PRESS STATEMENT

NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW! HE HAS A CASE TO ANSWER!

5 APRIL 2019

WCoZ is outraged with the reports of violence perpetrated by the Vice President Kembo Mohadi against Mrs. Tambudzani Mohadi on 30 March 2019. Reports indicate that Vice President Kembo Mohadi threatened to kill Mrs Tambudzani and attacked her with a deformed steel bar. It has also been reported that such shocking acts were committed in the presence of members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP). We believe that these are very serious allegations, which require urgent investigations and due process of the law.

WCoZ reminds the nation that for each story told of violence against women, there are hundred others that remain unheard. WCoZ reiterates that every woman has the right to live a life free of violence and therefore strongly condemns any act of violence against women and girls, be it within the family, private spaces or public spaces. The Convention on the Elimination of Violence against Women which Zimbabwe undertook clearly spells out the obligation of the State to exercise due diligence whenever gender-based violence occurs, whether perpetrated by the State or by private persons. Section 25 of the Constitution summarily states that the State and all government institutions and agencies of government at every level must protect and foster the institution of the family and in particular must endeavor, within the limits of the resources available to them, to adopt measures for the prevention of domestic violence. Section 52 of the Constitution grants every citizen the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes freedom from all forms of violence from private and public sources.

It is in light of the many legal provisions against violence, that WCOZ believes that the alleged conduct of the Vice President is a lack of respect for both the supreme law of the land and women. The battle against violence perpetrated on women and girls can never be won, when the perpetrators are men in whom the people have vested the authority and trust to lead the nation. The Vice President of a nation should always be above reproach when it comes to violence and women’s rights issues. The Vice President being a servant of the people therefore should answer to the nation the allegations that have been levelled against him. The nation, and the world at large, must be reminded that the very foundation of our democracy and freedom is that no one is above the law. Everyone is subject to the Constitution and the law. We therefore believe that this case should be treated as exemplary to all those who abuse their power to inflict pain and suffering upon women. Mr Kembo Mohadi must therefore be held accountable for his acts as a matter of priority.

WCOZ emphasizes that accountability and responsiveness are indispensable pillars of democracy and that if this matter is not adequately addressed, it may go down in history as the most fail of this government. A clear message must be sent out to perpetrators of violence that women’s bodies are not battleground and that violence against women has no place in Zimbabwean society. WCoZ would therefore urge Parliament in the circumstances, to exercise its mandate in terms of s97(1)(a) of the Constitution and resolve whether or not the conduct of the Vice President constitute serious misconduct.

WCoZ further registers its displeasure at the alleged conduct of members of the ZRP in whose presence this act is alleged to have been committed. The failure by the ZRP to promptly address the issue raises concern over the failure by critical institutions to adequately provide redress to survivors for violence in times of emergency. The ZRP is the first port of call for a survivor of violence, and thus there should never demonstrate laxity in responding to such cases. We therefore encourage the ZRP to act speedily and investigate this case and all other cases of violence against women in full length and detail.

In addition, WCOZ calls upon the judiciary to treat all cases of violence against women and girls with high priority and ensure that justice is served at all times.

Lastly, WCoZ encourages society to report perpetrators of violence against women and girls. We urge all the people of Zimbabwe to respect and protect women, and the nation must come together in the fight against violence directed at women.

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