

**ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE,  
1980-2006**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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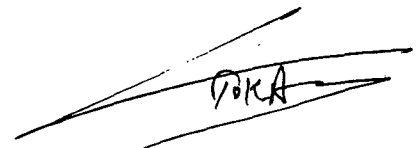
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**CERTIFICATE**

I declare that the dissertation entitled, “**ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE, 1980-2006**”, submitted by me, for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is my original work and has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree in any other University.

  
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We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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*DEDICATED  
TO  
MY DEAR PARENTS*

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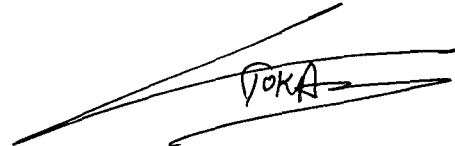
*I remain indebted to my parents for their blessings and consistent encouragement. I am grateful to my father Shri. Ishwar Singh Tokas and my mother Smti. Sarla Tokas for supporting my endeavour and extending their support . Special thanks to the enlightened*



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*Finally, I owe complete responsibility for any error and inadvertent lapses, which might have occurred.*

*Date: 18 July 2008*

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several sweeping lines that form the name 'CHETAN TOKAS'. The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized manner.

CHETAN TOKAS

## PREFACE

Zimbabwe has been under the rule of Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front since independence. The country is experiencing a deep economic crisis of its history. The economic crisis has direct repercussions in the political arena and there is a growing opposition and dissatisfaction with the present regime. The ever growing inflation rate which has reached to above 150000% suggests that the economic structure of the country is on the verge of breakdown. With elections held in March 2008, which according to some scholars have been rigged, provides a justified scope to take Zimbabwe as a case study.

After gaining independence from Britain in 1980, Zimbabwe has been under the rule of ZANU-PF which is being led by Robert Mugabe. Robert Mugabe who had a big support after the independence, his support base has been shrinking continuously. Opposition fractions have emerged openly in Zimbabwe which was earlier suppressed by Robert Mugabe under the garb of emergency. The Movement for Democratic Change which rose to the political arena after the 2000 referendum in which Robert Mugabe was defeated has been carrying forward its agenda under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangeraai. The opposition to Robert Mugabe's regime has been primarily because of his failure in delivering results in the economic sector. The failure of Land Reforms in 1980s and then the failure of the Structural Adjustment Programme in 1990s gave the Zimbabwean economy a big dent and its results are being felt by the Zimbabwean economy now.

The economic structure of the country is on the verge of breakdown. Rising deficit in the GDP and ever increasing inflation rates have not helped the population of Zimbabwe which is already divided on racial lines with big farms which are owned by whites. Under the Land Reforms, these farms were redistributed to the local inhabitants of Zimbabwe without adequate compensation to the whites. Whites who still are better off than the blacks are also leaving the country under such soaring prices of essential commodities. The government is following unrealistic policies of price control and forcing shopkeepers to sell commodities at fixed rates which has resulted in widespread

dissatisfaction and violence. The aged President faced elections in 2008 and there have been widespread allegations of corruption and inefficiency on his administration.

This economic and political instability in Zimbabwe has caused concerns for the neighboring countries and Southern African region as a whole. The authoritarian tendencies of Mugabe regime have already led to its expulsion from the commonwealth. These sustained authoritarian tendencies of the President have led to its dangerous economic situation today. The research study of Zimbabwe's economic and political instability will certainly add to the understanding of the country and will be very important considering its present deteriorated condition.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ZANU-PF	:	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
CAF	:	Central African Federation
UDI	:	Unilateral Declaration Of Independence
UNSC	:	United Nations Security Council
UK	:	United Kingdom
ZAPU	:	Zimbabwe African Peoples Union
LHA	:	Lancaster House Agreement
MP	:	Member of Parliament
SRHA	:	Southern Rhodesia House of Assembly
LAA	:	Land Apportionment Act
LHC	:	Lancaster House Conference
CLA	:	Communal Land Act
TTL	:	Tribal Trust Lands
CA	:	Communal Areas
LAA	:	Land Acquisition Act
CFU	:	Commercial Farmers Union
NCA	:	National Constitutional Assembly
WVA	:	War Veterans Association
LW	:	Liberation War
ZCTU	:	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
LOMA	:	Law and Order Maintenance Act
AWW	:	Africa's World War
GWA	:	Great War of Africa
DRC	:	Democratic Republic of Congo
SCW	:	Second Congo War
SADC	:	South African Development Community
ISO	:	International Socialist Organisation

NAGG	:	National Alliance for Good Governance
UPP	:	United People's Party
ZANU-N	:	Zimbabwe African National Union-Ndonga
ZPDP	:	Zimbabwe People's Democratic Party
ZYA	:	Zimbabwe Youth in Alliance
CAZ	:	Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe
PF	:	Patriotic Front
UP	:	United Party
RAP	:	Rhodesian Action Party
RFP	:	Rhodesian Front Party
UANC	:	United African National Council
ORO	:	Operation Restore Order
IOM	:	International Organisation of Migration
NGO	:	Non Governmental Organization
ZDHS	:	Zimbabwe Department of Health Services
GMB	:	Grain Marketing Board
CIO	:	Central Intelligence Organisation
OM	:	Operation Murambatsvina
UK	:	United Kingdom
USA	:	Union of South Africa
CAF	:	Central African Federation
WSR	:	White Southern Rhodesians
RFP	:	Rhodesian Front Party
UNSC	:	United Nations Security Council
LOMA	:	Law and Order Maintenance Act
MDC	:	Movement for Democratic Change
ESAP	:	Economic and Structural Adjustment Programme
NCA	:	National Constitutional Association
IFI	:	International Financial Institutions
USA	:	United States of America
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund

GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
LDC	:	Least Developed Countries
ZIMPREST	:	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation
LRP	:	Land Reform Policy
SDF	:	Social Development Fund
LRRP	:	Land Reform and Resettlement Programme
SAP	:	Structural Adjustment Programme
ACW	:	Angolan Civil War
AU	:	African Union
WFP	:	World Food Programme
IB	:	Indigenization Bill

**INTRODUCTION: KEY ISSUES AND CONCEPTS**

## 1.1 Zimbabwe: An Overview

### 1.1.1 Geographical Setup

The Republic of Zimbabwe is a landlocked country situated in Southern Africa. Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Mozambique and South Africa are the countries bordering Zimbabwe which has Harare as its capital. The estimated land area of Zimbabwe is 386,669 sq km and the population of the country as on 30 august 2007 was 12,311,143 with a growth rate of 0.6%.



Zimbabwe is divided into eight provinces and two cities with provincial status. These are territorial divisions for the purposes of administrative, political and

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<sup>1</sup> www.sas.upenn.edu retrieved on 31-05-08.



geographical demarcation. The provinces are subdivided into 59 districts and 1,200 municipalities.

### **1.1.2 Economic Features**

The Monetary unit of the country is Zimbabwean Dollar. Coal, chromium ore, Asbestos, Gold, Nickel, Copper, Iron ore, Vanadium, Lithium, Tin and Platinum group metals are some of the important natural resources of the country. Major trading partners are South Africa, Switzerland, UK, China, Germany and Botswana but Zimbabwe on the other hand has also been involved in border disputes with Botswana, Namibia and Zambia. The economy of Zimbabwe is collapsing under the weight of economic mismanagement, resulting in 85% unemployment and spiraling hyperinflation. The economy poorly transitioned after Robert Mugabe's leadership, deteriorating from one of Africa's strongest economies to one of the world's worst.

### **1.1.3 Political Structure**

Zimbabwe is a presidential republic. The President of Zimbabwe is both head of state and head of government. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and parliament. Parliament (formerly known as the House of Assembly) has 120 members elected by the common-roll electorate, 10 tribal chiefs, 12 presidential appointees, eight presidentially appointed provincial governors, the Speaker, and the Attorney General. It may serve for a maximum of five years. Some of the major political parties in Zimbabwe are ZANU (PF) - Zimbabwe African National Union and MDC – Movement for Democratic Change. Some of the minor parties are International Socialist Organisation, National Alliance for Good Governance, United People's Party, Zimbabwe African National Union - Ndonga, Zimbabwe People's Democratic Party and Zimbabwe Youth in Alliance.

### **1.1.4 Social Composition**

Shona ethnic group constitutes 82% of the population with Ndebele at 14%. Asians and Whites constitute 1% each. Syncretic is considered to be the religion followed

by half of the population of Zimbabwe. 25% follow Christianity and 24% follow their own indigenous beliefs. Literacy rate of the country in 2003 was 91% and the estimated unemployment was 80%. English has the status of being the official language and Shona and Ndebele are other major languages.

## **1.2 An estimate of the crisis in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe has been under the rule of Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front since independence. The country is experiencing a deep economic crisis of its history. The economic crisis has direct repercussions in the political arena and there is a growing opposition and dissatisfaction with the present regime. The ever growing inflation rate which has reached to above 150000%<sup>2</sup> suggests that the economic structure of the country is on the verge of breakdown. With elections held in March 2008, which according to some scholars have been rigged, provides a justified scope to take Zimbabwe as a case study.

After gaining independence from Britain in 1980, Zimbabwe has been under the rule of ZANU-PF which is being led by Robert Mugabe. Robert Mugabe who had a big support after the independence, his support base has been shrinking continuously. Opposition fractions have emerged openly in Zimbabwe which was earlier suppressed by Robert Mugabe under the garb of emergency. The Movement for Democratic Change which rose to the political arena after the 2000 referendum in which Robert Mugabe was defeated has been carrying forward its agenda under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangeraai. The opposition to Robert Mugabe's regime has been primarily because of his failure in delivering results in the economic sector. The failure of Land Reforms in 1980s and then the failure of the Structural Adjustment Programme in 1990s gave the Zimbabwean economy a big dent and its results are being felt by the Zimbabwean economy now.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.afriquenligne.fr/>, May 6, 2008. retrieved on 2008-05-08.

### **1.3 Early history of Zimbabwe**

Southern region of Africa suggests many centuries of human habitation. Archaeologists have found Stone-Age implements and pebble tools in several areas of Zimbabwe, a suggestion of human habitation for many centuries, and the ruins of stone buildings provide evidence of early civilization. The most impressive of these sites is the "Great Zimbabwe" ruins, after which the country is named, located near Masvingo. Evidence suggests that these stone structures were built between the 9th and 13th centuries A.D. by indigenous Africans who had established trading contacts with commercial centers on Africa's southeastern coast.

In the 16th century, the Portuguese were the first Europeans to attempt colonization of south-central Africa, but this hinterland lay virtually untouched by Europeans until the arrival of explorers, missionaries, ivory hunters, and traders some 300 years later. Meanwhile, mass migrations of indigenous peoples took place. Successive waves of more highly developed Bantu peoples from equatorial regions replaced the original inhabitants and are the ancestors of the region's Africans today.

In 1888, Cecil Rhodes obtained a concession for mineral rights from local chiefs. Later that year, the area that became Southern and Northern Rhodesia was proclaimed a British sphere of influence. The British South Africa Company was chartered in 1889, and the settlement of Salisbury (now Harare, the capital) was established in 1890. In 1895, the territory was formally named Rhodesia after Cecil Rhodes under the British South Africa Company's administration.

### **1.4 White Rule in Rhodesia**

Following the abrogation of the company's charter in 1923, Southern Rhodesia's white settlements were given the choice of being incorporated into the Union of South Africa or becoming a separate entity within the British Empire. The settlers rejected incorporation, and Southern Rhodesia was formally annexed by the United Kingdom that year. Rhodesia was an internally self-governing colony with its own legislature, civil service, armed forces, and police. Although Rhodesia was never administered directly

from London, the United Kingdom always retained the right to intervene in the affairs of the colony.

After 1923, European immigrants concentrated on developing Rhodesia's rich mineral resources and agricultural potential. The settlers' demand for more land led in 1934 to the passage of the first of a series of land apportionment acts that reserved certain areas for Europeans.

### **1.5 Forming the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland**

In September 1953, Southern Rhodesia was joined in a multiracial Central African Federation with the British protectorate of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in an effort to pool resources and markets. Although the federation flourished economically, the African population, who feared they would not be able to achieve self-government with the federal structure dominated by White Southern Rhodesians, opposed it. The federation was dissolved at the end of 1963 after much crisis and turmoil, and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland became the independent states of Zambia and Malawi in 1964.

The European electorate in Rhodesia, however, showed little willingness to accede to African demands for increased political participation and progressively replaced more moderate party leaders. In April 1964, Prime Minister Winston Field, accused of not moving rapidly enough to obtain independence from the United Kingdom, was replaced by his deputy, Ian Smith. Prime Minister Smith led his Rhodesian Front Party to an overwhelming victory in the 1965 elections, winning all 50 of the first roll seats and demoralizing the more moderate European opposition.

### **1.6 Unilateral Declaration Of Independence (UDI)**

Although United Kingdom was prepared to grant independence to Rhodesia, they insisted that the authorities at Salisbury first demonstrate their intention to move toward eventual majority rule. Desiring to keep their dominant position, the white Rhodesians refused to give such assurances. On November 11, 1965, after lengthy and unsuccessful

negotiations with the British Government, Prime Minister Smith issued a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from the United Kingdom.

The British Government considered the UDI unconstitutional and illegal but made clear that it would not use force to oppose it. On November 12, 1965, the United Nations also determined the Rhodesian Government and UDI to be illegal and called on member states to refrain from assisting or recognizing the Smith regime. The British Government imposed sanctions on Rhodesia and requested other nations to do the same.

On December 16, 1966, the UN Security Council, for the first time in this history, imposed mandatory economic sanctions on a state. Rhodesia's primary exports including ferrochrome and tobacco, were placed on the selective sanctions list, as were shipments of arms, aircraft, motor vehicles, petroleum, and petroleum products to Rhodesia. On May 29, 1968, the Security Council unanimously voted to broaden the sanctions by imposing an almost total embargo on all trade with, investments in, or transfers of funds to Rhodesia and imposed restrictions on air transport to the territory.

### **1.7 Post UDI developments**

In the early 1970s, informal attempts at settlement were renewed between the United Kingdom and the Rhodesian administration. Following the April 1974 coup in Portugal and the resulting shifts of power in Mozambique and Angola, pressure on the Smith regime to negotiate a peaceful settlement increased. In addition, sporadic antigovernment guerilla activity, which began in the late 1960s, increased dramatically after 1972, causing destruction, economic dislocation, casualties, and a slump in white morale.

In 1974, the major African nationalists groups – the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which split away from ZAPU in 1963 – were united into the "Patriotic Front" and combined their military forces. In 1976, a combination of embargo-related economic hardships, the pressure of

guerilla activity, independence and majority rule in the neighboring former Portuguese territories, and a UK-US diplomatic initiative, the Smith government agreed in principle to majority rule and to a meeting in Geneva with black nationalist leaders to seek an end to the conflict.

Blacks represented at the Geneva meeting included ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, ZANU leader Robert Mugabe, UANC chairman bishop Abel Muzorewa, and former ZANU leader Rev. Nadabaningi Sithole. The meeting failed to find a basis for agreement because of Smith's inflexibility and the inability of the black leaders to form a common political front. On September 1, 1977 a detailed Anglo-American plan was put forward with proposals for majority rule, neutrally administered with pre-independence elections, a democratic constitution and the formation of an integrated army. Reactions were mixed, but no party rejected them.

On March 3, 1978, the Smith administration signed the "internal settlement" agreement in Salisbury with Bishop Muzorewa, Rev. Sithole, and Chief Jeremiah Chirau. The agreement provided for qualified majority rule and elections with universal suffrage. Following elections in April 1979, in which his UANC party won a majority, Bishop Muzorewa assumed office on June 1, becoming "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia's" first black prime minister. However, the installation of the new black majority government did not end the guerilla conflict that had claimed more than 20,000 lives since 1972.

Shortly after British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's conservative government took power in May 1979, the British began a new round of consultations that culminated in an agreement among the Commonwealth countries as the basis for fresh negotiations among the parties and the British involving a new constitution, free elections and independence.

## **1.8 Lancaster House Agreement**

British and the African parties began deliberations on a Rhodesian settlement at Lancaster House in London on September 10, 1979. On December 10, in preparation for the transition under British authority to officially recognized independence, the "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia" reverted de facto to colonial status. On December 12, British Governor Lord Christopher Soames arrived in Salisbury to reassert British authority over the colony. His arrival signaled the end of the Rhodesian rebellion and "internal settlement." Zimbabwe began a transition to independence. The UK and US lifted all remaining sanctions shortly afterwards.

