

THE 2008 ZIMBABWE ELECTIONS



A DREAM DEFERRED

Africa Action is the name adopted in 2001, when three of the oldest Africa advocacy groups in the United States, the American Committee on Africa (1953), the Africa Fund (1966) and the Africa Policy Information Center (1978) merged to become one organization. Since 1953, the mission has been to mobilize communities to influence U.S.-Africa relations to promote political, economic and social justice in Africa. Africa Action provides accessible information and analysis; incorporates voices from civil society in Africa and communities in the United States into policy discussions in the U.S. We make local and global connections that reveal how structural racism and injustices marginalize Africa in international relations.

TransAfrica Forum is the oldest and largest African American human rights and social justice advocacy organization promoting diversity and equity in the foreign policy arena and justice for the African World. It serves as an educational and organizing center that encourages progressive viewpoints in the United States foreign policy arena and advocates justice for people of Africa and the African Diaspora.

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The 2008 Zimbabwe Election: A Dream Deferred

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"Harlem: A Dream Deferred"

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore--

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over--

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes

Montage of Dream Deferred, 1951

Langston Hughes

Montage of Dream Deferred, 1951

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Africa Action
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
AU	African Union
BSA	Broadcasting Service Act
CCJP	Commission for Justice and Peace
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Program
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NANGO	National Association of Non Governmental Organizations
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NECF	National Economic Consultative Forum
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TAF	TransAfrica Forum
UANC	United African National Council
U.K.	United Kingdom
UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Program on HIV/AIDS
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANU's army)
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZESN	Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network
ZIMCODD	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZAPU's army)





Map of Zimbabwe showing provincial boundaries

Map of Zimbabwe showing provincial boundaries

PREFACE

The March 29, 2008 elections ushered in a new chapter in Zimbabwe's near decade long political crisis, one that many had not foreseen. Faced with the reality of losing control of parliament for the first time since 1980, unprecedented rejection by the usually compliant rural population, and a real possibility of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) coming to power, Mugabe's scorched earth response is something that few had anticipated. Unleashing an unprecedented orgy of violence aimed at not only systematically decapitating the opposition and allied civil society groups but also whipping into line the rural populace and beating the opposition into a junior role in a political settlement, Mugabe has made it clear that he is only willing to allow the pretense of democracy and legitimacy for as long as it does not threaten his hold on power.

Zimbabwe's crisis has also intensified contradictions within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU). These bodies do not have a good history of standing up to fellow sitting presidents and demanding strict abidance to a democratic electoral process. Thus, the effectiveness of these institutions' response to Zimbabwe is compromised by their failure to take a firm stance against electoral fraud and gross human rights abuses in the past - cases in point being Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan, Swaziland and other countries. Mugabe is already exploiting this Achilles heel and effectively paralyzing the AU by arguing that even as his hands are dripping, others were allowed to get away with more blood on their hands.

SADC has a slightly better track record of problem solving and, as the neighbors to landlocked Zimbabwe, has both capacity and weight. Together the states prevailed over apartheid South Africa's military destabilization campaigns of the 1980's, and overcame region-wide drought in the early 1990's that would have starved millions if not for their coordinated actions. Within the body provisions exists for the sharp rebuke and removal of illegitimate regimes. But will SADC exert the political will to call Zimbabwe's one-man election illegitimate?

In addition to the thorny questions of violence and economic destabilization, Africa and its Diaspora are challenged to address the deeper political question represented by President Mugabe and his party who justify their attacks on the very core of the country's democracy and on the people that fought to bring it into being by saying he is defending the country against Western imperialism. This empty rhetoric, when Mugabe is busy repressing his own people is something that Africans and the Diaspora must take head on. The continued attack on Zimbabwe's poor and working people is the surest way to reverse the gains of the country's independence war. A brutalized public and a weakened civil society population provide little to no defense against Western nations who manipulatively pursue economic and political goals that generally run contrary to those of developing countries.



Internationally, solidarity activists are also challenged to adjust to the rapidly changing situation and to provide support where possible and appropriate. The exemplary model presented by South African trade unionists who refused to offload weapons bound for Zimbabwe sets a standard for other activists. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has already raised the suggestion of a regional blockade in the event that the SADC leaders fall short in their duties.

At present, pressure is mounting for ZANU-PF and MDC to come to a political settlement. Both parties have said that they are open to negotiations and it appears as if both parties need each other at this point. The total reliance on international pressure and failure to pursue alternative ways of leveraging its power such as mass mobilization for direct action leaves the MDC dependent on some level of cooperation from ZANU-PF in breaking the political impasse. On the other hand Mugabe's regime realizes that they cannot lift Zimbabwe out of the abyss without the cooperation of the MDC, particularly in repairing international relations and accessing economic support.

The MDC and sections of Zimbabwe's civil society have expressed openness to the idea of a transitional arrangement and or government of national unity.

It is at this time, when Zimbabwe is on the verge of political negotiations that the country's vibrant civil society must play a critical role. Not only to input on how the crisis must be resolved but to ensure that the political settlement does not short change the people of Zimbabwe as was the case with previous settlements such as the Lancaster house of 1979 and more recently the Unity Accord of 1987 through which ZANU-PF simply swallowed ZAPU. At the very minimum the transitional arrangement must provide a genuine foundation to build an enduring democracy for Zimbabwe.

This is a particularly difficulty challenge taking into account the historical alignment of civil society to the opposition. To consolidate the gains of the past decade of democratic struggles, Zimbabwe's civil society needs to be objectively critical of any arrangement proposed by ZANU-PF and MDC. This will be vital for the country's revitalization and political transformation.

Zimbabwe's next steps following President Mugabe's one-man election are unclear. However, if the dream of Zimbabwe is ever to be realized there are several factors that must be considered. First the violence must end and the political leadership must work out a political settlement with civil society input. We hope the information contained in the report that follows adds, in some small measure, to the deeper understanding of Zimbabwe's challenges as well and the creative and dynamic human resources found in civil society that will be central to addressing those challenges.

Briggs Bomba, Africa Action

Imani Countess, TransAfrica Forum

July 1, 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"The fear and anxiety concerns the post-election process. The most frequent comment from Zimbabweans and from those watching the process: "Will the old man rig the election? Will the count be fair...?" The fear of a stolen election and the possible outbreak of spontaneous violence have created a palpable anxiety throughout the country"

The preceding concludes a March 31 message from a member of the TransAfrica Forum/Africa Action Election Observer Mission to Zimbabwe. As this report goes to press, the results of the election, which were marred by flawed voter rolls, voter intimidation and lack of transparency in vote tallying, have been announced following an unprecedented month-long delay. However, the country's political future remains unclear.

The results:

- Out of a 5.2 million eligible voters, approximately 42 percent voted.
- For the first time in 28 years the ZANU-PF governing party has lost control of the Parliament. There were 207 House of Assembly seats contested; the combined opposition controls 109 seats, ZANU-PF 97, and 1 seat went to an independent.
- In the Senate, there were 60 seats being contested; ZANU-PF took 30 seats, MDC's Tsvangirai faction took 24 seats, and the MDC's Mutambara faction got 6 seats.
- Morgan Tsvangirai defeated President Robert Mugabe in the presidential election, but not with enough votes to avoid a run off: Morgan Tsvangirai - 47.9 percent, Robert Mugabe - 43.2 percent, and Simba Makoni - 8.3 percent. Zimbabwe's Electoral Act requires a 50 percent plus one vote majority for a candidate to be an outright winner; the law requires a runoff must take place within 21 days.

Any detailed post-election policy proposal risks being overtaken by events. In the most recent developments, the opposition party has decided to contest the presidential runoff, despite escalating violence, the failure to verify the long-delayed presidential vote count and their contention that they were deprived of a 50 percent-plus margin by fraud. The deadly violence, most of it attributed by observers to a decision by security authorities to intimidate the population into voting for President Mugabe, has already claimed at least 50 lives since the March 29 elections. Thousands have been beaten and/or lost their homes and other properties; making grim the prospects for a free and fair runoff. Whether a runoff election with any credibility is in fact possible, will depend on whether both internal and external pressure force security officials to desist from this systematic campaign of violent intimidation.

Recommendations

The Government of Zimbabwe must immediately end its campaign of violence against the political opposition, members of civil society and the human rights community, as well as ordinary citizens.

The solution to Zimbabwe's crisis rests with the people of Zimbabwe. However, the international community, including the U.S. and the United Nations, clearly has an important role to play, particularly in ensuring the opening up of democratic space to allow unhindered participation by all Zimbabweans. As such we encourage:

1. The U.S. and the international community to support SADC's ongoing mediation. For this mediation to be meaningful and to ensure total adherence to the process and abidance by its outcomes the international community must be firm with both ZANU-PF and the MDC.
2. The U.S. and the international community to support African-led mediation designed to conceptualize and implement a transitional arrangement.

TransAfrica Forum and **Africa Action** acknowledge the complexity of conceptualizing and implementing a transitional arrangement in an environment characterized by acute political polarization. The challenges are:

- a. Legal – the constitution will have to be amended to accommodate a transitional arrangement.
- b. Justice and Accountability – a transitional arrangement by its very nature is a negotiated settlement that can sacrifice issues of justice and accountability. The growing demands to hold members of President Mugabe's administration answerable for human rights abuses and corruption present a challenge to negotiating a political settlement. Largely because of these justice concerns grassroots sentiments within Zimbabwe are opposed to a transitional authority or government of national unity.
- c. Transformation - however the Zimbabwean crisis is defined it is clear that the solution requires a thorough transformation of the political culture and economic management systems. A negotiated settlement, by definition, limits the extent of such

transformation— the preserved power of the status quo will limit true transformation in an effort to maintain the political and economic status quo that confers power on a few at the expense of the many.

From the foregoing it is obvious that a negotiated settlement is an inferior solution to Zimbabwe's problems, however the current power dynamics within the country make it unavoidable. Principally because:

- a. ZANU-PF is still deeply entrenched – despite the fact that ZANU-PF lost the March 29 election it remains an entrenched entity that cannot be ignored. Fierce loyalty amongst war veterans and the security forces—the Army, the Police, Secret Service and the Prison Services—provide pillars of support that tilt the power balance in ZANU-PF's favor. In addition the March 29 election results highlight the reality that, among the 42 percent that voted, vote distribution is nearly split in the middle for presidential, parliamentary and Senate elections;
- b. The MDC party opposition does not seem to be pursuing any other option that can bring democratic pressure to bear on President Mugabe's government.

Thus, at present, the only viable alternative to a transitional arrangement seems to be a ZANU-PF government. That reality, given what has transpired over the last two months, can only increase the suffering of ordinary people and potentially lead to intense violence, even civil war.

Conceiving the Transitional Arrangement:

1. While the fine details of any arrangement must be worked out by Zimbabweans themselves, there are important elements that need to be emphasized:

- a. The transitional arrangement should be time limited to no more than two years. This is an important difference between a Transitional Authority and a Government of National Unity. A Transitional Authority is a clearly time limited, short term arrangement, whereas a Government of National Unity is generally a long term arrangement.
- b. The mandate of the transitional authority must be clearly spelt out from the beginning. The main task must be to create an environment that allows for a free and fair election and for the unhindered transfer of power to the winning party. Key to this is:
 - i. A democratic constitution
 - ii. Democratization and professionalization of state institutions, most importantly, the security forces, the Judiciary and the Electoral Commission.
 - iii. Arresting the socio-economic collapse, principally by stabilizing the Zimbabwe dollar, curbing inflation, stemming corruption, solving food shortages and restoring industrial and agricultural productivity.

2. The international community, in particular the nations of Southern Africa, should provide material and political support for a process of national reconciliation.

