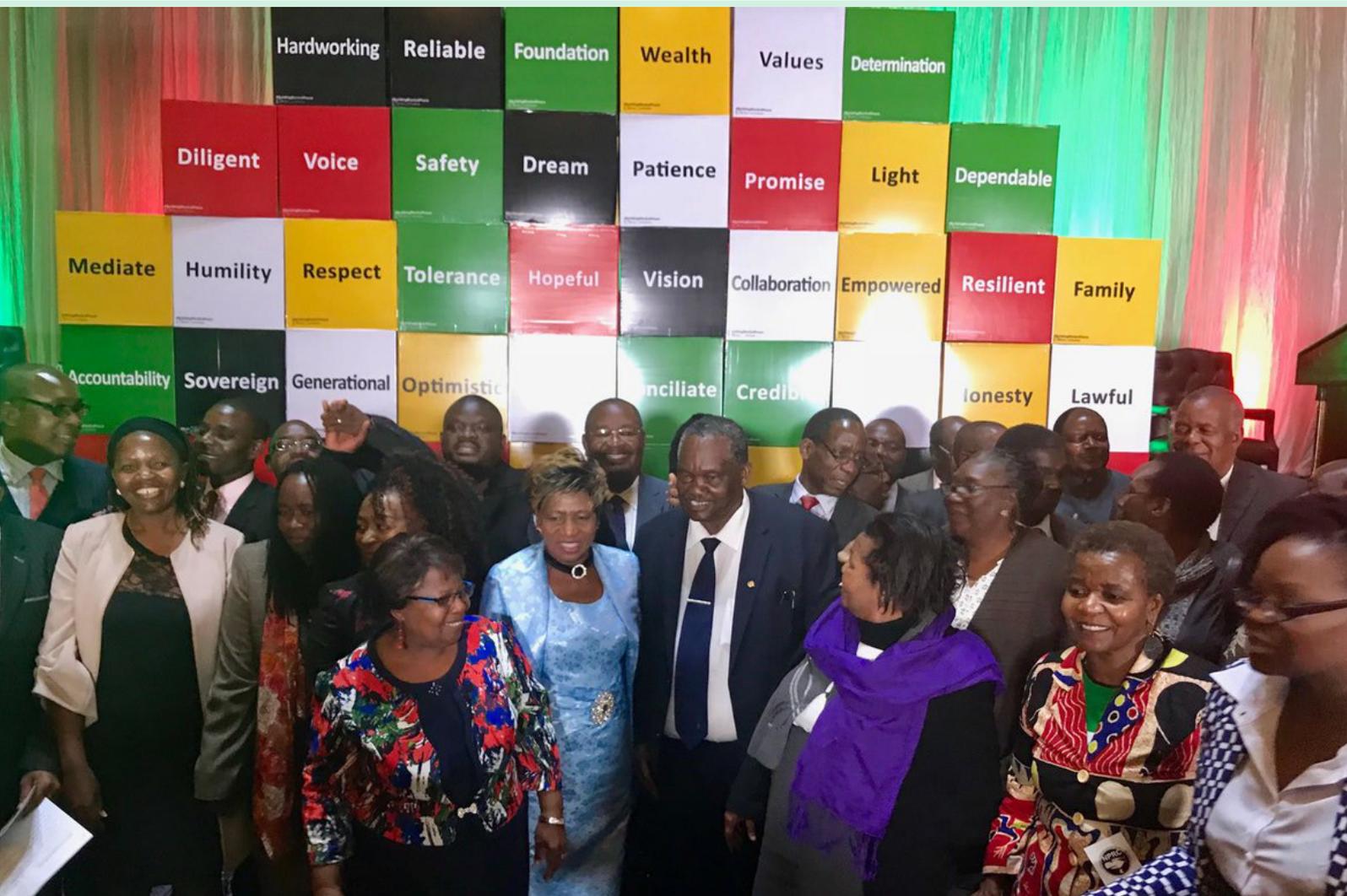




# A BASELINE STUDY REPORT

on the peace and reconciliation processes  
in Zimbabwe



An Ideal Bottom-Up Peace and Reconciliation Framework for Zimbabwe



# A BASELINE STUDY REPORT

ON THE PEACE AND RECONCILIATION  
PROCESS IN ZIMBABWE

AN IDEAL BOTTOM-UP PEACE AND RECONCILIATION  
FRAMEWORK FOR ZIMBABWE

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## List of Acronyms

AIPPA	Access to Informational and Privacy Protection Act
COPAC	Constitution Parliamentary Committee
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
HZT	Heal Zimbabwe Trust
ICSD	Independent Commissions Supporting Democracy
JOMIC	Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change -Tsvangirai
NAVUZ	National Vendors' Union of Zimbabwe
NPRC	National Peace and Reconciliation Commission
ONHRI	Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union –Patriotic Front
ZHRC	Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to appreciate Heal Zimbabwe staff members for their commitment towards the success of this publication. The data collection and analysis processes were strenuous, but through unwavering support, commitment and teamwork, the study came to a conclusion. Our gratitude also goes to different stakeholders who made this initiative possible. Special thanks go to Dr Solomon Mungure and Dr Holly Guthrey for their technical support in the development of this publication.

# HEAL ZIMBABWE

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

Rashid Stuart Mahiya  
Heal Zimbabwe Executive Director



Conflict and violence are detrimental to human development. In recent years intra-state conflicts have increased yet their resolution is ineptly prepared. These conflicts, partly, are marks of the inevitable wave of democratization emerging democracies and authoritarian systems go through. They are often characterised by ethnicity, unequal distribution of resources, terrorism, political corruption, poverty and broadly bad governance. Zimbabwe is not an exception to these global transitional conflict challenges. Our aim, therefore, as Heal Zimbabwe Trust is to accelerate progress in tackling conflict and violence. We are dedicated to advancing research in violence detection and prevention mechanisms, transforming peacebuilding innovations and optimising the existing conflict management, peacebuilding and community protection mechanisms.

This baseline study is one of Heal Zimbabwe Trust's contribution towards remedying the residual effects of past human rights violations. A thorough consideration of concerns raised in this report and its recommendations undoubtedly support the construction of a socially cohesive nation that enjoys tolerance, peace, and prosperity at all tiers of the society. We provide expanded facts about Zimbabwean communities' perceptions about what constitutes peace, healing and reconciliation while establishing an ideal framework for the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). Heal Zimbabwe Trust will continue to support research into all types of conflicts, across all communities, emphasising areas which we believe have significant peace and human rights improving potential.

It is my sincere hope and trust that you find this report useful. Peace!

## Executive Summary

The pile-up of violent legacies and delays in establishing architecture for peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe jointly constitute an impediment to peaceful nation building and development. Diverse and protracted debates continue regarding the need and feasibility of a sustainable peace and reconciliation framework for Zimbabwe in view of the constitutionalisation of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) in 2013 and the enactment of the NPRC Act in January 2018.<sup>1</sup> To explore this discourse, Heal Zimbabwe conducted a nationwide baseline study to inform diverse peace and reconciliation initiatives in Zimbabwe.

A baseline study is a descriptive cross-sectional study undertaken to establish the obtaining status of a particular situation before interventions. Baseline studies are essential for project design, benchmarks establishment, monitoring and evaluation.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, given the inevitability of transitional justice in Zimbabwe, this research was a deliberate process to gather national views on what constitute peace, healing and reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe.

This baseline study provides the context for the appropriate operationalization of peace and reconciliation interventions with a view of creating a better Zimbabwe for the present and future generations. Data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions in 44 of Zimbabwe's 59 districts. The study targeted individuals above 18 years across multiple stakeholder groups such as youths, women, civic society, political parties, churches, war veterans, traditional leaders, traditional healers, university students, lecturers and the business community. A total of 500 respondents were reached

through questionnaires while 113 key informants were interviewed.

The data collection period lasted from June 2016 to June 2017. The study solicited options for a successful framing, design, implementation, and monitoring mechanisms of the peace and reconciliation interventions which the Commission and other stakeholders can use for national healing, peace and reconciliation (nation building). The liberation struggle, the 1987 Unity Accord, the Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation, the 2013 constitutional provisions and the NPRC Act constitute adequate premises and reference for successful peace and reconciliation efforts. In addition, Independent Commissions Supporting Democracy (ICSDs) arising from Chapter 12 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe adopted in 2013, such as the Human Rights Commission and the Gender Commission are jointly established to address the legacies of our history including episodes of violence and structural shortcomings. Section 252 of the Constitution mandates the NPRC to ensure post-conflict justice, healing and reconciliation, truth-telling and community dialogue among other functions. Hence, this baseline study rests on historical, legal and structural peace and reconciliation accounts reflected by Zimbabwean citizens.

Views expressed in this study are mostly reflective of community level opinions. The analysis and categorisation of issues, therefore, is largely dependent on an array of issues raised by research participants from the sampled 44 of 59 Districts. In addition, the study findings are not exhaustive but they provide a basis for further systematic investigations on peace and reconciliation issues in Zimbabwe.

<sup>1</sup>See the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) Section 232e and 251-253) and the NPRC Act

<sup>2</sup>Freudenthal, S., and Narrowe, J. (1992). Baseline study handbook: focus on the field. Swedish International Development Agency.

# KEY FINDINGS

In Zimbabwe, peace and reconciliation are perceived as potential remedies to socio-political and economic pathologies, and drivers of human security and restoration of citizen dignity. The peace and reconciliation process is expected to bring citizens closer to their state in conformity with contemporary democratic tenets to eliminate structural violence, restore liberation ideals and promote peaceful coexistence.



Community members at a dialogue meeting supported by Heal Zimbabwe Trust (HZZT)

## Main reconciliation issues

Main peace and reconciliation issues are priority conflict concerns and human rights violations that research participants wanted to be prioritised during the NPRC operation. The main reconciliation issue that the NPRC must address is political and electoral violence most frequently mentioned by 50.8% of the research participants followed by economic disintegration with 13.4%. The least popular reconciliation issue that should be given attention is the liberation struggle most mentioned by 0.8% followed by

gender based violence (GBV) which was recorded at 1.3%. Chiadzwa atrocities, where people were extra-judicially killed during the 2006-2009 diamond rush also recorded 1.3% frequency. Political and electoral violence is, therefore the main predominant conflict issue that communities want to be given a top priority in order to facilitate a successful peace, healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe.

## Rationality for the National Peace and Reconciliation Process

The key justification for establishing the NPRC is to give Zimbabweans an opportunity to reconcile, heal and peacefully transform their conflicts. There is wide recognition that peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe derive from the country's historical transformations. The majority of the participants (20.4%) said that the major reason for setting up the NPRC is to undo cyclic violent conflicts followed by justice (15.5%) and to heal the pain of victims (14.9%). The least mentioned priority reasons were to bring closure to some traumatic past (2.1%) and undoing racial and ethnic tensions (3.1%).

### **Operational Definition of the NPRC**

- *peace and reconciliation constitute “a platform for dialogue, acceptance of responsibility for the past (torture and massacres, people to be answerable e.g. for Gukurahundi,) and admission of responsibility by duty bearers.”*
- *peace and reconciliation involves “the removal of structural violent conflicts and the presence of formal structures to deal with conflict at various levels (family, social and national) while reconciliation are mechanisms of accounting, forgiveness for past wrongs and recompense for wrongs, or are forced to do so through the courts/tribunal or any other vehicle.”*

### **Rationale for the NPRC**

- *“there a lot of festering wounds that need to be healed or else they will poison generations if not addressed.”*

## Historical episodes informing the NPRC

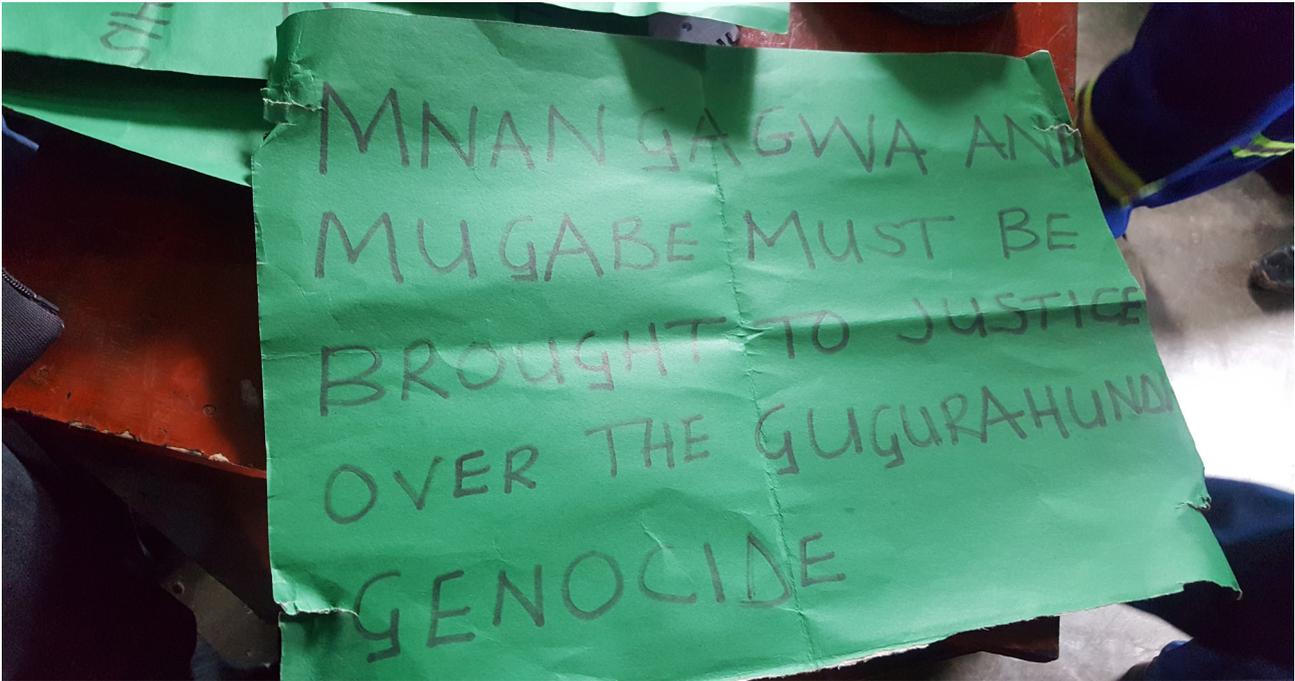
The historical episodes informing the NPRC span from 1890 when the first colonial leaders invaded Zimbabwe (the Pioneer Column) to the 2017 soft-military coup. This means the violence continuum requiring attention from the NPRC and its stakeholders include the racist colonial violence and the subjugation of the black natives by the white settlers, the liberation war, post-independence Gukurahundi atrocities experienced in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions, electoral violence spanning from 1990, 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008, the structural adjustment programmes experienced in early 1990s and the chaotic 2000 land reform among others conflict episodes. Other conflict episodes that necessitate a peace and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe include the 2008 hyperinflation and dollarization of the local currency and Operation Murambatsvina (and subsequent houses destruction).

### **Major reconciliation issues**

- *“we were forcibly removed from our house in Tokwe and some of us were beaten and arrested for demanding restitution”*
- *Gukurahundi was “an armed conflict displaying an unproportional response to the so called dissident threat, which made the conflict an ethnic genocide.”*

### **Past Experiences informing the NPRC processes**

- *Nkala (former Minister of Defence) says “The massacres in Matabeleland and the Midlands by the government are something that I regret.”*
- *The conflation of the state and party meant that citizens' security became compromised.*
- *About 3 900 white commercial farmers lost their farms while 224 000 farm workers lost their jobs and benefits while about 75% of them became landless and unemployed.*



One of the posters displayed by Mthwakazi Republic Party protesting activists in Bulawayo

Source: <http://www.sunrisenews.co.zw/mthwakazi-activists-disrupted-nprc-lupane-meeting/>

## Past Reconciliation Efforts: Success and Failures

In the past, the government of Zimbabwe once implemented numerous reconciliation efforts which yielded little results. Some of these reconciliation efforts include, the forgive and forget declaration policy of 1980, the 1983 Chihambakwe and Dumbutshena Commission of inquiry, the Unity Accord of 1987, the War Veterans Victims Fund of 1995, constitutional reforms (2000 and 2013) and the 2000 fast track land. The most recent efforts include the institutionalisation of national healing and reconciliation bodies such as the Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation (2009) and the NPRC established by section 251 of the constitution.

### **Past reconciliation efforts**

- ***“without institutional reforms, the NPRC will not succeed.”***

It is important to note that the past reconciliation efforts largely registered little milestones compared to what Zimbabwean citizens expected. For example, the 1980 forgive and forget declaration smoothed the integration of the Rhodesian soldiers and the two rival black liberation movements (ZIPRA and ZANLA forces) into the new Zimbabwe National Army. The Unity Accord also facilitated the union of the PF ZAPU and ZANU PF which led to the termination of Gukurahundi atrocities. Nonetheless, these mechanisms failed as conflicts continued escalating, coupled with bad governance and authoritarian rule. Reasons advanced by study respondents for the failure of the aforementioned reconciliation efforts include selfish political interests, lack of justice, corruption, lack of unity and cooperation, lack of inclusivity and lack of political will among other reasons.

## Ideal Peace and Reconciliation Framework

**The ideal NPRC model should be informed by three considerations namely**  
**(a) structural,**  
**(b) operational and**  
**(c) programmatic issues.**

Structurally, the NPRC should be independent so that it operates without undue influence from political forces, other government departments and individuals outside the Commission. There is an expectation from the communities that the NPRC should be decentralised from the national to the provincial, district, ward

and village levels. Also, the process should be guided by grassroots processes and traditions. A bottom-up healing and reconciliation process will increase communities' access to the NPRC services and it boosts local buy-in. Operationally the NPRC should ensure due process to grievances raised by the Zimbabwean communities and stakeholders. Political and electoral violence and race relations are priority conflict issues needing urgent redress. Programmatically, truth-telling and justice should be key thrusts for the NPRC while forgive and forget approach as well as amnesty should get least priority.

## Dispensing Justice, Healing and Reconciliation

For the victims of violence and conflict since Zimbabwe's colonial era, justice should be dispensed by having the government acknowledge past wrongs and take responsibility by redressing past violations. Truth-telling, public apology, reparations, guarantees of non-recurrence and prosecution of perpetrators should be prioritised. However, justice should not be

universally defined to mean prosecutions and use of national courts. Traditional mechanisms should also be explored at the lowest community level to allow organic peace and reconciliation. This traditional approach has the potential to reduce burden on the NPRC as it allows communal reconciliation processes to address mutually beneficial justice without retribution.

### *The Place for Justice*

- *"justice can only be delivered in an environment where there is respect for each other and where one can air out grievances"*

## What would communities want to see from the NPRC?

As the NPRC commences its work, communities in Zimbabwe would like to see it operating independently and genuinely listening to the affected crowds and addressing the communities concerns with compassion. The Commission should be inclusive and must consult diverse stakeholders from various socio-economic

and political backgrounds.

While facilitating peace and reconciliation processes, Zimbabweans would want to see the NPRC profiling past human rights violations and ensuring that there is guarantee of non-recurrence through putting relevant state institutions into action.

### *What Communities want done*

- *"those raped require medication and therapy since some rapists have died .... Some women got divorce after being raped and infected by HIV/AIDS..."*
- *"communities want the government to own up, address local fears, anger and worries."*

---

## Synergies and Collaborations

The majority of respondents (39.1% of the respondents) want to see the NPRC creating synergies with civic society organisations. While the NPRC will be leading the peace and reconciliation processes, study respondents suggested that they want civic groups to take an active role in the reconciliation process because they distrust the government

acting alone. However, churches, political parties, individuals and the international community should take part in healing Zimbabwean communities from the past violations. Traditional leaders were least preferred actors in leading peace and reconciliation processes because of their partisan conduct and alignment to the ruling party (ZANU PF).

## Indicators of Success

Without the ability to measure the accomplishments of the NPRC it could be difficult to judge the relevance of the NPRC. Therefore, research respondents provided different indicators that can be used to assess the performance of the NPRC. Some of these suggestions

include; the government's provision of legal systems that operationalize the NPRC, development of early warning and early response systems, the NPRC's material resource base, ensuring the presence of parliamentary oversight among others.