On December 21, after 3 months of hard bargaining, the parties signed an agreement at Lancaster House calling for a cease-fire, new elections, a transition period under British rule, and a new constitution implementing majority rule while protecting minority rights. The agreement specified that upon the granting of independence, the country's name would be Zimbabwe. The same day, the UN Security Council endorsed the settlement agreement and formally voted unanimously to call on member nations to remove sanctions.

During the transition period, nine political parties campaigned for the February 27-29 pre-independence elections. The elections were supervised by the British Government and monitored by hundreds of observers, most of who concluded that, under the prevailing circumstances, the elections were free and fair and reflected the will of the people. Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party won an absolute majority and was asked to form Zimbabwe's first government.

In a series of public statements during the transition period, Prime Minister Mugabe indicated that he was committed to a process of national reconciliation and reconstruction as well as moderate socioeconomic change. His priorities were to integrate the various armed forces, reestablish social services and education in rural areas, and resettle the estimated one million refugees and displaced persons. Mugabe also

announced that his government would begin investigating ways of reversing past discriminatory policies in land distribution, education, employment, and wages.

### **1.9 Zimbabwean Independence**

Mugabe stated that Zimbabwe would follow a nonaligned foreign policy and would pursue a pragmatic relationship with South Africa. He noted that Zimbabwe opposed apartheid and would support democratic change in South Africa. The British Government formally granted independence to Zimbabwe on April 18, 1980. Most nations recognized Zimbabwe following independence. The United States was the first nation to open an embassy in Salisbury (Harare) on that day. Parliament convened for the first time on May 13, 1980. Zimbabwe became a member of the United Nations in 1980.

In seeking national reconciliation, Prime Minister Mugabe's first cabinet comprised members of ZANU-PF, PF-ZAPU, and independent white members of parliament (MPs) and senators. The government embarked on an ambitious reconstruction and development program and instituted increases in minimum wages. Land redistribution proceeded under four experimental models on land that the government had purchased at market rates from willing sellers.

### **1.10 Post independence developments**

Prime Minister Mugabe's policy of reconciliation was generally successful during the country's first two years of independence, as the former political and military opponents began to work together. Although additional blacks were hired to fill new places in the civil service, there was no retribution for those whites who had worked for the Smith regime. Smith and many of his associates held seats in the parliament where they participated freely in debates. Likewise, Joshua Nkomo, Mugabe's rival as leader of the nationalist forces, was included in the first cabinet along with several other members of PF-ZAPU.



Splits soon developed, however. In 1981, several MPs from Smith's party left to sit as "independents," signifying that they did not automatically accept his anti-government posture. More importantly, government security officials discovered large caches of arms and ammunition on properties owned by ZAPU, and Nkomo and his followers were accused of plotting to overthrow Mugabe's government. Nkomo and his closest aides were expelled from the cabinet.

### **1.11 Defiance and Dissidence Against Mugabe's Rule**

As a result of what they perceived as persecution of Nkomo (known as "Father Zimbabwe") and of his party, PF-ZAPU supporters, some of them deserters from the army, began a loosely organized and ill-defined campaign of dissidence against the government. Centering primarily in Matabeleland, home of the Ndebeles who were PF-ZAPU's main followers, this dissidence continued through 1987 and involved attacks on government personnel and installations, armed banditry aimed at disrupting security and economic life in the rural areas, and harassment of ZANU-PF members.

### **1.12 Continuing the State of Emergency**

There had been an occasional demand that Nkomo and his colleagues be reinstated in the cabinet. More frequently, however, dissidents called for the return of farms and other properties seized from PF-ZAPU. Because of the unsettled security situation immediately after independence and the continuing anti-government dissidence, the government kept in force a "state of emergency," which was first declared before UDI. This gave government authorities widespread powers under the "Law and Order Maintenance Act," including the right to detain persons without charge.

In 1983-84, the government declared a curfew in areas of Matabeleland and sent in the army in an attempt to suppress dissidents. Credible reports surfaced of widespread violence and disregard for human rights by the security forces during these operations,

and the level of political tension rose in the country as a result. The pacification campaign, known as the *Gukuruhundi*, or strong wind, resulted in as many as 20,000 civilian deaths. (More recent investigations into the *Gukuruhundi* have suggested even higher numbers for civilian deaths.)

Nkomó and his lieutenants repeatedly denied any connection with the dissidents and called for an all-party conference to discuss the political problems facing the country. In the 1985 elections, ZANU-PF increased its majority, holding 67 of the 100 seats. The majority gave Mugabe the opportunity to start making changes to the constitution as agreed at the Lancaster House meetings, including those with regard to land restoration. ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU agreed to unite in December 1987, and the parties formally merged in December 1989.

### **1.13 Mugabe wants Absolute Power – A One Party State for Zimbabwe**

In October 1987, in accordance with the Lancaster House Accords, the constitution was amended to end the separate roll for white voters and to replace the whites whose reserved seats had been abolished; among the new members were 15 whites in the Senate and House of Assembly. Elections in March 1990 resulted in another overwhelming victory for Mugabe and his party, which won 117 of the 120 election seats. However, voter turnout was only 54%, and the campaign was not free and fair although the actual balloting was.

Not satisfied with a *de facto* one-party state, Mugabe called on the ZANU-PF Central Committee to support the creation of a *de jure* one-party state in September 1990 and lost. The state of emergency was lifted in July 1990. After the last restrictions of the Lancaster House agreement expired, April 18 1990, the government began further amending the constitution. The judiciary and human rights advocates fiercely criticized the first amendments, enacted in April 1991, because they restored corporal and capital punishment and denied recourse to the courts in cases of compulsory purchase of land by the government.

### **1.14 Demonstrating Against Mugabe's Reforms**

During the 1990s students, trade unionists and workers often demonstrated to express their discontent with the government. Students protested in 1990 against proposals for an increase in government control of universities and again in 1991 and 1992, when they clashed with police. Trade unionists and workers also criticized the government during this time. In 1992, police prevented trade unionists from holding anti-government demonstrations. In 1994 there was widespread industrial unrest. In 1996, civil servants, nurses, and junior doctors went on strike over salary issues.

### **1.15 Growing Opposition to Mugabe**

In part through its control of the media, the huge parastatal sector of the economy, and the security forces, the government has managed to keep organized political opposition to a minimum through most of the 1990's. Beginning in 1999, however, Zimbabwe has experienced a period of considerable political and economic upheaval. Opposition to President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF government has grown in recent years, in part due to worsening economic and human rights conditions. The opposition is currently led by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which was established in 1999.

The MDC's first opportunity to test opposition to the Mugabe government came in February 2000, when a referendum was held on a draft constitution proposed by the government. Among its elements, the new constitution would have permitted President Mugabe to seek two additional terms in office, granted government officials immunity from prosecution, and authorized government seizure of white-owned land. The referendum was handily defeated. Shortly thereafter, the government, through a loosely organized group of war veterans, sanctioned an aggressive land redistribution program often characterized by forced expulsion of white farmers and violence against farmers.

Parliamentary elections held in June 2000 were marred by localized violence, and claims of electoral irregularities and government intimidation of opposition supporters. Nonetheless, the MDC succeeded in capturing 57 of 120 seats in the National Assembly.

The Zimbabwean Constitution, initially from the Lancaster House Agreement a few months before the 1980 elections, chaired by Lord Carrington institutionalizes majority rule and protection of minority rights. Since independence, the Constitution has been amended by the government, to provide for:

- The abolition of seats reserved for whites in the country's Parliament in 1987;
- The abolition of the office of Prime Minister in 1987, and the creation of an executive presidency; and
- The abolition of the Senate in 1990, and the creation of appointed seats in the House of Assembly. A Senate was reintroduced in 2005.

The elected government controls senior appointments in the public service, including the military and police, and ensures that appointments at lower levels are made on an equitable basis by the independent Public Service Commission.

The ruling Zimbabwean African National Union--Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party's Soviet-style politburo, effectively outranks the Cabinet as the nation's top policy making council. Its 26 members include veteran politicians, ministers and service chiefs appointed by the President. Zanu PF Robert Mugabe, elected Prime Minister in 1980, revised the constitution in 1987 to make himself President. President Mugabe's affiliated party won every election from independence April 18 1980 to parliamentary elections in March 2008, however the latter results are still in dispute. In some quarters corruption and rigging elections have been alleged. In particular the elections of 1990 were nationally and internationally condemned as being rigged, with the second-placed party, Edgar Tekere's Zimbabwe Unity Movement, winning only 20% of the vote. Presidential elections were held in 2002 amid allegations of vote-rigging, intimidation, and fraud, and in March 2008.

### **1.16 Political Environment since 2000**

The ZANU PF regime had confronted its first major political challenge in 2000 when it lost a Constitutional Referendum and the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change almost won a popular majority at the Parliamentary elections. The government launched a campaign of systematic intimidation against the MDC MPs, and putting their leader on trial for treason. Journalists writing for the main opposition newspaper were arrested and harassed, and the newspapers closed down in 2004. Large numbers of ZANU PF militants were sent to political training camps, and then let loose as youth militias in many constituencies where they intimidated and often assaulted opposition supporters. Members of the ZANU PF War Veterans movement were put into key positions in the police and the army, and Chiefs and Headmen in the rural areas were given increased salaries and allowances to guarantee their support. The government also gave the state controlled Grain Marketing Board monopoly powers to buy maize, and used it to deny food to many of its opponents.

By the middle of 2004 ZANU PF had shown that it could win bye-elections in even the safest MDC seats by using militias to force MDC supporters to stay at home, manipulating electoral rolls, and additional bussing voters into constituencies. Army officers ran the 2005 election, key constituency boundaries were redrawn, and an out-of date electoral register retained, and election monitors from the UN and Western countries were refused entry.

During the election carefully selected election monitors from the region were admitted for the last three weeks of the campaign when the MDC was also allowed to campaign freely for the first time. It was able to win 41 urban seats out of the 120 contested, and to significantly increase its rural vote. This allowed the official election monitors to claim that the result did reflect the national will, although they did not recognise it as 'free and fair'. However, widespread irregularities were recorded in a detailed survey by the National Constitutional Association. More than 10% of voters were turned away from polling booths, and there were major discrepancies between the number of votes that polling agents announced at the end of the day, and those on which the final results were based. Since the President has the power to appoint a further 30

MPs, ZANU PF now has the two thirds majority it requires to alter the constitution. The MDC retains a strong enough presence to represent the country's main hope for the future, but Mugabe has made it plain that it will have no influence over forthcoming events.

The regime has also been able to retain the support of most of the states in the region, despite these abuses and its economic failures, because of Mugabe's ability to present himself as anti-colonial nationalist restoring economic rights to his people, and their reluctance to criticise each other.

### **1.17 The Nature of the Economic Breakdown after 2000**

The scale of the economic catastrophe inflicted on the country by the ZANU PF government since 2000 is inexpressible. This process of economic decay has had devastating social consequences. Thousands of people are now suffering from serious food shortages, and a million tons of food imports are needed to avert widespread starvation. Displaced farm workers now live as internal migrants in unbearable conditions. People have died from AIDs and other diseases, deprivation and stress. People have emigrated and live as illegal economic migrants in South Africa, Botswana and Europe, destroying the basis for stable family life. The middle classes have also suffered since inflation has destroyed their personal savings and pensions. Health, education and other social services have collapsed, and life expectancy has fallen from more than 60 in the late 1990s to about 35 now. Population has now started to decline. To overcome these problems we will now first study the logic of the political and economic forces that have driven this process of political and economic decay, and use this analysis as the basis for a new approach that will not only overcome these economic problems, but also enable those responsible to secure the political support required to remain in power and rebuild state capacity.

### **1.18 Populist Policies and Economic Breakdown**

Zimbabwe was a relatively well- managed African state up to the second half of the 1990s. By the start of 1997 it had completed a difficult and socially disruptive Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), but both its exports and output were growing

strongly. In August 1997 it began to take a series of decisions that have led it inexorably from one crisis to another, and now to a situation of virtual collapse where many people will be facing actual starvation if the government does not make an urgent appeal for foreign aid.

At the most general level, it is clear that the shift from the relatively disciplined economic policies that prevailed up to the middle of 1997 to a range of populist measures was a function of a growing sense of political vulnerability, and a corresponding willingness to use its economic power to transfer resources to key stakeholders and, in doing so, to undermine the profitability and productivity of the real economy. This, in turn, further reduced the regime's long-term capacity to acquire the taxes and foreign exchange it needed to maintain the state's capacity to deliver essential services, and also to satisfy its own supporters. It has then had to turn to further short-term measures that have further worsened the situation, leaving it now confronting the terminal breakdown.

The first indication of declining support was evident at the 1996 elections where ZANU PF was virtually unopposed, but voter turnout was very low. More significant, by 1997 the government's failure to generate formal sector jobs, exacerbated by ESAP, had led to widespread strikes from civil servants and other workers, and to threatening demonstrations from veterans of the civil war of the 1970s. These activities were complemented by a significant growth in activism amongst a wide range of civic organizations that came together under the auspices of the National Constitutional Association (NCA) in 1998 to campaign for a more democratic constitutional system. This opposition finally culminated in the formation of the opposition MDC in 1999 and in the loss of the government's Constitutional Reform Referendum in February, and in the MDC almost winning a popular majority in the parliamentary elections in April 2000 and the Presidential elections in 2002. All these developments led to the revival of almost forgotten demands for the transfer of white-owned commercial farms to black owners, and to the decision to encourage violent farm invasions by war veterans and less widespread occupations of commercial and industrial businesses.

The ZANU PF regime has used four key mechanisms to buy political support – fiscal transfers, foreign exchange controls, the seizure of private assets, and the allocation

of monopolies and subsidies to state enterprises and in doing so, to undermine the viability of the economic system and policy.

First, the ZANU PF regime had always run a high taxation policy, and it was its inability to bring the fiscal deficit under control during ESAP that had undermined much of the rest of the programme, and lost the full support of the International Financial Institutions. (IFIs) In early 1997 it was attempting to negotiate an extension of IFI support, but it was then confronted with the War Veteran's demonstration, and responded by giving them large and unbudgeted payouts in August 1997. This led to a serious loss of business confidence and a collapse in share prices and in the value of the currency. Despite this it then send its troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1998. Zimbabwe's engagement in war seriously worsened the fiscal deficit and alienated the IFIs even further. Inflation rate was as high as 600% at the end of 2003.

Second, the currency crisis at the end of 1997 persuaded the government to reintroduce the forex controls relaxed during the ESAP period and kept the rate at an increasingly overvalued level from then onwards in order to give it access to the foreign currency.

Third, the government responded to growing apathy in the rural areas by resurrecting its demand for land transfers that had virtually been in abeyance since the mid-1980s. It announced its intention of changing the constitution to enable it to take over land without paying full compensation at the end of 1998 and simultaneously nationalized all of the water and dams on privately owned farms. It led to a loss of business and farming confidence. But, most crucially, it encouraged the War Veterans to mount a campaign of violent farm invasions after the referendum and parliamentary elections. The government set up a hasty and badly managed redistribution programme in which many large farms were kept intact and allocated to favored politicians, soldiers, judges and officials.

Fourth, the government continued to control the supply of many key services and the commodities through state enterprises – power, transport, communications, food, steel, and many other activities. It used subsidies to control key prices – notably fuel which has always been heavily undervalued, and had controlled the prices of key foodstuffs. Lucrative jobs were given to key supporters including an increasing number



of retired army officers, and crony businessmen given favoured access to soft contracts. Their resources have also been systematically abused to in order to support the existing regime. Zim Air provides the President with free international flights at short notice and the national bus company provides ZANU supporters with free transport to rallies. None of them have published accounts for many years, but they are all losing money, intensifying the fiscal crisis and denying the private sector access to essential services.

The Reserve Bank has now insisted on a full audit of their accounts before it will bale them out further, but many commentators believe that the elites who control them will never allow this to happen. By the end of 2003 the disastrous policy decisions had had three major effects.

First, they had allowed the regime to reward its leading followers; obtain the resources needed to maintain minimal levels of state capacity, and to retain the support of the military, the police, and the traditional chieftaincy.

However, second, they had systematically undermined the society's capacity to generate the resources it needs to continue this process in the longer term, and therefore made it more and more difficult for the regime to continue to finance itself without inflicting further costs on the economic and social system.

