



**ZIMBABWE
PEACE
PROJECT**



TELLICOMP

Independently monitoring the constitution making process

Harare/Bulawayo Report

Shadowing the Outreach process

Overview

This report focuses on constitution outreach consultations in the two provinces of Harare and Bulawayo, activities that were suspended when the outreach programme kicked off on 23 June out of fear that the World Cup matches that had started in South Africa on 11 June may reduce attendance of outreach meetings in the two metropolitan provinces.

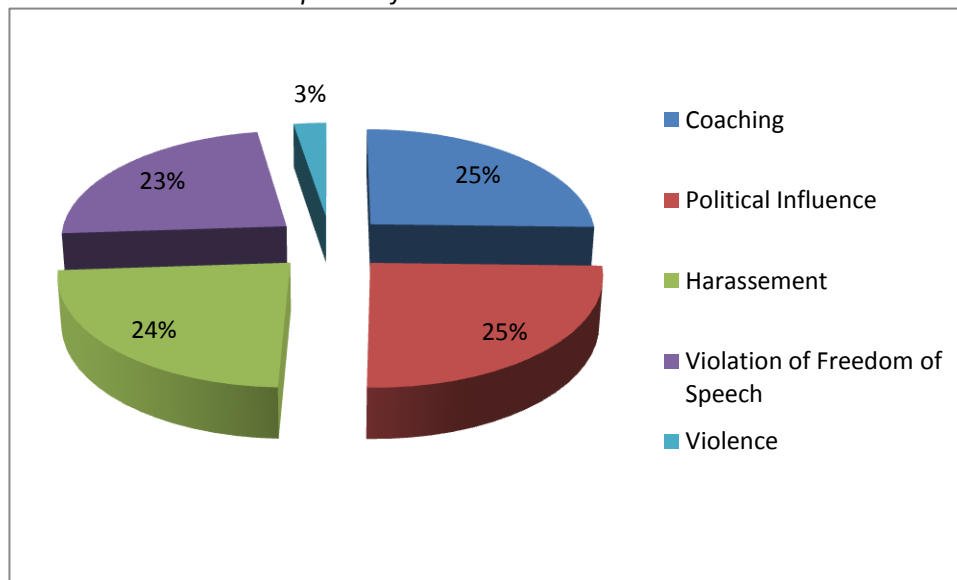
While constitution outreach consultations in Bulawayo went ahead as planned under relatively peaceful and inclusive circumstances though with a few isolated chaotic incidents, those in Harare had to be abandoned midstream as deep-seated inter-party violence reared its disgusting face. In fact, outreach experiences in these two urban provinces of Zimbabwe cast an incomparable contrast-a tale of two cities remotely related in terms of nationhood.

Outreach Violations

The nature of violations swung from subtle to extreme forms of violence with Harare province recording a total of 8 cases of violence. Barely two days into the outreach programme, the Harare province had recorded 14 cases of politically motivated disruptions with even reports of the death of an MDC T activist, Crispin Mandizvidza from the injuries sustained during one of the disturbances that rocked outreach meetings in Mbare.

A total of 307 outreach violations were recorded in the period under review with an incident spread of 78 cases of coaching, 77 of political interference, 72 of harassment and 8 of violence.

