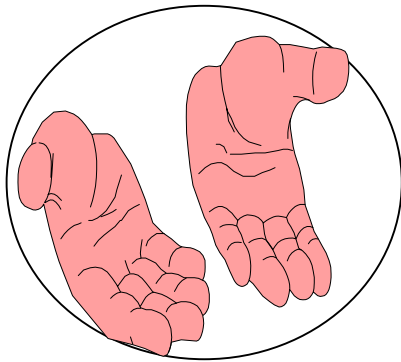


**CENTRE FOR THE
REHABILITATION
OF
TORTURE VICTIMS**



CERETOV
2003

**REPORT ON A SURVEY ON TORTURE AND
VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE**

Report compiled by Research Unlimited, 18 Terry Drive, Greendale. Tel: 492537, 492064

CERETOV in brief

CERETOV'S VISION

Setting the stage for renewal and reintegration.

MISSION

TO WORK TOWARDS THE RE-INTEGRATION OF TORTURE VICTIMS INTO SOCIETY.
CERETOV SEEKS TO RESTORE DIGNITY
TO THE DEHUMANIZED MEMBERS OF OUR SOCIETY THROUGH LONG-TERM STRATEGIES
THAT ARE ALSO EMPOWERING AND EFFECTIVE IN BRINGING PSYCHOLOGICAL AND
MENTAL STABILITY. WE STRIVE FOR RENEWAL AND THE RIGHT TO A DIGNIFIED LIFE.

OBJECTIVES

- To research about torture.
- To empower survivors of torture.
- To counsel survivors of torture.
- To provide legal aid to survivors.
- To advocate against torture nationally and internationally
- To network with organizations that support human rights.
- To compile a Database of torture in Zimbabwe.

CERETOV: A BRIEF BACKGROUND

CERETOV Zimbabwe Chapter is the brainchild of a group of torture victims who came together after having realised the effects of torture on their lives in particular and other silent victims in general.

Initially formed as a group in 2003 in Chitungwiza, the victims who met almost every Saturday to counsel each other decided to form an association that would attempt to engage many victims and find strategies for rehabilitation. CERETOV was registered as a Trust in November 2003 and is a non-partisan organisation that welcomes survivors of torture to be members and any other person who supports the cause of torture victims.

Acknowledgements

Ceretov salutes the individuals who accepted to be interviewed and to tell their story, together with the researchers who took the risk of going into the field to collect data. The tragedy of today's society is not only that there are evil people, but also that good people remain silent and let the evil take control.

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Executive Summary

This study reveals the prevalence of systematic violence targetted mainly at opposition supporters. The tradgedy of the situation is not only that a culture of violence is developing in our polity but also that the law enforcement agents turn a blind eye to it. However there is hope for the future in that there is the feeling that torturers can be rehabilitated back into their communities. While CERETOV is not yet well known, the consensus is that it is a vital organization in the fight to rid Zimbabwe of the scourge that is political violence. Society is expecting a lot from CERETOV. CERETOV must therefore be well poised to meet that expectation.

Rationale for the study

1980 marked a watershed in the history of this country. After years of colonial rule, the country gained independence. With this independence came hopes of a bright future, a future free from the vagaries of the Ian Smith era. Prominent among such vagaries was the use of torture as a strategy to induce compliance. The year 2000 however saw the dashing of whatever remained of those hopes. The constitutional referendum in 2000 and subsequent parliamentary and presidential elections saw the return of torture and violence as a tool to induce conformity. CERETOV ZIMBABWE felt there was a need to document such acts in the first instance. Initially however it would be necessary to carry out a study to determine the extent of the problem, identify the source of the problem and map out a way forward among other things. The result is this report.