And third, they had also involved the forcible transfer of massive resources from almost every social group in the society described earlier, and not just from the white commercial farmers that captured the attention of the West.

### **1.19 Economic developments 2000–2008**

Poor management of the economy and political turmoil has led to considerable economic hardship in Zimbabwe. The Government of Zimbabwe's chaotic land reform program, recurrent interference with, and intimidation of, the judiciary, as well as maintenance of unrealistic price controls and exchange rates has led to a sharp drop in investor confidence.

Between 2000 and December 2007, the national economy contracted by as much as 40%; inflation vaulted to over 66,000%, and there were persistent shortages of foreign

exchange, local currency, fuel, medicine, and food. GDP per capita dropped by 40%, agricultural output dropped by 51% and industrial production dropped by 47%. Direct foreign investment has all but evaporated. In 1998, direct foreign investment was US \$400 million. In 2007, that number had fallen to US \$30 million. Billions were spent in the country's involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mugabe's supporters maintain that economic hardship has been brought about by Western-backed economic sanctions instituted through the United Nations. As of February 2004 Zimbabwe's foreign debt repayments ceased, resulting in compulsory suspension from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This, and the United Nations World Food Programme stopping its food aid due to insufficient donations from the world community, forced the government into borrowing from local sources. In July 2005 Zimbabwe was reported to be appealing to the South African government for US\$1 billion of emergency loans, but despite regular rumours that the idea was being discussed no financial support was obtained from South Africa. The inefficient administration of Mugabe has been held responsible for all these economic hardships. That the country is on the verge of an economic breakdown is easily calculated by senior statesmen. It would be a challenge for the 28 year old regime to counter the opposition and come up with some popular policies which would also help gain prestige.

**ECONOMIC CRISIS SINCE INDEPENDENCE**

## **2.1 Breakdown of the economic structure of Zimbabwe**

The economic structure of Zimbabwe is on the verge of breakdown. Rising deficit in the GDP and ever increasing inflation rates have not helped the population of Zimbabwe which is already divided on racial lines with big farms which are owned by whites. Under the Land Reforms, these farms were redistributed to the local inhabitants of Zimbabwe without adequate compensation to the whites. Whites who still are better off than the blacks are also leaving the country under such soaring prices of essential commodities. The government is following unrealistic policies of price control and forcing shopkeepers to sell commodities at fixed rates which has resulted in widespread dissatisfaction and violence. The aged President faced elections in 2008 and there have been widespread allegations of corruption and inefficiency on his administration.

Most African states acquired democratic constitutions at independence, but soon fell prey to oligarchical rulers or military dictators. Corruption, mismanagement and disruptive conflict produced growing poverty, inequality and economic decline, and dependence on the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) for financial support and policy guidance. The generalised nature of the resulting political, economic and social crisis means that it must stem from deep-seated structural and societal factors rather than the personalities of particular leaders or short-term economic conditions. Radical theorists attributed it to unfavourable external factors and 'neo-colonialism' Mainstream theorists attributed it to the domestic political and policy mismanagement, and over-extended national states.

## **2.2 Explaining Political Disorder and State Failure in Africa**

Treating the African crisis as a function of state failure turns it into a problem for political science. It was in the 1960s that Huntington argued that the discipline had yet to provide "models of corrupt or degenerating societies highlighting the decay of political organization and the increasing dominance of disruptive social forces". We have theories of political *development* emerged in the 1950s and 1960s to explain transitions from colonialism to democracy, but they used functionalist models that failed to anticipate or explain the problems of political disorder and decay that were already evident in 1968. A

series of alternative explanations have subsequently emerged to address this problem. We can find these explanations in the dependency theory at the end of the 1960s, and neo-liberalism and neo-patrimonialism in the 1980s. They provided important but partial insights into the failed state problem. Here I will try to outline their basic assumptions and then use them to build a more comprehensive approach.

### **2.3 Neo-Patrimonialism and Primary Accumulation**

We can analyze the state failure in Africa by identifying the contextual factors that are involved in processes of institutional transformation rather than system maintenance.

First, political and economic markets depend on the existence of communities composed of fully informed and autonomous individuals, but people can only acquire the appropriate “aptitudes and dispositions” and “self-knowledge and identities” when they are already incorporated into the practices that only liberal institutions make possible.

Second, running the complex state apparatuses, political parties, pressure groups, media organisations, and educational and research institutions that sustain democracy is costly, and depends on the productivity of the economic system that has to finance them. Hence viable democracies are not just a function of appropriate rule systems, but of the existence of these historically contingent and contextual factors.

Combining the idea of primary accumulation with neo-patrimonialism provides us with convincing explanations for state failure in Africa. Here competing elites capture state power using divisive tribal or sectarian identities to build clientelistic support networks, and use that power to extract the resources they need to maintain their support and build capitalist enterprises. Free elections, merit-based bureaucracy and competitive markets are impossible in such environments because: on the one hand, public service remains personalized by way of clientelism and nepotism; on the other, access to the public institutions of the state is seen as the main means of personal enrichment – even if the fruits of such labour are thereafter to be redistributed or even reinvested.

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## **2.4 The Political Economy of State Failure in Africa**

While studying the political economy of states we find that states generally have three distinct but interdependent roles.

First, they make and enforce general social rules and maintain social unity by sustaining institutions that allow conflicting social interests to be expressed and managed. These 'political' activities involve the identification and aggregation of interests, the negotiation of compromises between competing social demands and the maintenance of support for the state as a collective system.

Second, states also produce public goods by creating an administrative apparatus that supplies private agents with essential services, but also competes with them for the resources that it needs.

Third, they provide the regulatory framework that governs the terms on which private and public enterprises relate to each other, generate livelihoods and provide the taxes required to finance the state apparatus. Political scientists generally focus on these 'political' and administrative problems, and economists on those related to the production of goods and services, but state capacity actually depends on the government's ability to maintain a symbiotic relationship between its political, administrative and economic roles. Politics in Africa has generally operated on authoritarian and corrupt principles that have produced destructive short-term results.

## **2.5 Corporatism, Liberalism and the African Crisis**

Years after independence, Africa's capacity to maintain its political, economic, and social institutions and to provide for its people is in crisis. Many countries now governed by predatory political and economic elites ignore the public interest in order to maximize their returns.

Zimbabwe's recent history provides us with an important 'natural experiment' in understanding the impact of corporatist, as opposed to liberal policy, regimes on developmental trajectories in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Between 1980 and 1989, Zimbabwean officials used licensing, subsidies and protectionism to keep private firms under tight control. They then adopted a classical ESAP involving the removal of many restrictions on trade, credit, foreign exchange, investments, and labour. This

generated a major restructuring, involving significant costs and losses, but by 1997 the country seemed to have completed a difficult transition that gave many grounds for optimism.

In 1997 senior business leaders were confident the economy had grown by 7.3 percent in 1996; exports had increased from 23.9 percent of GDP in 1991 to 36.1 percent in 1996; foreign exchange reserves were high; and employment was beginning to recover after a sustained period of downsizing. In June 1998, the IMF approved a Stand-By credit of \$175 million in response to promises that the government would adopt “a package of corrective policy measures”.

There was therefore good reason to believe that growth could now be sustained at the 6 percent level anticipated in the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) developed to succeed the ESAP in 1996, and therefore that “the worst was now behind”.<sup>1</sup> However, a series of counter-productive political decisions were taken from late 1997: large payments to war-veterans that undermined fiscal discipline, land appropriation, policy reversals on taxation and prices, and a decision to send the Zimbabwean army to the Congo. Corporatist controls over the exchange rate and many other prices were re-established that destroyed the viability of many firms and reduced the incentive to invest, and violent land expropriations followed. As a result, GDP fell by about 26 percent between 2000 and 2002,<sup>2</sup> and inflation was more than 600 percent by the beginning of 2004.

Food production was less than 50 percent of a normal year in 2003, and declined further in 2004 as a result of shortages of fertilizers and fuel. This destructive shift clearly represented a break with the relatively disciplined and coherent decision-making processes of the previous 18 years, and requires explanation. It could be attributed to the nature of the changes in the relationship between the state and the economic system, in the political regime based on the hegemonic authority of ZANU and President Mugabe, and in civil society generated by the liberalisation process.

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<sup>1</sup> Clever Mumbengegwi & Ramos Mabugu, ‘Macroeconomic and adjustment policies in Zimbabwe (1980-2000)

<sup>2</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report, December 2003*, Draft, London: EIU, 2003.

Under the garb of all these events we can clearly see that the major changes in rules, incentives, and power relations induced by the policy changes in Zimbabwe generated a major threat to the security of the ZANU based political regime and to the viability of the state apparatus that sustained it. These threats were not only economic but also political. The existence of a de facto one-party state up to 1996 meant that the regime did not have to confront serious electoral threats, and therefore was guaranteed, at least a surrogate for, the 'embedded autonomy' that is said to have been the pre-condition for East Asian economic success.<sup>3</sup> The emergence of a major political threat to its authority after 1996 changed all of this and forced it into increasingly contradictory attempts to satisfy the demands of a growing number of stakeholders with very contradictory needs. We can easily analyse it was the culmination of these tensions that generated the breakdown that surfaced at the end of the 1990s.

## **2.6 Crises, Policy Regimes and Breakdown in Zimbabwe**

In 1980, the new ZANU government had taken over a corporatist policy regime that had been created by its settler based predecessor, and added some redistributive elements to it; it then made a rapid shift to liberalisation in 1991 that was effectively dismantled again in 1998/9. Thus recent Zimbabwean history provides a well-documented natural experiment in the effects of the neo-liberal policies that have dominated the past 20 years, while it also has many distinctive features. It was a settler rather than a peasant economy, and therefore emerged from its colonial phase with well-developed industries and capitalist firms, a modern proletariat, good state services and relatively high per capita incomes. It also suffered from higher levels of economic inequality and racist exclusion that had led to a violent struggle for independence, and to the emergence of an authoritarian political movement profoundly imbued with a sense of its exclusive right to rule. These differences have given a specific complexion to the

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Evans, *Embedded autonomy: states and industrial transformation*. Princeton:

Princeton University Press, 1995. Herbst (1990) and Skålnes (1995), describe the relationship between government and the major economic interests.



institutional arrangements and social relationships that existed during both periods, to the crises that they generated, and to their outcomes.

## **2.7 Economy in the 1980s**

The new government under Robert Mugabe promoted socialism under which racial and class inequality would be eliminated. The economy partially relied on international aid. The new regime inherited one of the most structurally developed economies and effective state systems in Africa. Initially the government followed a corporatist model where the government sought to manage the economy. Some of these policies were a continuation those created by its predecessor to deal with sanctions imposed in 1965. The State already had ownership of utilities and agricultural marketing agencies. The new government merely added to this by buying out more private companies. A whole range of new economic policies were propagated. A minimum wage was introduced and the right to fire workers was virtually eliminated. Expenditure on health and education rose by 10 percent, public-sector employment by 60 percent, civil service by 12 percent per annum over the course of the 1980s. Central government expenditure tripled and increased its share from 32.5 percent of GDP in 1979 to 44.6% in 1989.

The consequences during this time were rather mixed. Economic inequality within the population decreased and provision of education and healthcare became more widespread. However, economic growth was rather limited. During the 1980s GDP per capita increased by 11.5%. The country was falling further behind the developed world. During the same time period the USA had a 38% increase in that time in GDP per Capita. Thus the relative poverty of the country actually increased during this time. This was in part, due to the economic policies as well as due to the exodus of white Zimbabweans who were often the most skilled and knowledgeable in the population.

There were several reasons for the low performance of the economy. Protection sustained existing high cost companies, but discouraged exports by raising the costs of

inputs to exporters, leading to a critical shortage of the foreign exchange needed to acquire imported technology. Foreign companies were not allowed to remit dividends, and new foreign investment was actively discouraged. The need to get permission and licenses for new investment and the dismissal of individual workers imposed heavy time and transaction costs. Repressed interest rates discouraged saving and the state's high propensity to borrow reduced the supply of capital to all but favored borrowers. The regime did not encourage, and even suppressed, the development of independent new African businesses because of the threat they were thought to offer to ZANU's political monopoly.

Public spending skyrocketed, particularly in the areas of civil service employment, spending on social services, drought relief, and subsidies for government owned companies. This in turn generated a chronic budget deficit, a high tax regime, and a rapid increase in public debt - all of which created a drag on the economy. Private investment was crowded out by shortages of credit stemming from the fiscal deficit, high taxes and the shortages of foreign exchange. The overall effects of these constraints favored existing capital-intensive producers, biasing the economy against areas labor-intensive activities. Compounding the problem, all companies were effectively discouraged from employing new workers because of controls over wages and employment.

This had two politically significant consequences. First, it suppressed the emergence of a genuinely entrepreneurial African business class and reduced the political support of those that did make their way despite these problems. Second, it turned unemployment into a major threat to the legitimacy of the regime, especially in urban areas. Wages were actually allowed to decline over the decade.

Following the Lancaster House settlement in December 1979, Zimbabwe had enjoyed a brisk economic recovery. Zimbabwe had inherited one of the strongest and most complete industrial infrastructures in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as rich mineral resources and a strong agricultural base. Real growth for 1980-81 exceeded 20%. However, depressed foreign demand for the country's mineral exports and the onset of a

drought cut sharply into the growth rate in 1982, 1983, and 1984. In 1985, the economy rebounded strongly due to a 30% jump in agricultural production. However it slumped in 1986 to a zero growth rate and registered a 3% contraction in GDP in 1987 due primarily to drought and foreign exchange crisis. Growth in 1988-90 averaged about 4.5%.

## **2.8 Land Reform in 1980s**

One of the major factors behind the economic turmoil of Zimbabwe has been its defective Land Reform Policy. Land reform in Zimbabwe began after the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement in 1979 in an effort to more equitably distribute land between the historically disenfranchised blacks and the minority-whites who ruled Zimbabwe from 1923 to 1979. The government's land distribution is perhaps the most crucial and the most bitterly contested political issue today.

The white farmer population first came to Southern Rhodesia in the 1890s. In 1918, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London ruled that the land of Southern Rhodesia was owned by the Crown and not by the British South Africa Company. This ruling led to increased pressure within the colony for self-government.

After self-government was granted in 1923, the Southern Rhodesia House of Assembly created a legal framework for the allocation of land. The segregationist Land Apportionment Act of 1930 was the basis for subsequent laws and continued in effect until independence. The Land Apportionment Act divided the land of the colony into three areas: areas where only whites could own property; areas which were held in trust for indigenous tribes on a collective basis (called "tribal trust lands" by a 1965 statute and "communal areas" by a 1981 statute); and areas where only blacks could own property. One practical effect of the apportionment was that some black families were ejected from land they had held for generations. Anger arising from these ejections had a profound impact on the politics of Zimbabwe in the post-independence period.

The lack of individual title on the landholdings was a major factor behind the underdevelopment of land. In the areas designated as tribal trust lands, it hindered the

development of the land through soil improvement, grading, irrigation, drainage, and roads. Few blacks had access to the capital funds necessary to buy large plots of land designated for sale to them in the Native Purchase areas. But many whites were able to buy and develop large areas of farmland. The designated white areas tended to be in the uplands where the rainfall was higher and soil thinner. These areas were optimal for large scale, mechanised farming. Government policy favored the more productive white commercial farms through training support, direct grants, loan guarantee schemes, and funding for agricultural research. Rural road building programs also favored white farming areas.

In the 1950s, the government of Garfield Todd did make some attempts to address problems of land tenure and development in the tribal trust lands, but these attempts were never popular with the largely white electorate. Many members of the white community supported the Unilateral Declaration of Independence regime of Ian Smith, which took over the government in the mid-1960s and broke with Britain over proposals for eventual democracy.

There was therefore a marked racial imbalance in the ownership and distribution of land. Zimbabwean whites, although making up less than 1% of the population, owned more than 70% of the arable land, including most of the best land. However, in many cases this land was more fertile because it was titled, resulting in incentives for commercial farmers to create reservoirs, irrigate, and otherwise tend the soil. Communal lands, with no property rights, were characterised by slash and burn agriculture, resulting in a tragedy of the commons.

After the Lancaster House Agreement paved the way for democracy, elections were won by Robert Mugabe in late February 1980. The three-month long Lancaster House conference nearly failed over land issues. However, the British agreed to fund reform on a willing buyer, willing seller principle, where farmers who were unwilling to stay in Zimbabwe would be bought out by funds provided by the British through the Zimbabwean government.

