

## Zimbabwe: Hunger begins to take its toll

Five children have died in Zimbabwe's southern drought-prone Masvingo province from severe malnutrition-related illnesses, according to members of a faith-based mission.

"The children died of starvation last week," said a member of the Catholic-run Bondolfi Mission, a member of the Holy Cross Convent, who did not want to be named. The mission is located in Chivi district. Two of the children died in the Mapanzure area near the mission, and three at a clinic in Mukaro Mission in the neighbouring Gutu district.

"There was nothing the clinic could do to help them - they were severely malnourished," said the mission staff member. The children had not eaten for a week.

Members of the Bondolfi Mission said they had last seen such levels of malnutrition in the severe drought 1991/1992. "During that time, humanitarian organisations helped to alleviate the shortages by distributing food aid in communities so the impact was not as severe as were a witnessing now," pointed out the staff member.

Nongovernmental organisations in Zimbabwe are in the process of resuming food distribution after a government ban on their operations was lifted on 28 August. The ban had been imposed ahead of a second round of voting in the presidential ballot on 27 June because of the alleged collective anti-government bias of NGOs.

Read the full article here <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=80525>