

“Burying Blair”

The 2005 post election report

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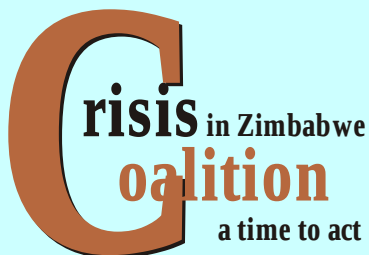


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What is Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition?

Crisis in Zimbabwe is a coalition of more than 350 civil society organisations. It was conceived in August 2001 as a collective response by Zimbabwean civics to the multi-faceted crisis facing the nation.

Vision: To see a democratic Zimbabwe.

Aims:

- ◆ To enhance Civil Society's capacity to deal with socio-economic and political crises, through encouraging a well co-ordinated strategic planning action.
- ◆ To promote freedom and democratic values through encouraging dialogue, tolerance and the sharing of ideas by Zimbabweans from all walks of life.

Objectives:

- ◆ To respond timeously to government positions regarding various key policy areas.
- ◆ To share ideas and information for use by CSOs in the articulation of credible, alternative and practical views.
- ◆ To ensure the rapid development of democratic governance in Zimbabwe.
- ◆ To amplify the collective voice of Civil Society in Zimbabwe.
- ◆ To cover issues which would otherwise not fall within the mandate of the major CSOs;
- ◆ To highlight, debate, research and propose solutions to the multi-layered national crisis.

The Coalition is currently Organising campaigns, which include:

- ◆ **A Time for Peace**
- ◆ **Leadership for Transformation**
- ◆ **Freedom from Hunger**
- ◆ **Repeal Unjust Laws**
- ◆ **No to Two-Thirds majority**
- ◆ **Let the true heroes speak**

1.0 Burying Blair?

The above question can only be answered after other preliminary questions have been considered. For example,

- Did Zanu PF steal the March 2005 parliamentary poll? If so, how and what is the proof?
- Was the election free, fair and legitimate?
- Did it “scrupulously” comply with the SADC principles guiding democratic elections?
- Did the anomalies enumerated above vitiate the freeness and fairness of the poll?
- Should all contestants to the 2005 election accept the poll result in terms of the SADC guidelines and principles?

2.0 Observations by the Coalition

Evidence collected by the Crisis Coalition suggests that Zanu PF once again subverted the will of the people of Zimbabwe in the March 2005 poll. The Coalition also noted the following:

- Zanu PFs urban showing improved significantly compared to the previous two elections
- MDC s rural vote also increased significantly
- The total number of voters in 2005 for the MDC declined by 8.94% and that of Zanu PF increased by 26.47% compared to the 2000 election. There was no significant independent voter education prior to the election
- The voters register was not accessible in electronic form. Its audit was not, therefore effectively carried out
- there was no equitable access to the media by the contesting political parties
- The SADC, AU and local observers were accredited and deployed after the 16th of March 2005. No groups or individual, therefore, monitored the process of printing and allocating ballot papers; verification and declaration of poll results.
- Restrictions imposed by repressive laws such as POSA, AIPPA persisted during the electoral process
- Covert violence and intimidation was rife

Zanu PF got 78 seats, the opposition MDC 41 and Professor Jonathan Moyo snatched one seat. Several foreign observer missions including the South African, the SADC and the African Union observer missions have described the 2005 poll as having been relatively free, fair, transparent therefore legitimate. So too has the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC¹).

The SADC Observer Mission comprised of members from Angola, Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, United Republic of Tanzania, South Africa and Zambia. Almost its entire secretariat was South African. It observed that, “...the elections were conducted in an open, transparent and professional manner²” In their observation, the mission, commented the:

- High level of political maturity
- Peaceful atmosphere in which supporters of different parties were sharing transport, interacted and joked at each other
- Most members of the police were helpful
- Learning and familiarization in the spirit and the letter of the SADC Principles and Guidelines.³

¹ The Zimbabwe Council of Churches Statement

² SADC observer report to the Zimbabwe general election, Harare 2005, pp02

³ Ibid

SADC therefore concluded that, "the election was peaceful, credible, well managed and transparent"⁴.

However, SADC raised the following concerns,

- The need to improve in equitable access to the state media by all political parties
- The need to simplify the procedure and to ensure that authorizations for voters education are provided easily and timeously by the relevant institutions;
- The need for wide publication of updating and verification of voters roll;
- Need to ensure that all police and presiding officers are informed of the roll and rights of observers; and
- Ensure that complaints are backed by sound and verifiable facts to facilitate follow up and fast decision-making"

The African Union Observer Mission confined its findings to the point of poll. The mission observed that, "at the point of ballot, the elections were held in a peaceful and orderly manner and the polling arrangements made it possible for the voters to freely choose their preferred candidates by casting a secret ballot."⁵

The A.U therefore concluded that the general electoral environment was peaceful but did not explicitly characterize the poll as free, fair or legitimate. In their report, the A.U also raised the following concerns,"

- *Prospective voters that could not find their names on the roll and were thus turned away from the polls*
- *The manner in which voting assistance was given requires to be reviewed to safeguard the secrecy of the ballot*
- *Polling agents played a passive role thus creating an impression that they did not understand and appreciate their role in attesting to the accuracy of the election result.*
- *The MDC has alleged that there are serious discrepancies in the official results released by ZEC for several constituencies⁶.*

Zanu PF accepted and celebrated the poll outcome whilst the opposition MDC –as already indicated elsewhere in this report- rejected the poll results. The coalition's view is that the election was neither free nor fair and its outcome is yet to be resolved. In other words, the poll results as yet declared by ZEC do not yet reflect the genuine will of the people of Zimbabwe.

In the absence of clarifications regarding the glaring anomalies, the conclusion is that the election was stolen.

Several inter related and complementary tactics were possibly used to rig the election. Secondly, the rigging was not just an event, but also a process that began well before the voter registration exercise. The Coalition has in its research and observation identified the following rigging methods:

- A non transparent voter registration exercise
- Gerrymandering during the process of delimiting constituency boundaries
- Covert intimidation by green bombers and traditional leaders in electoral processes
- The allegation of the use of food as a political tool
- Militarisation of electoral institutions⁷
- Voting in alphabetical order
- The use of transparent ballot boxes, and
- Counting in situ

⁴ Ibid

⁵ African Union Observer Mission report to the 2005 general election, page 02

⁶ Ibid., pp03

⁷ See Crisis Coalition report (2005), *Thing Fall Apart*, pp4-5. <http://www.crisis.org.zw>

3.0 Chaotic Voter Registration:

The SADC principles and guidelines for democratic elections state that there must be no discrimination of voters, and voters' rolls must be up dated and accessible⁸. Partisan institutions carried out the voters' registration exercise for the 2005 poll. The office of the Registrar General (R.G) carried out the exercise way before the ZEC came into existence. The voter's roll used for the 2005 poll was thus outdated.

International observers to the 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections had previously condemned the same voters register. The high number of people who were turned away from the polling stations, the African Union Observer Mission to the 2005 general election noted in their preliminary report that, "... several prospective voters could not find their names on the roll and were thus turned away from the polls⁹". The poor state of the voters roll was compounded by the presence of ghost voters that did not exist.

3.1 Delimitation Process

A four-member delimitation commission was appointed by President Mugabe to draw out constituency boundaries partitioning Zimbabwe into 120 constituencies. The Chiweshe report was drawn on the basis of two strategies. One was the elimination of constituencies from perceived opposition strongholds and adding constituencies in Zanu PF strongholds. The second was to stretch urban constituencies and extend them to include peri urban settlements that emerged after the land resettlement exercise. For example, Mbare East and West constituencies were merged. In Matebelaland South, Gwanda North and Gwanda South were merged into Gwanda constituency. Bulawayo South constituency was eliminated. In the same process, new constituencies were set up, one in Mashonaland west province, called Manyame constituency and the other in Mashonaland east, called Mudzi West constituency.

The second method of merging urban constituencies with peri urban settlements was applied in Harare South constituency that extends to the new Nehanda settlement. Mutare central constituency was divided into two, Mutare central and Mutare North, which extends to the northern timber plantations. Hatfield constituency in Harare, Marondera east in Mashonaland East province, Chinhoyi and Kariba constituencies in Mashonaland West province were also extended to cover peri urban settlements¹⁰.

ZANU PF reorganized constituencies, which certainly paid off as witnessed by the seeming resurgence of ZANU PF's support in urban areas. Commenting on the seeming resurgence of ZANU PF urban support in the 2005 poll, MDC member of Parliament for Glen Norah, Priscilla Misihairabwi insisted:

" We can not begin to talk about resurgence when the whole thing could turn out to be a fraud. We are now investigating the figures and hopefully will be able to get to the bottom of this

Commenting on the resurgence of the ZANU PF voters MDC Member of Parliament and Shadow Minister of foreign Affairs.

Misihairabwi however reiterated that the Delimitation Commission had ensured that MDC lost 3 constituencies Kadoma West, Bulawayo North and Mbare East, long before the elections. Resultantly, MDC lost four seats before the poll began.

⁸ Paragraph 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 of the SADC principles and guidelines

⁹ The African Union Observer Mission to the 2005 general election report, 03 April 2005, Harare

¹⁰

3.2 Covert Intimidation:

As noted elsewhere in this report, the Zanu PF government militarized state institutions, including the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, a body that ought to be independent and professional. The absence of overt violence does not therefore bring peace in the hearts and minds of people. Thus, the mere presence of soldiers, the police, the youth militias and district administrators all whom yesterday (1999 –2004) combined in torturing, raping, abducting and killing people certainly invokes sorrowful memories and stress. This stress is exacerbated by the fear of the unknown after the poll.

This strategy was used as a carrot and sticks game, where the government declared a monopoly on food importation and trading in cereal grains, making it difficult for business, church groups and civil society organisations to mitigate the impact of food insecurity¹¹. Zanu PF exacerbated a desperate food security situation by using food aid as political bait to woo votes.

It is estimated that more than 2 million people are in need of food aid. To date, the Catholic Church reports that nearly 180 people in Bulawayo, mainly children under the age of 5 have died of malnutrition, which is linked to food scarcity.

The severity of the situation prompted the WFP's James Morris, in June 2004; to note that food shortages and poverty have left Southern Africa as "the most serious humanitarian crisis in the world today," with Zimbabwe as its epicentre.

However, the government of Zimbabwe, in April 2004 said that the country would not need any food aid claiming it was anticipating a bumper harvest of 2.4 million tonnes of maize. President Robert Mugabe confirmed this assertion during an interview with the British Sky News, saying "donors should take their food to hungrier places" and that donors should not "choke us with this food aid"¹²



Thus the strategy was to starve people and turn around to provide conditional food, thus literally forcing people to vote Zanu PF as a precondition to survival.

3.3 Militarisation of electoral institutions



The trend of appointing persons with a military background has been reflected in institutions such as the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), the Delimitation commission and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission ZEC. For instance, Sobusa Gula-Ndebele, a lawyer and former colonel in the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) was the Chairman of the ESC charged with the running of elections from the year 2000 to January 2005. Gula-Ndebele has since been appointed the country's Attorney General and government's chief lawyer. During Gula-Ndebele's tenure, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the ESC was Brigadier General Douglas Nyikayaramba who at the time of his appointment to the ESC was a serving soldier. The General has since left the ESC and has been appointed by President Mugabe to head 2 Brigade.

Recently, in September 2004, President Mugabe appointed a four-member Delimitation Commission chaired by High Court Judge George Chiweshe who joined the bench in 2001 following the sacking of experienced and competent judges largely for political reasons. Justice

¹¹ *Crisis Coalition Report, The Commonwealth and Zimbabwe's Multi-layered crisis, April 2003, pp08*

¹² *The Times (London), 24 May 2004*

Chiweshe was later appointed to Chair the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. Judge Chiweshe is a former judge advocate responsible for military tribunals in the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) and a veteran of the liberation struggle. The secretariat of the electoral commission has a background in the army and intelligence. Mr Utloile Silaingwana, the spokesperson of ZEC is a former officer in the Zimbabwe National Army. The Chief elections officer, Mr Sekeramayi is the young brother to the Minister of Defence, Sydney and a former officer in the presidents office.

3.4 The Media

The public media was and remain blatantly pro-Zanu PF since the year 2002 hitherto. The SADC parliamentary forum, reporting on the 2002 presidential elections, noted that lack of access to the public media denied the electorate of an opportunity to make informed decisions¹³. Media is a strong opinion shaper. In particular, the media made the March 2005 election cease to be based on issues but solely an –anti MDC war. The fronts of media attack were two:

- Weakening the private media
- Simultaneously launching a barrage of propaganda against the opposition.

The government controlled media; the Zimpapers and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation had their principal aims at persuading people to vote Zanu PF. This was done through invoking the liberation struggle memories and reifying Zanu PF as the godfather of Zimbabwe. This was compounded by the holding of liberation war and youth galas, psyching out people to vote for Zanu PF¹⁴. The state media had a sustained attack at the MDC, naming it a stooge of the west. The media also has heralded endless streams of conspiracies of selling out the country to Britain. A clear example was the story of three youths named Bheki, Bhempilo and Bheki that were shown on television as having admitted to waging plans to topple the Zimbabwe government. These conspiratorial news items were meant to cause “fear and despondency” among the Zimbabwean public¹⁵.