Figure 1
Spread of outreach Violations

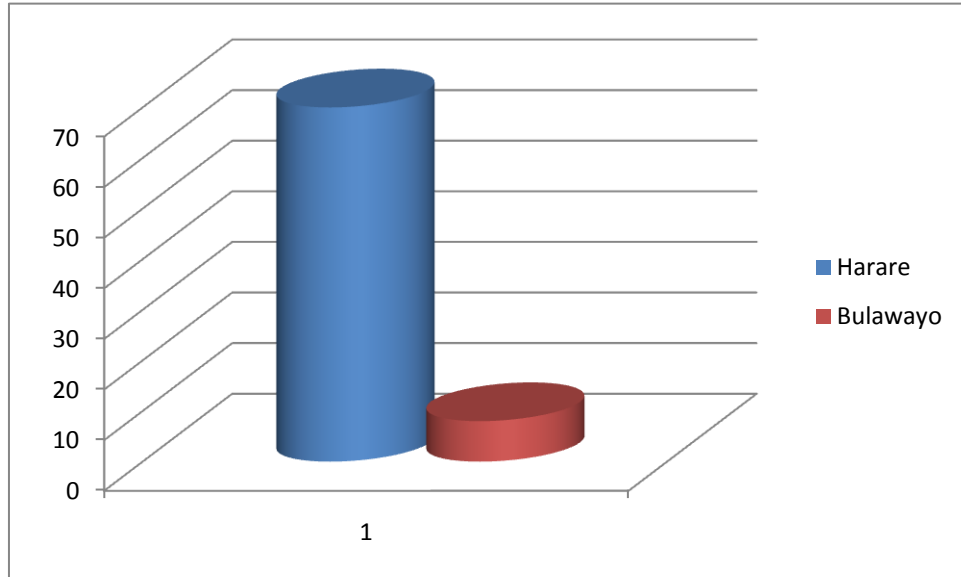


In terms of provincial spread, outreach violations remained heavily skewed towards Harare province, the metropolitan capital accounting for 94 % [288] of the violations while 19 were from Bulawayo.

Coaching

Coaching had the highest violation toll, accounting for 78 incidents, 70 of which were reported in Harare while 8 were in Bulawayo province. Provincial spread was as graphically shown below:

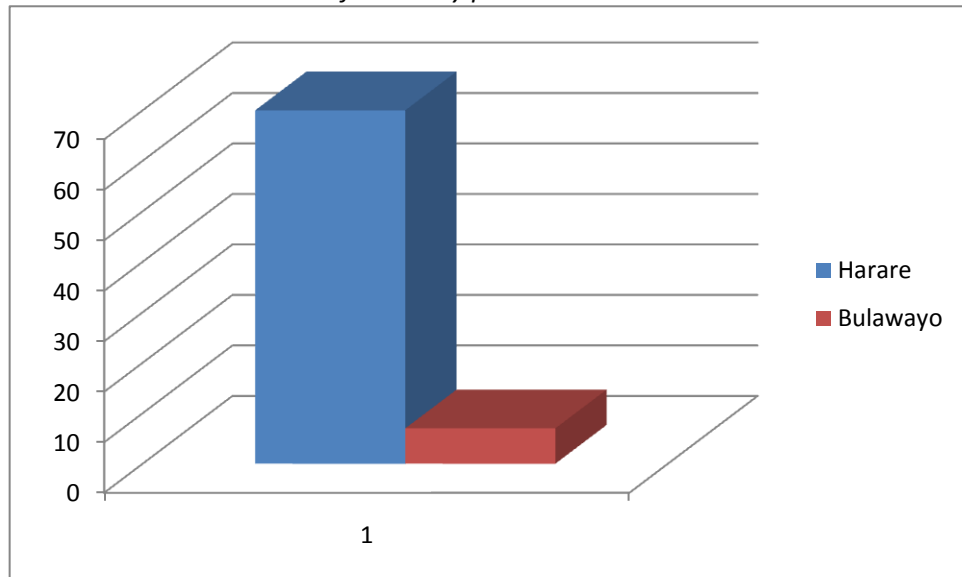
Figure 2
Coaching Spread by provinces



Political Interference

Political interference was second highest violation toll with a record of 77, 70 of which were accounted for Harare province and 2 from Bulawayo province.

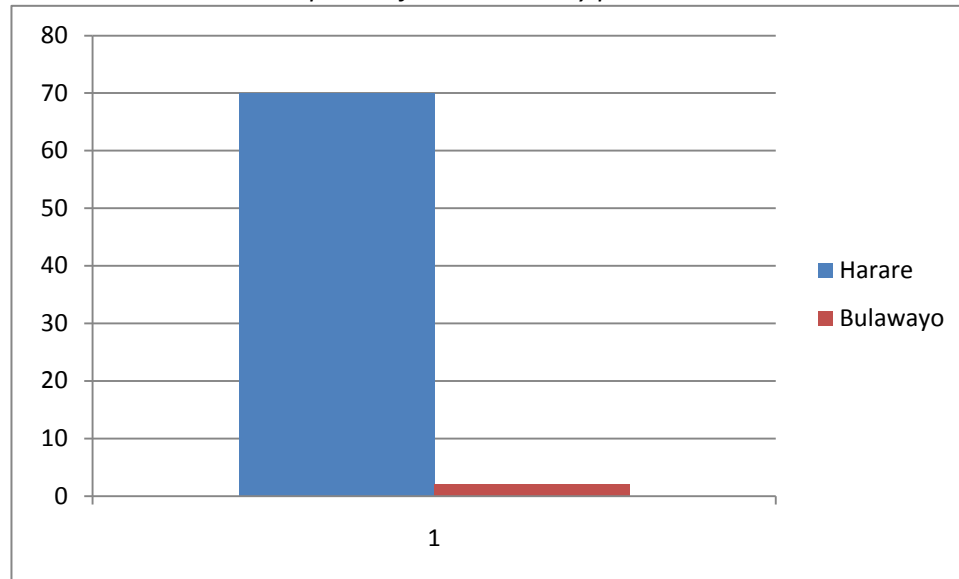
Figure 3
Political interference by province



