Blackshark

ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2026

CRIME WATCH BULLETIN

Security Trends and Advisory | October 2026

Keeping You Safe, One Alert at a Time!





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October 2026 Security Trends and Advisory

Monthly Overview

A woman and her three children were attacked in their home at 3am with machetes and axes. A man now faces ten armed robbery charges across Harare's leafy suburbs. Four gunmen walked into a Milton Park office and left with nearly US$50,000. October was a month in which violence moved from the street into the home and the office, and in which the state itself moved to take illegal firearms out of circulation.

In Umguza, outside Bulawayo, a gang armed with machetes, axes and knives struck five homes over two nights on 18 and 19 October, including one attack at around 3:45am in which a woman and her three children were assaulted and robbed of US$2,000 in cash and valuables. Police tracked the suspects into the bush near Norwood, where one was shot dead in an exchange of gunfire and two were arrested. In Harare, a 33-year-old man appeared in court facing ten counts of armed robbery across suburbs including Ashdown Park, Houghton Park, Cold Comfort and Bloomingdale, a series of home invasions between July and September in which pistols, machetes and iron bars were allegedly used and cash, laptops, phones, solar batteries and even a stolen pistol were taken. In Milton Park, four armed robbers reportedly attacked three businessmen at their office and made off with US$49,925, mobile phones and a Honda Fit.

The state's response was just as visible. The President granted a national firearm amnesty running from 12 October to 12 November, police launched Operation "Stock Thief Hot Pursuit" nationwide, and a senior police officer was arrested and charged over an alleged cover-up of an armed robbery on a Chinese businessman. Online, INTERPOL announced the results of Operation Serengeti III, a continental cybercrime sweep that included Zimbabwe, with 1,462 arrests and more than US$105 million recovered.

What follows is an account of what happened across Zimbabwe this month, and the practical steps that can reduce exposure as the festive season approaches.

THE MONTH IN PATTERN

Violent home invasions and armed robberies dominated October, with gangs hitting residences in the early hours and businesses during working hours, often armed with pistols, machetes and axes. Police responded with arrests, fatal shoot-outs and two national operations, one on stock theft and one on illegal firearms, while a court case exposed how a business dispute can turn into an armed extortion at a client's front door. Cybercrime, increasingly powered by artificial intelligence, remained a continental threat that Zimbabwe is now formally part of the response to.



KEY CRIME TRENDS OBSERVED IN SEPTEMBER 2026

1. VIOLENT HOME INVASIONS AND ARMED ROBBERY GANGS

It was a quarter to four in the morning when the intruders reached the house in Umguza. Armed with machetes, axes and knives, they attacked a woman and her three children and left with US$2,000 in cash and other valuables worth a further US$2,460. Hours earlier, at around 1:44am the same night, the same group had allegedly broken into another home, robbed the owner of US$300 and fled in his own Honda Fit, which they later abandoned after a road accident. In all, police linked the three men to five robberies on 18 and 19 October. One suspect died in a shoot-out when officers cornered the group near Norwood, Bulawayo; two others were arrested.

In Harare, the pattern was longer-running. A 33-year-old man appeared in court on ten counts of armed robbery stretching from late July to mid-September across Ashdown Park, Cold Comfort, Houghton Park, Bloomingdale and Madokero Estate. According to court papers, the group forced kitchen doors and bedroom doors, held residents at gunpoint, ordered them to lie on the floor and took cash, laptops, phones, inverters, solar batteries and, in one case, a pistol. Several victims handed over cash kept in wardrobes and bedrooms. The suspect was arrested only after a co-accused was caught on 30 September and implicated him. Separately, four armed robbers reportedly attacked three businessmen at their Milton Park office in Harare, escaping with US$49,925, mobile phones and a Honda Fit.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Treat cash kept at home as a risk in itself: bank it, or keep only a small amount in a hidden, secured place rather than a wardrobe or bedroom.
- Reinforce kitchen and back doors with security gates and quality locks; forced rear and kitchen doors featured repeatedly in this month's cases.
- Fit and test a panic button or response-linked alarm that can be reached from the bedroom, and agree a family safe room and duress plan.
- Keep vehicle and house keys out of sight at night; stolen cars, particularly Honda Fits, were again used as getaway vehicles.
- Offices holding cash or valuables should control entry, keep doors locked during the day and brief staff not to resist.

