



***Politically Motivated Violence
against Women in Zimbabwe
2000-2010. A review of the
public domain literature.***

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Background to PMV in Zimbabwe

Politically motivated violence (PMV) is defined as the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property in order to coerce or intimidate a government or the civilian population in furtherance of political or social objectives.¹

In Zimbabwe politically motivated violence dates as far back as the pre-colonial era. History tells us that, during the pre-colonial era, violence was mostly driven and inspired by the struggle for land, resources and chieftainship while in the colonial era it was mostly centered on the struggle for land and ethnic recognition. In the post-colonial era however, violence became much more pronounced and mostly centered on the struggle for political hegemony, and this period saw many Zimbabweans being exposed to all forms of violence particularly before, during and after elections².

Examples of such election violence include the "notorious" Matabeleland massacres of the 1980-1989 era also known as the "Gukurahundi."³ During this deadly period, at least 20 000 innocent civilians were killed; some were buried alive, burnt in their homes, while others were bayoneted.⁴

Violence did not end with Gukurahundi but became even much more pronounced during the turn of the 21st century, following the formation of the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 thereby threatening Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF's) support base in the landmark June 2000 Parliamentary elections and subsequent elections i.e. 2002, 2005 and 2008. This forced ZANU PF to resort to all forms of violence, and trickery in a bid to outwit the MDC in the electoral race and maintain its hold on power. A case in point was the introduction and implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) that was mainly centered on luring back the support base of the war veterans and the masses in general, that was fast waning from its grip in favour of the MDC. Other classical examples of this violence in the post-colonial era include the 2000 referendum, the presidential election of 2002 and the pre run off June 2008 controversial presidential elections among others which saw many people losing their lives, maimed, raped, abducted, losing properties and exposed to all forms of torture all in the name of fighting for political hegemony.

In all the reports on the violence, and especially the violence since 2000, there has been a decided lack of a gendered perspective. This does not mean that there are no reports about the violence experienced by women, but that there is not generally an attempt to disaggregate the data to reflect the specific issues related to women. There are a number of reports dealing with the violence experienced by female activists from organizations such as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) or Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)⁵, or dealing with women refugees, and a number of reports on women's views about and experiences of PMV. There are also reports dealing with specific violations such as rape and sexual

¹www.thefreedictionary.com/Politically+motivated+violence - [Cached](#) Accessed on 13 July 2011.

² For a comprehensive overview of political violence in Zimbabwe, see Sachikonye. L (2011), *When a State turns on its Citizens, Institutionalized Violence and Political Culture*. JACANA MEDIA.

³ Nyarota, Geoffrey, *Against the Grain*. Page 134.

⁴ <http://www.sokwanele.com/pdfs/BTS.pdf> "Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace", Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe: A report on the disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980-1989."

⁵ For example, NCA (2010), *Fighting for a New Constitution: Human Rights Violations experienced by Female Members of the National Constitutional Assembly*. Report produced by the Research & Advocacy Unit. March 2010. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT; WOZA (2008), *The effects of fighting repression with love*. A report by Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA). March 2008. ZIMBABWE: WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE ARISE.

violence⁶. A recent trend to disaggregating reports on political violence by the Zimbabwe Peace Project [ZPP] shows both the frequencies of women affected by PMV as well those of women participating in violence as perpetrators⁷.

However, it is interesting to see the extent to which all these reports have had an effect upon public consciousness, and one of the easiest ways in which to do this is to look at what has been reported in the public domain in newspapers, both in print and online. This was the aim of this report: to see to what extent issues related to PMV against women have been profiled in the media, and, furthermore, what were the issues that were picked up. This was achieved through analyzing all the reports documented on www.zimbabwesituation.com from January 2000 to December 2010, with a focus on women⁸. In this desk survey a total of 335 reports on PMV against women were extracted and scrutinized and the results make up this report.

Given that this survey's main focus was to look at PMV against women during the years 2000 - 2010, only articles that made particular reference to women's experiences during this period were extracted and analyzed, thereby giving a total of 335 violations against women. In terms of other demographics like age group, place of residence, etc., the selection criterion for the articles was all inclusive and cut across the rural and urban, provincial, age, race, gender, and level of education divides.

No comparison was made with the complete data base of reports, and hence we do not give any indication in regards to the proportion of reports concerning women against the total number of reports, which must be in the range of thousands.

Methodology

The survey proposed a two-pronged methodology. The first stage involved gathering data on different forms of violence meted out against women during the period 2000-2010 from the public domain and inputting this information into a quantitative database for analysis. The data was then examined to see the various trends. The second prong involved a qualitative analysis of the main themes on politically motivated violence against women extracted from the same reports.

Data collection for the survey was done over a period of four months, and articles for this survey were drawn from reports documented in the public domain that contained stories of politically motivated violence against women in Zimbabwe during the period 2000-2010. Data entry and analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 11.5, for the quantitative data, while for the qualitative data, the thematic approach was used.

There was a skew towards reports on incidents from the two major cities, Harare and Bulawayo, with nearly 50% of the reports coming from these two cities. This is perhaps unsurprising given the hostility with which journalists have been treated by the former government, and the additional difficulties of journalists operating in the rural areas. There is also a bias towards women's organisations such as WOZA, and women from the NCA, being more active in these two cities.

⁶ RAU (2010), *No Hiding Place. Politically Motivated Rape of Women in Zimbabwe. Report prepared by the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) and the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR). December 2010. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT*; Aids Free World "Electing to rape: sexual violence terror in Mugabe's Zimbabwe" 2009 [www.aidsfreeworld.org].

