment of human rights and deepens democracy,” said the Chief Justice.

Apart from digital reforms, the Judiciary was prioritizing the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), plea bargaining, and fast-

track and mobile courts to reduce judges and magistrates’ caseloads.

HRC-Z calls for accelerated compliance with Access to Information Act

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) called on information holders to accelerate efforts towards full compliance with the Access to Information (ATI) Act, No. 24 of 2023, before the expiration of the grace period on 25th June, 2026.

In a statement issued to



HRC-Z Chairperson Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo

the media on 8th January, 2026, Commission Chairperson, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo, emphasized the importance of aligning institutional systems, processes, and records management practices with the provisions of the ATI Act to guarantee citizens’ access to information.

The ATI Act came into force on 25th June 2024 following the issuance of the Commencement Order under Statutory Instrument No. 35 of 2024. The law provides for a two-year progressive compliance period, ending on 25th June 2026, during which information holders were expected to take urgent steps to ensure their readiness.

At a minimum, information holders are required to proactively disclose key information, including their organisational structures, mandates, functions, and contact details. This infor-

mation was to be made readily accessible to the public through digital platforms or print formats to enhance service delivery and public engagement.

The Commission further cautioned that once the compliance period lapsed, it would begin enforcing administrative penalties against non-compliant information holders. The measure was intended to strengthen adherence to the ATI Act.

To support implementation, the Access to Information (General) Regulations were developed and issued under Statutory Instrument No. 56 of 2025, and the Access to Information Guidelines published in the Government Gazette on 5th December 2025. These instruments provide detailed guidance on compliance requirements and procedures for handling information requests.

HRC-Z conducts inspections of detention and correctional facilities to strengthen human rights protection

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) continued its inspection of correlational facilities and other places of detention to promote and protect the rights of persons deprived of liberty.

The inspections, which commenced in December 2025 and continued through March 2026, covered correctional facilities and police stations in nine provinces including Central, Copperbelt, Eastern, Luapula, Muchinga, Northern, North-Western, Western and Southern.

The Commission assessed conditions of detention and compliance with national, regional, and international human rights standards. It observed a number of recurring challenges, including overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, poor ventilation, and insufficient separation of detainees.

In some facilities, congestion was found to compromise access to basic services such as sanitation, sleeping space, and healthcare, raising concerns about the dignity and safety of inmates.

A notable concern that emerged across several provinces was the welfare of law enforcement and correctional service officers. Officers highlighted the difficult conditions under which they operate, including outdated infrastructure and limited resources, which affect both their well-being and their ability to effectively carry out their duties.

The Commission noted that improving working conditions for officers is critical to ensuring better management of detention facilities and the protection of detainees' rights.

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HRC-Z Staff with ZCS Eastern Province Deputy Commanding Officer, Mr. Stephen Nyendwa (third from left) after a courtesy call on his office.



Inmates at Livingstone Correctional Facility attending classes

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Despite these challenges, the Commission commended officers for their professionalism and resilience, often maintaining order and ensuring basic standards in difficult circumstances.

The inspections also provided an opportunity for direct engagement with key stakeholders, including the Zambia Police Service and the Zambia Correctional Service. These engagements enabled the Commission to better understand operational constraints and identify practical

solutions to address systemic issues.

In addition, the Commission reiterated the importance of adhering to legal safeguards, including the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, the right to humane conditions of detention, and the need to avoid prolonged or arbitrary detention. Special attention was also drawn to the treatment of vulnerable groups, such as juveniles and women, who require appropriate separation and protection.



HRC-Z Staff with Livingstone District Criminal Investigations Officer, Mr. Boston Njibwe (third from left), after inspection of cells at Livingstone Central Police Station

Church key to promotion of human rights ahead of 2026 polls and beyond

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) has called on the church to take a lead in the promotion of human rights to help create and sustain a peaceful environment for holding the 2026 general election.

