Blackshark

ISSUE 07
JULY 2026

JULY 2026

CRIME WATCH

BULLETIN

INTELLIGENCE.
AWARENESS.
SAFETY.
SECURITY.

Keeping You Safe, One Alert at a Time!

CRIME WATCH BULLETIN

Blackshark

July 2026 Security Trends and Advisory

Monthly Overview

July arrived busy and unblinking. Across Zimbabwe's driveways, supermarket car parks, farm boundaries, courtrooms and border posts, the same lesson kept repeating itself: whatever is left unlocked, unwatched, or unverified will eventually be taken.

A Honda Fit vanished from a Bulawayo supermarket car park in the five minutes it took its owner to buy bread. Armed intruders forced their way into a Harare commercial premises with a claw bar, made off with a firearm, and tried and failed to blast open a safe in the accounts office. An accounts manager who had been trusted with his employer's banking run for years quietly stopped making the deposits. A car dealer who had built a following on social media adverts and confident promises left dozens of clients waiting on vehicles that never arrived. Two men walked onto a farm in Esigodini with a knife, an axe and a can of petrol. And in the space of forty-eight hours, more than two thousand people were arrested in a nationwide police operation that reached into nearly every district in the country.

None of these events made the news because they were rare. They made the news because they were not. July was not defined by a single dramatic incident but by the same operating principal criminals have relied on all year: exploit whatever is left predictable, unattended or unverified. Vehicle owners, finance teams, farming households, import clients and businesses all found themselves navigating a security environment shaped less by chance than by routine, routine that criminals had already taken the time to study.

The Month in Pattern

Vehicle crime dominated July, from the ease with which older Honda Fit models can be started with a spoon or screwdriver, to the cross-border syndicates smuggling stolen South African vehicles through Beitbridge and the Limpopo's shallow crossings. An armed break-in at a Harare commercial premises saw intruders force open a main door with a claw bar, steal a firearm, and attempt, unsuccessfully, to blast open a safe. Cash theft continued in two familiar forms: violent robbery and the quiet, sustained pilfering of funds by trusted employees. A car import scam left scores of clients out of pocket, and the Zimbabwe Republic Police launched a nationwide operation that produced over 2,000 arrests in 48 hours, a reminder that enforcement activity, roadblocks and compliance checks are intensifying across the country. Beneath all of it, the same theme recurs: predictability and misplaced trust remain the criminal's most reliable tools.

Key Crime Trends Observed in June 2027

1. VEHICLE THEFT THE HONDA FIT CRISIS

Five minutes. That is how long it took. A 25-year-old Bellevue man parked his Honda Fit outside a Bulawayo supermarket, walked in, and came back to an empty parking bay. Days earlier, a Harrisvale man lost his own Honda Fit along with a phone, a power bank, three jackets and US$35 in cash in the same amount of time, at the same kind of unlocked door.

Bulawayo police have confirmed a sharp rise in the theft of older-generation Honda Fit vehicles, driven by a design flaw that has become an open secret among criminals: the ignition and door locks are interchangeable across nearly every unit produced, meaning a spoon, a screwdriver, or a duplicate key from another Honda Fit can start the car. Inspector Nomalanga Msebele, Bulawayo police spokesperson, is urging owners to replace their ignition and door locking systems entirely. The vehicles are prized not only for resale value but for fuel efficiency, cargo space, and their ubiquity as mushikashika (unregistered pirate taxis), meaning a stolen Honda Fit can disappear into the informal transport fleet within hours. Police estimate stolen Honda Fits are linked to a significant share of robberies committed in

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Replace factory ignition and door locks on older-model Honda Fit vehicles; locksmiths in most cities now offer this service.
- Never leave a vehicle unlocked, even for a five-minute errand; ask a parking marshal or security guard to watch it.
- Fit a visible steering lock or hidden immobiliser switch as a low-cost additional deterrent.
- Install a tracking device, particularly on vehicles frequently left in unattended parking areas.

2. ARMED BREAK-IN AND ATTEMPTED SAFE BLASTING

The main door didn't stand a chance against a claw bar. In the early hours of 9 July 2026, armed intruders forced their way into a commercial and distribution premises in Harare, making straight for the firearm carried by on-site security before turning their attention to the accounts and debtors' office.

