

## **The Complexity of Democratic Transition: The Zimbabwe Case, 1999 to 2011**

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### **Abstract**

*The road to democratic development in Zimbabwe post 2000 was bumpy and thorny. All the elections held since 2000 were marred by violence, intimidation and killings. Zimbabwe faces many challenges towards its democratic governance, namely institutionalised political violence, blocked constitutionalism, lack of public accountability and transparency; and absence of the rule of law. This paper argues that Zimbabwe must address the following before any future elections, namely, creation of a social, political and economic order that is developmental in mobilising and managing its material, financial and human resources to achieve high economic growth rates, a developmental order which is democratic and respects the human rights of all citizens and a developmental and political order which is socially inclusive.*

**Key Words:** democracy, transition, governance, political violence, elections,

### **Introduction**

Since the formation of a strong opposition political party in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in September 1999, Zimbabwe started a journey towards democratic transition. The road to democratic development in Zimbabwe after 2000 was potholed and thorny. All the elections held since 2000, were marred by violence, intimidation and loss of life.

A number of questions have always overwhelmed many people whenever they read about democracy or the lack of it in Zimbabwe. Why the about turn by the very nationalist leaders who; now rule Zimbabwe, had committed themselves to the general principles of social justice during the struggle for independence and had constantly attacked the injustices and subjugation of colonial rule? Why the abrupt neglect of the democratic virtues adopted at independence? Why is it that once in control the nationalist leaders resorted to perpetual power, modelling themselves after the very colonial despots they vigorously resisted? Why the hasty suspiciousness among leaders and the led and autonomous popular groups? These mouthful questions show that Zimbabwe faced and continue to face many challenges towards its democratic governance. Chief among them include resistance of intransigent senior security officials, human security, corruption, absence of the rule of law, institutionalised politically motivated violence, blocked constitutionalism, lack of accountability and transparency; and powerlessness of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T).

This paper argues that there are three major challenges to democratic governance in Zimbabwe. First is the creation of a social, political and economic order that is developmental in mobilising and managing its material, financial and human resources to achieve high rates of growth and structural change. Secondly a developmental order which is democratic and respects the human rights of all citizens must be established and a developmental and political order which is socially inclusive must be instituted. Democratically elected institutions comprise both the permitting environment for social development and framework of evaluation for judging processes of policy making and implementation. This is vital if one reflects on the Declaration and Programme of Action of the 1995 Social Summit which states that:

“The ultimate goal of social development is to improve and enhance the quality of life of all people. It requires democratic institutions, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, increased and equal economic opportunities, the rule of law, the promotion of respect for cultural diversity and the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and an active involvement of civil society, empowerment and participation are essential for democracy, harmony and social development.....Consequently, the developmental ideologies and capacities of states are an important ingredient in the quest of such developmental, democratic and socially inclusive order.”

Contrary to the above pronouncement by the 1995 Social Summit the agendas and practices of different political and social players in Zimbabwe today do not point towards the establishment of such a state order. This is true given the domination of the widely supported Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai (MDC-T) by The Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) especially judging from the 29 March 2008 harmonised election where the former clinched the lead.

This paper therefore traces and analyses the above issues in the context of challenges curtailing the realisation of democracy in Zimbabwe since 1999.

In this presentation democratic transition means a political process aimed at creating a democratic political system by allowing bargaining and compromises among different political forces. It institutionalises the pluralist structures and procedures so that different political forces can compete over power. Furthermore, it regularises the transfer of power and transformation of political structures.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Carother's (2002:6-10) takes note of worldwide trends in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Huntington's third wave. This led to what he referred to as a universal paradigm of democratic transition, shaped by thinking of O'Donnell and Schmitter. He argues that with the transformations which have occurred, his earlier contributions are no longer conforming to this model because its assumptions are outdated. Moreover, Carothers notes that:

- Any movement away from dictatorial rule is transition towards democracy. He says that often authoritarian regimes become 'resolidified' and mutated into either "feckless pluralism"(positive, but shallow) or "dominant-power politics"(institutions are intact but insufficient and one powerful group dominates);
- The determinative importance of elections is exaggerated. Many elections are marked by violence and intimidation. However, the significance of free and fair elections-whenver they do occur.
- The underlying economic and social conditions are not seen as major factors in the transition, i.e, institutions alone are sufficient. He rejects this.
- It is also assumed that democratic transitions take place against the background of functioning states. He questions this.

In his response O' Donnell (2002:6-12) submitted and concurred with the criticism by Carothers adding that the transition from authoritarian rule is not the same as transition to democracy. O' Donnell and Carothers in fact co-authored a book titled "Transition from Authoritarian Rule: Towards Uncertain Democracies". Moreover, O' Donnell warned about "the illusion about consolidation," but disagrees with Carothers' critique of elections. He admits that fair and free elections are extremely important. On the issue of socio-economic conditions he concurs that they are a critical factor, but does not take them to be preconditions for free and fair elections. What he says is in line with Przewarski (2000)'s argument, namely that affluence makes democracies more durable once achieved: "the mortality rate of poor democracies is higher than that of the rich ones." The above assumptions by Carothers are in tandem with the determinants of democratic transition formulated by Yi Feng and Paul (1999). They argue that the formal dynamic theory of the transition from a developing autocracy to democracy is presented in the context of a heterogeneous agent general equilibrium growth model. The theory reveals that the primary determinants affecting the timing of democratic transitions are per capita income, the distribution of wealth, educational levels and the strength of preferences for political rights and civil liberties.

Table 1<sup>1</sup> illustrates that movement away from dictatorial rule was not necessarily towards democracy, for example, Democratic Republic of Congo, that there was breakdown of law and order and that some authoritarian regimes "resolidified", for example Zimbabwe.

**Table1<sup>1</sup>: Party Systems and Civil and Political Liberties within the SADC Region**

State	Independence Date	Party system 1989			Party System 2002		
		Multi	Single	Other	Multi	Single	Other
Angola	1975	-	Yes	-	1992 <sup>2</sup>	-	-
Botswana	1966	1966	-	-	Yes	-	-
Congo(DR)	1960	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes <sup>3</sup>
Lesotho	1966	-	Yes	-	1998	-	-
Malawi	1964	-	Yes	-	1994	-	-
Mauritius	1968	1968	-	-	Yes	-	-
Mozambique	1975	-	Yes	-	1994	-	-
Namibia	1990	-	-	Yes <sup>4</sup>	1990	-	-
Seychelles	1976	-	Yes	-	1993	-	-
South Africa	1910	-	-	Yes <sup>5</sup>	1994	-	-
Swaziland	1968	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes <sup>6</sup>
Tanzania	1961	-	Yes	-	1995	-	-
Zambia	1964	-	Yes	-	1991	-	-
Zimbabwe	1980	1980	-	-	Yes	-	-
Total	-	3	8	3	12	-	2

## Notes

1. Based on Freedom House (New York); ranging from 1 (most free) to 7 (least free).
2. Multi-party elections were held under United Nations supervision in 1992. But the major opposition, UNITA, rejected the outcome. The civil war continued.
3. The DR Congo became independent in 1960, as the former Belgian Congo, thereafter known as Zaire. Under President Mobuto, Zaire became a one-party state from 1970 to 1997 when rebels led by Laurent Kabila seized power. Civil war prevented the introduction of any form of representative government. Zaire was renamed the DR Congo in 1997.
6. Namibia has an executive monarchy. Former King Sobhuza II issued a royal decree in 1973 banning political parties. This ban was partly lifted. But in 1997 the new monarch, King Mswati III, officially a non-party state, atypical autocracy.
4. Namibia was under South Africa control from 1915 until 1988. The UN established joint control between 1988 and 1990, supervising multi-party elections in 1989 leading to independence in 1990.
5. South Africa was independent since 1910, but a white oligarchy ruled until the National Party and the ANC negotiated a new Constitution (1990-1993) under which first majority elections took place in 1994.

