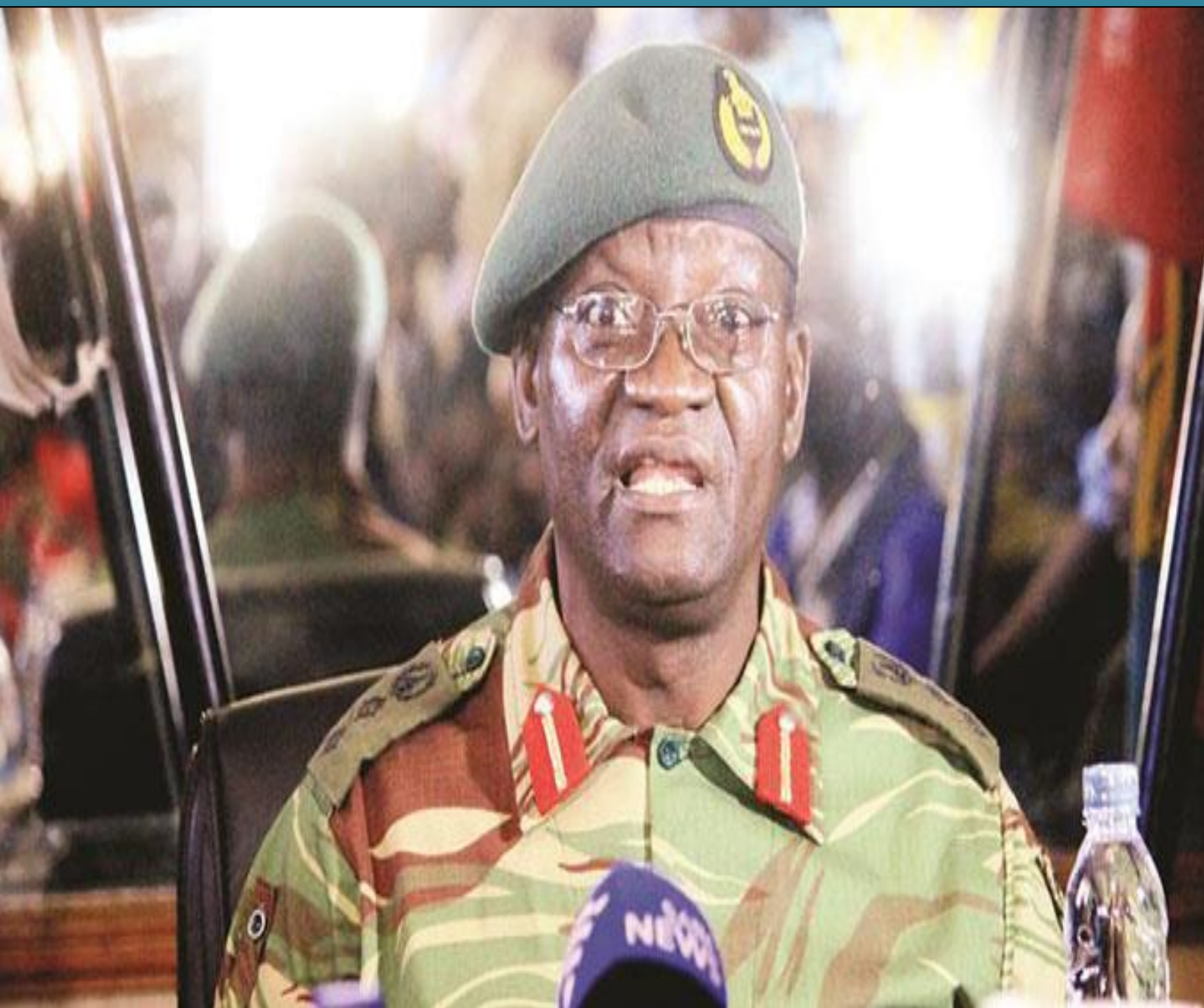


# ZANU PF/MILITARY DETERRENCE OF THE VILLAGE VOTE



PERCEPTIONS ON THE 2018 ELECTION ENVIRONMENT



Zimbabwe  
Democracy  
Institute



OSISA

Open Society Initiative  
for Southern Africa

## **COPYRIGHT STATEMENT**

© ZDI, July 2018.

Copyright in this article is vested with ZDI. No part of this report may be reproduced in whole or in part without the express permission, in writing, of the owner. It should be noted that the content and/or any opinions expressed in this publication are those of the ZDI, and not necessarily of the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa.



Zimbabwe Democracy Institute  
66 Jason Moyo Avenue,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Bothwell House  
Harare  
Zimbabwe

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ZDI acknowledges the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa's support that made this study possible. Further, our gratitude goes to all people who took part in this study, including those who participated in all focus group discussions and key interviews.

We wish to thank the ZDI board members and research team for their work in the production of this report.

## FOREWORD

This report puts the spotlight on the elephant in the room in Zimbabwe's national affairs – the partisan involvement of the security forces in civilian and electoral affairs. Ahead of the 30 July 2018 elections, president Mnangagwa repeatedly promised to deliver credible, free and fair elections. But his promises ring hollow in light of the findings in this report detailing how the deployment of soldiers in villages throughout Zimbabwe has created a climate of fear that undermines the holding of free and fair elections.

Zimbabwe's highly politicised and extremely partisan military leadership has for several years interfered in the nation's political and electoral affairs in ways that have adversely affected the ability of Zimbabwean citizens to vote freely. For example, during the 2008 elections the army played a major role in extreme, widespread and systematic political violence that led to the killing of up to 200 people, the beating and torture of 5,000 more, and the displacement of 36,000. There was no justice or accountability for these abuses, entrenching impunity within the security forces.

The mere presence of soldiers in villages ahead of elections will no doubt have a chilling effect on villagers who will freshly remember the extreme violence of the past that was not punished. This climate of fear leads to subliminal terror, to subtle and 'smart' forms of intimidation that do not involve actual violence. Zimbabwe Democracy Institute has carried out this timely and crucial study to raise red flags and provide pointers to keen observers to pay special attention to the villages and to subliminal, rather than open terror.

Zimbabwe's neighbors in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union should press president Mnangagwa and his government to dismantle the climate of fear and ensure the political neutrality of the security forces and non-interference in the country's civilian and electoral affairs. Zimbabwe is party to the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections established to promote regular free and fair, transparent, credible and peaceful democratic elections. Under the SADC Principles countries commit to take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent political violence, intolerance, and intimidation.

Dewa Mavhinga, Southern Africa Director at Human Rights Watch

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Copyright Statement .....  | ii   |
| Acknowledgements.....  | iii  |
| FOREWORD .....   | iv   |
| Table of Contents.....   | v    |
| Summary of Key Findings .....  | vii  |
| Perception on presence of soldiers in villages .....                           | vii  |
| Extent of military presence per village/community .....                        | vii  |
| Perception of intensity of military presence in communities/ by province ..... | vii  |
| Identification of soldiers in the village .....                                | vii  |
| Perceived agenda of soldiers in the village.....                               | viii |
| Feelings about state of personal security under ‘militarized’ villages.....    | viii |
| Feelings about voting for the opposition with the military in villages .....   | viii |
| Perceptions on the possibility of free and fair elections on 30 July 2018..... | viii |
| Possible impacts of military presence in villages on voter apathy .....        | viii |
| Chapter One .....  | 1    |
| Introduction And Research Design.....  | 1    |
| Introduction.....  | 1    |
| Background to The Study .....  | 2    |
| Objectives Of The Study.....   | 4    |
| Research Questions .....   | 4    |
| Research Design.....   | 4    |
| Sampling Procedure .....   | 4    |
| Data Collection .....  | 6    |
| Data Analysis .....  | 6    |
| Summary .....  | 6    |
| Chapter Two.....   | 7    |
| Literature Review And Conceptualisation.....                                   | 7    |
| Introduction.....  | 7    |
| Electoral Fraud and Malpractice .....  | 7    |
| ‘Militarisation’ of the Election Environment.....                              | 11   |
| Summary .....  | 12   |
| Chapter Three.....   | 13   |
| A Climate of Fear: Soldiers in Villages Ahead of Elections .....               | 13   |
| Introduction.....  | 13   |
| Perceived Military Presence And the Harvest of Fear in Villages .....          | 13   |
| Agenda And Cohorts of the Military in Communities.....                         | 17   |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Implications of Military Presence in Villages on Voting in the Upcoming Elections..... | 20 |
| Summary .....  | 22 |
| Chapter Four .....   | 23 |
| Conclusion And Recommendations.....  | 23 |
| Summary .....  | 23 |
| Conclusion .....   | 23 |
| Recommendations.....   | 23 |
| Government.....  | 23 |
| Civic society.....   | 24 |
| Opposition parties .....   | 24 |
| International Community .....  | 24 |
| References .....   | 25 |
| About the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute .....   | 27 |

## **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

This study examined the military presence and fear as key ingredients in the 2018 menu of electoral manipulation in villages and the implications on the attainability of a free and fair election in Zimbabwe this year. A team of Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) researchers collected data from a sample of 154 key informants who were purposively sampled from among leaders of community-based organisations, traditional leaders, war veterans, members of the security sector, members of the opposition political parties, members of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party and ordinary villagers. Data collection was done from April to July 2018 through 64 in-depth interviews with key informants in sampled constituencies and three provincial focus group discussions in Mutare, Gweru, and Masvingo attended by 90 participants. The key areas unpacked by the study are as follows:

### **PERCEPTION ON PRESENCE OF SOLDIERS IN VILLAGES**

- 81% of the sampled respondents agreed that there are soldiers in villages while 19% dismissed the claims.
- Part of those agreeing on the presence of soldiers in villages are traditional leaders, community-based organisations leaders, politicians, liberation struggle war veterans, civil servants and ordinary villagers.
- Most of those who dismissed the claims are members of the ruling ZANU-PF party.

### **EXTENT OF MILITARY PRESENCE PER VILLAGE/COMMUNITY**

- 67% of the sampled respondents stated that at least five soldiers have been deployed in their communities.
- 11% of the respondents said at most five soldiers have been deployed in their communities while the remaining 22% did not comment.

### **PERCEPTION OF INTENSITY OF MILITARY PRESENCE IN COMMUNITIES/ BY PROVINCE**

- 100% of the respondents sampled in Mashonaland Central province said more than five soldiers have been spotted in their villages.
- In other provinces the percentages of those who agreed that at least five soldiers have been deployed in their villages are as follows: Mashonaland East province 88%, Mashonaland West province 72%, Masvingo province 60%, Midlands province 50%, and Matabeleland North province 38%.
- The study, therefore, shows that military presence in villages is more intense in Mashonaland Central, East and West provinces as compared to the Midlands and Matabeleland North provinces.

### **IDENTIFICATION OF SOLDIERS IN THE VILLAGE**

- 42% of the respondents said the deployed soldiers move around wearing army uniforms.

- The snap survey showed that soldiers also move around carrying guns and other military equipment. However, no cases of physical violence were recorded during this study.
- Some soldiers move around in civilian clothes but easily identifiable as some of the soldiers come from the sampled areas.

#### **PERCEIVED AGENDA OF SOLDIERS IN THE VILLAGE**

- The survey reveals highest responses of villagers being that the soldiers are campaigning for the ruling ZANU-PF party.
- 38% of the sampled respondents said the soldiers are campaigning for President Emmerson Mnangagwa to be voted into office in the 30 July 2018 elections.
- 34% of the respondents said the soldiers are in the villages ostensibly to do government agricultural work (Command Agriculture program). Most of this 34%, however, said they believed the soldiers are actually working undercover, hiding behind the agricultural work cover.
- 7% comprising of mostly ZANU-PF supporters said the soldiers are maintaining peace and security in the villages while the rest declined to comment.

