CHAPTER 3: POST COLONIAL PEACE INITIATIVES

The history of Zimbabwe is characterised by a series of challenges that, at different turning points, manifested themselves through violent conflicts. Since its independence, the issue of achieving sustainable peace and development has remained a challenge due to a lack of comprehensive approaches to issues of human rights violations. The political events of the last decade in Zimbabwe have created challenges that have drawn the attention of both domestic and international actors.

For instance, since the sporadic, violent land seizures of 2000, punctuated by the violent elections in June 2000, March 2002, March 2005 and March 2008, the ruling party and government have attracted international censure for their poor human rights record, that resulted in targeted sanctions for the ruling elite. Whilst different explanations are given for the origins and nature of the current socio-political crisis, it can be argued that Zimbabwe faces a multilayered crisis which requires multi-faceted approaches and responses.

The crisis can be viewed as a confluence of several colonial and post-independence conflictual experiences. For instance, scholars who have written on Zimbabwe (Moyo 2001; Campell 2003; Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen 2003) suggest that the theatrical transitions in the county's political landscape can be attributed to: the referendum that rejected the government's draft constitution; the mounting opposition to the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party; the illegitimate land seizures by government loyalists; the negative response or unwillingness of the state establishment to remove the unlawful land invaders; political violence before, during and after elections and the sky-rocketing unemployment rate due to the hyperinflationary environment.

By the late 1990s, as a result of the government's continued lip-service to issues of social and economic empowerment, ordinary people and workers responded through their union movements by increasingly showing a capacity for militancy and adopting political positions that were in opposition to those of the ruling elites. In response, the government concentrated wealth and power in the ruling class and stifled popular dissent through repression and the systemic use of military force. Lacking an effective state social policy, people rose up in protest against the experienced poverty and social injustices.

The state increasingly resorted to terror tactics and violence in order to maintain social control. Despite all these repressive tactics, and with the support of a disenfranchised people, political opposition rallied around left-leaning trade-union leaders such as Morgan Richard Tsvangirai and Gibson Sibanda whose nascent Movement for Democratic Change Party (MDC) sent political shock waves to the ruling government by taking half of the vote in the parliamentary elections of June 2000. This strategic alliance between party politics and trade-union politics marked a critical turning point in Zimbabwe's political and historical memory landscape.

By 2007 Zimbabwe had entered a tragic and devastating stage in its history, with enormous human, material and moral costs. The political landscape was characterised by violence allegedly perpetrated by the state-sponsored militia against political opposition groups or anyone labelled as an enemy of the state. In addition, the violent political and electoral campaigns were characterised by arbitrary arrests, detention, torture, disappearances and the deaths of political opponents and activists.

Preceding these contradictory events were devastating droughts in the early 1990s and the period 2001-2002, coupled with an unsuccessful structural adjustment programme, all of which added up to the transitional challenges and socio-political complications. Today, the

Zimbabwean socio-political crisis is best described as a complex emergency because of the mosaic nature of the crisis. Thus, all these events constitute fundamental flashpoints which help give context and reflective understandings about the factors that influence the evolution and shaping of the politically motivated

At independence in 1980, most Africans expected that the injustices of the past would be redressed. However, Robert Mugabe, then Prime minister elect told the nation on independence eve;

> "We are called to be constructive, progressive and forever forward-looking, for we cannot afford to be men of yesterday, backward looking, retrogressive and destructive…. If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you. Is it not folly, therefore, that in these circumstances anybody should seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the past? The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten…" De Waal, (1990: 48-9)

In the name and spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness, all the grievances of the past were supposed to be forgotten. Consequently the inequalities and the landlessness, which characterised black Zimbabwean existence before independence, were to be forgotten. The vast majority of Zimbabweans today remain poor and landless. They still stay in all those other marginal lands allocated to them by the successive settler regimes. Meanwhile the small group that benefited through colonialism has continued to hold on to the land. Legally they are protected in their possession. As a result the reality of black labour on white farms has continued to be a fact of life in Zimbabwe.

As soon as the election results were made known, the new Prime Minister designate and the Minister of Defence called for reconciliation, while privately appealing to the British Government to allow Lord Soames to continue in his post for at least three months, Rupia (1992:46) "to dissuade military coup planners". ZANU (PF) further sought to

integrate "the more acceptable elements of the RSF with ZANLA and ZIPRA cadres."(Rupia, 1992:46)) Underlying the integration exercise was the realisation that, for every armed combatant, irrespective of his political views, the new Government had to meet two basic requirements, first, it had to assure his/her perception of personal security, and secondly, eventually provide employment either in or out of the armed forces. The integration exercise welcomed all those who wished to take up a military career in an organisation initially targeted at a strength of between 30 000 and 35 000.

