



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Zimbabwe - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 13 May 2014

Information on the Zanu PF Youth Service/Youth Brigade/Green Bombers including current activity and training camps

In October 2013 *The Zimbabwean* states:

“The government wants to revive national service, abandoned in 2009 after it emerged that its graduates were being used to support Zanu (PF) through violence” (*The Zimbabwean* (23 October 2013) *Training of green bombers to return*).

This article also notes:

““Everything is on course. Staff are already there at various training centres around the country. Once we get funding, we will start the recruitment of trainees,” said retired major Mathias Tongofa, the deputy minister for youth, indigenisation and economic empowerment. Taking part in the training programme would be a requirement for anyone wanting to join the uniformed forces. In the 2008 elections, graduates who had been through the rigorous six-month training programme, were known as Green Bombers or Border Gezi terror gangs. They caused chaos through violence directed at opposition supporters in the rural areas. They were trained at centres in Matebeleland South, Midlands, Masvingo and in Mashonaland” (ibid).

The *Zimbabwe Situation* in September 2013 notes:

“ZANU PF youths have said they want the National Youth Service training camps to be revived to beef up the party’s campaign” (*Zimbabwe Situation* (3 September 2013) *Zanu PF youths push for revival of national service*).

This article also points out that:

“The National Youth Service programme was launched by the late Youth minister Border Gezi in 2001 to “transform and empower youths for nation building through life skills training and leadership development”. The programme was, however, discontinued due to lack of funding and after recruits had been widely accused by opposition parties of inciting political violence especially during election time” (ibid).

Commenting on events of 2013, a report published in February 2014 by the *United States Department of State* notes that:

“ZANU-PF trained and deployed youths and war veterans to harass and disrupt the activities of MDC members, labor groups, student movements, civic groups, and journalists considered critical of ZANU-PF” (*United States Department of State* (27 February 2014) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013, Zimbabwe*, Section 2b Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association/Freedom of Assembly

No further information on this issue could be found among sources available to the RDC.

References

United States Department of State (27 February 2014) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013, Zimbabwe*

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>

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<http://www.thezimbabwean.co/news/zimbabwe/68995/training-of-green-bombers-to.html>

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http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/jb_zanu-pf-youths-push-for-revival-of-national-service/

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International

BBC News

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Google

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

International Crisis Group

IRIN News

Lexis Nexis

Minority Rights Group International

Online Newspapers

Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

Reliefweb

Reuters

United Kingdom Home Office

United States Department of State

UNHCR Refworld

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