#### **FEELINGS ABOUT STATE OF PERSONAL SECURITY UNDER 'MILITARIZED' VILLAGES**

- 46% of the sampled respondents said opposition political parties feel intimidated and deterred due to the militarization of the village while 45% stated that NGOs also feel intimidated and deterred for the same reason.
- The study shows that the soldiers work closely with war veterans and traditional leaders. However, most of the war veterans and the traditional leaders support the soldiers out of fear of being labelled 'dissidents.'

#### **FEELINGS ABOUT VOTING FOR THE OPPOSITION WITH THE MILITARY IN VILLAGES**

- 57% of the sampled respondents said they are afraid and feel insecure to vote for any opposition political party. They mentioned concerns about intimidation from top ZANU-PF officials.
- 31% of the respondents said they feel secure to vote for the opposition and do not feel threatened.

#### **PERCEPTIONS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS ON 30 JULY 2018**

- 48% of the respondents said election results will not be a true reflection of free choices of the people because of the military presence in the villages.
- 41% of the respondents said the upcoming election results will be a true reflection of free choices of the people.

#### **POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF MILITARY PRESENCE IN VILLAGES ON VOTER APATHY**

- 76% of the respondents said they will go and vote on the polling day knowing that there are soldiers in the village. Of this 76%, however, almost half mentioned that citizens' voting would not be out of free will but out of fear.
- 10% of the respondents said they will not go and vote as their votes will make no difference.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

---

*How can authoritarian governments manipulate elections without risking losing legitimacy? This question has been haunting the ZANU-PF government for some time now.*

*Following the military overthrow of former president Robert Mugabe on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) leadership, reports have been accumulating that the current government of ZANU-PF has intensified the military capture of the electoral space through a cocktail of sophisticated and decentralised electoral malpractice and fraud approaches embedding military personnel in every village and community ahead of the 2018 election.*

---

#### INTRODUCTION

A decisive factor to whether Zimbabwe can hold credible, free and fair elections in 2018 that will bring domestic and international legitimacy, is the role of the military, whose leadership for decades has interfered in the country's civilian and electoral affairs. According to the Global Militarization Index (GMI) 2017, Zimbabwe is ranked amongst the top ten most militarised countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and top 75 globally. The GMI shows the relative weight and importance of the military apparatus of one state in relation to its society. To measure militarization levels the GMI compares military expenditure with the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and its health expenditure (as share of its GDP); the contrast between the total number of (para)military forces and the number of medical doctors and the overall population; and the ratio

of the number of heavy weapons systems available and the total population.<sup>1</sup>

Zimbabwe's increased militarization and the military's direct interference in the country's civilian and political affairs came under the spotlight on 15 November 2017, when the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) leadership initiated "Operation Restore Legacy," that led to the overthrow of former president Robert Mugabe. The new president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, effectively came to power after a hybrid coup d'état.<sup>2</sup> Euphoria of optimism swept across the country and the international community about the possibility of a fresh start for the country in the aftermath of the military takeover.

An increasing number of reports from key election stakeholders indicate that the 'new dispensation' government of president Mnangagwa has deployed soldiers in villages and communities across the country ahead of the 2018 election. Among the key stakeholders who made these reports are the private media and opposition parties (Including the Movement for Democratic Change Alliance led by Nelson Chamisa and the National Patriotic Front (NPF) led by Ambrose Mutinhiri). Empirical data is essential to back up these reports to ensure they are not mere allegations. Empirical evidence of military presence in villages throughout Zimbabwe could be a key indicator of the significant obstacles in the country's ability to deliver credible, free and fair elections this year. Findings

---

<sup>1</sup> The Global Militarization Index (GMI) 2017, [https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx\\_bicctools/GMI\\_2017\\_EN.pdf](https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx_bicctools/GMI_2017_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>The overthrow of former president Mugabe is correctly identified by Gumbo (2018) as a 'hybrid coup' which combined: (i) a veto coup (removal of the ruling elite by the national army to protect the status quo from radical change) and (ii) a palace coup (political structures of existing regimes through deep and secretive plotting and conspiracy by rivals of the president within the ruling group who connive with the military to constitutionally oust the serving leader in a usually bloodless, quick and effective manner with very little destruction).

relating to the presence of soldiers in villages, and their political activities there, could influence thought leadership to avail strategic counter militarisation and electoral manipulation solutions ahead of the elections.

There was, therefore, need to: (i) investigate the veracity of these claims about the government's decentralisation of the 'militarisation' of the electoral environment to village level; (ii) unpack the implications of the presence of soldiers in villages on elections and possible electoral manipulation; (iii) examine the pre-election impact on voter behaviour; (iv) deduce the implications this militarisation and electoral manipulation has on the transition to a democratic dispensation; and (v) provide thought leadership to key stakeholders to the 2018 election to assist in devising counter measures to facilitate transition to a democratic dispensation.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

On numerous occasions, president Emmerson Mnangagwa has given public assurances that his government will deliver free and fair elections this year and oversee a transition to a democratic dispensation in Zimbabwe. The President has repeatedly emphasised that election observers from all the corners of the world are welcome to observe the elections. Mnangagwa's public statements about his commitment to free and fair elections have received mixed reactions ranging from cautious optimism to suspicion and scepticism. Granted, the Mnangagwa government has a legitimacy deficit arising from the military coup that brought it to power, and as such, delivery of a credible, free and fair election would be a key benchmark towards re-engagement with the international community. But it is possible that promising democratic

elections and inviting international donors could be a mere 'box-ticking' exercise. As noted by Bishop and Hoeffler (2014: 5) "the number of observed elections has steadily increased over time and it has become an internationally expected behaviour to invite election observers ... designed to signal a democratic intention to donors and investors."

Masunungure (2014:96) clarifies this problem of holding elections for a strategic reason where he notes: "some choose the electoral method ... for instrumental reasons, for example, to be accepted by the international community as democrats and therefore as legitimate and respectable." The observations by Bishop and Hoeffler (2014) and Manunungure (2014) show that conducting competitive elections, inviting election observers, and promises to hold free and fair elections has become an economically strategic approach by internationally isolated authoritarian regimes that struggle to get rid of the burden of illegitimacy. Even where elections are conducted fairly well, "when authoritarian regimes lose elections, power is not automatically transferred. These regimes commit a form of manipulation after election day if they fail to accept the results and retain power through other means" (Alvarez, et al 2008: 4). The 2018 election should be carefully and closely monitored to avoid a repeat of the 2008 elections that were characterised by extreme violence and electoral chicanery.

President Mnangagwa's public commitment to free and fair elections may amount to an 'authoritarian retreat.' However, it is yet to be seen how he plans to achieve this because "whereas it is possible to have elections without democracy, it is virtually impossible to have democracy without [credible] elections" (Olaniyan and Amao, 2015: 71). Meanwhile, the 'authoritarian

retreat' has charmed many, particularly in the West, to consider recasting their policy stances towards the ZANU-PF government to give them another chance if the change is sincere and genuine.

When assessing the post-Mugabe ZANU-PF government efforts to create a conducive environment for the holding of free and fair elections it should be noted that: (i) ZANU-PF has no experience in running state institutions without help from its patronage networks that include serving, undercover, and 'strategically' retired military personnel and; (ii) freeing the electoral playfield cannot be achieved without eliminating the ZANU-PF patronage network in key state institutions responsible for elections management. What this means is that, President Mnangagwa and his government must be ready to break-free from the past, and the first step is to destroy the ZANU-PF patronage system. Will president Mnangagwa and his military enforcers wilfully destroy this ZANU-PF system that they spoke and fought so hard to restore in November 2017?

Following the November 2017 military coup, president Mnangagwa and his 'Team Lacoste' that presently dominates ZANU-PF have devised and are pursuing a political survival agenda anchored on the following 'trinity for survival': (i) to have a foothold in those constituencies that were previously won by the rival G40 faction in ZANU-PF at House of Assembly, Senate and council level; (ii) to buttress the existing ZANU-PF gerrymandering system to counter pressure from the MDC Alliance and other opposition groups and; (iii) to gain domestic and international legitimacy through a cocktail of strategies that include a ploy to blinker and/or tweak perspectives in the international community (particularly Western superpowers) to see and believe that ZANU-PF has transformed to become a pro-democracy entity.

ZANU-PF has adopted a decentralised election campaign and voter mobilisation approach which puts much emphasis on strict monitoring, evaluation and surveillance of members at a cell (village) level, keeping strict records of such members and holding stratified person-to-person engagements paying attention to villages. Given ZANU-PF's history of running militarised elections since 1980 (ZDI, 2017; Masunungure, 2008) this cell-based election campaign approach and the 'militarisation' of the village came as no surprise. Decentralised military activities in a largely opaque terrain in villages usually go unnoticed when assessing the election environment and this usually leads to wrong conclusions.

The Mnangagwa administration, given its appetite for international recognition, is least likely to adopt overt tactics in the manipulation of the 2018 election. Schedler (2006:3) posits that, "authoritarian rulers, like successful enterprises, survive by innovation", analysis must brace for new ideas and strategies instead of expecting the usual to avoid being taken by surprise. Meanwhile, two key questions must be put forward: (1) is the ZANU-PF government not luring the international community through smokescreen electoral reforms? (2) In considering recasting foreign policy stances towards the ZANU-PF government, is the international community fully aware of the factual electoral environment and reforms at hand in Zimbabwe apart from what is communicated by ZANU-PF internationally? As Alvarez, et al (2008:4) correctly argued, "social scientists have an important opportunity to contribute to the detection and deterrence of election fraud." This study aims at contributing to the fulfilment of this national duty and provide thought leadership guidance in answering the key questions raised above.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The guiding and central objective of this study was to examine the electoral environment within the auspices of post-Mugabe efforts to make the 2018 election a breakthrough election and a transition into a democratic dispensation in Zimbabwe. Specific research objectives related to this guiding objective were:

1. To investigate the veracity of concerns about the government's decentralisation of militarisation of the electoral environment to a village level;
2. To unpack the basic tenets of this menu of electoral manipulation;
3. To examine the pre-election impact of militarisation of villages on possible voter behaviour;
4. To deduce implications of decentralised militarisation and electoral manipulation on the efforts to transition to a democratic dispensation once proven to be existent.

Overall, the research sought to provide answers to the extent to which the government that took power after Robert Mugabe has addressed the militarisation of the electoral environment prevalent in Mugabe's previous administration, whether anything more, less or different has been put in place of the traditional ZANU-PF 'military assisted' electoral victory and whether such a new mechanism is capable of ensuring a free and fair election which ultimately makes a transition to a democratic dispensation thinkable.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How true are concerns that the government has decentralised the militarisation of the electoral environment to a village level?
2. What are the basic tenets of this menu of electoral manipulation?
3. In what ways do the militarisation of the village and the observed menu of electoral manipulation impact possible voter behaviour in oncoming elections?
4. What implications do the decentralised militarisation of the electoral space and the observed menu of electoral manipulation have on the efforts to transition to a democratic dispensation in Zimbabwe?
5. How can key stakeholders to the 2018 election counter this militarisation of the village and electoral manipulation effects thereof to facilitate transition to a democratic dispensation?