Sampling

The sensitive nature of the study made it impossible to carry it out on the basis of a probability sample. The target group was individuals who themselves had been tortured or who had witnessed torture. Since most of these were in hiding or had deserted their homes it became very difficult to specify the probability that any case would be included in the sample. The nature of the cases therefore made it necessary to conduct non-probability sampling. Specifically, we adopted a method called “Snowball Sampling”. We identified and made contact with organizations who could get us in touch with one or two victims of torture who in turn would identify further cases. The trend would continue until we had a number of cases which were sufficient to give us the kind of qualitative data we required. In this case the sample size was four hundred and twenty seven (427). The cases were drawn from eight of the ten political provinces of this country in varying numbers. No attempt was made to divide the questionnaire administration equally across the gender divide and across the various age groups. The questionnaires were administered by two Enumerators in each of the provinces that were visited.

Limitations of the study

Three major limitations were identified during this study.

1. The lack of adequate funding meant that the methodology for the study was changed. Ideally, a nationally representative sample would have shed more light into the issue under review. The results of this study therefore cannot be used to generalize about the torture and violence situation in the country as a whole.
2. Identification of respondents proved extremely difficult. The study targetted those individuals who had experienced torture and needless to say the majority of them if not all of them are traumatized and were reluctant to speak about their experiences. This meant a lot of time was spent in the field than would have been the case with a “normal” survey. In addition it was necessary to gain the confidence of the respondents in order for them to identify for us other potential respondents.
3. The political terrain meant a slow and careful navigation by our Enumerators. It was important to ensure not only their safety but that of the respondents as well. There are areas where the Enumerators could not venture to go because of security reasons. Matebeleland North and South were unentered mainly because the subject under discussion meant an opening of the wounds of the “Gukurahundi” era. Respondents therefore were uncomfortable discussing a subject such as torture and violence.

Case processing summary

Fig 1: Provincial breakdown

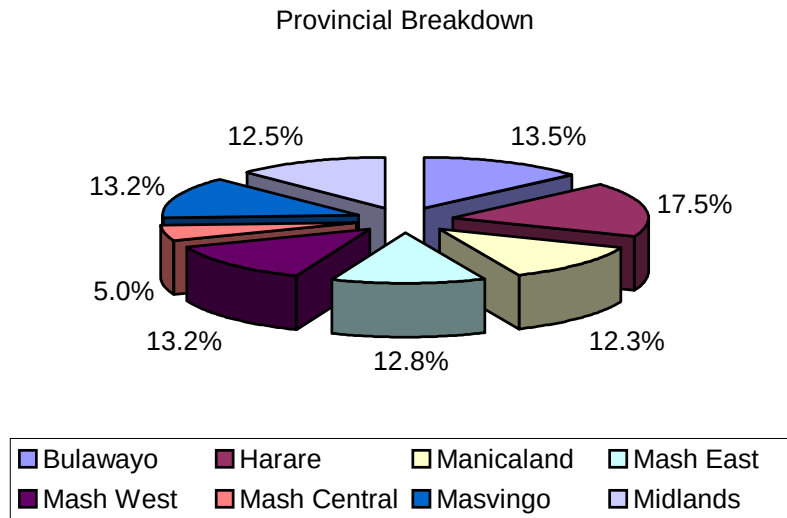
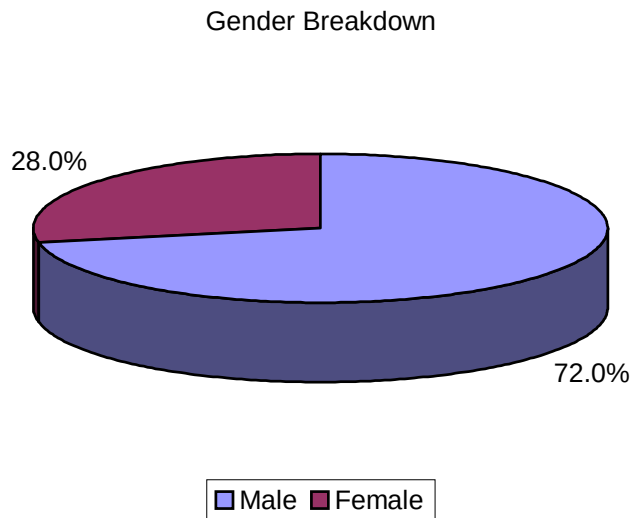


