



Zimbabwe



The Republic of Zimbabwe is located in southern Africa between South Africa and Zambia. It was formerly known as Rhodesia. The country covers an area that is slightly larger than the state of Montana but its population is over fourteen times the size. The capital city of Zimbabwe is Harare.



By JackyR <https://bit.ly/3nmXvX1>

An elephant in Hware National Park. People come to Zimbabwe to see the animals in nature. Poaching hurts the tourism business

Shona and Ndebele are the official local languages; English is the official language used for government business. Zimbabwe declared its independence from British rule in 1965 but the United Kingdom did not recognize this and demanded full voting rights for the black majority of citizens. UN sanctions against the country

and internal violence led to free elections in 1979 and true independence in 1980. Robert Mugabe, the first Prime Minister, became President in 1987 and ruled the country until he was forced to resign by the military in 2017. His government oversaw many controversies, such as forced land distribution from white farmers to Black farmers, the deforestation of lands, and increased poaching of wildlife. Coupled with severe droughts, this led to a decline in agricultural output, which was once the country's leading export. The tourism industry also suffered from unchecked animal poaching. Poor mining regulation led to a large toxic waste and heavy metal pollution problem.

After Mugabe's resignation, Vice President Emerson Mnangagwa took over. He was elected President in 2018.

According to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, the government of Zimbabwe continues to violate the rights to food and shelter; freedom of movement and residence; and the basic protection of law for its citizens. Excessive police action has been condemned by countries around the world

MCA in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has a very high rate of HIV/AIDS infections—almost 15% of the population is known to have the virus. Citizens are also at high risk for cholera and other waterborne diseases. Most Zimbabweans, especially those living in rural areas, cannot afford health care—three quarters of them live on about \$3 per day for all their needs.

All of these sobering facts, and many others, have led to a refugee crisis. Zimbabweans left their country in record numbers in the early 21st century. By 2010, approximately three million people had left for South Africa, and Botswana among other places. This has led to a “brain drain” in the society as most of the people who can afford to leave the country are the best educated.

While a majority of the country’s population is Christian, only about 7.3% of the people of Zimbabwe are Roman Catholic. Of course, this matters little to the Catholic Sisters supported by the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) as they serve all children, especially those considered to be “differently abled”.

Founded in the 1950’s as a Religious order for local Catholic women, the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (SJI) are at work in central Zimbabwe. First begun as an order of teachers and nurses, Sister Theresa Camillo, SJI says their first work was to “bring Christ to the people” in their own language. They soon saw the need for pastoral work among girls who had left school very young to be wives and mothers. These girls had no skills, educationally or vocationally. They began hosting evening meetings—they called them clubs—to teach these young women homemaking skills, including knitting, sewing, and embroidering. Soon these women were teaching their

artistry to their own children, helping to uplift the status and talents of the local girls. The women and girls were also able to earn extra money to support their families by selling their creations

The Sisters now also run a home for mentally challenged children called the Alfred Walters Hostel. These children, who have no family to care for them, depend on the Sisters for their spiritual, emotional, and physical care.

Recently, Missionary Childhood Association members from the local parish of Saint John made donations to the Sisters so that the children of the Hostel could have a happy Christmas!



MCA members deliver their gifts to the Hostel

At last report, MCA members worldwide donated \$235,000 to build new classrooms at schools, drill for clean water, stock feeding programs, furnish schools and early education centers, and more. At the same time, MCA members of Zimbabwe sacrificed \$3,000 from what little they have to their brothers and sisters in need around the world.