

Zimbabwe in Transition

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A View from Within

Edited by Tim Murithi and Aquilina Mawadza



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Introduction

The victims of ‘the political stand-offs’, ‘the economic meltdowns’, ‘the social disintegration’ and every other phrase that has been coined to describe Zimbabwe over the past few years are the ordinary citizens in the remote villages, towns and the cities of Zimbabwe. There remain many hurting citizens: the woman in anguish after the ‘disappearance’ of her husband who took and voiced a different political position; the family in a desperate situation after the ‘torching’ of their home and possessions to teach them a lesson in loyalty; the young graduate who battled over the years to get an education but whose prospects of applying the gained knowledge are hampered by the high rates of unemployment, and the middle-aged father of four who lost his job.

After the hotly contested presidential elections of 2008, Zimbabwe is currently ruled by a Government of National Unity (GNU). Faced with a monstrosity of a job description, at least from the perspective of the electorate, the GNU is expected to iron out the socially, economically and politically fragmented issues in the country. The GNU is constantly confronted with the Herculean task of addressing gross violations of human rights of the past decade, ensuring the rule of law and establishing a viable socio-economic paradigm that fosters economic growth. All this complicates Zimbabwe’s transition to democracy.

Much has been written about Zimbabwe since 2002 and these works have assisted the international community to better understand the situation in the country. Whilst those discourses go on, the ramifications of these symptoms are potent enough to destabilise every imaginable sector in the country hence it is important to track and discuss these symptoms with the intention of analysing their implications on the transition to democracy. Amidst these debates, it is crucial that the insights, perspectives and proposals of Zimbabweans themselves are heard. This book is a monologue on Zimbabwe, a styled conversation by its

own people, drawn from various stakeholders, on the transition to democracy by the country. The contributors offer a refreshing perspective on the state of the country, the effects of the events in Zimbabwe on the people and the steps they continue to take to reclaim their dignity as citizens of a state that is transiting to democracy.

Building on the extensive analysis of the history and unfolding crisis in Zimbabwe by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation ('the Institute'), this publication's focus is on knowledge-sharing aimed at preparing the ground for enhanced national reconstruction. The objective is to help create spaces within which Zimbabweans can develop capacity and resources to drive political change.

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation engagement in Zimbabwe

The Institute has worked extensively in Zimbabwe in cooperation with different stakeholders, among them civil society organisations, faith-based communities, women's groups and community leaders involved in community healing work over many years. This introductory chapter takes stock of the various interventions of the Institute and aims to increase our understanding of the role various stakeholders have played in the country's transition.

The early work of the Institute was characterised by the convening of public and private dialogues, providing both a platform for civil society voices and space for meetings of experts to plot a course for Zimbabwe's political future. The appointment of a full-time officer in the Institute's Zimbabwe desk in 2005 augmented the impact and effectiveness of its interventions in the country. Initial engagements were based on analysis, consultation and intervention in the democratisation processes in Zimbabwe. This effort by the Institute demonstrates its commitment to the development of relationships within civil society organisations in South Africa and Zimbabwe thereby enhancing regional cooperation.

The first publication on the country, *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation* (Raftopoulos, Savage) was published by the Institute in 2004 and Weaver Press in Zimbabwe in 2005. The book addressed a range of issues integral to the development of reconciliation as a political and practical instrument of transition in Zimbabwe. The added value of the book was that it provided a platform for Zimbabwean voices to be projected internationally. The second publication, *The Struggle for Legitimacy: A Long-Term Analysis of*

the 2005 Parliamentary Election and its Implications for Democratic Processes in Zimbabwe, as mentioned earlier, included analyses of certain key areas in relation to the political situation in Zimbabwe, especially the media, the role of the military and the gendered implications of the election process.

By the end of 2007, the Institute had revised its engagement in Zimbabwe owing to the near collapse of the country in the face of the political turmoil. A four-fold focus was adopted: there was a greater need for concerted analyses of political developments with a view to anticipating possible shifts in the political stand-off; secondly, the Institute sought for interventions to train those who may have the opportunity to participate in the democratic shaping of the country; thirdly, documentation of the Zimbabwe struggle in order for the citizens and others to understand their past as a basis for creating a better future and a heightened need to work with women's groups both in the country and in the diaspora.

As an output of this shift in engagement in Zimbabwe, the Institute embarked on a major history-writing project involving senior Zimbabwean scholars and activists. The model was based on the Institute's historical work around the *Turning Points* school history project in South Africa. The result is a book, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, a historical narrative of Zimbabwe from the pre-colonial period to 2008.

In early December 2009, the Institute hosted a two-day roundtable at Le Franschoek Hotel outside Cape Town. The meeting interrogated ways in which members of the Zimbabwean diaspora, many of whom occupy prominent positions in international institutions, can contribute to Zimbabwe's economic and socio-political reconstruction. The event saw the birth of a new organisation The 'Zimbabwe Diaspora Initiative' that is represented by 15 core members elected by the larger conference. This organisation has defined its mission as 'to mobilise, organise and develop the capacity of the Zimbabwean diaspora to participate effectively in Zimbabwe and benefit from its resources'.

In addition to the work of the Institute in the Zimbabwean diaspora, the Institute continues to engage in a process of dialogue and policy formation with different stakeholder groups on issues of national reconciliation and recovery: the Government of Zimbabwe represented by the Organ for National Healing, community leaders representing different communities, the women's coalition in Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. Such engagement has allowed participants to come together and critically engage with the Global Political Agreement,¹ but also to open dialogue on options and methods for Zimbabwe's healing and reconciliation process.

Chapter breakdown

Chapter one deals with the history of the transition and traces some of the prominent political, social and economic trends of the Zimbabwean transition from 1998 to the present. The chapter focuses on the characteristics that make Zimbabwe's case difficult to resolve.

Voices from civil society in chapter two consolidates all the work done in the last decade by civil society organisations in their role in the country's transition. The chapter also provides an analysis of civil society organisations in Zimbabwe. An important actor on the political landscape in Zimbabwe is the faith-based community whose work is discussed in this chapter.

Chapter three consolidates all the work done thus far with faith-based communities and their role in the Zimbabwean transition. The chapter seeks to answer the following questions: Who are the main faith-based community actors in the Zimbabwean crisis? How have they reacted to the crisis? What is their role in the Zimbabwean transition?

Chapter four, Responses from the diaspora, focuses on the potential role that the Zimbabwean diaspora can play both in contributing to and participating in the political and economic transitional process taking shape in Zimbabwe. Given that an estimated 3 million Zimbabweans are living in the diaspora, it is not only important but vitally strategic to tap into this resource, facilitate, enable and institutionalise its participation in the country's political and economic recovery. The diaspora community is already a major source of remittances that come through various forms and that have been central to household poverty reduction and have cushioned families that would otherwise have added to the statistics of those falling into destitution daily.

Rather than view the diaspora as an unpatriotic, angry and less engaged group, as others would argue, it is important to see the diaspora as a social and economic resource, a critical player in reconstruction and a social group that must be seriously engaged wherever and whenever they can be found. Examples across the world demonstrate the potential that resides in any diaspora. It is therefore critically important that this group of Zimbabweans be included in processes taking place – be they constitutional reform, national healing, economic reforms and social recapitalisation, skills retention and the national renewal processes currently underway.

There is need for clear initiatives aimed at re-engaging the Zimbabwean diaspora; for leadership to be displayed from within the diaspora itself as well as from the inclusive government to facilitate the realisation of the potential that

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resides in the diaspora in supporting national consolidation and reconstruction efforts currently under way. The opportunity must not be missed. For these initiatives to contribute meaningfully, there must be clear institutional and policy mechanisms that can unlock this value. The chapter critically examines the current political developments and economic reconstruction processes in Zimbabwe and highlights the role the diaspora could play in contributing to political and economic transition in the country.

Women in Zimbabwe have played an active role in the country since the political and economic meltdown started and this is discussed in chapter five on the role of women in democratic transition. The chapter emphasises the many factors that influence women's participation in democratic transitions.

In chapter six, community leaders and community healing work, critically discusses the work done by community leaders and their role in the Zimbabwean transition. It also incorporates the community healing work that has been facilitated by the Institute and the chapter provides valuable insights into community organising.

The role of the Zimbabwean media in shaping the political and economic transitional processes taking shape in Zimbabwe is analysed in chapter seven. Since the late 1990s, the media space has been severely constricted, and for a long time, the media authorities have been calling for legislation to provide for a free, independent, competitive and pluralistic mass media. This chapter therefore attempts to illustrate the complex problems and difficulties of the media and to assess the role it has played in the transition period. Experiences of the mass media in the last decade show that excessive administrative constraints and abuse by the government have had an impact on the media and its work. The chapter highlights the role the media could play in contributing to the Zimbabwean transition.

Chapter eight seeks answers to whether there is a causal link between democratic transition and the youth movement. This chapter is an effort to locate and harness the positive energy of youth towards progressive political, economic and social development in Zimbabwe. This chapter will consolidate all the work done thus far with the youth and their role in the Zimbabwean transition.

A discussion of the Zimbabwean transition would be incomplete without an assessment of the role of SADC, the African Union and the international community. Chapter nine argues that SADC and AU countries have supported a gradual political transition in Zimbabwe. While critics of SADC have accused the regional body of blocking the political transformation in Zimbabwe by

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offering President Mugabe unqualified support (Landsberg & Mackay 2005), SADC has, on the contrary, been one of the most prominent actors in efforts to resolve Zimbabwe's politics.

Dr Fanie du Toit

Executive Director of IJR

NOTES

- 1 The Global Political Agreement (GPA) was signed by ZANU PF and the two MDC factions (MDC-T and MDC-M) and provided for the formation of the Inclusive Government of Zimbabwe in February 2009.

CHAPTER ONE

Zimbabwe's failed transition? An analysis of the challenges and complexities in Zimbabwe's transition to democracy in the post-2000 period

James Muzondidya

Zimbabwe's road to democracy in the post-independence era, particularly since the democratisation wave of the late 1990s, has been a very difficult one. To date, there have been a number of sustained efforts by various local, regional and international actors to move Zimbabwe towards democracy as well as attempts to find a lasting solution to the political and economic crises that seriously affected the country's progress from the late 1990s. However, these attempts have been less successful mainly because Zimbabwe has complex political and economic problems, with interlocking national, regional and international political and economic dimensions rooted in both historical and contemporary factors and developments. To understand the complexities of challenges to Zimbabwe's transition to democracy as well as prospects for political change and democracy in the country, this paper critically examines both the historical and contemporary dynamics shaping political and economic developments in the country. The paper's central argument is that it is only through such an understanding of the complex web of domestic and international factors that shape developments in Zimbabwe that a lasting solution to the crisis can be developed. The wide range of factors and developments discussed in this paper include:

- the political and socio-economic developments in Zimbabwe in the first two decades of independence;
- the ideologies and strategies of the dominant political parties in Zimbabwe, ie Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the two

Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations;

- the key institutions and movements with significant influence on Zimbabwe's domestic politics, such as the civics and community-based organisations (CBOs), business, labour, the church and the security apparatus;
- ideologies and strategies of regional and international forces influencing political and economic developments in Zimbabwe, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and the United States.

Historical context

Zimbabwe's crisis and its challenges around democracy in the post-2000 period cannot be understood without a proper historical analysis of the political and economic developments of the country's first decades of independence. This is mainly because the political, economic and cultural developments and trends established in these early years of independence have continued to influence and shape process in contemporary Zimbabwe in critically important ways. Some of these cultural influences developed in the early years of independence, which have continued to have an important impact on democratisation initiatives in the country, include the culture of centralised despotism introduced on society by the ZANU PF-led government from the very moment it took over power in 1980.

Centralised despotism

While at independence in 1980, the ZANU PF Government committed itself to establishing a more cohesive nation–state based on democracy, reconciliation, social justice and equality, and tried to transform and democratise the structure of governance in urban and rural areas through decentralisation of powers and resources to local authorities,¹ its post-colonial project of building a just, equitable and non-racial society was not achieved in the 1980s and the foundation for a truly democratic order was not laid. A number of scholars who have written about post-independence Zimbabwe politics have pointed to the continuity of authoritarian governance from the Rhodesian Front to ZANU PF. They have traced the increasingly repressive nature of ZANU PF after independence, whether it was dealing with the official opposition, striking workers and students, or civil society.²

As Welshman Ncube observed, behind the façade of constitutional democracy lay an authoritarian political system characterised by the proscription of

democratic space, and serious violations of basic human rights and the rule of law. There was a strong continuity with the remnants of the colonial Rhodesian state, perpetuated through the application of its repressive laws, such as the Emergency Powers Act and the Law and Order Maintenance Act, which were used to detain political rivals and silence critics (Ncube, 1986: 156–77).

The government also relied heavily on the coercive tactics developed during the liberation struggle to elicit civilian compliance.³ As Masipula Sithole poignantly argued, the government continued to rely on the commandist nature of mobilisation and politicisation developed during the liberation struggle which emphasised the politics of intimidation and fear. Opponents were viewed in warlike terms, as enemies, and therefore illegitimate (Sithole, 1988: 245).

This 'culture of intolerance' of dissent, inherited from the liberation days, affected ZANU PF's practice of the democratic ideals it espoused. Although multiparty elections were held regularly throughout the 1980s and 1990s, their conduct betrayed the government's lack of tolerance of political diversity and commitment to democratic politics. ZANU PF approached elections as 'battles' and viewed its political opponents as enemies to be annihilated rather than as political competitors. Its electoral dominance was partly achieved through its *Gukurahundi*⁴ strategy, which entailed 'an undisguised, intolerant, commandist and deliberately violent policy towards the opposition' (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997: 133).

Indeed, ZANU PF did not mobilise or win elections through intimidation alone, as its critics and political opponents have often argued. It skilfully articulated populist policies on land, indigenisation of the economy, employment and workers' rights, and initially delivered on some of its social and economic promises. All the same, violence and coercion remained integral to Zimbabwe's electoral politics throughout the first decade of independence (Sithole, 1988: 84–85). Even though the government never proscribed multiparty elections, it never created conditions for them to be free and fair and gave opposition parties very little space to campaign. Besides deploying its violent youth and women's wings to commandeer support during elections, the party marshalled state resources and institutions, such as the army, police, intelligence service and public radio and television, to ensure its electoral hegemony (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997: 122–39; Moyo, 1992). This culture of violent electoral behaviour has been carried to this day, and this has continued to have a significant impact on electoral democracy in Zimbabwe.

The ruling party's dominance of state institutions and processes was similarly

exercised in the governance sphere. The local government decentralisation process started in 1980 was not successful because of the party's overbearing presence over the sector. The Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward Development Committees (WADCOs), which were supposed to spearhead development and democracy in rural communities, were not allowed to evolve into inclusive structures of governance. They remained, as Amanda Hammar noted, local ZANU PF party committees and cells carried over from the liberation war but whose partisan and authoritarian practices pervaded both popular participation and democratic developmentalism (Hammar, 2005: 19). Nor were Rural District Councils treated as autonomous units serving the interests of local communities. They remained an appendage of central government, severely marginalised, under-resourced and dependent on central government for both their funding and staffing. The District Administrators, who replaced District Commissioners, were not accountable to local communities but to central government (Chiwome, 1998; Munro, 1998; McGregor, 2002: 17–23; Masunungure & Musekiwa 2005). The political legacy of this culture of decentralised despotism by ZANU PF, particularly in rural areas, has resulted in their partial insulation from alternative political influences. Rural spaces have thus been literally cordoned off from opposition party influences partly through ZANU PF's dominance and control of both state administrative structures and rural populations.

In the urban sphere, the ZANU PF Government also sought to control forces challenging its authority, especially workers, youth groups and other civic bodies. For the greater part of its life in the post-colonial period, the labour movement, for instance, was not only weak and divided but also subordinated to the state. Its autonomy, as constituted in the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), was extremely limited, its capacity to set out and implement its own independent programmes was greatly reduced, and this remained the case for much of the 1980s (Raftopoulos & Sachikonye, 2001).

ZANU PF's power indeed continued to be challenged at every level by the country's diverse social and political groups throughout the first decades of independence and beyond. However, democracy was never allowed to develop as part of the political culture in independent Zimbabwe mainly because the post-independence state did not tolerate political diversity and dissent, heavily relied on force for mobilisation, and had a narrow, monolithic interpretation of citizenship, nationalism and national unity (Raftopoulos, 2004: 4). To give one example, the violent and brutal methods used by the state to suppress the activities of a few armed political rebels during *Gukurahundi* were not only unwarranted

but disproportionate to the security threat they posed (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJP), 1997; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003; Alexander, 1998: 151–82; Alexander, *et al*, 2000). Although the violence and killings of this period ended in 1987 after the signing of the Unity Accord between ZANU and Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union (ZAPU) and the merging of the two parties into the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), the political merger effectively emasculated the opposition (Raftopoulos, 2004: 4). The threat of violence and the hegemonic discourse of unity were not only used to subordinate ZAPU and other opposition parties, but also to control women's groups, labour, students and other civil forces whenever they expressed dissent or organised protests (Sachikonye, 1986; Raftopoulos, 2004: 4–5).

The political and cultural trends developed in Zimbabwe in the early years of independence not only had important implications for the practice of democracy in independent Zimbabwe but also for the growth of alternative political movements. ZANU PF's hegemonic culture stifled the growth of opposition parties in the first decades of independence, and it was not until the intensification of economic and social problems in the late 1990s that a vibrant opposition movement was formed. ZANU PF's hegemonic tendencies also obstructed the growth of a vibrant civic movement, a vital prerequisite for democracy in most states. The lack of vibrant political opposition and civic movements in the first decades of independence, as discussed below, has had a lasting legacy on the organisational and mobilisational capacity of Zimbabwe's opposition and civic movements.

Another important historical influence in Zimbabwe's politics that has crucially shaped the country's road towards democracy is the military factor in politics. Like most post-independent African states which went through protracted liberation wars, the political–military nexus remained strong within the dominant African nationalist organisations, ZAPU and ZANU, directly involved in the war of independence, during and after independence.

The military factor in Zimbabwean politics

From the early 1970s onwards, the political–military nexus was strong in both ZANU and ZAPU. Military commanders had a significant say in the party politics of both organisations and tensions and misunderstandings between political leaders and military commanders were increasingly resolved through assassinations (Sithole, 1979; Chung, 2005; Sibanda, 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006). The political–military nexus within the dominant nationalist organisations

was carried into the independence era. Despite remaining highly professional, the new army formed from the integration of Zimbabwe African Nationalist Army (ZANLA), Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and Rhodesian army forces after independence was not completely disengaged from the political sphere. Many of the new army's commanders were selected from the two guerrilla armies, ZANLA and ZIPRA, and senior army commanders remained strong political party activists. To guarantee political loyalty, all command posts from the position of colonel upwards remained political appointments – directly approved by the president. The political–military nexus helped to stabilise the state and shield the government from any possible military takeover (Chitiyo & Rupiya, 2005).

The military was indeed not directly involved in the day-to-day running of the country for the greater part of the first decades of independence. However, its top leadership continued to be important in decision-making processes of both the ruling party and the government. The expanding role of the military and other security actors in Zimbabwe's political, economic and social life was achieved in the later 1990s when President Mugabe increasingly turned to securocrats for protection against the first indications of discontent from opponents inside and outside his party. Through his patronage system, he managed to keep the army leadership close to him by making them beneficiaries of the lucrative mining contracts on offer in the DRC (Campbell, 2003; United Nations, 2002).

President Mugabe and his government moved even closer to the military and other security structures after the constitutional referendum defeat in February 2000. His government recruited serving members of the army, police and intelligence, alongside demobilised war veterans, to organise occupations of white-owned farms (Chitiyo, 2000; Kriger, 2003). When it came to the crucial 2002 presidential elections and subsequent elections, his party heavily relied on the security structures to mobilise support for the campaign and to organise the election (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 3 January 2003). Members of the security structures were deployed to run the Electoral Supervisory Commission, while war veterans were recruited to work as storm troopers during the campaign of the hotly contested presidential elections (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 3 January 2003; *Telegraph*, 3 May 2003). The military continued to extend its reach into various spheres of civilian life in the 2000s, including agriculture (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 18–24 November 2005; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 13 January 2006; Solidarity Peace Trust, April 2006). All this has had important implications for the country's transition to civilian, democratic rule.

Further complicating Zimbabwe's transition to political democracy and

economic normalcy throughout the last decade of crisis, is the nature of the political and economic crises the country is entangled in, and how the various political players entangled in the crisis have sought to play both historical and contemporary aspects of the crises to maximise their political space and opportunities. Particularly important has been the way in which the historical legacies of racial divisions and inequalities between and black and white Zimbabweans have come to play themselves in the crisis and all attendant efforts to resolve it.

The conundrum of race and the crisis

Undeniably, the Zimbabwean crisis is rooted in issues of governance and the ZANU PF government's economic policy failures and mismanagement. At the same time, ZANU PF's prolonged stay in power, especially from 2000 onwards, has been achieved partly through the use of coercive power to ensure civilian compliance. However, ZANU PF's continued hold over power cannot be understood in terms of the use of coercion and authoritarianism only, as Blair (2002), Meredith (2002) and Makumbe (2009) have sought to do. Its prolonged stay in power cannot be understood without understanding the failure by both its internal and external opponents to deal effectively with the questions of race, particularly the unresolved legacies of racial polarisation and inequalities in this former white settler colony (Muzondidya, 2010a; Muzondidya, 2010c).

First, although political and economic problems around issues of governance, democracy, authoritarianism and the economic meltdown of the 1990s helped to spark the Zimbabwean crisis, the unresolved racial inequalities in the economy, especially in land ownership and utilisation, partly contributed to the crisis. Second, once Zimbabwe started experiencing political and economic upheavals in the 1990s, the crisis assumed racial dimensions mainly because there were unresolved issues of race in post-independence Zimbabwe. Third, because of the unresolved colonial legacies of racial prejudice and inequalities, it was easier for the incumbent government to use both land and race for political mobilisation and scapegoating when it found itself confronted with mounting popular pressure. At the same time, by projecting both the Zimbabwean crisis as a racial problem and casting the opposition as 'stooges of local white farmers and the imperial West', the incumbent government has been able to occidentalise an internal problem while simultaneously positioning itself as an African nationalist government defending Zimbabwean national interests at home and black people's rights and

dignity across the globe. By projecting the crisis in this manner, the incumbent government has not only been able to win ideological support from some quarters of the marginalised world but also to retain some level of political legitimacy both internally and externally.

More fundamentally, Zimbabwe's political crisis has become protracted mainly because the ruling ZANU PF has successfully utilised the emotive issue of race to mobilise support internally, regionally and internationally, while both the opposition and external critics of ZANU PF have underestimated the power of race in building support for ZANU PF and in polarising political opinion on Zimbabwe. Opportunistically capitalising on the power of race in the post-colony, particularly in a former white settler state such as Zimbabwe which, like the other former settler colonies of South Africa and Namibia, has not managed to resolve the legacies of racism and racial inequalities in the economy and land ownership, ZANU PF has been able to articulate the Zimbabwean political crisis as a racial issue whose solution can only be found in addressing issues of racial domination and inequalities.

Also conscious of the historical and contemporary contestations around post-colonial redress and the native-settler dialectic in post-colonial Africa in general, from the late 1990s ZANU PF slowly began to redirect popular anger towards its government and capital (foreign and white-dominated) by focusing on the unresolved questions of belonging, citizenship and economic rights and appealing to notions of exclusive black nationalism. It skilfully shifted the political debate about Zimbabwe into a more complicated 'native-settler question' – a debate that has proved difficult to resolve in many other African countries with large numbers of non-autochthonous immigrant groups, such as South Africa, Rwanda, Angola, Uganda, Ivory Coast and the DRC (Malaquis, 2000; Mamdani, 2001; 2005; Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2004; Sall, 2004; Habib & Bentley, 2008).

The ZANU PF mobilisation strategy of shifting the debate about Zimbabwe to the 'native-settler question' and deploying the discourse of nativism has helped it to connect with some segments of the population, especially the older generations with fresh memories of colonialism. The 2004 Afrobarometer survey of political opinion in Zimbabwe, for instance, found out that while the MDC was attractive to the younger voters, ZANU PF tended to draw the old (Chikwanha, Sithole and Bratton, 2004). ZANU PF, to a certain extent, has also managed to win the hearts and souls of many Zimbabweans across the political divide by locating the land question within its discourse of post-colonial redress. For a large proportion of the Zimbabwean population in overpopulated rural areas and living adjacent to large

commercial farms owned by whites, the ZANU PF rhetoric about the 'return of the land to its rightful owners' has a popular resonance (Scoones, 2008; Moyo, 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

Indeed, the politics of nativism increasingly articulated by ZANU PF from the late 1990s onward are rhetorical politics designed to conceal the party's own policy shortcomings, authoritarianism and elite accumulation project (Raftopoulos, 2006; Scarnechia *et al*, 2008; Hammar, 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). However, such rhetorical, racial politics has enabled ZANU PF to connect with broader sections of the Zimbabwean population inside and outside the country, particularly the many Zimbabweans who recognise the unfair balance of ownership of land and other important economic resources between blacks and whites. The voting patterns in all the national elections from 2000, especially the March 2008 election, which was relatively free compared to all previous elections since 1980 (Zimbabwe Elections Support Network (ZESN), 2008), to a large extent, show some correlation between the ZANU PF rhetoric about land and its popularity. ZANU PF managed to show significant levels of electoral support in the relatively free and fair election of March 2008 when most people expected it to lose by a very wide margin. In this relatively 'free and fair' election that was held at a time when Zimbabweans were experiencing their worst economic hardships in history, ZANU PF still managed to retain 43.2 per cent of the national popular vote against the MDC's 47.9 per cent, and polled a majority in most rural district wards (Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), 2008: iv; ZESN, 2008: 43).

While most urbanites consistently voted against ZANU PF from 2000, most rural residents, particularly resettled peasants, have voted ZANU PF (ZESN, 2002; 2005; Alexander & Raftopoulos, 2005: 4–23; Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), 2008). ZANU PF's post-2000 electoral victories among rural residents have indeed been achieved partly through electoral fraud and the deployment of violence and coercion in the rural areas, easier to police than the urban areas and also suffering from the legacy of a concentration of Zimbabwe's electoral violence since independence in 1980 (Moyo, 1992; ZESN, 2002; 2005; 2008). However, ZANU PF's electoral victory in rural areas has not been achieved through intimidation alone, suggested by the writings of Bond (2001), Bond and Manyanya (2002), Campbell (2003; 2008) and Scarnerchia *et al* (2008). Anecdotal evidence from opinion polls and discussions with rural residents suggest that some of its support in these rural areas is based on voluntary support.

Even in the urban areas, where ZANU PF's political legitimacy has been increasingly questioned from several fronts since the early 1990s, its 'essentialist

race' message has managed to develop a broader appeal to some workers experiencing the negative effects of Zimbabwe's colour-coded capital. Despite its dramatic loss of support among urbanites after 2000, reflected in its poor showing in all the elections between 2000 and 2008, ZANU PF has retained some significant levels of support among various urban social groups, including workers, musicians, students and intellectuals, who have bought into its politics of nativism and empowerment of the workers. Through their own initiative or the support of government, popular urban musicians and actors, for instance, have popularised ZANU ideologies and politics by composing and performing songs in praise of ZANU PF and its fast-track land redistribution programme – the 'Hondo Yeminda' (war for land/fast track) musicians (Chikowero, 2011). The ZANU PF message about racial politics has also been providing the much-needed ideological backing by urban intellectuals, including university lecturers, independent researchers, writers and journalists, whose motives for supporting ZANU PF vary from ideological beliefs to the party's patronage system which guarantees benefits to its supporters. These intellectuals, dismissed by critics as 'patriotic intellectuals', have become the party's vital organic intellectuals who defend and rationalise its nativist politics and ideology inside the country and abroad through their writings and conference addresses (Ranger, 2005: 215–34; Tendi, 2008: 379–96).

The ZANU PF message on race and Zimbabwean supranationalism has also resonated strongly among Zimbabweans living abroad, especially those in South Africa, Europe and the United States who, like other African migrants, have to deal with being black in countries where issues of race and racism are still serious problems and have to develop defensive nationalism as a coping mechanism (Muzondidya, 2010a). This defensive nationalism, triggered by a combination of discrimination and the emotional void created by being away from home, has led some Zimbabweans abroad, even those who did not support the incumbent government, to develop a positive image of Zimbabwe and everything Zimbabwean and to be defensive about Zimbabwe and its government, especially when outsiders make generalisations about their country. It has also led others to embrace (temporarily or permanently) ZANU PF's politics of race.

The resonance of the race message among Zimbabweans has even been felt within the political opposition, characterised by Mugabe and ZANU as a foreign white creation (Raftopoulos, 2006). Having initially committed itself to the politics of non-racialism and having embraced whites in its structures and activities at its inception, the issue of race created strains within the MDC as some activists

began to complain about the predominance of whites in certain leading positions (MDC, 2005). It was therefore not surprising that the MDC, when confronted with the problematic legacies of racism and racial inequalities in post-settler society, began to adopt a much more cautious and sensitive approach towards issues of race and white representation in its activities (Raftopoulos, 2005). Under the strain of trying to find its own space and voice within a context where it was characterised as an extension of foreign white forces, the MDC has thus not only had difficulties dealing with issues of representation of Zimbabwean whites and other minorities in the party's leadership position (Raftopoulos, 2006) but also maintaining an open relationship with its donors and supporters in the West (Makunike, 2008).

The language of race and anti-imperialism has played particularly well on the African continent and other parts of the Third World where ZANU PF has received support partly because it has managed to articulate the political conflict to a broad anti-imperialist audience by mobilising the language of sub-alternism both to define the conflict and to mobilise support (Raftopoulos & Phimister, 2004; Raftopoulos, 2006). Conscious of the anti-imperialist and anti-racist sentiments among marginalised people across the world, ZANU PF ideologues have tried to conceal their authoritarianism and responsibility for the crisis by appealing to the language of post-colonial redress, black nationalism, anti-imperialism and pan-Africanism to project their government as a victim of an imperialist, Western plot designed to punish black Zimbabweans for having stood up to the interests of white capital and racism. The party's propagandists deployed inside and outside the country have also skilfully tried to link every problem in Zimbabwe to international sanctions by the EU and the United States (Phimister & Raftopoulos, 2004).

The West's 'clumsy reaction' to the Zimbabwean crisis has helped to bolster ZANU PF's claims that it is a victim of Western hegemonic designs. The West's 'clumsy' response to the Zimbabwean crisis has manifested itself in the British government's abrasive denial of responsibilities for colonial injustices in Zimbabwe, the imposition of targeted sanctions on the government of Zimbabwe by the United States, Australia, Canada and the EU, and offering of open support to the opposition in Zimbabwe (Phimister & Raftopoulos, 2004; Makunike, 2008).

At the same time, the Western governments' repeated verbal attacks on the Zimbabwean government, delivered in the arrogant language of imperial hegemony, has helped to divide international public opinion on the Zimbabwean crisis in a way that has complicated international intervention efforts in Zimbabwe.

In southern Africa, for instance, all the powerful regional actors, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique and Namibia, partly resentful of Western attempts to dictate orders, have solidly supported the ZANU PF government while countries like Botswana have taken a more critical but cautious stance. The reasons for this support are indeed complex, ranging from economic interests at stake to historical ties and solidarities forged during the anti-colonial struggle (Phimister & Raftopoulos, 2004). However, the resentment to Western attempts to dictate positions on African leaders, in a region pregnant with memories of racial domination and supremacy, has led many African governments to support the Zimbabwean Government, even though they disagree with some of its repressive and partisan politics.

Though increasingly unpopular and repressive at home, through some orchestrated articulation of racial politics, the ZANU PF Government has somehow managed to develop a populist appeal among some marginalised groups around the world by successfully mobilising the language of race and positioning itself as the champion of 'mass justice'. The same posturing has enabled it to maintain ideological backing among some Zimbabweans who, in spite of their continued economic suffering under the crisis, cannot disagree with its articulations on racial inequalities and prejudice. As scholars like Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros (2007), Ian Scoones (2008) and Mahmood Mamdani (2008) have all correctly observed, Mugabe's land-reform measures, however harsh, have won him considerable popularity, not just in Zimbabwe but throughout southern Africa, particularly among those who see his government's action as an attempt to deal with unresolved long-term historical grievances.

What has helped to make race a powerful tool for mobilisation in post-2000 Zimbabwe are not simply the visible and salient racial inequalities among Zimbabweans, but the concerns about the legacies of colonialism and racialism in the region as well as Third World grievances about the continued dominance and marginalisation of the South under globalisation. The mobilisation of race as a legitimising force or mobilising idiom in Zimbabwe occurred against a background of unresolved long-term historical economic grievances which included racial inequalities in the control and ownership of land and the economy (Moyo, 2000; Hammar & Raftopoulos, 2003; Mlambo, 2005). Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, white farmers had been reluctant to relinquish their colonially inherited control over land and there had been little radical reform or structural change in the Zimbabwean economy which had remained in foreign hands, especially British and South African-based multinational corporations, and some local

whites (Stoneman, 1988). The predominance of foreign-owned companies in the productive sectors of the economy meant that locals continued to be excluded.

In the absence of concerted pressure for justice and economic reform from the impoverished masses in the 1980s when the economy was performing well and social obligations were being met, both government and privileged whites were lulled into a false sense of political and economic security and did not do much at all during the first decades of independence to address the inherited racial imbalances in wealth between blacks and whites. The government's indigenisation policies were not coherently defined and were implemented half-heartedly (Raftopoulos, 1996; Raftopoulos & Compagnon, 2003), while many privileged whites, acknowledging their loss of political primacy, focused on maintaining their economic status (Huysse, 2003).

The behaviour of many white Zimbabweans continued to be influenced by what both Ranger and Mandaza have described as the legacy of 'settler culture' – a standardised mode of behaviour and thought which tenuously held the position of the white community's predominance over blacks and perpetual domination of natives by white settlers through settlers' virtual monopoly over political and legal institutions, coercive control over the labour and livelihoods of Africans (Mandaza, 1986; Ranger, forthcoming).

Influenced by the legacy of settler culture, many white Zimbabweans made no efforts to reform their political attitudes towards their black compatriots or to contribute to nation building (Godwin, 1984; Godwin & Hancock, 1993). Notwithstanding the significant role played by many whites who remained in Zimbabwe after independence, many whites had withdrawn into their 'racial enclaves' (Godwin, 1984). While some whites, especially the younger generation, were socially proactive and integrated, many maintained their isolation and 'largely abdicated from actively engaging in the process of nation building' (Alexander, 2004). As Selby has written in respect of white commercial farmers, 'The white community's visible affluence and continued social isolation, which amplified during structural adjustment, provided a target and a catalyst for anti-white sentiment'. An independent consultant identified the racial exclusiveness of the CFU (Commercial Farmers Union) as their biggest weakness and greatest threat. Racism among some whites was still prevalent and mounting scepticism among farmers towards government was often explained through condescending cultural perspectives (Selby, 2006).

Two decades after independence, there had been little integration in schools, sports, residences and other spaces of social contact. In the urban areas, for

instance, some responded to black suburban encroachment by creating alternative spaces where they continued to keep to themselves, 'retreat(ing) from public life into the laager of sports club, home entertaining and the video' (Godwin, 1984). In Harare, affluent whites reacted to the post-independence movement of blacks into previously white-only areas such as Mabelreign and Avondale by withdrawing to more exclusive suburbs like Mount Pleasant, Glen Lorne and Borrowdale; their counterparts in Bulawayo acted similarly by moving into areas like Suburbs (Pickard-Cambridge, 1988: 1–13; *Financial Gazette*, 30 December 1999; Kilgore, 2009: 19–30; 92–105). In clubs, diners and restaurants, separation was enforced through practices such as membership-based admission. In the educational sector, some white parents responded to the government's de-racialisation of education and the admission of blacks into formerly white-only (Group A) schools by building new, independent schools whose fee structures were designed to exclude the majority of children from middle- and low-income black families. Lack of social integration was similarly experienced in sport, especially in the formerly white codes of rugby and cricket, where issues of transformation continued to be a problem through to 2000 and beyond.

The above social and economic context, in a way, provided ZANU PF with the space and opportunity it needed to turn race into a powerful mobilisation idiom when it found itself against mounting pressure from the masses. The organisation was able to mobilise on the basis of race partly because of Zimbabwe's failure to de-racialise the economy and society following the end of colonial rule. As in the colonial period, race had continued to shape and influence the economic, social, and political life of post-independence Zimbabwe. Race had continued to matter for most Zimbabweans, mainly because it remained embedded in the social, economic and political structures of the country. Though removed from the country's legal system, it remained the modality through which life was experienced. This is the basic point that explains how and why ZANU PF was able to mobilise successfully on the basis of racial politics at this particular point in time – 20 years after the dismantling of colonial rule and its racialised structures of power.

By mobilising on the basis of race, an increasingly repressive and waning ZANU PF has thus not only been able to rally a significant proportion of the masses in Zimbabwe behind it but also to build its political legitimacy inside the country and abroad. By projecting the opposition leaders as puppets serving European and US imperial interests, the incumbent government has also been able both to occidentalise an internal problem and to cast doubt about the

opposition leadership's commitment to democracy. This, to a certain extent, has complicated both local and international efforts to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis, particularly within the democracy and human rights discourse and framework. Internal developments, including weaknesses in the domestic political movement itself in the last decade of the crisis and the uneven balance of power between the competing political forces, also explain why the Zimbabwean crisis has been protracted. The partial evening of this balance of power in 2008, coupled with mounting internal pressure from the economy and external pressure from regional and international powers, finally resulted in the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) between ZANU PF and the two MDC parties which resulted in the formation of the coalition government (Government of National Unity or GNU) at the beginning of 2009. The formation of the GNU has raised both hopes and fears about Zimbabwe's transition towards democracy. The following section of this chapter discusses both internal and external challenges to the successful resolution of the Zimbabwean crisis and the country's transition to democracy within the context of the GNU.

Challenges and prospects of democratic transition under the GNU

The formation of the GPA government in February 2009 has substantially helped to reduce polarisation and tension in Zimbabwe. There has been a notable reduction in cases of overt violence, including a decrease in the cases of politically motivated torture, assaults, arrests, abductions, murders, internal displacements and incidences of unlawful arrests as compared to the period prior to the GNU. At the same time, the limited reforms in some sectors of the government, the economy, the media, politics and society in general have helped to stabilise the country and open new spaces for progress and development. Significant progress has been made in addressing some of the economic challenges confronting the country since the formation of the coalition government in February 2009 and the introduction of stable multi-currencies in the economy. Basic commodities and food are now available in the shops and the provision of some social services has also improved, while a marginally improved number of workers are back at work (Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism (CISOMM), February 2010).

However, Zimbabwe is still struggling to recover from this decade-long, economic crisis that saw inflation reach 321 million per cent, supermarkets run out of food and resulted in unprecedented deindustrialisation, pauperisation

of the workers and peasants, destruction of the middle class, the growth of serious economic inequalities between rich and poor Zimbabweans and mass emigration of both skilled and unskilled Zimbabweans to the relatively prosperous neighbouring countries of South Africa, Botswana and Namibia as well as the rich countries of the Global North. The manufacturing, mining and agricultural industries, all biggest contributors to Zimbabwe's GDP, are still operating below capacity. A large proportion of those employed still live well below the poverty datum line of US \$500.

Economic recovery is bound to slow down even more, following the recent enactment of the controversial Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act, which requires foreign-owned businesses to cede 51 per cent of their shares to local Zimbabweans within the next five years.⁵ Potential foreign investors have already started to hold on to their funds, while those operating in the country have begun to be cautious about recapitalising and expanding their operations in the country. The negative effects of the act on the economy were felt immediately as companies owned by white Zimbabweans and foreign firms started to panic. Worried about a possible repeat of the chaotic way in which land has been expropriated from farms owned by white Zimbabweans and foreign companies, some of these companies have either halted their plans for expansion or stopped recruiting more workers. Trading at the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange has taken a knock since the introduction of the Act (*The Standard*, 27 February 2010; *The Business Herald*, 2 March 2010).

The instability of the GNU government, characterised by constant bickering between the two dominant parties in the coalition government – MDC-T and ZANU PF – has blighted the prospects for a quick recovery and the trend is likely to continue until a stable democratic regime is in place. The political future of Zimbabwe and its transition towards democracy mainly depends on the results of the contestation of power between both internal and external forces in Zimbabwe's power matrix. The key domestic factors in this power matrix include ZANU PF and its instruments of coercive power (state security apparatus and paramilitary forces such as war veterans and the youth militias), on the one hand, and the opposition MDC and its political allies in the form of labour, civics, NGOs and independent media. The key external factors influencing the outcome of the transition include regional and international powers, such as SADC, the AU, the EU and the United States, Eastern bloc countries of Russia and China, as well the emerging powerhouses of Iran and India.

ZANU PF and the coercive instruments of power

ZANU PF entered the GPA for reasons of preservation of power and control, and it has since then been seeking to regain its hegemonic control over government. As discussed above, ZANU PF's approach to issues of politics and governance since independence has been based on principles of hegemonic control of power (Ncube, 1991; Sithole & Makumbe, 1997; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2004). However, it has historically formed coalition governments with its rivals in times of intense political crisis.⁶ In the current context, ZANU PF agreed to a coalition government because it had run out of political and economic options, was suffering from an intensified crisis of legitimacy and the GPA government was the most and only pragmatic, self-preservation strategy. By the time it agreed to sign the GPA on 15 September 2008, the party had very limited capacity to continue governing on its own. While it still had control over coercive power (through its control of state security apparatus and paramilitary forces), it had lost significant popular support. It also had limited economic resources to maintain its rule through political patronage. Furthermore, the violence in the run-up to the controversial presidential run-off of June 2008 had seriously undermined its credibility within the region.

The ZANU PF strategy, consistent with its history and culture of centralised despotism, has been to use these coalition phases as window periods to reorganise and consolidate its hold on to power. Not surprisingly, since the formation of the GPA, the organisation has engaged in cosmetic political and economic reforms which will not inevitably result in opening of democratic space or result in loss of its historic monopoly over power. The current slowdown of the constitutional reform process and the delays in the implementation of some of the GPA agreements is part of the broad ZANU PF strategy of slowing down political reforms (CISOMM, February 2010). For the next few years, ZANU PF will thus be opening up certain spaces while keeping strategic spaces of its power, such as the security sector and the mining and agricultural industries, closed. Because a rapid opening up and recovery of the economy will threaten the party's control over internal developments in the country, it will keep blocking major reforms in the economy and this will continue to negatively impact on the pace of economic recovery and development.

Since the formation of the GPA government, ZANU PF has regrouped and is gradually consolidating its hegemonic hold over power. This new assertiveness is evident in the way it has been making unilateral government decisions, without consulting its partners in the GPA government (*Financial Gazette*, 11–17 March

2010). ZANU PF's new assertiveness stems from the realisation that some of the main challenges that were threatening the survival of its government, such as a rapidly deteriorating economy, the possibility of a social uprising and mounting regional and international pressure, have been partially addressed. In terms of power, ZANU PF has thus been able to tilt the scales back to its side in the last two years of the GPA government and all this has important implications on the future of the coalition government.

However, ZANU PF's ability to block the democratic tide also depends on the result of internal dynamics within the party, particularly the results of the contestation for power between the two main factions within ZANU PF – the pragmatists/reformists (coalescing around Vice-President Joice Mujuru and her husband, Rtd General Solomon Mujuru) and the conservative hardliners (mobilising around Defence Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa). These two main factions in ZANU PF mainly differ over party preservation strategy and succession to Mugabe's leadership. While the pragmatists/reformists believe in preservation of the party's power through limited reforms, co-option and adaptation, the authoritarian hardliners subscribe to retention of power through unrestricted use of force and primitive accumulation methods to preserve their own political and economic interests (Zimbabwe Institute, 2006; Muzondidya, 2007; International Crisis Group (ICG), March 2010).

Equally important in shaping the political destiny of the country is President Mugabe's ambitions for life presidency, a development which has the potential to prolong Zimbabwe's crisis given the extent of opposition to his continued rule both inside and outside the country. Interested in maintaining the privileges of being at the top and worried about his own security when he leaves office, Mugabe's strategy is to become life president of both ZANU PF and Zimbabwe. His plans to remain life president of his party are most likely going to succeed as long as there is no consensus among ZANU PF factions on his successor. Much more importantly, Zimbabwe's transition to democracy is very much dependent on the reaction of the securocrats to political developments in the country.

Securocrats

Securocrats represent the greatest threat to a democratic transition in the sense that they have the capacity to veto ZANU PF's handover of power to another party, even after a clear victory (Muzondidya, 2009; ICG, March 2010). Since the formation of the GNU in February 2009, reactionary elements within the

state security structures have become a key obstacle to both economic stability and a smooth transition to democratic governance in Zimbabwe. They have been reluctant to accommodate change in the system of governance and have tried to subvert the new government through a number of ways. Such activities include the victimisation of MDC and human rights activists and the organising of new farm takeovers (*Zimbabwe Times*, 14 February 2009; *The Standard*, 16 February 2009; *Zimbabwe Times*, 7 May 2009; SW Radio Africa, 30 March 2009). The reactionaries have also tried to undermine the new government by pressurising ZANU PF into renegeing on some of its commitments to the GPA.⁷ The individuals and groups resisting change thus remain a potent threat to both Zimbabwe's democratic transition and stability (ICG, April 2009).

The security apparatus of the state, especially their leadership, are an influential grouping in Zimbabwe's power matrix because of their control over both the coercive/hard power of the Zimbabwe state and strong influence over the internal dynamics of power in ZANU PF. Although they identify themselves with ZANU PF politics and they often work with ZANU PF politicians to advance their converging interests, the securocrats are an identifiable power group on their own with entrenched interests in the national economy and politics. This group has since the beginning of the post-2000 crisis firmly entrenched their grip on vital sectors of the economy, state bureaucracy, parliament and ZANU PF party machinery to an extent that they have now become the domestic anchor class of the ZANU PF-led government (Muzondidya, 2009).

By the time of the formation of the coalition government in 2009, the security sector, especially the military, had not only taken over the reigns of government but had also become a key cog in the economy. Many leading figures in the security structures, often in partnership with ZANU PF political leaders, established themselves in the productive sectors of the economy (*Financial Gazette*, 24 February 2005; *Africa Confidential*, 45 (8), 2004). Exploiting the opportunities created by the post-2000 crisis and the pull-out from the country by international investors, leading members from the security structures positioned themselves as serious actors in the economy by venturing into farming, gaming, mining and manufacturing, either as individuals or members of consortiums (*The Sunday Times* (UK), 20 October 2002; *Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation News*, 5 May 2003; *Financial Gazette*, 12 February 2004; *Newsweek* (US) 13 January 2006).

Many leading figures in the state security structures teamed up with politicians and businessmen to form consortiums that ventured into lucrative

business ventures, such as platinum and gold-mining (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 4 July 2003; *Financial Gazette*, 31 December 2004; *Zimbabwe Standard*, 4 July 2005; *Financial Gazette*, 9 March 2006; *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 2006). From 2000 onwards, securocrats, alongside their political counterparts, took over most productive sectors of the economy through a primitive accumulation process resembling the capital accumulation process in Europe during the transformation from feudalism to capitalism.⁸ Government audits of the fast-track land reform conducted from 2000 onwards found widespread evidence of corrupt allocations and looting of farm equipment by political leaders and members of the security forces (Government of Zimbabwe 2003; Parliament of Zimbabwe 2003). For instance, in 2006, a number of senior politicians and members of the security forces were implicated in the looting of farm equipment at Kondozi Horticultural Estate in Manicaland, which was one of the biggest agro-export industries in the region before its expropriation by the government (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 13 January 2006; *Zimbabwe Standard*, 30 January 2006; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 13 April 2006; <http://www.zimonline.com>, accessed 26 May 2006).

Many other leading figures in the government and the security structures were able to use their political capital to muscle out economic competitors and acquire land and other economic assets during the decade of chaos and crisis (*Africa Confidential*, 21 February 2003; <http://www.newzimbabwe.com>, accessed 15 April 2005; *Daily Mirror*, 16 February 2006). Members of the security structures and war veterans, who were central figures in the fast-track land acquisition process, were also able to exploit their strategic position as members of land allocation committees and storm troopers in land occupations to acquire prime land for themselves and their associates.⁹ Land committees, theoretically headed by District Administrators at the district level and Provincial Administrators at provincial level but practically controlled by ZANU PF party leaders, war veterans and security forces leaders, played a central role in land allocations in many parts of the country (Alexander, 2006: 188). Using their influence in these committees, political leaders and members of the security structures, especially those in the command structures, were able to allocate themselves desirable pieces of land, usually prime land, next to farmhouses or water sources, while others got large tracts of land in the country's most productive districts and regions. Some of these leaders, especially those who irregularly acquired multiple farms, are now spearheading efforts to resist attempts by the new government to conduct a land audit.

The deep entrenchment of the military into the governance and economic

structures of both the state and the country meant that the military had become an interest group in the political and economic governance of the country – an economic anchor class for the incumbent ZANU PF Government. As an interest group with vested political and economic interests in both the state and the government, it is likely to be affected by changes in the form of the state and nature of governance. The decision by the securocrats to back a post-Mugabe government is, therefore, largely dependent on whether such a government offers sufficient guarantees for their material and personal security.

The securocrats' threat to Zimbabwe's transition needs to be addressed through a double-pronged strategy which involves political confidence building and security guarantees. The political confidence building strategy involves developing political trust between the securocrats and the new political players in the GPA. Security guarantees involve practical measures (eg constitutional guarantees) taken to ensure that the security fears of securocrats and others worried about change are addressed. In this respect, the political advocacy activities of Oxfam during this transitional period should aim to help Zimbabweans develop a consensus about a transitional framework which can help them achieve sustainable peace.

Opposition movement and prospects for democracy

Fragmentation of the MDC into three factions over procedural and substantive issues has weakened the bargaining power of the opposition movement. The Morgan Tsvangirai-led MDC, formed in September 1999 and which remains the biggest group, is still the most important player, alongside ZANU PF, in the domestic politics of Zimbabwe. The stabilisation of the economy and the improved access to goods and services by the population have helped to boost the MDC-T's national support base, mainly because these developments have generally been attributed to its entry into government.

Having received the majority of the popular vote in the March 2008 elections, the MDC entered the GPA because it had no other way to translate its electoral victory into state power. The MDC's strategy when it got into the GPA government was to embark on a gradual incrementalist transfer of power to itself through democratic, political and economic reforms, such as parliamentary bills, the constitutional reform process and policy reforms in those ministries it controls.

The ability of the MDC-T to influence change within the GPA government has been very limited, mainly due to both ZANU PF's resistance to suggested

changes and its own internal weaknesses which affect its ability to take advantage of some of the few opportunities availing themselves. The failure to get ZANU PF cooperation on a number of agreements and reforms has resulted in political frustration among MDC leaders and supporters. At the same time, the inability of the party to steer rapid change in the economy and politics of the country has led to disenchantment among some of the party's traditional supporters and sympathisers. All these developments, coupled with reported cases of corruption among some of the party's elected officials, are beginning to affect the party's popularity among members of the public (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 18 February 2010; *Financial Gazette*, 11–17 March 2010).

Despite the challenges that the party has been encountering since joining the GPA, the MDC-T and its leader remain important forces for the democratisation of the country. The party still has significant grass-roots support across the country, and its leader is probably the most popular grass-roots leader. Its ability to influence democratic change and to tilt the balance of power towards itself within the confines of the GPA are, however, doubtful. But, because the party does not have a viable alternative to the pursuit of power outside the GPA, it is most likely going to remain in the GPA for its full term and hope that it can win power through another round of elections conducted under a new constitution and a new electoral commission.

The Mutambara-led MDC, which won 10 seats in the March 2008 parliamentary elections, has also remained an important factor in the transition to democracy. Lacking in national popular support, the party has managed to exercise its influence in parliament, where it holds the key to the balance of power in Zimbabwe's hung parliament, and the political negotiations over the GPA. Its politics has been characterised by the forging of temporary alliances with both the MDC and ZANU PF, on issues of strategic interests to itself. This strategy has left the party unpopular with opposition supporters, especially MDC-T supporters, who view it as engaging in divisive politics and helping ZANU PF to strengthen its bargaining power over the opposition.

If the MDC-M manages to survive beyond the GPA government, the party will be an important force to establish checks and balances against the abuse of power by the dominant parties. Its issue-based approach to politics, as opposed to blind party loyalty, regionalism, ethnicity, sexism and racism, will further nurture the maturing of Zimbabwe's democracy.

Civics

Zimbabwe's civic movement grew significantly in size and influence in the structural adjustment years of the 1990s and later during the constitutional reform debate of the late 1990s. It, together with labour, gave birth to the MDC and continued to provide an alternative platform for the fight for human rights and democracy throughout the post-2000 period.

However, Zimbabwean civil society has been in a gradual decline since the birth of the MDC, which increasingly overshadowed it after 1999. Internal splits, state repression, loss of capacity to mobilise and the departure of activists and leaders fleeing economic hardship all contributed to the current weak state of the movement (Rich-Dorman, 2003; United States Institute for Peace, 2003). Another serious problem within civil society is the polarisation within the movement, mainly along political party lines (Magaisa, 2006; Sachikonye, 2009). Most NGOs have sided with the opposition MDC, and some have doubled as office-bearers in both the MDC and their civic society organisations (CSOs). With the split in the MDC, CSOs have sided with either of the two MDC factions and this has worsened the disunity within the movement (Magaisa, 2006).

A serious limitation in Zimbabwe's civic movement, with regards to its capacity to mobilise citizens for democratic change, is its lack of organic linkages with the masses. Like most CSOs in Africa, Zimbabwean CSOs are mainly urban-centred, elitist and unconnected to the day-to-day struggles of the people. As a result, very few of the CSOs currently operating in the country have managed to either extend their support base to rural areas or consolidate their support in their urban bases. Generally, Zimbabwean civics have not sufficiently linked up with rural struggles, rural-based CBOs and other rural movements to building up synergies.¹⁰ Some of the main actors among CSOs, such as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), fighting for the adoption of a new constitution, Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), the student body Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), Combined Harare Residents Association and Crisis Coalition, have hogged the limelight in the media but have failed to develop grass-roots, mass support. For instance, when the NCA was formed in 1997 to press for a constitutional reform process driven by popular participation, the organisation was a broad-based movement, attracting the support of several church groups, urban-based NGOs, community-based organisations and associations representing women, youth and workers (Rich-Dorman, 2003; United States Institute of Peace, 2003). Now it is a former shadow of itself. The Zimbabwe Coalition, established in 2001, is on paper a broad coalition of more than 300 NGOs and 15 national coalitions, but in reality

it is hardly known outside its headquarters of Harare.

Internal splits, loss of the capacity to mobilise and departure of activists and leaders fleeing economic hardship have all contributed to the current weak state of the civic movement. The tense political climate prevailing in Zimbabwe has created conflicts within and among CSOs. Some of the conflicts have been over strategies, relationships with government and the MDC, struggles for power within existing organisations and lack of accountability.¹¹ Currently, civil society leaders have been fighting with the MDC leadership over their role in the transition process, arguing that the party is marginalising them from the process (Integrated Regional Information Network News (IRIN), 21 June 2007; <http://www.newzimbabwe.com>, accessed 31 May 2007; <http://www.zimonline.co.za>, accessed 20 September 2007).

Despite its growing list of weaknesses, Zimbabwe's civil society movement remains a critical stakeholder in Zimbabwe's political, economic and social development because it has and continues to play an important role in the fight for democracy, human rights, women's rights, children's rights and the empowerment of marginalised groups. Equally important in the fight for democracy and empowerment of the poor in Zimbabwe are CBOs, which suffered from the partial withdrawal of funding and restriction of space for community development by the ZANU PF Government in the post-2000 period.

Labour

Until the mounting of social and economic problems from the late 1980s and the introduction of ESAP (Economic Structural Adjustment Programme) in the early 1990s, the labour movement had been weak and subordinated to the state (Raftopoulos & Sachikonye, 2001). However, once retrenchments began to bite and living and working conditions for workers worsened under the ESAP, the labour movement became more assertive. It is within this context of the reinvigoration of labour during the 1990s that Zimbabwe's current protest movement and the MDC were born.

However, once the MDC had been formed, the labour movement increasingly became subordinated to political forces again as it unconditionally supported the MDC against ZANU PF authoritarianism. At the same time, the incorporation of the labour movement leaders into the MDC structures not only weakened the labour movement but also compromised its position and mandate. State repression, which included a violent crackdown on labour activities, routine harassment and

intimidation of labour leaders and structural changes in the labour force resulted in a massive decrease in the number of people in formal employment. Internal divisions and loss of its leadership to the MDC and to the diaspora also negatively affected the movement's organising capacity (Raftopoulos, 2007). All this makes it difficult for the labour movement to mobilise and organise workers.

At the moment, labour is also deeply divided along political lines. The labour movement in general, and the ZCTU in particular, also experience leadership challenges that have failed to unite the movement and build broader civic alliances. On the few occasions the leaders have tried to organise strikes, they have often taken up issues which the majority cannot easily relate to. For instance, in 2004 the ZCTU called for a job stay-away to 'force the government to act on alleged mismanagement and corruption at the National Social Security Authority (NSSA)', but the action flopped after workers ignored it. Successive attempts by the ZCTU to mobilise labour have failed and its following has dwindled. The fact that the leadership have failed time and again to harness and direct the anger of the people has been crucial in the failure of mass action in Zimbabwe. They have failed to harness the growing discontent over salaries and deteriorating socio-economic conditions to force changes in governance. The issue of the leadership of the labour movement's difficult relationship with the MDC has proved problematic, as their cause has been confused with the MDC cause.¹² The close symbiotic relationship with the MDC has not only meant that the weaknesses of the MDC are mirrored in the labour movement, it has also given the ZANU PF-led government the perfect excuse to treat labour with hostility and to deal with it harshly.

Churches

Zimbabwe's churches have historically played an important role in addressing issues of poverty and the accessing of basic human rights by the poor, especially the African poor, during both the colonial and post-colonial period (Lapsey, 1992; Verstraelen, 1998). Churches continued to contribute to national development in the post-independence period through provision of schools, hospitals, humanitarian programmes and the care of orphans, widows and the disadvantaged (Maxwell, 1995; Dorman, 2002).

The church in Zimbabwe is one of the groups that has the greatest influence on the lives of the people, and Zimbabwean churches have been able to reach out to people without much interference from the state. In this regard, the church is one of the few platforms that can be used to spearhead democracy and

civic education around people's rights. Since 2006 church leaders have tried to help resolve Zimbabwe's crisis through a decentralised campaign of non-violent resistance coordinated by the *Save Zimbabwe Campaign* (Voice of America, 30 November 2006). Given the levels of violence and political polarisation experienced in Zimbabwe in the last decade, the church can also be a useful platform for national healing and peace. Zimbabwean churches have the potential to play a critical role in supporting peaceful forms of change, either through facilitating negotiations among the feuding politicians or through democratic resistance. The CCJP took a very bold step when it documented the massacres of the Ndebeles during the *Gukurahundi* conflict in Matebeleland in their book *Breaking the Silence*. Publicisation of this information was crucial in letting the world know of the excesses of the incumbent regime and though there was no apology by the head of the state or compensation for the victims of the wanton killings, the alarm was successfully raised and this could have served as an early warning of what could happen to those who dared to oppose the ruling party.

This potential role of church leaders as mediators remains challenged by the evidence of the same polarisation and politicisation shown in Zimbabwean churches as in other sectors of society. The disunity within the church has given the government an opportunity to exploit their differences, embracing the conciliatory church leaders and their churches while dismissing the critical ones as 'enemies of the state', siding with the opposition.¹³

However, the church's potential as a platform for political change and democracy has not been fully utilised in post-2000 democratisation efforts. With better organisation and strategies, the church can play an important role in facilitating the transition to democracy in the country.

Media

The media has become a powerful agency for political change and democracy the world over. In most democratic and open political environments, the media is an important site for the contestation of ideas and a catalyst for political, social and economic change. Since 2000, the media has become a site of struggle and contestation between the government and agencies of change in Zimbabwe. In its attempt to control the political tide, the Zimbabwean Government has, since 2000, exercised very strict controls over information flows in the country. The independent media was systematically muzzled in a heavy-handed manner for almost a decade.

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Even after the formation of the GNU, the ZANU PF-led government has not acted quickly to remove the restrictive media framework. The repressive media legislation is still intact while there haven't been moves to liberalise the airwaves or the print media (CISSOM, 2009). The result of this tight control over the media is that most members of the public have remained without access to alternative forms of information besides what they get through heavily censored, government-controlled media. The ability of Zimbabwean citizens to make informed choices has therefore continued to be limited by this lack of diverse sources of information.

ZANU PF is most likely going to drag its feet on opening up this important site of struggle for the hearts and minds of the people. Control of information has always been a vital part of ZANU PF's strategy for political hegemony and it is not going to open up the media overnight.

However, the GPA government has already made some important concessions in this vital sector, which have already started to make a difference in people's access to information. To begin with, there has been a reduction in arrests and harassment of journalists. There has also been a loosening of attitudes towards the presence of newspapers and magazines from independent sources. As a result, a number of newspapers published from outside, like the *Zimbabwean* and the *Sunday Times*, and weekly and monthly magazines, such as the *Legal Monitor*, are now freely accessed by members of the public. Independent newspapers can also now be distributed in some of those rural areas where political intolerance did not allow the distribution of such papers. After prolonged delay, the Media and Information Commission has now been set up and it is expected to begin issuing operating licenses to new newspapers.

The limited openings occurring in Zimbabwe's previously tightly regulated media environment have created some new spaces for the media to play a more important role in Zimbabwe's development and democratisation.

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International and regional power brokers

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regional powers, the African regional blocs, SADC and the AU and the Eastern bloc countries of China and Russia.

SADC and AU

Concerned about the economic impact of the Zimbabwean crisis on the regional economy and the implications of a civil war in the country on regional peace and stability, SADC and AU countries have supported a gradual political transition. While critics of SADC have accused the regional body of blocking the political transformation in Zimbabwe by offering President Mugabe unqualified support (Landsberg & Mackay, 2005), SADC has, on the contrary, been one of the most prominent actors in efforts to resolve Zimbabwe's politics. Diplomatic mediation, rather than megaphone diplomacy, has remained its main method of engagement. Throughout the 2000s, SADC has thus continued to express regional solidarity with the Government of Zimbabwe, while its leaders have privately informed their counterparts that Zimbabwe's economic collapse is negatively affecting all neighbouring countries and that ZANU PF needs to change its politics and policies (Raftopoulos, 2007). It is against this backdrop of concern about the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe that SADC finally appointed former South African president Thabo Mbeki to facilitate negotiations between ZANU PF and the two MDC parties in March 2007, which ultimately resulted in the signing of the GPA on 15 September 2007.

As the political guarantors of the GPA, SADC is keen to see the GNU result in a successful transition in Zimbabwe. SADC is therefore bound to pay more attention to any efforts aimed at enabling the GPA government to deliver a successful transition, while shunning those activities and processes it regards to be against the smooth functioning of the GPA. For this reason, SADC has been critical of the EU and the United States' decision to extend sanctions against the Zimbabwe Government because it views such action as detrimental to the movement towards a successful transition.

The change of leadership in South Africa, the main regional power, and the change in the SADC facilitation team, has heightened expectations that SADC is going to be more engaged over Zimbabwe than it was under Mbeki (ICG, March 2010). However, though President Zuma's government has sought to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis with some urgency, South Africa and SADC as a whole are not likely to shift their traditional, diplomatic mediation tactics over Zimbabwe. The same shift is also not expected from the AU, which supposedly takes its cue on regional matters from its affiliate regional bodies. The only way that such a shift is

likely to take place is if ZANU PF seriously reneges on the GPA or the securocrats decide to take over government. In such a scenario, SADC and the AU are most likely going to impose punitive measures on Zimbabwe.

Western powers

Western powers, particularly the EU countries and the United States, who have been actively involved in the Zimbabwean crisis at different levels since its beginnings, remain critical to the outcome of the transitional processes in Zimbabwe. The EU and the United States have undoubtedly applied the toughest international pressure against ZANU PF and their pressure has, to some extent, forced ZANU PF to agree to limited reforms and to engage the MDC within the GNU. Since 2000, their strategy has been to apply pressure on ZANU PF to reform, while providing political and material support to Zimbabwean movements fighting for political and economic change and assisting vulnerable groups with humanitarian support.

The EU and US strategy over Zimbabwe has not changed much since the formation of the GNU in February 2009. Maintaining that the GNU between the MDC and ZANU PF has not resulted in any meaningful change towards democratic governance, the United States and EU countries have been reluctant to engage with the coalition government. The recent extension of sanctions for another year by both the EU and the United States shows their reluctance to accept the coalition government as a legitimate government (*Mail & Guardian*, 2 March 2010). The position within the EU is that sanctions will not be lifted until Zimbabwe conducts new elections very soon (*The Herald*, 2 March 2010). Arguing that development assistance will only help ZANU PF to consolidate its hold over power, many European countries have been reluctant to increase development assistance, preferring to focus on humanitarian assistance.

However, the strategy of confrontation and isolation has not yielded very effective results. Their confrontational strategy has not only allowed ZANU PF to project itself as a victim of Western imperialism but has also internationalised the Zimbabwean crisis, dividing the world over Zimbabwe on the basis of race and geographic location (Phimister & Raftopoulos, 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009; Muzondidya, 2010a). More importantly, the confrontational attitude from the West has enabled ZANU PF to continue receiving political sympathy and support from SADC, the AU and other Third World regional organisations who are all sensitive to issues of race and hegemonic control. Because of the legacies of race and colonialism, African leaders remain sensitive to any suggestion they are being

ordered around by the West on the issue of Zimbabwe or being made to carry out an external agenda imposed by Zimbabwe's former colonial rulers. The South African Government has been particularly sensitive to attempts by European and US leaders to prescribe its foreign policy on Zimbabwe (Raftopoulos & Phimister, 2005; ICG, June 2006).

On the domestic front, the continued confrontational stance by the EU and the United States strengthens the hand of the hardliners within ZANU PF who have been opposed to the GPA from the beginning. The limited support for the coalition government by the EU and the United States also makes it difficult for Zimbabwe to regain political credibility within the international community. Without this credibility, it is difficult for the country to access international credit and to engineer quick economic recovery – a development which negatively affects ordinary citizens and their capacity to fight for their political rights.

Eastern bloc and emerging powers

The economically and politically powerful Eastern bloc countries of China and Russia as well as the emerging powers, like Iran and India, have seized the opportunities presented by Zimbabwe's desperation for economic aid to exploit the country's resources and increase their influence. For instance, China has been supplying Zimbabwe with vital economic and military aid since the imposition of Western sanctions and the arms embargo around 2000. China is now the second largest investor in Zimbabwe, after South Africa, and has overtaken Zimbabwe's traditional Western economic partners as the investor with the fastest growing foreign direct investment (FDI) in Zimbabwe (<http://www.zimonline.co.za>, accessed 28 September 2007). While the economic support being received by the GPA government from these countries is limited, the unconditional support ZANU PF continues to receive from these countries is enough to enable it to keep on hobbling for a number of years without having to give in to pressure for political reforms. Zimbabwe's growing reliance on economic support from countries like China, which pay little attention to human rights and governance issues essential for stabilising the African state, is therefore one of the major obstacles to democratic transition.