In 1981, the British were instrumental in setting up the Zimbabwe conference on reconstruction and development. At that conference, more than £630 million of aid was pledged.

In 1981, the Communal Land Act changed the Tribal Trust Lands into Communal Areas and shifted authority over these lands from traditional rulers to local authorities. The 1985 Land Acquisition Act, though drawn in the spirit of the 1979 Lancaster House "willing seller, willing buyer" clause (which could not be changed for ten years), gave the government the first right to purchase excess land for redistribution to the landless. However, the Act had a limited impact, largely because the government did not have the money to compensate landowners. In addition, white farmers mounted a vigorous opposition to the Act. Because of the "willing seller, willing buyer" clause, the government was powerless in the face of the farmers' resistance. As a result, between 1980 and 1990, only 71,000 families out of a target of 162,000 were resettled.

## **2.9 Economic Structural Adjustment Programme 1990<sup>4</sup>**

Zimbabwe's Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), launched in 1990, was meant to herald a new era of modernised, competitive, export-led industrialisation. But despite a high-performing economy in its first decade of independence, the country appeared firmly lodged in a quagmire of mounting debt and erratic growth in the wake of five years of ESAP-mandated reforms.

In a short time, ESAP's World Bank-inspired reforms ripped into the existing economic and social infrastructure, shifting the focus of many mass-oriented development social programs away from redistribution towards management of defined and limited, even declining, public resources. When ESAP was first introduced, the government claimed it was the only alternative to continued production bottlenecks, stagnant local demand and a worsening unemployment problem that threatened to become politically troublesome. Zimbabwean industry was an easy convert, but the

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<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from "[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2000s\\_in\\_Zimbabwe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2000s_in_Zimbabwe)"

country's political leadership was less easily swayed. In the 1980s, Zimbabwe had been a star performer in Africa in the provision of social services and in the reconstruction and development of its public infrastructure. Average life expectancy was on the rise; childhood mortality was down, and other measuring sticks such as the literacy rate and the technical skills capacity were encouraging. Moreover, most of this social growth was financed by government without jeopardizing relative macroeconomic stability.

But from the mid-1980s the ruling party maintained that the future development of the country would depend upon the leading participation of the local private sector and capital inflows from overseas. So it did not come as a shock when the first phases of ESAP were announced, starting with government's budget statement in July 1990. What did come as a surprise was the rapidity with which the program undermined the relative stability of Zimbabwe's social economy.

Zimbabwe's adjustment program had all standard ingredients of "liberalisation," such as IMF's increasing emphasis on reduction of the government deficit, civil service reform and shedding of public enterprises. There was also a string of large loans and credit facilities from the Bank, the IMF and international donors, aimed at supporting the country's balance of payments and government's plans for substantial private sector infrastructural development. Government and its bankers said the new investment would be focused on modernizing the manufacturing sector which would enable the country to compete in international markets and earn the hard currency needed to pay back ESAP's underpinning foreign loans. An optimistic target of 5% annual growth in GDP was set by the Bank and government. Meanwhile, government fiscal restraint elsewhere, involving reduction in services, divestment of public corporations and layoffs in the government sector, would reduce the state's deficit from the usual 10% to 5% or less. The government admitted this risked higher unemployment and higher consumer prices in "the short term," but Zimbabweans were promised a rising real standard of living, long-term employment expansion and a modern, growing, internationally-competitive economy.

But in a country where local production was highly integrated and often efficient, and where a large state provided a range of quality social services, the reforms represented more peril than promise for most.

### **2.10 An experiment gets out of control**

As it happened, neither the market reforms, nor the different measures, went according to plan. Zimbabwean private sector started displaying worrying signs of deindustrialization, and the public debt spiralled upwards. The standard of living of most Zimbabweans was also plummeting to levels not seen in 25 years.

The initial economic shock treatment undertaken with ESAP's launch in the early 1990s hit the business sector and ordinary Zimbabweans very hard, and the impact of these measures was greatly exacerbated by the severe drought of the early 1990s. In 1992, after two consecutive poor rainy seasons, the economy contracted by at least 7.5%, with all sectors in Zimbabwe's agriculture-based productive sector affected. At the same time, price control relaxation saw inflation explode and consumer demand shrink, by as much as 30%.

One result was a sharp decline in average real wages. It was the beginning of a trend that would see, by the mid 1990s, average real earnings fall to the lowest levels since the early 1970s. ESAP, was quickly bringing the Zimbabwean working class to the brink of widespread destitution. In the rural areas, the majority population was often forced to depend on government food aid. By the end of the drought in November 1992, more than half the population of the country was receiving some form of drought relief assistance from government.

However, the return of rains in 1993 did not improve the situation, making it clear that the ESAP reforms themselves were the leading factor in undermining ordinary people's standard of living. Loan agreements emanating from ESAP have stretched the country's foreign and domestic debt to unmanageable proportions. And ESAP's deficit-

cutting fetish has led to the state's slashing of real per-capita social spending throughout the 1990s, and the marked undermining of local industry by government's greater role in one part of the private sector, financial markets. Forced to borrow heavily from local markets to finance reforms and service the deficit, government ended up distorting financial flows. Heavy public sector demand crowded-out private sector borrowing, and kept real interest rates punishingly high.

The combined outcome of chaotic fiscal policy and increased competition from imports was the development of a worrying pattern of deindustrialization, amid a pattern of spiralling government deficit and debt.

## **2.11 Social cuts and their consequences**

The primary response to the continued government deficit and climbing debt servicing was increased pressure to cut real spending on public services, including the cost of overall government administration itself. In this regard, it soon became clear that the fine attention to technical details which were part of the economic reform process was missing when it came to devising, implementing and reforming programs involving the "social" aspects of adjustment.

Moreover, there was a shift in emphasis in the redesign of the state's social programs. The negative social and economic consequences of this shift were immediately and abundantly clear for ordinary Zimbabweans. Of particular note was the rapid deterioration in the country's acclaimed health and education sectors.

### **2.11.1 Health care**

Public expenditure on health care declined by 39% in 1994-95. This decrease implied diminished spending on common drugs, extension and preventative health services, specialist facilities and treatment, and other components of quality health care



delivery. At the same time, the government's stricter enforcement of a user fees system erected barriers to health care in the way of poorer social groups who were, typically, those most in need of health services.

Worrying developments included a growth in prenatal mortality, accounted for by a variety of factors, including the increasing incidence of unbooked expectant mothers and "babies born before arrival," and decreased access to prenatal consultancies, equipment, necessary facilities and, not least of all, drugs.

In 1992 doctors and nurses began referring to "ESAP deaths," described as deaths caused by the inability of patients to pay for the minimal length of time in the hospital, or for prescription medicine. The Minister of Health, Dr. Timothy Stamps acknowledged that only one in ten Zimbabweans could afford to pay for their own health care. Yet fees remained in place, largely at the insistence of ESAP policy makers.

Accounts from rural clinics and hospitals urgently noted the near collapse of health care services under the weight of cutbacks and imposed self-reliance. Professional morale and service delivery within the public health system wilted. Many doctors, nurses and technicians were tempted into the higher-paying, better equipped local private sector, or out-of-country jobs altogether. The inevitable result was the rapid entrenchment of a two-tier health care system, in which those most in need and least able to pay were increasingly marginalized from quality services.

### **2.11.2 Education**

The same contradictions between cost savings and rising social needs emerged to threaten the country's celebrated post-independence advances in primary and secondary education. In the primary sector in particular, real per capita spending and average spending per pupil fell to the lowest levels since independence.

While government's declining investment undermined the quality of education, its imposition of user fees effectively barred easy access to education for hundreds of thousands of students from poorer households. The overall result of fee imposition was a decline by as much as 5% in enrollments by children in urban primary schools.

Over time, the government established a relief system and in 1995, government spent \$53 million helping 265,000 students with tuition and examination fees. But this still fell far short of the actual basic need, and did not begin to address additional heavy school attendance expenses including school levies, materials, uniforms and other costly items. It was estimated that in 1992-93, educational charges raised only \$50 million - or 0.5% of budgeted government expenditure.

## **2.12 Antisocial dimensions of adjustment**

To offset any negative impact of ESAP on poorer Zimbabwean households and retrenched public sector workers, government introduced the Social Development Fund (SDF) to assist poor households with school fees, health fees and food money subsidies. Retrenched civil servants were to be assisted with retraining and seed capital for entry into the private sector. But for the most part these new programs were less carefully planned and implemented than other components of ESAP and were to prove largely ineffective in cushioning the impact of reform on ordinary Zimbabweans.

The funds allotted to the SDF fell far short of matching the rate of government cuts in the social sectors of health and education. Spending cuts in the executing government agency hampered implementation of the SDF assistance. It was made the responsibility of potential beneficiaries to apply to the SDF for relief and there was considerable general confusion, even among government officials, as to what criteria qualified an applicant for assistance, and how screening should be carried out. Application paperwork was cumbersome, especially for the less educated who also tended to have less access to information on the programs. Co-ordination among the different relief schemes, which evidently had an overlapping target clientele, was poor.

The result was that a small proportion of those who were eligible for assistance were reached with resources that were, in any event, insufficient to offset the impact of government cuts.

### **2.13 Fallout and fracturing**

Promising rapid economic growth, expanding employment opportunities and a hands-off, efficient state was a myth. ESAP fell far short of its main macroeconomic targets. In reality, growth slowed and became more erratic, averaging only 1.2% (not the 5% envisaged) over 1991-94, a disappointing performance only partly due to the droughts of 1992 and 1995. In fact, a range of indicators reflected the entrenchment of deeper and systemic problems in the "reformed" economy.

Most Zimbabweans have experienced these changes in terms of employment and falling standards of living. Declining conditions of work and uncompetitive pay have chased many better-skilled public servants out of government, feeding a growing popular perception that government's main economic policy is being driven by "foreign experts." Among those who feel most threatened and disenfranchised by the new anti-social planning regime, and who are most critical of it, are trade unions and civic organizations. Public sector associations, in particular, have complained increasingly that corporate planning within government services is being imposed by the World Bank and IMF, without regard to the views or suggestions of those who actually work in the system.

The cruelest irony of ESAP is perhaps that a policy which aimed to halve the government deficit and finance a higher short-term debt through expanded industrialisation, in reality ended by doubling the national debt, putting additional pressure on the government deficit and stunting an anticipated process of locally-driven re-industrialisation.

## **2.14 Response from the grass roots**

The responses to this deteriorating situation have come at different levels. On the one hand, there have been sporadic protests; on the other, there has been a growing institutionalised response from within civil society.

The large majority of Zimbabweans have turned away from their weakened government, and focused on their own survival, reliant on their own pocketbooks. The reality is that diminished household incomes hold little likelihood of recovery to pre-ESAP levels.

## **2.15 Land reform in Zimbabwe in 1990s**

The 1992 Land Acquisition Act was enacted to speed up the land reform process by removing the "willing seller, willing buyer" clause. The Act had empowered the government to buy land compulsorily for redistribution, and a fair compensation was to be paid for land acquired. Landowners could challenge in court the price set by the acquiring authority. Opposition by landowners increased throughout the period from 1992 to 1997.

While some land was purchased by the fund, few families were resettled. Instead, hundreds of abandoned and expropriated white farms ended up in the hands of cabinet ministers, senior government officials and wealthy indigenous businessmen. Most British and Americans cut their losses and money, alleging widespread corruption. To date, fewer than 70,000 of the people of Zimbabwe have been resettled, most without the necessary infrastructure to work the huge commercial farms on the 12 hectare plots they have been allocated. Britain later withdrew aid to the land reform program, accusing Mugabe of giving the land to his "cronies".

In 1997 as part of the implementation of the 1992 Land Acquisition Act, the government published a list of 1,471 farmlands it intended to buy compulsorily for

redistribution. The list came out of a nationwide land identification exercise undertaken throughout the year. Landowners were given thirty days to submit written objections.

In June 1998, the government published its "policy framework" on the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase II (LRRP II), which envisaged the compulsory purchase over five years of 50,000 km<sup>2</sup> from the 112,000 km<sup>2</sup> owned by commercial farmers (both black and white), public corporations, churches, non-governmental organizations and multi-national companies. It in fact meant that every year between 1998 and 2003, the government intended to purchase 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> for redistribution.

In September 1998, the government called a donors conference in Harare on land reform (LRRP II); 48 countries and international organizations attended. The objective was to inform the donor community and involve them in the program. The donors unanimously endorsed the land program, saying it was essential for poverty reduction, political stability and economic growth. They particularly appreciated the political imperative and urgency of the land reform, and agreed that the "inception phase" should start immediately.

In 1999, the Commercial Farmers Union freely offered to sell the government 15,000 km<sup>2</sup> for redistribution. Landowners once again dragged their feet. In response to moves by the National Constitutional Assembly, a group of academics, trade unionists and other political activists, the government drafted a new constitution. The draft was discussed widely by the public in formal meetings, and amended to include restrictions on presidential powers, limits to the presidential term of office, and an upper age limit of 70 years for presidential candidates. This was not a suitable outcome for the government, so the proposals were amended to remove those clauses and insert a new one to compulsorily acquire land for redistribution without compensation. The drafting stage of the constitution was largely boycotted by the opposition who claimed that Mugabe only wanted a new constitution to entrench himself politically.

In 2000, the government organised a referendum on the new constitution, despite having a sufficiently large majority in parliament to pass any amendment it wished. Had it been approved, the new constitution would have empowered the government to acquire land compulsorily without compensation. Despite vast support in the media, the new constitution was defeated 55% to 45%.

A few days later, the pro-Mugabe War Veterans Association organised like-minded people to march on white-owned farmlands, initially with drums, song and dance. As the "liberation" continued, the seizing began to take on a more aggressive aspect. They claimed to have "seized" the farmlands. A total of 110,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land was seized.

The referendum result prompted the government to delay the parliamentary elections, so that an intensive voter registration exercise could take place. In the June parliamentary elections, ZANU PF got 48% of the vote (62 seats) and the MDC and ZANU got 52% (58 seats). The composition of the new parliament prevented the government from making further amendments to the constitution without opposition support.

In 2002 elections Mugabe defeated Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in presidential elections in March 2002. The incumbents picked Land Reform as the basis of their campaign. On July 3, 2004, a report adopted by the African Union executive council, which comprises foreign ministers of the fifty-three member states, criticised the government's handling of the election.

Minister for Lands, Land Reform and Resettlement John Nkomo said, on June 5, 2004, that all land, from crop fields to wildlife conservancies, would soon become state property. Farmland deeds would be replaced with 99-year leases, while leases for wildlife conservancies would be limited to 25 years. However, there have since been denials of this policy.

In 2005, the parliament, dominated by ZANU-PF, passed a constitutional amendment, signed into law on September 12, 2005, that nationalised Zimbabwe's

farmland and deprived landowners of the right to challenge in court the government's decision to expropriate their land.

In January 2006, Agriculture Minister Joseph Made said Zimbabwe was considering legislation that would compel commercial banks to finance black peasants who had been allocated formerly white-owned farmland in the land reforms.

The newly resettled peasants had largely failed to secure loans from commercial banks because they did not have title over the land on which they were resettled, and thus could not use it as collateral. With no security of tenure on the farms, banks have been reluctant to extend loans to the new farmers, many of whom do not have much experience in commercial farming, nor assets to provide alternative collateral for any borrowed money.

#### **2.16 2008 campaign of violence against white commercial farmers and black farmers supporting the MDC**

In 2000, Zimbabwe had about 4,000 white farmers. By 2003, that total had fallen to about 200. White commercial farmers have been under huge pressure and some have had their homes, crops and equipment destroyed or taken. Several farmers are currently fighting court actions against eviction orders from the properties they have cultivated for years. ZANU-PF claims that the Movement for Democratic Change would return land to evicted white farmers, most of who left Zimbabwe and resettled abroad, so the majority of Zimbabweans know that the land grab was largely completed five years ago. The political motivation behind the invasions by so-called "war veterans" is clear: the aim is to offer white-owned land as a reward for supporting Robert Mugabe.