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study adopted a mixed methods case study research design that used semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to collect data from purposively sampled constituencies and purposively sampled respondents. The rationale for purposively sampling respondents was to avoid seeking information on this sensitive issue where it is apparent that that none can be given. Another key consideration was the fact that these constituencies are very likely to have too much ZANU-PF electioneering activity since they were strongholds of the vanquished G40 faction of ZANU-PF which was loyal to former president Mugabe. Below is a detailed explanation of this design.

## **SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

This study was based on a mixed methods analysis of the presence of the military in villages throughout Zimbabwe and eight electoral constituencies were sampled and eight interviews were carried in each. In addition, three provincial focus group discussion sessions were then done as a follow-up strategy in Mutare, Masvingo and Gweru to ascertain the level of commonality between data collected through interviews. The total number of sampled key informants and participants in focus group discussions was 154.

*Figure 1.1: Purposive Sampling of Areas for In-depth Interviews*

| Sampled Constituency      | Province                     | Notes  |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Mberengwa East</b>     | Midlands Province            | Makhosini Hlongwane, the former ZANU-PF MP was fired from the party over alleged links to the G40 faction. |
| <b>Hurungwe East</b>      | Mashonaland West Province    | Sarah Mahoka, the former ZANU-PF MP was fired from the party over alleged links to the G40 faction.        |
| <b>Mount Darwin South</b> | Mashonaland Central Province | Saviour Kasukuwere, the former ZANU-PF MP was fired from the party over alleged links to the G40 faction.  |
| <b>Tsholotsho North</b>   | Matabeleland North Province  | Prof. Jonathan Moyo, the former ZANU-PF MP was fired from the party over                                   |

|                       |                           |  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--|
|                       |                           | alleged links to the G40 faction.  |
| <b>Marondera West</b> | Mashonaland East Province | Ambrose Mutinhiri, the former ZANU-PF MP resigned from the party and formed the opposition National Patriotic Front (NPF) party. |
| <b>Masvingo South</b> | Masvingo Province         | Dr Walter Mzembi (MP) was accused of links to the G40 group and expelled from Zanu-PF.   |
| <b>Zvimba North</b>   | Mashonaland West Province | Former president Robert Mugabe's home province, perceived to be key support base for the G40 faction.                            |
| <b>Zvimba South</b>   | Mashonaland West Province | Former president Robert Mugabe's home province, perceived to be key support base for the G40 faction.                            |

We chose these constituencies for their association with suspected key members of the G40 faction who are now former ZANU-PF members of parliament whose constituencies are likely to receive priority in deployment of the military to neutralise their influence. Focus on these constituencies would likely be driven by fears that the deep patronage networks left by the expelled G40 leaders that might tilt the vote against the 'Team Lacoste' ZANU-PF candidates posted there. Tsholotsho north constituency, apart from its association with the G40 kingpin Professor Jonathan Moyo for the

past 13 years, it has demonstrated to be prone to vote against ZANU-PF given the fact that no ZANU-PF MP has ever won this seat in contested elections since 2000. From each constituency, eight in-depth interviews with eight key informants were conducted. In addition to that, three provincial focus group discussions, each with 30 participants, were conducted in Mutare, Masvingo, and Gweru.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

Data was collected through: (i) in-depth interviews with purposively sampled key informants; (ii) non-participant observations; (iii) provincial focus group discussions and; (iv) desktop analysis of public data sets. An in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a local reality on the topic in question. It allows the study to gain access to what happens at a contextualised locality (the village) and capture how the phenomenon (military/soldiers presence in the village and the menu of electoral manipulation) affects the locals (villagers) and how they (villagers) think this will impact their behaviour in the future (upcoming elections). A semi-structured interview guide derived from the research questions stated above was used to guide data collection to ensure that the study meets stated objectives. Participants in provincial focus group discussions and interviews were sampled from knowledgeable citizens in each sampled constituency such as: (i) representatives of Community Based Organisations (CBOs); (ii) influential community members of the ruling ZANU-PF party; (iii) community members of opposition parties; (iv) community based citizen journalist coordinators; (v) randomly sampled villagers from the communities and; (vi) serving personnel in the military. Respondents of this nature were chosen for their proximity to first-

hand information due to their localised working area which makes them encounter key developments in villages such as the presence of soldiers in the village. The rationale for randomly sampling villagers and serving soldiers in the army was to test whether the data collected from the purposively sampled respondents (i)-(iv) mirrored what is generally conceived by villagers and known by serving soldiers.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data collected was subjected to a series of thematic and content analysis procedures to decipher key emerging trends, themes and supportive evidence. This study did not seek to document all the deployed soldiers, rather, it sought to shed light on the veracity of the allegations raised that villages have been militarised from the perspective of villagers in the village; CBOs in the village, electoral stakeholders in the village. Thus, thematic analysis and content analysis techniques were enough strategy for giving a picture into the veracity, extent, nature and rationale for militarising the village.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the reasons that compelled the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) to conduct this study and how this study was done. In brief, the study sought to have a quantitative glimpse alongside village-based explanations of what those who work in villages in the countryside see, think, feel and envision about the current electoral environment and implications on the possibility of holding free and fair elections on July 30, 2018. The following chapter presents a conceptual understanding of what makes an election that fails the 'free and fair' election status.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUALISATION

---

*There is indeed “wide agreement ... that free and fair elections are the cornerstone of any democratic system of government”;<sup>3</sup> passing or being close to attaining this cornerstone is a first step in showing genuineness of government commitment to bringing the country back to the long-walk to democracy.*

*Wherever ‘free, fair and/or credible’ elections are talked of, two key catchphrases come up: (i) electoral fraud and; (ii) electoral malpractice – which together serve to paint a picture of what people would have witnessed in cases where the ‘free and fair’ election standard is not satisfied.*

---

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a review of key literature conceptualising electoral manipulation which is key in understanding the ordeals in the struggle for a ‘free and fair’ election in Zimbabwe this year. The chapter reflects on key issues and areas of interest that should serve as the main subject of monitoring to election observers in Zimbabwe who are interested in documenting conditions and the environment around the upcoming elections. The chapter avers that, electoral manipulation is a key factor preventing the attainment of the ‘free and fair’ election status in many competitive authoritarian regimes and this is the most likely outcome in Zimbabwe 2018 elections. It examines two key sub-factors within the menu of electoral manipulation which militate against the achievement of an electoral environment conducive for holding free

---

<sup>3</sup>Observation by Snyder and Samuels (2006: 168).

and fair elections – electoral fraud and malpractice. Within the electoral manipulation dataset presented here is the military factor which also serves as a centre piece in electoral chicanery in most competitive authoritarian military regimes. Now that Zimbabwe has entered the list of military regimes in Africa, this factor should be taken seriously. In this context, it is essential to put the post-Mugabe menu of electoral manipulation into perspective. This chapter posits that competitive authoritarian regimes have many fascinating tools of electoral manipulation, including the omnipresence of the military hand. Authoritarian regimes are very innovative and dynamic in their pursuit of power retention, therefore, investigations should have a deeper focus than just considering what might be obvious or already known.

#### ELECTORAL FRAUD AND MALPRACTICE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attainability, and expose the genuineness, of the free and fair election promise given by president Mnangagwa and the commitment to usher in a democratic dispensation in Zimbabwe. There is indeed “wide agreement ... that free and fair elections are the cornerstone of any democratic system of government” (Snyder and Samuels 2006: 168); passing or being close to attaining a ‘free and fair election’ yardstick is a first step in showing genuineness of government commitment to bringing the country back to the long-walk to democracy. Wherever ‘free, fair and/or credible’ elections are talked of, two key catchphrases come up: (i) electoral fraud, and; (ii) electoral malpractice. These two together paint a picture of what people would have witnessed in cases where the ‘free and fair’ election standard is not met. The study focused on those factors that make it impossible to have free and fair elections. It deliberately

defines what constitutes 'free and fair elections' as those elections where cases of electoral fraud and malpractice are extremely limited and/or non-existent.

Firstly, it is important to understand what constitutes "electoral fraud and/or electoral malpractice" to be able to unpack the extent to which the post-Mugabe government has been and/or is walking the talk with regards delivery of free and fair 2018 elections. Schedler (2002:44-45) identified 'electoral fraud' as a key ingredient in "The Menu of Manipulation," used to steal elections in many competitive authoritarian regimes like Zimbabwe and he defined it as:

... the introduction of bias into the administration of elections... [that] ... can take place at any stage of the electoral process, from voter registration to the final tally of ballots ... [including] ... such activities as forging voter ID cards, burning ballot boxes or padding the vote totals of favored parties and candidates... [and it] ... distort the citizenry's preferences by denying voting rights to some citizens, while amplifying the voice of others.

Two points pertaining to the perception and essence of electoral fraud respectively are noteworthy. First is that, electoral fraud perception starts with the beginning of the electoral process, that is, during the registration period and continues till the announcement of election results. Schedler adds that election rigging and/or manipulation that happens during the elections also happens in pre- and post-election processes (Schedler, 2002). Bishop and Hoeffler (2014:3) also contend that "most observer organisations concentrate on the election as an event, i.e. whether the election was fair.... international organisations should put more emphasis on monitoring the run up to the elections, i.e. whether the elections were free." Thus, any assessment of the electoral environment that

begins during the election period (after announcement of the election date) omits a lot of data needed in determinations done to accord a 'free and fair/ credible election' status. Secondly, the essence of electoral fraud begins from the national identity registry stretching to the voter registration, voting process to the counting of the vote.

Bishop and Hoeffler (2014:6) correctly locate the beginning of electoral chicanery;

The right to vote, the registration of voters, freedom to stand as a candidate in the election and campaign freely and access to the media ... in the run up to the elections... counted accurately, the results from each polling station have to be reported and added up correctly. Complaints have to be handled by an independent agency.

No credible assessment of the credibility, freeness and fairness of the electoral environment isolates manipulation in the national identity registry because that is where the menu of manipulating identity and figures begins. It should be noted that this definition summed many acts of institutionalized practices that can create bias in favour of the incumbent in the electoral process which can either be legally provided for in electoral statutes of an authoritarian regime or illegal. This study contends that electoral laws of Zimbabwe and the identity registration processes must be examined together with other subjects of analysis if a clear picture of the electoral environment is to be given.

A more telling conceptualisation of this phenomenon is given by Vickery and Shein (2012:9) who state that, "electoral fraud is deliberate wrong-doing by election officials or other electoral stakeholders, which distorts the individual or collective will of the voters." From this definition, three key points should be underlined:



(a) electoral fraud is ‘deliberately’ doing what is prohibited by the laws and regulations governing the conduct of elections and the constitution of the land to disadvantage one political party or person to the benefit of another; (b) officials of election administration bodies are not alone in practicing electoral fraud, other stakeholders such as the civic society, political parties, government institutions, the security sector, media, investors, the business sector, the international community and key powerful countries can connive in wrongdoing to disadvantage one political party during the electoral period and; (c) the outcome of these activities result in the victory of political persons or parties that would have lost the election not because they are the people’s choice but because the fraudulent system disadvantaged and suppressed the power of the actual vote in determining the winner.

Electoral fraud is different from electoral malpractice which is another key ingredient in the ‘menu of manipulation’. Vickery and Shein (2012:9) argue that this difference is in that, “electoral malpractice is the breach by an election professional of his or her relevant duty of care, resulting from carelessness or neglect.” Whereas electoral fraud “is based on wrongful intent”, electoral malpractice is based on negligence of duty (Ibid). Figure 1.1 below gives a clear picture of how electoral fraud and malpractice works.

