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**TOPIC: FROM WAR TO PEACE: BREAKING THE CYCLE OF
 VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE**

BY: FARAI MAGUWU

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Introduction

The on-going political impasse that has reduced Zimbabwe to a pariah has got very deep roots that have been growing for the past forty-three years. Trying to explain the conflict in a narrow scope of recent political developments will only help to sustain the conflict and prolong the solution. It is therefore reasonable to understand the main actors in this conflict, investigate their beliefs, trace their political roots, and attempt to dig and expose their interests and needs, if possible. It appears Zimbabwe is a prisoner of its own history, and is firmly chained to its past that is characterized by intolerance, tribal politics, racial hatred, winner take all politics and political violence. Unless a proper diagnosis of the political cancer destroying the once prospering Zimbabwe is carried out the situation will continue to deteriorate to a near comatose state where people will think they have nothing more to lose and start another costly civil conflict.

In some countries leaders are elected because they have brilliant economic policies that promise to revive the various sectors of the economy and ensure a decent living for the citizens. Such leaders know that if they fail to deliver they can be kicked out of office, come next election. Such leaders owe their stay in power to their efficient service delivery and general support of the mass populace. They only look forward since they are under pressure to perform and continue to win the public confidence. In such democracies voters do not allow past achievements to eclipse current failures by their leaders.

That's why Tony Blair, very popular in Britain before the war on Iraq, has bowed to pressure and announced that he will be stepping down as Prime Minister in 2007.¹ In a related incident George Bush paid dearly for not listening to calls to pull out of Iraq by losing control of both the lower and upper houses. In such democracies the people have a powerful way of expressing their approval or disapproval of their leaders and governments. They reward them for good performance by returning them and punish them for bad policies by shunning them at the next polls. The mid-term elections in the United States of America are also a political barometer to test whether the leaders and the people are still moving in the same direction. This ensures that conflict is managed to a large extent by the ballot.

This is a completely different scenario when it comes to Zimbabwe where the current crop of leaders has one thing to talk about when appealing for votes – the liberation war. Even when their policies are a disaster they continue to appeal to the past for their political survival. Consequently government policies are inconsistent, there seems to be no agreed vision of the future, there is no democratic space for those who did not actively participate in the war and the economy is in serious recession due to corruption, bad planning and international isolation.

¹ Jim Lehrer, The online news hour, 7 September 2006, retrieved on 25 November 2006 from www.pbs.org/newshour

This paper attempts to investigate the root causes of the current socio economic challenges that are confronting Zimbabwe and affecting the entire Southern African Development Community. The paper begins by discussing how the current crop of the Zimbabwean political leadership emerged, their history, ideology and weaknesses of having war leaders in civilian offices. This is followed by a reflection on lessons that can be learnt from other states that emerged out of war to curve out peaceful states. A peace theory will be applied in an effort to guide the road to lasting peace in Zimbabwe. And finally the paper ends with general conclusion and recommendations.

War leaders in civilian offices.

Zimbabwe attained 'independence' in 1980 after a protracted armed war that left tens of thousands dead and many more thousands internally displaced, brutalized and maimed. The struggle for independence started in the fifties with formation of the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC) as an African nationalist party fighting for a non-violent political change and majority rule under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo. When ANC was banned the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) was formed. Soon ZAPU split over ideological differences within the party leadership, with a predominantly Shona speaking group under the leadership of Ndabaningi Sithole forming the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) whilst Joshua Nkomo formed the ZAPU-PCC (People's Caretaker Council)

Soon ZANU replaced ZAPU as the leading liberation movement in Zimbabwe. The rise of ZANU is attributed to two factors. First, ZANU exploited the tribal differences between the Ndebele and the Shona that dates back to the 19th century when the Ndebele arrived in present day Zimbabwe and constantly raided the Shona for cattle and women. This means ZANU gained popularity in the Shona speaking areas of Zimbabwe partly due to the tribal identity of most of its leaders. They exploited the historical conflict between the Ndebele and the Shona to win over the Shona to their side. ZANU has also maintained the Ndebele/Shona conflict for obvious political reasons.