Speaking on 12th February 2026 at a seminar held by Light and Life Bible Institute in Lusaka, HRC-Z Manager for Human Rights Advocacy, Mr. Simon Mulumbi said that the church had an inescapable duty and moral authority to educate their members and the general public on human rights to help build a human rights culture in Zambia.

Mr. Mulumbi said that the role of the church was key to ensuring that everyone was aware of and able to understand and enjoy their rights, while respecting the rights and freedoms of others.

He said respect for rights and freedoms was also key to promoting and maintaining peace in a democratic society like Zambia.

He also emphasized that respecting rights and freedoms, such as the right to life; access to information;



Mr. Simon Mulumbi, Manager-Human Rights Advocacy engaging the clergy at the Light and Bible Institute in Lusaka

freedom of expression; freedom of assembly and association; protection of personal liberty; protection from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and protection from discrimination is at the core of holding free and fair elections.

Mr. Mulumbi called upon the church to continue playing its noble role of caring for and protecting the vulnerable in society, especially the elderly, children, women and persons

with disabilities, ensuring they are treated with dignity and have their rights respected.

Meanwhile, the Principal of Light and Life Bible Institute, Dr. Bishop Humphrey Banda, praised HRC-Z for the role it continued to play in promoting and protecting human rights of all people.

Bishop Banda called upon the clergy to use the knowledge and information received during the seminar to promote respect for human rights in the communities.

HRC-Z Intensifies Stakeholder Engagements on Elections and Human Rights



HRC-Z Manager-Human Rights Advocacy, Mr. Simon Mulumbi (in a necktie), with Chinsali District Commissioner, Ms. Brendah Silwembe (In Chitenge dress) pose for a photo with stakeholders during human rights and elections stakeholder engagement meeting in Chinsali

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) has stepped up stakeholders' engagements on elections and human rights ahead of the 13th August 2026 general election.

HRC-Z held dialogue meetings with



A Stakeholder asking a question during the Luangwa Stakeholder engagement on human rights and elections

stakeholders in Chinsali, Chipata, Luangwa, Mongu and Ndola to enhance understanding and appreciation of fundamental rights and freedoms related to elections.

The dialogue meetings have been attended by political parties, law enforcement agencies, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations and the media.

On 24th January 2026, HRC-Z convened a sensitisation meeting at Chief Mphuka's palace in Luangwa District of Lusaka Province.

Speaking during the meeting, Chief Mphuka of the Chikunda people called on traditional leaders and other stakeholders to champion peace, unity and respect for human rights throughout the electoral period.



Director-Education, Training and Advocacy (ETAD) Mr. Mwelwa Muleya making a presentation on human rights and elections during the engagement meeting held in Mongu.



A stakeholder highlighting her point during the stakeholder engagement meeting on human rights and elections in Mongu.

In agreeing with the Chief, HRC-Z Manager for Human Rights Advocacy, Mr. Simon Mulumbi, underscored the need for enhanced respect for, and protection of, fundamental rights and freedoms of the electorate and those vying for public of-

fice during the forthcoming elections.

The engagements continued in Mongu on 3rd February 2026, where HRC-Z's Director for Education, Training and Advocacy, Mr. Mweelwa Muleya explained that participatory rights, such as the

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HRC-Z team led by Mr. Simon Mulumbi, Manager-Human Rights Advocacy engaging stakeholders during the Human Rights and Elections engagement meeting in Luangwa

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right to participate, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, access to information and the right to vote, enable citizens to effectively take part in public affairs.

“Political parties should be allowed to participate in elections without fear or

intimidation. People must be free to vote for a party or candidate of their choice,” he said.

In Chinsali, a stakeholders’ dialogue meeting was held on 6th February 2026. The District Commissioner, Ms. Brendah Silwembe, who was the guest of honour

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Director-ETAD Mr. Mwelwa Muleya having a light moment before the commencement of the engagement meeting in Mongu.



Western Province Complaints and Investigations Officer Ms. Florence Lifumbo welcoming stakeholders at the Human Rights and Elections engagement meeting in Mongu.



