



From Gukurahundi to August 1 shootings: The script remains the same

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A layman's view on the Commission of Inquiry into the August 1 shootings

The Commission of Inquiry which was tasked with investigating the murder of civilians by the military in Harare on August 1, 2018 has begun its work.

As Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, we are of the firm view that this Commission of Inquiry is highly compromised and not much can be expected from it.

In this article, we would like to put forward a layman's view concerning the events of August 1 as well as the work of the Commission of Inquiry;

The fact that President Mnangagwa was the appointing authority compromises the work of the Commission of Inquiry. It will be difficult to expect the Commission of Inquiry to come up with evidence that will nail President Mnangagwa or the party that he leads as well as his proxies within the ruling party. The Commission of Inquiry lacks independence and cannot be expected to carry out an independent and credible investigation

The local composition of the Commission of Inquiry is highly compromised. For example, Professor Lovemore Madhuku's credentials are highly questionable given the fact that he was a contestant during the July 30 elections and was very much critical of the MDC

Alliance to an extent that his sentiments amounted to politics of hate. There is also Professor Charity Manyeruke who is not only a Zanu PF member but a serious bootlicker as well and we cannot expect her to objectively judge the party which has fed her so well in the past

The investigations by the Commission of Inquiry ought to focus on who ordered the army to kill civilians who were exercising their democratic right to protest against electoral theft. We note with concern that there is an attempt by the State through the State media to try to blame the opposition for ordering people to go into the streets yet no such order was given. The issue at hand is that people were killed in cold blood by the military and the action taken by the army ought to be investigated fully

The State has made attempts to justify the move by the army to kill innocent civilians on the grounds that the demonstrators were violent and attacked Zanu PF offices but as was put forward by one witness, the opposition has held several demonstrations and has never bothered to attack offices of the ruling party. The same is true for the ruling party supporters.

Professor Lovemore Madhuku, who is part of the Commission of Inquiry, would attest to this fact given his long history of demonstrating in the streets of Harare. The hand of the third force, most probably linked to Zanu PF, must be thoroughly investigated and exposed

Sentiments from senior Zanu PF officials who include Josiah Hungwe and Terence Mukupe clearly prove that the army was ready to shoot for Emmerson Mnangagwa. In May 2018, Hungwe said Mnangagwa is a soldier who stands ready to shoot for power while Mukupe clearly said the army was ready to block opposition rule even if the opposition wins in elections. In December 2017, Presidential Advisor, Chris Mutsvangwa publicly stated that Zanu PF will seek the assistance of the military to win the 2018 elections

President Mnangagwa, as the Commander in Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces has the right to declare war or peace and it is therefore foolhardy to believe that the army would be deployed without his full knowledge. Mnangagwa or his cronies are better placed to know events leading to the deployment of the army into the

streets as well as the motive behind that

Vice President, Constantine Chiwenga, from his sentiments while he was still Army General, has always been ready to destroy the opposition using the army

Some of the soldiers who were identified on camera ought to come before the Commission of Inquiry and give evidence as witnesses. This would assist in knowing who deployed them to shoot innocent and unarmed civilians

Even though the State has been frantically trying to mislead the nation into believing that the August 1 protest was violent, it has to be noted that some of the victims of the army shootings were not part of the protestors but became victims of the indiscriminate shooting by the army. In this vein, it would be justifiable to conclude that the August 1 shootings were an attempt to intimidate people against protesting against electoral theft

The army has always played a pivotal role in assisting Zanu PF to steal elections. They have always been part of the ruling party's violence machinery and events of the bloody 2008 elections are clear testimony to this.

Zimbabwe National Army has always been prepared to shoot for Zanu PF

Ahead of the 2002 presidential elections, the then Military Chief, the late Vitalis Zvinvashe publicly stated that the Zimbabwe National Army was ready to block opposition rule even if the late opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai wins in elections.

He clearly stated that the office of the President was a straight jacket and that no other party, except Zanu PF was fit to lead the country.

Zvinvashe was supported by service chiefs who included Army Commander and now Vice President, Constantine Chiwenga, Air Force Chief and now Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Perrence Shiri and the then Police Commissioner General, Augustine Chihuri.