Harassment

Harassment remained a visible outreach violation, accounting for 72 of the reported 303 gross violations, 70 of which were in Harare and 2 in Bulawayo.

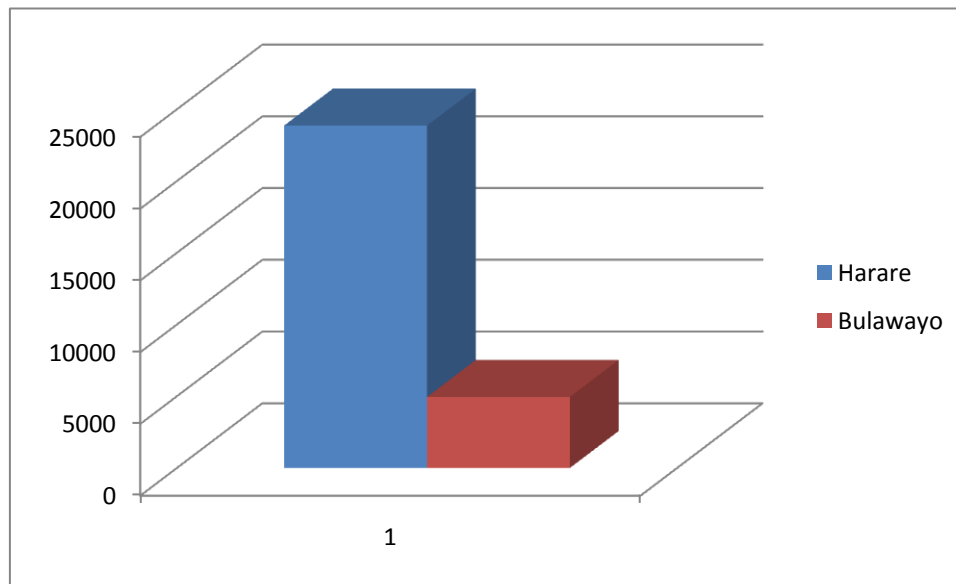
Figure 4
Spread of harassment by provinces



Participants Spread by provinces

However, despite the fact that the Bulawayo province outreach programme progressed to the end with attendance averages ranging between 200 and 250, Bulawayo province remains under the grip of deep-seated apathy. Of the 28 814 participants recorded in the period under review, 83 % [23 864] were in Harare province while 17 % [4950] were in Bulawayo province.