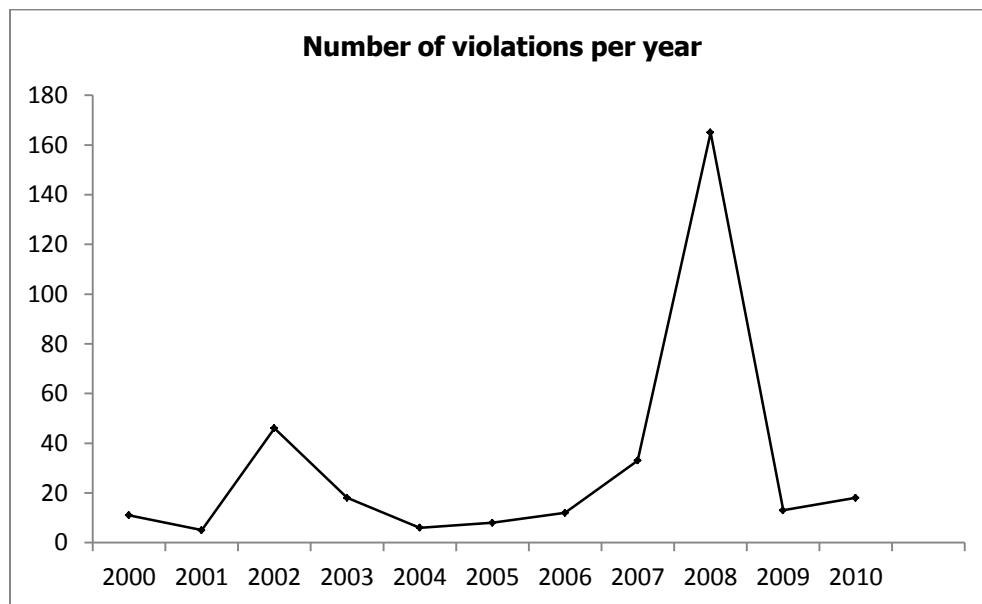
⁷ See, for example, ZPP (2011), *Summary on Politically-Motivated Human Rights and Food-Related Violations*. March 2011. HARARE: ZIMBABWE PEACE PROJECT.

⁸ Zimbabwe Situation [www.zimbabwesituation.com] is an online clipping service that has produced daily reports on all media and related reports since 2000. It thus provides one of the most comprehensive data bases on the public domain.

Trends of PMV against Women in Zimbabwe

As can be seen from Figure 1, a large percentage [63%] of the reports came from two election years, 2002 and 2008, but 2008 accounted for nearly 50% on its own. This was similar to the pattern observed in other human rights reports, but there were marked differences when the kinds of PMV were examined.

Figure 1



Analyzed against the type of violation, it was evident that the reports from the public domain showed a very different profile to those of human rights organizations. For example, 50 reports [15%] reported rape, which is much higher than all other reports, whilst torture was much lower with only 10 [3%] reports as opposed to assaults with 101 (30%). This latter difference probably reflects the kind of reporting where journalists seem not to distinguish between an assault (that is the correct nomenclature in the criminal law of Zimbabwe) and torture⁹. The frequency of rape is, however, interesting, and, measured against the generally low rates of rape reported directly to human rights organizations in Zimbabwe, does show an appreciation by the media of the importance of politically motivated rape. The

⁹ Torture should be inferred where the act involved the use of some kind of weapon and the perpetrator was either a state agent or someone acting with the condonation of the state. The rationale for distinguishing between assaults and torture is to highlight the agency of the state in perpetrating the violation, notwithstanding that the violation is a crime under Zimbabwean law, but to draw attention to the state's obligations under international laws such as the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment.

number of murders reported is also much higher than found in the human rights reports¹⁰: murder is a very high profile violation (and crime), and it is unsurprising that such cases would be reported by the media. The high rate of arbitrary arrests is due in the main to the reports involving WOZA and the NCA.

The point must be made very strongly that it is not possible to infer any kind of prevalence or incidence from this data. The reports in the public domain are themselves clearly selected by the media according to unknown rules and subject to editorial preferences, and hence the data here are only reported, as was mentioned above, for the purpose of examining whether violations against women are interesting to the media, and what kinds of violations (if any) are interesting.

Table 1: Type of Violation

	Number	Percentage of Total
Abduction	17	5%
Arbitrary arrest	58	17%
Arson	19	6%
Assault	101	30%
Detention	11	3%
Extortion	1	0
Forced attendance at meeting	1	0
Forced disappearance/removal	13	4%
Harassment	1	0
Indecent assault	4	1%
Murder	24	7%
Other	4	1%
Property destroyed	6	2%
Rape	50	15%
Sexual violence (not rape)	1	0
Threats	14	4%
Torture	10	3%
Total:	335	

There has been frequent reference to the preponderance of violations generally in the rural areas, and, when the data was disaggregated against place, it can be seen, from Table 2, that this was equally so for the current data. Although there was nearly equal frequency of reports for rural and urban areas, abduction, arson, displacement, indecent assault, murder, property destruction, rape, and threats were all significantly higher in the rural areas. This has been found in other human rights reports.

¹⁰ For example, the total rate of murder reported by the Human Rights Forum was only 0.4% of all violations in a 2008 report. See Human Rights Forum (2008), *Can the elections in Zimbabwe be Free and Fair?* Paper produced by the Research and Advocacy Unit [RAU] for the Human Rights Forum, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

Table 2: Type of violations vs. Place of Residence (Jan 2000-Dec 2010)

	Rural [n=167]	Urban [n=168]
	%	%
Abduction	7.2*	3.0
Arbitrary arrest	3.6	31.0
Arson	9.6*	1.8
Assault	26.9	33.3
Detention	1.8	4.8
Displacement	4.8*	3.0
Extortion	0.6	0.0
Forced attendance at meeting	0.0	0.6
Harassment	0.0	0.6
Indecent assault	1.8*	0.6
Murder	10.2*	4.2
Other	0.0	2.4
Property destruction	3.0*	0.6
Rape	21.0*	8.9
Sexual Violence	0.6	0.0
Threats	6.0*	2.4
Torture	3.0	3.0

*11

The next issue is the relationship of violations to elections. As was seen in Figure 1, there was a high total frequency of reported violations in 2002 and 2008. It is apparent that almost all types of violations were recorded as highest in the year 2008 alone, save for property destroyed and harassment. When the data was disaggregated according to election year – 2000, 2002, 2005, and 2008 – then it is apparent that violations are significantly more likely to be reported during an election year.

Firstly, the total number of violations from the four election years is double the number of violations from the other seven years - 230[61%] as opposed to 105 [39%]. This is similar to the findings of other human rights reports¹².

Secondly, as was found above for the contrast between rural and urban areas, a number of serious violations were more likely to occur during an election year: arson, displacement, murder, rape, and threats were significantly more likely during an election year.

¹¹ These differences were statistically significant [p=0.01].