Figure 2.1: Elements of Electoral Fraud and Malpractice

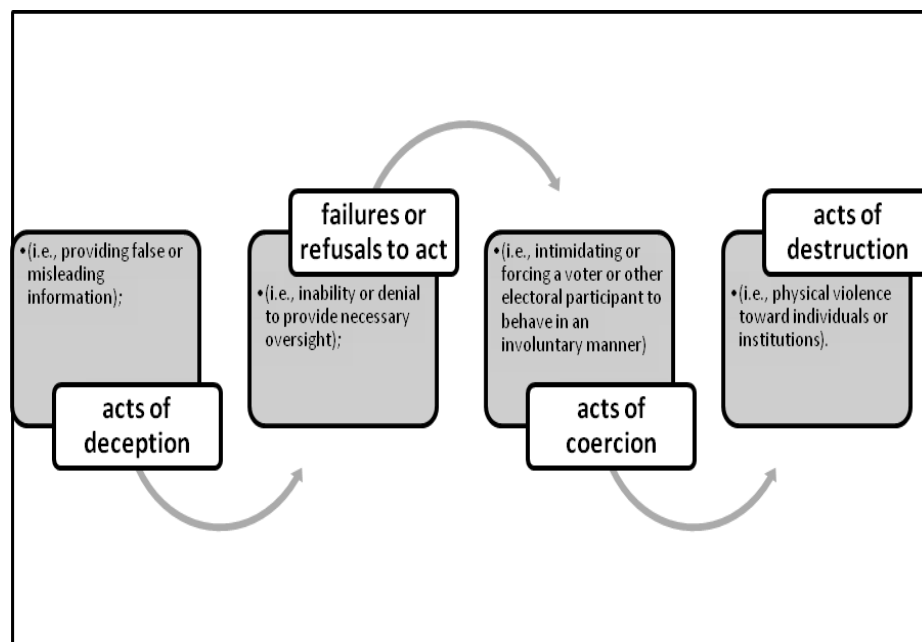
|                                   |                        | Electoral Fraud   | Electoral Malpractice  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Elements of the definition</b> | <b>Possible actors</b> | Election officials, other public officials, voters, political parties, candidates, media  | Election officials (including full-time and ad hoc workers performing official duties related to any stage of the electoral process)                                 |
|                                   | <b>Action</b>          | Actor knowingly interferes with the electoral process   | Actor is negligent or careless in carrying out his or her election-related responsibilities  |
|                                   | <b>Intent</b>          | The action or omission is committed deliberately  | The interference results from carelessness/neglect ( <i>gross negligence may rise to the level of criminal malpractice, regardless of whether intent is proven</i> ) |
|                                   | <b>Result</b>          | Distorts the will of the people. This may manifest itself as interference with individual votes, or in overall vote counts that impact the result or results of the election. <sup>29</sup> | May lead to irregularities in the electoral process, some of which may prevent the election outcome from reflecting the will of the people                           |

Source: Vickery and Shein (2012:12).

It can be argued that whereas electoral fraud can be done by all stakeholders in an election, electoral malpractice is only done by officials responsible for election management from the beginning of the election process to the end which results in other political players being prejudiced. However, this study deals with electoral fraud and the role of the military therein. As stated above, this study found that the Mnangagwa administration uses covert manipulative tactics that are short of overt which might go unperceived by those accustomed to Mugabe’s open manipulation strategies. Thus, it is

important to consider Birch and Carlson's (2012:2) use of four-pronged categorisation of acts of electoral misconduct and their manifestations to ensure that even the most covert of the strategies can be exposed and documented for public scrutiny.

*Figure 2.2: Birch and Carlson's Conceptualisation of Electoral Malpractice*

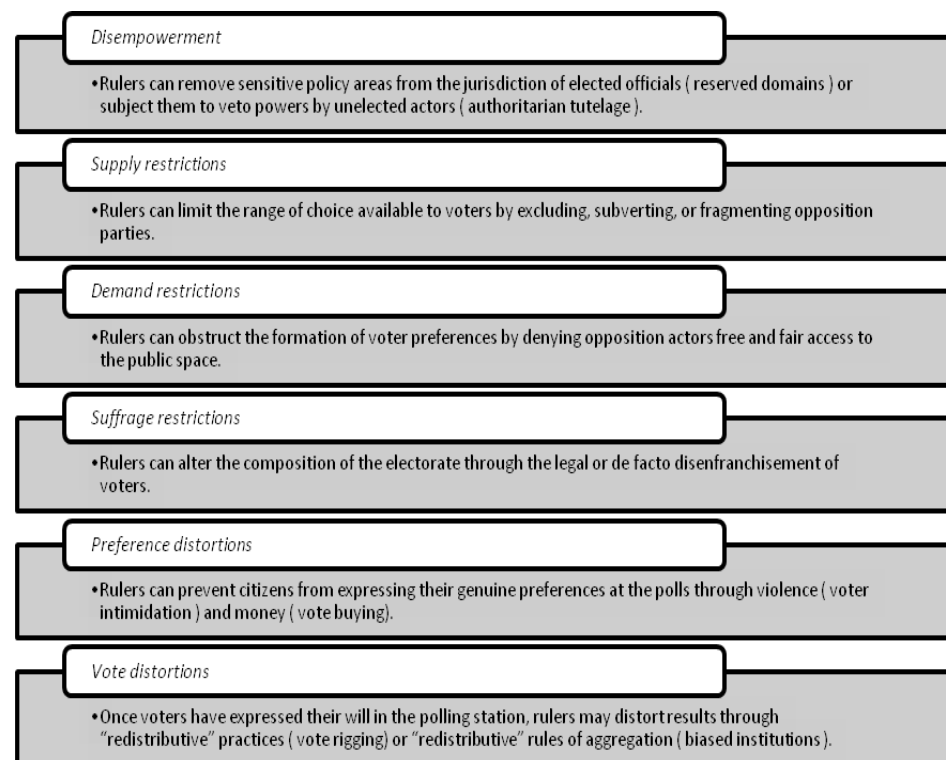


*Source: Birch and Carlson (2012:2).*

When combined, all acts of electoral fraud and malpractice build-up the menu of electoral manipulation utilised by competitive authoritarian regimes to win elections without democracy – a challenge that has characterised Zimbabwean electoral politics for

some time now. This is what was noted by Schedler (2006: 334) that, in these regimes, “even if they introduce multiparty elections to all levels of authority ..., they have a broad repertoire of manipulative measures at their disposal to contain the uncertainty of electoral outcomes...” The following (figure 1.3) is a diagrammatic presentation of Schedler (2006)’s conceptualisation of key ingredients in the menu of electoral manipulation.

*Figure 2.3: The Menu of Electoral Manipulation*



*Source: Adapted from ideas in Schedler (2006).*

In light of the above areas of electoral chicanery that can be used to 'manage' elections in competitive authoritarian regimes, this study scans the Zimbabwean electoral environment with the aim of searching for the manifestation of electoral fraud. Guided by conceptual insights in Schedler (2002), Birch and Carlson (2012), Vickery and Erica Shein (2012) as discussed above, this study identified key areas of consideration in trying to navigate the 2018 electoral environment and decipher the essence of the menu of manipulation used by the post-Mugabe ZANU-PF government despite its claim to ensure free and fair elections. The menu of electoral manipulation centres on the 'militarisation' of the electoral environment.

#### **'MILITARISATION' OF THE ELECTION ENVIRONMENT**

The military factor cannot be left out when short-listing key subjects of investigation if a realistic picture of the extent of electoral fraud and malpractice in the 2018 election environment is to be seen. Following the decolonisation of many African states as happened in Zimbabwe, the problem of the military and its interests in African politics emerged. As noted in Matlosa and Zounmenou (2016: 95), "... the legitimacy of some ... governments moved from the will of the people to the barrel of a gun... The military became a power unto itself." A serious analytical misfiring will be recorded if the hand of the military, its interests and influences on the attainability of free and fair election is isolated when investigating the freeness and fairness of the 2018 electoral environment in Zimbabwe. Worse now that one of the candidates running for the presidential office was brought to his position by the military.

Leading researchers in the militarisation of electoral politics,

Levytsky and Way (2002) have stated that: (i) this phenomenon is a political culture symptomatic of competitive authoritarian regimes where elections without democracy are conducted as a ritual to rubberstamp the ruling elite's stay in power and; (ii) four key institutions of the state that are targeted and/or captured by competitive authoritarian regimes are: the electoral system; the legislature; the judiciary; and the media. Although these researchers gave a conceptual and nuanced understanding of the operation of the electioneering machinery in competitive electoral regimes, they did not give a comprehensive account of how villages can be militarized short of violence and the impacts this has on holding free, fair and credible elections. This decentralization of the militarization of politics seems to be a missing link in their data set.

Diamond (2002), another key researcher in this area of militarised elections noted that some competitive electoral regime cases depend on the politicized military to "carve out large, autonomous spheres of political influence and economic domination behind the veil of civilian, multiparty rule" (Diamond, 2002:27). By this, the researcher meant that, the authoritarian ruling elite creates over powerful military elites whose influence and/or policy stance intimidates voters to always avoid voting against military interests.

ZDI (2017) has done an interrogation into the problem of military capture of public institutions and its report gives compelling findings to the tune that contemporary competitive authoritarian regimes do not only capture the state; they capture the dominant political party and turn it into a tool for capturing the state, the economy and the electoral system. In another study, ZDI (2017b) noted that institutions (the electoral system, judiciary, legislature

and the media) cannot be effectively captured through merely populating them with security sector personnel and friends, an authoritarian state deploys the military in every decision-making body of the state at all levels to ensure that the impact in those targets for maintaining and retaining power is well assured.

Three basic and clear interest-based points of the military elite have been made clear in Zimbabwe following the coup d'état in 15 November 2017 that brought president Emerson Mnangagwa to power: (i) the military elite must occupy strategic and leading positions in ZANU-PF and Cabinet to enable a military control of the political sphere and economy; (ii) that President Mnangagwa is the best face for serving military interests in ZANU-PF and government so far; (iii) that the constitution cannot hinder military interests whenever they are at stake. With these points clearly communicated to Zimbabweans, one wonders how else would the military be expected to ensure continuity and security of its interests as articulated in those three points in face of: (a) hotly contested 2018 elections; (b) deeply factionalised ZANU-PF party which has suffered loss of key electioneering kingpins in the G40 and; (c) serious challenges associated with selling their chosen candidate president Mnangagwa to the disgruntled electorate who see Mugabe and Mnangagwa as authors of poor policies and economic decline in the past 37 years of ZANU-PF rule. Faced with these challenges, the militarisation of the village hypothesis is the most effective possible answer to these. However as stated above, following his coming to power, president Mnangagwa assured Zimbabwe and the world that he will deliver a free and fair election and head Zimbabwe's transitioning to a democratic dispensation. This calls for a revisit of the military factor in Zimbabwe's electoral affairs to ascertain whether anything has

been done to ensure that a free and fair election (free from military interference) is achieved.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter presented that electoral manipulation is the centre of digression from free and fair elections. Reviewed literature shows that this manipulation is usually centered on electoral fraud and electoral malpractice – the two main facets in militarization of the electoral landscape which make up the menu of electoral manipulation in many competitive authoritarian regimes like Zimbabwe. Monitoring the electoral environment in Zimbabwe should be able to assess and/or identify the menu of electoral manipulation as correctly signaled in this chapter and inform corrective or defensive measures that can be put in place to defend the transition. Now that literature has spoken, the following chapters present key findings of this study on these issues in Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER THREE

### A CLIMATE OF FEAR: SOLDIERS IN VILLAGES AHEAD OF ELECTIONS

---

*Key findings show that the electoral environment and the election that follows have already been manipulated through the strategic deployment of soldiers in villages throughout Zimbabwe to secure a ZANU-PF victory where many voters reside (rural areas). This strategy has increased the possibility of voter turn-out, the beneficiary being ZANU-PF. Psychological intimidation and subtle reminders of past violent elections have been deployed to give a clear and single message – that the military must not be disappointed in its efforts to securely ‘restore legacy’ and that legacy is nothing without president Mnangagwa emerging as the winner in the 30 July, 2018 election.*

---

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings of this study on the nature, extent and impacts of the presence of soldiers in communities and implications on the efforts to hold free and fair elections that will lead to a transition to a democratic dispensation in Zimbabwe. The main observation is that the ZANU-PF government has innovatively increased military presence in villages the intent being to have as much intimidated village voters as possible before the election date. Instead of use of open violence as usual, the Mnangagwa regime has devised and unleashed a sophisticated ‘military schematic deterrence’ of the village vote which is hinged on five fundamental and perceptible electoral manipulation avenues; (i) ‘strategic’ and sudden increment in actual and perceived military ‘presence’ in villages; (ii) relentless ministerial assurance of a looming military intervention to ‘defend legacy’; (iii) refreshing and maximising on historically embedded village fear of the soldiers; (iv) intimidating

and enrolling traditional leaders to propagate fear of the military and; (v) militarising key state and/or party structures that have a direct contact with villagers on a daily bases to intensify fear.