3. The international community must continue to encourage and support the actions of civil society both in Zimbabwe and throughout Southern Africa in support of a free, democratic and socially just Zimbabwe. Civil society must continue to play an important role in Zimbabwe given the critical need for “institutions that can referee between the state and the people.” Groups need to pay special attention to:

- a. Developing a human rights framework within the country.
- b. Building and strengthening systems of accountability.
- c. Capacity building for civic groups and strengthening their autonomy. International groups should continue to give priority to people-to-people solidarity, supporting organic people-driven organizations, particularly those that are working to ensure that Zimbabwe's future economic engagement is based on terms defined by the people. Afro descendants, in particular, need to show more visible support for the people of Zimbabwe and their self-selected political processes.

4. The international community should continue to provide support that addresses Zimbabwe and the region's humanitarian needs.

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We also acknowledge and express appreciation for the many citizens throughout the country who shared their personal stories and their dream of a changed Zimbabwe.

This report was prepared by TransAfrica staff Imani Countess, Senior Director for Public Affairs, Roxanne Lawson, Director for Africa Policy, and Africa Action staff, Briggs Bomba, Associate Director for Outreach. Editorial reviewers included: Nicole Lee, Gerald LeMelle, Marie Clarke Brill, Sarian Samura, Mwiza Munthali, and Michael Swiggert. Research assistance was provided by Sarian Samura, Akua Peprah, and Aminata Jalloh. Alex Baramki provided copy editing services.

INTRODUCTION

TransAfrica Forum (TAF) and **Africa Action** (AA) partnered to field an unofficial observer team to Zimbabwe for the March 29, 2008 Harmonized Elections. The primary strategic objective was to collect first hand information and analysis directly from grassroots communities, trade union organizations, and other civic groups, in order to begin to re-frame what has become a polarized debate among African Americans, Africa advocates, and policymakers in the United States. In addition, TAF and AA sought through this mission to engage Zimbabwe civil society and social justice organizations on how U. S. groups can best extend support and express solidarity to the struggle for a free, democratic and socially just Zimbabwe.

Why Zimbabwe and Why Now?

As U.S.-based organizations, with foreign policy mandates, both TAF and AA were also interested in better understanding the motivation and on-the-ground workings of U.S. policy toward Zimbabwe. In the last decade, U.S. Zimbabwe policy has been characterized by both tremendous criticism of President Mugabe's administration and very vocal and material support for the opposition and civil society, thus creating a policy duality that raises questions and invites reflection on the historical purpose of U.S. policy towards Zimbabwe.

In reaction, many Africa advocates and Pan Africanists, who remember the U.S. government's questionable role in Southern Africa – including not only undermining democratically elected governments, as was the case with Patrice Lumumba, but also propping up undemocratic regimes as was the case with Mobutu Sese Seku, Jonas Savimbi, P.W. Botha, Ian Smith, and Afonso Dkhlama, – have questioned U.S. motives and been unwilling to be seen as supporters of policies that ring hollow. Based on first-hand knowledge and extensive ties to the country and the region, many progressive organizations and activists in the U.S. share criticism of President Mugabe's democratic record; however, activists are equally critical of the U.S. stance given the long-standing double standard in policy toward Africa.

Concern is deepened by the very un-diplomatic posture toward Zimbabwe exhibited by several U.S. diplomats. The rhetoric has been hostile, even confrontational and sometimes overblown, particularly during the tenure of former Ambassador Christopher Dell. According to many human rights workers the rhetoric has not only harmed relations with the region, but has also undermined the human rights community in Zimbabwe by encouraging perceptions that they are beholden to the West. Mugabe's propaganda machinery has skillfully exploited this situation dismissing the opposition as a stooge of the West and projecting Mugabe as an anti-imperialist champion. Many African leaders and human rights workers find themselves in a difficult situation of not wanting to echo U.S. criticism because of the risk of being marginalized as mouthpieces of Washington, D.C. and of having their own credibility questioned.

Both TransAfrica Forum (TAF) and Africa Action (AA) acknowledge that U.S. humanitarian assistance, HIV/AIDS programming and much of the support for civil society groups in Zimbabwe has been of vital importance. The humanitarian programs have had an important impact in terms of prolonging life and improving quality of life. Both TAF and AA recommend that the humanitarian programs continue.

The Zimbabwe Crisis

Accurate characterization of the Zimbabwean crisis is the starting point in the search for a genuine comprehensive solution. There are probably as many contesting characterizations of Zimbabwe as the different interests converging on the country's political and economic landscape. As with any other situation dominated by entrenched interests, objective analysis is the first casualty. The Zimbabwe government projects itself as a victim of a Western imperialist agenda under attack in retribution for the land reform program. It blames Western sanctions for the economic problems and dismisses the opposition as a puppet creation of the West. Significantly, this is the account that has been accepted in many circles especially on the African continent and throughout the Diaspora.

Many leaders in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the African Union revere President Mugabe as a liberation hero and consistently stand by him, as evidenced by their threat to boycott the last African Union – European Union Summit if Mugabe was not invited. Britain and America's disproportionate and very forward role in Zimbabwe tends to give credence to Mugabe's rhetoric. Again, the double standard evident throughout Western foreign policy – where on one hand dictators like Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi, Pakistan's Pervez Musharraf and the autocratic rulers of the Middle East are embraced, whilst preaching democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe – has undermined the credibility of Western intervention.

The main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), characterizes Zimbabwe's problems as a "crisis of governance," as such, the main problem is explained as the illegitimacy of the Mugabe regime whose authority is derived from disputed elections.

Neither of these perspectives seems able to explain why Zimbabwe was already sliding pre-2000, before the imposition of Western sanctions and before controversial elections. Sharply different as these two perspectives appear, they are similar in that they identify Zimbabwe's problem as a purely political crisis.

And, both these perspectives ignore decades of structural economic inequality, Western imposed neo-liberal economic policies, government corruption, as well as the flaws and weaknesses of all the economic solutions proposed by the political parties.

Both TransAfrica Forum and Africa Action recognized that the stakes for Zimbabwe's March 29 election were high and that the outcome would determine, to some extent, the nature, form and possible resolution of the economic crisis. As well, the elections will define the future political space, and determine whether a broader range of democracy actors will be able see their voice and vision reflected in the country's process of development.

The Progressive Task

The example of Kenya's elections provided additional impetus for the field mission. The aftermath of the Kenyan elections took many by surprise, and until now many are still struggling to come to terms with the explosion. With the Zimbabwe elections, it was important for progressive advocacy organizations to have clear and timely information and analysis from partners on the ground. The Kenya experience was characterized by sensationalized press coverage, manipulations by the ruling party, and stories that reinforced the U.S. stereotypical understandings of "tribal violence." We hoped that reporting directly from Zimbabwe, informed by the country's civil society organizations, would challenge these mischaracterizations.

Furthermore, a deeper investigation of U.S. interests and motives in Zimbabwe is absolutely required. TAF and AA hoped that the conversations with activists and scholars in Zimbabwe might initiate that investigation process. There are several competing theories regarding U.S. engagement in Zimbabwe, none of which fully explains the high-profile attention or the millions of U.S. dollars invested in effecting the desired change in Zimbabwe. The contrasting views of U.S. interest in Zimbabwe include:

- The belief that the policy is driven by a U.S. desire to remove an unpredictable leader from Southern Africa, a region strategic for its location and vast mineral resources.
- The belief that U.S. strategy is the result of concern over Zimbabwe's military actions in the DRC war, in which the country fought against U.S. allies Uganda and Rwanda; such a contradiction of U.S. interests is thought to be untenable.
- The desire to send a strong message to South Africa regarding land reform: Don't Even Think About It!
- U.S. anger over the poor treatment of white farmers during the land re-distribution process, a reaction rooted in U.S. racism that assigns much greater importance to a single injury to a white than it does to multiple injuries to Blacks.

It is unlikely that advocates and scholars will be able to articulate with full confidence the factors driving this particular policy, but strong skepticism over the Department of State's purported public concern for human rights and democracy will continue to exist.

Additionally, a fresh analysis of the situation in Zimbabwe, one seen through a human security framework, as opposed to the narrower lenses of human rights, democracy and governance which are currently the dominant frames, is required. A human security framework measures all political players – opposition, government, and international actors – by their ability to address the fundamental rights of Zimbabwe's people to a life free of want and free of fear.



Africa Action and TransAfrica Forum

Methodology

TAF and AA convened a strategy meeting on February 16, 2008. At that time representatives of the attendant organizations discussed:

- Zimbabwe's multifaceted crises
- An analysis of U.S. interests
- The historical and current role of progressive forces, and
- Possible future areas of research and next steps.

The meeting highlighted the urgent need to resolve Zimbabwe's problems in light of the dire humanitarian crisis engulfing the nation, whilst at the same time emphasizing the need for genuine durable solutions. In explaining the Zimbabwe crisis and seeking solutions, the meeting looked beyond Mugabe as an individual and his party ZANU-PF and questioned the role of IFI's (international financial institutions) and the impact of their economic structural adjustment policies. The role of the U.S. in both the colonial and postcolonial eras was spotlighted. The meeting highlighted the need to stand with the people of Zimbabwe and support a people's agenda, rather than any particular personalities.

A Taxi Driver's Perspective: Mr. Motoko*

We hope that March 29 will bring us a change. We want food for our children. We want health care, we want education. We want to see Zimbabwe working again. We are a hard working people and we want to be the breadbasket of SADC [Southern Africa Development Community] again.

You see these factories [driving along the airport road]. We have factories for light industry and they are empty. I am a salesman by profession. I used to work for National Foods, but I was retrenched three years ago. I drive a taxi to make ends meet. Most of my work is at night when the transport services end and people need to get from one point to another. The company I work for has contracts with companies, like hotels and banks, we transport employees that work late to their homes.

In the rural areas people are going hungry. I cannot say that people have died, but I know that people have empty stomachs.

*not his real name

The delegation to Zimbabwe was one activity that TAF and AA agreed to carry out following the strategy meeting.

Delegation members arrived in Zimbabwe approximately one week prior to Election Day. Once in the country, delegation members partnered with the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), a national social justice network with over 100 organizational members. ZIMCODD facilitated meetings with various civil society groups in Harare and Bulawayo. Delegation members interviewed representatives of civil society organizations, political leaders, and held informal talks with other observer missions, ordinary citizens, and where possible, members of the political parties. The delegation drafted formal interview questions for the civil society meetings and collected personal testimonials from individuals.

On return to Washington, D.C. both groups were interviewed by various international and domestic media. Both groups produced statements, and press releases. TransAfrica forum launched an Internet-based petition that calls for justice in Zimbabwe. Statements and other information are available at: www.africaaction.org and www.transafricaforum.org. Both organizations have selectively briefed congressional staff and members of various constituencies. A public briefing and reception were organized for local Washington, D.C. constituencies.

Evaluation

The goal of re-framing public debate on Zimbabwe is impossible to evaluate within the specific timeframe of the election observation mission. There are several key indicators that the organizations will continue to monitor over the next few months.

The mission was successful, however, in presenting factual accounts, as well as the analyses and thoughts of key civil society groups and individuals. Together, TAF and AA have generated thousands of media stories that have reached millions around the world and generated over 20,000 Google hits. A short list of media interviews is found in Appendix 2, and a few sample stories in Appendix 3.

ZIMBABWE: A HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

The first British explorers, colonists, and missionaries arrived in what is now Zimbabwe in the 1850s. In 1888 a treaty was signed with the British South Africa Company allowing them to mine gold in the kingdom, then under Ndebele rule, which resulted in an influx of settlers and the British-Ndebele War in 1893. The Ndebele were defeated.

African resistance peaked again following the 1894 imposition of several tax assessments, including a "hut tax." Both Ndebele and Shona peoples rebelled in June 1896 in what is known in nationalist discourse as the Chimurenga One. Traditional religious leaders, including a militant woman named Nyakasikana, who was said to be imbued with the "lion spirit" of "Nehanda," helped organize nationwide resistance to colonization. That war ended in defeat in 1897.

