

Organised Violence and Torture in Zimbabwe & the Liberation War

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“The Torture Convention was agreed not in order to create an international crime which had not previously existed but to provide an international system under which the international criminal--the torturer -could find no safe haven.”
[Browne-Wilkinson, ex parte Pinochet (3) (1990)].

Introduction¹

This short report is one section from a forthcoming monograph. The monograph is a detailed overview of the organised violence and torture that has afflicted Zimbabwe from 1980, as well as the violations that took place in the country known during the time as Rhodesia from 1972 to 1980 when independence finally came. The rationale for including the pre-Independence period, and a restricted one at that, is to illuminate the fact that some things never change: governments under threat have a propensity for resorting to coercive control. Obviously, war is one of those threats in which governments adopt coercive strategies, and the civil war that escalated in 1972 provides a graphic example of the way in which human rights violations escalate, but it is not only civil war that prompts the committing of gross human rights violations. As will be seen, the history of the past 49 years contains multiple periods in which Organised Violence and Torture (OVT) has proliferated. The issue is not so much the absence of OVT in some periods, but the frequency found overall in the past five decades.

The use of the term “*Organised Violence and Torture*”, or in short, *OVT*, may puzzle some readers. The term was coined in the late 1980s at a ground breaking regional conference in Zimbabwe.² Whilst the UN Conventions Against Torture (UNCAT) had earlier profiled the need to consider torture a very serious crime, the 1990 Conference on the *Consequences of Organised Violence in Southern Africa*, took place in a very violent region where torture was only one of a range of serious violations of human rights. There was civil war in Angola and Mozambique, Namibia just becoming independent after many years of bitter struggle, and the last days of apartheid in South Africa. Zimbabwe had not escaped the violence itself, with the serious violence during Gukurahandi (1982 to 1987), as well the violence on the border with Mozambique and the destabilisation activities within Zimbabwe by the South African government.

It is also important to stress the point made by Roget Southall (Southall, 2013), that Zimbabwe as well as Namibia and South Africa, were countries with significant “settler” populations, and hence the process of de-colonisation was rather different to many other African countries gaining independence from their colonial masters.³ This made the resort to armed struggle inevitable in many ways because of the resistance by the settler minorities. Of course, armed struggle was not exclusive to these Southern African countries, as in the case of Angola and Mozambique for example. However, Southern Africa in the 1970s was, as stated above, a region in which there was abundant war and OVT.

Taking into account the peculiarities of the region, it was evident that torture was just one of a range of human rights violations, and hence the conference adopted the following definition:

¹ This report was produced by the Research & Advocacy Unit Trust for the VOTAER Consortium. The Consortium is composed of Counselling Services Unit, Heal Zimbabwe Trust, Human Rights NGO Forum, Research and Advocacy Unit, and Veritas.

² Psychiatric Association of Zimbabwe (1990), *Report on an International Conference on "The Consequences of Organised Violence in Southern Africa*, HARARE: PAZ.

³ Southall, R (2013), *Liberation Movements in Power. Party and State in Southern Africa*. James Currey, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

"Organised violence is the interhuman infliction of significant avoidable pain and suffering by an organised group according to a declared or implied strategy and/or system of ideas and attitudes. It comprises any violent action, which is unacceptable by general human standards, and relates to the victims' feelings. Organised violence includes inter alia 'torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment' as mentioned in Article 5 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Imprisonment without trial, mock executions, hostage taking or any other form of violent deprivation of liberty also fall under the heading of organised violence. The effects of apartheid, destabilisation, civil war, the forced displacement of people, and political violence constitute organised violence. Violence which occurs in these situations as a direct consequence of political repression, although it may appear random, is of a structural nature, involves violation of basic human rights and can only disappear when human, social and political relationships are profoundly changed." (PAZ.1991)

It is evident from this definition that OVT places torture in the context of a much broader human rights problem, one in which the general population faces a very wide range of human rights violations. It is a definition that also speaks to the framework of the 1998 Rome Statute,⁴ and reflects the UN position that apartheid constituted a crime against humanity.