Other senior military personnel also went public to declare their allegiance to Zanu PF and vowed that allowing the opposition to rule the country would attract war as they stood ready to fight opposition ascendancy to



An unidentified ZNA soldier in the streets of Harare on August 1 2018

in this article; we reveal that the army has always stood ready to kill for Zanu PF;

power. These sentiments from the army clearly prove that it is not a mere coincidence that during the bloody 2008 elections, the army played a role in the murder of opposition activists.

The same is true for the August 1, 2018 killings and

January 2002- Defence Forces Chief, Vitalis Zvinvashe warned journalists against reporting on the army's actions including their involvement in politics and elections

August 2007- Prisons Boss, Paradzai Zimhondi said he would take up arms and fight if Zanu PF lost the 2008 elections
March 2008- The then police Commissioner General, Augustine Chihuri in a statement aimed at the late MDC-T leader, Morgan Tsvangirai and Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn leader Simba Makoni said, "This must serve as warning to puppets. We will not allow any puppets to take charge."

March 2008- Defence Forces Commander, Constantine Chiwenga threatened to overthrow the constitutional order if Zanu PF lost the 2008 elections.

He said, "Elections are coming up and the army will not support or salute sell-outs **Continued on page2..**

#ArmyMustGoBacktoBaracks

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and agents of the West before, during and after the Presidential elections. We will not support any one other than President Mugabe who has sacrificed a lot for the country.

When asked about the role of the army in democracy, Chiwenga said, "Are you mad? What is wrong about the army supporting the President against the election of sell-outs?"

April 2008- A report by Human Rights Watch accused the Zimbabwean Military of being responsible for political violence in rural areas and revealed that the army was supplying arms and trucks to paramilitary groups aligned to Zanu (PF)

On the eve of the bloody June 2008 run-off election, Lieutenant General Rugeje who was deployed in Masvingo said the army will drive people to polling stations to ensure they vote for President Mugabe, "We are soldiers. We do not ask for things but we force things. On Friday, we are going to make sure that you go and vote, not for any person of your choice but for President Mugabe. I am not asking you to do so but will force you to go and vote."

2009- Defence Forces Commander, Constantine Chiwenga said they will not allow the MDC-T to take over even if they win elections- because the party was foreign driven.

February 2011- A report by the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) revealed that the military and war veterans were leading a violent crusade against opposition party supporters in rural areas. The report announced that



ZANU PF's top 3 leaders: President Emmerson Mnangagwa who was head of Zimbabwean intelligence during Gukurahundi, Vice President Constantine Chiwenga in military regalia was General of the army who led the November 2017 coup while Vice President Kembo Mohadi also played a role in the army.

Douglas Nyikayaramba, who was Brigadier General by then, had warned chiefs that they will have a case to answer if Zanu PF loses the 2013 elections.

January 2012- Major General Douglas Nyikayaramba described MDC-T leader and then Prime Minister, Morgan Tsvangirai as a national security threat and suggested that the military should step in and deal with him

December 2013- The then Police Commissioner General, Augustine Chihuri said himself and the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) were not apologetic for supporting the ruling party, Zanu (PF) and implored police officers to ensure Zanu (PF's) continued stay in power

March 2014- Air Force of Zimbabwe Boss, Perrence Shiri celebrated Zanu (PF's) victory and announced that

the MDC-T (which he labeled as a party of puppets) was sliding into extinction. Shiri was speaking at the burial of the late Wing Commander Brian Muchenje January 2018- Zanu (PF) Political Commissar, Rt Lt General Engelbert Rugeje laid bare the army's involvement in elections in a warning to Gutu villagers. He narrated his involvement in politics while he was still a member of the Zimbabwe National Army and said, "We are getting towards important elections this year. I came here in 2008 when things were bad. I don't know where Masvingo had got this spirit and I came

and sorted things out. I came back again in 2013 and led the campaign team and I moved around the province addressing rallies and the results were impressive."

December 2016- Masvingo Minister of State, Josiah Hungwe threatened to deploy the army if Zanu (PF) loses the 2018 elections. He said, "Yes we can go to war. We can hire our army. Our soldiers can come in to help us. Don't forget what Rugeje (then Lieutenant General) did in Masvingo in 2008. We can call him again in 2018."

