

CHAPTER 6: THE MDC PRACTICE ON NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

The description furnished by Mugabe in 2001 clearly sets out the stage for violent political confrontations. He noted that:

The MDC should never be judged or characterised by its black trade union face; by its youthful student face; by its salaried black suburban junior professionals; never by its rough and violent high-density lumpen elements. It is much deeper than these human superficialities; for it is immovably and implacably moored in the colonial yesteryear and embraces wittingly or unwittingly the repulsive ideology of return to white settler rule. MDC is as old and as strong as the force that controls it; that converges on it and controls it; that drive and direct; indeed, that support, sponsor it. It is a counter-revolutionary Trojan horse contrived and nurtured by the very inimical forces that enslaved and oppressed our people yesterday (Mugabe, 2001: 88).

Mugabe was preparing for a violent showdown with the party through the contrived use of state agencies and state machinery and the entire party's youth militia and the Liberation veterans. Words such as 'unpatriotic' and 'puppets' became common features of Mugabe's speeches at each and every address. As a result, "elements of the police, the intelligence service, the army, the war veterans, party supporters and the youth militia, the ruling party has inflicted enormous damage on the personnel and structures of the opposition" (Raftopoulos, 2004: 163). The MDC used nonviolence to counter the brutality it endured at the hands of ZANU-PF.

The June 2000 parliamentary election was the beginning of highly institutionalised violence against the MDC and its supporters. The violence led to farm displacements and cordoning off of rural areas. The MDC participated in each election since 2000 and preached nonviolence each time there were threats of violence. The MDC wrote letters to SADC leadership imploring them to act in light of the violence. The Parliamentary elections were characterised by systematic

state sponsored violence against supporters of the MDC. Chief victims of the violence were those in the rural areas and farm workers. It was reported that:

31 deaths relating to political violence were reported during the run-up to the 2000 election, most of them perpetrated by ZANU-PF supporters. The majority of victims were MDC activists or supporters, many of whom had to go into hiding during the election campaign. Roy Bennett, the MDC candidate in Chimanimani, whose pregnant wife was attacked, as a result of which she suffered a miscarriage, and Blessing Chebundo, MDC candidate in Kwekwe were among them (Zimbabwe Country Assessment Report, 2002 Chapter 4:17).

The 2000 violence was instigated by war veterans under Chenjerai Hunzvi. In Buhera South Constituency the major villains in the orgy of violence were identified as Joseph Chinotimba, the then war veterans leader, Madziturira, the Buhera Rural District Council Chair, Wevhu (war veteran) and Chapeyama, a local welder. Notable youth commanders whose names featured prominently include Tawedzerwa Mcharwa, Langton Nehumambi, John Madidi, Chendinofira Gwengwe, Zvabhenda Mbavara, Kerenia Dambudzo, Uta Amosi Marowa, Rennei Muzerengwa, Mafunde Modikai, Nyaradzo Mudete, Beauty Chongore and Charles Mukanwa. The violence targeted mainly MDC supporters. The MDC appealed to the police to act. It seemed the police were in collusion with the perpetrators or were afraid of acting.

The MDC approached the Courts, but to no avail. The Murambinda Magistrate Courts in Buhera were a hive of legal manoeuvres as the perpetrators of violence often used the police to arrest victims. Notable victims of this were Julius Chivandire, Norosi Dzere and Chitombo Mundiriri who spent two months in Rusape prison after thwarting the ZANU-PF violence. Arrested ZANU-PF militia were released from prison after President Mugabe issued decrees granting them amnesty. These decrees became a systematic way of encouraging violence in

elections as they were issued in 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, and 2013 elections.

In Buhera South, the MDC leadership and its supporters hoped that a negotiated settlement would be reached in 2002. ZANU-PF and MDC attempted to find common ground in 2002. The talks were initiated by South Africa and Nigeria. These two countries proposed to find common ground between the political parties. The agendas of ZANU-PF and MDC were parallel in that the MDC was contesting the outcome of the election wanting a rerun while ZANU-PF wanted legitimacy. The MDC insisted that it was talking with ZANU-PF on the basis that ZANU-PF was a political party and not the government.

The imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe by the United States of America, the European Union and Britain in 2002, received the backing of the MDC. The MDC also supported the expulsion of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth. The MDC advocated for targeted sanctions on the political leadership in Zimbabwe and their businesses and government owned companies which financially supported the regime. The MDC party supported sanctions because they thought sanctions were a nonviolent way to political change. The sanctions were motivated by high levels of violence in Zimbabwe and intimidation and murder of political opponents. Sanctions have been used against rogue regimes such as the Saddam and Gaddafi regimes in Iraq and Libya respectively.

The MDC lobbied for the imposition of sanctions against the ZANU-PF leaders, their family and their businesses. More than 50 ZANU-PF members were sanctioned by the European Union and America. The sanctions coincided with the general economic decline in Zimbabwe. The imposition of sanctions resulted in the heavy-handed approach by ZANU-PF against the MDC. Violence became a recurring feature in the national political discourse. To those in Buhera, the sanctions lobby

was not well received as most members did not understand the implications and impact when the perpetrators of violence remained in office. One member opined that “zvinobatsirei kupa masanctions vanhu vacho vachiramba vachitonga” (how useful are the sanctions when perpetrators of violence remain in office). Initially most members embraced the call for sanctions, however, later on they felt the sanctions were of no use as long as they saw violence mongers in their midst.

The MDC utilised prayer as a nonviolent tool. Various meetings were held under the auspices of the church leadership to urge supporters to be tolerant of each other. The call for the prayer meeting was that:

The leadership of the Campaign once again reiterates its commitment to the resolution of the Zimbabwean crisis in total defiance of the brutality being perpetrated by the state security agents. We deplore the use of violence by those who are in power not by peoples’ consent but through coercive means. The state has an obligation to protect the citizenry and to respect the human rights, including the civil and political liberties of the people (New African Magazine, May 2007: 87).

The Save Zimbabwe Campaign also demanded peaceful elections during the 2008 general election. They also demanded that the elections be held under a new constitution which respected the fundamental rights of the people. They demanded that the elections be held under the supervision of local, regional, African and international observers. In their campaign, they cited the remarkable words of Eddison Zvobgo who said “We don’t want to create a socio-legal order in the country in which people will go to bed after having barricaded their doors and windows because someone from the special police branch will visit them during the night; no we are tired of it, that’s why we are in this revolution for as long as it is going to take” (Dr Eddison Zvobgo, 1974). In line with the Save Zimbabwe Campaign, the Buhera South MDC leadership attempted to replicate the Harare prayer campaigns with very little uptake of this as most felt they could easily be victimised.