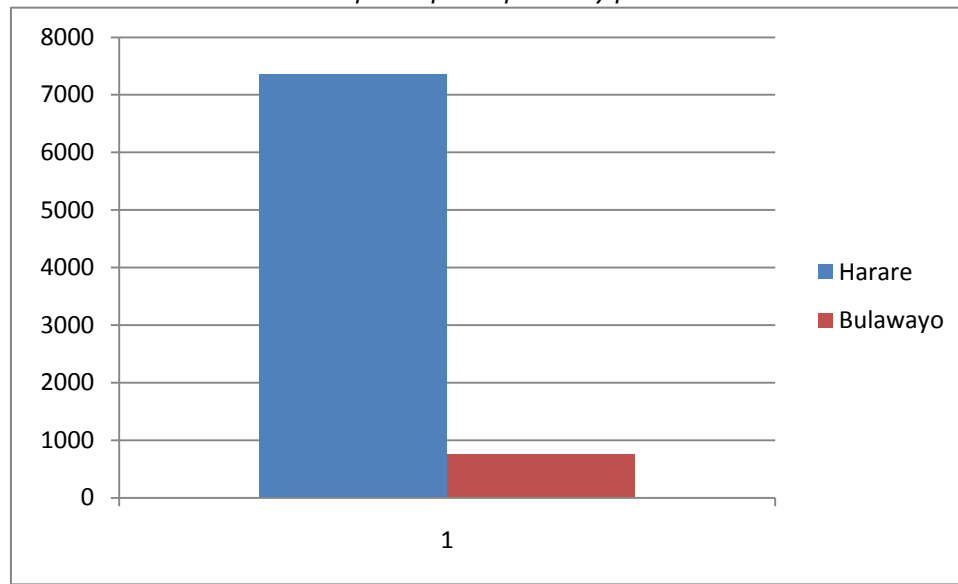
Figure 5
Participant Spread by provinces



Youth participants

This lethargy was also evident across age and gender. Of the total 8 120 youth participants recorded in the period under review, 9 % [760] were from Bulawayo province while 91 % [7360] were from Harare province.

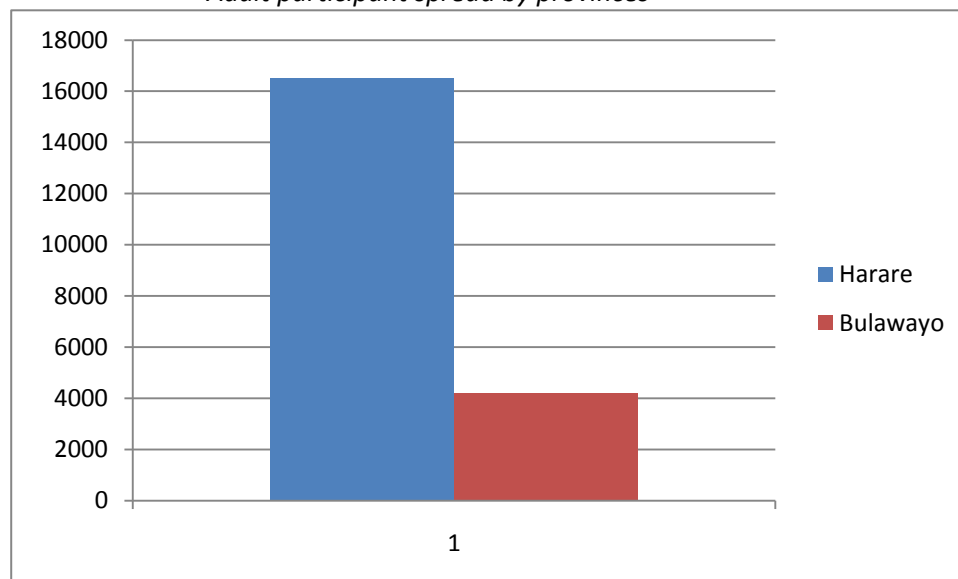
Figure 6
Youth participant spread by provinces



Adult participants

Participant spread was heavily slanted towards Harare with 80 % [16 504] of the total 20 694 adult participants being from Harare province while 20 % [4 190] were from Bulawayo province.

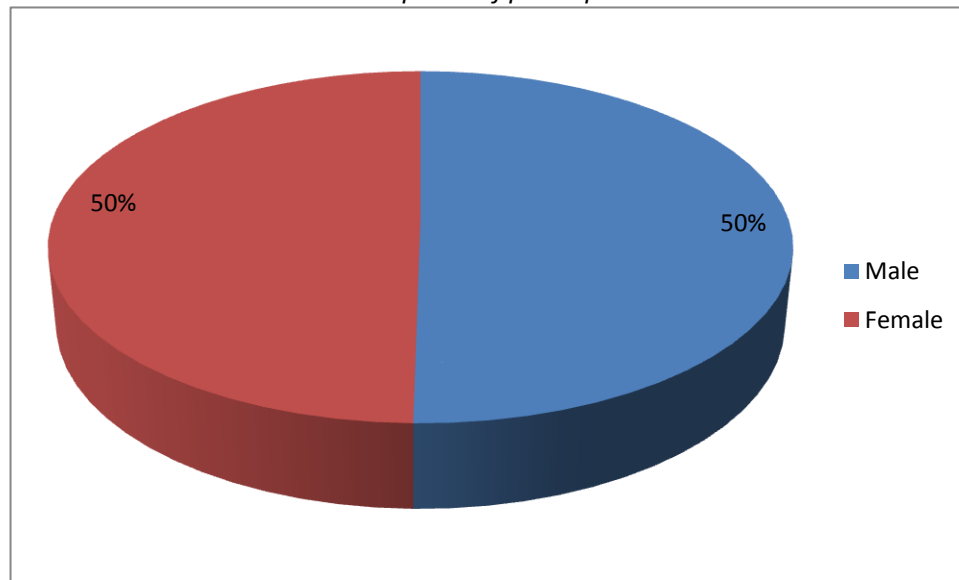
Figure 7
Adult participant spread by provinces