Conclusion

The greatest challenge to democratic transition in Zimbabwe at the moment is how to assure those unsettled by the transition, especially the securocrats and

thousands of peasants who benefitted in terms of land and other resources through ZANU PF's patronage politics, that they will not be subjected to retributive justice and that some of their economic gains will not be undermined seriously by the transition. Another challenge is on how to facilitate Zimbabwe's transition to democracy and economic recovery without strengthening repression or triggering a reaction that can lead to a worsening of the political situation.

For the current transition to hold and democratisation to occur, Zimbabwe needs to find a way of balancing its needs for justice and accountability against its needs for peace and stability. The most pragmatic transitional framework to democracy, given the current imbalances in power between the coalition parties as well as concerns and suspicions among certain sectors of the society, is restorative justice – that is, a 'forward-looking notion of justice' which tries to achieve sustainable peace by ignoring demands for backward-looking justice or victor's justice which is punitive and retributive. Such reassurances can come in the form of a transitional framework which focuses on reforming political institutions rather than targeting political individuals. Once political institutional reform has been achieved, the reformed institutions will be capable of dealing with both the current and future problems around issues of justice, accountability and authoritarianism. The reforms in institutions of governance will also help to weed the undesirables from both the political and security governance structures of the country, for those unwilling or unable to follow the new rules of engagement will move out or will be forced to leave by the collective. Successful transitions have been made through approaches that sought to deal with both the past and the future in a way that did not prevent movement towards the future by obsessing about the past – what scholars like William Zartman (2005) and Mahmood Mamdani (2001) have described as 'survivors' justice' or 'restorative justice'. They seek to transcend the bipolar notions of victim and perpetrator and their overall aim is to repair broken relationships and to heal the wounds of both victims and perpetrators/offenders alike.

NOTES

- 1 While there was no widespread violence in the period leading to the March 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections, the elections were not free from controversy and problems. There were various electoral irregularities in the organisation of the election. These included gerrymandering in the delimitation of electoral constituencies, and manipulation of the voter registration and voter education process. In contrast to the March 2008 elections, the period leading to the Presidential Election Run-off of June 2008, conducted following the inconclusiveness of the results of the first round of elections, was an extremely violent one. According to reports from human rights NGOs, 170 opposition MDC supporters were murdered in over 170 000 incidents of violence and abuse and more than 20 000

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- homes were burnt and destroyed in an orgy of violence mainly perpetrated by ZANU PF leaders and supporters. See ZESN, 2008; D. Matyszak, 2008.
- 2 See Raftopoulos, B. 2003. The state in crisis: Authoritarianism, selective citizenship and distortions of democracy in Zimbabwe. In: Hammar *et al*, eds. *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business*; Campbell, H. 2003. *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation*. Cape Town: David Phillip; Moyo, J. 1992. *Voting for Democracy: Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications; Ncube, W. 1991. Constitutionalism, democracy and political practice in Zimbabwe. In: I. Mandaza & L. Sachikonye, eds. *The One Party State and Democracy: The Zimbabwe Debate*. Harare: Sapes Trust; Makumbe, J. The 1990 Elections: Implications for democracy. In: *Ibid*.
 - 3 For a detailed discussion of violence and coercion in nationalist politics during the liberation struggle, see Kriger, N. 1992. *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Chung, F. 2005. *Re-living the Second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*. Harare: Weaver, pp. 175–78; Moore, D. 1991. Democracy, Violence and Identity in the Zimbabwean War of National liberation: Reflections from the Realms of Dissent, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 3, pp. 472–495; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2006. Nationalist-Military Alliance and the Fate of Democracy in Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 6(1), pp. 49–80; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2004. Putting People First – From Regime Security to Human Security: A Quest for Social Peace in Zimbabwe. In: A.G. Nhema, ed. *The Quest for Peace in Africa*. Addis Ababa: OSSREA.
 - 4 *Gukurahundi* is a metaphor that was used to disguise the violence against the opposition party, the Zimbabwe African People's Union Patriotic Front (ZAPU PF). Literally, it means 'the rain that sweeps away the chaff'.
 - 5 The Indigenisation and Black Empowerment Act regulates that all foreign-owned businesses with assets worth US \$500 000 or more should, within five years from 1 March 2010, or five years from commencement of business, cede a controlling interest of not less than 51 per cent of the shares to indigenous Zimbabweans.
 - 6 ZANU PF formed its first coalition government in 1980, when it was not sure of how the transition into independence would hold. The coalition was with its main political rivals – the Rhodesia Front and ZAPU. It formed its second government with ZAPU in 1987, after failing to deal with the insecurity in the Matebeleland and Midlands region through military means. The GPA government of February 2009 is thus ZANU's third coalition government since independence.
 - 7 Some of the issues which ZANU PF has reneged on, since the formation of the coalition government, include its refusal to have an equitable share among the coalition government partners in the allocation of positions of provincial governors and the need for the parties to consult in the appointment of ambassadors, the Attorney General and the Reserve Bank Governor.
 - 8 For a detailed discussion of this accumulation process, see Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, Vol.1, Part 8, chapter 26.
 - 9 Liberation war veterans and members of the army, police and intelligence spearheaded the takeover of farms and, in some cases, provided logistical support to peasants who initiated forceful evictions of farm owners. See Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post War Zimbabwe*, pp. 198–207; Alexander, J. 2006. *The Unsettled Land: State-making and the politics of land in Zimbabwe 1893–2003*. Oxford: James Currey, pp. 185–193; Marongwe, N. 2003. Farm Occupations and Occupiers in the New Politics of Land in Zimbabwe. In: A. Hammar, B. Raftopoulos & S. Jensen, eds. *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*. Harare: Weaver Press Ltd. See also, Army Brigadier Embroiled in Farm Ownership Wrangle, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 19 March 2009; Army set up farm occupations, says insider. *Guardian* (UK), 5 May 2000.
 - 10 Part of the reason for the failure by the Zimbabwean civic movement to mobilise rural communities has been ZANU PF's closure of rural spaces to outside influences since the constitutional referendum defeat of 2000 and the emergence of the MDC as a formidable opponent.
 - 11 The most blatant example of lack of accountability, demonstrating weaknesses in the internal governance systems of Zimbabwe's civic movement, was the 2006 NCA scandal when the sitting chairman of the organisation at the forefront of the fight for a new, democratic constitution for the nation, Dr Lovemore Madhuku, unilaterally changed the NCA constitution to enable himself to stand for re-election.
 - 12 A significant number of MDC office bearers have continued to hold on to their previous positions in the labour unions even years after venturing into full-time opposition politics. A few examples of these include the former Deputy Secretary General of the MDC, Gift Chimanihire, who continued to be an

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active member of the Communication and Allied Services Workers Union of Zimbabwe (CASWUZ), using union resources and assets such as cars, and Chairperson of the MDC's Women's Assembly, Lucia Matibenga who has continued to be an office bearer of the ZCTU. A number of other union leaders are members of the MDC's National Executive Council. See Matombo, Chimankire Saga deepens. *Zim Daily*, 20 July 2007.

- 13 The vocal Pius Ncube has been particularly singled out by the state, and his problems over a sex scandal cannot be understood outside the context of his tense relationship with the state. See BBC News, 28 March 2005; New Zimbabwe.com, 16 July 2007.

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CHAPTER TWO

Voices from civil society

Otto Saki and Washington Katema

In any political processes, there are non-state actors that articulate the wishes, demands, views and aspirations of the ordinary men and women. These institutions have their legitimacy in the social order and good, in their numbers, constituencies and beneficiaries of their products. Civil society in Zimbabwe has played important roles the past and the present and will undeniably continue to do so. The importance of civil society in any political society is confirmed by the levels to which the ruling elites all over the world have openly aligned or supported their own civil society to strengthen and continue their hold onto power.¹ Most of these groups have questionable credentials in the eyes of the citizens, but nevertheless, they can be viewed as some of kind of civil society. This is primarily because most of the civic society actors have been able to clearly channel the publics' frustrations into articulate demands that have evoked responses from the political system in Zimbabwe (Katema, 2008).

Defining civil society

Civil society can be defined as those institutions, individuals and organisations which are not state-formed. They can range from loose coalitions, networks, professional bodies of accountants, lawyers, medical entities to the less sophisticated groups like CBOs that all aim to act as a check on state excesses. It is fundamental to note that civil society and the state both exist in the same social realm.² Civil society has also been defined in some instances 'as a sphere of social interaction between the household and the state which is manifest in norms of community cooperation, structures of voluntary association and networks of public communication'.³ This makes it the realm of consent through which citizens may choose to accept or to reject the use of force by state officials.⁴ The

consent of citizens to state control, rule or government establishes the legitimacy or acceptance of a certain political establishment. Yet some define it as the self-generating and self-supporting community of people who share core values and voluntarily organise political, economic or cultural activities independent of the state.⁵ The element of voluntary association pervades the nature of civil society, the notion of wanting to participate and contribute voluntarily to a cause whether political, cultural, social or economic. States openly have monopoly of certain aspects of civilian life such as violence, force and command, but have no control over the opinions, thought processes and views of the citizens beyond efforts to influence such to its advantage. The *London School of Economics* provided a working definition of civil society as:

... the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated.⁶

It thus embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development NGOs, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.⁷

Civil society: The Zimbabwean context

This chapter concerns itself with the genre of civil society that has been instrumental in providing a platform for citizens to participate in the national dialogue. In other words, the chapter will critically interrogate and rethink the role of civic society as the 'voice of the voiceless', the ambassadors of the world's poor and fundamentally the bridge between the state and the society in a transitioning society where authoritarianism has prevailed for so long. The role of civil society in this piece will be limited to the political transition which predominantly focuses on multipartism, periodic and genuine elections and restoration of the rule of law. More concretely, the paper will focus on the historical 'civic claims' by CSOs operating in a fragile political environment. First there are civic legal claims, which focus on the legal interventions

such as the public interest litigation project by law-based organisations such as the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) and the Law Society of Zimbabwe (LSZ). Second, there is the civic political claim, where governance-focused civic formations call for an end to the authoritarian political culture and advocate for the rebirth of democratic practices in the national polity as a concrete intervention towards democratic consolidation and institutionalisation of good governance in Zimbabwe. These civic actors and institutions include but are not limited to ZCTU, ZINASU, NCA, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Bulawayo Agenda, ZPP, Institute for a Democratic Alternative for Zimbabwe (IDAZIM) and ZESN. Finally, there are civic social claims, which basically focus on media freedoms and reforms. These civic actors include the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ), Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ) and the Bulawayo-based Radio Dialogue among other media-oriented organisations. This approach is obviously limited as other factors like the political economy, role of external actors, international organisations and governments cannot be fully discussed in this chapter.

Notably again, most groups constituting civil society in Zimbabwe have been preoccupied with the political transition, with limited focus on the wealth, resource and economic dynamics as part of achieving a broader and non-minimalist interpretation of democracy, transition and the role of civil society. Be that as it may, other civic organisations such as the Mutare-based Centre for Research Development (CRD) have been trying to move from focusing primarily on civil rights to ‘silver rights’.⁸ In the case of the CRD, they have been a consistent and vocal voice against the egregious human rights violations in the diamond-rich Marange area, where the state through the military and police forces are alleged to have killed dozens of unemployed diamond panners in a ruthless and military-styled ‘Operation’ code-named *Chikorokoza Chapera* (no to illegal diamond mining). Further, the CRD has been the organised voice of the vulnerable communities who were without compensation, involuntarily displaced from their diamond-rich land of birth.

Two companies, Mbada and Canadile who are alleged to be economic fronts for ZANU PF, are now mining the diamonds and profiteering at the expense of the locals who remain poor and lagging furthest behind in terms of ‘silver rights’. Communities located in this area are being forcibly evicted by the state to pave way for the mining companies. Groups such as the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) have protested against these unfair evictions with no

alternative housing, infrastructure and social amenities being made available to the families concerned. The issues of natural resources and state should not be taken lightly. Due to the introduction of foreign-denominated currencies, the politics of patronage and resource and asset stripping have taken a new direction. To obtain foreign currency one has to be involved in the selling, extraction or procurement of items that attract such value. Some elements of the ruling elite in Zimbabwe are aiming at profiteering to the maximum extent possible during this fragile transition epoch, which in political terminology can be classified as a 'political grey zone'. With an election looming on the horizon, looting of state and natural resources might be the order of the day. The question that begs an answer is whether there should be increased attention to matters relating to the retention of economic resources and control or rather seek the political power and deal decisively with economic malfeasance and cartels. Strategies to deal decisively with economic crimes as part of human rights crimes committed by the past regimes should be incorporated in future transitional justice processes by post-conflict state and civic actors.

The politics of transition in Zimbabwe and invariably throughout the world has forced civil society in its collective sense to take ideological and/or pragmatic positions which have been either deemed 'progressive or regressive'. The swearing in of the transitional government in 2009 resulted in polarisation of civil society predicated on differences on principles and 'methodological frameworks',⁹ leading other commentators to highlight the existence of fundamentalism in civil society. Whether this polarity is real or imagined there is an absence of a unified 'single' voice of civil society. The differing approaches to the transition evince diversity and multiplicity. The necessity of speaking with one voice again is debated in the context of encouraging multiple voices and divergent views. But for purposes of achieving an identifiable and shared objective, speaking with one voice might be necessary. It is important to celebrate the diversity of civil society and their shared undeterred determination to democratise Zimbabwe though there are differences on the how part.¹⁰

The many groups which constitute civil society in Zimbabwe have played different roles at different stages. The form and nature of the transition in Zimbabwe cannot be classified as voluntary or consensual transition but rather it has been a 'forced transition'. The incredulous statement is premised on the observation that the political parties forming the Government of Zimbabwe (hereafter, the government) are not all in agreement on the end game and objective(s) of the inclusive government (IG). The continued failure to agree

on the adaptation of new rules of the political game and creation of democratic institutions that will level the electoral playing field indicates the reluctance of the old authoritarian regime to cede political power to a new democratic and legitimate government after holding of credible, free and fair elections. Unfortunately, there are always hypothetical assumptions that the product of the free and fair elections will be a democratic order.

The democratic element of the transitional government appears also equally constricted and restricted in the democratisation agenda and fears of rocking the boat. Moreover, the transitional phase of democratisation is a period of great political uncertainty as the democratic moderates will have to coexist with the authoritarian elite in a hybrid regime (Lee, 2007). It is apparent, however, that the state of politics and governance of Zimbabwe has changed significantly since the signing of the GPA in September 2008 by political parties with a representation in both chambers of the parliament. It should be noted this is not consociational power-sharing. Parties to this government are autonomous but with little cooperation. Civil society witnessed this occasion as participants, bystanders, analysts, sceptics and even sometimes in celebration mood. Can this myriad-form of interest be ruled as effective participation or contribution to the transition? Zimbabwe is currently experiencing what Scott Mainwaring and Donald Share (1986)¹¹ would aptly refer to as the 'transition through transaction' mode as part of the former ruling authoritarian elites are key players in the transitory processes. If it was a 'transition through regime collapse' or 'transition through extrication' mode, where the former ruling party would be weak and playing second fiddle to the democratic actors in the transition, then the voice of civic society would be more robust and effective. Navigating in Zimbabwe's political minefield, civil society is challenged to redefine its political, social and economic trajectory to challenge the political order in this transitioning, fluid and unstable state.

Zimbabwe is experiencing a unique form of transition, which the authors believe to be 'transition through incremental democratisation'; limited space is available for civil society to influence such processes. Transition through incremental democratisation presupposes that certain conditions for the establishment of a full-blown democracy are non-existent and therefore the role of the government in question is to prise away its own tentacles of repression and violence and its instruments of oppression. The re-democratisation of an authoritarian regime must combine 'erosion' and construction, advises the eminent scholar of democratic transitions, Alfred Stepan.¹² In one of his seminal works, Masipula Sithole (1998: 28) refers to transition through incremental democratisation as

same as ‘incremental authoritarianism erosion’. Unfortunately elements of a transition through transaction mode are dominant as political parties holding on to state power are not all in agreement with the democratisation agenda, which is imperative to both democratic political and civic societies in Zimbabwe. The theory of incremental democratisation and transition has been further supported by the actions of democratic actors in many coalition governments in Africa and Zimbabwe is no exception. Such parties are not willing to go for ‘the kill’, now that they are party to the governing structures, rhetoric over certain democratic reforms is toned down and voices from civil society demanding action and results are met with dwarfed responses of, ‘we are not the government but part of the government’, ‘we have unwilling partners’, ‘this a process and not an event’. These responses could be appropriate but should not be taken as a request for civil society to abdicate on its multifaceted mandate.

Events on the ground can also equally point to the opposite, which is democratic reversal of the transition as the former authoritarian element remains somehow in control and not even contemplating a government without them in the immediate or near future. The continued stranglehold on key state apparatus such as the security sector¹³ by a still very much organised and resourced party has been a factor pointing to the reversal of democratic gains. As this transition unfolds, it will be foolhardy to expect any radical and meaningful democratic reforms to take place and root in the national polity. Piecemeal reforms and tokenistic changes might be accepted by all political formations, but resistance from former ruling hardliners will be evident on issues that pose significant threats to state power. These reforms will be targeted at a possible fresh plebiscite.

As earlier alluded to in this critical narrative, a democratisation agenda is imperative to all democratic actors but there are differences in approaches culminating in fundamentally three civic ‘voices’ emerging from the civic society. The first group is calling for ‘early’ elections as the panacea to the existing political lacuna. These voices are said to belong to the ‘fast-track democratisation school of thought’.¹⁴ They include but are not limited to the Voice of Democracy (*The Independent*, 21 May 2010) and ZCTU (<http://www.zimonline.co.za>, accessed 21 May 2010). The other group is referred to as the ‘slow democratisers’ who believe in gradual authoritarianism erosion and incremental construction of democratic institutions before calling for a ‘breakthrough’ election. They want the political actors to ‘concentrate on reaching consensus on a “democratic constitution”’ and on the electoral law which defines the rules of the game and not its results. To the extent that a democratic constitution and fair democratic procedures would

offer guarantees to the former supporters of the authoritarian regime, such a constitution and procedures would accord them the possibility of continuing to pursue their interest under the new institutional arrangements proposed by the opposition (Sithole, 1998: 29). The proponents of this 'voice of reason' include but are not limited to ZLHR, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, ZPP and ZESN. The final voice is coming from the 'Security Firsters'. This group constitutes advocates for the Terrence Lyon's theory of demilitarisation of politics¹⁵ as a concrete way, method and process of guaranteeing democratic elections and successful power transfer in a transitioning society. Lyon and the authors of this chapter argue that post-settlement GPA elections are shaped by the legacy of fear and by institutions developed and sustained during the conflict. To demilitarise politics and overcome this difficult heritage prior to elections entails building and reforming norms and institutions that bridge electoral violence time-structures based on insecurity and fear (such as militias and uniformed forces) to structures based on security and trust that can sustain peace and democracy (like democratic political parties and civic society).

The 'militarisation of villages' and 'villagisation of the military' during the inter-election period of March to June 2008 left an unprecedented trail of mass destruction. To the victims of political violence, whose hands and arms were allegedly amputated, to HIV-positive rape victims, to families burnt out in their homes, a call for elections without guaranteeing the security of voters will be at best self-defeating and at worst pathological naivety. This school of thought is supported by Lyon, when he argued that:

The danger with regard to democratization is that post-settlement elections may entrench and provide electoral legitimacy to authoritarian parties who continue to rely upon coercion, fear and chauvinism to remain in power. Leaders and political organizations who derive their power from the structures of war often remain powerful at the time of the elections and therefore win the vote. Elections under these circumstances therefore risk increasing the power of non-democratic actors. (Lyon, 1999)

Some of the so-called civic voices are against fast-track democratisation because it will push their political principals out of power. They prefer the 'slow-track democratisation school of thought' not as a strategy to build new democratic institutions in Zimbabwe but as a plot or ploy to advance their 'loiter and linger' tactics. Historically, however, those who have opted for continual authoritarianism

have been swept away by the democratic storm. The authors of this chapter see no valid reason why repression in Zimbabwe should escape a similar fate.

Genealogy of civic society in Zimbabwe

Civil society in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the colonial era when trade union leaders organised themselves to challenge the status quo culminating in the formation of political parties. Once such formation metamorphosed into political entities, a vacuum was created and remained unoccupied until after independence in 1980. Post-independence civil society did exist but the ruling elite were serious in their agenda of closing up the alternative space for political or social debate other than the party. Co-optation and substitution of civil society is the norm during any transition and political formations are clear on the imperative need to stem any potential source of threat to power. Scholars have termed this democratic centralism.¹⁶ The independent state was fast becoming like the deposed colonial government: intolerant, violently suppressing dissent, and persecuting opponents through prosecution and invocation of security laws.¹⁷ Resistance to state excesses of the new majority government was muted, as the euphoria of majority rule and independence left many such institutions with little interest or motivation to question state power. Democratic institutions were gradually being compromised and replaced with sycophants. The country was sliding in to an authoritarian and one-party state.¹⁸ Formations such as trade unions and student bodies took the mantle of confronting the governance style of the ruling party which was now characterised by severe institutional corruption, nepotism and endemic acts of breaches of the rule of law. Even within the ruling party, individuals came out strongly against the emerging dictatorial and corrupt tendencies. For instance, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) was borne out of the internal protestations within ZANU PF. The President of ZUM, Edgar Zivanayi Tekere and other members of his party were subjected to attacks of all forms, causing the party to slowly disintegrate into oblivion. But again, ZANU PF had been challenged and interestingly too by one of their own 'comrades' in the liberation struggle and nationalists' circles.

In the first years of independence, Zimbabwe continued without any unified political formation challenging ZANU PF. This changed with the birth of the MDC. Civil society elements were behind this formation. A political platform to complete the revolution or change that the civil society had advocated for, but without a vehicle to capture state power, then was completing gestation.

This process led to the emergence of a strong political opposition never seen before in the history of post-colonial Zimbabwe, but the implications were the slow perforation and asphyxiation of civil society. The ruling elite had invested in bringing about limited participation and continued to restrict and undermine political space through legislative and administrative impediments. ZANU PF adopted the rhetoric of the liberation struggle of labelling and naming any person a sell-out or traitor or a stooge for the West for proposing a democratic political alternative.¹⁹ It is the authors' assertion that while the ruling elite as depicted by the nationalist party ZANU PF nearly succeeded in annihilating any form of opposition organised or disorganised, they have failed. As Sithole observed,

... total elimination of all opposition requires extremely effective mobilisation and the full integration of all institutions and social groups into the structures of a regime. This is a project of surpassing difficulty at which no modern authoritarian government has ever succeeded, from Hitler to Stalin, or from Ceausescu to Mengistu, let alone countries with even less capacity. (Sithole 1998: 26)

Civil society still maintained and guided jealously its 'zones of autonomy'. The political cost of holding onto power has eroded the ruling elites' legitimacy and acceptance, causing many unconceded tactical and strategic decisions. The transitional 'power-sharing'²⁰ government is one of such concessions. While naturally contested, there is a strong argument to the effect that civil society should be credited for these developments. Any political party that was in opposition and won elections but failed to win state power, would acknowledge the role of civil society. As the implementation of the GPA progressed, democratic political parties appeared to be drifting away from their critical allies within civil society, namely the trade unions and the constitutional reform activists. This again is not entirely negative. This turn of events, if substantiated and deemed true, should not be seen as a failure by democratic actors, but a positive development in so far as it shows the ability of civil society to remain identifiable and distinguishable from state and political power protagonists. As Alfred Stepan advises, democratic 'civic' forces should resist integration into the ruling regime and guide its zones of autonomy against it if it is going to be efficacious in executing its democratic tasks in a transition (in Sithole, 1998: 25).

Practitioners and academics in transitioning states have observed that there are stages to any transition and depending on each stage, civil society has a different role to play (Sorenson, 1993). Zimbabwe is at the stage of transition

which could become abortive as the processes are yet to reach a threshold of irreversibility. This view and notion has forced civil society to make calculative withdrawals, refocusing and reorientation of their advocacy, lobby, campaigns and programming. Although civil society is playing a role, to some it is constructive, to others it is obstructive and to some it is conflict entrepreneurship, but no doubt it has caused significant trepidation in current and former regimes to rule and ruin without regard to the existence or absence of consent from the governed.

Response to crisis and contributions towards liberalisation

Having either been observers, sceptics or analysts, civil society did play a crucial role. While more could have been done in respect of their role at the 'negotiating table', others point out that this was a pipe dream. The failure to accommodate civil society before and during the negotiations has been explained or justified by the absence of a collective view or voice of civil society by the political parties. Facilitators and mandating organisations such as the Republic of South Africa and SADC were not keen to expand the issues for resolution beyond the political protagonists. This might be justified if one focuses on the pure tenet of conflict resolution which is identifying the conflicting entities and issues, but one might miss the point of sustainable peace and the role of apolitical entities. Sadly then, the negotiating table was not expanded to accommodate civil society in rebuilding or building sustainable democratisation and a democratic reconstruction agenda. The reasons for calling for an expanded role for civil society during the negotiations for the formation of a transitional government were rooted in the lack of trust in politicians to decide Zimbabwe's political, social and economic destiny.

The initial political discussions had been triggered by the sustained calls from civil society to regional players to take a more pronounced role in solving the political and governance crisis. These calls date back to as early as 1997, the turning point or time of acute danger²¹ when signs of the complex conflict became noticeable. Limited response to these calls was noted. It was not until the Arusha Summit in March 2007, when SADC-formalised process recognised that the protagonists in Zimbabwe were limited to the three main political parties with parliamentary representation in parliament.²² While this might have been true in terms of those competing for state power, this remains not entirely correct in terms of democratisation of the country. Civil society has a major stake having been made to be carers of victims of organised and often state-sponsored violence and torture and to provide accommodation for displaced families, or political

leaders on the run from state injustice and threats, or made to live their lives in constant fear of abductions and enforced disappearances. The facilitator to the dialogue of the political parties remained adamant and unwilling to expand the 'negotiating table'. Civil society was perceived as spoilers or more aligned with the then MDC, although nothing could have been further from the truth.²³

The only common factor of the MDC and civil society is the need to see a democratic and accountable state, with the MDC preoccupied with gaining state power and civil society guarding against abuse of state power even when occupied by democrats. Other avenues for having a say at the negotiating table were mooted including submitting of dossiers, compendiums and briefing papers to the facilitator through His Excellency Ambassador Makhhalima to Zimbabwe. The facilitator even sent a mission of retired and serving army generals from his country to investigate allegations of human rights violations by their counterparts. As has become the norm for political discussions in Zimbabwe, the report was never published publicly. South African human rights organisations attempted to compel the facilitator to release the report with resounding indifference from the government.²⁴ For purposes of detailed assessment of the role of civil society in this transition, authors will look at the various formations, groups and identifiable entities that constitute civil society. While not exhaustive, the attention will be on some of the main actors and their roles.

Non-governmental organisations

NGOs incorporated under the laws of Zimbabwe, especially under the Private Voluntary Organisations Act (PVO Act), found themselves being tolerant of the state for fear of reprisals and they cooperated with state institutions. The legal requirements of registration of these NGOs made it impossible for some of them to question state authority as their objectives had to remain within the statutory confines of their legal registration requirements and objectives.²⁵ Women's organisations challenged the constitutionality of the powers appropriated to the regulatory authority of the PVO Act in 1997.²⁶ This again marked the beginning of a very tense relationship between the state and NGOs. Some of the groups and organisations that were very close to the liberation movement and the government were also forced to take clear positions on national issues such as the Matabeleland Massacres of 1982–1987.²⁷ Since then, their relations with the state have remained 'strained'. The development of a straitjacket of registration of NGOs has contributed to the 'professionalisation' of NGOs and also to the

introduction of safe politicking and safe operations.²⁸ The proliferation of many forms of NGOs in Zimbabwe has raised concerns about whether these vehicles are still furthering the 'people's agenda' or have already acquired an agenda of their own without much concern for the constituencies they were formed to serve. During the 1960s and 1970s, NGOs were derided as imperialist-sponsored institutions and Shivji (1992) goes on to state that these institutions have been indiscriminately embraced by some of us as 'comrades-in-arms' thus reproducing at the non-government level the erstwhile phenomenon of neocolonialism at the government level. The truth of this assertion might rest in the open dependence of NGOs on external funding, while dependence does not replace the notion of interdependence and universality of rights and requirements for such organisations to be funded.²⁹

African NGOs are yet to establish internal mechanisms of self-financing and sustainability. Dependence on donor funding has not caused such entities to become stooges of Western states and ideologies, as some have been able to continue to provide a service to their constituencies. The ability of NGOs to identify shared values with those who support their efforts has led to continuous NGO programming with the necessary levels of independence but not financial sustainability. The issue of funding has thus been used by critics of Western nations as advancing their liberal policies or extending their economic and ideological spheres of influence. NGOs in Zimbabwe have been targets of attacks from the state with efforts to ban such funding through legislative provisions mooted repeatedly.³⁰ The increased questioning of the political authority and government has increased the proclivity by the state to want to invoke statutory laws to limit or prohibit certain operations of NGOs. In many instances, such attempts have worked in diverting NGOs from focusing on national issues to defending their existence. The introduction of the 2004 NGO Bill which was to prohibit the receipt of foreign funding for human rights, democracy and governance work, entailed that for a few months, NGOs had to focus on justifying their existence and in the interim, political processes are unfolding in the country with limited input from NGOs.³¹

For Zimbabwe, the jury is still out on whether the current crisis was caused by an ideological deficit, or whether it is a developmental crisis precipitated by competing economic policies as promulgated by the new majority government, or perhaps the complete failure of a liberation movement to metamorphose into a democratic government that appreciates a rights-based developmental discourse and trajectory. NGOs have encouraged the transformation of the

liberation movement–state into an accountable government. This campaign has taken many forms and most efforts have led to the state holding negative views on NGOs especially those working on human rights and governance issues. The level of resentment towards NGOs is prevalent in the political narrative of Zimbabwe. The ‘supreme’³² leader of ZANU PF, Robert Mugabe, has openly stated in the past that NGOs are ‘hatcheries of political opposition... we begin to view them differently as political opponents. And political opponents are dealt with politically. They should not cry, for they have redefined the rules of engagement’.³³ Similar statements were repeated in parliament.³⁴ This statement resonated well and still does, as resistance to the increased calls for a transformed state which is usually called regime change.³⁵

Women’s groups

Historically, women and women’s associations have always played an important role in any transitions and struggles for democracy. During the liberation war, women were combatants side by side with men in the trenches.³⁶ In the post-independence period, their contribution was not celebrated accordingly with women being immediately reminded of their role as housewives.³⁷ Sadly, in post-colonial Zimbabwe, women continue to bear the brunt of failed government policies, violence, intimidation and scarcity of basics for human survival. Several associations, organisations and groups were formed in the post-independence era to champion and challenge underlying economic, social and political inequalities. In the current discourse on transition in Zimbabwe, women’s associations have participated in most of the initiatives being driven by the IG with the hope of influencing the direction of the transition. Advocacy initiatives from women’s groups have focused on several areas including land, economic empowerment, violence, political space and representation among other notable areas. In respect of the transition, social justice groups within the women’s movement have been concerned about the immediate addressing by the government of bread and butter issues. The arguments for sequencing of implementation of reforms and changes have not attracted much traction among these groups. WOZA is the beacon of such campaigns. WOZA has focused on the need for the transitional government to address issues that are central to human survival.³⁸ Campaigns launched by this group are predominantly aimed at compelling the government to focus on social services delivery, education, health and other basic needs essential for a dignified human life.

In this process WOZA has attracted the ire of even progressive members of the IG such as the Co-Home Affairs Minister from MDC-T who is on record as having chastised WOZA for continuing to cast a bad light on the country due to their incessant demonstrations.³⁹ The importance of groups such as WOZA cannot be underestimated in such a transition. The pressure for the government to deliver basics while in transition creates crises of expectation, as one would imagine that without unhindered state power, a political party might not be able to effectively govern. The formation of the IG enabled citizens to demand delivery as some identified the failure to provide social services as symptomatic of what was viewed as a failing state. The consistence of WOZA's campaign is unparalleled. These campaigns have rejuvenated the notion of governance to include the provision of basics and social safety nets for citizens.

The Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, proponents of the slow-track school of democratisation, have been advocating for the drafting and adoption of a people-driven democratic constitution as a key milestone in the 'long walk' to a democratic Zimbabwe. Their participation in the parliamentary-driven constitutional reform process is predicated on the premise that the GPA mechanism is an opportunity to redemocratised the authoritarian and chauvinistic political system in Zimbabwe. The Women's Coalition launched a constitutional reform campaign code-named *Women 'stand up' for your rights*. Most women-focused civic formations under the banner of the Women's Coalition have been implementing a battery of programmable activities ranging from constitutional reform dialogues and workshop at all levels to encourage maximum female participation. As a method to advance their civic political claims, the Women's Coalition has been advocating for a democratic reform in Zimbabwe's political system to allow for an increased role of women in the body politic through their 50 per cent representation campaign. However, in terms of gender statistical analysis in constitutional reform structures, it is evident that little has been achieved in respect of gender equality and equity in the constitutional reform structures and leadership. There are still few women as compared to their male counterparts. All Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) chairpersons are males and their names are as follows; Douglas Mwonzora (MDC-T), Paul Mangwana (ZANU PF) and Edward Mkosi (MDC-M).

Faith-based organisations

At the height of the repressive state in Zimbabwe, the church and other faith-based organisations provided safe houses for victims of political violence and families displaced by forced evictions. Their social services role, compassion and empathy were displayed extensively. Limiting the analysis to such a role would be unjust and incomplete. This role can be located within the historical context and the present. Political analysts have strongly averred that there is no room for neutrality for the church.⁴⁰ Countries such as South Africa that have gone through some of the recent transitions from authoritarian or repressive states to democracies have had religious groups playing an instrumental role. Critics have also noted the repressive role of religion, but practitioners of many religions including Christianity would attest to the existence of liberation theology. Faith-based organisations since the colonial era have been standing for justice on the side of the oppressed.⁴¹ Before independence, some black church leaders were perceived by the liberation armies to have sold out. Post-independence relations gradually soured, especially with the churches documenting the killings in Matabeleland.

CCJP and LRF were two of the few NGOs that raised alarm over the Matabeleland killings. The church continued to set the agenda in the coming years from the constitutional campaign which was supported by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), formerly Rhodesia Council of Churches, during the liberation struggle, culminating in the formation of the NCA in 1997. As a predominantly Christian country, main groupings such as the Catholic, Anglican, apostolic sects and Pentecostal churches have been involved in providing some form of spiritual, moral and practical support in the transition. Several churches have formed themselves into coordinating councils such as the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe which dates back to 1962, the Head of Denominations of Pentecostal Churches and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference. Within many churches, again, are institutions that focus predominantly on social, economic and political justice such as the CCJP, Silveira House and Ecumenical Support Services (ESS). These formations have provided a platform for active Christian work, including on issues of national reconciliation, peace and justice.

The Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA) led the campaign dubbed the *Save Zimbabwe Campaign*,⁴² which brought together opposition political parties, students, trade unions and civil society. The *Save Zimbabwe Campaign* was marked with the holding of prayer rallies throughout the country. The major prayer rally was violently disrupted by the state pre-GPA on 11 March 2007. The world

witnessed the brutality of Zimbabwe's authoritarian regime. Civil society leaders, trade unions and legitimate opposition political party leaders were butchered, fractured and subjected to all forms of ill-treatment by overzealous police officers and perceived intelligence officers. This violent disruption of a prayer meeting claimed the life of a political and constitutional activist, Gift Tandare. Prior to the watershed rally, leaders of the *Save Zimbabwe Campaign* and the ZCA had been arrested on several occasions. The gruesome pictures and evidence of the determination of the ZANU PF regime to perpetuate itself in office through violence shocked the world and regional leaders who had developed cold feet about resuming negotiations among the political parties. Civil society and the church, having been at the forefront of this people's action, were left out of the negotiations. One would hasten to conclude that civil society and the church might have played their role, which was to catalyse dialogue and discussion on the Zimbabwe question. The collective church has not been without its own internal disputes. For instance, the Anglican Church has been split on issues that relate to sexual and political orientation. Local sects are grappling with adhering to health standards of immunisation of children, thereby becoming a stomping ground for politicians. Leaders of some of the Pentecostal, Protestant and Catholic churches have been accused of taking partisan positions.⁴³ These differing positions assist in understanding why certain groups act or behave in a particular manner towards the protagonists in the coalition government.

Students and youths

Various formations of student groups exist within the country, from students' unions at tertiary institutions to national unions of the same. In any transition and political struggle, students provide the intellectual verve and element of calculated recklessness and boldness towards any undemocratic practices. During the liberation struggle, students were recruited from high schools, colleges and universities, while those who remained in school contributed to the debate on majority rule, independence and support for the liberation struggle. The current complex conflict in Zimbabwe witnessed again the emergency of a cadre of youths forming unions such as ZINASU, Zimbabwe Students Christian Movement (ZSCM) and Zimbabwe High School Students Union. The role of students in the formation of broader associations and political movements is thus notable.

Student leaders have graduated into occupying leadership posts as members

of parliament and key leaders of political parties and government.⁴⁴ To date, student groups, whether working on political or social justice issues, have continued to identify themselves with the progressive forces. The privatisation of education and introduction of foreign currency for tuition fees have caused the withdrawal of students from tertiary institutions and encouraged engagement in illicit means of raising funds. The market is further unable to absorb most of the graduates from these institutions, creating a medley of university dropouts and unemployed graduates. Due to the vulnerability of students at tertiary institutions and colleges predicated on the role of principals and vice chancellors, activists in these institutions have been suspended, expelled and even banned from such institutions for life.

The strategy of suffocating the generational change and continued development of individuals who have the skills to question, critique and champion social issues has taken place in the last 10 years. Students' bodies observed that 'today institutions of learning have been turned into torture chambers. Since 2000 more than 400 students have been issued with indefinite suspensions and 50 with life expulsions for demonstrating against the unaffordability of education in Zimbabwe'.⁴⁵ Student groups while alive to the broader political, social and economic struggles have also brought the battle to issues of paramount concern to them, that is actual access to and ability to enrol at these institutions. The IG, noting its transitory role, has equally failed to deliver in terms of addressing the concerns of students. On 29 March 2010, the students of Zimbabwe made their civic political claims loud and clear when they demonstrated against the IG for its failure to fully implement the GPA and address a myriad of challenges facing the student movement. Scores of student leaders and activists were arrested throughout the country and others were subsequently suspended from their institutions of higher learning.

Trade unions

The trade unions under the auspices of ZCTU have consistently called for the return to the rule of law, democracy and good governance in Zimbabwe. Having been instrumental and central in the formation of a credible and legitimate political party through the Working Peoples Convention of February 1999, ZCTU remains a critical player in the discussion on the transition. ZCTU objected to the GPA in principle and they continue to denounce it in practice. Further, ZCTU rejected the political parties' proposed road map as reflected in article 6 of the

GPA on the writing of a new constitution following the formation of the IG. With the NCA these institutions have been steadfast in campaigning for a genuinely 'people-driven' constitution-making process. The transitional aspect of the IG and the GPA was central to the demands of the labour movement. The trade union grudgingly accepted the transitional government on the understanding that certain reforms would be undertaken and most importantly that the government would not last more than 18–24 months.

The formation of the IG was met with a cold rebuff by the trade union, which was keen to see a clear transfer of power and formation of a legitimate government. Their sentiments were shared across a wide spectrum of audiences including within the unions. The desire for a political transition was not in doubt; trade unions had also suffered immeasurably during the economic and political meltdown. Membership subscriptions drastically reduced for several unions of ZCTU due to the political instability and economic plunder and regression. The workforce had literally been subjected to poverty through economic deprivation. This again affected the ability of the trade unions to organise and effectively mount sustained action against an authoritarian regime. The government naturally and sadly, pre- and post- the IG, reacted violently to actions and protests from labour. The ZCTU leadership has on numerous occasions been subjected to harassment, arrests and malicious prosecutions which have promoted the International Labour Organization to conduct fact-finding missions to Zimbabwe (Saki, Mukwewa & Hofisi, 2007).⁴⁶

Relations between the government and labour unions changed with the decision of the trade unions to become more independent and separate from state patronage (Sachikonye, 1997, 2001).⁴⁷ Splinter unions emerged with the full support of government and the ruling party, ZANU PF. The support base which the trade unions had historically provided to the political party was gone overnight and its popularity was equally waning within the working class. Surrogate trade unions were then used to counter, delegitimise and attempt to undermine the cause of the workers under ZCTU. Scholars have noted that the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) became part of the 'containment strategy' that includes the creation by the state of a worker organisation through funding and compulsory membership, in which the leadership of the union toes the party line.⁴⁸ This has been done through processes of openly attacking ZCTU and its role in the formation of the MDC, denying space for workers under ZCTU equal opportunities and platforms to engage with key stakeholders. What is obvious and fundamental is the fact that the relevant ministries continued to identify ZCTU as a key institution and interlocutor.⁴⁹

Media

Like any sector or alternative space for championing pro-democratic reforms and ventures, the media has been subjected to legal suits, the closure of media houses, arrests of journalists and ultimate self-censorship of the press. Due to the state monopoly of airwaves, daily papers continued to be closed and the community deprived of news as community radio stations grappled to obtain frequencies and registration. This is the narrative of the media in Zimbabwe. It is important to celebrate the bravado of many journalists and newspaper houses that continued to churn out alternative, credible news and invite dialogue around the transitional processes in Zimbabwe. The few independent papers in operation have been steadfast in this endeavour but again naturally some might have been seen as not independent as they purport to be either due to editorial policies or interests of the shareholders and directors of the publishing companies concerned.

The state-controlled entities, in particular *The Herald*, have continued to carry opinions and articles which in the interest of free expression, have been accepted but questioned in terms of peddling information meant to undermine or reverse the transitional process and gains made by democratic actors. Media watchdogs such as the MMPZ have lamented the biased and unfair coverage of the political actors in the IG. Media as the fourth estate, contributes to effective and accountable governance. During a political transition in which political actors are not in agreement of the country's trajectory, the increased information gap undermines any meaningful attempts at reforms and democratic consolidation becomes nearly impossible. In May 2009, the government, through the Ministry of Media, Information and Publicity, held a conference to discuss the media landscape and in the spirit of inclusiveness invited all stakeholders. Progressive media groups under the banner of the MAZ⁵⁰ boycotted the meeting but made written submissions to the gathering. Reasons for boycotting the meeting included, among others, limited consultation in the development of the programme and excessive involvement of individuals who are considered to be media henchmen.

Following the meeting, MISA Zimbabwe inquired on the recommendations of the conference from the relevant ministry in so far as implementation was to proceed without further consensus on the conference resolutions.⁵¹

The decision by media groups not to participate in this conference raised the costs of the government's continued use of the media as a political tool. The Zimbabwe Media Commission, a year⁵² after this conference, issued registration certificates to media houses that were once closed by the authorities in 2003,

such as the *Daily News* published by the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), the *Daily Gazette*, published by Modus Publications, publishers of the *Financial Gazette*, *News Day* published by Alpha Media Holdings and publishers of the *Standard* and *Independent*. New players include *The Mail* which is believed to be supported by a developmental fund of youths under the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment. The ZCTU-produced newspaper, *The Worker*, was also registered to become a weekly publication.

All forms of media have been explored in the discourse on Zimbabwe. Within a few years, several internet-based publications were formed to defy the ban and closure of independent dailies and the diaspora community formed similar social networks and news sites in defiance to the deprivation of news from home. Radio stations that had challenged the state's monopoly were harassed into exile, with dozens of journalists in chase of the moving media houses across the borders and seas. Civil society, having noticed the apparent lack of alternative platforms for articulating their agenda and sharing with constituencies and communities, developed simplified newsletters, such as the *Legal Monitor*, *Weekly Agenda* among other low-cost newsletters for community radios. These products, in the absence of opening of the print media, provided significant information on issues of the rule of law, violence, constitutional reform processes, national healing and commentaries on national topics such as the political negotiations.

Contributions towards political transition (Erosion of authoritarianism and the construction of democracy)

A political transition, simply defined, is the interval between one regime and the other, and prior to this will be the noticeable liberalisation and changes in the authoritarian government. The IG has contributed to the dismantling of the tentacles of oppression of the old order. The unstated and unagreed position is whether the liberalisation processes will result in actual transition to a shared coalition-mixed regime to a democratic new order. Civil society actors are preoccupied with efforts to prevent the reversal of the transition to a pre-transition state. During the authoritarian consolidation phases, civil society in Zimbabwe was the bedrock of the political actors who were politically marooned with limited external solidarity. The major role of civil society has been to pressurise the older regime to concede to certain fundamental changes which are concomitant with democratisation. Achievements have been recorded in respect

of some of the proposed changes to laws and media space. The decision to reform has not been without resistance and stagnation and regression has been witnessed during this period. This current set-up in the Zimbabwe political discourse has been characterised by the authors as the middle of liberalisation and the actual political transition. The likelihood of a complete reversal and abortive transition occurring is high.

In an effort to contribute towards this transition and encourage implementation of the GPA, several NGOs coalesced to form a monitoring mechanism of the GPA based on themes as articulated in the GPA. The platform, while broadly termed Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism (CISOMM),⁵³ is mainly composed of groups engaged in human rights advocacy, whether political rights or economic rights, social justice, media rights and freedoms and youth organisations. This formation has been leading in the production of reports providing a timeline of implementation and failures and successes of the transitional government. Some political parties to the GPA were not very receptive of this venture, as it appeared to them that the GPA was formed by political parties and internal monitoring mechanisms were factored in to make provision for the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee, (JOMIC),⁵⁴ formed by four representatives of the political parties to the GPA. JOMIC has not been visible in some instance in causing the political parties (themselves) to implement the GPA, considering the repeated failures to meet the many time frames set. Again this betrays the continued failure to appreciate the role of civil society outside political formations.

The impact of the civil society initiative is debateable. It has been a source of summarised, researched and somehow timely reports on the state of play and performance of the IG. Unwittingly this process, re-emphasises that civil society's role is only supposed to be monitoring state power and the agreements of political parties. The notion of agenda setting then becomes limited for civil society in this context as what remains for them is to comment, analyse and critique. Probably, this is a paramount role of civil society; to provide narrations of failures, successes and recommendations for political parties towards the peace agreements signed. This role could be expanded to include agenda setting. The current set-up of the IG, however, makes advocacy efforts by civil society in respect of the transition problematic. NGOs have been faced with comments from some of the democratic political actors that they should lower their attacks or give the political parties time to implement the GPA. This, while understandable, neglects the fact that political parties fail to distinguish their role in government and outside government. And in Zimbabwe a culture of making political parties

synonymous with the government is historical. Democratic political parties will have to be constantly reminded that NGOs or civil society are not extensions of political parties regardless of shared notions of creating a better society and even when the democratic parties are ultimately the beneficiaries of state power.

Sector specific interests are also being articulated in this quest for a political transition. Women's organisations have been focusing on the need to undertake constitutional and legislative reforms, the key delivery being the inclusion of provisions in the constitution which are non-discriminatory towards women on inheritance and customary practices, inter alia. These campaigns have gathered momentum as led by groups such as the Women's Coalition. The campaign for a new constitution and specific inclusion of women's rights and other provisions are central to the creation of an equal and just society. This model of advocating for a role in the transition by women's groups can be seen as a mixture of a sequenced and gradual approach to transition. Under the leadership of eminent women from different countries, these groups organised meetings with the political leadership in Zimbabwe with the view of re-energising the GPA.⁵⁵ The women from different political parties and persuasion made several resolutions to work together on critical issues and resolve conflict for the betterment of the country.⁵⁶ Prior to this effort, women's organisations had developed a Women's Charter which was a culmination of efforts from civil society, academics, professionals and ordinary women to demand space in the political dialogue and processes in Zimbabwe with the constitution-making process being the sphere for such activity. Several demands are clearly articulated in this document. Whether these aspirations from women's voices will be incorporated in the political debates and dialogues remains to be seen. However the effort towards presenting the varied organisations, political parties', women's leagues and assemblies as a united front against male or patriarchal hegemony and domination presents tangible efforts towards reorientation of Zimbabwe as a just society.

The church, as the largest social mobiliser, developed one landmark product of a 'unified' church dubbed *The Zimbabwe We Want* which was more like a kairos document for Zimbabwe.⁵⁷ *The Zimbabwe We Want* is a collection of aspirations and views of the ordinary parishioners on matters of importance to the building of a shared national vision.⁵⁸ The clergy, who were instrumental in the development of this document, had anticipated increased active involvement in the reaching of a negotiated settlement and transition in Zimbabwe. As the facilitation of the negotiations between the main political parties continued to stalemate, the clergy became excited but were not granted the opportunity.⁵⁹ *The Zimbabwe We Want*,

albeit its expansive content, was not extensively utilised by political parties, civil society and other players. *The Zimbabwe We Want* was crafted at a time when Zimbabwe was not facing any prospects of liberalisation of the political hold on power, but signs were visible of the possibility of the crumbling of the regime.

Labour unions, mainly ZCTU, command tremendous influence on the current political transition discourse especially on the democratic parties. The disagreements of labour with democratic actors caused minor disorientation in terms of political strategies and engagement of the IG. The many meetings and congresses of ZCTU have reaffirmed the need for the holding of presidential elections as an exit strategy out of the IG. The acceptability of holding an election in the current conditions where there has been limited or no significant institutional, policy and legislative reforms, raises fears of a return to the chaotic and violent sham of the June 2008 second presidential election. The calls from ZCTU for fresh elections have also been repeated by other political parties and civil society players though with different nuances and emphasis on a reformed environment before elections. Arguably, as the largest civil society formation outside the political parties, ZCTU has a central role to play. The IG provided some breathing space and period for the workers to recharge, reconfigure, retrospect and introspect into their role. As the IG continues to crawl along, workers of Zimbabwe have the opportunity to chart the course of this unsteady and shaky government. Setting the national agenda will require mass-based organisations, and the labour unions are correctly placed to provide very much-needed leadership at this juncture in Zimbabwe's history. The rallying around elections as the final epitaph of the authoritarian state has to be the key message for the labour organisations.

Opportunities and red herrings?

The dialogue around the transition in Zimbabwe has presented what analysts and scholars view as opportunities, but what activists take as red herrings and the diversionary agenda of ZANU PF. The limited level of sincerity in undertaking and implementing genuine reforms is responsible for the cynicism, especially among and within democratic actors. Civil society has repeatedly indicated the absence of social capital and commitment from politicians to see to it that Zimbabwe transits from an autocratic state into a democracy. Notable among the requisite conditions is the call for a new people-driven constitution. The debate on key reforms such as constitutional reform has unfortunately led to a polarisation of

civil society on whether to participate in the government/parliament-dominated reform or advocate for the notion of a purely people-driven process, meaning no political parties or government domination. Increasingly, reservations expressed by such organisations as NCA and ZCTU in respect of the constitution-making process are being confirmed.

The domination of the political parties has resulted in the process having many false starts and legitimacy concerns⁶⁰ as issues of consternation are referred to the principals or negotiators under the GPA. Civil society individuals and leaders, who had volunteered into the thematic committees for outreach and consultation on the constitution, found themselves owing allegiance to certain political parties. Some from human rights groups and trade unions are reported to have withdrawn their names in protest. If such a situation is allowed to persist it distorts the presence of an independent and credible civil society which is essential in the current uncertain transition in Zimbabwe. International agencies and governments had all been preoccupied with supporting the constitution-making process. Civil society, which has been opposed to this process, appears to be more and more exposed in terms of resources coming their way. A handful of agencies continue to support the dissenting voice. Other reasons for not supporting the dissenting voices have also been propagated. Concerns of politicisation of the constitution-making process have accentuated demands for the product to be viewed as a transitional constitution. Undertaking major constitutional reforms in the midst of a political grey zone, liberalisation–political transition was bound to be difficult (Carothers, 2002). The possibility of entrenchment of views and positions is paramount for political survival. Therefore the timing and sequencing of such reforms is important. The constitution making, if sufficiently participatory and involving of citizens, can be an antidote to conflict and violence. To reform the constitution after a complete political transition is the ideal situation. A constitution then becomes the road map for reconstruction, state building and consolidation. If undertaken during a period of actual transition between not so cooperative partners, constitutions can be used as tools of entrenchment of established power structures. The constitution should be a safeguard against the return to authoritarianism and can be structured to deal with potential conflictive areas. As a constitution cobbled together during a politically contested period, it is likely to be backward- and forward-looking, retrospective and prospective, continuous and discontinuous (Teitel, 1997).

As the supreme law, the constitution will cause the several subsidiary laws that are bound to be inconsistent with it to be repealed and/or amended. These

are the laws that have perpetuated the ZANU PF regime since 1980 as most of the laws were inherited from the colonial era and perfected with time. No doubt, ZANU PF will not march to its political grave with eyes open. The official commencement of the outreach process was a shifting target and in the interim, villagers and citizens were being subjected to intimidation. The Kariba Constitution which was drafted and signed by the political parties in 2007 is being touted as the appropriate constitution by ZANU PF. The NCA produced a critique of the Kariba Constitution observing the secretive nature of the process and its content.⁶¹ The ZANU PF leadership is causing the articulation of the provisions of the Kariba Constitution as the alternative. Reports of CSOs monitoring the constitution-making process are that it is likely to be stage-managed in many areas.⁶² Democratic actors and civil society should capitalise on the window presented by these consultation processes to prepare constituencies, revive social and political structures and contacts that were decimated in the June 2008 anarchical elections. The constitution reform process under these conditions might be a red herring and part of 'loiter and linger' tactics. Sadly, most of civil society has invested time and resources into this process without focusing much on the unintended consequences and collateral gains. As this process unfolds, confidence-building mechanisms should be incorporated to ensure that the established power structures do not feel threatened, but also that the majority participate and are empowered to do so (Samuels, 2006).

A disempowered populace requires multifaceted approaches to bridging the divide with its leaders, political parties and institutions that might have been central to the infliction of harm, violence and social strife. The inclusion of a clause on national healing in the GPA was again received with mixed celebrations. Political parties appointed individuals from their parties to lead the process of national healing. The Organ for National Healing and Reconciliation was tasked with implementing provisions of Article 7 of the GPA. The process of national healing and reconciliation appears to be more of a charade as the commitment of political structures and leadership to address the root causes of violence and social unrest is unsurprisingly nearly absent. The provision of the GPA on national healing is vague and ambiguous; this is further compounded by the absence of clear legislative and policy frameworks.⁶³ Other forms of dealing with past crimes such as prosecutions, restorative justice and truth-telling are not mentioned. Civil society has stipulated the necessary conditions, desirable mechanisms for addressing past human rights crimes, political and economic during a symposium in Johannesburg in 2003.⁶⁴ Had the national healing provisions been clearly

articulated and allowed for an independent truth, reconciliation and justice commission to take effect, communities and societies that have been torn apart by repeated cycles of violence might have had a genuine opportunity to have their grievances addressed. The process is far from being what would constitute transitional justice. The healing process is attending to the superficial wounds and is not victim-centred. Some churches and the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) have assisted the national healing process, albeit the apparent structural weaknesses, political manipulation and limited influence on institutions of violence.⁶⁵

The GPA constitutes a ceasefire arrangement, but protagonists remain armed and on guard. There are clear periods of violence in Zimbabwe's history all of which have not been addressed. Colonial Zimbabwe had liberation movements and the colonial forces engaged in battles across the country. Villagers were caught in the fray as active participants or victims of excesses of both liberators-to-be and settler forces. The combatants themselves were also not considered for any post-traumatic stress and treatment. Reconciliation was the mantra without any detailed analysis of requirements for sustainable reconciliation. The Matabeleland Massacres were met with a similar unity accord to end the disturbances but not accept liability, restore people's lives or acknowledge the atrocities committed. A commission of inquiry set through presidential decrees never made their findings public. Zimbabweans were left assuming. Civil society produced their own collections and accounts of victims, with clear recommendations for addressing the past, with little acceptance from the state.

Late in the 1990s, such violence was to reoccur with the formation of a new political party, ZUM, and increased with the real threat to political power, and emerged with the birth of the MDC. Violence that has been witnessed in Zimbabwe has all been related to retention of political power. Therefore the national healing process if not fake, should address the prospects of violence recurring during electoral periods and root causes of such within communities. One would observe the lull and pseudo-relaxation of the environment with a reduction in arrests. Yet overt violence, admittedly, is one of the gains of the GPA and the IG. Whether such can be attributed to the national healing exercise is contested. The ability to maintain this status quo and graduate into a fully fledged movement into a democratic state is the challenge for civil society as non-state actors.

Conclusion

Consolidation or reversal

A key observation of the political events in Zimbabwe is that this transition is yet to reach a threshold of irreversibility. The power-sharing agreement brought a halting of continued decline of the state into a failing or failed state. The situation prevailing before the formation of the GPA was defined as a complex emergency, characterised by collapsing social systems such as basic health services, chronic food shortages, a hyperinflationary environment and political stalemate and uncertainty. It is difficult, if not impossible, to classify the current state as a consolidation phase as elements of reversal of the incremental democratisation are visible. The fast-track demand of achieving total erosion of the authoritarian state through fresh elections appears to be gaining ground. The gradual prising away of a repressive state through consensual reforms, including the constitution, appear to be now dwarfed due to the slow progress of implementing the reforms. The resurgence of violence and intimidation in rural areas and predominantly political hot spots is testimony of this. Elections might not necessarily be the answer to this political quagmire. ZANU PF is arguing that it is not a transitional government – they are asking transitioning to where? In ZANU PF we have predatory leadership pushing for ‘determination elections’ thus maintaining the status quo and the developmental leadership, ie advocating for a democratic development trajectory in Zimbabwe.

A recollection of findings of international and local observer’s mission on elections in Zimbabwe since 2000 have concluded that laws, institutions and state arms are abused by ZANU PF thereby causing a shift or uneven electoral environment for the opposing political parties. ZCTU, in its resolutions, has indicated that it will be important to have a presidential election and not a harmonised election which includes local, parliamentarian and presidential elections. The rationale being that the presidential elections of March 2008 were not conclusive or decisive and therefore a fresh election should be for the presidency only. Financial reasons are also at hand; despite the wealth of mineral resources and the diamond rush in Marange, the state still depends on a cash budget, levies and taxes on an already cash-strapped workforce with little savings. Holding of a harmonised election will be deemed expensive.

Zimbabwe has never been wanting in terms of holding elections. The shortcoming has been in whether elections held are free and credible enough to result in power transfer to a party which has won the plebiscite. Competitive authoritarianism or electoral authoritarianism is where a state holds elections as a

way of legitimating (Levitsky & Way, 2002). In 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, elections were conducted as per the constitutional time requirements; the limitations have been the acceptability of the results. The 2008 presidential election results which took over five weeks to be announced, demonstrated unequivocally the reluctance of ZANU PF to transfer power. For all intents and purposes, democratic actors won the election but were short-changed on the transfer of power. Civil society has insurmountable tasks ahead in respect of elections. The IG was conceived with an unstated notion of being a transitional government of not more than 18–24 months from swearing in of the key appointments in February 2009. Even if the transitional government was to stretch to 2013, there is little indication that significant reforms will have been adopted. Time for the IG is running out, the intransigence of the actors within the government in implementing a reform agenda has accentuated the calls for an election. In any event the IG is a product of a failed election and power transfer.

The question that has to be answered then is what guarantees are there for an effective election which would result in power transfer to the legitimate winners? The reforms suggested by the democratic actors alone are not necessarily sufficient to trigger power transfer. Civil society has been advocating for broad reforms of the electoral laws, role of the military and demilitarising politics. Safety mechanisms in the unfortunate likelihood of violent elections should be established. Campaigns for essential democratic reforms to take place now, before any election is called for, then become the core activities for civic actors. This work is not new to civil society. The past 10 years have been punctuated by reactive measures, creation of safety nets, demands for reforms and the situation still demands such action. New strategies that could be invoked should be on how to engage a government which is neither outright authoritarian but also not entirely democratic. Regional actors who parented the IG should be activated to assemble political and civilian institutions to avoid a repeat of a power-sharing because of an inconclusive election or rather refusal to concede to electoral defeat. In ending, Zimbabweans through the various community and civil society structures should demand what is rightfully theirs; an accountable and legitimate government which reflects the will of the people.

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NOTES

- 1 In Zimbabwe some of the civil society organisations which are perceived to be fronted by the ruling elite include, Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU), Zimbabwe Congress of Students Union (ZICOSU), and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Justice (ZLJ). These groups have some of their rank and file in the structures of the ZANU PF and the same can also be said of some in the labour movement such as the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the MDC, observing that the MDC was a creation of the students, workers and peasants of Zimbabwe, so there is indeed that symbiotic relationship. The difference is that ZCTU and other civil society organisations have not blindly followed the political positions articulated by the MDC as will be highlighted in this paper.
- 2 Moyo, J. 1993. Civil Society in Zimbabwe. *Zambezia: The Journal of the University of Zimbabwe*, 20(1).
- 3 Bratton, M. 1994. *Civil Society and Political Transition in Africa*, 11(6), p. 3 (This report is based on remarks presented at Addis Ababa University, January 24, 1994 and at the Boston-Area Faculty NGO Seminar, Boston University, April 20, 1994).
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Howard, P. 2010. The Lasting Impact of Digital Media on Civil Society. *More Than Elections, How Democracies Transfer Power*, 15(1). Department of State.
- 6 The London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society. 2010. *What is Civil Society?* [online]. Available from: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/CCS/home.aspx> [Accessed 5 April 2010].
- 7 The London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society. 2010. *What is Civil Society?* [online]. Available from: http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/introduction/what_is_civil_society.htm [Accessed 5 April 2010].
- 8 Silver rights are primarily economic rights.
- 9 Methodological framework in the context of the constitutional reform process, some civic actors opted to participate in the constitutional reform process as a method of eroding authoritarianism but some opted out as a method of guiding their 'zones of autonomy' from 'government-driven constitutional reform processes'.
- 10 Shivji, I.G. in *Fight My Beloved Continent: New Democracy in Africa*, notes that civil society is sometimes discussed as if it had a homogenous, non-contradictory existence just as social movements seem to have acquired the status of good-in-themselves, 2nd edn SAPES 1992.
- 11 O'Donnell, G. 1996. Introduction to the Latin American Cases. In: G. O'Donnell, P. Schmitter & L. Whitehead, eds. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Latin America*, p. 9. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- 12 As reproduced in Sithole, M. 1998. *Public Eye*. Harare: Rujeko.
- 13 Again not all members of the security forces, army, intelligence, airforce and prison services are associated with ZANU PF. Results of the March 2008 polls would reflect that in some of the military cantonments and locations, more of the resident servicemen and women voted for the MDC, which then caused the forced and supervised voting in front of senior military personnel of most of the service personnel.
- 14 Hampson Osler, F. & Mendeloff, D. 2007. Intervention and the Nation-Building Debate. In: C.A. Crocker *et al.*, eds. *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
- 15 Lyons, T. 2005. *Demilitarizing Politics: Elections on the Uncertainty Road to Peace*. Boulder Colorado: Lynne Rienner.
- 16 Gellner, E. 1991. Civil Society in historical context. *International Social Science Journal*, CXXIX, pp. 495–510, as quoted in Moyo, J. *Civil Society in Zimbabwe*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe.
- 17 Raftopoulos, B. 2005. *Unreconciled Differences: The Limits of Reconciliation Politics in Zimbabwe*, South African Regional Poverty Network [online]. Available from: www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001146/P1266intro_24_Jan_Zimbabwe.pdf#9 [Accessed 4 April 2010].
- 18 Shaw, W.H. 1986. Towards the One-Party State in Zimbabwe: A Study in African Political Thought. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 24(3), pp. 373–394.
- 19 Raftopoulos supra 7 says that, 'a particularly damaging feature of the ruling party's response to the crisis in Zimbabwe has been the state's overwhelming, overarching articulation of an intolerant selective and racialised national discourse'.
- 20 Eminent scholars such as Eldred Masunungure and Micheal Bratton (2010) argue the transitional arrangement in Zimbabwe is not predicated on power-sharing but on power-division mode.