¹² See, for example, Human Rights Forum (2008), *Can the elections in Zimbabwe be Free and Fair?* Paper produced by the Research and Advocacy Unit [RAU] for the Human Rights Forum, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

Table 3: Violations compared according to election year

	Election year [n=230]	Non- election year [n=105]
	%	%
Abduction	4.8	5.7
Arbitrary arrest	14.8	22.9
Arson	6.9*	2.9
Assault	26.1	39.0
Detention	2.2	5.7
Displacement	4.8*	1.9
Extortion	0.4	0.0
Forced attendance at meeting	0.4	0.0
Harassment	0.0	1.0
Indecent assault	1.7	0.0
Murder	8.7*	3.8
Other	0.4	2.9
Property destroyed	2.6	0.0
Rape	17.8*	8.6
Sexual violence (not rape)	0.4	0.0
Threats	5.7*	1.0
Torture	2.2	4.8

*¹³

Finally, a brief comment should be made about the alleged perpetrators of the violations. As can be seen from Table 4 [over], the most frequently mentioned perpetrator group was the Zimbabwe Republic Police [ZRP], and, given the frequency of reports from Harare and Bulawayo (and the number of reports involving violations perpetrated against members of WOZA, this is unsurprising. This finding apart, and bearing in mind the findings reported above in respect of elections and the rural areas, it can be seen that, similar to all other reports from Zimbabwe, ZANU PF supporters and youth militia account for half the violations.

¹³ These differences were statistically significant [p=0.01].

Table 4: Frequency of reported perpetrators

	Number [%]
CIO	12 [4%]
JOC	1[0.3%]
MDC-T	1[0.3%]
ZNA	19[6%]
other	4[1.2%]
ZRP	108[32%]
War veterans	21[6%]
Youth militia	88[26%]
ZANU PF	81[24%]

Drawing some quick conclusions from the quantitative analysis, it seems evident that the media do reflect the more detailed findings of the reports by human rights organizations; in the trends, in the types of violations, in the geographical location of violations, and in their association with elections. The general citizenry would not be disadvantaged by having little or no access to the sometimes overwhelming and indigestible reports of the human rights organizations, so it is useful that a largely accurate picture is provided by the media. It is unsurprising that the media elaborate the associations between violence and elections, and equally unsurprising that they tend to have concentration on the urban areas: few independent journalists are able to work safely in the rural areas, especially when they are continuously accused of being disloyal or agents of imperialism¹⁴.

However, it is also clear that care must be taken in interpreting the trends in reporting. Both rape and murder are reported here with a frequency that does not reflect the national trends: it is not known how many politically motivated murders and rapes have actually occurred, and, even though they are very serious crimes, an injudicious analysis of the trends can be highly misleading. Similarly, there is very low rate of torture reported, which is at odds with the findings of most human rights organizations reporting since 2000. This seems to be less related to the interest that the media might have than in their use of language and in their understanding of the human rights field and lexicon: an assault by a state official for the purposes of intimidation is torture as well as criminal assault.

Impact of PMV against Women

Circumstances of extreme conflict unquestionably fuel the flames of PMV against women in any given conflict, as warring parties will be continually seeking to outmaneuver one another. This has largely been the case with Zimbabwean elections, particularly during the 2000-2010 election periods that saw many a Zimbabwean women, young or old, rural or urban, being exposed to similar kinds of PMV prior to, during, and after these elections, particularly during the year 2008. Thus many women were victims of violence, regardless of whether one was directly or indirectly involved in politics. For instance, most women were

¹⁴ See, for example, *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2007), Their Words Condemn Them: The Language of Violence, Intolerance and Despotism in Zimbabwe*, May 2007, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

left with permanent physical, psychological, and emotional scars, which have caused life changing adverse effects to their health. A case in point is Rutendo Munengami who suffered politically motivated sexual violence and assault. At a launch of a book on PMV against women in Zimbabwe held at the Book Café in Harare in 2010, A teary Munengami said:

*"My life has been affected tremendously by this ordeal." I cannot do heavy jobs like carry heavy items. After I got pregnant with the third child, I was told that I could not have any more children as my back cannot sustain it."*¹⁵

Other examples of women who have scars as a result of violence include Doreen Mapfumo, whose husband reported her being heavily assaulted with iron bars causing her baby to move from the right position and it is not clear whether she lost the baby or delivered¹⁶. For Patricia Hosoro, however, the beatings were so severe that doctors were left with no option but to operate on her buttocks, removing flesh and even contemplated performing a skin graft, but changed their mind, once convinced that she would eventually recover without it.¹⁷ Another married victim who preferred not to be named had rotting flesh on her buttocks surgically removed. She underwent a skin graft, but her buttocks would never regain their original shape, doctors said. They said if she had not been operated on, she would have died of her injuries. Still in bandages, almost two months after the beatings, the Zimbabwe Standard newspaper met her in Mbare and she confirmed she can hardly sit and cannot do any domestic chores.¹⁸

Others like Sarah (22 year old) from Central Zimbabwe recalled how on top of being sexually abused by ZANU PF youths had their properties destroyed and reduced to ashes. She remarked:

*"They burned down our house and destroyed everything we owned."*¹⁹

*"They looted my body like I was dead... "When I got home I found they had taken everything from my house and they had destroyed it right down to the ground."*²⁰

Others, however, on top of being sexually abused, had to live with constant reminders of such as falling pregnant and/or contracting the deadly HIV/AIDS virus and other STIs. After undergoing such a rape ordeal one of the women had this to say,

*"I was taken hostage by ZANU PF youths who are being led by a major and war veteran," she said. "One of them said I had to renounce my allegiance to opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).I had to give in to his demands as he said I could be beaten. It was against my will and he did not use any protection."*²¹

Moreover, in a report²² produced by RAU and Zimbabwe Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR), 40% of the women who had been raped stated that they had contracted HIV/AIDS²³ as a consequence of the rape.

A woman from Harare Province stated that, "I only started getting treatment for my rape in February 2010 when I was referred to Counseling Services Unit. I told them about my

¹⁵ <http://www.zimbabwesituation.org/?p=10013> Accessed on 29 July 2011.

¹⁶ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jun/21/zimbabwe> Accessed on 15 July 2011.

¹⁷ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/sep23a_2007.html Accessed 4 June 2011.

¹⁸ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/sep23a_2007.html Accessed 4 June 2011.

¹⁹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/mar/.../zimbabwe.andrewmeldrum> - Cached Accessed 16 April 2011.

²⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jun/21/zimbabwe> - Cached Accessed 16 June 2011.

²¹ news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7465101.stm - Cached Accessed 18 July 2011.