The strength of the integrated military represented a compromise between ideal strength and what the national economy could sustain. Prime Minister Mugabe also secured the services of Lieutenant General Peter Walls, who was appointed as Commander of the Joint High Command (JHC), and "tasked to integrate the three forces and establish a national army". By his own admission, Walls also stayed on to supervise the return of South African war material lent to Rhodesia in the last few months of the war, as well as to reassure those whites who wished to remain in the country and the forces.

The JHC, consisting of the Senior Commanders from the Rhodesian Army, Air Force, ZANLA and ZIPRA, was established and based at Army Headquarters in Harare. Of the assembled guerrillas, 9 500 ZANLA and ZIPRA members were expected to join the army, and the remaining 23 000 to become 'active reservists'. These were to be deployed elsewhere in the economy. Ministries, state departments, parastatal and local authorities were to be encouraged to draw manpower from this group.

One of the key factors that absorbed some of the pressure emanating from the high concentration of military staff at APs, were the vacating of posts by members of the former Rhodesian forces. Furthermore, because the forces had been based mainly on a conscription system, many whites

who stood down, simply returned to their jobs in commerce and industry and on the farms. To understand what was involved, a brief look at the structure of the Rhodesian Army at the end of 1979 would suffice.

The 1963 split in the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) that gave birth to a Shona dominated Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) remains one important event that indicated how tribalism and ethnicity were deeply embedded within nationalism. However hard those who were involved in this split deny the prominence of tribalism and ethnicity as a factor behind the split the subsequent events spoke loudly about the role of ethnicity in spoiling the birth of a nation. The immediate post-split ZAPU-ZANU faction fights in Harare, Gweru, Bulawayo and other sites took clear tribal and ethnic dimensions. Later splits including the one that resulted in the formation of the Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe (Frolizi) and others also indicated how ethnicity was playing havoc within nationalist politics. The same is true of postcolonial split that rocked the MDC in 2005.

Even factions within ZANU-PF indicate the reverberation of regional, kinship, clannish, ethnic and tribal alignments. In short, the liberation struggle became a terrain of re-tribalisation of nationalism with particular ethnic groups positioning themselves to lead and dominate the imagined postcolonial nation. Even a seemingly unitary Shona identity unravelled as the Karanga fought to eliminate the Manyika and the Zezuru fought for ascendance over the Karanga. Along the way lives were lost due to what Masipula Sithole termed struggles within the struggle.

The sum of all is that the Zimbabwe nation-state that was born in 1980 was a product of a deeply tribalised nationalism. The nationalists who spearheaded the liberation struggle dreamt in both nationalist and tribal languages and terms. The nation-state was therefore born with a terrible

ethnic-tribal birth-mark. As put by Eldred Masunungure, "Zimbabwe as a state came into being in 1980 but Zimbabwe as a nation did not". There was outright and unapologetic building of the state as a Zanufied and Shonalized political formation where other political actors like PF-ZAPU that drew most of its support from Matabeleland and Midlands regions had no dignified space and Ndebele-speaking people were an inconvenience that had to be dealt with. This mentality was clear from music, symbols, heroes and national celebrations of independence.

As noted above Zimbabwe was born out of an armed liberation war spearheaded by ethnically fragmented leadership, fought by equally ethnically fragmented freedom fighters and supported by masses that were socialised into tribal politics. It was against this background that ZANU-PF electoral victory in 1980 was celebrated as not only a victory of a liberation movement over settler colonialism but also as victory of Shona political elite over Ndebele political elites in PF-ZAPU. While ZANU-PF built their political legitimacy on their nationalist liberation war credentials, they also openly connected the party, the state, and the nation to Shona historical symbols.

This set the stage for an ethnic showdown between the triumphant Shona and the defeated Ndebele that became openly violent in 1982. On this issue, Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2009:12) noted "that from the very day of achievement of independence, the triumphant Shona-dominated ZANU-PF leadership displayed a unique desire to build a party-nation and a party-state that excluded other political formations, crafted around and backed by ZANU-PFs war-time military wing (ZANLA) and Shona historical experiences". Specific party slogans, party symbols, party songs, and party regalia of the liberation war time continued to be used at national ceremonies like Independence and Heroes Days. It was amidst this fanfare and celebratory mood that Shona triumphalism unfolded against Ndebele .