The following year, 1991, saw the Harare Commonwealth Declaration promulgated by the Commonwealth at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), and the paradox that the host country of the Declaration was suspended subsequently from the Commonwealth, finally leaving in 1994.⁵ The human rights crisis that developed from 2000 onwards became an international problem, not merely with the Commonwealth, but also with the European Union (EU) and the United States (US).⁶

The human rights crisis, and OVT, that developed in 2000 has continued to the present, but the history of OVT prior to independence cannot be excluded from any understanding of OVT in Zimbabwe: the continuities in the kinds of violations between those pre- and post-independence are far too great to ignore. For example, the repressive apparatus of the Rhodesian state was kept lock, stock and barrel by the Zimbabwe state, and all was evident in the violations that took place in Zimbabwe between 1982 and 1987.

Thus, the history of OVT that will be more fully detailed in the final complete monograph takes a long, albeit brief, overview in order that the continuity with the past is seen in the context of the present. There have been changes in the players, but the overall tenor of violations described in the 1990 definition remains the same: torture, abductions, and displacements still seen in 2021. It also covers all the ground covered previously by Lloyd Sachikonye in the excellent summary about political violence in Zimbabwe, *"When a State turns on its citizens"*:⁷ It differs only in that it is

⁴ UN (1998), *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* [https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-10&chapter=18&lang=en]

⁵ Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2007), *Revisiting the Commonwealth and Zimbabwe: What is to be done? An Assessment of Zimbabwe's Performance since its Withdrawal from the Commonwealth & Suggestions for Re-engagement by the Commonwealth*. February 2007. Harare: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum.

⁶ RAU (2015), *Zimbabwe, the European Union, and the Cotonou Agreement: An Opinion*. January 2015, Harare: Research & Advocacy Unit; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2006), *Zimbabwe's Failure to meet the Benchmarks in the Cotonou Agreement*, November 2006, Harare: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum.

⁷ Sachikonye, L (2011), *When a State Turns on its Citizens: 60 years of Institutionalised Violence in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Weaver Press.

shorter, sticks very closely to the data reports, and makes no use of case materials or personal stories. It is no way a substitute for this excellent history, but much has happened since 2011.

The country that came into being as Zimbabwe in 1980 was the product of a violent occupation that finally became one of the very few *bona fide* settler states in Africa. Southern Rhodesia eventually became self-governing in 1923, a fact that had profound effects for the de-colonising process. In many ways, the existence of settler states almost guaranteed that this process of de-colonisation would be violent as the complications over the extent of the *de jure* power of Zimbabwe meant that there was no easy path for Britain to ensure an independent, majority-ruled country as was possible in most of its colonies.

The violent capture of the territory that became Southern Rhodesia also meant that coercive control of the population was never remote as a method of governance. The import of this was captured by the 2003 Symposium organised by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum and the Southern African Trauma Coalition (SATC) in Johannesburg.⁸ The Symposium recognised that OVT had been present from the first occupation by the British South Africa Company (BSAC), and the violent subjugation of the original inhabitants, in what is now termed the “*First Chimurenga*”. As put in the Symposium Declaration:

“Throughout colonial occupation, black Zimbabweans were oppressed by the regime and denied all civil and political rights. They were deprived of their land, and socially and economically marginalised. From 1960 until 1980, they suffered even more widespread and systematic gross human rights violations. These violations, and the subsequent impunities, created the foundations for the human rights abuses experienced in subsequent decades”.

The Symposium, in examining the need for redress for all the victims and survivors of OVT recognised the impossibility of both a full investigation of and redress for over 100 hundred years of human rights violations, and, accordingly, divided the problem in two epochs. These were seen as the main tasks for a future Commission as follows:⁹

Regarding the human rights abuses prior to 1960, the Commission’s main functions will be:

- to investigate human rights abuses that occurred prior to 1960 and compile a full and accurate record of these abuses;
- to determine the social and economic effects of these abuses;
- to establish the extent to which these historical abuses continue at present and to which they negatively impact upon the rights of Zimbabweans;
- to make appropriate recommendations about remedial steps to address the needs of victims of these abuses and present injustices emanating from past injustices;
- to refer cases involving gross human rights violations to the Attorney General for possible criminal prosecution.

