Group launches campaign for peace on social media

Zimbabweans have taken to social media to express their disgust at politically-motivated violence by starting an online group called Blackout Thursday. Every Thursday, the Facebook group members blackout their picture profiles in an effort to promote peace.

One of the pioneers of the group, Freeman Chari, said the idea to blackout their profiles began spontaneously after the death of Christpowers Maisiri, who died in a suspected arson attack.

"Not everyone will have a chance to take part, but the responsibility lies with each one of us, including the media, to spread the message of peace, love and harmony, especially during these trying times. And in our small way, we are trying to do just that," he said.

"If we can convert one soul from the belief that violence brings votes or violence brings freedom, then we would have achieved our goal."

Chari said the campaign had generated much interest and in its three weeks of existence, it had experienced a surge in members.

"We have also received support from people of different political orientation and that encourages us," he said. "We intend to take the campaign to Twitter and WhatsApp, which we believe will increase our access to Zimbabweans. The campaign is running until the next election."

Beloved Chiweshe, a programmes officer at Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC), said the campaign had the potential to change perceptions.

"The campaign is easy to activate and has lots of potential to change people's perception," he said.

"We hope that one day everyone in the country will blackout their profile pictures."

Chiweshe said they believed social media was a growing platform and there was need to take advantage of the social trends.

Source: allAfrica