- *Peace and reconciliation should be evaluated using the benchmarks such as "one man one vote, freedom of expression, economic emancipation and access to land"*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe's national peace, healing and reconciliation needs can be traced from the time of British imperialism and colonial occupation accounts, in part, to the present struggles for democracy, human rights and good governance. The country's human rights violations record spans a long history which encompasses the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial experiences. Addressing these violations requires an appreciation of the background and context in which they arose and of the evolving relationships within and between diverse socio-economic and political players. The following sections, therefore, provide diverse contexts which eventually open up opportunities for a cohesive discourse on nation building process.

## 1.1. Background to Peace and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe

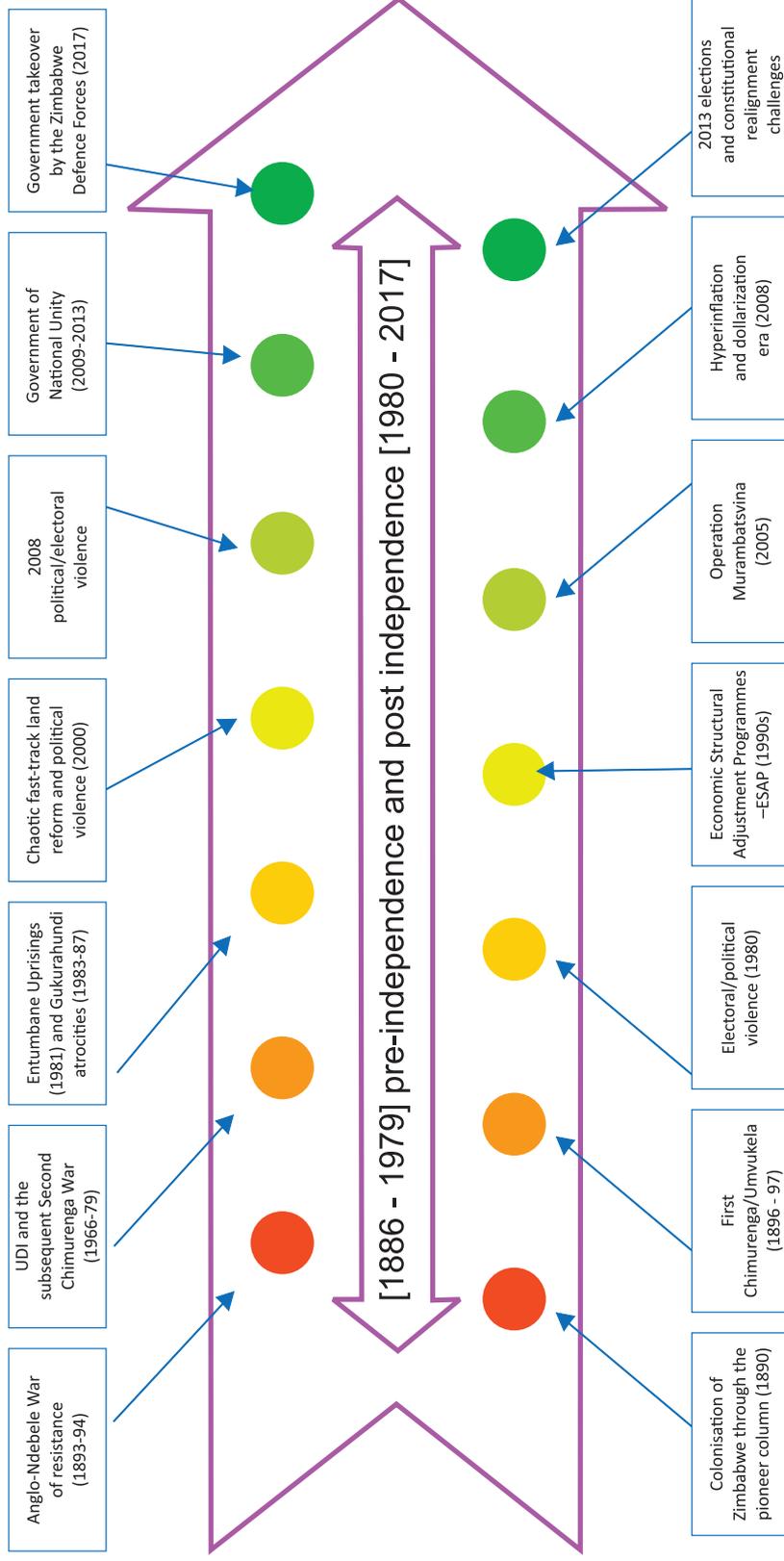
Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political development itinerary has been characterised by institutional, legal and structural shortfalls that have been challenged through historical upheavals and contestations. The state's governance omissions and commissions compounded by the residual impact of colonialism have generated cycles of tension and strife whose impact offset progressive vision for social, political and economic transformation. As citizens tried to adapt to modern governance and statecraft, they have often been criminalized leading to cycles of resistance and struggle. These developments created epochs of unresolved conflicts thereby cementing violent legacies.

Since the advent of colonialism in Zimbabwe, there has been characteristic dissociation, alienation and exclusion of citizens by the state. This is largely because governance systems, both colonial and post-colonial were modelled to deliberately perpetuate the interest of the politically powerful. For that reason, reconciliation between the state and citizen remains a daunting undertaking.

The delays in constitutionalizing the architecture for peace and reconciliation are linked to this experience. Besides, there is a recurrent disconnection between the traditional African practices and the colonially inherited state structures which has created practices that are outlawed by modern law and yet organically understood by the communities.

During the colonial and liberation struggle eras, atrocities targeted the guerrilla movements, the rural peasant communities, war collaborators and their proxies. Comparatively, the black majority suffered colonial cruelties than other races. However, while the pre-independence brutalities were largely Rhodesian-led and anti-black, there were also uncountable case of black against black atrocities, maiming and betrayal in the post-independence era. The violence continuum stretched into Zimbabwe's independence beginning with the 1982-87 Gukurahundi atrocities to the 2008 political violence and the recent military coup effected in November 2017. Figure 1 below is a timeline showing Zimbabwe's conflict and violence continuum.

Figure 1: Zimbabwe's violence continuum 1886 – 2017





Protesters gathering behind an army cordon on the road leading to State House, 2017.

Source: Ben Curtis

### a) Pre-Independence Violence (First and Second Chimurenga 1886 -1979)

Zimbabwe's pre-independence conflict has a narrative consisting of (a) Zimbabwean tribal wars involving Ndebele and Shona societies (b) the Zimbabwean natives facing colonial brutality and (c) the black liberation movements fighting the colonial liberation front, but also conflict among themselves. The pre-colonial tribal conflicts were never addressed such that the:

*Shona-speaking people continue to harbour a grievance against the descendants of the pre-colonial Ndebele-speaking people. Ndebele raids continue to be counted as a historic grievance. Even the Fifth Brigade atrocities were justified in some quarters as vengeance for what the Ndebele did in the 19th century. But such an approach to conflict resolution creates unending cycles of perpetrators and victims, and possesses the potential to seriously hinder every effort at nation-building.<sup>3</sup>*

The colonial regime, on the other hand, installed a brutal governance system that created systematic dispossession of land and wealth accumulation by the whites and, impoverishment among the blacks. The white minority exploited natural resources and governed the blacks as slaves until 1979. The locals resisted the colonial regime through various means, most discernibly, through the first and second Chimurenga leading to more than 30 000 lives being lost and many more unaccounted for.<sup>4</sup>

“The word Chimurenga refers to war or the struggle against any form of tyranny.”<sup>5</sup> According to Dawson (2011) the first Chimurenga was predominantly a tribal conflict while the second Chimurenga was an anti-colonial struggle.<sup>6</sup>

Although the second Chimurenga was largely an anti-colonial struggle, the

<sup>3</sup>Gatsheni, S. N., & Benyera, E. (2015). Towards a framework for resolving the justice and reconciliation question in Zimbabwe. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 15(2), 9-33.

<sup>4</sup>Elkins, C., & Pedersen, S. (Eds.). (2005). *Settler colonialism in the twentieth century: Projects, practices, legacies*. Routledge, New York.

<sup>5</sup>Vambe, M. T. (2004). Versions and sub-versions: Trends in Chimurenga musical discourses of post-independence Zimbabwe. *African Study Monographs*, 25(4): 167-193

<sup>6</sup>Dawson, S. (2011). The First Chimurenga: 1896-1897 Uprising in Matabeleland and Mashonaland and the Continued Conflicts in Academia. *Constellations*, 2(2), 144-153.

black liberation war movements that were fighting colonialism had power battles among themselves that Masipula Sithole labelled Struggles within the Struggle.<sup>7</sup> Sithole details the bimodal ethnic categorisation of Zimbabwean nationalist movements and the social identity fault lines that defined alliances during the war against the white settler regime. A dialogue about racial conflicts and black against black violence during the colonial era has, however, been avoided for decades yet they continue to define socio-economic and political contexts in Zimbabwe.



Zimbabwe Army 1980. Picture by Brian Harris/Rex/Strutterstock

## b) Entumbane Uprisings and Gukurahundi Atrocities (1981-1987)

When the liberation struggle concluded, an attempt was made at the end of 1980 to demobilise all combatants including the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Rhodesian Army towards the formation of an integrated Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). However, an internecine conflict between ZIPRA and ZANLA forces in their assembly points escalated leading to violent conflicts mainly in Entumbane in 1981.<sup>8</sup> Dissenting ZIPRA forces were contained by the ZNA followed by a lengthy episode

of massacres of innocent civilians between 1982 and 1987. The massacres, through an operation code-named Gukurahundi, were carried out mostly by a state sponsored '5th Brigade' allegedly deployed to contain ZIPRA rebellion led by Joshua Nkomo who was a leader of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). The 5th Brigade was an elite North Korean trained roving military unit that was deployed in the Matabeleland region between 1981 and 1987 to deal with allegations of dissidents.

<sup>7</sup>Sithole M. (1999). Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle, (1957-1980).2nd Ed. Harare. Zimbabwe. Rujeko Publishers.

<sup>8</sup>Binda, A. (2007). Masodja: The History of the Rhodesian African Rifles and Its Forerunner the Rhodesia Native Regiment. South Publishers.

The 5th Brigade was an elite North Korean trained roving military unit that was deployed in the Matabeleland region between 1981 and 1987 to deal with allegations of dissidents. The Brigade's instigated violence, occasionally described as a tribal genocide, claimed over 20,000 lives while many others were tortured, maimed and terrorised.<sup>9</sup> The 1987 Unity Accord was signed to stop the atrocities and resulted in an amalgamated Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF).<sup>10</sup> The accord symbolised victor's justice because there were no requisite redress of neither the developmental stagnation of the affected regions or the rehabilitation of the traumatised communities (Raftopolous 2005).<sup>11</sup>

The damage caused by Gukurahundi continues to reverberate as continued injustice. The government-sponsored Chihambakwe Commission of Inquiry Report (1984), into the disturbances, has not been made public while many of the alleged perpetrators, leaders and planners of the violations, continue to hold senior positions in government and security services mainly, thereby reinforcing impunity and amnesia. To worsen matters, the post Gukurahundi footprints are characterised by allegations of regional developmental stagnation, deindustrialisation, and ethnic decimation by other means.

### c) Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAP) Effects

In the 1990s Zimbabwe's economic policies were branded by neoliberal structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that included the privatisation of public entities, introduction of user fees in public health institutions and other public service providers. These actions triggered substantial retrenchments and massive labour protests. As the country was politically vulnerable, because of the rising economic problems associated with the SAPs, President Mugabe offered (first) generous pensions, then land to appease the aggrieved constituencies.<sup>12</sup> The resultant economic decline coincided with the war veterans cash hand-outs (compensation) which led to the fall of the Zimbabwean dollar, an incident now known as the Zimbabwean Black Friday (on November 14, 1997). The civil strife of the late 1990s activated the radicalisation of labour and the eventual formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which set the stage for the reactivation of violent state machinery with the co-option of youths, war veterans and state security elements. These historic moments also marked ZANU PF's deftness in populist politics involving constitutional manipulation, patronage building, exploitation of legitimate grievances and prowess in violence.

<sup>9</sup>Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (1997) Breaking the Silence: Building True Peace. A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980 to 1988. Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice and Legal Resources Foundation. Harare, Zimbabwe

<sup>10</sup>Mashingaidze, T. (2005) The 1987 Zimbabwe National Unity Accord and its Aftermath: A Case of Peace without Reconciliation. CODESRIA.

<sup>11</sup>Raftopolous, B. (2005). The Zimbabwe Crisis and the Challenge for the Left. Journal of Southern African.

<sup>12</sup>Onslow, S. (March 2011) Zimbabwe and Political Transition. London School of Economics and Political Science. [Online] Retrieved from: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43645/1/Zimbabwe%20and%20political%20transition.pdf>

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#### d) Chaotic Fast Track Land Reform and Electoral Violence (2000-2008)

In 1999, a formidable opposition party was established after massive food riots and protests against the government in 1998 through the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU). The opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), showed its strength by prevailing in the 2000 constitutional referendum, during which they campaigned for a 'NO' vote against the new draft constitution. The referendum loss prompted ZANU PF to take a drastic populist political agenda by legitimising the violent land invasions that the War Veterans had started ahead of elections in the same year. The Zimbabwean government and ruling party ZANU PF exploited a genuine land grievance, fronted by War Veterans. The land conflict developed from the Fast Track Land Reform Policy, code named the Third Chimurenga. As a result of the land reform programme, approximately 224 000 farm workers lost their jobs and 75% of them became landless and unemployed while about 3 900 white commercial farmers lost their farms.<sup>13</sup>

Since the 2000 constitutional referendum, the *jambanja* land reform violence became ZANU PF's instrument for electoral campaigns and ideological propagation. Conflation between ZANU PF and the state became more evident such that the 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008 elections were characterised by state-sponsored violence, murder, torture, arson, arbitrary arrest and detention, abductions, and many other

forms of politically motivated violence. In 2008 alone, over 200 people were killed and thousands were displaced.<sup>14</sup> The land issue became the centre of violence and political campaign while the liberation struggle experiences were repeatedly recounted for political propaganda. The anti-colonial history was frequently narrated on political gatherings, public meetings and on radio and television stations for political benefits. However, in all the politically motivated violence, there has been a difference in the magnitude, nature and forms of repression.

The Zimbabwean government began introducing repressive laws to suffocate political opposition and pluralist debate. The decay of the human security institutions and legal systems systematically undermined the country's potential for building the Zimbabwe that everyone longed for. Evidence collected about human rights violations, especially since the February 2000 constitutional referendum and subsequent elections demonstrate the danger of Zimbabwe's failure to deal with past injustices. Although, there have been attempts to address historical violations through remedial policies and inter-party agreements such as the Prime Minister's declaration of forgive and forget and the Unity Accord, a number of shortcomings led these efforts to be aborted. These past efforts and shortcomings will be discussed in the following section.

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<sup>13</sup>Sachikonye L. (2003) Land Reform and Farm Workers. Retrieved from <http://ir.uz.ac.zw/jspui/bitstream/handle/10646/365/Sachikonye-land-reform.pdf?sequence=1>. See also Hawkins, T. (2013) Zimbabwe Land Reform – How Successful. Retrieved from <http://www.cfuzim.org/index.php/land-facts/3700-zimbabwe-land-reform-how-successful>

<sup>14</sup>Human Rights Watch World Report.2008 Retrieved from: [http://pantheon.hrw.org/legacy/wr2k8/pdfs/wr2k8\\_web.pdf](http://pantheon.hrw.org/legacy/wr2k8/pdfs/wr2k8_web.pdf). See also: Human Rights NGO Forum. (2008). Political Violence Report. December 2008. Retrieved from: <http://www.hrforumzim.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/200812MPVR.pdf>



Protester holding a placard on land reform issues.  
 Source <https://newsclick.in/zimbabwe-and-robert-mugabe-looking-back>

### e) Post Conflict Reconciliation Efforts after Independence

Since independence, several reconciliation efforts have been attempted in Zimbabwe, albeit with little or no success. At independence Prime Minister Mugabe's decree of 1980 based on a "forgive and forget" (forced amnesia) concept of reconciliation was pronounced. However, a conflict among key nationalist movements [Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA)] subsequently ensued leading to another reconciliation effort through the Unity Accord signed on December 22 in 1987. The 2000 land reform became an opportunistic

reconciliation effort to address one of the national grievances which became an advantage to suppress the voices of war veterans who were demanding land, albeit violently and to the benefit of ZANU PF political business. The Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) established through the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in 2008 was the most recent reconciliation effort. The GPA was a further reaching political reconciliation institution which established a Coalition Government whose lifespan was cut short in 2013. However, these initiatives were never inserted into a feasible peace and reconciliation framework.

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While the aforementioned were state-led efforts, civic society organisations also made efforts to facilitate peace and reconciliation processes. The work of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) evidenced through the *Breaking the Silence* report (CCJP 1997), which is the first formal documentation on the Matabeleland and Midlands post-independence atrocities to be made public and the establishment of the Human Rights NGO Forum, is an early example of concerted civic society efforts to promote peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. The combined reconciliation efforts by both the state and civic society organisations, are however, considered to have both succeeded and failed at varying degrees.

The Prime Minister's reconciliation decree of 1980 was both a racially and politically integrative declaration of reconciliation between the white colonialists and blacks as well as among black nationalists who had differences carrying over from the liberation struggle movements. The then Prime Minister, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, declared that all peoples across the independent Zimbabwe must "forgive and forget" and beat their swords into ploughshares. At this point, Zimbabwe was grudgingly pursuing a 'forgive and forget' reconciliation policy, as a consequence of the Lancaster House negotiations in 1979. This reconciliation call saw white people continuing to live in Zimbabwe and many of them being offered positions in the new Africanised government. The land question, which was broadly the purpose of going to war, was promulgated through the "willing-buyer willing-seller" model as a reconciliatory measure that sought

to avoid radical redistribution of land and leaving the colonial settlers at a disadvantage. The willing-buyer willing-seller approach, however, resulted in unequal land distribution.

A coalition government comprised of the ZANU PF and PF ZAPU and partly the Rhodesian Front cadres also showed some semblance of political reconciliation. The liberation war fighters mainly the ZIPRA, ZANLA and Rhodesian Front armies were also reconciled by establishing an integrated National Army (Zimbabwe National Army).

Arguably, the acceptance of the 'forgive and forget' reconciliation policy made the whites believe in their indispensability, making it difficult to build a racially cohesive independent Zimbabwe. This arrogance made the land reconciliation attempt through the 'willing buyer willing seller' policy unproductive and wasteful.<sup>15</sup> The ominous integration of the Rhodesian and the Zimbabwe security forces brought with it institutionalised technologies of torture from Rhodesia into Zimbabwe. It is claimed that ZANU's dissent against ZAPU was supported by the United Kingdom. The 'forgive and forget' policy failed to identify perpetrators and hold them to account, and failed to identify, acknowledge and address the needs of victims. Worse still, the policy failed to facilitate necessary institutional transformation required to address historical issues and to install the necessary safeguards for the young democracy.

On the other hand, another issue that required reconciliation developed in 1997 when the War Veterans demanded land and financial rewards for having

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<sup>15</sup>Onslow S. (2011). Zimbabwe and Political Transition. London School of Economics and Political Science. Retrieved from: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43645/1/Zimbabwe%20and%20political%20transition.pdf>

<sup>16</sup>Moyo, S. (2014). A Failed Land Reform Strategy in Zimbabwe: The Willing Buyer Willing Seller. Harare, Zimbabwe; Research Institute for Policy Development, 2(1), 67-74.

fought the war of liberation. The government pacified the war veterans with financial rewards of ZW\$50,000 (equal to USD 4,500) each, but the issue subsequently emerged again in the year 2000, illustrating that this initial pacification was insufficient. The government, as a result, accepted to redistribute land through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme.<sup>17</sup> While this programme reconciled the Zimbabwean blacks and the government, albeit on partisan grounds, it created a huge conflict between the government and the white community that was relieved of their land, hence creating a racial-land reconciliation need.