The local leadership simply encouraged their followers to pray in their homes to avoid detection and retribution. The violence of 2000, 2002 and 2005 elections showed them that they had to be discreet in some instances to avoid being victimised.

On 11 March 2007, under the Save Zimbabwe Campaign, the opposition attempted to hold a prayer meeting at Zimbabwe Grounds in Highfields. The Zimbabwe Grounds is an historic place in the Zimbabwe liberation movement as it was the home of African nationalism. The police arrested the MDC leadership which included Morgan Tsvangirai, Arthur Mutambara, Tendai Biti, Organising Secretary Elias Mudzuri, Grace Kwinje, Sekai Holland, Job Sikhala, and NCA leader, Lovemore Madhuku for allegedly inciting violence. Scores of MDC supporters were injured in the ensuing melee with the police. Two MDC supporters Gift Tandari and Itai Manyeruke were killed during the meeting. MDC supporters protested and the protests were met with brute force. Douglas Mwonzora, a senior executive member of the MDC said: "The peace prayers were being run by clergymen who have invited us and the other political parties have apparently not taken them seriously, but we in the MDC take matters of peace and national harmony seriously" (*Herald*, 9/04/2012).

The Save Zimbabwe Campaign and the violence which ensued later showed that the state was prepared to use violence to maintain its hegemony. The beating of Tsvangirai showed that no one was safe especially considering that the MDC leadership were the victims. A Zimbabwean Human Rights Advocate had this to say "the 2008 Presidential campaign has already begun. This violence is the strategy of the ruling party. They want to eliminate opposition now so that the situation will appear calm in the period before the election" (OSISA, 2007: 2). The violence internationalised the Zimbabwean problem and the international community responded by paying spotlighting the crisis.

In this regard the nonviolence helped in isolating the ZANU-PF regime from the international community. During the same period the EU and USA further intensified sanctions on the Mugabe regime. Despite the threats and condemnation from different quotas, Mugabe boisterously stated that “police have the right to bash them... those who incite violence or actually cause and participate in unleashing it are set to pay a very heavy price, regardless of who they are” (*The Chronicle*, 15 March 2007). ZANU-PF attacked the MDC prayer campaigns for becoming a “campaign platform lending holiness to the MDC’s agenda” (*The Herald* 09/04/2012).

The MDC continued with the meetings even after the inception of the Inclusive Government. Even though the party faced criticism from other political players, they still used prayer as a nonviolent tool. Commenting on the events, Arthur Mutambara argued “the brutality has united us. I also observe that there is now total rebellion in the country and that we will defiantly continue with our rallies and demonstrations, in total disregard of the unjust and repressive laws of AIPPA and POSA” (*The Standard*, 2021/03/14). In response, Mugabe defiantly stated “of course he (opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai) was bashed. He deserved it... I told the police beat him a lot. He and his MDC must stop their terrorist activities. We saying to him ‘stop it now, or you will regret it’” (*The Standard*, 2021/03/14). This prompted the UN, EU, UNHRC, US State Department and AU to issue strong statements against Mugabe regime. Levy Mwanawasa was scathing in his condemnation of Mugabe when he says “quiet diplomacy has failed to help solve the political chaos and economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. As I speak right now one SADC country has sunk into such economic difficulties that it may be likened to a sinking Titanic whose passengers are jumping out in a bid to save their live.” (*The Standard*, 2021/03/14). In short what started as a prayer became a trigger for international action and condemnation such that Mbeki became the mediator in the conflict. The international community became more interested in

Zimbabwe with some calling for military action against Mugabe. Calls for fresh elections mounted. The elections earmarked for 2010 were pushed back to 2008 because of mounting legitimacy questions on Mugabe.

The Zimbabwean political scene uses t/shirts and other paraphernalia of marketing political activities. While these t/shirts served as campaign materials, they also became potential sources of violence. The political environment after 2000 became increasingly polarised. As soon as Robert Mugabe declared the MDC the enemies and friends of imperialists and colonial agents, the party youths were given the powers to cleanse territories of MDC supporters. Political party regalia are a source of identity and violence. Comparing violence in Kenya and Zimbabwe, John Githongo pointed out that:

The sources of violence are varied within the structure and organisation of ZANU-PF as a political movement: one of the key players is ZANU Youth militia. As Kenya's former 'anticorruption tsar', John Githongo has pointed out in a different context in Kenya, violence is empowering. Here youth violence has been co-opted, licensed and encouraged by the party-qua-state, in the formation of the Green Bombers. The particular Zimbabwean political culture of T-shirts – which confer identity and affiliation, communicate and intimidate players out here too. Other perpetrators are war veterans, ZANU-PF supporters and 'mixed groups' (Onslow 2011: 9).

As pointed out above t/shirts in Zimbabwe political arena became sources of constestation and violence.

In 2008 Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum reported that “the ripping off of MDC t-shirts has also been common on victims that have been attacked whilst putting on MDC party regalia” (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2008: 2). Some victims are reported to have been attacked for their party regalia. It was reported that:

Seven women, who were coming from an MDC rally in Epworth, were attacked by ZANU (PF) supporters who assaulted them and stripped two of them of their MDC regalia leaving the two women half naked. One of the victims reports that shortly after arriving home from the rally, a group of

four ZANU (PF) supporters forced their way into her house and assaulted her with clenched fists and booted feet. The assailants then stripped her of her MDC t-shirt leaving her upper body exposed. She managed to escape from the assailants and was given something to wear by a neighbour. Another victim who had her MDC regalia stripped off her also reports that the assailants went on to strip her of the pair of shorts she was wearing underneath her skirt (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2008: 8).

The various reports depict that the wearing of party regalia became dangerous to MDC supporters as they were easily identifiable. In most rural areas MDC supporters would take party regalia but rarely wore it because of the fears of being targets of violence. Even outside the electioneering period party regalia were rarely used by the supporters. They were also used in the distribution of Aid to communities. Those without political party regalia were denied government aid.