Fig 2: Gender Breakdown

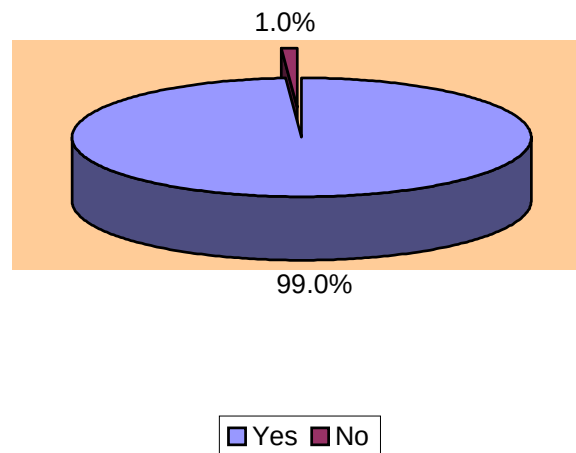


Section A

The Prevalence of Torture

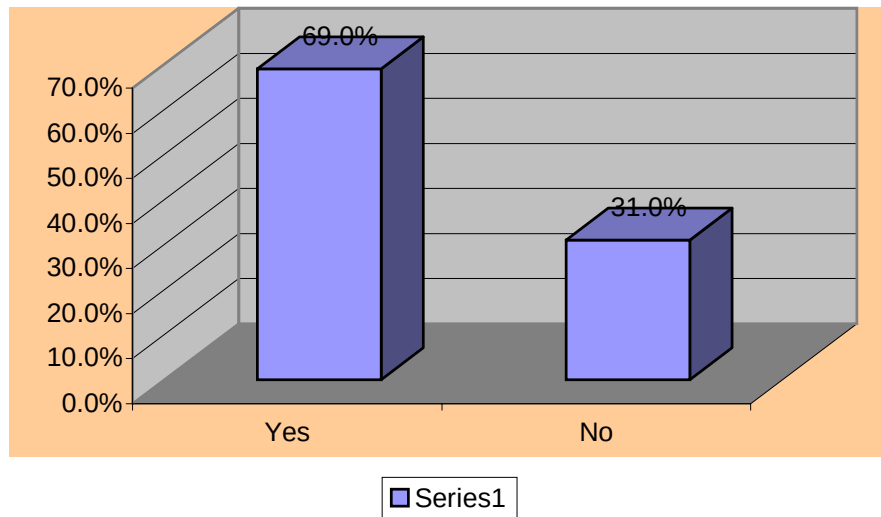
From the outset, the questionnaire sought to establish the prevalence of violence and torture. Respondents were asked whether there were any incidents of violence and torture in their places of residence.

Figure 3: Incidents of violence and torture



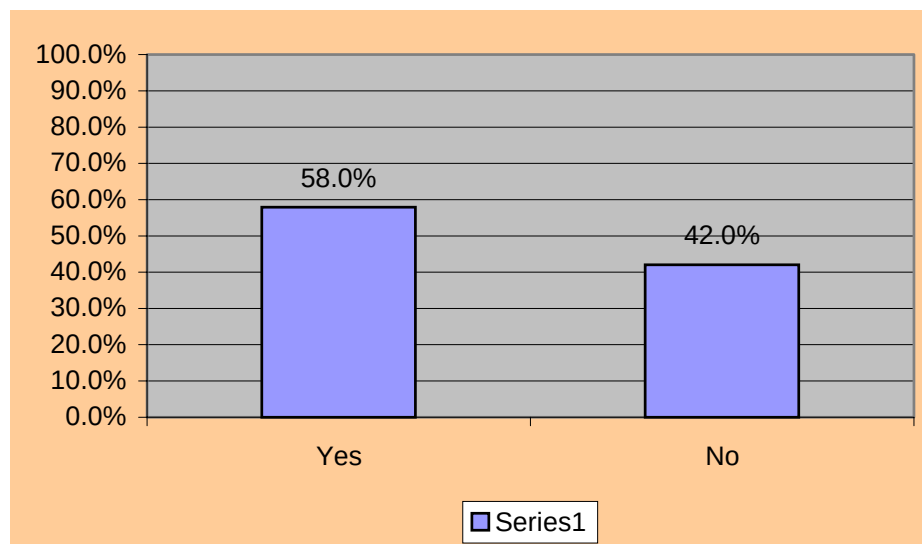
That such an overwhelming majority of respondents attest to the existence of violence in their place of residence is significant. Also significant is that this view cuts across all the eight provinces in which interviews were carried out. These statistics carry more significance when compared with those of questions which sought to find out if respondents themselves or their family members had been victims of violence and torture.

