

Melanie Roberts

British Ambassador to Zimbabwe
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
King Charles Street
London, SW1A 2AH

Sent via email

12 January 2021

Dear Ms Roberts

Violation of the human rights of health professionals in Zimbabwe

We are writing on behalf of the British Medical Association to raise our concerns about the serious ongoing violation of fundamental human rights in Zimbabwe. Our members have expressed particular concern about the continuing and sustained assault on the fundamental rights and freedoms of all public sector workers, including doctors and other health care professionals. We understand from doctor colleagues in Zimbabwe that medical staff are effectively being militarised. By forcibly co-opting them into the armed forces, the Zimbabwean Government is removing any rights they may have to take industrial action regarding their appalling – and deteriorating – wages and working conditions. You will of course have been aware of the abduction and subsequent torture in 2019 of Dr Peter Magombeyi, then acting President of the Zimbabwe Hospital Doctors Association, who was at the time leading a nationwide doctors' strike. Since then, in addition to reports substantiated by international human rights organisations of a political climate generally deeply toxic to fundamental human rights standards, we have received ongoing if fragmentary reports of continuing attempts to undermine the rights of doctors and other health professionals.

We are writing to urge you to raise these issues at the highest level with the Zimbabwean government. We would also very much welcome any evidence you may have received about the plight of public sector workers, including health professionals in Zimbabwe as we will continue to raise these concerns through international medical organisations.

Yours sincerely

Chief executive officer: Tom Grinyer

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Chair of BMA Medical Ethics Committee



Dr Kitty Mohan
Chair of BMA International Committee