Voices from civil society

- 21 Masipula Sithole noted that 1997 was Zimbabwe's turning point (*Financial Gazette*, Thursday 15 January 1998).
- 22 Negotiations between the MDC and ZANU PF had started in 2003 under the Commonwealth with Nigerian President Obasanjo taking the lead. Local clergy had also taken the lead to meet President Robert Mugabe of ZANU PF and President Morgan Tsvangirai of MDC. See National Constitutional Assembly Agenda 1, 2004.
- 23 Maybe this indeed is true as now, under the constitution-making process, reports are again of horse trading and civil society being either deemed ZANU PF or MDC in the thematic committees and various other roles. Whether the civil society accepted that has not been publicly stated.
- 24 South Africa History Archive, Southern African Centre for the Survivors of Torture (SACST) and the Southern African Litigation Centre (SALC) requested access to the Generals' Report into the violence in Zimbabwe subsequent to the election there last year. The response obtained was that there was never a report after the visit of the generals. Available from: http://www.saha.org.za/news/2009/June/saha_seek_access_to_general_s_report_on_violence_in_zimbabwe_2.htm [Accessed 4 April 2010].
- 25 Saki, O. 2010. Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, 12(2).
- 26 Sekai Holland vs Minister of Labour and Social Welfare 1997 (1) ZLR 186 (SC).
- 27 Rich, S. 1997. Zimbabwe: The State of NGOs in Zimbabwe: Honeymoon Over? *Southern Africa Report SAR*, 12(3), p. 17.
- 28 Stirrat, R.L. 2008. Mercenaries, Missionaries and Misfits: Representations of Development Personnel. *Critique of Anthropology*, 28(4), pp. 406–425.
- 29 Declaration on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms. General Assembly Resolution 53/144.
- 30 Parliamentary Legal Committee observed of the NGO Bill 2004 that 'Taken together, the provisions of this Bill will allow the Government of Zimbabwe to stop human rights organisations from operating... The provision prohibiting any foreign funding whatsoever cuts off the very livelihood of these organisations the major human rights organisations in Zimbabwe are silenced and closed, this will be a devastating blow to the cause of human rights in Zimbabwe. Without these organisations, many human rights abuses will go unreported and unpublicised and most victims will be left without any protection. Report of the parliamentary legal Committee on the non-governmental organisations Bill, 2004, (H.B. 13, 2004).
- 31 International Bar Association. 2004. *An Analysis of the Zimbabwean Non-Governmental Organizations Bill*, 24 August. [online]. Available from: <http://www.lexisnexis.com/presscenter/hottopics/Analysis.pdf> [Accessed 24 April 2010].
- 32 Mugabe has been the leader of ZANU PF since 1975.
- 33 'Mugabe warns against meddling.' *The Herald*, 13 October 2002.
- 34 Speech made at the official opening of the Fifth Session of the Fifth Parliament of Zimbabwe by President Mugabe on 20 July 2004.
- 35 'Some NGOs and churches are causing too much confusion in the country because they are converting their humanitarian programmes into politics... The government cannot allow that to happen, so we are saying they should go under scrutiny where we revise all modalities of their operations in the country.' *The Herald*, 5 April 2004, comments attributed to Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Paul Mangwana as quoted in Kagoro, B. 2005. Prisoners of Hope: Civil Society and the Opposition in Zimbabwe. *African Security Review*, 14(3).
- 36 Lyons, T. 2004. *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle* is about women guerrilla fighters in the Zimbabwean National Liberation war (1965–1980).
- 37 Campbell, H. 2003. *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The exhaustion of the patriarchal model of liberation*, p. 284. Cape Town: David Philips, as quoted by Janah Ncube in *The Women's Movement in the Zimbabwe Constitutional Debate: the continuous journey to a gender fair Constitution* [online]. Available from: www.siyanda.org/.../gender_and_constitution_building_zimbabwes_story_050907060455.doc [Accessed 29 April 2010].
- 38 Most of the issues are clearly articulated in their WOZA Charter.
- 39 *Counting the Cost of Courage, Trauma Experiences of Women Human Rights Defenders of Zimbabwe*. Report of WOZA, [online]. Available from: www.wozazimbabwe.org [Accessed August 2008].
- 40 Muchena, D. 2005. *The Challenges of the Church in the current Zimbabwe: Some perspectives*, presented at the AEA Ethics, Peace and Justice Commission SADC Regional Solidarity meeting in

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Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

- 41 Review: *Church–State Confrontation in Rhodesia*, Elaine Windrich Reviewed work(s): Speech from the Dock by Donal Lamont, *Africa Today*, 24(4). Nigeria: Impact of the Oil Economy (October–December 1977), pp. 67–73; Zvobgo, C. 2005. Church and State in Rhodesia: From the Unilateral Declaration of Independence to the Pearce Commission, 1965–72. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31(2), pp. 381–402.
- 42 Wakatama, P. 2006. 'Christian Alliance leads the Save Zimbabwe Campaign.' *The Standard*, 10 September.
- 43 Bishop faces chop over Zanu PF links, *The Standard (Zimbabwe)*, 3 December 2006 [online]. Available from: http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/relig/061203zimstand1.asp?sector=RELIG&year=2006&range_start=1 [Accessed DATE].
- 44 Zimunya, I.M. 2007. *Claiming Our Future: A Focus on the Students Movement in Zimbabwe*. Harare: KAF.
- 45 ZINASU statement on Zimbabwe's 30th Independence Anniversary on file.
- 46 *Truth, reconciliation and justice in Zimbabwe*. Report of the Commission of Inquiry appointed under article 26 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization to examine the observance by the Government of Zimbabwe of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) December 2009 International Labour Organization.
- 47 See remarks of Morgan Tsvangirai, the then secretary general of ZCTU in 1992, as quoted in *The Herald*, 29 April, reproduced in *The Labour Movement and Democratization in Zimbabwe*, Lovemore Matombo and Lloyd M Sachikonye (2010).
- 48 Valenzuela, J.S. 1989. *Labour Movements in Transitions to Democracy: A Framework for Analysis Comparative Politics*, 21(4), p. 448, as quoted in *The state, labour and the politics of social dialogue in Zimbabwe*, a conference paper by Booker Magure 1996–2007: issues resolved or matters arising?
- 49 Examples of the tri-partite negotiations, Kadoma Declaration where ZCTU was a key if not prominent actor, *The Kadoma Declaration: Towards a Shared national and economic vision*. unpublished paper. Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. Harare, Zimbabwe, August 2001.
- 50 Various NGOs that deal with the reformation of media laws boycotted a consultative media meeting that was slated for Kariba in May 2009 in an effort to force the Government of Zimbabwe to change its attitude towards the right to free speech. The organisations included Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA), Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ), the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) and the African Community Publishers Development Trust (ACPD).
- 51 See MISA Zimbabwe Letter to Minister Shamu, dated 18 August 2009 [online]. Available from: http://www.kubatana.net/docs/media/misaz_letter_shamu_media_conference_090818.pdf.
- 52 On Wednesday 26 May 2010, the Zimbabwe Media Commission chairperson Godfrey Majonga and fellow commissioners announced the registration of these newspapers.
- 53 CISOMM was steered by Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) and has now a membership of over 35 NGOs, including youth groups and women's organisations. Some of its reports are available on www.cisomm.org.
- 54 GPA Article 22.1. The GPA further makes provision for an annual periodic review committee under Article 23, composed of two representatives of political parties.
- 55 High Level Dialogue on Women's Empowerment in the Political and Economic Arena, co-hosted by the Zimbabwean Ministry of Women, Gender and Community Development; the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration; and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe [online]. Available from: <http://www.realizingrights.org/?option=content&task=view&id=479> [Accessed 13 May 2010].
- 56 http://www.realizingrights.org/pdf/Zimbabwe_Resolution_of_Women_Political_Leaders.pdf [Accessed 13 May 2010].
- 57 Kairos Document was a response by Christians to apartheid South Africa. The contexts are different but the lessons are the same for the role of faith-based organisations.
- 58 *The Zimbabwe We Want* states that it is not an exhaustive prescription, but is merely our humble contribution to the search for a solution to the challenges faced by our nation.
- 59 Mabhena, T. 'Church leaders keen to resuscitate initiative,' *ZimOnline* 28 January 2008.
- 60 Mulikita, N.M. 2003. A False Dawn? Africa's Post-1990 Democratization Waves. Southern African Centre for the Construction of Disputes (SACCORD). *African Security Review*, 12(4).
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- 62 Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, Zimbabwe Election Support Network, Zimbabwe Peace Project Constitution Monitoring Project, ZZZICOMP Launched on 27 January 2010. See also statement of 29 April 2010, available from: www.zlhr.org.zw.
- 63 Pamela Machanja National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Challenges and Opportunities, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Zimbabwe Monograph Series No. 1, 2010, available from: www.ijr.org.za.
- 64 Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. 2006. *Exploring Transitional Justice Options in Contemporary Zimbabwe*. Produced by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, January 2006.
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CHAPTER THREE

Voices from faith-based communities

Ezra Chitando and Molly Manyonganise

Had it not been for us, there would be no Global Political Agreement and no inclusive government.¹

The suffering people of Zimbabwe are groaning in agony: 'Watchman, how much longer the night?' (Isaiah 21:11) (Zimbabwean Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC), 2007, *God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed*: 5).

Although we have not issued statements on political violence, we have preached against it. We have used verses from the Quran to discourage violence. Islam is a religion of non-violence.²

Prayer is essential but it is useless if it is not backed up by the witness of our lives (ZCBC, ZCC, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD), 2005, *A Call to Conscience*: 8).

We try to show them that when they fight it is the grass that suffers, and when they are hugging again, it is the grass that suffers.³

Churches should challenge the inclusive government to be accountable.⁴

The Zimbabwean crisis (or, for some, crises) has captured the global media attention within the last decade. Whether there is in fact a crisis, when it began and how it can be resolved are intractable questions that elicit various responses. To a large extent, refusing to acknowledge the crisis and the kind of solution suggested are processes that are informed by one's ideological and political orientation. However, within the faith-based communities in Zimbabwe, there has been a general acceptance that a crisis of unparalleled proportions has descended upon the country and that there is need to work towards finding a lasting solution to the crisis.

This chapter focuses on the responses of the faith-based community in

Zimbabwe to the socio-economic and political crisis that has engulfed the country from the late 1990s to the contemporary period. Following the depreciation of the Zimbabwe dollar in 1997 – an outcome of President Robert Mugabe’s regime payment of an unbudgeted 50 000 Zimbabwe dollars each to war veterans – the economy went into a free fall. The farm invasions (third *Chimurenga* in official parlance) of 2000 and the endless printing of Zimbabwe dollars up to the formation of the IG, political violence and intolerance are some of the symptoms of the crisis (Raftopoulos, 2009). While most of the narratives on the crisis have focused on the reactions and proclamations of the political gladiators, very few focus on the responses and declarations of the faith-based community. The faith-based communities are crucial actors as in many cases they have been the only ones to pick up the pieces following incidents of violence and humanitarian crises. For us, the ‘voices’ of faith-based communities include both their responses during interviews and published statements relating to the challenges in the country.

The faith-based sector in Zimbabwe

In most scholarly debates, quarrels over terminology tend to cloud real issues. In order to try and minimise this danger, we deem it necessary to spend some time on a little ‘ground-clearing’ in relation to the central concept of ‘faith-based communities’ in Zimbabwe. The term ‘faith-based community/ies’ has been in vogue since international NGOs began to acknowledge the role these communities play in the response to HIV/AIDS. From the late 1990s, there has been a realisation that communities of faith have played and continue to play effective roles in the overall response to the epidemic (Chitando, 2007).

Where initially the faith-based communities were viewed with suspicion for frustrating the response to HIV, there has been a growing appreciation of their contributions. A World Bank publication concedes that ‘faith-based organizations are important players in many spheres of development’ (Marshall & Keough, 2004: 1), while UNAIDS has established partnerships with faith-based organisations in the response to HIV/AIDS. Studies by Sue Parry (2003) and William Sachs (2007) all confirm the centrality of ‘faith-based organisations’ to the response to the epidemic. Faith-based organisations are known to have longevity, long reach, countless volunteers and willingness to journey with the poorest of the poor.

Despite the popularity of the term, almost all the authors assume that ‘faith-based organisations/communities’ is self-explanatory. However, a cursory glance at these publications reveals that a ‘faith-based community’ is a community that

has come together on the basis of shared (religious) beliefs and practices. The term seeks to replace 'religion/s' as it is felt that the idea of religion is replete with fundamentalist ideas and assumptions. From the literature and our own reconstruction, the term, 'faith-based community' suggests a community that is motivated by its faith to act in a particular way. A 'faith-based community' is therefore one that is driven by its commitment to uphold specific ideals and to express its beliefs in a defined way within the larger context. In Zimbabwe, these include faith communities emerging from Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, the Bahá'í Faith, Rastafarianism and others.

Each one of the communities named above is characterised by internal variations. A good example is the Christian community. It is tempting to talk about 'the Church' in Zimbabwe as theologically this suggests a homogenous body following the teachings of one leader, Jesus Christ. However, the reality on the ground is that it is more sociologically appropriate to refer to Christianities and churches. There is the Catholic Church taking its cue from the ZCBC, the mainline/mainstream Protestant churches under the ZCC and the Pentecostal/Evangelical churches under the EFZ. These come together under the HOCD. There are also various African Independent/Indigenous/Initiated/Instituted churches (AICs) under the Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa (UDACIZA). Numerous other church groups are autonomous and operate outside the sphere of influence of these groups.

It is also vital to acknowledge that the faith-based sector in Zimbabwe is well subscribed. The faith sector in the country continues to expand and mutate in response to rapid social change. In particular, the crisis has facilitated the emergence of numerous 'deliverance ministries' that seek to assist their clients/members to cope with the massive challenges of unemployment, hyperinflation, political violence and the attendant loss of hope. Many movements have come up to rationalise the crisis and motivate individuals, families, the community and the nation to look forward to the future with hope. Other 'healing ministries' address HIV/AIDS and seek to plug the gap created by the collapse of the health delivery system. Overall, these emerging faith systems and communities can be understood within the context of managing angst and stress in contemporary Zimbabwe (Chitando, 2009a).

The need to disaggregate faith-based communities in Zimbabwe is accentuated when one realises that there have been varying responses to the crisis within the same community of faith. For example, the responses of members of the Anglican Church have not been uniform. There is a perception that Bishop

Nolbert Kunonga, who heads one of the factions within the church, identifies himself with the ruling party. Kunonga has openly supported the land invasions and characterises Mugabe as an African liberator. His critics charge that he is an ‘embedded’ church leader (Gunda, 2008). The pattern obtaining within the Anglican community in Zimbabwe is replicated within various other communities of faith. While the Catholic Church could issue revolutionary pastoral letters on governance and tolerance, Father Fidelis Mukonori acted as a chaplain to Mugabe. It is therefore crucial that the internal dynamics within the faith-based communities be examined critically before passing a verdict on what these communities have achieved or have overlooked in the context of the Zimbabwean crisis. Brian Raftopoulos has made the following incisive observation:

During the years covered in this chapter, the church was largely divided over the politics of the state; some key players in the major churches were drawn to Mugabe’s nationalism, others towards the critical civic movement, while growing congregations like the Pentecostals drew on their doctrines to ‘make the best of rapid social change’. (2009: 226–27)

While it is clear that the spiritual market in the country is quite dense, it must also be acknowledged that a Christian ethos tends to dominate.⁵ Granted that the country is home to many faith traditions, it is Christianity that has by far the largest share of the market. Other religions such as Islam, Buddhism, the Bahá’i Faith and Hinduism are indeed significant players but they tend to concentrate on meeting the spiritual needs of their adherents and have not been actively involved in processes of political engagement. Making this observation in no way minimises their status as faith-based communities in the country. Indeed, a separate study is required to do justice to their role in providing a ‘world to live by’ to their adherents. Consequently, this chapter mainly focuses on the activities of various Christian bodies and individuals, with some reference to Muslim endeavours.

‘Joy comes in the morning’ (Psalm 30: 5): Preaching hope during the crisis

One of the biggest casualties in a deep-seated crisis such as Zimbabwe’s is hope. There is hopelessness and despair when sometimes prices are changed upwards of three times per day; when one cannot access his or her salary at the bank;

when schools and hospitals are no longer functioning, in fact, when life has become a meaningless struggle for existence. In a context characterised by severe food shortages, political violence and intolerance, it is difficult to be exuberant and hopeful. Consequently, one of the biggest tasks facing the faith-based communities in Zimbabwe has been to reignite hope among their members and in the nation. According to one AIC bishop who declined to be named:

Christianity is based on faith and hope. We believe that suffering is temporary and that ultimately good will triumph over evil. In our preaching, we have encouraged the people of faith not to give up because God is faithful to His promises. Our message of hope is not based on some false consciousness: it emerges from deep faith that God does not want us to perish. Throughout the crisis, we have encouraged individuals, families and the nation to remain steadfast as we know that God seeks our joy and prosperity. We read in Psalm 30:3 that, 'suffering may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning'.

Most of the sermons preached during the crisis have sought to equip parishioners to face the future with optimism and hope. The situation has been compounded by the high death rate due to AIDS. It is difficult to press on when the life expectancy has plummeted and the possibility of dying young becomes quite high. Where one witnesses the burial of too many young people, one's sense of vulnerability becomes acute. Life can easily cease to make sense when death becomes an everyday experience. It is in this environment that church leaders have sought to encourage their members to persevere by suggesting that the crisis will pass.

In particular, gospel musicians composed songs that strengthened the faithful. Artists from the various denominations promised the nation that God would restore the country's social and economic fortunes. From the Pentecostal stable, Donna promised, *Dhora redu richasimba* (our Zimbabwean dollar shall regain its strength). Various Apostolic church groups including Vabati VaJehova, Vachemeri VeVhangeri and others also sought to energise the church and community to trust in God. Gospel music became quite popular in public vehicles, radio and television. Songs of healing and regeneration have sought to galvanise the public to face the crisis with courage.⁶

It is tempting to dismiss preaching hope as an escapist strategy that prevents communities from dealing with socio-economic and political challenges head-on. Such an interpretation would be consistent with Marxist analyses that contend

that religion is an ‘opium of the people’ that prevents them from embarking on social transformation. However, it must be acknowledged that the message on hope and patience definitely helped to prevent a bloodbath. In the words of a woman Baptist preacher who declined to be named:

Our preaching of hope, patience and tolerance enabled the country to navigate a very difficult phase. Imagine if we had not called upon our congregations to trust in the promises of God? Imagine if the spirit of rebellion and destruction had been allowed to roam and reign? It might be difficult to quantify and justify, but we are convinced that our preaching had a positive impact in ensuring that our society had the right focus.

The church’s contribution to national restraint needs to be emphasised as there has been a sizeable percentage of militants within the populace that has advocated the need for ‘revolutionary anger’ to deal with the situation in the country. When war veterans claim to have liberated Zimbabwe, these militant young people have retorted that they too can fight for the second liberation of Zimbabwe. Their anger and frustration is clear: many are young graduates who have been reduced to selling mobile phonecards. With unemployment hovering above 80 per cent, the environment for social strife is ripe. However, the church has played a key role in encouraging people to refrain from violence. Thus:

If the church had not intervened, this country could have had a bloodbath as in Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The church intervened aptly, utilising the wisdom it has acquired over the years. This has helped a lot.⁷

Messages of hope have been vital in enabling individuals and communities to come to terms with the crisis. In particular, the emphasis on non-violence has helped to avert more violence as the state has demonstrated that it will not hesitate to use violence to suppress dissent. Churches have contributed to the resilience and tenacity that the Zimbabwean populace has demonstrated in enduring the crisis. While armchair critics are keen to condemn the ‘docility and passivity’ of Zimbabweans, it might just be that restraint has proven to be tactfully superior to aggression.⁸ More importantly, it is the dominance of peace-loving women and mothers within churches that has ensured that life is upheld. This is in keeping with women’s peacemaking skills that have been noted in diverse contexts. Thus:

As women confronted with domestic, economic, political or military, social or cultural, ethnic or racial and religious violence respond in ways as diverse as their settings and their resources, their strength comes from their commitment to life rather than death, to peace rather than war, to the future for their children, their families, their communities (Gnanadason, Kanyoro & McSpadden, 2005: xi).

Up to this point, one would be forgiven for imagining that it was only individuals and groups aligned to Christianity that have sought to empower their members to face the difficult situation. Muslim leaders have been heavily involved in preparing their followers to be relevant to the Zimbabwean crisis. For example, they have consistently placed messages from the Quran that are followed by succinct commentaries. A form-critical analysis of these messages shows that they encourage members of the community to shun corruption, violence and other vices. Through this medium, Muslims have sought to provide ethical solutions to the crisis.

Alongside using the print media to convey messages of hope, Muslim leaders have also preached against violence in their sermons. They have challenged their followers to desist from resorting to militancy to address the crisis. Muslim preachers have placed emphasis on cultivating tolerance and engaging in dialogue. According to one Muslim preacher, Islam regards the serious socio-economic and political difficulties as a 'religious test'. In such instances, Islam encourages patience.⁹

We have deliberately given emphasis to the preaching of hope during the crisis as the primary focus of faith-based communities is to tend to the spiritual needs of their members and the larger communities. In other words, faith-based communities must initially be evaluated on the extent to which they address the spiritual and emotional needs of their members and the larger community. They are not there in the first instance to act as political parties or humanitarian organisations. Nonetheless, as they engage in their holistic ministry, they do engage in prophetic proclamations and actions.

'God hears the cry of the oppressed': Fighting injustice

Criticisms that faith-based communities in Zimbabwe 'have done nothing' to respond to the crisis are unfair and might stem from a refusal to appreciate their efforts. In addition, some critics are not aware of the highly dangerous terrain in which religious leaders have to challenge injustice. The Zimbabwean

state has been quite intolerant and heavy-handed when dealing with dissent. It has therefore taken a lot of courage on the part of church leaders to challenge political violence and bad governance as political parties have not taken criticism in the right spirit.

Pastoral letters, especially by the ZCBC, demonstrate the courage that religious leaders have summoned to respond to injustice and the worsening situation. In particular, they undertake a vivid analysis of the socio-economic and political context and suggest solutions. In, 'God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed', the bishops are blunt and to the point. They contend that a leadership crisis has developed and that there is need for total repentance if the nation is to rediscover its way. They proclaim:

Black Zimbabweans today fight for the same basic rights they fought for during the liberation struggle. It is the same conflict between those who possess power and wealth in abundance, and those who do not; between those who are determined to maintain their privileges of power and wealth at any cost, even at the cost of bloodshed, and those who demand their democratic right and share in the fruits of independence; between those who continue to benefit from the present system of inequality and injustice, because it favours them and enables them to maintain an exceptionally high standard of living, and those who go to bed hungry at night and wake up in the morning to another day without work and income; between those who only know the language of violence and intimidation, and those who feel they have nothing more to lose because their Constitutional rights have been abrogated and their votes rigged. Many people in Zimbabwe are angry, and their anger is now erupting into open revolt in one township after another. (ZCBC, 2007, *God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed*:7-8)

Anybody who is familiar with Mugabe's pronouncements during the independence and heroes' days would recognise that the bishops are repudiating his narrative of the ruling party having 'permanently liberated Zimbabweans from oppression'. In the foregoing citation, they essentially charge that the struggle for liberation has not ended. This echoes the advice of Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who suggested that the attainment of political independence would not necessarily translate into total liberation for blacks. If anything, there was need for more vigilance (Muzorewa, 1978). In the pastoral letter, the Catholic bishops abandon Mugabe's historiography that focuses on race and employ an incisive class analysis. While Mugabe dwells on the wrongs that the white minority did to the black majority

during the colonial period, the bishops focus on the ongoing class struggles between the filthy rich and the wretched of the earth. In a fundamental way, the pastoral letter reminds the ruling black elite that for many, the struggle has not ended. This is anathema to the ruling elite as it wishes to remind the nation of the pains it endured during ‘the reign of Pharaoh’.

The bishops have called upon the political leaders to be sensitive to the cries of the majority. In a prophetic tone, they lay bare the failings of the ruling elite. They have not been afraid to point out the abuse of power and intolerance of opposition. In particular, they have continued to remind the country of the excesses during *Gukurahundi*, when thousands of civilians were killed in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces in the early 1980s. While ruling party politicians have sought to have selective memories, the bishops have contended that *Gukurahundi* and other abuses of power must be acknowledged. In the pastoral letter on national healing and reconciliation, ‘God Can Heal the Wounds of the Afflicted’, they said:

Fundamental human rights have been violated. Violence has been institutionalized as demonstrated in various successive instances in the pre-independence war period, *Gukurahundi*, land re-distribution, Murambatsvina, violence during elections of which the worst was the period after the harmonized elections of 29 March 2008 (ZCBC, 2009, *God Can Heal the Wounds of the Afflicted*: 5–6).

The ZCC has also issued pastoral letters that seek to guide the faithful. In its, ‘Pastoral Letter to the Nation,’ after the formation of the IG in early 2009, it bemoans the ‘continued manipulation and closure of democratic space and selective application of the law using draconian legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Personal Privacy Act (AIPPA)’ (ZCC, 2009, ‘Pastoral Letter to the Nation’: 3). In a joint pastoral letter entitled ‘A Call to Conscience’, (ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ and HOCD, 2005) on the occasion of Zimbabwe’s silver jubilee church leaders in the country courageously proclaimed:

The result has been that we have built a house of fear. Some people do not feel free to speak their mind. Some no longer give their opinion without first checking if there is anyone listening, who could be a threat. Even the Preacher cannot preach the Word of God for fear of harassment and even deportation if expatriate. For certain crimes, people will not seek redress from the law because they know they will not receive it. The vision of Zimbabwe as a free nation is stifled. The

people are frozen in a war mode with the language and practices of a command structure. All this we have lived each day, prisoners in a concentration camp from the Zambezi to the Limpopo (ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ and HOCD, 2005, A Call to Conscience: 5).

It is our contention that neither the MDC, during its days in opposition, nor the militant University of Zimbabwe Students Union has had the temerity to characterise independent Zimbabwe as ‘a concentration camp from the Zambezi to the Limpopo’. One senses ‘righteous anger’ on the part of the church leaders and a willingness to challenge the status quo. To charge that ‘the vision of Zimbabwe as a free nation is stifled’ is to question the nationalist narrative of a heroic group that delivers liberation to the majority. A popular song by ZANLA has the cadres declaring to the parents, *rusununguko rwenyu urwu* (here is your freedom). By daring to suggest that Zimbabwean citizens do not enjoy true freedom, the church leaders have destabilised the nationalist myth of having granted total liberation to the country.

Have the pastoral letters been of any consequence? It is easy to dismiss pastoral letters as high-sounding theological treatises that do not have any impact on the material conditions prevailing in the country. However, the fact that politicians, including Mugabe, have often reacted angrily to these proclamations means that they do receive the message, loud and clear. As Gundani (2008) acknowledges, the pastoral letters in the third decade of independence confirm the prophetic ministry of the church. Significantly, the pastoral letters by Catholic bishops in particular receive wide circulation. This ensures that their reflections permeate to rank and file members. It can therefore be concluded that church leaders in Zimbabwe have been quite prophetic in challenging injustice.

As members of a religious minority, Muslim leaders have not been as forthright in challenging the excesses of the state as some of the Christian leaders.¹⁰ However, in their sermons and weekly press releases, they have demonstrated the folly of oppressing the majority or benefitting through corrupt means. The Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in Zimbabwe has encouraged Muslims to be objective, avoid violence and use dialogue to resolve conflicts.¹¹

The Holy Land of the ancestors: Faith-based communities and land questions in Zimbabwe

In many ways, the Zimbabwean crisis is synonymous with intractable difficulties

around the land questions. We have labelled them in the plural as they transcend the usual black–white contestations through which most debates have been framed. They include the ‘unspoken’ question of land owned by churches, multiple farm ownership by the black elite, the marginalisation of women in the redistribution, chaos and lack of productivity on many farms and other related questions. Faith-based communities in the country have responded to the land questions within the context of responding to the overall crisis. Nonetheless, it is important to isolate their voices in relation to this theme as it is intimately connected to the crisis.

The divisions within faith-based communities become acute when their responses to the land questions in the country are examined. To start with, one hardly finds individuals or groups that contend that there should not have been land reform in Zimbabwe. Virtually all agree that the historical imbalances where one racial minority group owned the most fertile land while the majority struggled to eke out a living in semi-arid spaces was unsustainable. The real debate is between those who celebrate the 2000 farm invasions by war veterans and ZANU PF activists on the one hand and those who contend that the invasions were disastrous on the other.

Some leaders of the faith-based communities have strongly supported Mugabe’s stance and actions relating to land. They have argued that land redistribution is theologically sound. They contend that black people should not be confined to unproductive land while the white minority has access to prime land. Supporters of land reform, as undertaken by ZANU PF, insist that the most important consideration is that black people have now taken over their God-given and ancestral land. Thus:

Church leaders like Bishop Nolbert Kunonga of the Anglican Church, Rev. Noah Pashapa of the Baptist Church and Rev. Andrew Wutawunashe of the Family of God Church were quite vocal in their support of Mugabe’s land reform programme. Rev. Obadiah Msindo of the Destiny of Africa Network provided spiritual guidance to the ruling party and government, maintaining that Mugabe was God’s chosen instrument for empowering blacks. He praised Mugabe’s land reform programme, claiming that it was consistent with God’s desire to restore the dignity of blacks. These church leaders utilised theological, historical and ethical arguments to justify the resettlement exercise (Chitando, 2005: 195).

On the other hand, many church leaders have been critical of the land reform

exercise as undertaken by Mugabe. They charge that the process was unplanned, that there are cases of multiple farm ownership and that there is need for a serious review in order to restore viability on the farms. Most agree on the need for land reform but question the methodology and end product. They have called upon government to open dialogue on this issue, instead of insisting that the land question has been closed. They also challenge government to learn from the church on this issue. In the words of one respondent:

Actually, the government did not start land reform. The Church started it in the 1960s. In Masvingo, Gokomere Mission was divided into two; one half to the Church and the other half to the people. This made people happy. This was also done at Chishawasha. It was done in an orderly manner. The Church is questioning multiple farm ownership. The land redistribution was not equal or fair. In response to this, we had open talks with the government. The problem is that at times what we agree on is not implemented.¹²

It emerges that the land questions have been particularly divisive within faith-based communities. Various leaders have adopted specific positions depending on their background. However, very few leaders have been willing to critique their churches' ownership of land and displacement of indigenous people. They are keen to challenge Mugabe's rhetoric on land and to question the absence of basic social services for the resettled farmers, but struggle to come to terms with the reality that their churches are some of the largest landowners in the country. Church leaders need to come up with creative proposals on greater utilisation of church land.¹³

'Bandaging wounds' (Luke 10: 34): Faith-based communities and the humanitarian crisis

Faith-based communities have been actively involved in responding to the humanitarian crisis in the country, including looking after families that were adversely affected by the land-redistribution exercise. Before examining the responses of the faith-based communities, it must be noted that the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe is not limited to the high-profile cases of Murambatsvina in 2005 and the cholera epidemic of 2008. Due to the hyperinflationary environment and political violence, there is a sense in which Zimbabwe has been gripped by an unseen humanitarian crisis.¹⁴ This varies from families failing to raise school

fees, retrenchments, malfunctioning of the health delivery system, lack of social security and other ills.

Faith-based communities have the mandate to look after vulnerable members of society. In Zimbabwe, this group has grown exponentially due to the harsh socio-economic context. No number of 'Operations' (for example, Operation Sunrise to slash zeroes from the Zimbabwe dollar) has been able to get the country out of its economic quagmire. The Reserve Bank Governor, Gideon Gono, took up the job with the declaration, 'failure is not an option'. However, by late 2008, inflation was in the stratosphere. Incredible figures like quintillions and sextillions became part of daily conversations. Failure had indeed become the only option! This would have been a laughing matter had it not been for its impact on society. Many families have been torn asunder as partners have fled the economic crisis into the region and beyond. Furthermore, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has resulted in many orphans and vulnerable children. The church has sought to support orphans through the provision of food, shelter and school fees.

*Operation Murambatsvina: Clearing dirt or class cleansing?*¹⁵

Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 ushered in a serious humanitarian crisis as thousands of families were rendered homeless, while livelihoods were compromised for many. Essentially, the government declared war on its citizens and this led to untold suffering. It was a highly charged environment in which many, including opposition political parties, were caught by surprise. The sheer scale and viciousness of the operation left many NGOs paralysed. However, faith-based organisations such as Christian Care, the service arm of the ZCC, played a crucial role in meeting the needs of the survivors.¹⁶ In fact, the organisation has been actively involved in responding to the humanitarian crisis in the country. Murambatsvina had an adverse effect on the informal sector, people living with HIV and women.¹⁷ Thus:

In 2005, we assisted victims of Operation Murambatsvina at Caledonia farm. We are still feeding those who have settled at Hopley and Dunstan farms, as well as those who are in Epworth and Hatcliffe. During the cholera epidemic, we provided non-food items, for example, aqua tablets and basic education on hygiene. We were one of the key organisations to assist victims of political violence at Harvest House (2008) and those that were relocated to Ruwa. We also helped with transporting survivors of political violence who wanted to go

back home. We relocated Mozambicans who were affected by the land reform programme and took them to Mozambique. Since 2002, Christian Care has been one of the organisations implementing World Food Programme (WFP) activities in Zimbabwe.¹⁸

Christian Care has demonstrated remarkable courage, consistency and fairness in a very difficult environment. It is difficult to carry out humanitarian work in Zimbabwe, as the state is highly suspicious of all other actors. The state has made it difficult for those involved in humanitarian work, especially those involved in food distribution as it fears that they may challenge its role as a benefactor to the suffering majority. During its opposition days, the MDC used to charge that ZANU PF uses drought relief as a campaign strategy. Christian Care has ignored the political debates and has sought to serve the poorest of the poor while politicians continue to jostle for power. It has also assisted in securing important documents for survivors of political violence. As part of the strategy to disenfranchise those who were perceived to support the opposition, their documents were seized and destroyed. Using a rights-based approach, Christian Care has assisted the individuals affected to get new documents.

Alongside providing food, Christian Care has been actively involved in helping communities to embark on creative irrigation projects and conservation farming. It has also been paying school fees for orphans and vulnerable children. Of significance is its involvement in the education of young people in the Kanyemba area, among the Doma people. Whereas successive governments have neglected the needs of people in this region, Christian Care has sought to provide books to schools, uniforms for children and food aid to ensure that no child goes to school on an empty stomach.¹⁹

The ZCA, a new but robust faith-based organisation that was formed in October 2005 in Matopos just outside Bulawayo, has its roots within the humanitarian crisis that was exacerbated by Operation Murambatsvina. Many Christians felt that the government had lost sensitivity and was punishing people for being poor. That the ZCA was formed in Matabeleland is noteworthy. Like the Churches in Manicaland, the ZCA was launched in a region that has had stressed relations with the ruling elite. Operation Murambatsvina enabled many church leaders who had been hesitant to challenge the government to do so. In the words of one of the leading activists within the ZCA:

That is what brought us into existence. We were so angry that the church had

remained quiet even when this evil was being committed and we wanted to speak against that. The two years that followed we commemorated the event. Our desire is that the commemoration of Operation Murambatsvina be on the Zimbabwe calendar.²⁰

The Catholic Church responded to Operation Murambatsvina in a number of ways. To begin with, the bishops criticised the exercise for its cruelty. It was undertaken at the height of winter and there was total disregard of the human rights of the people affected. As the operation gained ground, there were serious human rights violations as soldiers and police officers conscripted citizens who were going about their duties to participation in the demolition of houses. Alongside challenging the abuse of state power, the Catholic Church supported people who were affected by the operation:

We provided transport, food, clothing and money to the affected people. We hired lorries to take them to their rural areas. We also hired counsellors to counsel them. We had meetings with those in government and some of their explanations were both satisfactory and unsatisfactory. Of course, we agree that there was a lot of disorder and no church can refuse order. However, we feel that the government wanted to prove to the IMF that they were still in control.²¹

The sterling humanitarian work undertaken by the Dominican sisters and other orders in the area of HIV/AIDS needs to be acknowledged. Catholic nuns have been quietly providing care and treatment to people living with HIV/AIDS. During Murambatsvina, Dominican sisters played a major role in looking after people living with HIV. Throughout the crisis, nuns have rendered assistance to orphans and vulnerable children. They have also taken care of people with disabilities. This intervention by faith-based groups has cushioned many individuals and families as the social safety nets in the country have become porous. The following citation summarises the church-based response to Murambatsvina:

... Church-based groups were critical of the government's heavy-handedness in handling the matter. The Zimbabwe National Pastors Conference issued a statement on 29 May 2005 in which it boldly asserted that the government was responsible for the emergence of a dehumanising situation. On 17 June, after having a press statement on 2 June, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference issued a pastoral letter entitled, 'The Cry of the Poor' in which they bemoaned

the 'cruel and inhumane means' that had been used in the exercise. They also 'condemn(ed) the gross injustice done to the poor'. On 20 June 2005, the ZCC issued a statement in which it argued that the operation had brought 'unbearable misery' to the affected people. (Mapuranga, Chitando, 2008: 130)

Muslim organisations have also been involved in providing humanitarian assistance. The centre in Waterfalls, Harare and the mosque in Kwekwe have offered shelter and education to orphans and vulnerable children. In particular, the Zimbabwe Al'kauthra AIDS Foundation has played an instrumental role in ensuring that Muslims respond to the epidemic. It has supported self-help projects for people living with, and those affected by HIV, established herbal and nutritional gardens and networked with other AIDS service organisations. In addition, various Muslim groups have donated food and clothing to the poor.²²

'Come now, let us reason together' (Isaiah 1: 18): Faith-based organisations and efforts to resolve the crisis

How to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis has been a nagging question indeed. This issue has dogged Zimbabweans, the region, the continent as well as the broader international community. The crisis has been very divisive, with some from the Global South accepting Mugabe's interpretation of events. In Mugabe's scheme, he (and Zimbabwe) is a 'Suffering Servant' who is persecuted by the 'principalities and powers' of this world. Mugabe insists that the United Kingdom, the United States and their allies have formed 'an axis of evil' that seeks to unseat him because of his principled stance on black advancement and his country's sovereignty. Some within the faith-based communities in Zimbabwe have endorsed his version, while others contend that he has presided over a collapsing economy and has resorted to violence to retain his grip on power.

Various strategies have been employed by the faith-based communities in an effort to contribute towards a sustainable resolution of the Zimbabwean crisis. In this section, we seek to highlight the various initiatives that have been pursued in an endeavour to tackle the socio-economic and political crisis in the country. According to David Kaulemu, Regional Coordinator for Eastern and Southern Africa of the African Forum for Catholic Social Teaching (AFCAST), churches have institutional capacities and social resources that lend weight to their political voice:

Not only have many Zimbabwean Christians been credible agents of justice and peace, they have expressed human solidarity in their contributions to education, health, culture, relief and social and economic development within Zimbabwe. As such, Zimbabwean churches possess structures, institutions, organizations, systems, and personnel that can contribute to national transformation and development. This enhances their credibility for engaging government and state structures. (Kaulemu, 2010: 51)

Promoting dialogue among political parties

One of the most difficult tasks in Zimbabwe has been to bring together the two main protagonists, Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai to the negotiating table. In particular, Mugabe has been insistent that he would not waste time talking to Tsvangirai as the latter is a 'mere puppet of the British'. However, church leaders have played a major role in facilitating dialogue between the two men and their respective political parties. Soon after the controversial 2002 presidential election that was contested by the two men, Bishops Sebastian Bakare (ZCC), Trevor Manhanga (EFZ) and Patrick Mutume (ZCBC) initiated dialogue between Mugabe and Tsvangirai. Although the discussions did not yield the desired goal, they provided the basis for later initiatives that finally gave rise to the GPA that gave rise to the IG in 2009. In other words, there was already a basis for engagement between the two political parties.

On his part, Andrew Wutawunashe of the Family of God Church also launched his *Faith for the Nation* campaign. He sought to promote national dialogue and reconciliation within its scope. However, the campaign had limited results as many critics associated him with the ruling party. Such initiatives need to be recounted as they demonstrate that church leaders have not been idle during the crisis. Furthermore, some important interventions do not receive publicity due to the confidential nature of the discussions. This can be frustrating for church leaders.

We believe in dialogue and not in war. We do not believe that the good we have done should be publicised. However, we have been condemned as being silent. We believe in the biblical principle that says the left hand should not know what the right hand is doing.²³

By promoting dialogue among political parties, churches have rendered a

valuable service to the country. The level of polarisation between ZANU PF and MDC had reached unacceptable proportions, leading to violence. Through a patient strategy of engagement, church leaders were able to persuade the two main political parties to get to the negotiating table for the sake of the nation. The church was exercising its role as an agent of peace and reconciliation. As observed by Kaulemu above, the church was able to achieve this because it has a proven track record in various spheres. The church also has had some leverage as both Mugabe and Tsvangirai are Christians.

Alongside promoting dialogue at the national level, churches have been actively involved in building communities of peace at the local level. It has been observed that it is much easier for political gladiators to hug and make peace than for neighbours who may have committed atrocities against each other to do so. We shall return to this theme in relation to healing and reconciliation. Churches have been actively involved in preaching healing and reconciliation, especially in the rural and farming communities where political parties have preached violence and retaliation.

*'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29: 18):
Contributing towards a national vision*

It is sometimes easy to forget that Zimbabwe is a relatively young nation. The country gained its independence on 18 April 1980. To make this observation is not to absolve the country of the many serious mistakes it has made. However, there is need to realise that it is a young and maturing democracy that has emerged from a bitter and protracted struggle. In this context, it is useful to acknowledge that the process of developing a national vision is an ongoing one. Zimbabwe has suffered from the absence of a shared national vision. The nationalists who contributed to the attainment of independence have felt that they alone have a mandate to define the national interest. On the other hand, young activists within the opposition have charged that the nationalists have lost the original vision and are now preoccupied with retaining power at all costs.

It was within the polarised environment that the church leaders in Zimbabwe sought to contribute towards the framing of a national vision. The three main church bodies (ZCC, ZCBC and EFZ) sought to initiate national dialogue around the kind of nation that citizens want. They came up with an impressive document entitled, *The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision, A Discussion Document* (ZCBC, EFZ and ZCC, 2006). The document undertakes

a penetrating and honest assessment of the achievements and failures of independent Zimbabwe. It does not spare the church from criticism and invites Zimbabweans to work towards having a shared national vision.

The Zimbabwe We Want represents an important stage in the church's participation in political affairs in the country. In many respects, it is well thought and it engages in appreciable analysis of the historical and prevailing socio-economic and political challenges. The document does not avoid controversial topics such as contentious laws, the quest for a new constitution, corruption and the land issue. It tackles these themes with openness. For example, on the need for political tolerance it says:

Political intolerance has unfortunately become a culture in Zimbabwe. The trading of insults, violence with impunity, lawlessness and hate speech has unfortunately been characteristic of inter- and intra-political parties. *The Zimbabwe We Want* must cherish, embrace and celebrate a culture of tolerance of dissent, political plurality and a willingness to accommodate political differences. Intolerance breeds hatred and hatred brings violence. Violence, in turn, leads to destruction and social rupture. These voices cannot build *The Zimbabwe We Want* (ZCBC, EFZ and ZCC, 2006, *The Zimbabwe We Want*: 8).

By challenging the prevailing political culture, churches have sought to cultivate a new way of doing politics. More importantly, the very idea of coming up with *The Zimbabwe We Want*, the churches are suggesting that there is a lot that is undesirable in the Zimbabwe we currently have. As we have argued above, this poses a fundamental challenge to the ruling nationalists who have always proclaimed that the revolution has brought about dignity and milk and honey to the citizens. When the state propaganda machinery went into overdrive during Jonathan Moyo's tenure as Minister of Information and the jingle, *Rambai Makashinga* (remain resolute) was played incessantly on radio and television, the idea was to induce citizens into accepting the unacceptable. By coming up with *The Zimbabwe We Want*, the church is indicating that the status quo needs to be transformed. It also reminds citizens that it is within their power to imagine a new Zimbabwe.

Although *The Zimbabwe We Want* initiative could not sustain a high profile, it represents a significant stage in post-colonial church-state relations. Through it, the church was saying that if politicians, including those charged with the responsibility of providing a vision for the nation, failed to execute their duties,

the church would step in to assist in the process. In order to forestall the charge of dabbling in politics, the churches strategically called it, a 'discussion document'. The church must be commended for challenging the nation to work towards attaining a national vision. Furthermore, it is envisaged that many of the aspirations captured in *The Zimbabwe We Want* would be expressed in the new constitution.

Despite the promise, *The Zimbabwe We Want* was unable to avoid controversy. There were charges that the government watered down the final version. On his part, Mugabe did not hide his disappointment that the Lancaster House Constitution (that has been amended many times, resulting in his firm grip on power) has been heavily criticised in the document. Furthermore, the political environment prevented a more systematic dissemination of the document to outlying areas. With the church's position and participation in the drafting of the new constitution difficult to ascertain, it is difficult to ensure that the insights contained in the document will find their way into the new constitution.

Civic education

One of the major challenges facing churches in Zimbabwe is the lack of awareness of one's civic responsibility as a Christian. The ruling party has done a good job in making many Christians regard politics as a dangerous field that only the initiated can traverse. As a result, most Christians have abstained from engaging in political debates and activities on the understanding that 'politics is a dirty game'. Mugabe himself has invited church leaders to join him in the game of politics, but has repeatedly warned them that politicians are willing to score goals using foul means. He has characterised politics as a complicated and brutal game that has no space for those who are given to 'ways of righteousness'.

One of the key roles played by faith-based groups has been to invite Christians to take their civic responsibilities seriously. The significant work done in this area by Churches in Manicaland needs to be acknowledged. The book, *The Truth Will Make You Free: A Compendium of Christian Social Teaching* (Churches in Manicaland, 2006) is impressive. It covers values and principles, governance, economy and responding to crisis. It equips its readers with Christian values and principles and how to apply these in the contemporary Zimbabwean context. The Churches in Manicaland have also spoken about the need to 'heal the electoral environment'. According to the coordinator:

Some church leaders have been able to preach about the issues contained in the book in their congregations despite problems that have often arisen. For example, some individual pastors have at times been questioned by members of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). These CIO have even tried to change the mindset of some by offering gifts in a bid to silence them.²⁴

The issue of elections in Zimbabwe has also been quite controversial. Virtually every national election has been characterised by violence and disputes. The ruling party has also suggested that ‘the bullet is stronger than the ballot’, thereby suggesting that elections are a waste of time. On their part, a number of church-based organisations have done a lot of work around preparing their constituents for elections. The key motivation has been to empower Zimbabweans to take their vote seriously and refrain from boycotting elections. The work by faith-based groups and NGOs has been effective as elections in the country have been characterised by high voter turnout.

In line with the mandate to ensure that elections remain peaceful and contribute towards democratic transition, church-based groups have also invested heavily in discouraging violence during elections. Some have been courageous enough to publish unsettling pictures of survivors of violence. Churches in Manicaland, CCJP (Mutare) and Educators Association for Human Rights endorsed the booklet, *The Darkest Hour is Just Before the Dawn: Election Violence, Zimbabwe, 2008: A Pictorial Reflection* (Anon., 2009). The ruling party has tended to deny that it has sponsored violence as an election strategy. However, the booklet contains harrowing pictures of broken limbs and homes that were destroyed. The booklet calls upon Zimbabwean citizens to shun violence and work towards peace.

Both the ZCC and the CA have taken on the issue of ensuring that elections in Zimbabwe are transparent and credible. This is a positive development as the temptation to retreat to overtly spiritual matters is high. By challenging the faithful to pay attention to their civic responsibilities, church leaders are showing that Christians are still ‘in the world’, even though they work and wait for the world to come. The following citations indicate this clearly:

ZCC has been involved in voter education, election monitoring and coordination of church organisations from other nations. We have worked hand in hand with the Zimbabwe Elections Support Network (ZESN). We have issued statements in partnership with other bodies like ZESN.²⁵

Through the hubs, the Christian Alliance makes people realise the importance

of participating in elections. We realised that people were boycotting and we went on a conscientisation programme to encourage people to vote. We joined hands with ZESN so that Zimbabwean people are properly versed with all the processes of election. We trained monitors as Christian Alliance, but they were barred from monitoring the elections.²⁶

*'When I am weak, then I am strong' (2 Corinthians 12: 10):
Challenges in the faith-based communities' response to the
Zimbabwean crisis*

The faith-based communities in Zimbabwe have responded to the crisis through various channels and have achieved commendable results in many instances, as the foregoing sections illustrate. Their courage has enabled them to press on in a highly charged atmosphere. As the situation between the March presidential election and the run-off in June 2008 has confirmed, militant elements within the state will not hesitate to use maximum force to retain the benefits of power. As thousands of internally displaced people, many with broken limbs and hearts fled the countryside, faith-based groups and individuals gave them refuge despite the high risks involved.

As the foregoing sections have illustrated, faith-based communities have been critical players in the Zimbabwean crisis. In fact, failure to acknowledge the role of faith-based communities results in a skewed analysis of the situation in the country. It is faith-based communities that preached the message of peace, thereby preventing the country from degenerating into a bloody confrontation. This was a real possibility as the government has demonstrated its willingness to use force to subdue a restless citizenry. This was eloquently demonstrated during the abortive 'Final Push' of June 2003 when the army was deployed and many citizens were brutalised.

The Zimbabwean crisis has been worsened by food shortages. Faith-based organisations have consistently provided food aid to desperate families and individuals in both rural and urban areas. This has gone a long way in preventing starvation. In addition, this has disarmed some politicians who have used food as a veritable political weapon.

We have had a profound effect on Zimbabwean politics in the sense that, 'people are manipulated when they are hungry'. By providing communities with food, without any political strings attached, we disempowered politicians and that is

Voices from faith-based communities

why there have been outcries from all political parties about food politicisation. Food is a very strong weapon for political manipulation. As an organisation, we were more powerful than people who were doing slogans. That is the reason why politicians would plead with us not to do food distribution when they were having rallies because they feared that the people would go for food distribution instead of the rallies.²⁷

We can therefore state with confidence that faith-based groups have been actively involved in the transition in Zimbabwe. However, there are a number of weaknesses that need to be acknowledged in order to assist faith-based groups to become more effective. To make this observation is not to minimise their role in responding to the crisis. Rather, it is to help them sharpen their engagement with the state in the future, as well as to respond more effectively to future crises.

Division within the faith-based communities

Faith-based communities in Zimbabwe have not been as effective in contributing to the resolution of the crisis as they could have been due to division. In particular, the identification of some religious leaders with Mugabe and ZANU PF and the emergence of others as opposition activists have placed the followers in a difficult position. Sometimes, the division is within the same church or faith-based organisation. Instead of looking at issues confronting the nation objectively, many organisations have tended to be partisan in their analyses. Fortunately, church leaders have been honest enough to acknowledge that they have been divided.

The question to be raised is: How could the situation degenerate to this extent as described above when more than 80% of the population is Christian, including many of those in political leadership positions? What happened to our Christian love, peace, justice, forgiveness, honesty, truthfulness? Where was the voice of the church which is called upon to be the conscience of the nation? Clearly, we did not do enough as Churches to defend these values and to raise an alarm at the appropriate time. We too have often tended to look inward rather than outward and also ignore the wisdom from our Christian sisters and brothers outside Zimbabwe. Maybe we used the same tinted glasses used by secular authorities to evaluate the advice given to us by other members of the body of Christ outside Zimbabwe. As Churches we confess to have failed the nation because we have not been able to speak with one voice. We have often not been the salt and the light

that the Gospel calls us to be. We therefore confess our failure and ask for God's forgiveness (ZCBC, EFZ and ZCC, 2006, *The Zimbabwe We Want* :10).

The division within and among faith-based groups has tended to dilute their prophetic statements and actions. When one group comes out with a powerful critique today, tomorrow another group emerges with unreserved praise for the ruling elite. As the current General Secretary of the ZCC concedes, 'It has been a challenge to build consensus on national issues. There has been a tendency by churches to issue parallel conflicting statements'.²⁸ On its part, the government was keen to assemble and give prominence to those church leaders who supported it. In particular, some members of AICs featured regularly at the airport during state visits, as well as at the Heroes Acre during burials or commemorations.²⁹

Division within the faith-based communities also extends to the absence of collaborative actions and statements across the religious divide. To a very large extent, church leaders have not sought to interact with leaders from the Muslim and other communities. Perhaps due to the higher percentage of Christians in the country, the church has not sought to cooperate with other religions.³⁰ However, this domineering approach is counterproductive. There is so much to learn from other communities of faith. Furthermore, joint action is more effective. Christians must acknowledge the right of other religions to exist and even work towards ensuring that their rights are upheld. Unfortunately, the general feeling is that the church is enjoying its privileged status in the country.

We feel that Christians are favoured because in every residential suburb, places to build churches are set aside, which is not the case with us. In the new constitution, we are fighting for equal recognition of religions.³¹

We are involved in the current constitution-making process after an invitation by the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO). I was on FM Radio the other day arguing why Muslims should be involved in the constitution-making process. We are fighting for equal treatment of religions. For example, the Christian marriage certificate is recognised by government while the Muslim one is rejected. We are worried when decisions and policies are made on our behalf. So, in short, we are saying, 'Nothing about us without us.'³²

Narrow definition of the church's mission

In a highly charged environment such as Zimbabwe's, it is tempting to define

the Christian narrowly. In this scheme, the role of the church and its members is to ‘preach the gospel’ and to avoid challenging oppressive laws and systems. Indeed, this has been the avenue championed by some church leaders. They preach an ‘other-worldly’ message that seeks to prepare their followers for heaven. Tragically, such Christians are of very little earthly relevance! According to Kaulemu:

Many who have avoided direct political engagement seem to have been gripped by fear because ZANU PF has placed violence at the center of its political strategies. Withdrawal into prayer and fasting is a Christian response; however, refusal to engage political powers in order to transform the social sphere is a limited approach, and one that avoids important issues of justice, human dignity, and the common good. (Kaulemu, 2010: 49)

When preachers are preoccupied with ‘getting people to heaven’ at the expense of responding to the pressing issues of the day, they are doing a disservice to the holistic ministry of the church. This has been the challenge in Zimbabwean gospel music. Too often, the artists have been hesitant to critique the socio-economic situation and have been too quick to call for divine intervention. The call for divine intervention absolves human beings of their responsibility in creating the crisis as well as their role in its resolution. There is therefore need for the church to rediscover the notion of holistic ministry. If Christian ministry is properly understood, believers will be actively involved in addressing the crisis.

Reductionist readings of the Bible

Closely related to the foregoing challenge of defining the mission of the church narrowly is the challenge of employing reductionist readings of the Bible. This is where church leaders contend that the Bible is ‘only about salvation of the soul’ at the expense of its highly relevant ethical teachings. Such church leaders call for uncritical submission to the governing authorities, even when it is clear that these authorities are trampling upon the rights of citizens. Lovemore Togarasei has analysed the reductionist readings of the Bible in relation to the 2002 presidential elections and has concluded that there is need to promote liberating readings of the Bible in Zimbabwe (Togarasei, 2004).

When the Bible is read in liberating ways, it assists communities to confront injustices in the social, economic and political arenas. Liberating readings of the

Bible charge communities to prioritise life ahead of death. Communities that read the Bible in life-affirming ways reject violence and abuse of power. Unfortunately, escapist and reductionist readings of the Bible tend to be dominant in Zimbabwe. This is a serious limitation.

Limited appreciation of politics

The theological training that most church leaders have does not pay attention to crucial issues such as politics and economics. In many instances, church leaders are specialists in reading the Bible, but they are not aware of contemporary methods of reading the Bible in context. The emerging field of Contextual Bible Study (CBS) encourages preachers to always read the Bible with an eye on issues such as politics, economics, gender inequality and other lived realities. Most church leaders do not have an appreciation of the dynamics within the area of politics and therefore find it difficult to engage politicians.

Limited appreciation of politics has left many leaders from the faith-based communities wondering why politicians are quick to renege on their promises. It has also left some feeling used as politicians have been keen to invite them to give opening and closing prayers while spewing messages of violence at such meetings. Some church leaders have been forced to utter ZANU PF slogans at rallies, unaware of the implications of such a gesture. Consequently, there is need to increase the levels of political literacy of many church leaders in the country.

Marginalising lay professionals

One of the biggest challenges of faith-based communities in Zimbabwe is that the leadership tends to be monopolised by ordained middle-aged men. There is very little scope for women's and youth leadership. In addition, lay professionals are marginalised. This is unfortunate as lay professionals can provide important insights into issues relating to politics, economics and others. In fact, one can detect the hand of lay professionals on those occasions when they would have been consulted in the drafting of hard-hitting pastoral letters and statements. There is need to increase the participation of lay people in all affairs of the church. Thus:

An ecclesiology that dwells on ordained members prevents most members from realizing that the church is home to people from various walks of life. This is

a remarkable fact that needs to be fully appreciated. The church in Africa enjoys the membership of people with different areas of specialization. These include artisans, medical personnel, politicians, economists and theologians. It is unfortunate that the church rarely calls upon their expertise in a direct way. In most instances, their membership is appreciated only to the extent that they make financial contributions that help to support the church's activities (Chitando, 2007: 16).

Limited financial resources

Many of the programmes that address issues of good governance, democracy, gender and human rights that enable the faith-based communities to respond to the crisis in Zimbabwe are funded externally. This raises serious questions regarding the sustainability of such programmes as history shows that donors/partners can withdraw at any time. The dependence on financial assistance from outside suggests that the long-term viability of these programmes cannot be guaranteed.

There is need for faith-based communities in the country to fund-raise internally for programmes that enable the movements to be relevant players in national affairs. Unfortunately, most members of the faith communities are keen to contribute towards humanitarian assistance, but are not willing to support the church's participation in civic issues. This is a result of the impoverished gospel that many parishioners have.

Struggling to contribute towards national healing and reconstruction

The church has found it difficult to be relevant to discourses on national healing and reconstruction. In many ways, the IG has gone ahead of the church, leaving it struggling to identify its proper and effective role. This is unfortunate as the political climate is conducive to active participation by the church. To a large extent, the era of the IG has led to a lowering of the political temperatures and the attendant political violence. Despite the foregoing criticism, the church must be commended for at least initiating programmes to effect healing and reconciliation. For example, the Churches in Manicaland have been holding workshops with the major political parties, including Mavambo. This drive towards greater inclusion is commendable as there has been a worrying tendency to limit political space

to ZANU PF and the two MDCs. The emphasis on local communities must be acknowledged. Thus:

In August 2009 we held a workshop in Nyanga and at the end of the workshop members of the MDC and ZANU-PF said, 'We should forgive one another since we are neighbours. We have hated each other for too long.' At this workshop, traditional leaders like Chief Tangwena invited the churches to go to their areas and talk to people in their various communities because that is where real violence and hatred took place. They even challenged the church to act before a crisis rather than after the crisis has already occurred.³³

The church is well placed to guide the country on the road to truth, healing and reconciliation. It has consistently preached these values and has contact with the grass roots. As we have stated above, the church must place emphasis on truth-telling. Without owning up and confession, perpetrators of violence will not be free. Without knowing their tormentors and their motivation, survivors of political violence will not be free. The church must therefore ensure that the process of truth, healing and reconciliation is pursued vigorously.

Some suggestions on increasing the effectiveness of the faith-based community's response to the crisis

In the foregoing section, we have outlined some of the major limitations of the faith-based community's intervention in the Zimbabwean crisis. In this section, we seek to draw attention to some of the strategies that could be adopted in order to make these communities more effective as they seek to make effective contributions to nation building.

Enhancing the prophetic ministry

The formation of the IG can lead activists to conclude that the nightmare is over and that the future can only be better. Although it is crucial for faith-based communities to preach hope, there is need for vigilance. The struggle for dignity and prosperity is far from being over as many dark forces threaten the peace that has been ushered in. It is therefore crucial for the prophetic ministry to be enhanced.

Faith-based communities must take advantage of the opportunities offered by the era of the IG to work towards ensuring that the democratic space is enlarged.

Furthermore, they must strategise to ensure that the needs of the poor are never sacrificed at the altar of politic expedience. How scandalous it was that food distribution was stopped because some politicians felt that it compromised some national ideal! Thus:

There is need for an independent team to look at the operations of non-governmental organisations, especially in a bid to deal with bureaucratic processes. There is a lot of bureaucracy for one to access communities hence the need to minimise it because a lot of time is lost. I agree that monitoring is important, but everything cannot be done at the same place. The tension between government and NGOs is unnecessary. For example, the blanket ban on NGOs was not necessary. At least they should have streamlined so that humanitarian organisations were not affected so as to prevent loss of human lives.³⁴

Faith-based communities must continue to engage in the politics and theology of accompaniment. When politicians desert their constituencies and settle in newly found comfort, the church must continue to walk with the poor and the vulnerable. When politicians perfect the art of doublespeak, the church must be clear and unambiguous in its solidarity with the marginalised. When politicians craft lofty economic policies, the church must preach the simple message of the Gospel: abundant life for all. When politicians mouth empty but high-sounding rhetoric, the church must speak simply but truly. This is the strength of the church: political parties have come and have gone, but the church has remained in the trenches with the wretched of the earth.

Increase training and empowerment within the faith-based sector

There is need to ensure that theological training in Zimbabwe is revamped in order to equip pastors and church leaders with skills to become relevant and prophetic. There is a worrying increase in the number of theological colleges that offer ministerial degrees, including doctorates done overnight! As a result, some preachers imagine that shouting loudly is a substitute for sober biblical exegesis and application of the text to the lived realities of the audience. Preaching 'prosperity and progress' instead of tackling bad governance and corruption leaves the people of God worse off.

In order to enhance the levels of competence within the faith-based sector, it is necessary to bring in experts from outside the sector. However, this should not lead to churches abandoning their language to adopt that of the NGO sector. The

church must retain its distinct identity. Thus:

One major challenge is our failure to speak our own language as churches. We are borrowing language from civic society which is leading to failure in articulating issues – there is need to mobilise churches so that they can be strategically positioned to speak out. This can happen if we hold regular strategic conferences. There is also need to build the capacity of heads of churches to understand national issues in terms of action and intervention.³⁵

Kaulemu identifies major flaws in the churches' engagement with politics. He contends that there is need to establish and strengthen organisations that work full-time on engaging national and governmental structures and processes. Furthermore, he observes that the churches take too long to develop their response to national issues. Churches need to enhance their capacity to research national issues as well as to participate in policy development processes (Kaulemu, 2010: 51). According to him:

Prophetic engagement will be strengthened when churches give more attention to developing clergy and lay leaders in areas other than theology. If churches are not more intentional about guaranteeing that training includes systematic social analysis, how will churches make serious contributions to policies affecting the social, scientific, and technological development of the nation? (Kaulemu, 2010: 51)

While we agree with Kaulemu in terms of the thrust of his argument, we contend that what is required is a relevant theological curriculum that equips clergy and lay leaders to 'read the signs of the times'. Lifelong learning, capacity building and exposure visits are some of the strategies that could be employed in order to strengthen the ability of church leaders to respond to crises. In order to improve knowledge of the Christian's role in society, there is need to extend the social teachings of the church to 'the whole people of God'. Thus:

Social teachings of the Church should become part and parcel of school curriculum from secondary school to tertiary levels. Parishes should conduct seminars and symposiums on the role of Christians in emerging democracies. In seminaries, students for the priesthood should study the history of the Church's interaction with the world so that they may appreciate where the Church has come from and where it is going. Social teachings of the Church can be appreciated only within

the Church's involvement in world affairs in the various epochs of its existence.
(Ruzivo, 2010: 75)

Greater collaboration within the sector

While the different church bodies have come together regularly in response to the Zimbabwean crisis, the level of ecumenical sharing and partnership still leaves a lot to be desired. There is limited ecumenical maturity in the country and promotion of denominational rivalry and competition, a relic from the missionary era. This can be easily demonstrated from the emergence of denominational universities. It would have been more effective for the churches to come together to establish one efficient and impressive church-related university. This would have ensured that the church's contribution to society would be more effective (Zwana, 2008).

Greater collaboration within the faith-based sector would also minimise the fear of isolation and victimisation. There is strength in unity. Currently, politicians take advantage of division within the sector to further their own agendas. With greater collaboration, this would not happen. There is therefore need for the different church bodies to take advantage of their cordial relations to have collaborative projects and programmes that will improve the quality of life in the country. As we have argued earlier, this must also be extended to other communities of faith in Zimbabwe.

Increasing women's participation in leadership

The leadership of the dominant faith-based communities in Zimbabwe remains overwhelmingly male. This is in sharp contrast to the membership that is dominated by women. In fact, when the ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ and HOCD meet, they are almost always characterised as exclusive male gatherings. The same is true of the Supreme Council of Muslim Affairs. It is clear that women's leadership is vital for these organisations to prioritise women's issues and concerns.

The move to increase women's participation in leadership and decision making within the faith-based sector in Zimbabwe is not a question of charity but one of upholding human rights. It is embarrassing for organisations that champion democracy and human rights to refuse to prioritise women's leadership. Furthermore, increasing women's participation in leadership and decision making will enhance the effectiveness of these organisations. Women have demonstrated remarkable leadership within families, society and within these organisations. It is therefore time for them to be given the chance to lead in faith-

based communities. No amount of fundamentalist interpretation of scripture will postpone the need to get women to the forefront of faith-based organisations!³⁶

Conclusion

A crisis paralyses. A crisis pressurises. A crisis perturbs. A crisis prevents clear thought. Zimbabwe has endured a decade of multiple, mutually reinforcing crises. As many of its citizens lost weight, took the exit option or resorted to visiting the *sowes* (sacred prayer sites) to be spiritually recharged to fight for another day, the country degenerated from being a vibrant nation to a 'House of Hunger'. As the tsunami of inflation, HIV/AIDS and violence has swept through the country, leaving in its wake shattered dreams and broken limbs, the faith-based community in the country has sought to be relevant. Tired of bandaging wounds, the faith-based community has actively sought to contribute to the resolution of the crisis. In this chapter, we have examined the responses of the faith-based community to the crisis, privileging the voices of actors within the sector. We noted the numerous activities that the faith-based community in the country has undertaken, the weaknesses in the approaches adopted as well as suggesting some solutions. In particular, the church has navigated the turbulent political waters of Zimbabwe emboldened by just one question:

'If God is for us, who is against us?' (Romans 8: 31)

NOTES

- 1 Interview with Bishop Dr Levee Kadenge. Harare, April 2010.
- 2 Interview with Sheikh Mustafa Wasili. Harare, 29 April 2010.
- 3 Interview with Father Edward Ndete. Harare, 10 May 2010.
- 4 Interview with Rev. Dr Solomon Zwana. Harare, 22 April 2010.
- 5 This has led some Christians to suggest that Zimbabwe should be declared a 'Christian state' whenever there is a constitution-making process underway.
- 6 It remains debatable whether gospel music is politically conscious or lulls the faithful into complacency. Our considered view is that gospel music has been an avenue for social protest. Politicians have not censored this musical genre, naively assuming it to be 'innocent'.
- 7 Interview with Father Edward Ndete. Harare, 10 May 2010.
- 8 It could be argued that the coming of the inclusive government, forced on Mugabe upon his electoral defeat by Morgan Tsvangirai in the March 2008 polls, provides some support for those who promoted a peaceful approach to the crisis.
- 9 Interview with Sheikh Mustafa Wasili. Harare, 29 April 2010.
- 10 A separate study is required to analyse the implications of the Zimbabwean state's favourable relationships with a number of Muslim countries.
- 11 Interview with Adam Salam. Harare, 30 April 2010.
- 12 Interview with Father Edward Ndete. Harare, 10 May 2010.
- 13 A separate study is required to establish the levels of productivity and social relevance of church-owned farms in the country.

Voices from faith-based communities

- 14 See for example, Chitando, E *Rise Up and Walk: The Humanitarian Crisis in Zimbabwe*, unpublished paper presented to the Non-Governmental Organisations' Directors' Forum, Harare, 2 February 2009.
- 15 Alongside 'ethnic cleansing', 'class cleansing' is a possibility. In Operation Murambatsvina, the government fought against poor people instead of fighting poverty.
- 16 For a helpful study of the history and activities of Christian Care, see for example, Bornstein 2003.
- 17 See for example, Chirongoma 2009.
- 18 Interview with Rev. Forbes Matonga. Harare, April 2010.
- 19 Interview with Rev. Forbes Matonga. Harare, April 2010.
- 20 Interview with Bishop Dr Levee Kadenge. Harare, April 2010.
- 21 Interview with Father Edward Ndeti. Harare, 10 May 2010.
- 22 Interview with Sheikh Mustafa Wasili. Harare, 29 April 2010.
- 23 Interview with Father Edward Ndeti. Harare, 10 May 2010.
- 24 Interview with Rev. Abel Waziwei. Harare, April 2010.
- 25 Interview with Rev. Dr Solomon Zwana. Harare, 22 April 2010.
- 26 Interview with Bishop Dr Levee Kadenge. Harare, April 2010.
- 27 Interview with Rev. Forbes Matonga. Harare, April 2010.
- 28 Interview with Rev. Dr Solomon Zwana. Harare, 22 April 2010.
- 29 To state this is not to accuse *all* AICs of working with ZANU PF.
- 30 There have been a number of initiatives to bring together all the different religions in the country, but these have not met with success.
- 31 Interview with Adam Salam. Harare, 30 April 2010.
- 32 Interview with Sheikh Mustafa Wasili. Harare, 29 April 2010.
- 33 Interview with Rev. Abel Waziwei. Harare, April 2010.
- 34 Interview with Rev. Forbes Matonga. Harare, April 2010.
- 35 Interview with Rev. Dr Solomon Zwana. Harare, 22 April 2010.
- 36 Apart from the Bahá'í Faith, the religions of Zimbabwe are patriarchal. The Bahá'í Faith consciously seeks to promote equality between women and men.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Zimbabwean diaspora: Opportunities and challenges for engagement in Zimbabwe's political development and economic transformation

James Muzondidya

Since the late 1990s, Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis has produced a dramatic global scattering of its citizens. The 2002 census estimated that 3 million people had emigrated from Zimbabwe fleeing either economic hardship or political persecution. South Africa is the most important destination for Zimbabweans with an estimated 1 to 1.5 million Zimbabwean migrants and immigrants (Goliber, 2004; Polzer, 2007: 5; IRIN, 3 April 2008). Newspaper accounts have speculated that there may be over a quarter of a million Zimbabweans in the United Kingdom and Botswana. Other Zimbabweans have made their way to destinations as far-flung as New Zealand and Australia. The large number of Zimbabweans spread all over Europe, the Americas and the southern African region has created what observers have described as an incipient Zimbabwean diaspora community. This emerging diaspora is made up of asylum seekers, political refugees, skilled expatriates, students, semi-skilled and unskilled labour migrants, undocumented/illegal migrants and others who have naturalised. In its various geographical locations, the heterogeneous group of Zimbabweans abroad has been constantly engaged not only in negotiating new spaces for themselves but also in political and economic processes at home.