After independence in 1980, when PF ZAPU continued its dominance in Matebeleland and the Midlands provinces, Zimbabwe was again plagued by a bloody ethnic conflict that claimed anything between 10 000 and 30 000 civilians. The government justifies the atrocities as a worth exercise to quell dissident activities in the two provinces. 'The ultimate goal, however, was to eliminate the opposition ZAPU party whose stronghold was in the targeted region', argued Brian Abrams.² The atrocities were part of the unfinished business of the early 1960s when the two parties tried to destroy each other by violent means. Now that ZANU had the state apparatus at its disposal, with its own former combatants in powerful civilian offices, the time had come to wipe out ZAPU from the face of the earth.

Secondly, the birth of ZANU in August 1963 marked a major paradigm shift in the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. As soon as ZANU established its command structures it exploded the violent liberation struggle that culminated in the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980. In 1964 ZANU started recruiting militants and politicizing rural people, using force when necessary.³ The use of force was used as both a means of recruiting guerrilla fighters and enlisting the support of the masses, especially towards the 1980 general election. Those civilians who did not support ZANU were labeled 'vatengeshi', meaning sell-outs and were in most cases brutally slain by the guerrilla fighters. In ZANU controlled areas there was no room to belong to another liberation

²Brian Eric Abrams, 2006, Strategy of Domination: ZANU PF'S USE OF ETHNIC CONFLICT AS A MEANS OF MAINTAINING POLITICAL CONTROL IN ZIMBABWE, 1982 –2006, , The Fletcher School, Tufts University, www.fletcher.tufts.edu

³ Eric Young, 7 march 2002, Race and History, Zimbabwe, www.raceandhistory.com

movement. Girls were forcibly taken away, ostensibly to cook for the fighters,⁴ and were gang-raped and abducted as sex slaves for a prolonged period. People were forced to attend ZANU all-night vigils, forced to shout ZANU slogans and sing revolutionary songs in praise of ZANU leaders.

Political Ideology

From its new base in Mozambique, opened after the attainment of independence by Mozambique in 1975, ZANU officially adopted Marxism-Leninism as its ideology.⁵ Henceforth ZANU adopted the *Gukurahundi* policy (meaning the early strong rain that washes away the chaff before the spring rains, or the storm that destroys everything) in executing the war. According to Masipula Sithole ZANU declared 1977 as “‘The year of Gukurahundi’”, presaging the destruction of the white settler regime, the internal settlement puppets and, finally, the capitalist system.’⁶ The term Gukurahundi was also the code name used during the government atrocities committed in the Midlands and Matebeleland provinces between 1982 and 1988. John Makumbe and Masipula Sithole describe the Gukurahundi policy as ‘an undisguised, intolerant, commandist and deliberately violent policy towards the opposition.’⁷

This ideology had far reaching consequences for post-independent Zimbabwe. The spirit of Gukurahundi swept President Robert Mugabe and his ruling ZANU PF to power in the February 1980 general election. The Gukurahundi threats have often been issued and executed ruthlessly on ZANU PF opponents. Zimbabwe has experienced political violence in nearly all the parliamentary and presidential elections held since independence in 1980, with only one exception, the 2005 parliamentary election. It seems obvious that whenever there is a stiff electoral race ZANU PF unleashes a reign of terror to maintain its grip on power. This is well argued by Asher Arian who observed that ‘a habit of confrontation is perhaps as difficult to give up as any other habit’ adding that ‘the ways of peace are difficult for those disciplined in war.’⁸ Whilst physical violence has remarkably declined in the past two years there is overwhelming evidence that the government continues to train youth militias who often operate as quasi-military units in ZANU PF service during election times. This means the likelihood of a massive blood bath is very high given the general dissatisfaction and discontentment among Zimbabweans today. As the struggle to remove ZANU PF from power gathers

⁴ In Kadzere Village in Mudzindiko Kraal, one girl was forcibly taken away by the guerrilla fighters amidst a fierce protest from her sister. The guerrilla fighters returned the following day to pick up the elder sister and tortured her for many days till she died. This story is just one of several cases where the guerrilla fighters caused terror in rural Zimbabwe. Consequently no one could question them even in cases where they abducted married women and gang-raped them.

⁵ Masipula Sithole, (1997) Zimbabwe’s Eroding Authoritarianism, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 8 Number 1, January 1997, p132

⁶ Ibid p132

⁷ Makumbe J and Sithole M, Elections in Zimbabwe: The ZANU (PF) Hegemony and its Incipient decline, *African Journal of Political Science*, Volume 2 Number 1, pages 122 –139, www.digital.lib.msu.edu

⁸ Arian Asher, 1996, *Security Threatened: Surveying the Israeli Opinion on Peace and War*, Oxford University Press, New York, P4

momentum so is the likelihood of a return to political violence as this has been ZANU PF's method of dealing with opponents.