Spread of participants by gender

This skew was also apparent when participants were analyzed in terms of gender. Of the total 14 483 male participants recorded in the period under review, 81 % [11 674] were from Harare province while 19 % [2809] were from Bulawayo province. Of the total 14 331 female participants, 15 % [2141] were from Bulawayo while 85 % [12 190] were from Harare province.

Figure 8
Gender Spread of participants



However, observed low outreach attendance trends in Bulawayo are generally in sync with observed trends in the other two provinces of Matabeleland since the onset of the outreach programme.

Equally worth noting is that although Harare boasts of high attendance records in its short-lived outreach consultations, not much should be read from these records as most of them were a result of bussing in of participants. Analysis of contributions at most of these highly attended outreach meetings point to muted debate. High attendance did not translate into visible participation at outreach meetings as fear, inter-party violence, coaching, and harassment drowned citizen voice!

Experiences by provinces

Harare

Although constitutional outreach consultations in Harare were scheduled for three days running from 18 September to 20 September with 84 meetings lined up, experiences from day one cast a caricature, a farce and indeed, a trivialization of the essence of constitution making processes. It was in essence, a telling case of unbridled inter-party intolerance and a chilling reminder to the nation-that the forces of darkness that stalked the run up to the 2008 June run off are still intact and raring to roll out at the slightest provocation.

Politically motivated violence, manhandling of honourable members, intimidation, verbal threats, racial intolerance, assaults, fistfights, whistling and booing of participants presenting different views, sloganeering, singing of revolutionary songs, bussing in of participants, among other things, characterized outreach consultations, with Mbare, Budiro, Greystone Park and Dvivarasekwa as lead hotbeds of politically motivated violence. A politically electric atmosphere prevailed at almost all outreach meetings. A total of 288 constitution outreach violations were recorded in Harare with an incident spread of 70 harassment, 8 violence, 70 coaching, 70 political interference and 70 violations of freedom of speech.

Barely a day after the start of constitution outreach processes, *The Herald* of 20 September, in a stunning departure from its tradition of keeping a blind eye on issues of violence, released a screamer “*Violence breaks Harare outreach*” while *The Herald* of 21 September followed with another “*COPAC suspends meeting*” in Harare “until a full review has been conducted”.

With these developments unfolding in the metropolitan capital city of Harare province, the nerve centre of Government, questions have since emerged about how constitution outreach consultations in the rural areas by being “far from the madding crowd” could have survived experiences encountered in Harare. ZZZICOMP is hardly surprised as it has always in its weekly and monthly report alerted the nation of clandestine and systematically organized outreach violations in communities. The only difference is that they were taking place in areas that are from the full glare of both the state and private media.

Although 70 out of the scheduled 84 meetings in Harare emerge as “successful meetings”, this is just as statistics go. They were only successful in the narrow sense of not having been abandoned midstream. When analyzed in the broad sense of being free from fear, intimidation, coaching and political interference-it does not pass the test. The constitutional outreach process for children that was held for two days at the parliament of Zimbabwe in Harare on 22 to 23 September was not spared amid reports of high levels of coaching with children taking partisan positions on constitutional issues. A total of 335 children, 172 females and 163 males-drawn from various provinces in Harare, 120 of which were Child Parliamentarians, 10 child governors, 30 child senators and 155 child representatives of different sectors including the disabled and street kids- attended the meeting.