²² RAU & ZADHR (2010) No Hiding Place: Politically Motivated Rape of Women in Zimbabwe page13.

²³ There is no way to prove or disprove these claims as the women presented themselves for testing months or years after the rape.

*rape and I was tested for HIV and I tested positive. I had been tested for HIV when I was pregnant with my first born son and I came out HIV negative.*²⁴

*A woman from Manicaland stated that, "After the rape, I went for an HIV test at Murambinda Hospital and I was told that I was HIV positive. I had been tested twice for HIV in 2007 when I was pregnant with my child; and in January 2008 and I was found both times HIV negative. Right now I am taking Anti Retro Virals."*²⁵

For many of the women who were exposed to politically motivated sexual violence, the psychological consequences of the rapes were severe. Sadly for Debbie, apart from contracting the deadly HIV/AIDS virus, she also became pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl. However, the thought that she could possibly die of AIDS before she had grown up into a fully-fledged woman constantly overwhelmed her, and she contemplated killing herself a couple of times.²⁶

Worse still for others, on top of being badly beaten and escaping death, they also had to endure other humiliating and degrading treatment such as having a whole box of cotton wool stuffed in the anus, and have had sticks forced up their vaginas²⁷. These horrendous acts were recorded by human rights activists like Joel Nkusane, the Catholic Commission for Justice Peace (CCJP) coordinator and two other colleagues who had to undergo counseling themselves after listening to these accounts.²⁸

However, rape and indecent assault were not the only weapons used against women, as many women were murdered for clearly expressing their political affiliations and views. Examples of such women include Dadirai Chipiro, Talent Mabika, Tabitha Marume, Ruth Mushayahembe, Rosemary Maramba, Pamela Pasvani, Abigail Chiroto, Sophia Chingozho, Jessica Ziyengwa, Ratidzai Dzenga, and Fungisai Ziome²⁹ to mention but a few women who were all supporters, relatives, or influential persons themselves within the MDC structures in their local communities.

Perpetrator's comments

Women were victims to the above forms of violence mainly because of their reproductive roles and the burden of care for the children, the sick, and the elderly whom they lived with, thereby constraining their capability to running away at the first sign of danger unlike their male counterparts. Women also fell victims to all these forms of violence either by direct involvement in political activities or by association with opposition elements such as their husbands or any other male relative who might have been involved in politics at that time. Thus women had to pay the price for this kind of involvement through various ways such as having their bodies or rights violated thus consequently suffer from all kinds of abuses.

This violence was also systematic and uniform in nature, sparing no age group, and hence all women ranging from young girls, adult women and elderly women were all exposed to the same kinds of PMV. The perpetrators, whether acting on direct orders from a command high above, or on opportunistic grounds, echoed the same alibis to their victims as justification for their actions. Thus the reasons ranged from punishment for betraying the struggle by supporting the MDC,

²⁴ RAU & ZADHR (2010) No Hiding Place: Politically Motivated Rape of Women in Zimbabwe page13.

²⁵ Ibid pg 13.

²⁶ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/feb28_2004.html#Zimbabwe%27s%20torture%20training%20camps Accessed 16 May 2011.

²⁷ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/apr15a_2009.html Accessed 14 June 2011.

²⁸ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/apr15a_2009.html Accessed 14 June 2011.

²⁹ <http://www.realchangetimes.com/index.php/roll-of-honour.html> Accessed 15 June 2011.

They accused us of trying to take back the country to the British (Zimbabwe's former colonial power). They told me that they were going to put me in my right place as a woman. They said they were beating me so I could learn to concentrate on raising my family instead of demonstrating. One of the police officers even boasted that he had been trained to kill traitors like me³⁰.

Mavis Mavhunga, 65, a widow, said four ruling party youths came to her hut before dawn last week to punish her for attending opposition meetings before the election. "They said at my age I must be old enough to know that this country came through the barrel of the gun. They said I should therefore be grateful" to the ruling party, Mavhunga recalled. The youths hit her with sticks and fists, then pulled up her dress to lash her across the buttocks. When she fainted, one of the youths poured a bucket of water on her head to revive her so the beating could continue, Mavhunga said, weeping as she recalled the pain.³¹

"They hit me on my back and ribs. As they beat me, they said to me: 'Did you think you could get away with betraying your country? You, old woman did you think you'd get away with this? 'I saw them shoot my son again before I fainted.'³²

"They kept thrusting themselves into me over and over again saying: 'This is the punishment for those of you who want to sell this country to Tony Blair and the whites'. When they had finished it hurt so much I couldn't walk.³³

For others it was punishment for being the opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai's "prostitute":

They said: "You are a prostitute of [MDC leader Morgan] Tsvangirai, so we are going to take this condom and put it on this gun and get it into you, because Tsvangirai is doing this to you and you enjoy having sex with him". I told them I had never had sex with Tsvangirai and they said: "That is your boyfriend and you should suffer for this." They put the gun inside me and they asked me if I was enjoying it. I said: "It is painful." They said: "It is not painful because when you have it with Tsvangirai you'll be smiling."³⁴

Tabitha Chingaya, a 42-year-old widow and leader of the local MDC women's league was coming home from drawing water from the river when she came upon seven young men she knew who happened to be ZANU PF party members. They blocked her path saying she would learn a lesson for being "Morgan Tsvangirai's prostitute." One man called "Max," who seemed to be the gang leader, ordered the others to stop. He removed his trousers and raped her. All the others followed suit, taking turns to hold her down. When they were done, Max took a log and began poking her vagina until she bled. She says the other six laughed and left her for dead.³⁵

Whilst for yet another group of women it was to atone for one's own, a son's, a relative's or for a husband's sins for supporting the MDC. Below are some of the comments said in justification of such actions;

³⁰ iwpr.net/report-news/police-brutality-victim-speaks-out - [Cached](#) Accessed on 7 May 2011.

³¹ www.kubatana.net/html/archive/polpar/080423wp.asp?... - [Cached](#) Accessed on 20 June 2011.

³² www.independent.co.uk > News > World > Africa - [Cached](#) Accessed on 20 June 2011.

³³ www.telegraph.co.uk/.../zimbabwe/.../Dora-12-gang-raped-by-Mugabes-m... Accessed on 4 April 2011.

³⁴ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/mar25_2003.html Accessed on 17 April 2011.

³⁵ humanprovince.wordpress.com/2008/.../mugabes-do-or-die-campai... - [Cached](#) Accessed on 21 June 2011.