To counter the weaponisation of party regalia, the MDC encouraged its supporters in Buhera South Constituency to participate in ZANU-PF projects through getting ZANU-PF regalia and attending ZANU-PF meetings to protect themselves from violence. In Buhera South Constituency except for known MDC leaders, most members preferred to partake in ZANU-PF programmes and even getting and putting on its regalia religiously although at elections they were determined to vote for their party. This was evident when MDC supporters voted overwhelmingly for Naison Nemadziya against Chinotimba. Theodore is quoted by the *Newsday* saying “I only attend rallies and even take part in the scramble when necessary because it’s important for me to keep at least two different types of influential parties to protect my family...we have learnt our lesson, this time we are prepared” (*Newsday*, 21/06/2019). In the run up to the June 2008 presidential election run-off, MDC members were encouraged to join and vote for ZANU-PF to protect their lives.

The MDC' symbol of the open palm and its red cards were the insignia for change. The red card was symbolically copied from football to signal change. MDC supporters used the open palm to show their support for their party. In most households in Buhera South, individuals had both the regalia for ZANU-PF and MDC. They would put on ZANU-PF regalia during the day and put on MDC regalia during the night.

The MDC attempted a mass action against the government considering alleged electoral theft after the 2002 elections. The mass action was meant to be a peaceful takeover of power. The protester had planned to march straight to State House (the official residents of the Zimbabwean president). The intention was to force the government to arrest the worsening economic situation and also to force Mugabe to step down. This tactic had been used before in other countries with some success. The Orange revolution in Ukraine was one such an example where mass action had been successful. In Africa the Tunisian uprising and the 2019 Sudanese uprising successfully led to the resignation of Al Bashir. Morgan Tsvangirai stated that:

We want to embark on democracy marches in every town and every workplace...must be prepared to be arrested, we must be prepared to make a mark to ensure that we will never again be oppressed....Action must take place everywhere in Zimbabwe. Be peaceful. Be disciplined...Beware of the ZANU-PF merchants of anger (The Zimbabwe Independent, 17/03/2006).

The MDC, then spokesperson Paul Themba Nyathi, stated that "If government out of fear of its own citizens' throngs' security forces into the streets that will be a massive defeat for them and a victory for democracy" (*The Zimbabwe Independent*, 17/03/2006). The MDC mass action became a political mobilisation after each and every election between 2002 and 2019. The party felt that election irregularities could be solved by peaceful political uprising. In 2014 in the call for fresh mass action Tsvangirai said:

Fellow democrats I am making an urgent call today for a shift to action. We cannot allow ourselves to be victims of illusion and phantoms of hope alone. We have to be brave, we have to take action...for my part as I stand before you, I am forever ready to lead from the front these very democratic troops gathered here today and all those across the nation (The Daily News, 01/11/2014).

The attempted takeover was however met with a military show of power which cowed the MDC supporters. Derek Matyszak commented on the failure of the mass action attempt to overthrow Mugabe: "the storming of the Bastille that heralded the end to the despotism of Louis XVI, would not have been possible but for the fact that the French Guard decided to align itself with the people of Paris" (Matyszak, 2011: 135).

In Zimbabwe the army has been an appendage of ZANU-PF, it is often used to entrench ZANU-PF's hold on power. What led to the failure of such an action has been the consistent use of the army to protect the establishment. The army and the police since independence have periodically used live ammunition against protesters. This forced the MDC after 2002 to use other nonviolent methods. However:

Calls for mass demonstrations in Zimbabwe rarely bring more than a few hundred people out onto the streets. Demonstrations have thus been discredited as a means of exerting any effective pressure on the Mugabe government; they result simply in arrests and extended periods of incarceration for the participants (Matyszak, 2011: 135).

On the day of the mass action soldiers were deployed in the high density suburbs and colleges to instil fear in would be protestors.

The MDC attempted diplomatic forays in the region, continent and beyond. The forays resulted in internationalising the Zimbabwean problem. The SADC region appointed South Africa President Thabo Mbeki as the mediator to the Zimbabwean conflict. The mediation

went from 2002-2009 when the Government of National Unit (GNU) came into being. Since the formation of the MDC Tsvangirai visited various African and European countries with the aim of outlining his party's vision and spelling out their economic and political campaigns. In 2015 Luke Tambolinyoka the Presidential spokesperson highlighted that "the president has gone to the USA on a diplomatic offensive. He is going to make more diplomatic offensives in line with the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe... only this morning he was finalising his letter to the SADC Chair that was copied to regional leaders" (*The Daily News* 15/03/2015).

During the GNU Tsvangirai consistently approached the SADC leadership to upraise them on the progress made towards implementing the Global Political Agreement which ushered in the GNU. Moses Matenga a reporter from the *Newsday* quoted the Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's spokesperson as saying, "The PM is leaving for the region to meet heads of State in SADC and the AU (African Union), he will meet them to discuss the next elections as they are guarantors of the Global Political Agreement and they are trying to create a conducive environment for free and fair elections and make sure agreed reforms are implemented" (*Newsday*, April 29, 2013). The MDC diplomatic offensives were meant to put pressure on Robert Mugabe to implement key reforms agreed during the inclusive government. He also aimed at selling his party's view regarding the implementation of the GPA and the successes of the inclusive government.

The MDC used legal recourse whenever they felt unjustly treated by the government. Since their active participation in the Zimbabwe electoral process, they have approached the courts in each and every electoral contest. The party approached the courts to appeal against certain laws which did not comply with the constitution. In 2001 they approached the courts challenging the constitutionality of the Law and

Order Maintenance Act. The Supreme Court struck down certain provisions of the law as they were unconstitutional. However, the government immediately enacted the Public Order and Security Act which stifled political activity.

The MDC also resorted to challenging the election results in the courts. They challenged parliamentary results in 2000, 2005, 2008, and 2013. They also challenged the presidential results in 2002 and 2018. The judgement for presidential results challenged in 2002 was reserved and up to 2019 the Supreme Court had not delivered a judgement. In 2001 results in Seke, Buhera North, and Hurungwe East were nullified by the High Court, however, ZANU-PF appealed to the Supreme Court and the High court victories to the MDC were nullified. Up to now 2023 the MDC 2002 Presidential Election challenge is not yet finalised.

There was indiscriminate arrest of MDC senior officials at the slightest chance. Tsvangirai was arrested in 2001 for comments made at a rally; he was arrested again after being found in possession of a two-way radio. Others, such as Job Sikhala, Tafadzwa Musekiwa, and Nelson Chamisa became victims of arbitrary arrests. In 2001, MDC supporters in Bulawayo were arrested accused of murdering Cain Nkala, an outspoken leader of the war veterans. However, in all these arrests the MDC approached the courts and the victims were found not guilty. Robert Mugabe used the law as a repressive tool.