While ZANU-PF built their political legitimacy on their nationalist liberation war credentials, they also openly connected the party, the state, and the nation to Shona historical symbols. This set the stage for an ethnic showdown between the triumphant Shona and the defeated Ndebele that became openly violent in 1982. On this issue, Norma Kriger (1997 12) noted that "from the very day of achievement of independence, the triumphant Shona-dominated ZANU-PF leadership displayed a unique desire to build a party-nation and a party-state that excluded other political formations, crafted around and backed by ZANU-PFs war-time military wing (ZANLA) and Shona historical experiences"

Specific party slogans, party symbols, party songs, and party regalia of the liberation war time continued to be used at national ceremonies like Independence and Heroes Days. It was amidst this fanfare and celebratory mood that Shona triumphalism unfolded against Ndebele particularism reeling under a feeling of defeat.

The triumphant ZANU-PF politicians immediately used the state controlled media to cast PF-ZAPU, its leader Joshua Nkomo, and its military wing (ZIPRA), as no heroic liberators, as no committed nation-builders, but as a threat to the country's hard won independence. Historians like T. Ranger, N. Bhebe, and E. Sibanda have tried to add the Matabeleland narratives into the story of nationalism through Matabeleland focused research in recent years. This academic compensation has not been accompanied by a clear drive for political and economic inclusion of Ndebele people into the mainstream of post-colonial Zimbabwe save for the Unity Accord of 22 December 1987. Thus there was a systematic attempt to sideline the Ndebele from mainstream political activity due to tribalism inherent in ZANU PF that led to hostilities and antagonism within the newly created army and transcending to the people

The first crisis that hit the post-colonial nation-building project had to do with ethnicity and integration of military forces. A crisis that began in the ranks of the military, involving open exchange of fire between the triumphant and Shona-dominant ZANLA and the Ndebele-dominated ZIPRA in Connemara (Gweru) and Entumbane (Bulawayo), that ignited a reign of state terror in Matabeleland and the Midlands region in the period 1980-1987. The reign of terror that became known as the *Gukurahundi* campaign was ostensibly meant to seek and destroy some ex-ZIPRA combatants who had defected from the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) to embark on a life of dissidence.

But as noted by Bhebe the violence was somehow an inevitable consequence of the way nationalism had evolved and how the nationalist armies had been formed. This is how he puts it:

> "To some extent we accept the notion of the inevitability of a violent post-colonial civil war pitting the former liberation movements and their former armies against each other. But there is need to posit that the inevitability of violence was underwritten by incompatibilities of Ndebele and Shona particularities. The violence was in a way symptomatic of the failure of a smooth blending of major ethnicities into a new national identity called Zimbabwe."

The net effect of this was that violence was the only invitation card by which the Ndebele were invited into a Shona-imagined nation.

Matabeleland had to be conquered and forced into part of Zimbabwe. That was the essence of the violence of the 1980s. PF-ZAPU, ZIPRA and Joshua Nkomo only happened to be mistaken for symbols of Ndebele particularism. It is within this context that the impact of that violence has to be understood, particularly its role in the re-packaging of post-Gukurahundi politics in Matabeleland.

The war was a spill-over from the nationalist politics of the 1960s and 1970s. Nationalism had the ambiguity of being both exclusionary and all-embracing. It subsumed class, ethnic and religious differences, and, at the same time, tried to use these cleavages for its sustenance.

Alexander observed that the escalation of violence after the end of the liberation war built on the two guerrilla armies' (Zanla for ZANU and Zipra for ZAPU) regional patterns of recruitment and operation during the 1970s, and the history of animosity and the distrust between the two armies and their political leaders (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger 2000: 181).

Following ZANU-PF's victory in the February 1980, the possibility that the clearly surprised and disappointed ZAPU would use these forces, that were still largely based outside the country, to obtain victory by other means was a source of concern for ZANU-PF. These seeds of distrust and division fell on fertile ground in the early 1980s (Alexander *et al.,* 2000:181). When the war ended guerrillas were supposed to move into Assembly Points (APs) for disbanding, demobilisation or integration into the newly created Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). However, there were incessant, often violent, conflicts between Zanla and Zipra combatants caused by mutual suspicion. This resulted first in the demotion of the ZAPU leader, Joshua Nkomo, serving in the national unity government, from Minister of Home Affairs to Minister without Portfolio (Alexander *et al.,* 2000:181). This angered ZAPU and Zipra cadres. The government secretly initiated the training of the notorious Fifth Brigade by 106 North Korean instructors.