The chapter critically examines the current political developments and economic reconstruction processes in Zimbabwe and highlights the role the diaspora could play in contributing to political and economic transition in the

country. It specifically seeks to:

- define the size, composition and character of the Zimbabwean diaspora;
- discuss Zimbabwean diaspora's political and economic contribution to political and economic processes in Zimbabwe within the context of global diaspora interactive processes with their home countries;
- critically examine opportunities and constraints to the Zimbabwean diaspora's contribution to Zimbabwe's political progress and economic transformation;
- discuss the views and perspectives of the Zimbabwean diaspora on the current political and economic transition in Zimbabwe;
- provide recommendations on the policy and institutional frameworks that need to be addressed to enable the diaspora to become a more important political and economic resource for Zimbabwe's development and transition.

Conceptual framework

Diasporas are, by definition, communities living (more or less permanently) outside their homeland. Dispersal does not automatically create a diaspora (Zezeza, 2003; Pasura, 2005). But, diaspora communities are created by ethnic and racial groups of migrants of common geographic origin residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands (Sheffer, 1986: 3). Diaspora communities are the outcome of historical, political, economic and cultural processes through which ideas of belonging come to be defined primarily in terms of a distant homeland and shared national imaginary (Mcgregor, 2010: 6). The term 'diaspora' conveys a collective dimension: as a community, a group or even as an organised network sharing common interests. However, diaspora communities are often heterogeneous groups and diaspora identities, connections and claims, like those of many other social groups, are often fluid and contested, changing over time and space.

While a significant number of Zimbabweans abroad, especially the skilled professionals, have already settled permanently or semi-permanently in their host countries, most Zimbabweans scattered all over the southern African region, Europe, the United States and other countries do not see their stay there as a permanent or semi-permanent one. Their presence abroad, like that of many other post-colonial African migrants before them, might turn out to be more permanent, but many still regard it as temporary and see themselves as economic exiles waiting to return to their country when conditions normalise (Chetsanga

& Muchenje, 2003; Magaisa, 2005). The undocumented seasonal migrants, who occasionally sneak in and out of South Africa and Botswana, thus fit into the category of economic refugees rather than diaspora. However, diasporas are not necessarily defined through livelihoods, class and residence status in the host country. A key characteristic of diasporas is the strong sense of connection to a homeland maintained through cultural practices and ways of life practised in host countries, as well as numerous forms of interaction, including remittances, between diasporas and their home countries (Makina *et al*, 2010). To remove any ambiguities over the use of the terms ‘diaspora’, ‘exiles’ and ‘refuge’, in this chapter the term ‘diaspora’ is used to refer to all Zimbabweans who have settled abroad, whether permanently or temporarily.

Virtually every nation contains not only a core of people living in the territory they think of as their homeland, but also others who have migrated, sometimes as refugees but often as emigrants, seeking better opportunities elsewhere. Diasporas can have a positive and a negative influence on events and processes at home. More positively, diasporas can give humanitarian assistance to victims of conflict and they also support post-war reconstruction efforts. Migrants often send financial contributions to relatives and friends they have left behind and alleviate the suffering of people living in crisis situations. In countries like Mexico, for instance, migrant remittances have become the biggest source of foreign income, and public works that would be considered the province of government elsewhere may be financed by Mexican workers’ remittances sent to their hometowns (<http://www.limitstogrowth.org/WEB-text/remittances.html>, accessed 20 January 2008). Building on their values of kinship ties, *bayanihan*, and the idea that blessings need to be shared, the 1.8 million Filipino-Americans based in the United States collectively send about US \$5 billion to the Philippines every year (<http://www.filipinodiasporagiving.org>, accessed 24 February 2008). During the Asian economic crisis from 1997 to 1999, when FDI tumbled down, remittances actually increased and helped cushion the impact of the crisis. Closer to home in Ghana, which has a much longer history of post-colonial migration dating back to the 1960s, remittances from migrants from different parts of the globe have become the biggest source of FDI received by the country, much more than amounts received from Western donor countries and multilateral institutions (Higazi, 2005).

On the political front, countries in crisis produce refugees and exile populations that engage with their homeland in ways that have both positive and negative impacts on the conflict dynamics in their homelands. At times, these diaspora

communities can be irresponsible long-distance nationalists or fundamentalists that perpetuate conflicts through economic and political support. In countries at war, diasporas can secure resources to fuel armed conflicts, and they can provide opaque institutional and network structures that enable the transfer of arms and money to fighting groups (Smith & Stares, 2007). In the specific case of Africa, diasporas have been implicated in supplying resources that perpetuate wars on the continent. The work of Koser (2003) and Bernal (2004, 2006), for instance, has shown that Eritreans abroad have over the years played an important role in mobilising funds for both Eritrea's war of independence and the country's intrastate wars against Ethiopia.

On the positive side, diaspora and exile groups, when living outside conflict zones, can be committed to non-violent conflict resolution and they can make powerful contributions to peace and reconciliation, reinforce local processes of democratisation and post-conflict reconstruction in their countries of origin (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2005). Somali and Liberian groups living outside of Africa, for instance, have been involved in peace and reconstruction initiatives for their home countries (African Diaspora Policy Centre, 2006; Mahmood, 2006).

Generally, diasporas are affected by political conflicts in their countries of origin and get involved in the conflict directly or indirectly. Sometimes they support revolutionary or secessionist movements or, alternatively, they uphold established governments resisting such movements (Riggs, 1998). Palestinians in the diaspora, for example, have largely supported the Palestinian nationalist movement, while the Irish in the United States and other parts of the world have supported the Irish nationalist movement. Similarly the Jewish diaspora played a crucial part in the creation of the modern state of Israel, and has continued to play an important role in supporting the Israeli cause. In North America, the political activities of well-established groups such as the Jews, the Greeks and the Armenians have been recognised as a significant part of North American domestic and international politics. Throughout Europe, transnational communities of immigrants, labour migrants and refugees retain and develop an interest in, and political ties with, their country of origin (Riggs, 1998).

In the case of Zimbabwe, diasporas have historically played an important part in influencing both the political and economic course of the country. The South African black diaspora groups, for instance, were important in providing intellectual leadership to the early forms of African protest politics in colonial Zimbabwe (Ranger, 1970). At the same time, a number of Zimbabweans who went to live and work outside their country during the colonial period, were not

only exposed to new ideas about politics and society but were able to use those ideas learnt from outside to engage and reform their societies. Many of those who went outside, especially to South Africa and the United States which had more radical and developed black political consciousness than other southern African countries, came back more active politically and played a crucial role in the liberation of the country from colonial rule (Shamuyarira, 1978; Muzondidya, 2005). It was therefore no coincidence that a significant proportion of the leadership of the early African nationalist movement, which included Joshua Nkomo, James Chikerema, George Nyandoro, David Parirenyatwa, Stanley Culverwell, Charles Mzingeli, Leopold Takawira, Maurice Nyagumbo, Herbert Chitepo and Robert Mugabe, had spent a considerable part of its life outside the country.

Through the exiles, the later nationalist organisations, ZAPU and ZANU, also managed to set up structures and mobilise foreign support for the nationalist cause in Europe, the Americas and the Nordic countries. The exiles were largely responsible for raising funds for the liberation organisations. They also organised demonstrations against the Rhodesian Government from their locations outside. When the Rhodesia Front Government in 1964 banned both ZANU and ZAPU, they moved to Zambia where they began to rely increasingly on Zimbabweans in the diaspora as they organised themselves politically and militarily (Tungamirai, 1995: 40–43). All this underlined the importance of the diaspora in the internal political dynamics of crisis zones.

Size, composition and nature of Zimbabweans in the diaspora

A critical assessment of the role of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the country's political and economic transformation cannot be conducted without a full understanding of the size, composition and character of the Zimbabwean population living abroad. Issues such as size, composition and social status of Zimbabwean diasporas, as well as other social categorisations based on gender, generation, ethnicity and race, are not only important in mediating the migrants' experience of life abroad but are also crucial in shaping their relationship with their home country, especially when it comes to influencing migrants' political behaviour and ideas about nationhood, citizenship and identity.

Zimbabwe is estimated to have around 15 per cent of its estimated population of 15 million (2 to 2.5 million Zimbabweans) living outside its borders (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2010). Many of these Zimbabweans are living in the United Kingdom,

the United States, Canada, Australia and the relatively prosperous neighbouring countries of South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. South Africa is by far the most important destination for both unskilled and skilled Zimbabweans seeking economic survival outside Zimbabwe because of its proximity and relatively larger economic base in the region. But, mostly because of the illegal nature of much of the migration, there are no accurate statistics. What we have are wildly varying estimates such as speculative media and advocacy group estimates, which range from 3 to 5 million. The estimates in the few scientific studies that have been done suggest lower figures, pointing towards an estimated 1 million Zimbabweans in South Africa, including both legal and illegal migrants (Centre for Development Enterprise, 2008: 8; Polzer, 2007: 5; Makina, 2007).

Botswana hosts the second largest number of Zimbabweans in the southern African region. Media estimates wildly vary from 250 000 to 500 000 – a figure implying that Zimbabweans constitute almost a quarter of Botswana's national population. However, more reliable estimates from migration researchers suggest a figure of less than 100 000 Zimbabweans (Campbell & Oucho, 2003; Betts & Kaytaz, 2009). Botswana's Central Statistics Office figures for 2009 indicated that Zimbabwe recorded the highest number of employee work permit holders with 6 922 persons or 61.2 per cent of the total permit holders (<http://www.mmegi.bw>, accessed 5 May 2009). The majority of Zimbabweans living in Botswana are unskilled migrant workers employed in menial rural jobs, such as herding cattle and farm labour, while others work in construction, manufacturing, retail and domestic service. Those employed in professional services are mainly employed in education, health and the auto-industry as mechanics and electricians. Namibia also has a sizeable number of Zimbabweans, mainly professionals, while a sizeable number of Zimbabweans, mainly farmers and professionals like engineers and artisans, are living in Mozambique and Zambia. According to a survey conducted by the Zimbabwe–Mozambique Solidarity Association (ZIMOSA) in 2009, an estimated 3 000 Zimbabweans were living in Mozambique, most of them illegally (<http://www.inwent-ijj-lab.org>, accessed 16 September 2009).

The United Kingdom, because of its colonial and historical links and connections with Zimbabwe, hosts the largest share of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the North and the second largest global number of Zimbabweans living outside the country. There is, however, great difficulty in estimating the number of Zimbabweans living in the United Kingdom because many of them enter the country as visitors and then remain in the United Kingdom as undocumented migrants when their visas would have expired or asylum claims been rejected.

Others have entered the United Kingdom on false passports. In 2010, the United Kingdom Government's Office of National Statistics estimated that the figure of Zimbabwean-born people living in the United Kingdom had risen to 122 000. Newspapers have speculated that the Zimbabwean population in the United Kingdom might be between half a million and a million, but community leaders and migration research findings (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2006; Magunha, Bailey and Cliffe, 2009; Bloch, 2010) estimate the figure to be between 200 000 and 300 000, a figure close to the UK Home Office's estimate of 200 000 Zimbabweans in the United Kingdom (Pasura, 2006).

What is known is that the number of Zimbabweans in the United Kingdom rose gradually from the late 1990s with people entering the United Kingdom using a variety of illegitimate routes. The majority of these Zimbabweans were young men and women aged between 25 and 44. Zimbabweans who have settled in the United Kingdom tend to be professionals or middle-class members with the necessary financial resources and support and connections to afford long-distance travel. A skills audit carried out by the UK Home Office found a high level of pre-migration qualifications, fluency in English and professional employment among Zimbabwean refugees. Alice Bloch's survey of 500 Zimbabweans living in the United Kingdom in 2004 found out that nearly everyone (97 per cent) arrived in the United Kingdom with a qualification and among those with a qualification, 43 per cent were educated either to degree or postgraduate level. A further 21 per cent had a Diploma in Higher Education (Bloch, 2010). The majority of Zimbabweans in the United Kingdom, however, do not utilise the skills they acquired in their country of origin but work in unskilled service industries. Bloch's (2005) survey and Mbiba's (2005) survey both demonstrate evidence of deskilling among the Zimbabwean migrants and its negative impact on remittances and other forms of transnational activities.

The number of Zimbabweans in the other developed countries, such as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand is difficult to estimate mainly due to the lack of research on the communities living in these countries. Most of the academic research on the Zimbabwean diaspora has focused on the more concentrated Zimbabwean communities in South Africa and the United Kingdom. Zimbabweans living in these other developed countries are also much more scattered across their host countries, as compared to Zimbabweans in the United Kingdom or South Africa who are more concentrated in the larger cities of London, Johannesburg and Cape Town, and easier to estimate through surveys. Besides being scattered across their host countries, Zimbabweans in the United

States, Canada and other developed countries are less organised as distinct Zimbabwean communities meeting through social networks like churches, clubs and music festivals, and the lack of community organisations representing their interests has made them less visible.

However, there is a small but steadily growing population of black and white Zimbabweans living in these countries. The estimated population of Zimbabweans living in the United States and Canada is 50 000, while Australia and New Zealand are believed to be hosting around 20 000 black and white Zimbabweans (Makina *et al.*, 2010: 21). The majority of Zimbabwean diasporas settled in these other northern countries, like those based in the United Kingdom, are mainly from the professional and middle classes who can afford the cost of travelling and meet the stringent visa application requirements of these countries, ie, proof of a stable job, a viable business and fixed assets such as a house or business premises.

The Zimbabwean diaspora, like many other diasporas, comprises both voluntary and forced migrants. It is composed of individuals who have chosen to migrate formally, especially professionals with skills or funds and old networks abroad, and others who have been compelled to move by their complex political or economic circumstances. It is, in the main, made up of asylum seekers, political refugees, skilled expatriates, students, semi-skilled and unskilled labour migrants as well as undocumented migrants. While many of the Zimbabweans living in the United Kingdom and other developed countries like the United States, Canada and Australia are professionals with higher educational qualifications, undocumented and unskilled migrants constitute the largest proportion of Zimbabweans in South Africa (Sisulu, Moyo & Tshuma, 2007: 554; Polzer, 2008: 3–5). Many of these undocumented Zimbabweans are labour migrants seeking temporary economic reprieve in South Africa until the economic and political situation in Zimbabwe stabilises. They, in the main, live on the margins of the economy and society.

The nature and character of the Zimbabwean diaspora is also defined by the migration history and settlement patterns of the various groups of Zimbabweans making up the diverse community of Zimbabweans abroad. Within this incipient Zimbabwean diaspora community are Zimbabweans who have settled permanently and naturalised in their countries of settlement and others whose stay in the host countries is only temporary.

Broadly, the community of Zimbabweans abroad consists of both recent and earlier migrants. Among the older migrants are Zimbabweans who, together with thousands of other Africans, moved to neighbouring African countries, like

the independent states of Zambia and Ghana, or Europe to seek education and better economic opportunities during Rhodesian colonial rule. A more significant number of these earlier Zimbabwean migrants were unskilled and semi-skilled contract labourers who, alongside their counterparts from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique, moved to South Africa to service the labour needs of the South African mining industry (Van Onselen, 1976; Crush, Jeeves & Yudelman, 1991). The majority of these migrants were forced migrants, but some of them were also labour migrants who voluntarily moved across to South Africa in search of employment and better wages in the mining, commercial, agriculture and domestic service sectors (Ranger, 1989). A 2002 survey by the Southern African Migration Project shows that almost 25 per cent of adult Zimbabweans' parents or grandparents had worked in South Africa at some point in their lives (Tevera & Zinyama, 2002). While some of these migrants returned home after varying periods of stay, others started families in South Africa as they married into local communities and eventually settled permanently. Those who stayed permanently are referred to as *amagewu* or *zvichoni* in local Ndebele and Shona lingua, respectively (Muzondidya, 2007).

Among the older communities of Zimbabweans abroad are also those established by white emigrants who initially fled from the 1970s war of independence and later the introduction of black majority rule in 1980 (Selby, 2006: 117–18; Simon, 1988: 1). Tevera and Crush (2003) estimate that about 50 000 to 60 000 whites left the country between 1980 and 1984. Many of them went to settle in the United Kingdom, South Africa and the former British colonies of Australia and New Zealand, where they were able to be absorbed into these country's professional services. The skilled immigrants, including doctors, accountants, engineers and teachers, were easily absorbed into the private sectors of their host countries, while others were able to set up their own businesses (Sinclair, 1979: 41). Some of the immigrants, especially former members of the Rhodesian security services with military backgrounds, were absorbed into the apartheid government's military and intelligence services (Godwin & Hancock, 1993: 314–19; Stiff, 2002). Because of historical and family attachments, some of these emigrants continued to maintain their connection with Zimbabwe through sending of direct material support to individual friends, relatives and institutions, such as old people's homes and former schools.

Zimbabwe's post-independence diaspora communities also include black political refugees from Matebeleland and parts of Midlands who fled from the state-inspired, *Gukurahundi* violence and killings in Matebeleland between 1983

and 1987 and sought refuge in South Africa and the United Kingdom (Hanlon, 1986: 181–83; Alexander, McGregor & Ranger, 2000: 192; 195–97). Alongside these post-independence refugees were also labour migrants, especially from the drought-prone, southern districts of Masvingo, Midlands and Matebeleland South whose residents had historically migrated to South African farms, mines and towns rather than Harare and other major towns of Zimbabwe to seek employment (Amanor-Wilks & Moyo, 1996; Maphosa, 2008). Many of these early post-independence migrants simply slipped into the country unnoticed and their cultural and linguistic affinity with the Nguni communities of South Africa enabled them to settle largely unnoticed in the country. Some of these Zimbabweans eventually acquired South African citizenship, both lawfully and unlawfully (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2004; Sisulu, Moyo & Tshuma, 2007: 554).

Generally, early post-independence migrants managed to secure jobs and to establish themselves in their countries of settlement. Some set up homes and families, while others naturalised and assumed the nationalities of their host countries. In the case of Zimbabweans who slipped into South Africa, many established their stay by assuming South African identities. But, many of these migrants, popularly known back home as *injiva* (Ndebele *lingua franca* for rich person), continued to go back to Zimbabwe during holidays. They also continued to lead dual lives, establishing families across both sides of the Limpopo (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2004; Maphosa, 2004: 16). Many of these early post-independence migrants continued to look at Zimbabwe as home and supported their home communities in various ways, including sending material support directly to relatives and friends left behind or helping them to come and settle in South Africa. Others formed self-help organisations to develop their communities in Zimbabwe and to repair public facilities like schools and clinics damaged during *Gukurahundi* (Muzondidya & Chiroro, 2008).

The largest constituent of Zimbabweans living abroad is made up of recent migrants. These recent migrants mainly include those who left the country in the 1990s when the Zimbabwean economy showed signs of trouble, and small numbers of skilled and semi-skilled Zimbabweans, including engineers, teachers, doctors and nurses, began to seek better paying jobs in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia (Amanor-Wilks & Moyo, 1996; Tevera & Crush, 2003; Chikanda, 2005). While during the pre-2000 period the migrants were predominantly young males, the young and old and the married and unmarried were involved in post-2000 migration. A growing number of women and children also joined the migration stream, especially after the 2005 elections when the economy

rapidly deteriorated and the disastrous Operation Murambatsvina destroyed the livelihoods of many urban-based households (United Nations, 2005). In some cases, entire families relocated because of the increasing economic hardships in Zimbabwe and the growing shortages of basic services and commodities. The politically induced nature of some of the movement, especially for opposition activists fleeing from political persecution by ZANU PF and government security agencies, resulted in the relocation of entire families. At the same time, refuge has also made it difficult for the displaced to go back home more often (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2004).

Unlike the earlier migrants, many of the post-2000 migrants have struggled to settle down in the competitive and economically harsh environments of their host countries. For instance, the new migrants in South Africa have struggled to secure jobs on the South African market, which has, over the years, not been generating enough jobs to absorb both the domestic and foreign supply (Muzondidya, 2007; Solidarity Peace Trust, 2009). Those who have gone to the United Kingdom in the post-2000 period, especially after the disputed 2002 presidential election when the political and economic situation deteriorated further, have equally found it difficult to secure jobs that are commensurate with their qualifications. Most Zimbabwean professionals in the United Kingdom have, in the end, survived through menial jobs in British factories and the home-based care industry (McGregor, 2007, 2010).

The few recent migrants who have found it relatively easy to settle in South Africa are those at the upper end of the labour market, such as accountants, engineers and academics, whose services are desperately needed because of the critical skills shortage in South Africa (South African Government Information, 3 March 2006; Sisulu, Moyo & Tshuma, 2007). Business entrepreneurs also fare well, while some of the Zimbabwean farmers who left Zimbabwe after 2000 have also been successfully absorbed into the farming industry of not only South Africa but other SADC countries like Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi (*The Zimbabwean*, 18 January 2005; IRIN, 2 June 2006).

Living a more comfortable life than the rest, Zimbabweans who have secured formal employment or established businesses in their host countries have bought homes and invested in their host countries. Others have been granted permanent residency or citizenship. Others have sought to integrate into the local way of life and to raise their children in their host countries, while still looking to Zimbabwe as home. These Zimbabweans generally look forward to being in their host countries for the long-term.

Clearly, the Zimbabwean community abroad is a complex social formation, not only in terms of its composition, cultural and class diversity but also its migration history and settlement patterns as well as its tendencies and practices. All these factors influence, in a variety of ways, the ways it politically and economically engages with the Zimbabwean state as well as unfolding processes back home. The proceeding discussion shows how these differential histories and contemporary experiences of Zimbabweans abroad combine with many other influences, such as their cultural and historical backgrounds, to shape their engagement with contemporary processes and developments in Zimbabwe.

Opportunities and constraints for economic engagement

The emerging role of diasporas in national development cannot be underestimated. According to the World Bank, the global flow of remittances in 2008 stood at US \$328 billion. For many countries such as China, India, Mexico, Ghana and Lesotho, the diaspora is becoming a major source of FDI, commercial contacts, political connections, advocacy and technological transfer (Higazi, 2005: 4–7; Johnson, 2007: 3, 11–20). In 2009, recorded remittances to developing countries were at US \$307 billion, down 5.5 per cent from US \$325 billion in 2008 (Mashayekhi, 2011). On a global scale, recorded remittances flows to developing countries have overtaken overseas development assistance flows in the past decade. In sub-Saharan Africa, countries such as Lesotho, Mauritius, Swaziland, Nigeria and Senegal remittances constitute more than the amount of money received through Official Development Assistance (ODA) (Makina *et al*, 2010: 16–17).

While some development scholars have argued that the developmental potential of remittances is limited by the fact that they are mainly spent on consumption, if remittances are invested or saved in financial institutions, there is enough evidence to prove that remittances can be used to finance future consumption and can lead to development (Makina *et al*, 2010: 18). Remittance inflows are considered to be one of the contributors to Cape Verde's graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2007 (Mashayekhi, 2011). In central America, where many national economies have collapsed and the state has been struggling to provide basic services to the population, diasporas have been largely responsible for community development projects through their social investments and collective remittances (Johnson, 2007: 7; Orozco, 2003b: 5–11). In countries like Mexico, for instance, migrant remittances have become the

biggest source of foreign income, and public works that would be considered the province of government elsewhere are financed by Mexican workers' remittances sent to their hometowns (<http://www.limitstogrowth.org/WEB-text/remittances.html>, accessed 20 January 2008).

Where remittances have become substantial and fairly predictable over time, they have been used to improve a country's creditworthiness (lowering the cost of borrowing) and hence the country's access to international capital markets. Several banks in developing countries such as Brazil, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Mexico and Turkey have been able to raise cheaper and long-term financing (more than US \$15 billion since 2000) from international markets via the securitisation of future remittance flows (Ratha, 2007, in Makina *et al*, 2010: 18).

China, India and Israel are the best-known examples of countries whose development was spearheaded by their nationals spread across the globe. In these countries, diaspora communities have gone beyond the traditional support for home countries via private transfers of funds, goods and equipment. Diaspora investors and entrepreneurs have played a critical role in attracting FDI, setting up joint ventures and promoting export of domestic companies. Both Chinese diaspora returnees and overseas Chinese diasporans have played an active role in technology transfer, trade and investment in China. It has been estimated that 60 per cent of China's FDI originates from its 55 per cent Chinese diaspora residents (Wang, 2009).

Coming closer home to Africa, from West Africa to East Africa and from southern Africa to North Africa, African diaspora communities have been involved in the reconstruction of their countries' economies destroyed by years of political conflict, war or bad governance. In the case of Ghana, for instance, the country's huge diaspora which runs through successive generations and is spread in different world regions, has mobilised through Ghanaian Pentecostal churches and ethnic associations to help Ghana rebuild (Higazi, 2005: 13). From the United Kingdom to the Netherlands, Ghanaian ethnic associations make contributions to their ancestral homes for projects through financial and material support (Higazi, 2005: 14). Ghanaians abroad, working closely with their diplomatic missions, have had several home-based activities aimed at stimulating the country's development. In 2001, the *Homecoming Summit for Ghanaians Living Abroad* broke new ground for organised visits by the diaspora to their homeland for a variety of activities including exploring development opportunities (Ouchou, 2009).

Nigeria, the country with the largest group of diaspora Africans, has equally

benefitted from the contribution of its diasporas. Nigerian diaspora organisations have made efforts to conduct skills audits in Europe, the Americas and other African countries with large concentrations of Nigerians and have facilitated the transfer of expertise in technology, in agro-business and IT. A group of Nigerian doctors in the United States has been setting up state-of-the-art hospitals in selected locations in the country (Adepoju, 2008: 34, in Oucho, 2009). To ensure that its millions of diasporas do not abandon their home country once they settle and acquire citizenship status in their host countries, Nigeria, like Ghana, has adopted a Dual Citizenship Act that ensures that the birthright citizenship of either a Nigerian or non-Nigerian is not lost on the acquisition of a foreign or Nigerian citizenship. Nigerian diasporas have not only been involved in the economic transformation of their country but also its political transition. Nigerian politics has been influenced by the diaspora voices with powerful intellectual and financial might (Oucho, 2009).

Rwanda is another African country whose diasporas have played a crucial part in the reconstruction of the country and whose government has gone a long way to facilitate their active involvement in national development and transformation. The Government of Rwanda, in 2007, created the Department for the Diaspora in its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation to mobilise the diaspora for the development of Rwanda, gather information about it, set up a database and provide information about the situation in the country. The government's diaspora policy proactively seeks to facilitate the capacity of the diaspora in Rwanda's development through financial transfers, technology, knowledge and skills transfers as well as the mobilisation of foreign investors, markets of Rwandan products abroad and the promotion of the image of Rwanda as a cherished tourism and investment destination (Government of Rwanda, 2009).

Diasporas in Ethiopia and Eritrea, two countries whose economies and societies were devastated by decades of fighting, have similarly been active in the reconstruction of their countries. The diaspora's involvement in the reconstruction and transformation of these countries has been spearheaded by diaspora organisations. The Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD), for instance, contributes towards the improvement of education in Ethiopia by exploring, soliciting, acquiring and delivering educational materials to Ethiopian universities and colleges, while the Action for Health, Education and Development (AHEAD), a UK-based charity, has also initiated and supported projects aimed at combating poverty and inequalities in health, education and development in Ethiopia (Oucho, 2009).

Since independence from Ethiopia in 1993, Eritrea's development has relied more heavily on its diaspora. The involvement of the Eritrean diaspora in the country's reconstruction has been both a voluntary and coercive affair. The independent state of Eritrea imposed a compulsory tax on its diaspora – 'healing tax' – particularly to meet the cost of the Ethio–Eritrean war. This compulsory remittance scheme became a source of controversy, but it helped the country raise the resources needed to rebuild the country. Generally, the Eritrean diaspora has been committed to help their country rebuild. Their resolve to engage in post-conflict reconstruction is founded on the patriotism developed by the diaspora during the country's three decades (1961–1991) of independence struggle and two years of a border war with Ethiopia (1998–2000) in which the Eritrean liberation movement, and later Eritrean state, came to draw heavily on the Eritrean diaspora for funding (Bernal, 2004, 2006; Koser, 2007). The Eritrean diaspora has not only been involved in Eritrea's transformation through remittances but also through engagement with political process at home. The diaspora has taken part in the drafting of the country's constitution and in the electoral process emanating from it. The internet has facilitated networks among homeland and diaspora Eritreans, and websites such as the Eritrean Community Online Network have played an instrumental role in facilitating political and cultural engagement among the diaspora and between the diaspora and their counterparts at home (Bernal, 2006).

Elsewhere across the continent, the Kenyan diaspora has equally played an important role in the development of the country through remittances and promotion of Kenya's economic development abroad (Republic of Kenya, n.d.: 5–6). In Uganda, the Presidential Standards Task Force has been leading a crusade to have the skilled Ugandan diaspora return to the country for short periods, with the government providing them with free round-trip air tickets, board and lodging, a free tour of the country and other fringe benefits (Oucho, 2009). The economic investments of diasporas in these countries and others is an agent for change and development. More Africans in the diaspora are reconnecting to their home countries in imaginative new ways through creative development strategies. Somali and Liberian groups living outside of Africa have been involved in peace and reconstruction initiatives for their home countries (African Diaspora Policy Centre, 2006). Africans in the diaspora frequently organise themselves into associations based on hometown, ethnic, alumni, or equivalent associations aimed at effecting positive change in their regions of origin (Chikezie, 2005).

The Zimbabwean diaspora has equally been playing its part in the economic

development and sustenance of their country, especially through remittances. The actual magnitude of remittances into Zimbabwe is unknown because most of the remittances go through informal channels. However, what is known is that since the beginning of the post-2000 crisis, the economic livelihoods of most Zimbabweans at home have increasingly come to depend on remittances from those Zimbabweans based abroad who have maintained strong ties with their home country. A study carried out on the development potential of Zimbabweans living abroad by the IOM in 2005 showed that at least 96 per cent of Zimbabweans in the United Kingdom and South Africa maintain regular social contact with family members (Bloch, 2005). Another survey carried out in Harare and Bulawayo in 2005 and 2006 showed that 50 per cent of urban households are surviving on migrant remittances for everyday consumables too exorbitant or in short supply at home (Bracking & Sachikonye, 2007: 1), while research by both Blair Rutherford and Lincoln Addison (2007: 628) and France Maphosa (2004, 2008) on Zimbabwean migrants working in South Africa noted that money, food items and other consumer products sent back to Zimbabwe are an important source of support for many families and communities. In 2008, Zimbabweans abroad were reportedly sending back about US \$50 million a month (<http://www.mg.co.za>, accessed 14 August 2008).

Figures released by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) have shown that remittances from Zimbabweans living abroad (sent through official channels) had increased by 32.9 per cent in 2010 to about US \$263.3 million (<http://www.newzimbabwe.com>, accessed 9 March 2010). The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) reported that in 2007, Zimbabwe received US \$361 million in monetary remittances, excluding in-kind transfers. This represented 7.2 per cent of the country's 2007 GDP (Makina, 2010: 31). Makina *et al* (2010: 31) estimated that remittance flows through both informal and formal channels had risen from under US \$200 000 in 2001 to nearly US \$1.4 billion by the end of 2009 (Makina, 2010: 31).

The remittances from Zimbabweans in the diaspora have a direct poverty mitigating effect in Zimbabwe and have helped to keep the country going. Apart from the remittances that are sent to families, there is also an amount that is sent as charitable donations towards community development, ie to build and rebuild schools, churches and hospitals (Maphosa, 2004; Bloch, 2005). Conscious of the numerous economic, health and educational challenges facing their communities, Zimbabweans abroad are giving various forms of help to relatives, friends and institutions. Some are donating books, computers and other research material

to their old schools and universities on an ad hoc basis (Mushonga & Nyakudya, 2008; Muzondidya, 2008). Many of the struggling schools have found a lifeline through the intervention of their former students now working abroad who have donated money to repair leaking roofs or helped the schools to source equipment or donations from international donors. Much of the assistance given to schools is mobilised either individually or collectively, through alumni associations which are increasingly playing an important role in the sustenance of many of Zimbabwe's schools (<http://www.savetheconvent.org>; <http://www.mosadete.info.ms>, accessed 22 January 2008).

Zimbabweans living outside are also sending basic drugs, including the desperately needed HIV/AIDS drugs, to Zimbabwe to assist sick relatives (Baldauf, 2008; *Legal Monitor*, 30 May 2008). Even those without relatives abroad, especially patients in need of specialised or expensive treatment both inside and outside Zimbabwe, have also received assistance from Zimbabweans in the diaspora through the diaspora's contributions to charity donations to assist Zimbabweans in need of specialist treatment (<http://www.newzimbabwe.com>, accessed 24 May 2008; *The Herald*, 15 March 2008).

Besides offering direct material assistance to individuals and institutions in Zimbabwe, Zimbabwean professionals in strategic positions of influence and authority are also contributing to the skills training of young scholars and workers based in Zimbabwe by recruiting or helping to place them in organisations and companies abroad. Others are helping to train them in Zimbabwe by getting them involved in collaborative projects that facilitate their skills training. These collaborative research projects not only facilitate skills training but also help Zimbabwean-based scholars with financial sustenance.

In response to their country's complex socio-economic circumstances, Zimbabweans abroad have thus been playing various roles to keep Zimbabwe afloat by supplying the country with both foreign currency and essential services in short supply. However, Zimbabwe has not been able to maximise the economic benefits of its diaspora because of a number of constraints. First and foremost, the contribution of the diaspora in Zimbabwe's economic development has been constrained by the lack of supportive policies at home. As illustrated above, countries that have succeeded in harnessing the developmental potential of their diasporas, such as China, India, the Philippines and Ghana, have put in place clear and innovative diaspora policies that act as incentives for their diaspora to be involved in national development. In the case of Zimbabwe, the main challenge has, over the years, not just been the absence of clear policies but

the existence of policies and practices that actually discourage diasporas from investing back home. The Zimbabwean Government has in fact developed a political paranoia towards both foreigners and Zimbabweans in the diaspora, especially those suspected of supporting the opposition movement over the last decade of crisis and this has made it difficult for the diaspora to be involved in national development.

Second, the Zimbabwean Government has done little over the years to encourage its diaspora to engage in the development of the country. Countries such as China, India, Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria that have managed to effectively engage their diasporas into the economic development of the nation, have not only relied on patriotism to attract their nationals back home or to contribute towards their home country's development, they have introduced a wide range of incentives to engage the diaspora in homeland development programmes. These incentives include tax breaks for diasporas, attractive bonds, access to land as well as social and political incentives, including facilitating free movement by granting visa-free entry for nationals who are no longer citizens in their countries of origin, dual citizenship and the right to vote from abroad. Others have also made the necessary institutional arrangements, such as the creation of diaspora-handling offices in both home and host countries. The Ethiopian and Rwandan Governments, for instance, have created departments for their diasporas in government ministries, while the Senegalese Government has created the Ministry of Senegalese Abroad. Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe have created favourable conditions for their diaspora citizens to buy land and other property (Ionescu, 2006: 39, in Oucho, 2009).

The Zimbabwean Government has indeed made some efforts to tap into the development potential of diaspora resources. Faced with severe shortages of foreign currency, caused by the restrictions of bilateral financial support and the dwindling of earnings from exports, the Reserve Bank initiated programmes aimed at encouraging its diaspora community to invest in the country. The programmes included the 2004 trips to the United States, the United Kingdom and South Africa by the Reserve Bank governor and his teams, where they urged Zimbabweans to send their remittances through the Reserve Bank's formal channels. In April 2004, the Reserve Bank then established a subsidiary, Homelink, a mechanism meant to encourage migrants to remit funds through formal channels in order to build and acquire homes. Homelink introduced three products, namely, a Money Transfer Service, a Foreign Currency Bond and the Housing Development Scheme for Diasporans. The Foreign Currency Bond was

to be an investment vehicle for the diaspora earning them a return of 12 per cent, a rate that was significantly higher than average international rates so as to attract foreign currency deposits from Zimbabweans abroad. The prospective buyer for Homelink houses would pay for the property in foreign currency while Homelink would pay on behalf of the buyer in local currency to real estate agencies or building societies (*The Herald*, 16 June 2004; Makina, 2010: 49).

On paper, the Homelink scheme was a good attempt by the Government of Zimbabwe to put in place incentives for diaspora investment into the country. However, the policy, which is still in place, was not successful because of a number of factors. The first problem that negatively affected the take-off of the programme among the diasporas was that of political trust. The fact that the programme was being spearheaded by the Reserve Bank of a government which had lost the trust and support of many of the Zimbabweans who had gone in the diaspora meant that the programme did not have many takers. Second, the Reserve Bank's insistence of paying a fixed rate that was below the market rate for remittances sent through the Homelink discouraged remitters from sending their money through the government's formal channels. Third, the failure by the Reserve Bank to complete the building of homes within the agreed time frames, due to shortages in building material, and its failure to get enough land from municipalities, which were reluctant to sell their land at the lower rates offered by the Reserve Bank, discouraged diasporas from joining the scheme (*The Chronicle*, 16 February 2006). The high perceived country risk, the lack of trust between authorities and the diaspora and the policy inflexibility of the Reserve Bank has thus largely contributed to the general failure of its diaspora engagement policy. In this sense, the political and economic context of Zimbabwe has tended to constrain the Zimbabwean diaspora's contribution towards the economic development of the country.

However, the limited contribution of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the country's development cannot be explained only in terms of lack of positive government policies. The other major constraint that has negatively affected the contribution of the Zimbabwean diaspora towards their country's economic transformation over the last decade of crisis is their structural condition. While analysts and policymakers have expected a lot from the Zimbabwean diaspora in terms of remittances and investments, what has often been forgotten is that the majority of the Zimbabwean diaspora, especially those in South Africa and other regional countries, are economically vulnerable migrants living on the margins of the economy and society (Ranchod, 2005: 14; Human Rights Watch, 2006;

Rutherford & Addison, 2007: 625, 627, 629; Muzondidya, 2007; Solidarity Peace Trust, 2009). Many of them not only receive very low wages but also remain out of employment for a long time such that they have to rely on the benevolence of fellow migrants for survival. These Zimbabweans, therefore, have very little resources to remit even to their families back home.

Compounding Zimbabwe's challenges in harnessing the full potential of its children in the diaspora in national development, as will be discussed in detail in the last section, is the issue of the lack of vibrant organisation among the country's new diaspora as well as active links between diaspora groups and organisations based in Zimbabwe. Unlike other African migrant communities with a much longer history of post-colonial migration, such as the Congolese and the Nigerians, Zimbabweans have not been able to come together in sufficient numbers and establish social organisations representing their interests and others at home. Members of the professional and middle classes who live in isolated spaces in suburbia have remained isolated from their compatriots, while most migrants who are faced with the day-to-day problems of survival outside have no time or space in their lives for organised activities beyond the burial societies and stokvels. The dispersal of Zimbabwean diasporas and their lack of organisation into cohesive communities makes it difficult to organise them for organised programmes and activities aimed at raising resources for the country's development. The lack of an organised Zimbabwean diaspora community has particularly affected the diaspora's engagement with political processes at home.

The Zimbabwean diaspora and politics: Opportunities and challenges

There has been some considerable diaspora political activism since the beginning of the crisis in 2000. Much of the Zimbabwean diaspora's activism has found form in the numerous political pressure groups formed by the diaspora to help the democratisation process at home through lobbying key policy actors and participants in the Zimbabwe body politic. The large diaspora groups are mainly based in the United Kingdom, United States and South Africa.

From their various locations abroad, these diaspora organisations, most of them opposed to ZANU PF's continued rule, have articulated their grievances mainly through peaceful demonstrations. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the Zimbabwe Vigil has since 2000 been a major rallying point for demonstrations against ZANU PF. Groups like the Zimbabwe Exiles Forum have also been

mobilising Zimbabweans in South Africa to protest and demonstrate against abuses of power by the ZANU PF Government, while the Zimbabwe Action Support Group has also tried to rally Zimbabweans in the United States to be more active in resolving Zimbabwe's political problems. During the Thabo Mbeki-mediated talks between ZANU PF and the MDC, for a negotiated political settlement in Zimbabwe in 2007, Zimbabwe's diaspora civil society groups waged a sustained campaign against the talks, criticising them for their sidelining of civil society and the churches (*The Nation*, 15 July 2008; Inter Press Service, 16 August 2008). Diaspora groups and individuals based across the world have over the years lobbied their host countries' governments to take more positive action on Zimbabwe. Much of this lobbying has been done either directly with the government officials or through the medium of other civics, particularly labour and the church groups. Such advocacy activities have led to greater understanding of the Zimbabwe crisis regionally and internationally.

Basically rooted in constitutional forms of protest, diaspora activism has also taken the form of court battles. The UK-based Diaspora Vote Action Group, for instance, unsuccessfully fought for the right of Zimbabweans abroad to vote in the 2005 and 2008 elections. In a petition brought before the supreme court shortly before the 2005 election, the group argued against a government decision that limited voting by Zimbabweans outside the country to members of the armed forces and embassy officials (<http://www.newzimbabwe.com>, accessed 1 February 2005). Despite its dismissal by the supreme court, the case generated a lot of international and local interest. In addition, it gave impetus to a much more serious debate around the issue of the diaspora vote which has continued up to the present.

At the individual level, Zimbabweans abroad have also played important roles in political processes in Zimbabwe. Their most important roles have been on fundraising and mobilisation of human and ideological support (Pasura, 2009). Raising funds for political parties from local sources has been a huge challenge in the deteriorating economic climate of Zimbabwe, and both the MDC and ZANU PF have had to rely on Zimbabweans outside for direct funding and to access donors from outside. Although there is a fair degree of secrecy regarding the diaspora's financial support for political parties back home, mainly due to individual concerns about reprisals that might arise from exposure, there is some evidence Zimbabweans abroad are playing an important role in the financial sustenance of political parties in Zimbabwe. During the March 2008 elections, a number of Zimbabwean businessmen now living abroad reportedly funded the

campaign of Simba Makoni, the independent presidential candidate who broke away from ZANU PF after failing to get the party's support to be the presidential candidate (*Africa Report*, No. 160, 14 March 2008; *The Herald*, 14 March 2008; <http://www.talkzimbabwe.com/pdf.php?a=1798>, accessed 13 February 2008).

Being outside has made it possible for Zimbabweans to effectively network and build alliances with international organisations and other influential groups, and Zimbabweans abroad have used these networks to advance their parties' political causes in the ideological battle for the hearts and minds of the world. This battle has been fought in the numerous public forums and debates where the Zimbabwe issue has been discussed since 2000. Living in the diaspora has made it relatively easy for diaspora activists to reach the relevant decision-makers across the world and this has helped to promote international advocacy around the Zimbabwean crisis. Lobbying has been done through e-mail, websites, and direct appeals to the relevant political structures both inside and outside of Zimbabwe. Others have had face-to-face discussions with such bodies as the Congressional Black Caucus, senior officials in the European and US state departments and coalitions of civic groups (Makumbe, 2005).

Within Zimbabwe, Zimbabweans in the diaspora have played a crucial role in pushing the frontiers of the political debates about national questions through their regular contributions in the press (both local and international). Debate inside Zimbabwe has been constrained through legislation, such as POSA and AIPPA, which has also been used to control information outflow. Zimbabweans abroad, unlike those in the country, have not been confronted with the same kind of restrictions and they have had more access to communication networks, especially the internet, resulting in more information inflow about events at home. The rights to freedom of association and organisation enjoyed outside Zimbabwe have been critical to the promotion of vibrant political debate and activity among Zimbabweans abroad. Being away from the frontline has opened up more space to organise meetings and conferences and to engage in robust political debate.

Through the internet, Zimbabweans abroad have not only been able to link up with friends and relatives back home (Britain Zimbabwe Society, 2003) but also to mobilise support for their respective political parties and debate national issues extensively. Those outside have found it easy to read the externally published weekly paper, *The Zimbabwean*, and other newspapers everyday; to listen to radio broadcasts; to participate in chat shows; and to receive regular e-mail attachments from human rights organisations and political parties. The numerous internet websites operated by Zimbabweans abroad have led to the

growth of what Bernal (2006) describes as Internet Intellectuals. It has also allowed for many Zimbabweans to voice their views. Internet-based activism has thus opened a new front in democratic politics in Zimbabwe, especially among Zimbabweans abroad whose distance from the scene of political battles reduces other forms of political engagement.

Cyber-democracy indeed offers democracy to a minority and restricts the major political debates to those with access to computers and the internet. But, the recorded increased use of the internet and wireless phones among Zimbabweans at home and abroad means that cyber-democracy is a growing political front.¹ While it is difficult to quantify the effect of these sites or the extent to which they have fostered political networks and promoted activism, it is clear that it is a front which has enabled ideas to be discussed and linkages to be forged between individuals and political movements at home. Many of the important national questions of the day, including the coalition government between ZANU PF, MDC-T and the Welshman Ncube-led MDC, the constitution-making process and the elections, have been widely debated by the diaspora in cyberspace. The divisions and the leadership crisis within the dominant political parties, ZANU PF and MDC, have equally received a lot of debate on the internet, and there is no doubt that these debates have, to a certain extent, shaped many people's thinking around these issues. The fact that the political leadership of parties and government have on many occasions been forced to react to news material or web content published on websites run by Zimbabweans outside, shows that it is a front which Zimbabwean politicians have been forced to engage with.

Zimbabwean journalists living abroad have also played a very influential role in shaping the debates and processes at home. The exodus of Zimbabwean journalists, alongside their skilled counterparts, has led to the emergence of a Zimbabwe media-in-exile that strives to keep news about their homeland flowing (Witchel, 2005). The numerous Zimbabwe diaspora newspapers include *The Zimbabwean*, an online and print weekly newspaper; *ZW news* and *Zimonline*, both produced out of South Africa; *Zimbabwe Situation*, bringing together news items about Zimbabwe from different online sources; and <http://www.newzimbabwe.com>, featuring tabloid-style news (Witchel, 2005). This media-in-exile also includes: SW Radio Africa, a radio service station run by ex-employees of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation and broadcast from London and Studio Seven, a radio service on the US-government funded Voice of America in Washington that is staffed mainly by exiled Zimbabwean journalists, which both have an outreach in Zimbabwe. Internet radio stations such as Afro-sounds

FM and SW Africa have also been important sites for promoting political debate around the Zimbabwean crisis.

Clearly, Zimbabweans abroad have increasingly played important roles in the political processes at home. The diaspora setting has equally opened up opportunities for Zimbabweans abroad to play a more constructive role in the political transformation of Zimbabwe. However, the effectiveness of Zimbabwean diaspora groups in the political transformation of the country has been constrained by a number of factors. First and foremost, although there are now a number of Zimbabwean diaspora organisations, especially in the United Kingdom and South Africa, Zimbabwean diaspora groups have not been able to build themselves into vibrant diaspora organisations with a mass appeal. Relying on restrictive mobilisation strategies, such as conferences, workshops in exclusive venues like hotels and the internet to mobilise and spread their ideas, most of the diaspora organisations have struggled to reach out to the majority of Zimbabweans outside the country, especially political refugees and exiles, undocumented labour migrants and students with limited access to these venues (Muzondidya, 2006). The majority of the organisations, including both political advocacy groups and development advocacy organisations, have thus remained elitist, with limited support beyond a few members of the professional and middle classes (Dube, 2010). In fact many of the Zimbabwean diaspora organisations have remained briefcase organisations with no proper records of membership, organisational standards or proper accounting procedures for funds and other resources donated by well-wishers. The Zimbabwe Action Support Group, for instance, was accused of faking rallies and holding 'ghost meetings' in a bid to project itself as a well-supported organisation and fraudulently solicit money from donors (SW Radio Africa Zimbabwe News, 1 March 2006). Without a large diaspora constituency behind them, many of these organisations have struggled to become powerful lobby groups with the capacity to initiate political and economic changes in the country.

Secondly, Zimbabwean diaspora groups have been weakened by the proliferation of diaspora groups organising within the same diaspora community and working on the same issues. In Johannesburg alone, for instance, there are over 20 diaspora civic organisations all competing for the same donors and political space. The plethora of groups operating in Johannesburg alone include the following: Zimbabwe Action Support Group (ZASG); Zimbabwe Advocacy Campaign (ZAC); Zimbabwe Exiles Forum (ZEF); Zimbabwe Diaspora Forum; Mthwakazi Forum; Mthwakazi Arts and Culture; Zimbabwe Human Rights

Lobby Group; Zimbabwe Liaison Office (ZLO); Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum; Zimbabwe Political Victims Association (ZIPOVA); Zimbabwe Torture Victims Project; Zimbabwe Combined Civil Society; Peace and Democracy Project; Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition; IDAZIM; Heal Zimbabwe Trust (HZT); NCA; Disabled Zimbabweans Abroad; and Concerned Zimbabweans Abroad. The groups and their leaders rival each other bitterly and the same individuals are often involved in more than one organisation (Maclean, 2008: 12). The material benefits of diaspora activism have thus led to the growth of career activism among Zimbabweans abroad which has had a corrupting effect on their politics. The lack of seriousness of purpose in some organisations and the lack of integrity in the leadership of these groups has turned away potential activists and this has affected diaspora activism in general (Makunike, 2005; Dube, 2011).

Third, the effectiveness of the Zimbabwean diaspora in influencing political and economic changes in Zimbabwe has also been constrained by the divisions within the disparate diaspora groups made up of different generations and classes driven into exile by different motivations. While the diaspora has sometimes presented opportunities for greater unity among Zimbabweans, it has also reinforced disunities from home. Ethnic and regional divisions from home have been deepened in some diasporic contexts (Pasura, 2005; Muzondidya, 2010a). Much of the socialisation among black Zimbabweans sometimes occurs within limited circles of people who know each other from home or organise in linguistic, ethnic and regional groupings. For instance, in one of the informal settlements in Pretoria, Zandspruit, Karanga-speaking migrants from Masvingo normally socialise alone, as do the Shangaan speakers from Chiredzi and Chipinge and Venda speakers from Beitbridge. The various groups rent accommodation in different quarters of the informal settlement, rarely mix when drinking at shebeens and often engage in ethnic fights (Muzondidya, 2007, 2010).

There is also mutual antagonism between Ndebele migrants who fled Zimbabwe during the *Gukurahundi* violence and killings of the 1980s who are often collectively branded ZIPRA dissidents, and Shona migrants who are often collectively identified with ZANU PF by the other group (<http://www.newzimbabwe.com>, accessed 15 June 2005; Inter Press Service, 24 November 2005). Divisions among Zimbabweans abroad have given rise to tribally exclusive organisations. For instance, diaspora political activists from Matebeleland who are bitter about the marginalisation of their region from national development and the perceived ethnic hegemony of the majority Shona ethnic group have formed separatist organisations, such as Mthwakazi Action Group on Genocide

and Ethnic Cleansing in Matebeleland and Midlands and Mthwakazi People's Congress (MPC). These organisations have not only provincialised Ndebele identity and tried to construct it as an antithesis to Shona identity, but have also agitated Ndebele self-determination through the creation of an autonomous Ndebele state (Mthwakazi, 2006). Tribally based political parties within Zimbabwe such as the Patriotic Union of Matabeleland (PUMA), the Federal Democratic Union (FDU) and ZAPU PF, have all found more support among the young Ndebele generations in the diaspora, where displaced Ndebele communities are linking up via the internet and through web-based forums such as <http://www.inkundla.net>, to promote a distinct Ndebele political identity (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007).

The racial divide between white and black Zimbabweans experienced at home has also been reproduced in the diaspora (Makunike, 2005). This divide is particularly felt between the 'Rhodies' who could not accommodate themselves to majority rule, and black Zimbabweans, whom they blame collectively for their dislocation. Some white Zimbabweans have found it difficult to continue identifying with Zimbabwe after moving abroad. Many whites have not only lost their citizenship status through the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act (2001), which required Zimbabweans of foreign descent to provide documentary proof to the Registrar General that they have legally renounced their foreign citizenship or entitlement to foreign citizenship, (Human Rights Forum, 2002; Government of Zimbabwe, 2003) they have also been vilified by the Zimbabwean state and constructed as foreigners since the beginning of the chaotic but populist fast-track land reform programme in 2000 (Raftopoulos, 2003: 230; Muzondidya, 2007: 333–40). Constructed as aliens on the basis of their race and stripped of their legal citizenship by the amendment, white Zimbabweans living outside Zimbabwe have increasingly become naturalised citizens of South Africa, the United Kingdom and other countries.

Another major problem with Zimbabwean diaspora political engagement efforts is their espousal of fundamentalist politics and adoption of counterproductive strategies. Removed from the day-to-day struggles at home, Zimbabweans in the diaspora have sometimes expressed views that are out of touch with the political realities in Zimbabwe. The strongest opposition to a negotiated political settlement and the GPA government, for instance, has been from Zimbabwean civics and Zimbabweans abroad. Some, especially political refugees who fled from political persecution by ZANU PF activists and government security agencies, have bitter memories of their experiences in Zimbabwe. Some have

also experienced extreme hardship in exile. Influenced by their bitterness, these Zimbabweans have rejected political compromises to resolve the crisis. They have instead called for the complete overthrow of ZANU PF (*The Zimbabwean*, 17 February 2006; *The Zimbabwean*, 2 March 2006) evidently unrealistic under the current circumstances where the balance of power between the ruling party and opposition forces is even.

Diaspora groups have generally adopted a negative attitude towards political dialogue and have tended to choose confrontation over constructive engagement. While some diaspora organisations, especially the development advocacy groups such as the Zimbabwe Diaspora Interface, the Development Foundation of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Diaspora Focus Group (ZDFG), have been making efforts to engage the coalition government (Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), 2009; *The Zimbabwean*, 23 July 2010; Makina, 2010), most diaspora organisations have not only been very critical of the current transitional processes but also reluctant to engage the transitional government in positive ways. During his visits to Europe in June 2009, for instance, the Prime Minister received a hostile reception from some diaspora groups who accused his party of betraying the masses by agreeing to a coalition government with ZANU PF (*The Zimbabwean*, 24 June 2009). The GPA framework, however, offers the diaspora the best opportunity to make a critical contribution to the political and economic transformation of the country. But for this to happen, there are still a number of issues that need to be addressed and the next section discusses some of the challenges that need to be addressed.

The GPA framework: Opportunities and constraints

The GPA government has remained a fragile political arrangement but it has presented Zimbabwe with opportunities for political and economic transformation. The political and economic stability which followed the signing of the GPA in 2008, and the subsequent formation of the coalition government in February 2009, created an enabling environment for development to occur. The coalition government has also created a new framework for political and economic engagement between government and various groups, including diasporas. The ongoing reforms in government policies and structures of governance, including the constitution-making process, have opened up new entry points for advocacy work around a wide range of issues.

Since its inauguration in February 2009, the coalition government has

been working on a number of initiatives aimed at engaging the diaspora in the development of the country. From the time he got into office, Prime Minister Tsvangirai, for instance, has been urging the government and the private sector to embark on programmes that facilitate the formulation of strategies to lure back skilled Zimbabweans who had left the country as a result of the economic and political crises (<http://www.newzimbabwesituation.com>, accessed 8 May 2009). During their trips abroad, various government officials, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, have all been urging Zimbabweans in the diaspora to contribute to the country's reconstruction through capital and technological transfers and investments, marketing Zimbabwe's image and products abroad and coming back home to fill the skills gap (*The Zimbabwean*, 24 June 2009; Agence France-Presse (AFP), 3 August 2009). In both parliament and cabinet meetings, the new government has been discussing how the government could set up concrete programmes to engage the diaspora into the country's development (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2009).

The new government's economic recovery programme, Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP), acknowledged the role of FDI in Zimbabwe's recovery and specifically noted that it would give special attention to investment by Zimbabweans living in the diaspora. Recognising the massive resources financially and intellectually that the diaspora can offer to Zimbabwe, the transitional government has declared its commitment to 'mount a targeted campaign complemented by an incentive structure to induce skilled non-resident nationals to return and serve their country'. It has specifically sought to target professionals, such as medical doctors, engineers, financial and information and communications technology (ICT) experts, university lecturers and science teachers for engagement (STERP, 2009: paragraphs 290–92). It has also announced its commitment to offer the diaspora some incentives for their return.

Following promises made in its three-year Macro-Economic Policy and Budget Framework launched in 2009, to develop an appropriate remittance framework linked to investment for non-resident Zimbabweans, the transitional government in February 2010 tried to enlist the services of diaspora Zimbabweans in the reconstruction of the country by floating a US \$50 million diaspora bond. The bond is guaranteed by the government and African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) (*The Standard*, 20 February 2010). The uptake of the bond among Zimbabweans in the diaspora was, however, slow, with most people suspicious about the government's capacity to pay the promised interest after the Reserve Bank had previously defaulted on its repayments of investment interest

on another bond which matured in January 2010.

Furthermore, the government, in conjunction with its development partners such as the IOM and the Department for International Development (DFID), has been hosting a series of meetings with Zimbabwean professionals in the diaspora to encourage them to participate in the development of the country. The IOM has been assisting with the voluntary return and reintegration of Zimbabweans from the United Kingdom and other countries, helping returnees to establish small businesses and engage in educational or vocational training. Conscious of how Zimbabwe's health sector has been severely affected by the migration of health professionals to Australia, Botswana, Canada, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries, IOM has been running a programme to help bring back, on a short-term basis, Zimbabwean health professionals and lecturers to support health institutions and the University of Zimbabwe's College of Health Sciences. The programme, which has been receiving good support among Zimbabwean health professionals in the diaspora, creates space for the diaspora to contribute to national reconstruction from their host countries through the following processes:

- individuals returning to contribute skills or to provide service at select hospitals or clinics around Zimbabwe;
- teams of health professionals returning to perform a specific procedure;
- experts in the diaspora conducting joint medical procedures with local personnel;
- lecturing at the University of Zimbabwe College of Health Sciences (IOM Brochure, n.d.).

The government and IOM have also co-hosted a series of migration and development workshops with the aim of formulating a national migration and development strategy. These have culminated in the drafting of a migration policy document that is still waiting for cabinet approval. In April 2008, IOM sponsored the establishment of a Migration and Development Unit in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion whose mandate is to coordinate migration and diaspora developmental issues (Makina, 2010: 49).

On its part, the Zimbabwean diaspora, especially the professional and middle classes and their organisations, has made a couple of initiatives to engage the transitional government. The UK-based Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Interface (ZDDI), for instance, hosted the Diaspora Investment Conference in September 2009 in London. The event, which brought together officials from

Zimbabwe's coalition government, the British Government and the Zimbabwean diaspora, focused on key policy issues relating to investment opportunities for the Zimbabwean diaspora and the question of skills return and development. At the end of 2009, a group of Zimbabwean professionals based in South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States and other parts of the world linked up with the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation to organise a consultative conference with officials of the GPA government. The conference's objective was to offer Zimbabwean diasporas an opportunity to assess political and economic developments in Zimbabwe, through discussions with government officials, and to explore roles that the diaspora could play in contributing to the economic recovery of their country (IJR, 2009).

This initial consultative conference culminated in the formation of the Development Foundation for Zimbabwe (DFZ), a development advocacy organisation, whose principal purpose is to create a platform for constructive engagement between Zimbabweans in the diaspora, Zimbabweans at home, government, business and civil society in the political and economic transformation of the country. The DFZ recently held its inaugural conference in Victoria Falls in December 2010. Attended by close to 150 Zimbabweans from the diaspora and from inside the country, including representatives of business, trade unions, civics, government officials and Zimbabwean professionals, the conference was aimed at discussing the creation of an institutional framework that will help the Zimbabwean diaspora contribute to the country's development.

From the above, it can be seen that the establishment of the transitional government in Zimbabwe has created more spaces and opportunities for the increased engagement of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the country's recovery and transformation. However, despite these positive developments, there are still a number of bottlenecks that have continued to constrain diaspora contribution to Zimbabwe's development.

Beyond the current bottlenecks: Recommendations on the way forward

The implementation of initiatives aimed at maximising the diaspora's contribution towards Zimbabwe's economic and political transition has been constrained by a number of problems that include policy weaknesses and inconsistencies, capacity and institutional challenges, political polarisation and the continued cases of political instability and uncertainty in the country.

First, while the political settlement between ZANU PF and the two MDC formations and the establishment of the IG has helped to restore some modicum of political and economic stability, the political and economic conditions in Zimbabwe are still very fragile and volatile. The political fragility of the Zimbabwean situation, evidenced by the continued bickering between ZANU PF and MDC and the continued harassment of opposition and civil society activists, and economic volatility, characterised by policy inconsistency and unilateralism in policy making, has negatively affected efforts to lure the diaspora into investing in Zimbabwe or to commit themselves to returning home. The efforts to recruit teachers back into Zimbabwean schools, for instance, have been hampered not only by the bureaucratic inefficiency which has slowed down the process of re-engaging those who have returned to take up their old positions, but also by the continued political harassment of some of the teachers who have gone back to their old schools (National Education Advisory Board (NEAB), 2010). In general, reports of sporadic violence and harassment of opposition and civil society activists by political party activists and state security agents has dampened efforts to recruit skilled manpower from the diaspora. A number of both skilled and unskilled Zimbabweans willing to return home, especially those who left because of political reasons, are not yet convinced that the worst is over and they are waiting to see how things turn out before they can relocate back (Council for Zimbabwe, 2010). The political and economic instability, at the same time, has also caused panic among Zimbabwean diaspora businessmen, and very few are willing to gamble with their capital by investing in the unpredictable Zimbabwean market. Political and economic stability issues thus need to be addressed first in order to attract both the material and human resource capital of the diaspora into Zimbabwe.

Besides the political and economic instability, Zimbabwe's efforts to attract its diaspora back have also been hampered by the limited economic incentives on offer back home. Countries that have successfully managed to attract their diasporas have been able to do so by offering them attractive incentives, such as land to build houses, educational subsidies for the returnees' children and favourable investment rates for capital brought from abroad. In the case of Zimbabwe, both the government and the private sector have not done much to offer incentives for diaspora expatriates to return. The only government incentive at the moment is the expatriate rebate which entitles returning residents, who have spent more than two years living and working outside the country, to import their vehicles and household goods on a duty-free basis. The government has in

fact rejected some of the suggestions by Zimbabwe diaspora groups for special incentives, arguing that it will not treat Zimbabweans in the diaspora as a special group (*Financial Gazette*, 10 January 2011).

In addition to its lack of incentives, the government does not have a coherent migration or diaspora policy that caters for the different needs of the various categories of Zimbabweans abroad. The current government is still in the process of crafting a proper policy on the diaspora, and the draft National Migration Management and Diaspora Policy, drafted with technical expertise from the IOM, was only completed in 2010. Migration issues are currently being handled in multiple ministries, including the ministries of Finance; Economic Planning and Investment Promotion; Regional Integration and International Cooperation; Home Affairs; and Foreign Affairs, without a coherent overarching migration policy framework (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2010). In the absence of an approved national policy, each ministry has been applying discretionary migration policy measures without taking into account what is happening in other ministries. There is also considerable institutional overlap in migration and diaspora issues without an overall coordinating authority (Makina, 2010: 52).

The different pieces of legislation relating to migration and the diaspora need to be harmonised so that they serve the same objectives. Furthermore, the government needs to develop one focal point or institution that coordinates government policy on diaspora in the form of a department for the diaspora in either the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Regional Integration and International Cooperation or a new ministry devoted to diaspora issues, as in other countries with successful diaspora policies such as Israel, Senegal and India (African Diaspora Policy Centre, 2010).

Besides lacking a coherent migration and development policy, Zimbabwe has a number of legal and institutional bottlenecks, especially in its economic policies and financial legislation, that stifle not only remittance flows but the general participation of diasporas in the development of their countries. For instance, Zimbabwe has some of the most stringent laws and policies when it comes to remitting of money or investing of capital from outside, whether it is from foreign companies or from Zimbabweans based abroad (SW Radio Africa Zimbabwe News, 10 October 2006). The whole process of getting a business permit is usually a lengthy process that can take anything from six months to a year, and this has tended to frustrate diaspora entrepreneurs wishing to invest in Zimbabwe. Because of Zimbabwe's policy constraints, Zimbabwean entrepreneurs in the diaspora willing to invest in Zimbabwe end up investing

in alternative markets with flexible policies. A good example of this is the South African-based telecommunications mogul – Strive Masiyiwa – who, over the last few years, has been forced to invest his capital in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland after facing a number of obstacles in expanding his mobile company – Econet – business operations in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabweans in the diaspora have also not been able to send remittances to Zimbabwe on a regular basis because of lack of reliable and affordable channels. Most of the few available reliable money transfer agencies, such as Western Union, charge exorbitant fees beyond the affordability of many ordinary Zimbabweans in the diaspora. The few that charge reasonable rates, including those owned by fellow Zimbabweans in the diaspora, are often unreliable – either taking long to get the remittances to beneficiaries or failing to deliver remitted money. As a result, a significant number of Zimbabweans in the diaspora, especially those on the lower end of the market, use unofficial channels, such as truck drivers and fellow Zimbabweans travelling back home, to send their remittances back home (Rutherford & Addison 2007; Muzondidya, 2007).

The use of unofficial channels to remit money and goods not only creates security problems for the remitters, but also deprives the Zimbabwean state of the much-needed transfer revenue. The result is that instead of the whole nation benefitting from these remittances, through taxes and other levies, money and goods sent from Zimbabweans in the diaspora usually end up benefitting a few select families with relatives abroad (Bracking, 2003: 633–44). Also, because much of the remittances coming from the diaspora are coming through unofficial channels, it is difficult for the government to budget and plan on the basis of projections of its foreign currency inflows. In other countries like Egypt, governments have been able not only to use records of their currency inflows to budget and plan but also to raise cheaper and long-term financing from international markets through the securitisation of future remittance flows.