The current crop of Zimbabwe's leaders has no democratic foundation in the first place. They owe their political fortunes to their role in the anti-colonial war, and not to sound policies or anything persuasive to the voter. This is probably why the Zimbabwean leaders do not resign even after serious failures in their policies. Rather, when faced with stiff electoral competition, they threaten to 'go back to the bush' if they lose. This was shaped by their war experiences, which underpinned victory over the enemy by whatever means. There was no room for defeat or anything less than outright victory. Violence brought ZANU PF to power and violence has sustained ZANU PF's grip on power.

Colonial Legacy

One critic said Zimbabwe's liberation war was not a revolution but a rebellion. The argument is that the end of the colonial era did not change much for the ordinary people. What changed was the leadership but the state structures remained unchanged. To a large extent the new black government took a form that was no different from the one they inherited from the colonial regime. For instance laws such as the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) that were enacted to suppress nationalism in Zimbabwe was kept in place until 1990. The law was reintroduced in 2001 as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) to suppress the growing opposition to ZANU PF.

To understand ZANU PF one has to understand how the party inherited power and from what nature of regime. The colonial regime that ended in 1980 was to all intents and purposes undemocratic and extremely repressive. Ian Smith is on record swearing that there will be no majority rule during his lifetime, not even in a thousand years. He refused dialogue with Black nationalists, arguing that he could not negotiate with terrorists. He transformed the internal conflict to give it an international outlook by claiming that he was fighting communist terrorists. To him the conflict was between capitalism and communism, between Christianity and atheism, and finally between western civilization and eastern primitivism. He played the politics of denial, refuting that blacks wanted self-rule and were disgruntled by the segregationist policies of his regime. He even claimed to have the 'happiest Africans on the continent'.

There was no room for political competition for blacks. Laws were enacted to suppress dissent. It is a paradox that the colonial regime whose architects were British nationals and whose political roots were deeply entrenched in the British system of democratic governance, never allowed Africans to exercise their democratic rights to vote. This is articulated by Mair and Sithole who observed that:

‘Colonial authoritarianism, far from deepening a commitment to democratic norms and practices on the African nationalist elite, merely consolidated an incipient authoritarian psyche in the nationalist leadership. The authoritarianism of the colonial era reproduced itself within the nationalist political movement.’⁹

Brian Job posits that in developing countries coercive capacity is centralized to a substantive degree. He argues that this accumulation of crude force by the postcolonial state apparatus is built upon the instruments of repression constructed by colonial powers and perfected by the native successors.¹⁰ The crude manner in which the Rhodesian government treated the guerrilla movements of ZANU and ZAPU is the same manner ZANU PF is treating the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. The government claims there is no conflict in Zimbabwe but rather the conflict is between Zimbabwe and Britain, between independent black Africa and western imperialists. The government does not want to come face to face with its own people’s grievances and discontentment over the lack of democratic space, failed policies and corruption by the ruling elite.

In most cases elections are the measure for democracy. ZANU PF claims the people of Zimbabwe are mandating them to rule at each election conducted after 1980 despite the widely condemned electoral rules and the uneven playing field in the politics of Zimbabwe. This can be viewed as a colonial heritage that has been perfected by ZANU PF. When under pressure to accept majority rule in 1979, Ian Smith, the Rhodesian Prime Minister hurriedly conducted an election that was boycotted by the country’s main liberation movements, ZANU and ZAPU. He used the election to legitimize his rule and win international recognition.

The 1979 election could not be considered free and fair since it was marred by low voter turn out. Smith feared a one-man one-vote election would dethrone him since he relied heavily upon the white minority community. Now ZANU PF has disenfranchised Zimbabweans who have fled the country due to the economic hardships the country is experiencing and has limited the vote only to those resident in the country.¹¹ Only Zimbabweans on government service abroad such as diplomats, soldiers on foreign missions and police are allowed to send their votes from outside the country. These are government loyalists in most cases and furthermore, the postal votes are not monitored by any local or foreign observer. New laws have been passed that make it a crime to hold two citizenships or holding a foreign passport. This has an effect of reducing the number of people eligible to vote. Those most affected by these laws are white Zimbabweans and educated or skilled Zimbabweans who travel abroad and who have been known to form the MDC support base.