Investigators say the offenders forced open the door to the accounts and debtors' office and attempted to blast the safe open, believed to have used a small explosive charge. The attempt failed, but not before one of the suspects was injured, leaving blood traces on the safe and door frame that a forensic team is now working to match against fingerprint evidence lifted at the scene. The only item confirmed stolen was the on-site firearm. Police and a private response team attended the scene, and investigations continue.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Store on-site firearms in dedicated, tamper-resistant safes with restricted, need-to-know access rather than predictable fixed locations.
- Reinforce main entry points against forced or claw-bar entry with secondary locking bars and monitored door-forced alarms.
- Position safes away from ground-floor entry points, in rooms with reinforced walls, and ensure CCTV covers both the safe room and all entry points.
- Preserve the scene immediately after any break-in, including blood, tool marks and fingerprint evidence, until forensic teams have attended.
- Review armed-response protocols with your security provider, including duress alerts and firearm accountability checks at every shift change.

3. CROSS-BORDER SMUGGLING — STOLEN VEHICLES

The papers looked right. The registration book did not. On 6 July 2026, a Bulawayo man was stopped at the Beitbridge CID North Cabin attempting to clear a white Ford Ranger whose registration book described a blue one. He had no affidavit from the registered owner and no explanation. A check with Interpol confirmed what officers already suspected: the vehicle had been stolen during an armed robbery in Gauteng, South Africa, days earlier.

The arrest is the latest thread in a wider pattern connecting South Africa and Zimbabwe. Stolen 4x4s and double-cab pickups are driven or towed across unofficial Limpopo River crossings, cloned with duplicated VIN and engine numbers, or brought in on abused Temporary Import Permits before being resold, re-registered, or stripped for parts. Investigators have linked the suspect's name to the syndicate behind the US$4 million Ecobank cash heist in Bulawayo, in which a similarly smuggled and re-plated Ford Ranger served as the getaway vehicle. Days earlier, South African police intercepted two more stolen vehicles bound for the same border post. Prosecutors say demand is driven by the price gap between legitimately imported vehicles and their stolen, laundered equivalents.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Fleet operators and dealers should independently verify chassis and engine numbers against Interpol and ZIMRA records before buying any informally sourced vehicle.
- Be suspicious of vehicles priced well below market value, particularly recent South African imports without complete paperwork.
- Businesses near border regions should tighten screening of vehicles, cargo and personnel movements.
- Report vehicles with mismatched registration details or inconsistent paperwork to the nearest police station.

4. CASH THEFT AND ARMED ROBBERY

The banking envelope kept coming back light. For months, an accounts manager at a Harare debt-collection firm received cash from debtors and EcoCash withdrawals meant for the company's bank account. Little of it arrived. When colleagues asked, he claimed there was nothing to collect, once even asking a senior colleague to transfer company funds into his own mother's EcoCash account, promising reimbursement that never came. By the time the shortfall was uncovered, more than US$10,800 had disappeared.

Two hundred kilometres south, the theft took a far more violent form. On 23 July, two men walked onto a farm cabin in Esigodini armed with a knife and an axe. They assaulted the two occupants, took a mobile phone, a second handset and US$20 in cash, then poured petrol inside the cabin, locked the door and set it alight. A 56-year-old woman died in the fire; the second victim escaped with severe burns. Both crimes shared a common thread: an attacker who understood exactly how money and access moved before they acted.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Rotate the staff responsible for handling and banking cash; no single person should control collection, recording and depositing unchecked.
- Reconcile cash and EcoCash records daily against banking slips, not just at month-end.
- Never approve a request to redirect company funds to a personal or family mobile money account, regardless of the reason given.
- Rural properties and farm outbuildings should have a working phone signal, a means of raising an alarm, and a plan for isolated occupants after dark.

5. LARGE-SCALE FRAUD — THE IMPORT SCAM

The adverts looked professional. The promises were specific: a vehicle sourced and imported within an agreed time, at a competitive price. Between 2022 and July 2026, a Harare car dealer built a client base through social media and print adverts, collecting deposits and full payments from dozens of customers who believed they were buying imported vehicles.

None of the vehicles arrived. When the case reached the Harare regional court this month, prosecutors alleged the accused had neither the intention nor the capacity to fulfil the orders, and that combined losses exceeded US$624,000 and ZiG1.27 million. Nothing has been recovered. The case echoes June's land-scam prosecution: a legitimate-seeming business, a steady stream of willing buyers, and a promise that was never going to be kept.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Before paying any deposit for an imported vehicle, confirm the dealer's business registration and import licence independently, not through the dealer's own documentation.
- Request proof of an existing shipment or clearing agent relationship and verify it directly with the named company.
- Be wary of businesses built mainly on social media adverts and testimonials, without a verifiable trading history.
- Pay in staged instalments tied to verifiable delivery milestones rather than upfront in full.