On the other hand, private media was under attack from the government appointed media and information commission. The Weekly Times, A Bulawayo based private newspaper was closed in February 2005 whilst private radio stations such as Voice of the People, SW Radio and Voice of America were declared illegal.

Media Monitoring of Zimbabwe notes that during the campaign period, the ruling Zanu PF party had 83%, MDC 13%, Zanu NDONGA 2% and independents 2% on television while the ratio of state newspaper coverage was, Zanu PF 81%, MDC 17% and 2% to independent candidates¹⁶.

¹³ Adapted from the MMPZ, The media update, 14-20 March 2004

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

4.0 Was the election free and fair?

Due to the fundamental issues cited above, it is not possible to describe the election as having been free and fair. The anomalies indicated above make the electoral outcome illegitimate. In that regard and as expected, Zanu PF as the party in government, and having achieved two-thirds majority has accepted the poll outcome. The opposition party MDC has rejected the poll outcome. Their basis of the rejection being that the 2005 election failed to fulfill a fundamental demand of the liberation struggle, one-person one vote without intimidation and institutional manipulation.

4.1 Did it “scrupulously” comply with the SADC principles guiding democratic elections?

The March 31 election partially complied with some aspects of the SADC principles and guidelines for democratic elections. The following summary displays the extent of compliance to noted principles of the declaration.

2.1.1 *Full participation of the citizens in the political process:*

There was partial adherence to this aspect as the registrar generals department gave notice and advertised to the people to register and check their names in the voter's roll. This excluded Zimbabweans resident out of the country.

However, as noted in the observer reports, ancillary aspect in the process of voting was not followed. Issues of partisan editorial policies in the state media encourage, not full but a partisan participation in political processes. Most of the deterrents are explained in sections 2.1.2, 2.1.5 and 2.1.7 below.

2.1.2 *Freedom of association:*

Freedom of association and assembly have been limited by the Public Order and Security Act [Chapter 11:17], under which the Police have powers and often abuse by regularly banning meetings of the opposition and the Non governmental Organisations¹⁷. POSA made it impossible for the government to comply with this SADC requirement.

2.1.4 *Regular intervals for elections as provided for by the respective National Constitutions:*

The constitution of Zimbabwe is specific on the frequency of parliamentary and presidential elections. A parliamentary election must be held within four months after parliament is dissolved or has come to the end of its five-year term¹⁸. The president had powers to fix election dates without approval or consultation with cabinet or parliament. The SADC guidelines suggest that parliament should be involved in the fixing of election dates. The Zimbabwe government seems to have complied to this aspect of this principle in as far as regularity of elections is concerned. However, the issue of consulting parliament remains the aim.

2.1.5 *Equal opportunity for all political parties to access the state media :*

As explained above, the state media, which is government, controlled often contributes to the imbalance. This was compounded by the closure of alternative media in the form of private media in Zimbabwe, the most recent being the closure of the Weekly Times in February of 2005. There was little compliance with this aspect as the ruling party got an average of 82% in the state media whilst the main opposition received an average time of 12% coverage and independents and other parties shared the remaining 4%¹⁹.

¹⁷ ZESN evaluation on the SADC electoral principles and guidelines, and Zimbabwe's new electoral legislation, 2005, pp01

¹⁸ Section 58(1) and 63(4) of the constitution

¹⁹ *ibid*

2.1.7 Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions :

As intimated in earlier paragraphs, members of the ruling Zanu PF dominate the Judicial Services Commission and the parliamentary committee on standing rules and orders. The Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's independence is dubious given his earlier stints in the army and at the delimitation commission. The same aspect applies to the staff of the ZEC. Mr. Silaingwana, the spokesperson is a former army personnel, Mr. Sekeramayi- the Chief Election Officer in ZEC is the young brother to the Minister of Defense, Mr. Sydney Sekeramayi. Our argument is not that former army officers must not be employed in electoral bodies, but it becomes a worrying trend if it becomes almost certain that former army and or intelligence officers run electoral institutions.

The Zimbabwe government did not scrupulously comply with the SADC principles for democratic elections. Notwithstanding this, the South African Observer Mission commended the fact that the government of Zimbabwe administered the March 31 election in the spirit and letter of the SADC declaration.

5.0 Promises & Disappointments

In order to understand the implications of the outcome of the March 31 2005 elections it is important to take cognizance of what the contesting parties promised the electorate ahead of the poll. The analysis below reflects on specific provisions within the respective parties' Manifestos and public utterances made the concerned parties' leadership.

Throughout his countrywide campaign the ZANU PF leader Robert Mugabe indicated that he was expecting a "huge mountainous victory"²⁰. ZANU PF thus set out to achieve this '**huge mountainous victory**'. In the 2002 Presidential election Zanu PF had achieved victory by a perilously narrow margin of less than half a million votes. Clearly Zanu PF sought to better its 2002 election as a means of demonstrating both its legitimacy and popularity. It is arguable that this objective was to be achieved by any means necessary.

ZANU PF had previously laboured under the effects of highly disputed 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections respectively. It therefore went into the 2005 seeking legitimacy at different levels and from different sources including, SADC, the AU and this it hoped would extend to the broader international community.

ZANU PF intended to use the 2005 parliamentary election to settle what it views as a bilateral feud between itself and the British Prime-minister Tony Blair. In the result, the ZANU PF election campaign was dubbed the "Anti Blair campaign". Zanu PF's 2005-election manifesto²¹ dedicated five pages to the 'Blair factor'. Much of the vitriol against Blair draws on statements the latter made on June 14 2004, in the House of Commons. In response to questions from the floor on his government's policy towards Zimbabwe Mr. Blair replied:

...It is important that we give every chance to, and make every effort to try to help those in South Africa - the Southern part of Africa (sic) to put pressure for change on the Mugabe regime, because there is no salvation for the people of Zimbabwe until that regime is changed". —

These words-understandably--incensed ZANU PF have repeatedly been used as justification for the continued vilification and victimization of pro-democracy activists. The notion of "*regime change*" has a very guilty meaning in the context of current global political economic events. It is associated with American/British unilateralism in Iraq and elsewhere. There is as much strong

²⁰ Cnn.com 30 march Zimbabwe Party Politics

²¹ Zanu PF manifesto pg11-17: **March 2005 Election the broader context**

opposition to this notion as there is to the war on Iraq. Blair's statement elicited strong criticism from a wide spectrum of African leaders in government and civil society. Thus ZANU PF gained the sympathetic ear it needed from the region and sections of Europe opposed to Iraq. Equally so, MDC's popularity and acceptability within certain circles on the continent declined. Its legitimacy was once again cast in doubt. Zanu PF seized upon the opportunity and portrayed MDC as a proxy of imperial interests.

Shortly after the statement by Mr. Blair referred to above, the new US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described Zimbabwe as an "outpost of tyranny". The Zanu PF election manifesto described these sentiments by Condoleezza Rice as a "sinister disposition". Unlike in the two previous elections, Zanu PF was able to ahead of the 2005 poll- refer to some evidence of western interference in Zimbabwe's domestic affairs. It was able to portray itself as a party under siege from the 'Blair and Bush factors together with their alleged coterie of local proxies. Thus severe repression against perceived opponents of the government was justified as a means of fighting these powerful imperial meddlers. Once again the scrutiny of Zanu PF's repressive conduct and policies was post-poned in the light of greater fears of regime change.

The stern positions adopted by the US and UK placed MDC in a political quandary as the party now had to articulate some position either distancing itself from or associating itself with the Bush/Blair Administrations. President Thabo Mbeki dismissed Condoleezza Rice's characterization of Zimbabwe as unfounded and unfortunate.

The Zanu PF manifesto describes NGOs as a third force in an axis of evil constituted of imperial interests, the MDC and NGOs. In particular the Zanu PF Manifesto states as follows:²²

"... The imperialist world launched and sponsored phony and non-governmental organizations, which in reality were disguised opposition to ZANU PF. These organizations have been pushing an agenda of Britain and white farmers embittered by repossession of our land"

6.0 The Eastern Connection

According to the ZANU PF election manifesto the party advocates for a "New **Look East**" policy 'which the party claims is

"... Beginning to bear fruit, with new investment beginning to flow in from that region, most notably from the People's Republic of China, Malaysia Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran, buttressing the Turn around."

ZANU PF with its standoff stance has closed any possibility of engagement with the West in the near future. To date trade concessions and deals are being made with China, Malaysia, and Iran.

Currently this is evidenced by the surplus supply of largely sub-standard goods, which have flooded Zimbabwe's market. Although there is repeated reference to the East for Salvation, the county has maintained continued to maintain diplomatic relations with all Western nations including Washington and London.

In spite of this, Mugabe's obsession with Tony Blair is now legendary. At the World Summit on sustainable development held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002, he declared, to a cheering crowd;

²² ZANU PF manifesto pg 16

“... So Blair keep your England and I will keep my Zimbabwe”

7.0 The Land Question

Zimbabwe's constructed standoff with Washington and London might appease general sentiments of political correctness, but has done very little to assuage the country's abysmal economic decline. In fact droves of Zimbabweans leave the country each day in search of greener pastures in Blair and Bush lands. The foreign currency repatriations are contributing significantly to the country's economic recovery. Herein lies the dilemma in Zimbabwe; our politics is totally incongruent to our economic recovery efforts.

The Zanu PF manifesto does not explain how resettlement of 140 000 people relieves pressure on the congested rural areas which accommodate a population of 7 million people.

The manifesto also skirts around the issue of the criteria used to resettle people leaving readers to speculate over the question of favoritism and partisan focused distribution of land.

With over four years of land reform, Zimbabwe continues to rely on food imports and agriculture production has failed to reach pre-2000 levels. The ZANU PF manifesto is silent on how the pre 2000 levels of production will be achieved. There is need to make sure that land is optimally used for the benefit of the country. In this regard, a thorough land audit is a necessary starting point.

MDC on the other had promised Zimbabweans more transparent land reform. On page 6 of its manifesto, the MDC highlights the following²³:

The MDC said it would establish a constitutional Land Commission, which will have jurisdiction overall state land and ensure:

- The rationalization of land rights
- The supervision of rural transformation

The efficient allocation and distribution of agricultural inputs, technical and extension support

A close analysis of the two positions on land reform reveals that ZANU PF promised quantity while MDC promise quality. There was however simultaneous promise of a new constitution by both parties.

8.0 The role of traditional leaders

Throughout the 2005 election, ZANU PF effectively manipulated the traditional leaders and the rural community. First indication of this was in 2003 when ZANU PF offered chiefs competitive salaries, government offering them vehicles and ensuring that their residences were electrified.

In the Coalition's view, the position of chiefs was highly compromised by these trinkets. As a result chiefs began to tow the party line. Many of them became party watchdogs by default as they tried to keep a favourable face with the ruling party. While this is not necessarily a glaring case of vote buying, it certainly compromised the standing of traditional chiefs who obviously had great influence on their subjects. There were reports that chiefs were directed to move with their subjects to polling stations. Chiefs unwittingly became outposts of state supervision and surveillance.

²³ *The MDC Election Manifesto 2005*

9.0 The Morning after

The Sunday Mail of April 3 2005 Mugabe hinted that he is willing and ready to work with the MDC.

Commenting on possible reconciliation Mugabe said, "We would want this to be the basis of which we interact. We are fully prepared as ZANU PF members of parliament to interact with MDC MPs in a manner that is national and that recognizes that we have a mission to fulfill that to make sure that the parliament works"

However on Monday April 4 2005, while speaking to an SABC 3 journalist Snuki Zikalala, Mugabe suggested that his party would only interact with the MDC in parliament and dismissed the need for reconciliation.

Mugabe's public utterances, therefore, do not give clear indications of what ZANU PF's proposed constitutional reform will entail. In the SABC interview above Mugabe indicated that he was ready to increase the number of members of parliament to introduce a bicameral legislature consisting of senate and an upper House.

ZANU PF is likely to use the constitutional reform process to expedite its desires. Some of these can be the continual marginalization of NGOs. The consolidation of women's support, in the party by introducing 50 parliamentary seats and also the militarisation of critical national structures.

Mugabe was also adamant that he would not introduce a limited term of office for the Presidium. It seems unlikely – in the absence of internal pressure that ZANU PF will introduce a Prime Minister.

There are indications though, that ZANU PF might entertain introducing a mixed electoral system. There are also possibilities that several commissions might be included in the ZANU PF constitutional reform agenda.

ZANU PF constitutional reform is most likely to be used as a medium for self-entrenchment and control as opposed to democratisation.

10.0 ZANU PF government and the international community

On March 14, 2005 the EU issued a statement declaring that it would not recognize the outcome of March 31 Election as it was flawed.

Also dismissing the Zimbabwe March 31, 2005 were the USA and the British governments and the Confederation of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU). But the rest of the world awaits more reliable statement from the observer teams on the ground. Zimbabweans on the other hand had been critical of the South Africa Observer team, which had spelt out its position not to waiver from the outlook of the head of state who had gone ahead and declared Zimbabwean elections free and fair.