In February1982 the government announced it had discovered vast amounts of arms on properties owned by the ZAPU Company, Nitram, and around Zipra Assembly Points. These allegations were used as grounds for confiscating the properties and sacking Nkomo and other ZAPU ministers. Many deserted the army due to fear of persecution and took up arms. After February 1982, the room for political conciliation disappeared. Prime Minister Robert Mugabe treated the caches as definitive proof that ZAPU had always been planning a coup. It was said that it had held back forces and cached weapons to fight in a final

struggle to overthrow a ZANU-PF government if it came to power (Alexander *et al* 2000:181).

Former Zipra cadres were persecuted, especially those in the army. Some fled for dear life while those who remained in the army were often demoted. Alexander *et al.*(2000:181) notes that:

> "The desertion in 1982 of thousands of armed former Zipras from the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) and their persecution at home led to a vast increase of dissident violence in Matabeleland. These dissidents were not the same as those of 1980. Their position was due to the deterioration of relations within the ZNA and targeting of former Zipras outside it, a situation that was to worsen dramatically with the deployment of the notorious Fifth Brigade to Matabeleland North in 1983."

The Fifth Brigade was unlike other units of the ZNA. It was accountable only to the then Prime Minister, and not to the normal military chain of command. It was specifically intended for what were termed 'internal defense purposes' (Alexander *et al.,* 2000:181). From its deployment in Matabeleland North in January 1983 until its withdrawal from Matabeleland South in late 1984, the brigade carried out a grotesquely violent campaign. It targeted party chairmen and civil servants, civilians at large, as well as former Zipra combatants, refugees, and anyone suspected of having crossed the border to Botswana in the course of the liberation war. Former Zipra combatants rarely survived encounters with this brigade.

Its violence largely shaped the spread and character of dissidency (Alexander *et al.,* 2000). The operation to expunge the dissidents was code-named *Gukurahundi* (in Shona, this phrase means the first rains of the year that wash away rubbish). Although the government deployed many sectors of its security apparatus, the Fifth Brigade excelled in repression. Many people were tortured, raped, murdered, and maimed in the pursuit of dissident quashing. Many people still bear the mental and physical scars of the war.

The Matabeleland inferno ended after the signing of the Unity Accord on 22 December 1987 between Prime Minister Mugabe and the ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, who had been persecuted by the ZANU government**.** The Unity Accord aimed to do what Gukurahundi had failed to do, that is, conquer the last frontier of resistance to ZANU-PF hegemony by delivering the Ndebele-speaking region to the Shona-dominated party. In the same year, Constitutional Amendment Act (No.7) created an executive presidency with Mugabe as President and Nkomo as one of two national Vice-Presidents. One salutary effect of this rapprochement was that former PF-ZAPU leaders were now positioned to urge moderation against the push to create a de jure one-party state in Zimbabwe

Perhaps guided by Kwame Nkrumah's injunction to "seek ye first the political kingdom," the ZANU-PF government of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe instead gave priority to the consolidation of political power, especially by strengthening the coercive organs of the state. The first task was to ensure party control over key institutions by appointing loyalists from the nationalist struggle to top positions in Cabinet and the state security apparatus.

Thus the leadership of ZANU-PF at independence was a coalition of old-guard nationalists, young radicals, battle-hardened guerrilla commanders, and professionals returned from exile. Unlike Nkomo, who bestrode the pinnacle of his party in the typical dominant style of an African "big man," Mugabe at first occupied a less secure position. Historically, ZANU had always been split by roiling internal divisions between generations of political activists among armed factions within the guerrilla armies, and between the fighting forces on the frontlines and the political leaders involved in international negotiations. Mugabe emerged in 1977 as a compromise leader who was minimally acceptable to all sides including, critically, the military commanders.

The promotion of ex-ZANLA commanders as heads of the security forces and the creation of an exclusively Shona Fifth Brigade ensured the loyalty of the army, both to the party and to the top leader personally. The coherence of the security forces was tested in the early 1980s by sporadic insurgent activities by ex-ZIPRA "dissidents," which gave Mugabe an excuse to dismiss Nkomo and other PF-ZAPU ministers from the Cabinet in 1982 and unleash a violent pogrom against the rural population of Matabeleland, whom he accused of aiding and abetting South African interests. In addition, senior ex-ZIPRA officers, including Lookout Masuku, then deputy commander of the army, and Dumiso Dabengwa were arrested and charged with treason.