Figure 4: Respondents as victims of torture



69% of the people interviewed had actually experienced torture themselves. The 99% who said there was violence and torture in their places of residence could theoretically have only heard about it. However it is significant that 69% actually went through the experience. This can therefore be interpreted to mean that there is a prevalence of violence and torture in this country. This is further buttressed by the statistics that show that 58.4% of the respondents have family members who themselves had also experienced torture.

Figure 5: Family members – Violence and torture



Two other indicators point to a high prevalence of violence and torture in Zimbabwe. The first are the responses to the question on who perpetrates the violence and torture. Respondents were able to name not only the broad location of the perpetrators but in

some instances identified the perpetrators by name. Such violence could only have taken place over a long time or to a great extent if the perpetrators can be identified by name. Secondly, respondents felt that violence and torture cut across the gender barrier as well. In terms of the gender more affected by the violence and torture, there is the view that both sexes are affected. Below is an outline of the responses.

Table 1: Gender more affected

Gender	% Affected
Male	23%
Female	44%
Both	32%

The questionnaire also tried to find out the ways in which the violence and torture are carried out. What emerges is that the forms of torture are similar across the different provinces. Respondents talk of systemic assaults, kidnappings, displacement and threats. This similarity in methods suggests similar perpetrators and in turn this suggests a well coordinated strategy.

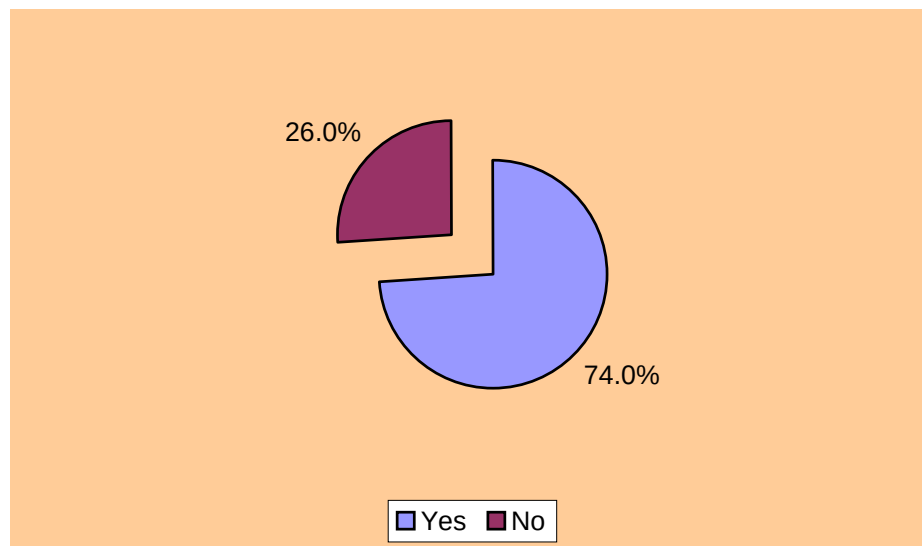
Section B

The Rationale for Torture and the Perpetrators

All the individuals who were interviewed linked the prevalence of violence and torture to politics and to elections in particular. It is a sad indictment of the conduct of political affairs in this country that people identify elections and political issues with violence.