⁸ Themba Lesizwe (2004), *Civil Society and Justice in Zimbabwe*, Proceedings of a symposium held in Johannesburg, 11-13 August 2003, Pretoria: Themba LeSizwe.

⁹ Thus, the Symposium anticipated the existence of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), established by the 2013 Constitution.

Regarding the human rights abuses subsequent to 1960, the main functions of the Commission will be:

- to take steps to ensure the protection and preservation of evidence of human rights abuses;
- to investigate human rights abuses that have occurred between 1960 and the date upon which this Commission commences its operations, including violations during a transitional period, and compile a full and accurate record of these abuses using available documentation, victim statements, and testimony from perpetrators;
- to require persons accused of human rights violations, but who deny that they committed such violations, to appear before the Commission so that these cases can be fairly investigated and findings can be made;
- to require persons who admit to having committed human rights violations over this period to appear before the Commission, make full and accurate admissions about their involvement;
- to recommend that those found to have committed gross human rights abuses should be removed from any positions of power and authority that would allow them to commit further human rights abuses in the future;
- to recommend that the remedial steps needed in order to provide reparations to victims should encompass the basic rights framework outlined by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations; namely, the right to know, the right to justice, the right to non-recurrence, and the rights to restitution, compensation and rehabilitation;
- to explore the desirability of facilitating genuine community reconciliation;
- to facilitate processes of community-driven exhumation, reburial and memorialisation.

This framework has guided the work of human rights organisations since 2003. It has led to extensive documentation and research, civil litigation, the lobbying of international and regional rights bodies, the establishment of the National Transitional Justice Working Group (with nearly 100 stakeholder organisations and groups), and the sustained pressure during the life of the Inclusive Government (2009 to 2013) for a transitional justice mechanism. This last resulted in the creation of a new Independent Commission, the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). It can be said, without contradiction, that OVT and Transitional Justice are now wholly embedded in the national psyche.

However, it is not evident that all citizens appreciate the full implications of this terrible history. Research shows the views of citizens about transitional justice are very uneven, and here it is important to note that nearly 75% of Zimbabwe's population are under 35 years of age. Most Zimbabweans have been born well after the depredations of the Liberation War, and even more will have no memory about human rights prior to 1960. This has an effect on how citizens view OVT and transitional justice.

An early study of views about transitional justice, of 514 persons, indicated that very few (6%) had any interest in investigating violations prior to 1980, and 77% felt investigations confine themselves to the period from 2000 onwards.¹⁰ Furthermore, a majority (56%) of the Ndebele respondents felt that the investigations should focus on the period 1980 to 1987, whereas Shona

¹⁰ RAU (2009), *Transitional Justice in Zimbabwe: A pilot survey of the views of activists & victims*. Report produced by the Research & Advocacy Unit. January 2009. Harare: Research & Advocacy Unit.

respondents mostly (68%) were in favour of focusing on 2000 to 2008. These findings were corroborated and extended, by a subsequent national survey.¹¹ This study interviewed 3 198 individuals and the findings were largely similar to the pilot: 41% felt that investigations be confined to 2000 onwards, and 71% felt it should be confined to 1980 onwards.

The significance is that very few Zimbabweans feel that OVT and transitional justice should encompass the history prior to Independence. This in the context of a country in which rhetoric about the Liberation War, the unresolved problems left by the colonial era, such as land, and the centrality of these to the political narrative of the country 40 years later. Disregarding the violence that accompanied the struggle for independence would seem unwise, especially in a region where five of the SADC countries – Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe – are governed still by former liberation movements, and where the memories of brutal wars are carried by many still living.

The histories of these countries are not disjunctive, and carried by those who lived through the violence of each decade. Hence, it must be owned and honoured by all, and, as pointed out some decades ago about Zimbabwe, “we cannot open cans of worms selectively”.¹² Examining the history allows the nation to see itself more clearly, and to see how history is used in perverse ways. More recently for example, the “*pungwes*” of the freedom fighters that were used to mobilise the populace to challenge the settler state, raise morale, and provide political education re-emerged in the post-2000 era as processes of “mass torture”.¹³ In fairness, the “*pungwes*” during the Liberation War were also occasions when torture and extra-judicial killings took place, but the purpose of those meetings were different overall in intention to those in recent times.