To maximise on remittance flows from its diaspora, Zimbabwe will need to take comparative lessons from countries like India, the Philippines and Kenya who have all managed to increase their remittance flows through the adoption of innovative policies. India's foreign exchange laws were quite restrictive while the banking charges were among the highest in the world. To facilitate the inflow of remittances from Indian migrants, the Indian Government in 2000 repealed its strict controls on foreign exchange transactions and laws that fixed the rupee rate. As a result of these changes, non-resident Indians were more willing to change their foreign currency in their deposit accounts into local currency (Makina,

2010: 32). Most transfers to the Philippines, which ranked fourth among the world's remittance receiving countries in 2007, are through official channels. To facilitate this mode of transfer, a network of local and foreign corresponding banks was established to handle remittances for Filipino migrant workers. As a result, the role of informal transfer channels (mainly door-to-door companies that work independently from banks and courier services) dropped sharply from 21.9 per cent in 2001 to 3.4 per cent in 2007, and Filipino-run door-to-door money transfer agents are increasingly entering into partnerships with commercial banks (Makina *et al*, 2010: 32). In Kenya, remittances are predominantly received through commercial banks using telegraphic transfers, electronic funds transfers and bank drafts for large value transfers because of the innovative policies of the private sector and the flexibility of the government. Postal Corporation and Afri-payments Limited Liability Company (LLC) have introduced a new money transfer service known as PostaPay which allows Kenyan migrants to send funds through a website or a toll-free call. In March 2007, Safaricom (a joint venture between Telkom and Vodafone – the largest cellphone company in Kenya) introduced a money transfer service known as M-Pesa that allows its customers to send remittances electronically by cellphone through SMS (Makina *et al*, 2010: 33).

Another fundamental challenge with Zimbabwe's remittance flows relates to their utilisation. Much of the remittances coming into the country are not benefitting the nation mainly because there are no policy coordination or public awareness programmes designed to promote better utilisation of remittances. Maphosa (2004: 18) found that while remittances from migrants working in South Africa are contributing much to the alleviation of poverty and the development of households in Matebeleland South, there is very little investment at the community level. Very few migrants have been involved in community development projects such as building or refurbishing hospitals, clinics and schools. In countries with well-thought policies on remittances, such as Mexico and Senegal, remittances have produced a multiplier effect on communities. These countries have adopted policies and mechanisms that encourage savings and investing of remittances. In Senegal, for instance, the government provides special financial products and advice for senders and recipients while India's One India programme provides for investment forums and trade fairs for its diaspora (Mashayekhi, 2011).

The list of institutional and legal frameworks in Zimbabwe that inhibit Zimbabwean diasporas from participating fully in the country's development also include the country's restrictive citizenship laws, which prohibit dual citizenship,

and the electoral laws which do not provide for the diaspora vote. According to Zimbabwe's immigration and citizenship laws, Zimbabweans who acquire citizenship of another country or stay outside the country for seven consecutive years automatically lose their Zimbabwean citizenship. The issue of voting rights and dual citizenship has remained a sore point among many Zimbabweans in the diaspora, especially diaspora activists, who have all complained that their denial of dual citizenship and the right to vote is a travesty of justice and denial of their basic political and human rights (IJR, 2009; Council for Zimbabwe, 2010). Pointing out that their denial of the right to vote and dual citizenship strips them of both their rights to belonging and participation in the national affairs of the country, some Zimbabwean diasporas have argued that the current government does not have the right to ask and expect them to participate in the reconstruction of the country. When the Minister of Finance proposed a tax for Zimbabweans working outside the country, his idea was thus overwhelmingly condemned by diaspora representative groups and individuals who felt the coalition government had no right to expect them to pay taxes to it when they were excluded from participating in its governance by Zimbabwe's restrictive policies and laws (<http://www.newzimbabwesituation.com>, accessed 27 December 2009).

The country needs to extend dual citizenship and the right to vote to Zimbabweans based outside, not just as an incentive measure for the diaspora to continue participating in Zimbabwe's development but also because it is the most pragmatic and right thing to do. Every citizen has an inalienable right to vote, while the denial of dual citizenship to Zimbabweans puts them at a disadvantage in the globally competitive world. Globally, it has been noted that citizens of countries with flexible citizenship laws have more flexibility to move across the globe and to choose careers (Spiro, 2011). For instance, in most countries, non-nationals cannot be employed in certain posts, even if they have the qualifications, simply because employers look for people who hold the passports of those countries. Recently, many African governments have been reaching out to their diasporas by adopting dual citizenship laws. Mexico has even created positions for elected diaspora representatives in state parliaments (Binkerhoff, 2006: 20).

Another major challenge for both government and private sector efforts to harness the diaspora into the country's development is the lack of access to reliable information and data on the location, number and skills profile of their people. The Zimbabwean Government's last attempt to get some information and data on its diaspora was the 2003 preliminary survey by the Scientific and Industrial Research Development Centre (SIRDC) which was never followed

up or updated. Though the study's findings are still valuable, its results cannot be very useful for effective planning, especially given the fact that the research was not only undertaken almost a decade ago but also before a number of Zimbabweans who later left the country in huge numbers after the violence of the 2002 presidential election and the frustration of the 2005 election results, had migrated. The IOM, individual migration scholars, such as Sarah Bracking, and a couple of other Zimbabwean diaspora organisations, such as Motherland Zimbabwe and Come Home to Zimbabwe, have indeed tried to create some skills databases and profiles of Zimbabwean diasporas. However, their efforts have remained uncoordinated and have been conducted on a smaller scale, either focusing on a specific professional class of diasporas like health personnel or confined to specific geographical locations.

The government, alongside its development partners, diaspora organisations and the private sector, will need to create a reliable database of the Zimbabwean diaspora. Such a database will not only help the country to have a good idea of the numbers and profile of its human resource base outside the country but also know where and how to engage the various groups of Zimbabweans abroad. Through its consular network, Senegal has for a number of years maintained a database of skilled Senegalese abroad which allows for regular updates of profiles and CVs and is used to invite Senegalese experts to return to Senegal for short stints. Kenya is also in the process of conducting a formal survey of the profile of its diaspora citizens which is aimed at improving the management and coordination of its diaspora (African Diaspora Policy Centre, 2010).

The fundamental problem with Zimbabwe's engagement with its diaspora, as it seeks to rope it into the country's reconstruction, is the rigidity in the thinking and policy framework around diaspora issues. The current thinking in both government, business and policy practitioners is that the Zimbabwean diaspora can only help in the reconstruction by coming back to work in Zimbabwe. The recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study on the potential role of the diasporas in Zimbabwe's recovery, Makina *et al* (2010), for instance, tends to endorse this paradigm by recommending that Zimbabwe should focus on policies that seek to bring back its expatriates because the 'longer-term recovery in Zimbabwe will depend more on the return of human capital and skills in both the public and private sectors'.

Although a significant number of Zimbabweans have been returning to Zimbabwe since the establishment of the GPA government, and others are also ready to come back once political and economic conditions in the country

improve, Zimbabwean diasporas, especially the skilled professionals who are more settled in their host countries, are not likely to return soon because of a number of factors (Safran, 1991; Muzondidya, 2010b). In its survey carried out among Zimbabweans in the United States, the Council for Zimbabwe, a Zimbabwean diaspora network organisation based in New York, found that the majority of responders were unsure about whether they plan to ever return to Zimbabwe. They have not cut their ties to Zimbabwe but are probably waiting for a more favourable political and economic climate to emerge before they consider returning (Council for Zimbabwe, 2010). Many diaspora Zimbabweans, like many other African diasporas, are going to remain in their host countries due to political, economic, cultural and family imperatives. The majority of professionals, for instance, are reluctant to return due to low salaries offered on the local market, while others willing to come back cannot simply pack up their bags and return because they have started new families and connections as well as investments which they cannot easily abandon (Muzondidya, 2010b).

Instead of the government and private sector complaining continuously about skills loss and the need for skilled Zimbabweans to come back into the country, they should partner each other to create programmes through which thousands of Zimbabwean professionals, now based abroad, can contribute to economic development from their foreign stations. They might need to adopt a diaspora engagement policy built along similar frameworks as the IOM's Temporary Return of Health Professionals to Zimbabwe (TRHPZ) programmes or the Taiwanese model. Having experienced a significant brain drain in the second half of the 20th century, characterised by a very low attrition rate among Taiwanese students who went to study abroad, Taiwan adopted a 'brain trust' model that focuses on attracting both human capital and knowledge from the diaspora. Its policy is based on the benefits of technology transfer, ie those that can be derived from maintaining close ties with a highly skilled group of emigrants (Makina *et al*, 2010: 41).

Focusing on a diaspora policy that encourages utilising the skills and resources of Zimbabweans from their bases will enable diasporas to contribute to the country's development much more effectively because they will not have to worry about the uncertainties of return. Migration scholars who have studied the links between Chinese migration and development have noted that China's diaspora policies have significantly shifted from an emphasis on return in the 1990s, to a recent redirection to temporary return 'to serve the motherland', where the national government, knowledge-user institutes (ie, universities, research

institutes, high-tech enterprises and industrial parks), and some local government departments alike are soliciting knowledge exchange and engagement from the diaspora. Government maintains five central agencies that interface with overseas Chinese professionals, as well as several quasi-government agencies with funding to support knowledge exchange activities (Brinkerhoff, 2006: 2). There are currently thousands of Zimbabwean professionals employed in strategically important positions across the world and many are more than willing to exchange knowledge and expertise with their counterparts at home.

Given the current challenges in attracting diasporas from their locations, it is imperative for Zimbabwe to adopt a framework of knowledge transfers and exchanges along the same lines as that adopted by China. IT has emerged as an essential enabler of diaspora knowledge transfer and exchange, and the advances in technology and communication links would make it easy for Zimbabwean professionals to help build the country from their locations abroad through knowledge transfers and exchange. Through IT, knowledge transfer and exchange projects can be proposed and designed. IT also enables diaspora knowledge contributions without necessitating short-term return or repatriation (Meyer, 2001). However, diaspora knowledge transfer/exchange requires networks and both Zimbabweans inside the country and those outside will need to be more active in fostering knowledge transfer networks. In the current situation, there has not been much work on creating networks or linkages between the two groups (Bloch, 2005: 72). The relationship between the diaspora and those at home has been more of a tense one, characterised by professional jealousy and limited cooperation.

Apart from adopting innovative policies that allow the thousands of skilled Zimbabwean professionals from their various locations abroad to participate in the economy, the country also needs to begin to create opportunities and spaces for all Zimbabweans abroad, business entrepreneurs, skilled professionals and unskilled diasporas alike, to do so. The current thinking framework in the ZANU PF-led government is that Zimbabweans who want to participate in the economic development of the country can only do so if they 'come back home and get pieces of land'. Yet, Zimbabweans do not need to be physically present to direct business or to be partners in successful economic ventures. The government can easily facilitate their broad participation in the economy by opening certain areas of investment for the diaspora. For example, the transitional government can facilitate the diaspora's participation in the economy by offering them a chance to buy shares in the various government parastatals that are being privatised.

A look at a country like India whose main policy focus towards its diaspora has been on its potential contribution to the country's development through direct and portfolio investment, helps to illustrate this point. In order to capitalise on its large diaspora, Indian IT entrepreneurs and professionals have set up a number of business networks, notably the IndUS Entrepreneur which has grown to 25 chapters and the Silicon Valley Indian Professional Association (SIPA) of Santa Clara, California which has over 1 800 members. These networks match experienced entrepreneurs and start-up managers in a mentoring relationship. Furthermore, they back up promising enterprises in both the host country (eg the United States) and the home country with venture capital (Makina, 2010: 42).

However, the involvement of the diaspora in the political and economic development of Zimbabwe cannot be a one-way process. The diaspora also has to take the initiative and create political and economic spaces for itself rather than wait for the government and other players in Zimbabwe to invite them to participate. So far, the Zimbabwean diaspora has not shown much initiative. While there have certainly been a number of Zimbabweans and Zimbabwean diaspora organisations that have actively sought to participate in the political and economic processes at home, most Zimbabweans have not actively sought to be agents of change in their communities and the country at large. Many have adopted a wait-and-see attitude, and have not put much energy in to creating spaces for themselves and others. Most business entrepreneurs in the diaspora, for instance, have not taken advantage of some of the few openings in the economy to help the economy grow. With a few exceptions like Shingi Munyeza of African Sun, Strive Masiyiwa of Econet and Trevor Ncube of Associated Newspapers, who have been prepared to take risks and expand their operations since the formation of the GPA government, a significant number of Zimbabwean business entrepreneurs have remained on the sidelines, 'waiting for the right moment to come'.

Diasporas' ability to mobilise for homeland contributions can be explained, in part, through network theory and associated social capital. The most commonly identified factor necessary for effective mobilisation is the creation of a sense of solidarity and community identity. Community identity enables the harnessing of diverse resources and capacities, such as material resources, skills and organisational resources (Brinkerhoff, 2006: 11).

The Zimbabwean diaspora, though largely connected back to Zimbabwe due to familial ties, is not well integrated into associations and networks in the same way that other African diasporas like the Senegalese, Ghanaian, Nigerian and Ethiopian diasporas are (Muzondidya, 2007; Landau, 2007). In its recent

research on Zimbabweans in the United States, the Council of Zimbabwe found out that 80 per cent of diaspora Zimbabweans in the United States were not involved with a diaspora organisation (Council for Zimbabwe, 2010). While Pasura (2009, 2010) and Makina *et al* (2010: 35) argue that a lively civil society has developed in the Zimbabwean diaspora community, Zimbabwean diaspora associations and networks are not as vibrant as those of other diasporas from other developing countries, especially those with a longer history of migration and settlement (Muzondidya, 2006). The few vibrant Zimbabwean diaspora community organisations that exist have been formed by Zimbabweans from the drought-prone and underdeveloped regions of Matabeleland and Midlands who have been marginalised from both the state and national development and have been mobilising resources for the development of their marginalised regions since the 1980s (*Africa Report*, 2007; *Sunday News*, 9 March 2008; Maphosa, 2008: 4). Such organisations include the London-based Mthwakazi Action Group on Genocide, a political pressure group mobilising material and moral support for victims of the *Gukurahundi* violence of the 1980s and Mthwakazi Foundation, a public charity organisation registered in the United States and Canada but with branches in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The organisation's primary objective is to offer assistance to the peoples and communities of Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, Midlands and Bulawayo by improving their access to clean water, improving their access to healthcare by providing aid to hospitals by rehabilitating existing hospitals, providing healthcare supplies, and improving their access to education by providing aid to schools by rehabilitating physical structures, providing benches, tables and classrooms and school supplies that include books, pens and pencils (<http://www.mthwakazionline.org>; <http://www.mthwakazifoundation.org>, accessed 23 January 2008).

Apart from these community organisations formed by earlier migrants from the south-western parts of the country, and a few burial societies by labour migrants in South Africa, Zimbabweans have not really organised themselves into vibrant homeland networks with a developmental agenda. A number of countries that have positively benefitted from their diasporas' contribution to development, such as China, Senegal and Ghana, have all depended on strong diaspora networks and associations to connect with their diasporas and mobilise diaspora resources (Brinkerhoff, 2006: 11; African Diaspora Policy Centre, 2010). For the country to be able to mobilise diaspora resources more effectively, Zimbabwean diaspora communities will need to develop more vibrant networks and associations with a strong and imaginative leadership. Once the Zimbabwean diaspora community is

much more organised, its struggle for the rights and interests of Zimbabweans in both the host countries and Zimbabwe will be more enhanced.

Much more importantly, the Zimbabwean diaspora's contribution to struggles for democratisation and economic development in Zimbabwe can be significantly enhanced if both external and internal struggles are synchronised. Currently, there is little synchronisation or cooperation between internal and external struggles. There is in fact antagonism between internal and external CSOs and activists. The recent attempts by the Development Foundation Zimbabwe during its December 2010 conference to create linkages between internal and external activism is thus a step in the right direction.

Zimbabweans in the diaspora need to come up with new and imaginative ways of reconnecting with Zimbabwe and engaging the state. All over the continent, rapid progress in communications technology is providing Africans with new opportunities for political networking and enterprise. An increasing number of Africans in the diaspora are reconnecting to their home countries in imaginative new ways involving creative development strategies (Chikezie, 2005). Multiple communications technologies – websites, blogs, online newspapers, chat rooms, live radio feeds, mobile phone text messaging – all exist now to keep the avid diaspora and those still in Zimbabwe informed about developments.

Conclusion

The Zimbabwean diaspora has played a significantly important role in the political and economic development of the country since the beginning of the post-2000 crisis. This role, often rarely appreciated by both the Zimbabwean Government and public, has helped to keep the country going. The role of the diaspora in the country's political and economic transition has become even more important in the current transitional period where the country needs to dig through all its reserves located both inside and outside the country to overcome its mammoth reconstruction challenges. The country's skills needs, for example, cannot be overcome without Zimbabwe having to look at its children in the diaspora for help. At the same time, the diaspora will have to contribute significantly to the country's financial and economic resource requirements for Zimbabwe to rebuild its economy and infrastructure destroyed by a decade of economic and political crises. On the political level, the current transitional and democratisation processes can only succeed if there is a fruitful engagement and exchange of ideas between Zimbabweans at home and their counterparts in the diaspora.

The Zimbabwean diaspora

However, the Zimbabwean diaspora's contribution towards Zimbabwe's political and economic progress is currently being constrained by a number of factors. These range of factors constraining the positive contribution of the diaspora towards the country's development, include political processes such as the lack of acknowledgement of the diaspora as an important constituency to be consulted by the key political parties, and institutional frameworks, including laws and policies that do not promote diaspora involvement in the country's developments. The diaspora's contribution towards the development of Zimbabwe has also been limited by the rigidity in policy frameworks, displayed in both government and private sector's emphasis on human capital return rather than diaspora skills exchange and circulation. The Zimbabwean diaspora itself has also not organised itself into a vibrant force capable of shaping political and economic processes in Zimbabwe. It has also failed to organise itself into a vibrant community with a mass appeal and has equally failed to create positive networks and synergies among itself and with Zimbabweans at home. It has also not effectively utilised emerging opportunities to become a positive influence for change and development.

The diaspora's positive contribution towards political and economic developments at home can only be enhanced through the addressing of the wide range of organisational, policy and institutional challenges highlighted above. Addressing these challenges will require initiative from the diaspora, an imaginative leadership and the development of cooperative linkages between government, the private sector, civics and diasporas.

NOTES

- 1 According to Internet World Stats, internet usage in Zimbabwe grew by 165 per cent between 2005 and 2008. Ranking tenth in Africa, in terms of numbers of users of the internet, Zimbabwe had 13 521 000 internet users – a growth of 2 602 per cent from 50 000 in 2000. See Internet World Stats, 2008. www.internetworldstats.com [Accessed 3 February 2011].

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CHAPTER FIVE

The role of women in Zimbabwe's transition

Kudakwashe Chitsike

In the early post-independence period between 1980 and 1985 Zimbabwe made great inroads in promoting and protecting women's rights through legislation such as the Legal Age of Majority Act. However, 30 years later, there is little respect for women's rights in Zimbabwe as legal discrimination and violence are justified through cultural and religious arguments.¹ The government's failure to uphold women's rights as full and equal citizens despite existing local legislation and signing and ratification of regional and international legislation,² sends a clear message to the community that women's lives are less precious and that violence and discrimination against them is tolerable. Violence tends to increase during periods of conflict such as elections³ and women's bodies are very often used as the battlefields. The implication is that women do need to take an active role and articulate their unique experiences because when the conflict is over, their issues may not be addressed during the transition and the likelihood of recurrence is greater.

Zimbabwean women have been involved in politics since before the liberation war, with Mbuya Nehanda (a woman, who, together with Kaguvi, led the first Shona rebellion against the British South Africa Company in the 1880s). Zimbabwean women either joined the liberation war voluntarily or because they had to flee the Rhodesian security forces. They ended up playing different roles in the struggle and these varied from carrying ammunition for the guerrillas, to domestic chores such as cooking. Thousands of young and old women cooked for, washed and fed guerrillas in the second *Chimurenga* in rural areas in Zimbabwe. Hundreds of women lost their lives at the hands of the Rhodesian forces as a result of their participation in the war.⁴ As men and women experience life differently whether in times of peace or war, it is thus important to add the voices

of both men and women when decisions have to be taken about changes that will occur particularly during transition. Although women are included at all levels of decision making in Zimbabwe, their participation is usually a token to appease women's pressure groups.⁵ The political arena has always been dominated by males and women have had to fight for their inclusion and to remain in those positions. They have fought patriarchal attitudes perpetuated not only by men but by other women who believe that a woman's place is in the home.⁶

An important factor that has to be taken into consideration is that not all women are economically empowered to stand on their own and this has serious ramifications in all aspects of their lives. However, one line of argument is that women ought to stop placing too much emphasis on their victimhood status and take responsibility for the way they are treated and viewed by society. This is partly because women too have been perpetrators in Zimbabwe's conflict, beating up people and acting as informers and snitches, inciting violence, cheering, singing and dancing while people were being beaten at the 'militia bases' that were set up all over the country during the 2008 election period when the country experienced unprecedented violence.⁷ The two main presidential candidates did not achieve the 51 per cent required to win the March harmonised election and a run-off was to be held between Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai. Tsvangirai then pulled out before the election in June 2008 because of the violence.

The last 10 years have led to a regression in the gains that Zimbabwean women had amassed in the years since independence. During the 1980s and 1990s, there was a drive to promote and protect women's rights but this was disrupted by the socio-economic and political crisis that the country is currently trying to break out of. Ordinary women in Zimbabwe lack the confidence to engage in politics after what they have been subjected to in the name of politics, from name-calling to rape and murder.⁸ The link between politics and violence in Zimbabwe has also resulted in a lot of women shunning politics thus eroding the gains of the early years. For consultations on the transition to succeed, women have to first receive basic education on their rights again, then political education, so that they can better understand the democratic process and participate as equals coming from a knowledge basis. There have been a number of African countries that have gone through successful transitions that have taken women's experiences into account that Zimbabwe can learn from, for example Liberia, Kenya and Sierra Leone.

There are different transitional justice mechanisms that can be applied in Zimbabwe but it is important to apply those that best take into consideration

women's issue. These mechanisms are described below, looking specifically at how they affect women.

Prosecution

In some instances, some countries have stated that there can be no transition if perpetrators of violence are not taken before the courts of law and prosecuted, convicted and sentenced. In the Zimbabwean GPA signed on 15 September 2008, bringing into effect the IG, there is a provision for investigations and prosecution of perpetrators of political violence but this has not yet been done⁹. This stalling is causing concern, particularly within women's groups, as it is estimated that thousands of women were victims of political violence including rape and other forms of sexual abuse. Failing to punish these perpetrators is not only irresponsible but dangerous as the likelihood of recurrence is great. However, prosecution must take into account the costs, as criminal trials are long, slow and expensive. It is important to keep in mind that the trials will be held in existing court structures that are likely to be compromised as in Zimbabwe the entire law enforcement system, including the judiciary, is partisan. An evaluation of the court system has to be carried out first to establish whether fair trials can be held. In order for the cases to be tried successfully, the rule of law must prevail but this is usually unlikely after the immediate removal of a regime. This is because security forces and court personnel remain in place and tend to undermine the process to protect themselves. Unless a constitutional commitment is made to ensure that all perpetrators are held accountable, prosecution will not be effective. It has been recommended that new governments should wait and deal with these issues after they are reformed. The law enforcement system, including the police and the judiciary is not victim (women) friendly. The lack of understanding of the judiciary process, transport costs to and from the courts are only a few of the challenges women face when they attempt to access the judicial system to have their cases heard. The fact that there are very few women legislators (14 per cent) and female judges is a major obstacle in the Zimbabwean scenario. The general sentiment is that women are not well-represented in parliament and in the judiciary hence it would be difficult for their needs to be addressed.

There is need for security sector reform¹⁰ during the transitional phase, especially where security forces are routinely mentioned as perpetrators of violence. Security sector reform does not have to start with the service chiefs; the entry point should be at the middle management who are able to influence the

rank and file. This reform should include an engendered training for personnel, looking also at the reasons behind their behaviour and attitudes towards the promotion and protection of human rights, more specifically women's rights. It must also look at the police's involvement in the violence¹¹ and the other issues of coercion, fear of their superiors and of losing their jobs. The reform should scrutinise issues such as remuneration and resources allocated to the forces, both financial, human and infrastructure.¹² For the success of the security sector reform, there should also be inclusion of the communities to ensure that there is ownership of the process and an understanding of the role of the sector, especially where it has been regarded as partisan and an integral part of the state machinery of violence.

The issue of impunity poses one of the biggest challenges to women's participation in the transitional phase. The culture of impunity,¹³ which has existed in Zimbabwe since independence in 1979, is a result of the 'forgive and forget' deal that was adopted when amnesty was granted for all those involved in the struggle for and against majority rule, yet all sides involved were responsible for many atrocities, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. After the *Gukurahundi* between 1980 and 1987¹⁴ where approximately 20 000 people were said to have been killed, the policy of reconciliation was adopted again. Between 1988 and 1998 there were two general elections that were marred by violence perpetrated against the opposition by state security forces as well as the ruling party members and supporters, but after each election, amnesties were proclaimed such as the General Notice 424A of 1990 and Clemency Order No. 1 of 1995. After the 2000 and 2002 election periods, Clemency Orders 1 of 2000 and 2002 were enacted to pardon anyone involved in political violence during these periods.

In 2008 the culture of impunity was reinforced as state agents, war veterans, youth militia and supporters of the ruling party carried out politically motivated violations and the state condoned them. The police¹⁵ merely turned a blind eye to the human rights violations that took place during the election pre-run-off period. When reports were made to them, the response was that they had received authority from the top not to accept any reports of political violence. This meant that perpetrators were given free reign to do as they pleased. Human rights groups,¹⁶ however, documented the violations as the victims had nowhere to turn to for assistance. Many women and girls were sexually abused during this period;¹⁷ the statistics, however, are difficult to determine as many of them have not come out in the open because of fear and the stigma attached to rape and some

women are afraid of spousal abandonment¹⁸ and embarrassment to their families. In Zimbabwe, this is compounded by the HIV/AIDS stigma resulting in most women's reluctance to report the incident and to be tested and therefore they do not seek medical attention immediately after the assault. The consequence of this is that they do not receive post-exposure prophylaxis and counselling and they end up transmitting it to the very family members they are trying to protect by not telling them of their ordeal.

Although there is now international recognition of sexual violence as a security issue through UN Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1880, the newly adopted 1960,¹⁹ and the appointment of the first Special Representative on Sexual Violence, protection for women on the ground will only be achieved if there is a zero tolerance to sexual violence attitude.²⁰ The resolutions state that those who commit and command sexual violence should be prosecuted and excluded from law enforcement. The resolutions also reaffirm the inclusion of women in formal peace processes and women's inclusion in peacekeeping missions in the hope that this will encourage women to report acts of sexual violence. In Zimbabwe, there is denial that sexual violence occurs in the political power contestation process. There have been a few cases that have been prosecuted but the majority of the women are afraid to speak out against the perpetrators as they see them as powerful and together with the issues of impunity, the unresponsiveness of the police and the dilapidated state medical facilities, the deterring factors are thus high. There has not been any police or army official who has been removed or disciplined for participating in sexual violence or refusing to accept a report of such nature. The UN proposed that each country should develop an action plan on Resolution 1325 and this is yet to be done in Zimbabwe. There must also be guarantees that women are consulted and centrally involved in all processes that aim to end sexual violence.²¹ The women must be encouraged to speak out when violence occurs and have the perpetrators arrested. It is therefore necessary to set up witness protection programmes where victims can speak freely without fear of reprisals from the perpetrators.

Truth and reconciliation

A popular mechanism of transitional justice is the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC), as was the case in South Africa. The problem with this is conditional amnesty; the conditions being that the perpetrators acknowledge and disclose their part in the violations or risk prosecution if the

testimony is deemed to be incomplete or untrue. This conditional amnesty comes in the form of truth commissions, which many countries have adopted. The advantages of having conditional amnesty are that it can hold perpetrators not willing to come forward liable for prosecution, and it encourages cooperation for those willing to come forward. Truth commissions are seen as:

...an alternative means of dealing with a nation's past, and one which, it was argued had a great deal more potential for victims... truth commissions were able to provide a more sympathetic and supportive environment for victims to tell their 'stories' than that provided by the more formal proceedings normally associated with criminal trials and that they had the potential to be more responsive to victims' psychological, financial and symbolic needs.²²

International experiences, for example, in Sierra Leone and Ghana, have shown that the success of a truth commission is dependent on the existence of sufficient time, human resources and capital.²³ There has to be operational independence and although it is supported by government, it must not be seen to be a political body but must have a strong and flexible mandate. The broad inclusion of actors in all aspects of the process, political consensus and the ability to implement all of its recommendations are seen as positive attributes of a successful commission.

Truth commissions are limited, however, as they cannot reveal the complete truth. For instance, they cannot hear all the cases, and, in most cases, they lack the power to perform searches and seizures and cannot corroborate the testimonies. These commissions must guard against political interference, their reports should have realistic recommendations and they must be strong enough to have their recommendations enforced.

Although knowing the truth is important, it is not enough in Zimbabwe²⁴ especially with regard to post-independence abuses as these occurred in a non-war situation. Abuses against women cannot be successfully dealt with merely by the perpetrator stating exactly what happened, reparations and compensation have to be included as part of the process.²⁵ The fact that amnesty has generally been abused in Zimbabwe makes this process less favourable. It should be done away with as it can be dangerous and lead to impunity and as has been seen in the country, it can be used to reward perpetrators for committing violence in the name of party politics.

An acceptable fact is that truth commissions are an acknowledgement of the truth and they serve as documentation for future generations.²⁶ Amnesties should

be based on the truth so that everyone knows what the amnesty is for. They should be granted where they serve the purposes of reparations and prevention, and be an acknowledgement of the truth and be approved by the nation. There are certain crimes where amnesty cannot be availed. Several reasons why amnesty for human rights crimes as well as economic crimes is generally considered inappropriate were listed by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations' Subcommission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights as follows:

- they violate victims' rights to redress and can also be in variance with state obligations under international law to punish perpetrators of human rights crimes;
- they can subvert the rule of law by allowing perpetrators of human rights crimes to unfairly escape liability;
- they can undermine both general and specific deterrence through the impression that serious crimes may be committed with impunity.

They can also promote the spirit of private vengeance as victims become disillusioned and take the law into their own hands (victims turning into perpetrators).

Sexual abuse against women certainly falls under the subcommission's list. The gender aspect of losses suffered through arson and looting should be taken into account. A lot of Zimbabwean women are not able to recover from these losses because of the meltdown of the economy since 2000.

The South African TRC is seen to have gone the furthest in meshing truth and reconciliation, effectively saying that truth is a precondition for reconciliation but it does not mean that reconciliation is an automatic consequence of the revelation of the information. The TRC was, however, criticised²⁷ for not being gender sensitive as the appearance of women was mainly to talk about the experiences of their men rather than their own experiences. Women's groups were not involved in the creation of the TRC or the drafting of the legislation that governed it. Women's organisations did not see the TRC as a priority and they focused on building a new society. Human rights abuses perpetrated against women because of their biological make-up, ie rape, have to be acknowledged and addressed as part of any process of reconciliation. Women have to take a central role to ensure that their experiences are addressed and do not occur again.²⁸ The way the South African TRC was framed did not recognise women's experiences in their own right but subsequent TRC's in other African countries have recognised women.²⁹

The TRC was perceived to have been much less successful in bringing about reconciliation than in bringing out the truth. Reconciliation is much more difficult to accomplish when the wounds are immensely deep. It may be too much to ask. One can never forget how difficult it must be to reconcile! Reconciliation has to happen on the individual level (Jay & Erika Vora, 2004, *The Effectiveness of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*).

Documentation and memorialisation

Although documentation is primarily seen as part of the truth and reconciliation process, it can stand alone as a method of healing. Documenting and making sure the history of human rights violations is not forgotten is another approach to dealing with the past as it honours both the dead and the survivors as well as ensuring that the abuses do not happen again. This falls under the ambit of truth and reconciliation, as 'memorials have become a means of reclaiming an oppressed history; remembrance in honouring those that have died or that have been victimised during conflict'.³⁰ Such memorials become important especially in countries where poverty is an issue, and where financial reparations will never be enough where many lives were lost. The purpose of documentation and memorialisation is never to forget what happened but it will be dogged by controversy as the truth is often contested between the victims and the perpetrators. It also runs the risk of opening up old wounds.

It is necessary to remember and acknowledge those victimised, and, in many post-conflict societies such as Guatemala, South Africa and El Salvador³¹ memorials have become a significant part of the transformation and transitional justice process. The way a society remembers what is important and how it will be represented in history is what will promote the protection of human rights and ensure peace building in the future. Though documenting is essential, it has to be gender sensitive, especially with regard to naming the victims of sexual violence as this can cause stigma. The people responsible for the documentation should be well-versed in gender-based politically motivated violence as well as possess some training in gender awareness. Crimes against women in Zimbabwe have been well-documented but there is a sense that this is not enough, more needs to be done for the victims for them to feel that their pain has been acknowledged by the state and the perpetrators have been held accountable.

Restorative justice

Restorative justice³² is a way to address past wrongs with emphasis on the need for healing of both the wronged and the wrongdoers. There are proponents of restorative justice that say that this is the best way to deal with the past, as this involves the full participation of the victims and their communities together with the perpetrators. Healing both the physical and the psychological wounds of the survivors may be a strategy as it not only looks at the individuals but also is dependent on linking individual healings to reparation of the community and the nation as a whole. It implies restoring a normalised everyday life that can recreate and confirm a people's sense of being and belonging. In most violent conflicts, victimisation is not limited to the physical injury of the person but also extends to the psychological trauma that the witnesses of the violent experience went through. This includes children who were forced to watch terrible things happen to their mothers and other family members.³³

The aim of restorative justice is to restore relations as soon as possible between victims and offenders and the community. This only works if the offender admits the pain caused and if the victim is emotionally ready to meet the offender. There also has to be consensus that it is a community problem and other people should be part of the process as well. This is a holistic approach to looking at the past but if any of the parties are not willing to come to the table, it will not work. The approach has to be aware of the gender dynamics and take them into consideration before attempting to bring victims and perpetrators together. Both parties need to be adequately prepared beforehand.

A healing and empowerment workshop called *The Tree of Life*, that was originally developed as an approach for assisting unemployed youth, was introduced in Zimbabwe in 2004. It was adapted to the needs of Zimbabwean political violence victims living in exile in South Africa in 2002.³⁴ This process has made inroads in communities as village headmen are consulted to ensure that they are aware of the healing process and in most of the areas *The Tree of Life* has been welcomed, is spreading throughout the country and has become a fully fledged organisation with full-time staff. It is involving both men and women and where necessary the groups are divided according to sex as some women are uncomfortable describing their experiences in the presence of men.

Reparations

After perpetration of human rights abuses, a nation has a moral obligation to attend to the needs of the victims especially given the fact that prosecutions are highly unlikely. Reparation is one way of dealing with victims without compromising the political stability and it is in fact an obligation under international law. Reparative justice works well as it is healing-centred and does not focus on just punishing the perpetrators but on healing the victims and creating an environment for the community to move forward. As with restorative justice, it is based on traditional justice practices and principles used in indigenous cultures.

In Zimbabwe there has not been any attempt to compensate victims by the government but NGOs have been advocating for reparations and compensation for the victims of human rights abuses and torture since 2000. Where there is to be compensation and reparations, gender justice³⁵ should be the guideline and the definition of victim has to be addressed to ensure that both primary and secondary victims are considered, looking not only at wives and mothers but all dependents. Reparations directly benefit the affected women and girls and the proper implementation would allow them to start their lives afresh giving them a sense of satisfaction and to a certain extent, prevent the recurrence of crimes and violations against women.

In 2007, after the UN General Assembly's adoption of the *Basic principles and guidelines on the right to a remedy and reparation for victims of gross violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law*, a group of activists and survivors of sexual violence rallied together and drafted the Nairobi Declaration on Women's and Girls' Rights to Remedy and Reparation. The declaration, although a non-binding document, calls for just, effective as well as prompt reparation measures which are comparative to the gravity of the crimes as well as the harm suffered. If the crime committed has permanent effects on the victim, then the reparation awarded should be higher. This is usually the case if the victim has suffered from sexual violence. The Nairobi Declaration is an instrument that takes into consideration the welfare of women and if implemented, the world will see great strides being taken in the advancement of women's rights in Africa.

The concept of reparations is of paramount importance because it will ensure that governments are responsible and accountable for their actions. The declaration calls upon national governments to bear primary responsibility to provide remedy and reparations within an environment that would guarantee safety and human security. This is an important provision, especially if applied

to Zimbabwe, because it would ensure that government agencies would not flagrantly abuse international human rights as the state would have to pay reparations for those abuses. This will definitely be an effective measure against human rights abuses. Reconciliation is equally an important goal of peace and reparation processes but it can only be achieved with women and girl victims' full participation, while respecting their right to dignity, privacy, safety and security.

Civil society led by women's groups should drive policies and practices on reparations as in the Nairobi Declaration, and the Zimbabwean Government should work together with civil society groups to guarantee civil society autonomy and space for the representation of women's and girls' voices in all their diversity to deal with the past atrocities. As the largest number of Zimbabwean women victims are from the rural areas, they are interested primarily in reparations as they want to get the property they lost back.

Steps have been taken before by the international community to afford women necessary and special protection by introducing instruments and setting up of institutions which function as checks upon governments in relation to gender-based violence.³⁶ Regardless of whether countries have ratified these treaties or not, these instruments have not taken into consideration the situation on the ground, as they have failed to make an impact on the very people the instruments were attempting to serve because the women affected were not consulted. The most important thing, though, is to ensure that decisions should not be made on behalf of women without their consultation.

Women have multiple roles to play in the transition to democracy including being peacemakers and educators.³⁷ Their voices should thus be heard while transforming conflict into durable peace. The culture of fear that has existed since 2000 has had lasting effects that prevent women from taking up a more central position in the transitional phase as there is no protection from the law for those that attempt to exercise their rights in the democratic process.³⁸

The participation of women in the political transitions of their respective nations is compromised by their biological and social roles in the society. At times, their role as mothers affects their involvement on the political terrain. Childbearing, rearing, guidance and protection require a greater percentage of women's time, effort and commitment, and this tends to compromise their continuity and consistence in full-time participation in active politics. Hence, this biological and social role is the major factor that marginalises women across the globe into predominantly campaigners, supporters and voters for men. The rough nature of the political terrain, associated with verbal abuse, de-campaigning,

backbiting, politically motivated violence, injuries, unaccountable deaths, spying on each other and many other dirty strategies, force most women to refrain from active engagement. As a result, the few courageous women find themselves being appointed into the upper echelons of the political party structures, leaving the majority in the grass roots where they are close to their families and can give more attention and commitment to their children. Representation at higher levels, therefore, may not make up for the 50 per cent which is, in the case of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, the ideal requirement. Different kinds of constitutional arrangements can set quotas to achieve this.³⁹ Even with the constitutional provisions in place, the gender balance may not be realised, because the majority of women tend to recoil into their families. Hence, the role of women in Zimbabwe's democratic transition is compromised by their lower numbers in the higher levels of political party structures and the inherent problems of mobilising as a movement to demand recognition of their rights.

The role of women in a democratic transition

Ideally the transition in Zimbabwe should respond to the dictates of the institutions of democracy and encourage women to join in the political processes of the country. The decade 1999 to 2009 in Zimbabwe witnessed a great momentum in women's involvement in opposition politics as well as a high record of women who showed interest in campaigning for parliamentary seats. This marked a shift from the position of being citizens who voted men into political power into being prospective candidates for political leadership. Women who suffered a great deal in the eight years prior to the signing of the GPA were let down by the fact that women were not well-represented at the mediation talks. Only one woman from the smaller faction of the MDC was on the negotiation team and she had the responsibility of catering for the needs of 52 per cent of the population. Women's participation was not seen as a priority although efforts have been made since independence in 1980 to upgrade the position of women in society in Zimbabwe. It is at this early stage of reconciliation that women's voices need to be heard as women's experiences of conflict are different and the experiences should be handled in a gender-sensitive manner.

The GPA created the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration as an acknowledgement that the country is in transition and it recognises that there is a need to address the violence and the polarisation that has characterised the Zimbabwean crisis. The vision of the Organ is to be the

bridge to take Zimbabweans from conflict through this transition to the post-conflict peaceful Zimbabwe which all citizens desire. It is made up of three co-principals from the parties to the GPA and its role is to provide healing for the victims of political violence and promote reconciliation and integration between the supporters of the different political parties. The Organ's mandate is not clear and one of the Organ's co-principals, Sekai Holland, from the MDC-T, admitted this in May 2010;⁴⁰ she did, however, state that its core strategy of implementing its programmes is through multiple partnerships: local, regional and international in order to get at the heart of national healing of Zimbabweans by Zimbabweans. It is important for women's groups⁴¹ to engage with the Organ as one of its key partners so that the experiences of women are included in its programmes. There are some sectors that do not believe in engaging with the Organ as it is considered flawed. The Organ has been criticised for not being victim-centred and does not take their views into consideration but it is the only process that exists at the moment to try and deal with the past hence it is important to interact with it. It is necessary to ensure that the Organ understands women's needs in relation to peace, justice, democracy and good governance informed by the voices of the women.

In 2008 there was an increase in the number of prospective female political candidates for the two main political parties in the country; ZANU PF and the MDC. One of the main reasons why there was a high record of prospective candidates for the political posts was because women were tired of the crisis that had engrossed the country for more than a decade. They felt that it was now time for them to stand for the interests of their children, their motherland as well as their communities rather than wait for the men to continue doing it for them. The increased participation of women was also made possible by the gender policy of the MDC which presented women with opportunities to genuinely represent their constituencies in the august house but because of the general status of women, the calibre of the women in parliament today is not impressive. For women to be able to play a substantial role in the transition, they need to partner with those in positions of decision making. As we recognise the lack of capacity of the majority of the women parliamentarians, capacity building programmes should be held for them to enable them to articulate the relevant issues in a male-dominated environment.

The role of women in church groups should not be underestimated as it provides an opportunity for women to discuss issues pertaining to their daily lives. It is in these church groups that women from different political parties meet

hence church-based organisations should utilise the opportunity. Zimbabwean women can learn from the Liberian women who played a pivotal role in building peace. Women from different churches came together and their efforts resulted in contributing to the end of war. It is important to look at what other women have done in other areas around the world in order to push for peace and a successful transition to democracy.⁴²

One of the biggest roles women can play is to educate their families on non-violence as they are the ones with more influence over their families' activities and they are the mothers of the youth being used by the political leaders. The women's movement in Zimbabwe lobbied for the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act in 2006 and this has been one of its greatest achievements. The movement had awareness raising workshops in communities on the importance of the Act and it continues to have programmes to ensure the implementation of the Act. More recently, in October 2009, the movement celebrated another victory when the government ratified the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development after actively engaging the government, mainly through the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development. This protocol is important as it recognises women's rights to protection against gender-based violence. The next lobbying should be for the domestication of this protocol. Efforts are being made to ensure that women's experiences and opinions are recognised and that they play a role in the transition. The women's movement is playing its part in the call by civil society to end violence and have the perpetrators arrested so as to end impunity before a peaceful transition can progress smoothly, especially for perpetrators of gender-based crimes.⁴³

The rise of women's movements

As a reaction to the political dispensation that characterised the Zimbabwean political and economic crisis in 2000, women organised themselves and sought a platform for articulating their perspectives towards the prevailing situation. This response witnessed the rise of women's movements on the Zimbabwean political field. The resurfacing of the women's movement was critical as a vehicle that would drive the women's agenda and organise the women's voice as a political currency in political processes that continue to unfold in the country's transition. Zimbabwe plunged into a social, economic and political crisis which slowed the efforts to get a new constitution.

In 1997, when the NCA came into being, women's groups had an

opportunity to make a dent on the male-dominated political landscape. The NCA coalition was led by a task force comprising 30 per cent membership from women's groups. The NCA, particularly under the leadership of Thoko Matshe, a champion activist for women's rights, embarked on mobilisation, education, creating local and national stage deliberations, lobbying government and engaging other CSOs at the local, regional and international levels. It also carried out comparative study tours to other countries which had undergone constitutional reforms and many other reform programmes. With the formation of the NCA, women became more active participants in the growing political debate. The 'framework of the Constitution was described by NCA members as a "non-political" way of talking about the exercise of politics'.⁴⁴ With their participation in the NCA, women's political issues gained visibility and acknowledgement.

During the constitutional reform process in 1999, the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) was born. WCoZ is a network of 60 women's groups and hundreds of women's rights activists; it includes women's organisations, clubs, associations and the women's wings of political parties. It has eight chapters around the country giving women an opportunity to meet and engage collectively on issues affecting women and the girl children in Zimbabwe. Its central role is to provide a core point for activism on women and girls' rights. The objectives of the Women's Coalition are among others:

- to provide a focal point for joint activism at macro-level on topical and cross-cutting issues affecting women;
- to mobilise women to support identified issues and to ensure that the women's question remains central to the national agenda;
- to coordinate the participation of women in the activities of the coalition;
- to bring women from diverse backgrounds to advocate the attainment and enjoyment of their rights and freedoms;
- to bring women from all walks of life to speak with one voice;
- to build the capacity of women's rights activists to articulate the demands of women;
- to facilitate the sharing of information among its members;
- to form strategic alliances locally, regionally and internationally for the furtherance of its objectives;
- to carry out field and desk research on issues affecting women in order to develop and build on theories with a view to enhance the coalition's efforts in promoting the rights of women.

In April 2009, WCoZ provided women with a platform from which to participate in the transitional processes after the political crisis and economic downturn. This was done through a national conference bringing women together to discuss how they can contribute to the transitional process. Over 200 women's groups were represented at this conference. WCoZ brought females from diverse backgrounds to collectively advocate for the attainment and enjoyment of their rights, and chief among them, the right to occupy the central position in the transitional activities, and thus, contribute towards determining Zimbabwe's political and economic destiny. Thus, at this point in the country's historical trajectory, WCoZ embarked on a spree to mobilise women to participate actively in all aspects of the transitional process through conscientising women leaders from all over Zimbabwe's rural and urban centres and all political parties. To achieve its intended goal, WCoZ organised one-day conferences to discuss the contents of the GPA as they relate to women. The conferences were also expected to provide a forum to discuss critical areas of concern in the transitional process, for example, the constitutional review, transitional justice mechanisms, socio-economic and political reconstruction, women's participation in the transitional governance, just to mention a few. In a way, the day-long conferences were a way of strategising on the way forward for Zimbabwean women.

On the eve of the GPA, the women's movements attempted to assist the womenfolk to identify the challenges emanating from the GPA and empower them to participate meaningfully at all levels afforded. The whole idea was to ensure that women participated in the changing political and economic landscape in Zimbabwe and key among the changes was the constitutional reform. The day-long conferences called upon the daughters of Zimbabwe to rise and claim their place, to get rid of complacency and stop agonising, but participate in nation building.

Following the formation of WCoZ in 2002, WOZA,⁴⁵ a social justice movement calling upon women to stand up and fight for their rights was formed in Bulawayo. The movement is cognisant of the fact that women faced some of the most ruthless intimidation during Zimbabwe's crisis period. The movement, therefore, aims to:

- provide women, from all walks of life, with a united voice to speak out on issues affecting their day-to-day lives;
- empower female leadership that will lead community involvement in pressing for solutions to the current crisis;
- encourage women to stand up for their rights and freedoms;
- lobby and advocate on those issues affecting women and their families.

Based on the principles of strategic non-violence through peaceful civic actions, WOZA creates opportunities to allow Zimbabweans to articulate issues they may be too fearful to raise alone. WOZA has conducted over 50 protests in its five-year existence and over 2 500 women have spent time in police custody for up to 48 hours or more. These women, the front-line human rights defenders, have demonstrated a willingness to suffer beatings and unbearable conditions in prison cells to exercise their constitutional rights and fundamental freedoms.⁴⁶

WOZA members have suffered violations perpetrated by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), the CIO, war veterans and the youth militia. They have been assaulted, tortured, endured *falanga* (a form of torture where the feet are beaten), insulted by police officers and made to undergo humiliating and degrading treatment. These violations mainly occur during or after the demonstrations. WOZA actions are always peaceful, and began in 2003 when WOZA went to the streets on Valentine's Day and distributed flowers to members of the public as a symbol of love. They have been arrested every year since then for this. The distribution of flowers was also to highlight and counter the government's hate-filled propaganda as well as violent actions towards any group or individual who has a dissenting voice. WOZA is the main women's organisation peacefully marching on the streets demonstrating its displeasure with the political, economic and social state of affairs of Zimbabwe.⁴⁷

To date, WOZA has over 70 000 members countrywide and through its activities, women amid the political unrest and economic derailment sought to undermine their oppressors' power with their own power in order to sap a dictator's strength with their own. The courage showed by the leadership has inspired others and they have received international accolades for their non-violent approach to ending the crisis and establishing a democratic government. According to this movement, 'The future is not a gift: it is an achievement. Every generation helps make its own future'.⁴⁸ In a way the formation of this women's movement was a mechanism of empowering women in preparation for active participation in the highly contested and male-dominated political terrain. And all those who came to join it were seen as participating in a non-violent struggle for a better Zimbabwe.

The movement has many examples to learn from, including as mentioned earlier, the women in Liberia as well as the Rwandan women who are from the first country in Africa to have more than 50 per cent representation in parliament. As part of this learning process, in 2010, the women's movement worked together with the women in the political parties and invited a delegation of seven eminent

African women from Liberia, Uganda, South Africa and Kenya to attend a High Level Dialogue on Women's Empowerment in the Political and Economic Arena.⁴⁹ The purpose of the visit was to express solidarity with Zimbabwean women working to foster democracy and human rights. On 29 April 2010, the women's wings of the political parties in the GPA, ie ZANU PF, MDC-T and MDC-M, signed a resolution agreeing to form a joint committee that would meet on a regular basis to discuss and agree to take the appropriate actions for resolving all issues pertaining to the well-being of the Zimbabwean women and the nation. This shows that the women in political parties are beginning to remove their party hats and focus more on women's issues. WCoZ should thus continue interacting with these women and ensure that the spirit of the resolution is adhered to.⁵⁰

The place of women in the IG

The IG that came into being with the signing of the GPA in September 2008 is still male-dominated just like in the previous governments. Women, who constitute 52 per cent of the population, occupy 14 per cent representation in parliament and 18 per cent in government, despite the GPA stating that government ministerial positions should be divided equally between men and women. The question that still remains is how would these women adequately represent the interests of the 52 per cent of the population? This same question was raised during the SADC-initiated talks, as only one woman was part of the negotiation team. The women's movements have called upon women to devise solutions for addressing the imbalances in leadership, cabinet and parliament. The current constitution reform process provides women with an opportunity to influence the future of women's participation. Women look forward to a people-driven reform process with women adequately represented. The fundamental question here is: How many influential women are there on the political field who can contribute to a meaningful transition and how many are needed?

And by influential women we mean women who can actively participate in transitional processes not those who are elevated to fill the gaps to appear to be positively responding to signed and ratified international and regional conventions, but those who rise on their own and those who can challenge the male-dominated system. It is unfortunate that some women who occupy the political positions are appointed on the basis of affirmative action. The criteria for women's empowerment should not override the aspect of merit, that is, qualification, experience, courage, commitment and impeccable conduct. It is

at this juncture that it has to be highlighted that societal failure to observe and genuinely empower women has great potential to negatively affect the democratic transition of any nation.

In 2009, a survey to find out Zimbabwean women's views on transitional justice and other related issues was conducted in Zimbabwe, a small per cent were interviewed in South Africa and Botswana by the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), WCoZ, the Institute for Democracy in Africa (Idasa) and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). The survey was conducted on the basis that women need to be consulted on issues that have affected them during the last 10 years, and particularly in 2008. One of the reasons was to find out how women want the IG to address their issues through the Organ for National Healing. In this survey, over 2 220 women participated and 85 per cent of them felt that they should have been consulted about the GPA, and 70 per cent stated that women's interests are not represented in the IG; 80 per cent of women stated that their lives had not changed much for the better, since the formation of the IG.⁵¹ On the basis of these findings, it appears that women are aware of the shortcomings of the IG in relation to providing women with the chance to participate in the democratic process and that they need to demand participation in the process and not accept the situation as it is. The women's movement's refusal to accept their exclusion in the outreach programme of the constitutional process should be applauded.

The place and role of women in the constitution-making process

The IG is a product of SADC-mediated talks between ZANU PF and the two formations of the MDC. It aims to capture and reverse the political and socio-economic challenges that confronted the country and adversely affected the quality of life of millions of Zimbabweans. In the lifetime of the GPA, the coalition government has committed to addressing the following key issues; economic recovery, social services sector, a new people-driven constitution, institutional reform, respect and promotion of human rights, mobilising and providing humanitarian aid to all citizens who are in need, and national healing. The constitutional reform process has been recognised as one of the key mechanisms for instituting the rebuilding of systems, structures and pillars of good governance and democracy within Zimbabwe. In pursuance of this, CSOs, meeting under the auspices of the Civil Society Constitutional Coordination Mechanisms, held a

series of meetings to define approaches and minimum principles for meaningful engagement in the constitutional reform process. In this process, the NANGO's role has been to facilitate linkages between civil society and various state institutions on matters around constitutional reforms.

The constitutional building process has availed a rallying point for women for a strategic alliance with other coalitions and a springboard of gender politics into the mainstream of political contestation in Zimbabwe. It has provided them with a chance to lobby for the representation of their requirements, expectations and fears, an opportunity which was never availed to them during the drafting of the current constitution of Zimbabwe. The current constitution of Zimbabwe was adopted as part of the 1979 Lancaster House Agreement, which was conceived and borne out of negotiation undertakings aimed at ending armed conflict between the African nationalist parties of Zimbabwe and the white colonial settlers. The outcome of the negotiations dictated that there be a negotiated constitution, a transitional government that was meant to run until a time the elections were held and a ceasefire was agreed upon.⁵² In the constitution, the only interests taken into consideration were those of the participating males; the minority white settlers of the colonial government and the males representing the dominant parties involved in the conflict.

Women, by virtue of their occupation of the private domestic sphere, were not invited into the process because the constitutional participants viewed the conflict as being between the male Africans within the respective political parties and the colonial settlers. This skewed view of the struggle for liberation determined the nature of the stakeholders who were invited to grace the negotiation process. The outright exclusion of the women from the negotiation forum started with this first major transition.

In 1999, Zimbabwe attempted to rewrite its constitution, as mentioned earlier. This process included women but this draft constitution was rejected by the February 2000 referendum because the final draft did not represent the views of the population. The general consensus was that there was too much political interference and civil society, through the NCA, had a parallel process and drafted its own people-driven democratic constitution. When the government-led constitution process was completed, civil society lobbied for its rejection based on the fact that the process was flawed and not in the best interest of Zimbabwe. The public response was a resounding 'no' to this draft. Although this was a major victory for civil society, this process was the catalyst for the crisis that brought the country to the current situation and this also was the first major

defeat for Robert Mugabe since coming into power in 1980. Resistance to the proposed constitutional process and the defeat at the referendum contributed to the formation of the MDC. This new party, the MDC, (a political party formed by civil society, including the labour movement) came very close to a majority in parliament indicating the dwindling popularity of ZANU PF.

The current constitution-making process is driven by COPAC, made up of 25 members from the three major political parties. The women's movement has rallied together to ensure that women's voices are heard in the constitutional reform process. During the formation of the outreach teams, it was stated that these would be formed on a 50–50 basis but somehow this was then disregarded and a lot of women were replaced on these outreach teams with men. This happened without any consultation and the women's movement was livid, as rumours were circulating that more women were not needed as a few would be adequate to bring women's issues to light.⁵³ This showed that the efforts made over the years for gender equality were not being taken into consideration. Meetings⁵³ were consequently held by the women to ensure their inclusion in the constitutional reform process. All efforts were made to pressure COPAC into ensuring there was adequate representation of women in the outreach process. Meetings were held with the political parties at a high level and press statements were issued expressing the dissatisfaction of the removal of women from the outreach process. In this constitutional reform process, women have to push for justiciable socio-economic and political rights as these do not exist in the current constitution. For instance, Women from Bulawayo have indicated that load-shedding by the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority currently poses one of the biggest threats to women's participation in the constitution-making process. At a meeting to discuss women's involvement in the constitution-making process, organised by the Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association in Makokoba Constituency, women indicated that faced with a situation where they have to make a choice between cooking for their families and participating in the constitution-making process, women would rather have men representing their interests. The meeting indicated that the load-shedding timetable has meant that they would be busy looking for firewood to cook for their families when they should be engaged in nation building. This was reported in the Progressive Residents Association Bulawayo's Residents' Voice, 18 May 2010.

Women are responsible for the health and education of their families and these issues should be included in the constitution. Other issues raised by women in relation to the constitution are citizenship and access to identity documents.

For example, women should be allowed to obtain identity documents for their children without the presence or authority of the father. These are issues that are regarded as trivial by men and not worthy of being put in the constitution but are of importance to women. Here culture is used to justify the status quo but this denial of women's rights to be legally responsible guardians for their children should be done away with.

In a NANGO constitutional review process meeting, women's groups showed that they are taking the constitutional process very seriously and have expressed strong reservations concerning the proposed talking points that COPAC intends to use during the outreach meetings, which have been described as prescriptive and suggestive. These reservations are based on the fact that the output shall not adequately represent the will and intention of the people of Zimbabwe, particularly women. If talking points are outlined during the outreach process there is a very high probability that the women participating will not raise other issues. It was further stated that the language being used in the talking points was too technical and will intimidate the ordinary person. The women's movement is also extremely concerned by the existing gaps within the talking points; key issues affecting the rights of women and equality before the law as well as humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable persons are not adequately addressed. At this meeting the delegates observed that COPAC had not consulted key stakeholders, including civil society, hence the resultant gaps that have been identified in the talking points.

The women's movement reiterated its demands for a minimum of 52 per cent representation in the leadership of political and socio-economic aspects of public life. Women's groups demand equality in terms of opportunities and mainstreaming of gender issues into the constitution-making process.

The operational environment is currently not conducive for the outreach teams to conduct their work, but they have gone out regardless.⁵⁴ There have been reports by CSOs of intimidation and threats of violence during the process throughout the country. According to the Sokwanele Newsletter ZIG Watch: Issue 15, ZANU PF has clandestinely launched Operation Hapana Anotaura (no one speaks) – meant to stop the rural population participating in the decision-making process. Sources say that ZANU PF plans to make sure that grass-roots citizens cannot air their views during the constitutional outreach programme. There's no freedom of assembly, as in some areas gatherings for talks on the constitution – especially where gatherings organised by civil society are disrupted by ZANU PF youth and security forces – show that ZANU PF is unwilling to relinquish power.

They want the country to adopt the Kariba Draft, the constitution favoured by President Mugabe. They know that if the constitutional process is completely people-driven, their hold on power will be lost.

Women are exposed to great security risk in the constitution-making process due to the highly polarised environment. There is overwhelming evidence of ongoing systematic harassments and intimidation of women in order to stifle them from contributing during the outreach process hence men take the lead in making submissions on the content of the constitution. Organisations that are monitoring the process are not immune to the intimidation. Some have been assaulted and arrested, eg monitors from ZESN, ZPP, ZLHR and the Independent Constitution Monitoring Project (ZZZICOMP).

Challenges associated with women's participation in the transition to democracy

One of the major challenges with women's participation in the transition is patriarchy, and society's perception of women is what holds them back. This includes both men and women, as it is said women's involvement in politics is not in line with married life and women who are seen to be involved in politics are considered women of loose morals or wanting to be like men. Women who are activists and involved in politics have been accused of being prostitutes and having nothing better to do as they do not have men and children to look after.⁵⁵ Perceptions play an important role as families are seen to breaking up because of politics especially where the women are the ones running for office and spending so much time at political meetings.

There isn't full equality between men and women as there are still certain things that are considered to be only for men, and not for women, and politics is one of them. Cultural and religious beliefs were also raised as another reason why women are not participating to their full potential. With the patriarchal system in our society, women become subservient to men and men will even quote the Bible to discriminate against women but the Bible is never quoted if it is something that promotes women.

There are also the social issues where women don't see themselves as leaders so for them to vote for another woman leader when they feel that she's not capable of leading them becomes difficult. Politics is not for the faint-hearted, women have to be tough and work twice as hard as men to survive. Women don't engage in politics not by choice, but because they are persuaded by the intimidation and

violence, whether real or perceived, into believing that they can't vote for a fellow woman but must vote for a man. The savvy political leaders brainwash the women into believing that they cannot make independent political choices and because they are not educated they feel inferior and end up accepting what they have been told. The women are easily discouraged because they do not have money to start up their own political parties or fund their own political campaigns against the men.⁵⁶

Another reason why women do not vote for women candidates is a result of negative media and societal portrayal of women leaders; there is a belief that a woman cannot be equally successful in her roles as a politician, mother and wife despite the existence of many examples of women doing so not only in Zimbabwe but throughout the world.⁵⁷ There is a real need for political education among women especially the less-educated who lack exposure.

One of the key challenges facing societies undergoing transition is to devise a sustainable judicial system that will prevent impunity for gender-based crimes in the post-conflict era. Emphasis is needed on strengthening legal and judicial mechanisms in order to transform the reality of gender-sensitive jurisprudence into tangible benefits. This requires ensuring domestic courts and judicial mechanisms are fully capacitated in the area of prosecuting gender-based crimes. When seeking to address gender-based violence in transitional justice initiatives, not only physical violations must be considered, but also economic and social violations.

For the women's movement to have an impact on the transitional process adequate funding is required for its programmes; this is one impediment to women's participation. Funds for women's organisations have dwindled over the years and there is just a small pot that a lot of organisations are competing for. To ensure full participation of women, it is necessary to have programmes that educate and inform women on the changes occurring in the country and how they can influence democratic processes, but these programmes require funds.

The way information is disseminated is challenging because the type of information and the technology in which the information is disseminated regarding the way they are to be reintegrated into society has to be gender sensitive. In most communities, women are the least educated and if the information is in print form only and/or not in vernacular languages, clear and simple, the intended beneficiaries will lose out on any programme. The media has to be part of this and there are some remote areas in the country that get left behind when discussions of national importance are being held.

The culture of fear is a major challenge to women's participation in the transition. There are several different levels of fear that have been used to keep women away from the political table, the first being intimidation. Women are threatened with violence, whether it's against themselves or their families and because women are natural protectors they desist from whatever it was they were being threatened for. Intimidation may also come in the form of witnessing violence where the women fear the same will happen to them if they don't toe the line. Actual violence perpetrated on the women obviously deters or urges them to do as they are told. There is also the fear of not being accepted socially in the community you reside in; conformity is an important aspect of being a Zimbabwean woman. Women are afraid of being called names and the words and the behaviour that are associated with women who are in the forefront become problematic. Impunity also plays a part in keeping women in fear, as seeing perpetrators roaming free is a clear indicator that there is no rule of law.

Political parties themselves are not doing enough to provide opportunities for women to actively participate in politics. The parties themselves are still very much a male domain and for a candidate to succeed to the top, support from the political party is required and the men are not yet prepared to share their political space. Women are sidelined in politics because males often argue that they are not as educated as the men and would not be able to take up leadership roles especially at the national level.⁵⁸

Further, women still constitute the vast majority of the poor, but they are often the last to benefit from reparation programmes or development policies. Even when they do, they are frequently met with social challenges that prevent them from realising their rights and entitlements. Future initiatives in transitional justice thus have to recognise these broader concerns and radically challenge the current configuration of processes to enable a more gender-aware and inclusive approach to post-conflict reconstruction.

Although there are challenges, women should not lose hope, as there are different levels of participation; there is exercising your democratic right to vote without making it obvious who you are supporting. This, however, could cause problems as Zimbabwe is very polarised politically.

A report released by the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) in March 2009, entitled *Putting it Right: Addressing Violations against Zimbabwean Women*, details how issues relating to women should be addressed during a transitional period. This report recommended that the Zimbabwean IG adheres to the GPA, particularly by returning to the rule of law, bringing all perpetrators of political

violence to book, ensuring that there is no gender-based discrimination and ensuring community integration and national healing.

Conclusion

The effect of the political conflict in Zimbabwe on women's physical, social and psychological well-being was massive as they were not only primary victims but also secondary victims as they are caregivers and would in many instances take care of the injured, be they children, husbands and other relatives involved in politics. Women were caught up in the violence as they were not always politically active and many women were targeted, especially in 2008, because their male family members were involved and when the perpetrators arrived looking for the men and did not find them, they assaulted the women. Interestingly, it has appeared to have been the strategy with political activists that the men would leave their home seeking refuge elsewhere with the belief that their wives and children would be safe as they were not the targets, but sadly this strategy backfired tremendously. Another theory is that when these men left their homes they asked their families to come with them but because women are deeply connected to the domestic side of their duties, they refused to leave as the homestead was all they possessed and they could not leave; also it may not always have been practical to leave and find a safe haven with three or four children in tow. The perpetrators then attacked the women as punishing the absentee men showing that they believe women are the property of men and in the case of those women who were assaulted in their own right the message was this was a male domain and women should not be involved in politics.

Rehabilitation is essential, both for the victims and the perpetrators using an approach that creates self-awareness and an awareness of both basic and human rights. There will be need for intense gender-sensitive programmes that create self-confidence based on personal values, strengths and weaknesses; and examine the women's influences on others and how they themselves are influenced by others. If the women themselves are not educated on respecting themselves it will be difficult for them to claim their rights after they have been violated. Local women's organisations have to take the lead role to advocate for gender justice in a transitional period. For this to be long-lasting, gender training has to be incorporated into all aspects of the community involving both men and women together with other human rights education programmes. Leaving men out of the process will be detrimental to women's empowerment as it gives men the

chance to understand what is meant by women's empowerment and to see that their power is not being totally taken away from them.

The aspect of fear has to be addressed for both victims and perpetrators. If the perpetrators are still in the community and not showing remorse, the victims continue to experience fear and will not open up. Women are culturally brought up to suffer in silence and need programmes to encourage activism and ensure that they talk about their experiences in a safe and secure environment. Perpetrators need to answer for their actions during the conflict period. Transitional justice should be inclusive of mechanisms that allow perpetrators to acknowledge their wrongdoing.

A conducive environment has to be created during the transitional justice period and beyond to enable women and men to talk about their experiences, this can be done by responsible governments and CSOs to ensure that the reintegration and subsequent peace is durable.