⁹ Mair, Stefan and Sithole, Masipula, 2002, Blocked Democracies in Africa: Case Study of Zimbabwe, Harare, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

¹⁰ Brian L. Bob 1992: The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States, Lynne Rienner Publishers, USA

¹¹ It is estimated that between 4 and 5 million Zimbabweans have left Zimbabwe in the past 6 years. Major destinations for Zimbabwe’s economic refugees are South Africa, Botswana, Britain, America and Australia.

Thus the new Zimbabwean leaders have not deviated from the system of governance established by the colonial regime. Whilst in public they present themselves as heroes who brought independence and ended colonial rule, the reality is they maintained the same repressive machinery used against them by the colonial regime. Now there is talk of the second liberation of Zimbabwe after the realization that Zimbabweans are worse off now than what they were 50 years ago.

However, despite its violent history, Zimbabwe can still learn from other states that emerged out of violent conflicts and managed to put their past behind and together worked out a shared vision for a peaceful future. Zimbabweans are now aware of the nexus between political instability and economic decline. It is in the best interest of Zimbabwe that a lasting peace is found for it to regain its status of the breadbasket of Africa.

Lessons from other states

The American Civil War

Between 1861 and 1865 America was embroiled in a bitter civil war between the United States Federal Government (The Union) and eleven Southern slave states that declared their secession and formed the Confederate States of America, under the leadership of Jefferson Davis. The Union, led by Abraham Lincoln, and the Republican Party were opposed to the continuation of slavery and therefore opposed the right of secession. A year after the commencement of the war, in September 1862, Abraham Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation** that made the freeing of slaves the main goal of the war. The emancipation proclamation meant that Britain and France, also proponents of the abolition of slavery, would not help the confederacy. It also gave the Union an opportunity to recruit slaves into their force. The fighting ended with the surrender of the Confederate States. It is estimated that some 650 000 men died during the war

However, the lesson to be learnt about the American civil war is not the war itself but what happened after the war. They entered the reconstruction phase. "The northerners leaders agreed that victory would require more than the end of fighting."¹² By the 1890s, veterans of the war in both the north and south had reconciled and were holding joint reunions.¹³ Reconstruction, which began early in the war and ended in 1877, brought several changes to federal and state policies. The constitution was amended to lawfully abolish slavery, extend federal legal protections to all citizens irrespective of race and abolished racial restrictions on voting.

Towards Human Security

The end of the war shifted attention from the war to the concept of human security in the United States of America. The reconstruction exercise laid the foundation upon which the

¹² The American Civil War, www.en.wikipedia.org

¹³ Ibid

United States democracy is built. The civil war, in the words of President Abraham Lincoln, brought to America 'a new birth of freedom'. Although Abraham Lincoln's original goal was not to stop slavery, but to hold the union together, he found himself speaking the same language of freedom and emancipation with the blacks. By the end of the war about 200 000 black soldiers had served in the Union army and navy, laying a firm foundation for their claim to citizenship. Consequently, blacks began to demand equality before the law, land of their own, educational rights and equal access to schools, transportation and many other freedoms that were limited to the white community only. Blacks began to feel that they had a stake in America.

In 1865, Congress established the Freedman's Saving and Trust Company as a corporation to encourage thrift among the former slaves. Black individuals, families, church groups, fraternal orders, and civic organizations deposited nearly two million dollars in branch banks located throughout the South.¹⁴ Economic security was one of the main goals of reconstruction. After a civil war the government must ensure that its citizens are well catered for lest they are motivated to return to violence.

Caroline Guinard posits that democracy, equality and welfare state are central to reconstruction:

'One of the most fundamental issues which promotes reconciliation and peace after an intra-State conflict is to recognize, within the peace agreement, the State or government's liability for promotion of economic and social development at all levels of the country. This is one of the main State prerogatives when we consider that a State should play a welfare role. Most modern democracies have chosen to give this role to the State. Usually after an intra-State conflict, mediators and parties ask for implementation of a democratic system and consequently want this issue to be taken into account in the new State organization.'¹⁵

Although it took time before America could live out the full meaning of the emancipation proclamation, there is no doubt that the reconstruction period was an exciting phase in America's transformation to democracy.