**Sources:** Freedom House (2002 and 1996) The Annual Survey of Political and Civil Liberties, New York; and Esteruysen P. (ed) (1998) Africa A-Z Profiles, Africa Institute, Pretoria

The transitions in Africa have been more abrupt than in Latin America, where an extended period of “liberalisation” or “decomposition” preceded full scale democratisation (O’ Donnell et al: 1986; Stepan: 1988). These authors argued that civilian autocracies were transformed into a number of distinct but overlapping patterns:

1. Reform via a change of government after elections held within a slightly modified existing constitutional framework, as in Cape Verde, Sao-Tome and Principe, Zambia, Burundi.
2. Co-opted transactions, in which existing autocratic regimes have used the benefits of incumbency to “win” contested elections and liberalise their rule as in Senegal, Cote d’Ivoire, Cabon, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Ghana
3. ‘Pacted’ extrications from power by military regimes controlling the agenda or negotiating with chosen civilian intermediaries, as Nigeria, Guinea, Ghana
4. Collapse of authoritarian or military regimes from within, for example, after revolts by junior officers or men in the ranks, sometimes in alliance with civilians, as in Mali or earlier transitions in Sudan, Ghana, Sierra Leone

5. Seizure of the initiative by political forces acting outside the state, remobilising civil society and producing both regime changes and new constitutional dispensations, for example, via national conferences in Benin, Congo, Niger, Mali.
6. Defeat of regimes and their military forces by armed insurrections, culminating in new constitutional orders that may or may not have instituted democracy, as in Uganda under Museveni, Ethiopia, Eritrea.
7. Transitions to democracy inscribed into negotiated long-standing armed conflicts, as part of national reconciliation, as attempted in Namibia, Angola, Mozambique (Hutchful and Bathily, 1998:590-591).

A common thread running through all these transitions has been the collapse of authoritarian regimes or their retreat from power in order to avoid collapse. The precedents set by earlier transitions from military to constitutional rule have scarcely been encouraging due to the intervention by the sacrosanct.

### **Democratic Governance Trends in Zimbabwe**

Different principles about good governance have been put forward by scholars. According to Phirinyane good governance principles are: respect for the rule of law, transparency, openness and accountability to democratic institutions, fairness and equity in dealing with citizens, including mechanisms for consultation and participation, efficient and effective services, clear, transparent and applicable laws and regulations, consistency and coherence in policy formation and high standards of ethical behaviour (2002:103).

For a country to be viewed as good or properly governed it must uphold all of the above good governance principles. The constitution of Zimbabwe provides for the separation of powers among the three arms of the State and Bill of Rights Chapter Three. At the 1991 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), Zimbabwe was praised for having achieved substantial strides in executing the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to which it is a signatory. According to Third World Criteria, Zimbabwe's record in ensuring "basic education, primary health care, safe drinking water and rural development in general was regarded as a model that other African countries were encouraged to emulate" (CPIA, 2005: 15).

These achievements were however short-lived. It was chiefly in the second half of the second decade following Zimbabwe's independence when the current social, economic and political crisis started. Zimbabwe was once "a Third World model of post-colonial development and democracy in Sub-Sahara Africa" (CFPIA, 2005: 16). Since then Zimbabwe was held responsible for bad governance particularly by the West which was concerned about lack of; government accountability, transparency and rule of law, respect of human rights particularly from the late 1990s to the present. Some scholars argue that, the situation increasingly declined following the formation of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in September 1999. They identified; the No Vote to the Draft Zimbabwe Constitutional Referendum in the year 2000, the 2000 general elections, 2002 Presidential elections, 2005 Parliamentary elections, 2005 operation *Murambatsvina* (clean up operation), 2008 harmonised elections and the 27 June 2008 Presidential run-off between President Robert Mugabe and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai as the most memorable epochs of human rights violation. Furthermore, evidence indicating the prevalence of bad governance can be drawn from 1999 to the present. Zimbabweans suffered as a result of economic hardships punctuated by hyperinflation, unemployment, foreign currency shortages, local bank notes shortages and indiscipline in the financial sector. (Bond and Manyanya 2003: 187).

In June 2007 arbitrary price controls were implemented leading to the arrest of several business executives for charging goods above stipulated prices (The Standard 19-25 October 2008). The formalisation of the ad hoc or unplanned if not chaotic Fast Track Land Reform Programme in 2000 which led to loss of property and life, loss of employment and reduced production in agriculture and related industries (Bond and Manyanya 2003). This was aggravated by the criminalisation of opposition politics evident in the treason charges levelled against MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai and the death of opposition activists such as Learnmore Musha Jongwe among others under unclear circumstances (The Washington Times, 7 February 2008). To muzzle freedom, rigid legislation were promulgated which include the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Broadcasting Services Act. These violated the rights and freedom of the individuals that are enshrined in the constitution of Zimbabwe namely; freedom of movement, association and expression ([www.idasa.org/.../](http://www.idasa.org/.../). *Idasa%20Restrictive%*). There were a number of instances when attacks and manipulation of the judiciary were apparent interspersed by alleged non-implementation of court rulings thereby making the rule of law anathema (Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe 2009).

The untimely and vindictive enforcement of Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act which is likely to; scare investors and delay the resumption of credit lines for Zimbabwe, reduce production and cause capital flight at the detriment of the country's economy (Financial Gazette 23-27 October 2010, Zimbabwe Independent 24-31 November 2010).

### **Constitutional Meddling and Contortion**

In December 1987, Constitutional Amendment Number 6 established a post of an Executive with far and unlimited powers. The powers include, inter alia, the appointment of Chief Justice and judges of both the High Court and Supreme Court although after consultations with the Judicial Services Commission. The Constitutional Amendment Number 9 of 1989 abolished the bicameral and introduced a unicameral legislature consisting of a 150 member house of assembly, 120 of whom were popularly elected for five-year terms and 30 non-constituency members of Parliament were directly appointed by the President, for instance, cabinet ministers, traditional chiefs and provincial governors. Undoubtedly, this gave the sitting political party some added benefit since the president's appointments mechanically meant that his party needed to win only 46 normally elected seats in the 150 Member of Parliament to enable it to command a majority in government. As a result, the incumbent government has constitutionally by design or default, eroded the principle of separation of powers, which is one of the essential principles that ensure good governance. Constitutional Amendment Number 17 nationalised all land in Zimbabwe.