Mugabe has already identified his enemies as Bush and Blair and by opting for East he is clearly sending a message that there will be no mending of relations soon. Whether Zimbabwe will be able to survive the isolation from other International platforms such as

the Commonwealth still remains to be seen. There is certainly a desire on the part of SADC to bring Zimbabwe back into the fold

Pronouncements coming from the west in relation to the 2005 Zimbabwean general election point to the unlikelihood of re-engagement of the Mugabe regime post election, while on its part ZANU PF has also clearly shown a hostility towards the West that does not sow on fertile grounds the seeds of re-engagement. In its election manifesto for the election, which it dubbed an anti- Blair election, the ruling party decidedly states that it is pitting itself against Blair and his allies, which in essence is the West, as typified by the MDC, which it calls a 'dubious sell-out party' and a creation of resurgent British imperialism. It is clear that ZANU PF does not need to look West in terms of engagement, and seem to be comfortable with their New Look East policy. They state the following in their manifesto:

. Through the new "Look East" Policy, Zimbabwe is charting a new course away from the traditional dependence on the colonial West, in order to boost relations with Countries of the Far East and the Persian Gulf.⁴

The doors to re-engagement with the west are also shut by virtue of the fact that the west still feels that the Mugabe regime has not complied with set conditions to restore the rule of law, improve its human rights record, and ensure genuine freedoms of the people of Zimbabwe through repealing repressive legislation, and disbanding youth militias. Clear pronouncements to that end have come, from Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, Jack Straw⁵ who has suggested further sanctions for the Harare regime, stating that the recently held election was fundamentally flawed, the voters roll severely compromised, and that Mugabe's cheating would prolong the Zimbabwean crisis.

The European union through Glennys Kinock⁶ has stated similar notions, and has suggested the broadening of the scope of the current sanctions. New Zealand through its associate Foreign affairs minister Marian Hobbs⁷, Ireland through its Minister for Foreign affairs Dermot Ahern⁸, The United States through State Department spokesperson Mark Boucher, Germany, Australia, Norway and Scotland have all come out expressing their unease over Zimbabwe's election and calling for a return to accountable and democratic government.

IT would thus seem that possibilities of re-engagement of the Harare regime, which the US State department has called an 'Outpost of Tyranny', and the west, which the Harare regime has labelled as averse to Independent-minded countries like Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Belarus and Burma⁹, are unlikely. Zimbabwe is likely to be further isolated by the west, while the regime banks on regional support in Africa and the Eastern countries, a situation, which they are comfortable with. In their manifesto they state:

The African Union continues to stand by Zimbabwe, in spite of repeated attempts by the West to subvert its institutions. The recent defeat of British machinations in the UN General Assembly underscored the support and respect Zimbabwe commands within the world. This decisive support factor is critical to countervailing the Blair-led anti-Zimbabwe lobby in the West.¹⁰

Further reasons for the unlikelihood of re-engagement also hinge on the NGO Bill. Several donor countries and aid agencies have had to contemplate leaving the country. Such agencies have found themselves caught between a rock and a hard place on whether to engage or disengage as well as reconciling the paradox of seeking to strengthen Zimbabwean civil society, whilst at the same time signaling disapproval for the prevailing politics of management by crisis. The fact that the NGO Bill intends to exercise greater control and supervision of the activities of NGOs will likely lead to the flight of aid from

vulnerable social groups that the government has been unable to support. This alone is sufficient ground for disengagement.

11.0 The Tsholothso Declaration

London based newspaper 'The Zimbabwean' of Friday April 1, 2005 carried an article on a new political alignment by former information minister Jonathan Moyo on behalf of the speaker of parliament, Emerson Mnangagwa.

The two have every reason to feel short-changed by ZANU PF. Emerson Mnangagwa is notorious for the role he played as Gukurahundi mastermind and the way he was sidelined from vying for the post of Vice president of Zimbabwe.

Mugabe, fired Moyo in response to the role he played in convening the Tsholotsho Meeting and Declaration, which set out to oppose his appointment of Joyce Mujuru to the post of national Vice president. It is widely believed that the Tsholotsho Declaration was indeed strongly supported by Emerson Mnangagwa

If the above alignment does not materialize the question is will ZANU PF keep away from Moyo, or vice versa. This is taking cognizance of the fact that Moyo proved to be a hard worker and was credited for ZANU PF's mainstay, through the mooting of repressive legislation such as AIPPA (Access to Information protection of privacy Act) and POSA (Public Order and Security Act), which became the bastion of ZANU PF.

In the last three month after ZANU PF had divorced Jonathan Moyo, there has been a clear void in the party's information strategy. The Party's Manifesto was not ready during its congress and some of its Election campaign material lacked the 'sting ' that had become synonymous with the work of Moyo.

Juxtaposed is Moyo's Tsholotsho victory, which is an indication that he is not to be easily wished away. Having dabbled in the ZANU PF echelons he remains a great threat to party. He left with ZANU PF secrets and can easily part with them. ZANU PF is better off with Moyo than allowing him align himself with the opposition.

For now however, Moyo has dismissed the MDC as being disorganized and a party premised on the fruits of Zimbabwe people's anger only. He has also harshly stated that he will not return to ZANU PF and argued that:

"...It is far better to be with the people and to work with and to work for them than to be hostage to the whims and caprice of the politics of patronage "

In contract Mnangagwa remains time in the party. He wields a lot of power and despite the hugs and smiles at the ZANU PF congress while congratulating Joyce Mujuru he remains a wounded bull, whose strategy and intention are unknown. The question is what are the implications of the many years of being Mugabe 's henchman could mean Mugabe's mainstay.

Mnangagwa lost to MDC candidate Blessing Chebundo by less than 1000 votes on March 31 2005. Mnangagwa who had continually stressed his "born again status' realized an upsurge of 33% in votes in 2005 in comparison to 2003.

Up to now however he has been associated with highly critical processes which make it difficult to place him in the maze of ZANU PF politics. He is rumored to have played an important role in a dialogue effort 2003 headed by Colonel Dyke and aimed at negotiating Mugabe out of power.

He is also credited for having strategised ways to bank- roll ZANU PF in the last two decades.

However as Mugabe 's blue eyed boy, Mnagaggwa was the expected choice for succession, and when Mugabe opted for Joyce Mujuru, it became apparent that Mugabe was slowly sidelining him.

12.0 False Sense of Justice

By the time Zimbabwe went to the poll this year, many felt that the time had come for the people's chance to shape the future of Zimbabwe. This sense of dawn was a result of the sudden opening of democratic space for the opposition, both in the rural and urban areas and in the media.

In the last 33 days to the election, Zimbabweans felt a sense of victory and because they were deprived of media coverage, a small concession such as 12 minutes a day on national television given to the opposition party had a big opinion impact. Images of the opposition having popularly attended rallies in the rural areas gave the impression that a break of dawn was imminent among opposition supporters.

In the euphoria and the false sense of justice, Zimbabweans failed to question the institutional and technical process of the election. The people forgot to focus on the tilted playing field, the condemned voter's roll and the issues around the skewed Electoral Act. When the inflated ZANU PF victory was announced it was déjà vu for Zimbabweans, for they had been violated before (in 2000 and 2002) when the ruling party stole the elections: only this time the incongruence was enormous.

13.0 Which way NGOs

The fact that the NGOs Bill is still hanging hangs over the heads of civil society after being forced through Parliament on December 9 2004 points in the general direction of what the future holds for civil society, post election. Further to that the fact that NGOs get a special mention in the ZANU PF Manifesto²⁴ for the 2005 general election also seem to set the tone for how ZANU PF intends to deal with civil society.

In the ZANU PF Manifesto, it is stated that ZANU PF:

*.... is the only party that understands the national question, and commands the most effective ways of dealing with it.*²⁵

The statement portrays everyone else outside ZANU PF as anti-national or simply unpatriotic. After what has been described as a "resounding" victory, ZANU PF is likely to become even more intransigent and intolerant of alternative views and understandings of what constitutes the National Question.

The fact that on page six of its manifesto, ZANU PF dedicates an entire section to civil society speaks volumes about how serious ZANU PF is taking the NGO question. How it then describes the NGOs is clear that it intends not to treat civil society with kid gloves, and the likelihood that after the selection of a new cabinet, Mugabe will sign the NGO in order to deal with what it refers to as "phoney" NGOs, political opposition and disguised opposition. The allusion to western funding of NGOs and the fact that the just ended elections were dubbed the 'Anti- Blair elections',

²⁴ ZANU PF Election Manifesto-March 2005: the Peoples manifesto, message from the first secretary and President of ZANU PF, CDE R.G.Mugabe

²⁵ ibid, page

also points to possibilities of ZANU PF going all out to quash the activities of NGOs. ZANU PF views NGOs as proxies of euro-American imperial interests, or at worst, puppets. For those CSOs who are out of reach of the new NGOs legislation, other methods are likely to be used. The ZCTU, which also gets a special mention in the manifesto, and is tacitly accused of being funded by the “right wing, CIA Funded ICFTU”, has already been strained by the regime through engineered splits, and the sponsoring of discontent within its rank and file²⁶. These machinations will continue in respect of the ZCTU, as they will in respect of the church and other entities deemed potentially anti-establishment.

Suffice it to say that, the axe is likely to fall on CSOs that are deemed political and rogue, further shrinking the alternative democratic space, souring already bitter and contentious relations between the government and civic society organisations in Zimbabwe. The road map with regards to this is clearly set, and the Minister of Public Service and Social Welfare; Mr. Paul Mangwana was quoted just over a year ago as having the following to say about civil society and government, showing a clear line of action that the government is likely to take in the post election period:

“Some NGOs and churches are causing too much confusion in the country because they are converting their humanitarian programmes into politics...The government cannot allow that to happen, so we are saying they should go under scrutiny where we revise all modalities of their operations in the country”²⁷

The inevitability of the passing of the Bill is bound, besides shrinking the democratic space and removing watchdogs of the excesses of the Harare regime, to cause untold suffering for the millions of Zimbabweans who are struggling to make ends meet. Exacerbating, instead of resolving and ending the crisis, through criminalisation of human rights work.

14.0 Liberal Politics or Greater Repression: The likelihood for Zimbabwe

As Zimbabwe gets into post-election mode it is quite difficult to predict what the future holds for Zimbabwe; a great deal will depend on what ZANU PF will venture to do with their new-found two-thirds majority in parliament. The indications from the ruling party manifesto are that it is likely that ZANU PF will be magnanimous in victory, thereby practising liberal politics. For the last 3 years civil society, the progressives in Zimbabwe and the International community have been advocating for the repealing of POSA, AIPPA and other such repressive legislation reminiscent of colonial and apartheid times. Consistently ZANU PF has stood in defence of this repressive legislation as necessary to maintain law and order in Zimbabwe. Instead of bowing down to popular sentiments and repealing these laws, the government has moved further in the route of repression by continuing to promulgate laws that demean the substance and social fibre of the country. Laws that are bent on shrinking the democratic space and oppressing the people of Zimbabwe by infringing on their fundamental freedoms. Indications are also that the Public Order and Security Act, a worthy successor to Ian Smiths Law and Order Maintenance Act, is still a favoured tool of rule by ZANU PF and its use might be heightened in the post election period as the opposition has rejected the results and is said to be mobilising for a popular mass uprising.

It should not be forgotten that the central objective of promulgating these laws and the setting up of other institutions and infrastructure of repression, was to silence the democratic forces in Zimbabwe, and for as long as ZANU PFs legitimacy is questioned, it will continue to use these draconian laws as safe guards to its rule. If there were to be any changes in the type of politics,

²⁶ The Herald 31-03-05, page 4 “Affiliate bodies want ZCTU leaders to quit”

²⁷ Herald Newspaper, 5 April 2004

ZANU would have indicated it by now. The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition chairperson Brian Kagoro had this to say:

*The repressive laws passed in order to contain the spread of opposition politics and/or anti-Zanu PF sentiments have been buttressed by the addition of the NGO Act. These instruments facilitate the consolidation of political power and the silencing of voices of dissent. They imprison any hope Zimbabweans have ever had of outliving the Rhodesian demon. They constitute the seeds of violence and political xenophobia*²⁸

As the country prepares for the seating of its sixth parliament these laws as described above are still in existence, and there has been no promise to repeal them or even rationalise them. Calls for their repealing have fallen on deaf ears and been met with cynicism, in its manifesto ZANU PF clearly restates its position on the human rights question:

*Tony Blair and his European and American anti-Zimbabwe lobby has been using lies and the fig leaf of democracy and human rights, to impart respectability to their continued recolonisation designs on Zimbabwe. They have maligned the country and its laws on grounds of false and self-fulfilling democratic standards, which are arbitrary and spitefully meant to indict Zimbabwe.*²⁹

Given the above stance, there is no indication that ZANU PF will relent on its path of seemingly perpetual repression in favour of more liberal and people centred politics.

15.0 Mugabe's Departure

Speculation is rife among the optimists that the resounding victory of ZANU PF will pave way for the safe and victorious departure from office of Robert Mugabe. It is postulated that Mugabe has always wanted to leave office, but has wanted to do it on his own terms, terms that would ensure that his name is forever remembered, terms that would ensure that he claims a place as one of the most astute African statesmen and revolutionary leaders of all time, terms that would ensure his security and safety from prosecution, and lastly terms that would ensure that he leaves while on top of his game. The propounders of these theories are buoyed by the speculation that Mugabe intends to embark on constitutional reform that will make him choose his successor. It is our humble submission though, that the "victory", will not expedite the departure of Mugabe from office. Indications from the last ZANU PF Annual Peoples Conventions, and the December Congress, have not clearly brought out a successor from the party. In the absence of a clear successor, it is unlikely that Mugabe will vacate office in the near future. If the assertions that Mugabe wants to leave while popular and on top, are anything to go by, then Mugabe will want to consolidate this victory before leaving office. In the event that economic hardships will continue to persist, and that the opposition might mobilise their supporters to conduct mass action, Mugabe evidently has a lot of cleaning up to do in real terms if he wants to leave office with his reputation intact.