Similarly, the rhetoric of the Liberation War returns more recently, perhaps throughout Independence, as “hate speech”. Whilst the rhetoric necessary for a fully-fledged civil war can at least be understood, if not justified, there seems little place for this in a time of indisputable peace. There seems little basis for describing members of opposition political parties as “enemies”, or terming human rights defenders “agents of regime change”. Worse than this, encouraging party members to commit violent acts has no place in peacetime.¹⁴

Thus, old and new weave inextricably into the fabric of Zimbabwean politics, and no period in the past fifty years is disconnected from any other. This is the rationale behind the “*Joinet Principles*”, formulated over two decades ago in response to the fall of the autocracies in Southern Europe and Latin America.¹⁵ The four rights, articulated in order to deal with impunity, have become the basis for most transitional justice processes, reflected in the

¹¹ ZHRNGOF (2010), *Taking Transitional Justice to the People. Vol.1*. Harare: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum; ZHRNGOF (2011), *Taking Transitional Justice to the People. Vol.2*. Harare: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum.

¹² *We cannot open cans of worms selectively*, Tony Reeler, Zimbabwe Independent, 23 April 1997.

¹³ IRCT (2000), *Organised Violence and Torture in Zimbabwe*, 6th June 2000, Copenhagen and Harare, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims & Amani Trust; IRCT (2001) *Organised Violence and Torture in Zimbabwe*, 24th May 2001, Copenhagen and Harare, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims & Amani Trust.

¹⁴ ZHRNGOF (2007), *Their Words Condemn Them: The Language of Violence, Intolerance and Despotism in Zimbabwe*, May 2007, Harare: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum.

¹⁵ UN [1997], *The Administration of Justice and the Human Rights of Detainees: Question of the impunity of perpetrators of human rights violations (civil and political)*, revised final report prepared by Mr Joinet pursuant to Sub-Commission decision 1996/119, United Nations. Economic and Social Council. Commission on Human Rights. Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/20/Rev.1.

conclusions on the 2003 Symposium and guiding the work of the National Transitional Justice Working Group;

- The Right To Know;
- The Right to Justice;
- The Right to Non-recurrence;
- The Right to Reparation (Restitution, Compensation and Rehabilitation).

Primary (perhaps) amongst these rights is the *Right to Know*”, for this right challenges the silencing that comes with impunity and precipitate reconciliation. Without the history of what actually happened, not only are the other rights difficult to implement, but also the nation has no possibility of seeing itself realistically. This does not mean the other rights are unimportant, but here this report is concerned only with the historical record on OVT implied in the *Right to Know*.

It is for this reason that it is important to understand the OVT that took place during the Liberation War.

The Liberation War

The legacy of the OVT in the Liberation War lives on today, both as a central feature in the politics of the country, but also in the largely unaddressed morbidity that it created. Whilst the 2003 Symposium posited that the period 1960 to 1980 be addressed in any transitional justice process (including rehabilitation), the most serious violence took place between 1972 and 1979. It is not recognised generally just how brutal was this civil war, and, as pointed out earlier, few in Zimbabwe’s very young population have any understanding of this.

The Liberation War has been written about copiously, but there are relatively few reports of a specific human rights nature, although OVT is covered in largely anecdotal fashion in many reports and books. The two major data sources at the actual time are Amnesty International (five reports) and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia (three reports).

The data on both the scale of the violence and the morbidity this induced are highly disputed, but conservative estimates reflect how much the period between 1972 and 1979 affected the entire country. The war ostensibly began in 1965 with the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by the Southern Rhodesian government, which effectively was an act of treason, and led very quickly to United Nations sanctions, but not any military action by the colonial power.¹⁶

The resort to sanctions as the political weapon left the nationalist political parties in an invidious position: whilst the treason of the settler state implied that any action (including military) aimed at restoring constitutionality should be supported, in practice the decision to launch an armed struggle was repudiated by the UK and the West. Thus, “freedom fighters” became “terrorists” in Rhodesian parlance, and accepted as the latter by most Western nations rather than militarily supported. Since the only recourse, and an invidious choice during the Cold War, was for support from the Soviet Bloc and China, creating tacit support for the illegal Smith regime from many Western countries, frequent acceptance for the breaking of sanctions,