HRC-Z Staff and Stakeholders pose for a Picture after a Stakeholders engagement meeting in Ndola



HRC-Z Manager- Human Rights Advocacy engaging stakeholders on elections and human rights in Chinsali



A stakeholder engages Ms. Lucy B. Munthali, Senior Education and Training Officer during the Human Rights and Elections Stakeholders Engagement Meeting in Chinsali

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called on citizens and institutions alike to identify existing gaps and strengthen mechanisms that safeguard the rights and dignity of all citizens ahead of the polls.

On 13th February 2026, a stakeholders' engagement meeting was held in Ndo-la. Speaking during the engagement, Mr. Muleya called for the protection of press freedom, noting that the media plays a



Stakeholders paying attention to proceedings during the Human Rights and Elections Stakeholders Engagement Meeting in Chinsali

critical role in ensuring balanced and equitable coverage of all political players.

He urged media institutions to uphold professionalism and fairness to enable voters to make informed choices.

In Chipata, the stakeholders' engagement meeting was conducted on 6th March 2026.

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Facilitating the dialogue, Mr. Mulumbi stressed the growing importance of digital platforms in advancing freedom of expression. However, he cautioned that the exercise of freedom of expression should not infringe on the rights of others.

Adding to the call for peaceful elections, Eastern Provincial Chairperson for the Council of Churches in Zambia, Reverend Sonye Banda, urged stakeholders to uphold the rule of law, respect electoral processes and work collectively to safeguard the country's democracy.

Through these engagements, HRC-Z reached over 250 stakeholders, including representatives from political parties, civil society organisations, the cler-

gy, media, traditional leadership, law enforcement officers and other government officials.



HRC-Z Education and Training Officer Mrs. Precious C. Kalima making a presentation on the mandate of the Commission during the human rights in Ndola



HRC-Z Director-Education, Training and Advocacy Department engaging stakeholders on elections and human rights in Ndola



A stakeholder engages engaging Mrs. Chola Waluzimba, Complaints and Investigations Officer during the Human Rights and Elections Stakeholders Engagement Meeting in Ndola



HRC Team posing for a group photo during the Human Rights and Elections Engagement meeting in Chipata

Zambia Commemorates International Women's Day

On Sunday, 8th March 2026, Zambia joined the rest of the world in commemorating International Women's Day at the Lusaka Showgrounds, with President Hakainde Hichilema gracing the event as Guest of Honour.

The national commemoration which was celebrated under the theme: **"Rights. Justice. Action. For All Women and Girls"** brought together government officials, diplomats, Cooperating Partners, civil society organisations and members of the public to celebrate progress made in advancing the rights of women and girls while reflecting on the work that still lie ahead.

Speaking during the event, President Hichilema reaffirmed government's commitment to promoting gender equality and ensuring that women and girls are fully included in national development.

The President highlighted a number of reforms undertaken by his administration, including free education, strengthened laws addressing gender-based violence, and constitutional reforms aimed at increasing the participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities



Human Rights Commission Chairperson, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo Delivering the Vote of Thanks during the Commemoration

in governance. He stressed that empowering women is critical to Zambia's social and economic progress.

Meanwhile, United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator, Ms. Beatrice Mutali also stressed the importance of collective action in advancing women's rights. She noted that this year's themecalls for concrete steps to address persistent inequalities affecting women and girls, particularly those in rural and vulnerable communities.

Ms. Mutali reaffirmed the UN's commitment to supporting Zambia's efforts to strengthen legal protections, expand economic opportunities and ensure access to justice for all women and girls.

Delivering the Vote of Thanks, Human Rights Commission

Chairperson, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo, described the commemoration as more than a celebration, but a re-affirmation of the country's constitutional and moral duty to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of women and girls.

Dr. Sambo acknowledged progress made by government in strengthening laws against gender-based violence, combating child marriage and expanding access to education.