1. When asked to point out who can stop the violence and torture, respondents identified the president and ZANU(PF). This also buttresses the fact that violence and torture are "born out of elections and the political dispensation of the day. In addition, this also points out the perceived perpetrators of these acts. Respondents identified the youth militia, security agents and war veterans as being responsible for this violence and torture.
2. Respondents identified the police as being reluctant to deal with the perpetrators of violence. Again this is an indicator of where the violence and torture is perceived to be emanating from. Ideally the police should be impartial. Their lack of enthusiasm suggests that those responsible have power over the police.
3. The majority of those who perpetrate violence and torture are known to the community. By implication this means that their political affiliations are known and consequently their "pay masters". The fact that they carry out these acts with impunity suggests that they can only be sent by those in positions of authority.

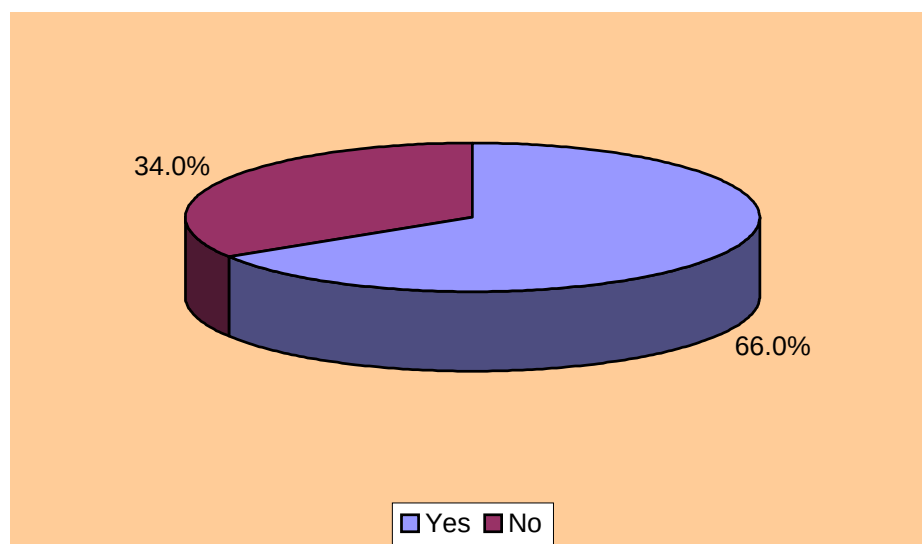
Figure 6: Are torture perpetrators known



Section C

What can be done about violence and torture

Figure 7: Can there be an end to torture



Despite the apparent prevalence of violence and torture and the systematic manner in which it is perpetrated, respondents feel confident that it can be brought to an end. However respondents are of the opinion that the perpetrators should not be forgiven and that they should not be accepted back into society.

It is important to note that respondents feel that they should be made accountable for their acts and should be punished in accordance with the laws as a precondition to their being accepted back into society. Opinion is almost split on the issue of acceptance back into society.