The defeat led to an additional influx of foreigners and the establishment of the territory of Rhodesia, named after Cecil John Rhodes of the British South Africa Company.

THE PRE-COLONIAL ERA

The history of the many civilizations that originated, settled and prospered in Zimbabwe are physically evident in modernity through the remains of the ancient stone structures at Great Zimbabwe, Khami and Dhlo-Dhlo. The land's earliest settlers, the Khoisan, date back to 200 B.C.E. The first major civilization, the Mwene Mutapa (or Monomatapas) established themselves in the 1440s under King Mutota's empire which included much of present day Zimbabwe and extensive parts of what is now Mozambique. This empire was supported by small-scale industries of iron smelting, textiles, gold and copper mining and metalwork and agriculture. The products of these industries were traded with the surrounding kingdoms.

In the early 16th century the Portuguese arrived, destroyed the inter-kingdom trade and began a series of wars which, by the 17th century, left the region in serious decline. In this period several Shona states came together to form the Rozwi Empire, which covered more than half of present day Zimbabwe.

By 1690 the Portuguese had been forced out of the area and much of the land formerly under Mwene Mutapa was now controlled by the Rozwi. By the mid-19th century the descendants of the Nguni and Zulu, the Ndebele, had established a powerful kingdom.

The Ndebele are a branch of Zulus who split from King Shaka Zulu in the early 1820s under the leadership of Mzilikazi, a former general in Shaka's army. During a turbulent period of African history known as the Mfecane or "the scattering", Mzilikazi and his followers, initially numbering about 500 people, moved west towards the area near the present-day city of Pretoria, where they founded a settlement called Mhlahlandlela. There they came into contact with the Tswana people, who are credited with giving this band of Zulus the name "Matabele". Tabele comes from tebele which means 'to chase away'.

In 1838 the Ndebele moved further north into present-day Zimbabwe where they battled with the Shona, eventually establishing Matabeleland, encompassing the west and south-west regions of the country. In the course of the migration, large numbers of conquered local clans and individuals were absorbed into the Ndebele nation.



Mbuya Nehanda: "My bones will rise again."

Nehanda is said to be the "lion spirit" of King Mutota's daughter. As a medium of the spirit, Nyakasikana performed traditional ceremonies and initially promoted good relations between the Shona and the Europeans. However, following the imposition of various taxes, Nyakasikana and other mediums spearheaded national resistance. Nyakasikana and other leaders were captured in 1897 and hanged in what is now the capitol city, Harare. Before she was hanged, however, she warned the British "my bones will rise again". Images of Nehanda continue to inspire Zimbabweans of all generations, and are even invoked in popular culture by hip-hop artists and performance poets.

In 1923, European settlers voted to become the white minority self-governing British colony of Southern Rhodesia. Despite the colony's theoretically non-racial constitution, the minority government worked to effectively exclude the majority of Africans from voting. In addition, the government passed a series of exclusionary laws, prohibiting Africans from owning prime land (1930 Land Act), entering skilled trades and professions (1934 Labor Law), and limiting the number of cattle head Africans could own, (Cattle Levy Act of 1934). The Cattle Levy Act limited African access to hard currency and thus an ability to maintain a sustainable livelihood. As a consequence of these actions, Africans were forced to work for subsistence wages on white farms, in mines and in factories.

By the 1950s the standard of living for whites was either equal to or higher than that of whites in the United States. The average white family had at least two domestic servants and the average farmer owned 6,000 acres of land.

These great disparities, coupled with poor wages and conditions led to the gradual radicalization of the African labor force. By 1953 a federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) was formed in order to maintain white minority rule in the face of a radicalizing, mostly Black and Coloured, labor force.

The 1960s saw the formation of a number of political parties. At the forefront of these movements was Joshua Nkomo's National Democratic Party, founded in 1960; and banned in the same year. Nkomo and others then formed the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), which in turn was banned in 1962.

In 1963 Robert Mugabe, Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, Edgar Tekere, Edson Zvobgo, Enos Nkala and lawyer Herbert Chitepo split from ZAPU to form the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which was influenced by a more militant ideology as well as by Maoism. Both parties were unified in their opposition to the government of Rhodesia and the split was mostly characterized by the difference in how to bring about revolutionary change.

After a brief federation with Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) in the post-World War II period, Rhodesia chose to remain a colony when its two partners voted for independence in 1963.

In 1964 the Ian Smith regime arrested Nkomo and Mugabe for their leadership in ZAPU and ZANU. On Nov. 11, 1965, the white-minority government of Rhodesia unilaterally declared its independence from Britain. In response to the declaration, ZANU and ZAPU launched the Second Chimurenga, or independence war, in 1966. The Second Chimurenga evolved alongside several other wars of independence on the African Continent, including Angola's war of independence (1961-1975) and the resultant South African backed counter-insurgency war (1975-2002), Mozambique's war of independence (1964-1975) and struggle against the Rhodesian, and later South African, funded Mozambique Resistance Movement (RENAMO) in Mozambique (1977 to 1992).

In 1968 the UN voted for mandatory sanctions against the minority government of Rhodesia. However, with the support of British, South African, and U.S. companies, and the country's domestic production, the sanctions were largely ineffective and resulted in the growth of Rhodesia's economy. On March 1, 1970, Rhodesia formally proclaimed itself a republic.

In 1975, with independence won in Angola and Mozambique, the power balance within Rhodesia was greatly altered and the imprisoned nationalist leaders from ZANU and ZAPU were released and united in the Patriotic Front Party.

Mozambique's independence "led to a new surge of confidence among Zimbabweans" as that country moved from close ally to a "frontline state providing training for guerrillas. Rhodesian forces increased their brutality against the civilian population, including forcing 750,000 civilians into 220 protected villages with dusk-to-dawn curfews during which "Rhodesian troopers had orders to shoot without challenge. Each day 30 to 40 civilian Africans died, whether as 'curfew breakers', 'supporters of the guerrillas', or victims caught in the crossfire. The killing of innocent civilians was not confined to Zimbabwe but extended to air strikes deep inside Mozambique, Zambia, and even Angola. The Rhodesian Air Force, supported by the South Africans, carried out bombing raids against the frontline territories, bombing vital communication links, roads, bridges, and the refugee camps.

In 1977, suffering from the impacts of war and an exodus of large numbers of whites from the country, the Rhodesian government, led by Ian Smith, tried to make a deal to hold on to partial power. They wanted, in exchange for a government of majority rule, an agreement that would secure white Rhodesians a minimum of 28 seats in the 100 seat parliament; a veto over legislation for 10 years; and white control of the army, air force, police, judiciary and civil service. This deal was rejected because it failed to address the requirements of true economic, political and cultural independence.

On March 3, 1978, Smith's government and several African moderate leaders, Ndabaningi Sithole, Abel Tendekayi Muzorewa, and Chief Jeremiah Chirau signed an agreement to transfer power to the black majority by Dec. 31, 1978 under a new Zimbabwe Rhodesia government. They formed an executive council, with chairmanship rotating but with Smith retaining the title of prime minister. Africans were named to each cabinet ministry, serving as co-ministers with the whites already holding these posts. African nations and rebel leaders immediately denounced the action, but Western governments were more reserved, although none granted recognition to the new regime.

Signed on December 21, 1979 in the U.K., the Lancaster House Conference and Agreement legally ended the white minority rule in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe's war for independence. The three-month long conference almost failed to reach an accord due to disagreements on land reform. In order to end the stalemate and broker a deal that the Patriot Front would sign, Great Britain and United States governments under Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, respectively, offered to establish a fund to buy land from willing white settlers who could not accept reconciliation under a "willing buyer, willing seller" principle. At independence about 6,000 farmers, retained 39 percent of the land, amounting to 15.5 million hectares of prime agro-ecological farmland, while one million black households remained consigned to 41.4 percent of the land, or 16.4 million hectares of marginal land. The white minority (about 3 percent) controlled approximately two-thirds of national income; while the black majority (97 percent) took the remaining one-third. Great Britain also pledged £630 million to aid in Zimbabwe's reconstruction. The first phase of land reform in 1980, which was partially funded by the United Kingdom, successfully resettled around 70,000 landless people on more than 20,000 km² of land. However the other financial promises of the United Kingdom and the United States in regard to land reform were never honored.

Zimbabwe's first elections took place on March 27-29, 1980. In accordance with the Lancaster compromise, Black Zimbabweans competed for 80 out of the 100 seats in the House of Assembly with 20 seats reserved for whites. Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) won a majority with 57 seats while Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) won 27 seats and Abel Muzorewa's United African National Council (UANC) won three. The Rhodesian Front won all 20 white seats.





Post-Independence

Once Zimbabweans won their independence the South African apartheid government, concerned by the loss of a key ally in the Rhodesian government and hoping to maintain their own white minority rule, organized anti-government forces in Zimbabwe using the same model it had already employed and would again employ in Angola, Mozambique, Lesotho and Zambia. In Zimbabwe, the South African intelligence community worked to strengthen existing anti-government sentiment and to fuel discontent. Their actions were part of a destabilization strategy that fomented “civil wars” throughout the region in order to undermine regional support for the anti-apartheid movement.

Specifically, the government of South Africa sponsored dissidents and mercenaries, hired informants and conducted campaigns of misinformation. The South African government was also able to take advantage of the difficult integration of three armies—ZANLA (ZANU’s army), ZIPRA (ZAPU’s army) and the former Rhodesian army.

During this period South Africa’s intelligence agents were able to spread rumors regarding ZAPU’s plans to overthrow the Zimbabwe’s elected government. In 1982 caches of arms, which ZANU was lead to believe were to be used to overthrow the elected government, were discovered on farms owned by ZAPU. This discovery led to the dismissal of Joshua Nkomo and three other ZAPU ministers from the Zimbabwean government and the arrests of Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku the former ZIPRA intelligence chief and commander. These actions lead to hundreds of former ZIPRA guerrillas, now dissidents, returning to the bush.

Attacks now began on local stores, as well as politically motivated assaults against white farmers and ZANU officials. In response, in 1983 and 1984, the Zimbabwean government mobilized the North Korean trained 5th Brigade ostensibly to keep order. This Brigade did not restore order but rather began a reign of terror targeting suspected ZIPRA supporters and Ndebele citizens.

This fighting continued at a government military level and among local militias of demobilized soldiers for five years. In this period it is estimated that over 30,000 civilians were killed by the Zimbabwean government, the majority of whom were ethnic Ndebele.

In December of 1987 Mugabe and Nkomo reached a power sharing agreement whereby ZAPU became part of ZANU-PF and the government changed the constitution to make Mugabe the country’s first executive president and Nkomo one of two vice presidents.

Robert Mugabe, the current President of Zimbabwe, began his political career and rose to prominence in the 1960s as a member of ZANU. Trained as a teacher, Mugabe holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Fort Hare, a Bachelor of Administration and Bachelor of Education from the University of South Africa and a Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Laws, Master of Science and Master of Laws, all from the University of London External Programme. Mugabe also received instruction at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute in southern Ghana.

In 1964 he was arrested by Rhodesia’s Smith Regime for “subversive speech” and spent the next 10 years in prison. In 1974, while still in prison, Mugabe was elected to take over the reigns of ZANU.

With Independence in 1980 Mugabe became Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. He served as Prime Minister from 1980 to 1987 and has served as the first executive President since 1987.

Legacy of the Gukurahundi Campaign

...Six of my uncles were in ZIPRA, two uncles were in the training camps in Angola, and my father was a member of the uniformed forces. Following the Lancaster House Agreement, ZIPRA members were assembled throughout Matabeleland and disarmed. That is when trouble began. In Bulawayo ZIPRA forces were attacked by both armed Rhodesians and ZANLA. ZANU began imprisoning ZIPRA members from 1980 to 1983. My family had to move three times. One of my uncles, Mando Nkomo, was taken and stoned to death by Robert’s [Robert Mugabe] people. Another uncle arrived from Angola and survived two attacks on his life. My mom took us from town to a rural place where we stayed for a year. That was the time of the Gukurahundi campaign. There were rapes, disappearances, villages were attacked, and people were thrown down mine shafts.