## **2.17 Economic Consequences of fractured Land Reforms**

The results of the post-2000 land reform have been disastrous for the economy of Zimbabwe. Prior to land redistribution, land-owning farmers, mostly white, had large tracts of land and utilized economies of scale to raise capital, borrow money when necessary, and purchase modern mechanised farm equipment to increase productivity on their land. The reforms broke this land into smaller tracts, thereby destroying the economies of scale and gave it to former black farmworkers and peasants, who had little knowledge of how to run the farms efficiently or raise productivity. Further, the refusal of banks to lend them money has limited their ability to purchase equipment or otherwise raise capital. As a result, the drop in total farm output has been tremendous and produced widespread claims by aid agencies of starvation and famine. However, Mugabe's expulsion of the international media has prevented full analysis of the scale of the famine and the resultant deaths. What is not in dispute is that a country once so rich in agricultural produce that it was dubbed the "bread basket" of Southern Africa, is now struggling to feed its own population. A staggering 45 percent of the population is considered malnourished. Foreign tourism has also plummeted, costing tens of millions of dollars a year in lost revenue.

## **2.18 Economic destruction of Zimbabwe**

The present wretched situation in Zimbabwe is itself the product of the IMF's structural adjustment programmes. Unlike other developing countries, Zimbabwe was not suffering from an unsustainable foreign debt crisis when it turned to the IMF for help with its budget deficit in the early 1990s. But far from helping Zimbabwe's economic development, the aim of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) was to remake Zimbabwe's economy in the interests of the transnational corporations.

Its first step was to insist that the government halve the fiscal deficit to 5 percent by 1994 through cutting taxation. The IMF's SAP has wrought untold havoc on economic and social conditions in Zimbabwe. It struck at the very heart of the political and



economic programme followed by Mugabe's government since independence. This was to expand social and public services while leaving the white settler community's share of the country's land, wealth and income intact. By cutting social provision, structural adjustment in fact removed the very limited safety net for the nation's people.

### **2.19 Impact on social conditions**

The cuts in public expenditure triggered a collapse in public investment and the disintegration of the basic infrastructure. It has led to the re-emergence of diseases such as cholera, malaria and yellow fever, and the spread of new ones such as HIV/AIDS. With 25 percent of those aged 15 to 49 infected with the HIV virus, Zimbabwe is the worst affected country in Africa.

Not surprisingly, there was a 5 percent drop in primary school completion rates in the early 1990s. The transition rate for girls into secondary education fell by 30 percent, with the dropout rate increasing by the same amount. Less than 4 percent of pupils entering secondary schools now graduate with a leaving certificate.

### **2.20 Mounting political unrest**

Growing poverty has given rise to mounting political protests and strike action, as wages fail to keep up with inflation and only 11 percent of the population are formally employed. Real incomes are now lower than they were 20 years ago. Mugabe has illegally arrested, jailed and tortured journalists, imposed bans on the media, outlawed strikes and "stay-aways", and allowed the military and Central Intelligence Organisation to arrest and detain civilians. He has openly flouted court orders. The government's brutal suppression of any opposition, the war in the Congo and the failure to distribute land to the rural poor, has brought it into conflict with all sections of society.

## **2.21 Conflicting Interests, Public Policy, and Structural Breakdown**

This account demonstrates the complex interactions between the political and economic stresses that have undermined the system, but says little about the nature of the conflicting interests that have driven the regime to choose one path rather than another. However, we can only understand the rationale of policy decisions when we recognise that they always stem from demands that could improve the situation of some groups at the expense of others and even of the integrity of the system as a whole. ZANU-PF claimed to be a 'socialist' regime, but it actually chose to follow a corporatist rather than a state socialist strategy. It did not expropriate the white capitalist class but subjected them to tight regulatory constraints, following the lead set by the Smith regime in response to international sanctions. The monopolistic nature of the system suppressed the emergence of a new class of small entrepreneurs, and therefore of an autonomous black bourgeoisie. The result was low growth rates, and fiscal and forex shortages that inhibited new investment. Formal employment hardly grew at all, leaving a larger and larger proportion of an increasingly educated youth without jobs. The ESAP programme was a serious attempt to remove these contradictions and generate a progressive capitalist transformation, but the stresses involved were too strong.

## **2.22 Future Prospects**

All this analysis tells us that the situation in Zimbabwe is acute but there are some key issues which could be resolved to reduce the gravity of the crisis.

First, resolving the crisis is now a political rather than an economic problem. We have seen that Uganda, Ghana and Mozambique also had similar circumstances, in fact worse, but they have shown that countries with worse problems than Zimbabwe can recover successfully with good leadership, responsible policy programmes, and favourable relationships with donors. Hence ZANU-PF's ability to manipulate elections and abuse the economy to reward supporters is now the key obstacle to a viable solution, and the ability of the MDC and civil society to mobilise an alternative programme with

outside support is the long-term solution. This means that the idea of a negotiated settlement between ZANU-PF as it is presently constituted, and the MDC is little more than wishful thinking.

Second, a peaceful electoral transition is becoming increasingly remote, given the ability of the régime to use violence and fraud. Observers assume that there must be a direct connection between economic breakdown and regime change, but the connections are not immediate or direct. The MDC would almost certainly win a 'free and fair' election but this will not be allowed. Joblessness, famine, hyper-inflation, gross political corruption and mismanagement, collapsing hospitals and failing schools should serve to drive people into the streets, but this will only happen when they do not expect the state to drive them back at great personal cost. The regime has managed to do this so far, and it is now further consolidating its hold on the army and police by placing trusted supporters at all levels, many of them War Veterans. Thus it is becoming more difficult for ZANU-PF to retain power, but there is little evidence that the opposition will be able to mount an effective challenge at the polls through public demonstrations.

Third, the regime's growing ability to manipulate the electoral process has now been combined with evidence of an ability to handle the economic crisis more effectively. Financial reforms have restored some discipline to the banking sector but the stabilization of the ever mounting inflation remains a big challenge. It would need comprehensive and concrete policies which should have roots in macroeconomics as well as in political realms.

**POLITICAL CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE**

### **3.1 Independence of Zimbabwe**

Robert Mugabe's ZANU party won a majority in the elections in March 1980 with 53 out of 80 seats reserved for black voters, with Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU gaining 27, and Muzorewa's UANC only three and The Republic of Zimbabwe came into being on April 18, 1980. The new Constitution of Zimbabwe provided for a non-executive President as Head of State with a Prime Minister as Head of Government. The first President was Rev. Canaan Banana with Robert Mugabe as Prime Minister. In 1987, the Constitution was amended, which we will later discuss in detail, to provide for an Executive President and the office of Prime Minister was abolished. The constitutional changes came into effect on 1 January 1988 with Robert Mugabe as President.

The Parliament was bicameral, with the House of Assembly being directly elected and the Senate consisting of indirectly elected and nominated members, including tribal chiefs. Under the Constitution, there were two separate voters rolls, one for the black African majority, who had 80% of the seats in Parliament and the other for whites and other ethnic minorities, such as Coloureds (people of mixed race) and Asians, who held 20%.

This gave whites disproportionate representation, and in 1986 the Constitution was amended to scrap this system, replacing the white seats in with seats filled by nominated members. Many white MPs joined ZANU, which then reappointed them. In 1990, the Senate was abolished, and the House of Assembly's membership was increased to include members nominated by the President.

As Prime Minister Mugabe instituted a policy of reconciliation which was generally successful during the country's first two years of independence, as former political and military opponents began to work together. Although additional blacks were hired to fill new places in the civil service, there was no retribution for those whites who had worked for the Smith regime. Smith and many of his associates held seats in the parliament where they participated freely in debates. Likewise, Joshua Nkomo, Mugabe's rival as leader of the nationalist forces, was included in the first cabinet along with several other members of PF-ZAPU.

Splits soon developed, however, following independence, the rivalry that had been fermenting between ZAPU and ZANU erupted, with guerrilla activity starting again, in Matabeleland (south-western Zimbabwe). Nkomo (ZAPU) left for exile in Britain, and did not return until Mugabe guaranteed his safety. In 1981, several MPs from Smith's party left to sit as "independents," signifying that they did not automatically accept his anti-government posture. In 1982, government security officials discovered large caches of arms and ammunition on properties owned by ZAPU, and Nkomo and his followers were accused of plotting to overthrow Mugabe's government. Nkomo and his closest aides were expelled from the cabinet.

As a result of what they saw as persecution of Nkomo (known as "Father Zimbabwe") and of his party, PF-ZAPU supporters, some of army deserters, began a loosely organized and ill-defined campaign of dissidence against the government. Centering primarily in Matabeleland, home of the Ndebeles who were at the time PF-ZAPU's main followers, this dissidence continued through 1987. It involved attacks on government personnel and installations, armed banditry aimed at disrupting security and economic life in the rural areas, and harassment of ZANU-PF members.

Because of the unsettled security situation immediately after independence and the continuing anti government dissidence, the government kept in force a "state of emergency,". This gave the government widespread powers under the "Law and Order Maintenance Act," including the right to detain persons without charge which it used quite widely.

In 1983 to 1984, the government declared a curfew in areas of Matabeleland and sent in the army in an attempt to suppress dissidents. Credible reports surfaced of widespread violence and disregard for human rights by the security forces during these operations, and the level of political tension rose in the country as a result. The pacification campaign, known as the Gukuruhundi, or strong wind, resulted in at least 20,000 civilian deaths perpetrated by an elite, communist-trained brigade, known in Zimbabwe as the Gukurahundi. The situation evolved into a low level civil war.

### 3.2 Elections in Zimbabwe

In order to understand the political developments in Zimbabwe, here we will first study various elections held in Zimbabwe and then we will proceed to analyze these elections in detail with their corresponding dynamics.

1980 - Zimbabwean parliamentary election. The Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front won a majority, and Robert Mugabe became the first Prime Minister of Zimbabwe.

1985 - Zimbabwean parliamentary election, Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front increased its majority.

1990 - Zimbabwean presidential election, (28-30 March).

Robert Mugabe — Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (83.0%).

Edgar Tekere — Zimbabwe Unity Movement (17.0%)

1995 - Zimbabwean parliamentary election, (8-9 April)

Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (81.4%)

1996 - Zimbabwean presidential election, (16-17 March)

Robert Mugabe — Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (92.7%)

Abel Muzorewa — United Party (4.8%)

Zimbabwe African National Union - Ndonga (6.9%)

#### 2000 Referendum

On 12-13 February 2000, there was a constitutional referendum for increased powers to president; these were to permit the government to confiscate without compensation

white-owned land for the purpose of redistribution to black farmers, and to give government officials immunity from prosecution. 45.32% voter favoured the agenda but 54.68% of the voters were against it.

2000 - Zimbabwean parliamentary election, (24-25 June)

Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (48.6%)

Movement for Democratic Change (47.0%)

2002 - Zimbabwean presidential election, (9-11 March)

Robert Gabriel Mugabe - Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front – 56%

Morgan Tsvangirai - Movement for Democratic Change – 42%

2005 - Zimbabwean parliamentary election

Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front - 59.6%

Movement for Democratic Change - 39.5

2005 - Senate of Zimbabwe elections

Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front - 73.71

Movement for Democratic Change - 20.26

In the 1985 elections, ZANU-PF increased its majority by winning 67 of the 100 seats. The majority gave Mugabe the opportunity to start making changes to the constitution, including those with regard to land restoration. Fighting did not cease until Mugabe and Nkomo reached an agreement in December 1987 whereby ZAPU was subsumed into ZANU-PF.

The constitution was then changed in 1987. The result was that Robert Mugabe then became the country's first executive president, and Nkomo became one of the nation's two vice presidents. The separate roll for white voters was abolished as reserved seats for whites.



### 3.3 Political developments in 1990s

Elections in March 1990 resulted in another overwhelming victory for Mugabe and his party, which won 117 of the 120 election seats. Election observers estimated voter turnout at only 54% and found the campaign neither free nor fair, though balloting met international standards. Unsatisfied with a *de facto* one-party state, Mugabe called on the ZANU-PF Central Committee to support the creation of a *de jure* one-party state in September 1990 and lost. The government began further amending the constitution. The judiciary and human rights advocates fiercely criticised the first amendments enacted in April 1991 because they restored corporal and capital punishment and denied recourse to the courts in cases of compulsory purchase of land by the government.

During the 1990s students, trade unionists, and workers often demonstrated to express their discontent with the government. Students protested in 1990 against proposals for an increase in government control of universities and again in 1991 and 1992 when they clashed with police. Trade unionists and workers also criticised the government during this time. In 1992 police prevented trade unionists from holding anti-government demonstrations. In 1994 widespread industrial unrest further weakened the economy.

On December 9, 1997 a national strike paralyzed the country. Mugabe was panicked by demonstrations by Zanla ex-combatants, war veterans, who had been the heart of incursions 20 years earlier in the Bush War. He agreed to pay them large gratuities and pensions, which proved to be a wholly unproductive and unbudgeted financial commitment. The discontent with the government spawned draconian government crackdowns which in turn started to destroy both the fabric of the state and of society. This in turn brought with it further discontent within the population.

Although many whites had left Zimbabwe after independence, mainly for neighbouring South Africa, those who remained continued to wield disproportionate control of some sectors of the economy, especially agriculture. In the late-1990s whites accounted for less than 1% of the population but owned 70% of arable land. Mugabe raised this issue of land ownership by white farmers. In a naive, but populist move, he

began land redistribution, which brought the government into headlong conflict with the International Monetary Fund. Amid a severe drought in the region, the police and military were instructed not to stop the invasion of white-owned farms by the so-called 'war veterans' and youth militia. This has led to a mass migration of White Rhodesians out of Zimbabwe. At present almost no arable land is in the possession of white farmers.

General elections were held in March 1990. In July the government lifted the 25-year old state of emergency. Zimbabwe became a republic on April 17, 1991. In November 1992 the first cases of a cholera epidemic were reported from within the Tongogara Refugee Camp in Manicaland. In June 1993 the government announced plans to downsize the 50,000-strong Zimbabwe National Army by 10,000 men over the next five years. The combined Zimbabwe Defense Forces Headquarters was formed in July 1994.

In April 1995 parliamentary elections were held. The Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) ran unopposed in 54 of the 120 electoral districts and a further 20 parliamentary seats were reserved. ZANU-PF won the elections with a majority of 81.4% votes. Canaan Banana, Methodist minister, theologian, and the former President of Zimbabwe was sentenced to ten years imprisonment by a court on January 18, 1999. And it was in September 1999 that the Movement for Democratic Change was formed.

### **3.4 Lusaka Protocol 1994**

The Lusaka Protocol was signed in Lusaka, Zambia on October 31, 1994. Lusaka protocol was an attempt to end the Angolan Civil War by integrating and disarming UNITA and national reconciliation. Ceasefire was signed as a part of the protocol on November 20, 1994. Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and South African President Nelson Mandela met in Lusaka on November 15, 1994 in a symbolic move to boost support for the protocol.

### **3.5 Second Congo War, 1998-2003**

The Second Congo War, also known as Africa's World War and the Great War of Africa, took place between 1998 and 2003 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly called Zaire), and ended when the Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo took power. The largest war in modern African history, it directly involved eight African nations, as well as about 25 armed groups. By 2008 the war and its aftermath had killed 5.4 million people, mostly from disease and starvation, making the Second Congo War the deadliest conflict since World War II. Millions more were displaced from their homes or sought asylum in neighboring countries.

The Zimbabwean government sent troops to assist Kabila in 1998. President Robert Mugabe, lured by Congo's rich natural resources and a desire to increase his own power and prestige in Africa, was the most ardent supporter of intervention on Kabila's behalf. Kabila and Mugabe had signed a US\$200 million contract involving corporations owned by Mugabe and his family, and there were several reports in 1998 of numerous mining contracts being negotiated with companies under the control of the Mugabe family. Mugabe resented being displaced by South African Nelson Mandela as the premier statesman of southern Africa. The war was a chance to confront another prominent African president, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. As the head of the SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Mugabe believed he could reclaim his position as southern Africa's premiere statesmen by aiding Kabila. Mugabe pitched the war as an effort to shore up a "democratically elected government." Involvement in the war triggered a precipitous decline in Zimbabwe's economic performance and the value of the Zimbabwean dollar. In addition, it caused severe shortages of hard currency.

### **3.6 List of political parties in Zimbabwe**

Opposition parties had been denied any platform in Zimbabwe since independence but it was after 2000 referendum, in which the President had to retreat with his agenda, opposition parties started surfacing and organizing themselves, MDC

becoming the leading opposition party. Hence it will be necessary to list up all the major parties because from then onwards ZANU-PF has been an element of attack by these parties.