However, she also noted that systemic challenges such as poverty, long distances to schools and limited facilities for handling gender-based violence cases continue to hinder the full realisation of women's and girls' rights.

Dr. Sambo further called for sustained collaboration among government, civil society, traditional leaders and Cooperating Partners to dismantle entrenched inequalities.

She concluded by thanking the President, the United Nations and the women's movement in Zambia for their continued commitment to advancing gender equality and justice.



HRC-Z members of staff during the International Women's Day Commemoration in Lusaka

HRC-Z Chairperson extols Bishop Chikoya's virtues at CCZ farewell service



Dignitaries led by HRC-Z Chairperson Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo after the farewell service at the Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Lusaka

Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) Chairperson, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo, has described outgoing Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) General Secretary, Bishop Emmanuel Chikoya, as a principled and courageous leader who devoted his time to the service of God and protection of vulnerable people.

Dr. Sambo was speaking at the farewell service held on the 31st of January 2026, at the Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Lusaka in honour of Bishop Chikoya's eight-year service as CCZ General Secretary.

The HRC-Z Chairperson, who was the Guest of Honour at the farewell service, said Bishop Chikoya was a model for servant leadership.

"Bishop Chikoya consistently used his platform as a prophetic voice, advocating for human rights, social justice, and protection of vulnerable groups amid Zambia's social and economic challenges," Dr. Sambo said.

The Chairperson praised Bishop Chikoya for his tireless service as CCZ General Secretary and Human Rights Commissioner, the roles he played with integrity, moral courage, and professionalism.

She said CCZ grew stronger and became more resilient

and firmly anchored in its core values under Bishop Chikoya's leadership.

In the same vein, CCZ President, Rev. Ackson Banda, described Bishop Chikoya as a selfless, principled and deeply committed servant of God.

Rev. Banda said, "Bishop Chikoya strengthened ecumenical unity, promoted dialogue, mutual respect, prayer, and guided the Council through challenging moments with wisdom and humility."

He added that Bishop Chikoya was leaving behind a strong legacy, reflected in improved relationships and institutional resilience.

Delivering his farewell sermon, Bishop Chikoya said that his work was an awkward, but necessary ministry as it required him to speak truth to



HRC-Z Chairperson Dr. Sambo delivering a key note address at Bishop Chikoya's farewell service



Bishop Chikoya delivering a sermon at his farewell service

power for the protection of the interests of many vulnerable Zambians.

Bishop Chikoya called for peace and the uprooting of negative vices, such as corruption, injustice, tribalism, moral decay, and abuse of authority, and urged the clergy to minister the truth to those in authority.

Bishop Chikoya's farewell service was attended by distinguished men and women from the church and civil society, all walks of life including the Vice Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission, Dr. Felicity Kayumba Kalunga, was also part of the grand event.

The Bishop is now serving the nation in his new role as Bishop of the Anglican Central Diocese of Zambia and continues as Commissioner of the HRC-Z. Canon Rev. James Phiri took over as CCZ General Secretary.



HRC-Z Promotes Human Rights in Schools

On Friday, 6th March 2026, the Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRC-Z) engaged members of the Human Rights Club at Kasama Boys Secondary School in Northern Province as part of its ongoing efforts to promote and strengthen the understanding of human rights among young people, particularly learners in schools.

The engagement provided an opportunity for the Commission to interact directly with learners and discuss the importance of human rights, responsibilities, and the role young people can play in promoting respect for the rights and dignity of others within their schools and communities.

During the session, learners were sensitised on various human rights issues affecting young people, including the importance of equality, respect for the rights of others, and the need to speak out against practices that undermine human dignity.

In Lusaka, HRC-Z had a hu-

man rights sensitisation session at Briccho Academy on 18th March 2026, where Senior Education and Training Officer, Ms. Lucy Munthali, urged learners to take an active role in safeguarding their rights.

“Regardless of your age, HRC-Z has a constitutional mandate to promote and protect your rights. When your rights, or those of others around you, are violated or abused, report to us by dialing 8181 toll-free,” Ms. Munthali said.