Mozambique: From civil war to peace and development

The Mozambican civil war started after independence from Portugal in 1975. The war was fought between the ruling Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and the Mozambique Resistance Movement (RENAMO). Over five million civilians were displaced, 900 000 are thought to have died in fighting and from starvation and many were made amputees by landmines.¹⁶

When Mozambique became independent in 1975, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and its military wing the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) established their base in Mozambique and began to attack the Rhodesian Front

¹⁴ The Meaning of Freedom: Black and White Responses to the End of Slavery: America's Reconstruction: People and Politics after the Civil War, www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

¹⁵ Guinard Caroline, 2002, From War to Peace, Lessons Learned from achievements and failures in Peace Agreements over the Past decade: A Strategy for Peace Process Optimization, Nonviolence International, Bangkok, SIAM

¹⁶ wikipedia, Mozambican civil war, [en/wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

from Mozambique. The white minority regime in Rhodesia responded by forming RENAMO to counter both the new Mozambican government and ZANLA forces operating from Mozambique. Rhodesia financed RENAMO. However, when Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization transferred the control of RENAMO to the south African Apartheid regime that was opposed to the new Mozambican government for its commitment to the total liberation of Africa and Southern Africa in particular. The war raged on as long as the Apartheid regime in South Africa was in control.

In an effort to curtail South Africa's assistance to RENAMO, Mozambique entered negotiations with South Africa in 1983, resulting in a non-aggression pact in 1984. They agreed not support each other's opposition movements. However South Africa continued to support RENAMO. South Africa is accused of killing the Mozambican President Samora Machel in October 1986. As curtain came down on the Apartheid regime in the late 1990s and with the election of moderate FW De Klerk as the last Apartheid president of South Africa, peace in Mozambique looked realistic and imminent. De Klerk, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and other regional leaders started urging the warring parties to talk and end hostilities. FRELIMO and RENAMO leaders signed a peace agreement in October 1992 and in December 1992 the United Nations began deploying 7500 troops for the UN operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ), and in October 1994 democratic elections were held in Mozambique for the first time in many years.

Despite the peace accord of 1992, more needed to be done for ordinary people to enjoy the peace dividends. Caroline Guinard noted that five years after the Peace Agreement was signed, it seemed there were signs of reconciliation at the national level where parliamentarians could argue issues in a democratic manner.¹⁷ She however noted that at the local level there was still profound unrest and intermittent violence that threatened the fragile peace. There was need to consolidate peace at all levels of society and in all geographical zones of Mozambique, particularly rural areas.

Because the government did not take a leading role in consolidating peace, the civilian population began to take initiative, bolstered by the peace agreement. Civilians began organizing rituals to '*appease the spirit*' as a traditional mechanism of redressing wrongs of the past. Purification ceremonies were organized to reintegrate child soldiers who had escaped from rebel factions. Trauma in many parts of Africa is regarded as a family and community problem so the ceremonies were meant to serve as a break from the past and a commitment to move to a new and peaceful future.

The economy of Mozambique has been on an upward trend since the Peace Agreement in 1992,. The country's gross domestic product grew by 7.5 per cent between 1996 and 2001. Mozambique managed to make early progress in public expenditure reform with the result that resources have shifted increasingly to essential pro-poor services. Consequently, because of the country's commitment to good governance fighting poverty, the World Bank and IMF declared in 1998 that Mozambique was eligible for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative in 1998.

¹⁷ Caroline Guinard, op cit, p113

In June 1999, some \$1.7 billion of Mozambique's debt was waived. In December 2005 the IMF announced that it was granting 100% debt relief to Mozambique, alongside 18 other countries. The international support to Mozambique is meant to support the country's government in its commitment to promote good governance and poverty alleviation. The voluntary retirement of the former Mozambique president Joaquim Chissano in 2005 further increased the confidence of the international community in Mozambique's democratic structures..

Peace Methodology

According to Brian Job, ignoring the role of the state in peace making in the third world states is equal to leaving out a very key and central player in third world politics.¹⁸ He argues that the third world state has two forms of security that must be considered. The two are national security and regime security. These two have become the main reason for massive acquisition of small arms and light weapons in third world countries. The state constantly claims that there are enemies out there intending to destroy it and hence there is need to protect the national borders against the foes. If there is no real enemy or a perceived enemy, the third world state is bound to create one and cause fear within its borders so as to bind the nation together through the nationalistic rhetoric.