While the land issue was simmering, Zimbabwean citizens demanded constitutional reforms. This led to the setting up of a Constitutional Commission (on 28 April 1999) to oversee the development of a new constitution between 1999 and 2000.<sup>18</sup> The constitutional changes were triggered by the desire to enshrine Zimbabwean people's aspirations into the constitution while removing the colonial (Lancaster House) laws. However, the attempt failed when the majority voted against the constitution in the 2000 referendum. Similar efforts were made between 2009 -2013 through the Constitution Parliamentary Committee (COPAC) where a new constitution was drafted and successfully adopted through referendum in July 2013. As such, the constitutional referenda of 2000 and 2013 challenged the colonial laws and the lack of rule of law in the modern Zimbabwe.

Following violent elections in 2008, a coalition government was established marking a political reconciliation effort. The Government of National Unity (GNU) also established peace and reconciliation architectures such as the Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) and the Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC). These institutions had different mandates, but they all contributed towards creating an atmosphere of unity, tolerance and reconciliation. ONHRI was specifically responsible for facilitating national healing and reconciliation among communities, while JOMIC sought to promote a peaceful political reform by monitoring the work of political parties in implementing the Global Political Agreement. COPAC, on the other hand, facilitated constitutional reforms that led to the development and adoption of the 2013 Zimbabwean constitution.

Reconciliation in Zimbabwe has always been a necessity given the country's history. Both the pre and post-independence eras had experienced episodes of human rights violations. Therefore, efforts to address the legacy of violence and conflict culminated into a compromised decision to have a legal provision in the constitution that establishes the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. As such, the country is looking forward to a comprehensive reconciliation process. Like all of the above efforts, if not fully aided by a sincere and honest political desire to resolve the past, the

<sup>17</sup>Moyo, S. (2004). A Review of Zimbabwean Agricultural Sector following the Implementation of the Land Reform: Overall Impacts of Fast Track Land Reform Programme. Retrieved from [http://archive.kubatana.net/docs/agric/aias\\_land\\_reform\\_040513.pdf](http://archive.kubatana.net/docs/agric/aias_land_reform_040513.pdf)

<sup>18</sup>Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. (2001). Human Rights and Zimbabwe's June 2000 Elections Retrieved from. <http://hrforumzim.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/SR27-Human-Rights-and-Zimbabwe-June-2000-Election.pdf>

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opportunity can wither, and even more so considering that the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission is only established for 10 years.

In view of the above narratives, the (selective) reconciliation efforts that Zimbabwe has experienced, in many ways, failed to meaningfully facilitate transitional justice that would draw a line between the country's violent past and a more peaceful future. The past efforts failed to bring psychological closure to the traumas of the past,

which has resulted in continuous calls for a proper reconciliation process. Because the government is primarily, and perpetually, leading the violations and also acting as the arbiter of these abuses a genuine national healing, peace and reconciliation process has been stifled. Since independence, the lack of distinction between ZANU PF and the government (state-party conflation) and systematic executive interference have compromised the rule of law thereby exacerbating the vulnerability of citizens.

## 1.2 Research Context

Zimbabwe has a volatile socio-economic and political environment characterized by polarization, political discord, economic decline and rising costs of living, authoritarianism and institutional decay. These factors pose challenges to peace and reconciliation processes in the country by shifting people's interests and priorities, multiplying layers of victims and perpetrators, blurring the distinction between a perpetrator and a victim and acting as the state's justification for ignoring past injustices.

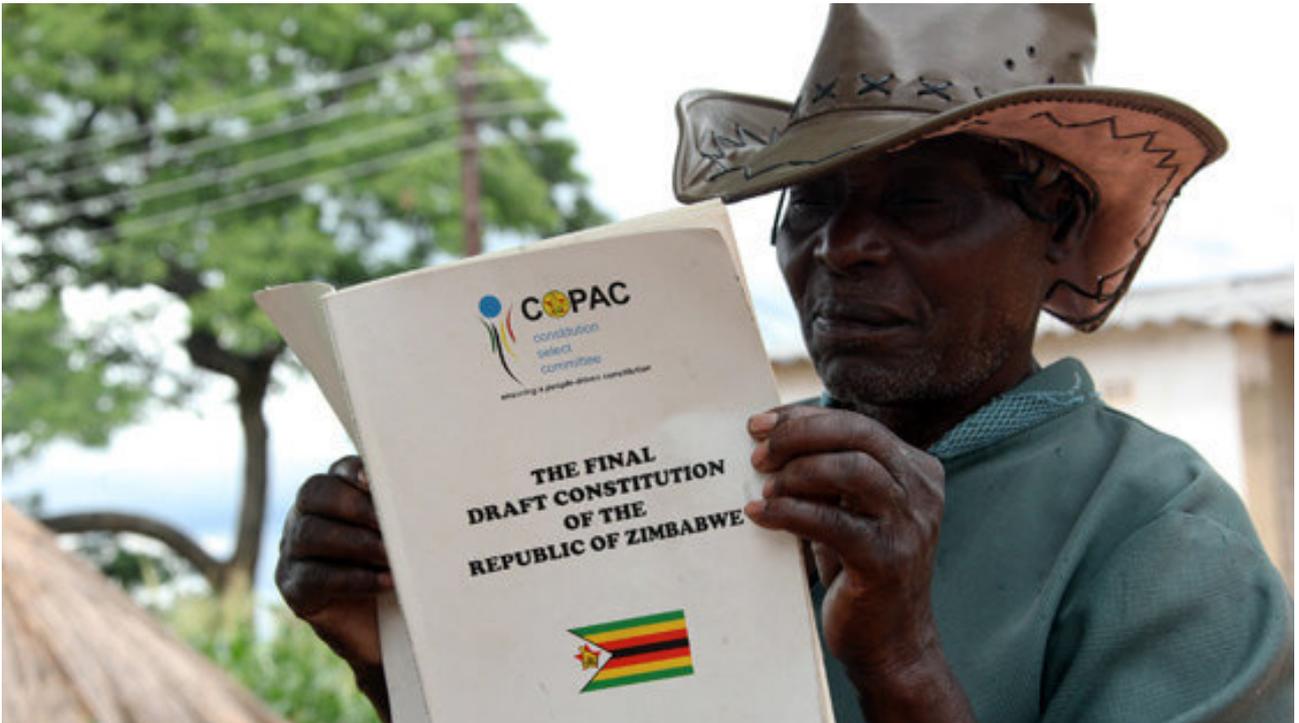
The 2013 Constitution established five Independent Commissions Supporting Democracy (ICSD) to facilitate democracy. The Constitution also provides a Bill of Rights that advances the protection and promotion of human rights, including the right to live in a peaceful environment. However, it is important to note that the 2013 Constitution was adopted at a time when Zimbabwe had a democratic representation in parliament. The Global Political Agreement regulated the signatories against excessive powers

among themselves which effected traction towards constitutionalism.<sup>19</sup> The emergence of ZANU PF as the outright winner of the 2013 elections, the expulsion of MDC-T members of parliament and the withdrawal of major political parties from participating in the subsequent by-elections made the country regress to a pseudo multi-party state.<sup>20</sup> Since then, the government never sincerely committed itself to align laws with the new constitution, nor to effectively operationalize ICSD and allow non-state actors to pursue peace building initiatives.

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<sup>19</sup>National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations. (2013). Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement Implementation: 4 Years on at Best Faltering.... At Worst Failing ... Retrieved from: [http://archive.kubatana.net/docs/cact/zcsos\\_zim\\_gpa\\_4yrs\\_on\\_120917.pdf](http://archive.kubatana.net/docs/cact/zcsos_zim_gpa_4yrs_on_120917.pdf)

<sup>20</sup>The MDC-T withdrew 21 of its MPs from Parliament following a split when they crossed the floor into joining the splinter group led by Tendai Biti. See: The Herald (2015) Parliament Expels MDC-T MPs. Retrieved from: <http://www.herald.co.zw/parliament-expels-21-mdc-t-mps/>.



A Zimbabwean Citizen reading the draft Constitution, 2013.

Source: The Economist

Since the 2013 elections the country's political position has continued to deteriorate because of escalating intraparty violence. Both the ruling party and the opposition parties are characterised by factionalism and internal policy discord. The opposition MDC-T split in 2014 following their defeat in the 2013 elections resulted in the formation of the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) led by Tendai Biti. PDP further fractured when Elton Mangoma setup a splinter party called the Renewal Democrats of Zimbabwe (RDZ).

ZANU PF, on the other hand, is also in a bitter factional fight between the alleged Group of 40 (G40) and the Team Lacoste. G40 is led by the party's National Political Commissar Saviour Kasukuwere and Jonathan Moyo, the Tsholotsho North Member of Parliament. The ZANU PF conflict escalated in November 2017 leading the relegation of Vice President Emerson Mnangagwa from the Presidium and subsequent expulsion from the

party. Mnangagwa's expulsion drew the Zimbabwe Defence Forces to speak in his defence, while issuing threats that would compromise national security and stability. ZANU PF factionalism is aided by hate speech, thus promoting political intolerance and violence.

Economically, Zimbabwe is plagued by factors ranging from alarming corruption levels, high unemployment rates and poor economic policy planning. The government is grappling with redeeming the economy from alarming unemployment levels, trade deficit, liquidity crisis, cash shortages, dwindling foreign direct investment and domestic production. Citizens are spending long hours queuing for cash in banks, a situation akin to the 2008 hyperinflationary crisis. The introduction of bond notes in 2016 created anxiety and despondency as citizens fear the return of hyperinflation experienced in 2008.



**Gokwe Centre:** Participants pledging for peace at a National Peace Concert organized by HZT.

Draconian laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) continue to stifle peace and reconciliation efforts in Zimbabwe. This is despite the fact that Zimbabwe adopted a new constitution in 2013. Section 79 of AIPPA suppresses freedom of the press by strictly censoring information that can be published through accredited journalists.<sup>21</sup>

Journalists that work without state approval risk two years imprisonment. This compromises news circulation and publication of research findings that may aid peace and reconciliation in the country. On the other hand, POSA inhibits freedom of assembly and freedom of speech among

many other freedoms. Since its enactment in January 2002, POSA has been used to outlaw any opposition parties' supporters, independent media and human rights activists meetings. With the continued existence of such draconian laws, peace and reconciliation remain difficult to facilitate because all community oriented meetings are expected to be cleared and sanctioned before they are convened.

The constitutionally mandated NPRC is yet to become operational even though it should have been established just after the promulgation of the new constitution in 2013. Two NPRC Bills have been tabled before the Parliament without success. The first Bill was gazetted in December 2015

<sup>21</sup>Government of Zimbabwe (2003) Access to Information and Privacy Protection Act [Chapter 10:27] Government of Zimbabwe

[HB.13, 2015] but it was later withdrawn from Parliament in May 2016 following an adverse report from the Parliamentary Legal Committee and the countrywide public rebuttal.

The second NPRC Bill [HB.2, 2017] was gazetted on February 10, 2017 but ZANU PF Members of Parliament attempted pushing for its dismissal arguing that the NPRC seeks to “open wounds of the past,

people must just forget.”<sup>22</sup> In this view, the operationalization of the NPRC remains a serious concern as the Commission is beginning to close in on its 10 year lifespan since the adoption of the constitution in 2013. To worsen matters, violations continue to take place without any recourse regardless of the presence of the independent commissions and the security institutions.

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<sup>22</sup>Mashaya, B and Mananavire, B (19 May 2017, The Daily News) ZANU PF MPs want Gukurahundi Buried. [Online] Retrieved from: <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2017/05/19/zanu-pf-mps-want-gukurahundi-buried>

## 2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Zimbabwe, before and after independence in 1980, suffered a series of conflict episodes, but there has never been a viable process to facilitate national healing, reconciliation and integration. The government's interests to address the past conflicts and mapping a new pathway for peace building was first observed when it established the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) (2008/9), the Joint Monitoring Committee (JOMIC) (2008/9) and the Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) in 2009. Then the subsequently adopted Constitution in 2013 provided for the establishment of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), an independent commission responsible for facilitating transitional justice. However, since 2013, the government is delaying full operationalization of the NPRC and addressing the causes and consequences of the past conflicts.

In order to establish an effective Commission it is crucial to have a baseline understanding of what is needed for Zimbabwe to move beyond its tumultuous past, which is currently lacking. This justifies the need for a baseline study to guide the NPRC's priorities and indicators for success within different communities and constituencies, a gap this report intends to fill.

The conceptualisation of the NPRC in Zimbabwe brings up questions regarding the provision of an ideal reconciliation framework that promotes bottom-up transitional justice solutions. The national programming priorities on reconciliation and the basis upon which the NPRC and other ancillary reconciliation processes track their achievements are missing. The peoples' perceptions of national healing and reconciliation remain under-researched within this field of inquiry. Therefore, primary key questions emerge, including: What are ordinary peoples' perceptions about the reconciliation and national healing in Zimbabwe? What are

popular sentiments about the direction of national healing and reconciliation and the institutions that support the process in the country? What are the obstacles and opportunities for reconciliation? Above all, what can be done to address these concerns? This study aims to contribute to answering these questions, but at the same time it recognised that further investment in transitional justice research is crucial.

A comprehensive documentation of the reconciliation issues in Zimbabwe can help decisions, whether by government, aid agencies or the business community to be made while factoring in a number of social and political realities that are critical to peace and reconciliation. More importantly, an annual Reconciliation Barometer independently commissioned by stakeholders such as Churches and Civic organisations in peace building and conflict transformation, together with the government may assist in facilitating a robust peace and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe.

### 3. STUDY OBJECTIVES

This study intends to develop a national baseline understanding the state of peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe and the peoples' views on the implementation of peace and reconciliation processes in the country.

The specific research objectives are:

- a) To propose a peace and reconciliation framework for Zimbabwe in the aftermath of the 2013 Constitution.
- b) To explore the state of reconciliation in Zimbabwe;
- c) To identify Zimbabwean citizens' perceptions of previous and future peace, reconciliation and integration processes or efforts;
- d) To recommend programme priorities for the national peace and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe.



Participants at a dialogue meeting supported by HTZ, Gutu.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study undertook a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Semi-structured interview questionnaires with both closed and open-ended questions were used to solicit information from the respondents. An interview guide was also used to collect data from key informant interviews while focus group discussions were used in areas where either survey questionnaires or interviews could not be conducted. Target participants drawn from either in HZT programming areas or in areas where partner organisations operate were identified based on their expertise, leadership position, awareness of Zimbabwe's history and understanding of past human rights violations and or direct experience of violence.

These participants included ordinary citizens, youths, women, civic society leaders, political parties' representatives, churches leaders, war veterans, traditional leaders, traditional healers, University students and lecturers and business leaders. Drawing participants from across these socio-economic and political groups made the study views reflective of various sectoral peace and reconciliation issues. The study sample involved Zimbabweans above the age of 18 years from 44 districts out of possible 59 districts in Zimbabwe's 10 administrative provinces.

Responses examined were from 613 people: 500 respondents were reached through semi-structured questionnaires while 113 people were individually interviewed using an interview guide. The 500 survey respondents involved 277 males (55.4%) and 223 females (44.6%) who were either randomly or purposively selected. The 113 interview respondents (72 males and 41 females) were conveniently interviewed based on their expertise in peace and reconciliation processes, leadership position, popular opinion-making or their lived experiences in Zimbabwe. In addition to survey questionnaire administration and

interviews, four focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in Lupane, Tsholotsho, Masvingo and Plumtree.

These areas were difficult to administer individual questionnaires as some locals were afraid to speak individually because of their lived experiences with violence.

The target population elements were first divided into clusters based on geographical location and stakeholder groups such as women, youths and war veterans, among others then the respondents were randomly selected for interviews. Recruitment of respondents per province was, however, unevenly distributed with the highest number of 116 participants coming from Harare Metropolitan province whilst the lowest was in Matabeleland South where only three participants were interviewed. The uneven distribution of participants affected fair representation of views geographically as observed in Matabeleland South, for example, where only three participants were interviewed.

Purposive sampling techniques were used to select focus group participants in areas where it was difficult to interview individuals. The data collection period stretched from June 2016 to June 2017.



**#ThisFlag** protesters praying outside the Harare Magistrate Court in solidarity with Pastor Evan Mawarire, 2017.

### a) Data Collection and Analysis

In order to analyse the data, we used thematic analysis given that several themes were emerging from the key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Thematic analysis is used to analyse, classify and present themes or patterns emerging from the collected data.<sup>23</sup> The method was most appropriate as it allowed the researchers to discover several issues requiring interpretations systematically. Thus “thematic analysis is capable to detect and identify, e.g. factors or variables that influence any issue generated by the participants.”<sup>24</sup>

The data collected through the questionnaires were analysed by coding and processing the data through the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Coding was done by creating an SPSS dictionary identifying key themes in

the questionnaire and in the narrative text from the respondents. Frequencies of the identified themes were matched with all the responses from the 500 questionnaires and were presented in figures, tables and charts. Differences and similarities clarifying relationships were drawn using the statistical inferences from the SPSS tabulated data. This data strengthened the evidence gathered from key informant interviews and FGDs. Data extracted from FGDs and interviews was analysed using thematic analysis and were presented in the form of explanations and quotations. It is also important to note that respondents in this study report are not all quoted using their real names and in most cases identity is completely removed for the purposes of upholding research ethics and standards, particularly given the sensitive nature of this research topic.

<sup>23</sup>Boyatzis, R.E. (1998). Transforming qualitative information: thematic analysis and code development. California, Sage Publications.

<sup>24</sup>Alhojailan, M. I. (2012). Thematic analysis: A critical review of its process and evaluation. West East Journal of Social Sciences, 1(1), 39-47.

## 5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Both thematic and quantitative approaches were engaged in the analysis of the findings. On one end the baseline brings out the prospects of the NPRC especially give the facilitative provision enunciated in the 2013 Constitution and the provision for a statutory body for the implementation of peace and reconciliation programmes and processes. On the other, descriptive statistics are computed to reveal the preferences and choices that citizens have regarding the priorities and views regarding what should guide the NPRC, who the key players should be and how best the processes should roll out.



A member of Heal Zimbabwe Trust peacebuilding groups

## 5.1 Operational Definitions Of Peace And Reconciliation

In order for the NPRC and other supporting institutions to collectively facilitate peace and reconciliation processes it is necessary to have a commonly understood definition of these concepts from all stakeholders and the NPRC. Therefore, research participants were asked to express what ‘peace and reconciliation’ meant to them and what their ‘main reconciliation’ issues were. As will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs, Heal Zimbabwe deduces that more respondents defined ‘peace and reconciliation’ as a dialogue and mediation platform for victims and perpetrators overseen by the government and other stakeholders such as churches, traditional leaders, formal courts, political parties (and their leaders) to address their past.

The respondents expected peace and reconciliation to address past human rights violations through open dialogue, truth-telling, compensation and peaceful co-existence. Peace and Reconciliation involve making amends to historical events or episodes that caused injury, pain and trauma among the affected communities and people. This means the foundation of any peace and reconciliation process is the acknowledgement of past wrongs.

The National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe Chairperson, for example, defined peace and reconciliation as

*“a platform for dialogue, acceptance of responsibility for the past (torture and massacres, people to be answerable e.g. for Gukurahundi,) admission of responsibility by duty bearers.”*<sup>25</sup> Similar thoughts were also echoed by a church leader who said peace and reconciliation involves *“dealing with our past and related reparations, truth-telling and reinstalling justice.”*<sup>26</sup>

The study reveals that peace and reconciliation should be anchored on the principles of fairness, inclusivity and accountability at family and community level. One opposition party leader interviewed highlighted that peace and reconciliation is beyond what has been defined as negative or the absence of direct violence by prominent peace researcher Johan Galtung.<sup>27</sup> The interviewee (political leader) said peace and reconciliation implies

*“the elimination of structural violence and the availability of formal structures that deals with conflict prevention at various societal levels (family, social and national) while reconciliation involves mechanisms of accounting, forgiveness for past wrongs and recompense for wrongs including criminal prosecutions.”*<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, peace and reconciliation should be a genuine process of undergoing dialogue about the past human rights violations with a view to heal the wounds of affected individual communities while facilitating accountability of such wrongs formally or informally.

*“The process becomes nationally meaningful when there is acknowledgement by the authorities, inclusive participation, fair treatment of all and free expression,”*

the political leader added. War Veterans interviewed generally viewed peace and reconciliation as the rectification of national grievances that led to the liberation war. They also argued that Zimbabwe’s peace and reconciliation should be evaluated using the benchmarks such as “one man one vote, freedom of expression, economic emancipation and access to land” which were key reasons for fighting the country’s liberation struggle.

