

Blackshark

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AUGUST 2026

CRIME WATCH BULLETIN

Security Trends and Advisory | August 2026

Keeping You Safe, One Alert at a Time!





CRIME WATCH BULLETIN

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August 2026 Security Trends and Advisory

Monthly Overview

August began with thousands gathered at the National Heroes Acre in Harare, and it ended with a nation in mourning after Zimbabwe's worst transport disaster on record. In between, familiar patterns continued: predictability and misplaced trust remained the openings criminals relied on most.

Thousands gathered at the National Heroes Acre on 10 August as Zimbabwe marked its 46th Heroes Day, part of a long weekend that also included Defence Forces Day. Away from the commemorations, an armed gang cased bars, shops and company premises across Harare for weeks before its five members were finally arrested. A ride-hailing scheme turned drivers into targets, robbing them mid-journey after luring them through app bookings. A Bulawayo company lost copper cable to a theft gang feeding the scrap-metal trade. And on 11 August, a passenger ferry travelling from Kariba town to lakeside fishing camps capsized in rough water, in a tragedy that has since claimed more than ninety lives.

None of the crime patterns below are new in kind. What changed in August was scale and visibility: a five-man robbery gang linked to seven armed hold-ups was finally taken off the streets, courts in Kadoma and Shurugwi handed down heavy sentences for home invasions, and the long Heroes and Defence Forces holiday weekend left homes and offices empty while families travelled, conditions criminals have learned to read as opportunity.

What follows is an account of what happened across Zimbabwe this month, a public safety notice on the Kariba disaster, and the practical steps that can reduce exposure in the weeks ahead.

THE MONTH IN PATTERN



Armed robbery gangs targeting businesses, bars and security guards dominated the crime picture in August, alongside a ride-hailing robbery spree that has renewed questions about driver and passenger safety. Copper cable theft continued to drain businesses of equipment and uptime. The Heroes and Defence Forces holiday weekend added its own seasonal risk: empty properties, large crowds, and increased travel. Overshadowing all of it was the Lake Kariba ferry disaster on 11 August, now Zimbabwe's deadliest transport accident on record, a tragedy rather than a crime, but one with real lessons for anyone who travels by water.

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PUBLIC SAFETY NOTICE: LAKE KARIBA FERRY DISASTER



On 11 August 2026, a passenger ferry travelling from Kariba town to outlying fishing camps and lakeside settlements capsized in rough water on Lake Kariba. The vessel was licensed to carry 90 people; police and eyewitness accounts suggest it was carrying considerably more, with estimates ranging as high as 180. As of 20 August, confirmed deaths stood at 95, with 77 survivors recovered and search and recovery operations continuing. It is now the deadliest transport disaster in Zimbabwe's history, surpassing the 1991 Nyanga bus crash, which killed 89 people.

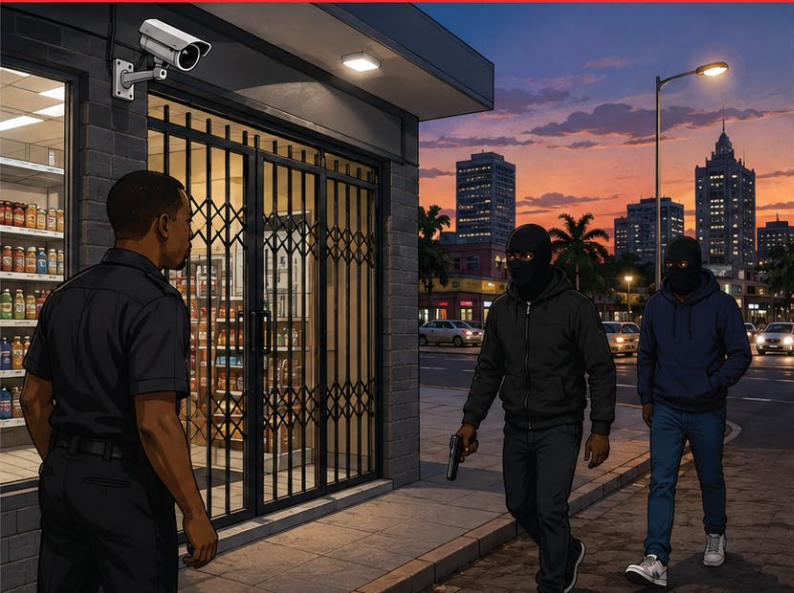
This is a tragedy of a scale this bulletin has not had to record before, and our thoughts are with everyone affected. We include it here because the circumstances raise a safety issue relevant to anyone who travels by water in Zimbabwe, particularly around Kariba, Lake Chivero and other inland waterways.