6. NATIONWIDE POLICE CRACKDOWN — WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

On 13 July 2026, the Zimbabwe Republic Police launched a nationwide operation targeting violent crime, theft, drug offences, smuggling and traffic violations. Within 48 hours, more than 2,000 people had been arrested, including suspects for robbery, murder, stock theft, unlawful entry and possession of dangerous drugs. Roadblocks, stop-and-search operations and compliance inspections have intensified in towns and along major routes since.

For businesses and households, the operation is a reminder that enforcement activity, and criminal opportunism, both shift during periods of heightened policing. Vehicles, drivers and premises should be fully compliant, as roadblocks and inspections are more frequent and less predictable than usual. At the same time, increased police visibility in one area can displace criminal activity toward less-patrolled routes and times, a pattern worth factoring into travel and security planning.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Ensure vehicle registration, licensing, insurance and driver documentation are current and always carried.
- Brief drivers and fleet staff that roadblocks and compliance checks are more frequent this month, and to remain calm and cooperative.
- Reassess travel routes and timing where increased enforcement in one corridor may be displacing criminal activity elsewhere.
- Continue reporting crime through official channels; police have specifically requested public tips and information.

7. CYBERCRIME AND PAYMENT FRAUD

The instruction seemed reasonable enough: transfer the funds, sort out the paperwork afterwards. That is precisely how one Harare accounts manager persuaded a colleague to move company money into a personal EcoCash account this month, and it is the same psychological mechanism criminals continue to exploit at scale across Zimbabwe: urgency, familiarity, and the assumption that a request from someone known must be legitimate.

Digital payment fraud remains an active and costly threat. Criminals continue to impersonate suppliers, c lone company WhatsApp accounts, and intercept business payments, while mobile money fraud in Zimbabwe continues to exceed US$30 million annually. Finance teams processing high volumes of payments, especially around month-end, remain the most exposed.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

Implement a two-person verification rule for all payments and account changes above a set threshold, with no exceptions for "urgent" requests.

Never redirect funds to a personal account on a verbal or written instruction alone; confirm through a separate, previously verified channel.

Call suppliers and colleagues on a known number to verify any change to banking details or unusual payment request.

Train staff to treat urgency as a warning sign, not a reason to move faster.

Stay Alert. Stay Unpredictable. Stay Safe.

Blackshark

JULY SECURITY ADVISORY

FOR BUSINESSES AND FLEET OPERATORS

1. Verify vehicle chassis and engine numbers independently before any purchase, particularly informally sourced bakkies and 4x4s.
2. Enforce a two-person rule for cash handling, banking and payment approvals; no single employee should control the full cycle.
3. Reconcile cash, EcoCash and banking records daily, not at month-end.
4. Keep vehicle documentation, insurance and driver licensing current given intensified roadblock activity.
5. Conduct background checks on staff with access to cash, vehicles or financial systems.
6. Reinforce main entry points against forced entry, and secure on-site firearms and safes with restricted, need-to-know access

FOR SCHOOLS AND EVENT ORGANISERS

7. Replace factory ignition and door locks on older Honda Fit models, or fit an additional immobiliser.
8. Never leave a vehicle unlocked or unattended, even briefly; ask someone to watch it.
9. Fit a tracking device and park in guarded, well-lit areas.
10. Carry current registration, licensing and insurance documents; expect more frequent roadblocks this month.

FOR PROPERTY BUYERS AND INVESTORS

11. Independently verify any dealer's business registration and import or clearing relationships before paying a deposit.
12. Pay in stages tied to verifiable delivery milestones, not in full upfront.
13. Be cautious of businesses built primarily on social media advertising with no verifiable trading history.

FOR HOUSEHOLDS

14. Ensure isolated properties, farm cabins and outbuildings have a way to raise an alarm and a working phone signal.
15. Lock gates and doors at all times, including during the day.
16. Vary the routine of who is present on a property and when.

Blackshark

CYBER SAFETY REMINDER

A fraudster's most effective tool is a plausible reason to move quickly. If you are asked to redirect funds, change banking details, or release money against an unverified instruction — whether by email, WhatsApp or in person — pause and verify through a separate, known channel first. A single phone call can prevent a five-figure loss.

Closing Note

July 2026 confirms what June already suggested: predictability and misplaced trust remain the two openings' criminals rely on most, whether in an unlocked car, an unverified employee, an unregistered import business, or a rural property with no one watching. Vehicle security, cash controls, staff vetting and verification habits are not administrative extras. They are the first line of defence.

Blackshark Security remains committed to providing clients with timely, practical intelligence to support informed security decisions. 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)

Landline
(0242) 61382

Cell
0779 398 869

Stay Alert. Stay Unpredictable. Stay Safe.