²⁸ Brian Kagoro. The Prisoners of Hope, Civil Society and the opposition ahead of the 2005 parliamentary poll. Paper presented to the Institute of Security Studies, 12 December 2004

²⁹ ZANU PF election manifesto, March 2005: the people's manifesto, message from the first secretary and president of ZANU PF cde R.G. Mugabe, pp22

16.0 Whither the MDC?

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) rejected the March 31 parliamentary election as fraudulent³⁰ and is rumoured to be preparing for nation-wide mass protests to reverse the poll result. As part of this civil disobedience programme, the MDC is distributing flyers in Harare urging its supporters and the generality of Zimbabweans to reject the poll. One of the flyers reads, *'Reject the fraudulent poll result'*. On 4 April 2005, a group of about 2 000 MDC supporters mainly youths marched in the streets of Harare demanding that the election be annulled on account of alleged irregularities. The MDC believes that the small protest march is the beginning of more organised demonstrations against alleged poll irregularities.

The sporadic protests by MDC supporters followed assertions made by Morgan Tsvangirai on 2 April 2005 to the effect that senior officials in the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) informed him that:

'In Mashonaland West, we had won Kariba, Chinhoyi, Hurungwe West, Chegutu and Manyame. In Mashonaland Central, we won Guruve North and South, Shamva and Bindura. In Mashonaland we won in Chikomba, Hwedza and Goromonzi, while in Masvingo we won in all constituencies, "³¹

Tsvangirai further reiterated his belief that the elections were rigged when he addressed diplomats on 3 April 2005. In his view, the following factors require thorough consideration

- Massive intimidation that was taking place engendered by the fact that ballot counting was to take place at the polling station where the same was the case.
- The fact that the election was not being run by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) but instead by a past discredited ZANU PF bureaucracy.
- The adverse use of militias, the army and the police
- The use and abuse of traditional leaders as mobilisation agents for ZANU PF
- The turning away of opposition election agents in some places
- Consequently ballot stuffing

Having outlined the factors that influenced the poll in ZANU PF's favour to the diplomats, Tsvangirai concluded that:

*"We therefore categorically reject the process and the flawed result of March 2005 elections. We note cynically how figures announced for total votes in some constituencies were substantially lower than the announced results. The credibility gap of this election and its illegitimacy is so obvious to Zimbabweans and to the region. On the evidence available there is no doubt that we won 94 of the contested seats. We make the fundamental call for a fresh election under a completely different Constitutional dispensation."*³²

Unlike in the 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections where the MDC challenged the poll outcome, the MDC intimated that it would not seek judicial intervention. While reasons were not given for taking such a course of action it should be noted that when the MDC petitioned the High Court against the outcome in 37 constituencies in the 2000 poll, seven constituent results were nullified. ZANU PF appealed to the Supreme Court and at the time of going to the polls on March 31, 2005 those cases were still pending. The MDC also petitioned the court concerning the outcome of the 2002 presidential election result. This is yet to be resolved. In short the opposition has lost faith in the country's judicial system.

³⁰ Tsvangirai's statement, 1 April 2005

³¹ MDC president addressing a media conference, 2 April 2005, Harare

³² *ibid*

The basis of challenging the past two elections was mainly that violence; intimidation, vote buying and murder vitiated the freeness and fairness of the polls. However, the scenario has significantly changed with respect to the 2005 outcome. The opposition alleges that the Zimbabwean Election Commission authorities were either inflating or understating the figures. There is perhaps a greater chance for quicker resolution of the dispute than was the case in the previous two elections. The MDC might be better advised to – amongst other strategies – approach the electoral court for relief.

But besides allegations that the poll was rigged, some elements within the MDC believe that the party's senior leadership is opposed to any confrontational politics, let alone mass civil disobedience. There were rumours of internal squabbles ahead of the 2004 MDC primaries. In fact there were suggestions of splits along the following lines;

- Intellectuals vs. labour unions
- The old guard vs. former student leaders
- Ndebeles vs. Shonas

ZANU PF may have instigated most of these rumours.

This issue of internal squabbles is likely to be the highlight of the MDC's April 2005 national congress to choose the new leadership. But before the congress, the MDC's national executive council is scheduled to go to a retreat where it will strategically reflect the disputed poll. This is where the repositioning of the party to address issues such as the alleged electoral fraud will begin.

There are some within the MDC who believe that some elements in the party's top leadership have no capacity to deal with the crisis of legitimacy and governance the country has been grappling with since 2000. There is even a call by the reformists in the MDC to tap the brains that are outside the party structures as a way of re-invigorating the party ahead of the 2008 presidential election and also as a way of pre-empting the so-called Third Force.

In the opinion of some MDC activists, the party's structures need be to re-organized starting from the top. However, even these reformists are cautious to avoid a possible split between the intellectuals and labour. The result has been calls for the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai to purge the deadwood in his party. In all these strands of thought Mr. Tsvangirai is seen as central to the MDC's re-invigoration and restructuring. There is heightened expectation that he should exhibit the highest level of leadership acumen

According to Brian Kagoro, the chairperson of Crisis In Zimbabwe Coalition, the founders of the MDC wanted to avoid a situation where self-serving party militants desecrated the value of national politics. He argues that those who formed the MDC were actuated by the desire to substitute 'mob-rule with a 'more tolerant politics, an accountable, truly national and transparent way of governance'.³³

The MDC has been in existence close to six (6) years now. It is perhaps appropriate to inquire whether it has exhibited and been faithful to its founding ideals in its operations and leadership. That is- bar its obvious external threats – whether the MDC is tolerant of opposition/diversity; accountable; transparent and peaceful?⁵ Given MDC's internal squabbles during the primary elections in which allegations of vote buying and imposition of leaders were rampant it is prudent

³³ Brian Kagoro. The Prisoners of Hope, Civil Society and the opposition ahead of the 2005 parliamentary poll. Paper presented to the Institute of Security Studies, 12 December 2004

to re-visit the question of unresolved internal conflicts. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the opposition is not one of collapse, but how to avoid Zanuification. MDC has the onerous task of continually presenting a credible alternative political programme to change hungry Zimbabweans. After five years of electoral politics and three consecutive defeats its key activists and leaders may begin to suffer from burn out; impasse of perception and frustration. MDC thus needs fresh inspiration in the face of elusive political power; regional pressure and greater repression.

While the MDC has begun to engage in demonstrations against the election outcome, President Mugabe on Saturday 2 April 2005 said the MDC should accept defeat in order to foster good relations between the two parties. In short Mugabe seems to be ready to either accommodate or pacify the opposition. *"We would want this to become the basis on which to interact. We are fully prepared as ZANU- PF Members of Parliament to interact with MDC MPs in a manner that is national and that recognizes that we have a mission to fulfil – that is to make sure that Parliament works ... Sure, we will remain ready to interact with the MDC or any member of society. This is what we have always been."*³⁴

In the Coalition's view, the MDC is unlikely to negotiate with ZANU PF this time because it feels that it had won the election and ZANU PF robbed it of victory. Also crucial is the fact that unlike in the 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential election respectively, the MDC had a lot of support. The party got 57 seats in the legislative poll and polled over 1.2 million votes in the presidential election. In the March 31, 2005 poll the MDC lost substantial ground meaning that its power to negotiate with ZANU PF has been tremendously weakened. There is also fear among MDC followers that if the opposition enters into a coalition government with ZANU PF that would weaken its chances of winning the presidential election in 2008. It could be swallowed as happened to ZAPU in 1987.

After considering all relevant factors, the Coalition is not convinced that the MDC lost the election, at least not with the margin suggested by the poll result. This is so because of: the effects the violence and intimidation after the presidential election; attacks on judicial independence and press freedom through the closure of four privately owned newspapers; attacks on civil society through the passing of repressive legislation such as the NGO Bill and the Public Order and Security Act; and the use of food as a political weapon as well as the continued existence of the infrastructure of violence such as the youth militia. These factors significantly contributed to the rigging of the poll and the unfreeness and unfairness of the process.

There is evidence at hand to suggest that the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC), which administered the poll, might have made fundamental mistakes, which in the opinion Coalition indicate a rigged poll. For instance at the close of polling ZEC declared that in Chegutu constituency 19 763 people had voted by 1930hrs. However when the poll results were announced 5 611 voters were added. This happened in a number of constituencies and ZEC has not yet furnished a convincing explanation for these anomalies.

In the Coalition's view, the MDC is evidently a party under enormous strain. To its credit, it has managed to weather the storm over the last five (5) years. For the greater part the MDC is slowly becoming a victim of several factors: -

- The electorate's loss of confidence in politics, politicians and the electoral process
- Severely diminished financial /material resources
- Sustained and consistent government propaganda
- SADC commitment to rescue the Mugabe government at all costs
- Tactical inertia and burn out
- Structural incoherence and diminished cohesion

³⁴ The Sunday Mail, 3 April 2005

- General fatigue and crisis of expectation amongst Zimbabweans
- Outward migration

Notwithstanding these factors, the MDC performed beyond expectation within the rural areas in the recently ended poll. (See *fig 3-5 below*). MDC also managed to retain almost all the urban seats save for a few. Its critical challenge is to construct a new message and profile a leadership that will re-capture and inspire imagination, especially of reluctant urban voters.

17.0 The “Third Force”

The emergence of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change on Zimbabwe's political landscape in 1999 as an alternative movement to the ruling Zanu PF party has created an entrenched two party system.

The MDC has managed to mount stiff challenges to Zanu PF's dominance of Zimbabwe's body politic. For instance in the year 2000, when the party was hardly 9 months old, it snatched 57 seats of the 120 seats in parliament. In the 2002 presidential election, MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai narrowly lost to President Mugabe, in an election the former described as the “worst electoral fraud in history”³⁵. Morgan Tsvangirai lost the election by 426 812 votes. The total number of registered voters for the 2002 Presidential election was 2 943 613. Zanu PF obtained 1 685 212 votes and MDC got 1 258 401 votes³⁶. In the just ended 2005 parliamentary elections, the MDC seats in parliament have been dramatically reduced to just 41, allowing Zanu PF to claim the much needed two-thirds majority. However, as the fight for the democratisation of Zimbabwe continues, there is disenchantment within a minority sector of the pro-democracy movement on the way the opposition MDC is mounting its challenge to the status quo. Inevitably, debate on the emergence of a third force has captured the imagination of Zimbabweans, especially coming against the background of the recent defeat of the MDC in the just concluded parliamentary poll.

Notwithstanding the fact that the ‘third force’ debate may be premature, it raises fundamental questions about both leadership depth and strategic coherence of the oppositional movement in Zimbabwe. It is unclear what the social base of the so-called ‘third force’ would be. There is an apparent analytical gap between the mooted reasons for a third force and the real reason behind MDC's dismal electoral performance. Evidence from the 2000, 2002 and 2005 election suggests that the MDC's support base is still intact in the urban areas. In fact MDC performed beyond expectations in many rural areas in recently ended 2005 parliamentary poll. Cases in point are Gutu South, Hwedza, Zaka's, Gokwe's and Buhera's.

The working people of Zimbabwe who yearned for a political structure organised differently from Zanu PF formed the MDC in 1999. The founders of the MDC did not see a political party as an authority, but a vehicle through which they could exercise their authority and express their will. They had observed the dangers replete in conflating the party with the government. They had also seen how impostors pretended to be party militants as a short cut to gain private wealth, to hold a post in the government, step up the ladder, get promotion and make a career for themselves.

The founders of the MDC had keenly observed how self-serving party militants desecrated the value of national politics. They were actuated by the desire to substitute ‘**mob rule**’ with a ‘**more tolerant politics, an accountable, truly national and transparent way of governance**’.³⁷

³⁵ MDC statement, 15 March 2002

³⁶ ZESN election report, March 2002

³⁷ Brian Kagoro. The Prisoners of Hope, Civil Society and the opposition ahead of the 2005 parliamentary poll. Paper presented to the Institute of Security Studies, 12 December 2004

The MDC has been in existence close to six (6) years now. It is perhaps apposite to inquire whether it has exhibited these ideals in its operations and leadership. That is – bar its obvious external threats – whether the MDC is tolerant of opposition/diversity; accountable; transparent and peaceful? Whether it represents a different leadership model to that of Zanu PF? And whether it has the depth of leadership to present a true alternative to the gang-like parties that Zimbabwe has seen so far. These questions might form the basis for deep introspection within the MDC and even restructuring. However, it is not clear how these questions necessarily militate for the formation of a ‘third force’.

