

Zimbabwe activists released following international pressure

Human Rights activist Jestina Mukoko was again released from custody with 14 others after a judge was forced to reverse her decision to send them back to prison earlier this week. The activists, who had been charged with terrorism and released from custody in March, had their bail revoked after a formal indictment was filed provoking heavy criticism from human rights organisations. The charges facing the activists, stemming from an alleged plot to overthrow President Robert Mugabe, have been widely denounced as baseless. The decision was reversed under pressure from the MDC and rumoured pressure from the South African government. Three political activists remain in custody, the magistrate said that their cases were more serious because they had allegedly been found with explosives. A bail hearing before a higher court was scheduled for the three on Thursday 7th May but subsequently postponed due to a request from the state for more time to prepare a response.

Top Zimbabwean Human Rights lawyer arrested

Alec Muchadehama, lawyer for the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), was arrested on Thursday reportedly on charges of obstructing and defeating the course of justice. Muchadehama was part of the legal team representing the political activists who were recently released on bail. A statement from Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), released prior to Muchadehama's arrest, said police wanted to question him for allegedly improperly facilitating the release of three activists earlier this week. The MDC said that the arrest was a "politically motivated and vindictive act" and had nothing to do with the rule of law. Two editors of an independent weekly paper were also arrested this week charged with publishing falsehoods after their newspaper ran an article naming security agents allegedly involved in the abduction of the political activists. They were later released on bail.