### **3.6.1 Major parties**

Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) - ruling party ,  
Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) - opposition

### **3.6.2 Minor parties**

International Socialist Organisation, National Alliance for Good Governance, United People's Party, Zimbabwe African National Union - Ndonga, Zimbabwe People's Democratic Party, Zimbabwe Youth in Alliance

### **3.6.3 Defunct parties**

Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe, Patriotic Front, United Party, Rhodesian Action Party, Rhodesian Front Party, United African National Council, Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) .

Zimbabwe began experiencing a period of considerable political and economic upheaval in 1999. Opposition to President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF government grew considerably after the mid-1990s in part due to worsening economic and human rights conditions. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was established in September 1999 as an opposition party founded by trade unionist Morgan Tsvangirai.

The MDC's first opportunity to test opposition to the Mugabe government came in February 2000, when a referendum was held on a draft constitution proposed by the government. Among its elements, the new constitution would have permitted President Mugabe to seek two additional terms in office, granted government officials immunity from prosecution, and authorised government seizure of white-owned land. The referendum was handily defeated. Shortly thereafter, the government, through a loosely organised group of war veterans, sanctioned an aggressive land redistribution program

often characterised by forced expulsion of white farmers and violence against both farmers and farm employees.

Parliamentary elections held in June 2000 were marred by localised violence, and claims of electoral irregularities and government intimidation of opposition supporters. Nonetheless, the MDC succeeded in capturing 57 of 120 seats in the National Assembly

### **3.7 Third Chimurenga, 2000<sup>1</sup>**

The present era in Zimbabwe is called the Third Chimurenga, by the ruling ZANU-PF. The Mugabe administration claims that colonial social and economic structures remained largely intact in the years after the end of Rhodesian rule, with a small minority of white farmers owning the vast majority of the country's arable land. By 2000 ZANU militants proclaimed violent struggle for land reform the "Third Chimurenga." The beginning of the "Third Chimurenga"<sup>2</sup> is often attributed to the need to distract Zimbabwean electorate from the poorly conceived war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and deepening economic problems blamed on graft and ineptitude in the ruling party.

The opposition briefly used the term to describe Zimbabwe's current struggles aimed at removing the ZANU government, resolving the Land Question, the establishment of democracy, rebuilding the rule of law and good governance, as well as the eradication of corruption in Government. The term is no longer in vogue amongst Zimbabwe's urban population and lacks the gravity.

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<sup>1</sup> The First Chimurenga is now celebrated in Zimbabwe as the First War of Independence, but it is best known in the Anglo-Saxon world as the Second Matabele War. This conflict refers to the 1896-1897 Ndebele-Shona revolt against colonial rule by the British South Africa Company.

<sup>2</sup> The Second Chimurenga, also known as the Rhodesian Bush War or as Zimbabwe's liberation war, refers to the guerrilla war of 1966-1979 which led to the end of white-minority rule in Rhodesia and to the de-facto independence of Zimbabwe.

### **3.8 2002 Election Irregularities – Mugabe Retains Power**

The March 2002 presidential election was preceded by months of intensive violence and intimidation against MDC supporters, and more than 50 people, mostly opposition supporters, were killed. President Mugabe was declared the winner over challenger Morgan Tsvangirai by a 56-to-42 percent margin. Most international observers condemned the election as seriously flawed – the pre-election environment was neither free nor fair, and the election itself was marred by significant fraud and rigging – but regional opinions were mixed.

### **3.9 International Sanctions Against Mugabe and his Officials**

Soon after the election, the MDC filed a petition challenging Mugabe's victory, citing flaws in electoral laws, electoral irregularities and pre-election violence. As of the end of 2004, the case had not yet been decided. As a result of this election, the United States, the EU, and other European countries imposed travel restrictions against senior Zimbabwean officials and embargoed the sale of arms to Zimbabwe. The US and the EU also froze the financial assets of selected ruling party officials.

### **3.10 Suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations**

The Commonwealth of Nations suspended Zimbabwe from council meetings for one year after its election observer team found the election neither free nor fair. At the mid-term suspension review in March 2003, the three-country committee charged with deciding Zimbabwe's fate decided to continue the suspension until the next Commonwealth meeting in December 2003. At this meeting, despite vigorous campaigning by South Africa, Zimbabwe was not invited to attend the meeting and the Commonwealth decided to continue with the suspension. Immediately after this, Mugabe withdrew Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth.

### **3.11 Charging the Opposition with Treason**

In March 2003, MDC leaders Morgan Tsvangirai, Welshman Ncube, and Renson Gasela went on trial for treason. Charges against Ncube and Gasela were subsequently dropped and in October 2004 Tsvangirai was found not guilty. In August 2005, the government dropped a second charge of treason against Tsvangirai.

### **3.12 Political developments from 2004 to 2005**

Divisions within the opposition MDC had begun to arise early in the decade, after Morgan Tsvangirai (the president of the MDC) was lured into a government sting operation that videotaped him talking of Mr. Mugabe's removal from power. He was subsequently arrested and put on trial on treason charges. This crippled his control of party affairs and raised questions about his competence. It also catalyzed a major split within the party. In 2004 he was acquitted, but not after suffering serious abuse and mistreatment in prison.

Zimbabwean parliamentary election, 2005 were held in March 2005 in which ZANU-PF won a two-thirds majority. Elections were again criticised by international observers as being flawed.

As Senate elections approached further opposition splits occurred. Ncube's supporters argued that the MDC should field a slate of candidates; Tsvangirai's argued for a boycott. When party leaders voted on the issue, Ncube's side narrowly won, but Mr. Tsvangirai declared that as president of the party he was not bound by the majority's decision. Again the opposition was weakened. As a result the elections for a new Senate in November 2005 were largely boycotted by the opposition. Mugabe's party won 24 of the 31 constituencies where elections were held amid low voter turnout. Again, evidence surfaced of voter intimidation and fraud.

In September 2005 Mugabe signed constitutional amendments that reinstated a national senate (which was earlier abolished in 1987) and that nationalised all land. This converted all ownership rights into leases. The amendments also ended the right of

landowners to challenge government expropriation of land in the courts and marked the end of any hope of returning any land that had been hitherto grabbed by armed land invasions. Elections for the senate in November resulted in a victory for the government. The MDC split over whether to field candidates and partially boycotted the vote. In addition to low turnout there was widespread government intimidation. The split in the MDC hardened into factions, each of which claimed control of the party.

### **3.13 More Election Irregularities in 2005**

The government subscribed to the electoral principles of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 2004 but failed to implement key elements of the principles in advance of the 2005 parliamentary elections. The campaign period and election day were largely non-violent, but the elections were not free and fair. The election process was marred by repressive legislation that limits freedom of speech and assembly; millions of expatriate Zimbabweans were not permitted to vote; the government used food distributions to influence an increasingly hungry population; an astonishingly high 10% (as high as 30% in some areas) of would-be voters were turned away; and discrepancies in officially announced results and the government's refusal to release key voting data have led to questions about the possibility of fraud.

### **3.14 Operation Murambatsvina**

In May 2005, the government began Operation *Murambatsvina* (means "Drive out Rubbish" but was also known as Operation Restore Order), ostensibly to rid urban areas of illegal structures, illegal business enterprises, and criminal activities. The International Organization of Migration estimated that at least 300,000 people were displaced nationwide, as the operation moved from urban areas into rural areas and included apparently legal structures. Families and traders, especially at the beginning of the operation, were often given no notice before police destroyed their homes and businesses. Others were able to salvage some possessions and building materials but often had nowhere to go, despite the government's statement that people should be returning to



their rural homes. Thousands of families were left unprotected in the open in the middle of Zimbabwe's winter. The government interfered with non-governmental organization (NGO) efforts to provide emergency assistance to the displaced in many instances. Some families were removed to transit camps, where they had no shelter or cooking facilities and minimal food, supplies, and sanitary facilities. The operation continued into July 2005, when the government began a program to provide housing for the newly displaced. As of September 2006, housing construction fell far short of demand, and there were reports that beneficiaries were mostly civil servants and ruling party loyalists, not those displaced. The government campaign of forced evictions continued in 2006, albeit on a lesser scale.

### **3.15 Responses to operation Murambatsvina**

Operation Murambatsvina has been widely condemned by Zimbabwean non-governmental organisations, churches, legal organizations, and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. The international community has also condemned the operation with nations and international organizations strongly attacking the Zimbabwean government's policy.

In August 2006 runaway inflation forced the government to replace its existing currency with a revalued one. In December 2006, ZANU-PF proposed the "harmonisation" of the parliamentary and presidential election schedules in 2010; the move was seen by the opposition as an excuse to extend Mugabe's term as president until 2010.

It has been noticed that the economy has shrunk by 50% from 2000 to 2007. In September 2007 the inflation rate was put at almost 8,000%, the world's highest. There are frequent power and water outages. Harare's drinking water became unreliable in 2006 and as a consequence dysentery and cholera swept the city in December 2006 and January 2007. Unemployment in formal jobs is running at a record 80%. There is widespread famine, which has been cynically manipulated by the government so that

opposition strongholds suffer the most. Most recently, supplies of bread have dried up, after a poor wheat harvest, and the closure of all bakeries.

The country used to be one of Africa's richest and is now one of its poorest. Many observers now view the country as a 'failed state'. The settlement of the Second Congo War brought back Zimbabwe's substantial military commitment, although some troops remain to secure the mining assets under their control. The government lacks the resources or machinery to deal with the ravages of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which affects 25% of the population. With all this and the forced and violent removal of white farmers in a brutal land redistribution program, Mugabe has earned himself widespread scorn from the international arena.

### **3.16 Supporting the 'Look East' Policy**

ZANU-PF's drive towards resolving its economic crisis has included strengthening its historical ties with China. Speculation over the motives behind Operation Murambatsvina has pointed to the removal of local competition threatening newly arrived Chinese businessmen whose stores sell cheap and often poor quality goods. It is estimated that, as a result of the government's aggressive 'Look East' policy, up to 10,000 Chinese citizens have moved into the country, and some have moved onto farms taken from highly skilled commercial farmers, notably to grow tobacco for China's smokers. Many have suggested that Operation Murambatsvina also demonstrates an adherence to a 'Look East' ideology.

### **3.17 Zimbabwean law**

Under Zimbabwean law, when several candidates contest the presidency the winning candidate must receive at least 51% of the vote, otherwise a second round between the two leading candidates must be held within 21 days.

If the results are disputed, the fear is of violence in Zimbabwe's more volatile areas in what could be a repeat of the violent aftermath of the Kenyan elections December. If the election leads to further confrontation, analysts say the African Union (AU) should be ready to quickly offer mediation for a power-sharing agreement and a transitional government.

### **3.18 Operation Mavhoterapapi, 2008 Presidential election**

Operation Mavhoterapapi (English: Operation Where You Put Your X), is a large scale Zimbabwean government campaign to punish those who supposedly voted for the Movement for Democratic Change in the 2008 presidential election rather than for ZANU-PF. However, the campaign has met with harsh condemnation from Zimbabwean opposition parties, church groups, non-governmental organizations, and the wider international community.

**CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES OF MUGABE'S  
REGIME TO THE CURRENT CRISIS**

Mugabe and his cronies are chiefly responsible for an economic meltdown that has turned one of Africa's most prosperous countries into a country with one of the lowest life expectancies in the world. Since 1994, the average life expectancy in Zimbabwe has fallen from 57 years to 34 years for women and from 54 years to 37 years for men. Some 3,500 Zimbabweans die every week from the combined effects of HIV/AIDS, poverty, and malnutrition. There is no freedom of speech or assembly in Zimbabwe, and the state has used violence to intimidate and murder its opponents. At the root of Zimbabwe's problems is corrupt political elite that has, with considerable international support, behaved with utter impunity for some two decades. This elite is determined to hang on to power no matter what the consequences. The new government will have to embrace a more limited idea of government and rescind legislation that makes the operation of the private sector next to impossible. Moreover, the new government will have to find a way for the people of Zimbabwe to heal the wounds caused by decades of political violence.

#### **4.1 Economic Collapse and Political Repression under Robert Mugabe**

The economic decline of Zimbabwe, which started in 1997, has been startling. Gross domestic product (GDP) declined by about 43 percent between 2000 and 2007. Not surprisingly, every sector of the formerly diverse Zimbabwean economy was affected. The mainstay of the economy, agriculture, was all but destroyed by the politically expedient and often violent land reform program initiated by Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front government in 2000. Foreign aid that Zimbabwe received as part of the ESAP strengthened the Zimbabwean dollar and increased imports. Local manufacturers, therefore, found themselves under pressure from the rapid increases in local costs, particularly interest rates, and the decreasing demand for their goods as competition from imports increased. Members of the ruling regime and their associates have become rich by buying up foreign currency at the official exchange rate and then selling it at the blackmarket rate, pocketing the difference. In an effort to stem runaway inflation, the government announced halving all prices.

Blessed with some of the best mineral reserves in the world, Zimbabwe has vast deposits of iron, nickel, platinum, coal, asbestos, diamonds, tantalite, coalbed methane, and gold. Yet mining, which should have boomed over the last decade because of global economic expansion, has, all but collapsed. Zimbabwe has vast reserves of gold still stuck beneath its soil. The government's decision to force the mining companies to exchange some of their earnings at the official exchange rate undermined gold production.

Zimbabwe is a country blessed with natural beauty. In addition to the magnificent Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe also have some of the best game reserves in Africa, stunning mountainous areas, and a wonderful climate. Unfortunately, because of the racist hate speech directed against white people by the ZANU-PF government and the oppressive and often violent political atmosphere, most foreign airlines have stopped flying into the country and tourist arrivals have plummeted. Consequently, annual foreign earnings from tourism in 2006 were less than one-tenth of what they were a decade ago.

#### **4.2 Humanitarian Catastrophe**

Zimbabwe's economy is now in a free fall. Inflation, according to official government figures, now exceeds 8,000 percent a year. Respected economists believe that inflation is probably in excess of 150,000 percent a year.<sup>1</sup> To put this figure in perspective, the country with the next-highest inflation rate, Iraq, has a rate of 53 percent a year.<sup>2</sup> The human cost of Zimbabwe's economic crisis has been catastrophic. Millions of Zimbabweans have left the country, with 3 million fleeing to South Africa alone. Over 80 percent of Zimbabweans remaining in the country are now unemployed. The estimated proportion of the population living below the official poverty line has more than doubled since the mid-1990s and is now over 80 percent.

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<sup>1</sup> Shakeman Mugari, "Zimbabwe: IMF Estimates Inflation at 150 000 Percent," allAfrica.com, January 18, 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200801180772.html>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>.

Zimbabwe's human development indicators rank 151st of 177 countries surveyed.<sup>3</sup> In 2006, the World Health Organization reported that people living in Zimbabwe have one of the lowest life expectancies in the world. Since 1994, the average life expectancy for women in Zimbabwe has fallen from 57 years to 34 years and for men from 54 years to 37 years. Operation Murambatsvina has no doubt contributed to the increase in general mortality rates. According to the Zimbabwe Department of Health Services preliminary report, a great number of those displaced under that operation were children.<sup>4</sup>

Another problem that Zimbabwe faces is HIV/AIDS. In a report released in June 2006, the UN stated that Zimbabwe has one of the highest incidences of HIV/AIDS in the world. Southern Africa is the epicenter of the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. Nine of the 10 countries with the highest levels of HIV/AIDS infection in the world are in southern Africa. Zimbabwe is one of them.<sup>5</sup> What makes HIV/AIDS particularly serious in Zimbabwe is that the government has dedicated the bulk of its dwindling resources to maintaining its hold on power, leaving little or no money for HIV/AIDS prevention and provision of antiretroviral drugs. The ZANU-PF government prefers to spend money on keeping its own people at bay.

Zimbabwe suffers from high levels of malnutrition exacerbated by the government's refusal to acknowledge the extent of the problem. In December 2007, for example, the World Food Program warned that Zimbabwe was one of seven "hotspots".

The government consistently refuses to admit the gravity of the problem, and on various occasions in the last few years it has deliberately obstructed the WFP and other humanitarian agencies, preventing them from operating freely in Zimbabwe. The ZANU-PF barred the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from distributing food.

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 2007/2008* (New York: United Nations, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Central Statistical Office of the Government of Zimbabwe, "Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey 2005–2006: <http://harare.usembassy.gov/uploads/images/ErYMhCdkmrjnsEXXPylA/Zimbabwe>.

