

**STATEMENT BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION-ZAMBIA  
CHAIRPERSON, DR. PAMELA TOWELA SAMBO, ON THE HUMAN  
RIGHTS SITUATION IN ZAMBIA, DELIVERED ON 13<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2026  
DURING THE 87<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE’S RIGHTS IN BANJUL,  
THE GAMBIA.**

- The Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights;
- State Parties Representatives;
- Chairperson of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and representatives of all NHRIs present;
- All protocols observed.

**1.0 Introduction**

- Happy 40<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries of the adoption and entry into force of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.
- Indeed, since its adoption and coming into force, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights has continued to be a valuable guiding instrument on matters of human rights to State Parties, including Zambia.
- However, more still needs to be done to address historical, emerging and lived realities of human rights confronting our people in Africa as a whole.

## **2.0 Human Rights Situation in Zambia**

- As an autonomous NHRI, the Human Rights Commission - Zambia has unfettered constitutional and legislative mandate to promote and protect human rights throughout the Republic of Zambia.
- Practical and progressive steps have been undertaken in Zambia to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights, some of which .
- include, but are not limited to, the following:
  1. Zambia has consistently held national elections leading to peaceful transitions or government retention. Free and fair elections are a fundamental human right and key to sustainable peace, stability, and security; thereby creating an environment where governance and human rights thrive.
  2. Zambia has abolished the death penalty and further acceded to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This step has enhanced the protection of the right to life, in accordance with the provisions of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights in particular, as well as several international human rights instruments;

3. Zambia has enacted a comprehensive Children's Code Act, which domesticates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;

4. Giving effect to the right to access information as guaranteed in the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, the Republic of Zambia has enacted Access to Information Legislation

### **3.0 Human Rights Challenges**

Notwithstanding the notable achievements towards promoting and protecting human rights, historical and emerging human rights challenges persist:

- Zambia has recently enacted cyber security and cybercrimes legislation. However, there is concern that the provisions of these two pieces of legislation must strike a suitable balance between addressing security and other concerns, without undermining the enjoyment of fundamental human rights such as the rights to freedom of expression and privacy.
- While Zambia has enhanced access to justice by among other measures, transforming prisons to correctional facilities, prolonged detention without trial remains a critical challenge.

#### **4.0 Commendations and Recommendations**

1. The Human Rights Commission - Zambia commends the African Commission on Human and People's Rights for adopting the following:

- ***Guidelines on the Conditions of Arrest, Police Custody and Pre-Trial Detention;***
- ***African Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection;***
- However, continued and effective monitoring mechanisms, and technical assistance to State Parties to enhance compliance and implementation with the guidelines and the convention are recommended.
- The initiative to develop the ***African Guidelines on Promoting and Harnessing Data Access as a Tool for Advancing Human Rights and Sustainable Development in the Digital Age*** is commendable; however, an expedited process for addressing the emerging challenge of balancing security concerns and enjoyment of human rights in the rapidly evolving digital era is hereby recommended.

#### **6.0 Conclusion**

In conclusion, on behalf of the Human Rights Commission Zambia and myself, I wish to express sincere gratitude to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights for its unwavering commitment towards facilitating inclusive and constructive dialogue among State Parties, National Human Rights Institutions and Civil Society Organisations; all of which efforts are aimed at deepening a culture of human rights in Africa.

Thank you.