Thus, the elite coalition between the two leading nationalist parties – ZANU (PF) and (PF) ZAPU – effectively unraveled within a couple of years of independence. Former allies were castigated as "enemies of the state," fit only for destruction. Moreover, atrocities committed by the army's Fifth Brigade in the *Gukurahundi* campaign in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands Province led to the permanent alienation of most Ndebele-speakers from the governing authorities. However, a Unity Accord of 1987 revived the grand coalition established at independence, rehabilitated Nkomo and other senior PF-ZAPU leaders, and restored a semblance of peace in the countryside.

Given its roots as a national liberation movement, ZANU-PF also moved quickly to penetrate the state apparatus in the peasant farming areas, for example by appointing party loyalists as District Administrators and replacing the old system of native administration with representative District Councils. The party leadership worked hard to get its candidates elected to these local government bodies and to a hierarchy of provincial and district planning boards and ward and village development committees, successfully so in all areas but Matabeleland.

The second decade of independence began with leaders pushing for a *de jure* one-party state, a move ultimately made unnecessary by ZANU-PF's easy *de facto* dominance at the polls. The regime grew increasingly intolerant of dissent and ever more willing to use violence as a campaign tool. The party asserted supremacy over the state by politicizing the bureaucracy and army and turning a blind eye to rent-seeking. Yet, faced with deficits and debts, the government had little choice but to accept reforms to structurally adjust Zimbabwe's outdated economy. Under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai, the ZCTU reacted with a series of strikes and stay-always and, in coalition with civic associations bent on constitutional reform, formed the MDC, an opposition party. For his part, Mugabe was only able to hold together his splintering ruling coalition by using unbudgeted state resources to buy off the militant war veterans..

In 1993, Zimbabwe was in the third year of a five-year Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) designed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and scheduled for completion in December 1995. It seemed unlikely, however, that much would be accomplished by the end date. The stated purpose of the plan was to liberalize the economy and pave the way for capitalist development. Thus, ESAP sought to improve incentives for foreign investors by reducing government spending, providing fewer services (and charging fees for them), cutting back on state employment, removing government subsidies on food products, reducing tariffs, and ending artificial supports for the currency. ESAP's austerity measures were supposed to have short-term costs as they led to the long-term benefits of increased employment and productivity. In fact, the most vulnerable Zimbabweans have suffered and government debt has mounted.

In 1993 an $83 million subsidy on maize was removed, and prices rose 30 percent. The end of subsidies on wheat and dairy products also made life very costly for the poor. Pledges to reduce the bloated public service by 25 percent were not fulfilled — political patronage (the cabinet had 43

members) and corruption undermined such expressed intentions. In 1992 the gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 8 percent.

As a consequence, ZCTU gradually distanced itself from ZANU-PF, especially after the election of Morgan Tsvangirai as the union's Secretary-General in 1989. Once a foreman in the mining industry and a disaffected former political commissar in ZANU-PF, Tsvangirai emerged as the critical voice of the labor movement. Previously, in the 1980s, union leaders had called for worker representation in ZANU-PF structures; by the 1990s, they came out openly (much as Frederic Chiluba did in Zambia) in support of an alternate, multiparty political system. In 1989, Tsvangirai condemned the closure of the University of Zimbabwe and voiced solidarity with students protesting against corruption. When, in 1992, he led the unions in opposition to government legislation that undercut the ZCTU's financial base the Minister of Labor warned ZCTU not to behave like an opposition political party or risk harsh treatment.

By 2000, average real incomes were one fifth lower than in 1980 and three-quarters of the population was estimated to be living in poverty. Yet food subsidies had been withdrawn. Moreover, as the government turned to policies of cost recovery for social services, access to education and health care, after rising dramatically in the 1980s, reversed direction in the 1990s. Symbolizing these setbacks, school teachers refused to mark exam papers for want of adequate salaries, timely paid. In protest, ZCTU officials took the lead in organizing a national public sector strike in 1996, a general strike in 1997, and mass stay-aways in 1998.