In an issue of the *Zimbabwe Independent* (18 March 2005), publisher of the Zimbabwe Independent, Trevor Ncube sought to describe the manifold weaknesses of the MDC. In his view, “the MDC has long ago lost the drive for a people’s revolution... the facts on the grounds show an ineffective opposition party that lacks vision and strategy” Trevor Ncube suggests that “the possibility of a third way is something worth contemplating”. In what seemed to be a well orchestrated move to galvanize public opinion in favour of a third force, a week later, in the issue of the *Zimbabwe Independent* (24 March) another opinion leader, former editor of the banned *Daily News*, Geoff Nyarota, referred to the inevitability of a third force. Nyarota maintains, “instead of exhibiting the dynamism and vibrancy of a young and progressive party, the MDC has become moribund. Apart from the founding fathers and mothers it has not attracted any new blood or talent, apart from Shake Maya of NAAG, whose arrival added little value to the MDC”. Shake Maya went on to lose Mhondoro seat, which the MDC won in 2000.

It is imperative to realize that these sentiments were raised prior the parliamentary elections, and are likely to be galvanized even more now that the MDC has been defeated in a poll adjudged by SADC as free and fair. Before interrogating whether the defeat of the MDC would facilitate the emergence of a third force, this paper seeks to expose possible sources of disenchantment within MDC beyond academic opinions proffered by Trevor Ncube and Geoff Nyarota. Many a times the opposition MDC has witnessed turmoil and instability, the most notable being the stand-off between the socialists inclined Munyaradzi Gwisai and senior members of the party. The rift later led to the expulsion of Gwisai from the party. People like Munyaradzi Gwisai represent the breed of extremists within the pro-democracy movement, who also felt greatly aggrieved with his expulsion.

There are also other voices within the pro-democracy movement that openly lambasted the MDC for its alleged inefficiency and lack of strategy, like Lovemore Madhuku, chairperson of National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). The NCA now has structures across the country, and is best positioned – if so inclined – to act as a vehicle for the emergence of this so-called ‘third force’. However, people like Madhuku and Gwisai have not stated any intentions to form a third force. If at all it arises, a third force might emerge from these quarters, radicals who view the MDC as a party of mild individuals. The students movement, which played a critical role in the formation of the MDC, of late has been feeling aggrieved by the relegation of former student leaders within the MDC leadership and structures. A case in point is the elbowing out Charlton Hwende in the Zengeza by-election in 2004. The stand-off between Job Sikhala, a former student leader and the party’s leadership also portrays the rift that might exist in party.

It is however, doubtful at this point that either the radical intellectuals or the former student leaders command neutral and natural support independent of the MDC to constitute a real alternative. In fact, the other possibility included a coterie of academic, young professionals, exiles and businesspersons. These groups are tragically elitist and lack a real linkage to the Zimbabwean grassroots politics. The intellectual deception within this latter group is terminal. There is a belief that the MDC lacks three things

- Intellectual vigour
- Credible political programmes, as envisaged by Jonathan Moyo in an interview with Sky News on the 2nd of March

- Effective leadership

That this lacuna explains the MDC's recent defeat at the polls is tantamount to blaming the MDC for its inability to pre-empt and prevent the manipulation of traditional leaders, peasant communities and figures obtained from the polling stations. This report suggests that – bar the manipulation of figures – MDC significantly increased rural vote across the country. Further, this is tantamount to suggesting that Zanu PF's increase in seat numbers is a signification of its popularity, which is farce. Nothing can be further from the truth.

The debate on the third force does not only revolve within the boundaries of the pro-democracy movement. Zanu PF is a party that is currently torn apart. Emerson Mnangwas's crippled ascendancy to the Presidency claimed many scalps within Zanu PF. Emerson Mnangagwa, the chief architect of the Tsholotsho debacle, was demoted from the post of Secretary for administration to the less influential post of legal affairs. His political career is currently in the intensive care unit following yet another humiliating defeat in the just ended parliamentary poll. Jonathan Moyo, the former mercurial Information Tsar in Mugabe's cabinet was fired, and he narrowly won the Tsholotsho seat by 2000 votes. Six provincial chairpersons were suspended for 4 years from the party. This discontent might lead to the formation of a third force, as Wilf Mbanga holds in *The Zimbabwean*.³⁸

However, even though the defeat of the MDC can lead to the emergence of another third force, this paper also seeks to expose the fact that such an exercise might be futile. This is especially so because a third force can only emerge from the urban areas, in which case the MDC, save for one constituency in Harare South, has managed to retain its hegemony in the urban areas. It has retained its support in the urban areas, giving credence to the fact that it enjoys popular support within the working class people of the urban areas. A third force that emerges to seek popular support also has to prove that the MDC lost fairly in this election. To quote Trevor Ncube, "years of violence and intimidation, a slew of repressive laws such as the Public Order and Security Act, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the NGO bill have all conspired to undermine the party's effectiveness. Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai's treason trial, together with other numerous acts of harassment of party activists, has further reduced its effectiveness".³⁹ With evidence mounting of discrepancies in the just ended poll, it might be fair to hint that the MDC actually commands majority support but was victim of an extremely flawed and rigged process. This sentiment that the election might have been rigged in favour of the ruling Zanu PF party might militate against the third force.

³⁸ *The Zimbabwean*, 1 April 2005, pp1

³⁹ *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 18 March 2005

18.0 Wither Zimbabwe: Prospects of resolution

Zimbabwean politics reads like a nomad's diary. Fraught with promises of a better future, every election has been read as a unique opportunity to set the pace for development through creating a new vision that people must rally behind. The ruling party has coined catchwords like "Health For All by the year 2000", "Vision 2020", and more recently "Our land is our economy" to sway public opinion towards its policies.

The result has been increased commercialisation of democratic processes at the expense of genuine people's interests. The hunger for power has seen the emasculation of the citizenry as politicians continuously see themselves as the "be all" and the "end all" of the crises affecting the country. Adorned in robes depicting economic and social salvation, many of the country's politicians have cajoled the country's citizenry into believing that the greatest enemy is outside the country, and anyone averse to their principles is selling out.

ZANU PF's victory has a number of ramifications in terms of governance and democracy. The first inclination for the party will be towards an increased sense of benevolent democracy. The ruling party will feel vindicated for all its statements against the "interference" of Western countries in the running of the country. ZANU PF posturing will make supporters feel at home with vindictive talk on the opposition and will divert focus on the real issues affecting the people.

The greatest tragedy in the past five years has been the lack of adequate discourse on political issues affecting the people. The ruling party dealt a blow to media freedom and expression through the closure of independent newspapers as well as the criminalisation of journalistic practice. The opposition has been painted black in state run media with token time being allocated towards the elections in the spirit of the SADC protocol on elections.

ZANU PF has justified its attack on the opposition by deliberately quoting the opposition out of context and finding favour with the rural community, which has very little access to independent press. The mushrooming of private radio and television stations outside the country that reports on the activities within Zimbabwe bears testimony to the extent to which the state has curtailed media freedom to suit its own ends.

The ruling party is likely to continue with this state of affairs to the detriment of community development.

Another option is for the state to consider national unity and to merge the two major political parties. Whilst the recent elections do not present an opportunity for a change in government policy, they do present phenomenal opportunities for the ruling party to make constitutional reforms that will have a direct bearing on the kind of government to come after the presidential elections in 2008.

If the pressure brought to bear on the state by the regional and international community is anything to go by, the state might be inclined to make constitutional reforms that could include opposition led policies. The idea of a government of national unity denotes greater stakeholder engagement at every level. Translated to the ground, the ruling party as well as other

stakeholders could be presented with a unique opportunity to exercise their right to negotiate change and influence policy.

Under this scenario the next three years will see the nation at home with the region and the world at large. This will have a positive effect on sister developments within the country, notably on the economy, health delivery and social services. There will be a constructive effort on both sides of the political divide to make things happen for the improvement of the state.

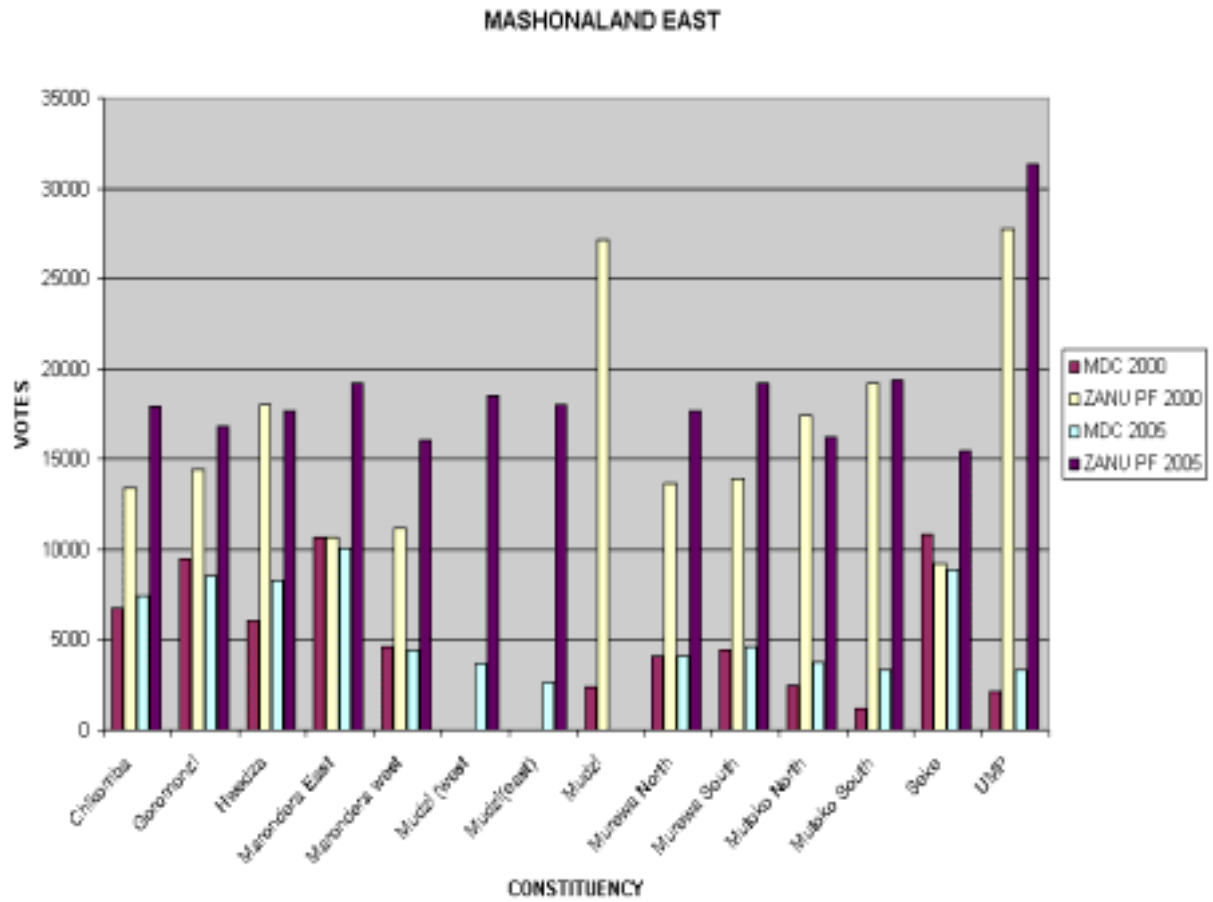
Current questions on the legitimacy of elections, let alone government itself hinge on its ability to negotiate for effective policy with its people. All government has an obligation to listen to its electorate and present issues as mandated by the people.

The second scenario reads as fantasy when put under the spotlight of Zimbabwean politics. Robert Mugabe has labelled the call for Government of National Unity a non-event on numerous occasions. He has seen the opposition not as a competitor providing a viable alternative policy, but rather as a hindrance that needs to be crushed. Both the state and independent media have quoted him as saying that a government of national unity will not be necessary. If anything, the opposition has lost and it should accept defeat.