*Zimbabwe’s peace and reconciliation should be evaluated using the benchmarks such as “one man one vote, freedom of expression, economic emancipation and access to land”*

<sup>25</sup>Personal interview with, the National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe Chairperson on the 24th of April 2017

<sup>26</sup>Personal interview with a Church leader in Harare on 11th of April 2017

<sup>27</sup>Galtung, J., & Höivik, T. (1971). Structural and direct violence: A note on operationalization. *Journal of Peace Research*, 8(1), 73-76.

<sup>28</sup>Personal interview with an Opposition Political Leader in Harare on the 11th of April 2017

To operationalize peace and reconciliation, respondents identified political violence, unemployment, unfair distribution and access to resources, corruption and economic disintegration among others as key issues that should be addressed by Zimbabwe's peace and reconciliation processes. In response to the question what is the main reconciliation issue in your area, respondents' mentioned the following, as shown in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Main reconciliation issues**

Reconciliation Issues	Percentages
Political and electoral violence	50.8
Economic disintegration	13.4
Corruption	5.1
2008 Political violence	4.8
Poor social services/utilities and infrastructural dilapidation	4.8
Gukurahundi	4.8
Tribal/ethnic/religious conflicts	4.0
Partisan justice delivery	2.9
Unfair distribution of land and other resources	2.1
Chaotic land reform	2.1
Murambatsvina or property destruction	1.6
Gender Based Violence (GBV)	1.3
Chiadzwa atrocities	1.3
Liberation struggle	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In view of the issues revealed in table 1 above political and electoral violence was identified by 50.8% of the total respondents as the most urgent issue requiring redress. Economic disintegration was the second most urgent reconciliation issue identified by 13.4% of the total respondents while corruption was most mentioned by 5.1% of the participants. The least identified reconciliation issue was the liberation struggle that was mentioned by 0.8% of the total participants followed by gender based violence (GBV) and Chiadzwa atrocities both mentioned by 1.3% survey respondents.

It is vital to note that issues mentioned by few survey respondents such as the liberation struggle, GBV and Chiadzwa atrocities are not necessarily less import in the peace and reconciliation narrative. The results may have been influenced by the nature of participants chosen or their priority concerns. For example, GBV was mentioned by only 1.3% of the respondents yet violence among women has been rampant during elections and in times of political conflict such as during the Gukurahundi. The seriousness of GBV is captured from one interview respondent who said:

*There is need for the truth to be told about how social, economic and political violence has silenced women's voices ..... the Zimbabwean history narrative is very masculine even in education, history is a subject where the Rozvi or Mutapa women were not visible, but in Chigodora the wife of the chief is an advisor and mbuyas and aunties sometimes carry spiritual roles. Why are these people invisible at the national level. Society has left women very bitter.<sup>29</sup>*

In addition to the above quote, the Human Rights NGO Forum observed that “in 2001, there were 75 women whose rights were violated in Zimbabwe, 151 in 2002; 217 in 2003; 229 in 2004; 154 in 2005 259 in 2006 and 1 323 in 2007.”<sup>30</sup> This evidence, therefore, suggests that it is important to appreciate that GBV is a reconciliation which also requires prioritisation. However, its visibility could be overshadowed by political power dynamics, masculine traditional practices and other conflict issues.

According to an interviewee from Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE), the conceptualisation of peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe should involve “a holistic approach or process capturing all multi-layered conflicts in the Zimbabwean history.”<sup>31</sup> It must address past human rights violations by ensuring that “a genuine or honest dialogue about all the scars that have been inflicted on the nation through various violations.”<sup>32</sup> Political episodes in Zimbabwe could have an overshadowing effect on the reconciliation process; but 95% of the study respondents noted that the process should be inclusive of social, economic and political sectoral issues. As such, if peace and reconciliation is to be successfully completed it will stimulate community and national development. This means the peace and reconciliation agenda should be framed within a broader policy arena that allows ordinary citizens to participate together with all sectors responsible for peace and security in the country.

## 5.2 Rationale for the NPRC in Zimbabwe

The NPRC was established by Zimbabwe's Constitution as part of five Independent Commissions Supporting Democracy identified in Section 232. Section 252 of the Constitution mandates the creation of the NPRC to ensure post conflict justice, healing and reconciliation, among other functions.<sup>33</sup> However, there are diverse interpretations on what the NPRC should essentially do operationally since it is not constitutionally defined as a ‘Truth and Reconciliation Commission’ but rather a peace and reconciliation institution whose

mandate does not oblige it to facilitate truth recovery and restitution. This means the rationality of setting up the NPRC could require a collective understanding and delimitation anchored in the goal of nation building. Therefore, in this study, HZT sought to understand the communities' views on the reasons for setting up the Commission. The major reasons for setting up the NPRC were undoing cyclic violent conflicts and justice as shown in table 2 below.

<sup>29</sup>Personal interview with a representative from the Women's Coalition (a Women's Movement) on 27 May 2016.

<sup>30</sup>The Human Rights NGO Forum (20 May 2008) The burden of politics on women in Zimbabwe. Available at: <http://www.hrforumzim.org/press-releases/the-burden-of-politics-on-women-in-zimbabwe/>

<sup>31</sup>Personal interview with a Lecturer of Peace and Governance from Bindura University on the 10th of June 2016

<sup>32</sup>Personal interview with a female student from Great Zimbabwe University on the 24th of February 2017

<sup>33</sup>Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment (No. 20 (2013) Act

**Table 2: Major reasons for setting up the NPRC**

Major Reason	Percentages (%)
To undo cyclic violent conflicts	20.4
Justice	15.5
To heal the pain of the victims	14.9
To help in nation building	14.3
To facilitate compensation and restitution	9.2
Truth-telling	8.4
Forgiveness	8.0
To undue a culture of impunity	4.2
To undo racial and ethnic tensions	3.1
To bring closure to some traumatic past	2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

In a range of 1-5, the reason ranked first by 20.4% of the respondents as the major reason for setting up the NPRC was to undo cyclic violent conflicts, while justice was ranked second. Bringing closure to some traumatic and undoing racial and ethnic tensions were ranked last. These responses show that peace and reconciliation process is not just about victims only, but a broader transformation of cultures of conflict and violence within the Zimbabwean society. Interviewees also raised issues related to undoing cycles of violence because Zimbabwe as a nation has never been afforded an opportunity to heal from the wounds of the liberation struggle and the post liberation conflicts. For example, a participant from Lupane said “there a lot of festering wounds that need to be healed or else they will poison generations if not addressed.”<sup>34</sup> A member of the opposition leadership also echoed that sentiment with the comment:

*Anger is accumulating and therefore peace and reconciliation are needed in a wounded society (which emotionally needs to reconcile). There is anger on the victims’ side and their dependents. If that is resolved, people will live in harmony notwithstanding the human made disasters of the past. ...Zimbabwe’s peace and*

*reconciliation story derives from the political life of the country since 1980 characterised by violence and harassment by the ruling party and the state.*<sup>35</sup>

The above views demonstrate that healing, avoiding further violence and reconciling victims with their aggressors should be focal points within the NPRC. Still, the justification for peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe is not only about the post-independence politically motivated violations as noted by an opposition leader. Both pre and post-independence issues relating to the liberation struggle squabbles including tribalism and regionalism should also be addressed. To explain this need, a liberation war veteran said:

*Some regions were suppressed, and their key political figures were eliminated. The Whites had a long-term agenda to control the country and they created their own sell-outs, but the nationalist movements also had sell-outs planted by the West, some were pretender revolutionaries. Liberation fighters should be excused because they were vulnerable, they went to war with Standard six<sup>36</sup> at most, and so many were manipulated even in the post war developments.*<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Personal interview with a Civic Society leader on the 14th of March 2017

<sup>35</sup>Personal interview with an opposition leader in Chipinge on the 17th of February 2017

<sup>36</sup>Standard six refers to educational level (used during the colonial era) equivalent to (form 2) high school education in today’s Zimbabwe.

<sup>37</sup>Personal interview with a Resident of Bulawayo in Bulawayo on the 14th of March 2017

Another respondent, a war veteran from Zvishavane echoed similar views justifying the need for national peace and reconciliation processes by stating that:

*We need peace and reconciliation because our history is so dark to describe the colonial abuses and colonialists never apologised because they were leaving, we are owed an apology. The new government in 1980 misled the people into believing that there were dissidents led by Nkomo (manufactured grievance) in 1982, shutting down dissenting voices against the one party state and building oppressive structures of the state. Mugabe was still very trusted and got thumps up from the West. Even that early we already had abductions, torture, rape, poverty and related problems, failed policies that drove our youths into prostitution and drugs, today we also have rampant corruption and looting of state resources.<sup>38</sup>*

The view above presents a broad spectrum of the grievances and historical challenges that Zimbabwe must account for. As such, any peace and reconciliation process should account for all the country's historical past without excluding the colonial era. However, it could be difficult to demand apology from the colonial government because a negotiated settlement was meant to break from the past.

Citizens also believe that the NPRC is being set up to address socio-economic challenges affecting the country. These conflicts mostly relate to partisan distribution of development projects, aid and services. One recurrent issue was the concern about internally displaced persons resulting from natural resources

exploitation and development projects in different communities. For example there are displacements that took place in Chiadzwa, Chisumbanje and in Chingwizi. One respondent in Mutare said that “people feel neglected and are not benefitting from development projects that displace them yet their relocation is never done properly especially in areas such as Lake Kariba and Marange Diamonds, Chingwizi and ARDA-Chisumbanje.”<sup>39</sup>

A female respondent and victim of the Tokwe-Mukorsi Dam construction displacement added that “we were forcibly

**“...we were forcibly removed from our house in Tokwe and some of us were beaten and arrested for demanding restitution”**

removed from our house in Tokwe and some of us were beaten and arrested for demanding restitution”.<sup>40</sup> As such, the NPRC justifiably has to address both historical political past as well as socio-economic conflicts that Zimbabwe has faced. In fact, the state has been the major agent for involuntary resettlement in Zimbabwe and in that way has violated citizen's socio-cultural and economic rights.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup>Personal Interview with a former ZIPRA member and War Veteran in Zvishavane on the 23rd of February 2017

<sup>39</sup>Personal interview with a Civic Society leader in Mutare on the 23rd of February 2017

<sup>40</sup>Personal interview with a female victim of the Tokwe-Mukorsi Dam Construction in Chingwizi on the 23rd of February 2017

<sup>41</sup>Chris de Wet. (2017). The State, Involuntary Resettlement, And Unintended Agency: *Some Reflections From Southern Africa*. Retrieved from: [https://www.iss.nl/fileadmin/ASSETS/iss/Documents/Research\\_and\\_projects/DRS/de\\_Wet\\_TheStateInvoluntaryResettlement\\_SouthernAfrica.pdf](https://www.iss.nl/fileadmin/ASSETS/iss/Documents/Research_and_projects/DRS/de_Wet_TheStateInvoluntaryResettlement_SouthernAfrica.pdf)

Based on respondents' responses, it can be deduced that communities continue to live in fear as a result of the unaddressed past human rights violations.

Therefore, the NPRC should be set up to fact find, document and archive issues relating to past injustices and human rights violations with truthfulness. Communities believe NPRC was established to deal with diverse socio-economic and political concerns which require the body to have a broad mandate beyond its constitutional restrictions.

This is evidently explained by research participants' broad views on the reasons

for setting up the NPRC. For example, communities want the NPRC to assist in reducing political polarisation, fear and intimidation within communities, create an environment for free and fair elections, address socio-economic grievances and to raise awareness on human rights. Some of these community expectations are, however, outside the constitutional mandate of the NPRC and should be broadly addressed by other Independent Commissions Supporting Democracy such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC).

### 5.3 Past Experiences to Inform the Peace and Reconciliation Framework

The Peace and Reconciliation Framework that Zimbabwe will adopt may determine the extent to which the NPRC will achieve or fulfil its mandate. However, this framework should be determined by past human rights violations, conflict episodes and challenges that Zimbabwe as a country endured before and after its independence. This means that pre-and post-independence experiences should be identified and explored. Research participants and informants mentioned diverse episodes and experiences that are relevant to consider when developing the peace and reconciliation processes.

Experiences identified by the research respondents include Zimbabwe's social, economic and political dynamics. Among them were:

#### Political violations:

Political violations in this study refer to harms committed in the interest of political motivations. The respondents pointed out the liberation struggle, early independence (Gukurahundi), and political violence spanning different electoral cycles, for example the 2000-2002, 2005 and 2007/8 as key violent political episodes.



Participants at a dialogue meeting supported by HZT in Mutasa, Manicaland, 2016

The liberation struggle is seen as an issue requiring reconciliation because the period involved killings between the white colonialists and the black majority who were natives of the Zimbabwean state. However, there were also atrocities among the black liberation war fighters emanating from ethnocentric fundamentalism and power dynamics among the liberation movements including Zimbabwe People's

Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) –mainly. The killings experienced during the Nhari rebellion and the Mugagao Declaration are such examples where black liberation war fighters killed each other.<sup>42</sup> In addition, women were raped, used as human shields and at times used as bait to trap opponents.



Zimbabwe Government of National Unity(GNU) principals with President Thabo Mbeki, (2008)

Source: Reuters/Antony Njuguna

### Gukurahundi:

Was the first post-independence conflict that led to fatalities.<sup>43</sup> A traditional leader in Tsholotsho described Gukurahundi as “an armed conflict displaying an unproportional response to the so called dissident threat which made the conflict and ethnic genocide.”<sup>44</sup> According to the affected communities, Gukurahundi conflict had different levels of conflicts namely (i) the State vs. Citizens, (ii) Ndebele versus Shona and then (iii) Ndebele vs. Ndebele etc. Initially, the state sponsored the violence against dissidents and their proxies who it

perceived as sources of political instability. They were not separated from ordinary citizens who were of Matabeleland origin. The blur of identity led to mass killings of innocent civilians. Second, the victims of the Gukurahundi (in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces) shifted the blame from the state, (the sponsor of violence) to the Shona people; hence a continuous tribal conflict between the Ndebele and Shona people emerged. Third, hatred escalated among Ndebele people who were in PF ZAPU versus those in ZANU. Enos

<sup>42</sup>White, L. (2003). *The assassination of Herbert Chitepo: Texts and politics in Zimbabwe*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

<sup>43</sup>Tauten, B. (2015). “A recipe for another war of revenge”: The Lasting Impacts of the Gukurahundi on Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. Dissertation. Oxford Brookes University. Retrieved from: <http://architecture.brookes.ac.uk/research/cendep/dissertations/BenTeuten.pdf>

<sup>44</sup>Personal interview with a War Veteran Leader in Mbire on the 6th of July 2016.

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Nkala and Joshua Nkomo had political differences dating from 1963 when Nkala helped establishing ZANU as an alternative to ZAPU which was led by Nkomo. After independence, Nkala allegedly pioneered the Gukurahundi massacres while he was the Minister of Defence a role which he regrets.<sup>45</sup> In an interview with Dongozi (a journalist), Nkala says “The massacres in Matabeleland and the Midlands by the government are something that I regret.”<sup>46</sup>

### Political violence:

Spanning from the 2000 -2016 electoral episodes is also considered as a key issue requiring reconciliation. Between these stated periods violence was unleashed upon political opponents. Some respondents describe this phase as follows;

*By 2000 the constitution movement geared at addressing the post-independence injustices as a reaction to state oppression, this saw the defeat of the government in the 2000 constitutional referendum. Subsequent reprisal was expressed through the land acquisition in retaliation against the white commercial farmers who had supported the no vote. Since the year 2000, the MDC supporters suffered intense state sponsored violence. The conflict, in fact, showed several characters: the state vs people, national youth service graduates vs Zimbabweans, ZANU PF vs the opposition party and war veterans vs people.<sup>47</sup> These different conflict characteristics identify actors in the Zimbabwe conflict episodes.*

The violations from Gukurahundi have not been addressed. For instance, some women raped during the liberation struggle and during the Gukurahundi era have children without birth certificates. They bore the children out of rape abuses and some of the perpetrators are known but they regarded as untouchables. Hence, the women continue to live with wounds that require healing.

The state became more aggressive against the people in defence of ZANU PF that was losing political ground.<sup>48</sup> ZANU PF and its surrogate youths and war veterans also started perpetrating violence on the citizens, white commercial farmers and opposition parties without restraint. The conflation of the state and party meant that citizens’ security became compromised. ZANU PF became the major sponsor of political violence as it found expediency in supporting the war veterans and youths grievances.

Political intolerance increased in Zimbabwe such that the apex of hostility resulted in the torture of political opponents, arson, abductions and direct physical assault among other forms of human rights violations. The country’s political conflict became more challenging because of the military service chiefs who proclaimed never to allow a President or political leaders to be in power without liberation war credentials. It is within this context that communities want a process that promotes reconciliation so that political tolerance and trust are built sustainably.

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<sup>45</sup>(2013) Nkala itched for Nkomo’s Blood –Mugabe. News Day. Retrieved from, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/08/30/nkala-itched-nkomos-blood-mugabe/>

<sup>46</sup>Dongozi, F. (2013). EnosNkala’s last controversial interview. The Independent. Retrieved from <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2013/09/06/enos-nkalas-last-controversial-interview/>

<sup>47</sup>Personal interview with a former Member of Parliament in Chinhoyi on the 12th of June 2016

<sup>48</sup>Sachikonye, L. (2011). When a state turns on its citizens: 60 years of institutionalised violence in Zimbabwe. African Books Collective.

## Social/economic policy failures:

In early 1990s the economic situation started deteriorating as a result of the Structural Adjustment programmes. Between 2000 and 2008, Zimbabwe again experienced the worst economic decline characterised with rising unemployment, inflation, price fluctuations and corruption. In this study, respondents identified the government indigenisation laws, the rising informal economy, and deindustrialisation of the Matabeleland region and lack of protection of vendors, Structural Adjustment

Programmes, job losses as key economic experiences warranting attention of the NPRC.

Generally, these violations are a result of the government's economic policy proclamations resulting in communities losing their possessions. For example, the land reform policy, the dollarization policy, economic structural adjustment policies and the labour policies affected people's livelihoods.

## The land reform policy:

Arguably took place in a chaotic manner with many White people losing their farms. About 3 900 white commercial farmers lost their farms while 224 000 farm workers lost their jobs and benefits while about 75% of them became landless and unemployed.<sup>49</sup>

In most instances, new farm owners did not continue employing the farm workers and they also did not compensate the majority of employees for lost benefits.

## Operation Murambatsvina:

Was identified as yet another crucial point in Zimbabwe's history that should be addressed within a reconciliation process. Operation Murambatsvina refers to the government's action of demolishing houses and market stalls that were considered illegal in urban areas and growth points.<sup>50</sup> Respondents argued that the government violated the people's human rights by destroying their houses under the guise of enforcing council by-laws, restoring order

and sanity in towns and stopping illegal businesses and informal settlements. On 19 May 2005 the Government of Zimbabwe launched Operation Murambatsvina where the "police burnt, bulldozed and destroyed tens of thousands of properties around the country."<sup>51</sup> The United Nations estimated that 700 000 people were made homeless, forced out of their homes or lost their livelihoods which constitute serious human rights violations.

<sup>49</sup>Sachikonye, L. (2003). Land Reform and Farm Workers. Retrieved from <http://ir.uz.ac.zw/jspui/bitstream/handle/10646/365/Sachikonye-land-reform.pdf?sequence=1>. See also Hawkins, T. (2013). Zimbabwe Land Reform – How Successful. Retrieved from <http://www.cfuzim.org/index.php/land-facts/3700-zimbabwe-land-reform-how-successful>

<sup>50</sup>Potts, D. (2006). 'Restoring order'? Operation Murambatsvina and the urban crisis in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 32(2), 273-291.

<sup>51</sup>Human Rights Watch. (2011). The Implementation of Operation Murambatsvina (Clear the Filth) Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/africa/zimbabwe0905/4.htm>

## The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) of 1992 and the 2015 retrenchments:

Were also identified as part of the broader economic issues that should be addressed. These two episodes saw many people in both the private and public sector workforce having their contracts terminated which suddenly plunged them into severe poverty. The indigenization policy that was established by the government compelling all foreign owned companies to cede 51% to the government and to local citizens<sup>52</sup> and amounted to expropriation. Social experiences, on the

other hand, included, lack of compensation of the disabilities and injuries during state sponsored interventions. Many of these social challenges are a result of the declining economic situation and rising corruption in Zimbabwe.