The concept of national or state security usually refers to the protection of the core values of the state, particularly its political sovereignty and territorial integrity. These core values should not be imposed upon the people, but rather must be gradually developed as part of shared history and some form of national vision. There must be some coherence between the state institutions and the people. If the state protects these values in the genuine interest of the general population it will receive support from the people. However, third world regimes have narrowed the interests of the state to the shallow scope of the interests of the ruling elite. This creates disengagement among the citizenry who may argue that the government is abusing the people in the name of national interests and state security.

The second form of security haunting third world states in general and Zimbabwe in particular is regime security. Regime security is primarily all about the survival of the present regime, not the state. Regime security is defined by Brian Job as "the ability of the government of the day, the ruling group or elite, to successfully manage and overcome the problems of governance while maintaining the continuity of its authority and hold on power."¹⁹

Barry Buzan also adds that

"Weak states have as their principal distinguishing feature...their high level of concern with domestically generated threats to the security of the government...Weak states either do not have, or have failed to

¹⁸ Job Brian, 1992, *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, p144

¹⁹ Ibid, p144

create, a domestic political and social consensus of sufficient strength to eliminate the large-scale use of force as a major and continuing element in the domestic political life of the nation.”²⁰

The biggest threat to the state is no longer external but rather internal, it’s no longer a threat from another state but a threat from its own citizens who may want to change the government for its failed policies. The state that was created through revolutionary means is likely to continue to use the revolution as its prime object of identity. For this reason, despite the worsening of poverty in many parts of Africa, governments continue to purchase military hardware in enormous volumes ostensibly for the security of the state and government.

Brian Job also noted that even if the regime is committed to the goal of national economic and social development, it may not match it with political liberalization and reform, because it might see its own survival as an important precondition for successful national development.²¹ Brian Job further adds the complexity of external interactions between citizens and the western democracies where legitimacy is key to recognition. Due to increased communications and cultural exchanges third world states are now under pressure from citizens who are demanding liberal democratic structures alongside the western models. This has resulted in states tightening security systems within the state so as to suppress popular uprising.

Given the centrality of the state in third world politics, it is difficult to exclude the state from finding a lasting solution to violence that is largely committed by the state. There is therefore need to involve the state in the transformation from violence to peace. Brian Job says it is very crucial to help strengthen indigenous structures that guarantee legitimacy in third world states. The state, in his view, must be a partner in the peace making process, as it is also a victim of international power dynamics that create destabilization in developing countries. This echoed by Caroline Guinard who posited that one of the most fundamental issues is to recognize...the state or government’s liability for promotion of economic and social development at all levels of the country.²² She further submits that since at the national level the government or ruling authorities will be involved in the conflict, there is need to include them in the peace talks.

Having concurred with Brian Job on the centrality of the state in both creation and resolution of the conflict, Caroline Guinard goes on to suggest steps that can be taken to resolve the conflict:

Pre-negotiation Agreements: To talk about talks

There is need to understand the parties in the conflict and their grievances before anything is done. Conflict mapping will help to identify whom to bring to the negotiating table and helps the peacemaker to formulate strategies that will likely meet the needs of the conflicting parties. She noted that in some instances the government might apply a

²⁰ Buzan, Barry, *People, States and Fear*, cited by Brian Job, op cit, p21

²¹ Ibid, p144

²² Caroline Guinard, op cit, p74

dictatorial police over its own people and terrorize them in addition to forbidding all kinds of freedom including civil and political freedoms. She also observed that in some cases the opposition may be composed of many different groups, which basically have the same goal, but act in dissimilar ways of follow other political principles. This observation underscores the challenges in Zimbabwe where the ruling party uses the army and police to crush any form of opposition to it. There is no distinction between the ruling party and the state and government. On the other hand the opposition Movement for Democratic Change is riddled by internal contradictions emanating from the incoherence of the various interest groups that characterize it.

Caroline Guinard also said in each intra-state conflict, there will be many international parties involved, at different levels of the intra-state conflict, and the peace process in itself.²³ She argues that the principal participant at this level may be the United Nations, which has the mandate to protect and foster international peace and global security. The United Nations may be assisted by a regional state perceived to be neutral in resolving the conflict. The third actor may be an international institution such as the African Union or Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

Whilst the Zimbabwe government has said it welcomes the efforts by Pan African Institutions in resolving the country's political crises, it has constantly rebuffed efforts by the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan to end the crises. The government accuses the United Nations of reflecting western views on Zimbabwe. This was worsened by the damning report by the United Nations Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issues, Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka on the controversial urban house demolition exercise carried by the government in 2005. Tibaijuka . The Zimbabwe government refused to accept the report and further rejected a UN aid to help build houses for the affected families. They argued that the report was part of the western agenda of effecting regime change in Zimbabwe.