Each time the MDC applied to the police for permission to hold rallies, the police gave flimsy reasons to deny them the chance. Reasons usually given were that of inadequate manpower and constrained resources. Three laws became important ZANU-PF instruments of dictatorship. The Public Order and Security Act (POSA), the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the General Laws Amendment Act (GLAA) institutionalised dictatorship. The POSA provided for the death penalty for those accused of assisting

terrorism, subversion, banditry, sabotage and treason against the government. The law banned public gatherings convened "to conduct riots, disorder or intolerance" and made it an imprisonable offence to undermine the authority of President Mugabe by making or publishing hostile statements". AIPPA was used to close newspapers or deny newspapers sympathetic to the opposition the licence to publish. In Buhera South Constituency, the MDC rallies for Mutiusinazita pencilled for the 10th of March 2002, Chapanduka Business centre rally scheduled for May 2002, Birchenough Bridge May 2002 and Tsvangirai Star rally at Muzokomba in 2002, were all banned (Interview with Participant 28, 13/01/22). The MDC appealed to the Magistrate courts to no avail in all these instances. For the 2008 run off the pattern was the same. The MDC initially applied to have a blanket ban on its rallies lifted but with the intensification of violence they abandoned the legal route before withdrawing from the race.

In cases where the MDC rallies were approved, the ZANU-PF youth militia disrupted them. The MDC rallies in 2002 towards the presidential election and their rally on 20 June 2008 were all disrupted by militia violence. It was reported that:

On 19 January 2002, twenty people were injured and thousands tear-gassed after police and ZANU-PF militants intervened to stop an MDC rally at a stadium in Bulawayo. Militants occupied the stadium and beat MDC supporters while police teargassed people waiting outside. The police claimed that they did not target MDC supporters but intervened to stop violence (CNN, 20/01/2002).

In the 2002 elections around 48 MDC supporters were killed due to political violence. For those killed, there was no prosecution of the perpetrators, in fact after the elections Robert Mugabe issued presidential decrees granting amnesty to perpetrators of violence. MDC polling agents countrywide suffered from retribution and in some cases they were killed. The MDC approached the courts following the kidnapping, assault and murder of Chokuda Mupango at Mavhungire

Business centre. The relatives of the deceased claimed they were cowed into withdrawing the court case (Interview with Participant 27, 13/01/22).

The MDC and its affiliates, which include, the ZCTU and various civil society organisations, had been calling for job actions since 2000. In fact, the strikes and stayaways were a method which had been used during the period 1989-1999 before the formation of the MDC. These job actions received wide spread support from the urban supporters of the MDC in the early 2000s. However, the decimation of the industry and its total collapse rendered strike actions futile and ineffective.

In the formative stages of MDC, strikes received support from the generality of Zimbabweans. However, the government through the secret services used intimidatory tactics to scare supporters of both MDC and ZCTU. Members of the CIO enrolled at universities countrywide to spy on student leaders. The US State Department reported that:

CIO personnel took faculty and other positions and posed as students at the University of Zimbabwe to intimidate and gather intelligence on students who might protest government actions. Approximately five students were suspended or expelled during the year for political activity (US State Department 2006, (Zimbabwe Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2005 8 March – Attachment 1).

Student leaders were expelled for petty reasons. The ZINASU leadership particularly bore the brunt of these expulsions. At the Midlands State University Jabusile Shumba and Showers Mawowa were expelled or suspended from their studies for their fight for student rights. In Harare the following ZINASU leadership were also arrested Washington Katema, Zimbabwe National Student's Union (ZINASU) coordinator, Promise Mkwanzani, (ZINASU) president, Tellington Kwashira, Emily Nkhungwa and Roderick Chirowodza (Human Rights Forum March 2007: 8).

As the economic meltdown continued fatigue crept in the nonviolent discourse of strikes and stayaways. By 2007 the ZCTU was taking a backseat as its membership was also affected by job losses. The MDC was affected by its internal problems after their split in 2005. The party was now preoccupied with internal issues. By 2007 calls for general strikes from the main labour body became an academic exercise because the ZCTU membership had considerably dwindled. The IRIN reported that:

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) that has often been in the vanguard of protest against President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF government, is taking a back seat, while a whole swathe of society, including doctors, nurses, teachers, university lecturers and tobacco industry workers have embarked on strike action, and miners, government employees and students are on the brink of doing so... Although the ZCTU, an ally of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party, has been a fervent critic of Mugabe, disillusionment with the ZANU-PF government's handling of the economy is spreading among government employees (IRIN News, 7 February 2007).

Due to the problems bedevilling the economy from 2001 to 2008, the government experienced intermittent pressure from its employees who kept on demanding better pay and living conditions. The MDC offered solidarity to the workers.

This chapter has highlighted the nature of MDC's rhetoric and practice of non-violent resistance. The formation of the MDC in 1999 led to one of the most unprecedented state sponsored violence against political opponents. The ZANU-PF government employed its arsenal against perceived opponents. The loss of the referendum vote to the 'VOTE NO' campaigners led to violence against commercial farmers who were accused of supporting and sponsoring a regime change agenda owing to their support of the MDC. Central to this was the revival of a nationalistic discourse portrayed through a new narrative of the liberation struggle code-named 3rd Chimurenga. As in any war situation, violence became the only option for political orientation of

puppets opposed to the regime. The state used the media to carefully create an intellectual nationalist agenda portraying itself as victim to Western machinations and neo-colonial agenda.

Having witnessed the orgy of violence against its supporters, especially those in the rural areas, the MDC evacuated those who felt threatened to safe houses in urban areas. The safe houses provided sanctuary to victims of violence. The MDC headquarters, the Harvest House became a transit centre to safe places. The safe houses were used for the sanctuary of victims of violence (Interview with Participant 27, 26/01/22). The main victims of violence fled from the rural areas to the urban centres where they were kept from further violence by ZANU-PF supporters (Interview with Participant 27, 13/01/22). They were guaranteed safety from abduction, torture and humiliation. Some of the victims were left without shelter after their houses had been burnt in the rural areas.