Table 3, shows the conflict issues that were indicated during the key informant interviews as conflict episodes. The conflict events were categorised into two (covering pre-independence and post-independence era).

**Table 3: Past experiences to be considered in peace and reconciliation processes**

Pre-Independence	Post-Independence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matebele war</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gukurahundi - 1980-1987</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laws that disempowered citizens, such as the Land Apportionment Act, Land Tenure Act of 1969, Law and Order Maintenance Act)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2000 chaotic land reform (Farm workers suffered)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberation Struggle abuses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electoral violence (1990, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2008, 2013)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom fighters and non-combatants rehabilitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operation Murambatsvina (2005 and post 2000)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1979-1980 electoral violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involuntary displacements (Chingwizi-Tokwe Mukorsi flood victims/Chiadzwa diamonds exploitation/Mutoko granite mining/Chisumbanje ethanol project/Matabeleland ARDA project extension)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Shocks (ESAP, Urban expansion, dollarization, de-industrialization)</li> </ul>

<sup>52</sup>The Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act [Chapter 14:33] of Zimbabwe

To further understand the past experiences informing the national peace and reconciliation framework, we also asked respondents within our questionnaire to state at most three major events in Zimbabwe's history that warrant national peace and reconciliation interventions.

Table 4 below indicates the percentage frequencies of major events experienced in Zimbabwe in response to the question: List three major events in Zimbabwe's history that warrant the national peace and reconciliation interventions.

**Table 4: Major events warranting national peace and reconciliation interventions**

Major events	Percentages
2008 political violence	29.3%
Gukurahundi	24.9%
Murambatsvina	24.4%
Liberation struggle	6.8%
2000 Land reform	4.2%
Dollarization	3.1%
1992 Drought	2.3%
2015 retrenchments	1.8%
2002 political violence	1.0%
Chiadzwa atrocities	0.9%
GNU	0.8%
2016 mass demonstrations e.g. Tajamuka and #This Flag protests/stay away	0.3%
Katiyo massacres	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The 2008 political violence was most frequently mentioned by 29.3% of respondents as the most prominent event warranting the NPRC followed by Gukurahundi with 24.9% and Operation Murambatsvina at 24.4%. The 2008 political violence is the most recent episode of violence that rocked Zimbabwe during elections. Over 200 people were killed while thousands were internally displaced.<sup>53</sup> Gukurahundi is the early independence political conflict that left over 20 000 people dead in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. The least frequently mentioned event was the Katiyo massacres with 0.2%

and the 2016 mass demonstrations with 0.3%. Katiyo massacres are killings that took place during the liberation struggle in the eastern border with Mozambique while the 2016 mass demonstrations involves violence that spread across the country as people protested against declining economy and bad governance.

Heal Zimbabwe Trust notes that the views were mostly expressed by victims of violence and those who feel aggrieved by specific historical issues. Geographical differences and political orientation also influenced participants' views as shown below in table 5.

<sup>53</sup>Human Rights Watch. (2011). Zimbabwe: No Justice for Rampant Killings, Torture Impunity Fuels New Abuses, Imperils Future Elections. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/03/08/zimbabwe-no-justice-rampant-killings-torture>.

**Table 5: Geographical differences on major reconciliation issues**

Province	Main reconciliation issue (percentages)													Total percentages	
Manicaland	55.7	3.3	6.6	1.6	6.6	1.6	0	1.6	8.2	1.6	4.9	0	8.2	0	100
Matabeleland North	0	16.7	0	0	0	33.3	33	0	16.7	0	0	0	0	0	100
Matabeleland South	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
Mashonaland East	72	4	4	8	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	100
Mashonaland Central	85.7	0	0	14.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
Mashonaland West	78.3	0	0	13	0	4.3	0	0	0	4.3	0	0	0	0	100
Bulawayo Metropolitan	25.	5	0	0	0	25	40	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
Harare Metropolitan	29.1	32.7	12.7	1.8	9.1	3.6	0	0	0.9	1.8	1.8	3.6	0	0.9	100
Midlands	66.7	13.3	2.2	2.2	0	2.2	2.2	2.2	6.7	4.4	0	0	0	0	100
Masvingo	61.2	4.5	0	10.4	4.5	0	4.5	0	0	0	6	3.0	0	1.5	100
	50.8	13.4	5.1	4.8	4.8	4.0	4.8	4.8	1.3	2.9	2.1	1.6	1.3	0.8	100

Table 5 above shows that respondents from different provinces had their own key reconciliation issues. For example, respondents from Manicaland, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central, the Midlands and Masvingo provinces mentioned political and electoral violence as their major reconciliation issue while those from Matabeleland South and Bulawayo metropolitan provinces mentioned Gukurahundi as their key

reconciliation issue. Respondents from Matabeleland South mentioned tribal and ethnic conflict as their major reconciliation issue while Harare province mentioned economic disintegration as the major reconciliation issue. This observation suggests that the entry points for peace and reconciliation interventions in each province should be differentiated, taking into consideration each area's priority reconciliation issue.

## 5.4 Designing a Possible Framework for the NPRC

Based on the analysis of the data gathered in this study, this section presents an ideal National Peace and Reconciliation framework, reflecting the views of those interviewed. The respondents' views were shaped by their experiences from past reconciliation efforts such as Prime Minister's reconciliation proclamation

decree (1980), the Unity Accord (1987), and Global Political Agreement (2008) and socio-political dynamics of traditional reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe. All the respondents raised concerns over the environmental factors (mainly political interference) that could affect the effectiveness of the Commission.

### 5.4.1 Ideal Peace and Reconciliation Framework

Both focus group participants and interviewees had difficulties to express what they consider an ideal peace and reconciliation process. Within one focus group in Tsholotsho, participants concurred that "there is not any ideal peace and reconciliation framework because of the unpredictability of the political situation in the country."<sup>54</sup>

However, participants reflected on a variety of interventions, processes and actions that could be considered for an ideal peace and reconciliation framework.

These considerations can be categorised into three areas namely:

- (i) Institutional/ Structural
- (ii) Operational and
- (iii) Programmatic concerns.

Institutional considerations focus on the infrastructural architecture of the commission itself; process considerations detail community expectations in the commission's operational methodologies whilst programmatic considerations describe key activities that the commission needs to implement in order to facilitate national peace, healing and reconciliation.

<sup>54</sup>Focus group discussion with participants in Tsholotsho on the 2nd of June 2016

## i) Institutional/ Structural Issues

Structural considerations that form the peace and reconciliation framework are hierarchical arrangements, institutional design and operational architecture of the NPRC. Respondents indicated that the institution responsible for facilitating peace and reconciliation processes should be independent in terms of being free from influence by the government and politicians. They also specified that “church and community leaders should be involved in educating the citizens on the NPRC.”<sup>55</sup>

**“...Church leaders and community leaders should be involved in the educating the citizens on the NPRC”**

This means there must be an inclusion of civic society organisations in the formal NPRC process. Communities also proposed that the commission be

decentralized in order to ensure that people in remote areas are also able to access the Commission’s service. However, what was emphasized by all research participants is the need for decentralising the national peace and reconciliation architecture to the ward level in order to reach out to a wider audience.

The proposed decentralisation model structure was a template of the Joint Operations Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) which was established during the Government of National Unity (GNU) between 2009 -2013. One key informant said the peace and reconciliation process “should adopt the JOMIC model by creating structures that investigate thoroughly community level issues.”<sup>56</sup> JOMIC was decentralised cutting across all tiers, National, Provincial District and Ward-based structures led by Political Liaison Officers. The structures were composed of all political parties participating in the GNU. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they want to see the NPRC decentralised. Table 6 below shows survey respondents’ views on the question: Reconciliation should have national coordination structures at village, ward, district and provincial levels.

**Table 6: Desired peace and reconciliation structures**

Administrative structures	Percentages
Village	20.9%
Ward	20.3%
District	20.2%
National	19.7%
Province	18.9%
Total	100.0%

<sup>55</sup>Personal interview with a former Zimbabwe National Army Officer in Chinhoyi on the 12th of June 2016

<sup>56</sup>Personal interview with a key informant interviewee in Mberengwa on the 5th of July 2016

Table 6 above shows that the respondents want National Peace and Reconciliation structures at all levels given that all the response frequencies are within the range of 18 - 20%. The difference in the responses as shown in Table 6 above points to the conclusion that peace and reconciliation structures should be present at all levels. To buttress the proposition of decentralisation, one respondent said: “the NPRC should have structures from ward up to national levels in order to reduce shying away of people from national platforms. Local structures offer greater access and connection to the people and people are likely to spell out their will.”<sup>57</sup>

While explaining decentralisation issues, one respondent said “instead of establishing offices at ward level, let’s have justice committees” or “local liaison committees.”<sup>58</sup> These structures were proposed to counter traditional structures that have become politically partisan by actively supporting specific political parties which is prohibited by the constitution.<sup>59</sup> As such, respondents proposed the establishment of community structures to support local reconciliation processes as opposed to top-down peace and reconciliation interventions that lack local visibility.

In terms of involving other stakeholders in peace and reconciliation structures, one respondent said “if serious, the peace structure needs to be visible at ward and cell levels with a good reflection of the cross section of the society.”<sup>60</sup>

This reflection indicates the importance of stakeholders. The commission should involve different stakeholders in its operations and establish multi-sectoral synergies with civic society organization and other government departments. This maximizes the commission’s reach and mobilisation of Zimbabweans towards achieving a peaceful and reconciled country.

To aid views about stakeholders’ involvement in the peace and reconciliation structures, respondents were asked to mention 5 different stakeholders who should lead in peacebuilding processes in Zimbabwe. Table 7 below shows frequencies of survey respondents’ views in response to the question: **which five actors should take the lead in peacebuilding processes in Zimbabwe?**

**Table 7: Actors to lead in peace building process**

Stakeholder	Percentages
Government (NPRC)	32.8
Civic Society Organisations and Independent parties	19.0
Political parties	14.6
Church	11.9
International community	7.3
Individuals	5.6
Community	4.6
Traditional leaders and village heads	4.0
Total	100.0

<sup>59</sup>Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa. (2017). Report on Capture of Zimbabwean Traditional Leaders for Political Expediency. ACT-Southern Africa. Kwekwe.

<sup>60</sup>Personal interview with Residence Association leaders in Karoi on the 13 of June 2016.

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Table 7 above shows that 32.8% of the respondents were more comfortable and interested to see the NPRC (as a government established institution) leading the reconciliation process followed by 19.0% who believed the civic society should lead the reconciliation process. Traditional leaders were the least expected actor to lead the reconciliation process (4.0%) followed by the community itself indicated by only 4.6% of the participants. Most participants said they want the government to lead so that they will see its genuineness in wanting to promote peace while the civic society was considered to be generally neutral and non-partisan.

The civic society and local communities have been the most active peace and reconciliation actors in the absence of state-led efforts. Traditional leaders, however, had become very unpopular as a result of their co-optation into state organised and state sponsored violence.<sup>61</sup>

Some respondents expected that the secretariat of the NPRC, at different levels, should demonstrate experience and competence in conflict mediation and conciliation, and they must not hold positions in any political party.

The commission should be composed of an inclusive and professional secretariat that is skilled enough to withstand and avoid influences from political parties or political biases. The NPRC must also be structured in such a way that allows for a national dialogue among stakeholders such as church leaders, political parties and traditional leaders. It is also imperative that the government establishes a court specifically for handling issues requiring legal remedy. Such a court should build upon the country's rich traditional and modern court systems. More importantly, traditional leaders should also be involved in facilitating peace and reconciliation processes at the local level.

## ii) Expected Operational Methodologies

Operational considerations refer to methodologies and actions that communities expect to see in the commission's practical work. The respondents said the NPRC must carry out a baseline study detailing unaddressed national grievances and key peace and reconciliation priorities before beginning its work. Besides, the Commission may need to consider existing baseline findings detailing different peace and reconciliation intervention needs and priorities. Generally, a baseline study may set the tone for a robust peace and reconciliation process as well as ensuring that the commission addresses the needs

and expectations of the people. From the respondents' responses, HZT deduces that there must be a broader policy framework that clearly defines the mandate of the commission, allocates timeframes for the commission to handle each case and above all demarcates how far back the commission can investigate past injustices. To observe communities views about the NPRC's operational questions, HZT asked respondents to rank five major areas around which reconciliation should be anchored. Table 8 below shows responses to the question: Rank five major areas around which reconciliation what should start?

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<sup>61</sup>Alexander, J. (2014). Things fall apart, the centre can hold: processes of post-war political change in Zimbabwe's rural areas. Occasional Paper, (8), 131-162.

**Table 8: Major areas around which reconciliation should start**

Conflict Issues	Percentages
Political violence	55.9
Economic conflicts	12
Family disputes	10.2
Resource based conflicts (including land)	6.5
Race relations	5.3
Ethnic conflicts	4.3
Interpersonal conflicts	3.3
Religious conflicts	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in table 8 above, within the eight categories of conflicts provided, political violence was most frequently mentioned by 55.9% of the survey respondents as one of the major areas around which peace and reconciliation process should commence addressing. Economic conflicts were ranked second by 12% of the survey respondents followed by family disputes, resource based conflicts and race related conflicts. Religious conflicts were ranked least by 2.5% of the survey respondents.

Political violence was considered the most pressing issue requiring redress because of its widespread effects compared to other conflict issues. These rankings depict the reality of the country as many people in Zimbabwe are victims of political violence and economic disempowerment, compared to racial concerns or otherwise. However, it is important to note that since Zimbabwe's independence, ZANU PF always used racially charged language to mobilise political support locally, regionally and internationally.<sup>62</sup>

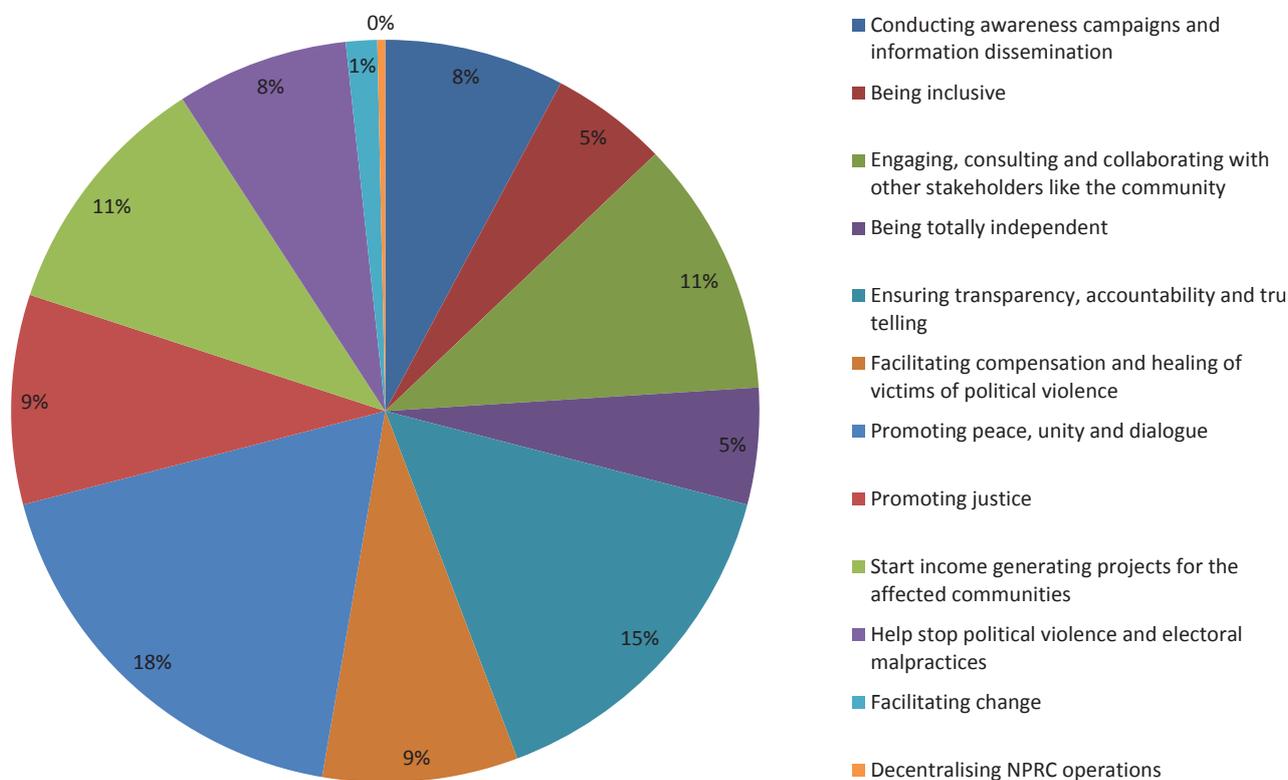
### iii) Programming actions

In terms of activities that should be implemented by the NPRC, the study observed that communities are more interested to have a commission running peace education programs to promote peaceful co-existence, and move away from cultures of violence, acknowledgement of past reconciliation efforts, public apologies by the government and individual perpetrators, national dialogue, investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, compensation and truth recovery. Such actions will also ensure the

rights of citizens to live in a peaceful environment, free from fear and intimidation. The commission also needs to facilitate dialogue platforms that are guided by freedom of expression and the desire to reveal the truth and genuine healing and reconciliation between perpetrators and victims. Rehabilitation of perpetrators and victims was also pointed as a key intervention for the commission. Figure 2 below shows issues that respondents want to see the NPRC doing within communities (list any three things you would want to see the NPRC doing differently).

<sup>62</sup>Muzondidya, J. (2010). The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Unresolved Conundrum of Race in the Post-colonial Period. *Journal of Developing Societies*. Volume 26(1)

**Figure 2: What communities want to see done differently by the NPRC**



In view of the above chart (figure 2), 18% of the respondents mentioned they want to see the NPRC promoting peace, unity and dialogue while 15% of the respondents want to see the Commission facilitating transparency, accountability and truth-telling. However, less than 1% of the total participants expected the NPRC to facilitate compensation and healing of victims of political violence.

It was noticeable that respondents who mentioned that they want to see the NPRC facilitating change were referring to the transformation of government by ushering in a new government system while those who want to see the NPRC encouraging decentralisation were calling for the implementation of constitutional provisions (section 264) requiring the government to devolve its power to provincial governments.

### 5.4.2 The Place for Justice in the Reconciliation Framework

HZT solicited what respondents would consider to be the place of justice within the reconciliation framework and how they wish to see justice being dispensed during the process of implementing reconciliation interventions. Responses from some research participants indicated that justice

is not the same for everyone and it is not just about going to courts when a conviction and sentence will be passed. One respondent indicated that: “Justice, yes but not everyone wants to go to the courts, for example, if I lost ‘my road-runner chicken’. For women these possessions are

very central. Such resources have connections with livelihoods and womanhood.”<sup>63</sup> As such, justice to some people means compensation or getting back what they lost as opposed to obtaining a ruling against a perpetrator in a court of law. Justice could also mean restoration of livelihoods, relocation and material benefits, emotional healing and accountability of the past violations in various forms.<sup>64</sup>

There was also recognition that certain violations are difficult to ensure justice for as they can cause re-victimisation and may bring shame to the victims. For example, “rape victims may find it hard to open up because they could feel ashamed of themselves as it is a taboo to speak out about being raped, they could lose their marriages or experience emotional harm from relived memories. Therefore, people need to experience justice in practice and also seeing the benefits of justice without revictimisation or else they resort to alternative justice ways such as witchcraft.”<sup>65</sup>

Witchcraft as a form of justice refers to the use of avenging spirits to demand accountability and reparation. This is a retributive approach which implies that if peaceful mechanisms for justice are not dispensed in time. Witchcraft is an unorthodox African traditional practice of cursing others resulting from hate, frustration or anger. For example, a political activist, Kennedy Chokuda, was killed in Gokwe and his spirit was reportedly tormenting the murderers until they acknowledged their crime and paid reparations. Most notable in the case is that the murdered victim’s body could not be buried for two years and seven months until the reparations were paid.