#### PERCEIVED MILITARY PRESENCE AND THE HARVEST OF FEAR IN VILLAGES

The study found that the ZANU-PF government has indeed militarised villages mainly to harvest, (i) fear induced voting preferences and/or (ii) fear induced voter apathy in the 30 July, 2018 elections. The unleashing of ‘military fear’ is in two ways, the psychological and the actual. In the menu of electoral manipulation conceptual framework, this kind of electoral chicanery falls under “failures or refusals to act” which *Birch and Carlson (2012:2)* define as “inability or denial to provide necessary oversight” and “acts of coercion” defined by the same scholars as “intimidating or forcing a voter or other electoral participant to behave in an involuntary manner.” The psychological fear involves use of traditional leaders, government ministers, social media, and ZANU-PF campaign teams, to spread threats among citizens that “the military is determined to defend the November 2017 outcome in the event that their subjects vote the opposition.”<sup>4</sup> The government’s failure to enforce the rule of law to reprimand Ministers such as Terence Mukupe and Josiah Hungwe, who have warned voters that the military will only respect a Mnangagwa win, seems to be a strategic silence meant to ensure that this kind of voter intimidation secures the intended outcome. This has not only intimidated voters who have seen soldiers in their villages, it has terrified even those villagers where the soldiers have not been.

---

<sup>4</sup>Comments by a CBO leader in Hurungwe. ZDI Interviews, April 2018.

ZDF spokesperson Colonel Overson Mugwisi addressing a press conference in Harare on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July to “tackle” the militarisation of the village question and clarify the role of the army in the July 30 election, after disputing figures given by media, he noted that the deployment of soldiers in communities has indeed been done not for political party campaign but for: (i) various command projects; (ii) border control operations; (iii) humanitarian demining activities; (iv) artisanal construction of community projects among others.<sup>5</sup> However, it should be noted that Zimbabwean communities are expected to react in line with their historical experience of the intent and effects of a sudden deployment of soldiers during an electoral environment. Due to a very ugly military interaction with electorates during the *Gukurahundi* epoch, the Operation *Murambatsvina* and the 2008 run-off election, “fear based” election manipulating effect of this deployment confirmed by ZDF cannot be ignored. Although being a legally correct argument raised by ZDF in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July press conference that their retired members have a constitutional right to join any political party, purposive sampling of retiring leaders of the November 2017 coup d’état to fill strategic ZANU PF party positions such as political commissar ((retired) Lieutenant General. Engelbert Rugeje) and vice president post by (retired) General Chiwenga, and politburo posts by the announcer of the coup d’état (retired) Major General Sibusiso Moyo leaves no doubt in the eyes of the populace in communities that ZDF is aligned to ZANU-PF in the oncoming election and their interests and ZANU-PF interests are inseparable. The timing of deployments makes them a ‘strategic’ and sudden increment in actual and perceived military ‘presence’ and it is

---

<sup>5</sup>ZDF Press conference video (Online). Available at: <https://youtu.be/SPdAHSVgxDU?t=>.

militarisation of key state and/or party structures that have a direct contact with villagers on a daily bases to intensify fear.

Rumours of an impending military terror campaign after the vote to punish disappointing voters have cancerously spread across the country through many agents such as ZANU-PF members, traditional leaders, newspapers and social media and we fear for our lives. You will agree with me here my son that I will be foolish if I choose to cause the death of these young children by just casting an unwanted vote.<sup>6</sup>

In this scenario, villagers have been made to think that 30 July is a day for tough choices, (a) choosing to disappoint military interests (voting against ZANU-PF) and face a military terror campaign thereafter as witnessed in Matabeleland and Midlands in 1980s and the 2008 electoral violence, or (b) betray their right to choose the candidate of their choice in the name of avoiding loss of lives, family, property and peace that come with all ‘remembered’ post-election military campaigns to punish ‘bad voters’. Under these circumstances, no free and fair election can be expected because psychologically intimidated electorates usually see voting ZANU-PF or avoiding participation in elections as a ticket to life.<sup>7</sup>

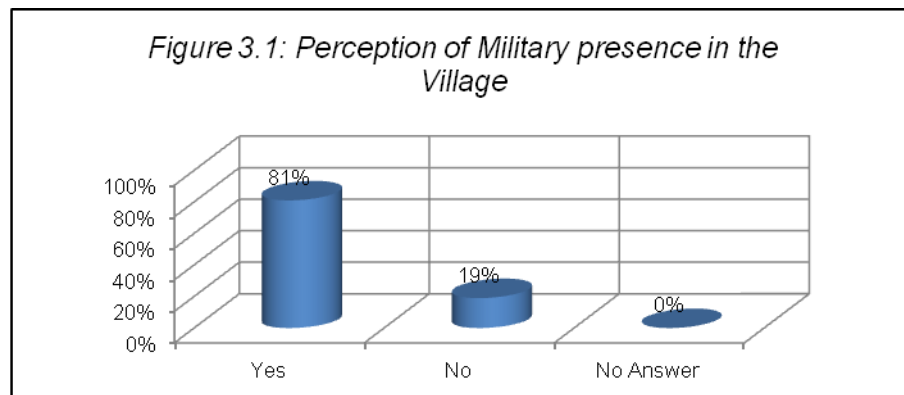
The actual unleashing of ‘military fear’ has manifested itself through a sudden increase in military presence in villages following Mugabe’s overthrow. Schedler (2006) identifies this under “preference distortions” ingredient in the menu of electoral manipulation wherein, “rulers can prevent citizens from expressing their genuine preferences at the polls through violence (voter intimidation) and money (vote buying).” To ascertain the veracity of

---

<sup>6</sup>Comments by a traditional leader in Zvimba-North. This message was reiterated by over 50% of ordinary citizens and confirmed by CBOs as the general feeling of the people they work with. ZDI Interviews, April 2018.

<sup>7</sup>Comment by a CBO leaders in Masvingo. ZDI Interviews, April-May 2018.

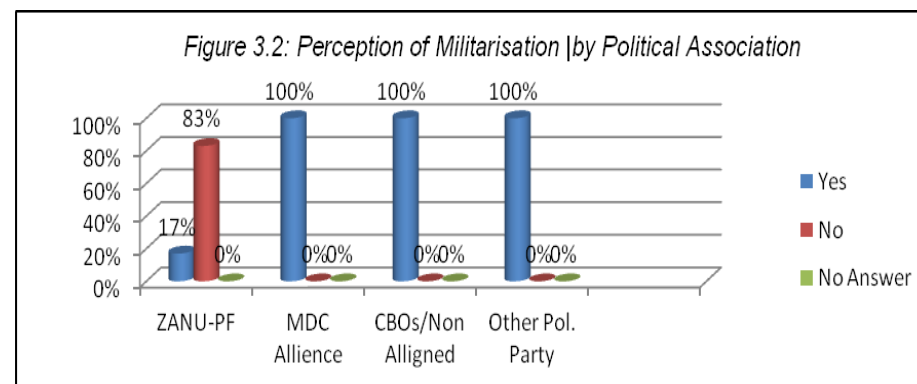
actual presence of soldiers in the village, respondents were asked the question below Figure 3.1 and results were as presented below.



**Respondents were asked – QA1:** *It has been published on media that the Government has deployed soldiers in communities. Do you think military/security personnel have been present in your village since beginning of 2018?*<sup>8</sup>

The 81% of the sampled respondents that confirmed having witnessed the sudden increase in the concentration of the military in their villages should be taken as an eye opener to the state of ‘felt’ and/or ‘thought’ electoral environment. Among these were traditional leaders, CBO leaders, politicians, liberation struggle war veterans, civil servants and ordinary villagers from across political diversities in Zimbabwe. However, 19% of the sampled respondents claimed not to have seen the military in their villages. As presented in Figure 3.2 below, this group comprised of liberation struggle war veterans and those who associate themselves with ZANU-PF.

<sup>8</sup>Interviews: April-May 2018.

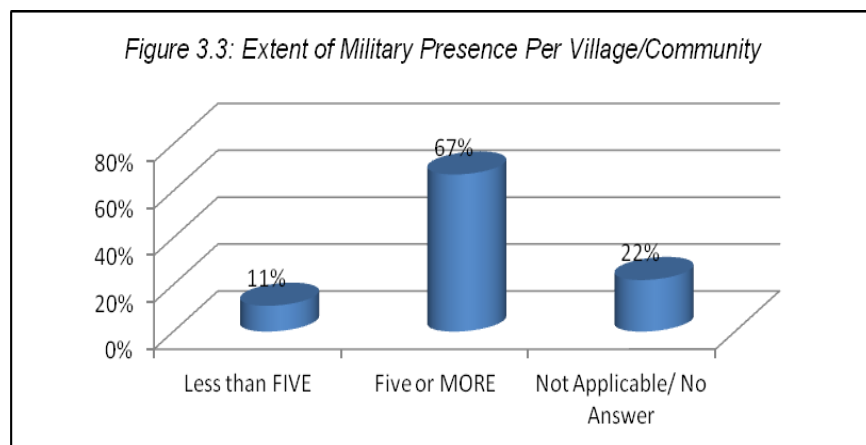


**Respondents were asked – QuestionA1:** *It has been published on media that the Government has deployed soldiers in communities. Do you think there has been a presence of military/security personnel in your village since beginning of 2018?*<sup>9</sup>

To further explore the perceived militarisation in the village, this study probed interviewees to give a picture of the extent of the military surge in their local communities and the following (Figure 3.3) was discovered.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.



