

17 May 2015

Update: Zimbabwe – Harassment and threats against human rights defender Prosper Tiringindi

On 16 May 2016, the **Masvingo Residents Trust** was unexpectedly visited by six Masvingo Central police officers who demanded to see human rights defender Mr **Prosper Tiringindi**, coordinator of the organisation, and ordered that he appear at the police station. This follows a number of threats pronounced against Prosper Tiringindi in connection to a case that he brought against a police officer.

[Prosper Tiringindi](#) is Coordinator of Masvingo Residents Trust ([MRT](#)), a human rights organisation which campaigns for transparency and public accountability in the delivery of social services in the Masvingo province of south-eastern Zimbabwe. The group advocates for the improvement of the socio-economic rights of communities in the province by supporting projects to reduce poverty and support sustainable development, and organising peaceful demonstrations demanding good governance from the Masvingo authorities.

At approximately 11:30 am on 16 May 2016, police officers unexpectedly arrived at MRT's office requesting to speak to Prosper Tiringindi. As the human rights defender was not in the office at that time, the police officers waited forty-five minutes for him to return. Prosper Tiringindi however did not return, and as they were leaving the office, the police officers asked a member of staff to inform the human rights defender to report to the Masvingo Central Police Station later that day, for which they gave no reason. On 12 May 2016, the human rights defender received multiple calls demanding that he cease his work and to drop the charges he brought against a police officer following an incident on [25 February 2016](#), in which Prosper Tiringindi was ill-treated. The caller declared that, in bringing this case to court, the human rights defender was declaring 'a war on all state security forces'. Similarly, the witnesses who had pledged to support Prosper Tiringindi's case in court have received threatening calls of the same nature.

The calls on 12 May 2016 follow various incidents of harassment and threats targeting Prosper Tiringindi, his family, colleagues, and witnesses in his trial. On 2 May and 3 May 2016, a group of four people went to MRT's office on two different occasions when the human rights defender was not present, and repeated the same threats to Prosper Tiringindi's colleagues. Furthermore, on 28 April 2016, three unknown people arrived at the human rights defenders house while he was away. They asked for Prosper Tiringindi's whereabouts, and told his wife that he needed to drop the case as he was tarnishing the government of President Robert Mugabe.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern for the continued threats and harassment of Prosper Tiringindi, his family and colleagues as it believes the actions against him to be directly linked to his legitimate human rights work.