The father of one of the murderers paid 35 head of cattle and US\$15 000 to the Chokuda family.<sup>66</sup>

In addition, some respondents suggested that the space for justice is not yet available given the doubtful justice delivery system, unrepentant media and political players who remain conservative and less tolerant. A former Councillor interviewed in Mutoko District said “justice can only be delivered in an environment where there is respect for each other and where one can air out grievances”<sup>67</sup> yet in the current system the space is not there. To show doubt in the judicial system and lack of remorse on the part of the state and the perpetrators of violence, one respondent said:

*There is no space for justice yet, the judiciary has commissions to deliver justice but there is a clique who operates in a mafia style, so justice will be delayed for some time, there are too many extra-legal arrests and trumped up charges. There will be no justice until the state apparatus is cleaned up. These include state pillars; state security, media, treasury, executive and parastatals. Oppressive systems are usually hard to dismantle and unseat. For NAVUZ intelligence personnel were even planted into our structures (with officers masquerading as fake vendors and eating taxpayers’ money)<sup>68</sup>*

In view of the above response, it is important to consider that while justice has the potential to be delivered, there are many people who also believe that justice cannot exist in the current political system because of corruption, partisan bureaucrats and state-party conflation challenges. As such, there is need to build trust among the victims and perpetrators so that the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Peace and Reconciliation Commission will not be doubted.

<sup>63</sup>Personal interview with a male victim of violence in Muzarabani on the 5th of July 2016.

<sup>64</sup>See Guthrey, H. L. (2016). Expectations and promises in the quest for truth: Examining victims’ perceptions of truth commission participation in Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 22(4), 306-317

<sup>65</sup>Personal interview with a female civic society leader from the Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe in Bindura on the 14th of June 2016

<sup>66</sup>Benyera, E. (2015). Debating the efficacy transitional justice mechanisms: the case of national healing in Zimbabwe 1880 -2011. Doctoral Thesis: UNISA

<sup>67</sup>Personal interview with a ZANU PF former council chairperson in Mutoko on the 21st of February 2016

<sup>68</sup>Personal interview with a Vendors’ Union of Zimbabwe activist and social change leader in Harare on the 11th of April 2017

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### i) How should Justice be delivered?

Zimbabwe has conventional and traditional justice delivery mechanisms which are vital to consider in the context of national healing and reconciliation processes. Therefore, to understand the mix of justice solutions that Zimbabweans would want, we asked participants to indicate the extent to which reconciliation and national healing should be informed by local traditional

methodologies such as *'kuripangozi, kutandabotso and nhimbes.'* In response to the question: To what extent should reconciliation and national healing be informed by local traditional practices such as kuripa, botso, nhimbe, ngozi etc, respondents had a somewhat inclination to the use of traditional mechanisms as shown in table 9 below:

**Table 9: Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms**

Ranking	Percentages
To a lesser extent	24.8
To a greater extent	24.6
To the largest extent	24.0
To the least extent	19.2
Not sure	7.5
Total	100.0

The responses in table 9 above shows that the majority of respondents (24.8%) said traditional practices should be used 'to a lesser extent' while 24.6% also said the traditional practices should be used to a greater extent. At the same time, 24.0% said the traditional practices should be used to the largest extent. Given that the statistics do not differ greatly, it can be inferred that there is a slightly inclination towards using traditional mechanisms as part of the reconciliation interventions.

To observe practical reconciliation interventions that can be favourable to the

communities, HZT asked respondents to rank, in order of importance, possible national healing and reconciliation programmes they would value if implemented. The ranked processes involved both traditional and conventional transitional justice methodologies. In response to the question: Rank the following in order of importance in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. In your view, what should start first and come last in the list above, survey respondents said the following, in table 10:

**Table 10: Preferred reconciliation program that should come first and last**

Reconciliation Interventions	What should come first (Percentages)	What should come last (Percentages)
Truth-telling	36.5	3.5
Justice	17.8	7.0
Compensation/ Restitution	13.5	8.6
Dialogue	10.5	5.1
Forgiveness/Amnesty	6.0	17.9
Apology	5.6	2.3
Healing	5.2	1.2
Forgive and Forget	3.2	27.6
Memorialisation	1.1	8.9
Ritualization	0.6	17.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 10 shows that truth-telling should come first as 36.5% of the total participants approved it followed by justice which was approved by 17.8%. On the other hand, a total of 27.6% of the total respondents said forgive and forget should come last followed

by ritualization and forgiveness/amnesty which both scored 17.9%. These results shows clearly that truth-telling and justice are first priority reconciliation interventions while forgiving and forgetting, amnesty and ritualization should be sequenced later.

## 5.5. How do Communities Want to Deal with the Past

This section explains how communities expect to see peace and reconciliation process happening at both national and community levels. Respondents were asked to explain what communities actually want

to be done in order for them to feel satisfied that reconciliation has taken place. They were also asked to explain what they want to see the NPRC do for their wishes to be achieved.

### 5.5.1. What Communities Want to be Done

The study observed specific peace and reconciliation remedies that communities seek to be done in order for the process to be most effective. Among the general demands that communities would want to see are; compensation, truth-telling, prosecution of offenders and assurance of non-recurrence. A member of the clergy from Bulawayo remarked that;

*Firstly people need to talk about their pain; some people just began to cry, in a visit to Tsholotsho... we meet skeletons of our dead relatives,' we need time to cry bury and get explanations, zvakaiteirwei and who did it? This expression of 'moment of madness does not help', we need national ownership of the perpetration, because those who were not involved have been brought into the hogwash; -our silence nurtured this culture.... we need memorialisation...<sup>69</sup>*

<sup>69</sup>Personal interview with a Church Leader in Bulawayo on the 14th of March 2017



Former President of Zimbabwe R.G Mugabe, (2008) **Source: Reuters/Antony Njuguna**

<sup>70</sup>Ndakakuwadzwa but handina mari yekuzvirapisa' means I was injured but I do not have money to pay my medical bills.

<sup>71</sup>Personal interview with a female Gukurahundi Victim in Bulawayo on the 14th of March 2017.

<sup>72</sup>Guthrey, H. L. (2015). Victim healing and truth commissions: Transforming pain through voice in Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste (Vol. 11). Springer.

<sup>73</sup>Personal interview with a female, Civic Society Leader Harare on the 12th of April 2017.

Another respondent echoed that “Matabeleland women want an apology accompanied with truth and acknowledgement. I can’t see my perpetrator walking free out there. I know my perpetrators. *‘Ndakakuwadzwa but handinamariyekuzvirapisa*<sup>70</sup> -we need compensation.”<sup>71</sup>

The above demands illustrate that communities are still suffering from the wounds of the past violations. They want truth-telling and compensation as well as to know the motivation behind the violations. Communities want to rebury their beloved ones who were buried in the shallow graves, as in case of the victims of Gukurahundi and the 2008 killings. They also want to conduct memorialisation programmes to allow them to remember the past. It is also notable that the NPRC should not be blind to regional transitional justice grievances. This means that reconciliation program activities may also be customised to specific regional needs and interests.

A gendered approach is also necessary to ensure that victims, particularly women, are afforded healing opportunity without exposing them to re-victimisation.<sup>72</sup> One respondent said, “those raped require medication and therapy since some rapists have died .... Some women got divorce after being raped and infected by HIV/AIDS. Some were labelled ‘Mahure a Tsvangirayi (meaning prostitutes of the opposition MDC-T leader)’.”<sup>73</sup> These remarks above, calls for the peace and reconciliation facilitators to be sensitive to gender-specific needs.

The study also observed that the respondents were concerned about institutional reform as part of the reconciliation process. Firstly, they want the government to acknowledge and take responsibilities of the past violations.

One respondent, for example, commented that “communities want the government to own up, address local fears, anger and worries.” The government should take responsibility by prosecuting the perpetrators of violence, discouraging violence and to “use state institutions and handle grievance responsively as well as setting up competent courts even community courts such as the Rwandese gacaca.”<sup>74</sup> This suggests that if the government publicly denounces violence and guarantees non-recurrence of violence, communities will be able to appreciate the sincerity and genuineness of the government in national peace and reconciliation processes.

**“ the President and current MPs should resign because they remind citizens of the past violence and gross human rights violations.”**

Respondents with radical views even called for the removal of the political leaders and institutions who participated in perpetrating violence. For example, one respondent said that for peace and

reconciliation to take place effectively, “the President and current MPs should resign because they remind citizens of the past violence and gross human rights violations.”<sup>75</sup> This would help to pave the way for a sincere reconciliation and peace building effort. The new leadership will also have to demonstrate will and commitment towards revisiting the past and protecting the rights of its citizens by enacting laws and policies that guarantee non-recurrence and hold perpetrators to account. Institutions such as Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF), Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and the Judicial Services Commission (JSC) must also be reformed and re-constituted. This is because these institutions played a pivotal role in perpetuating violence in the country. Such reforms will entrench rule of law and democracy thereby establishing a conducive environment within which the peace and reconciliation efforts can achieve positive results.

Communities also expect political parties to reform from being conflictual into becoming peaceful and democratic. Some respondents said violence has become a code of conduct of political parties. Therefore, “we need to address violent political activities and selfishness within political parties.”<sup>76</sup> In view of this response, it is not only government institutions that should reform, but political parties that in turn lead legislative decisions and government business.

<sup>74</sup>Personal interview with Community leader in Mazowe on the 7th of July 2016

<sup>75</sup>Personal interview with a Church leader in Chinhoyi on the 13th of June 2016

<sup>76</sup>Personal interview with a Civic Society representative in Chinhoyi on the 13th of June 2016

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### 5.5.2. How Communities Want to See the NPRC Function

Participants were asked what they think Zimbabwean citizens actually want to see the NPRC doing within their communities. The investigation provides specific attitudes, behaviours and processes that should be exhibited and undertaken by the NPRC. Respondents' views addressed institutional architectural and remedial-operational issues they would want to see the NPRC providing to the communities. Institutional/structural issues include decentralisation of the NPRC offices, independent operations and collaboration or synergies with other government departments and the civic society.

A total of 20% of the survey respondents mentioned that they were motivated to see the NPRC facilitating peace, unity dialogue while 19.7% of the respondents said they wanted to see the NPRC promoting accountability, transparency and truth-telling. A total of 1.1% of the respondents said they least expect to see the NPRC facilitating political change. These views were also expressed by interviewees and focus group participants.

#### Profiling and Archiving:

Some respondents expected the NPRC to profile the stories of victims and perpetrators of violence within communities as part of their investigation of issues. Respondents suggested that profiling would ensure that accounts of what happened and the magnitude of the violations are correctly captured.

To buttress this suggestion, one respondent said “from national to local, there is need to investigate all violations and profiling the victims' cases because some of the violations took place when the victims had run away from the scene.” This experience shows the importance of thorough investigations and capturing correct accounts of what happened during the occurrence of the violations before providing remedial solutions to each case as there could be different accounts told by witnesses, the perpetrators and victims.

#### Decentralised institutions and engagement with other government departments

As observed earlier in Table 5 communities want to see the NPRC operating at the lowest community level to increase access to the Commission's services and to promote horizontal community level reconciliation processes. One respondent said “the NPRC should use the JOMIC template and include the ZRP, to provincial, district and wards.” While calling for the JOMIC template, it is notable that the respondent alluded to the involvement of the Zimbabwe Republic Police which is part of the government first line law enforcement agency.

This means there is also need to have mechanisms that include government departments in the reconciliation processes. This is further illustrated in the comment from one respondent that:

**“from national to local, there is need to investigate all violations and profiling the victims' cases because some of the violations took place when the victims had run away from the scene.”**

*The NPRC should link with other government departments. An inter-ministerial committee including the local government ministry, traditional leaders, the Ministry of Gender and Community Development, social welfare departments and home affairs can be set up to work with the NPRC. It will be an inter-ministerial network for the protection of*

*victims and witnesses and perpetrators. Kenya has a good commission but it is only in Nairobi and lacks visibility. The security apparatus has more access to the Commission, but the Commission has less capacity. In the same way, ONHRI could have done better if they had the will to work at the lowest community level.<sup>77</sup>*

Collaborative synergies should exist between the NPRC and other government institutions because of the crosscutting issues the Commission aims to address. However, it also shows the importance of ensuring that the synergies are effective. The respondent also referred to the Kenyan

Commission responsible for reconciliation. This brings up the question of whether the Zimbabwean NPRC should borrow lessons from other countries and to what extent.

Most research participants (39.6%) indicated that Zimbabwe must draw upon lessons from countries that once experienced or implemented transitional justice processes. Table 11 below shows survey participants responses to the question: To what extent should reconciliation and national healing be informed by international best practices and models such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions?

**Table 11: Extent to which reconciliation should be informed by international best practices**

Ranking	Percentages
To a greater extent	39.6
To a largest extent	29.5
To a lesser extent	13.6
Not sure	8.9
To a least extent	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of respondents approved that lessons should be drawn from the international community to a greater extent with 39.6% followed by 29.5% who believed that the NPRC should borrow lessons to the largest extent. Only 8.5% of the respondents said the NPRC should least borrow from international best practices. To summarise what communities want to see the NPRC doing a respondent from Rusape said;

*Many people talk about revenge. An eye for an eye hoping that some impunity will also protect them. Therefore, there is urgent need to address impunity. While there is need to address the past violations, we must make sure that there is for sustainable peace building by*

- (i) considering participatory decision making, increasing the participation of traditional leaders in peace building processes and promoting outreach activities targeting both perpetrators and victims of violence.*
- (ii) We need criminal justice and closure to the past violations.*
- (iii) Key perpetrator of atrocities must be brought before the courts even after their death. Let's not detach ourselves from the problems posed by the perpetrators.*
- (iv) There should be NPRC offices around the country so that issues are easily reported by victims and that perpetrators are easily accessed.<sup>78</sup>*

In order for it to deliver peace and reconciliation, the commission must be guided by fairness, transparency, impartiality and inclusiveness as key principles. It must also ensure that it

<sup>77</sup>Personal interview with a Secondary school teacher in Mutasa on the 17th of February 2017

<sup>78</sup>Personal Interview with a farmer and resident of Rusape on the 15th of February 2017.

constantly draws from the public by establishing peace and reconciliation committees that are politically inclusive at ward level. The NPRC should also engage traditional, religious and civic platforms in executing its functions.

The collected data also indicate the need to empower the commission to investigate and prosecute cases presented to it. While such responsibilities help in reducing bottle necks and potential hindrances to justice, it is important to note that Peace and Reconciliation Commissions usually

have fact finding functions only without prosecution powers.<sup>79</sup> The NPRC itself does not have prosecuting powers but it can seek the services of the police and courts to achieve its objectives.

This means communities have high expectations from the NPRC beyond what is constitutionally mandated to do. However, HZT believes such expectations could be a result of communities losing trust and confidence in institutions such as the police and as such their involvement in community healing should be minimal.<sup>80</sup>



Heal Zimbabwe National Peace Campaign Motto, 2018

Respondents also indicated that the commission must publicize its work before intervening so that everyone has the same understanding and can then cooperate in maximizing its achievements. Televising the NPRC's work could help in terms of raising awareness as well as deterring violence and human rights abuse in the future. However, it is vital to note that

some of the work may not need to be publicised when there is a possibility of re-victimisation, stigmatisation or any other forms of insecurity, thus requiring the NPRC to conduct some work in closed doors under camera for the protection of any possible vulnerable victims, witnesses and perpetrators.

<sup>79</sup>Carter, L. E., Ellis, M. S., & Jalloh, C. C. (2016). *The International Criminal Court in an Effective Global Justice System*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

<sup>80</sup>2017. We lost public trust due to waywardness: ZRP. *The Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.herald.co.zw/latest-zrp-promises-professionalism-and-respect/>. See also: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. (2006). *Who guards the guards? Violations by Law Enforcement Agencies in Zimbabwe, 2000 to 2006*. Retrieved from [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/58DE07598E4101AD4925725F001D41B7-Full\\_Report.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/58DE07598E4101AD4925725F001D41B7-Full_Report.pdf).

# 6. SYNERGIES AND COLLABORATIONS

This section focuses on identifying the stakeholders that communities strongly felt should collaborate with the NPRC in order for the commission to effectively execute its constitutional mandate. The respondents indicated that the NPRC should utilise or work with existing institutions such as faith based organisations, local and international NGOs. Government institutions such as the departments responsible for social welfare, traditional leaders, youth, and women among others should also be involved.

## 6.1 Synergies With State Actors

All research respondents concurred that it was important for the NPRC and other government departments to work together in facilitating peace and reconciliation processes in the country. The police, constitutional court and traditional leaders were identified as strategic state institutions that should work closely with the NPRC.

Integration of such state institutions in the work of the NPRC “promotes sustainable peace building at community level as well as ensuring that the whole country benefits from the commission.” The involvement of these stakeholders enhances oversight, legitimizes the Commission’s work and demonstrates the government’s commitment to address past injustices.

Traditional leaders have generally been accused of being politically partisan, but they remain powerful local leaders capable of facilitating traditional justice and

ritualization processes at community level. The role of traditional leaders in the work of the NPRC should not be side-lined.

They are instrumental in resolving matters that cannot be dealt easily with by formal courts such as the appeasement of vengeful spirits and other cases of intimidation and harassment. In addition, “they can help relieve pressure from formal courts by handling local matters, like what gacaca courts of Rwanda did after the genocide.”<sup>81</sup> However, there is evidence of those who participated in the Rwandese gacaca courts facing retribution and insecurity, testimonies in the traditional courts would trigger participants’ propensity to revenge, reduce their inclination to forgive or increase insecurity, particularly to those who give testimonies.<sup>82</sup> This means security and safety measures should be put in place to avoid such pitfalls.

For peace and reconciliation processes to succeed, full cooperation of law enforcement agencies is a necessity. Research respondents (21.7%) pointed out that law enforcement is the responsibility of the police. Therefore, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) must see itself as an implementing arm of the NPRC and it must enforce the law, especially, by protecting victims and witnesses from intimidation or victimisation by perpetrators of violence.

**“ ...they can help relieve pressure from formal courts by handling local matters, like what gacaca courts of Rwanda did after the genocide.”**

<sup>81</sup>Personal interview with a Traditional Leader in Masvingo on the 24th of February 2017

<sup>82</sup>Karen Brounéus, ‘The Trauma of Truth Telling: Effects of Witnessing in the Rwandan Gacaca Courts on Psychological Health,’ *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54(3) (2010): 409. See also: Bernard Rimé and Patrick Kanyangara, ‘The Impact of Gacaca Tribunals in Rwanda: Psychosocial Effects of Participation in a Truth and Reconciliation Process after a Genocide,’ *European Journal of Social Psychology* 41 (2011): 695-706.

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The ZRP may also be instrumental in investigating cases of violations referred to it by the Commission. However, most research participants put a caveat on the ZRP involvement in the NPRC work arguing that the police are generally partisan in favour of ZANU PF. The implications of the

NPRC working with the police under such circumstances include continued public mistrust in the peace and reconciliation process and continued fear by the victims which could lead to low participation in the NPRC interventions

## 6.2 Synergies with Non-state Actors

A total of 39.1% of the respondents mentioned that the NPRC should work hand in hand with local civic society organizations. Non-state actors have generally played a significant role in promoting national healing, peace and reconciliation. For example, non-governmental organisations, community based civic groups, and churches among other non-state institutions have been instrumental in facilitating community dialogues, providing psychosocial support services including emotional healing therapy to victims of violence.<sup>83</sup>

Communities considered civic society institutions as non-partisan because they have been implementing peace building initiatives in Zimbabwe with substantial success. However, while trusting civic society organisations to actively participate in national healing processes, communities also noted that some civic groups are viewed as “regime change agents” which could hinder their acceptability in some social sectors.

A Great Zimbabwe University student interviewed added that political parties should be viewed as part of the civic groups that must participate in peace and reconciliation processes. Political parties’ participation in the processes will help dismantle past political electoral violence and rigidities that the country witnessed since independence. However, because political parties have vested interests in any peace and reconciliation process, churches must take the lead. To support this view, further said, “the commission should work with churches because other institutions are politically biased; churches preach unity, forgiveness and work together.”<sup>84</sup>

Besides working with community level institutions, respondents advocated for a close working relationship between the NPRC and think-tank groups. Such think tanks include the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) and Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI) .