There is one incident that I vividly remember. When I was four they – the 5th Brigade – came to the village and took my uncle. They assembled the entire village, including the children, declaring that a sell-out would die. They first asked the villagers how should a traitor die, someone responded don’t waste a bullet. They picked up a pick-axe; the crowd gasped and began to cover the eyes of the children. The troops said everyone should look to see what happens to a traitor. It is one of those things that comes back to me. I was only four, but I can still see it. They took the pick-axe and hit him in the head. Blood was everywhere, coming from his nose and mouth. The villagers were told not to bury him, but after a few nights several people got up in the middle of the night and buried him.

I also remember villages being burned and stories of people disappearing. I remember the fear. There were mass graves. An estimated 30,000 were killed, but I believe that it was many more. My father was killed, but I don’t want to talk about that. My mother had to run and we ended up in Gweru around 1985. People knew her so she could not get a job; we survived on government handouts. I was quite violent growing up, I was always getting into fights, until I understood my anger, understood that I was living in a situation where there is no justice.

When I started participating in politics as a student in the late 1990s my mother was hospitalized as a result of the stress. I participated in the formation of the MDC in 1999. I and my comrades were harassed at university, suspended, our academics suffered.

What do I want from the government: I want Robert Mugabe out of power and minimally I want an apology. I used to fantasize about killing the people that killed my father; I know who they are I have seen them on television. My cousins have a strong hatred for Shona speakers; a hatred for Shonas was cultivated.

At this point I don’t want revenge, I do want a Truth Commission. Not “Truth and Reconciliation” like they did in South Africa where murderers confess crimes and walk the streets. Hell no. I want them to tell who did what and then I want them taken to a military court. The atrocities were done by the military and they should be tried in a military court. They have been allowed to walk free, to become successful. They don’t see the scars on people, on their children who grew up without parents, the psychological scars that cannot be measured.

Today in Bulawayo almost all the able bodied people are in South Africa. You can go to any family in the city and the able-bodied family members are out of the country. This is the legacy of the massacres, atrocities, and continued marginalization of Matabeleland. **By Nkululeko Masuku**

In 1988 the law guaranteeing whites 20 seats in parliament was rescinded. In 1990-91 ZANU declared, in keeping with the “willing buyer, willing seller” plan of the Lancaster House Agreement, that half of the land belonging to white farmers would be reallocated to Africans after a 10 year period. In 1992 one-third of Zimbabwe’s arable land was still owned by 4,000 whites.

In 1997, the new British government led by Tony Blair unilaterally stopped funding the “willing buyer, willing seller” land reform program on the basis that the initial £44 million allocated under the Thatcher government was used to purchase land for members of the ruling elite rather than landless peasants. More importantly, Britain’s ruling Labour Party felt no obligation to continue paying white farmers compensation, or in Minister Clare Short’s words, “I should make it clear that we do not accept that Britain has a special responsibility to meet the costs of land purchase in Zimbabwe. We are a new Government from diverse backgrounds without links to former colonial interests. My own origins are Irish and as you know we were colonised not colonisers.”

After this move the issue of land reform was not central in the official politics of Zimbabwe until 2000, when people, proclaiming to be

veterans of Zimbabwe's independence war began squatting on land owned by white farmers in an effort to reclaim land taken under British colonization.

In March 2002, Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations. That month Mugabe was reelected president for another six years in a blatantly rigged election whose results were enforced by the president's militia. In Aug. 2002, Mugabe ordered all white commercial farmers to leave their land without compensation. In 2003, due to a combination of factors—environmental shifts, water shortages, and a poorly executed land reform—inflation hit 300 percent. In this same year Zimbabwe experienced its first nationwide food shortage. In 2004, the IMF estimated that the country had grown one-third poorer since 1999. Economic justice campaigners attribute this “new” poverty to the failure of IMF proscribed structural adjustment programs and a lack of foreign direct investment into key sectors of the economy.

Vimbai's Story -- Land Reform Gone Awry

My sister died in the late 1990s. She was the oldest in our family, educated in the U.K., and an economist by training. After I graduated from college I went to live with her in Harare. She helped me find a job and paid my school fees. I was the baby in the family and she was the central caretaker. That all changed when she died unexpectedly.

When she died, you know, all her property was taken by other family members. She left her apartment to me, but it was heavily mortgaged. I wanted to keep the flat; it was the only tangible link to her. But, I needed money to pay off the mortgage. I was invited by a friend, a white farmer who owned three farms, to lease one of his farms. I knew nothing about farming, but with his support I began. I started with five acres on which I grew onions. I wanted to raise and sell chickens, but he advised me to start with onions – boring onions! But, once harvested and dried, onions supply a steady income throughout the year. Within eight months I was able to clear all my debts.

Within three years I had expanded to 15 acres, with 6,000 chickens, and 27 farm workers. I was becoming established and beginning to get used to life as a farmer. It is a hard life, but after the loss of my sister I found it therapeutic. In my third year I received a note from a local party official asking permission to use my lands to establish a Border Ghazi school, a training facility for young ZANU-PF militants. I replied that I was actively farming, and that the school should be placed on nearby non-arable land. Next three men came to the farmhouse to inform me that the farm would be taken over. I replied that I was farming, showed my registration to indicate that my citizenship, and in response to the redistribution plan I showed them my skin and replied: "Aren't I black enough?" Soon thereafter, 15 young men came to the house and I was ordered to leave within five days. A government Minister wanted my farm. I had to uproot my crop, sell my belongings – some to the Minister who took my farm. I sold my chickens to the OK [food chain] in Bindura at a loss.zv

All 27 farm workers lost their livelihoods. Me, I was crushed. For a year afterwards I lived with another sister unable to do anything except sit and sometimes play with her children. Eventually I was offered a consultancy with a non-profit organization and within a few years ended up working for the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions.

Despite the problems articulated above, post independence Zimbabwe made great strides in expanding access to health care, education, housing and other social services through various affirmative schemes that catered to the previously marginalized African population. As a result of these policies Zimbabwe attained the status of having one of the most highly educated populations in Africa, an achievement fast eroding as a result of the present crisis.

ZIMBABWE'S CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCATES

The concept of civil society in post-independence Zimbabwe has changed a great deal over the past 28 years. In the early years of independence, independent civil society was almost non-existent; today Zimbabwe has one of the most vibrant independent civic formations on the continent. In order to understand the evolution of civil society in Zimbabwe one has to trace the path of the country's socio-economic and political history.

Zimbabwe Elections Support Network

Objectives:

- To enhance citizen participation in issues of governance and democracy.
- To promote democratic free and fair electoral processes through objectively and impartially monitoring and observing elections.
- To promote the creation of legal framework and election culture for free and fair elections.
- To effectively gather, disseminate and communicate objective information about elections and other democratic processes.

Mission Statement: To enhance a democratic, transparent, free and fair electoral process and environment by co-ordinating election related activities through member organisations.

Sectors: Advocacy; Civil Activism; Democracy/Good Governance.

At independence the state was carved out of the national liberation movement that occupied such a high moral ground in the eyes of the majority population that it was almost beyond criticism. Fourteen years of armed struggle gave the new state a hegemony that practically closed off space for critical independent organizing. During this era, the agenda of civic formations was mostly complementary to the state's developmental thrust. Civil society worked alongside the state on issues such as literacy, health education, and support services for communal farmers. Except for a few groups such as the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) that challenged the state human rights record during the Matabeleland and midlands massacres in the mid 1980s, civil society generally kept out of human rights and democracy issues and any other matters that confronted the state.

WOZA

Woza, the acronym of Women of Zimbabwe Arise, is an Ndebele word meaning 'Come forward'. Now with a countrywide membership of over 35,000 women and men, WOZA was formed in 2003 as a women's civic movement 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; and
- Lobby and advocate on those issues affecting women and their families.

Labor and the student movement, both of which are key pillars of today's independent civil society in Zimbabwe, were mere wings of the ruling party with their leadership ranks filled with card carrying members of the ruling party. In fact, the ruling party was so instrumental in the formation of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) that its first secretary general was Robert Mugabe's brother. The workers day celebrations that today are infernos at which ZANU-PF is roasted and protest resolutions passed were occasions for the government and labor to showcase their love affair. Up until the early 90s, the Minister of Labour was always invited as the guest of honor at such events. The same cozy relationship existed in the student movement; for one to run as the President of the Student Representative Council at the University of Zimbabwe, then the country's only university, one had to be cleared by the local ZANU-PF branch. Even as students sometimes clashed with the state, it was all done in the context of ultimate loyalty to ruling party and government.

Breaking the Hegemony

Independent civil society was born out of student struggles in the late 1990s that challenged the state on corruption and increasingly on democracy issues. These struggles cracked the state hegemony and gave confidence to other sectors of society thus opening the path for independent civic engagement. A key political moment was the October 4, 1989 anti-corruption demonstration at the University of Zimbabwe that led to the closure of the university for the first time and arrest of student leaders and Morgan Tsvangirai, then ZCTU secretary for



supporting the student strike. The brutal manner with which the state put down the student demonstration massively undermined its moral authority. Further, the exposure of serious corruption in the government pricked the veil of sanctity that had shielded the state from criticism. The scathing and defiant words from student leaders in the face of state brutality marked a permanent break in the marriage between the state and the students' movement:

Zimbabwe National Students Union

Mission: To champion and protect education as a human right and autonomy of institutions of higher learning through engaging the government, college and university authorities in critical issues affecting education in Zimbabwe.

Vision: To see a robust education delivery system in an open, just and democratic Zimbabwe

Demands:

- Affordable and good quality education delivery system for all;
- Adequate learning, teaching and research facilities;
- Employment creation for college graduates;
- A democratic Constitution; and
- A democratic Zimbabwe.

They [the riot police] harassed and terrorized students indiscriminately throughout the campus randomly tear gassing halls of residence, wantonly clobbering and brutalizing students threatening to use gunfire...comrades, this is state terrorism at its worst!

Yes, we did not apply for permission and we will never apply for permission from anyone in this country...to them, the ruling dogs of imperialism, academic freedom involves the narrow acquisition of knowledge, domination of knowledge and who should teach whom...it is a government which displays brute neo-fascist force only comparable to that of [apartheid] South Africa before its own unarmed defenseless students. It's our strong submission that this institution of government has thus been rendered completely disreputable and hence the incumbents have completely lost legitimacy.

Who in this government can have the audacity and credibility to criticize the De-Klerk regime in South Africa...That one fought for this country does not justify them to loot, plunder and wreck the economy of Zimbabwe and let alone stifle people's democratic rights.

Years of Structural Adjustment

The critical break between the state and civil society occurred during the structural adjustment period, 1989 – 1991. The negative socio-economic impact of structural adjustment sparked independent organizations and resistance across the spectrum of society. The labor movement led in ideologically contesting the structural adjustment agenda and predicted that the socio-economic consequence will put the state on a collision course with the population. In a 1990 strategy document the ZCTU argued:

The government strategy of staking the people's hopes on World Bank structural adjustment policies, on foreign investment, on privatization and on trade liberalization ignores the evidence of the devastating effects of these policies on working people across the globe and dooms a vast section of the society to permanent joblessness, hopelessness and economic insecurity. It further mortgages the economy to foreigners and leaves the nation economically powerless and without economic control over its future.



As economic hardship worsened in ESAP's second year, ZCTU organized its first major demonstration since independence, demanding a reversal of ESAP, reintroduction of subsidies on basic commodities, an end to the public transport crisis, and a withdrawal of the labor bill that attacked worker rights. This marked the unions' first major break from the wings of ZANU-PF.