It invalidated all the 4000 court cases brought mostly by white commercial farmers who were challenging compulsory possession of their farming land by government. It further prohibited the courts from receiving appeals from persons whose land would have been compulsorily acquired by government. Constitutional Amendment Number 17 "created an unstable farming season....and painted a dark and unpredictable future in the economic turnaround efforts by the government" (CPIA, 2005:138). These were legalised racial violations of democracy. Constitutional amendment number 19 gave birth and operationalised the Government of National Unity (GNU). Constitutional Amendment 19 made provision for the creation of the post of prime minister and deputy prime minister for Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) faction leaders Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara, respectively (allAfrica.com, 27 January 2009). However, ZANU-PF continued to violate the democratic traits enshrined in the global political agreement such as the sharing of governors and constitution making process (Zimbabwe Independent, Thursday 28 October 2010).

### **The Nexus between POSA and AIPPA, and Democratic Virtues**

AIPPA Chapter 10: 27 Part VII sections 38 and 39 oblige local journalists to be accredited by a government appointed panel (the Media Commission) which was replaced by the Zimbabwe Media Commission which comprised the representatives of all the political parties that make up the Global Political Agreement (GPA). It allows the government to suppress anything the Media Commission may perceive as "subversive" or "falsehoods" competent of causing public panic or dejection. It also restricts reporting of meetings of the cabinet and other government bodies. Independent newspapers were banned, such as the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ)'s Daily News and the Daily News on Sunday. These papers are now operating except Tribune. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Cable Network News (CNN) were removed from one and only national state run television, Zimbabwe Television (ZTV). Collectively these measures undermine human development and democracy.

POSA created a state of crisis scenario in Zimbabwe. It was "a dreaded and unwanted law" (Simon Badza and Elias Rusike in CFPIA, 2005: 15) because of its skewed interpretation by the police. It was an instrument of destroying opposition politics in Zimbabwe. Jointly, the POSA and AIPPA blocked the democratic political freedom for any legitimate peaceful political opposition in Zimbabwe. The two Acts reduced citizen involvement in governance and the gratification of the basic liberties and rights of the individual. What then did the nationalists fight for? One is compelled to think that they fought for freedom of; expression, assemble, writing and printing their opinions. In addition they fought for their personal security, the right to be free from unlawful arrest and unreasonable detention, speaking on behalf of the voiceless marginalised and disempowered Zimbabweans. Moreover, the struggle was carried out to secure the rights of; children, prisoners, those affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Added to this Zimbabweans are demanding the following;

- Right to development, to economic equality, to own property
- Accountability, responsibility and transparency in our government
- An end to corruption, abuse of power
- The separation of powers between the executive, judiciary and parliament
- A government that is responsive and accessible to the electorate and run in accordance with democratic principles
- a people-driven constitution which reflects the will of the people by participating in its making (Bond and Manyanya 2003, Makumbe 2002, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 2008: 4-5, MPOI Report 2008).

Zimbabwe continues to experience growing challenges in the development of its democratic system. Problems still abound, including political violence, limited citizen participation and violation of human rights. Citizens must know, claim and defend their rights. Since 1999, constitutionalism has been blocked and rule of law made anathema (Makumbe 2008). Democracy and social justice, accountability and transparency, inclusiveness and empowerment of people so that they can participate fully in public affairs have not been achieved in Zimbabwe. It was the germ of violence which destroyed the sensitivity of good governance.

### **Political Violence**

One of the serious challenges which confronted Zimbabwe during the period covered by this presentation was political violence which was by then on the increase. The police was quick to act when the alleged perpetrators of political violence were members of former opposition parties, in particular, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T). Against democratic virtues the police demonstrated a pattern of permissiveness when the perpetrators of political violence were linked with the former ruling party ZANU-PF. Political violence was a symptom of political intolerance in Zimbabwe. Political bigotry mushroomed in the major political parties. Democracy is about debate; it is about involvement or sharing points of view and respecting multiplicity of opinion. The reality of Zimbabwean politics was about muzzling opposition or suppressing dissent. Zimbabwe degraded into the politics of impunity where those who killed people, stole money, violated human rights and behaved as bastard escaped the wrath of the law on the basis of their affiliation to ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe Independent, May 27 to June 2, 2011). To this end many politicians who were active in politics at the time had dirty pasts and others had blood on their hands. In a democratic environment Zimbabweans were supposed to be free and empowered to bring to book or hold accountable those who abrogate the law.

ZANU-PF government comprehensively exploited and tirelessly cultivated fear by using the youths to terrify the population (Financial Gazette, 9-16 May 2011). Consequently, ZANU-PF prospered on terror and on the myth of its indomitability. President Mugabe and the leadership of ZANU-PF set the pace of political violence through objectionable and provocative statements that degraded the MDC and its leadership. Related to this Samuel Mumbengegwi, former Finance Minister said, "This is up to you; if you want peace, you should vote for us. If you vote for the MDC, we will go to war" (The Financial Gazette, 19 June 2008). More-so the late Vice-President Joseph Msika remarked that, "Tsvangirai is a traitor. I came here to warn you about the machinations of the Rhodesians and their imperialist allies who we dislodged through the protracted armed struggle, but now they intend to come back using one of our fellow Zimbabweans Tsvangirai, as their running dog-chimbwasungata. If you vote for Tsvangirai on June 27, you are voting for the former Rhodesians and thus you are voting for war" (The Manica Post, 20 June 2008).

Furthermore, President Mugabe threatened that, "ZANU-PF fought for, for our rights, land and a bright future. This legacy should not simply be vanquished by the stroke of a pen at the ballot just because I am not getting basic goods.... Otherwise a simple X would have taken the country back to 1890. The Third Chimurenga can't just die because of an X. All those who died in the struggle will turn in their graves" (The Sunday Mail 19 June 2008). The preceding statements divulge utmost degree of political intolerance and present a fertile ground for substantial political violence. The violence was executed by trained youth brigades with an objective of winning political support. This is contrary to Article 1X (9.2) (b) of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which states that "the responsibility of effecting change of government in Zimbabwe vests exclusively on and is the sole prerogative of the people of Zimbabwe." Contrary to the call for peace there is looming danger of unprecedented violence if Zimbabwe decided to go to polls before fulfilling the requirements of the Global Political Agreement.