The roles women are expected to play in the Zimbabwean transitional period:

- Women must continue to be active participants at all levels of national discussions on the transitional process, including the constitution-making exercise so that their rights are captured and observed.
- They must facilitate the creation of a society where there is political tolerance and reduced tension.
- Women have a role to play in preventing politically motivated violence against women. Groups must coordinate efforts working to address political violence and present a united front, especially around the action plan on Resolution 1325.
- Women must advocate for a witness protection programme when cases of political violence are being heard to ensure that every victim is protected and in an environment to speak freely.
- Women should advocate for a transitional justice mechanism that takes into consideration the needs of women, ie acknowledgement of the crimes committed, no amnesty for sexual violence and reparations for loss of property.
- With the GPA in place, women must continue to promote dialogue between political leaders which can result in attainment of tolerance at higher levels and this would cascade to the grass roots and ensure that the unity is not only seen to exist at the principal level.
- Women have to participate in democratic decision-making and peace-building processes because any degeneration of peace and tranquillity will negatively

impingement on the lives of women themselves and children. Therefore, the safety and welfare of children rests on the effective and consistent democratic participation of women in the national healing and peace-building process. Peace is essential for women and children as a precursor for their own welfare, in particular and national development in general.

NOTES

- 1 Zimbabwe has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) but discrimination continues at high levels. For example, married women are forced to take up their husbands' surname for them to get passports, although there is a High Court judgement prohibiting this. Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA) challenged the practice in 2002 but the Register General's Office continues with the practice and ignores the judgement.
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CHAPTER SIX

Incising an unripe abscess: The challenges of community healing in Zimbabwe

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I was taken from my house... When I got into the car, I discovered that there were six of us, two women and four men. We were taken to St Johns in Waterfalls where we were beaten up with metal rods all over our bodies... we were taken to Koala Park, a farm along Seke Road managed by war veterans. When we arrived at Koala Park, we were put in a cold room and beaten up one by one with cricket bats... We were put in sacks, two people in each. I was in the same sack with a young man whose name I did not know. Our assailants went ahead to beat us up with iron objects while we were in those sacks until I eventually collapsed.

We spent three days at the farm in sacks, with no access to food or water. The six of us were then blindfolded with ZANU PF regalia and one of our abductors then suggested that we be dumped in a dam in Guruve. The six of us were eventually dumped in a forest in Zimre Park where we slept as we had no energy to walk back home. In the morning the owner of the farm where we were dumped found us and took us to Epworth police station before we were taken to Epworth clinic. We were transferred to Chitungwiza Hospital where we spent a week by which time my hand was rotting, I couldn't eat or wake up the whole time.

... I still have problems with my hands and legs and I am unable to work due to my condition. My children are not going to school and they have nothing to wear. We live under deplorable conditions with no roof over our heads, just plastic bags. (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, 2010: 14–15)

How can such a past be righted? How can this community be healed? What is healing to the woman narrating this story, her children, relatives and friends,

fellow abductees? What is healing to the perpetrators, their families, relatives and friends? What is healing to those who witnessed the abduction and torture? What is healing to the farmer who found them on his farm and took them to the police station? What is healing to the police and nurses who attended to them and treated them respectively? What is healing to the community?

The story above is not an isolated case. It is a representation of a wide phenomenon of violence that gripped the country in the run-up to the run-off presidential election of June 2008 and electoral violence that has characterised major elections since independence. It is a shorter and milder version of more brutal and deadly experiences of the *Gukurahundi*¹ disturbances and the liberation war. The different experiences raise the same difficult questions as asked above.

The questions above fall in the realm of community healing which is well defined by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) as a process which aims to help communities deal and come to terms with a divided and violent past (IJR, 2006: 6). Community healing, like transitional justice – which is the development, analysis and application of strategies for confronting past human rights abuses in order to create a just and democratic future – suggests processes that come after an end to or at least cessation of the violence or abuses. It denotes a society in transition from a violent past to a more peaceful one. Otherwise it would be pointless to talk of community healing when violence is still being perpetrated. This raises fundamental questions for Zimbabwe that include the following; is Zimbabwe ready to honestly engage in the emotive discussions of community healing, ie has the violence stopped and are conditions conducive for engagement in this? If not, then when and what should be done in the meantime?

This paper seeks to explore the concept of community healing; consider community healing as advocated by victims, perpetrators and third parties, ie different actors promoting community healing; outline what has been happening in the field; identify gaps; critique the role of community leaders; and propose a mechanism or model for community healing in Zimbabwe.

Community healing in Zimbabwe

Article 7 of Zimbabwe's GPA recognises that Zimbabwe has had a long history of divisive violent conflicts and needs healing. These conflicts include the independence war (1965–1979), the *Gukurahundi* atrocities (1980–1987) and the post-2000 referendum period mostly characterised by electoral violence

(2000 to present) (Epel *et al*, 2009). Whilst the *Gukurahundi* atrocities were largely perpetrated by the state against civilian populations in what President Mugabe described as a ‘time of madness’, the war of liberation pitted armed belligerents against each other and at times against civilians; and the electoral violence involved political parties against each other and others. What remains uncontested of all conflicts is that the violence happened in communities and members of the communities, either as individuals or organised groups, in one way or the other were involved as victims, perpetrators, collaborators or mere witnesses. This means that all the conflicts that were experienced left the communities divided and haunted.

No serious efforts were made to heal the communities in the past. Issues of community healing have invariably been subsumed in national healing and reconciliation. The GPA continued on this trajectory. There are a number of reasons for this, the major reasons being national healing is more political, hence appealing, and at times erroneously assumed to incorporate or take care of community healing. The reality, however, is that whilst the ultimate objective of both is lasting peace, they are different in terms of both their processes and scopes. Both serve their own purposes in dealing with post-conflict situations and both need to be employed in saying never again and to build enduring peace. National healing and reconciliation is at a broader political level and is building new institutions and a new democratic culture; whilst community healing is about mending injured dignities and broken relations for peaceful coexistence. Further, whilst national healing and reconciliation are mostly political processes, community healing is deeper as it is about people’s hearts, spirits and souls.

A lot of work has gone into developing mechanisms for dealing with post-conflict situations but most of it has been restricted to national processes towards national reconciliation. The Zimbabwean experience towards national reconciliation has been characterised by the government’s policy of ‘letting bygones be bygones’ or collective amnesia prescribed through the Prime Minister’s addresses to the nation of 4 and 17 March 1980 (Ministry of Information, Immigration and Tourism, 1980; Kubatana, 2010). Although it would be unfair to dismiss these pronouncements as mere political statements, for they helped calm the nerves of the former warring parties and other stakeholders both at home and abroad, it is a fact that they largely remained political speeches which were never translated into any government policy or programme. The same approach was adopted in 1987 after the signing of the Unity Accord that stopped the atrocities in Matebeleland and Midlands provinces. The creation of the Organ for National

Healing and Reconciliation by the IG in 2009, set in motion energetic efforts by the Organ and CSOs in and outside Zimbabwe to help develop a mechanism towards national healing. Those that operate at the grass-roots level also took the initiative to expand or diversify into the difficult area of community healing.

The greatest challenge confounding community healing work in Zimbabwe is trying to engage in the processes when the environment is not conducive. A meeting organised by the Organ and chaired by the Vice-President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, John Landa Nkomo, was aborted when members of his party, ZANU PF, gatecrashed the meeting and refused to leave the venue (Bwititi, 2010). The meeting was attended by leaders of the three political parties in the IG with their delegations headed by their respective Secretary Generals. Two things are revealed here. Firstly, the conflict is still raging and dialogue on community healing could thus be premature. Secondly, if hooligans can 'gatecrash' a high-powered meeting of top political leaders at a five-star hotel in Harare and disrupt proceedings in full glare of the media as has happened in the past, it becomes obvious that a lot worse could happen if similar initiatives are to take place at community level.

Another challenge in community healing is the glaring inadequacy of leadership at both national and community levels to manage this process. There are a lot of processes, initiatives and actors all directed towards a poorly defined community healing. Whilst it is not suggested that a synoptic approach to community healing be adopted, it is apparent that the leadership paralysis in this field is partly caused by the incoherent conception of community healing and the equally poor coordination of efforts.

What needs to be healed?

Before delving deeper into the matter it is helpful to consider what needs to be healed in Zimbabwe.

As in most violent conflicts, the war of independence, the *Gukurahundi* conflict and electoral violence of the post-2000 referendum left many communities scarred and traumatised. In violent conflicts, the dignity of the human person was injured, people were killed, others maimed, women and girls raped, properties lost, sacred spaces defiled, etc. The violence took place in communities – traumatising victims, perpetrators and observers; divided families; strained relations; and affected community life. The majority of the affected are still to be healed and healing is not an easy process.

Victims of the different major conflicts that took place in Zimbabwe still endure the pain of meeting their scot-free tormentors in their communities. Those whose properties were looted live with the pain of seeing the perpetrators benefitting from the property, eg milking stolen cattle or using them as draught power. 'What I can't bear is seeing him ploughing his field using my oxen when my field is lying fallow for lack of draught power,'² complained a peasant farmer in Mutoko. Another villager in Buhera mourned, 'My children are starving as if I did not produce anything last season. A group of political hoodlums attacked my homestead, stole my property and burnt my granary. Now I am destitute and they are living normal lives.'

A Chitungwiza man in his late twenties confessed to having difficulties staying with his sister who was expecting a child conceived from a rape attack. The sister was gang-raped during the 2008 electoral violence. He was in a quandary as to how he would relate to the niece or nephew. 'The child will be a constant reminder to the family and community of how the mother was violated,' he said dejectedly. In a country with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, it is not surprising that some survivors of rape contracted the virus. Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (2010) reported that some women got the virus from such abuses.

Some victims of the June 2008 electoral violence were still to seek medical attention, a year into the life of the IG, ie March 2010, which is about two years after the injuries were inflicted on them. A survivor from Muzarabani who visited a Harare clinic in March 2010 lamented:

After beating me up they warned the village against taking me to hospital. In any case the clinic was ordered by the base commanders not to attend to victims of political violence. They left me to die. God and the ancestors saved me. My family later returned from hiding and helped me. I couldn't leave the village to seek medical attention. Nobody could. My wounds look healed from outside but I still feel that they are sore inside.

This means there is still need to take care of the basic physiological need, the healing of the body before other higher forms of needs or healing.

In many areas people no longer talk to each other, attend funerals in some homesteads, attend church together and draw water from some wells or boreholes lest they are poisoned as a result of the conflicts. The trust generated by social capital over generations was completely destroyed. Some of the relations are strained on the basis of suspicion. A woman in Kezi remarked, 'The soldiers

couldn't have come from Mashonaland to pick up my husband without some locals selling him out. I want to know why they sent him to his death.' This was in reference to the 1980s *Gukurahundi*. Whether anybody was really sold out or not is not the issue. The widow was convinced that her husband was sold out. She is not the only one in this predicament as many victims feel that the strangers who perpetrated violence on them identified their targets through the collusion of locals who in most cases are neighbours, relatives and friends. This is telling for in the main, the state is regarded as the major perpetrator of political violence in Zimbabwe and national healing is prescribed as the appropriate remedy for this scourge.

Zimbabwe's cities and towns are teeming with people suffering from mental health illnesses. Although comprehensive studies are still to be carried out, the locals attribute this to *ngozi* (avenging spirits of the innocent people killed during the violent conflicts). In some parts of the country such as in Manicaland, these people are called *ma27 June* (the 27 Junes – named after the electoral violence of the 27 June 2008 run-off presidential election). The popular belief is that some of the perpetrators of political violence or their blood relatives, especially those who murdered innocent people, are haunted by the dead and those who stole properties were bewitched resulting in the upsurge of the number of people with mental health problems. *N'angas* (traditional healers) and *maporofita* (faith healers mostly of African apostolic sects) are busy dealing with cases emanating from the violence.

Veterans of the liberation war started a project to identify mass graves of their colleagues who were killed during the war but were never accorded decent burials. The aim is to rebury them in their homes with befitting and proper rituals (Kadungure, 2009). This, they argue will bring healing to the fallen combatants, their families, to them as colleagues, to the communities where they are improperly buried and the nation at large. Some of the combatants, families and communities claim to be haunted by the spirits of the dead and forgotten guerrilla fighters. The different cases illustrate that it is not only the survivors who are in need of healing but the significant others in their lives and indeed the whole community.

In response to the call for national healing after the formation of the IG in February 2009, a section of the war veterans issued statements asking who should be healed first, those who died to liberate the country and are forgotten in shallow and mass graves in and outside the country, or those who suffered post-independence electoral violence. Although the answer is not necessarily an

either or, the point is made that community healing in Zimbabwe is not only long overdue but also complex.

To illustrate the complexity of community healing in Zimbabwe it is instructive to consider the following different forms of punishment used during the violent conflicts including the 2008 electoral violence: murder; rape of women and girls; mutilating genitals including putting chilli in women's private parts; burning of flesh using plastics; all forms of torture, eg *falanga*; beatings with any weapon or instrument including barbed wire, bicycle chains, baseball bats and logs; poisoning including spraying with pesticides and herbicides; forced evictions and disappearances; burning of houses; confiscating or looting of property and livestock (some slaughtered for food at bases/command posts but some still found in the communities serving the perpetrators providing milk and draught power); indiscriminate killing of livestock including through plucking their eyes out and letting them die of the wounds, thirst and hunger as they couldn't fend for themselves since the owners fled their homesteads; driving cattle to graze in fields of victims; denying victims access to essential services for instance, hospital and justice. Some perpetrators threatened hospital workers from attending to victims of political violence and others camped at hospitals to ensure that victims were not treated. This harrowing list is not exhaustive. These experiences dehumanised the victims, the perpetrators, their families and friends, their communities, those who came into contact with them and those who got to hear their stories. How can one go through the barbaric acts above and remain normal? Can a normal person perpetrate any of the above? Is it possible to witness the above and remain the same? All become victims: the perpetrators, collaborators, witnesses – all become victims of the horrible experiences. All have their human dignity injured.

The different cases presented above, covering most regions of the country and historical epochs, demonstrate that community healing is not only complex, long overdue and necessary but also ought to be a huge undertaking. Because of its complexity, this undertaking needs a holistic approach.

What causes perpetrators to commit atrocities? Why is one victimised?

Before prescribing remedies towards community healing, it is important to do a proper diagnosis of the ailment. Why do perpetrators commit atrocities? There are different answers proffered by different communities to what causes perpetrators to commit atrocities. These include, but are not limited to, opportunism, poverty,

force, jealousy, vengeance, ignorance and evil spirits.

As is common with civil unrest, some people take the opportunity to settle personal scores. A visibly distraught teenage girl, claiming to have escaped from her rural home, narrated a heart-wrenching story. When her father died, her mother refused to be inherited. This did not go down well with one of the deceased's younger brothers. When the political campaigns turned violent, he led a group of youths to his late brother's homestead where he accused his sister-in-law of supporting the opposition and proceeded to rape her. He offered the girl to the youths to do as they pleased since he couldn't touch her because she was his 'own blood'. The youths gang-raped her.

Politicians and other powerful people entice gullible youths with promises of rewards like money and jobs. One youth confessed, 'We were ordered to beat up opponents and those who refused to join us, destroy their properties and do other bad things in return for money and jobs. We were promised jobs in the civil service and security forces.'

A woman confessed to selling out on her neighbour not because of the neighbour's political activism but because the neighbour had 'cooking oil and washing soap' – symbols of good living in the impoverished community.

A defiant war veteran remained adamant that what happened was war and they had defended the country's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. 'The country was going to the imperialists. We had to defend it,' he said.

A young man, now confined to walking with the aid of crutches as a result of the beating he got during the 2008 electoral violence, confessed at a peace-building workshop to having designed an elaborate plan to poison the waterwell used by those who destroyed his life. Had this young man not been converted by the workshop, a lot of people and their livestock could have lost their lives. This act of vengeance would have made the young man a perpetrator. Needless to say, unresolved conflicts rage on in people's hearts, and families will for generations, occasionally find expression through minor provocations.

Stories from the liberation struggle and the *Gukurahundi* conflict show that what happened in 2008 was not new and some of the personalities who commanded the operations were the same. This suggests not only a cycle and pattern of violence but also a repository of both agents and agency of violence. Whilst this could be easily explained in terms of political, psychological and economic terms, including failed demobilisation in the case of war veterans and youth militias, it is also important to look at it from the sociological, anthropological and religious points of view. For instance, why is it that some people, across the class lines

have developed a propensity to commit atrocities or always get fingered in the perpetration of violence? A *n'anga* had a simple explanation, 'It is either they have a *shave* (evil spirit) or are under the dark spell of angry spirits they killed during the war. In this case they need to appease those spirits. If not, then their children and grandchildren will also live under the same spell.' As if to confirm the *n'anga's* claim one perpetrator said, 'I don't know what got into me. I just found myself doing it.'

Similarly others would ask why one is victimised. One traditional healer opined, 'The spirits are supposed to protect their own from harm. When one is harmed, something will be wrong somewhere. Perhaps the spirits will be angry and they need appeasement.' This is a difficult proposition that blames the victim for what happened to them. There are, however, many people who believe this and they consult traditional healers and faith healers to remedy their wrongs.

The above notwithstanding, human rights purists and fundamentalists insist that those who created conditions for the atrocities to be committed bear the greatest responsibility.

What has been happening in terms of community healing?

As mentioned earlier, community healing has largely been subsumed under the demands for national healing and therefore dictated by the national politics of appeasement, ie letting bygones be bygones. At the community level, the communities are still numbed into inaction, especially in the aftermath of those who tried to recover their looted properties. Most community leaders, especially traditional leaders, who would naturally lead community healing processes, lost credibility and moral capital as some were complicit in the violations through commission or omission. It is also fair to note that most communities don't have capacity to deal with the difficult issues as presented by the nature of conflict. Dealing with issues of communal land disputes, incest, adultery and witchcraft is different from issues of political violence.

However, it is important to recognise notable attempts towards community healing made in some areas, mostly by CSOs especially NGOs and churches. These have, however, largely remained small scale, uncoordinated, fragmented and faltering because of obvious conceptual defects and a lack of political will.

Some of the activities undertaken included reburials, medical treatments, counselling, litigation, psycho-social support, education and skills training for victims and perpetrators, human rights education and peace-building initiatives, etc.

Each organisation implemented its own programme designed according to its own conceptualisation of community and healing, community healing and a healed community. Although the intentions of actors may be good and noble, their values and constructions of community healing imposed on the communities become unnecessary burdens that bring conflicts to the same communities needing healing. Some churches, and those schooled in modern science for instance, would scoff at suggestions to invest in exorcising evil spirits that cause some people to commit crimes or rituals that heal the defiled land or environment. This means whilst the communities may believe that there is a relationship between the shedding of innocent blood and vicissitudes of nature such as droughts and famine, those not disposed to these beliefs may bring their own programmes that do not meet this need. The late rainfall in some parts of Manicaland province was generally attributed by the locals to the angry spirits of the land and of the people killed by security forces in the controversial diamond fields of Chiadzwa. The popular view was that unless the spirits and the dead were appeased through acknowledgement and rituals, the skies would remain shut. The rains came in late prompting some to question the avenging spirits assertion but the locals still attribute the insignificant harvests expected in the season to the curse.

The above just demonstrates that community healing is a contested and value-laden process. For effective community healing to take place, there is need for serious engagement at the community level to ascertain needs and ensure respect for local values and traditions. External actors can only come in to support local processes that are lead by locals. This point ought to be emphasised as each community is different. The locals' views, not just victims' views, ought to shape the mechanism for holistic community healing initiatives. Implied in this is the difficult consideration that ought to be made between individual rights versus community rights.

The syncretism that has become part of Zimbabwean community life also makes developing a community programme for community healing challenging. As the response to the Chiadzwa massacres attests, different members of the community would scorn some practices, preferring others. Community leaders, who are also steeped in their own polarised values, would therefore have difficulty agreeing on joint programmes and processes to heal their communities.

Theoretical framework

To consider the relevance and timing of community healing in Zimbabwe, it is not enough to adopt a historical approach to what happened in the past versus the objective conditions obtaining in the country. It is important to consider the concepts of community and healing. Cultural relativism, which means understanding cultures in terms of their own standards and values since they are unique and diverse, becomes important in locating the discussion in its proper context.

The Bantu people, who form the majority population of Zimbabwe, consider the person as a community (Mbiti, 1969; Samkange, 1980; Nabudere, 2004). This community consists of the physical, spiritual and social beings. Although different Bantu communities have their own unique beliefs that underpin and inform their practices, they have general practices that are similar and which distinguish them from other peoples. Whilst the modern development approach is predominantly centred on the individual (Corsini, 2000), the Bantu way of life remains to a large extent centred on the community and/or the individual in community (Moyo, 1987; Some', 1996). And life is lived in its totality; the physical, social and spiritual. A quick glance at Bantu cosmology suffices.

The Bantu, like other indigenous Africans, are by nature extremely religious and spiritual (Moyo, 1987; Kibicho, 1990; Louw, 1998). The Shona of southern Africa (specifically Zimbabwe and Mozambique) will be used to illustrate this. The Shona believe in a Supreme Being whom they call *Mwari* derived from the suffix *mu* and the verb *ari* which means 'to be' (Moyo, 1987: 59). When put together *Mu-ari* would mean 'who is'. This expresses the point that the Supreme Being IS. Moyo and Kibicho demonstrate that God is conceived as transcendent, immanent, almighty, omnipresent, omniscient and eternal. In Shona cosmology nothing happens by accident, it is directed by 'divine providence and prudence' (Ongonga, 1990: 228). God, to the Shona, is near and this is demonstrated by the Shona language's consciousness to the nearness of *Mwari* through its expressions and proverbs (Moyo, 1987).

Moyo shows that the Shona have high regard for elders, protocol and intermediation or intercession. This is demonstrated in common transactions like approaching a chief where one has to go through a sub-chief or prospective father-in-law through *munyai* (go-between/marriage broker). Similarly in Shona cosmology the people communicate with God, who is the Supreme Being, superior to all elders that are 'alive and the living dead' (Moyo, 1987: 61) through the mediation of *Vadzimu* (their ancestral spirits). These function as intermediaries as

well as spirit guardians. The spirits communicate to man through spirit mediums. These are living people who are from time to time possessed by the spirits of the ancestors to communicate with the living. Although ancestral spirits are generally believed to act for and on behalf of *Mwari*, there are cases where they are known to act on their own. Ultimately they are responsible to God (Moyo, 1987).

Religion is not an affair of the individual but of the community and it permeates all aspects and institutions of indigenous life. This means there is no segregation between the sacred and the profane – the religious and the secular; the social, cultural, political, economic and the environmental. (Moyo, 1987; Kibicho, 1990). Moyo demonstrates this by revealing that chieftainships are decided by the living dead and so the chiefs who are appointed wield both religious and secular authority (Moyo, 1987: 67).

Life in the indigenous sense is thus anchored on the following three pillars: community, ritual and nature. These are explained below.

Community is ‘a group of people meeting with the intention of connecting to the power within’ (Some’, 1998: 69). Some’ further asserts that community is about communion, about serving, about supportive presence and being intimately connected. It is also a place of self-definition. In this regard, community is both a state of being and a place, a physical location.

There are different levels and ways of belonging and being in community. The Shona believe human beings live on earth as body and spirit and only as spirit when they die and enter the spirit world or the world of the ancestors (Moyo, 1987). This means the body and the spirit live in communion or as a community, as every human being is naturally born in a family, the nucleus family, that extends the community or creates a social community or community of communities. The extended family, to which many belong, is a further extension of the community or community of communities. The concentric circles widen and multiply as many more people are involved and networked.

The Bantu philosophy of *hunhu* or *ubuntu* asserts that a human being is (who he or she is) because of other people. *Ubuntu* is well articulated by Mbiti who summed up the philosophy as, ‘I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am’ (Mbiti, 1969: 135). In Shona the individual is not addressed in singular terms but rather in plural, thus a simple greeting of ‘how are you?’ (plural you) will be responded to as ‘we are well’. The other people referred to by Mbiti and the Shona are not just members of the nucleus or even extended family, but others in the physical location of the person: the village, the unborn and the living dead.

To the Bantu, a community is made up of various communities of the living,

the unborn (Samkange, 1980; Mbiti, 1969) and 'the living dead' (Moyo, 1987) or ancestors as these are in a 'different form of belonging to a community' (Some', 1998: 53). The living and the living dead stay in communion and act in consent to resolve community issues through intermediaries. For instance no major decisions are taken without the consent of the ancestors (Moyo, 1987). The spirits are regarded as the invisible members of their respective communities and are therefore accorded recognition in the ceremonies of their communities (Kibicho, 1990). As such, no meeting is held without invoking the presence of those in the spirit world (Some', 1996).

Somé (1996), Samkange and Mbiti suggest that a community is characterised by unity of spirit, trust, openness, love and caring, respect for elders, respect for nature and reverence of the spirits. Everyone is sent to earth for a purpose and the community helps the person to realise their potential and fulfil that purpose (Some', 1996). Similarly the general health or well-being of an individual is connected to the community (Tacey, 2006). From the above narrative, it can be concluded that community is about interdependent individuals, a state of being and a place of belonging. It is both secular and spiritual.

A ritual is when a person is, or a group of people are, in contact with or connected to the spirits and bound by an emotional energy through libations or offerings (Kibicho, 1990) or as Some' (1996) put it, a connection with the hidden spiritual realm, with which the entire community is genetically connected. Some' (1998) adds that ritual is when spirits of the living interact with those of the other world as well as spirits of the living interacting with each other. This means a ritual is a spiritual exercise conducted by living members of the community who on one hand, connect among themselves and on the other hand connect with the spirit world. Rituals link human beings to God (Moyo, 1987; Kibicho, 1990; Some', 1996, 1998). Because they are conducted in community they strengthen links between the living and the spirit world and help members of the community keep in communion with themselves and others (Some', 1996).

There are three types of rituals namely individual rituals performed by individuals; family rituals lead by family heads and attended by initiated family members; and community rituals attended by grown-up members of the village or community (Some', 1996). This suggests that every member of the community is involved in rituals in one way or another.

Rituals have the following basic elements: invocation where the living call on the spirit for specific purposes; dialogue where participants enter into solemn dialogue with the spirit and themselves; structured and repetitive actions;

healing; opening and closure of the ritual space which is opened at the invocation of spirit(s) and closed when they are thanked and bade farewell (Some', 1996, 1998). This means rituals are also occasions and means for healing of ailments and dysfunctions of different nature be they physical, social, economic, political or environmental, afflicting individuals, families and/or the entire community. Rituals are held in community and on nature.

There is a strong relationship between the physical being, spirit and nature. As Some' (1998: 73) noted, 'illness is a physical manifestation of a spiritual decay'. For instance if a person is sick, a ritual is performed to cleanse the spirit or spiritual ailment before attending to the body or physical ailment (Some', 1996; Torbet, 2005). The Shona communicate with the other world (spirit world) through trees, grass or other natural phenomena (Moyo, 1987). This is supported by Kasiera (1990: 14) who attests 'humans maintain spiritual relations with the elements of their environment'. Nature is the source of life, meaning, healing, wisdom, nourishment and livelihood (Some', 1998). It is about the sanctity of the natural environment.

Notable rituals performed on nature include rites of passage which mark the most significant turning or transitional points in the life of an individual from one stage to the next. These are birth, initiation to adulthood, marriage and death. All rites and ceremonies have to do with prayers to God and communion with the living dead (Kibicho, 1990). Elders provide guidance and leadership to the community in rituals as they are 'ancestors in training' (Some', 1998: 133). Those preparing for different rites of passage are helped in their preparations by mentors who are carefully selected adults. The mentor's primary objective is to facilitate the learning of those preparing to move from one stage of development to another. They have a community obligation to train and examine members before initiating them. Some' (1998) stresses that healing, ritual and community are connected.

Colonialism, globalisation, migration, technological advancement and their attendant influences like materialism and liberalism have resulted in significant alteration and adulteration of the spiritual life, that is, the beliefs and practices of the Zimbabwean population. Although it is generally claimed that more than 70 per cent of the population profess to be Christian, it is known that the majority of these practice syncretism; Christianity during the day and African traditions at night (Nabudere, 2004). This is prevalent in times of personal, family or social distress. Funeral rites and rituals for the dead attest to this. The strong pull of African traditional religion revealed itself in the much-publicised Chinhoyi diesel

saga where the top brass of the government (the cabinet, the bureaucracy and the Joint Operations Command (security) services) were made to believe (by a Grade 3 school dropout) that the spirits of the land had blessed the country with purified diesel oozing out of a rock. To dismiss the leadership's quick acceptance of the strange finding of purified diesel – not crude oil springing out of a rock – as gullibility, naivety or simply madness is to miss the point. The leadership believe in and practise traditional African religion! It is possible that they indulge in it because it has worked for them, notwithstanding the fact that in this instance they were taken down the garden path. It is generally known that politicians consult *n'angas* before elections. Needless to say, like the majority population of Zimbabwe, most – if not all – of those in the leadership who were deeply involved in the Chinhoyi diesel saga are highly educated and profess to be Christian.

The syncretism practised in Zimbabwe is still evidence of a deeply religious and spiritual people. The pull of modernity has had some influences on traditional practices which are still observed in both rural and urban areas albeit with sprinklings of modernity. Whilst the external expressions or outside signs and material conditions have changed in some respects, the core or meaning of the practices is not significantly altered. Because of this, some mainstream churches, having noted some similarities between Judaeo-Christian and African traditional beliefs and practices, allowed serious engagement between Christianity and African traditions through enculturation.

Colonialism and the introduction of the secular state weakened the position of religion and its formal place in institutions of society. Whilst in the past there was no segregation between the religious and the secular, the same cannot be said of today. Moyo (1987) intimated that chieftainships were decided by the ancestors and wielded both religious and secular authority. Successive pre- and post-independence governments have influenced the appointment of some chiefs. Succession battles and interference by politicians in the appointment of chiefs are now commonplace. In fact in Zimbabwe, the legal position is that chiefs are appointed by the state president and lower level traditional leaders by the minister of local government. The power of chiefs has been diluted over the years through a raft of legislation. Chiefs have been reduced to civil servants who implement government policy for a salary. Further, undeserving individuals who end up assuming chieftainships through underhand means wield neither religious nor secular authority.

The case has been made that the majority population of Zimbabwe is spiritual and religious; lives in community – community understood to consist of the body

and spirit of the individual, all humanity, the living dead, the unborn and nature or the environment; accepts that prosperity to the land only comes through the process of reconciliation or healing that incorporates rituals – individual, family and social or community rituals; and accepts that community leadership plays a role in fostering sustainable peace.

In search of a framework for holistic community healing

Given the concept of community and healing articulated above as well as complex relations demonstrated so far, community healing would therefore be a dialogical encounter of the victim, perpetrator and the community to repair broken relations. It is a social, spiritual and political exercise that begins with the individual and ends with engaging the community. As demonstrated earlier, it is difficult to talk of a single victim when an atrocity is committed for many people, including the perpetrator, become victims.

When an atrocity is perpetrated different actors play different roles through their actions or non-actions and are therefore guilty of commission or omission. Karl Jaspers (1961) identified four concepts of guilt namely criminal guilt, political guilt, moral guilt and metaphysical guilt.

Criminal guilt is when acts like arson that violate laws, and can be objectively proved, are committed. Jurisdiction therefore rests with formal courts that establish the facts and apply the law. The consequence of committing crimes is punishment.

Political guilt involves the actions of political leaders and citizenry. The citizenry answers for its polity by tolerating the actions of a despotic regime or violent group. And here jurisdiction rests with the victor or new regime. The consequence of political guilt is liability. The guilty become liable for reparations.

Moral guilt is when the individual feels morally responsible for his actions, eg supporting and cooperating with perpetrators. It does not matter whether the individual was forced to act or not. Jurisdiction rests with the individual's conscience. The consequence is insight which involves penance and renewal. The limitation with this is some people may not be capable of penitence and reform.

Metaphysical guilt is when an individual, aware of crimes or gross violations, fails to act in solidarity with those in need, for example by standing by or looking the other way when violations were perpetrated. Jurisdiction rests with God. The consequence is transformation of human self-consciousness before God.

The accused or guilty person is charged either from without, meaning by the

world, for crimes and political guilt or from within by his own soul, that is by moral failure and metaphysical weakness.

Jaspers' (1961) concept of guilt and the already established notion of victims reinforce the complexity of community healing and build the case for a more integrated and restorative justice approach. The whole essence of community healing is to restore relations and community harmony. Because of the different interests and values of actors, community healing is both a contested and holistic process.

Community healing is a process that has the following key elements:

- acknowledgement of the atrocities committed – voluntarily through own conscience or involuntarily through trials at community courts;
- truth-seeking or recovery as there are contested truths – tied to the above and may involve engaging the state in gross violations – if for example, somebody confesses to killing someone and burying the body, this may require state and expert intervention to facilitate exhumation, forensic studies and reburial;
- taking responsibility for the wrongs done through reparation or compensation – attempts to the extent possible to compensate the victim for their loss;
- reintegration of affected members of the community;
- memorialisation – memorialising or maintaining collective memory of key events and places;
- reconciliation – reverting to normal relations;
- rituals – outward signs of individuals' and the communities' expressions of grief, atonement, purification, reconciliation, joy, etc. Rituals are held at the personal, family and community level and accompany the different stages. The stages are detailed below.

Confronting the past, truth-telling and seeking the truth

The first and most difficult stage in the community healing process is acknowledgment of the past. The truth shall set you free, so says the age-old adage. The victim, the perpetrator and the community are freed by the truth. However, they all have shades of the truth – not the whole truth. They all want answers. The victim wants to know why he/she was attacked and what will happen next. The community seeks to know what happened and why. The perpetrator wants to know what will happen to him/her. In some cases the perpetrator also wants to know what happened. Just as there are cases of accused persons sent for psychiatric examination in criminal trials, some community leaders believe

some perpetrators commit atrocities under the influence of evil spirits. In such cases the perpetrator also seeks to know what happened. To ascertain the truth everyone would have to be given a chance to tell his or her story. It is through subjecting the different stories to rigorous scrutiny and interrogation that the truth is established.

How do victims and perpetrators get to tell their stories? Does this process begin with the perpetrator as a result of examination of conscience or the victim standing on a platform provided for that? The quick answer is it doesn't matter. What matters is telling of the stories. However, victims who are not ready to tell their stories and perpetrators who are not ready to acknowledge their guilt make truth-seeking a mammoth task. At times, community support and encouragement, relatives, friends, the church and NGOs are helpful.

In conflict situations, truth is mostly subjective and contested. It is not surprising that in most cases victims and perpetrators have different versions of the same incident. Whilst in some cases the different stories will be representing genuine recollections of accounts from the perspective of the narrator, in others they are a mixture of genuine accounts and fabrications. There are different psychological, social, political and at times economic reasons for the edited versions. The reality of different versions makes it imperative for a process to establish the objective truth or as near objective as possible.

In Zimbabwe, confronting the past is still very much linked to the contest for state power. ZANU PF feels revisiting the ugly past and telling Priscilla Hayner's 'unspeakable truths' (Hayner, 2002) soils its reputation as a party that brought liberation to the country and weakens it in the process. At the same time other political parties, led by the MDC, see an opportunity to score political points as their supporters or sympathisers were largely on the receiving end of the violence. After the 2008 electoral violence, some perpetrators who had looted properties took it upon themselves to return the looted properties. Some of those who accepted their properties back ended up getting arrested on charges of extortion (Du Plessis & Ford, 2008). Meetings and exhibitions of the atrocities of the past such as *Gukurahundi* and the 2008 electoral violence were ruthlessly quashed by the state using a raft of legislation like POSA and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act. Until a generally accepted transitional justice and national healing mechanism is developed, truth-telling and by extension community healing in Zimbabwe will be dogged by party politics.

A lot of work, mostly led by NGOs and the churches, has gone into monitoring and documentation of human rights violations or breaches of peace. Numerous

reports in the form of books and videos on the atrocities perpetrated in the country have been produced and others await publication. Other than serving to warn perpetrators and give hope to victims that the world is watching, the monitoring and documentation provides records of what happened. Because of the restrictive environment and victim-centred approaches adopted by many of the organisations, some of the reports appear predominantly one-sided – as being against the major perpetrators – the state and ZANU PF. Serious work on capturing the experiences and stories of individual perpetrators is still to begin. The perpetrators' stories help in understanding the true motives and proper diagnostics of the problems which is necessary to prescribe effective remedies for community healing.

The approaches used to monitor and document incidences of violence in the country have a legal or human rights bias. This has tended to emphasise the labelling of actors as victims and perpetrators. Further, justice, especially retributive justice, has invariably been prescribed as the major if not sole remedy to right the wrongs of the past and chart a bright future for the country. Preliminary findings from research into needs of victims of political violence indicate that the majority prefer to see both retributive justice and compensation. In this case, the truth will be adduced and objectified through court trials. The truth is obtained to serve the interests of justice. It is important to note that criminal courts are exclusive, located in urban centres, far from the communities, and follow cultures alien to the majority of the people.

Whereas, in processes that serve the interest of 'justice', the emphasis is on obtaining the truth to nail the perpetrator, and the same adduced truth may not necessarily result in freeing the victim, perpetrator and others in the community in pursuit of community healing. As explained, establishing the truth is the first step towards healing yet it is not easy to obtain. In post-conflict situations, confidence building measures need to be in place to allow both perpetrators and victims to express themselves; and rigorous measures to test the truth are needed to establish its objectivity.

Truth-telling at community level is possible through 'modernised' community processes like those of the traditional *dare/enkundla* (village assembly/chief's court/community court). This would be a platform to hear people's stories. The traditional *dare* would take the form of a community court where cases were heard and tried. After independence the courts were maintained though with limited jurisdiction. As the *Gacaca* system of Rwanda demonstrated, it is possible to 'modernise' and use the traditional system and customary law instruments to

dispense transitional justice and heal the communities.

Emphasis on modernising the community processes, as in the old traditional processes, leads to the exclusion of some groups in society. The roles and positions of women, youth, children, the poor and 'aliens' at the *dare* are inferior compared to able-bodied and propertied men. Similarly because some of the people who would ordinarily preside over such community processes are compromised and may need to tell their own stories at the *dares*, other people's presence needs to be considered. These would include women, pastors, respectable elders and local professionals. The model of community courts, with expanded jurisdiction, provides a good foundation for this.

In the absence of political will, getting perpetrators to the *dare* is a challenge. Defiant perpetrators may choose not to subject themselves to the authority of the community leadership and the *dare*. Political will as happened with the *Gacaca* in Rwanda will result in the legislation of community processes. Those failing to cooperate with the processes will not only face community sanction like ostracisation, as happened in the community healing processes of Mozambique, but they also face the wrath of the law.

At the *dare*, every adult member of the community would have the opportunity to speak and ask questions for clarification. This is important as all are affected and have different questions begging answers. As in the traditional court systems, the presiding officer is assisted by other 'elders' in managing the process and ensuring that the objective truth is reached and ultimately a win-win situation is attained.

Those selected to preside over the community processes need training. The government and civil society would need to design an appropriate curriculum that capacitates the presiding officers to competently carry out their mandates in line with the enabling legislation.

Taking responsibility for the wrongs

Establishing the truth is not an end in itself. Getting the community to accept a single version of the truth is a very important step. However, getting the community to come to terms with that truth and dealing with it is a different proposition. Those pleading or found guilty of offending others and the community would move or be asked to repair the damage they caused to the victims. A major criticism of restorative justice and the demand for perpetrators to compensate or pay restitution to victims is the limited capacity of the individual to mobilise

enough resources for this undertaking. According to African traditions, the perpetrator and his or her family assume responsibility for the reparations. This makes the undertaking a collective affair of the family or tribe and the reasons for this are understandable. In the event that the family or tribe fails to honour their obligations to the victims, the resultant curse lives with the whole family or tribe for generations. This is generally so in the case of murders where the spirit of the deceased is appeased lest the blood relatives of the perpetrators and their properties are wiped out by the avenging spirit. Another notable example obtaining in many communities is when a woman elopes to a family and dies before *roora* (bride price/dowry) is paid. She is not buried until the family pays the imposed fine or a substantial part of it. This fine is not left to the poor man to mobilise, it becomes a family effort as the deceased will be in their home and community. Major advantages of shared responsibility include that victims have a realistic chance of getting fair compensation and families take full responsibility in ensuring that members do not engage in atrocities.

In the Zimbabwe of 2010 it is not uncommon to see different members of one family professing different religious persuasions. Indeed family conflicts abound regarding traditional rituals especially funeral rites and the rites for the dead. It is therefore possible that some relatives of the perpetrator would refuse to help out for 'fear of nothing'. Further, in the modern era of individual rights taking precedence over community rights, some members of the perpetrators' family would refuse to take responsibility for offences they did not commit. This would be a negation of *ubuntu*.

In the past a family guilty of murder would compensate by giving a girl child and cattle to the family of the deceased. The understanding was the girl child would give birth to children who would replace the deceased. This had the dual purpose of perpetuating the existence of the deceased, family or tribe and memorialising them. Just like the dying system of inheriting wives of deceased brothers, the practice of using girls to appease avenging spirits or pay fines no longer serves its purpose. Generally acceptable forms of compensation include money, livestock and labour. Communities are always capable of finding creative ways and means of repairing the damages suffered.

The objective of reparations is to try, to the best extent possible, to restore the victim to their status quo ante. For instance, if a villager lost five goats, then the perpetrator will be asked to pay restitution in the form of five goats. However, in the majority of cases things are not this simple. What kind of restitution compensates the loss of life, a child, spouse, an eye, a limb or livelihood? No

restoration is possible here. However, attempts ought to be made, if not to fully compensate for the injury suffered, then at least symbolically to right the wrong done and restore dignity and relations. In cases where perpetrators may not have the wherewithal to sufficiently compensate victims, the state and other actors may need to come in to assist. This would have to be in cases where the condition of survivors is dire.

Compensating the affected family is one thing and compensating the community and the spirits is a different thing altogether. During conflicts members of the community are forced to witness horrors like severe beatings, rapes and murders. This injures them. Many of the witnesses will live with, if not be haunted by, the horrendous images for the rest of their lives. These deserve not only treatment but also compensation. Similarly as generally believed by the majority African population, when an atrocity or abomination like murder or the rape of a baby or old woman takes place in a community, the land is perceived to be defiled. Defiling communal land is wrong as the consequences will be communally suffered. In this case the community has to be compensated for endangering its existence and the spirits of the land appeased lest they punish the community. As can be deduced, it is not possible for all members of the community to be compensated. Normally, traditional leaders, village heads, headman and chiefs represent the community and receive reparations on behalf of the community and the spirits.

Rituals

Repairing relations is not only a social but also a spiritual affair. When one transgresses against others, one sins against God and offends the community; the living, the living dead and the unborn. To right this wrong one has to acknowledge the wrong (telling the truth as in above), compensate for the injuries and losses incurred (again as in the discussion on reparations above) and finally one has to be cleansed and be reintegrated in to the community.

As mentioned earlier rituals are outward signs of deeper spiritual expressions and relations. The majority population of Zimbabwe is deeply spiritual. Rituals play a very prominent and important role in the life of a Zimbabwean. Community healing is cemented through rituals at different levels. Creativity is called for especially in designing public rituals. Sincere dialogue is necessary in developing appropriate and acceptable rituals. History shows that Zimbabweans tolerate religious diversity as different churches operate in communities of

people practising traditional religion without any problems. From time to time the country is called to pray for different things such as rain, peace or a cure for HIV/AIDS. Different people and different communities heed the calls and pray in their own ways. Once in a while, people gather to pray together in ecumenical services. Similarly, the traditionalists gather for community prayers. The most notable example was the nationwide conducting of *biras* (traditional ceremonies to invoke the spirits of the land) that took place in 2007. Traditional ceremonies, just like church services, bring the people together; body, mind and spirit in union with the Supreme Being in an encounter that cleanses individuals, the community and the land. As previously noted, rituals link human beings to God (Moyo, 1987; Kibicho, 1990; Some', 1996, 1998) and because they are conducted in community, they strengthen links between the living and the spirit world and help members of the community, jointly and severally, keep in communion with themselves and with others (Some', 1996).

Reintegration

Reintegration of the survivor and perpetrators into society and resumption of normal community life is important. When one survives a violent attack like rape, it is a normal reaction for that person to withdraw from community life. Similarly, the perpetrator is either ostracised or withdraws from community life on his or her own volition upon realising their guilt. At the same time, the community and community life do not remain the same when heinous offences are committed in the community especially to members of the community by fellow members.

Reintegration is not an event. It is a process that is punctuated by rituals. A multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach is required. Depending on one's disposition and preferences, a mixture of traditional and modern practices would characterise the reintegration process. In the case of perpetrators, it is important to ensure that adequate care including counselling is given to avoid recidivism. Different communities have different ways of memorialising the past. Local traditions, customs, values and sensibilities would need to be considered in determining the best ways of preserving collective memory.

The role of community leaders

To this point, community has mostly been defined in terms of relationships. However, community is also a geographical location. A community can be a

village, ward, chiefdom, district, province, country, region or subcontinent, continent and the global village. However, in terms of community healing, a community cannot go beyond chiefdom. It can only be a village, a ward or an area under a chief.

A community leader will therefore be a person with influence in the village, ward or chiefdom. These are both people with formal and informal power. The list includes all traditional leaders: chiefs, headmen, village heads, spirit mediums and traditional healers; political leaders: councillors, local leaders of political parties; elders; leaders of faith-based organisations: priests, pastors, shamans; faith healers; professionals: doctors, headmasters, civil servants; CBO leaders; NGO representatives; activists and police officers.

As demonstrated above, most of the leaders with formal power lost moral capital through their actions and non-actions during the violence in Zimbabwe. Whilst some, for different reasons, enthusiastically perpetrated violence and others collaborated, the majority simply kept quiet or looked the other way. Those who sided with the persecuted or voiced disapproval will find it easy to lead community healing initiatives in their areas. Those who looked the other way have a chance of redeeming themselves and right the wrongs done. However, those who perpetrated violence or collaborated have little chance of successfully leading community healing as the communities have lost confidence in them. They can redeem themselves by cooperating in and supporting the community healing initiatives.

Naturally, chiefs have a vantage point in terms of rural community engagement. They can rally the community using both traditional and bureaucratic authority. This is the reason why both the colonial and post-independence governments used crooked methods to have them on their side. With time, traditional leaders were put on government payroll in Zimbabwe and given the politicisation of the civil service; they became tools for the government.

With moral capital, chiefs and other traditional leaders would be best suited to preside over the *dare* or community court. Unfortunately, some traditional leaders, mostly chiefs, stand accused of perpetrating violence; denying relatives of deceased opposition supporters space to have funeral wakes; denying burial of people murdered during political violence accusing them of being sell-outs or evil; and burying some murdered people without the necessary rituals. These violations are a negation of the customs and traditions of which they are custodians.

Spirit mediums work hand in hand with chiefs. It is generally believed that

spirit mediums warned against the violence. Because of this, they can play a role in the design of healing programmes and can direct community rituals. The major difficulty would be their limited appeal to people professing Christianity who would not want to be seen to be following African traditional religions. As noted earlier, a sizable chunk of the African Christians nicodemously practise African traditional religions.

Politicians like councillors and local leaders of political parties remain large symbols of polarisation and disunity in the country. The politicians and their supporters were directly involved in the violence that engulfed some communities as victims or perpetrators. This means in many parts of the country they cannot really direct community healing initiatives like presiding over matters at the *dare*. If they do, the positions taken by the *dare* risk being perceived as influenced by partisan interests even though politicians provide stability and confidence to processes if they lend their support and provide the much-needed political will. The politics of patronage, rife in many political parties in Zimbabwe, may force local politicians to toe and parrot the party line which may not be in tune with community needs and interests.

Every community has its elders. These are people who may not hold any formal position in the community but command respect because of their wisdom, moral rectitude, experiences, age or business acumen. Similarly most communities have professionals: doctors, headmasters or civil servants. These are best suited to preside over the *dare*. The major limitation would be their lack of supportive infrastructure since they don't have any organisation to back them up as compared to traditional leaders who have traditional structures and councillors who use structures of their local authorities or councils. In the context of a legislated *dare* or any other community healing framework, this can be overcome through appropriate provisions of the law.

Faith-based organisations are found throughout the country and have huge potential for community healing. Ordinarily these would naturally play a pivotal role in promoting peace and community healing. However as the events of the past show, many of the faith-based organisations need to say 'mea culpa' before they are taken seriously. Very few voices, chiefly the main line churches through hard-hitting pastoral statements, were heard denouncing violence from the different levels of the churches in Zimbabwe. Some Catholic priests got into trouble for reading and distributing the Easter 2007 Pastoral Statement of the ZCBC entitled 'God hears the cries of the oppressed'. The majority of churches, especially the fast-growing modern Pentecostal and Evangelical churches as well

as African Apostolic sects, remained quiet. Some church premises were used as bases where the perpetrators camped and from which they carried out their heinous crimes. Most sermons were far removed from Christian values. One man commented, 'I couldn't believe the sermon. He preached about making money when we were all living in fear of violence. People were dying and yet Sunday after Sunday our pastor preached the prosperity gospels.' This was common in most communities. Some pastors and churches claim to be apolitical and conveniently chose to ignore the widespread persecution around them. In the same congregation, one would find victims, perpetrators, collaborators and the indifferent. One priest narrated a story of a catechist who discovered, when his blindfold fell off whilst being beaten up at a base, that his tormentors were youths from his parish.

The faith-based organisations, especially the churches, have tremendous potential to facilitate community healing as the church leaders, priest, pastors, catechists can preside at community courts or *dare* and lead rituals.

Church leaders at different levels seem to be regaining their voice and joining the chorus for community healing. However, the majority are preaching the gospel of forgiving and forgetting, which is a rendition of the government's 'let-by-gones-be-by-gones' refrain. As demonstrated, this is a flawed conceptualisation of community healing which will not find support within the communities. Needless to say, simplification and romanticising of community healing or reconciliation as an easy process that puts responsibility on the victim to forgive and forget, negates Judaeo-Christian principles of reconciliation. Like the Bantu, the Judaeo-Christian conceptualise reconciliation as a process that involves examination of conscience, confession, restitution, forgiveness and reconciliation. There is no healing without restitution and no restitution without truth-telling. Despite irresistible temptations to short-circuit the process, there cannot be short cuts to sustainable peace.

Traditional healers and faith healers work mostly with individuals or families. They provide healing through consultations on different physical, social, mental and spiritual ailments as well as facilitate rituals. Because of the porous state of the economy and other factors, bogus healers have emerged. This makes it difficult in the initial stages to tell the bona fides of the healers. The Chinhoyi diesel *n'anga* mentioned above is a classic case.

Simple studies in the communities would reveal that in the post-June 2008 electoral violence, traditional healers and faith healers became busy as they were frequented a lot by victims seeking justice on one side and perpetrators and

collaborators seeking peace on the other. This means healers can contribute to community healing by facilitating the engagement of victims and perpetrators as well as collaborating with community courts and leading community rituals. However, like the spirit mediums, the major challenge with healers is that a lot of people, Christians and professionals, prefer to engage them in privacy for fear of stigmatisation.

Leaders of CBOs and representatives of NGOs have the potential to facilitate in building the capacity of different community actors and sharing of information and good practices for effective community healing. Due to their location and roots in the communities, leaders of CBOs can also preside over community courts. However, whilst most victims have respect for and trust in these institutions, the same cannot be said of perpetrators who perceive them as partisan and tools of Western imperialism.

As explained earlier, one major challenge with NGOs in community healing is the emphasis by many on retributive justice. Reconciliation and community healing, whilst not entirely premised on restorative justice, do not put people on trial to punish them but to establish the truth so as to restore relations and readmit the perpetrator into the community. Perhaps the blurred line between transitional justice and community healing needs bolding. The strong pull towards the dominant retributive justice elements of transitional justice in community healing discourse is understandable as leading human rights NGOs bestride both fields. They are locally focused community healing and the broader and more politically inclined national healing or transitional justice.

Another weakness of the NGOs is the negation of spirituality in healing and exclusion of other significant actors in rural communities as identified above. Because of access to education and proximity to other cultures and influences, a lot of NGOs tend to exhibit bias towards foreign ideologies dubbed international best practices. The community is not healed by the mere incarceration of a perpetrator after successful prosecution. Rather, healing takes place with engagements of families, restitution and rituals after establishment of the truth through trial. Further, NGOs' engagement with perpetrators, collaborators or those perceived to bear the greatest responsibility is marginal.

The above challenges notwithstanding, with a revised and holistic concept of community healing, NGOs, because of their intellectual capital, ie education, information and technical skills reposed in them, are best suited to build capacity of community leaders and the communities at large to engage in the complex yet necessary work of community healing.

As observed, community healing does not just happen. A lot of foundational work needs to be done. This includes building the confidence of different actors, reforming local institutions, disseminating information about different processes, all activities that NGOs and CBOs can play an instrumental role in.

Police officers are treated differently from other professionals and civil servants because of the unique position they occupy. Their work entails maintaining peace, law and order in the communities. They facilitate community healing *ceteris paribus*. However, since 2000 the Zimbabwe police force has been compromised in its work especially regarding political crimes. In fact, the police force is used as both instruments of oppression and political tools by ZANU PF. The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (2010) provided testimonies by individuals who were abused by members of the police force in and out of police stations for engaging in oppositional politics as well as officers acting ostensibly on superior orders. This criminalisation of politics and politicisation of crime soiled the image and reputation of the police force.

However, the police still have a role to play. Some of the functions of the police would include providing security for community healing initiatives and providing specialist and support services during community healing processes such as forensic investigations and securing of evidence.

Complexity of healing programmes

There are still a number of complex issues around community healing in Zimbabwe in 2010. The first is obviously the question of readiness. Is the environment ripe for community healing? Healing presupposes a period or stage after the injury and definitely not in the course of further or continued injury. Can one talk of healing in the course of the conflict or ongoing violence? This appears to be so as in some places violence or the threat of it is still real. The signing of the GPA in September 2008 and the subsequent formation of the IG in February 2009 were ignored in some communities. ZPP and other civic organisations reported through their monthly reports how ZANU PF youths and war veterans derided the GPA and IG as having effect only in Harare and not in their areas. This suggests that to them and their communities nothing had changed. To buttress this point, ZPP monthly reports indicate intolerable incidents of violence and lack of freedom.

Still on the question of readiness, are the communities ready for dialogue on this emotive issue? Perhaps the question should be, are Zimbabwe's political leaders ready to allow community healing processes to begin? There is evidently

no political will to facilitate initiatives towards community healing. As the stuttering constitution-making process showed, ZANU PF fears that opening space for people at the community level to openly discuss what went wrong in the past or, in the case of the new constitution, how they want to be governed, results in the Freirian critical consciousness that would ultimately lead to their ousting from power. Senior government and security sector officials, who probably know that community healing results in truth-telling which may expose some of them as bearing the greatest responsibility through orchestrating or commanding the reigns of terror, would do anything to suppress the truth from coming out. So ZANU PF, senior government officials and security chiefs would not support community healing processes simply because they want to preserve themselves in power and protect themselves from facing justice.

The second complexity is, as demonstrated above, that the violence was systemic and systematic, indicating orchestration from outside the community. Reports by several human rights organisations in Zimbabwe and abroad revealed that the violence was imported into the communities by people linked to the security agencies. In this case, to the victims, collaborators or 'sell-outs' are the enemies and regarded just as guilty as the perpetrators. As Du Plessis and Ford (2008) and Eppel and Raftopoulos (2009) observed this sets brothers against each other and neighbour against neighbour.

The third challenge is whilst strong community leadership is a prerequisite for community healing, many of the community leaders are compromised. The complexity is the complicity of leaders in the conflict or perpetration of atrocities. Many traditional leaders compromised themselves by coming out, whether by choice or coercion, in support of ZANU PF and chanted ZANU PF slogans, including the violent, *pasi nanhingi* (down with so and so). Some presided over kangaroo courts that found the then opposition supporters guilty of defiling their communities and imposed fines on them. Those traditional leaders who opposed the violence were either ignored or branded opposition supporters and punished. Many chose to look the other way.

Many victims accuse the state of either orchestrating the violence or at least failing to protect them from the perpetrators. Police at local levels openly confessed that they had no power to act in certain political crimes. They took directives from politicians. A case in point is the arrest of victims of political violence who had recovered their looted properties. They were arrested and charged for extortion (Du Plessis & Ford, 2008). Similarly the judicial system was rendered impotent.

The fourth complexity is the symbiotic relationship between community healing and transitional justice, better known as national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. National healing without community healing is impossible as the nation is made up of communities. Rather it is mere politicking. Effective community healing initiatives cannot take place without enabling legislation. This legislation invariably sets the scope and parameters of processes. At the same time local processes cannot be used for crimes committed by the state. This means community healing is for members of the community, with or without the state, but definitely not with other communities in other districts or provinces.

Conclusion

The culture of impunity that pervades Zimbabwean political life dating back to pre-independence Zimbabwe and confirmed at independence through the let-by-gones-be-by-gones policy of reconciliation does not help. The 1980 policy of reconciliation predicated on indemnity set a bad precedence for dealing with past human rights offences. The fervour with which war veterans and grass-roots' people invaded white-owned land in 2000 and the anguished cries for justice by victims of different post-independence conflicts in Zimbabwe, demonstrate the festering wounds that are still to heal and the angry demons that are still to be exorcised.

Community healing cannot take place in a time of continued violence. The contested constitution-making process and announcement of another election in 2011 mounts tension that polarises the communities and makes it difficult to engage in the arduous task of community healing. The politicians and their parties will either stifle the work or hijack the processes for partisan political interest.

The disjointed and inadequately conceptualised responses towards community healing are symptoms of gaps in community leadership and limited engagement with communities by external actors. Serious engagement would entail serious interrogation of the *etic* (outsiders) view of community healing and lending listening ears to the *emic* (locals) views of the same. Comprehensive and coherent programmes of national reconciliation and community healing need to be developed. The national healing programme is important as it deals with the environment and conditions for healing and mechanisms for community healing processes. At the same time, community healing should be facilitated through traditional and local community processes that involve victims, perpetrators and

the community. This is important as it opens space for dialogue, renegotiation of values, repairing of relations and restoring of dignity.

In the absence of enabling legislation to facilitate community healing, the work done mostly on a small scale, risks being superficial bordering on naivety. However, civil society can in the meantime engage in serious debates and research on concepts and models for community healing that are appropriate for Zimbabwean communities. This naturally means engaging the communities in the processes.

As community healing has a symbiotic relationship with national healing and reconciliation, greater care needs to be taken in discussing the emotive subject of transitional justice. As Zalaquett (1992) noted, the ethical imperatives and the dictates of international law need to be balanced by the political realities and constraints of the time. Difficult choices, and at times not very popular decisions and compromises have to be made. This presents challenges to CSOs and others who have carried out extensive research on the needs of victims of political violence. As articulated herein, most victims indicated preference for both prosecution and punishment of offenders and compensation for injuries suffered and losses incurred. This is an obvious outcome when a victim is afforded the chance to be complainant, prosecutor, judge, juror and executioner. Appropriate and timely responses are needed as victims may in time be persuaded to take the law into their own hands and become perpetrators in the process. Immediate to long-term responses by CSOs would include peace-building initiatives to reduce and minimise incidents of violence especially during the constitution-making process and subsequent general election; capacity building of community leaders to manage conflicts and development-related issues at local level; human rights training for communities and where possible promotion of traditional systems to deal with issues of reconciliation in the interim.

NOTES

- 1 Literally, 'the rain that clears the chaff'. It was the code name for a military campaign in Matebeleland and Midlands provinces, ostensibly to flush out dissidents, which resulted in the massacre of between 10 000 and 22 000 people.
- 2 Interviews were conducted in the course of some other work which is still to be published.

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The role of the Zimbabwean media in the transition process

Juliet Thondhlana

Zimbabwe is currently going through a transition period symbolised by a hybrid transition government that has brought together the three main political players in the country: ZANU PF led by Robert Mugabe, the MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC breakaway faction, MDC-M, led by Arthur Mutambara. The unity government brokered by SADC was created under the GPA signed by the three leaders. The purpose of the unity government was to take the nation through a transitional phase focusing on economic, political and social recovery and transformation that would culminate in free and fair elections.

The role that the media can play or is playing in Zimbabwe's transition and transformation continues to be controversial. This chapter scrutinises the media in the country, that is, its operating environment as well as its size, character, nature and impact during this transitional period. The chapter will also consider some propositions regarding the way forward for a successful transition for Zimbabwe.

What is media?

The media or mass media traditionally refers to the print media (printed press including newspapers and magazines) and electronic media in the narrow sense of radio and television broadcasting. However, the definition has recently broadened to include the internet in its diverse forms, for example, e-mail, websites, video games (eg PlayStation 3, Xbox 360 and Wii), blogs and podcasts (eg news, music, pre-recorded speeches and videos) as well as other electronic forms of news and entertainment such as SMS on mobile telephones. Mobile phones are being used for rapid breaking news and short entertainment clips for news alerts, games,

music and advertising. Recent advancements allow access to the internet through mobile phones and e-mail communication.

The media has diverse functions. It plays an advocacy role for business and social interests that include advertising, marketing, propaganda, public relations and political interaction (Fog, 1999). In politics, the media informs the public on political developments and also ought to protect the people it represents. The public views the media as a system for keeping the power structures of their society in check and notifying them of any issues that merit attention. In this regard, the media plays a 'watchdog' role through scrutinising and discussing the successes and failures of governments. In this way, it informs the public about the effectiveness of their government's performance and may even influence critical events such as elections (Fog, 1999). The media also alerts the public when something that negatively affects them happens or provides a platform for different stakeholders to debate issues that are of political interest to them. This watchdog function is essential in a democratic society where people have the right to know what their governments are doing. In relation to the watchdog role, the media plays a sentry role by letting the public know what's coming and whether the changes may be good or insignificant. Information is thus provided as it evolves thereby enabling the public to follow events and even influence them as they unfold. Diceman (2000) further notes that the media also acts as the marketplace of ideas and plays multiple leadership roles through disseminating their own and others' views. The public builds on these views and formulates its own opinions and this activates debate since most media outlets now present both sides of a story to help the public to formulate informed opinions and decisions.

The media also facilitates social cohesion that comes through members sharing culture through shared experiences. The media contributes to the spread of these shared values thereby enabling society to bond and make decisions for the common good. In this way, the media therefore plays a peace-building role (Adam & Holguin, 2003). Adam and Holguin (2003) list a number of media peace-building initiatives around the world in places such as Rwanda, Mali, Mexico, Canada, Colombia and Somalia where media such as e-mails and radio have been used to bring about social change by facilitating transitions from war to peace. However, it is equally important to point out that the media can also be used to convey hate messages and incite the public to turn on each other as with what happened in Rwanda between the Hutus and the Tutsis in 1994. The radio was used to convey the genocide message by the Hutus.

For the media to accomplish its multiple functions, it has to meet certain criteria and Diceman (2000) has identified criteria it has to comply with to be effective. For example, it has to be universally accessible to the diverse groupings with varied cultures, ideologies, needs and goals in a given society. As such, it has to present multiple perspectives on issues of common interest (Curran, 1997). Public access of the media is essential for all citizens to have an equal chance to participate in public discourses. In addition, the media must commit to responsible and intelligent debating of issues and be able to distinguish between strong arguments and those lacking in logic. Also, the media must treat all contributors with respect in spite of their status in society. More importantly, the media must be independent from power structures if it is to play its watchdog role effectively. These power structures include the government, business corporations and the elite. Further, the media must be responsive to the public concerns and interests and therefore be able to represent and inform the public in an impartial manner. Accurate, honest and objective reporting is a must for any credible media.

The challenge for the media emanates from the fact that it requires large amounts of capital hence its independence can be compromised. Media responsiveness is also limited by commercial goals as the media market is almost always profit-driven. Caution has to be exercised and these issues addressed when assessing the media's role in nation building.

Zimbabwean media

The Zimbabwean media has gone through a number of transitional stages and is therefore best understood by reflecting on how it has evolved to its current state. As noted by Media in Zimbabwe (n.d.), the media story in Zimbabwe is closely linked to the history of the country's struggle for independence and as such, the story of the media in Zimbabwe cannot be separated from the history of the country's struggle for independence. According to Mukasa (2003), these transitional stages can be divided into three eras as follows: colonial/nationalist era (pre-1980); transitional era (1980–1990) and post-transitional era (1990 to present). During each of these eras, the media's policies are seen as reflecting the 'ideological and socio-political environment of the country' during each period (Mukasa, 2003: 1).

Colonial/nationalist era (pre-1980)

Media in Zimbabwe (n.d.) reports that Zimbabwe has some of the oldest newspapers. *The Mashonaland* and *Zambesian Times*, a handwritten paper, was launched in June 1891. It was later replaced in 1892 by the *Rhodesian Herald*, which has since been renamed *The Herald* and has maintained its status as the country's oldest and largest daily newspaper to date. In October 1894, another paper, the *Bulawayo Chronicle* was launched in the country's second largest city, Bulawayo. As with *The Herald*, *The Chronicle* has continued to exist until today. These two papers, together with their respective sister weekly, the *Sunday Mail*, as well as a latter addition, the *Financial Gazette*, were initially aligned with the ideological interests of the colonial rulers of Rhodesia. The media focused on the needs and interests of the white settler population and ignored the needs and interests of the black majority.

Media in Zimbabwe (n.d.) observes that much of the news covered was about events taking place in the metropolis, sports and politics while African news was not published. Any news relating to black people mostly focused on criminal activities. The media itself was fully controlled by the settler regime with the printing and publishing executives being white as were the editors, copy editors and most of the reporters and most of the advertising and circulation executives (Media in Zimbabwe, (n.d.)). The same applied to the electronic media, the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation (RBC), which was under the control of the government which appointed its board of governors. Theoretically, the RBC was autonomous but in reality, the government controlled it as exemplified by the fact that the media was instructed not to give airtime to the African political opposition or mention any of the opposition organisations.

Alongside the colonial press surfaced a liberation nationalist-oriented press with the emergence of publications such as the *Daily News* and church publications, *Moto* (fire) and *Umbowo* (witness) which offered a platform and voice to nationalist leaders of the 1960s and 1970s to express themselves and mobilise the masses to press for regime change (Mukasa, 2003). *Moto* was a Catholic Church publication and *Umbowo* was a United Methodist Church publication. The two main nationalist movements, ZANU and ZAPU had their own publications which were based outside the country. Mukasa (2003) notes that the development of the nationalist and church media was a response to the injustices, oppression, racism and exploitation characteristic of colonial rule. This media was naturally not welcomed by the settler government which did not tolerate dissenting voices. As such, they did not become a part of the

mainstream media. Chavhunduka (2002) reports that the independent media in colonial times struggled to report freely because of restrictive laws imposed by the settler regime such as the Official Secrets Act (February 1970), which made it a crime to report on 'classified information'; the Law and Order Maintenance act (LOMA) (December 1960), by which the state could act against any persons and the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament Act (1971), which made it illegal for media to report on debates in parliament. These laws caused a media blackout on reporting the heavy casualties suffered by government forces and instead focused on casualties suffered by the guerrillas. Thus, one of the main aims of the struggle for independence was for a free press.