<sup>5</sup> Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, *2006 Report on the Global Aids Epidemic* (Geneva, Switzerland: <http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/GlobalReport/Default.asp>).

### **4.3 Limited International Interest in Zimbabwe**

Despite the gravity of the crisis, international interest in Zimbabwe's agony seems limited. That lack of interest is attributable to a number of factors.

First, although more people are dying in Zimbabwe than in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Darfur, Zimbabwe's mention in the international media is disproportionately smaller in part because stories about Zimbabwe are more difficult to film and write. The country offers very few stark images likely to capture the world's attention.

Second, although the foreign media is allowed into Darfur, Afghanistan, and Iraq, it has been generally barred from operating in Zimbabwe. Draconian laws forbid foreign journalists from working in Zimbabwe without permission, which is rarely given.

Third, because Zimbabwe has no oil and very few strategic mineral resources, no obvious strategic reason exists why world powers should want to focus their attention on that country's problems.

Fourth, the response of most southern African governments and the Southern African Development Community to the catastrophe unfolding on their doorstep is best described as a state of denial or paralysis. Until the African governments act, the rest of the international community can do little to help Zimbabwe. The humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe has spiraled out of control and there does not appear to be any international political will to deal with it decisively and urgently.

### **4.4 Political Roots of the Current Crisis**

Zimbabwe's humanitarian and economic crises are rooted in politics. The UN imposed an international trade embargo on the white minority government of Rhodesia in 1966. Fourteen years later, the Zimbabwean economy emerged from the sanctions with one of the largest economies in Africa and a currency that was stronger than the U.S.



dollar. The years after 2000 showed above-average or average rainfall even as the economy continued to plummet. Thus, the government cannot credibly blame bad weather for the country's dismal economic situation. The root of Zimbabwe's woes is the absence of liberal democracy. In *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, the Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen stresses the connection between political freedom and the absence of famine.<sup>6</sup> He makes the point that no country with a free press has ever had a famine in its recorded history, and he claims that a free press and an active opposition constitute the best early warning system a country threatened by famine can have. The situation in Zimbabwe supports Sen's analysis.

#### **4.5 Undermining Political Freedom (1980–97)**

Three pivotal historical issues are directly responsible for the failure of Zimbabwe's democratic institutions and its calamitous consequences.

First, consider the constitution greed at the Lancaster House conference that paved the way for Zimbabwean independence in 1980. It was a compromise document, primarily designed to put an end to a bloody civil war. It perpetuated many oppressive aspects of white minority rule. The Lancaster House constitution created the template for authoritarian rule and allowed Robert Mugabe and the ZANU-PF to consolidate and later to monopolize power. Unlike the agreement that brought an end to apartheid in South Africa in 1994, the Lancaster House agreement did not attempt to address issues of reconciliation and justice.

Second, soon after taking power in April 1980, Mugabe had engaged in secret negotiations with the North Korean dictator Kim II Sung to create an army unit specifically designed to deal with "internal dissent." Those negotiations culminated in an agreement under whose terms the North Koreans would train and arm a new brigade to deal with domestic "malcontents." The new brigade came to be known as the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade

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<sup>6</sup> Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1983).

or “Gukurahundi Brigade.”<sup>7</sup> In January 1983 Mugabe’s government sent the Gukurahundi into Matabeleland, where the soldiers proceeded to murder approximately 20,000 civilians. The failure of the West to act against the ZANU and later the ZANU-PF government, or even to condemn the atrocities, created a sense of impunity in the minds of the ZANU-PF leadership. That sense of impunity had a direct bearing on the events of the last few years. The ZANU-PF regime not only got away with genocide in the 1980s but also was actually rewarded in the years that followed through the continued infusion of substantial aid and other awards.

Third, consider the failure of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program. The collapse of the Soviet bloc and the end of apartheid in the early 1990s saw the ZANU-PF lose some of its leverage over the West. The need to keep Zimbabwe out of the Soviet sphere of influence and the need to use the Zimbabwean “reconciliation” experience to allay white South African fears regarding post apartheid South Africa no doubt greatly influenced Western foreign policy toward Zimbabwe in the 1980s— especially with regard to ignoring Gukurahundi and the ZANU-PF’s authoritarian inclinations.

#### **4.6 1997: The Point of No Return**

In 1997, three events occurred that set the stage for the current crisis.

First, the war veterans loyal to the ZANU-PF became increasingly disgruntled with the widening wealth gap between themselves and the ruling elite. In an effort to placate them, Mugabe agreed to pay huge pensions and other benefits.

Second, in an effort to protect mining investments made by the members of the Zimbabwean ruling elite in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mugabe ordered the costly deployment of thousands of Zimbabwean troops to the DRC to prop up the regime of Laurent Kabila.

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<sup>7</sup> *Gukurahundi* is a Shona-language expression meaning “the rain that washes away the chaff before the spring rains.”

Third, toward the end of the year, the government moved on its threat to acquire vast tracts of land held by white commercial farmers. The combination of those three events led to the dramatic crash of the Zimbabwean dollar in November 1997 and to the beginning of the Zimbabwean economy's downward spiral.

#### **4.7 The ZANU-PF Turns on Its Enemies**

Since the 2000 referendum, the ZANU-PF systematically torpedoned down the elaborate facade of democracy that it carefully constructed in the first two decades of its rule. The only underlying goal of the new policies was to hold onto power. The ZANU-PF has achieved that goal with two broad tactics. First, it attacked whatever institution it deemed to support the opposition. Second, it maintained its core support through the confiscation and redistribution of privately owned assets.

#### **4.8 Using Food Aid as a Weapon**

In the course of 2003 and 2004, the government started to use another weapon—the selective distribution of food. Corn is the staple diet of most Zimbabweans. Farmers of small-scale communal plots who kept most of their crop for their own consumption grew most of the corn in Zimbabwe. In 2004, with shortages of the staple food becoming the norm, the ZANU-PF imposed tight controls on the sale and distribution of corn, effectively giving itself control over the distribution of the increasingly scarce commodity. That proved to be a particularly effective political weapon in the run-up to the 2005 parliamentary general election. In August 2005 the government sealed the fate of white commercial farmers with the passage of Constitutional Amendment no. 17, which removed any remaining right of the commercial farmers to have the courts adjudicate the confiscation of their properties.

#### **4.9 Mugabe's New Enemy: The Economy**

The government has compromised the independence of the judiciary, destroyed the productivity of the white commercial farming sector, and weakened the opposition, but now it has a new enemy—the falling economy. Zimbabwe faces skyrocketing inflation and rapidly rising government domestic debt.

In November 2007, the parliament passed an Indigenization Bill. Ostensibly, that bill is designed to rectify—27 years after independence—the injustices caused by white colonial rule. The bill, yet to be signed into law by Mugabe, obliges every business to be controlled through a majority shareholding by “indigenous” or nonwhite Zimbabweans. The net effect of this measure will be to ensure that no white person can ever own a business in Zimbabwe again. It will also ensure that no foreign investor can ever control a business in Zimbabwe again.

#### **4.10 The Way Forward**

The world has rightly laid most of the blame for the Zimbabwean catastrophe on Mugabe and his ZANU-PF government. However, the international community must accept that it is complicit in one respect. International financial institutions and Western aid agencies poured billions of U.S. dollars into Zimbabwe. There is very little to show for all that money in Zimbabwe today. The truth is that the ZANUPF used much of that money to consolidate power and to suppress its subjects. At the same time, the international community, especially other African countries, ignored very serious deficiencies in governance and in so doing assisted in the perpetuation of the culture of impunity and violence that has plagued Zimbabwean society for so long.

1. Any political settlement brokered by the international community must have certain essential ingredients. At the root of Zimbabwe’s problems is its highly deficient constitution. In particular, the vast disparity of power between the executive, on the one hand, and the legislature and the judiciary, on the other hand, has contributed to the gross abuses that have destroyed Zimbabwe. A new democratic constitution must be agreed to initiate a process which would be embraced by all Zimbabweans. That constitution must balance power among the three arms of government and ensure that the independence of the media is greatly strengthened.

2. It must also create new institutions to support democracy, such as an independent electoral commission. When the new constitution has been legislated and the institutions

mentioned have been established, any international aid should help strengthen those institutions.

3. The first necessary step in this process will be the establishment of a Truth Commission that will provide an opportunity for victims to explain what has happened to them over the last several decades. Such a commission must also allow them to say what measures they believe are necessary to achieve meaningful justice and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

While discussing the economic crisis in Zimbabwe, we find some of the key factors responsible for it. In the following sections we will observe some of the key drivers of the current economic crisis.

#### **4.10.1 Land reform and agricultural policies**

The fast track land reform programme, initiated in 2000, has undoubtedly contributed to Zimbabwe's rapid social and economic deterioration. The eviction and loss of jobs experienced by former farm workers has led to displacement and created new vulnerable groups who lack access to essential services and are often chronically food-insecure.

Zimbabwe's 'war vets' were central to Mugabe's decision to push ahead with the fast track land reform process, as such a reform process would create a resource which could be used to support, or create, allies. From 1997 the 'war vets' had become Mugabe's most significant political threat and to stave off possible political defeat, Mugabe offered the veterans a generous set of payments including a pension and gave them the green light to invade white-owned commercial farms. Legally, Zimbabwe's fast track land reform is closely associated with the revision of the country's constitution which attempted to link the constitution with the state's right to seize land from large-scale farmers for redistribution. A national referendum (February 2000) rejected the proposals. Despite losing the referendum, the Government amended the constitution and passed a new Land Acquisition Act in April 2000. This Act legalized compulsory acquisition and then in June 2000 Mugabe announced the fast track land reform

programme. This programme stated that it was necessary to correct colonial imbalances in land ownership. As a result of defective Land Reform policy Zimbabwe has experienced a sharp decline in grain production shifting from being a net food exporting to a net food importing country.

#### **4.10.2 Imperfect agricultural input markets**

The availability of seed and key agro-chemicals is unavailable in Zimbabwe. Over the last four growing seasons even farmers with the money to purchase the increasingly expensive inputs have often not been able to find them. Fertiliser companies operating in Zimbabwe have been constrained by foreign exchange shortages, which has hampered production and supply has been unreliable. Speculators are active and “new farmers”, who benefited with land allocations following the Fast Track Land Reform, are selling the subsidized fuel and fertilizer they have received from the State rather than using them for productive activities. Without fertilizer, yields from the soil have fallen.

#### **4.10.3 Distorted agricultural output markets**

*Food grains:* Maize, wheat and white sorghum are now classified as ‘restricted crops’, meaning that they can only be sold to the state owned and administered Grain Marketing Board at below the international market price. Richer communal farmers club together to hire a truck to transport their harvest, but this is expensive, and is likely to exclude poorer farmers and those with limited marketable surplus. These, and other farmers, rely on illegal ‘side marketing’, and local agro-processing. An example of the militarization of agriculture has been the systematic destruction of market gardens and cash crop by the army.

*Tobacco:* Tobacco used to be Zimbabwe’s main national industry and foreign exchange earner, contributing 25-30% of total earnings, and at least 6% of total national employment. Most of the key tobacco farms were left intact between 1997 and 2000 but farm invasions after 2000 included some of these large-scale tobacco farms, and production has collapsed. This has undermined Zimbabwe’s main source of foreign exchange, and the economic ramifications have been severe.

#### **4.10.4 Unemployment and hyperinflation**

The fast track land reform process has had a profound effect on the national economy. The sharp decline in export revenues and the collapse in foreign investment combined to create an acute foreign exchange shortage. This severely affected industrial production. Official unemployment is now 80% in Zimbabwe and the informal economy has emerged as a critically important for survival. Migration has risen sharply since 2000, both within Zimbabwe and internationally. Tens of thousands of professionals have left the country to find work abroad in the region and in Europe,<sup>8</sup> and an estimated 3 million Zimbabweans have fled to South Africa.

#### **4.10.5 Social unrest and state repression**

The real power brokers in Zimbabwe are the security sector - the Army, the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), the Police, and War Veterans and various state militia. Although there are splits within these, it is the soldiers and the CIO who ultimately hold the power, and they will have to be involved in decisions about Zimbabwe's future<sup>9</sup>.

#### **4.10.6 The authoritarian state: Operation Murambatsvina**

Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order) took place in May/June 2005 and was described by the Government as an attempt to control 'economic saboteurs' who were operating the black market and to improve the quality of urban housing stock by ensuring that planning permission and building regulations were obeyed. But in reality this operation was initiated because of three major reasons.

First, a desire to punish opposition supporters, and to tighten control over the population  
Second, to disperse potential sources of political agitation from urban areas to rural areas

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<sup>8</sup> Pambazuka News, 20 April 2007: *Zimbabwe: Time for Civil Society to seize the space?*  
<http://www.pambazuka.org/en/>

<sup>9</sup> Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), 2007: <http://www.rusi.org/>

Third, with the informal sector crushed, the control of the economy returns firmly to the government and the population's dependence on the state for food increases, reducing scope for opposition.

Operation Murambatsvina (OM) targeted illegal structures and informal businesses, demolishing buildings, vending sites and other informal business premises without planning permission and driving the informal sector underground. The Operation resulted in the loss of livelihoods for those previously working in the informal sector. It is estimated that some 650,000-700,000 people were directly affected through the loss of shelter and/or livelihoods. OM has been described as a massive human rights violation. The Operation has had a long-run impact. The police have enforced stringent licensing regulations.

In the run up to the next elections in 2008, Mugabe intensified the crackdown on political opponents. The brutal police intervention against an opposition prayer meeting in March ignited a new campaign of state violence against the opposition and other groups. The arrest and the severe beating of opposition leaders and political activists, among them the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, signifies a new low point in the systematic persecution of opponents.

#### **4.7 HIV/AIDS**

The HIV/AIDS pandemic in Zimbabwe threatens to further erode Zimbabwe's already weak economy and governance institutions through the attrition of economically active adults. HIV affected households have a greater proportion of household members who are economically inactive, are less likely to seek medical treatment due to a lack of funds, and have a lower monthly income, illustrating a vicious circle of impoverishment and HIV positive status. The spread of the disease has dramatically increased the numbers of orphans, dependents and child-headed households and threatens to overburden traditional safety nets. Official UN statistics show that HIV infection rate in Zimbabwe is at 24.6%, one of the highest in the world<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Pambazuka News: *Zimbabwe: Time for Civil Society to seize the space?* 20 April 2007: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en>



The Zimbabwean government has declared HIV/AIDS a national emergency and established a National Aids Council that is currently implementing AIDS interventions. In addition, there have also been allegations of the politicisation of drug delivery and a high level of corruption among the service providers. In addition, state health institutions have been hit by the migration of key staff including specialist doctors, pharmacists and nurses to other countries.

#### **4.8 The socio-economic situation and its impact on the population**

In Zimbabwe, households face a combination of different crisis. Some of them have a widespread impact such as successive droughts, bad governance, economic decline, characterised by a hyperinflation and high unemployment and institutional collapse.

Economic decline in Zimbabwe means that households are facing shrinking incomes alongside spiralling inflation. Hyperinflation combined with unemployment has been a major driver of poverty, particularly in urban Zimbabwe. Many households and individuals have lost the value of their savings. Unemployment now stands at 80%. In this context households are increasingly unable to afford education and health services, leading to increasing numbers of school drop-outs, rising numbers of people debilitated by treatable illness and a sharp growth in maternal and neo-natal mortality.

The introduction of command agriculture further increases vulnerability as people increasingly depend on the State as the only source of marketed food. Economic hardship has also resulted in increased use of adverse coping strategies including commercial sex work, corruption, crime and the unsustainable utilisation of fauna and flora. The challenges facing ordinary Zimbabweans have been further compounded by the effects of Operation Murambatsvina. After destroying homes in the cities and moving people into transit camps, the government assigned people to rural areas on the basis of their identity card numbers. The relocations from cities to villages have affected thousands throughout Zimbabwe and the displaced have placed an additional burden on the rural community to which they used to provide financial support. Failed crops and rejection by traditional leaders has made life even more difficult for many forced migrants. Many others, who

could not be relocated, continue to be homeless and destitute, despite the government's promises to provide shelter under Operation Garikai.