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<sup>83</sup>Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. (2017). Transitional Justice in Pre-Transitional Times. See also; Vinjamuri, L., & Boesenecker, A. P. (2008). Religious actors and transitional justice. *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics*, 155.

<sup>84</sup>Personal interview with a student from Great Zimbabwe University on the 23rd of February 2017

# 7. PAST ATTEMPTS FOR RECONCILIATION IN ZIMBABWE

HZT explored past reconciliation efforts and reasons for their previous failures. Major reconciliation efforts that were identified by respondents include: the Prime Minister's decree of 1980 (Forgive and Forget), the 1987 unity Accord, the Government of National Unity which gave birth to the first constitutionally provided reconciliation mechanism the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI).

While some respondents witnessed the past reconciliation efforts, some of the research participants were either not yet born or did not have adequate knowledge on the processes, hence they could not provide sufficient responses. Below are the study's observations on what constitutes past reconciliation efforts successes and reasons for failure.

**Table 12: Previous government reconciliation efforts**

Past reconciliation efforts	
a)	Lord Pierce Commission (1972)
b)	Lancaster House Constitution Negotiations
c)	1980 -Forgive and forget reconciliation decree
d)	1983 -Chihambakwe and Dumbutshena Commissions
e)	1987 -Unity Accord (uniting ZANU PF and PF ZAPU)
f)	1995 -War Victims Compensation Fund and (1997 War Veterans Compensation)
g)	2000 and 2013 constitutional referendums
h)	2000 - Fast track land reform programme
i)	2009 Government of National Unity (Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC)

## 7.1 Successes And Failures Of Past Reconciliation Efforts

In light of the past reconciliation efforts outlined in table 12 above, there are success stories and milestones that were recorded in Zimbabwe's transitional justice processes. The 'forgive and forget' reconciliation policy of 1980, also known as the Prime Minister's decree) was considered successful in integrating the Rhodesian armed forces with the liberation war movements (ZIPRA and ZANLA) to form a unified Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA).



The Late VP. Dr. Joshua N. Nkomo and the former President of Zimbabwe R.G. Mugabe after signing the Unity Accord, 1987. **Source: The Herald**

However, the decree failed to effectively unite black liberation war movements ZANLA and ZAPU which led to uprisings within the armies' assembly points in Entumbane in 1981.<sup>85</sup> Arguably, it was the inappropriate demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of the war liberation movements which led to the Gukurahundi massacres between 1981 -1986 as "the 'dissidents' wanted to make the country ungovernable."<sup>86</sup>

**The Gukurahundi** atrocities left Zimbabwe tribally divided and politically fractured. The Unity Accord was then signed between PF ZAPU and ZANU PF to form ZANU PF with an objective to halt the massacres and creating a one party state.<sup>87</sup>

**“the ‘dissidents’  
wanted to make  
the country  
ungovernable.”**

The study respondents believe that the Unity Accord successfully stopped the Gukurahundi massacres as well as ensuring that Zimbabwe remains one country. One key informant interviewee confirmed this assertion saying “the unity between ZAPU and ZANU which you call Unity Accord brought unity because dissidents wanted to split the country into two separate states.”<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup>Benyera, E. (2015). Debating the efficacy transitional justice mechanisms: the case of national healing in Zimbabwe. Pretoria, University of South Africa

<sup>86</sup>Personal interview with a War Veteran in Midlands on the 16th of March 2017

<sup>87</sup>Masunungure, E. V. (2006). Nation-building, state-building and power configuration in Zimbabwe. conflict trends, (1), 3-8. See also, Mashingaidze, T. M. (2005). The 1987 Zimbabwe National Unity Accord and its Aftermath: A case of peace without reconciliation. From national liberation to democratic renaissance in Southern Africa, 82-92.

<sup>88</sup>Personal interview with a War Veteran in Zaka on the 22nd of February 2017

In this view, the Unity Accord can be considered to have achieved some milestones in keeping Zimbabwe united and creating an opportunity for a working relationship among the key liberation war movements.

However, the *Unity Accord* is largely regarded as a failed instrument for national healing, peace and reconciliation as it only facilitated a fragile political integration. While PF ZAPU and ZANU PF forged a working relationship, the unity was fragile as evidenced by the pulling out of some ZIPRA members from the Unity Accord arrangements. The agreement left out community level socio-economic integration and political reconciliation. Thus, creating an economic *Gukurahundi*<sup>89</sup> against the former PF ZAPU dominated populations, which today express themselves as economically marginalised.

*The War Victims Compensation Fund was another attempt to correct historical injustices by providing a legislated restorative justice mechanism targeting War Veterans and the Victims of the liberation war struggle. While the war veterans and war victims received financial compensation, not all people benefitted. The process was hijacked by some war veterans and politically connected individuals who led the process to derailment. The war veterans' compensation led to the collapse of the country's economy beginning with the 1997 black Friday where the Zimbabwean dollar lost 72% value against the United States dollar.*<sup>90</sup>

In the year 2000, a fast track land reform ensued. The land grievance is one of the causes of fighting the liberation war struggle and it was not addressed at independence. War veterans and Zimbabweans, in general, who felt that the land was still in possession of the white community, symbolising a colonial injustice, decided to demand it. As a result, the government facilitated the Fast Track Land Reform Programme as an attempt to promote healing, peace and reconciliation through equitable distribution of land. While the land redistribution process succeeded, the process was marred with human rights violations including violence, loss of jobs, incomes and sheer property destruction. Other beneficiaries, in a corrupt fashion, awarded themselves multiple farms leading to other people failing to access the expropriated land. Therefore, the land issues remain an issue in need of reconciliation.

In addition, the increasing state repression led to demands for constitutional reforms in 2000 and 2009. The first constitutional reforms were undertaken in 2000. However, the reforms were rejected by the Zimbabwean majority that participated in the referendum because of its inadequacies. In the year 2009, another constitutional reform process commenced. In 2013, a new constitution was adopted through a referendum. While the 2013 adopted constitution was largely led by political parties, it is generally considered a people-driven supreme law of the Zimbabwean state which means that peace and reconciliation attempts could succeed.

<sup>89</sup>Economic Gukurahundi refers to the economic marginalisation of the people of Matabeleland region which further inflict pain after the (political) Gukurahundi massacres.

<sup>90</sup>Mambondiani, L (2007, November 2) A Minute of Silence for Black Friday. The Zimbabwe Independent. Retrieved from <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2007/11/02/a-minute-of-silence-for-black-friday/>

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Another popular reconciliation attempt in Zimbabwe was the establishment of the Government of National Unity (GNU). The GNU facilitated a working relationship among contesting political parties, ZANU PF and MDC formations. The ability of having ZANU PF and MDC groups working together through a coalition government was viewed by many respondents as a successful reconciliation attempt. The respondents also used different organs established during the coalition government such as the Joint Operations Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC)

and the ONHRI as successful attempts to lead peace and reconciliation in the country. JOMIC and ONHRI generally made efforts to promote political tolerance and contributing towards violence prevention and mitigation. For example, the JOMIC was able to “promote tolerance in Muzarabani,<sup>91</sup> during its tenure in the GNU. The GNU broadly contributed towards improved economic stability and enhanced political tolerance. Goods became available in shops while political rivals started working together with some degree of tolerance.<sup>92</sup>

## 7.2 Major Reasons for Failures of Past Reconciliation Efforts

There is an array of reasons that explain the failure of reconciliation efforts. The majority of respondents believe that efforts towards reconciliation in post-independence Zimbabwe were compromised by individual selfish political interests, corruption, lack of justice, inadequate financial resources, lack of knowledge on reconciliation issues, lack of independence, lack of trust and forgiveness and lack of inclusivity among other factors. However, some interview respondents said the broader challenge which affected past reconciliation efforts was the absence of a legal basis and clear policy framework to support these efforts. Some respondents also mentioned that

the lack of community ownership of the reconciliation interventions, proclamation of amnesties and cheap political stunts are contributing factors to the failure of past reconciliation efforts. In addition, the state has been preoccupied with consolidating power and thereby making too much political rhetoric in addressing injustices and human rights violations.

Table 13 below shows the frequencies of reasons why past reconciliation efforts failed, in response to the question: give three reasons why previous reconciliation efforts did not achieve ideal levels of peace and reconciliation (e.g. Prime Minister’s decree, Unity Accord etc.).

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<sup>91</sup>Personal Interview with a ZANU PF member in Muzarabani (Mazowe District) on 4th of July 2017

<sup>92</sup>Dziva, C., Dube, B., & Manatsa, P. (2013) A critique of the 2008 Government of National Unity and human rights protection in Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)* ISSN Volume 3.358 (2012)

**Table 13: Frequencies of reasons why previous reconciliation efforts failed**

Reasons	Percentages
Selfish political interests	21.7
Lack of justice	16.5
Corruption	11.6
Lack of unity and cooperation	8.5
Lack of inclusivity	6.8
Lack of political will	6.3
Inadequate financial resources	5.3
Lack of trust/ forgiveness	5.0
Racial/ethnic discrimination	4.8
Lack of transparency	4.0
Lack of knowledge on reconciliation	3.8
Bad governance	3.7
Lack of independence	1.4
Electoral malpractices	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

In view of the above responses, it can be noted that many responses indicated that selfish political interests (21.7%) followed by lack of justice (16.5%) and corruption (11.6%) are the major reasons for the failure of past reconciliation efforts. Selfish political interests echo the self-centeredness of the political leadership that have been facilitating reconciliation efforts. Most respondents stated that they perceive lack of justice and corruption as contributing factors to reconciliation failure because there are many cases reported to courts that were either compromised by partisanship or were never attended to. While only perceptions, these views are relevant within the context of popular concerns.

The key informant respondents also echoed issues related to those observed from survey respondents. A Church leader (key informant) said “without institutional reforms, the NPRC will not succeed.”

This view means lack of reformation of institutions since 1980 affected reconciliation processes.<sup>93</sup>

**“ ... even after the proclamation of 1980 reconciliation policy, Gukurahundi started immediately meaning that it was not sincere and it was a contradiction to the decree ...Nkomo had to run away.”**

Mistrust and ethnic discrimination made some prior reconciliation efforts to fail. The liberation war struggle differences among liberation movements (PF ZAPU and ZANU PF) were carried beyond the independence era

<sup>93</sup>The Human Rights NGO Forum. (2017). Transitional Justice in Pre-Transitional Times: Are there lessons for Zimbabwe. Harare ,Human Rights NGO Forum,

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such that they culminated in Gukurahundi. In the words of one respondent, “even after the proclamation of 1980 reconciliation policy, Gukurahundi started immediately meaning that it was not sincere and it was a contradiction to the decree ...Nkomo had to run away. This revelation shows that there was no sincerity on the part of the government in the first place. A similar view was further articulated by a community leader who said:

*“the 1980 speech was a cheap political stunt, hollow of latitude indicating left and turning right ....there was no evidence that the declaration meant it.”*

Out of selfish political ends, the 1980 decree even failed to address the land grievance. A farmer representative interviewed said “... the land as a reconciliation issue could have been dealt with in 1980 once and for all it failed and the 2000 chaotic land reform was a manifestation of the policy failure.”<sup>94</sup>

In addition, the Unity Accord was initiated as a way of averting further massacres of the Ndebele people. Expanding on this, another interviewee said

*“so it was not a genuine reconciliation attempt. It was simply a ceasefire political settlement, which never facilitated redress of the deep rooted causes of the problem. The 1987 Unity Accord was a stage managed fallacy only meant to stop the war.”<sup>95</sup>*

While corruption, racial/ethnic discrimination, lack of inclusivity, lack of transparency, bad governance and inadequate financial resources were cited as factors that contributed to the failure of previous reconciliation efforts, it is important to note that these are largely perceptions. The failure of several reconciliation processes can generally be attributed to the non-transition of the ruling government and political regime, ZANU PF.

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<sup>94</sup>A personal interview with a Farmer in Mutoko on the 13th of June 2016

<sup>95</sup>A personal Interview with a War Veteran in Bubi on the 13th of March 2017

# 8. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR RECONCILIATION

This section explores factors that the NPRC may need to take advantage of in order to facilitate successful peace and reconciliation interventions in the country. It also reveals potential challenges that the Commission need to consider before rolling out its peace and reconciliation programmes.

## 8.1. Opportunities for Peace and Reconciliation

The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission is mandated to be an independent constitutional body responsible for facilitating national peace, healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe for a period of 10 years. The NPRC should therefore take full advantage of constitutional provisions establishing its independence and the Bill of Rights in the constitution to implement programmes and activities within its jurisdiction. The fact that the NPRC is a constitutional body makes the Zimbabwean populace hopeful about the institution's operationalization. This anticipation has unconsciously built a general willingness and acceptance of the body by Zimbabweans which must be taken advantage of by the Commission. The civic society organisations, international development institutions and the general donor community are also willing to assist in the implementation of reconciliation processes.

- **Constitutional Provisions** –the NPRC is established by section 251 of the Constitution (Amendment no. 20 of 2013) as an independent body. Therefore, the Commission should take advantage of its constitutionally provided independence to implement programmes without interference by interested parties. The constitution also provides for a Bill of Rights in Chapter 4 which the Commission could use in determining dimensions of rights and the magnitude of violations.
- **Civic Society Organisations** –there is a general readiness by CSOs to collaborate with the NPRC and any government departments' interested in promoting national peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. The CSOs include Community Based Organisations, Faith Based Organisations, local-nongovernmental organisations and several interest groups organised as associations, clubs and cooperatives. The NPRC should therefore take advantage of these grassroots oriented institutions especially in terms of technical support and community level intervention programmes. Many CSOs have a wider network of actors at grassroots level which makes it easier for the NPRC to reach many communities through them.
- **International community** –the international community involves intergovernmental institutions, individual countries and funding institutions. These institutions are available to provide technical and financial support which the NPRC could benefit from. It is therefore, instructive that the NPRC could reach out to these institutions for financial and technical support where necessary. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been instrumental in supporting past reconciliation efforts through the ONHRI as well as the latest constitutional reform processes through COPAC.

- **Traditional mechanisms** - there is also an opportunity to facilitate community level peace and reconciliation processes through grassroots level institutions such as traditional leadership and practices. Traditional leaders can facilitate peace and reconciliation processes through administering traditional courts, facilitating kuripa, kutandabotso, kupiramidzimu, among others and can supplement the national level conventional justice practices. These practices can be done without involving national level leaders whose participation is usually viewed with resentment. Although traditional leaders are increasingly becoming politically partisan in dispensing their duties, they still command respect within rural communities such that their genuine involvement in the process could easily build confidence among peace and reconciliation process beneficiaries.

- **Churches and faith based organisations** - churches can also assist in promoting peace and reconciliation processes through “preaching moral practices that propagate the spirit of love and unity.”<sup>96</sup> Religious institutions generally enjoy a substantial following and they have a wider national presence. This makes churches a strategic social change agent for peace and reconciliation, in terms of messaging and program activity implementation. For easy synergies

and collaborations the NPRC may build working relations with churches associations such as the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, Association of Pentecostal Churches and the Catholics Bishops Conference, among others.

- **New Media** -social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Short Term Messages and Blogs can also play a greater role in peace and reconciliation as a communication tool for education and awareness raising. There is an increase in the use of social media in Zimbabwe which could make it easier to spread low cost peace and reconciliation messages to a wider audience.

- **Other government departments** - while the NPRC is an independent body, it should take advantage of other government departments when implementing its programme activities. For example, the police should assist by enforcing the law through investigating criminal cases connected to peace and reconciliation issues as well as making arrests where necessary.<sup>97</sup> The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare can also assist with Counselling services as social support to victims of violence and conflict while departments responsible for gender and youth development can provide rehabilitation platforms for those in need of such services.

<sup>96</sup>Personal interview with a ZANU PF youth member in Mutoko on the 14th of August 2016 Muzondidya, J. (2010).

<sup>97</sup>The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Unresolved Conundrum of Race in the Post-colonial Period. Journal of Developing Societies. Volume 26(1)

## 8.2. Challenges and Levelling the Playing Field

National peace, healing and reconciliation processes across the globe are sometimes treated with suspicion. In Zimbabwe, political polarisation and the long years of repression have made people lose trust in government-led presided programmes. On the other hand, those in positions of power have made it difficult to build mutual trust with the citizens. As such, most respondents argued that the NPRC processes could be hindered by mistrust, lack of political will, partisan dispensation of duties by those responsible for national healing programming. In addition, there is generally a lack of readiness by the victims and perpetrators to negotiate for peace and reconciliation which affects the healing process.

Lack of political will by policy makers and cooperation by government departments could hinder the effectiveness of the NPRC and its interventions. One respondent argued that the ZHRC is not meeting the people's expectations as it is not deterring human rights violations which could also affect the NPRC. This respondent said "at present the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission is receiving reports, but the violations are not getting any attention,

**“...at present the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission is receiving reports, but the violations are not getting any attention, this will also be the same with the NPRC.”**

this will also be the same with the NPRC.”<sup>98</sup> This means the NPRC may suffer from lack of support by political actors and it may not be able to enforce action against those found guilty. As such, it is therefore necessary that enforcement mechanisms be put in place to avoid lack of compliance.

Respondents also raised a concern about communities' readiness to accept the reconciliation process. Respondents argued that most communities are still politically divided, the perpetrators of violence and conflict are still in power and the victims are still filled with fear. One respondent said "When the perpetrators are the judges and the final arbiter, then patronage will rise while political interference by those in positions of power could hinder the reconciliation progress as well as further

**“When the perpetrators are the judges and the final arbiter, then patronage will rise while political interference by those in positions of power could hinder the reconciliation progress as well as further reinforce fear among the victims of violence.”**

<sup>98</sup>Personal interview with a former government employee in Murehwa on the 13th of August 2018

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reinforce fear among the victims of violence.”<sup>99</sup> This observation shows that regime transition is an important factor in the peace and reconciliation process. In the absence of a proper transition, it is necessary for the present regime to not only create peace and reconciliation institutions, but also create an enabling environment that promotes mutual trust and inclusive participation among victims and perpetrators of violence.

Zimbabwe is experiencing serious economic decline which could affect the funding base for reconciliation processes. Respondents observed that the funding base for the programmes aimed at facilitating national healing and reconciliation may not be adequate. Besides direct funding needs, the respondents also argued that high unemployment levels and a largely informal economy could mean that only a few people will pay attention to the reconciliation processes ahead of their livelihoods needs.

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<sup>99</sup>Personal Interview with a High School Teacher in Marambapfungwe on the 14th of August 2016



Protesters celebrating the downfall of R.G Mugabe in Harare, 2017.  
Source: Reuters/Philimon/Bulawayo

## 9. INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

The success of the NPRC and the general peace and reconciliation interventions in Zimbabwe should be measured by specific indicators that communities consider to be important. Within the timeline of the NPRC, there are structural, process and outcome benchmarks that can be considered to measure progress and institutional effectiveness.