The 2008 political violence both for harmonised and presidential run-off provides adequate information to extrapolate the nature of the imminent harmonised elections. ZANU-PF was highly likely to use political violence, pure pain and harm to threaten and to dissuade, to frighten and to blackmail, to dishearten and to paralyse its opponents. It seemed that Zimbabwe could not afford another contested election result. The political procedure should at the end give authenticity to whoever emerges victorious. Legitimacy mirrors the vigour of the underlying agreement which bequeaths the state and its officers with whatever influence and power they have, not by virtue of legality, but by the truth of the respect with which the citizens pay to the institutions and behaviour norms. Legitimacy is earned by the capability of those who conduct the power of the state to embody and reveal a broad consent. This is a familiar dogma articulated in the Declaration of Independence. In addition, authenticity can not be claimed or given by mere technicality of law; it must be won by the achievement of state institutions in cultivating and meeting prospects in mediating interests and aiding the process by which the ideals of persons and groups are allocated in the creation, enforcement, intercession and universal observance of law.

The Government of National Unity (GNU) created a milieu of acceptance and accommodation of contradictory views. President Mugabe, for example, proclaimed 24, 25 and 26 July 2009 as peace days to promote the ideals of national healing, reconciliation and integration. In an extraordinary Government Gazette published on Thursday 16 July 2009, President Mugabe urged political parties, traditional leaders, faith-based institutions and civic society organisations to promote reconciliation and help demolish the culture of violence and bigotry. He proclaimed that;

“In the spirit of the inter-party political agreement, I do hereby declare, set out and dedicate the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of July as a period during which the nation may dedicate the inclusive, our new spirit of nation-building, national healing, reconciliation and integration to inspire the country going ahead. To make sure Zimbabweans dedicate these days to measures necessary to ensure that the structures, agents and institutions that they control or liaise within and without Zimbabwe do not engage or support engagement in perpetration of violence or any other activities harmful to Zimbabwe.”

The election mood then obtaining in Zimbabwe indicated a different position. It appears this was just mere rhetoric. Ironically, the same individual who called for peace promoted institutionalised political violence. For example, referring to Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, President Mugabe was quoted saying “of course, he was bashed. He deserved it. I told the police to beat him a lot” (The Herald 29 March 2007). This shows that political violence undermine the security of the people. Therefore, Zimbabwe should be encouraged to embrace democratic values as a strategy of ensuring human security even beyond the MDC formations and ZANU-PF.

### **Human Security versus Territorial Security**

Security is the capacity of the state to shield national interests against both national and external enemies (AFRODAD, 2005). This conventional notion of security was concerned with “security of territory from external aggression or as protection of national interests in foreign policy” (UNDP, 1994a). It focussed on the nation-state and attached “disproportionate attention to security of the state” (Regehr and Whelan, 2004), “legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives” (UNDP, 1994a) were overlooked.

The 1994 human development report of the UNDP officially coined the human security concept, stating that the intention of human security is “to capture the post-cold war peace dividend and redirected these resources towards the development agenda” (Axworthy, 1999: 2). Human security has become a call on nation states to remember that sovereignty should not be viewed as control but responsibility to “protect individuals and provide their welfare” so that they “secure existence in life and dignity” (Wallenstein, 2007). Human security captures “disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflicts, political repression and environmental hazards” (UNDP, 1994b). More-so, human security includes widening the range of people’s choices and the ability for people to exercise these choices freely and safely. The UNDP report provides a plan of values of human security which are summed up as economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security (UNDP, 1994b). Any failure to meet these needs may lead to insecurity to state leadership.

Zimbabwe needs to moralise security by viewing it as the protection of human beings rather than the protection of sovereignty. In 2008, there was a regional reaction when Zimbabwe attempted to import a shipload of weapons via South Africa and civil society institutions put pressure on the South African government not to allow the passage of the “cargo of death” as it came to be called.

This is true cognisant of the fact that militarization of social and political life is in itself a potential threat to human freedom (Bajpai, 2000). The threats in Zimbabwe could not be surmounted by the use of force. In fact security policies need to closely assimilate with strategies for promoting human rights, democracy and development. Preparation for war when a country is threatened by HIV/AIDS, food crisis, underdevelopment, and flagrant violation of human rights can have social effects with consequences for individual safety.

Democratising the political space, constitutionalism, rule of law, observance and protection of human rights, the security of a state can be guaranteed by its citizens. It is only in an empowered society, where people can make informed choices freely and interact meaningfully with their leaders, that the element of suspicion and mistrust can be allayed both in the citizenry and the elite. During the period covered by this presentation this was deficient in Zimbabwe; therefore there existed an acrimonious relationship between the governed and their rulers. These issues can be addressed during the transition to democracy.

### **Electoral Framework, Practices and Relevance**

Robert Dahl concurs that democratic states ought to have the following institutions: elected representatives, free and fair elections, political parties, inclusive suffrage, and the right to run for office, the freedom of expression, associational autonomy, the rule of law, an efficient bureaucracy and development based on a market economy (1971). More distinctively, the state must be “subject to law” as Linz and Stepan (1996: 17) put it. According to Sartori’s classification (1987: 13), the institutional base line “in a democracy no one can choose himself, no one can invest himself with power to rule and therefore no one can give himself unconditional and unlimited power.” This definition undoubtedly reveals the way in which Zimbabwean elections were held in the previous years under limelight. Michael Bratton (1998: 52) echoed the same sentiments when he said, “while you have elections without democracy, you can’t have democracy without elections.” Bratton further points out that elections are necessary but not sufficient. What is foremost is not the quantity but the quality and meaning of elections. Various freedoms are a fundamental ingredient of the election equation. Usual free and fair elections guarantee and ensure independence, transparency and accountability of institutions and structures.

The Zimbabwean election debate raised more questions than answers. If the international and regional community as well as the Zimbabwean citizens are convinced that the political environment is not yet conducive for ‘quality, meaningful and credible’ election, why should ZANU-PF continue to push for early polls? If Zimbabwe is allowed to go to the polls without appropriate infrastructure in place that may not guarantee free and fair elections. In fact the country risks witnessing untold havoc, chaos and bloodbath. Massacres, harm and threats of opposition supporters are highly likely to be ignored by state institutions like the police as was the case before. This explains the breakdown in the rule of law predominantly from 2000 up to the present when opposition political supporters were painted as “political hooligans” by the police. Consequently, a significant number of opposition supporters were imprisoned and in most cases without trial.

This kind of structural violence dogged the country since independence because the government inherited systems that were used against Africans by the former colonial master. Institutions skilled in the management of political intimidation and violence include the militia whose recruiting ground was the national youth training service (popularly known as Border Gezi) training camps as well as war veterans (Sachikonye, 2011). The camps imparted political indoctrination that extolled the supremacy of ZANU-PF in the liberation struggle (ibid). Opposition parties were castigated as “sell-outs” or “western puppets”. The graduates from the camps employed total violence and terror to usurp and undermine the electoral process.

Even if the GNU could religiously implement the electoral and political reforms, the institutions of violence remained empowered to resort to tactics of violence in an effort that propels ZANU-PF to victory by whatever means. Prior to 2008, Zimbabwe adopted the SADC Principles and Guidelines on Democratic Elections of 2004 of which Zimbabwe was a signatory ([www.idasa.org/media](http://www.idasa.org/media)). The Inter-Party Dialogue initiated between ZANU PF and MDC in 2007 was designed to create a conducive electoral environment. Both processes pressed for electoral reforms. The reforms in the electoral system on the eve of the 2008 were partial and hesitant rather than comprehensive.