2. OPERATION "STOCK THIEF HOT PURSUIT"

Police launched Operation "Stock Thief Hot Pursuit" on 1 October and by mid-month reported 5,780 arrests nationwide. Most, 5,694, were for stock-related offences such as unlawful movement or slaughter, while 86 were for stock theft itself, with Mashonaland East recording the most. Officers recovered 117 cattle, 31 goats and 23 donkeys, along with more than 1,500 kilogrammes of beef and quantities of other meat. Harare accounted for the largest number of arrests, almost all for related offences rather than outright theft.

Police reiterated that moving cattle and other livestock at night is prohibited and urged the public to report suspicious movements to the National Complaints Desk on (0242) 703631 or on WhatsApp at 0712 800 197. The operation follows the stock theft breakthroughs reported in September and confirms rustling as a sustained national enforcement priority rather than a seasonal blip.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Keep movement permits and ownership records for all livestock and never transport animals at night.
- Butcheries, restaurants and caterers should buy meat only from licensed, traceable suppliers and keep invoices.
- Report suspicious livestock movements or unexplained cheap meat offers through the police numbers above.
- Farms should keep herd registers and mark animals clearly so recovered stock can be identified and returned.

3. NATIONAL FIREARM AMNESTY AND SAFE FIREARM CUSTODY

The President granted a month-long national firearm amnesty, running from 12 October to 12 November 2026. It allows individuals and institutions to hand in unlicensed, smuggled or illegally acquired firearms and ammunition at any police station without being questioned, and surrendering owners receive an official safe custody receipt. Police spokesperson Commissioner Paul Nyathi said some licensed holders were not renewing certificates or updating records, and that others were not securing their weapons properly, contributing to armed robbery, murder and other crimes. He also pointed to firearms left with owners after company closures, lapsed gun club membership or the death of the licensed holder, and to dealers and clubs holding unclaimed firearms in breach of the Firearms Act.

Police warned that once the amnesty expires, they will carry out physical checks and verification exercises targeting those suspected of keeping illegal firearms. The theme is a familiar one: several of this year's robberies have involved stolen pistols later recovered from

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Confirm that every licence, certificate and firearm record is current and update details at your local police station.
- Store firearms in an approved safe, separate from ammunition, with controlled key and code access.
- Companies that have closed, downsized or lost a licensed holder should account for every firearm and ammunition stock immediately.
- Surrender unwanted or unlicensed firearms before 12 November, and report any firearm loss or theft to police without delay.

4. ARMED EXTORTION AND ALLEGED POLICE COVER-UP

A business dispute over a chrome transport deal turned into an armed home invasion in Borrowdale West. According to court papers, on 13 October a woman and accomplices went to a Chinese businessman's home with a Mossberg shotgun, threatened and assaulted him, handcuffed him, searched the house and forced him to transfer US$13,050 into her bank account. When he reported the case at Borrowdale Police Station, the acting officer in charge, Inspector Farai Gwamure, was arrested on 19 October and charged with extortion, criminal abuse of duty and defeating or obstructing the course of justice. He is alleged to have discouraged the complaint, handed the complainant cash and falsified an entry in the station's report book. He was granted bail and returns to court on 4 November.