*"Your man did not win this election," one shouted at her. "Next time you must get it right or you will die." "This is a war," she heard them shouting. "We will keep fighting until we win."*³⁶

*Two of the men raped her on her own bed and spat in her face, saying: "This is what you and your sell-out husband get for voting MDC."*³⁷

*"They said, 'You voted for the MDC, now we want to do this in order to teach you to vote. You wasted your vote by voting for Tsvangirai. He will never be the president of Zimbabwe. Robert Mugabe will remain, so we want to teach you to vote.'*³⁸

*"The young men told me that my sin was that I have a son who works in Harare, labelling everyone residing in urban areas as a sell-out because the MDC gets most of its support from towns and cities. I feared that they would assault or kill me, and had no option but to join my son here [in Harare] because at least it is safer".*³⁹

*"I was trying to tell them I did not know where my husband was since it was in the afternoon. They grabbed my baby, this one here and tied a sack around her waist. Then one of them started swinging her while holding her by the legs." "They said she was an MDC baby so they were going to take her away from me. They said that way my husband and I would have another baby, a Zanu PF baby this time, because they don't like MDC people, because they are sell-outs."*⁴⁰

*The driver was a nephew of the region 'former ZANU PF MP. "They said, 'why did you marry an MDC person?' I said, 'when I married, the MDC was not formed.' Then they started to beat me."*⁴¹

Politician's comments

Governments everywhere are duty bound to provide certain minimum standards that safeguard human rights and uphold justice that is satisfactory to their citizens from whom they derive their mandate to rule. This implies having to appoint appropriate non-partisan servicemen based on merit. In Zimbabwe however this has not been the case amongst the servicemen and politicians whom to a greater extent have largely or solely been responsible for the instigation of PMV and other human rights abuses against women and the perpetuation of impunity for such crimes over the past decade (i.e. 2000-2010). Quite often they have been quoted at public fora or rallies saying callous statements that assert their allegiance to ZANU PF and threaten the security of individual citizens who dare accept or go against the winds of political change⁴². These have led to increased violence against women in Zimbabwe during election period given that the female body is used as a tool in war situations, which is why opposing parties take pride in raping women,⁴³ and exposing them to all sorts of abuses. A classical example is Police Commissioner-General Augustine Chihuri, who has made it no secret that he hates the MDC, and has

³⁶ www.zimbabwesituation.com/apr12_2008.html Accessed on 25 June 2011.

³⁷ <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/top-stories/2008/04/26/inside-zimbabwe-torture-torment-and-tyranny-115875-20395031/> Accessed 17 June 2011.

³⁸ www.zimbabwesituation.com/apr27a_2008.html Accessed on 25 June 2011.

³⁹ www.zimbabwesituation.com/may1a_2008.html - Cached Accessed 26 July 2011.

⁴⁰ www.zimbabwesituation.com/jun2_2008.html - Cached Accessed on 25 June 2011.

⁴¹ www.zimbabwesituation.com/jun21a_2008.html - Cached Accessed on 6 June 2011.

⁴² Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2007), *Their Words Condemn Them: The Language of Violence, Intolerance and Despotism in Zimbabwe*, May 2007, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

⁴³ <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=2156> Accessed 30 June 2011.

been arresting several MDC supporters since its emergence in 2000. Even today some are still languishing in prison; i.e. the accused of the alleged murder of a policeman in Harare's Glen View suburb⁴⁴. In defence of his stance he declared:

*You don't allow puppets to run the country. Yes they are also people, but those are their names...No country is run by such irresponsible ignoramuses like that. We will not blink. Don't put your X on the wrong box. We are not intimidating you. If you don't vote wisely you betray the fallen heroes whose graves you toured." This country came through blood and the barrel of the gun and it can never be re-colonised through simple pen, which costs as little as five cents.*⁴⁵

Not to be outdone and while addressing Prison Officers in Harare, Paradzai Zimondi was also quoted as saying,

*"I would rather retire and go farming if Tsvangirai is elected President because I would have difficulty saluting a person who did not go to war."*⁴⁶

At a function to promote prison officers, he is also said to have ordered all correction services officers to vote for Mugabe and ZANU PF during the landmark 2008 elections saying,

*"I am giving you an order to vote for President Mugabe; I will only support the leadership of President Mugabe, I will not salute Makoni or Tsvangirai. We still remember the blood and the graves of our gallant sons and daughters who died for this country, and we shall not sell them out."*⁴⁷

Likewise, while speaking to the Zimbabwean Standard newspaper in support of President Robert Mugabe's candidature prior to the March 2008 harmonized elections, Army commander General Constantine Chiwenga vowed the army would not support an opposition led government, in the event of Robert Mugabe losing the election, arguing that Mugabe had sacrificed a lot for the country and deserved support. He remarked,

*'Elections are coming and the army will not support or salute sell-outs and agents of the West before, during and after the presidential elections.'*⁴⁸

In the same vein, while officiating at a shooting championship in Harare 2008, Major-General Martin Chedondo the commander of Army Skill reportedly told officers that they were bound to support Mugabe as he was the defense forces' boss. He was quoted as having said:

*"The Constitution says the country should be protected by voting in the 27 June presidential election run-off pitting our defence chief Cde Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC-T, we should, therefore, stand behind our Commander-in-Chief. "Soldiers are not apolitical. Only mercenaries are apolitical. We have signed and agreed to fight and protect the ruling party's principles of defending the revolution. If you have other thoughts, then you should remove that uniform."*⁴⁹

⁴⁴ <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/zimbabwe/50820/lawmakers-want-service-chiefs-reigned.html> Accessed on 13 July 2011.

⁴⁵ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/dec2_2010.html Accessed 7 May 2011.

⁴⁶ <http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/prison/090322vop.asp?...1> - [Cached](#) Accessed 8 May 2011

⁴⁷ www.thestandard.co.zw/local/17606.html - [Cached](#) Accessed 8 May 2011.

⁴⁸ www.swradioafrica.com/news100308/chiwenga100308.htm - [Cached](#) Accessed 8 May 2011.

⁴⁹ www.zimbabwesituation.com/jun30_2011.html - [Cached](#) Accessed 9 May 2011.