#### **4.9 Argument for humanitarian support to Zimbabwe**

In Zimbabwe, with such extreme levels of vulnerability there is a strong argument for humanitarian assistance. If effectively distributed, it will protect the poorest from food insecurity. It seems that without humanitarian and development support, the citizenry will rise up to depose despotic leaders and find alternative and more benign leaders to govern the country. Zimbabwe's opposition is weak and fragmented and an alternative to the current regime is not immediately obvious. Without a strong interim government of national unity, with mass domestic support, it is quite likely that an attempt to orchestrate regime change would backfire. Furthermore, the 'strong but unresponsive' Zimbabwean State is a pervasive force in people's lives. NGOs and aid agencies provide, in principle, a countervailing force. A number of international NGOs are delivering a range of humanitarian interventions; there is not yet a full-scale humanitarian response to the crisis in Zimbabwe. However, with current levels of ill-being, vulnerability and mortality rates the international agencies should gear up to provide a greater level and range of support.

#### **4.10 Argument for developmental support to Zimbabwe**

There is no doubt that the people of Zimbabwe should receive humanitarian assistance but, arguably, such assistance should extend beyond food aid. Without interventions to help to slow the erosion of poor people's assets and their adoption of adverse forms of coping, the hardship experienced by poor people will create 'irreversibilities' that will be difficult and expensive to later reverse or mitigate. The hardships include those contravening the human rights conventions. This suggests that there are both strong ethical and practical grounds for development interventions to complement humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance prevents people from starving to death. It does not prevent the erosion of productive and household assets necessary for effective livelihoods and a decent life.

#### **4.11 Argument against developmental support to Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe's crisis is largely due to failures in governance and macro-economic management. Government policies have directly contributed to high levels of vulnerability by undermining or destroying the livelihoods of many. Zimbabwe has been classified as a strong, but unresponsive state. The performance of the government of Zimbabwe is clearly too poor to be in receipt of direct budget support. Poor governance should not be rewarded. The Zimbabwean Government has done almost all it can to alienate the international community and it is hard to justify massive spending on a country which only ten years ago was on the brink of becoming a middle income country.

#### **4.12 Zimbabwe and the international community**

In 2002, the government suspended operations of several aid agencies. The government stated its intention to regularise activities of the aid community and subsequently, aid agencies were required to register if they wanted to resume humanitarian interventions. Since then, relations between the International aid community and the government of Zimbabwe have been characterised by mistrust. Fears that external interventions will highlight the government's inability to assist its own population, the tense relationship between the International community and Zimbabwe and suspicion that agencies have a political rather than a humanitarian agenda have led to increasing tensions. Aid agencies have been forced to scale down their operations to target only 'vulnerable groups', such as people living with HIV/AIDS and the elderly.<sup>11</sup>

#### **4.13 Zimbabwe's "look East" policy**

China's policy towards African nations has become more active in recent years as it grows increasingly concerned about securing sufficient resources to fuel its industrial revolution.<sup>12</sup> China has promised to build schools, hospitals, give loans in foreign currency and help revive Zimbabwe's ailing agricultural sector. In April, China agreed to provide Zimbabwe with \$25m worth of farm equipment to help revive the tobacco

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<sup>11</sup> IRIN Africa, 21 March 2007: <http://www.irinnews.org>

<sup>12</sup> Financial times, 04 Jan 2007: <http://search.ft.com/>.

industry in return for large quantities of tobacco. China has also contributed \$100,000 to fund the newly opened Confucius Institute in Harare. On a recent trip to Africa, Chinese President Hu Jintao insisted that Beijing did not just want to milk the continent for its bountiful natural resources but rather, establish a two-way relationship which could benefit both sides.<sup>13</sup> China is also reported to be providing significant military aid to Zimbabwe.<sup>14</sup>

#### **4.14 Zimbabwe's neighbours - negative spill-over effects**

There have been gloomy predictions that there will be serious negative spill-over effects from Zimbabwe to South Africa and other neighbours. South Africa is receiving unprecedented numbers of illegal immigrants and this has triggered unrest in some poor urban neighbourhoods but so far, South Africa has managed to control the situation. If Zimbabwe collapses, a significant influx of refugees could trigger social unrest and instability. This scenario needs to be factored into the plans being made by the International Community.

#### **4.15 Zimbabwe's future**

The future of Zimbabwe is understood to be inextricably linked to the future of Mugabe. Mugabe, far from planning to retire, has made several moves to extend his rule beyond 2008. Macro-economic instability is now so severe that it is threatening the key business interests of ruling party officials and it is this that has, reportedly, led to pressure on Mugabe to step down in 2008. Factions within ZANU-PF successfully blocked an attempt to amend the constitution to allow Mugabe to stay in power till 2010. Despite Mugabe's determination to hold onto power, it is generally accepted that a transition of sorts has already begun but considerable doubts remain as to where the transition will

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<sup>13</sup> The Mail & Guardian, South African Press Association, 09 March 2007: *China Push into Africa Reaches*

<sup>14</sup> Carnegie Endowment, 12 December 2006: *China's Africa Strategy: A New Approach to Development and Diplomacy?*

lead, and what sorts of political and possibly military processes will occur within it.<sup>15</sup> Even if Zimbabwe eventually reaches the “tipping point” and Mugabe steps down, several post-Mugabe scenarios are possible: the transition to a handpicked successor; the rise of a reformist faction within the governing party; a government of national unity, a military coup or even a descent into chaos.

#### **4.16 Role of the International community**

How and when Mugabe will move on is still uncertain. The International community should adopt a joint strategy with a clear sequence of benchmarks to support a genuinely democratic process. The removal of sanctions and resumption of international aid to government institutions could be used as incentives at the appropriate time. Before change takes place, the International community needs to identify how it will respond to the various possible scenarios: (1) a ZANU PF successor, chosen by Mugabe to continue pursuing his agenda; (2) a new government, led by a reformist faction of ZANU PF; (3) the emergence of a government of national unity; (4) a government led by the opposition; (5) a military coup or (6) a descent into chaos.

Some of the measures available for the international community are following:

- Maintain diplomatic pressure
- Continue to provide limited humanitarian assistance
- Scale up humanitarian assistance
- Deliver limited development assistance
- Deliver substantial development assistance

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<sup>15</sup> Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), 2007: <http://www.rusi.org/>

## **CONCLUSION**

The liberal experiment in Zimbabwe has produced devastating results. Growth, employment, wages and social service spending have contracted sharply. Inflation did not improve, the deficit has remained well above target, and many industrial firms have been closed in response to increased competition and high real interest rates over a period of last two decades. On the positive side, capital formation and the percentage of exports in GDP have increased and urban rural inequality has fallen down.

It is important here to learn the experiences derived from the Zimbabwean weak performance. Three kinds of explanation for Zimbabwe's weak performance could be studied.

First, ESAP was undermined by extremely unfavorable conditions. Drought reduced agricultural output and exports. Growth during three drought-affected years (1992, 1993 and 1995) averaged 2.6 percent; however during three good years (1991, 1994 and 1996) it was 6.5 percent. Negative trends in the terms of trade during the first three years also "put severe pressure on the balance of payments situation and the exchange rate.

Second, there is now widespread agreement that the government's failure to bring the fiscal deficit under control undermined the effectiveness of the programme. This led to growth in public borrowing and sharp increases in interest rates. The IFIs were deeply concerned about these failures, with IMF ultimately withdrawing support in 1994. However, the Zimbabwe government was far less dependent on donor support than most African governments, so the Fund was unable to make much impact on the regime.

Supporters of the programme attribute almost all of the blame for poor performance to the negative externalities. However, the critics claim that many of the problems that emerged can also be attributed to failures in the actual design of the programme.

Third, there were almost certainly serious 'errors of commission' by policy-makers. There were difficulties associated with the attempt to impose an over-rapid liberalisation on a relatively weak and highly protected economy. They note that its large uncompetitive manufacturing sector made it look more like a 'transition economy' than most African countries. Manufacturing investment was too low to generate the economic growth that was hoped for with the introduction of ESAP. These failures therefore made the costs of adjustment far greater and the strong improvement in the balance of payments had virtually eliminated the foreign exchange constraint. The "major structural reforms with improved management of the next stage of the reform programme, could have moved onto a far more stable growth path. Unfortunately, as we know, the political costs of the programme turned out to be so large that this could not happen.

### **From Corporatism to Liberalisation (1980-1997)**

The Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) (ZANU-PF), which was led by Robert Mugabe, inherited a successful but repressive 'cohesive capitalist state' in 1980 from a white government that had enforced its control through racially exclusive institutions that denied Africans most political and economic rights. White capitalists monopolised most of the best land and all large commercial, industrial and financial companies. Growth had averaged 6-7 percent, accompanied by rapid industrialisation, for ten years from the imposition of sanctions in 1965 until the war in the late 1970s, creating the most sophisticated economy on the continent after South Africa. The new democratic government managed to sustain a viable balance between political compliance, administrative capacity and economic growth from 1980 to the late 1990s because ZANU-PF established itself as the primary representative of the political interests of the African population. It also renounced its 'left' Marxist ideology to persuade key officials and most of the capitalist class to remain and provide the skills and capital on which economic productivity depended. It was therefore able to retain majority support and expand its tax base until the late 1990s. It first used corporatist, then liberal, economic policies. Populist policies produced a series of vicious circles that turned Zimbabwe from a relatively successful state to a crisis state in serious danger of collapse.



ZANU-PF emerged from the civil war as a centralised party that operated on Leninist organisational principles, and gave precedence to decisions taken by its Politburo and Central Committee over those taken in cabinet. It represented the majority Shona tribe and was opposed by the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU), which represented the minority Ndabele tribe and remained in opposition until 1988. Hostility between the two intensified in the early 1980s, until plans for unconstitutional action in Matabeleland in 1987 were violently suppressed by the army, with many thousands of deaths. ZAPU then entered into an agreement with ZANU-PF and was incorporated into the ruling party and government.

The programme which the government was following was well managed, and produced more than 4 percent growth over the decade and growing revenues.<sup>1</sup> There was virtually no growth in formal employment, but existing workers were guaranteed job security and reasonable wages. This growth in public sector employment and services consolidated the political support for the regime, producing a *de facto* one-party state until the end of the 1990s. However, this corporatist strategy was becoming increasingly economically unsustainable because import substitution had suppressed exports and led to a shortage of foreign exchange, and state spending to a fiscal deficit.

All these problems led to a well-managed shift from corporatism to a market based regime in the form of an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) that was negotiated with representatives of the major business associations, and managed by the technocrats in the Ministry of Finance with active support from the IFIs. ESAP had very mixed short-term economic results – drought, deteriorating terms of trade, errors of sequencing, and a failure to control the fiscal deficit, produced lower growth rates, higher unemployment and declining access to social services.<sup>2</sup> The technocrats behind the programme ignored the disruptive social, and political, effects, of these calamities with devastating consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> See John Robertson, 'The economy: a sectoral overview', in Simon Baynam (ed.), *Zimbabwe in transition*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992; C. Stoneman & L. Cliffe, *Zimbabwe: politics, economic and society*, London: Pinter, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Bond & Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge: exhausted nationalism, neoliberalism and the search for social justice*, London: Merlin Press, 2002

ESAP involved major resource transfers from the urban to the rural sector and reduced job security and conditions of employment. Tariff reductions and high interest rates led to widespread closures in high cost industry, demands for fiscal restraint led to cuts in social provision and threatened jobs and labour conditions in the civil service. Many of these problems could have been avoided with greater policy flexibility and donor support, but this did not occur. The result was a significant growth in civic associations opposed to the changes, trade union resistance, and unrest in the civil service and a decline in political support for ZANU-PF. The government responded to these political threats by adopting populist policies designed to buy political support from the key constituencies whose support they had already lost.

### **From Liberalisation to Breakdown (1997-2007)**

By 1997 the combined effects of corporatism and liberalisation had produced serious unemployment that could not be absorbed on the land because of over-crowding. The government in 1998 announced its intention to transfer white-owned farms to Africans. In the same year the government invaded the Democratic Republic of the Congo with even further growth in budget deficits.

All of this worsened the economic crisis and intensified the political opposition originally generated by ESAP. The critical civic and economic organisations intensified their opposition and came together to form the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 that won the political support of most urban voters and those in the former ZAPU areas. This new alliance demonstrated its power when it defeated the government in the constitutional referendum in 2000, and in subsequent parliamentary and presidential elections that the MDC would probably have won but for electoral manipulation.<sup>3</sup> These political threats then intensified the use of state power to transfer resources as the government appealed to anti-colonial nationalism to justify the forcible expropriation of most commercial farms that it redistributed to small-scale settlers and key members of

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<sup>3</sup> See especially B. Raftopolous, 'Current politics in Zimbabwe: confronting the crisis', and the other articles in D. Harld-Barry, *Zimbabwe: the past is the future*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2004; see also A. Hammar *et al.*, *Zimbabwe's unfinished business: rethinking land, state, and nation in the context of crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2002.

the political and bureaucratic elite. The following five years were marked by hyperinflation and a collapse in the value of the currency.

### **Managing Political Disorder and Economic Breakdown**

The regime has been able to manage this destructive process with skill and ruthlessness. Formal democratic elections have continued so far and all these elections have made use of an anti-colonial and nationalist rhetoric to maintain political support. But it has also suppressed opposition newspapers, and used organised violence in rural constituencies to intimidate opposition supporters and has manipulated the vote. The MDC has dealt with this pressure with considerable skill and restraint. In 2005, the regime won a two thirds majority in Parliament and introduced a new Senate. The MDC has now suffered a major split over its decision not to contest these elections, and its ability to operate as a viable political force was open to question by the end of 2005. In May, the regime mounted 'Operation *Murambatsvina*' (or 'Drive out Rubbish') to destroy most urban informal settlements and markets because it saw the urban poor as a source of political opposition.

Threats of reprisals and devastating poverty have made it impossible for the MDC to mobilise mass demonstrations capable of destabilising the regime. The regime's ability to maintain its control is being constantly eroded by economic failures that tighten budget and foreign exchange constraints and erode its capacity to deliver services. Disaffected groups from ZANU-PF are considering the creation of a 'third force' in association with the political notables that have recently broken from the MDC, while local observers claim that senior army officers are becoming increasingly restless. This crisis has produced a vicious circle that is remarkably similar to the one that occurred in Uganda in the 1970s. It has undermined administrative and economic capacity and political support for a regime that has transformed itself from one of the most successful to one of the most unsuccessful in Africa. This has generated opposition movements that are actively trying to transform the situation from within, and eroded their ability to resist the policy demands of the international community. We cannot say when or how these processes will work themselves out, but we also cannot rule out a major transformation of political,

administrative and economic relationships comparable to the one that occurred in Uganda after 1986.

### **Conclusions: Social Conflict, Primary Accumulation and Political Change in Africa**

I will now conclude by using the theoretical explanations outlined in the previous sections to explain why similar policy programmes produced successful outcomes under one set of circumstances and disastrous ones under another. At independence the new governments needed to buy political support by transferring resources from immigrant to African communities. At the same time they had to retain immigrant capital and skills in order to sustain economic growth. They initially managed this contradiction by allowing most immigrant businesses to continue. The pressure to make these transfers depended on the political stability. Poor performance was not simply due to 'state intervention' but to the nature of the political context in which it occurred. To explain these failures we have to distinguish between the different effects of these policies on the new African elites and on the subordinate classes. The instability produced many losers who attributed their failure to political factors. These conflicts and distortions were kept under control during the early years. These economic costs also reduced popular political support by increasing inequality and poverty. Most investments went to elite projects, with little being done to upgrade the productivity of most small farmers or develop small-businesses.

What are the theoretical and practical conclusions that can be drawn from these experiences?

First, Corporatism did produce growth in Zimbabwe in the 1980s, while liberalisation increased inequality and led to de-industrialisation in Zimbabwe in the 1980s, as dependency theorists predicted. However, growth under corporatist strategies was Unsustainable.

Second, it demonstrates that the viability of particular policy regimes will depend on the nature of the historical processes that have produced the political, social and economic contexts where they are applied. Corporatism worked well in Zimbabwe in the 1980s, but very badly when it was re-introduced in the late 1990s because of the intensification of

political conflict. Liberalisation produced ambiguous economic results and political instability in Zimbabwe. It led to falling output and increased unemployment.

Third, liberalisation would not have destabilised Zimbabwe in the way that it did had the regime been given more external support.

Fourth, any policy process generates dynamic changes in the relationships between political, administrative, social and economic variables, and therefore in their tendency to produce successes or failures. In Zimbabwe, the crisis of the 1990s produced the new movements that destabilised the political system.

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