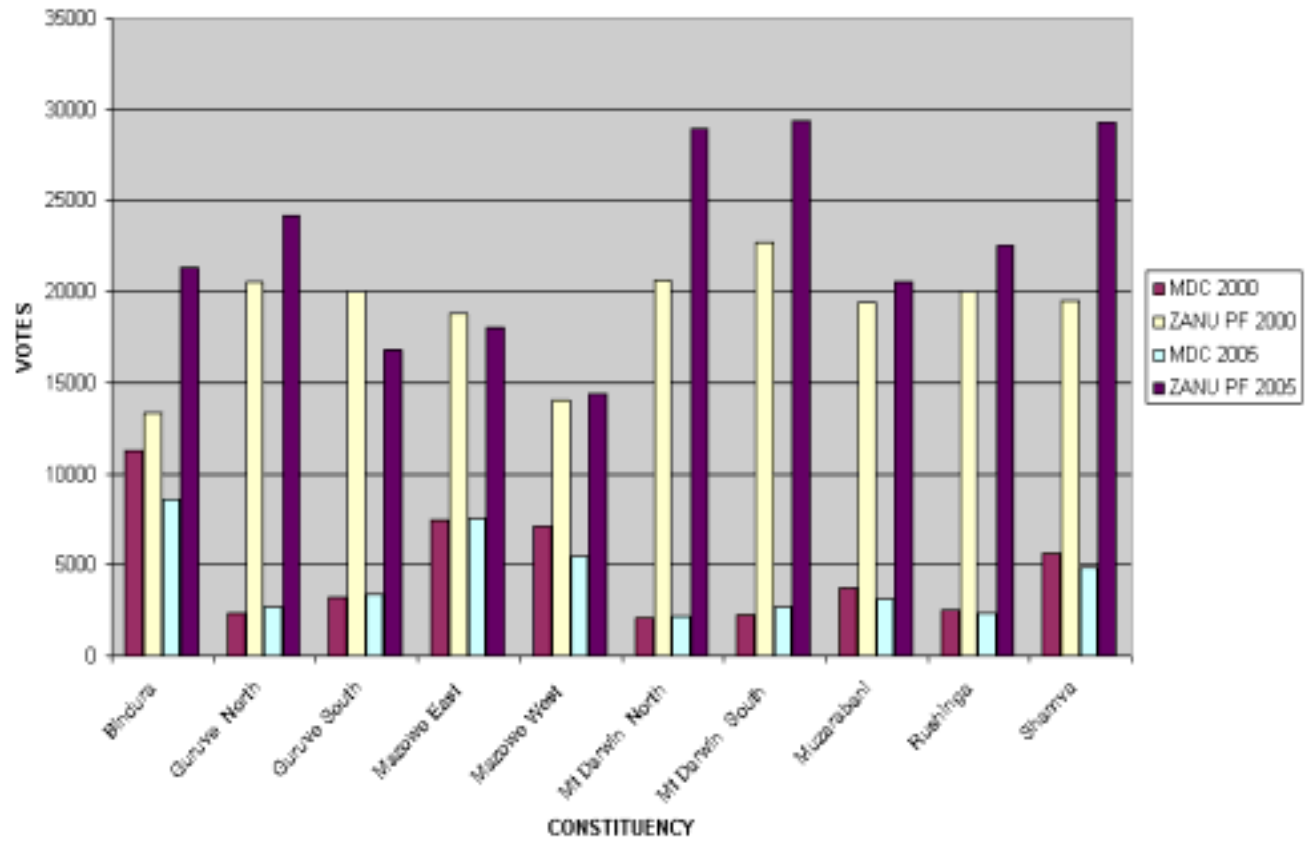
There is, therefore, every indication that the state will revert to an authoritarian and repressive movement aimed at curbing the resurgence of the opposition ahead of the 2008 presidential election. The negative impact of this stance on Zimbabwean politics is ominous; unless an effective method is put in place to scrutinise policy and bring everyone to the discussion table, Zimbabwe shall continue to spiral into a quagmire.

19.0 Graphs and Charts

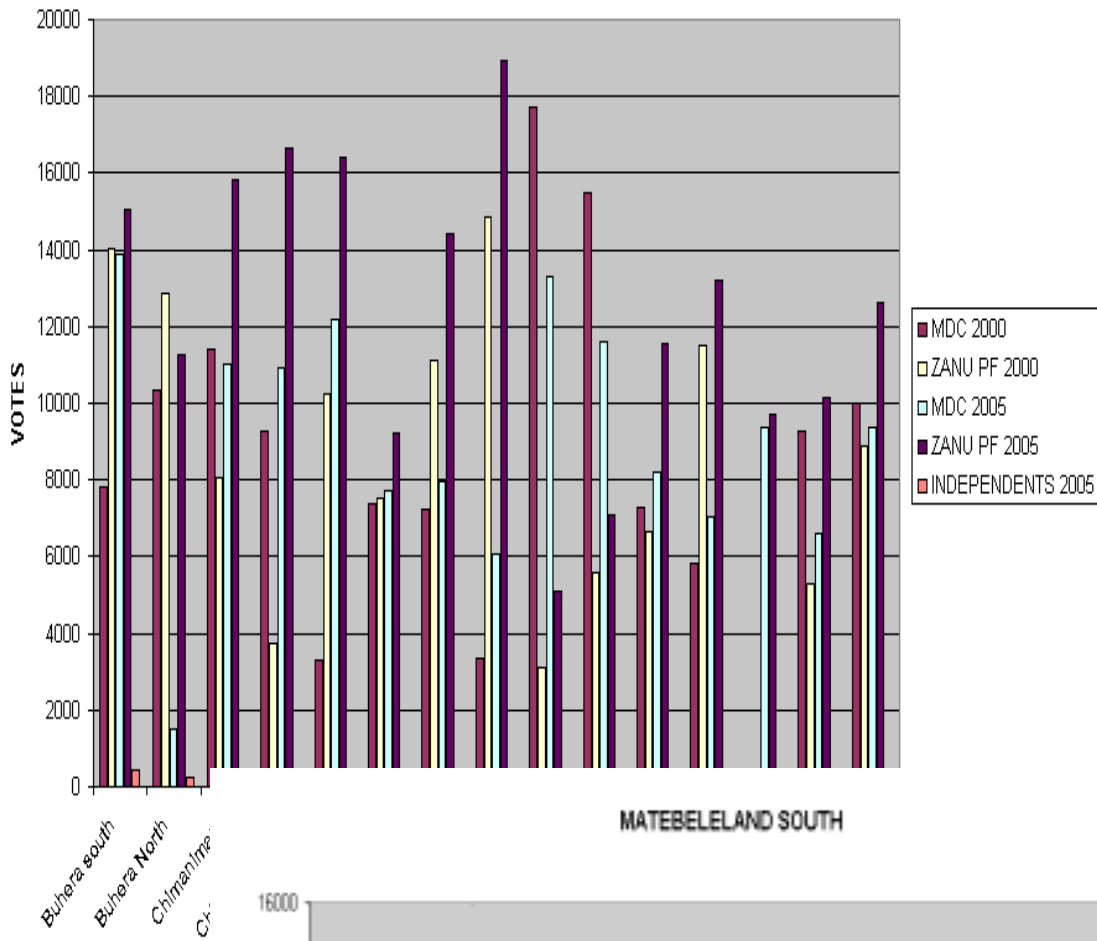
The graphs below display the voting trends of 2000 and 2005 elections. The charts concentrate on displaying the irregularities associated with the 2005 poll.