Importantly, the unions expanded their critique of the government beyond sadza-and-relish issues to broader demands for political accountability. Labor leaders nurtured alliances with other social groups, notably university students and human rights activists, which together demonstrated a newfound capacity to confront the government

in coordinated fashion. According to Raftopoulos (2002:45) "The disparity between the *de jure* rights and freedoms enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution and the *de facto* political rules developed by the state…provided…important openings for contesting ZANU-PF domination.

The watershed entry (or rather re-entry) of the war veterans into a prominent place in national politics had far-reaching effects that stretched well beyond the sacking of the public treasury. Just as important was the radicalization – or for want of a better word, martialization of ZANU-PF and national politics. The payment had unprecedented results on the economy as it accelerated the decline of the Zimbabwe dollar and the economy in general. This economic decline led to strikes in the country with the most violent being the food riots in major towns and cities. As the economy declined opposition against the government grew and as opposition grew the state resorted to violence and intimidation against opponents

Civic groups in Zimbabwe formed the National Constitutional Assembly towards the end of 1997 to force the government to write a new people driven constitution. The groups that were at the forefront of the constitutional movement comprised labour, student unions and academics. Their main aim was to write new constitution to remove the Lancaster house constitution which had been negotiated and had a lot of weaknesses especially on the powers of the executive president.

In response to the NCA the government put up a team of that was to write a new constitution. The Constitutional Commission was led by mostly ZANU PF members of parliament. There was open hostility towards the two constitution making groups with accusations coming from both sides. The NCA spiritedly campaigned for a no vote during the referendum. At the same time the NCA membership became instrumental in the formation of the MDC. After the rejection of the constitution ZANU PF initiated the fast track land reform programme

meant to distribute land. The exercise was characterised by violent occupation white owned farm with 6 farmers reported dead. The violence that the land reform was tackled the international community condemned the exercise and imposed targeted sanctions on the ruling party members and business associated with it.

By the end of the 1990s, therefore, the scattered social interests that had contested the one-party state at the beginning of the decade had begun to crystallize into a nascent opposition coalition. Formal organizations in political society started to align themselves with this civic movement. For example, all but two opposition parties10 boycotted the 1995 elections because of the absence of electoral and constitutional reforms.

For its part, the NCA effectively advocated a popular boycott of the government's official constitutional commission. While some citizens heeded this call, others felt emboldened to speak up to the government's handpicked commissioners by presenting their own unvarnished views. As an independent civic organization, the NCA claimed (somewhat disingenuously) to have no partisan agenda. Instead, ZCTU took the lead, announcing in 1999 the formation of a political party known as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) whose principal objective was "a struggle for jobs, decency and democracy." Tsvangirai – then NCA Chair as well as ZCTU Secretary General – was elected as President of the MDC at an inaugural party congress in January 2000.

Thus, as the decade ended, an emergent popular movement born in civil society arose to challenge an entrenched ruling party whose mismanagement and corruption had called into question its right to rule. To offset a loss of political support, ZANU-PF tried to shore up its heartland among the Shona-speaking peasantry, for example by providing rural voters with food relief during droughts and distributing free seed and fertilizer afterwards.

In addition, Rural and District Councils were legally merged, thus transferring tax revenues from commercial to communal farming areas. At the same time, ZANU-PF began to reverse its relations with traditional chiefs and headmen by restoring some of their lost powers and including them in the party's patronage network. Formerly the leading source of progressive ideas in Zimbabwe, the party elite thereby began to transform ZANU-PF into a force for social and political conservatism.

By the end of the 1990s, the ZANU-PF leadership coalition had become narrow and less cohesive: few former PF-ZAPU members remained in Cabinet, rifts had begun to emerge among rivals to succeed Mugabe and parliamentary backbenchers were restive. The party's loss of political legitimacy was starkly illustrated by the 1996 presidential elections: although Mugabe won over 90 percent of the vote, rival candidates withdrew because of irregularities and barely one-third of the registered electorate bothered to show up on polling day.

In the next decade, violence and disorder would become the prime instruments of ZANU-PF rule, symbolized most clearly by chaotic invasions of commercial farmland. At the same time, an opposition movement growing out of civil society offered a more orderly and constitutional vision of the future.

The millennium marked the onset of Zimbabwe's descent into political terror and economic collapse. The turning point was a constitutional referendum, that the opposition scored its first electoral victory. The incumbent elite struck back with land invasions, purges of judges, and the mobilization of militias. A Joint Operations Command (JOC) of security chiefs usurped key policy making functions from the Cabinet and the Reserve Bank became a slush fund for the ruling party and armed forces.