A cursory review of outreach experiences in the six districts of Harare province, namely, Chitungwiza, Epworth, Waterfalls, Highfields, Harare North and Harare Central attests to this.

Chitungwiza District

Chitungwiza had a schedule of 25 meetings lined up for 18 September. Although 24 of these were reported as “successfully held”, close analysis of events at most meeting points smacks of a highly compromised and stressed process. At Shingai Primary school in Zengeza West constituency where 259 participants turned up, MDC party COPAC members led by one honourable reportedly walked out of the venue in protest, citing irregularities on how the process was being conducted. This was allegedly after another honourable member of ZANU PF gave opening remarks that were perceived as exhorting partisan debate. At Seke 2 High School, a white man was reportedly harassed by suspected war veterans and ZANU PF youth militia who, in a typical case of racial intolerance, were arguing that white people were not part of the constitution making process. ZZZICOMP reports of other meetings in this district generally refer to widespread outreach violations in the form of bussing in of participants, intolerance towards divergent views, political influence and coaching with most contributions at outreach meetings in this district conspicuously the same, word for word.

Harare Central District

Inter-party violence reared its vicious form at most outreach meetings in the district, the environment generally politically electric with outreach experiences on 18 September at Mai Musodzi Hall in Ward 3 of Mbare, a telling case of uninhibited inter-party violence. As gleaned from ZZZICOMP reports, participants to the venue were vetted by ZANU PF party youths with those known or suspected to be from known rival political parties, reportedly barred from entering the venue. COPAC teams led by Co-chairperson Munyaradzi Mangwana and Gokwe-Nembudziya House of Assembly Flora Buka were reportedly besieged at the venue, allegedly after they had announced that the outreach exercise would be deferred to 20 September to allow tempers to cool down. Participants went on to close gates in a bid to prevent COPAC teams from leaving. Police officers in riot gear had to move in to prevent the situation from turning ugly as people started chanting their party slogans in protest. Earlier in the day, violence had erupted, reportedly leaving two people injured. Although meetings at Mbare Netball Complex in Ward 11 and Stordat Hall in Ward 12 went ahead, debate was highly compromised as people were seen reading from printed answers with suspected ZANU PF supporters reportedly threatening people they perceived to be members of other political parties.

Epworth

Epworth had a line up of 12 meeting points with all but one meeting at Chinamano Primary School highly attended with an average of 200 participants, the atmosphere was generally not conducive for free expression of voice. At a meeting that was held on 18 September at Chinamano Primary School in Ward 7, the local ZANU PF councillor was seen registering everyone attending the meeting while only those earlier selected to speak were the only ones allowed to talk during debates with while those not sanctioned to speak either booed or verbally threatened. ZZZICOMP observers also alleged that most of the participants were not resident in the area, having been bussed in from other areas. At Makono Secondary School in Ward 2, suspected ZANU PF supporters were seen singing political songs and dancing with an abandon reminiscent of political party rallies. At Chizungu Primary School, the opening prayer and closing prayers were reportedly riddled with hate speech perceived to be targeted at MDC party activists.

Mabvuku Tafara

One of the 4 meetings lined up for Mabvuku /Tafara on 18 September was reportedly abandoned midstream as politically motivated violence reared its ugly face, youths from the two main political parties, MDC- T and ZANU PF, engaging in fist fights. At Tafara Community Centre in Ward 46, 80 % of the participants were reportedly people who had been bussed in from nearby Caledonia Farm by suspected war veterans and youth militia. The meeting was nearly disrupted by violence as youth from the MDC-T and ZANU PF engaged in fist fights. At Mabvuku Hall in Ward 21, there was violence marred before, during and after the meeting with youth from different political parties exchanging threatening language.

Harare North

Harare North which includes Mt Pleasant, Lewisam Primary School, Greystone Park, and Hatcliffe Extension open space, Avondale Primary, Alfred Beit Primary, Dzivarasekwa 3 Hall and Dzivarasekwa 2 had all its meetings, save Avondale Primary School, highly attended. However high attendance did not translate into participation as whistling, clapping of hands, singing and dancing characterized proceedings at most outreach meetings in the district. Although 9 meetings had been scheduled, two of them did not take place due to security concerns of the COPAC members.