SAFETY GUIDANCE



- Before boarding any passenger vessel, check that it is licensed for the number of passengers actually on board; do not board a vessel that appears overloaded.
- Confirm that life jackets are available and accessible for every passenger, not simply carried somewhere on board.
- Avoid water travel in poor weather or rough water conditions, and ask operators directly about their safety certification.
- If arranging group or staff travel by boat, verify the operator's licence and passenger limit in advance rather than relying on assurances at the point of boarding.

KEY CRIME TRENDS OBSERVED IN AUGUST 2026



1. ARMED ROBBERY GANGS TARGETING BUSINESSES AND SECURITY GUARDS

The two guards never had a chance to raise the alarm. At a company premises along Simon Mazorodze Road in Waterfalls, armed men arrived in a blue Toyota Passo, confronted the guards on duty, tied their hands and legs with strips of cloth, and stripped the site of a generator, three batteries and other equipment worth around US\$2,500. It was one of at least seven armed robberies linked to the same five-man gang between 17 July and 5 August, targeting bars, shops, tuckshops and company premises across Harare with a Retay pistol and the same small blue getaway car.

Police eventually identified and arrested Peter Gawa, Billian Magacha, Taurai Badza, Soneni Maruva and Calvin Tinashe Langa after tracing CCTV footage, recovered clothing and two stolen phones back to the group. The arrests followed a wider pattern of organised robbery gangs uncovered elsewhere this winter: in Glen View and Budiro, a single suspect was linked to 31 counts of robbery targeting residents; in Kadoma, three men received a combined 70 years in prison for a spree involving knives, axes and iron bars; and in Shurugwi, six men now face trial after allegedly tying up and robbing a businessman of US\$8,800 at his home. In each case, investigators pointed to the same features: groups of three or more, a getaway vehicle, and premises or households targeted after dark when guards and residents are most isolated.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY



- Brief on-site security guards on duress protocols and ensure they can raise an alarm without needing to reach a fixed panic button.
- Avoid single-guard postings at night on premises holding cash, equipment or valuable stock; pair or rotate guards where possible.
- Fit CCTV covering all entry points and vehicle approach routes, and ensure footage is retained and backed up off-site.
- Vary guard shift patterns and patrol routes; predictable routines are what these gangs have been shown to study before striking.
- **Report suspicious vehicles, especially small sedans loitering near business premises after hours, to police or your security provider immediately**

2. E-HAILING AND RIDE-HAILING DRIVER ROBBERIES

The booking looked like any other. A passenger requested a ride through the InDrive app, climbed in, and by the end of the trip the driver had been robbed of cash and a mobile phone. Police say a 23-year-old Harare man and three accomplices, identified only as Kedha, Slim Giant and Rasta, used the app to lure drivers between July and August 2026 before robbing them mid-journey. The arrest came after detectives traced a stolen phone to the suspect on 15 August.

The case has reopened concern about the safety of app-based ride-hailing in Zimbabwe, a sector that has recorded a string of violent incidents in recent years, including armed hijackings and, in at least two prior cases, a driver's death. Drivers are especially exposed: they carry cash, work alone for long hours, and can find a booking turn into a hijacking within minutes of a passenger getting in. The same vulnerability applies in reverse to passengers, particularly during holiday periods when demand for e-hailing rises and more people travel outside their usual routines.



SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Drivers should confirm passenger details match the booking before departure and share trip details with a trusted contact for every ride.
- Avoid accepting rides or cash bookings arranged outside the app, even from a regular passenger.
- Passengers should verify the driver, vehicle and registration match the app profile before entering the vehicle, and share live location with someone they trust.
- Businesses providing staff transport should use registered, verifiable operators rather than informal or app bookings for late-night or high-value trips.
- **Report irregular pick-up requests, route changes, or additional passengers not shown on the booking to the platform and police immediately.**

3. COPPER CABLE AND INFRASTRUCTURE THEFT

A Bulawayo company found out the hard way that copper does not need to leave the country to become a criminal target. Police arrested a 27-year-old man on 2 August in connection with the theft of copper cable from a local company, the latest in a steady run of infrastructure theft cases feeding a resale and scrap-metal market that shows little sign of slowing.