This means the United Nations may have to rely on regional and continental Pan African institutions in resolving the Zimbabwe crises. However the availability of regional and international players alone does not guarantee success in peace making. At times, like in the case of Zimbabwe, the government has constantly refused to sit on the table with the opposition MDC. To overcome this obstacle, argues Caroline Guinard, a high quality mediator must be selected by the negotiating parties and be present from the beginning of the process.²⁴

At the beginning of the rounds of talks there is need to determine the nature of the whole crisis in all its aspects. The historical background of the conflict must be known, the geopolitical factors must be understood by all the parties. Caroline Guinard observed that external decolonization is usually followed by internal colonization of the newly independent state by the dominant national group. This is probably the root cause of Zimbabwe's political crises as majority of ordinary people perceive the ruling ZANU PF as a turncoat of the Rhodesian government. Many feel ZANU PF is has created an elite

²³ Ibid, p21

²⁴ Ibid, p32

government that that is denying the ordinary people the right to participate in the country's political life. This is worsened by the government's refusal to acknowledge the opposition MDC as a genuine Zimbabwean political party fighting for political power within the rule of law. The government and the ruling ZANU PF constantly refuse to acknowledge the existence of the MDC, preferring to label it a British puppet party despite it filling one third of parliamentary seats.

Caroline Guinard says in such circumstances balanced power-sharing between government and opposition is key to peace settlement:

"Therefore, in the political-solution negotiation phase, the substantive issue will be to obtain an accord from all parties on a new state power organization. Parties to the conflict will discuss how they should share executive and legislative power, and at what level and degree of participation, in order to create a new government. The goal of such negotiations is to build a balanced power sharing system between the ...government and the opposition".²⁵

Given the high level of intolerance prevailing in Zimbabwe today and the military strength of the government compared to opposition which is calling for a non violent and peaceful democratic change, it is clear that a power sharing deal can be the starting point. Power sharing will save the face of government that may be struggling to accept that its social capital has declined significantly since independence. The government can take the opposition on board without necessarily conceding defeat.

Guinard argues that civil society must play a leading role in bringing together the government and the opposition. She also argues that women must be given a crucial role in the peace process since they are naturally good peacemakers. To her, leaving out women and religious organizations is fatal mistake that can limit the impact the whole exercise. However Guinard also pointed out that where civil society is non-existent, lacks financial resources or is not respected by the government, then a mediator has to be found who is accepted by both parties.

Guinard argues that the peace agreement must include a socio-economic obligation on the state to promote the welfare of all its citizens. She noted that most of the conflicts are caused poor living conditions and the hence the solution is also partly a broad program of fighting poverty in all its forms and manifestations. This must be done through democratic participation at grassroots level and through wide consultation with the citizenry on policy issues. This dispels mistrust and hostility towards the citizens who may feel they having no ownership of their country. The government must give priority to the neediest sectors of society and the most disadvantaged areas of the country. Economic justice helps alleviate structural violence through providing people with the basic needs of life and creating an enabling environment where ordinary people can pursue their dreams and aspiration without hindrance.

In addition to economic justice, argues Guinard, the new agreement must also put emphasis on the prosecution of perpetrators of violence and all parties must make a

²⁵ Ibid, p67

commitment to protect human rights.²⁶ The precondition for the prosecution of human rights violators must be the improvement of the independence, and effectiveness, of the judicial system. Only when human rights are protected can a nation's citizenry freely participate in decision making processes. Perhaps a commitment to the protection of human rights is the surest sign to the citizens that they can now democratically participate in decision making without being victimized. When human rights perpetrators are punished by the independent judiciary there is a growth of trust between the government and the citizenry. This can be the turning point that leads to lasting peace.

Conclusions and recommendations

There is no doubt that Zimbabwe needs a negotiated settlement to rescue itself from the multiplicity of maladies that plague it today. It is case of history repeating itself. Just as the white settler regime finally agreed to the negotiated peace talks at Lancaster House in 1979, it seems likely that the only way to rescue Zimbabwe from a similar but less violent conflict is through dialogue. . However the circumstances have greatly changed as the convener of the Lancaster House talks, Britain, considered neutral in 1979, is now being accused by the ZANU PF government of trying to effect regime change in Zimbabwe. Finding a neutral mediator may then be a big challenge.

