

## Pastor's Eviction Report

Written by Administrator  
Sunday, 09 August 2015 13:13 -

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On 5 August 2015 around 2 pm, without warning, the Zimbabwe Republic Police in the company of the Deputy Sheriff arrived at the headman's house on Willsgrove Farm with an eviction order and commanded the headman to move away and said that they were destroying the buildings. This farm is the property of a brick manufacturing company. As the senior police officer was talking to the old man the rest of his team rushed into the house and started throwing out the belongings. No sooner had they started than a bulldozer arrived and started to demolish the buildings. They did not only demolish the homestead but also three chicken houses that the headman had, containing about 2000 birds. The remaining live chickens were stuffed into sacks. The turkeys' legs were tied and they were also shoved into sacks. Most of them suffocated. In addition puppies were also put into sacks and suffocated. They also towed the headman's car away. It was found with no bonnet and a smashed windscreen. The headman had been living on the property for 27 years.

After this they moved to another brick under iron homestead which they destroyed and took property such as fridges which were taken to an unknown destination. They targeted the four leaders of the community first. After that they started on the other homesteads. There was a lot of crying among the people: women and men and children.

At first we did not know how to respond. The police said that because I was not living there they could not give me any details. Then we did some follow-up and located property along the Old Esigodini Road. Once the people knew where their property was whole families (33 people) walked to where it was to guard it. Similar groups formed round property on the Gwanda Road (8 families) and in the bush (40-50 families). They slept out in the cold with no shelter for three nights by the road.

On 6<sup>th</sup> August the police returned at 9am and continued to destroy homesteads. We alerted the press, who came to witness what was happening, and we also notified Bulawayo churches and pleaded for food and blankets. We received help from Bulawayo Help Network, Whitestone Chapel and individuals who donated food, clothing and fuel.

A human rights lawyer managed to get the evictions stopped. He came with papers around 2 pm. He showed the police the papers and instructed them to stop the operation immediately. There will be a hearing on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

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Records have been taken of the people now internally displaced and around 1000 names have been collected.

Bulawayo is not the only city affected by the destructions. The same thing is happening in Chinoyi and around Harare.

At present the families are very distressed. Some of the children have been taken to pastors and relatives in the surrounding area. I am very puzzled and distressed at the manner in which this exercise was carried out in such an inhumane way to people who are struggling to make ends meet and the way in which animals were destroyed. To date people are still sleeping in the open indicating that they have nowhere else to go. The little that they have has been destroyed. One old man had to be taken to hospital and they said he had to be put into Ingutsheni Hospital because of his unstable mental condition.

Up to now we have not had any support from the local churches by way of food, blankets, clothing and transport. No one has come to visit. The displaced people are greatly encouraged when people come to see them.