Meanwhile, Education and Training Officer, Mrs. Precious Kalima, outlined key rights that children are entitled to, including the right to life, education, parental care, identity, privacy, protection from discrimination, sexual and substance abuse.

Mrs. Kalima emphasised that children have the responsibility to respect the rights of other people as they enjoy their rights, noting that rights and responsibilities go hand-in-hand.

Speaking on behalf of the pupils, 12-year-old Tapiwa Banda welcomed the engagement, saying it had helped learners better understand their rights and how to act when those rights are threatened.

And Briccho Academy Head Teacher, Mr. Samson Chiyawa, said the knowledge acquired will have a lasting impact beyond the school, as learners share knowledge within their communities.

During the session, learners were also guided on how to lodge complaints, with the Commission highlighting its legal standing and quasi-judicial powers in handling human rights violations.

The sensitisation session, attended by 69 pupils and six staff members, forms part of HRC-Z’s ongoing outreach programme aimed at promoting a culture of human rights awareness and accountability across the country.

Maintaining a Disciplined School Without Corporal Punishment

Despite corporal punishment being outlawed in Zambia, recent incidents suggest the practice persists in some schools. This underscores the need for a renewed focus on maintaining discipline in ways that promote academic excellence without harming learners.

A key starting point is distinguishing between punishment and discipline.

Punishment often relies on fear, pain, or humiliation and tends to focus on past wrongdoing, while discipline is grounded in calm guidance, correction and reasoning, with an emphasis on helping learners improve future behavior.

Managing schools without corporal punishment is not only possible but also more effective in building lasting responsibility, respect and self-discipline.

This approach aligns with international and regional human rights standards on child protection.

In practice, schools can adopt several strategies to sustain discipline with one of them being shifting from control to guidance, with focus on teaching rather than punishing.

When learners understand the consequences of their actions, they are more likely to reflect and change, with mistakes being treated as learning opportunities to encourage self-discipline.

Establishing clear and consistent rules is equally important with expectations being simple, clear, well-communicated and applied fairly to all learners. Involving learners in creating these rules fosters ownership, while displaying them around the school reinforces accountability.

Positive discipline techniques also play a critical role. Teachers should encourage good behavior through praise and recognition, while addressing misconduct through constructive conversations rather than shouting or scolding.

Consequences should be corrective, not harmful, and may include assigning responsibilities, engaging parents, or requiring apology letters. For example, a learner who is frequently late can be given responsibilities that promote punctuality, rather than being punished physically or excluded from lessons.

Strong teacher-learner relationships further enhance discipline. An environment built on respect, fairness and open communication makes learners feel safe and valued.

When teachers are approachable and avoid insults or threats, learners are more likely to respond positively and respectfully.

At the same time, effective discipline depends on skilled educators. Continuous professional development is essential to equip teachers with practical classroom management skills, such as maintaining structured lessons, using engaging teaching methods and addressing disruptions early.

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Corporal Punishment has been outlawed in Schools in Zambia



Education and Training Officer, Mrs. Precious C. Kalima, sensitising pupils at Matero Girls on Human Rights and their corresponding Responsibilities

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Disciplinary measures must always be fair, proportionate and non-discriminatory. Practices such as physical punishment, public humiliation and collective punishment should be avoided. Instead, schools should rely on alternatives like counseling, loss of privileges and consistent parental involvement.

Support systems within schools are also vital. Guidance and counseling services, peer mentorship programs, and conflict

resolution mechanisms help address underlying causes of misbehavior, ensuring discipline is both corrective and supportive.

Finally, schools must promote core values such as respect, responsibility, integrity and empathy. These values, reinforced through a human rights-based discipline policy, help shape positive behavior.

Such policies should clearly prohibit corporal punishment,

uphold learner dignity and ensure fair procedures, including the right to be heard.

Ultimately, discipline without corporal punishment is not about being lenient, but about being fair, consistent and intentional. While fear may achieve short-term compliance, respect fosters lasting behavioral change.