The first transitional era (1980–1990)

The transitional period was marked by attempts to forge a three-way socio-political alliance that included the two main nationalist factions (ZANU and ZAPU) and the established white settlers. On the one hand, the new government attempted to redress colonial injustices and inequities through policy schemes such as Growth with Equity and Transformation, the Five Year National Development Plan and the President's Directive on Black Advancement and on the other hand, it got preoccupied with maintaining the three-way alliance which is blamed for the further marginalisation of the general public (Mukasa, 2003). During this transitional period, it was hoped that the media would be transformed to reflect the ideologies of the new black majority rule government. Ironically, however, the government did not implement the proposed media reforms. Instead, the transitional period saw the emergence of a neocolonial press that bore most of the characteristics of the colonial media. Chavhunduka (2002) argues that the new government saw government control of the media as being useful for the dissemination of government-approved information. The only legislation to be repealed was the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament Act (May 1971).

The new government moved on to acquire a majority of the shares in Zimbabwe Newspapers (Zimpapers), a company that owned all major newspapers in the country. In 1981 it went on to institute the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) as part of its new media policy in response to public calls to reform the media from white minority control to give it a Zimbabwean flavour (Park & Curran, 2000). The government called for the freeing of media to become non-partisan and mass-oriented, serving the interests of the nation as a whole.

According to this policy, the government would not be involved in monitoring and mentoring the press. However, this was not to be because of the heavy presence of the government through the Ministry of Information and the ZMMT itself was later to be subjected to systematic attempts by government to control and influence the press. The early 1980s saw the resignation of many white journalists as government moved on with its affirmative action policy which replaced white editors with black ones. Following the Matabeleland Massacres and the consequent dissident activities (1983–1987), the challenge for journalists was on the extent to which they could report freely on the military conflict in the region. Mukasa (2003) contends that it was the dissident problem, the ongoing political conflict with ZAPU and apartheid South Africa's destabilisation programme that forced the ZANU Government to strengthen its hold on the media. Editors committed to serving the interests of the ruling party only were appointed by the government. The challenges faced by the media during this period are reflected in the following statements by government officials:

There is no such thing as freedom of the press. The press is a structural component of the society whose interest it must reflect, promote and indeed defend. Therefore freedom of the press is only relative to given social, economic and political circumstances you are in relation to the existence of others... (Mukasa, 1990: 221 as cited in Mukasa, 2003: 5)

Another one commented that,

In order for the mass media to play their role effectively, it is important that the selection of editors and senior staff be acceptable to government (Mukasa, 1990: 219–20 in Mukasa, 2003: 6).

It is evident from these pronouncements that government defined what freedom of expression and developmental journalism meant. Many journalists and editors who decided to continue reporting professionally at this time were either demoted or forced to step down. Their efforts, however, are reflected in some of the successes of the media during this period. For instance, the AIDS issue was vigorously covered in the private media in the late 1980s resulting in government efforts to publicise and educate the nation on the disease. Also, attempts by government to adopt a one-party state mirroring its alliance with communist states elsewhere was heavily campaigned against by the private media leading to the

abandonment of the idea in the late 1980s. In addition, the ‘Willowgate Scandal’ whereby the media exposed corruption of authorities involved in purchasing of cars at a cheaper price than members of the public is another successful example. Six government officials resigned as a result of this media exposure.

Post-transitional era (1990 to present)

The 1990s saw more exposure of scandals by the media with the reporting of looting of funds set aside for projects by government officials which led to some corrective measures by the government though with some exceptions. The looting of diamonds in the DRC by the Zimbabwe National Army (International Press Institute, 2000) also came out during this period.

The emergence and growth of the independent press coupled with the emergence of civic groups and opposition parties played a significant role in keeping Zimbabwe on track with multiparty politics. This development followed the decline of government’s popularity in the late 1990s and the increasing instability in the country. Mukasa (2003), identifies three categories of Zimbabwe’s press that were present by the end of the 1990s, that is, the mainstream press owned by Zimpapers, the rural and small town and peri-urban newspapers owned by the ZMMT, and the independent press owned by the private sector. The following table summarises these newspapers:

Table 7.1: Zimbabwean press at the end of the 1990s

Mainstream press	Rural press	Independent press
The Herald	Kwayedza	The Zimbabwe Independent
The Chronicle	People’s Voice	Financial Gazette
Sunday Mail	Midweek News	Daily News
Sunday News	High Density Mirror	Sunday Standard
Mutare Post	Chaminuka News	Horizon
	Mashonaland Guardian	Zimbabwe Mirror
	Gweru Times	Express
	Ilangalindosakusa	Dispatch
	Masvingo Provincial Star	Mercury

Source: Mukasa (2003)

Most of these newspapers were weeklies with the mainstream press publishing the two government-controlled and long standing dailies, *The Herald* and the *Bulawayo Chronicle* and it was only in 1999 that an independent press daily, the

Daily News, was launched. In 1998, the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) was established by a consortium of local and foreign businesses becoming the only challenge to the media monopoly by Zimpapers. Its shareholders, under the Africa Media Trust, included British, South African and New Zealand companies. The ANZ launched newspapers such as the *Express*, the *Dispatch*, *Daily News* and the *Mercury*. In the early 2000s, the Zimbabwean media, particularly the independent media, continued to expand. In 2002, the Media Africa group launched the *Weekend Tribune* and the *Business Tribune*. A fourth national daily, the *Daily Mirror* was launched by the Southern African Printing and Publishing House while its sister weekly, the *Zimbabwe Mirror*, was renamed the *Sunday Mirror*.

Thus the beginning of the 2000s was marked by a period and climate of outspoken and fearless opposition with the emergence of strong opposition politics as embodied by the newly formed MDC. The MDC was founded in 1999 under the leadership of the former trade union leader Morgan Tsvangirai. It was made up of civic groups who had campaigned for the 'no' vote in the 2000 constitution referendum which had among its proposals, limiting a president's term of office to two terms as well as giving legal immunities to the state. Among its most controversial clauses were the land reform policies which stated that if the United Kingdom would not honour its duty to fund land reforms leading to the transfer of land from white farmers to landless black peasants by compensating the farmers, the government would seize the land without compensation. The independent media saw this as an opportunity to hold government to account through professional and honest reporting thus further exposing corruption and fiscal mismanagement in government.

During the elections that followed, the government moved quickly to suppress access to the media including access to radio and television broadcasts and advertising to opposition political groups while giving the ruling party unlimited access. The state-controlled media was used to attack domestic and foreign opponents. Opposition groups only found some level of coverage in the independent press which published both positive and negative news and commentaries about the opposition. In response, restrictive and controversial laws, often termed 'draconian laws', were introduced. One of the first of such laws was the Posts and Telecommunications Act of 2000. According to this Act, the president may find it necessary, in the interests of national security or the maintenance of law and order, to give a directive that any class of communications transmitted by means of a cellular telecommunication or telecommunications

service (including e-mail) may be intercepted or monitored in a manner specified in the directive (Section 98 (2) (b)). While there is no evidence that this law has ever been used, the US State Department in their 2002 Human Rights Report condemned it:

The law permits the Government to monitor and intercept e-mails entering and leaving the country, and security services have reportedly used this authority to monitor e-mail communication, although the extent of this monitoring was unknown.

Other laws enacted to limit freedom of expression of the media include the Broadcasting Services Act (April 2001) and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Commercialisation Act (April 2001), which give the government control over any future private broadcaster and POSA (January 2002). POSA was found to be particularly notorious as it makes it a criminal offence to publish anything 'likely to cause alarm or despondency' (and carries a prison sentence of up to seven years). The government can block any publishing site using legislation such as POSA. A further law considered even more dangerous to media survival and which has earned the titled 'draconian law' is the 2002 AIPPA. Some of the more problematical aspects of AIPPA, from the perspective of freedom of expression and of the media, include the allocation of substantial regulatory powers over media outlets and individual journalists to the Media and Information Commission (MIC), a body which is subject to extensive direct and indirect government control.

All media outlets and any business disseminating media products must obtain a registration certificate from the MIC. Also, accreditation must be obtained from the MIC before anyone can work as a journalist. This is effectively a form of licensing. To get licensed, applicants have to meet a stringent set of requirements and the licence can be revoked at any time if the code of conduct is considered to have been breached. In addition, foreign media organisations are required to pay a stipulated amount of money annually for every correspondent. If found guilty of any offence, journalists face a hefty fine or two years in prison. This law led to the arrest and detention of a number of journalists including Andrew Meldrum, a reporter for a British newspaper, *The Guardian*, who was accused of 'publishing falsehoods'. Meldrum was subsequently acquitted in court and then expelled from the country in May 2003. The Zimbabwean independent media endured harassments and threats for the first five years of its existence and

the media landscape continued to shrink following the closure of four privately owned newspapers, the *Daily News* and the *Daily News on Sunday* (September 2003), *The Tribune* and *The Weekly Times* (February 2005). Only three privately owned newspapers continued to report critically on the situation in Zimbabwe.

Besides AIPPA, other laws have also been formulated to complement and further tighten provisions of the existing restrictive laws, for example, the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act (2005), General Laws Amendment Act, Constitutional (No. 17) Amendment Act (2006) and the Interception of Communications Act (2007). The Criminal (Codification and Reform) Act is believed to be more stringent than even POSA and AIPPA as it has harsher penalties than those provided for under POSA and AIPPA. For example, if found guilty of contravening these laws a journalist may spend 20 years in jail.

Emergence of an alternative media

The past decade has seen a dramatic rise in the number of Zimbabweans of all ages who are leaving the country for other countries such as South Africa, Botswana, the United Kingdom, North America and Australia (Chetsanga & Muchenje, 2003; Tevera & Crush, 2003; Pasura, 2008). It is estimated that about one-third (about 4 million), of the Zimbabwean population are in the diaspora. The reasons for this migration are many but relate mostly to the unstable economic and political situation in Zimbabwe following the controversial land reform programmes and disputed elections since 2000. For reasons of wanting to safeguard national interests and territorial sovereignty, democratic rights and freedoms such as the freedom of speech, press, information and assembly have been rigorously controlled for the opposition, the media (whether state-controlled or private as demonstrated above) and civic society using a range of amended legislation as well as the security forces. Consequently, the space for divergent opinions within the public, social and political spheres and for democratic participation and political pluralism has become very limited.

Zimbabwean diasporans are not eligible to vote and are therefore unable to participate in the most basic political decision-making process of their country. Zimbabweans abroad have therefore developed other ways of participating in the political life of their home country using the alternative democratic space available in some of the host countries such as the United Kingdom, where politically active Zimbabweans in the diaspora try to influence domestic political processes in their country of origin through other non-electoral means. Similarly,

self-exiled journalists and civil society activists are maximising on the freedoms given to them in the host countries by making their opinions public, engaging in awareness raising activities and continuing to provide information for the international community and Zimbabweans inside and outside Zimbabwe. One of the instruments used to achieve this is the so called 'alternative media'.

According to Pickard (2007), the term 'alternative media' covers a wide range of media forms that challenge the status quo. Moyo (2007) notes that, historically, those living under repressive governments have tended to develop alternative forms of communication as tools of subversion. While traditionally, underground newspapers and pirate radio have been some of the common forms (eg during the war of liberation), the emergence of new communication technologies in recent times has ushered in new forms with greater possibilities for transnational and even wider citizen participation and empowerment. Atton (2002: 4) defines alternative media as '... the means for democratic communication to people who are normally excluded from media production'. Hamilton (2000) also sees it as '... new forms of organising more participatory techniques of media and more inclusive, democratic forms of communication'. As noted by Atton (2002), alternative media gives a voice to the marginalised so that they are able to tell their own stories in their own media. This media is indicated by qualities such as '... non-commercial sites for distribution; transformed social relations, and roles and responsibilities and transformed communication processes' (Atton, 2002: 27). Zimbabweans are using a range of alternative media means such as mobile phones, online publications (foreign-based news websites), radios and blogs to communicate with each other regarding all manner of socio-political issues that affect them and to keep each other updated as well as to raise awareness on certain issues and mobilise each other towards a particular course of action. According to Moyo (2007), Zimbabweans in the diaspora are creatively exploiting new media to resist state-controlled news by the mainstream media. Kupe (2007) concurs that the Zimbabwean alternative media is a response to the closure of media space. Some of these media are sponsored by foreign governments. For instance, Voice of America – News for Zimbabwe, Studio 7 is funded by the US Government and is based in Washington DC.

Alternative media is not only used in the diaspora but also in Zimbabwe. Vibrant political discussion takes place through the internet and on various internet forums in Zimbabwe. One such initiative based in Zimbabwe is <http://www.kubatana.net> founded by Brenda Burrell and others. Kubutana.net has come up with strategies of using e-mail, internet, mobile phones and dial-up radio as alternative media

sources. It provides recipients with alternative voices and they can decide what to do with the information they receive. Information and discussion is provided on human rights, HIV/AIDS, activism, the Zimbabwean judiciary system and other areas that are not fully covered by the state-controlled media. SMS is used for two-way communication with members able to respond with questions and comments. Through the various channels offered by Kubatana.net, ordinary Zimbabweans are able to publish their stories of unlawful detention and torture. Kubatana.net has had wide ranging impacts to the extent that other media have sometimes used stories they publish in their own newspaper publications and CSOs have also used the Kubatana directory to arrange seminars, conferences and workshops.

Currently, however, Zimbabwe has a more vibrant media outside the country than the media at home and with the growth of the new and alternative media, Zimbabweans have been able to interact across continents and with their fellow citizens in Zimbabwe. At present, figures for Zimbabwean media at home and abroad or online are estimated as follows:

Table 7.2: Zimbabwean media figures at home and abroad

Media type	Figures	
	National	Foreign/online
Broadcasting	2	6
Internet	8	65
Magazine	0	1
Newspaper	14	4

Source: Zimpapers and News Media (2000–2011)

As can be seen in Table 2, foreign Zimbabwean media is generally higher than in the country. In spite of the prevailing restrictions therefore, the media has continued to provide space and forums for debating socio-political and economic issues affecting the country. Significant mobilisation has taken place through the internet, for example in relation to the fight against human rights abuses and the constitution-making process and diasporan dialogues have further helped to publicise the Zimbabwean crisis as well as the efforts of the current transition unity government towards finding a solution to the crisis.

Besides the above, Zimbabwe's local and foreign media and other non-Zimbabwean media have been reporting on the Zimbabwean situation and have faced similar restrictions on researching and reporting news about Zimbabwe.

Also, using alternative media to disseminate news and facilitate debate, has provided further alternative sources of information and discussion forums to Zimbabweans, especially those in the diaspora who can access the internet more easily.

Supporting initiatives of the media are the efforts of the vibrant Zimbabwe NGO sector that works around issues of media and human rights. This sector gathered momentum in the late 1990s and the period since 2000 in response to increasing repressive activities of the state resulting from the emergence of strong opposition politics. NGOs provided, and continue to provide, one of the alternative voices in Zimbabwe on human rights issues. The sector has helped push to the fore issues of media diversity, pluralism and independence through lobbying for an improved operating environment for the media. Key NGOs working on media development activities include the following (BBC World Service Trust (n.d.):

- MISA: works on advocacy for media freedom; freedom of expression and freedom of information; media training and legal defence of media outlets and media workers.
- MMPZ: monitors the reporting of both broadcast and print media in Zimbabwe and gives out reports on the conduct of media organisations. It also addresses issues of balance and ethical reporting and freedom of speech.
- Federation of African Media Women of Zimbabwe (FAMWZ): endeavours to promote gender rights in the media and collaborates with female media workers in poor communities to address issues such as gender violence, gender in the media and HIV/AIDS.
- Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ): works to promote the interests of media workers in terms of their work environments and conditions of employment.

Other related NGOs include the ZLHR which is a group of lawyers working to promote human rights in Zimbabwe and offering legal services especially to victims of human rights abuses; the Human Rights and Development Trust of Southern Africa (HURIDETSA), the former Southern Africa Human Rights Trust (SAHRIT) which advances human rights in the southern African region through human rights training directed at NGOs, government, police and other stakeholders and the Zimbabwe Women's Resources Centre and Network (ZWRCN) which looks at development issues affecting women, training, policy reform and lobbying. All these organisations promote media interests in one form or other.

Media focus has seen journalists and activists receive awards in recognition of their efforts, for example, Geoffrey Nyarota, journalist and author, who is the managing editor of *The Zimbabwe Times*, an online newspaper and former editor-in-chief of the *Daily News*, has won several awards for his work, such as, a CPJ International Press Freedom Award in 2001 by the Committee to Protect Journalists, the Golden Pen of Freedom Award in 2002 by the World Association of Newspapers and that same year he was also awarded UNESCO's Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize (<http://www.unesco.org>, 2002); Jestina Mukoko, director of ZPP, which monitors rights violations, won the City Of Weimar, Germany's Human Rights Award in 2009 (Mhlanga-Nyahuye, 2009) and Beatrice Mtetwa, human rights lawyer, was awarded the Inamori Ethics Prize by Case Western Reserve University in Ohio in 2011 (Timeslive, 2011).

Zimbabwe transition and media perspective

Following the violent and disputed elections of March 2008, a transitional unity government, under the auspices of the GPA and brokered by SADC, was established. This GPA transitional government was set up to break the political stalemate resulting from the problematic 2008 elections. The ruling party, ZANU PF, had, for the first time since independence, lost its parliamentary majority. The opposition leader had won the presidential vote but had failed to get the 50 per cent needed to avoid a run-off. The ensuing run-off itself was fraught with problems and Tsvangirai withdrew from the race citing political violence and an environment not conducive for free and fair elections. Mugabe was declared a winner amidst claims by observer missions that the poll had not reflected the will of the people. After lengthy negotiations, an agreement was reached to form a government of national unity with Mugabe as Head of State, Tsvangirai as Prime Minister and Mutambara as the Deputy Prime Minister.

It has been widely documented that the unity government has faced numerous challenges from its inception with some media reports claiming that it was doomed from the beginning. There was good reason for this scepticism. Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC was considered by many to be too inexperienced to assert itself as an equal partner with Mugabe's ZANU PF with its many years of political manoeuvring and a good record of out-manoevring previous opposition using its so called 'divide, rule, co-opt and destroy' strategy (Crisis Group, 2010). There were also major threats to the coalition such as the resistance to accept the unity by the powerful security sector leaders; infighting within the major parties

themselves; reluctance by ZANU PF to embrace and adopt and implement the full terms of the GPA and the donors lack of confidence in the unity without whose support the coalition would collapse. Now in its sixteenth month, MDC-T (Tsvangirai-led) recently reported the successes and challenges of the transitional government as follows:

What he calls ‘definite successes’:

- We have brought sanity and stability to the economy.
- We have revived the health sector, which had all but collapsed.
- We have got the schools back up and running and textbooks distributed.
- We now have independent daily newspapers registered to operate.
- Basic services such as sewerage reticulation, refuse collection and water provision have been restored in many areas.

(Tsvangirai, June 2010)

And challenges which he admits overshadow the successes to date:

- The pace of reform has been painfully slow.
- Abuses of power are still all too common.
- Many people are still struggling to make a living wage, and provide for their families.
- Infrastructure rehabilitation and energy supply continue to inhibit development.

(Tsvangirai, June 2010)

Media opinions are divided as to the successes and failures or even survival of the unity government. Activities of the IG have continued to attract a lot of interest from all media (state-controlled, internal private and alternative). There have, however, been differences in terms of what is emphasised and analysis of the activities.

The state-controlled media reports have revealed mixed sentiments on the GPA with the majority of the stories reported portraying the IG as progressing well, and citing as proof signs of economic recovery (including alleged increase in investor confidence), ongoing national reconciliation efforts, compliance with the political agreement and the general acceptance of its endorsement by some sections of the international community while downplaying the issues hampering a smooth transition such as the unilateral and partisan announcement of new boards for the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe and for Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings. Most of the fewer stories reporting lack of progress and turmoil as demonstrated by the still evident economic stagnation, chaos in the

resource-starved agricultural, education and health sectors and also highlighting the problems undermining the effectiveness of the GPA have tended to blame Western interference and sanctions, the alleged ineffectiveness of the MDC arm of the government which is in charge of the socio-economic ministries and the civic society (eg *The Herald*; *Sunday Mail*; ZTV; ZBC, October 2009). For example, *The Herald* (October 2009) referred to MDC-M Minister of Education David Coltard's reluctance to extend the deadline for school examinations' registration as a deliberate attempt to '... take the country back to the pre-independence era of bottleneck education system' (ZBC, 30 September 2009, 8pm). Also facing blame is MDC-T's Finance Minister Tendai Biti who is accused of '... deliberately letting the economy bleed' by allegedly blocking IMF funds to Zimbabwe by conflicting with Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono (ZBC, 2 October 2009, 1 pm).

With both the internal private and alternative media, there is a section of the media that does not see the transition being accomplished successfully by the unity government due to the alleged lack of political will by ZANU PF. Its refusal to comply with all terms of the GPA has often been sighted as the main problem. For example, Chogugudza (December 2009), reporting in the online publication, *NewZimbabwe*, about challenges of a democratic transition, does not believe that democratic transition is possible in Zimbabwe. He argues that Zimbabwe has irretrievably broken down and is on the verge of economic collapse. At the time of publication of his article, he could not see any significant achievements by the unity government noting particularly that people's lives were still being threatened as indicated by unofficial reports of increased disappearances; human rights were continuously violated with e-mails and telephone communications being intercepted as well as wanton arrests and harassment still being experienced. Chogugudza does not believe that democratic transition is possible where such civil liberties are restricted.

Similarly, ZSCM reported to the Ecumenical News International (17 June 2009) that in their view, most people were still living below the poverty datum line noting that the majority of workers earned between 1 and 3.5 per cent of what they needed to meet the cost of basic needs. They further stated that the government of national unity had failed to resuscitate the social services delivery system in the country and that there was need for concerted efforts from the government to revive the education system, right from the infrastructure to service delivery as well as introducing political reforms if Zimbabwe was to reclaim its position on the continent. Concurring with these views and writing more recently,

the *Financial Gazette* (May 2010) argues that 'Political transformation cannot take place outside of... policies, institutions and a culture that promotes good governance at national, local and institutional level'.

The paper suggests that in order for this to happen, there needs to be in place the necessary measures, actions, attitudes and institutions such as the development of a good constitution, the transformation of the media, establishment of democratic institutions and the development of a new political culture.

Some media reports reflect scepticism likely to have developed over years of repeated broken promises by government such that they do not see any possibility for positive change. For example, Clottey (2010), reporting for VOA News, believes that the unity government is not able to deliver on issues of media reform, governance and democracy because ZANU PF lacks the political will to do so. However, the licensing of four private newspapers later in the month (28 May 2010) contradicts this view showing that change is possible. The ICG (2010) provides perhaps the most balanced view of the Zimbabwe unity government's transition efforts. ICG notes that while it is indisputable that the unity government is facing a range of challenges to the processes of democratic transformation, it has, however, managed to score some successes against the odds.

On the positive side, most observers did not give the unity government much of a chance in the beginning but records show that it actually started with significant tangible results. For example, at its inception, all systems including health, education, the economy, politics, agriculture and security were collapsing. However, soon after the new government started operating, schools and hospitals reopened. In addition, the cholera epidemic was successfully arrested. Also, civil servants returned to work and began to receive salaries just like all other civil servants who were being paid a living allowance of US \$100. In addition, the multimillion per cent inflation, which had become a permanent feature of the economy, became a thing of the past with the adoption of the US dollar as the local currency. Inflation also fell from 231 million per cent in July 2008 to 6 per cent in 2009, with a projected further drop to 5.1 per cent in 2010 (Crisis Group). Government revenue started to pick and shops were beginning to fill up with goods. While rebuilding the economy that has a 90 per cent unemployment figure is a major challenge, the government managed to restore some level of confidence and fiscal stability and signs of recovery are beginning to show with the growth of the GDP to 4.7 in 2009. The 2010 budget is reported to have been aiming for a further GDP growth rate of 7 per cent (Crisis Group).

The close link between economic and social development and political

reform has been emphasised by the media. The ICG observes that progress has been made towards fully implementing the GPA. For example, independent commissions have been formed to address media, human rights and election matters. A decline in the number of politically driven detentions and arrests has also been reported.

Further, the licensing of four private newspapers is a welcome development. The Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) recently reported that it had considered the registration of the ANZ to relaunch the *Daily News*; Alpha Media Holdings to publish a new daily known as *Newsday*; Modus Publications to publish the *Daily Gazette* and the fourth licence was granted to Fruitlink Ventures, to publish *The Mail*.

ICG notes, however, that there are still major challenges to the transition. One of the major challenges, as noted by other media, is the stance taken by the security establishment which is not keen on the unity government. Another challenge is the slow pace at which key donors are embracing the new government because of its failure to fully implement the GPA. The donor community, while continuing to provide humanitarian assistance, has preferred to adopt a wait-and-see position before it can release large amounts of money desperately required for recovery and reconstruction thereby making transition and transformation untenable. Civil servants are still very poorly paid and have had to take industrial action in order to press for higher salaries. On the political front, isolated cases of politically motivated detentions and arrest are still being reported although, according to Crisis Group, these have significantly declined. The dreaded POSA and AIPPA are still in place to the disappointment of many. The licensing of four private papers, however, is a welcome but not sufficient development. Further, the constitutional reform process, while it started in earnest in January 2010, lacks impetus and has been said to exclude the general populace.

It is evident from the above that the media, notwithstanding the major challenges it still faces, has a crucial role to play in the transition. The role that the media is playing has to be measured in the light of the main concerns of the GPA which are summarised in the following pronouncements (Nyakunu, March 2010):

- concern about the recent challenges that we have faced as a country and the multiple threats to the well-being of our people and, therefore, determined to resolve these permanently;
- dedicating ourselves to putting an end to the polarisation, divisions, conflict and intolerance that has characterised Zimbabwe politics and society in recent times;

- determined to build a society free of violence, fear, intimidation, hatred, patronage, corruption and founded on justice, fairness, openness, transparency, dignity and equality;
- recognising and accepting that the land question has been at the core of the contestation in Zimbabwe and acknowledging the centrality of issues relating to the rule of law, respect for human rights, democracy and governance.

These statements provide an entry point for the media to play its mediating role effectively. Nyakunu (2010) suggests that in order to address the above issues effectively, the media should do everything within its mandate to set the agenda and shape opinions and views by creating platforms for multiple views on the stated issues. To this end, the media should identify and define the diverse threats to the security and well-being of the people and provide forums for the public to speak on the issues. Victims of past atrocities should be heard. Nyakunu suggests that the Zimbabwean media can learn from the experiences of other countries with similar experiences such as South Africa, Angola, Rwanda and Somalia. The aim would be to facilitate efforts to rebuild the country and avoid regression and the recurrence of conflict. The media, in this regard would need to come up with a strategy that would guide the country towards peace, reconciliation and nation building. To achieve all this, the media itself has to win public respect and trust, even touching the conscience of those in power and this requires that the media operate with the highest professional and ethical standards including doing extensive research, reflecting on issues soberly and systematically utilising existing resources.

The question is whether the Zimbabwean media is currently realistically able to fulfil this complex role. It appears that every attempt by the media to play its role results in harassment that discourages future action. It is evident that in spite of the harsh political climate, the media – the independent, alternative and international media – must continue to perform their watchdog and other roles in order to hold politicians to account with respect to these pronouncements. For example, in 2010, reporters from a weekly private paper and a freelance journalist were questioned for reporting the findings of a committee linking a prominent businessman and a prominent minister to alleged fraudulent land deals (*Metro Zimbabwe*, March 2010). The media is also keeping the public updated as to the progress, or otherwise, being made by the transitional government as well as providing space to debate the implications of the various GPA activities through opinion sections of newspapers and the alternative media spaces such as blogs,

mobile phones and e-mails.

It is also possible that the current media in all its forms may actually not altogether have the requisite sophistication required to professionally accomplish its obligation. Commenting on professional journalism, Zimbabwean panellists Mukoko, Zhangazha and Masuku (Media Sustainability Index Africa, 2008) noted that Zimbabwean reporting is 'not fair, well-sourced, or objective' due to poor financial infrastructure and human resources further explaining that while private journalists try to follow ethical standards, insufficient resources and lack of access to state and public information lead to sensationalisation of stories and publication of poorly sourced reports.

It appears therefore that, while current media attempts to maintain high standards of professional reporting of news are commendable, much needs to be done to empower them to function efficiently and contribute more positively to Zimbabwe's transition and beyond. The argument for the reform of media laws to abolish so called 'draconian laws' in Zimbabwe has been well-documented by diverse media sources and includes removing barriers to access to state and public information. However, as observed by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Centre for Democracy and Governance, it is necessary but not enough to argue that the media needs a range of support to function efficiently. This support includes training of media practitioners in areas such as professional, ethical and technical information gathering and dissemination thus raising the level of journalistic professionalism and cultivating alternative media that are credible so that credible multiple voices and opinions will be heard which would enable the public to access information required to make informed decisions about issues that affect them. This would also enhance the mobilisation of mass participants in the transition process.

Way forward

As the Zimbabwe unity government proceeds with the daunting and challenging task of transforming the country into a truly democratic nation for the good of all, there are a number of key issues that it needs to address. It has already been noted that Zimbabwe is currently going through a process of political transition symbolised by a power-sharing arrangement involving the three main parties in the country. It has been emphasised that the authority of the hybrid regime is not permanent and an exit point is inevitable. The nation therefore needs to metamorphose from transition to social, economic and political transformation.

The critical role of the media in this process cannot be emphasised enough as will be shown below.

Nkomo (2010: 1) argues that political transformation amounts to ‘... the values, systems, structures, culture, behaviour, laws and policies that engender good governance, respect for the rule of law and upholding fundamental human rights’. He further argues that political reform must of necessity result in socio-economic transformation culminating in economic growth and availability of basic services and goods. However, political transformation itself cannot occur in the absence of policies, institutions and a culture that encourages good governance at national, local and institutional levels and good governance itself is not possible without a range of measures in place. This includes ensuring civil society participation in the national dialogue, strengthening democratic institutions, building the capacity of independent media and implementing justice programmes. These measures are not possible without a good constitution.

The media and political and economic transformation

The constitution-making process and the role of the media

A constitution is a fundamental legal document by which the government of a country operates. It is superior to all the laws of a country. In a democratic country, the citizens participate in the functioning of the government directly or indirectly. It is in a constitution that the government’s powers are spelt out and citizens’ rights mentioned. A constitution is therefore considered to be a living document. Accordingly, a good constitution will clearly and properly define the relationship of the state with its citizens, thus providing an enabling framework for citizens to exercise their rights and participate in decision making. A good constitution will also help define the powers of the state at various levels, state obligations, responsibilities, duties and prerogatives. It is therefore clear that there is need for dialogue at various levels in order for the constitution-making process to be inclusive. A participatory constitution-making process is critical in post-conflict transition as a peace-building mechanism (Hatchard, 2001; Saki, 2010). To date, the process which started in January 2010 has met with many challenges with reports saying that the process is basically not inclusive and therefore not people-driven. This is not surprising because interaction or communication between the government and the people in decision making, planning and implementation of policies is highly complex and one that does not come naturally to either. The need for mediation to ensure effective communication is clear and what is

required is a communication system to help distribute and exchange ideas and messages across the different sections of the society. The media presents such a system.

To date, a number of media initiatives on constitutional dialogues have been recorded. For example, Sokwanele, a civic organisation agitating for freedom and democracy in Zimbabwe, has developed an online constitution resource and survey ‘... to make it easier for Zimbabweans, and friends of Zimbabwe, to compare different thinking on critical constitutional issues’ (Sokwanele, 2009). The constitutional survey ‘... aims to gather views from Zimbabweans everywhere, including the millions of Zimbabweans who live in the Diaspora and who have been largely excluded from the constitution-making process’ (Sokwanele, 2010). Zimbabweans and other interested parties can let others know about the survey either by forwarding the mailing, or by sending the given e-card. They can also follow and contribute to the debate on Sokwanele Facebook or Twitter. In addition, Global Voices, a community of bloggers and translators around the world who work together to compile reports from blogs and citizen media everywhere is adding to the constitutional dialogues as part of its aim ‘... to aggregate, curate, and amplify the global conversation online – shining light on places and people other media often ignore (working) to develop tools, institutions and relationships that will help all voices, everywhere, to be heard’ (Global Voices, November 2010). Kubatana.net and a Facebook group calling itself Zimbabwe Constitution are also providing space for Zimbabweans everywhere and others to participate in the constitutional dialogues. Without these media initiatives most Zimbabweans in the diaspora would be left out of the constitution-making process.

The media therefore have a critical role to play in the Zimbabwean constitution-making process. The sole aim of a thorough and strong media campaign in constitution making is to enable the people to participate meaningfully as they are the major stakeholders in the whole process. Public participation keeps political manoeuvrings in check and it is a vibrant media that makes this possible. Also, an independent media is needed to help keep in check government excesses that could be entered into the constitution and made law. For example, the media helped to successfully stop the adoption of the contested Kariba Draft Constitution (September 2007) which would have been imposed on the people.

The public ought to be guided through the process and therefore extensive consultation, publicity and education around both process and content of the constitution are keys in constitution making for the purposes of legitimacy.

However, nothing much has been done to raise public awareness on the importance of the constitution, constitutionalism and the constitution-making process because the mainstream state-owned media which, until the recent licensing of four independent media, dominated the local media scene, was, at the time of writing, not producing programmes dedicated to various themes of the constitution and many people are not even aware of the Bill of Rights which spells out the rights of every Zimbabwean citizen.

Saki (2010) rightly points out that since Zimbabwe is at the crucial consultative stage of the constitution-making process, due diligence needs to be observed with respect to educating and soliciting views from the general public. This is a long and drawn-out process as already being experienced. However, it should be noted that only 65 days were initially earmarked for public consultation and this time frame was obviously inadequate. Normally, ample time needs to be allocated for an efficient constitution-making process. For example, in Zambia the government stated that the constitutional-making process could not be rushed and should be open-ended. Another example is South Africa's which took six years of consulting its populace using various means of communication such as public seminars or hearings, where people would be informed as well as allowed to air their views. Saki (2010) reports that, the interim and final copies of the constitution were printed in all their 11 languages and given to the people. According to the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa, the majority knew about the constitution. In Zimbabwe, however, not enough time has been allotted to the process as is evidenced by the fact that the process is currently behind schedule. As such, there is need for the extensive use of news media and other forms of communication to speed it up. Media, in all its various forms, therefore has to facilitate this process.

For example, radio is a powerful media especially in Zimbabwe because many people have access to that medium. It is suggested that the state, which controls radio and television stations, should take steps to run programmes on the constitution and stimulate debate. Since the unity government has the mandate to ensure that the constitution is produced in the shortest possible time, it should therefore use this machinery to its advantage. The media is so powerful such that educational and informational campaigns can be conducted through radio programmes where the audience reached for a single programme of 30 minutes can be millions (Saki, 2010). Such programmes, besides being more effective, can reduce the strenuous workload on the committee involved in the process. Other channels that can be employed include phone-in programmes, e-mails and

blogs as well as SMS for purposes of making contributions and getting or giving feedback.

Further, a website could be launched by the select committee where they could have a toll-free number and an e-mail address so that they get in touch with the people with ease. For example, civic society groups are reported to have launched a website dedicated to constitution making under the auspices of MISA and Talk Constitution Zimbabwe, which allows debates, chatting and has news content. This development would be a step in the right direction for media organisations.

In addition, billboards are another way of educating and informing the masses, with various messages targeted at an array of themes. Television advertisements, current affairs programmes and newspapers could invite experts to discuss problematic areas and debate possible ways of resolving them as the process is ongoing. Also, flyers could be distributed in all vernacular languages in order to ensure that the rural population is fully informed. Local information offices and centres should be established to provide an access point where information sessions and soliciting of public views takes place, particularly in the rural areas where people cannot easily make their views known. Participatory methods such as seminars, workshops, public meetings and questionnaires can be used as part of the participatory process (Saki, 2010). The use of questionnaires particularly on contentious constitutional issues such as land and electoral reforms would be helpful because the questionnaire method has the capacity to reach many people.

The media should also advocate for the involvement of those in the diaspora in the constitution-making process. Currently, no official mechanism has been put in place to facilitate the effective participation by the Zimbabwean community in the diaspora. Zimbabwe has approximately 4 million Zimbabweans living in the diaspora whose views should be included in the new constitution. The media can provide space for COPAC, which currently has no website, to reach out to this critical population.

This way and with the full support of the hundreds of individuals from COPAC, it is possible to reach the majority of Zimbabweans. It should be noted that the media can only accomplish this mammoth and crucial task if it is freed, hence the call for media reform.

Media reform

It has already been shown how the Zimbabwean media has repeatedly operated under restrictive laws since colonial times and how in recent years further

laws have made professional reporting and effectiveness even more difficult to accomplish. Reforming media laws should be welcomed by the unity government because it would strengthen the role of media as a conduit to link the government and the people. The converse is more destructive because when press freedom is denied, the opposition may resort to more violent forms of expression and protest. Media freedom should be guaranteed in the constitution to protect media against interference by any political party or government now and in the future.

The transitional government should therefore move quickly to repeal existing restrictive media laws such as POSA, the Official Secrets Act and others that constrain the efficient functioning of media or at least, as noted by Kupe (2007), sections of the laws that violate media freedom and freedom of speech in order to enable the range of media including state-owned, independent and alternative media to operate fully so as to support this and other processes necessary for national recovery. Kupe (2007) argues that a transformed Zimbabwe needs 'modern laws of disclosure and access to information' in order to promote transparency and accountability. In the same spirit, state-owned media needs to be reformed so that it is more oriented to the needs of the people. Kupe (2007) suggests that the boards of Zimpapers, New Ziana and ZBC should be reconstituted through change of management and personnel from political appointees to independent and appropriate professionals.

Regarding media reforms, however, it should be noted, as observed by the Centre for Democracy and Governance (1999) that every media system in the world operates under various kinds of restraints partly, as noted earlier, because media requires large amounts of money to operate and is in some cases controlled by commercial interests. It is argued therefore that the objective of media should ultimately be relative rather than absolute freedom (1999). Development of alternative forms of media free from political controls such as community-owned media is one way of countering this problem. The Centre for Democracy and Governance (1999) suggests that self-regulation and media accountability may be the most effective way of fighting restrictive media laws.

To this end, the Zimbabwean media itself should on its part move towards steps to promote professional journalism such as creating and distributing products that are ethical in terms of being accurate, honest and objective in accordance with a well balanced code of conduct.

On their part, Zimbabweans, both local and in the diaspora, must (1) seek to understand the media in terms of its possibilities and limitations; (2) be able to critically read media messages; (3) be in a position to make contribution to a plural

media system if they so wish; (4) understand the importance of such contribution towards sustenance of democracy; and (5) believe that their participation counts.

Establishment of democratic institutions and the role of the media

While the development of a good constitution and media reform are important steps towards transformation, they are not in themselves determining factors for democracy. Other factors such as the development of a new political culture, which respects democratic practices including citizen participation in decision making at all levels, and a culture of transparency and the respect of individual and collective rights as well as ingrained democratic values are critical (*Financial Gazette*, May 2010).

The *Financial Gazette* suggests that for democracy to thrive, it needs the support of strong pillars of governance in the form of strong democratic institutions. These democratic institutions include independent commissions accountable to parliament, such as, media (outlined above), human rights, anti-corruption and justice and truth commissions. Further, the growth of trade unions, consumer groups unions, farmers associations, business associations, professional unions, church groups, registered charities, development NGOs and various interest groups, would be an important aspect of building strong democratic institutions that can act as a buffer against state excesses, unfettered market forces and social injustices (*Financial Gazette*, May 2010). As noted by Global Voices both civil society and the media have a role to play in any constitution-making process. It is reported that in Kenya, for example, ‘... vigilant civil society, vibrant media and new media tools played a pivotal role in (that country’s) constitution-making process...’ and that similarly Zimbabwe needs both a strong civil society movement and vibrant media that will enable citizens to participate meaningfully in decision making in an organised and informed manner.

Civil society is a public space between the state, the market and the ordinary household, in which people can debate and take actions to make things right. The chief role of CSOs is to act as government watchdogs in terms of critiquing government and offering potential solutions to challenges facing the country. In this way, they act as checks and balances on any excesses of political power. Further, they are vehicles for social change in that their goal is not to attain political power but to influence the way in which the people are governed. Civil society in Zimbabwe should therefore seek ways and means to influence the new government’s policies and its ultimate victory should be the institutionalisation and socialisation of human rights norms in Zimbabwe.

The media, working together with civic actors and other democratic players should in this regard intensify efforts to ensure the emergence of a democratic political culture in which trust, tolerance and compromise are the dominant political forms. Ruhanya (2010) argues that to effect democratic consolidation, civic and political players should be prepared to adopt a broader democratisation agenda, not piecemeal reforms. This means that they should make concerted efforts to ensure that the values associated with the stability of a democracy such as ‘moderation, cooperation, bargaining and accommodation’ (‘toleration, pragmatism, willingness to compromise and civility in political discourse’) exist among the political players.

Media’s role of disseminating information and mediating between the state and all aspects of civil society is critical in this process. It further has the watchdog role of exposing human rights abuses and providing checks on all other democratic institutions to ensure the sustenance and monitoring of a healthy democracy that would contribute to greater accountability, good government and economic development.

Economic transformation and the role of the media

The World Bank (n.d.) observe that media is at the core of equitable development. They argue that it is the media’s capacity to expose corruption, keep a check on public policy by throwing a spotlight on government action, enable people to voice diverse opinions on governance and reform, and help build public consensus to bring about change which helps markets work better. They contend that, given the right environment in terms of freedoms, capacities, and checks and balances, media can support development by facilitating trade through transmitting ideas and innovation across boundaries. It is clear that Zimbabwe needs to move along the trajectory from relief to recovery to development or transition to transformation. In this regard, the government needs to have the necessary human, technical and financial capital to move along. In terms of human capital, the media can speed and ease the long, slow social transformation required for economic development, and, in particular, speed and smooth the task of mobilising of human resources behind the national effort. Media can do this by, for example, providing information and focusing attention on matters of economic interest, such as new agricultural practices; raising aspirations; creating ideas on the part of individuals to desire a better life by inferring status and prestige upon an individual and enforcing social norms for development behaviour as well as policing deviations from these norms. On the whole, the

media can accomplish this by converting events into a simple, coherent narrative that everyone can follow (Frank, 2008).

There are other related significant factors the unity government needs to consider as it seeks ways towards economic recovery. One such factor has to do with Zimbabwean brain drain. Over the past ten years, the country has lost a significant proportion of its skilled and experienced manpower to foreign lands. A strategy therefore needs to be put in place to tap into this diasporan population in the process of economic transformation.

Research has shown that the diasporan population is already playing a significant economic role through remittances which have become an important source of income for providing food, health care and education for families in Zimbabwe (Chetsanga & Muchenje, 2003). Further, Zimbabweans in the diaspora have expressed a desire to contribute to the development of their country in more ways than sending remittances used for household upkeep through investments in business, working in Zimbabwe or engaging in human capacity development for fellow Zimbabweans. This contribution is, however, not without conditions, some of which are political changes, economic opportunities, voting rights, dual citizenship and a better exchange rate policy.

The coalition should therefore consider ways of engaging the diaspora. For example, recognising diaspora organisations such as the Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Chamber, established in South Africa, and the Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Interface based in the United Kingdom which together focus on development in Zimbabwe as legitimate developmental partners and formalise that relationship is one possible solution. The Zimbabwean Government should embrace them as development partners. To this end, media can play a significant role by providing additional forums for broad-based interaction among all stakeholders through cyberspace and other spaces in order to facilitate dialogue between homeland and diasporan experts and business contacts.

During the transitional period, in order to kick-start development, the government needs the cooperation and support of key Western donors in terms of promoting private sector development, agricultural recovery and trade through microfinance, skills development and promotion of market linkages. The donor community has, however, laid down conditions for supporting the transition programme which include the full implementation of the GPA, respect for the rule of law and human rights (including cessation of brutal suppression, wanton arrests and every form of political persecution). The government and all parties involved should therefore set aside individual interests that have held

back progress towards meeting these conditions and speed up addressing of all outstanding issues. The media, on its part, can highlight the positive steps being taken by the GPA towards fulfilment of donor requirements in order to increase investor confidence.

There is also need to revive the productive sectors of the economy as a consumer economy will not serve the best interests of the nation. FDI is needed to capitalise industry and the mining and agricultural sectors. This investment will, again, not materialise as long as there is an unstable political environment which poses a threat to property rights and proper conduct of business. The first step in boosting investor confidence will therefore be formulating investor-friendly policies. In order for the economy to generate confidence within itself and to external investors, there is need for policy consistency and an enabling legislative framework. The new strategy must focus on basically restoring confidence by creating conditions of fulfilment of basic human material and social needs by ensuring conditions for reproduction of labour and restoration of dignity. Accountability, transparency and trust are critical factors in this regard and media is, as noted by Emmott (2004), valuable as part of a society's mechanism for helping to increase people's trust in the world they live and invest in and the rules and the power structures that surround them.

Respect for the rule of law and the role of the media

The unity government must assure respect for the rule of law and human rights. According to Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the rule of law is equality before the law, including, 'without any discrimination', equal protection of the law. Discrimination or incitement to discrimination before the law is not permitted. Therefore no one is above or exempted from the law. The general public, political parties, ethnic groups, the government – all must see themselves as equally subject to the law, and equally punishable if they break it. No society can claim to be free or democratic without adherence to the rule of law.

In order for investors to maintain their interest in Zimbabwe, government authorities should act responsibly and refrain from making hate and racial statements as well as respect the rule of law and the judiciary as competent institutions. Besides ensuring that the unity government received much-needed financial support and investment required for recovery, promoting the rule of law is critical in guaranteeing fairness and openness in electoral matters. As Zimbabwe gears itself for a much-desired election, therefore, strict adherence to

the rule of law through the establishment and institutionalisation of an effective electoral infrastructure in terms of genuine electoral reforms, media reforms (as already noted), security sector reforms and judiciary reforms to eradicate fear, mistrust and suspicion before, during and after the elections is critical. On its part, an independent media can help monitor the judiciary, report on the courts and keep an enabling environment suitable for freedom of speech.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the state and nature of Zimbabwean media and the critical role they are playing in the Zimbabwean transition to economic, political and social recovery. It has been noted that the nature of the Zimbabwean media is closely tied to the country's history and struggle for independence and that an understanding of its current nature and role entails understanding how it has transitioned through the various political dispensations associated with the political history of the country. The chapter has chronicled the various challenges that the media has faced and continues to face in their quest for freedom and space to play their critical role of facilitating and supporting democratic transition and transformation. Suggestions were made as to how this could be achieved through crucial media reforms and related economic, political and social reforms. It is evident that Zimbabwe has a long way to go to achieve democratic change but the small steps taken are an indicator that democratic change is possible if political will of all players is there.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

The youth movement and democratisation in Zimbabwe: Youth bulges, contentious politics and democratic transitions

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There are few studies which have undertaken an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the organisation of Zimbabwe's young people in the political spheres of life in general and within the political market in particular. The limited literature has tried to interrogate the role of the students' movement in organising protests and resistance against both the economic challenges and the entrenchment of authoritarianism in Zimbabwe. The limited focus on the students' movement, which represents youth in higher education institutions, is partly attributable to the fact that ZINASU was key to the formation of first the NCA in 1997 and secondly the MDC in 1999. Another factor explaining the documentation of the students' struggles is the fact that the students' movement also exhibited a higher level of organisation and coordination in confronting the repressive regime when civil society was still in its formative stages in Zimbabwe. This chapter seeks to unpack the youth movement in relation to the transition to democracy in Zimbabwe based on an underlying assumption that the youth constitute a huge chunk of the population. This will assist efforts to locate and harness the positive energy of youth towards progressive political, economic and social development in Zimbabwe. This chapter will also try to analyse the role of the students' union within the youth movement.

The chapter will therefore interrogate the levels of organisation, or lack of it, within the youth movement by first understanding the key actors within the so-called pro-democracy youth movement. Whilst undertaking to unpack their

collective identity, if any, strategies in mobilising protest and their perceptions and efforts with regards to the democratisation struggle, past and present, in Zimbabwe will be the major focus. As a result, the chapter attempts to understand the perceptions of the youth movement on the transition vis-à-vis the governance structures and their commitment to ensure that democratic transition will succeed. The chapter will also look at the capacity and willingness of the youth within the pro-democracy movement to meaningfully contribute to democratisation by positively engaging in the transition process.

Social movement theories have been used to critically examine and understand the nature and levels of organisation within the youth movement. In particular, the political process and resource mobilisation approaches have been used to understand how the youth movement has evolved and operated during the periods under review. The political process approach conceives of social movements and their protest activity as cyclical phenomena which rise and fall as a function of political changes external to the movement and expects that transitions from authoritarian politics to democracy will be accompanied by dramatic shifts in social movement strategies and forms of collective action usually in the direction of greater institutionalisation (Meyer & Tarrow, 2004).

The youth-bulge theory has also been used to evaluate and assess the capacity of the youth in Zimbabwe to positively respond to the economic, social and political crisis and contribute to the success of the democratic transition. Youth bulges are defined as extraordinary youth cohorts relative to the adult population (Urdal, 2004) and the youth bulge theory states that ‘Youth bulges above a certain “critical level” make countries especially prone to conflict’ (Huntington, 1991).

Recent studies by Urdal (2004) further reveal that youth bulges are believed to strain social institutions such as the labour market and the educational system, thereby causing grievances that may result in violent conflict. An increase in youth bulges of 1 percentage point is associated with an increased likelihood of conflict of around 7 per cent (Urdal, 2004). This study utilises both theories to explain the evolution and activities of the youth movement in Zimbabwe.

Methodology

Data collection for this chapter included interviews with past and present actors within the youth movement. The study has identified all leading actors and opinion leaders within the youth movement from 1998 to 2010. These actors range from student leaders, young people who formed youth organisations,

leaders of youth wings of political parties which are part of the pro-democracy movement, workers within the youth movement and leaders of broader CSOs which incorporate the youth within their structures. Organisations interviewed included the Youth Initiative for Democracy in Zimbabwe (YIDEZ), Youth Agenda Trust Zimbabwe, ZSCM, Youth Forum and the Zimbabwe Youth Movement (ZYM). Various publications including press statements, advertorials and position papers by various other youth organisations were also used to enrich the analysis.

This study was also cognisant of the fact that not only the pro-democracy movement draws its support from the youth cohort, the alleged forces of evil, the ruling party, also draw their support from the same as witnessed by the paramilitary activities of youth militias and their forced conscription into the security forces.

Summary of the decade of crisis in Zimbabwe from 1998 to 2008

During the late 1990s the authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe began decaying at a faster rate than expected as a result of the impact of the ESAP adopted by the government in 1990. ESAP led to the near collapse of the economy and social service delivery to the extent that social unrest was evident with mass demonstrations, strikes and riots, particularly in the main urban areas. The violent land seizures under the fast-track land reform programme coupled with political violence triggered by the 'no' vote in the constitutional referendum in 2000 and the emergence of a vibrant opposition political party, the MDC, contributed to the international condemnation of the Harare regime. The regime lost its local and international legitimacy and it faced a series of accusations of electoral fraud from the 2000, 2002 and 2005 general and presidential elections (Bogaards, 2007; Brett, 2008; Harold-Barry, 2004). As the crisis deepened, the authoritarian stance of the ruling party became more evident.

The unfolding social, economic and political crisis resulted in the mass mobilisation of social groupings involving students, trade unions, religious groupings as well as the broader civil society demanding meaningful political reform and their coordinated efforts towards eroding the entrenchment of authoritarianism in Zimbabwe by the ruling party, ZANU PF (Harold-Barry, 2004; Soussi & Bellemare, 2008; Zeilig, 2008).

The worsening of the economic and social crisis further reduced the legitimacy

of the ruling regime and efforts to undermine the ZANU PF regime by pro-democracy forces intensified and the regime was forced to react, its heavy-handed response exposing its violent authoritarian tendencies and this resulted in SADC pushing for negotiations between the contesting political parties. Hence Zimbabwe's ruling regime made a few concessions under pressure from the SADC-mediation efforts. There were a series of changes to the constitution regarding electoral laws, laws regulating freedom of assembly and the operation of the print and electronic media. However, the electoral processes of 2008 further changed the landscape of politics in Zimbabwe.

The March 2008 harmonised elections were relatively free and fair and the opposition parties, the MDC-T, led by Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC-M, led by Arthur Mutambara, won a combined majority in the House of Assembly and the local councils. In the senate both MDCs and the ruling party had an equal number of seats. However, the results of the poll were not released for a month without any convincing reason being given. There was no clear winner for the presidential vote as none of the candidates managed to get more than 50 per cent of the votes thereby necessitating a presidential run-off election. The run-off election was marred by serious human rights violations and a defacto ban on opposition political parties and the civil society. Hence, the other phases of the transition, namely the handover of power peacefully, legitimisation of the winning regime and the consolidation of democracy failed to materialise.

An Extraordinary Summit of the heads of state and government of SADC met in Lusaka, Zambia on 12 April 2008, to discuss the political developments in Zimbabwe following the elections held on 29 March 2008 in which the government failed to release the poll results in time. The African Union Assembly also met for its 11th Ordinary Session held from 30 June to 1 July, 2008 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, and issued a communiqué stating that SADC negotiations should be resumed as a matter of urgency and that an IG be formed to steer the country from its political crisis (African Union Communiqué, 1 July 2008). This resulted in the signing of the GPA on 15 September 2008 and the formation of an IG in February 2009. The main objective of the GPA and the IG was to ensure a return to good governance and democracy thus it had to steer the state into a democratic transition. It is against this background that we are now searching for answers for a successful transition and some of the possibilities lie within the youth movement.

The youth bulge and its social, economic and political context

An accomplished political science scholar, Samuel P. Huntington, once argued that 'youth bulges above a certain "critical level" make countries especially prone to conflict'. Huntington (1996: 117) further argues that 'young people are the protagonists of protests, instability, reform, and revolution', suggesting that youth generally have a natural urge for change. One of the leading theorists on the role of youth in political violence, Jack A. Goldstone, claims that:

Youth have played a prominent role in political violence throughout recorded history: and the existence of a 'youth bulge' (an unusually high proportion of youths 15–25 relative to the total population) has historically been associated with times of political crisis (Goldstone, 2001: 95).

Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world have large youth cohorts in relation to the rest of the population and in most instances these countries either experience bad governance or there are huge inequalities in terms of wealth distribution. The question which then arises is whether the youth can collectively engage in processes which can address social evils affecting their countries. Recent developments in the Arab world have shown that young people can successfully lead the mobilisation of the poor into the streets and demand radical changes in the way the country is governed.² This is the nagging question which is confronting the struggle for democratic change in Zimbabwe given the fact that the struggle has persisted for slightly more than a decade and the faces of the struggle remain the same. It is therefore critical to analyse the demographics of the Zimbabwean populace within the context of the youth-bulge theory so as to understand whether the potential for pushing for a radical and rapid democratic transition lies within the youth cohort and, if so, how it can be harnessed.

Recent studies by Henrik Urdal (2004) have provided further evidence that youth bulges which exist in the presence of poor economic performance as well as intermediary and unstable regimes can be potentially explosive.³ On the basis of the age bracket 15 to 30 years, 32 per cent of 11.3 million Zimbabweans enumerated in the 2002 census are the youth.⁴ Unconfirmed estimates of the youth cohort of 15 to 35 years of age put the percentage range between 60 to 67 per cent. It is therefore indisputable that there exists a youth bulge in Zimbabwe which has persisted over the past 15 years and hence it has been in coexistence with the decay of the social fabric, economic upheavals and political turmoil which can be summed up as a decade of crisis in Zimbabwe.

Youth bulges are believed to strain social institutions such as the labour market and the educational system, thereby causing grievances that may result in violent conflict. This was quite evident at the end of the 1990s in Zimbabwe as the effects of the IMF and World Bank-sponsored ESAP took its toll on the social fabric and economy of the country.

Unemployment in any society weakens the political system's legitimacy and stability. Such conditions produce a climate of radicalism particularly among unattached youth who have the least to lose in the gamble and struggle for revolutionary gain (Braungart, 1984: 16). The current unemployment levels among youths who have attained at least secondary education will definitely increase the propensities for dissatisfaction with the political transition in Zimbabwe and this might result in instability. However, if the dissatisfaction is used as a rallying tool within the ZANU PF's youth movement, sufficient political pressure will be built up and this could in turn influence a more radical and rapid movement towards a democratic transition.

Various studies on the political science of conflict have profoundly and repeatedly found that the mere facts of poverty and inequality or even increases in these conditions, do not necessarily lead to political instability. There must also be some vulnerability of the state, in the form of internal divisions and economic or political reversals. Otherwise, popular discontent is unvoiced and popular opposition is simply suppressed. A state characterised by notorious instability and disintegration, a feature often referred to as state weakness, is more likely to offer opportunities for violence than a stark and authoritarian state (Goldstone, 2001; Homer-Dixon & Blitt, 1998).

It is helpful to understand participation within the youth movement itself so as to assess its capacity to influence democratisation. In general, youth seem to be more available to participate in confrontations with the state than older people. This is said to be a result of both cultural and structural factors which might result in the troublesome idealism of the young. Goldstone (2001: 95) claims that large youth groups can cause conflict because they are more easily attracted towards new ideas and religions and thereby challenge traditional forms of authority. Youth movement organisations have managed to recruit active membership because of various reasons and the most prominent ones are that most youth have been open to the idea of change and in most target communities the young people generally have fewer responsibilities for families and careers hence they are free, to a unique degree, of constraints that tend to make activism too time-consuming or risky for other groups to engage in. In economic terms, the cost of recruiting

young people to rebel movements is relatively low since the opportunity–cost for a young person generally is low (Collier, 2000: 94). Most of the young people who are active within the organisations have fewer responsibilities for families and careers thus they have been relatively easy to mobilise as agents for social and political change.

The institutionalisation of the youth movement began with the formation of youth-led organisations. Despite assertions by most founder members of these organisations that they intended to harness youth efforts, a result, intended or otherwise, was the compartmentalisation of youth actions. This compartmentalisation was fortunately or unfortunately restricted to those who believed in the particular organisations' goals and objectives and it was not necessarily aimed towards the institutionalisation of the broader youth movement. The institutionalisation of the individual organisations has not necessarily translated into the institutionalisation of the broader youth movement. This could be in tandem with an argument by Koopmans (1993) who argued that: 'Social movements are characterised by a low degree of institutionalisation, high heterogeneity, a lack of clearly defined boundaries and decision-making structures, a volatility matched by few other social phenomena' (Koopmans, 1993: 637). Offe (1985) is similarly suggestive of it when he argues that 'social movements are condemned to less institutionalised forms of political involvement because they lack the internal homogeneity for them to be able to engage in binding negotiations'. A clear leadership of the youth movement is difficult to point at as no single individual or organisation has a mandate to talk on behalf of the movement as a whole because they cannot assume that fellow movement activists share their specific perspective on events. This is not to say that solidarity is never evident in the movement but to suggest, rather, that we cannot take it for granted as a stable and self-evident feature.

The Zimbabwean state's autocratic structures have failed to give social movements, youths and students included, an opportunity to raise demands. The state has monopolised power through the use of coercive instruments and in the process, denying other groups political rights and opportunities. The restriction of political space has been bolstered by the ascendancy of the military–security establishment within the state known as *securocrats* and this has been described as the militarisation of the state ZANU PF and military service chiefs. The authoritarian regime has therefore concentrated its energies in emasculating labour unions, student organisations, human rights groups, the independent press and the judiciary (Sachikonye, 2009).

Conditions that contributed to development of the youth movement

The government introduced the first full ESAP in 1991, although the IMF had been pressing the government to reduce expenditure and devalue the Zimbabwe dollar from as early as 1982. Following similar – and similarly disastrous – programmes in most of Africa the World Bank insisted on trade liberalisation, the removal of import controls and export incentives, deregulation – including changes to what was regarded as ‘restrictive’ labour legislation – and widespread public-sector reforms. The government pursued policies involving privatisation and the closure of state companies deemed unprofitable by Western donors, the IMF and the World Bank. The year after the implementation of the ESAP saw a high 11 per cent fall in per capita GDP. More than 20 000 jobs were lost between January 1991 and July 1993. In 1993, unemployment had reached a record 1.3 million from a total population of about 10 million. Tor Skalmes reported 25 000 civil service jobs lost by 1995, while ‘inflation rose and exports declined’. The new policies promoted by Washington and the IMF failed to stem, and by all accounts, helped to deepen the recession that continued to grip Zimbabwe. The country began experiencing its worst economic crisis since independence, with unemployment at over 60 per cent and inflation hitting 114 per cent. Employment in the formal sector virtually collapsed, leaving thousands of graduates without work or the prospect of getting any (in Zeilig, 2008).

A new militancy was therefore borne out of the socio-economic turmoil of the late 1990s and it has exponentially grown over the past decade as Zimbabwe is experiencing demographic changes – rapid growth in the labour force whilst the economy is in recession; a rapid increase in educated youth aspiring to elite positions when such positions are scarce and democratic space for participation is shrinking. The huge job-cuts coupled with the youth bulge entering the labour market resulted in an unmatched increase in labour supply. This was also worsened by the unprecedented closure of most industries and the contraction of the economy by more than 40 per cent between 2000 and 2005. Hence unemployment became one of the major grievances for most youths and today it is the major bone of contention between the youths and the IG. According to the latest Human Development Report (UNDP, 2010), Zimbabwe has an employment to population ratio of 64.9 per cent. However, formal employment is only 38.2 per cent and 61.8 per cent are in vulnerable employment.

At the turn of the millennium, the Government of Zimbabwe went on a drive towards establishing universities in all provinces of the country and this

tripled the enrolment of students into universities.⁵ Such an expansion in the education sector raised expectations within the youth bulge and failure to secure employment in the formal sector increased frustrations among recent graduates. Braungart (1984: 16) observes that:

The underemployment and unemployment prospects for university educated youth in many developing countries, as well as in more advanced developed countries, enlarge the reservoir of latent rebellion from which revolutionary politics can be drawn.

It is imperative to note that the issue of unemployment has been a major rallying point for the youth and students' movement of Zimbabwe and it has remained a key demand on which the performance of the IG has been judged.⁶

The authoritarian nature of the Zimbabwean state has repeatedly provided incentives for the youth to riot against the establishment and to mobilise dissent and discontent against government policies and programmes. Students have always demonstrated when denied an audience by university or college authorities and officials of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. Youths have also been central to demonstrations by organisations like the NCA and under campaigns such as *Save Zimbabwe Campaign*. These demonstrations were a result of arrogance by public office-bearers who chose not to entertain grievances brought to them by the civil society.⁷ However, the politicisation of the military–security establishment has resulted in limited successes of the youth rebellions as the army, police and CIOs have been roped in to crush any suspected voices of dissent. Ndlovu-Gatsheni states that:

In Zimbabwe, a strong alliance between ZANU PF nationalist leadership and the military forces has stood at the road to democracy and post-nationalist dispensation. It has guarded the nationalist shrine up to today and has defined politics in terms of a straightjacket that only fits those with nationalist and military background. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009)

It should be noted that repression and rebellion has become cyclical over the years as both the youth movement and the state responded to each other's actions. During the late 1990s, young people were mobilised around socio-economic issues and the failure of the sitting government to provide basic necessities, opportunities and services. Unfortunately, as the young people and the broader

society started transforming their anger into mass action and street protests, the state responded violently and was forced to shrink the democratic space available for citizens to express their grievances. This in turn forced the youth and the broader society to also incorporate issues of civil and political rights within the protest agenda.

It is also important to look at the vulnerability of the state as we seek to understand the capacity of the youth bulge to influence democratic transition in Zimbabwe. Political analysts have come to the conclusion that the essence of political stability or instability lies in a set of reciprocal relationships among the state, elites and popular groups (Goldstone, 2002). This is in addition to the relationships which exist within these collectives as these define their capacities and weaknesses. Put simply, political stability and opportunities for successful revolts depend on relationships between the state and other states in the global community; relationships between elite factions and the relationship between the state, elites and popular groups (Goldstone, 2002).

The relationship between the Zimbabwean state and the international community has been strained over the past 10 years. The ZANU PF-led government faced a persistent legitimacy crisis as opposition groups, civil society and international observers, with the exception of SADC, claimed that elections since 2000 had been disputed and were judged as not free and fair. Violent land seizures under the fast-track land reform also attracted a backlash from the West and Zimbabwe was suspended and later withdrew its membership from the Commonwealth group. The United States and the EU responded to calls for isolating the Zimbabwean state which was perceived to be under capture by ZANU PF by imposing targeted sanctions against key figures in the ruling party. The country still enjoyed solidarity from some African and east Asian states though they could not meaningfully mitigate the impact of isolation from the West. An international legislative structure has forced the pace of this strangulation; this has included the United States Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001, which immediately cut access to international credit for the country and Zimbabwean companies. As international funds have dried up, the state has been largely incapacitated and welfare provision, often in the form of food aid is now being provided by international agencies and NGOs. Zimbabwe was also suspended from the major international financial institutions and the closure of most credit lines accelerated the downturn of the economy thus making the calls for regime change louder from within. The current governing regime has failed to regain the lost legitimacy as the West remains sceptical to the presence of ZANU

PF in the governance structure and lack of movement towards the restoration of democracy. The country currently enjoys minimal levels of goodwill and processes of engagement with the Western states have been initiated. This has also resulted in the stabilisation of the economy though no meaningful change has resulted when particularly referring to job creation and improving accessibility and affordability of key social goods and services.

The second factor which is the relationship of the state and elites, as well as popular groups, has not changed much with the formation of the IG. Tracking the cause of the Zimbabwean crisis, Zamponi (2005) argues that the crisis began when the elite consensus between the ZANU PF Government and the white elites was broken:

... issues which have never been solved, which have been relegated to the background, and which only became explicit when the interests of the powerful white minority were challenged or, to put it better, when the post-independence 'elite consensus' was brought to a crisis, a consensus which, albeit subject to transformations over the years, had to some extent lasted until 1997. At that point, it became clear that the 'historic compromise' had come to an end, showing the crisis of the post-colonial state and the resurgence of the instrumental use of nationalism (at internal level) and regional solidarity (at regional level).

Elite cohesion has been largely compromised in Zimbabwe because the 10-year crisis spilled over to affect previously apathetic communities like business groups.