The local leadership in Buhera South used the same method to protect their own. They used rented houses at Birchenough Bridge Business centre for the safety of their members. These houses were transit houses as they were not very safe. Usually, members would stay for at least two weeks before they were moved to Harare. This applied to the old members as the members of the Youth Movement opted to go to Chiadzwa diamond fields in 2008 for artisanal mining. Others like Chrispen Mupfuki, Rindai Mudzongobaya, Julius Chivandire, Dhindai Nyipo, and Chikondowa Mike fled to South Africa in search for better opportunities (Interview with Participant 27, 13/01/22). When Harvest House was raided on 25 April 2008, the victims were paraded by the government as terrorists. The safe houses mostly in Harare became convergent centres for violence victims from across the country. The MDC spokesperson Nelson Chamisa in 2008 appealed for international humanitarian assistance claiming that “the situation is overwhelming us. There is no way in which we can, on our own provide shelter for

over a hundred homes that have been destroyed, drugs and hospital bills for the maimed or displaced" (*Reliefweb*, 25 April 2008). Others sought for Shelter at the American Embassy as violence swept across the country (*Aljazeera*, 4 July 2008).

The 2008 presidential election runoff was one of the most violent elections since the MDC was formed. The violence transcended geographical location. Since 2000 the violence was largely rural but in 2008 the urban areas became targets of violence. "The worst incident was recorded in 2002 when armed officers who had been sent to disperse MDC supporters who attended an MDC rally at the Harare Show grounds, heavily assaulted the victims. Further to this offensive by members of the armed forces a group of armed ZANU-PF youth reportedly descended on the same MDC supporters intending to disrupt the rally" 9Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 04/11/2008;3). Robert Mugabe had also threatened war by stating that the country was "taken by a gun, not a pen'. Throughout the campaign, ZANU-PF threatened that there would be war if MDC were to win the presidential run off. Mugabe made it clear that power would not be taken by a pen but by a gun. War veterans aligned to him articulated this position throughout the country" (*Mail & Guardian*, 10/08/2008).

The violence forced the MDC to withdraw from the runoff to protect MDC supporters. Tsvangirai said:

We in the MDC have resolved that we will no longer participate in this violent, illegitimate sham of an election process. Conditions as of today do not permit the holding of a credible poll. Given the totality of these circumstances, we believe a credible election is impossible. We can't ask the people to cast their vote on June 27 when that vote will cost their lives. We will no longer participate in this violent sham election. On June 27 Mugabe has declared war, and we will not be part of the war. Our victory is certain, but it can only be delayed (Glendenning & Jones *the Guardian*, 22/06/2008, *Aljazeera*, 23/06/08).

Tsvangirai's argument received widespread support throughout. ZANU-PF forced the runoff despite the withdrawal arguing that it was unconstitutional. While ZANU-PF went ahead through constitutional arguments the MDC withdrawal left a legitimacy crisis hovering over the election and Mugabe's presidency.

The UN condemned the manner in which the elections were held in Zimbabwe as they had failed to meet the required standards for peaceful and democratic elections. The UN concurred with the MDC position as the Deputy Secretary General of the UN said:

(Observations) clearly indicate that the electoral process leading to the declared reelection of President Mugabe was seriously flawed. This profound crisis of illegitimacy is further compounded by the paralysis of State institutions. There is currently no functioning Parliament. Civil society has been silenced and intimidated. The economy is crippled, with annual inflation reaching 10.5 million percent by the end of June and unemployment being over 80 percent, and severe shortages of food and basic services exist. There is an urgent need to restore the rule of law and to start building public institutions (Migiro, 2008: 2).

The MDC managed to internationalise the Zimbabwean crisis. Despite the bravado shown by ZANU-PF during the runoff, the MDC used nonviolent means to find a solution to the crisis prevailing in Zimbabwe.

The AU issued a communiqué condemning the Zimbabwean government and its actions during the runoff period. Mugabe who was inaugurated immediately after the runoff and had attended the AU summit in Egypt to tell the Zimbabwean story was left with egg on his face. The communiqué showed that the international community were:

Deeply concerned with the prevailing situation in Zimbabwe; deeply concerned with the negative reports of SADC, the African Union, and the Pan-African Parliament observers on the Zimbabwean Presidential run-off election held on 27 June 2008; deeply concerned about the violence and the loss of life that has occurred in Zimbabwe; considering the urgent need to prevent further worsening of the situation and with the view to avoid the spread of the conflict with the consequential negative impact on the country

and the subregion ... recognising the complexity of the situation in Zimbabwe, noting the willingness of the political leaders of Zimbabwe to enter into negotiations to establish a government of national unity (AU Summit Communiqué, 2008).

The MDC welcomed the AU position, however they felt that there was no prospect of any negotiated settlement with ZANU-PF. Tendai Biti the MDC Secretary General condemned the runoff arguing that it had “totally and completely exterminated any prospect of a negotiated settlement” (Aljazeera, 01/07/2008). However, as time went by, the party began to warm up to a negotiated settlement probably due to pressure from its supporters who were facing persecution from ZANU-PF and the need to arrest the deteriorating economic conditions in the country. International pressure also contributed to the consummation of the Inclusive Government.

The 2008 elections provided a new framework for nonviolent resistance. ZANU-PF’s violent triumphalism in the runoff failed to gain international traction. The MDC insisted on questioning the legitimacy of the botched runoff citing the way it was conducted and the way the results were announced. The GNU came into effect after:

SADC and the AU initiated the coming together of the political parties. SADC’s formal involvement in the crisis in Zimbabwe that began with the extraordinary summit of the Heads of State and Government that was held in Dar as Salaam, Tanzania, on 29 March, 2007 gathered momentum after the election stalemate of 2008 and became a reality after the AU passed a resolution at Sharm El Sheikh that asked the regional bloc to find a negotiated settlement (Mutambudzi, 2015: 157).

Thabo Mbeki was tasked with mediating between the political parties owing to South Africa’s political and economic leverage over Zimbabwe. In fact, since the beginning of the Zimbabwean crises in 2000 South Africa had been trying to find a solution to the crisis. SADC used a three pronged strategy in coming up with the GPA which

included the pre-2008 election period which ideally covered the period from 2007 to 28 March 2008, the immediate post-2008 election period which gave Mbeki facilitation time, and the period of the GPA.