There are state institutions that have threatened and undermined efforts towards reforms in Zimbabwe. The military for instance,



“Having increased their power and influence within the state through increased self-confidence, appointments into government bureaucracy and accumulation of wealth, the military leadership arrogantly announced in unequivocal terms that it would not countenance a transfer of power through an electoral process” (Sachikonye, 2011: 47).

The above assertion is an indication that the military was a challenge to Zimbabwe’s road to democracy during the period covered by this presentation. During the 2002 presidential election campaign, the joint statement of the military, police, intelligence and prison heads was an inundation aimed at informing both the opposition and the international community that an election would not lead to a democratic transfer of power. They cautioned that:

The highest office of the land is a straight jacket whose occupant is expected to observe the objectives of the liberation struggle. We will therefore not accept, let alone support or salute anyone with a different agenda that threatens the very existence of our sovereignty, our country, our people... (ZHR NGO Forum, 2007).

This was an unambiguous disrespect of the democratic and electoral procedure of the constitution of Zimbabwe and of the people’s resolve. In 2008, the military explicitly noted that they would not salute any president other than President Robert Mugabe. In addition, late 2010, Didymus Mutasa referring to Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai said, “Tsvangirai will never rule this country even if he wins” (The Herald, 17 September, 2010). One can learn that the military, police, intelligence and prisons are central actors in tactical policy-making and implementation in Zimbabwe especially with regards to the electoral process. These four institutions comprise the Joint Operations Command (JOC) and National Security Council (NSC). JOC pursues and advances the collective interests of the securocrats. At the helm of JOC and NSC was President Robert Mugabe as the Commander-in-Chief of the Zimbabwe defence forces (ZDF), the head of ZANU-PF and the government. This complicated the equation since there was limited or no optimism headed for the democratisation of these institutions cognisant of the heavily centralised power. Armed with this, Zimbabwe was supposed to temporarily defer the issue of holding fresh elections in the near future because its delicate economy could collapse.

The institutional framework consists of; the Delimitations commission, the Electoral Supervisory Commission, the Registrar of Elections, the Election Directorate and the Electoral Court. Tradition has revealed that the balance of influence and power always rest with the Registrar of elections and the election Directorate both working in government ministries. This scenario presents loopholes for electoral fraud.

Unlike in the pre-March 2008 period, the presidential run-off campaign was a visibly militarised one (Masunungure, 2009). The securocrats, rather than ZANU-PF itself, were in the forefront spearheading the campaign.

“Available evidence suggests that the regime came to the conclusion that its party had failed in the march to 29 March and therefore the military should lead the march to 27 June (Ibid: 80).

Mugabe did not anticipate a win in the “sink or swim” presidential run-off unless a military-style leadership campaigned for him (Independent, 23 May 2008). The deliberate recourse to violence to coerce voters to vote for Mugabe was:

“to reduce the run-off contest to a battle between the bullet and the ballot. In this battle, ZANU-PF was making it starkly clear that in its political world, the bullet is supreme and the ballot subservient to it.... (Masunungure, 2009: 84).

The strategy to execute a military style election campaign was code- named Coercion, Intimidation, Beating and Displacement (CIBD). The overall campaign was termed Operation Makavhotera Papi (Operation whom did you vote for?) It was crafted to identify and punish those who had voted against Mugabe in the first presidential round.

“In a tragic sense, the whole country was unified, in violence and its pattern was the same, indicating a central point of organisation and execution (Masunungure, 2009: 87).

In overall charge, however, was the JOC under the leadership of Emerson Munangagwa. Officers deployed by JOC played a role in setting up torture camps and bases in Manicaland, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central and Masvingo.

The camps were used for beating and torturing victims to punish them for voting for the MDC, to extract information on the whereabouts of MDC activists and supporters and to force victims to denounce MDC and swear allegiance to ZANU-PF (Masunungure, 2009: 105).

ZANU-PF domination of the state radio and television stations created unfair level of campaigning field for other political players. This argument is convincing given ZANU-PF's superior command of the broadcast media for its political campaigns despite the formation of the government of national unity. Evidence can be drawn from the use of the periodic jingles that praise President Mugabe and ZANU PF as a strategy of attracting the people into voting for the party. The persistent jingles were aired in breach of the Zimbabwe broadcasting laws (Newsday, Friday, May 6, 2011).

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission which is responsible for elections and referendums was accused of partisan operations and incompetency. All elections together with the; 2000 general election, 2002 presidential election, 2005 Parliamentary election held on the 31st of March, 29 March 2008 harmonised elections and 27 June 2008 presidential run-off were characterised by substantial voter indifference and supposed rigging. This development mirrors lack of integrity or reliability and precision of the Zimbabwean electoral process. On the contrary the 1980 election that brought about the political independence of Zimbabwe remains the most competitive and democratic election to be held in the country.

## **The road to Democracy: The Zimbabwean Case**

### **Security Enhancement**

The security forces have always been used to manipulate elections in favour of President Mugabe. In an effort to bring about democracy the security sectors need to be enhanced on the benefits of transparent elections in the short and the long term. For the Zimbabwean case there is need to enhance the security sector as opposed to reforming it which risks being met with resistance. The process of enhancement is a vital pre-condition for free and fair elections to be held given the fact that security forces and para-military ZANU PF linked structures were accused of unleashing violence and intimidation before, during and after elections (Mavhinga, 2011:1).

Hardline security forces continued to arrest and detain activists and MDC parliamentarians. A case in point is that of, Co-Minister Moses Mzila Ndlovu of MDC-N and Catholic Priest Father Marko Mabutho Mnkandla who were arrested for meeting Gukurahundi victims at Silwane Primary School in Lupane (Newsday, 15; 16; 18-04:2011). Furthermore, the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), Lizwe Jamela, Nikiwe Ncube and Nosimilo Chanayiwa were detained at a road block (Ibid). It was a political manoeuvre and deliberate strategy to frustrate the lawyers from reaching their clients. One more illustrative case is the treason case against Munyaradzi Gwisai, International Socialist Organisation (ISO) general coordinator and five others which took a new contortion when the AG's office astonishingly ordered that the case be heard at the magistrates' court instead of the high court (**source**). This was a violation of the law of the land because in Zimbabwe treason cases' jurisdiction lies with the High Court.

All the preceding examples show that the so-called securocrats held de-facto supremacy over democratic transition in Zimbabwe. To pave way for democracy the Joint Command Operations should be dismantled and replaced with the National Security Council (Zimbabwe Independent, Thursday 13 October 2011). It is imperative to avoid being retributive during the enhancement process to averting aggravating the already volatile or inflamed situation. To this end there was need to engage the concerned parties in the security sector because a radical total overhaul of the military risked sliding the country into a worse conflict. Worse still such efforts could be stalled by the members from the security sector had they been affected negatively by the process. It was vital to institute a commission where civilians together with the security sector members regulated the conduct of an instrument established by civilians for their protection not for threatening their survival.