¹⁶ For a comprehensive analysis of the complexities involved in UDI and dealing with the renegade state of Rhodesia, see White, L (2015), *Unpopular Sovereignty. Rhodesian Independence and African Decolonization*. University of Chicago Press.

and active support from South Africa and Portugal (at least until the fall of the Salazar regime).¹⁷

The acceptance of the “terrorist” paradigm allowed the Rhodesian state free reign in using coercive control to deal with its political problems. Detention and torture became commonplace, leading to Amnesty International taking a keen interest in Rhodesia – Southern Rhodesia became the Republic of Rhodesia in 1969 – and the human rights violations that were taking place.¹⁸ The work of Amnesty International was complimented by a domestic initiative, the establishment by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia (CCJPR). The work of CCJPR became critical in exposing gross human rights violations when the civil war escalated in 1972, and the freedom fighters, taking advantage of the now massively expanded border following Mozambican independence, extended armed incursions into the North Eastern areas of Zimbabwe.

It is worth pointing out here the scale of this short and brutal phase of the lengthy struggle for independence. By 1980, it is estimated that 60 000 people died (the vast majority ordinary civilians), 750 000 had been displaced into “protected villages”, and probably an equal number had been displaced into neighbouring countries. The war spread rapidly right around the country, and large areas of the country came under the control of the two guerrilla armies, Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). The war even spread to neighbouring countries, predominantly Zambia and Mozambique, and Rhodesian security forces carried out very serious massacres at refugee camps. By 1979, and the Lancaster House talks, the region was engulfed in war, and not merely in Zimbabwe: Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and even South Africa, were experiencing OVT on a very large scale.

For the ordinary citizen in Rhodesia – they were universally Black, rural, and certainly not citizens in the eyes of the settler state – life became extremely dangerous. The first reports of CCJP detailed this.¹⁹ These reports covered the ground from the hardships involved in the displacements into the “keeps”,²⁰ as the local people termed the protected villages, through to the rising frequency of torture and extra-judicial killings. As the death toll of civilians rose, the Rhodesian state termed these incidents as persons killed “running with the terrorists”, but investigations by CCJP soon exposed the reality: for example, one such incident, at Karima village near Mount Darwin, suggested no presence of ZANLA forces, and much more a deliberate massacre to intimidate the local population.²¹ There were also large-scale massacres of refugees and combatants in Mozambique and Zambia.

In order to combat both the negative publicity and neutralise organisations such as CCJPR, the Rhodesian government passed the iniquitous Indemnity and Compensation Act in 1975. The effect of the Act was to grant impunity for any act committed by a state agent: very broadly defined since virtually the entire White male population was conscripted to some form of

¹⁷ See again White, L (2015), *Unpopular Sovereignty. Rhodesian Independence and African Decolonization*. University of Chicago Press.

¹⁸ AI (1977), *Rhodesia: AI campaign: use of torture in Rhodesia*. London: Amnesty International; AI (1977), *Rhodesia: The death penalty and executions in Rhodesia*. London: Amnesty International; AI (1977), *Rhodesia: Torture in Rhodesia: Extracts of Statements received by AI*. London: Amnesty International; AI (1979), *Rhodesia: HR violations in Rhodesia 1978/1979*. London: Amnesty International.

¹⁹ CCJP (1975), *The Man in the Middle: torture, resettlement and eviction*, Salisbury: Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia; CCJP (1976), *Civil War in Rhodesia: Abduction, Torture and Death in the Counter-Insurgency Campaign*, Salisbury: Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia.

²⁰ protected villages introduced in Southern Rhodesia between 1972 to 1980 as a military strategy to isolate the freedom fighters.