The MDC insisted on using nonviolent means against electoral theft. Within the party there was a realisation that the securocrats were spoiling for a fight. The MDC felt that violence would play into the hands of the army. While they protested against the delay in announcing election results, they still felt it necessary to be a part to the runoff. However, they did so under protest. The MDC, despite claiming victory was clueless on the way forward. In agreeing to the GPA, MDC agreed to a broader working framework whose aim was to achieve sustainable peace and national healing. The parties agreed that they would:

... work together to create a genuine, viable, permanent, sustainable and nationally acceptable solution to the Zimbabwe situation and in particular to implement the following agreement with the aims of resolving once and for all the current political and economic situations and charting a new political direction for the country (GPA, 2008).

While the signing of the agreement was welcomed by the majority, there was haggling over the implementation of the agreement. The major problems arose over sharing of Cabinet posts and other outstanding issues. MDC attached important attachment to Articles 7, 10, 11, 12, and 19 because they directly addressed the root causes of violence in Zimbabwe. The party wanted professionalism in the security sector having seen the lack of it as the cause of violence. The opposition proposed the repeal of POSA, AIPPA and other laws which they felt were used to the advantage of the incumbent political party.

The MDC joined the government of national unity in 2009 as a transformatory framework to peaceful resolution of the Zimbabwean crisis. The period preceding the June 27 2008 election runoff had shown the extent of ZANU-PF violence. The MDC had realised that

without joining the GNU (though the agreement was far from perfect) they would continue counting body bags of their supporters. From its inception, the old tensions did not disappear but rather they continued as the two protagonists were trapped in fixed positions. Tendai Biti wrote that:

Coalition governments are bound to be more complex. Distinct parties must establish trust, a difficult thing when they are mired into permanent political competition. They must also agree on a common vision and a common plan, and how to execute it. Finding common ground on these four issues alone is often difficult. A coalition government born out of disputed and violent elections—such as Zimbabwe’s GNU was—is even more challenging. ZANU (PF) and the MDC have thoroughly differing ideological backgrounds. By the time the GNU came into existence, the MDC had been the target of sustained attacks from the ZANU (PF)-controlled state since the party’s formation in 1999. Its leaders had been assaulted, tortured, imprisoned, kidnapped and some had lost their lives. The two protagonists thus found themselves trapped in the same government. Regrettably but unsurprisingly, old tensions and mistrust did not disappear. An invisible permanent wall kept on separating both sides (Biti, 2014: 15).

The GNU became an albatross to both political parties as policy shift was seen as a sign of weakness. The MDC used the coalition agreement to better the lives of Zimbabweans and to make fundamental changes to the decades of ZANU-PF hold on the country. The drafting of the new constitution became a priority to the party.

However, the nature of the GNU served the interests of ZANU-PF more than the MDC in that fundamental issues which the MDC had been fighting for were left unattended to in the framework of the agreement. ZANU-PF was left with the crucial ministries of Defence and Home Affairs while the MDC was given social clusters. Mugabe was left primarily in charge of overall responsibilities of cabinet thus, the MDC were junior partners in the agreement. Machakanja wrote that:

The continued impunity undermines the whole concept of inclusive power sharing and a government of national unity assumed to have been founded on the GPA's principles of social cohesion, national healing and unity. The alleged continued contravention of the GPA principles by the ZANU-PF reveals a disregard for both the rule of law and commitment to transformative change that could be premised on the loose and misleading interpretation of the meaning attached to the concept of rule of law and the safeguarding of national and state security (Machakanja, 2010: 05).

The MDC soldiered on despite the challenges from an antagonistic partner. During the subsistence of the GNU abductions and torture of MDC activists continued. However, the MDC approached the courts and SADC as guarantors of the GPA whenever they felt short changed. For instance, during the tenure of the GPA, more than 30 political activists were abducted (*Newsday*, 10/09 2012).

The GPA signing on 15 September signalled the victory of nonviolence over violence. However, the mediation process left gaps such as those on appointment of Provincial Governors that did not transform the conflict. The MDC and ZANU-PF spent more of their time haggling over appointments to position and the role and authority of cabinet. Problems also arose over the secondment of MDC member Roy Bennet to the position of Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

The MDC insisted on the establishment of the Organ on Peace Healing and Reconciliation in the GNU framework for a comprehensive reconciliation and healing process in Zimbabwe. This was after the realisation that since independence there were no concrete steps put in place for truth telling. The assumption was that the Organ would put to closure misdeeds of the past and all the violence which affected Zimbabwe after independence. Article VII of the agreement focused on:

7.1 Equality, National Healing, Cohesion and Unity

7.1.1 The Parties hereby agree that the new Government:

- 7.1.1.a. will ensure equal treatment of all regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, place of origin and will work towards equal access to development for all;
- 7.1.1.b. 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;
- 7.1.1.c. 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
- 7.1.1.d. 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, and ethnicity, place of origin or political affiliation.
- 7.1.1.e. 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 (GPA, 15 September 2008)

The MDC used boycotts in advancing its nonviolent rhetoric. The party boycotted the 2005 Senate elections, 2008 run off and disengaged from the GNU. Even the process leading to the GPA witnessed the same methods, they were characterised by “deadlocks, walkouts, harsh exchanges, delays, continuing violence, raised hopes, false expectations and angry words” (Bloomfield *et al.*, 1988:61), The party also disengaged during the GNU as Tsvangirai argued that “It is our right to disengage from a dishonest and unreliable partner. In this regard, whilst being in government we shall forthwith disengage from ZANU-PF and in particular from Cabinet and Council of Ministers until such time as confidence and respect are restored amongst us”

(Dzirutwe, 2009). The disengagement was due to a plethora of problems bedevilling the coalition government. Tsvangirai complained of persecution of his supporters and the refusal by Mugabe to swear in Roy Bennet the MDC treasurer as Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

The MDC boycott of the 2008 presidential runoff and the 2009 disengagement from the GNU prompted SADC to find an amicable solution to the Zimbabwean problem. The MDC disengagement was to create a platform for mediated dialogue as the party felt engagement within the confines of cabinet and government processes was not yielding much due to the disproportionate power that Robert Mugabe continued to exercise over almost all the arms of the state. The disengagement received the backing of the EU as it announced that “in view of the situation in Zimbabwe, in particular the lack of progress in the implementation of the Global Political Agreement signed in September 2008, the restrictive measures ... should be extended for a further period of 12 months” (Felix, 2010). The disengagement removed the legitimacy of ZANU-PF and Mugabe. The opposition used the SADC Troika organ to voice its concerns. Nelson Chamisa the then MDC Spokesperson stated that:

If the (SADC Troika) meeting fails to break the deadlock, we hope there will be a full (SADC) summit. If that fails, then the only option will be a free and fair election under international supervision. In our forensic audit, we have only implemented a quarter of the Global Political Agreement ... and there is a danger that ZANU-PF may want to reverse some of the progress that we have achieved (Chinaka, 2009a).