Even though this seemed thorny, only the politically pressurised keenness of the key players in the inclusive government could have made the enhancement probable. One might have been cognisant of the fact that in Zimbabwe the military was the set back to the realisation of democracy (ZHR NGO Forum, 2007, Lloyd Sachikonye, 2011: 47). Constitutional democracy requires non-partisan military and security organs of the state. This does not essentially imply that soldiers and those who direct them are "political eunuchs, it does mean that soldiers are not partisan political animals" (Masunungure, 2009:69).

The security sector must serve the state not political players who worry much about state security at the expense of human security at the time when states can seldom face threats from the outside but from within their boundaries. Contrary to what is expected of the military, just before the June 2008 presidential run-off election, Army Chief of Staff Major-General Martin Chedondo unambiguously declared that:

“Soldiers are not apolitical. Only mercenaries are apolitical. We have signed and agreed to fight and protect the ruling party’s principles of defending the revolution. If you have other thoughts, then you should remove that uniform” (The Herald, 31 May 2008).

Assuming that the foregoing statement was representative of the military it gives the undoubted impression that the security forces in Zimbabwe are partisan and that ZANU-PF can only be removed from power through the barrel of the gun not by the ballot. This compliments President Robert Mugabe point of view that, “Only God can oust me....not MDC, not the British” (The Herald, 21 June 2008). What caused all stakeholders to worry was the feeling that even if MDC-T emerges victorious in future elections it would be denied the right to govern the country. ZANU-PF was likely to make use of 2008 tactics to frustrate the whole election process had the elections been held in 2011 before all critical issues outlined in the GPA were accomplished. Therefore, Zimbabweans must ensure that their country is not once again going to be reduced to a Hobbesian state of nature where life becomes horrible, violent and petite. For example; burning down of houses, whippings, seizures, mass dislocation of supposed MDC adherents, arson and murder which characterised presidential run-off campaign in 2008 must be curtailed.

### **GPA Implementation and Conclusion**

The democratic agenda was still far from being achieved in Zimbabwe. The Global Political Agreement (GPA) was intended to chiefly craft conditions for authentic political and electoral transformations. The pre-election modifications include media, constitutional, electoral, security reforms and national healing. These reforms depended on the benevolence and political compliance of both parties represented in the GPA.

The virtue of compliance was extremely lacking and missing in both MDC-T and ZANU PF. In addition, amendments to draconian legislation, such as POSA, AIPPA and BSA were not instituted. More-so, the appointment of provincial governors and the regular functioning of the National Security Council remained unresolved.

One can conclude that ZANU-PF lacked transparency and accountability and therefore thrived in a lawless environment. For instance when the Minister of Finance Tendai Biti recommended to Cabinet that an investigation be commenced to find out why Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe’s assets were being auctioned to resolve debts with creditors, the proposal was met with indignation by ZANU-PF Cabinet ministers ([allafricacm.stories/201009100484.html](http://allafricacm.stories/201009100484.html)).

Although the twenty-four (24) GPA agreed upon outstanding issues were still not implemented there were some notable GPA achievements including the formation of the; Human Rights Commissions and Zimbabwe Media Commission, re-opening of schools and hospitals; partial restoration of investor confidence. One of the major obstructions in the direction of the democratisation of Zimbabwe through the inclusive government was that the MDC formations were accorded nominal power in the GNU. To guarantee implementation, the MDC required control over ministries and statutory institutions with the suitable executive power. None of the ministries Mugabe allocated to the MDC formations gave them such command. Such vital ministries include defence, the media and security sectors. The MDC formations in general and MDC-T in particular are blamed for non-implementation of a handful of the GPA issues. The MDC-T was entrenched with immense weaknesses.

### **Weaknesses of Political Parties**

Prime Minister Tsvangirai and his team fell victim to Mugabe’s break up, co-opt and demolish strategy. The MDC-T calculated that its ability to cause change would be greater inside government than outside. This proved to be intricate to achieve. The veteran President Mugabe had submissive of most regional leaders and most importantly the securocrats. The MDC members were hoodwinked by the former ruling party by enticing them with the bait of state benefaction, for example, Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara’s MDC was fractured into blocs or faded into insignificance as Welshman Ncube claimed presidency.

This created disappointment and distrust in ordinary people. Even though MDC-T was party to the GNU, prevalent corruption has almost become a national culture as national resources are seldom put to effective use for the benefit of the nation. Leaders are quick to use political power for personal gains, guided by a sort of “mercenary ethos” (Eyoh, 1995) or kleptocratic instincts (Bayart et al, 1999; Russell, 1999). It has become a common phenomena that leaders who fear defeat generally have a reason both to steal fast and to focus resources on invigorating their own power and devastating antagonists rather than by means of state resources to build up institutions and make investments that promote development.

Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC had two options to become more relevant and push for reforms. They were challenged by President Mugabe who ignored the requirement that all key appointments in terms of the constitution and any appointment in terms of an Act of Parliament can be lawfully made by the President with the consent of the Prime Minister. President Mugabe ignored this prerequisite where it suited him to do so and Tsvangirai has not sought to exercise this right in all instances. For example, President Mugabe appointed provincial governors, ambassadors to represent Zimbabwe in South Africa and European Union unilaterally. The Prime Minister wrote the letters on 7 October instructing the EU and South Africa not to recognise them but without success (Zimbabwe Independent, Thursday 28 October 2010). The MDC-T drive towards democracy was for a long time except the recent Livingston, Zambia, Communiqué, derailed by SADC. It appeared as if SADC had not fully grasped the importance of the MDC-T’s right in the GPA implementation as evidenced by it requesting the MDC-T to ‘park’ the issues arising from Mugabe’s one-sided appointments. Instead, SADC was supposed to press President Mugabe to comply with all issues articulated in the GPA. Besides the unilateral appointment of provincial governors Mugabe rejected to repeal the engagement of Reserve Bank Zimbabwe Governor – Gideon Gono and Attorney-General Johannes Tomana ([www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/11332](http://www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/11332)). More-so he refused to swear in MDC-T Deputy Treasurer General Roy Bennet as Deputy Agriculture Minister until MDC-T had to replace him with Ian Kay who was sworn in.

The only way forward for the MDC formations was to re-unite and use numerical superiority in parliament so as to execute changes that merely call for the House to change. Even in future beyond 2011 they should make sure that constitutional committees, mainly the all-important ZEC, embrace resilient, capable and conversant individuals who could energetically press forward an agenda of democratic transformation. This should not be done with a hidden agenda for retribution, but for the achievement of lasting peace where there is room furtherance of national healing, reconciliation and integration. The major challenge MDC-T faced was limited capacity within its ranks and that it was almost bankrupt on policy or governance issues.