These are allegations that will be tested in court, but the case illustrates two risks that businesses should plan for: commercial disputes can escalate into coerced bank transfers at gunpoint, and a victim who feels unable to rely on the first point of contact needs a documented, escalated reporting route.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Settle commercial disputes in writing, through lawyers or arbitration, and never at the client's or your own residence.
- If you are forced to transfer money, contact your bank and the police immediately; early reports improve the chance of reversal.
- Record the complaint number and officer details, and escalate to the National Complaints Desk if a report is not recorded properly.
- Share any threats with your security provider so patrols and access control can be tightened.



5. CYBERCRIME: THE SERENGETI III OPERATION

INTERPOL announced on 22 October that Operation Serengeti III, run between 29 June and 31 August with law enforcement from 21 countries including Zimbabwe, had led to 1,462 arrests, disrupted 10,909 malicious networks and recovered more than US$105 million. Investigators identified 65,929 victims of cyber-enabled fraud, ransomware, business email compromise, online scams and digital extortion, linked to losses above US$385 million. The Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe was among the supporting partners.

Highlights included a call-centre fraud ring in Uganda that used scripted calls and fake trading platforms, a phishing and business email compromise operation in Nigeria that had harvested around 2.1 million email addresses, an investment scam promoted through messaging apps, and a mobile loan application fraud in Tanzania. INTERPOL's African Cyber Threat Assessment Report 2026 earlier linked artificial intelligence to more than half of cybercrime on the continent, a reminder that scam messages and voice calls are becoming harder to tell from the real thing.

SECURITY TAKEAWAY

- Verify any change of supplier banking details by calling a known number, never one supplied in the email asking for the change.
- Treat investment offers received through WhatsApp or social media as scams until proven otherwise.
- Use multi-factor authentication on email and banking, and never share one-time codes, even with callers who sound familiar.
- Train staff to report suspicious messages early; speed is what makes recovery of funds possible.

OCTOBER SECURITY ADVISORY



FOR HOMES AND FAMILIES

1. Bank cash rather than keeping it at home, and secure kitchen and back doors with quality gates and locks.
2. Install and test a panic button or response-linked alarm reachable from the bedroom, and agree a family safe room.
3. Keep keys and vehicles secured at night, and avoid resisting if confronted; belongings can be replaced.
4. Report any suspicious vehicles or persons around the property to your security provider immediately.

FOR BUSINESSES AND OFFICES

5. Control entry to offices during the day and brief staff on non-resistance and duress alarms.
6. Vary cash handling, banking times and routes, and avoid holding large sums on site.
7. Keep disputes with partners and suppliers in writing and out of homes or after-hours settings.
8. Verify any banking or supplier detail change through a second, known channel before paying.

FOR FIREARM OWNERS AND COMPANIES WITH FIREARMS

9. Update licences and firearm records at your local police station before the amnesty ends on 12 November.
10. Store firearms and ammunition in approved safes with controlled access, and account for them after any closure or staff change.
11. Surrender unwanted or unlicensed weapons during the amnesty and keep the safe custody receipt.
12. Report any lost or stolen firearm to police immediately.

FOR FARMERS, BUTCHERIES AND MEAT TRADERS

13. Keep ownership and movement records for livestock and do not move animals at night.
14. Buy meat only from licensed, traceable suppliers, and keep invoices.
15. Report suspicious livestock movements via (0242) 703631 or WhatsApp 0712 800 197

CYBER SAFETY REMINDER

Serengeti III showed that cybercrime is organised, international and increasingly assisted by artificial intelligence. The defence is still the same simple habit: verify before you trust. If you are asked to move money, share one-time codes or change banking details on the strength of urgency alone, stop and confirm through a separate, known channel.

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Closing Note

October 2026 showed violence reaching into homes and offices, with gangs willing to use machetes, axes and firearms for sums of a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. It also showed the response tightening: a national firearm amnesty, a nationwide stock theft operation, arrests, and a senior officer in the dock. As the festive season approaches and more cash, travel and empty homes come into play, the principles hold: reduce predictability, secure the weakest door, and verify before you trust.

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

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Stay Alert. Stay Unpredictable. Stay Safe.