Unpacking the youth movement

From the above analysis it is clear that the Zimbabwean context is pregnant with factors which can result in a youth-led revolt against the architects and apparatus of bad governance and repression. It has to be understood that an elite leadership should also emerge among the ranks to mobilise popular groups and create linkages between them in order for popular discontent or distress to turn into protest. It is therefore important to get a deeper understanding of the youth movement in Zimbabwe as it is the one which stands a better chance of tapping into the youth bulge. There is need to critically analyse the youth movement in Zimbabwe through the lens of social movement theories at the same time seeking to understand how the youth are organised; how they organise; what are their views on the transition and most importantly how and to what extent they can

stimulate democratisation processes in Zimbabwe. The youth movement can be viewed as a collective enterprise seeking to establish a new order of life. They were conceived in a condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current quality of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new system of living. The career of a social movement depicts the emergence of a new order of life (Blumer, 1969: 99). Tarrow concurs with these views:

Contentious politics occurs when ordinary people, often in league with more influential citizens, join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities and opponents. When backed by dense social networks and galvanised by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols, contentious politics leads to sustained interaction with opponents and the result is the social movement. (Tarrow, 1998: 2)

The students' movement became one of the earliest challengers to the hegemony of ZANU PF in the late 1980s (Zeilig, 2006) and during the late 1990s they became much more vigilant in articulating national governance issues and were also at the forefront of demanding alternatives to the prevailing political systems and structures. Thus ZINASU was quite instrumental in the formation of the NCA and MDC which became the most formidable opposition party in post-colonial Zimbabwe (Zeilig, 2008; Zimunya, 2006; Chibango & Kajau, 2010). Students had the utmost advantage of being organised in their campuses such that they could easily share ideologies and grievances and coupled with their identity and pride as the intelligentsia they could articulate governance issues at forums beyond their campuses. Hence they could easily engage with other actors such as the trade unions and early CSOs. Sendisa Ndlovu,⁸ a former student leader at the University of Zimbabwe, pointed out that when the MDC called for mass action that was dubbed the final push in 2003, 'it was only the students at the University of Zimbabwe who managed to march more than a metre towards the state house'.

Students became engaged with grass-roots advocacy activities as they were an institutional member of the NCA. In an interview with Madock Chivasa,⁹ who was a student activist and also active in NCA campaigns in the year, he stated that students were key in terms of mobilising communities towards the successful 'no' vote in the February 2000 constitutional referendum.¹⁰ Chivasa also pointed out that students from different campuses ensured that the NCA could have foot soldiers in different areas that could encourage the participation of out-of-school youths. Another organisation which tapped into the students'

community as a way of ensuring that youth engaged in governance and political processes was the ZSCM. The organisation managed to engage young Christian students who were already organised under their denominational groupings and trained them so that they could participate in broader CSOs such as the ZESN, ZIMRIGHTS, Transparency International, NCA and many other groupings.¹¹ These two student organisations were the early organisers of youths within the pro-democracy movement in Zimbabwe outside youth participation in broader formations such as the MDC and NCA.

The MDC was meant to compete for state power and on the other hand, the civil society was to remain the vanguard for agitating for good governance and democracy. Saddening as it may be, the civil society voice was drowned by the rise in prominence and popularity of the MDC. In as much as the civil society created a valuable space for participation, it still failed to create opportunities for material gains which could at least retain youth participation. A number of youth who were faced with worsening economic hardships were forced to migrate to Botswana, South Africa, the United Kingdom and other countries. The IOM reported in 2007 that approximately 3.4 million Zimbabweans had left the country since 2000. These huge migration figures somehow deflated the youth bulge and its potential of ensuring that the youth could vociferously agitate for democratic change through protests and other confrontational means. Migration thus became a safety valve for youth discontent. A factor that is of great importance for determining the conflict potential of youth bulges is the opportunity for migration. If migration opportunities are substantially restricted, this is likely to cause increased pressure from youth bulges accompanied by a higher risk of political disturbance and violence in a number of developing countries (UNDP, 2002).

ZANU PFs' reaction to the increased participation of youths within the pro-democracy movement was to start recruiting and training youth under the National Youth Service programme which was introduced in 2000. Youths were lured to the programme by promises of jobs and empowerment opportunities. During the same time there was a marked escalation in cases of political violence and the youth militias were implicated. There was therefore need for the creation of safe spaces where ordinary youth in communities could come together and engage in political and governance discourses in a non-partisan manner. This led to the formation, in 2005, of YIDEZ, a youth organisation which tried to bring together youth outside the main political formations and ensure that they participate in governance process. This was in direct response to the low youth

turnout in the 2005 general elections.

On the other hand, repression targeted at students had intensified and most students were either suspended or expelled from campuses without going through proper disciplinary channels. The police and state security maintained a heavy presence on campuses and university authorities became dictatorial and they banned any political activities. Hence the students' movement was weakened as activism was now limited to activists and there was no longer any meaningful backing from the ordinary students. Student activists were also becoming more prominent within the broader movements such as the NCA and MDC at the expense of the broader student community. However, the student activists did not find much comfort within these broader formations and they ended up teaming up with youth who were courageous in the streets and started forming youth organisations. The coming together of student activists and their counterparts in the streets led to the formation of organisations like ZYM and Youth Agenda Trust in 2006 and 2007 respectively. Hence, the period after the 2005 general elections was a watershed period for the youth movement as youths decided to create alternatives to political participation beyond political parties. The engagement of youths within the MDC was highlighted in various internal reports by the MDC which are captured by Raftopoulos (2006):

- The bulk of the youth are bad mannered, undisciplined, uncontrollable and only in it for the money. They left the premises and vehicles they used in a disgusting state and when asked to clean up said – 'I am not the one.'
- An important point made in the report was the danger of party functionaries mobilising unemployed youth to carry out party violence. It was further admitted that the party 'has no capacity to satisfy youth welfare needs' and that there is a 'general lack of education and orientation on party objectives and values'. This point needs to be situated within the broader context of the culture of violence established and perpetuated by ZANU PF. The central findings of the report were:
 - It is common cause that the greater majority of our youths in our structures are activists and unemployed.
 - They have no source of income, therefore they are destitute. This makes them vulnerable to political vultures who are cash driven.
 - Staff, some party leaders and external forces are using the youths for various political ambitions and devious goals.

The participation of youths within the MDC was now based on patronage and

clientelism where youths were expected to be aligned to specific politicians and assist them to pursue their own selfish interest in return for favours and all this was at the expense of societal interests.

The formation of youth organisations resulted in the development of a generational consciousness between individual youth activists and student activists and the resultant youth organisations began functioning as identity groups which were built out of an awareness of belonging to a generation of extraordinary size and strength. However, generational consciousness failed to transform into generational consensus as the new organisations failed to coalesce into a single front which had a shared identity. The lack of a generational consensus remains a challenge to collective actions in the present day. This is largely due to polarisation which is not only inter-party but is also intra-party as youths also fight to belong to certain factions within different political formations.

Prior to 2000, the governance agenda had always been set by political parties and civil society failed to come up with alternative agendas. Youth organisations have thus continued to align their interventions towards the broader agenda of the MDC and in most instances, they have been dismissed by ZANU PF apologists as appendages of the MDC and the West. The various youth organisations agree that they share the same grievances and they also agree on the causes of the grievances. This could largely be a result of the proffered ‘National Question’ by the pro-democracy movement and supported by the West which was summed up as ‘Mugabe must go’. Sachikonye (2009) observed that:

Robert Mugabe has been the personification of authoritarianism in Zimbabwe; this is a political and social system and structure that has suppressed growth of democracy, preservation of the rule of law, development of checks and balances on state institutions and protection of civil liberties.

Similarly, grievances arise if possibilities to influence the political system and attain elite positions are limited.

The modes of redress to the grievances are not collectively shared among youth organisations as other groupings such as YIDEZ and ZSCM prefer an approach which is civil and non-violent whilst other groupings such as ZINASU, Youth Forum and Youth Agenda Trust believe in a more radical programme of action which involves civil disobedience and direct confrontation. There is also an extreme group within the youth movement such as ZYM which believes in an armed revolutionary agenda which should be built on the principles of

*Dare reChimurenga*¹² that provides an alternative to boardroom engagement. Grievances within the youth movement have been built around issues of health, education, food, employment, social service delivery, civil and political rights. Some youth organisations have managed to go beyond the ‘Mugabe must go’ rhetoric and this was explained by Sydney Chisi¹³ in the following words:

The issue we face is to see whether you and me can go to a hospital and find the doctor willing to treat me without payment, but for a solution there is need to allow young people to voice up and it is not just about removing Mugabe but issues involving livelihood and not to build another elite cult. Young people are brought together with the issues of livelihood that the government has failed to bring so they are now for the idea of a new generation leading. What young people want is transformation so it will be a serious joke in the next election for Mugabe at 87 or 90 years to say ‘vote for me and you will see change in 10 years to come’. The young people want socio economic rights for sustainable livelihood.

Later theorists on the resource mobilisation approach to social movement theory such as McCarthy and Zald (1977) argued that there is always enough discontent in any society to supply the grass-roots support for a movement if the movement is effectively organised and has at its disposal the power and resources of some established elite group. The youth organisations in this study are led by young and emerging issue entrepreneurs who managed to define and cause grievances which they manipulated into discontent.

Youth organisations have not operated in isolation; instead they have actively participated in other social movements and civil society processes such as the *Save Zimbabwe Campaign*¹⁴ and they have also blended well with the communities they operate in. However, their relationship with governing authorities has always been strained and sour and this has led to various clampdowns led by state security institutions.¹⁵ Organisations within the pro-democracy youth movement are relatively independent in as far as their ideological programming is concerned hence they enjoy a certain level of autonomy though it is limited. The autonomy of these organisations, in as far as defining a democratisation path for Zimbabwe, is somehow limited because most of their constituents also belong to the youth assembly of the MDC and somehow they end up not wanting to deviate from its agenda and road map. Lack of a strong financial resource mobilisation base has also compromised the autonomy of these organisations as sometimes they have to side with the agenda defined by the donor community. This was aptly summed

up by Fortune Nyamande¹⁶ who stated that:

There is a lot of manipulation; it is very rare to have young people in the MDC criticizing Tsvangirai even if he is wrong. For example, the MDC youth have an agenda of a democratic Zimbabwe but what is lacking is autonomy and resources. The ANC youth league in South Africa can come up with a very different idea from that of the broader ANC unlike the MDC youth league. Though they report to the broader ANC, they have their own issues; they are independent and they can air their own views. The MDC Youth Assembly have their own agenda but they face challenges financially to fund their activities and that is where the manipulation comes in, that is where the independent thinking is kept in terms of agenda, they have a clear agenda, that of democracy but what continues to lack is the autonomy and finance.

Most youth organisations have made a deliberate attempt to recruit membership from marginalised communities which are found in rural, mining and farming areas. These areas had been a myth for a long time as they were perceived to be no-go areas for political parties and organisations not aligned to ZANU PF. However, the then opposition political party MDC managed to win a significant number of parliamentary seats in these areas in the March 2008 harmonised elections. Young professionals and the middle-class youth have not been targeted by most youth organisations. The age bracket for participation in the youth movement has been 15 to 35 years of age and the students' movement has managed to tap into those under the age of 18 as they have supported the formation and orientation of the Zimbabwe High School Students Union (ZIHSSU).

The youth movement in general and its organisations in particular have been built around two key forms of membership or participation: the organisations have their key constituents who are experienced activists and are usually found at the forefront of pushing the agenda of the organisation. There are also adherents and these are youth who believe in the goals of the movement though they do not necessarily provide resources to it. Beyond adherents and constituents, most organisations also aim to tap into the 'bystander youth' who are neither for the revolution nor against it. Some youth organisations like the Youth Agenda Trust, Youth Forum, ZYM and YIDEZ have managed to organise youth into community chapters which are led by small executive committees. The main task of these committees is to ensure that non-adherents are turned into adherents, adherents into constituents and maintaining the involvement of constituents. Contrary

to the usual norm of youths intensifying their struggles in rural and farming communities, ZYM, at its inception, made a deliberate move to target urban communities. In an interview with Sendisa Ndlovu, a founding member of ZYM, he stated:

The Zimbabwe Youth Movements' thrust was to have structures in the urban areas where there are more conscious youth activists and then infiltrate into the rural areas. If you realise this was a contradiction to the Chimurenga struggle where liberation movements infiltrated rural areas first and then moved into urban areas.

Actions within and beyond the youth movement are not only restricted to protest, rather, youth organisations have engaged in a rigorous process of educating youth on the basic tenets of good governance and democracy especially those from information-starved communities. Youth actions have not necessarily been under the sway of sentiment, emotions and ideologies that guided their action but rather should be understood in the logic of costs and benefits as well as opportunities for action. Hence their activities have to be treated as tactics and strategies. More often than not, the capacity of the youth movement in Zimbabwe has been judged based on its potential to protest and most expectations are hinged on whether the youth are in constant protest against the establishment or not. However, Melluci (1994) argues that 'movements do much besides and sometimes instead of protesting such that protest can be a poor indicator of the life or existence of a movement'. Such an assertion is quite true for the youth movement in Zimbabwe as it has not been engaged in protracted protests. However, that does not imply that the youth have been docile. Instead youth organisations have been at the forefront of building a critical mass of conscious youth who have actively participated in various democracy building projects such as election monitoring and observation under the ZESN. A huge number of youths were election agents in the March 2008 harmonised elections and some of them were deployed in rural areas which were predominantly ZANU PF.

It will be foolhardy to assume that there is total agreement within the youth movement. There exists a certain amount of tacit agreement between movement organisations such that disagreements can be overlooked when important actions need to be undertaken and this has been witnessed during key periods which involve elections and major political and social reforms. Such disagreements were visibly noticed when ZYM was initially denied membership to the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Youth Committee and their continued marginalisation in

collective actions. Sendisa Ndlovu summed it as follows:

The other youth viewed the Zimbabwe Youth Movement as too radical and it took us time to be accepted by youth serving organisations and it took us almost a year or two to be a member of Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Youth Committee as they were not interested in being connected with radicals. However, the situation changed as we moved toward the 2008 harmonised election. There was a general appreciation of the need to come together and fight the dictatorship in the same corner. Hence we were finally invited to participate at the All Peoples' Convention where we were a recognized group and we were slowly getting Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights to represent some of our arrested or imprisoned members and we were being recognized as a force to reckon with in terms of youth organizing.

Another point to note is that organisations within the movement do, at least, agree over what they are in disagreement about. Such disagreements might even create schisms within the movement and this has been evidenced by the split within the students' movement ZINASU which resulted in two factions emerging and each claiming to be bona fide representatives of the students' community.¹⁷

The arguments which the youth movement has proffered against the social and political order which it is opposing, gains its leverage from widely shared assumptions and beliefs with the broader society. This is so because youth organisations have preferred to articulate social and economic issues instead of pursuing issues related to occupation of political office. The messaging of most actions has been centred on social service delivery, education and economic empowerment in as much as issues in dispute within the IG have been centred on political offices such as the Attorney General, governors and the Reserve Bank Governor.¹⁸ Such an alignment of issues with those issues affecting ordinary people certainly guarantees public support. Thus, the sharing of basic assumptions is by no means exclusive to members of the youth movement, and is always, as in all social relations, a matter of degree. At a more specific level, the youth movement has been important because they are key agents for bringing about change within societies. Immediately this conjures up an image of revolution or major legislative change. The youth movement has managed to problematise the ways in which people live their lives and through their actions, they have mobilised towards changes in habits of thought, action and interpretation. More to the point, they have endeavoured to become manifestations of social change through innovative community advocacy initiatives such as community sweeps,

reconstruction projects and various other social responsibilities initiated by youth volunteers. The society in which youth organisations act is not static or stable. It can be depicted as flowing and the youth organisations are key currents within this flow. The actions of the movement trigger chains of events which cannot always be foreseen or controlled and they sometimes provoke backlashes and other unintended responses.

Perceptions to democratic transition vis-à-vis the GPA and IG

Young people have been the vanguard of the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe though their engagement with the democratisation struggle has been restricted to the trenches and when it came to high-level engagement, young people were then found at the rear of the struggle. Usually, an authoritarian regime begins to entertain opposition figures when it is under immense economic and political pressure and to a certain extent, international pressure. The regime might be forced to make concessions thereby liberalising the political market though it does not necessarily make wholesale reforms. This has been the experience in Zimbabwe where the regime was brought under immense pressure and it ended up making concessions which resulted in electoral reforms in 2005 and 2007 and amendments to the notorious POSA in 2007. It is necessary to understand how the youth viewed negotiations between the leaders of the pro-democracy movement and the authoritarian regime as these high-level engagements took place whilst they were in the trenches and the regime was terrorising them.

High-level engagements between leaders of the pro-democracy movement began soon after the 2002 presidential elections which were won by the incumbent Robert Mugabe and the poll result was contested by Morgan Tsvangirai with the civil society dismissing the presidency of Robert Mugabe and the ZANU PF Government as illegitimate. These engagements were quite exclusive and secretive as they only involved leaders of the MDC and ZANU PF and they excluded civil society, church and youth movement leaders. These engagements did not go anywhere far and they did not achieve much in terms of coming up with an amicable political settlement which could end the suffering of Zimbabweans.¹⁹ The youths believed that they had made significant sacrifices from 1997 to 2002 and hence they still wanted to go ahead with the fight in the trenches rather than negotiating with the dictator. Sydney Chisi said that:

There was a build up in 2000 when there was a referendum and parliamentary

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elections. Before that Zanu PF had been enjoying a de facto one party state hence the young people were fighting for regime change. Young people did not believe in negotiations they wanted an outright approach, for example, with no food and basic goods on shop shelves they started to view shortages and economic problems as personified by Mugabe and Zanu PF and this gave them power to demand a complete overhaul of the system and its custodians. There was the issue of violence which was escalating such that the youths did not believe that the negotiations would end violence.

There was a sense of belief within the youths at that time and the only victory they could enjoy was one which they won in the trenches and they were also afraid that any agreement would end up incorporating ZANU PF in the governing structures. The discussions between representatives of MDC and ZANU PF continued up to 2007 when SADC officially mandated Thabo Mbeki, the then president of South Africa, to facilitate negotiations between the two antagonistic parties. Zimbabwe's ruling regime made a few concessions under pressure from the SADC mediation efforts. There were a series of changes to the constitution, electoral laws, laws regulating freedom of assembly and the operation of the print and electronic media. However, it should be noted that the regime only made these concessions less than three months before the election hence there was not enough time for the full implementation and realisation of the opening up of democratic space. These reforms were, however, dismissed by the civil society and the youth movement as piecemeal and window-dressing strategies by the ZANU PF regime. Once again youths disagreed with these proposed changes which were co-sponsored by both ZANU PF and MDC in parliament as Constitutional Amendment 18. They believed that their efforts in the trenches were paying off dividends hence it was not strategic to start compromising with the regime. Sendisa Ndlovu emphasised that:

As Zimbabwe Youth Movement, we viewed negotiations as never favourable to any progressive movements because ZANU PF still wielded state power though the people's power was gaining momentum. The negotiations were therefore meant to burst the revolutionary bubble. Our conclusion was that the MDC were 'included to be excluded'. We were not in favour of the constitutional amendments as we believed that we could not settle for anything less than a full loaf.

The transition process in Zimbabwe is being led by the ruling elites and opposition

elites, which are ZANU PF and MDC respectively, who have made an elite pact through protracted negotiations which resulted in the GPA and they subsequently formed an IG. However, choices in making elite pacts are usually constrained due to the need to make trade-offs, compromises and protect the interests of the bourgeoisie and the armed forces without whose agreement the transition cannot take place (Potter, 1997). Hence, the pact between the opposing forces is a result of trade-offs as the ruling elite believe that they have the balance of power since they are largely in control of political institutions, state media as well as the judiciary and security arms of government. On the other hand, the opposition elite also believe that they have the balance of power since they have the credibility to get development aid and credit lines to revive and sustain the economy which has nearly crumbled and also due to the tremendous support they received in the March elections, in addition to the fall in legitimacy of the ruling elite.

The compromises involved in the formulation of the GPA and formation of the IG meant that it would be received with mixed feelings by the youth. The transition is a result of both a sustained process of eroding authoritarianism with the authoritarian regime responding by ruthlessly crushing voices of dissent through extralegal executions, destruction of properties and deprivation of livelihoods. Transitions through transaction have relatively low levels of violence and relative degrees of stability. However, they can be difficult to achieve and can only be effected under certain conditions and they are also likely to entail some political, economic and social costs (Share, Mainwaring, 1985 as cited in Selcher, 1986). The question which arises is whether the youth are in a position to accept these facts and find ways of locating their role in making the transition successful. Or they would view the transition as a betrayal and as a result feel subdued?

As expected, the GPA and the IG was received with mixed feelings by the youth movement. Celebrations by the youth were largely motivated by the fact that the regime had conceded defeat in the March 2008 elections and it had also agreed to share state power for the first time in 28 years. However, disappointments grew among the youth because they felt that neither the GPA nor the IG could atone for the activists who died in the struggle. Fortune Nyamande had this to say:

This was one of the sad eras in the lives of the young people, atrocities committed during the presidential runoff election of 27 June were gruesome such that young people felt that the will of the people had been subverted by allowing

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an arrangement which included ZANU PF; it was more of a 'boardroom coup' because they had lost the elections. ZANU militias and war veterans killed and raped young people and it could be a reason why some young people welcomed the negotiations as they thought the agreement could stop violence. We also felt that the political leaders were not honest and sincere, instead they negotiated for power not for the pertinent issues affecting the people.

However, other groupings within the youth movement embraced the GPA and IG as a timely intervention to the social, economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe with particular emphasis on the possible reduction in political violence. In an interview, Admire Zaya revealed the feeling within their community of Christian students and youths:

We welcomed it (GPA) with conscious optimism; we thought it will bring democracy though we still believed in a government voted for by the people. We however acknowledged the shortcomings of the GPA and we knew these would hamper the expectations of young people as issues of concern were not adequately addressed. For example, national healing was an important issue to the youth as they were the ones who experienced the violence more than any other group; they were the most affected by the 2008 violence but there was no clear cut way prescribed on how to achieve proper reconciliation. The GPA made those who perpetrated violence walk scot free. The issue of National Youth Service was not addressed clearly on how they were going to stop the programme as it was a vehicle of violence. Hence, we just welcomed the GPA as way to stop the violence.

An extreme feeling towards the GPA was expressed by Sendisa Ndlovu, who lamented:

The GPA and the inclusive government did not bring anything new to the way politics is done in Zimbabwe. It was just old wine in new bottles, ZANU PF never intended to change its way as evidenced by its behaviour during the negotiations, that is the various appointments they made to the Reserve Bank and Attorney General's office. The MDC failed to translate its power on the ground to the negotiating table but ZANU PF took advantage of the negotiations and ensured that they retained power thus creating opportunities for its relaunch.

The mixed feelings towards the IG meant that youths would apply different efforts

towards ensuring that the GPA would be an effective vehicle for democratisation. Instead of energising the revolutionary struggle, the GPA actually resulted in the youth movement finding itself in conflict as different organisations took different positions. The most contentious issue was that of constitutional reform. Article VI of the GPA provides for the drafting of a new constitution. It states that a select committee of parliament composed of representatives of the parties will be formed and its responsibilities would be to set up subcommittees made up of the civil society and other interest groups. These subcommittees will be chaired by parliamentarians. The select constitutional committee will also convene two all stakeholders' conferences for the purpose of carrying out extensive consultations and reviewing the draft constitution which will be subjected to a referendum for its final adoption or rejection. It is also responsible for ensuring wide consultations with various stakeholders and communities to ensure that the process is widely consultative and people-driven. However, some sections of the youth movement, notably ZINASU, have expressed their rejection of the process since it will be led by parliament thus politicians.²⁰ They argued that the process therefore lacks independence and legitimacy since it is prone to manipulation by politicians who would want to protect their interests. The rest of the organisations decided to engage the process on a step-by-step basis as they feared losing an opportunity presented to come up with a new constitution. The making of a new constitution provided an opportunity for a change in the political rules and would also guarantee a relatively free and fair election.

The perceptions of the youth towards the GPA and IG will definitely influence their role in the transition and the vigour with which they will articulate issues when mobilising communities. There is a general acknowledgement within the youth movement that the IG has brought a certain degree of economic stability. As a result, basic goods and services which had virtually disappeared are now available in abundance. Some of the social service delivery institutions which had been closed are reopening and some economic activity is being witnessed. But in the eyes of most youth, these social and economic movements are not enough as long as the ordinary citizen is still not accessing the goods and services because they cannot afford to do so. Sendisa Ndlovu expressed the general sentiment that:

We did not spend the past ten years fighting to have food on the shelves; we were fighting so that the ordinary youth and the general populace could access the food on the shelves! The same should be said of schools, universities and clinics; the idea was not to just have the facilities open, we wanted the poor people of

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Zimbabwe to have access to these facilities. This is not the case here in Zimbabwe so the struggle has to continue unabated.

The IG has also failed to stimulate growth within the economy which could have resulted in job creation. Unemployment remains very high and recent indices on poverty released by the UNDP have ranked Zimbabwe as the poorest country in the world.²¹ This is despite the promises of the IG on its inception in February 2009. The story on the political front is even sadder as respect for human rights have deteriorated again and democratic space is shrinking with each passing day. Each article of the GPA has been disregarded with impunity hence the full text of the GPA has failed to translate into reality. State security agents have continued to be unleashed on pro-democracy organisations and opposition activists and violence has been on the rise since the constitutional outreach consultations. Youth organisations have lost all faith in the IG as a vehicle for democratic transition. There is a strong belief that ZANU PF still wields almost all leverages as far as the power matrix is concerned. Fortune Nyamande explained this sad reality as follows:

ZANU PF is still in control of all levers of state power and unfortunately MDC might find it difficult to come out of the inclusive government as it does not have any viable alternative. So in terms of democratisation nothing has been done beyond the rhetoric of the GPA. The national healing process is a flop from the onset and the people who have been mandated to lead the process are politicians who were at the forefront of perpetrating human rights violations.²² Incidences of violence are escalating as we hear political parties calling for elections.²³ The constitutional reform process has also been flawed as there were widespread cases of manipulation and intimidation by war veterans and youth militias aligned to ZANU PF.²⁴ The constitutional reform process has ceased to serve the needs and aspirations of the people. Instead it has become a political weapon for political leaders to safeguard their interests hence if the constitution is correct for MDC or ZANU PF it is not obvious that it is correct for the people.

In some sections of the youth movement the two-year existence of the IG has actually dashed hopes for a proper transition to democracy. Some youth leaders who initially had faith in the process have expressed disappointment at the performance of the IG so far. Admire Zaya expressed dissatisfaction:

At first we viewed the inclusive government as a proper vehicle for a transition to democracy because of the various platforms which would be created like the constitutional reform process, independent commissions for human rights, media, elections and corruption. Also the issue of having co-ministers of Home Affairs seemed to guarantee human security and property rights. Two years later, we are faced with a stark reality that this was a wrong thought. Actually, ZANU PF now operates under the cover of the inclusive government and they have become even more dangerous such that we believe we are now at risk more than in 2007, that is before the 2008 harmonized elections.

ZANU PF youth league and its appendages

Youths are an integral part of the authoritarian enclave which is occupied by the security service chiefs and hardliners within ZANU PF. They are organised as militias who are only accountable to the hardliners and hence they carry out extralegal state security functions at the orders of the military chiefs. Various covert actions have been carried out by ZANU PF and its military allies in a bid to remain in power and in most instances youths have been used to implement these actions. There are possibilities that the same youth could be used to block any transition to democracy. This part of the chapter seeks to understand how the youth in the authoritarian enclave are organised and to assess the possibilities of democratic reversals or stagnation of the transition as a result of their actions.

It became apparent in 2000, that ZANU PF no longer enjoyed support from most young people and this was because the party had become a preserve for those who participated in the liberation struggle thereby sidelining the so-called 'born free' generation. Young people were organised under the party's youth league but the leadership was dominated by older adults aged above 40 years of age. ZANU PF was faced with two challenges; one of recruiting young people into its ranks and secondly addressing their socio-economic needs so that protests against the party and its government could stop. This led to the revitalisation of the youth league and the formation of a government-sponsored youth recruitment and training programme called the National Youth Service Training Programme.²⁵ Concrete steps were taken to forcibly inculcate liberation struggle history on the nation in general, and the youth in particular, in an endeavour to create what was termed a 'patriotic citizenry'. This took two forms.

The first was the introduction of a compulsory course in teacher-training at polytechnical colleges known as National Strategic Studies aimed at teaching

issues of national strategic importance like sovereignty, national ethos, history of the liberation struggle and the importance of land for economic development and as part of native heritage. The second was the introduction of the National Youth Training Service Programme as a conduit to reproduce the traditions of the national liberation struggle through forcible and intensive inculcation of the youth with a very partisan narrative of national history of liberation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). The *Zimbabwe Independent*²⁶ reported that the training was an exclusive ZANU PF project which was rejected by the MDC and the newspaper sought comment from the (then) MDC national youth chairperson, Nelson Chamisa, who expressed the opinion that:

... (what) prompted the government to pursue this policy of militarising the youth is its realisation that it has lost its support amongst the youth. It reminds one of the despotic and desperate regimes such as that of Kamuzu Banda and Adolf Hitler. It is an exercise in political dishonesty.

The ZANU PF Youth League is a semi-autonomous body which has structures at village, cell, district, provincial and national level. The youth league is led by a national executive committee which is headed by a chairperson. The chairperson is a member of the politburo²⁷ and deputises the Secretary for Youth who is appointed by the First Secretary²⁸ of the party. The youth league makes its own independent decisions which it presents to the politburo for approval though in most instances they are expected to adopt and implement decisions coming from the politburo. The youth league has an Afro-radical identity which is an abstract of African nationalism dictated by the ZANU PF politburo. They adopted Afro-radicalism as a way of justifying their participation in a liberation party which had reverted to 'anti-colonial' nationalism as its ideology. The backslide in ideology witnessed in ZANU PF and its functionaries is a result of its failure to deliver on material promises, loss of its previous popular appeal and the global pressures for democracy; the end result has been a fall from African nationalism into cultural nationalism and nativism as a way to compensate for crisis and decline (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006). Robert Mugabe and ZANU PF have continued to deploy Afro-radicalism and nativism as part of taking the decolonisation struggle to the further level of economic liberation from the snares of neocolonialism (Osaghae, 2005: 1).

Orientation into the ZANU PF Youth League and its training programme is based on a history manual called *Inside the Third Chimurenga*²⁹ which provides teachings on patriotism for the 'born free' generation. The manual consists

entirely of speeches made by President Robert Mugabe since 2000, among them his addresses to ZANU PF party congresses and funeral orations for deceased ZANU PF heroes. The opposition MDC is repeatedly vilified in this compilation and referred to as imperialist and neocolonialist. Supporters of the opposition are described as ‘rough and violent high-density lumpen elements’, as well as ‘disgruntled Former Rhodesians’ and the ‘Zimbabwean contagion’. The MDC is said to be driven by ‘the repulsive ideology of return to white settler rule’. Foreign governments and the opposition are conflated as ‘enemies and their local lackeys’.³⁰ Such hatred for the West and the opposition, including civil society, has resulted in widespread violations of human rights with the latter group being victims. Various media reports over the past decade have alleged that ZANU PF youth and graduates of the national youth service training, collectively known as youth militias, have been the main perpetrators of politically motivated crimes against humanity.³¹ ZANU PF youth militias have been operating above the law and their actions have continued with impunity. The youths enjoy the support of politicians who are top government officials and senior police officers and whenever they commit crimes they are not arrested, instead their victims are the ones who are arrested and arraigned before the courts.

The actions of youth militias indicate that they have no respect for civil and political rights, democratic principles, rule of law and tenets of good governance. Their actions are sustained through a vigorous cycle of patronage and they have enjoyed a laissez-faire system. Youth militias have acted as first-class citizens as they believe that they are heirs to the liberation movement. They respect ZANU PF ‘chiefs’ only and view the rest of the citizens as subordinates and this implies that they do not believe in broader citizen participation which is a cornerstone of democracy. Top officials of the ZANU PF Youth League were interviewed and they argued that Zimbabwe had already achieved democracy though it was incomplete without economic empowerment of indigenous Zimbabweans.³² They pointed to the existence of opposition political parties and civil society as an indicator of multiparty democracy and democratic space. However, they contradicted themselves as they were contemptuous of other political parties which they described as ‘Mickey Mouse’ political parties which had no liberation war credentials and were thus not fit to govern the country. They also held the GPA and IG in contempt though they acknowledged that they had brought about positive changes. The youth league leaders summed up their views towards the SADC- brokered engagements between ZANU PF and MDC leadership between 2003 and 2008 as follows:

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The talks which were going on between our leadership and the opposition between 2003 and 2007 were a nonentity because they did not affect our political position in any way. Thabo Mbeki was simply doing diplomatic work out of courtesy. We, however, acknowledge that we had not done enough work in the March 2008 harmonised elections and this forced our party leadership to sit down and negotiate power with an opposition party. This was unfortunate and embarrassing for the youth league and we had to make up for it in the presidential run-off election which we ended up winning resoundingly. The 2008 negotiations were a serious negation to the ideals of our struggle because as the youth league we have always been committed to defending the people's revolution in the battlefields not in boardrooms.

The youth league leaders also counter-argued that Zimbabwe was not going through any democratic transition:

We cannot talk of any democratic transition in Zimbabwe because we experienced that in 1980 when the liberation movement triumphed over colonial rule. Our struggle at the moment is to ensure that Zimbabwe does not revert to settler rule so as a league we are actually trying to defend the democratic transition which was achieved in 1980. The issue of human rights and democratic principles are borrowed western ideologies which are being used as a cover for re-colonisation of our country. First generation rights were achieved in 1980 and what we are fighting for now are social and economic rights and this is what has incensed the West because we have managed to upset the balance of power. The few allegations of human rights abuses and the closure of democratic spaces are only temporary setbacks and it should be known that in any revolution there are casualties; casualties can be human beings, institutions or systems of governance. However, the casualties have been worsened by the western imposed sanctions and in most instances they are blown out of proportion by the hostile western media and its sponsored local outlets.

These perceptions of democracy and patriotism by the youth aligned to ZANU PF are a real threat to democratic transition in Zimbabwe. These youths do not believe in democracy and its values to the extent that they are willing to sacrifice it by all means necessary. The youths are willing instruments of oppression and they can be easily mobilised to frustrate any form of transition. ZANU PF has over the years developed strategies of recruiting youths into its ranks either through

coercion or providing economic incentives. The strategy of providing economic incentives and opportunities could be used to tap into the youth bulge given the socio-economic challenges faced by the youth over the past years.

Conclusion and possible way forward

The analysis provided in the chapter has shown that Zimbabwe has a reservoir of youths who can contribute to an inclusive democratic transition. The current circumstances in which young people are living also provides the necessary motivations for collective actions aimed at pushing for democratisation. The youth have endured the ramifications of the crisis which has led many to leave the country to do menial jobs in neighbouring countries and overseas. The coming in of an IG initially created hope but all hope has been lost and once again, the young people are faced with no option but to confront the governance systems and structures of the country. The youth movement in Zimbabwe has exhibited the necessary levels of organisation and consciousness to initiate an alternative and revolutionary grass-roots advocacy process which can inevitably steer the country towards a sustained transition. I therefore suggest a five-point plan for the youth movement so that it can stimulate democratisation in Zimbabwe.

Firstly, the youth movement should come together and go beyond their petty differences so that they can establish a network of activists, volunteers and supporters throughout the country. They should then start mobilising communities around bread-and-butter issues so as to identify with the day-to-day struggles and realities faced by the ordinary citizens. Once again the issues of social and economic justice have come to the forefront of youth struggles and this is quite reminiscent of the late 1990s when people started to mobilise around bread-and-butter issues. This has been worsened by the low salaries which are being earned by a few employed workers. Most of the youth are employed in the informal sector and hence they are much more vulnerable to any negative economic changes. It therefore becomes easy for the youth to mobilise their communities to push for meaningful reforms which can bring about tangible changes in as far as social and economic issues are concerned. Such an effort should not be political in nature as it is quite difficult for ordinary citizens to engage in processes which might end up putting political burdens on their shoulders. Mobilisation to the movement should also begin to go beyond the criteria of courage, rather the clarion call should be 'community service'. An articulate joint-action plan based on a clear non-partisan agenda built on socio-economic issues should be put in place and

religiously followed by members of the youth movement and the issues should be widely shared with the broader society. An extensive information network will assist in disseminating information on future actions of the movement as well as closing the information gap which is a result of the dominance of the state media on the information market. Thus the youth should devise a counter propaganda strategy.

Secondly, the youth movement should be at the forefront of community healing. The progressive youth movement should take over the national healing process and ensure that conflict levels are reduced to the community level. The youth should swiftly move into communities and build their capacities to adequately respond to violence and mitigate its effects by working closely together in defending themselves from any future attacks. This also involves naming and shaming perpetrators of violence and ensuring that their actions and torture bases are exposed through the media. There is need for a deliberate attempt towards restoring hope and confidence in communities which have witnessed high incidences of violence. Intimidation and fear will result in apathy and loss of confidence in transition processes like constitutional reform and elections. Youth should take a lead in building people-to-people solidarity within communities as it is an important step towards restoring hope and dignity.

Thirdly, the youth should play a critical role in the constitutional reform process as it is their future which will be at stake when the outcome of the process is known. The youth movement should not compromise on key issues such as a justiciable Bill of Rights which guarantees socio-economic rights; civil and political rights and electoral laws which are in conformity with SADC, AU and international guidelines on the conduct of elections. Hence, communities should be prepared beforehand on the benchmarks of a good constitution so that they will be able to judge the draft constitution which will be put for a referendum. A new constitution largely built on a Bill of Rights, separation of powers between the executive, judiciary and legislature as well as the repeal of restrictive clauses will take the country a step towards democracy. In addition to agitating for a democratic constitution, the youth should also start emphasising the need for an inculcation of a culture of constitutionalism so that the general populace would be able to hold custodians of state power accountable.

Fourth, the youth movement should be prepared to engage in electoral processes as they are inevitable on the way to democracy. A robust voter registration drive has to be initiated and it should target all first-time voters. Institutions responsible for electoral processes such as the ZEC and the Registrar General's

Office responsible for managing the voters roll and registering new voters has done nothing in terms of educating new voters on what is required for one to be eligible to vote. It is therefore incumbent upon the youths to disseminate such critical information and ensure that the youth take heed and register as voters. The youth movement should also demand that optimum conditions for holding free and fair elections are held and these demands should be communicated to both the governing authorities and SADC, as the former are drafting a road map for the next elections.

Lastly, youth institutions within ZANU PF should be a target for lobby and advocacy. They have proved to be a pillar of support for the party as they are loyal foot soldiers and executors of the party's road map. These youth have to be incorporated into processes which promote upholding of democratic principles and values. There is need for sustained dialogue between youths from the pro-democracy movement and youths within ZANU PF so that they may begin to construct common agendas for national development. Polarisation between the two groups has to be dealt with forthwith and consensus building between the two dissenting groups should be initiated to avoid future conflicts which might be detrimental to a successful transition.

NOTES

- 1 Arnold Rangarirayi Chamunogwa is the National Coordinator of Youth Agenda Trust. He is a young social entrepreneur and a human rights defender based in Zimbabwe. He also has post graduate qualifications in Governance, Democratisation and Public Policy.
- 2 The popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya have been led by young revolutionaries who have inspired their older counterparts to join them in the streets.
- 3 The studies were commissioned by the World Bank and the paper explores links between youth bulges and violent conflict, and attempts to model under what conditions youth bulges can lead to conflict. The study also includes the security implications of population pressure and resource scarcity.
- 4 Source: National Youth Policy of Zimbabwe.
- 5 Before the year 2000 there were only two state-owned universities: the University of Zimbabwe and National University of Science and Technology. There were also two private universities: Solusi University and Africa University. However, to date there are an additional five state-owned universities.
- 6 See: www.laborrightsnow.org/zimbabwe
- 7 www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/index.php?...nca...demonstrations; www.zimbabwejournalists.com/print.php?art_id=1845; www.voanews.com/english/news/.../a-13-2007-02-07-voa72.html
- 8 Sendisa Ndlovu is a former student leader at the University of Zimbabwe. He is a founding member of the Zimbabwe Youth Movement. He was interviewed in Harare.
- 9 Madock Chivasa is currently the NCA spokesperson; he started as an active member at the University of Zimbabwe to become advocacy chairperson and now is the spokesperson. He was interviewed in Harare.
- 10 NCA successfully campaigned for a NO vote in the 2000 referendum against the government-sponsored draft constitution.
- 11 Admire Zaya was interviewed in Harare. He is the former Vice Chairman of ZSCM (2003 to 2005) though he joined the organisation in 1997. The organisation was formed in 1963 and it also supported student activists during the liberation struggle.

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- 12 Dare reChimurenga was a revolutionary council for ZANU PF during the liberation struggle. It was the supreme decision-making body and it also incorporated military leaders of ZANU PF's military wing, ZANLA.
- 13 Sydney Chisi is the founding Director of Youth Initiative for Democracy in Zimbabwe (YIDEZ).
- 14 The Save Zimbabwe Campaign was a broad and coordinated campaign of civil society, churches and pro democracy political parties.
- 15 See: allafrica.com/stories/201102100038.html; (Zimbabwe: Youth Forum Offices Shut down over sms Campaign); www.outsidethebeltway.com/students-in-zimbabwe-arrested-for-watching-coverage-of-arab-uprisings/; www.zimbabwenewsonline.com/top_news/1924.html
- 16 Fortune Nyamande is a member of the secretariat of Youth Agenda Trust and former president of the Zimbabwe Medical Students Association.
- 17 The Zimbabwe National Students Union split in 2008 with one faction led by the president and the other led by the vice president. Differences are alleged to have been a result of disagreements on whether to participate in the constitutional reform process or not. See: www.mg.co.za/.../2010-03-08-tsvangirai-urges-peace-force-for-next-zim-poll/; nehandaradio.com/2010/04/.../zinasu-factions-head-to-head-on-bth/; www.swradioafrica.com/news090310/zinasu090310.htm
- 18 See: www.zimbabweprimeminister.org/index.php?; www.allafrica.com/stories/200909080030.html; www.zimdaily.com/news/?p=285
- 19 See: Zanu PF prefers talking to MDC direct (2003) allafrica.com/stories/200308220534.html; www.sadocc.at/news/2003-231.shtml; MDC-ZANU PF set for new breakthrough (2003) www.mg.co.za/.../2003-09-22-mdc-zanupf-set-for-new-breakthrough
- 20 ZINASU joined hands with the ZCTU and NCA and initiated a Take Charge campaign which is meant to mobilise for a NO vote in the COPAC process. See: www.groups.google.com/group/cosatu-press/.../487784501e78afeb; www.zimbabwenewsonline.com/index.php?news=152; www.actsa.org/Pictures/UpImages/.../Aug%2009%20Zim%20Update.pdf
- 21 Source: Human Development Report 2010, United Nations Development Fund.
- 22 National Healing is being led by three political appointees from ZANU PF, MDC-T and MDC-M.
- 23 See: blog.amnestyusa.org/iar/escalating-political-violence-in-zimbabwe; www.news24.com/.../Zimbabwe/Violence-on-the-increase-in-Zimbabwe-20110130/; www.actsa.org/.../crisis-in-zimbabwe-coalition-statement-on-increased-human-rights-violations-in-zimbabwe/; www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,IRIN,,ZWE,,4ae844f8c,0.html
- 24 See: www.dailynews.co.zw/.../752-councillor-headman-injure-in-copac-violence-in-makoni-south.html; www.newsday.co.zw/.../2010-11-01-violence-rocks-rescheduled-copac-meetings; www.thestandard.co.zw/.../25451-villagers-snub-copac-outreach-efforts.html
- 25 The National Youth Service Training Programme was mooted by the ZANU PF Minister of Youth, Border Gezi, in 2000 and the initial training was conducted in 2001. The programme was supported through the fiscus.
- 26 War veterans to take charge of national youth training. *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 2 August 2001.
- 27 The politburo is the highest decision-making body of the party.
- 28 The First Secretary of the party is also the president of the country.
- 29 *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, by President Robert G. Mugabe, Department of Information and Publicity, Harare, December 2001.
- 30 Extracted from the Solidarity Peace Trust Report (National youth service training – *shaping youths in a truly Zimbabwean manner*. An overview of youth militia training and activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 – August 2003).
- 31 www.bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-1223-article-Three+Zanu+youth+activists+arrested+for+Harare+violence.html; <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/WoW/2005/Zimbabwe2005.pdf>; www.csvr.org.za/wits/articles/artsmi2.html www.unhcr.org/.../country,,QUERYRESPONSE,ZWE,456d621e2,45f147ce2f,0.html; www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR46/004/.../afr460042002en.html
- 32 ZANU PF Youth League leaders were interviewed in Harare and they requested anonymity.

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CHAPTER NINE

Voices from Pan-African Society on Zimbabwe: South Africa, the African Union and SADC

Tim Murithi and Aquilina Mawadza

The African Union (AU) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) have maintained a constant engagement with the developments in Zimbabwe. This chapter will discuss how the AU's initial attempts to engage with the Zimbabwe crisis were thwarted. Subsequently, it will discuss how SADC took over the mantle of addressing the situation in the country. Despite the criticism labeled against quiet diplomacy, SADC and South Africa have been instrumental in the transition process in Zimbabwe. The role played by SADC and South Africa in particular as mediator in the Zimbabwe crisis cannot be overemphasised. While the SADC intervention, including President Mbeki's era of quiet diplomacy, has been widely criticised as flawed, SADC and South Africa have played a key role in Zimbabwe's transition. However, much more needs to be done by SADC to support this transition and to ensure that legitimate elections can take place and to prevent Zimbabwe from slipping back into crisis.¹ This chapter will conclude with some observations and recommendations on how both the AU and SADC can remain engaged with the political crisis in Zimbabwe.

The African Union and peace and security

The African Union was formally launched in July 2002, in Durban, South Africa. The organisation emerged from its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The 54-member African Union was launched with the objective of intervening more effectively to address crises across the continent. The AU Constitutive Act of 2000 states that the AU shall strive to ensure the

‘peaceful resolution of conflicts’. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is enumerated in the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* of July 2002. This Protocol also established the Panel of the Wise (PoW), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF) and the AU Peace Fund. The Peace and Security Council was formally launched in March 2004. Article 6 of the PSC Protocol states that the Council is mandated to support ‘peace building and post-conflict reconstruction’. Furthermore, Article 14(2) of the PSC Protocol states that the Council shall contribute towards peace building through ‘the implementation of policy designed to reduce degradation of social and economic conditions arising from conflicts’. Article 14(3)(a) states that the PSC shall assist AU member states ‘that have been adversely affected by violent conflicts’ with the ‘establishment of conditions of political, social and economic reconstruction of the society and government institutions’. The AU therefore has the mandate from its 54 members to actively intervene in crisis situations across the continent. The situation in Zimbabwe was one of its earliest attempts to uphold this mandate.

The trajectory of the AU’s engagement in Zimbabwe

The AU’s engagement with Zimbabwe can best be characterised as one of benign bemusement and frustration. During the liberation struggle Mugabe was effective at utilising his Pan-African networks to rally support for independence. Shortly after independence the Zimbabwean government maintained a Pan-Africanist outlook. Yet the AU has only had a limited impact on the internal affairs of Zimbabwe. This relationship is characterised by a Pan-Africanist stance in rhetoric but not in practice, particularly when it comes to having to modify internal behaviour to respond to the exigencies of AU norms and principles on democracy, governance and elections.

The year 2005 witnessed the crisis in the country deteriorating following a government-sanctioned forced removal of people from their homes, also known as ‘Operation Restore Order/Murambatsvina’. The Tanzanian Anne Tibajuka was appointed as the United Nations Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe and tasked with investigating the government-sanctioned forced removals. She subsequently issued a document entitled: *Report of the Fact-finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina*. This report described the government action as a ‘violation of

the right to adequate housing and other rights including the right to life, property and freedom of movement' (United Nations, 2005: 63).²

The AU's engagement with Zimbabwe became pronounced in 2005, when it appointed former Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano as the AU's Special Representative to Zimbabwe to try and persuade an intransigent Mugabe government to negotiate with the opposition parties. While Mugabe was cordial in receiving Chissano, the AU Special Representative was effectively rebuffed and the voice of the continental body in effect became marginalised from domestic Zimbabwean politics. The ZANU PF government calculated that its best chance to control the developments pertaining to the internationalisation of the Zimbabwean crisis was to relocate the issue to SADC, the sub-regional body. The assumption was that it would be much easier to control and manipulate sub-regional politics in ZANU PF's favour.

The AU was happy to concede this devolution of responsibility to SADC, since the sub-regional body is one of the constituent Regional Economic Communities (RECs) which form the building blocks of the Union. Notwithstanding, the AU's attempt to try and mediate between the government of Zimbabwe and the opposition parties was also a positive step in the right direction. In spite of the obvious difficulties and intransigence that Chissano faced, the AU was at least demonstrating that it was willing to take the responsibility to address a deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe. Indeed, this was in keeping with the emerging AU doctrine of non-indifference which was spearheaded by the then chairperson of the commission, Alpha Oumar Konare during his tenure as the head of the continental body.

Following the Chissano debacle, subsequent engagement by the African Union with the Zimbabwean situation was consigned to a supportive role towards SADC initiatives. Zimbabwe remained on the AU's radar and continued to feature in the occasional meeting and communiqué of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the 15-member body tasked by the continental body to monitor crisis situations and authorise interventions as required (African Union, 2009b).

The AU, however, also continued to engage with the governance processes in Zimbabwe. In March 2008, the AU participated in the observation of elections in the country. In the aftermath of the late announcement of poll results, the AU was among the organisations that voiced concern about the manipulation of the outcome. In a one-candidate run-off election Mugabe was declared triumphant and duly sworn in. This swearing in process was not attended by the usual extended coterie of African brother presidents, and the ceremonial impact of the

event was dampened by the twilight and ensuing darkness in which it took place.

On 1 July 2008, the AU convened the Eleventh Summit of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Sharm-el Sheik, in Egypt. In that meeting the AU leaders assessed a wide range of issues including the persistent crisis in Zimbabwe. The AU acknowledged that the elections in Zimbabwe had been less than transparent and was at the time urging for an agreement between the key political formations in order to stabilise the country (African Union, 2008).

Mugabe's unilateral inauguration triggered a crisis in the country which required the intervention of SADC under the mediation of Thabo Mbeki, the then president of South Africa, which was endorsed by the AU. The ensuing mediation process led to the signing of the Global Political Agreement and the establishment of the Inclusive Government, comprised of ZANU PF and the MDC formations on 15 September 2008.

On 11 February 2009, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Jean Ping, was in Harare to participate in the inauguration of Robert Mugabe as president and Morgan Tsvangirai as prime minister in the Inclusive Government that was established through the Global Political Agreement (African Union, 2009a). Since then the AU has largely maintained its vocal critique of the Zimbabwean situation through the regular reports to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the state of peace and security across the continent. In addition, the AU PSC issues the occasional statement pertaining to the situation in the country.

The African Union has as one of its key objectives the active collaboration with RECs such as SADC. Specifically, Article 16 of the PSC Protocol states that 'regional mechanisms are part of the overall security architecture of the African Union'. Article 16(a) states that the AU shall strive to 'harmonise and coordinate the activities of regional mechanisms in the field of peace, security and stability to ensure that these activities are consistent with the objective and principles of the African Union'. It is on this basis that there was no resistance within the AU to provide SADC with a wide berth to address the crisis in Zimbabwe. In effect, the day-to-day management of the Zimbabwean crisis was devolved to SADC, with South Africa taking the lead on the facilitation and mediation efforts in the country.

The SADC's role in sub-regional peace and security

In 1979, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was held in Lusaka, Zambia, as a bulwark and solidarity network against the perils of the then apartheid regime in South Africa. This grouping of frontline states³

worked collectively to mitigate against the effects of the destabilisation strategies of the apartheid government. In 1992, the SADCC Heads of State and Government adopted the Southern African Development Community Treaty and Declaration which transformed SADCC into SADC. Currently SADC has a membership of 15 member states, namely Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Declaration and Treaty of SADC was signed by regional Heads of State and Government in Windhoek, Namibia, in 1992. Through this treaty, SADC is mandated to 'take the region out of an era of conflict and confrontation, to one of cooperation, in a climate of peace, security and stability'. Article 4 of the SADC Treaty commits the organisation to promoting 'solidarity, peace and security'. On 18 January 1996, a meeting of the SADC Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security recommended the establishment of a SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security. The Organ is committed to promoting 'security and defence cooperation through conflict prevention, management and resolution' as well as the 'mediation of disputes and conflicts'.⁴

SADC, South Africa and the Zimbabwe crisis

In March 2007, SADC convened an Extra-Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, in Tanzania, through which it tasked South Africa with the mandate to manage the Zimbabwean crisis. In March 2007, the events on the ground in Zimbabwe were punctuated by the increasing incidence of political violence including the public beating, arrest and torture of opposition and civic leaders as well as wide spread attacks on the infrastructure of the opposition formations. This was a belated attempt by SADC to address a crisis that had already spiraled out of control. Historically, SADC had not succeeded in bringing about any meaningful transition in Zimbabwe. The SADC mediation effort became hostage to the persona and outlook of the lead mediator, the then President Mbeki.

Zimbabwe and the Mbeki Era, 2007–2009

President Mbeki has mediated some of the most difficult issues on the African continent including in Burundi, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Côte d'Ivoire. In 2007, SADC formally designated President Thabo Mbeki

to mediate the crisis in Zimbabwe after one of the leaders of the opposition, Morgan Tsvangirai, was severely beaten by government security forces in March 2007. Soko and Balchin (2009) argue that the South African policy under Mbeki was governed by political and ideological concerns, which related closely to perceptions about South Africa's role on the African continent. If this assessment is accurate then Mbeki viewed his role not as one that would be forceful and coercive, but rather consensual and accommodative (Smith-Hohn, 2009).

However, this strategy did not seem to yield any significant results. Through a successive series of meetings, Mbeki struggled to address the conundrum at the heart of the crisis, namely the power imbalance between the incumbent President Mugabe backed by the force of the security sector and the increasingly agitated opposition and civil society groupings. His approach was to try and seek concessions and accommodation from the opposition supposedly to maintain an inclusive framework of government. Observers both inside and outside the region feel that Mbeki's soft approach to Mugabe in particular has provided him the tacit support to continue his repressive regime.⁵ However the Mbeki mediation did produce some changes to the electoral law, and more importantly President Mbeki was instrumental in the formation of the Government of National Unity through the signing of the Global Political Agreement on 15 September 2008. One key objective of the September 2008 agreement was to find a power-sharing arrangement that would reflect the balance of political power in the country, following the March 2008 elections. The poll deteriorated into a farce when a one-candidate presidential run-off election took place in June 2008 which declared Mugabe the winner. This situation clearly left the issue of the presidential election unresolved (Eppel & Raftopoulos, 2008).

The GNU was not an ideal situation. One view is that it in effect rewarded the intransigence of incumbency and thwarted the democratic will of the Zimbabwean people. However, it is difficult to second guess what the potential critical situation could have deteriorated into without the signing of the GPA. At the time of the signing of the agreement the country was on the brink of political, social and economic collapse. Inflation was incalculably high to the extent that the country's Central Bank placed constraints upon the amount of money Zimbabweans could withdraw from their bank accounts on a daily basis. There were fears of an armed uprising and hospital staff failed to turn up for work, placing the already severely affected health sector under considerable additional strain. The water authority did not have a sufficient amount of chemicals to purify drinking water. Cholera, easily prevented and cured under normal circumstances, broke out compelling

the government to declare a humanitarian emergency.⁶ Mbeki's mediating environment was therefore less than ideal.

However, this does not detract from the fact that to external observers, Mbeki did not seem to be fulfilling the primary task of the mediator, namely to find a way to establish political equilibrium to enable the protagonists on either side to negotiate on the basis of fairness. Some observers have argued that Mbeki's mediation strategy could best be defined by a propensity towards denialism. When Mbeki was accosted by journalists inquiring about the Zimbabwe crisis, he replied to them with a bemused expression and declared 'crisis, what crisis?'⁷ Whether this was a politician's way of dispersing the gaggle of journalists, or whether it was an internalised perception of the situation will remain a contested issue. Ultimately, beyond the signing of the GPA the situation in Zimbabwe stabilised moderately and this can be attributed to Mbeki's ambiguous intervention in the country.

Zimbabwe and the Zuma Era

In 2009, following his election as President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma also assumed the mediation role of the Zimbabwe crisis. SADC's mandate was to South Africa and not an individual, so Zuma in effect had to pick up the mantle by default rather than by design. Mbeki's era was typified by a soft stance on Zimbabwe and a predisposition to quiet diplomacy. Whether Mbeki's departure from the Zimbabwe mediation exercise marks an end to the era of South Africa's quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe remains to be seen.

Zuma continued with the series of talks initiated by Mbeki, but also appointed a facilitation team comprised of his old African National Congress (ANC) comrade-in-arms, Mac Maharaj and one of his senior advisors, Lindiwe Zulu, to remain engaged with the situation in Zimbabwe. The facilitation team undertook a series of trips to Zimbabwe to meet with the principals of the political formations. When it was expedient to do so, Zimbabwean leaders were flown into South Africa, sometimes covertly to avoid the glare of media publicity. The South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) played an instrumental role in providing the technical support for the interventions by the presidency and the facilitation team.

In 2011, Zuma presented a report which indicated that the region and international community were losing patience with Mugabe who is seen as the stumbling block to the implementation of the GPA and smooth functioning of the

GNU. A communiqué from the SADC Summit of the Organ Troika for Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, issued on 31 March 2011, in Livingstone, Zambia, said it ‘appreciated the frankness with which the report was presented by the SADC facilitator and commended him for the work that he has been doing on behalf of SADC’. It went on to note that ‘the summit recalled past SADC decisions on the implementation of the GPA and noted with disappointment insufficient progress thereof and expressed its impatience in the delay of the implementation of the GPA.’ Furthermore, the statement concluded that the ‘Summit noted with grave concern the polarisation of the political environment as characterised by, inter alia, resurgence of violence, arrests and intimidation in Zimbabwe. There must be an immediate end of violence, intimidation, hate speech, harassment, and any other form of action that contradicts the letter and spirit of the GPA.’

While there was much debate with regards to the use of the word ‘noted’ versus ‘endorsed’, the stance taken by SADC and the tone of the communiqué itself marks a departure in the traditional SADC approach to Zimbabwe. It is clear that President Mugabe has been somewhat immune to criticism because he is viewed as having liberation struggle credentials against the yoke of British colonialism. To some, including many African leaders, this carries with it a mark of respect and a predisposition to see no evil and hear no evil as far as struggle leaders are concerned. It is a myopic tendency among African leaders which has disastrous consequences on the well-being of societies across the continent. In addition, Mugabe was also viewed in his earlier incarnation as president and shortly after independence as one of Africa’s leading intellectuals. Regionally, what made it even more difficult to censure him is that most SADC countries were run by authoritarian leaders who had also failed to manage their own governments, economies and societies in an open and pluralist way. It was therefore almost always the case of the blind leading the deaf as far as leadership in the sub-region was concerned.

The Livingstone communiqué therefore marked a turning point. The Livingstone critique however could not have transpired without the Zuma Report, which in a clear departure from Mbeki’s policy of obfuscation, made an attempt to call the situation as it found it. SADC had finally found its voice in Livingstone and sought to chart a new course for Zimbabwe. The Livingstone summit was a breaking point and defining moment, a turning point in SADC history. It was a moment of truth in which SADC read the riot act to Mugabe. This was subsequently buttressed by a communiqué of the Extra-Ordinary

Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government, in Sandton, South Africa, on 11 and 12 June 2011, which 'noted the report of President Zuma' and also 'noted the decisions of the Organ Troika Summit held in Livingstone, Zambia, in March 2011'. The SADC's call for an immediate end to violence, intimidation, hate speech, harassment, and any other forms of action that contradict the letter and spirit of dialogue, to a large extent spoke directly to pro-ZANU PF elements, but also to MDC agitators. The Summit also mandated the Organ Troika 'to continue to assist Zimbabwe in the full implementation of the GPA'. This in effect put the ball back into the Organ Troika's court and in effect endorsed its robust stance on the situation in Livingstone. These events marked a departure from SADC's stance of protecting President Mugabe. It also increased the pressure on Zimbabwe's leadership to avoid a recurrence of the debacle that was the 2008 elections. Undoubtedly, SADC leaders are wary of the contagion of the uprisings that characterised North Africa in the first half of 2011. In this context the stability of the region was clearly at stake in some of these considerations.

Prior to this robust statement, Mugabe and ZANU PF were already on an offensive to challenge SADC pronouncements with criticisms of their own. In April 2011, Mugabe addressed a ZANU PF meeting in Harare and criticised Zuma and SADC for interfering in Zimbabwe's affairs. The intention was to clearly diffuse any potential political momentum generated by future SADC statements. Furthermore, Zuma became a target for vocal criticism from ZANU PF stalwarts with calls for him to step down as mediator.

Zimbabwean leaders and the SA Facilitation Team have been working to thrash out a so-called roadmap to fresh polls. The issue of elections was firmly postponed to after 2011 despite the insistence by some internal factions within ZANU PF that they be convened earlier. SADC and South Africa continued to publicly condemn political violence and consistently stated that no elections would be possible without a clear roadmap for free and fair elections and also in accordance with SADC principles and guidelines on free and fair elections. Zuma's unpopularity with ZANU PF and his insistence on a clear election roadmap has been interpreted by ZANU PF analysts as a ploy to delay elections in Zimbabwe up until a time when President Mugabe is not able to run for office.

Scholars and critics alike have accused SADC of quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe, stating that historically there was no naming and shaming of transgressors of the GPA (Dzinesa & Zambara, 2009). Even the language used in SADC communiqués declined to overtly state the nature of the problem. SADC's about-turn in Livingstone and Zuma's role in instigating this process suggests that

the sub-regional body may depart from its erstwhile tendency to platitudes. This will only augur well for the prospects for transition in Zimbabwe.

Security sector reform process in Zimbabwe

One issue that SADC has not been able to gain any in-roads into is the reform of the security sector. The effective reform of the security sector in Zimbabwe is at the heart of the stabilisation of the country. The politicisation of virtually all of the security sectors has witnessed the police and military being deployed to fight political battles. Any situation in which the force of arms takes precedence over the force of arguments is self-evidently corruption of the social contract between the governed and the governors and is ultimately unsustainable in the long-run.

Attempts to hold elections in 2011 have been viewed by regional observers and Zuma as undue influence being exerted on the political process by the military/security establishment. Zuma's insistence that the political process be allowed to work, and that the military/security establishment stand down and follow the pace and lead of the political actors, generated frenzied criticism of the South African leader from ZANU PF stalwarts.

ZANU PF negotiators have expressed reluctance to discuss security sector reform, for fear of recrimination and to protect the ZANU PF source of power and cohesion. Zuma, recognising the intricate role played by the military/security establishment in obstructing, influencing and subverting the political process, has made overt and direct attempts to engage the force behind ZANU PF and bring resolution to a lingering crisis. The African Union will be issuing its Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform by 2012 which will enable the continental body as well as SADC to utilise it as a platform from which to engage with this issue in Zimbabwe.

The limitations of the interventions of regional organisations

The AU and SADC interventions in Zimbabwe reveal the challenges that regional and sub-regional organisations face in effectively addressing domestic crises of their member states. In the case of the AU, Mugabe ensured that it would not gain any traction in Zimbabwean affairs through a policy of non-engagement. SADC managed to remain engaged with the Zimbabwean issue due to its close proximity to the crisis and the necessity for cooperation within the region. Regional organisations face an uphill task in bringing one of their errant member states to

heel, when the level of democratic transparency is limited and governance is oppressive in the majority of its constituent countries. It is therefore for the AU and SADC to preach to their member states if transgressions and violations of human rights are so blatantly taking place within their sphere of influence.

The Zimbabwean crisis also suggests that regional organisations like the AU and SADC should not wait until a situation is out of hand before making an intervention. Neither should it always wait for the international community to make the first move. These organisations are mandated to make the necessary interventions; what is often lacking is the political will to call situations as they actually are. In this regard, as stated earlier, Livingstone was therefore an important turning point for SADC.

Conclusion: maintaining the Pan-African voice in the Zimbabwe transition

The AU's initial attempt to engage with the Zimbabwean crisis was effectively rebuffed by the ZANU-PF government. The voice from the continental body became effectively silenced by Mugabe's reluctance to allow it a more substantial role in Zimbabwean affairs. The mantle was duly passed on to SADC which in effect assumed the lead role in addressing the crisis affecting the country. Within SADC, South Africa took on the burden of mediating the Zimbabwean crisis. Mbeki's era of quiet diplomacy yielded few gains for the country, but oversaw the signing of the Global Political Agreement on 15 September 2008. Zuma's intervention witnessed the emergence of a more vocal SADC, notably in the meeting of its Organ Troika on Politics, Defence and Security, in Livingstone, Zambia, in March 2011. At Livingstone, SADC found its voice on Zimbabwe and dispensed with the perennial diplomatic niceties. In political terms, South African leadership will be instrumental in coordinating the response by SADC, AU and the wider international community to any irregularities in Zimbabwe's next election.

SADC, like the AU, realised that the key to Zimbabwe's economic and social stabilisation efforts lies in political stabilisation. SADC has to therefore increase its monitoring role to ensure that the GPA government genuinely pursues political stabilisation in the country which is a prerequisite for economic stabilisation. SADC also recognised that lack of policy consistency has greatly undermined efforts to stabilise the economy. The Inclusive Government will need to develop consistency in its policies while its leaders should speak with one voice on key policy issues to avoid sending mixed messages to investors.

For a political and economic transition to occur in Zimbabwe, citizens and leaders need to have a proper conversation around the terms and conditions of such a transition. Such a negotiation will have to focus on the security and constitutional guarantees for transitional processes and the proper structural mechanisms, frameworks and processes for the transfer of power as well as physical, political and economic security guarantees for those who lose power. There is a role for SADC and the AU to ensure that this dialogue is advanced. The Pan-African voice on the Zimbabwean transition therefore has to remain loud and vocal in order to achieve a more peaceful and stable future for the country.

NOTES

- 1 SADC's role in Zimbabwe. Guarantor of democracy or deadlock?, Gwinyayi Dzinesa and Webster Zambara, OSISA, http://www.osisa.org/sites/default/files/sup_files/SADC's%20Role%20in%20Zimbabwe.pdf
- 2 Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka. 2005. Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe.
- 3 These were Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and, from 1980, Zimbabwe. The Frontline States were formed in 1970 to coordinate their responses to apartheid and formulate a uniform policy towards the apartheid government and the liberation movement. <http://www.sahistory.org.za/organisations/frontline-states>
- 4 <http://www.sadc.int/>
- 5 <http://www.usip.org/publications/issues-zimbabwe>
- 6 Cholera Outbreak Outcome of West's War on Zimbabwe, <http://www.africanexecutive.com/modules/magazine/articles.php?article=3880>
- 7 'Crisis? What Crisis? There is no crisis in Zimbabwe,' President Thabo Mbeki made this statement after a one-hour meeting with embattled Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe. Mbeki was on his way to a Southern African Development Community emergency meeting in Lusaka, convened to prevent Zimbabwe's disputed elections from erupting into full-scale violence. Mbeki told reporters in Harare that the election stalemate was not a crisis and the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission (ZEC) must be given time to release the results of a presidential poll held in March, 13 April 2008, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/sundaytimes/article79246.ece> [Accessed 17 August 2011].

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