The MDC was, however, forced back into the inclusive government though without the expected success. Even Thabo Mbeki remained hopeful that the parties to the conflict would guarantee the GNU. Mbeki stated that “I would hope people are faithfully implementing what was contained in the GPA. And really what was contained in it was that they would put in place various measures which would help overcome the causes of conflict that had taken place in Zimbabwe and

create a basis for reconciliation” (Radio VOP, 2010). Commentators condemned the MDC disengagement stance reminding the party that it was no longer an opposition party but rather a governing party.

Having been victims of the Lancaster House Constitution which was heavily doctored to support ZANU-PF hegemony, the MDC insisted on the constitutional reform process during the GNU. The constitutional reform agenda became an imperative agenda of the GNU. In fact, the holding of the next election was going to be preceded by the completion of the drafting of the new constitution. Since the formation of the NCA in 1999, the MDC had always pushed for a people driven Constitution. In early 2000, the MDC and its partners mobilised people to vote against the government-led constitution. In 2007 MDC and ZANU-PF clandestinely agreed on a document later known as the Kariba draft, this document was a draft constitutional agreement between ZANU-PF and MDC. However, the draft was put aside and got overtaken by events. The GPA asserts that “it is the fundamental right and duty of Zimbabwean people to make a constitution by themselves and for themselves” (GPA, 2008; Article 6).

Throughout the talks constitutional reform became a major aim of the MDC. This had been one of their repeated calls since 2000. Munemo (2016: 231) stated that “in the talks, it was also agreed that a new constitution would be drafted, democratic conditions would be created and a roadmap for free and fair undisputed elections would be constructed.”

The MDC documented perpetrators of violence as a nonviolence means to deter would-be perpetrators. Names of security agents responsible for the beatings and torture of members of the MDC were published in leading newspapers as a strategy to shame them and expose their brutality. Prominent politicians were also given prominent coverage in newspapers for their human rights abuses. The

MDC also instituted litigations against officers responsible for torture and unlawful detentions of activists. In some instances, the government was sued for damages resulting from unlawful arrests. The courts pressurised the Attorney General to release the names of the perpetrators of abductions of citizens. The *Zimbabwe Independent* reported that “the Attorney-General's Office has revealed the names of some of the members of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and the police who were allegedly involved in the abduction of human rights defenders and MDC activists last November” (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 7/05/2009). This was a nonviolent method which deterred would-be perpetrators of violence.

Following the arrest of prominent activist, Jestina Mukoko in 2008, the government was sued for unlawful arrest and detention. Mukoko received a compensation of US \$150 000 for the abuse she suffered. Upon receiving her compensation, Mukoko revealed that “... there are people who were also abducted before me and people who were abducted after me. So, I think the State has just taken the first step and I think if we are going to say justice has been delivered, they need to be able to take into account all the other instances of enforced disappearances and, in particular, pay attention to those who have never been found after they disappeared” (*Pindula News*, 14/12/2018). Chris Dhlamini, the Director of Security in the MDC approached the courts through his lawyer Alec Muchadehama “demanding damages for unlawful abduction, enforced disappearance, unlawful detention incommunicado, unlawful arrest and unlawful deprivation of liberty; assault, torture, pain, shock, suffering and psychological trauma, contumelia and loss of amenities of life; and for malicious prosecution” (*The Zimbabwean* 22/04/2009). The lawsuit by Dhlamini had the double effect of suing the government and documenting the names of people responsible for his ordeal. All the people implicated were high ranking government officials and security officers. The following were part of the details of the lawsuit:

Dhlamini is demanding the compensation from the co-Ministers of Home Affairs, Kembo Mohadi and Giles Mutsekwa, Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa, then Security Minister Didymus Mutasa, Police Commissioner-General Augustine Chihuri, Prisons Commissioner Paradzai Zimondi, and Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) Director-General Happyton Bonyongwe. Also sued are police Senior Assistant Commissioner Nyathi, Chief Superintendent Crispin Makendenge, Detective Chief Inspector Mpofo, Chief Superintendent Peter Magwenzi, Senior Assistant Commissioner Chiobvu of the Prison Services, Detective Chief Inspector Elliot Muchada, Superintendent Josh Shasha Tenderere, Assistant Inspector Mudandira, Superintendent Regis Takaitei Chitekwe, Detective Assistant Inspector Maria Phiri, Detective Inspector Chibaya, Detective Muuya and Assistant Director of the External Branch of the CIO, Asher Walter Tapfumaneyi, according to court documents (The Zimbabwean, 22/04/2009).

The lawsuit by Dhlamini reflects the complicity of the government and the security sector in advancing ZANU-PF interests. At the same time, it also showed that top officials in the security sector could be sued for damages in their personal capacity. The lawsuits were intended to lessen police brutality on the MDC.

In the run up to the 2008 elections, the MDC parliamentarian for Buhera West, Eric Matinenga also successfully “presented a case before the High Court alleging that defence force members harassed, assaulted, and humiliated MDC-T supporters... Justice Bhunu issued a court order declaring the deployment of defence forces in Buhera unlawful and ordered their withdrawal” (US State Department, 11 March 2010). In a presentation to the Commission of Inquiry into the 1 August 2018 shootings Tendai Biti cited several cases of litigation against the law enforcement agency. The cases cited were:

Chauke vs Mare is judgement number SC 147 of 2007... Eugenia Teera vs Minister of Defence. The citation is Harare 21 of 2007. And this case involved the plaintiff Mrs Teera suing the Zimbabwe National Army for the sum of \$70 000 for damages for paying shocking suffering and injury as a result of an unlawfully assault and assaults that was inflicted on her by

members of the National Army in Glenview and the judgment was handed down by Justice Hungwe. *Jestina Mukoko vs the Attorney General* the citation is SC 11/12... *Lillian Chinyerere vs Minister of Home Affairs* the citation is HC 11 969/2016... *Vaina Ndlovu and 5 others Vs Officer Mazarura and two others* the citation is GL467/472/15... *Sophia Tagwirei vs Officer in charge Triangle and two others* Chiredzi Magistrate Court the citation is GL184/2015... *Ellen Muteiwa vs Office in charge Masvingo province* and the citation is GHIL 208/15... *Getrude Changweshwa vs Officer in Charge Triangles and two others...* the Citation is GL 201/15... *Cynthia Fungayi Manjoro Vs Minister of affairs, Commissioner General of police and the Prosecutor General* and the case number HC, 2965/14. (Commission of Inquiry, 2018:1156-1158).