Worse, while addressing mourners at the funeral wake of late national hero, Retired Lieutenant-General Amoth Chimombe in Zaka East in 2008, Major General Engelbert Rugeje was quoted as having said:

ZANU PF came into power after a protracted war and therefore it will not let go of the country unless defeated by the MDC in a war. "This country came through the bullet, not the pencil. Therefore, it will not go by your X (voting mark) of the pencil. We cannot let the efforts of such people as the late Chimombe to liberate this country just go to waste," soldiers have a duty to protect the country from "going back to the enemy." "Today, I came here by helicopter with the late Chimombe's body. The next time I will come next week to Jerera, the helicopter will be full of bullets. You know what you did."⁵⁰

In comments before the run off in 2008 aimed at torpedoing the voting process, the octogenarian President, Robert Mugabe, in persistence of his war theme warning, threatened,

Zimbabwe's independence "came through the barrel of the gun, not the ballot", (ZTV (12/6, 7am) "This legacy should not simply be vanquished by the stroke of a pen at the ballot." The Sunday Mail (15/6) "This country shall not again come under the rule and control of the white man, direct or indirect...Anyone who seeks to undermine our land reform, itself the bedrock of politics from time immemorial, seeks and gets war" (The Sunday Mail 15/6) You can vote for him (Tsvangirai) but if he brings back the whites we go to war. You decide for yourselves to vote for war or vote for people who work for the development of the country" – The Herald (17/6). "We will never allow an event like an election reverse our independence, our sovereignty, our sweat and all that we fought for ... all that our comrades died fighting for." (The Zimbabwean 18/6). "The MDC will never be allowed to rule this country -- never ever, only God who appointed me will remove me -- not the MDC, not the British." (The Telegraph 20/6).

Recently, Brigadier General Douglas Nyikayaramba in a bid to justify the security forces involvement in political affairs of the state said that the army treats Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai as a security threat, a statement that has been described by the premier and legal experts as treasonous.⁵¹ However, surprisingly enough, soon after Nyikayaramba had made such statements, President Robert Mugabe who is the Commander-in Chief of the Defence Forces said nothing to condemn his service chief as would be expected under normal circumstances. He ironically went on to defend his most loyal henchmen (without whom he cannot be guaranteed of a major electoral landslide come poll times) by stating that:

"As Commander-in Chief of the security forces, I want to make it very clear that no one should meddle with the command and Parliament cannot be the commander in chief of the security forces. Never at all".... "Very few of our politicians today can dispense to these fine men and women any lessons on freedom and democracy. We don't want to teach them about freedom and democracy. They fought for it. It's their product."⁵²

Apart from service chiefs, politicians too echoed like-minded sentiments in support of President Mugabe's candidature prior to elections. Oppah Muchinguri, the then leader of ZANU PF women's league, and an ideal women's rights advocate, shocked the entire nation and many women's rights organizations at a meeting held at the party's Harare headquarters in early 2008 in support of President Mugabe's candidature, by declaring that:

⁵⁰http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jun21b_2008.html accessed 29 June 2011.

⁵¹www.zimbabwesituation.com/jul13_2011.html - [Cached](#) Accessed on 29 July 2011.

⁵²http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15551:leave-my-generals-president&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130 Accessed on 29 July 2011.

"If anyone tries to remove President Robert Mugabe from power, we will march in the streets and we are prepared to remove our clothes in support of his candidature in next year's election."⁵³

Likewise Saviour Kasukuwere, the Zanu PF Deputy Secretary for Youth (who is also the Minister of Youth Development, Indigenisation and Empowerment) admitted point blank, at the Chinhoyi Press Club in 2009, that the former ruling party had been responsible for deploying militias to spearhead violent election campaigns the previous year (2008) that left hundreds of opposition supporters including women dead. Thus, he claimed that all political parties had "abused" the youths to further their own ambitions⁵⁴. He boldly stated,

"We have done it . . . all political party youths were involved in it," he said. "MDC have done it as well. It's easy to take advantage of a young man or woman who is doing nothing. What do you do? You buy them beer . . . four crates after that you say let's go and do such and such a thing. They are young, naive and under the influence of alcohol. Wrong direction. . . wrong leadership. "The youth do it because normally they are easy to mobilise to do activities of violence that are not in the long run helpful to themselves. I think we have learnt our lessons."⁵⁵

Zimbabwean Laws Governing Politically Motivated Violence.

To date there is no specific law in Zimbabwe that specifically criminalises the perpetration of PMV per se, but there are various pieces of legislation outlawing certain acts of violence against other individuals. Thus, if one is to be found guilty of indecent assault, rape, arson or any other crime that is politically motivated, the case is not treated as such, but as a criminal act mainly when the MDC are alleged perpetrators. There is an urgent need for the enactment of a specific law that directly criminalises politically motivated violence in Zimbabwe if a long lasting solution towards ending politically motivated violence and attaining total peace is to be achieved.

For example, if someone were to be raped in Zimbabwe on political grounds, the rape case can only be criminalized under the Sexual Offences Act of 2001 (SOA) that seeks to protect women from sexual abuse and criminalizes marital rape and willful transmission of HIV and AIDS; it also prohibits trafficking of persons for purposes of prostitution. Since the beginning of the decade very few politically motivated sexual or any other violence cases have ever been filed within the police departments countrywide⁵⁶. This is a clear indication of where the loyalties of the police lie. Such attitudes create fertile ground for, further perpetuating impunity for PMV crimes.

Further, all the other acts just like the (SOA) that criminalise murder, indecent assault, arson, etc. are all contained within the Criminal Law Codification and Reform Act and in their very nature seem to be very effective when applied within the right context, but, when it comes to politically motivated violence criminal cases, they are however found lacking as they seem to be non-existent when it comes to the

⁵³ <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711010943.html> Accessed 28 June 2011.

⁵⁴ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jul5a_2009.html Accessed 13 April 2011.

⁵⁵ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jul5a_2009.html Accessed 13 April 2011.

⁵⁶ Although very few cases have been documented by human rights groups, it is not the case that this represents the real situation. RAU, in a national survey on women, found that 2% of women reported personal experience of politically motivated rape. See RAU (2010), *Preying on the "Weaker" Sex: Political Violence against Women in Zimbabwe*. Report produced by IDASA (An African Democracy Institute), the International Center for Transitional Justice [ICTJ] and the Research and Advocacy Unit [RAU]. November 2010. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT.

application of the law⁵⁷. There is an urgent need for the Zimbabwean Government to strongly support the enactment and implementation of a specific law that directly outlaws PMV to be perpetrated in whatever political context and timeframe.