MDC-T did not have a clear ideology. This was one of the political malaises of MDC-T. Professor Kings Phiri (2000: 68-69) observes that “without clearly defined ideologies, however, political parties become rather redundant and the electorate increasingly resort to primordial or parochial criteria for the choices it has made...leaders are able to switch from one party to another, usually in pursuit of personal or material gain.” Without apparent ideological positions, there is a propensity to differ more and more on less critical issues in an exceedingly personalised manner.

On the other hand for ZANU-PF to drive the nation towards democracy was supposed to restructure by packing all lying ineffective members in its ranks, allow the people’s choice candidates to rise up the political ladder and punish perpetrators of violence. On the land issue the veteran party was supposed to allow a land audit especially among its cadres and pack those who were given resources by the government but still reaped nothing. The white stakeholders were supposed to be allowed to own the land but hand over large tracks of underutilised arable land for the resettlement of the land hungry black Zimbabweans in a planned manner where government and its stakeholders would take responsibility to compensate for the developments done on the resettled forms. ZANU-PF commands the policy and if it had lobbied against violence, peace could have prevailed. There was need to have stopped the politicisation of the effective Zimbabwe Republic Police. Above all a peaceful environment could have attracted investors in Zimbabwe thereby reducing widespread unemployment then dogging the country as it stood above 97%. Even the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) governor, Gideon Gono, added his weight against fresh and early harmonised elections when he noted that:

“In deciding when and whether or not to have elections, a firm balance may need to be struck between the twin objectives of politics and the economy. Key is to be decisive and not leave the economy in a state of guesswork for far too long. Zimbabwe is not the only destination crying for investment in a world not yet fully recovered from the global financial crisis. Put differently, the economy favours no elections for now while political dynamics and imperatives may favour or dictate otherwise” (The Sunday Mail 15-22 May 2011).

Likewise during the changeover stage, MDC-T could have created a well intended strategy. This might have involved the establishment of information and intelligence systems that match those of the experienced ZANU-PF. For instance, during the constitutional outreach exercise MDC-T lacked mobilisation capability and tactic and consequently it disastrously failed to use its grass-roots structures, leadership and governance capacity to establish the outcome of the Constitution Parliamentary Committee (COPAC) outreach in an extraordinary way. To do this effectively, MDC-T must have some insight into the nature of current discourses within the security sector. MDC-T was supposed to be geared work with all members of the security sector; retired and serving who might empower them about the needs of the security sector. Furthermore, MDC-T needs to construct suitable coalitions which must include allies from the security sector not the puerile tactic of promising revenge to their antagonists the moment they get into power.

### **Election roadmap**

According to George Charamba, Presidential Spokesperson and Permanent Secretary for Information, Media and Publicity was quoted to have said that ZANU-PF resisted the idea of election roadmap process, asserting that the GPA “on its own is an election roadmap” (The Herald, Tuesday, 22 March 2011). From the above ZANU-PF viewed the GPA as a means that provided a framework for constitutional reforms that was supposed to lay the basis for future credible elections and political stability. The MDC argued that GPA was “the basis and only a starting point” of the roadmap ([www.theindependent.co.zw/local/30600](http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/30600)). For Zimbabwe to have credible and meaningful elections in terms of quality, a comprehensive election roadmap with benchmarks, timeframes and signposts was supposed to be mandatory. This position was adopted by SADC facilitators and endorsed by regional leaders. The SADC troika Summit in Livingston, Zambia, Communiqué said “the IG of Zimbabwe should complete all the steps necessary for the holding of free and fair elections, including finalisation of the constitutional making and referendum” ([www.sadc.int/index/browse/page/858](http://www.sadc.int/index/browse/page/858)). Nonetheless, the efforts by SADC were either given a cold shoulder or violated by ZANU PF because of its lack of cooperation. Instead it viewed the regional body as infringing its national sovereignty through the imposition of election benchmarks which they believed to be the prerogative of the Zimbabweans ([www.newzimbabwe.com/blog/index.php/2011/04/jmoyo](http://www.newzimbabwe.com/blog/index.php/2011/04/jmoyo)).

Given this election quandary SADC should help Zimbabwe to devise guidelines that assist in holding peaceful, free and fair elections, in accordance to SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. Furthermore, SADC should continue to call for an immediate end to violence, intimidation, hate speech, harassment and any other form of action that violate the spirit of the GPA.

To prevent perpetual violence SADC should help to transform the political culture and mindset of Zimbabweans, although this might take along time it should commence as a matter of urgency. Efforts should be made towards creating a conducive election milieu and impress on politicians the fact that it is both inhumane and wicked for politicians to bounce back into power at the cost of human life. More importantly Zimbabwe should implement religiously the SADC principles and guidelines governing democratic elections. These entail creating conditions to ensure full participation of the citizens in the political processes, freedom of association, assembly and speech, political tolerance, equal opportunity for political parties, independence of the judiciary, impartiality of electoral institutions, opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for, voter education, acceptance of election results and the opportunity to challenge contested results in terms of the law of the land.

Concerted efforts must be made to ensure that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) which runs elections must be impartial and competent. To achieve this a new voters’ roll which is accurate, clean and up to date must be created. The delimitation of constituencies must be transparent and credible and gerrymandering must be thwarted. Elections must be viewed as a process not an event where political parties must be able to campaign freely and peacefully.

It follows that, violence or intimidation must not be allowed. Subsequently, political parties contesting elections must have fair equal access to the public media. More-over, monitors and observers must be given free access to polling stations. This process must transcend into a timely, accurate and efficient counting of votes and announcement of results must be promptly.

### **Less Power in the Presidency**

The Zimbabwean constitution which existed during the period embraced by this paper gives far too much power to the presidency, sometimes to the point amounting to autocracy (Constitutional Amendment No. 1987). The concentration of power in the presidency gives politics an unhealthy force. Due to the fact that this office is so powerful such that those who compete for it voluntarily resort to means that are unlawful as if to indicate that for this particular office, the end justifies all means. There is every need for Zimbabweans to reduce the powers of the presidency not against President Mugabe or for Prime Minister Tsvangirai but for presidency now and forever more. One way of reducing the powers of this office is to establish independent commissions such as the judicial commission, the public service commission and the electoral commission in such a manner that the President's role in their appointment is nominal and to abolish all presidential determination of the conditions of their tenure.

### **Balance of Power**

Separation of powers between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary is lacking since power is concentrated in one office of the executive. It might be prudent that, more substantive powers be given to the legislative in regard to appointment to high offices of state, the making and approval of national budgets, foreign policy and national security. Legislatures need information base for the exercise of their role, administrative support and financial resources independent of the presidency to carry out their duties. An independent judiciary must be adequately funded and should be self-accounting. The Judiciary Commission (JC) that oversees the judiciary should be effectively independent of the presidency. Judges should be appointed by this independent JC or elected and their tenure of office should be secured by statutory instruments which the president can not amend or alter.