This calls for civil society in Zimbabwe to play a mediator's role in the peace talks. Whilst some members of Christian churches have tried to bring the rival political parties to the table, it is important to note that some of the most prominent Christian leaders have remained silent about the crises. For instance the leader of the biggest Pentecostal denomination in Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), Apostle Ezekiel Guti, has remained quiet regarding this crises. Guti is respected by many Zimbabweans for establishing a church whose membership is estimated at above two million. He is also a very elderly citizen whose wisdom and advice is valued by many people. There are also several influential Catholic Bishops who haven't spoken much about the on-going conflict. Andrew Wutawunashe, founder and President of the second largest Pentecostal church in Zimbabwe, The Family of God, has also played a peripheral role in the peace process. If these highly influential leaders join the peace process they will add weight to the whole process.

This doesn't undermine the work done by other clergy who have sharply rebuked the government for its bad human rights record. The argument is that while others point out to the government weaknesses and failures, others must try and engage the government in dialogue that rescues the nation from the present hardships.

Negotiation in the Zimbabwe case must focus on a power-sharing deal, or the formation of a government of national unity. This will form the beginning of the transition to democratic elections where the conditions of conducting the election will be agreed upon by both parties. This will also help solve the question of legitimacy that has created the political crises that have continued for six years on end. Negotiation will also reconcile

²⁶ Ibid, pages 79-82

the government and its people who accuse it of stealing the vote and mismanaging the economy.

The government must also show commitment to create an independent and effective judiciary . The country has experienced a lot of human rights abuses since independence. Majority of the perpetrators are still free, despite overwhelming evidence against them. The Presidential amnesty given to perpetrators of human rights abuses between 2000 and 2002 must be revoked. A truth and reconciliation commission must be set up to investigate the nature of the violations.

Offensive draconian laws such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Public Order and Security Act must be repealed as they give ZANU PF an unfair advantage over opposition political parties in addition to closing democratic space for dissenting civil society. The government must start wide consultations with its citizens on how to move forward. It is amazing that Zimbabweans are willing to help the government out of the political crises but the government has not yet demonstrated the political will to engage civil society in constructive dialogue. So far civic leaders who have contacts with the government are those praise singers who see nothing wrong about the current situation. They speak the political language of the government that is characterized by hate and denial that a crisis exists in Zimbabwe.

The economic challenges confronting Zimbabwe today must be addressed urgently as part of the peace road map. Genuine peace cannot come when citizens are constantly complaining about the shortage of basic commodities. The government must reform its policies and allow the economy to grow without political hindrances. Government ministries must allow market forces to determine prizes and minimize the role of the government in the economy.²⁷

Furthermore, the government must immediately stop the farm seizures ensure that commercial farms are in the hands of capable farmers irrespective of race and gender. The manner in which the government attempted to correct the land imbalances was done in a partisan way and left millions of Zimbabweans bitter. The government must acknowledge that the fast track land reform benefited to a very large extend ZANU PF supporters and officials as the exercise was carried out within the context of defeating the opposition MDC during the 2000 general and 2002 presidential elections. The violence that characterized the exercise further made the whole thing a political issue and yet the land is a national heritage of all Zimbabweans. Thus the land issue is far from solved and stakeholders must find a lasting solution to the land question prevent a situation where future generations will fight over the same issue. The government has already admitted

²⁷ On the 24th of November 2007 a Harare magistrate jailed for four months two directors of the country's biggest bakery, Lobels Brothers, for hiking the prize of bread without government approval. Government accused the Directors of sabotaging the economy and working in cahoots with its enemies whom they accuse of trying to effect regime change in Zimbabwe. This is despite the official statistics which put Zimbabwe's inflation rate at 1070%. Critics view the sentence as an extreme act of arbitrary government interference in the running of economy.

that the fast track land reform was conducted in a haphazard manner. There is need to correct this misnomer urgently.

Finally a peace agreement where all parties make a firm commitment to peace is necessary. This must be supported by institutions that support peace and democracy. Zimbabwe needs a shared national vision that encompass a bright future and peaceful coexistence. Leaders, in particular the government, must take a leading role in educating the nation about this national vision. Not only does the government have the obligation to teach the nation about peace, it must lead by example. Government officials who seek votes must behave in a responsible manner when campaigning. The war rhetoric must be abandoned as it has proved to be inflammatory in all its forms and practices.

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