At Dzivarasekwa 3 and 2, the COPAC teams did not turn up, scenarios that could have had a hand in the ugly scenario in which the honourable Senator of the constituency [name withheld] was slapped by ZANU PF militia suspected to be from the presidential guard camp in the area. Access to the venue was reportedly tightly controlled as participants were vetted at the gate and those that were not members of ZANU PF or were not spouses of soldiers from the army camp, were reportedly turned away. At Greystone Park Primary School, the gates were reportedly manned by war veterans who were vetting people attending the meeting. The COPAC team including those that were affiliated to ZANU PF reportedly fled from the scene after one of the participants, a suspected supporter of the MDC- T party, was heckled by suspected ZANU PF members. Two white people who had turned up for outreach consultations were reportedly threatened with violence after they expressed interest in contributing their views. There were also allegations that most of the participants were not residents of the area. A ZZZICOMP observer was also detained for 3 hours at the venue after the COPAC outreach team had left while two ZZZICOMP coordinators and driver were detained for 30 minutes at the school by the war veterans, all this in full view of the police who looked on helplessly without intervening to restore order.

The meeting at Lewisam Primary with around 244 people in attendance, racial intolerance saw two white men being denied participation and ordered to leave the meeting, though COPAC officials intervened to no avail. ZZZICOMP observer monitoring proceedings at the meeting was also initially denied access to the venue although he was later allowed in when COPAC teams arrived. Contributions at this meeting reflected rampant coaching and general lack of tolerance for dissenting views which received boos and verbal threats.

At the Mt Pleasant Hall meeting point where 254 people were in attendance, the police were reportedly arrested a man suspected to be a University of Zimbabwe lecturer [name withheld], allegedly for inciting violence against people he suspected to be members of the MDC. At Hatcliffe Extension Open Space where over 1000 people had turned up, there was singing of revolutionary songs and dancing by suspected ZANU PF youths before the meeting.

Waterfalls District

In this district which covered meeting points such as Hatfield Community Hall, Sunningdale Primary 1, Sunningdale Community, Masasa Park Creche, Kutsaga Hall, St Jones Retreat, and Waterfalls Hall-the political atmosphere was generally tense although attendance was generally on the high side save at Sunningdale Primary 1 where 60 people reportedly turned up. Opening and closing prayer were full of hate language directed towards supporters of the MDC-T party. There were allegations of coaching and bussing in of participants.

Budiriro

A meeting that was scheduled for 19 September at OK Shopping Centre in Ward 45 had to be abandoned midstream when people exchanged blows. This broke out when a suspected ZANU PF activist making contributions on what kind of media the country should have, castigated pirate radio stations saying they should be banned as they were distorting the political situation in the country. This did not go down well with one suspected MDC-T activist who reportedly heckled the participant, labelling him a foreigner from Mozambique. Skirmishes erupted for 30 minutes, people exchanging blows while police struggled to contain the situation to no avail-leading to the abandonment of the meeting.

In Zengeza East, the MDC T MP of the area reportedly drove off saying he would only return after police had beefed up the security. People could be seen coming from beer outlets to make contributions while clutching bottles of beer and visibly drunk. By close of day, COPAC teams had not pitched up.

Bulawayo

Constitution outreach consultations generally went well though with a few isolated chaotic incidents. Attendance at meetings was generally on the high side, meetings polling an average of 200 to 300 people. Of the 44 meetings recorded in Bulawayo, 36 were high attendance cases while 8 were low attendance cases. Outreach related violations were on the low side with 19 out of the reported 307 cases of violations being reported in Bulawayo.

Emerging Issues

People advocated for devolution of power to be enshrined in the constitution. They specifically wanted the constitution to empower the provinces to be run by local authorities and provincial governors who are voted for than those appointed. They also agreed that they should be a land audit, one man one farm and that the constitution should ensure that land owners are given title deeds for their land, not leases. Also proposed was a President with limited powers, five provinces, elected provincial governors, two terms for both President and Prime minister, among others.

Conclusions

Outreach experiences in Harare were in essence a mockery of the constitution making process. Though highly attended, the climate under which they were conducted was too electric to allow space for citizen voice. Those that went ahead should be urgently investigated to verify if the proposals that emerged from these meetings should be taken on board.