By Davison Miyoba, Complaints & Investigations Officer, Human Rights Commission-Zambia



HRZ-Z Chipata Office sensitising Kanjala Day Secondary School pupils from the Human Rights Club



HRZ-Z Mansa Office engaging pupils at Mabel Show Girls Secondary School on human rights and responsibilities

HRC-Z Teamwork delivers comprehensive 2025 Annual Report

The Human Rights Commission of Zambia (HRCZ) successfully conducted a Report Writing Workshop from 2nd to 6th March 2026 at Best Western Plus Hotel in Lusaka.

The workshop, which was organized by the Research and Planning Department, marked an important step in the preparation and finalization of the Commission's 2025 Annual Report.

The activity brought together selected staff from key departments, including Research and Planning, Education, Training and Advocacy, Compliance and Legal Services, Complaints and Investigations, Human Resource and Administration as well as the Finance Section and ICT Unit.

It was implemented in two phases: the first phase focused on drafting and consolidating departmental submissions, while the second phase em-

phasized editing, quality assurance, and finalization of the report.

The workshop provided a valuable platform for departments to present their major achievements, challenges, and lessons learned during the 2025 reporting period. It also strengthened internal coordination and ensured that the report accurately reflected the Commission's impact in promoting and protecting human rights in Zambia.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Lisbon Chaamwe, Manager Research and Mechanisms, highlighted the importance of the Annual Report as both a statutory requirement and a key accountability tool. He urged participants to ensure that the report clearly demonstrates the Commission's contributions to advancing human rights and reflects credible, evidence-based information.

Through a participatory approach involving presentations, discussions, and technical reviews, participants worked collaboratively to compile, validate, and refine departmental inputs. The workshop resulted in the successful drafting and consolidation of the 2025 Annual Report, improved data quality, enhanced report structure, and strengthened collaboration across departments.

Despite minor challenges, including time constraint and data inconsistencies, the workshop was a success and demonstrated the Commission's continued commitment to transparency, accountability, and high-quality institutional reporting. The collaborative efforts of staff ensured that the Annual Report comprehensively documented the Commission's 2025 activities and its continued mandate to promote and protect human rights in Zambia.



HRCZ members of staff working on the 2025 Annual Report at Best Western Plus Hotel in Lusaka

Human Rights Commission

Promoting and Protecting Your Rights and Freedoms



MISSION

To ensure the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people in Zambia; through advocacy, investigations and appropriate redress of human rights violations, and monitoring of compliance with human rights standards and obligations.



VISION

A society that respects and upholds human rights for all persons in Zambia.



VALUES

HRC pledges to serve its clients with
 # impartiality
 # integrity
 # transparency and
 # accountability
 while upholding virtues of independence in the discharge of its duties