²¹ CCJP (1975) *The Man in the Middle*, Op Cit.

military service. The Act was made retroactive to 1972 when the first major guerrilla attacks took place, and the violations since then had been exposed by CCJPR. CCJPR thus became vilified, members attacked, and most forced into exile.²²

With the closing down of internal monitoring, the peace that followed the Lancaster House Agreement, the statutes of impunity promulgated by the British government (and repeated by the Zimbabwe government), and the much-lauded policy of reconciliation offered by the Mugabe government, both justice and assistance to the tens of thousands of victims went out the window.

Thus, the first major attempt to examine the OVT of the Liberation War and assist the victims came nearly two decades later, with the Amani Trust beginning work in Mashonaland Central. It became readily apparent just how extensive had been the OVT, as well as how many were still suffering the after effects in physical and psychological disability. An early epidemiological study in Mount Darwin District, one of the most affected places during the war, demonstrated that 1 in 10 adults, over the age of 30 years, was a victim of OVT (mostly torture) and suffering from clinically significant psychological disorder.²³ In addition, many were still suffering from physical disability from torture.²⁴ However, it was not merely civilians who suffered: research on the sequelae of OVT in “war veterans” also showed significantly high rates of psychological disorder.²⁵

The effects on the citizens were not trivial. This is demonstrated by a comparison between survivors from the Liberation War with more recent victims.

Table 1: Comparison of types of torture (Mean number of each type)

[Source: RAU & CSU.2020]

	1970 [n=392]	2000/2002 [n=320]
Adult witness	52%	29%
Child witness	32%	22%
No. of types of OVT [mean]:		
Physical abuse (beatings, suspension, electrical shock, etc.)	1.7	1.2
Deprivation (food, water, sleep deprivation, etc.)	1.8	0.9
Sensory-overstimulation (constant noise, constant lighting, drugs, etc.)	0.8	0.4
Psychological abuse (verbal abuse, threats, threats against family, etc.)	1.8	1.5
Witness assaults	1.8	1.2
Witness executions	0.9	0.5
Total torture	8.8	5.2

²² Auret, D (1992), *Reaching for Justice: The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, 1972-1992*, Gweru: Mambo Press.

²³ Reeler, A.P., Mbape,P., Matshona,J., Mhetura,J., & Hlatywayo,E. (2001), The prevalence and nature of disorders due to torture in Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe, *Torture*, 11, 4-9.

²⁴ Amani (1997), *Survivors of Torture in Mount Darwin District, Mashonaland Central Province: Report and Recommendations*, Harare: Amani Trust.

²⁵ Reeler, A.P., & Mupinda, M.(1996), Investigation into the sequelae of Torture and Organised Violence amongst Zimbabwean War Veterans, *Legal Forum*; 8, 12-27.

This recent study, comparing the survivors of the Liberation War with the victims of the OVT between 2000 and 2002, makes the point quite clearly that the consequences of a frank war leads to both significantly worse OVT and to a greater probability of clinically significant psychological disorder.²⁶

It can be seen from Table 1 that survivors of the Liberation War experienced not only more different types of torture (8.8 v 5.2), they also were more likely to witness others experiencing the same, and were more likely to have their abuse witnessed by others, both adults and children. This is very straightforward demonstration that war leads to greater violence, but also, in the Zimbabwe case, shows the dangers of giving advance immunity to perpetrators. In respect of this last point, a study by the Amani Trust showed that the great majority of violations (69%) in Mount Darwin District took place between 1975 and 1979, after the passing of the Indemnity and Compensation Act.²⁷

Table 2: SRQ-8 scores & No. in the clinically significant range on initial assessment²⁸

[Source: RAU & CSU.2020]

	SRQ-8 [mean & S.D]	% positive [>4]	% Negative [<4]
2000	1.53 (1.91)	20.9%	79.1%
1970	2.94 (1.95)	45.9%	54.1%

In addition to the greater severity of abuse, the long-term consequences of developing clinically significant disorder were greater for the survivors of the Liberation War. Table 2 shows that 46% of survivors had scores 4 or more on the SRQ-8 as opposed to only 21% of those from 2000 to 2002. Scores of four or more on the SRQ-8 indicate the presence of clinically significant psychological disorder: it is not diagnostic of any particular disorder, but indicates that the person should be seen by a mental health professional.