Social struggles intensified in the mid to late 1990s as it became obvious that the promised benefits of ESAP were a mirage, which sparked protests against worsening conditions of poverty. Most notable is the civil servants strike of August 1996 in which more than 70,000 government workers went on strike demanding a 100 percent cost of living adjustment and other allowances. Despite initially firing 7,000 workers, the government eventually gave in to the demands. The success of the civil servants strike boosted confidence in other sectors of society, who embarked on strikes, thus marking 1996 as the biggest strike year yet.

This was to spark economic struggles that by the end of the decade had generalized into a political fight for the control of the state built around labor.

Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU)

Objectives: The ZCTU is committed to promoting, protecting and advancing the interests of workers.

Sectors: Adult Education; Advocacy; Civil Activism; Consumer Rights; Democracy/Good Governance; Education/Training; Gender; HIV/AIDS; Health; Human Rights; Labour; Local Government; Poverty Alleviation; Research/Documentation/ Information Dissemination; Sexual Rights.

A total of 235,000 workers went on strike in 1996 compared to 20,000 the previous year; 1997 saw even bigger strike activity as massive demonstrations rocked Zimbabwe. Whilst 1996 had recorded a total of 28 strikes 1997 recorded a total of 55 strikes with over a million workers involved. Private sector workers rose up demanding cost of living adjustments, the student movement, under the leadership of the Zimbabwe National Students Union, paralyzed colleges and universities nationally in the first ever-nationwide demonstration since independence. The students' main demands were payout increment, reversal of privatization and respect of 'academic freedom'. In the same year, war veterans, who had been reduced to paupers, under years of structural adjustment, mounted serious protests for compensation for their role in the liberation struggle, eventually forcing President Mugabe's administration to award gratuities and pensions.

With the whole country on fire, the ZCTU leadership found itself having to champion an agenda beyond labor's immediate and direct interests.

In January 1998, spontaneous food riots erupted in townships across the nation with poor people looting and ransacking shops for anything they could put their hands on. For days there were running battles in townships between combined police/army units and the poor residents of the townships. Soldiers and tanks were deployed into townships with clear instructions to shoot and kill, orders that resulted in ten workers losing their lives. Cases of spontaneous protests continued in spite of heightened state repression and intimidation. This forced the state to craft a National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF) at the end of January 1998 with the purported aim of consulting civil society on the national crisis. The NECF was a mere talk shop, as observed by Richard Saunders:

...Its delegates were selected on an individual basis, and not directly by social constituencies they were to represent. Those attending the NECF would be accorded equal status, regardless of the size and organizational status of the groups they belonged to. Furthermore, the NECF would have no specific, recognized mandate – informal or legal- to negotiate and enforce decisions in conjunction with the government. ...the NECF would only act as an advisory body.

Combined Harare Residents Association

Mission Statement: To represent and support all residents of Harare by advocating for effective, transparent and affordable municipal and other services and quality facilities on a professional, non partisan basis.

Vision: To be an effective watchdog and vehicle for good governance in Harare and a model for advocacy

The ZCTU refused to join the NECF because of the simmering anger on the streets and the fact that the NECF was clearly a bureaucratic maneuver. The labor body instead called for a democratic and inclusive process and a clearer mandate.

Strike activity continued and intensified throughout 1998. On the 3rd and 4th of March the nation came to a standstill as people stayed home in response to the ZCTU's call for a two-day general strike. A nationwide consultation by the ZCTU through labor forums overwhelmingly showed that people were in favor of indefinite mass action.

The popular struggles of the late 1990s forced the state to make a partial withdrawal from structural adjustment, but not in time to win back the loyalty of the populace. As a survival strategy the government was forced to reintroduce price controls and subsidies and to step up the process of acquiring white owned commercial farms for land redistribution. At the same time the state became blatantly more repressive in order to contain the rising mass opposition. The brutality and impunity exhibited by the army and police in food riots was to intensify and become even more systematic. In November 1999, the government formally banned stayaways using the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act.

The Birth of The Pro-democracy Movement

By the close of the decade the workers' actions had transcended the original economic demands to encompass political demands. Sectoral struggles became generalized into a political struggle for the control of the state led by organized labor but involving a cross-section of stakeholders including the student movement, industrial workers, farm workers, academics, and non-governmental organizations. The coming together of all these forces initially led to the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and eventually the Movement for Democratic Change. A key moment was February 1999, when ZCTU, now clearly championing a political agenda convened the All Working People's Convention that became the embryo for the formation of the MDC a few months later. As the then ZCTU Secretary General, Morgan Tsvangirai, expressed it:

(ZIMCODD)

Objectives

- To raise the level of economic literacy among ZIMCODD members to include views and participation of grassroots and marginalized communities;
- To facilitate research, lobbying and advocacy in order to raise the level of economic literacy on issues of debt, trade and sustainable development;
- To formulate credible and sustainable economic and social policy alternatives;
- To develop a national coalition and facilitate the building of a vibrant movement for social and economic justice.

Vision: Sustainable socio-economic justice in Zimbabwe through a vibrant people based movement.

Mission Statement: To develop capacities of Zimbabwean People to redress the debt burden and unjust trade practices, building and promoting alternatives to the neoliberal agenda.

Sectors: Advocacy; Civil Activism; Human Rights; Social & Economic Justice

There is no longer any need for people to continue skirting the root cause of our economic problems. Zimbabweans must now resolve the question of national governance. When those who have been put in power show such arrogance and behave as if nothing can be done to them, then it is perhaps time for the people to find other means out of these problems. What we are crying about now is the issue of governance, how national affairs are being conducted – corruption, the land issue, public tenders, involvement in foreign wars and amendments to the constitution. Until we address these, I doubt we are going anywhere.

The convention, which brought together stakeholders from civic groups across the nation, mandated the ZCTU to spearhead the formation of an opposition political party, resolving that:

National policies should prioritize the mobilization and organization of resources to meet people's basic needs for food security, shelter, clean water, health and education; the equitable distribution of resources such as land, skills, capital and technology for production and industri-

alization strategies that are based on building and using the capabilities of the people for production... The country should aim to reduce its dependency on foreign loans and the loss of sovereignty that this bring. The right to a minimum standard of health inputs (food, water, shelter) and health care must be defined and entrenched in the constitution, guaranteed and funded on an equitable basis by the state through its mobilization of national resources. The Convention thus resolved to take these issues to the people across the country, to mobilize them towards the working people's agenda, and to implement a vigorous and democratic political movement for change.

The MDC was therefore formed as a special project of Zimbabwe's civil society to seek a political solution to what had started as an economic crisis. As a consequence there was initially no critical distance between the party and civil society and even now the line is still blurred.

Whereas at independence, human rights, good governance, rule of law and democracy were not on the agenda of Zimbabwe's civil society, they are now the main focus today. From 2000 onwards there has been an explosion of civic groups focusing on these matters.

Today Zimbabwe is at a critical stage. The opposition party that has been the project of civil society for the last seven years is on the verge of taking state power having won a majority in parliament and most likely set to win the presidential election. The very real possibility of an exodus from civil society to join the new state bureaucracy creates new challenges on how civil society can continue playing a watchdog role to keep the state in check.

Some key groups that Africa Action and TransAfrica Forum met in consultation during the election time:

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition	National Constitutional Assembly
Combined Harare Residents Association	Zimbabwe Elections Support Network
Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development
Student Solidarity Trust	Women of Zimbabwe Arise
Zimbabwe Social Forum	National Alliance of NGOs
Bulawayo Agenda	National Youth Development Trust
Christian Alliance and the Save Zimbabwe Campaign	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
Center for Peace Initiatives in Africa	Matabeleland Empowerment Services Association
Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association	Zimbabwe Human Rights Campaign

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition

Vision

To bring about democratic change in Zimbabwe.

Mission Statement

- To enhance civil society's capacity to deal with the socio-economic and political crises through encouraging well coordinated strategic planning and action.
- To promote freedom and democratic values through encouraging dialogue, tolerance and the shaping of ideas by Zimbabweans from all walks of life.

Objectives

- To respond in a timely manner to government positions regarding various key policy areas;
- To share ideas and information for use by CSOs in the articulation of credible, alternative and practical views;
- To ensure the rapid development of democratic governance in Zimbabwe;
- To amplify the collective voice of civil society in Zimbabwe;
- To cover issues which would otherwise not fall within the mandate of the major CSOs;
- To highlight, debate, research and propose solutions to the multi-layered national crisis. Key concerns of the Coalition include:

Human rights, political freedom, women's rights, electoral reform, constitutional reform, demilitarization and depoliticisation of state institutions, repeal of repressive legislation (e.g. POSA, AIPAA, Broadcasting Act) corruption, restoration of peace economic development land reform.

National Constitutional Assembly (NCA)

Vision of NCA

The vision of the NCA is a peaceful, prosperous, democratic and united country founded on human dignity and social justice

Mission/Goal

- The goal of the NCA is for Zimbabwe to have a new, democratic and people driven constitution. To achieve this goal, the NCA seeks to:
- Initiate and engage in a process of enlightening the general public on the current constitution of Zimbabwe;
- Identify shortcomings of the current constitution and organise debate on possible constitutional reform;
- Facilitate constitutional debates in a way which allows broad-based participation;
- Subject the constitution-making process in Zimbabwe to popular scrutiny with a view to entrenching the principle that constitutions are made by and for the people;
- Promote, discuss and debate questions of good governance in Zimbabwe;
- Promote, discuss and debate important economic, political and social issues in Zimbabwe;
- Promote debate and fight to establish a tolerant, just, and transparent political order in Zimbabwe; and
- Generally encourage a culture of popular participation in decision making.

What is The Purpose of a New, Democratic and People-driven Constitution?

- The NCA does not just desire a new constitution for its own sake. A democratic constitution will achieve the vision of the NCA. A democratic constitution is the basis of good governance and leads to social and economic development.

Thus a Democratic Constitution Leads to:

- Free and fair elections;
- Observance of and respect for fundamental human rights;
- Respect for the rule of law;
- Accountable and responsive government;
- Sound economic management and employment creation;
- Respect of human rights;
- Access to good education and health facilities; and
- Equitable wealth creation and redistribution.



MULTIPLE CRISES INTERSECT: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

Zimbabwe today is in deep crisis. The country, once the agricultural breadbasket of the region, has significant potential, with great mineral wealth, a developed manufacturing sector, as well as prime agricultural land. While international political opinion is largely focused on issues of governance and human rights, the scope of Zimbabwe's problems are complex and multifaceted, and include social as well as economic factors.

Many political economists identify the country's unresolved structural weaknesses and systemic inequality built into the apartheid-like system constructed by the Rhodesian settlers as the primary root cause. Others, for example South African-based scholar, Patrick Bond, point to the related crises of Rhodesia's "over-consumption" of the early 1970s. Whatever the beginning, analysts agree that at independence the country's economy was skewed. For example:

- The entire national economy was designed to support the maintenance and enrichment of a small white minority. At independence fewer than 7,000 white farmers each owned, on average, more than 100 times the land available to the average African peasant. "These farmers for decades had benefited from government agricultural subsidies and investments in the farming sector;
- Industry, mining and the manufacturing sector were in the hands of multinational corporations and the white settler minority;
- The majority of the population had been systematically excluded from the pool of skilled labor as well as from the formal economy through a variety of legal and abusive measures.

Economic distortions continue today. Mining, manufacturing, and most industries remain in the hands of external corporations, the white minority, or a small African elite. In addition, South African businesses are taking advantage of Zimbabwe's weaker national economy to begin to establish a foothold in the country.

Many civil society analysts point to Zimbabwe's Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP), which began in 1990, as the source of the current economic difficulties.