Contact Details



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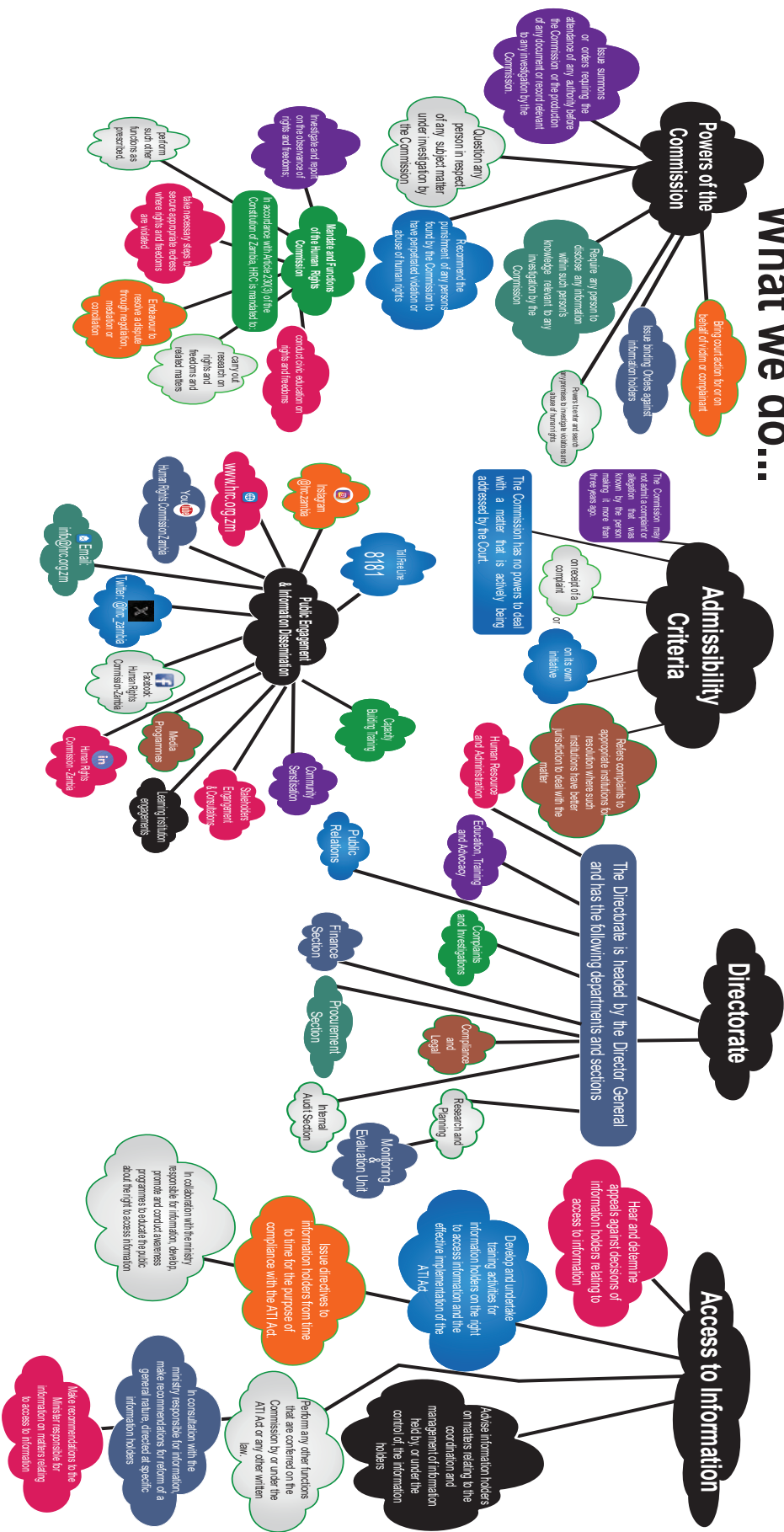


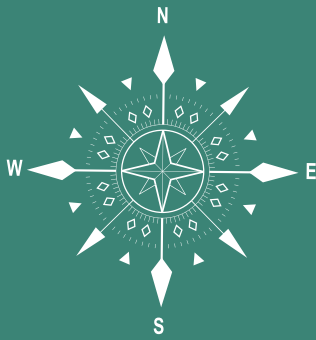
Human Rights Commission-Zambia

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What we do...





MAP OF ZAMBIA SHOWING LOCATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - ZAMBIA'S PROVINCIAL OFFICES



CONTACT DETAILS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION-ZAMBIA'S PROVINCIAL OFFICES

1 Lusaka Province
Lusaka: +260 251 327 / 251 357

2 Central Province
Kabwe: 0957 445 833

3 Copperbelt Province
Ndola: 0954 170 753

4 Eastern Province
Chipata: 0954 170 748

5 Luapula Province
Mansa: 0958 122 370

6 Muchinga Province
Chinsali: 0958122368

7 Northern Province
Kasama: 0958122369

8 Northwestern Province
Solwezi: 0958 122 373

9 Southern Province
Livingstone: 0958 122 375

10 Western Province
Mongu: 0958 122 374


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