Figure 8: Should torturers be forgiven

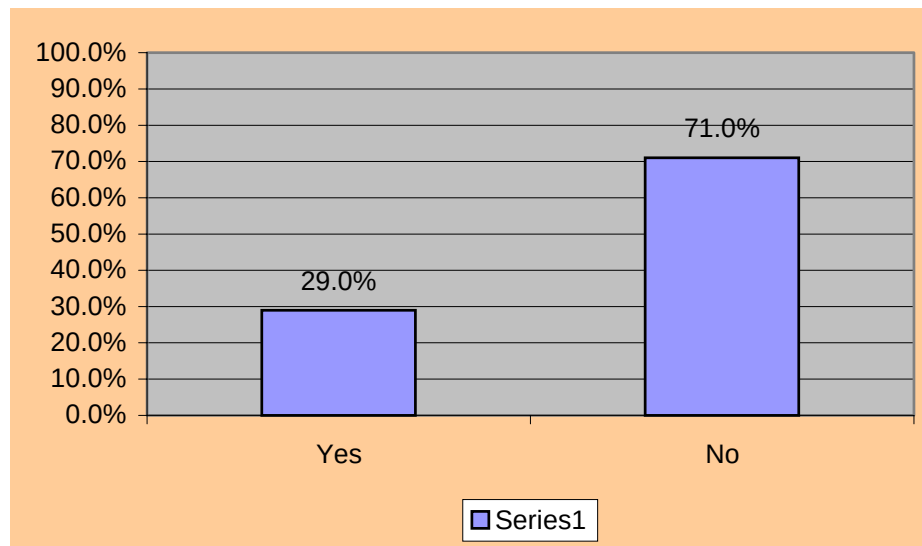
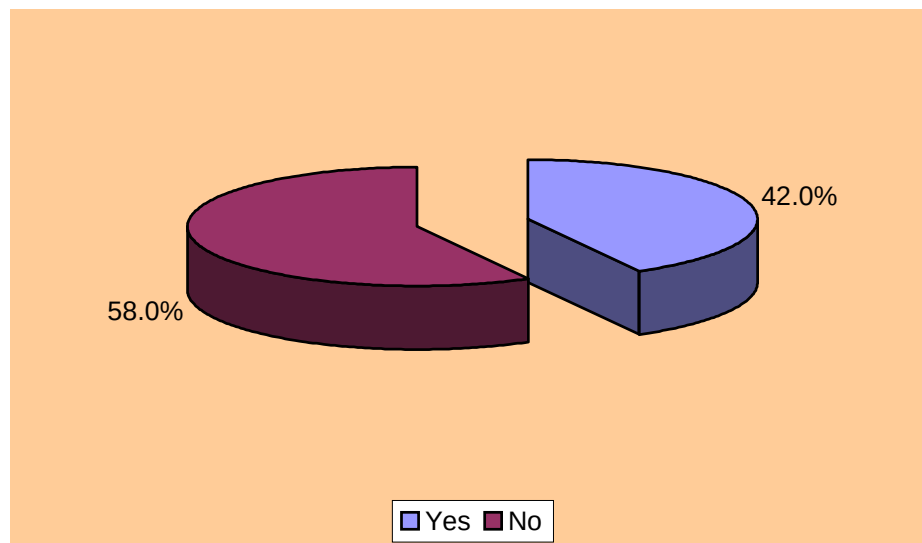


Figure 9: Should torturers be accepted back into society

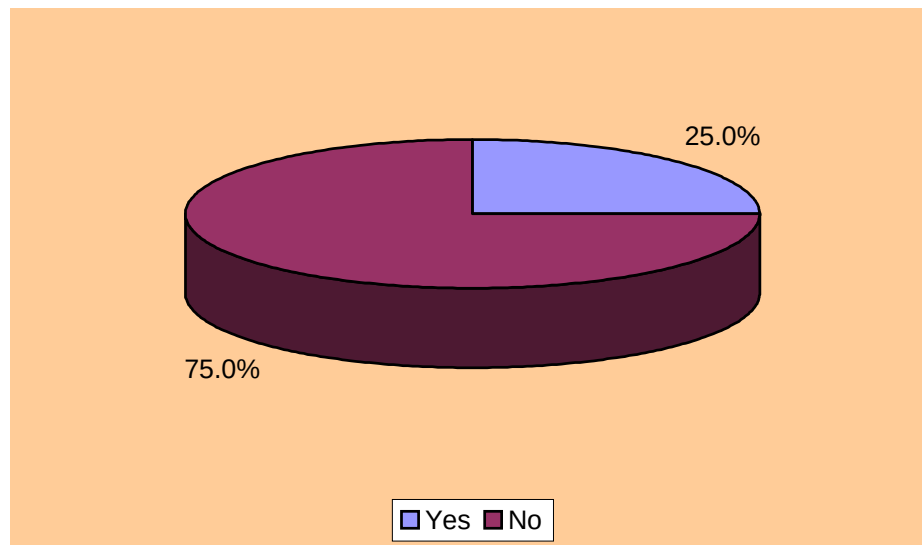


Section D

CERETOV and the future

The research reveals that the majority of respondents are not aware of the existence of CERETOV-Zimbabwe. This is hardly surprising considering that it was launched only recently.