Copper and cable theft remains a persistent, low-visibility drain on businesses, utilities and construction sites, causing damage and downtime that often outweighs the value of the metal itself. Sites with exposed wiring, transformers, or stored cable remain the most exposed.



SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Store spare cable and copper stock in locked, alarmed areas rather than open yards.
- Mark or etch cable and equipment with company identifiers to reduce resale value and assist recovery.
- Engage with local scrap metal dealers and municipal by-laws requiring proof of ownership before purchase.
- Install motion-sensor lighting and CCTV around exposed wiring, transformers and cable runs.

4. HEROES DAY AND HOLIDAY TRAVEL SECURITY

Thousands gathered at the National Heroes Acre in Harare on 10 August as Zimbabwe marked its 46th Heroes Day, part of a long weekend that also included Defence Forces Day. For many households and businesses, it meant travel, family visits and premises left empty for several days in a row.

Public holidays and long weekends create a predictable window that opportunistic criminals have learned to watch for: empty homes, unattended offices, and large crowds at commemorative events where pickpocketing and vehicle theft can go unnoticed in the press of people. None of this is unique to August, but the concentration of travel and gatherings around Heroes and Defence Forces Day makes it a recurring seasonal risk worth planning around.



SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Arrange for a trusted neighbour, relative or security provider to check on your home or business during any period of holiday travel.
- Avoid publicising travel plans or an empty property on social media until after you have returned.
- At large public gatherings, keep valuables secured on your person and agree a meeting point with family in case of separation.
- Ensure alarm systems, CCTV and outdoor lighting are tested and functioning before leaving a property unattended.
- Businesses closing over a holiday period should conduct a final walk-through, confirm all entry points are secured, and notify their security provider of the closure dates.



AUGUST SECURITY ADVISORY

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FOR BUSINESSES AND SECURITY TEAMS

1. Review guard staffing levels and duress protocols at all premises, particularly those holding cash, equipment or stock overnight.
2. Ensure CCTV coverage extends to all entry points and approach routes, with footage retained and backed up off-site.
3. Secure copper cable, spare parts and exposed wiring in locked, alarmed storage.
4. Vary patrol routes, guard shifts and cash-handling routines to avoid predictable patterns.
5. Notify your security provider of any holiday closures, including dates and expected reopening.

FOR MOTORISTS AND RIDE-HAILING USERS

6. Verify driver and vehicle details match the app booking before entering any vehicle.
7. Share live trip location with a trusted contact for every ride, especially at night.
8. Drivers should avoid off-app cash bookings and confirm passenger identity where possible.
9. Report irregular pick-up requests or unexpected additional passengers to the platform and police.

FOR TRAVELLERS AND HOUSEHOLDS OVER THE HOLIDAY PERIOD

10. Arrange for someone trusted to check your property while you are away.
11. Avoid posting travel plans or an empty home on social media until you return.
12. Test alarms, CCTV and lighting before leaving any property unattended.
13. Keep valuables secured and agree a family meeting point at large public gatherings.

FOR WATER TRAVEL AND BOAT OPERATORS

14. Confirm a vessel's licensed passenger capacity before boarding, and do not board if it appears overloaded.
15. Ensure life jackets are available and accessible for every passenger.
16. Avoid water travel in poor weather or rough conditions.



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CYBER SAFETY

REMINDER

Away from the road and the water, the same rule applies online: verify before you trust. If you are asked to move money, share one-time codes, or change banking details based on urgency alone, stop and confirm through a separate, known channel. Predictability and misplaced trust remain the two openings criminals rely on most.



Closing Note

August 2026 was a month of extremes: a national tragedy on Lake Kariba, a long holiday weekend that tested households' and businesses' security routines, and a steady drumbeat of armed robbery arrests and convictions across Harare, Kadoma and Shurugwi. Whatever the incident, the same principles hold: verify capacity and credentials before you travel, secure premises and routines before you leave them unattended, and treat guards, drivers and staff as the first line of defence they are.

Blackshark Security remains committed to providing clients with timely, practical intelligence to support informed security decisions, and our thoughts remain with everyone affected by the Kariba tragedy this month. If you wish to discuss any of the trends in this bulletin or request a site-specific risk assessment, please contact us.

Emergency Contacts

Blackshark Protection Services Control Room (24/7)

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Stay Alert. Stay Unpredictable. Stay Safe.