The predictable results of these ill-advised policies were economic contraction, disintegrating public services, runaway inflation, and widespread public discontent. After MDC leaders were assaulted at a peaceful rally, external actors from the Southern Africa region stepped up pressure for a political settlement. When a June 2008 presidential election – the most violent in Zimbabwe's history was blatantly won by Mugabe, SADC forced Zimbabwe's rival elite coalitions into an awkward power-sharing settlement.

The ruling party strategy for subsequent elections – in June 2000 (parliamentary), March 2002 (presidential) and March 2005 (parliamentary) – was to create "no-go" zones in the countryside that were closed to opposition campaigns. Under the direction of the party hierarchy, local ZANU-PF officials and members ignored constitutional guarantees of free association and assembly by effectively "banning" MDC from operating. In a mounting war of electoral violence, state-sponsored militias harassed, intimidated, raped and murdered MDC candidates and supporters.

At the same time, the ruling party employed the mass media – especially government-controlled television and radio stations and daily newspapers – to restrict coverage of MDC, except to depict them as pawns of neocolonialism. For its part, the opposition used ZCTU and NCA structures to build a rival network of activists among public service workers like teachers, nurses and agricultural extension workers, including in the ruling party's rural strongholds. The MDC held special appeal for urban youth, workers, professionals and the residents of disaffected regions: mainly Matabeleland, but also Manicaland. It was a new party with a fresh agenda whose coalition of supporters (including the private media, particularly the *Daily News*) had few associations with ruling or opposition political parties from the past.

In a further bid to reestablish lost authority, the ZANU-PF elite drastically curtailed the residual independence still enjoyed by institutions of the Zimbabwean state. The main victim was the rule of law. Until then, the judiciary had retained a good measure of professionalism and autonomy, often issuing verdicts against the government in constitutional test cases. But the anarchic events of 2000-2, whether land invasions, political intimidation, or election tampering along with an amnesty cynically granted for perpetrators of violence were all clearly illegal.

In ruling on a case brought by the Commercial Farmers' Union, the Supreme Court found the fast-track land reform program had not been carried out in conformity with laws that the government had itself enacted. Rather than complying with the court, however, senior government officials including the Minister of Justice condemned the judges. And war veterans invaded the Supreme Court. Ultimately, in 2001, the Chief Justice and two High Court judges, who happened to be white, were forced into early retirement under threat of physical harm. In place of Chief Justice Gubbay, Robert Mugabe appointed Judge Godfrey Chidyausiku a former ZANU-PF minister and reliable ally.

In May 2005, the government of Zimbabwe initiated Operation *Murambatsvina* (variously translated as "Restore Order" or "Clean Out the Filth"), a massive demolition program aimed at destroying allegedly illegal urban structures, such as informal housing and markets. By early July 2005, an estimated 700,000 urban Zimbabweans had been rendered homeless or unemployed by the operation, and an estimated 2.1 million (in total, almost 20% of the population) were indirectly affected by the demolitions.

Operation *Murambatsvina* had a severe impact on the nation's economy and on the livelihood of its citizens. For many, this was not the first time they had been forcibly removed from their homes. As a result of the 2000

land reform program, an estimated 400,000 black laborers on commercial farms lost their livelihoods and/or homes, and many fled to urban areas to find work.

The government described *Murambatsvina* as a program designed to restore the capital city to its former image as "the Sunshine City," ridding the country's urban areas of illegal structures that foster criminal activity and stemming the black market trade in foreign currency. International reaction to *Murambatsvina* was highly critical. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan named Tanzanian-born Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, as the U.N. Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe to investigate the humanitarian impact of the demolitions. Following a fact-finding mission to the country, she issued a comprehensive report, which concluded:

> "Operation Restore Order, while purporting to target illegal dwellings and structures and to clamp down on alleged illicit activities, was carried out in an indiscriminate and unjustified manner, with indifference to human suffering and, in repeated cases, with disregard to several provisions of national and international legal frameworks."

The report also described police preventing civil society and humanitarian organization from assisting those affected by the demolitions, and suggested that the groups were operating in a "climate of fear" and practicing "'self-censorship' to avoid being closed down or evicted."

By 2007 Zimbabwe had entered a tragic and devastating stage in its history, with enormous human, material and moral costs. The political landscape was characterised by violence allegedly perpetrated by the state-sponsored militia against political opposition groups or anyone labelled as an enemy of the state. In addition, the violent political and electoral campaigns were characterised by arbitrary arrests, detention, torture, disappearances and the deaths of political opponents and activists.