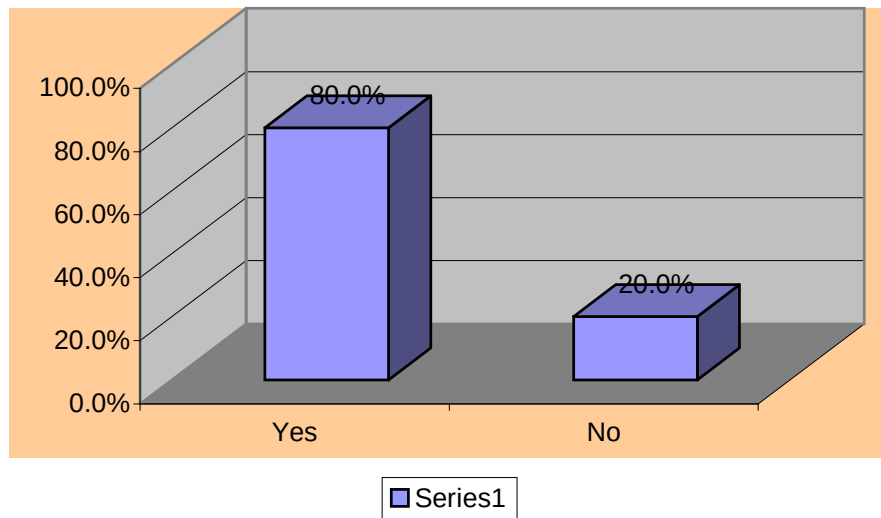
Figure 9: Awareness of CERETOV- Zimbabwe



However what is encouraging is the interest that is apparent among respondents. Apart from the eagerness to be members, respondents also came up with ways in which CERETOV-Zimbabwe could be of assistance to victims of violence and torture. Three major categories of assistance needs were mentioned and these are:

1. Medical assistance- Respondents revealed that more often than not victims of violence and torture are denied medical assistance when they approach hospitals and clinics.
2. Counselling services- Torture victims are severely traumatised and have to live with flashbacks all their lives
3. Shelter-Victims of torture and violence almost always are displaced and end up destitute.

Figure 10: Would you like to be a member of CERETOV-Zimbabwe



Conclusions and recommendations

1. Violence and torture are prevalent in Zimbabwe. Authorities cannot turn a blind eye to this scourge on Zimbabwe's landscape. Intervention strategies ought to be formulated so that this problem can be dealt with and be exterminated.
2. The law enforcement agencies in this country have been implicated not only in terms of perpetrating violence themselves but also in "folding their hands" when it comes to assisting victims of violence and torture. A professional, non-partisan approach is required as this will go a long way in restoring public confidence in the law enforcement agencies.
3. The violence and torture appears systemic and planned. This culture in the conduct of public affairs in Zimbabwe should be done away with.
4. Respondents are hopeful that violence and torture can be brought to an end. However deep seated emotions exist. Respondents do not want the perpetrators to be forgiven and accepted back into society. This state of affairs calls for a strategy along the lines of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa.
5. Awareness concerning CERETOV-Zimbabwe is still limited. It is incumbent upon the organization to market itself and make itself more visible not only to victims of violence and torture but to the country as a whole. People should be aware of what CERETOV has to offer. In the long run this will call for the establishment of provincial and perhaps even district offices to ensure easier accessibility.
6. CERETOV-Zimbabwe should equip itself in accordance with the needs espoused by the respondents. CERETOV-Zimbabwe should be in a position to offer medical and counselling services. Considering the responses from the respondents it may be necessary to set up special clinics where non-partisan medical attention will be provided. In addition there is a need to provide safe havens for victims of violence and torture.