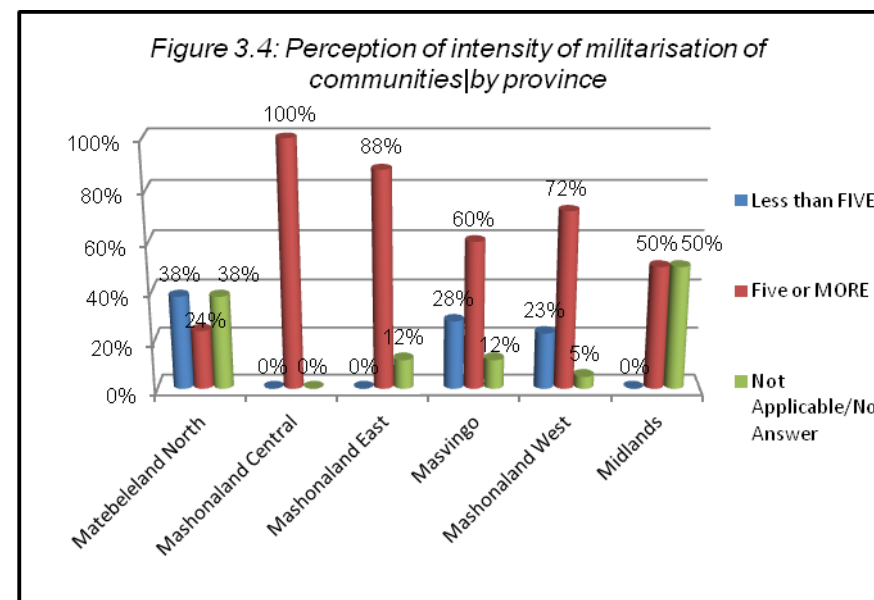


**Respondents were asked – Question A2:** Based on your above answer, state how many roughly are deployed in each village?<sup>10</sup>

From the above data, it appears the villages have been militarised to manipulate voter choices because it is unlikely to have more than five military officers spotted together in villages unless on government duty. This has kept villagers guessing ‘what’s next’ and reminiscences of what is associated with militarisation of villages in the run-up to elections in Zimbabwe makes fear and intimidation an expected and/or unavoidable outcome.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>ZDI Interviews – April –May2017.

<sup>11</sup>ZDI Roundtable discussions in Gweru, Masvingo, and Mutare – May 2018.



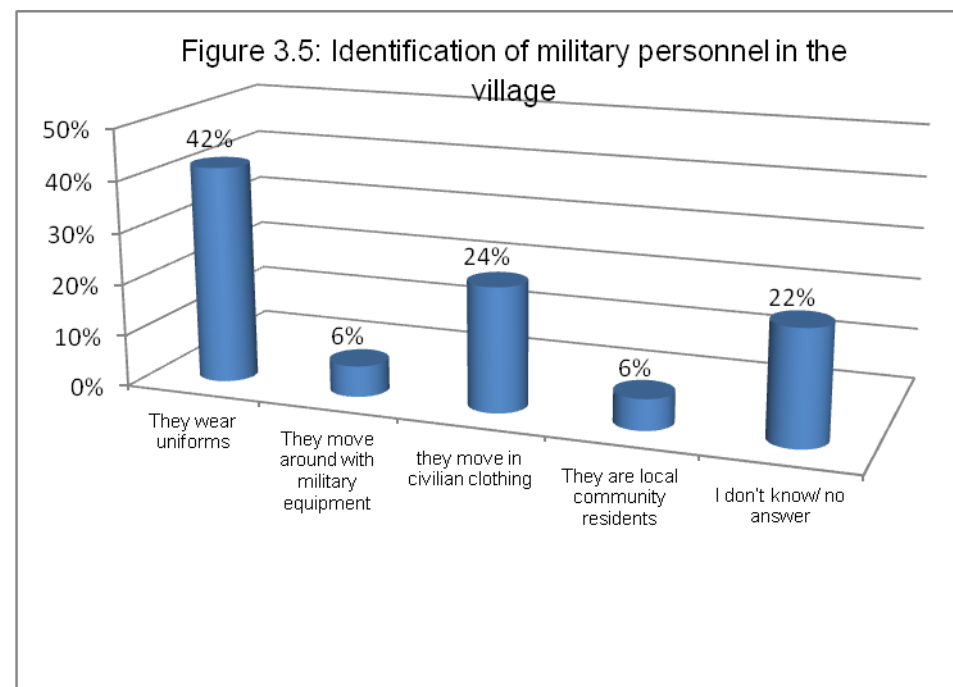
**Respondents were asked: Question– A2:** Based on your above answer, state how many soldiers, roughly, are deployed in each village?

This data (figure 3.4) indicates that military presence in villages is more intense in Mashonaland Central, East and West compared to Midlands and Matabeleland North. This is most likely because these areas have been a traditional support base of former president Mugabe and they therefore need ‘more electoral deterrence’ from embarking on revenge and/or punitive voting against president Mnangagwa. However, it was also raised by many interviewees in these regions that although the level of military presence has suddenly increased, there is no military violence yet and some of them are seen on their “Command Agriculture” duties and routine military exercises since there are military barracks in these regions. Electoral manipulation agenda



cannot be entirely divorced from possible strategic long-term plans of the government for a heavily militarised agriculture programme that coincides with the election period. It appears these soldiers serve more the electioneering function than the command agriculture programme.<sup>12</sup>

Further on the perception of military deployment in villages, the study probed to ascertain whether deployed soldiers can be easily distinguished from community civilians by anyone from other villages and following results (fig 3.5) were obtained.



**Respondents were asked: Question– A3: How are they (military persons/ soldiers) identified from civilians, do they wear uniforms or move around with military equipment?**<sup>13</sup>

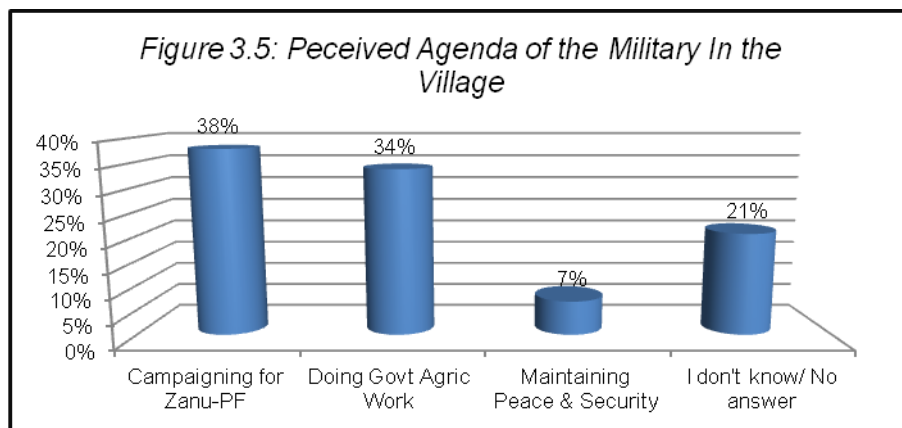
### AGENDA AND COHORTS OF THE MILITARY IN COMMUNITIES

The study further explored the intentions and effects of militarising villages during the electoral period. Knowing the observed and perceived agenda of the military in villages makes it easy to decrypt what government expects as outputs and outcomes from this unusual culture in communities. The general view in the villages is

<sup>12</sup>This is the general conclusion drawn from analysis of feelings of community members towards these soldiers on command agriculture program.

<sup>13</sup>Interviews & Focus Group Discussions: April-May 2018.

that the military is there to enforce the will of the ruling ZANU-PF party and create an electoral environment that makes it difficult for it to be defeated in the 30 July election. In all focus group discussions and in-depth interviews conducted for this study, sampled respondents were asked to state what they see and/or perceive as the agenda of 'increased' numbers of military personnel in their villages and/or communities. Collected data reflected key trends as presented in Figure 3.5 below.

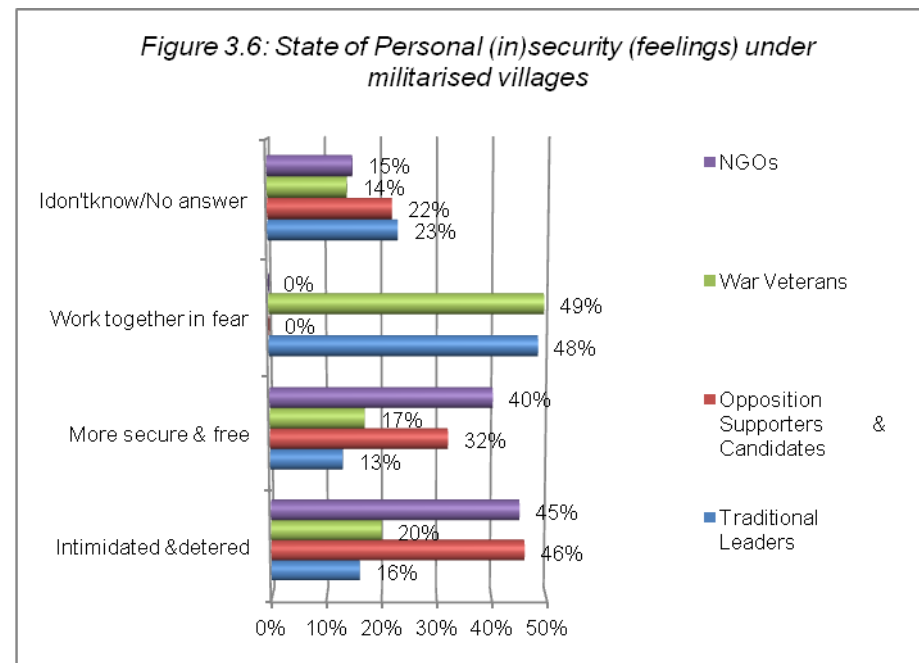


**Respondents were asked: Question– B1: What are those security/military officers doing in the village?**<sup>14</sup>

Sights and perceptions of military personnel “campaigning for ZANU-PF” (38%) followed by “Command Agriculture” (34%) were the most prominent in the list of main activities done by the ‘villagised’ military in Zimbabwe ahead of 2018 elections. Respondents also noted that the military forces ‘claim’ to be spearheading agricultural activities in Bindura, Matabeleland North

<sup>14</sup>Interviews: April-May 2018.

and Mount Darwin.<sup>15</sup> People have been intimidated and this works to the advantage of ZANU-PF.



**Respondents were asked: Question– B2: Since you or the following groups heard and/or saw the increased presence of soldiers in villages, how are you (they) thriving in this election period? 1) Traditional Leaders; 2) Opposition political parties; 3) War Veterans and; 4) NGOs.**

These revelations are what matters for the success of the menu of electoral manipulation, even if government primary intention in sending soldiers to communities was to assist in its Command Agriculture program, what has been felt by the people as a result vis-à-vis the oncoming election matters the most.