December 2017- Presidential Advisor, Chris Mutsvangwa said, "We are going to campaign for Zanu (PF) along with our army which is the best in the world and also traditional leaders"

What About Professor Lumbe Mr President?

In June 2018, alleged Zanu PF activists killed a two year old; Professor Lumbe in Glendale after the minors' father had ditched the ruling party, Zanu PF for the opposition.

Prior to Professor's death, his father had been warned by known Zanu PF activists in the area that his move to defect to the opposition had paced the lives of his family members at risk.

President Mnangagwa condemned the murder of Professor Lumbe and ordered the Zimbabwe Republic Police to act swiftly and bring the culprits to book.

Despite his order, the Crisis Report has it on good authority that the alleged culprits are walking scot free as there has been no action from the police.

This is reminiscent of the dark past which President Mnangagwa pledged to do away with. It is in the public domain that a number of murderers who killed in the name of Zanu PF walked scot free as they enjoyed immunity.

On the case of the late, Professor Lumbe it is more disturbing to note that his father has since fled the Glendale area after he received further threats from the alleged culprits who killed his son.

In July 2018, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition made inquiries with the police over the case of the late Professor and the law enforcement agents said they would issue a statement which has not been seen up to now.

The police went on to rule out political violence.

In June 2008, we stated as Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition that the case of the late Professor was a litmus test in as much as President Mnangagwa's pledge to do away with the dark past is concerned.

We are however concerned that it is becoming quite clear that Zimbabwe is still stuck in the dark past and this comes at a time President Mnangagwa has appointed a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the shooting of civilians by the army on August 1, 2018.

CiZC has expressed serious reservations with the Commission of Inquiry and we do not expect much to come out of that compromised Commission. After the President ordered a probe into the murder of Professor and nothing has come out almost four months down the line, we are left wondering whether there will be any credible outcome from the 'Commission of Inquiry' into the August 1 events.

On Professor's case, we urge President Mnangagwa to ensure that the police act diligently without fear or favour.

Justice delayed is justice denied.

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Zimbabwe has a well known history of murder of perceived and known opponents of



Zanu PF and the Gukurahundi massacres stand out as the most atrocious killings of perceived opponents of Zanu PF.

After nearly 20 000 civilians were killed by the North Korean trained Fifth Brigade, former Zanu PF leader, Robert Mugabe, who refused to apologize for the genocide claimed that Gukurahundi was a moment of madness.

After Gukurahundi, Zanu PF's moments of madness persisted and following the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999, there were several reports of murder and enforced disappearances of opposition activists with the ruling party denying responsibility.

In 2008, about 200 opposition supporters lost their lives at the hands of Zanu PF militia and the army after it became clear the revolutionary party was going to lose elections.

And again, Zanu PF denied responsibility.

Past events during which thousands of people were killed by Zanu PF and the revolutionary party denied responsibility leave us questioning President Emmerson Mnangagwa's sincerity in appointing the Commission of Inquiry to investigate the murder of civilians by the army on August 1, 2018.

It has to be noted that during the Gukurahundi era, Mnangagwa was Mugabe's proxy, serving as State

Security Minister. He however revealed his penchant of sweeping issues under the carpet when during an interview with the BBC; he flatly denied that there were mass murders in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces.

He said, "I have never witnessed that. I have never heard about it except to read about it in the press.

I have never heard any complaint of that nature reaching headquarters."

In the same video clip, the BBC quoted the late Vice President, Joshua Nkomo who was ZAPU leader at that time expressing concern over the genocide in Matabeleland.

"The beatings, the torture is unbelievable. People are being taken day and night and they disappear forever," said Nkomo.

President Mnangagwa's insincerity on national healing was further revealed in January 2018 when he was in Davos.

He disputed the fact that 20 000 civilians lost their lives at the hands of the Fifth Brigade and further hinted that he would not apologize for the Gukurahundi massacres saying that the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission would deal with the matter.

"The most important thing is that ,what has happened has happened and that should not stop us from having a bright future," he said.

CiZC reiterates its position that the Commission of Inquiry appointed by President Mnangagwa to look into the August 1 shootings is highly compromised and cannot be expected to objectively investigate the army killings.