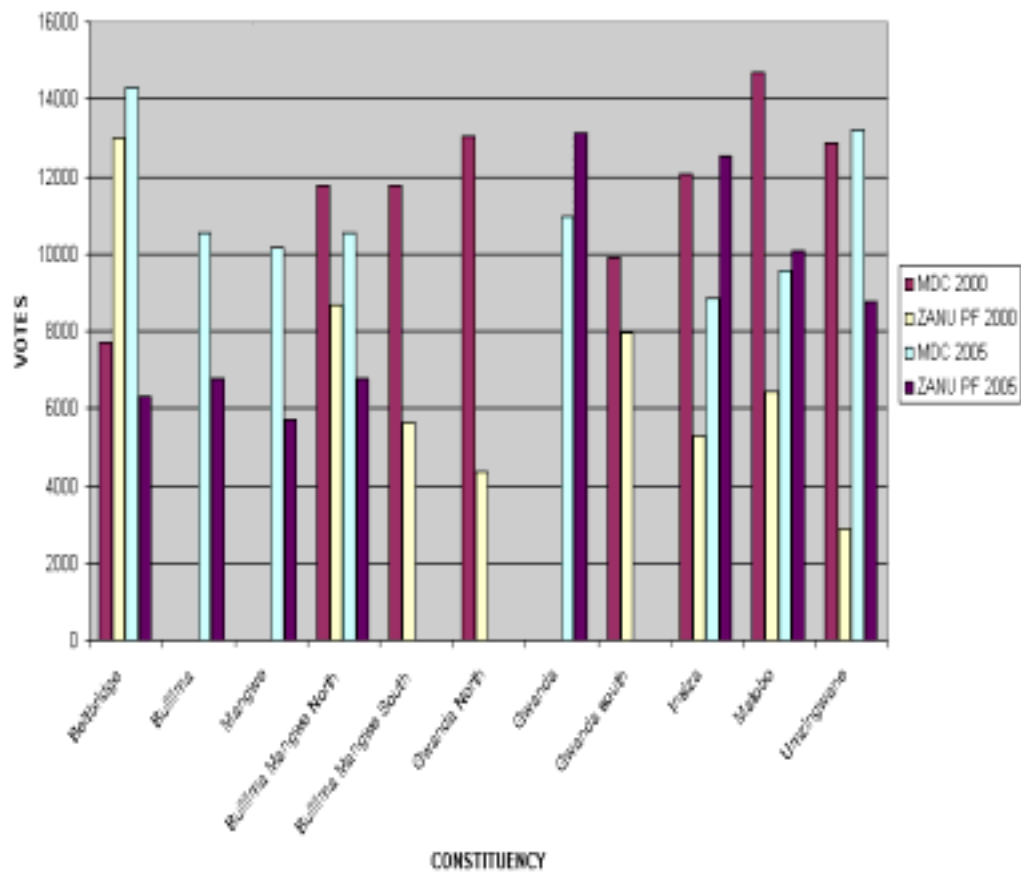
MASHONALAND CENTRAL

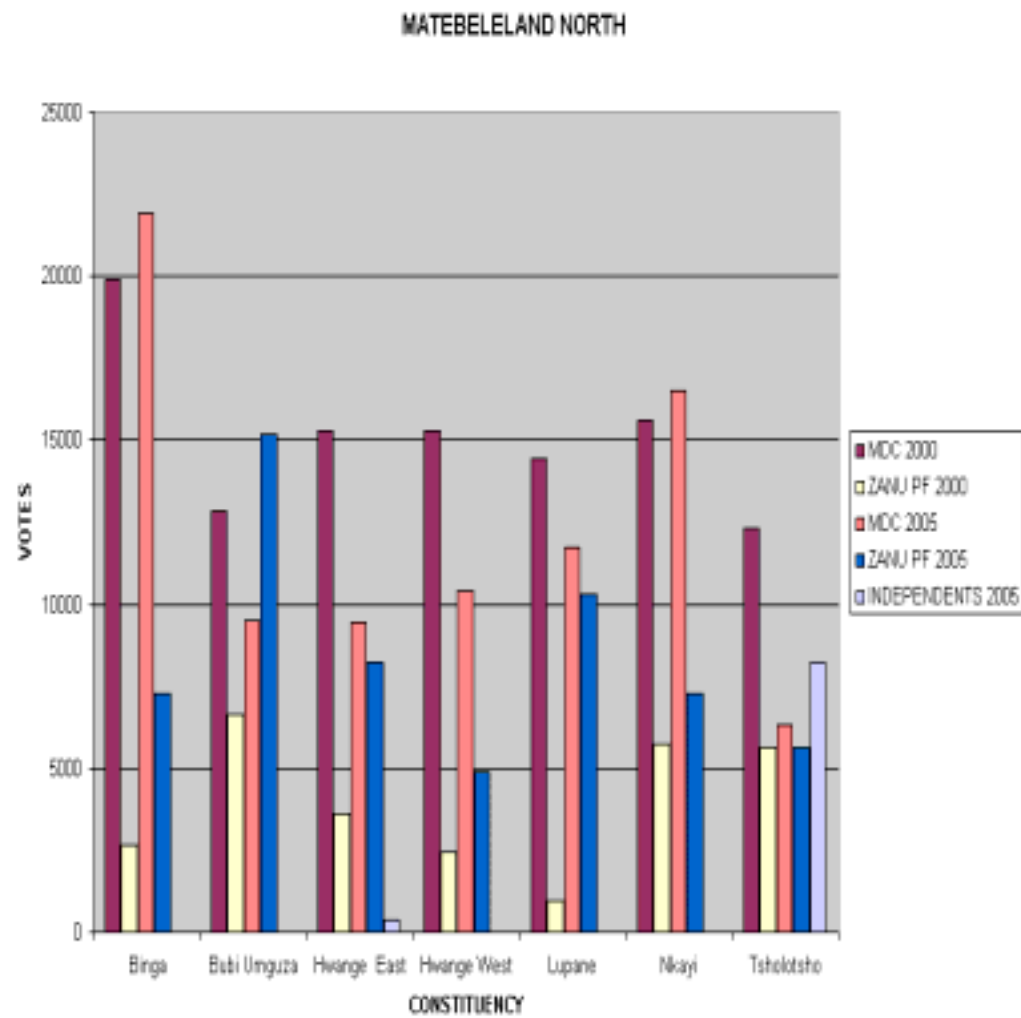


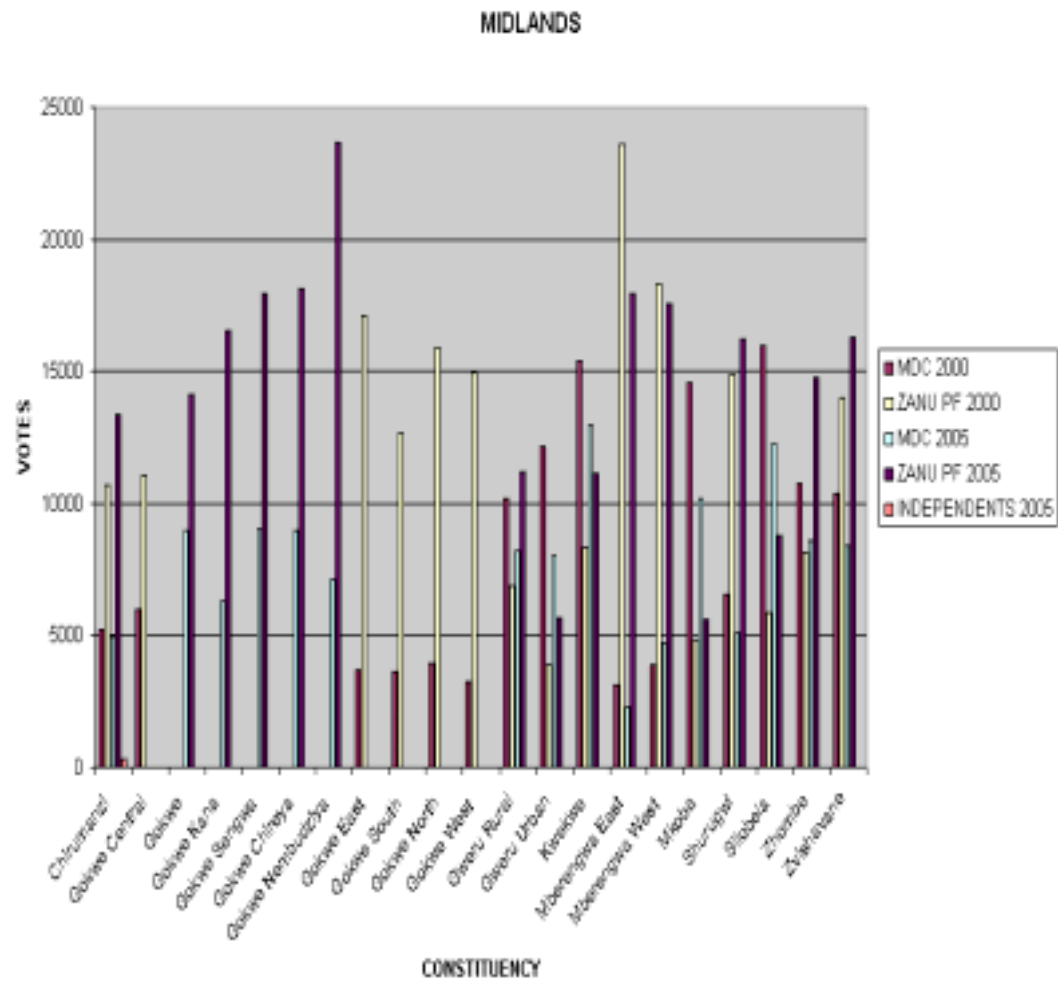
MANICALAND



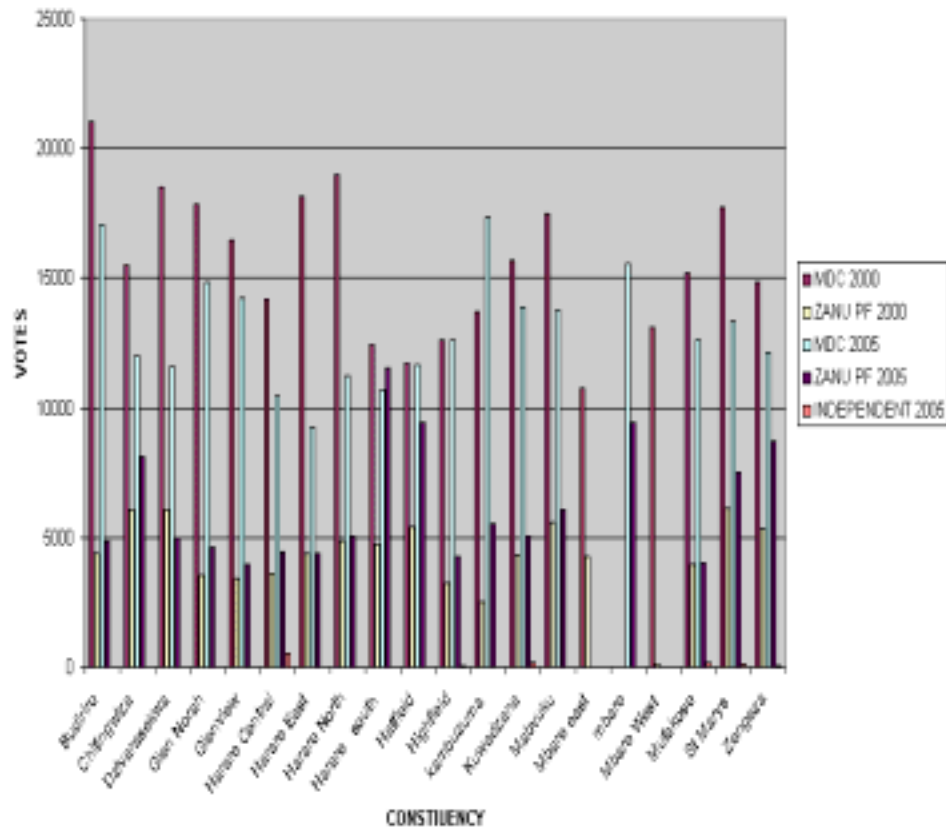
MATEBELELAND SOUTH



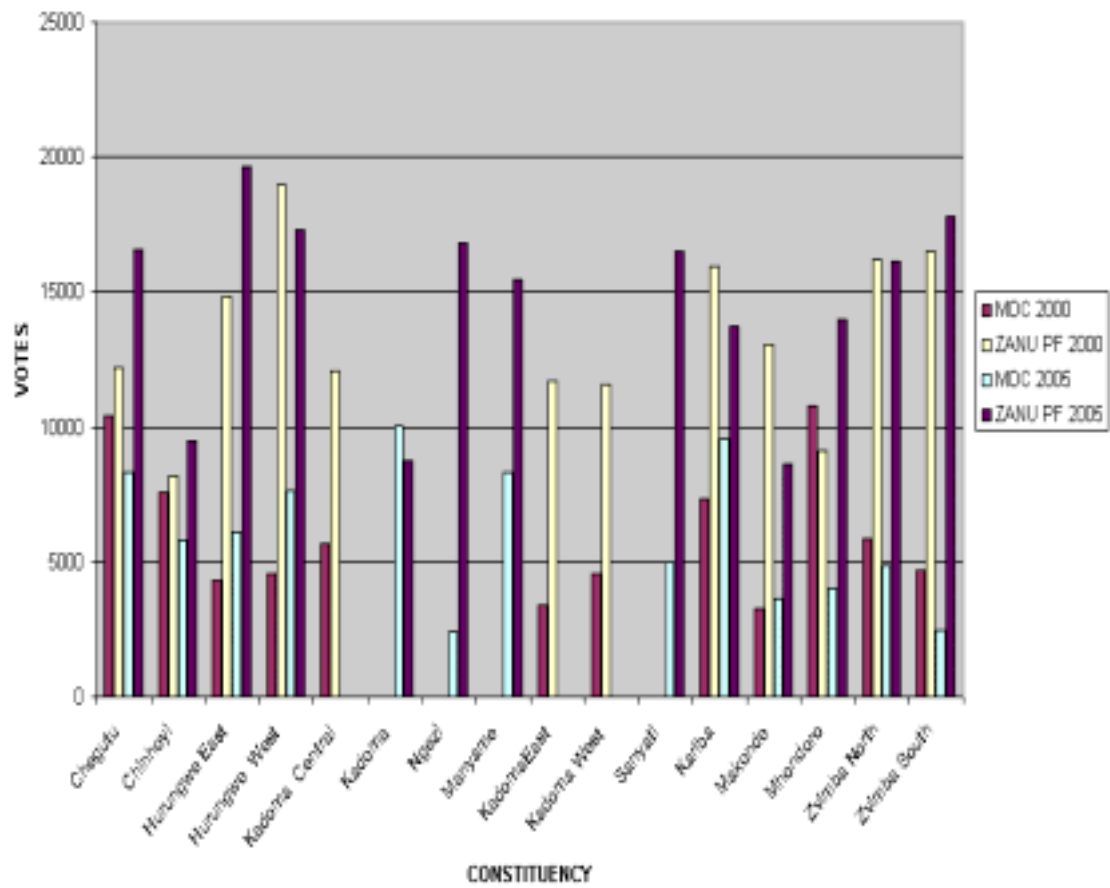


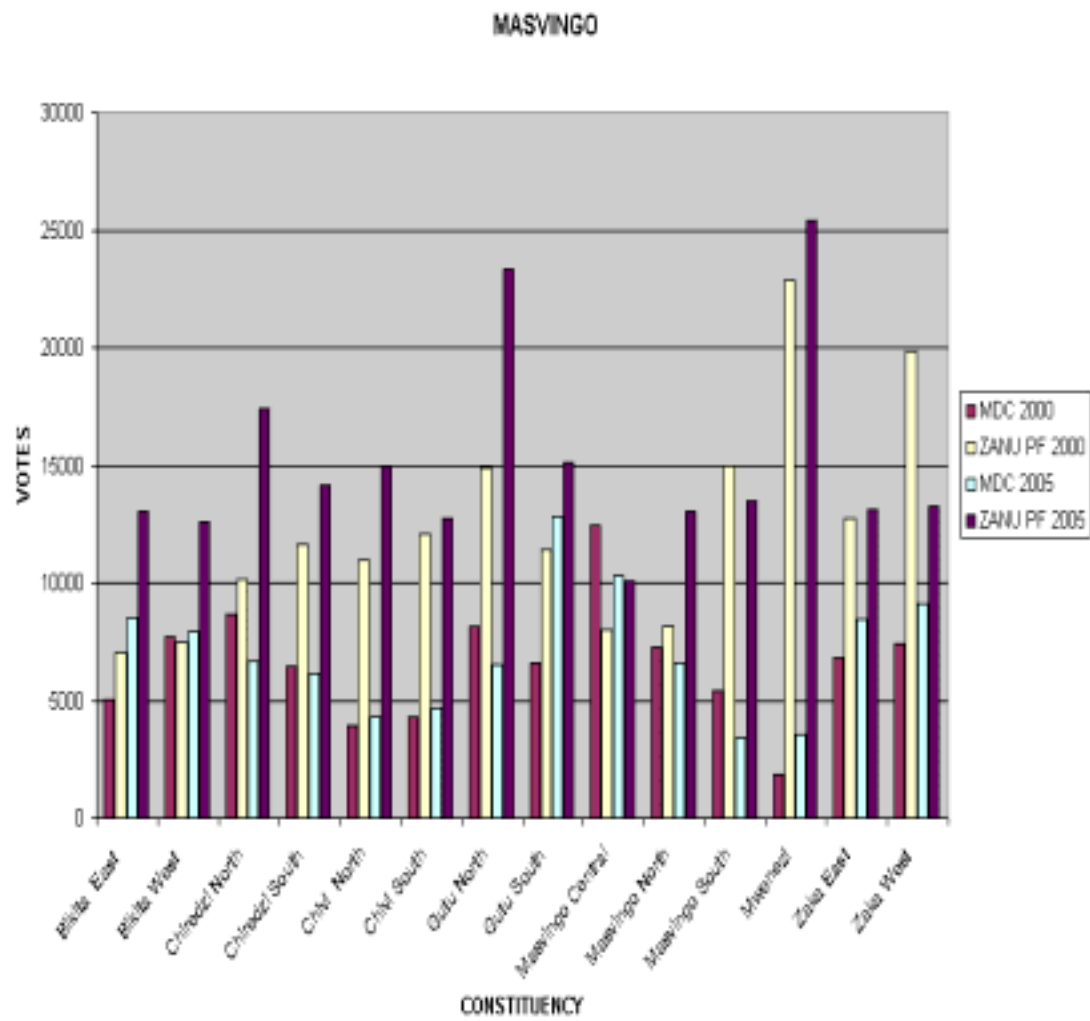


HARARE PROVINCE

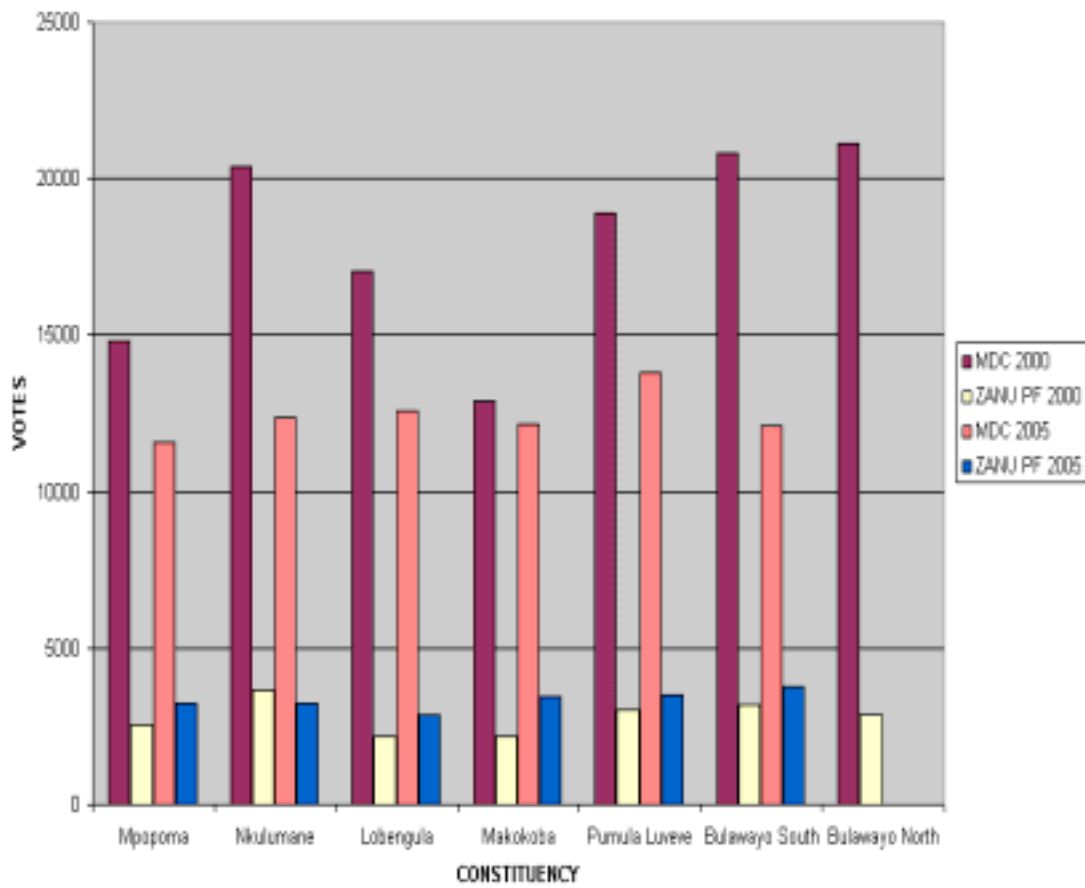


MASHONALAND WEST





BULAWAYO



ANALYSIS OF VOTES INCREASE, MDC & ZANU PF 2000 AND 2005									
2000				2005			504		
BULAWAYO PROVINCE									
Constituency	MDC	ZANU PF	MDC	ZANU PF	Z/A	margin	% Increase	MDC	ZANU PF
Mpopoma	14613	2540	11567	3228		8359	-21.79%	27.09%	
Makumane	20380	3644	12392	3243		8149	-39.30%	-17.00%	
Lobengula	17041	2197	12603	2092		9711	-26.04%	27.62%	
Makokoba	12901	2196	12135	3438		8700	-6.97%	86.96%	
Pumula-Lusave	19901	3020	13910	3527		10282	-26.94%	16.79%	
Bulawayo South	20761	3193	12120	3777		8343	-41.68%	16.72%	
Bulawayo North	21100	2864	0	0		0	0.00%	0.00%	
Bulawayo East			10804	2504		8300	0.00%	0.00%	
MANICALAND									
Bulwer South	7821	14016	13893	18066	439	1173	77.64%	7.48%	
Bulwer North	10316	13850	1514	11296	236	-10008	0.98%	88.22%	
Chimanimani	11410	8072	11031	15817	0	4786	-3.22%	95.95%	
Chipinge North	9263	3728	10920	16647	0	5727	17.63%	346.54%	
Chipinge South	3263	10245	12163	16412	0	-4249	270.48%	60.15%	
Makoni East	7391	7509	7708	9201	0	1493	-4.29%	22.63%	
Makoni West	7235	11135	7864	14436	0	6402	9.54%	29.61%	
Makoni North	4457	14835	6077	18910	0	12833	81.02%	27.47%	
Mutare Central	17706	3091	12289	5088	0	13289	-24.95%	64.81%	
Mutare North	15500	5564	11597	7066	0	4531	25.18%	26.39%	
Mutare South	7273	6673	8220	13552	0	3332	13.02%	73.12%	
Mutare West	5816	11498	7065	13216	0	6161	21.26%	14.94%	
Mutema South	0	0	9380	9715	0	336	0.00%	0.00%	
Mutema North	9279	5281	6805	10135	0	3630	-28.81%	81.81%	
Nyanga	10016	8891	9360	12603	0	3142	-6.55%	41.74%	
MASHONALAND CENTRAL									
Bendure	11257	13328	8616	21279		12663	-23.46%	79.51%	
Gurure North	2370	20513	2679	24165		21495	13.04%	17.60%	
Gurure South	3239	19988	3375	16801		13428	4.20%	-16.94%	
Mazowe East	7473	18824	7567	18041		10474	1.28%	-4.16%	
Mazowe West	7065	14024	5477	14397		8920	-22.70%	2.86%	
Mt Darwin North	2037	20629	2205	28943		26739	6.25%	40.30%	
Mt Darwin South	2295	22733	2712	29349		26837	10.17%	29.13%	
Muzarabani	3727	19441	3115	20569		17451	-16.34%	5.80%	
Pfungwe	2483	20027	2295	22494		20196	-7.45%	12.32%	
Shamva	5821	18480	4848	29287		24439	-13.75%	60.80%	
MASHONALAND EAST									
Chikomba	6776	13417	7403	17928		10525	9.25%	33.62%	
Goromonzi	9469	14459	8578	16782		6204	-9.60%	16.07%	
Hwedza	6049	18044	8317	17680		9363	37.49%	-2.02%	
Marondera East	10629	10692	10066	19182		9116	-6.60%	-7.94%	
Marondera West	4870	11221	4467	16029		11672	-2.47%	42.81%	
Mvuma (west)	0	0	3638	18547		14811	0.00%	0.00%	
Mvuma (east)	0	0	2676	19003		16327	0.00%	0.00%	
Mvuma	2371	27149	0	0		0	0.00%	0.00%	
Murewa North	4104	13694	4137	17677		13640	0.60%	29.04%	
Murewa South	4426	13895	4586	19200		14814	0.36%	36.18%	
Mvoto North	3447	17374	3782	16257		12475	84.18%	-8.43%	
Mvoto South	1177	19228	3358	19390		16032	188.30%	0.84%	
Seke	10821	9235	9863	15434		6591	-19.29%	67.05%	
UMP	2120	27748	3209	31351		29062	54.56%	12.90%	
MASHONALAND WEST									
Chegutu	10412	12169	8285	16542		8266	-20.91%	36.94%	
Chinhoyi	7602	8176	5773	9462		3889	-24.08%	16.73%	
Hurungwe East	4315	14814	6080	19670		13680	41.44%	32.78%	
Hurungwe West	4532	18591	7663	17295		9632	69.09%	-6.93%	
Kadoma Central	5666	12049	0	0		0	0.00%	0.00%	
Kadoma	0	0	10023	8740		1203	0.00%	0.00%	
Ngezi	0	0	2404	16801		14397	0.00%	0.00%	
Manyame	0	0	8312	15448		7136	0.00%	0.00%	
Kadoma East	3362	11673	0	0		0	0.00%	0.00%	
Kadoma West	4591	11573	0	0		0	0.00%	0.00%	
Sanyasi	0	0	4590	16512		11593	0.00%	0.00%	
Kariba	7332	15948	9540	13719		4179	30.11%	-13.90%	
Makonde	3294	13065	3643	8607		16144	10.60%	-34.13%	
Mhondoro	10783	9118	4015	13066		9961	-66.97%	29.63%	
Zvimba North	5872	16175	4864	16140		11308	-17.68%	-0.22%	
Zvimba South	4689	16508	2439	17797		15268	-47.98%	7.81%	
MASVINGO									
