

Police arrest arts director

By [Natasha Hove](#)

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Zimbabwe police yesterday briefly arrested renowned arts director; Cont Mhlanga before banning the premier of his controversial political play saying it 'revoked memories of Gukurahundi.'

Bulawayo - Heavily armed police squads on foot with guns, rubber batons, shields, teargas canisters and supported by menacing highly trained police dogs barricaded the venue and barred the premier of the play.

The increasingly paranoid police said the play, which was supposed to be premiered at the Bulawayo Theater, violated sections of the draconian Public Order and Security Act (POSA).

Amakhosi Director, Cont Mhlanga said about the ban of the premier of his play: "There are no valid reasons under POSA for the police to ban the play other than the fact that the police have become increasingly paranoid."

The play is about a rural grandmother who commits suicide in protest after her grandson refuses to give her transport money to return to the rural areas in time for voting back the ruling party president, Robert Mugabe.

Crackdown stokes already high tensions

The play during its premier in the capital attracted a heavy presence of security officers and the government has branded it as anti-establishment and tribal as it touches on the Matabeleland atrocities which claimed over 20 000 civilians.

However, Mhlanga who says he is not scared of the state apparatus notes that the play is inspired by the recent bashing of opposition leaders and civic society activists on their way to a prayer meeting.

The government has launched a crackdown on opposition voices. Analysts say the crackdown has stroked already high tensions in Zimbabwe facing its worst ever economic crises characterised by high inflation, high unemployment, shortages and the ever rising cost of living.

Mugabe's plans to extend his term of office beyond 2008 under the guise of saving administrative costs and simplifying electoral logistics have been met with unprecedented defiance and stoked up hostilities in Zimbabwe as well as the ruling party - CAJ News.

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