The economic crisis has been worsened by rampant corruption and outright mismanagement. Despite Zimbabwe's economic progress of the 1980s, during which the economy grew at 4 percent from 1986–1990, the country accumulated massive debt, as well as incurring high defense costs resulting from apartheid South Africa's war of regional destabilization. ESAP, as has been the case in many other countries, "undermined the country's industrial base." The imposition of tariffs on manufacturing inputs, trade liberalization (which exposed manufacturing companies to foreign competition), decreasing productivity, privatization, imposition of user fees for education and health, and a decline in wages and employment were the main outcomes of the program. ESAP's "overall impact was deindustrializing, with foreign competition increasing dramatically," and a weakened economy. Also, ESAP resulted in a reversal of the gains made during the first decade of independence in building people-oriented social service delivery systems. Stringent public sector budget cuts as part of structural adjustment negatively impacted on education, healthcare and other social services. Furthermore, the government's decision to provide a Z4.5Bn financial payout to militant war veterans in 1997 further increased the budget deficit and inflation. Moreover the military costs of war in the DRC (1998 - 2003), and a steep decline in agricultural production following land redistribution have added to the country's economic woes.

Today, the country is in the midst of economic collapse. Unemployment in the formal sector stands at 80 percent. Two years ago, in 2006, the government estimated an annual inflation rate of 1,016 percent and in May 2007 it was pegged at 4,530 percent. Currently, official estimates put inflation levels at 1,000,000 percent, the highest in the world. "Overall GDP growth has cumulatively declined by 33.5 percent between 2000 and 2006 and the economy experienced further decline by -1.1 percent in 2007. "Fuel is "acutely scarce," electricity erratic, and external debt "continues to mount" and "the country has witnessed a deterioration of all major infrastructures."

There have been different postulations on the factors fuelling inflation. On one hand, the government has charged that the self-serving activities of the private sector, and the "de facto" sanctions of the international community which have reduced foreign investment, foreign

assistance and balance of payment assistance, are major contributors to the current economic crisis. The private sector, on the other hand, has largely blamed excess government deficit financing through domestic borrowing, massive corruption and policy inconsistencies-- including inappropriate pricing systems-- as the main drivers of inflation.

In addition to generalized food insecurity, the ruling party has used food as a political weapon. For example, in many rural areas food distribution and access to grains from the state-run marketing boards has been limited to those communities supportive of ZANU-PF.

In late 2007 representatives of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the National Security Agency, and the International Monetary Fund emphatically stated that Zimbabwe's economic isolation will continue until there is a political transition in the country.

Zimbabwe government policies aimed at addressing the situation have been blamed for exacerbating the situation. For most people, the economy is the single biggest concern.



Effie Ncube, Matabeleland Empowerment Services Association

This is our country and we need to rescue it from the jaws of collapse....We need change, but much more than what we are seeing. We need change in the political culture. We need to create an environment where people can debate and the best solutions will emerge from that debate.

We are deeply disappointed with the way that the West is dealing with poverty in Africa. Institutions that have been created to help have actually disabled Africa. The World Trade Organization, the World Bank, so many institutions have disabled the ability of Africans to address issues of poverty. This is what we are seeing today, without taking anything away from the destructive nature of Mugabe's policies



Amai Tendai*

...We can't survive. How can we survive with nothing. No income. No work. No health care. No education. We are hungry.

I am disabled and I receive 200 million Zimbabwe dollars per month. My rent is 150 million. What can I do with 50 million a month when one kg of meat costs 150 million?

I supported ZANU-PF from 1980 because they delivered our independence. I have changed because of my children. They can't get jobs, we can't get medication, even in the hospital. There is nothing in the supermarket, no basic commodities. They are only available in the streets,

"Living by the Grace of God" Hunger in Rural Matabeleland

Matabeleland in western Zimbabwe and consisted of barley, beans, and cooking oil. When the food runs out, residents are not sure what they will do. World Vision staff say that there will be no more food deliveries.

Children are no longer going to school; there is no transport, and no food. "We are living by the grace of God." For these women, the March 29 elections represented an opportunity for change. These rural residents are looking for a government that will stabilize the economy, create employment for them so that they can generate income. They also want irrigation and inputs for agricultural projects.

Matabeleland, a stronghold for Zimbabwe's political opposition, and home for many of the 20 percent of the country's isiNdebele speakers, has been marginalized since the independence period. In addition to discrimination, the area has been affected by chronic food shortages, and the country's rampant inflation. According to residents ZANU-PF officials also withhold food to non-party members.

To generate some income the women grow what they can on their small plots, make curios for tourists, and sell amarula fruit. But with the crash of Zimbabwe's tourism industry there are no tourists and no customers for their goods. For these women the elections represented hope.

Zimbabwe, like most of Southern Africa, has been hard hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The UNAIDS estimates that 15 percent of the population is affected; women and young girls are twice as affected. Life expectancy has fallen to 37 for men and 34 for women. Only 8 percent of the population is receiving antiretroviral drugs.

Additionally, the worsening economic and political crises have resulted in the migration of large numbers. Accurate migration figures are unavailable, however the most frequently used estimates are that approximately 3 million Zimbabweans have left the country, with an estimated 1 million in the UK, and an estimated 2 million in Southern Africa. Additionally, Zimbabweans have migrated to other Commonwealth countries, notably New Zealand and Australia. Migrants are generally composed of the most productive sector and frequently the most educated of the country.

It should be noted that while migration does represent a loss of productive capacity, remittances provide an important source of economic support.



Activist from Bulawayo

"Visit any family in Bulawayo and they will tell you of family members that have left for South Africa...Look at communities and you will see old people and children because all the youth have left for South Africa."

THE ELECTORAL ROAD: 'Fraught with Potholes

According to interviewees from civil society organizations and individual Zimbabweans, the conditions for a free and fair election were not met. This position is at variance with the declaration by all the invited observer missions, including SADC and the AU, who passed the election as free and fair. The differences in these verdicts seem to lie in the scope of the observation period. The SADC observer mission based their judgment on the brief window, a matter of weeks prior to the election, when the government of Zimbabwe invited international observers. On the other hand, civic groups interviewed took into consideration past events, sometimes going back more than three decades, that had a bearing on the March 29 elections.

The Candidates

The Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) are the dominant parties. A faction of the MDC led by Arthur Mutambara also fielded candidates. Simba Makoni ran as an independent candidate.

The ZANU-PF message to voters emphasized the close relationship between the opposition and Western nations that would lead to reversals of the land distribution process and the "re-enslavement" of Zimbabweans. The MDC pledged to bring fundamental change to the country's economy and political system. Makoni promised that his victory would end the country's crisis.

Political Activist in Bulawayo

This is the best election in terms of conditions. The electoral and legal frameworks have changed. But the objective political, subjective environment has not. The international standards for a democratic election have not been met.

Substantially Improved Conditions

While it is true that Zimbabwe's March 29 elections were held under conditions substantially improved from previous elections, significant obstacles still hindered free participation. On the positive side, what was most notable is the remarkable peace that characterized the campaigning period and voting day. Unlike previous elections marred by violence and fatalities, this time only very isolated cases were reported, none of which was fatal. As a manifestation of this peace, opposition activists freely wore identifying T-shirts in areas that previously were no go areas and opposition candidates were able to campaign unhindered. Another significant improvement was in the opening up of state media to the opposition. Despite the disproportionate coverage accorded to ZANU-PF, opposition formations had greatly increased access to state radio, television and print media compared to previous elections. Also important were the amendments to media and security laws that resulted from the SADC dialogue between ZANU-PF and the MDC. These amendments combined with changes to the electoral act greatly leveled the playing field.

Ethel, a candidate for local election in Matabeleland, indicated that she felt "comfortable" and that she had not seen violence. Her view was that people in her area [The Matapos Region] were eager to vote and that the major challenge was that rural people would have to travel up to 10 kilometers to reach a polling station. Ethel, like many others, felt that there would be no problem counting the votes at the local level, but was not sure about the presidential vote.

"The most frequent comment from the residents as well as others: "Will the old man" rig the election, will the count be fair? No one expects the crudeness of what some here call 'Nigerian style elections' but identify slightly more sophisticated problems."

ZIMCODD, calling the election "a vote to restore dignity," noted that the elections had a tolerance level that did not exist in 2002, although cases of harassment in the rural areas continued. According to ZIMCODD, the SADC talks had resulted in a relaxation of some laws. However, the near collapse of the economy posed the most significant threat to the ruling party. Even as civic groups, the opposition and individuals acknowledged the vastly improved electoral environment, they raised many concerns about the overall process. These included:

1. Pre-election Repression

The year before Zimbabwe's election was marked by heightened repression. On March 12, 2007, the police crushed an opposition and civil society organized event in the working class township of Highfield, brutally assaulting Morgan Tsvangirai and his fellow colleagues. The police killed one activist and dozens were arrested. After this, the police practically banned MDC rallies denying the party an opportunity to build its constituency. For sometime the opposition was banned from marches when ZANU-PF sympathizers were allowed to march freely and canvas

support. It was after these brutal attacks that SADC initiated a mediation process led by South African President Thabo Mbeki. Critics insist that this period of repression impacted negatively on the opposition's capacity thereby undermining the freeness of the election.

2. Partisan Security Forces

Civil society actors did not have confidence that the security forces would discharge their duties in the professional manner necessary to create a free and fair environment. Of major concern was the history of partisan actions in favor of the ruling party by the Zimbabwe Republic Police, Zimbabwe National Army, Central Intelligence Organization and the Zimbabwe Prison Services. These fears led the opposition and allied civic groups to oppose the presence of police inside polling stations and to reject the standing provision that allowed police to assist illiterate and disabled voters in the booth. Under the SADC dialogue, ZANU-PF and the MDC agreed that the police were not allowed inside the polling station, however President Mugabe used the Presidential Emergency Powers Act to change this at the last minute causing uproar from civil society.

Zimbabwe's security forces have in the past been associated with brutal acts such as the 2005 Clean Up Campaign, "Operation Murambatsvina," during which over 700,000 people were forcibly removed from their informal dwellings. As such the presence of these government forces does not inspire security and confidence in the opposition.

These fears were confirmed when a few days before the election the generals commanding the Zimbabwe National Army, the Zimbabwe Prison Services and the Zimbabwe Republic Police declared that they will not salute anyone other than Mugabe and ordered forces under their command to vote for ZANU-PF.

Civil society interpreted these remarks as coup threats and attempts to spread fear and intimidation that directly curtailed democratic space.

3. Biased State Media

Zimbabwe has one TV and radio broadcaster that is state owned. The major newspapers are likewise government controlled. While opposition coverage in state media increased, media bias in favor of ZANU-PF was a deep concern. State media invariably gave ZANU-PF favorable coverage whereas the opposition was often abused and misrepresented as puppets of the West bent on giving land back to white farmers and making Zimbabwe a British colony again.

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network documented several major problems, including:

- Threatening statements by ZANU-PF military and prison officials, who vowed not to serve anyone but Robert Mugabe,
- Delays in publishing the official voter registration rolls,
- The printing of almost 9 million ballots for 5 million registered voters,
- The decision to post police officers at every polling station, as well as
- Large number of postal ballots – reportedly 600,000 for an estimated 30,000 civil servants engaged in national duty.

For example, prior to the elections the Christian Alliance/Save Zimbabwe Coalition in an open letter to the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings Company expressed concern over news coverage. The letter states:

"You covered about eight rallies by the ZANU PF, one by the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai, none by the MDC led by Arthur Mutambara and none by Simba Makoni....Your news coverage of the campaigns is biased, and we note the derogatory remarks of your reporters whenever they cover other political parties that are not ZANU PF."

In addition, interviewees spoke of the intimidating impact of "hate speech", for example the characterization of Simba Makoni as a prostitute.



4. Vote Buying

In the run-up to the elections President Mugabe and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe gave many handouts to villagers and resettled farmers, including tractors, seed, ploughs, cattle and fuel. The timing of these handouts just before the election raised concern of vote buying

5. Restrictions on Voter Education and Registration

Zimbabwe law does not allow independent organizations to conduct voter education without special clearance by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. The delays by ZEC in clearing the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network – the umbrella body of civil society on elections – to do voter education raised concerns that voters were denied the information they needed to participate in the election.