Regional Laws Governing Politically Motivated Violence.

Zimbabwe is signatory to the Constitutive Act of 2000 of the African Union, which is the principal instrument and the founding treaty, that commits member states to democratic, representative, and responsive governance under conditions of peace and stability.

Also rooted in this Constitutive Act of 2000 is the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance that was adopted during the eighth ordinary session of the assembly of the AU convened in Addis Ababa on January 30, 2007. It is the most comprehensive human rights and democracy instrument in Africa and derives its authority and legitimacy from the Constitutive Act of the AU. In particular, Articles 3 and 4 commit member states to participatory democracy, constitutionalism, and the rule of law, human rights, peace and security, as well as sustainable human development in Africa, and builds on previous commitments to democratic governance enunciated through numerous declarations, decisions and instruments⁵⁸.

However, it is imperative to note that, by March 2010, the Charter had only been signed by thirty member states of the African Union.⁵⁹ Apart from the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, Zimbabwe is also signatory to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), but has not yet acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of NEPAD, which is a mutually agreed programme, voluntarily adopted by the member states of the African Union, to promote and re-enforce high standards of governance. It is a self-monitoring mechanism whose mandate is to ensure that the policies and practices of participating countries conform to the agreed values in four focus areas; that is, democracy and political governance, economic governance, corporate governance, and socio-economic development. As such, periodic reviews of the participating countries to assess progress being made towards achieving the mutually agreed goals are made⁶⁰. However, it is important to note that there is no conditionality attached to the peer review mechanism, hence member states known to be grossly abusing human rights in their countries will continue to remain untouchable for such abuses for as long as they choose to refrain from the APRM, and Zimbabwe is one such country.

Despite having ratified the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, a regional instrument for advancing gender equality and women's rights, in November 2009, and becoming the second country after Namibia to accede to this important regional instrument for advancing gender equality and women's rights⁶¹, Zimbabwe is still ranked as one of the highest holders of gross human rights violations the world over for crimes perpetrated during the period 2000-2010, thereby further exposing the flaws in SADC towards implementing a holistic approach in ameliorating the plight of women in Zimbabwe.

⁵⁷ Solidarity Peace Trust (2005), *Subverting Justice: The role of the Judiciary in denying the will of the Zimbabwe electorate since 2000*. MARCH 2005. ZIMBABWE & SOUTH AFRICA: SOLIDARITY PEACE TRUST.

⁵⁸ African Union Panel of the Wise, "Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence: Strengthening the role of the African Union in Preventing, Managing, and Resolving conflict," The African Union Series, New York: International Peace Institute, July 2010, pg. 28.

⁵⁹ Namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic of Congo, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo Brazzaville, Djibouti, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo and Uganda and ratified by only three signatories, Ethiopia, Mauritania, and Sierra Leone. Zimbabwe was excluded by then which meant that another twelve states still had to ratify it before it became a legally binding document. Zimbabwe remained untouchable for gross human rights abuses committed within the period 2000-2010 as a result.

⁶⁰ <http://www.nepad.org/economicandcorporategovernance/african-peer-review-mechanism/about/> accessed 29 July 2011.

⁶¹ <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/60355> Accessed 29 July 2011.

Therefore, until all AU, NEPAD, and SADC member states (Zimbabwe included) embrace the various democracy initiatives, including the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, NEPAD's APRM, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, these instruments will not nurture and consolidate democracy, peace, stability and the constructive management of conflicts in Africa.

International Laws Governing Politically Motivated Violence.

Zimbabwe is also signatory to a number of international bodies and institutions that have human rights instruments in place that directly criminalise PMV, but, surprisingly enough, Zimbabwe has only ratified a limited number of these core UN human rights treaties. A case in point is the Convention against Genocide of the United Nations. This convention bans acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group and declares genocide a crime under international law whether committed during war or peacetime thereby binding all signatories of the convention to take measures to prevent and punish any acts of genocide committed within their jurisdiction⁶². But, for obvious reasons, Zimbabwe has chosen to refrain from ratifying this act.

Apart from this convention, Zimbabwe is also not a signatory to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. This Convention bans torture under all circumstances, and establishes the UN Committee against Torture which sets out the rules on its membership and activities by requiring states to take effective legal and other measures to prevent torture, as well as provide appropriate punishment for those who commit torture.⁶³ However, since the Convention was passed and opened for ratification in February, 1985, Zimbabwe amongst other countries has not yet ratified it again for well-known reasons.

Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) without reservations, declarations, or objections.⁶⁴ It signed this convention which seeks to protect women from all forms of discrimination against women on the 13th of May 1991, yet to date gross human rights violations, especially against women, are being recorded in the country in large numbers.

Moreover, despite being a signatory to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the primary judicial organ of the United Nations, Zimbabwe has not yet acceded to the ICJ for obvious reasons. Similarly, Zimbabwe is not a signatory to the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court (ICC). The failure to accept these regional and international instruments makes it difficult for these international bodies to take action against the perpetration of PMV against women in Zimbabwe from 2000-2010 (and beyond) given that the previous Zimbabwean government has made sure of it that no international body or court has any form of jurisdiction whatsoever over what happens in Zimbabwe. In confirmation of this, The British Foreign Secretary Lord Howell of Guildford in June 2011 told the House of Lords,

*"Zimbabwe is not a party to the Rome Statute so the International Criminal Court (ICC) has no jurisdiction over events which have taken place in that country," "Hence for the ICC's Prosecutor to initiate an investigation in these circumstances would require either a referral by the United Nations Security Council, or the acceptance of ICC jurisdiction by the government of Zimbabwe."*⁶⁵

Coupled with this, several moves to get the United Nations Security Council to condemn Zimbabwe's actions, or to impose sanctions on the country, have always met with resistance from Zimbabwe's

⁶² <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html> Accessed 28 July 2010.

⁶³ <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/cat.html#Article2015> Accessed 28 July 2010.

⁶⁴ <http://www.cedaw2010.org/index.php/about-cedaw> Accessed 28 July 2011.

⁶⁵ <http://www.insiderzim.com/stories/2013-the-icc-has-no-jurisdiction-over-zimbabwe-says-british-foreign-minister.html> Accessed 28 July 2011.

erstwhile and former communist allies Russia and China, both having veto powers over Security Council resolutions. This reluctance to accede to international statute and international agencies, and including the SADC Tribunal, is widely perceived to be due to the fears of senior ZANU PF politicians and security force chiefs that they may be held accountable for violations since 2000, and even for the violations that took place in the 1980s.