None of this is to minimise the experiences of the more recent survivors, which are clearly serious, and it may well be that the lengthy delay for the survivors from the Liberation War may have also contributed to the greater probability of developing a psychological disorder. Most of these survivors from the Liberation War only received specialist care nearly two decades after the original abuse.

However, it was not merely the physical and psychological sequelae for individual survivors that are important, there are significant consequences for the families and the communities around them. One study demonstrated that there were a number of differences in social and economic factors between the survivors and their neighbours.²⁹ The survivors had:

²⁶ RAU & CSU (2020), *Severity of Violence and the Long-term Effects: Comparison of Survivors of the Liberation War (1972 to 1980) with Survivors of Political Violence (2000 to 2002)*. October 2020. Harare: Research & Advocacy Unit.

²⁷ Amani (1998), *Survivors of Torture and Organised Violence from the 1970 War of Liberation*, Harare: Amani Trust.

²⁸ The Self-Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ-8) is a psychiatric screening instrument, based on the Self-Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ-20) developed by the World Health Organisation. The SRQ-8 is a short version of the SRQ-20, validated for Zimbabwe, and widely used in studies of mental disorder and OVT. See Patel, V., & Todd, C. (1996), The validity of the Shona version of the Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ) and the development of the SRQ-8, *INT.J.METHODS IN PSYCHIAT.RES.*, 6, 153-160.

²⁹ Reeler, A.P., & Mhetura, J. (2000), The psychosocial effects of organised violence and torture: A pilot study comparing survivors and their neighbours in Zimbabwe, *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 15, 137-169.

- *greater illiteracy;*
- *higher unemployment;*
- *spend more money on health care;*
- *less income in the past week;*
- *less earnings in the past year;*
- *lower household expenditure;*
- *more dependency upon credit [greater potential indebtedness];*
- *poorer housing[both structurally and state of repair];*
- *tendency to travel further for fuel wood;*
- *grow less maize, cotton and tobacco;*
- *less food security[months of food available];*
- *more frequent recourse to drought relief;*
- *less likely to have fruit trees or wood lots;*
- *less use of natural resources;*
- *less access to information;*
- *more likely to use charity or social welfare.*

The costs to a person from an experience of OVT are not trivial, and involve more people than the individual victim: certainly, having a disabled breadwinner affects the whole family. Furthermore, it takes little imagination to see that communities in which there are large numbers of such families are going to be significantly poorer than those that do not.

Quite apart for their poverty, the survivors showed many signs of having less self-esteem and greater apathy than their neighbours have:³⁰

- *more likely to see war as a reason for poverty;*
- *less optimistic that the situation can be changed;*
- *more dependent on outside help [believe they need money help as opposed to empowerment help].*

This second group of findings speaks to the psychological consequences of OVT and the social adversity. Survivors have low self-efficacy, and this is due in part to the original violence and in part to the failure to overcome the social adversity. It is demonstrated endlessly by studies on individuals that OVT creates powerlessness and a lack of self-efficacy: many commentators point out that this is replicated in the social and political arena. Survivors are traumatised into feelings and beliefs of powerlessness, perform less well in the many tasks of life, and the failure compounds and reinforces the lack of self-efficacy. It takes little imagination to see how this then translates into community, social and political apathy.

Conclusion

Hopefully the point made earlier, about not excluding the pre-Independence period from any general history of OVT in Zimbabwe, is now apparent. The OVT, and the facilitation of this by formal impunity, led to very large numbers suffering, and, continuing to suffer decades after the horrible events. It is also worth pointing out that this OVT was not inflicted by only the security forces of the Rhodesian regime: most was, but the studies from Mount Darwin show that at least 10% of the violations were committed by the freedom fighters. There are no angels during modern wars, just devils of more or less frequency.

It was such a short and brutal war that one might have expected a very strong commitment to eschew OVT in the new state of Zimbabwe, as was explicit in the address by Prime Minister,

³⁰ Reeler, A.P., & Mhetura, J. (2000), *The psychosocial effects of organised violence and torture*, Op Cit.

Robert Mugabe, on the assumption of office and the new Zimbabwe government taking power. However, the promise lasted no more than two years before Zimbabwe was embroiled once again in extensive OVT in the southern half of the country.