Preceding these contradictory events were devastating droughts in the early 1990s and the period 2001-2002, coupled with an unsuccessful structural adjustment programme, all of which added up to the transitional challenges and socio-political complications. The Zimbabwean socio-political crisis is best described as a complex emergency because of the mosaic nature of the crisis. Thus, all these events constitute fundamental flashpoints that help give context and reflective understandings about the factors that influence the evolution and shaping of the politically motivated violence in Zimbabwe.

However, with the help of a mediated process by the former South African President, Thabo Mbeki and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the ruling ZANU PF party and the opposing MDC factions signed a Global Political Agreement (GPA) on 15 September 2008. While this historic event marked the end of violent politics, it also ushered in the beginning of the many challenges involved in rebuilding the country. Thus, by signing the agreement, Zimbabwe as a nation entered another challenging process: the creation of a new era of democratic and transparent leadership, anchored in transitional justice with national healing and reconciliation as prerequisites for sustainable peace and nation building.

The Global Political Agreement (GPA) of September 2008 led to the formation of a transitional "government of national unity" (GNU) in February 2009. This new settlement was no leader's first choice; both Mugabe and Tsvangirai entered reluctantly. On one hand, the elite accord restored a welcome modicum of peace and economic stability. On the other hand, it papered over key issues, especially how to divide executive power, manage the economy, and ensure civilian control of the armed forces. In practice, the GNU has been unable to implement the central provisions of the GPA, leading to repeated breakdowns in communication and cooperation between President and Prime Minister. The roots of the impasse lie in the Mugabe's unwillingness to share

power and resistance to political reform by senior military elements in the dominant coalition. But the divisions, inexperience and organizational weaknesses of the rival MDC coalition are also to blame.

The Global Political Agreement of 15 September 2008 signaled the end of the political crisis between rival political parties in Zimbabwe. The agreement was signed by the three main rival parties that had won the harmonised elections. The agreement represents a 'framework' that formally recognised the extent of the political tragedy and enshrined the respect of human rights.

Article VII of the agreement focuses on: Equality, National Healing, Cohesion and Unity. The Parties hereby agree that the new Government will ensure equal treatment of all regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, place of origin and will work towards equal access to development for all will ensure equal and fair development of all regions of the country and in particular to correct historical imbalances in the development of the regions, shall give consideration to the setting up of a mechanism to properly advise on what mechanisms might be necessary and practicable to achieve national healing, cohesion and unity in respect of victims of pre and post independence political conflicts; and will strive to create an environment of tolerance and respect among Zimbabweans and that all citizens are treated with dignity and decency irrespective of age, gender, race, ethnicity, place of origin or political affiliation, will formulate policies and put measures in place to attract the return and repatriation of all Zimbabweans in the Diaspora and in particular will work towards the return of all skilled personnel.

The Global Political Agreement between the ZANU-PF, MDC-T and MDC-M formations, attempts were made to promote national healing and reconciliation with a view to rebuilding the country. A summit to explore ways of reconciling Zimbabweans divided by almost a decade of political violence between the two main rival political parties was held in April 2009. The ZANU-PF chairman John Nkomo, MDC-M vice

president Gibson Sibanda and Sekai Holland from the MDC–T were appointed as Ministers of State responsible for National Healing and Reconciliation.

The GNU's position on reconciliation and national healing represents what many saw as an acknowledgement and endorsement of the adoption of the need for some form of transitional justice in Zimbabwe. Recognizing the sensitive nature of the reconciliation and national healing project, the mandate of the tripartite team was to come up with a policy framework that was to be presented to the council of ministers for debate, approval and ratification into an act and bill.

However, despite these efforts, there were arguments as to whether the national healing and reconciliation project should be led by politicians, given the politics of partisanship that characterised the political landscape of Zimbabwe since its independence. For example, informed by the South African and Rwandan experiences, arguments by some church alliances are that because issues of national healing and reconciliation are embedded in moral obligations, the church or church-based independent organisations can claim 'moral authority' and 'legitimacy' to lead the National Healing and Reconciliation process, as politicians are viewed as not having the moral integrity to remain neutral and or separate national issues from party political agendas.

Post colonial conflict peace initiatives did not manage to bring about the mush needed peace unity and reconciliation in Zimbabwe exigent for development. The following chapter is going to analyse why all these have engender peace unity and reconciliation