Inaccurate voter registration rolls and unclear voter registration processes also presented challenges. One young person said:



Morgan Tsvangirai

I think that most people in my age range, which is 18-25 years, were unable to vote. I and three of my friends tried to register but it was too much. First they said write a letter to yourself, mail it, and then bring that in to show that you live in the Ward. Then they said bring in an affidavit from your parents saying that you live at that address. It was just too much. I don't think they wanted to let young people vote because they knew that we would vote for the opposition.

One interviewee commented that "what you don't see and can't prove" is the problem. And, that the problems with voter rolls, postal votes, and extra ballots were all evidence of "smart manipulation." "Zimbabweans are risk-averse, and are beyond machetes. This is not Kenya."

6. State Of The Voters Roll

Civil society was concerned by the Zimbabwe Election Commission's (ZEC) failure to avail electronic copies of the voters roll and the large fee

charged for the hard copies that were provided only a few days before the election. The presence of dead people on the rolls and the absence of duly registered people also worried civic groups.

7. The Legacy of Violence

Politics in Zimbabwe has long been characterized by violence. The colonial state survived through violence and repression; mobilization during the anti-colonial struggle was often through coercion. The post-independent state retained coercion as a tool to achieve political ends, becoming notorious for disappearing political opponents. This legacy of violence is etched on people's minds and a lot of them consider political participation a risk.

8. Fear Factor

Fear remains a determinant in Zimbabwe's politics particularly in rural areas where a significant number of people believe that if ZANU-PF loses there will be war in Zimbabwe. Reports received during the course of this observation mission indicate that there were elements of ZANU-PF supporters that deliberately spread these threats of war to intimidate people into voting a certain way.

In addition to the psychological impact of fear, several repressive laws that limit freedom of expression, organizing, and human rights activity remained on the books. These laws include: Public Order and Security Act (POSA), Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), and the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA).

Simbarashe "Simba" Makoni is a Zimbabwean politician and the former Minister of Finance and Economic Development from 2000 to 2002.

During the Second Chimurenga years Makoni trained as a chemist in the UK and acted as the ZANU representative to Europe.

He earned his B.Sc. at Leeds University and a Ph.D. at Leicester Polytechnic in medicinal chemistry.

At Independence, Makoni was appointed Deputy Minister of Agriculture. From 1981-1983, he was the Minister of Industry and Energy Development. He was then elected as the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), serving in that post for ten years.

From 1994 to 1997 he was also the Managing Director of Zimbabwe Newspapers. He was appointed Minister of Finance in 2000. During "the Economic Change" he supported the devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar in contradiction to the rest of the ZANU-PF and, as a result, was removed from his office.

Until he announced his intent to run for president, as an independent in 2008 Makoni was a member of the ZANU-PF Politburo and the party's Deputy Secretary of Economic Affairs.

9. Diaspora Vote

At least 3 million Zimbabweans of voting age are estimated to have left the country for the Diaspora as a result of the crisis. Civic groups and the opposition argued that for the vote to be reflective of the preference of all Zimbabweans the Diaspora must be allowed to vote. ZANU-PF resisted this and in the end the Diaspora did not vote. Critics assert that disenfranchisement of the Diaspora was reflected in low voter turnout.



10. Lack of Confidence In Observers

Civic groups were concerned that the Zimbabwe government only invited friendly observers who could not be counted on to observe the election impartially and if necessary raise difficult questions with the government of Zimbabwe. Angola, which led the SADC observer delegation has not had an election in 18 years, prompting critics to question the experience and capacity of the mission.



MARCH 29: ELECTION DAY and the AFTERMATH

Unprecedented anticipation characterized the run-up to voting day on March 29. It was as if a sudden wave swept through the country awakening everyone's political interest. Conversations everywhere centered on the election with many people investing their hope for a different reality in the election. The message everywhere seemed to be 'we cannot take it anymore – we want change.' People were excited by the prospect of voting for change and by the possibility that things could actually change. A calm electoral environment and the hard voter education work conducted by civic organizations such as ZESN boosted people's confidence that their participation actually mattered. Evidence of a turning tide in the rural areas boosted the confidence of urban opposition supporters.

A veteran trade unionist we spoke to, Vimbai Zemura, described March 29 as "Independence Day", explaining the eagerness to vote as a result of the total collapse of government systems. "People are tired. Within the regime, the implementers [of policy] are tired." "Systems have collapsed and everyone is ready for change". The "independence day" phrase was articulated by others throughout Election Day.

A majority of the civic groups and individuals with whom we spoke expressed optimism that on March 29, 'things will change', citing the improved electoral environment, the 'awakening' of the electorate, and the mobilizing factor of the collapsed economy. In addition, the optimism derived from evidence of fracturing within ZANU-PF. While rumors of factionalism within the ruling party abound, Simba Makoni's candidacy was the first real evidence of a major fissure within ZANU-PF. Makoni is a former Finance Minister and Politburo member.

However, several civil society actors were less optimistic. Xolani Zitha, Coordinator of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, urged caution noting that the "optimism is not balanced with an elections infrastructure that is enabling." Coalition staff pointed out that the environment was

tipped strongly towards electoral rigging. In addition, they noted that key laws, for example the President's Emergency Powers Act, as well as the lingering effect of state violence, which has historically targeted opposition and human rights activists, lives in peoples' memories and impacts how and if they vote.

A Community-based Activist Noted:

"Judging by history and constitutional laws, no one should be optimistic. This government will not allow an MDC win. It will do so using the constitutional framework. There is no independence... The Zimbabwean dictatorship is sophisticated... they are masters of deception."

Polls opened to long lines; at some stations people had camped out or begun queuing as early as 4:00 am. Analysts had predicted a logistical nightmare, suggesting that ZEC was ill prepared to run an unprecedented 4 in 1 election, [Presidential, House of Assembly, Senate, and Ward or local levels] however this was not the case as in many places queues had disappeared by 3:00 pm.

Perhaps the biggest Election Day surprise was that despite the high level of optimism, the turnout was lower than expected -- approximately 42 percent. Most observers watching the mood of the country had expected a high turnout. A possible explanation is the exodus of more than 3 million Zimbabweans who left in the last decade and did not return to vote. Also, a significant number of those who talked about change were not registered voters: for many the awakening happened when voter registration had already closed.

The police presence was noticeable, at least four officers at each polling station. At several stations voters complained about late starts and slow proceedings. We received no reports of people unable to vote once their registration was verified. In one reported case ballot papers ran out and officials had to suspend voting awaiting delivery of ballots from Harare.

As projected, irregularities in the voters roll did present problems:

I registered to vote in Highfield. But when I went to vote, I was told that my registration was in Chisipiti. It cost me 100 million Zimbabwe dollars to travel there in order to vote., This was a hardship because I am unemployed.

Some confusion arose from the redrawing of constituency boundaries that took place three months before the election, as some voters were left not knowing where they belonged. The delimitation exercise, contested by the opposition on the grounds that it was done using a grossly flawed voters roll that carried ghost voters, split and merged old constituencies in a way that was not very clear. The opposition argued that the constituency boundaries were drawn to favor ZANU- PF citing cases in which some urban constituencies were 'diluted' by merging with peri-urban and rural constituencies, and also the fact that there was a disproportionately high number of constituencies in rural areas that were considered ZANU-PF strongholds.

The requirement for voting to be ward based and the late publication of polling stations worsened the problem as many voters did not know their exact polling station or had to travel far to get to it.

In total, there were 9,400 polling stations designated throughout the country. Of these the independent elections monitoring group ZESN, was able to deploy observers to 8,000. Both MDC and ZANU-PF representatives were present at nearly all of the polling stations.

In many places, vote counting commenced immediately after the polls closed and was conducted in the presence of party agents and observers. Within 24 hours, the results for the majority of constituencies were publically posted near polling stations as required by the amended Electoral Act. This greatly enhanced the transparency of the process as it enabled contesting parties and observers to independently collect and collate results. Winners for the House of Assembly elections were declared at constituency command centers as soon as results were known.

The immediate aftermath of the election was marked by anxious quietness as people awaited the official announcement of the results. As described by Comrade Fatso, a prominent poet, musician and grassroots activist:

Today is peaceful. Calm. Like an anesthetized patient having her stomach slit open. We drove from the elite suburbs of Borrowdale to the peopled townships of Highfields. The queues of the morning had tired into afternoon strolls into empty polling stations. All over this expectant, pregnant town

there was a feeling of calm. 'Peace'. The vote happened. We went through the motions.

But it's a tense peace. Inside each polling station is an agent of oppression - a police officer. Youth militia parade townships 'peacefully'. As I write on the calm street outside the Book Cafe there are twenty police officers sitting menacingly underneath a tree. Waiting. Yes, there is peace. As long as you vote and shut up. As long as you don't disturb this fragile shack they have painted 'peace'. Peace is not the absence of war. Peace can also be the presence of rigging.

This is where we stand today. In a peaceful election where my comrade, Godobori, registered to vote in the town of Chitungwiza, had to go to different polling stations in various suburbs of the next door town of Harare after he had been 'moved' on the voters roll. He finally voted at 6:15pm. It is a calm election of ghost voters and living human beings who are dead to the voters roll.

In what appeared to be a carefully choreographed sequence the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC) slowly and selectively released the results starting with the House of Assembly, then Senate and finally, Presidential. This delay severely undermined the credibility of the election process and stocked tensions across the country. The aftermath also exposed the weakness of Zimbabwe's democratic process as it became clear that ZEC was taking instructions from ZANU-PF, instead of acting independently.

Counting the Votes

The Parliamentary Elections – While the outcome of the presidential elections have overshadowed the results of the parliamentary elections, 210 members to the House of Assembly and 93 seats in the Senate were also elected.

The official results for the House of Assembly showed MDC's Tsvangirai faction with 99 seats, ZANU-PF with 97 seats, MDC's Mutambara faction with nine seats, and one independent, Jonathan Moyo. Final Senate results were released on April 5, showing the combined MDC and ZANU-PF with 30 seats each.

On April 13, the Electoral Commission announced that there would be a full recount of both parliamentary and presidential votes in 23 constituencies on April 19 in the presence of party representatives and electoral observers.

By April 18, seven ZEC officials had been arrested and charged with manipulating results. Dianne Kohbler-Barnard, a South African Member of Parliament and SADC observer in the election, said on April 21 that the recount was "fatally flawed"; and, that she had seen evidence of ballot box tampering.

The recount did not change the seat distribution.

The Presidential Elections – On Sunday, March 30 opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai announced victory at the polls, confident that the results of the early tabulations based upon the results publically posted near each station. For example, also on March 30 TransAfrica staff visited Harare's Mount Pleasant Ward 7, which posted the following results: Tsvangirai-342, Makoni-79, and Mugabe-63. The ward level counting and observer access to the numbers provided the basis for the MDC victory claims.

The ZEC released the results of the presidential election on May 2.



THE WAY FORWARD

At present, Zimbabwe is at a critical juncture. The results from the presidential vote were announced on May 2, 2008, a month after the elections. They show Morgan Tsvangirai in the lead with 47.9 percent, Robert Mugabe with 43.2 percent, and Simba Makoni with 8.3 percent. As this report goes to press, the next steps are unclear. The election law requires a run-off between the leading candidates within 21 days. MDC leadership has announced that they will participate in the runoff, but that it must be scheduled within the 21 day timeframe. A spokesperson for the Zimbabwe Election Commission estimates, however, that it will need at least six months to a year to prepare for a runoff.

Since our return to the U.S., the reports of harassment, intimidation, and brutal assaults on independent election observers and supporters of the opposition increase daily. On May 3 the MDC announced the murders of 20 MDC supporters. On May 4, the South African-based Cape Argus newspaper reported: "There are now 7,000 casualties of the rapidly worsening violence in Zimbabwe as the military's campaign against the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opposition party [heats] up, according to doctors treating the injured." The article states further that a 14-month old child was admitted to a Harare hospital after having been beaten unconscious on her mother's back "in an attack by ZANU-PF youths and men..."