Structural indicators –refers to the construction of the peace and reconciliation architecture. The appointment of the Commissioners and the secretariat must reflect institutional independence, professionalism integrity and competitiveness. Most interviewees reasoned that the character and personalities of those appointed to lead the peace and reconciliation process should be trusted, people-centred and politically infallible. For example, one interviewee

indicated that “the workers of the NPRC must not be political party affiliates, should be credible, not involved in past violence cases and should not be seen to defend political positions.”<sup>100</sup> This means the structural architecture of the NPRC must be compliant with the constitution in order to be considered progressive. Below are some of the structural indicators of success gathered from the survey respondents and key informant interviews:

<sup>100</sup>Personal Interview with a War veteran in Kwekwe on the 23rd of July of 2017

**Table 14: NPRC structural indicators of success**

**Indicators of success**

- Availability of a legal framework operationalizing the NPRC
- Presence of parliamentary oversight
- Existence of supportive laws regulating victims' protection, restitution, lustration etc.
- Policy harmonising state structures involved in peace and reconciliation processes
- Impartial and non-partisan conduct of the NPRC and state institutions responsible for peace and reconciliation
- NPRC institutional capacity in terms of human resources capacities (technical, breadth, rigour, experience etc.)
- Availability of a budget provided for though the national focus and also room to solicit funding from development partners
- Material resource base (offices, vehicles, equipment, etc)
- Synergies with other key stakeholders
- Institutional capacity for early warning and early response services

**Operational indicators** – the operational indicators are benchmarks related to the activities and interventions that the NPRC and related institutions will be implementing. For example, if the NPRC publicly condemns violence and implements healing and reconciliation activities, then such initiatives will signal progress. But in cases where the NPRC cannot openly condemn violence or implement activities indicative of healing and reconciliation then

it will be a failure of progress. The extent to which the NPRC will be collaborating with other stakeholders such as CSOs, churches and international institutions in facilitating peace and reconciliation issues may also highlight progress towards success. Process indicators can be derived from communities' perceptions and observations on the work of the NPRC. Below are some of the identified process indicators:

**Table 15: Operational indicators of success**

**Indicators of Success**

- Implementation of peace and reconciliation interventions such as dialogues, messages and messaging platforms, public hearings,
- Inclusivity in the peace and reconciliation processes (upholding a culture of participatory actions)
- Visibility and presence at all tiers of the national political administration
- Investigative actions of the NPRC taking place
- Victims of violence receiving compensation, truth-telling platforms being created and victims and perpetrators participating
- Active confidentiality and secure data storage
- Presence of parliamentary oversight
- NPRC setting targets and those targets being achieved over time

- Reduction in political violence and human rights violations (process deterrence effects)
- Existence of substantive reports with actionable recommendations
- Reparations
- Name and shaming of perpetrators of violence

**Outcomes** –outcome indicators relates to the achievements of the NPRC from its interventions. Potential indicators of success in the work of the NPRC include: the retrieval of truth about what happened to various victims and survivors, genuine public apologies, compensation of victims, institutional reforms and prosecution of the perpetrators of violence. However, some of these indicators could be difficult to measure given the different contexts and narratives that exist in Zimbabwe's

violent legacy. For example, genuine public apologies may not be easy to measure although a common understanding can be reached in defining each of the benchmark indicators. In response to a question seeking to identify indicators of success: Indicate what you would consider to be the three major indicators for a successful Peace and Reconciliation programme/policy, respondents mentioned different pointers as shown in table 16 below.

**Table 16: Outcome indicators of success frequencies**

Indicators of Success	Percentages
Peace	20.1
Unity, racial and ethnic integration.	14.2
Economic and national development	13.3
Political freedom and stability	13.1
Justice	10.0
Reconciliation, apology and forgiveness	9.0
Good governance, accountability and transparency	7.8
Compensation and healing of victims of violence	7.0
Employment creation	4.5
Improved livelihood, education and food security	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows that overall the respondents expect the NPRC to create a peaceful society where all people live without fear followed by an economic and national development process. A total of 20.1% of the survey respondents most frequently mentioned peace while 14.2% mentioned unity, racial and ethnic integration. Improved livelihood, education

and food security were least mentioned by 1.0% of the survey respondents. These indicators may not be exhaustive but they link well with the key reconciliation issues identified by the respondents where they said first electoral/political violence must be addressed followed by employment creation.

# 10. REFLECTIONS

The conceptualisation of national peace, healing and reconciliation in this study is derived from the concepts that are part of the field of transitional justice. Transitional justice (TJ) refers to “the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation.”<sup>101</sup>

This definition agrees with Al-Makassary who defines TJ as representing “a framework of mechanisms that works to restore the rule of law and justice through both judicial and non-judicial responses.”<sup>102</sup> Therefore, in the context of Zimbabwe, peace, healing and reconciliation process should resonate with the Zimbabwean history, conflict episodes, public grievances and communities’ needs.

The above observations show that there is need for a community level driven reconciliation process which ensures that there is inclusivity in all the processes.

As such, it is necessary to question the national preparedness in implementing the demands that the communities feel the need to be reconciled reconciliation. However, it is also necessary to consider practicalities of diverse issues raised by the research respondents as reflecting some of the general Zimbabwean populace views.

## 10.1. National Preparedness for Peace and Reconciliation

In order for the peace and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe to succeed, the NPRC, other responsible government departments, citizens, political parties and non-state actors interested in transitional justice should be fully prepared. Necessary facets of preparedness include national popular readiness, legal and institutional readiness. Popular readiness refers the citizens’ willingness to participate in the

peace and reconciliation process while legal readiness refers to the development of laws and regulations that permits peace and reconciliation interventions. Institutional readiness refers to the establishment of necessary institutions that support national peace and reconciliation across the country. The study found that the citizens and a large number of civic society organisations are ready to embrace reconciliation processes. However, there is need for the government to put in place necessary legislative and policy frameworks to legitimize the population’s full participation and engagement in the reconciliation processes. Moreover, political will is a crucial asset that largely determines the extent to which the NPRC will succeed.

Below are discussions about the country’s readiness to facilitate a credible and successful reconciliation process.

### i) Legal readiness

The Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment number 20) adopted in 2013 provides a legal basis for the establishment of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission as one of five Independent Commissions Supporting Democracy (Chapter 12, Section 232). Section 251-253 of the Constitution establishes the mandate, functions and administration of the NPRC work. The NPRC Commissioners were appointed in 2015 and sworn in on the 24th of February 2016. The NPRC Act, an enabling Legislation

<sup>101</sup>United Nations “The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies” (S/2004/616), para8

<sup>102</sup>Al-Makassary, R. (2013). Revisiting the Conceptual Framework of Transitional Justice: Some Critical Notes. Kathmandu School. Law. Review, 2, 172.

that operationalizes the Commission was gazetted on January 5, 2018. Also, the Officials Secrecy Act, Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) have residual effects to the peace and reconciliation processes unless they are realigned with the constitution. These laws stifle transparency and accountability, hence, the country is partially ready to facilitate a just, transparent and accountable peace and reconciliation process.

### ii) Popular readiness

Zimbabweans must be ready to participate in the peace and reconciliation process. This study observed that Zimbabweans are generally ready for national peace and reconciliation interventions. All respondents agreed that Zimbabwe needs a national healing, peace and reconciliation process. However, there were diverse views on what should constitute this process, what interventions should be included and the kind of conflicts that should be prioritised. The country's long history of conflict, violence, impunity and gross human rights violations both on civic and political rights as well as socio-cultural and economic rights is largely acknowledged as the basis for peace and reconciliation needs. Political violence and economic disempowerment are the major conflict concerns that communities want addressed. Notwithstanding the severe impact of past violence experiences,

most survivors of organized violence, who participated in the study, were generally concerned about immediate economic redress compared to psycho-social support. Livelihoods sources are the most immediate concerns, therefore.

### iii) Institutional readiness

Institutional readiness includes the preparedness of the NPRC itself as well as other public or private players in national peace and reconciliation processes. At present, the NPRC is partially ready to operate, for instance, (i) 8 Commissioners were appointed and (ii) the Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) is acting as the NPRC secretariat. The government also appointed Vice President Kembo Mohadi as the Minister responsible for national healing and reconciliation. However, the credibility of the established structures and systems remains debatable. For instance, the Minister responsible for national healing and reconciliation is accused of once being a perpetrator of violence and as capable of interfering with the Commission's work. Also, lack of political will appears to be an unavoidable impediment to peace and reconciliation initiatives as demonstrated by ZANU PF's Members of Parliament (MPs) remarks against the NPRC processes, in which they argue, could open past violence wounds.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, the country's institutional readiness for peace and reconciliation processes is below what should ideally be expected.

<sup>103</sup>Mashaya, B & Mananavire, B (2017, May 19). ZANU PF MPs Want Gukurahundi Buried. Daily News. Retrieved from <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2017/05/19/zanu-pf-mps-want-gukurahundi-buried>



Major General S.B. Moyo addressing crowds in Harare during the political transition that removed Mr R.G Mugabe.  
 Source: Al Jazeera/Tendai Marima

## 10.2. Peace Architecture Institutional Design, Process and Scope

Besides institutional readiness, the NPRC processes are anticipated to meet the peoples' expectations by taking into consideration both victims and perpetrators interests and positions without compromising the objectives of facilitating peace and reconciliation interventions. Therefore, a meaningful national healing and reconciliation processes should allow inclusive citizen engagement, participation and peaceful resolution of disputes. However, such an environment is determined by the peace and reconciliation architectural design, nature of interventions implemented and the attitude of other complementary structures. Below are the study's observations on popular institutional structure, processes and outcomes.

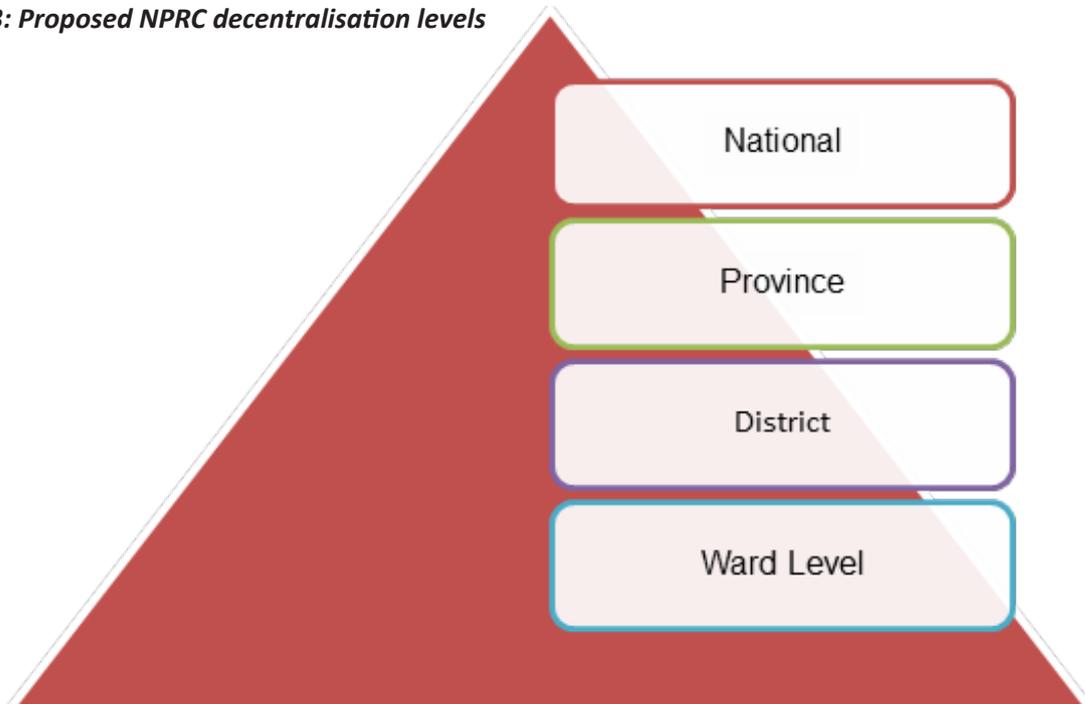
### i) Structure of the National Peace Architecture

The depth and breadth of the NPRC's institutional structural design determines its operational independence and accessibility by victims and perpetrators. The study, observed that the communities are happier to have the NPRC reach from the national to the lowest local government levels. The body should set up administrative centres at ward, district, province and national levels. This approach will allow communities to easily access the NPRC services. In addition, a functional peace and reconciliation process would remove bureaucratic challenges especially where the community can address peace and

reconciliation issues without needing national interventions. Figure 3 below is

a decentralized structure demanded by most study respondents.

**Figure 3: Proposed NPRC decentralisation levels**



The Commission should not only be decentralised, but it must be anchored on grassroots processes and bottom-up principles which increases popular access to the NPRC services and a people driven solutions to their grievances. This way, solutions to victims and perpetrators grievances may be easily addressed through local indigenous structures which may play a role in enabling sustainable peace building. However, there are challenges that could hinder this decentralisation process such as financial resources and political will. Since the adoption of the constitution in 2013, the government is yet to implement constitutional provisions requiring devolution of power at provincial levels which reflects lack of political will.

## ii) Peace and Reconciliation Scope

The scope of the peace and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe is within the ambit of transitional justice. The study findings indicate that the NPRC's work should focus on all episodes of conflict that characterise the pre-and post-independence eras. However, the Commission must put more emphasis on the liberation war struggle violations and the post-independence Zimbabwe conflict episodes. These issues include pre-independence violations such as abuse of non-combatants by freedom fighters and reintegration of freedom fighters, the Gukurahundi, electoral and political violence, Operation Murambatsvina (including other urban settlements demolitions), Economic Structural Adjustment Programs,

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the chaotic land reform and the continuing economic challenges. The NPRC should procedurally address political and electoral violence and race relations mostly taking into account inclusive stakeholder participation and engagement. Programmatically, truth-telling and justice should be prioritised as entry points to peace and reconciliation processes while forgiving and forgetting and amnesty should be least prioritised to a lesser degree.

### 10.3. Expectations

As the peace and reconciliation programmes are rolled out, communities expect a formal redress of their grievances by the NPRC. Compensation, truth-telling, apologies and a guarantee on non-recurrence of the past violations are some of the expected interventions that could allow healing, reconciliation and peace building. Communities largely do not have high expectations from the government, but there is a desire to have a genuine process that facilitates closure and guarantees non-recurrence of past violations.

#### a) Formal redress of the past through dialogue

Communities expect dialogue to be held at all levels in an environment that allows freedom to disclose truths without reprisal. However, participants (both victims and perpetrators) must be guaranteed protection before, during and after such dialogues. Churches, political parties, traditional leaders, civic society organizations, government and other stakeholders must all take part in ensuring that dialogue platforms allow constructive engagement and free participation in order to yield positive results.

#### b) Making Amends and Moving Forward

Respondents indicated that there can be no peace and reconciliation without compensation, truth telling, justice, apology and assurances of non-recurrence of violence. Therefore, for the victims of violence and conflict, justice should be dispensed by having the government acknowledge the past wrongs and take responsibility for all historical human rights violations. Truth telling public apology, compensation and guarantee of non-recurrence should be prioritised by the government as well as prosecuting those who participated in various violations. However, justice should not be universally defined to mean prosecutions and use of national courts. Traditional amends-making mechanisms should also be explored at the lowest community level to encourage natural ways of peace and reconciliation. Using traditional methodologies in peace and reconciliation will reduce burden from the NPRC as it allows communal reconciliation processes to address mutually beneficial justice without retribution.

#### c) Development and Economic Justice

The past economic downturns and marginalisation experienced in Zimbabwe, particularly, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), the 2008 hyperinflation and dollarization are key historical episodes needing attention in the peace and reconciliation process. The study observed that citizens expect economic healing and development to reduce the propensity of abuse by political parties and conflict entrepreneurs. Youth, women and the unemployed rural populations have been

major victims of violence because of their vulnerable position in the community. The Commission is, therefore, expected to help communities to get over the past economic violations while creating a conducive environment for equal access to economic opportunities and resources which, in practice, is unrealistic.

#### **d) Reburial and memorialisation of Gukurahundi Victims**

In the pre and post liberation war eras, Zimbabwe experienced politically motivated deaths wherein many of the victims were neither accorded proper burials nor memorialisation. The liberation war victims, Gukurahundi and the various electoral episodes in Zimbabwe, for instance, were characterised by deaths and grievous violations that require redress. As such, the communities anticipate that the NPRC will facilitate a process for reburials and memory

development. Reburials allow aggrieved families to heal and face closure of the past. Along with reburials, communities pointed out that children of the deceased people should have assistance to access birth certificates and national identity cards.

#### **e) Political Stability in the Country**

Political instability and uncertainty rekindles memories of past human rights violations. Therefore, communities expect the Commission to facilitate a national dialogue that promotes political stability. Electoral history in Zimbabwe shows that political contestations are usually the source of violence, conflict and gross human rights violations. Therefore, communities recommended that the NPRC must inculcate political tolerance among different political parties and should ensure rule of law and respect of human rights.

### **10.4. Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism**

While the NPRC has the responsibility to address past violations, the respondents recommended that the body must establish Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) mechanisms to anticipate conflict and violence that emerges during the time of its operation and beyond. As one respondent remarked “we are worried about any future violence too and it is what the NPRC should address instead of only focusing on the past.” EWER system is a disaster risk reduction mechanism which will assist the NPRC and other institutions that support peace building and violence prevention to identify imminent risks and potential conflicts so that corrective measures can be taken before a crisis happens. The EWER mechanisms, when properly developed, will be used to map conflict hotspots and mapping problem trends as well as taking preventive actions. Some of the EWER mechanism recommended include:

- (i) have the NPRC establish clear communication lines and procedures with the Police, traditional leaders, civic society organisations and other government departments that can directly contribute towards effective reconciliation, peace building and conflict transformation.

#### **a) Early Warning**

The study respondents indicated that the early warning mechanisms needed should predict potential violence and help the NPRC to address the root causes earlier. An early warning is primarily a tool that seeks to prepare response efforts to prevent significant impact of potential conflict and violence. It was suggested that the NPRC should have a clearly established stakeholders engagement plan and communication tools which allow it to collect timely

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data in order to predict any potential conflict problems that could hinder peace building, reconciliation and national healing interventions at various levels. The early warning mechanisms should be inclusive and accommodative of different stakeholders such as civic society organisations and Government departments such as the security institutions (police, army). At community levels, traditional leaders, churches and community based organisations can be of great help. Most importantly the parliament should, at the national level, act as a critical oversight institution that provides necessary early warning to the NPRC.

**b) Rapid Response**

While the early warning mechanisms are necessary, a rapid response system was also recommended. A rapid response mechanism is meant to swiftly respond to risks, conflicts and violence observed with a view to minimise its impact. The NPRC should, therefore, establish a specific rapid response Committee that collects data from the Early Warning stakeholders and coordinate response actions.

# 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

## **a) Institutional Design of the NPRC:**

The NPRC should be free from political interference, devolved and acceptable within diverse communities. The independence of the NPRC can be guaranteed by the government's respect for the constitution and ensuring that the Commission receives support from other government departments. In addition, peace and reconciliation mechanisms deployed must be traditionally relevant and modelled to promote grassroots participation and engagement.

## **b) Peace and Reconciliation Scope:**

There is need to recognise and emphasize that the peace and reconciliation processes that the NPRC is set to facilitate is NOT (i) a court processes, (ii) witch hunting mission or (iii) process of targeting perpetrators. The peace and reconciliation process is meant to facilitate reconciliation, peaceful realisation of positive relations.

## **c) NPRC Processes:**

The NPRC should consider facilitating truth-telling, public apologies and restorative justice processes (including compensation). The NPRC processes should not be seen as a court of hearing, but a reconciliation process requiring dialogue, mediation and engagement.

## **d) Social sensitivities:**

The NPRC and other bodies that will facilitate reconciliation processes must consider gender sensitive cases and the value of privacy and security of victims and perpetrators.

## **e) Traditional Peace and Reconciliation Mechanisms:**

The Zimbabwean society is founded on traditional values embedded in the country's culture and values. As such, the peace and reconciliation process must consider utilising traditional mechanisms, while at the same time being cognisant of their possible limitations.

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### **Heal Zimbabwe Trust and its Contribution to National Peace and Reconciliation**

Heal Zimbabwe's vision centres on building a peaceful, inclusivity and tolerant society. We envision a, 'socially cohesive nation that enjoys tolerance, peace, and prosperity at all tiers of the society'. Heal Zimbabwe's mission is to 'promote tolerance, peace and inclusive prosperity hinged on the observance of socio-economic and political rights of Zimbabwean citizens. Since its establishment in 2010, Heal Zimbabwe has effectively documented human rights violations, implemented peacebuilding interventions and supported victims and survivors of violence with livelihoods enhancement projects.

The organisation created a niche in working at lowest community level through the establishment of community peacebuilding structures (community peace clubs), training human rights monitors and supporting Community Based Organisations to mainstream peacebuilding and championing human rights

protection. Besides working in rural areas that were most affected by violence since the year 2000, the organisation successfully campaigned for the operationalization of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission which has the mandate to deal with dealing with past human rights violations and preventing recurrence of human rights violations.

The establishment of the NPRC, through the constitution adopted in 2013, as an independent commission for post conflict justice inspired HZT to accelerate its work towards peace and reconciliation within local communities. The organisation sees this as an opportunity to promote peaceful coexistence but more importantly, to assist communities in living beyond their past. As such, the baseline study presented in this report is an important step towards enhancing understanding about HZT's future peace building programming and transitional justice processes in Zimbabwe.

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ISBN



EAN 9780797493292