Police responses to cases of PMV.

During the period 2000-2010, political violence erupted throughout Zimbabwe's ten provinces as a result of the contested national elections and Zimbabwean women of all ages targeted for their political affiliations. The local police and national leaders were unresponsive to these women's pleas for protection and justice, and to local and international demands for an end to this violence respectively. Hence they turned away many women in large numbers who sought to file a complaint for rape and many other serious abuses, for fear of inviting problems for themselves too. For that reason even those who attempted to approach state hospitals too for medical assistance were simply told by doctors:

"I don't want to cause trouble for myself therefore I don't have a choice but to turn you away", Makoni said.⁶⁶

In addition to this, after being raped by three youth militias at a base one after the other, a woman in her thirties, named Memory, decided to go to the police to report the matter, but to her utter surprise she was even more shocked to learn that they would not accept her statement. The policeman simply told her,

"We are not dealing with political violence cases. The time will come when we will deal with them."⁶⁷

Likewise for Sara's father, after discovering what had happened to his daughter also decided to go to the police station to report her case, only to be told,

"You people voted for a nonsense party, why didn't you vote for Zanu PF?"⁶⁸

Such has been the fate of many of Zimbabwe's female complainants. In efforts to back up their alibis in response to questions as to why the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) Support Unit beats up and detains anyone suspected to be planning a demonstration. A top police official who requested anonymity for fear of victimization confessed that it is mainly because the ZRP Support Unit continuously gets these and other directives from Zanu (PF) hardliners who instruct them to carry out such orders without prior investigation of the cause. Hence in their defence he remarked:

"Orders to beat up anybody opposing Zanu (PF) are still coming from the police top officials who are not happy with the current political set-up. We are instructed to harass civilians who happen to stage demos without finding out the reasons and basis for such actions. What we know as police is that we can only apply force to violent

⁶⁶"Our Hands Are Tied" Erosion of Law in Zimbabwe, HRW November 2008 pg. 1.

⁶⁷<http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/zimbabwe/56187> 2009-05-08, Issue 431 Accessed on 13 July 2011

⁶⁸ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/zimbabwe/1405372/Dora-12-gang-raped-by-Mugabes-men-for-four-hours.html> Accessed 27 June 2011.

demonstrations, not small law abiding civilians organizing their social meetings. The directives are barbaric and we have told junior officers not to follow them".⁶⁹

However, on the contrary, while commenting on the alleged instigation and prevalence of politically motivated sexual violence against women in Zimbabwe as a form of PMV against women, Police Assistant Commissioner Wayne Bvudzijena totally denied the allegations that women were being raped as part of a political campaign, and scoffed off at such allegations saying:

"Politics is never a reason for rape. I have come across murder, assault and public disturbances that are politically motivated, but never politically-motivated."⁷⁰

Be that as it may, and contrary to Police Assistant Commissioner Wayne Bvudzijena's remarks, only two cases of politically motivated sexual violence were documented in the public domain, during the period under review, as having been investigated and the perpetrators brought to trial. The perpetrators in these cases were none other than the commander of a ZANU PF youth base in the run up to the June 27 presidential election who was slapped with a 20 year jail term in 2008 after being convicted of raping the wife of an MDC activist.⁷¹ Kufa Ringeringe of Bota Village in Zaka pleaded not guilty to two counts of rape, but was however convicted on both charges by Masvingo regional magistrate, Esther Muremba, who deplored the rape of defenceless women under the guise of campaigning for President Robert Mugabe.⁷²

This, however, means that the rest of the perpetrators for these, and other crimes of PMV, are still at large, even up to today, as a result of the high dismissals of PMV cases by the police and the low conviction rates of PMV cases by the prosecutors and courts. The failure to apply uniform criteria particularly in relation to measures to protect victims further perpetuates impunity for crimes of this magnitude. Thus, many Zimbabwean women have remained without redress and they are still bitter as regards what happened to them given that they still bear the wounds and scars of the different kinds of PMV practices meted out against their bodies during the period 2000-2010 and beyond⁷³.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the above analysis, it is therefore evident that PMV terror and intimidation tactics have been employed by warring parties (and mostly ZANU PF supporters of various kinds), during the highly polarised political environment that has characterised Zimbabwe over the past decade, as punitive tools aimed at instilling fear, humiliating, and effecting total disengagement in politics on the part of the

⁶⁹ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jun25a_2009.html Accessed 28 June 2011.

⁷⁰ <http://www.irinnews.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=33974> Accessed 22 April 2011.

⁷¹ http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/oct27_2008.html Accessed 19 June 2011

⁷² http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/oct27_2008.html Accessed 19 June 2011.

⁷³ See RAU (2010), *Preying on the "Weaker" Sex: Political Violence against Women in Zimbabwe*. Report produced by IDASA (An African Democracy Institute), the International Center for Transitional Justice [ICTJ] and the Research and Advocacy Unit [RAU]. November 2010. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT; RAU (2010), *"When the going gets tough the man gets going!" Zimbabwean Women's views on Politics, Governance, Political Violence, and Transitional Justice*. Report produced by the Research and Advocacy Unit [RAU], Idasa [Institute for Democracy in Africa], and the International Center for Transitional Justice [ICTJ]. November 2010. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT.

women, men, sons, and male relatives who had dared openly or indirectly express their partisan affiliations. Therefore, in efforts to put an end to PMV once and for all, and in a bid to safeguard the security and rights of women, who, in most cases, are the major casualties, RAU strongly urges the Zimbabwean government to seriously consider the following recommendations:

- *Immediate security sector reforms to ensure all service chiefs are impartial and non-partisan, in the execution of their duties;*
- *Parties to the Global Political Agreement (GPA) to implement all the agreed provisions in the GPA;*
- *Parties to the GPA to continuously condemn and call for action against politically-motivated violence against women prior to, during and after elections;*
- *The separation of powers that will enable the judiciary to operate independently of the state as well as end impunity for PMV crimes;*
- *The implementation of preventative measures against politically motivated violence against women as well as rehabilitative measures for the victims of such;*
- *A specific provision in the constitution that criminalises PMV prior to, during and after election periods.*

Finally, the media needs to pay more careful attention both to the issue of violations against women and the manner in which they report on such violations, especially in widening the lexicon applied to reporting on violations.



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