In addition, stories of worsening food insecurity and a dramatic rise in refugees crossing Zimbabwe's borders into Mozambique, Botswana, and South Africa also mount.

Independent observers and media report that one formal refugee camp (Dukwe Refugee Camp near the Namibian border) in Botswana for Zimbabweans fleeing the economic crisis is growing and

new informal camps are springing up. Morgan Tsvangirai has been granted temporary asylum in Botswana after receiving threats from the security forces in Zimbabwe.

Several of the individuals we interviewed are now being sought by the police and have gone into hiding, including Rindai Chipfunde, Executive Director of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN). News stories and analysis from the Washington, D.C.-based Washington Post newspaper, as well Southern African media, assert that the heads of the security forces, such as Army General Constantine Chiwenga, have become the primary decision makers in Zimbabwe.

One interviewee wrote in a follow-up e-mail on April 26:

... the situation has deteriorated further, Mugabe is busy preparing for re-run and is now using "the reign of terror" in the rural areas. People are being beaten up and brutalized, some have their homes burnt and as I speak there has been a refugee camp that has been set up in the neighboring Botswana.

We have come together as civil society leaders and Churches and we are launching a campaign for peace that entails within it several strategies that include safety measures and how to mitigate the situation. The war Veterans have recently had their pension allowances reviewed upwards to Z\$ 9

billion while the civil servant's salaries remain at 3 billion, this is meant to motivate them to work even harder, killing maiming, brutalizing the opposition supporters, so that in the event of a re-run, he may win. We are currently mobilizing resources and we have set up a command center to gather information and call upon relevant organizations to act on it depending on the nature of the problem. We are now on guard 24-7.

As this goes to print, 100,000 migrants in South Africa, mostly Zimbabweans, have been displaced as a result of xenophobic violence. Almost 50 migrants have been killed. The attacks thrust into sharp relief the potential for regional destabilization posed by Zimbabwe's economic refugees who are migrating into countries that have not resolved their own economic underdevelopment.

For many reasons, the election, whose strategic purpose was to resolve Zimbabwe's political crisis, has not achieved that result. Some of the factors contributing to the election's failure are outlined throughout this report. Other factors to be explored include state repression, the MDC's own internal weaknesses, as well as the strategic policy errors of the U.S. and the U.K.

Given the current level of violence and instability there seems to be only one approach that might possibly lead to a peaceful and just solution in Zimbabwe: a transitional government. A multi-year transitional arrangement would allow government and stakeholders to draft a new constitution, work towards the democratization and professionalization of government structures, and create an environment that would be conducive not only for free and fair elections but also allow for unhindered transfer of power.

Of the various scenarios with which TransAfrica Forum and Africa Action are familiar, none except negotiations leading toward a transitional government seem viable. The current conditions on the ground make a runoff, even if legally required, extremely difficult. A government of national unity seems equally untenable given the extreme polarization in the country as well as the checkered success of such arrangements. According to a ZCTU representative:

...ZANU-PF is incapable of compromise. Negotiation or compromise is not with the organization.



Even before the official results were released, the U.S. Department of State announced that the MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai had won and that President Mugabe should step aside. ZESN's independent projections also showed the MDC with more votes in the presidential election and a parliamentary majority. However, both official and unofficial results show that neither candidate received the required majority.

The willingness of the U.S. to call a victor in a contested election is perhaps the clearest recent example of U.S. government error. Given that it does not appear that MDC achieved the required majority, it was, at best, improper for the U.S. Department of State to make a declaration of their victory. By some assessments the pronouncement seems irresponsible given the volatility of the situation. The MDC leader and supporters may feel that their case is bolstered by such a demonstration of support from the U.S. but in fact their position is compromised if it appears that they rely on the perceived might of the U.S. to determine the outcome of their country's elections.

This perception is not only shared by **TransAfrica Forum** and **Africa Action**. On several occasions human rights activists conveyed to members of our delegation that public commentary from the United States has not only harmed relations in the region, but has also undermined the human rights community in Zimbabwe. African leaders find themselves in a similar position: both leaders and human rights workers risk being marginalized and characterized as mouthpieces of Washington, D.C. and having their own credibility questioned.

Whether the country moves to a runoff, a transitional arrangement, or uses another legal framework to move forward, the overarching challenges to constructing a new society remain.

Recommendations

1. The government of Zimbabwe must immediately end its campaign of violence against the political opposition, members of civil society and the human rights community, as well as ordinary citizens.

2. The solution to Zimbabwe's crisis rests with the people of Zimbabwe. However, the international community, including the U.S. and the United Nations, clearly has an important role to play, particularly in ensuring the opening up of democratic space to allow unhindered participation by all Zimbabweans. As such we encourage:

- (a) The U.S. and the international community to support the ongoing mediation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). We believe that for this mediation to be meaningful, the international community must be firm with both ZANU-PF and the MDC to ensure total adherence to the process and abidance by its outcomes.
- (b) The U.S. and the international community to support African-led mediation designed to conceptualize and implement a transitional arrangement.

TransAfrica Forum and **Africa Action** acknowledge the complexity of conceptualizing and implementing a transitional arrangement in an environment characterized by acute political polarization. The challenges include: i) Legal issues – The constitution will have to be amended to accommodate a transitional arrangement. ii) Justice – By its very nature as a negotiated settlement a transitional arrangement, sacrifices aspects of justice and accountability. The growing demands to bring members of President Mugabe's administration to account for human rights abuses and corruption present a challenge to negotiating a political settlement. It is largely because of this justice question that some grassroots sentiments within Zimbabwe are opposed to a transitional authority or government of national unity. iii) Transformation – However the Zimbabwean crisis is defined, it is clear that the solution requires a deep transformation in political culture and economic management. A negotiated settlement by definition limits the extent to which this transformation can go, as the preserved power of the status quo will work to limit systemic changes as much as possible.

These factors make it obvious that a negotiated settlement is a less than perfect solution to Zimbabwe's problems; however, the current power dynamics within the country make it unavoidable. Principally: i) ZANU-PF is still deeply entrenched – while ZANU-PF lost the March 29 election, it remains an entrenched force that cannot be ignored. Fierce loyalty among war veterans and the security forces, including the Army, Police, Secret Service and the Prison Services provides pillars of support that tilt the power balance in the government's favor. In addition, the vote distribution from the March 29 elections gives a hung outcome in which the vote is nearly split in the middle for presidential, parliamentary and Senate elections. ii) The opposition does not seem to be pursuing any other option that can bring democratic pressure to bear on President Mugabe's government. Thus the alternative to a transitional arrangement seems to be ZANU-PF. This situation can only increase the suffering of ordinary people and potentially lead to intense violence, even civil war.



A TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENT

1. While the fine details of any arrangement must be worked out by Zimbabweans themselves, there are important elements that need to be emphasized:

- (a) The transitional arrangement must be time limited, possibly to two years. This is an important difference between a transitional authority and a government of national unity. A transitional authority is a clearly time limited, short term arrangement, whereas a government of national unity is generally a long term arrangement.
- (b) The mandate of the transitional authority must be clearly spelled out from the beginning. The main task must be to create an environment that allows not only for a free and fair election and the end of the transitional arrangement, but also for the unhindered transfer of power to the winning party. Key to this is:
 - (i) A democratic constitution.
 - (ii) Democratization and professionalization of state institutions, most importantly the security forces, the judiciary and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission.
 - (iii) Arresting Zimbabwe's socio-economic collapse, principally stabilizing the Zimbabwe dollar, bringing down inflation, stemming corruption, solving food shortages and restoring industrial and agricultural productivity.

Rationale: Interviewees used various arguments for a negotiated arrangement. Several spoke about the intransigence of the regime: "ZANU-PF will never allow MDC to win" was an oft repeated phrase. Other interviewees spoke about the need for systemic change, particularly the need to democratize all spaces in the society, to create an enabling environment before government could address major problems like the economy. One person said, "It is easier to get rid of ZANU-PF, but it will be more difficult to 'de-Zanufy' the country." Critics identified the need for the country to address the authoritarianism that has become a feature of the society and its political culture. Interviewees indicated discomfort with the unquestioning adherence to authority, the use of ridicule and isolation of those who question, a practice that is found inside civil society as well. Several articulated the need to craft a political climate and culture that is less based on personality and more focused on issues.

2. The international community, in particular the nations of Southern Africa, should provide material and other support for a process of national reconciliation.

Rationale: We visited a fractured country that will require decades to heal. Not only are there the expected divisions between the political parties, economic classes, and ideological tendencies, but differences based on generation, gender, ethnicity, and between those in the country versus those that have left. The MDC platform identifies the need for a reconciliation process based upon the four major human rights violations in the country's history: [insert the list]. Whether this list or another, there is a serious need to facilitate dialogue, as one interviewee expressed it the country needs: "serious good faith dialogue."

3. The international community should continue to encourage and support the actions of civil society both in Zimbabwe and throughout Southern Africa to create a free, democratic and socially just Zimbabwe.

- (a) Civil society must continue to play an important role in Zimbabwe given the critical need for institutions that can referee between the state and the people. Groups need to pay special attention to
 - (i) developing a human rights framework within the country,
 - (ii) building and strengthening systems of accountability,
 - (iii) capacity building for civic groups and strengthening their autonomy.

(b) International groups should continue to prioritize people-to-people solidarity, supporting organic people-driven organizations, particularly those that are working to ensure that Zimbabwe's future economic engagement is based on terms defined by the people. African Americans, in particular, need to show more visible support. As one civil society leader interviewed by this delegation stated in March, "when we see African Americans we see only their support for ZANU-PF. African Americans need to be more visible in their solidarity... Stealing an election is beyond color."

Rationale: Whereas at independence human rights, good governance, rule of law and democracy was not on the agenda of Zimbabwe's civil society, this is now the main focus today. The opposition party, which has been the project of civil society for the last seven years is on the verge of taking state power whether in a runoff or following a transitional arrangement. The very real possibility of an exodus from civil society to join the new state bureaucracy creates new challenges on how civil society can continue playing a watchdog role to keep the state in check.

4. The international community should continue to provide support that addresses Zimbabwe and the region's humanitarian needs.

Rationale: The U.S. and the international community should prepare for increased humanitarian needs in the region. Drought, economic instability and political crisis lead many to fear that we may be on the brink of a humanitarian crisis in the region. We encourage continued support for the UN World Food Programme's Protracted Relief for Vulnerable Groups in Zimbabwe, and for refugee support overseen by the appropriate UN agencies. Additionally, we encourage continued support for the HIV/AIDS programs; over 400,000 people need anti-retroviral drugs, yet only 60,000 receive the drugs for free.

Additionally, millions of Zimbabweans have already crossed borders and will continue to do so as the situation in their country spirals downward. We encourage the U.S. Department of State to direct its Ambassador to the United Nations to work with the appropriate agencies and relevant missions to ensure that Zimbabwe's refugees in the region are assisted and protected in light of the recent violence in South Africa, given the finite resources of those nations.

5. Zimbabwe has the potential to be the breadbasket for the region. The country deserves a plan for economic reconstruction that breaks both with the current downward spiral of corruption and collapse and with rigid economic formulas imposed by international financial institutions.

Rationale: Every interviewee identified economic reconstruction and controlling inflation as a main priority. Many groups expressed concern over the "terms of economic re-engagement." Groups were very aware that international packages were going to be made available to the country if the opposition won, but are very concerned about the nature and composition of those packages. Several groups, in various parts of the country, said "the ESAP package destroyed the economy" and therefore worry that the new packages will again require a strict adherence to neo-liberalism. ZIMCODD highlighted the need for a formal debt audit. They also urged the international debt movement to continue to provide solidarity given the links between debt and poverty.



A Dream Deferred

