This edition of the Zimbabwe Update covers the latest on the proposed constitution, UN High Commissioner Navi Pillay’s visit to Zimbabwe, the EU assessment of the Marange diamond fields, the immunisation campaign by the health ministry and continued fears of the spread of cholera.

You can find more details about ACTSA’s campaign work on Zimbabwe on the [ACTSA website](#).

### New constitution days away?
According to reports, the final version of the draft constitution is complete and should be launched early in July. The Zimbabwe Constitution Select Committee (COPAC) is believed to have reached an agreement on issues of contention including devolution, dual citizenship and the structure of the executive branch. The proposed constitution is expected to redistribute some political power away from central government. There are also reports that the parties agreed to abolish the position of Prime Minister and to restrict the political involvement of the armed forces, including campaigning for any particular political party.

### UN rights chief visits Zimbabwe
In May the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay visited Zimbabwe. She raised a number of concerns and called for an end to increased and politically motivated violence, for respect for human rights and human rights defenders, for a new constitution with a bill of rights and non-party political state institutions. She also highlighted positive changes in the country, including efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and improvements in the economy. Pillay also called on the European Union and the United States to lift targeted measures on Zimbabwe until after the elections, saying they have worsened the country’s economic problems with “quite serious ramifications” for the poor and most vulnerable.

Shortly after Pillay’s visit, Zimbabwean civil society groups asked the United Nations to establish an office to monitor growing human rights violations. Abel Chikomo, Director of the Human Rights NGO Forum said, “We urge the UN to maintain a permanent presence in and focus on Zimbabwe, watching over the protection of human rights of all Zimbabweans through setting up a UN Human Rights Monitoring Office.”

### Politically motivated violence prevails
Violence against MDC party members has continued in the run up to elections, especially following Navi Pillay’s visit. In May, following the murder of an MDC supporter, six ZANU PF activists were arrested. On 6 May armed police disrupted a MDC rally, arresting two. On 2 June police officers also assaulted members of WOZA during a peaceful protest on the devolution of power. In Harare on 4 June, police assaulted and fired teargas at a crowd attending a MDC youth protest, arresting one of its youth leaders.

It has been reported that food is only being distributed in the Umguzu district to ZANU PF supporters. ZANU PF officials are being accused of denying food distribution to HIV/AIDS orphans because their grandparents are MDC activists.

The EU delegation in Zimbabwe said, “The European Union Delegation deplores that politically motivated violence flared once again in Zimbabwe....and after repeated appeals from the Inclusive Government Principals to put an end to such acts.”

### Immunisation efforts targets under fives
Zimbabwe’s health ministry embarked on a new immunisation campaign on June 18 to provide vaccines for polio and measles, and vitamin A supplements for children under five. The campaign is being funded with US$4.8 million granted by the Japanese government through UNICEF. The campaign will be run in all 62 districts and is expected to reach two million children below the age of five.

### More women MPs in draft constitution
ZANU PF and both MDC parties are believed to be in support of the creation of 60 additional seats for women in the House of Assembly, to be elected by proportional representation. Currently only 15 per cent of Zimbabwe’s 210 parliamentary seats are held by women.

### Star FM radio broadcasts
Zimpapers’ talk radio station, after conducting a trial run in early June, went live for the first time on 25 June under the name Star FM. The station is one of two private radio stations that were recently issued private licenses to compete with the only government-owned station. However, both stations that received licenses are expected to support the Mugabe regime. Zimpapers publishes The Herald, a pro-Mugabe daily paper and the other channel ZiFM is controlled by Supa Mandiwanzira, a prominent ZANU PF supporter.
Matombo loses ZCTU court case
Former Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) president, Lovemore Matombo has lost his appeal against a High Court ruling which barred him from representing the organisation and holding meetings in its name. The Supreme Court dismissed Matombo’s appeal and upheld George Nkwane as the president of ZCTU and Japhet Moyo as its secretary-general.

The case emerged after Lovemore Matombo and others declined to recognise George Nkwane and Japhet Moyo as leaders of the federation following its congress in August last year. The case was taken to the High Court where Justice Francis Bere barred the Matombo faction from presenting themselves as the union’s leaders, prompting Matombo and 12 others to file an appeal against the ruling.

Aid provided in wake of ongoing cholera crisis
After recent reports of cholera in Chiredzi, Harare has been on high alert for the possible spread of the disease. In Chiredzi two people have died and more than 100 are being treated for cholera. Due to water shortages, many of Harare’s residents have been using drinking water from unprotected sources such as manholes and wells, which increase their risk of infection. The city has called for residents to use water sparingly and the Prime Minister has recently launched a safe water campaign.

"We are monitoring the situation very closely to make sure the cholera does not spread," said Dr Portia Manangazira, Director of Epidemiology and Disease Control.

At the end of June, the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society (ZRCS) launched a four year water, sanitation and hygiene (Wash) project to improve water accessibility in over 400 communities in the Chivi district, by drilling new boreholes and repairing those that are broken.

EU delegation visit Marange diamond fields
Diplomats from the European Union (EU) delegation to Zimbabwe visited the Marange diamond fields on 25 to 27 June for the first time to assess whether human rights violations are still ongoing there. Until now access to the area has been highly restricted.

The EU head of mission in Harare, Aldo Dell'Ariccia, commented that there are problems of transparency in diamond revenues and wants to establish inspection mechanisms that meet international standards.

The visit by the EU is taking place amidst increased calls for transparency in Zimbabwe’s mining sector, especially with regards to diamond mining. Human Rights Watch has urged the Kimberley Process to focus on the continuing human rights violations in Zimbabwe’s Marange fields at its annual meeting, in Washington DC on 4-7 June. Human Rights Watch called for reform that “explicitly incorporates human rights to prevent ‘blood diamonds’ and other stones tainted by human rights abuse from reaching consumers.” The call for KP to redefine ‘blood diamonds’ has also been made by other civil society groups, observers and analysts advocating that the current definition of blood diamonds is extremely narrow and does not cover all human rights abuses associated with diamond mining.

Dignity! Period
Access to sanitary products for women in Zimbabwe is worse than ever, for many women sanitary protection is a luxury they can no longer afford. Women have been forced to use newspaper, rags or leaves as a substitute for sanitary pads which can cause serious infections for which there is no available medication.

ACTSA’s Dignity! Period campaign provides sanitary towels to women in Zimbabwe, just £3 a month provides sanitary towels for 3 women for a year.

Visit the Dignity! Period pages of the ACTSA website to make a donation or learn more.