### **Why ZANU-PF Needs Early Elections**

ZANU-PF was pushing for an early election in 2012 because it held the reins of state power, including that it derived from controlling the security sector and the public media. This is despite national and international counsel that the country is not stable, calm and prepared enough to hold another election while the bitter memories of the violence of the 2008 presidential election continue to haunt it. The second half of 2010 and first quarter of 2011 witnessed violence in several urban centres, for example, Harare townships of; Mbare, Budiro, Epworth and Highfield (Sachikonye, 2011). The clashes centred on access to local market infrastructure such as stalls, land for urban agriculture and location of infrastructure such as party offices. Zimbabwe by any standard is not ready for an election by 2012. For instance, the voters' roll is marred with errors as well as ghost voters. It therefore needs a meticulous overhaul by a neutral or dispassionate body. The ZEC did not have the necessary professional staff and material resources to mount an efficient, credible and recognisable election. The African Union (AU) and SADC advised against an early poll before conditions are suitable for a free and fair election.

Given the 2008 election violence, people had fresh memories and running another election earlier is not expedient. Unnecessary anxiety could set in and be a deterrent to investment because it could portray an unstable country at a time Zimbabwe was desperate for investors. The dissonance in the GPA which manifested itself in numerous poll dates mirrored that the GPA was infested with a lot of challenges. On several occasions, President Mugabe and ZANU-PF leaders said Zimbabwe was to run polls in 2011. For example Rugare Gumbo announced, "The party position is very clear, I don't know how many times I should repeat this. Elections are on this year and reforms are not fundamental if people want elections" ([www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/africa/50882](http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/africa/50882)). On the contrary Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai told a press conference on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum summit in Cape Town, South Africa, that "elections could only be held within 12 months but certainly not this year" ([www.thestandard.co.zw/local/29812](http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/29812)). Furthermore, Welshman Ncube, leader of a smaller faction of the MDC told a business conference in Bulawayo that elections were impossible in 2011, and suggested March 2012 as the nearest possible poll date (Zimbabwe Independent, Thursday, 03 November 2011). The magnitude and intensity of violence during the constitutional outreach exercise revealed ZANU-PF's strategic computation for acquiring and maintaining power.

Intimidation and violence were used during the constitutional outreach programme in both rural and urban areas. Intimidation, orchestrated disruptive activities and violence were deployed in the second half of 2010 for just that purpose. An Operation Chimumumu (be quiet and don't express views on the constitution) devised by state agencies sought to silence voices, other than those of ZANU-PF, in expressing views on what should be contained in a new constitution. An extensive rural mobilisation campaign Operation Chimumumu was undertaken by the War Veteran leader Jabulani Sibanda (Sachikonye, 2011). The constitutional outreach programme was handicapped by threats which could negatively affect the quality and meaning of the proposed new constitution. The military leaders in Zimbabwe play roles of soldiers and political commissars. The degree of partisanship is chilling and alarming as confirmed by Theresa Makone (MDC-T) Co-Minister of Home Affairs, (Newsday 17 January 2011). The GNU has not succeeded in stamping out partisanship, no reform of the security sector though this is urgently needed. The Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) established by the GNU appears to have failed and it's extremely moribund.

If Zimbabwe goes to polls in future without accomplishing the GPA issues, the infamous and inhumane 2008 systemic violence could be repeated. ZANU-PF seems prepared to win the next election at any cost and its contempt of the will of people will recur. ZANU-PF was not ready to hand over power to the opposition and this was evident from President Mugabe in 2008, when said "the country was won by the barrel of the gun and should we let it go at the stroke of a pen" and "should one just write an X and then it goes like that" (The Herald, 20 June, 2008). One can glean that if the next elections are tabled without pivotal, realistic and critical transformations, even if the MDC-T wins, Mugabe and his team will never transfer power to Morgan Tsvangirai. This is an explicit indication that any future elections which are held without reforms could just be cosmetic. More-so, if any party wins other than ZANU-PF, violence could be unleashed. Bludgeoning voters into submission amply confirmed that the party's powers of persuasion had diminished considerably.

During the 27 June presidential run-off, ZANU-PF local leadership demanded that voters record the serial numbers on their ballots and hand over this information to its party's wardens together with their personal details (ZESN, 2008: 66). This was supposed to enable the wardens to check for whom the voter had voted for (Ibid). This was clearly an electoral irregularity that should be disallowed by the electoral commission. Other irregularities included the forcing of voters to first assemble at the headman's homestead where they were given numbers after which they would proceed to the polling stations led by their kraal heads (Masunungure, 2009:92). To this end the report by an election monitoring organisation confirmed:

"In most rural constituencies, voters were reportedly herded to polling stations by traditional leaders and allegedly instructed to vote for the ruling party candidate. They were also ordered to record their ballot papers' serial numbers and would after polling give them to the local party leaders (ZESN, 2008: 66).

Furthermore, opposition members were intimidated into feigning illiteracy so that they would be assisted to vote. It should not come as a surprise that the 27 June 2008 run-off election recorded the highest number of spoilt papers to date. This was a show of regret, disillusionment and frustration by the electorate and reveal that the electoral process had been a travesty or mockery

The transition phase to democratic rule in Zimbabwe seems problematic and uncertain. It was our submission that during the transition process and prior to pending elections, the GNU take the following preparatory steps:

- Registration of voters and establishment of a clean voters roll
- Finalisation of the constitutional making
- Kick-start a realistic-practical national healing, reconciliation and integration process
- Discuss the fate of the perpetrators of different crimes against humanity so that they will not stall the transitional process.
- Opening the transition process to international observer groups including UN, AU, SADC, EU
- Opening government-run media stations (television and radio) and print media to all political parties to sell manifestos and campaign for the elections
- Transparent printing of ballot papers
- Delimitations of constitutions-avoiding gerrymandering, establishment of electoral courts and polling stations
- Guarantee immunity to the service chiefs

## **Conclusion**

The electioneering process should be, to all intents and purposes, a free and fair democratic exercise, even though scattered allegations to the contrary may be witnessed. This is so because conflict, like the search for order and stability, is inevitable and necessary part of social life. The transition to democracy can materialise only if systematic violence and terror are not employed to hijack and subvert the electoral process. The issues raised in this text, indeed may take time, but it is far better to spend time in building a solid foundation rather than build hastily on a shaky foundation. Hasty polls are likely to be retrogressive and produce a contested result. The heart of the matter here is that the security forces may not be taken to task for the excesses and vices of their rule they need to be enhanced so that it establish pragmatic civil military relations. The current comprehensive inventory of the techniques to keep securocrats motivated through material and professional pay-offs (pay, promotions, equipment), privileged access to rent-seeking opportunities, such as land and government contracts, cooption of officers into government positions can still be professional done take cognisant of the civilianisation of soldiers without indoctrinating or manipulating them to serve the vested interests of individuals. For democracy to succeed in Zimbabwe, loyalty of the armed forces must be secured to institutions rather than buying their support for a particular set of rules, enabling the latter to repress dissent and avoid public accountability. The securocrats are capable of both stalling transition in a democratic government or turning government to its own advantage to assure their own continuation in power. The only way-forward is for the GNU to accomplish all the outstanding issues stipulated in the GPA before the pending elections are held.

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