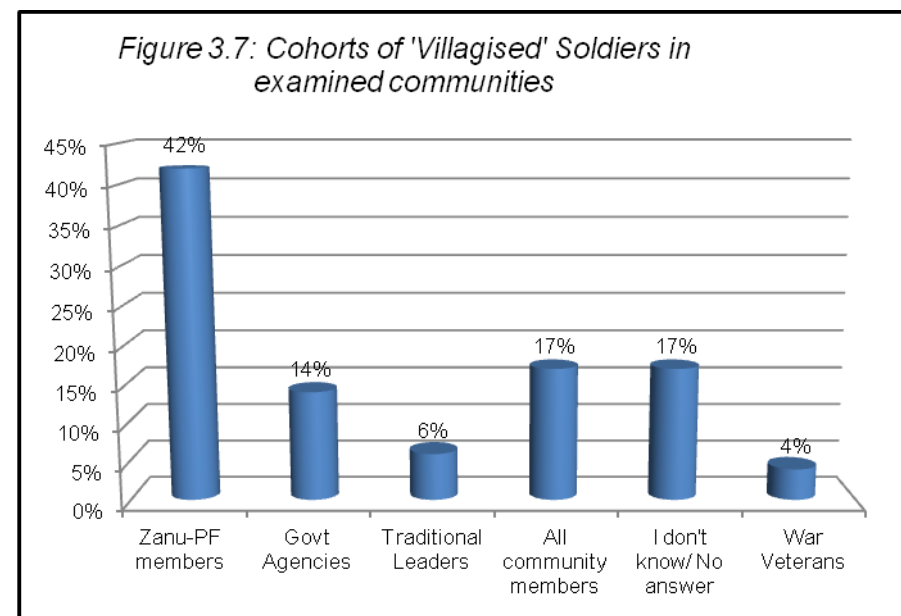
<sup>15</sup>Interviews April- May 2018 in Tsholotsho North, Mount Darwin and

What this means is that, safety for the future of village electorates is increasingly dependent on victory of ZANU-PF since the 'villagised' soldier is in a good position to identify village members who support the opposition for lynching. Vulnerable villagers have seen who the military supports and will make a wise choice of preventing military interference with their peace in July 30.<sup>16</sup>

No free and fair election can be expected from such an environment. Psychological and physical manipulation of feelings (fear) has been done and entrenched by government across villages.

People think these soldiers are here to spy on them and know them better to easily pick them up in the event that the people they work with and/or for lose the election. They (soldiers) are seen supporting and working with the current running ZANU-PF Parliamentary and council candidates.<sup>17</sup>

"They are requesting people's voting serial numbers and counting numbers of those registered to vote, I can safely say they are campaigning for Mnangagwa," said a respondent from Chihota area in Mashonaland East province. This was also captured in data gathered in response to another question asked in pursuit of a clear picture of village partners working in cohorts with military personnel in villages. Figure 3.7 below shows a list of key community actors working in cohorts with deployed officers in the order of their prominent partnerships.



**Respondents were asked: Question– B3: Who works with these deployed officers?**<sup>18</sup>

The graph shows that military forces work more often with ZANU-PF candidates and members than they do with other community members followed by working with all community members and government agencies. What this entails is that, (i) ZANU-PF candidates have been given an advantage of appearing as 'owning' the soldiers who 'removed Mugabe' and capable of removing anyone else if such a command is given; (ii) citizens have been left very vulnerable now that soldiers do head counts in distribution of command agriculture inputs, they think soldiers know them better

<sup>16</sup>ZDI Interviews, Hurungwe – May 2018.

<sup>17</sup>Respondent from Mswigana area in Tsholotsho North. ZDI Interviews, April-May 2018.

<sup>18</sup>Interviews: April-May 2018

than before and it is therefore very risky to oppose their masters; (iii) it is a reality that ZDF has gained popularity in some areas of the country that wanted former President Mugabe to leave power; however, ZANU-PF has unfairly claimed this victory in such a manner that villagers are made to believe that soldiers removed Mugabe as a command from ZANU-PF and this has to a certain extent attracted voters while intimidating those who wish ZANU-PF to leave power. These impressions have serious implications on the attainability of a free and fair election in Zimbabwe.

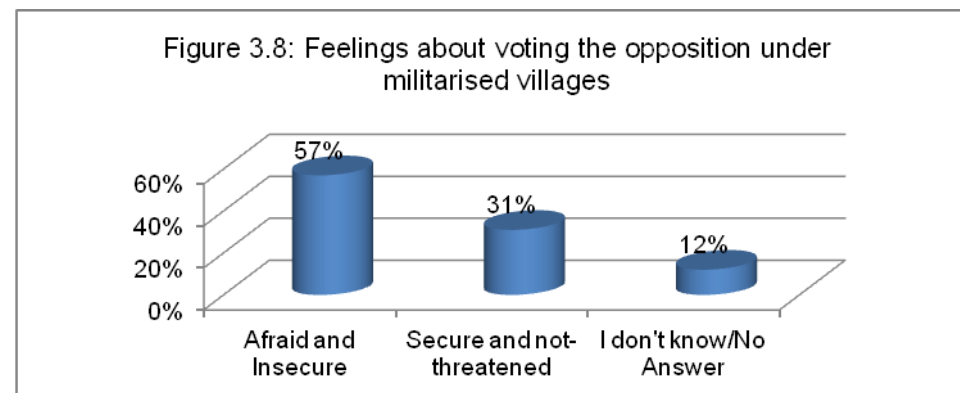
#### IMPLICATIONS OF MILITARY PRESENCE IN VILLAGES ON VOTING IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS

The military presence in villages throughout Zimbabwe has many grave implications on the freeness and fairness of the upcoming election. As stated by former ZANU-PF chief strategist Professor Jonathan Moyo that, “I repeat what I said in 2002: ‘where the army is deployed, don't expect a picnic.’ When the Army was deployed in 2008, it was not a picnic, it was a reversal of a poll result; and when it was deployed last November, it wasn't a picnic, it was a COUP!”<sup>19</sup> These statements ring true in Zimbabwean villages because knowledge and remembrance of the brutal past brings fear, especially when there are threats of a repeat of that past.<sup>20</sup> The grand impact is to either force electorates to vote president Mnangagwa or to desist from participating in elections at all if doing so will result in the defeat of the incumbent president. This is, in

<sup>19</sup> <https://twitter.com/ProfJNMoyo>.

<sup>20</sup> The Mnangagwa government has strategically deployed its ministers such as Terrence Mukupe and Hungwe to remind the electorate of this looming terror and later on utilised its commissar, Engelbert Rugeje to buttress the warning call. <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/05/army-wont-let-chamisa-rule-minister/>. See also, We Will Not Leave The Army When Campaigning For 2018 Elections. <https://news.pindula.co.zw>.

clear terms, a cunningly hewn electoral manipulation strategy that recasts historical realities to deter prospective opposition votes. Figure 3.8 below gives a glimpse into the outcomes of militarising villages on citizens' feelings as they approach July 30, 2018 elections.

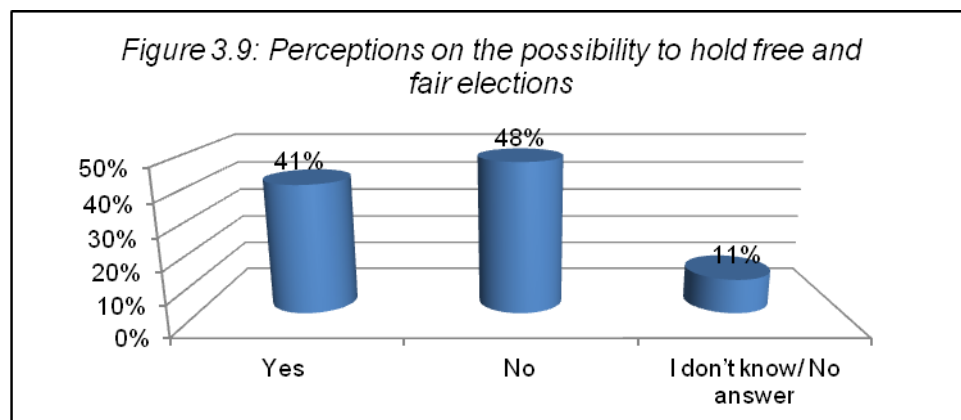


**Respondents were asked: Question– C1: What is the general feeling about voting the opposition in villages with increased military presence? Explain why?**<sup>21</sup>

To qualify their fears and insecurities (57%) revealed above, three major reasons were given: (i) hearing politicians with influential decision making powers in government and ZANU-PF such as Josiah Hungwe, Terrence Mukupe and Rugeje stating the same message of military reprisals after voting Mnangagwa out leaves no doubt that voting ZANU-PF is a conflict prevention strategy; (ii) soldiers in villages know people by names in those villages, so the anonymity of the vote has become very limited, people can easily be rounded up at night and punished and; (iii) the international community, especially the United Kingdom, has shown an eagerness to re-engage ZANU-PF government. This has made it

<sup>21</sup> ZDI Interviews & Focus Group discussions: April - May 2018.

seem plausible that if the military perpetrated post-election violence it will be shielded from international censure by powerful countries in alliance with president Mnangagwa's government as was experienced during the Gukurahundi period. Figure 3.9 below sums the perceptions of the people in militarised villages on the oncoming election – whether it will give a true reflection of what should be a free and fair election.



**Respondents were asked: Question– C2:** *Since 2018 elections are fast approaching, do you think election results will be a true reflection of free choices of the people following the militarization of the village? Explain why?*<sup>22</sup>

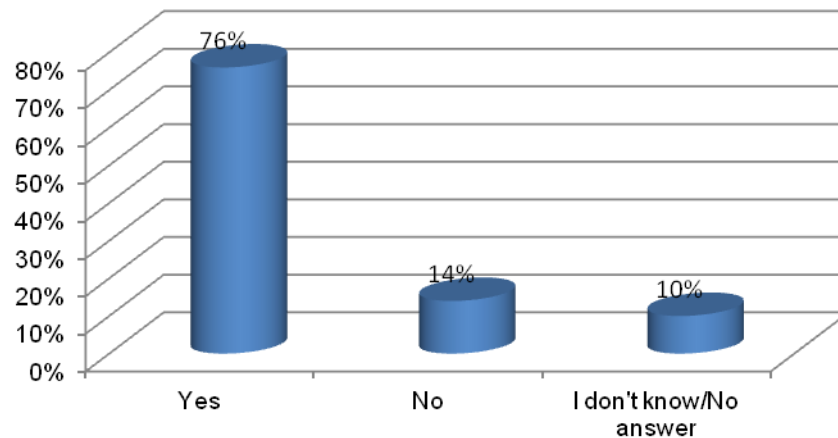
As indicated above, 48% of the respondents mentioned that election results will not be a true reflection of free choices of the people following the militarization of the village. Most of the respondents said citizens are in fear of the presence of the army; they fear that the ruling party, ZANU-PF, is likely to use the military to manipulate election results. “No. People are not safe. The pre-election phase has been characterized by militarization, intimidation

and cohesion,” said a respondent from Mount Darwin. “Election rigging will take place as ZANU-PF is likely to be defeated,” said another respondent from Chimbwanda area. Respondents said it is likely that ZANU-PF will not accept defeat, “they will rig elections like they always did in the Mugabe era,” said a respondent. However, 41% of the respondents said the oncoming election results will be a true reflection of free choices of the people. “Yes, citizens are going to experience free, fair and credible elections as there is no militarization of the village,” said a ZANU-PF council candidate in Tsholotsho. “For the past years, villagers have always voted freely without any harm or force hence this years’ election will also reflect their free choices,” argued a respondent in Mberengwa East. However, 11% of the respondents said they are not sure or in other words they were not open to comment.

The absence of physical violence in those militarised villages has made ZANU-PF project a false image of the electoral environment; they have made observers believe that just because there are no beatings of the people, there is no use of physical violence. This is why many interviewed ZANU-PF officials and other observers thought as reflected in the 41% cluster; they think absence of physical violence constitutes a free and fair election. The resurrection, re-freshening and reminiscences of past violence and using such to influence future choices constitute use of psychological violence and hence a chief strategy in the 2018 ZANU-PF/Military deterrence of the village votes. Figure 3.10 below gives findings on possible outcomes of militarisation of the communities on voter turn-out.

<sup>22</sup>ZDI Interviews & Focus Group Discussions: April- May 2018.