Bikita East	5015	7047	8551	13009	396	4460	70.51%	64.60%	
Bikita West	7726	7445	7935	12628		4692	0.27%	69.62%	
Chiredo North	8675	10154	8671	17385		10714	-23.10%	71.21%	
Chiredo South	6414	11611	8170	14185	778	7996	-3.80%	22.00%	
Chivi North	3938	10987	4303	14590		10696	9.28%	41.07%	
Chivi South	4312	12056	4684	12749		8065	9.63%	5.75%	
Gutu North	8179	14867	6554	23368		16614	-19.07%	67.10%	
Gutu South	6606	11434	12775	15116		2330	93.43%	32.20%	
Masvingo Central	12417	8023	10298	10103	350	196	-17.07%	26.93%	
Masvingo North	7224	8146	8694	13015		6421	-0.87%	68.77%	
Masvingo South	5444	14954	3272	13498		10128	-38.08%	-8.74%	
Mvurero	1861	23976	3549	25435		21696	90.76%	11.19%	
Zaka East	6775	12730	8462	13076		4616	24.95%	5.72%	
Zaka West	7444	19628	9126	13276		4162	22.60%	-3.30%	

MIDLANDS PROVINCE								
Chirumanz	5185	10708	4971	13373	322	8402	-4.13%	24.86%
Gokwe Central	5987	11082	0	0	0		0.00%	0.00%
Gokwe	0	0	2987	14113	0	5128	0.00%	0.00%
Gokwe Kana	0	0	6306	16568	0	10262	0.00%	0.00%
Gokwe Sengwa	0	0	9048	17922	0	8074	0.00%	0.00%
Gokwe Chinaya	0	0	8951	18111	0	9180	0.00%	0.00%
Gokwe Nemubudziye	0	0	7100	23884	0	18884	0.00%	0.00%
Gokwe East	3674	17088	0	0	0		0.00%	0.00%
Gokwe South	3615	12644	0	0	0		0.00%	0.00%
Gokwe North	3987	15923	0	0	0		0.00%	0.00%
Gokwe West	3240	14956	0	0	0		0.00%	0.00%
Gweru Rural	10190	6889	8230	11226	0	2998	-19.23%	62.86%
Gweru Urban	12172	3877	8011	5689	0	2322	-34.19%	46.74%
Kwekwe	15388	8352	12989	11124	0	1065	-15.59%	33.19%
Mberengwa East	3117	23595	2297	17915	0	15618	-2.63%	-2.41%
Mberengwa West	3899	18315	4730	17533	0	12803	21.83%	-4.27%
Mkoba	14587	4880	10181	5908	0	4583	-30.14%	16.87%
Shurugwi	6524	14891	5113	16212	0	11099	-21.63%	9.97%
Stobela	15985	5648	12293	8768	0	-3525	-23.67%	4.99%
Zombe	10757	8165	8579	14750	0	6171	-20.26%	80.66%
Zvishavane	10373	13971	8388	16311	0	7923	-19.14%	1.67%
HARARE PROVINCE								
Budiriro	21058	4410	17053	4886		12167	-19.02%	10.79%
Chitungoza	15480	6068	12024	6126		3898	-22.33%	4.74%
Dzivarasakawa	18516	8084	11817	5014		6603	-37.26%	1.76%
Glen North	17866	3517	18841	4648		10193	-16.93%	32.16%
Glenview	16670	3443	14231	3993		10238	-13.59%	1.60%
Harare Central	14207	3620	10462	4423	525	6039	-26.36%	22.10%
Harare East	18129	4391	9259	4363		4896	-48.93%	-0.64%
Harare North	18976	4852	11262	5034		6228	-40.86%	3.72%
Harare south	12430	4730	10716	11545		929	-13.79%	143.17%
Harfield	11740	5413	11652	9408		2244	-0.64%	73.80%
Highfield	12616	3234	12600	4296	88	8304	-0.13%	32.64%
Kambuzuma	13722	2542	17394	5555		11839	28.76%	21.98%
Kuwadzanga	15691	4349	13870	5034	160	8846	-13.33%	16.62%
Matvuku	17495	5572	13743	6078		7395	-20.72%	9.09%
Mbare east	10754	4265	0	0			0.00%	0.00%
mbare	0	0	15543	9418		6125	0.00%	0.00%
Mbare West	13118	122	0	0			0.00%	0.00%
Mufakose	15233	3865	12643	4016	177	8627	-17.00%	1.29%
St Marys	17740	6135	13369	7498	130	5971	-24.64%	22.22%
Zengeza	14814	5330	12129	8718	81	5971	-18.12%	63.66%
MATABELAND NORTH								
Binga	19894	2675	21906	7264	0	14642	10.11%	171.66%
Rubi Umguza	12837	6645	9502	15158	0	5656	-25.90%	129.11%
Hwange East	15271	3617	9448	8203	361	1245	-38.13%	126.79%
Hwange West	15312	2445	10415	4899	0	5518	-31.46%	100.37%
Lupane	14439	972	11749	10301	0	1448	-18.63%	959.77%
Nkayi	15601	5746	16513	7254	0	8989	5.86%	26.24%
Tsholotsho	12318	5634	6310	5648	6208	662	-49.77%	0.25%
MATEBELELAND SOUTH								
Batbridge	7686	12088	14305	6297		8008	10.14%	-18.07%
Bulima	0	0	10528	6775		3753	0.00%	0.00%
Mangwe	0	0	10145	5723		4422	0.00%	0.00%
Bulima Mangwe North	11767	8679	10528	6775		3753	-10.53%	-21.94%
Bulima Mangwe South	11761	5617	0	0			0.00%	0.00%
Gwanda North	13039	4358	0	0			0.00%	0.00%
Gwanda	0	0	10951	13109		2158	0.00%	0.00%
Gwanda south	9913	7944	0	0			0.00%	0.00%
Imatza	12049	5304	8840	12537		3697	-26.63%	136.37%
Matobo	14701	6419	9572	10074		611	-34.89%	56.94%
Umzingwane	12878	2887	13198	8754		4444	2.48%	203.22%
TOTAL								
TOTAL VOTES CAST 2000								
MDC	1152822							
ZANU PF	1215661							
TOTAL	2368488							
2005								
MDC	1049606							
ZANU PF	1537482							
INDEPENDENT	10727							
TOTAL	2598015							