Figure 3.10: Possible impacts of Militarising Villages on Voter Apathy



**Respondents were asked: Question– C3:** Do you think you or other people will go and vote on the polling day knowing that there are soldiers in the village? Explain why?<sup>23</sup>

The survey shows that voters in militarised villages are resolute in participating in on-coming elections; 76% of the respondents said they will go and vote on the polling day knowing that there are soldiers in the village. However, among this 76%, almost half of them mentioned that citizens' voting would not be out of free will but out of fear. 'Yes they will definitely go and vote but this would be out of fear especially knowing that soldiers will make a follow up on whether they voted or not,' said a respondent from Chimbwanda area. 'Yes, we will go and vote just in fear that we will be asked to

provide exhibit that we have actually voted in the election,' added a respondent from Mashonaland Central. This shows that citizens are not free and they are not going to vote out of willingness but to prevent disappointing the agenda of the ruling party. It must be noted that other respondents (mostly ZANU-PF members) within the 76% said citizens will go and vote freely 'the army is only there to protect citizens not to disturb consensus,' said a respondent from Mberengwa. However, 10% of the respondents said they will not go and vote as their votes are not recognized, 'Why vote while I am sure that my vote doesn't count,' said a respondent.

## SUMMARY

This chapter presented key findings of the study on the schematic ZANU-PF deterrence of the village vote. The chapter shows that the electoral environment and the election that follows have already been manipulated to secure a ZANU-PF victory were many voters reside (rural areas). The study also noted that this strategy has increased the possibility of voter turn-out the beneficiary being ZANU-PF. Although findings discovered that there is no use of physical violence so far, psychological intimidation and resurrection of memories of a violent military/ZANU-PF election campaign have been cunningly hewn to the ousting of Robert Mugabe to give a clear and single message – that the military must not be disappointed in its efforts to securely 'restore legacy' and that legacy is nothing without Mnangagwa emerging as the winner in the July 30, 2018 election. The following chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

<sup>23</sup>Interviews: April- May 2018 in Bindura, Mount Darwin, Tsholotsho, Mberengwa, Hurungwe, Zvimba&Masvingo.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **SUMMARY**

The study unpacked the menu of electoral manipulation in Zimbabwe paying attention to the role of the military deployed in the villages throughout Zimbabwe. It adopted a mixed methods research design which mixed provincial focus group discussions and semi-structured key informant interviews to come up with the findings presented in chapter three. Using a conceptual framework derived from a critical analysis of previous studies on militarisation of the electoral space and electoral manipulation, this study was able to conceptualise the ZANU-PF strategy that marries militarisation of the village and the menu of electoral manipulation to come up with what this study problematised at a “ZANU-PF/Military schematic deterrence of the rural vote. It must be noted that ZANU-PF has for many decades been enjoying electoral victories in rural areas and these areas are home to above 60% of citizen voters in Zimbabwe. The study noted that ZANU-PF has realised this fact and seeks to ensure that this rural electoral mass is either dissuaded from voting or left under assured ZANU-PF monopoly and the village military presence came to buttress this plan.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the study revealed that villages are indeed militarised although reasons for militarisation seem to range from attempts to

assist in implementation of the government Command Agriculture programme, assisting ZANU-PF members in their campaign and maintaining peace and stability in communities. However, this study asserts that all the above reasons are weigh very light against the desire to manipulate the electoral environment ahead of 2018 elections. The study also emphasised that command agriculture program is part of the menu of electoral manipulation that has given ZANU-PF a ticket to send soldiers into villages knowing that the ‘fear arousal’ impact is an unavoidable electoral benefit accrued to ZANU-PF. The study found no record of use of physical violence for election-related purposes by the military. The study also concludes that the militarisation of the village has turned participation in July 2018 elections as a day of making survival choices among rural electorates and this survival and conflict prevention means voting ZANU-PF. In short, no free and fair elections are expected in a climate of fear, in an environment where choices are made under psychological and physical threats of military reprisals.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **GOVERNMENT**

- With-draw the military from villages and/or confine them in designated military points to avoid panic and fear created.
- Nation-wide voter and civic education to remove the fear intentionally or unintentionally caused by militarisation of communities to ensure that voters are assured of safety and peace no matter how they express their choices in the on-coming election.
- Release of public notification and assurances through the state broadcaster and social media clearly condemning the work of ZANU-PF politicians, traditional leaders and military personnel



using the military in their campaigns and assure citizens that these activities are illegal and not sanctioned by government.

- Conduct an inquiry into the militarisation of the village; prosecute individuals involved in militarising the village and military personnel involved.
- Guarantee traditional leaders autonomy from ZANU-PF patronage networks and compel them to publicly assert their independence from political control by government.
- Institute a security sector reform program to depoliticise the military and re-assert its integrity.

#### **CIVIC SOCIETY**

- Conduct civic and voter education to limit the grave impacts of village military fear on voting patterns in the upcoming election.
- Perform the watchdog role and expose electoral manipulation at all voting centres to ensure that election results are discredited based on valid facts.
- Start pre-emptive planning for provision of safety nets for electorates to caution electorates from possible reprisals in the event that they choose to risk their lives by making their genuine choices that might disappoint military interests.
- Conduct a national inquiry into this militarisation of the village to come up with wider quantifications of its impacts in manipulating votes in favour of ZANU-PF.

#### **OPPOSITION PARTIES**

- Begin lobbying regional and international players to assist in setting up safety and security mechanisms to give voters security and safety assurances as they approach the election.

- Spearhead a nation-wide campaign against fear of the military in villages and grave impacts on their ability to vote freely. This can include engaging the government and pressuring it to make public assurances, cause military leaders to also make public assurances that they will honour the will of the people even if that will send ZANU-PF out of power.
- Do serious community voter education especially in rural areas to ensure that votes are cast as a free choice than a choice between peace and military reprisal.
- Create an election watch-team that will be able to compile election results at all voting centres for use in cross-checking the authenticity of ZEC results released after conclusion of the election. This team should also be in a position to audit the voters' roll to ensure that electoral chicanery therein is identified and exposed.

#### **INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

- Send election observers to observe the electoral environment in rural villages and assessment of electoral violence should go beyond physical violence to the psychological.
- Provide public assurances to voters that security and peace is guaranteed after votes and condemn the use of the military to do electoral manipulation on behalf of the ruling government.



## REFERENCES

- Alvarez, R. M et al. 2008. *Building Secure and Transparent Elections through Standard Operating Procedures*. [Online]. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2008.00924.x>.
- Birch, S and Carlson, J. 2012. *Electoral fraud, causes, types and consequences*. [Online]. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228913438\\_Electoral\\_Fraud\\_Causes\\_Types\\_and\\_Consequences](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228913438_Electoral_Fraud_Causes_Types_and_Consequences).
- Bishop, S and Hoeffler, A. 2014. Free and Fair Elections – A New Database. *CSAE Working Paper WPS/2014-14*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk/materials/data/151/csae-wps-2014-14.pdf>.
- Diamond, L. 2002. *Elections without democracy: Thinking about hybrid regimes*. Volume 13 issue 2. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.academia.edu/5130268/Thinking\\_About\\_Hybrid\\_Regime\\_s](http://www.academia.edu/5130268/Thinking_About_Hybrid_Regime_s).
- Levytsky, S and Way, L. A. 2002. *The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism: Journal of Democracy*. Volume 13 issue 2. [Online]. Available at <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.
- Matlosa, K and Zounmenou, D., D. 2016. *The tension between militarization and democratisation in West Africa*. Volume 10 issue 2. [Online]. Available at: <https://eisa.org.za/pdf/JAE10.2Matlosa.pdf>.
- Masunungure, E.V. 2014. *The 'menu of manipulation' and the 2013 Zimbabwe elections*. Volume 13 issue 2. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.eisa.org.za/pdf/JAE13.2Masunungure.pdf>.
- Olaniyan, A and Amao, O. B. 2015. *Election as warfare: Militarisation of elections and challenges of democratic consolidation in Nigeria*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/politics/otago213404.pdf>.
- Schedler, A. 2002. The Menu of Manipulation. *Journal of Democracy* 13(2), 36-50.
- Schedler, A. 2006. *Patterns of Repression and Manipulation: Towards a Topography of Authoritarian Elections, 1980–2002*. [Online]. Available at: [http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper\\_5180.pdf](http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper_5180.pdf).
- Schedler, A. 2009. The New Institutionalism in the Study of Authoritarian Regimes. *Totalitarismus und Demokratie*, 6(2), 323-340. [Online]. Available at: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-sssoar-311637>.
- Synder, R and Samuels, D. 2006. 'Devaluing the Vote in Latin America'. In L Diamond & M F Plattner (eds). *Electoral Systems and Democracy*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Vickery, C and Shein, E. 2012. *Assessing electoral fraud in New Democracies: Refining the Vocabulary*. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/assessing\\_electoral\\_fraud\\_series\\_vickery\\_shein\\_0.pdf](http://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/assessing_electoral_fraud_series_vickery_shein_0.pdf).

Zimbabwe Democracy Institute. 2017. *Zec and the struggle against political decay: A light at the end of the Tunnel?* [Online]. Available at:

[www.zimdem.org/.../download.php?...BVR%20ZEC%20and%20the%20Struggle%20Ag...](http://www.zimdem.org/.../download.php?...BVR%20ZEC%20and%20the%20Struggle%20Ag...)

Zimbabwe Democracy Institute. 2017. *Zimbabwe transition in a muddy terrain: political economy military capture*. [Online]. Available at: <http://kubatana.net/2017/12/14/zimbabwe-transition-muddy-terrain-political-economy-military-capture/>.

## **ABOUT THE ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE**

The Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) is a politically independent and not for profit public policy think-tank based in Zimbabwe. Founded and registered as a trust in terms of the laws of Zimbabwe in November 2012 (Deed of Trust Registration Number MA1223/2012), ZDI serves to generate and disseminate innovative ideas, cutting-edge research and policy analysis to advance democracy, development, good governance and human rights in Zimbabwe. The Institute also aims to promote open, informed and evidence-based debate by bringing together pro-democracy experts to platforms for debate. The idea is to offer new ideas to policy makers with a view to entrenching democratic practices in Zimbabwe. The ZDI researches, publishes and conducts national policy debates and conferences in democratization, good governance, public finance and economic governance, public policy, human rights and transitional justice, media and democracy relations, electoral politics and international affairs.

ZDI was born out of a realization that there is an absence of credible policy and research analysis by Zimbabwean organizations. A careful assessment of most publications on Zimbabwe's political economy shows that a majority of them are generated from outside Zimbabwe. ZDI's team of trustees includes eminent Zimbabwean scholars and experts.

The vision, mission and Objectives of the organization are as listed below:

### **Vision**

A democratic Zimbabwe in which citizens fully participate in all matters of governance, realize and assert social economic and political rights.

### **Mission**

To promote cutting-edge research and public policy analysis institute for sustainable democracy

To be the leading cutting-edge research and public policy analysis institute for sustainable democracy

### **Organizational Objectives**

1. To strengthen policy formulation and implementation through public policy debate in Zimbabwe.
2. To inculcate a culture of critical debate on public affairs among Zimbabwean citizens.
3. To ensure that Zimbabwe's development trajectory is shaped by locally generated information and knowledge.
4. To stimulate citizen participation by strengthening the capacity of state and non-state actors in undertaking research and analysis of public policy.
5. To ensure the direct participation of women in public policy formulation and implementation.
6. To ensure direct participation of youths in public policy formulation and implementation.