The above cases of litigation brings to the fore the fact that the people had moved from acceptance of police brutality to confronting brutality through the lenses of the law. In the case of *Jestina Mukoko* “the Constitutional Court unanimously concluded that the state through its agency had violated the applicant’s right protected in the Constitution, Section 13.1, Section 15 .1 and section 18.1 and therefore ordered a permanent stay of the prosecution” (Commission of Inquiry, 2018:1157). These litigations exposed the complicity of the government in torture and cruel treatment of citizens. The state was forced to pay damages for such criminal acts.

The MDC encouraged their members and supporters to boycott all businesses owned by the ZANU-PF leadership and those aligned to it. Parastatals were not spared from these boycotts. Members were encouraged to boycott products from Gushungo Dairies, a company owned by President Robert Mugabe and his family, ZUPCO, a government owned bus service, National Railways and Air Zimbabwe, the national airline among others. Consumer boycotts can be defined as “as a refusal to buy goods or patronize certain business undertaken by individuals in their role as consumers and citizens to effect political or social change” (Lee, 2012: 3).

Consumer boycotts can be equated to consumerism politics. “Regardless of whether political consumers act individually or collectively, their market choices reflect an understanding of material products as embedded in a complex social and normative context that can be called the politics behind products” (Micheletti, 2003a cited in Stolle *et al*, 2005: 247). Boycotts are used to show political disapproval and claim political rights through targeting businesses of the political elite. Consumer boycotts are a nonviolent political reciprocation to violence. Boycotts shows how citizens can use moral persuasion to voice political grievances. In this regard, MDC targeted influential companies linked to the political elite.

The MDC spokesperson Obert Gutu said “we need to hear ZANU-PF scream and as a democratic party we can only engage in peaceful resistance until it squeals. The MDC has come up with a programme in which we will call on all our supporters and generality of Zimbabweans to stop dealing and buying products from ZANU-PF-linked and owned businesses and their products” (*Newsday*, 18/08/2019). Gutu further commented that “when dealing with an entrenched dictatorship, we need to devise systems or programmes that make it scream. We should hit the regime where it hurts in the pocket. We are aware that most ZANU-PF functionaries have their tentacles in all the facets of the economy” (*Newsday*, 18/08/2019). Douglas Mwonozora, the MDC Secretary General, said “this target is passive. We are not going to buy in their shops. We are not going to do anything. We are not going to loot those shops, we are not going to harass them, we are not going to burn the shops. We are simply staying away from buying from these shops” (*VOA NEWS*, 24/06/2016).

Since 2000 the MDC has created a roll of honour of its members killed, tortured, kidnapped and abducted by ZANU-PF, its militia, soldiers, police and the CIO. This roll of honour represented democratic heroes

who were honoured for their fight for democratic change through nonviolence. Roll of honour exists in many nations affected by violence where nonviolent fighters are honoured and remembered. In Germany, Kurt Huber is honoured for his ability to influence students not to commit any act of violence and to persuade them to adhere to clear moral principles, a constitutional state and mutual trust among people. Huber maintained that doing so was not illegal, but a means to restore legality (Scholl, 2002a). In a memorial address to the nonviolent victims of Nazi rule in 1953 the German president said: 'the courageous death of these young people, who pitted integrity of mind and courage to voice the truth against empty rhetoric and the lie, became a victory at the moment when their life was cut off' (Scholl, 2002a).

Rolls of honours have become important events in commemorating heroes of the nonviolent struggles. The MDC website lists the names of the deceased and commemorations are held to honour the fighters. The key theme was to make sure that they did not die in vain and to show the sanctity of life and the importance of upholding virtue. During the Commission of Enquiry into the 1 August 2018 shooting of the civilians by the army, Tendai Biti presented a list of 3000 of what he termed "democratic resistance warriors" killed by the various government forces. Tendai Biti stated: "Mr Chairperson I have got a roll of honour. This list has got over 3000 people that we have lost over the years at the hands of ZANU-PF. Can I be allowed to submit the same as exhibit A" (Commission of Inquiry, 2018: 1152). The democratic warriors show the power and the force of nonviolent resistance. During the presentation, Tendai Biti attempted to show that despite violence perpetrated by the government, they never resorted to brute force but they soldiered on against the vice of violence.

A roll of honour is an attempt to embarrass the aggressor through showing the excesses of violence. It is a way of creating democratic heroes of the struggle. Roll of honours are nothing new. The ZANU-PF

government has its own at shrines in Chimoio and Nyadzonya and the tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the National Heroes Acre. The MDC, in this instance, was creating a nonviolent heroes list. In 2008 alone, the level of killing of MDC supporters forced ZANU-PF to accept a GNU following sustained pressure from the international community. The MDC-T continued to claim that approximately 200 other members and supporters were missing and presumed dead in the wake of election-related violence in 2008. The MDC youth's assembly on its website notes that:

The MDC roll of honour recognises the role played by all activists who passed away in the line of duty – fighting for democracy and a socially just Zimbabwe. Most on this list were murdered in cold blood, while other members passed away due to injuries sustained from violence. We recognise that we all did something for democracy, but others gave all. They are our heroes and heroines. We remember them. We salute them (<https://mdc-youthassembly.blogspot.com/p/roll-of-honor.html>).

The documentation of such atrocities mobilised the international community to put pressure on ZANU-PF to reform its rule and modus operandi.

The MDC resorted to boycotting national events to show their disapproval of Mugabe and the manner in which he ruled and allegedly killed its supporters. The then MDC spokesman, Nelson Chamisa, commented that “we will not wine and dine with murderers” (*The Zimbabwean*, 22/04/2008). These boycotts by the opposition were a dent on the legitimacy of Mugabe which he so wished to repeatedly assert. Tsvangirai boycotted the inauguration of Mugabe in 2002, and 2008 claiming that he had stolen the vote. MDC members of parliament also boycotted the official opening of parliament by President Mugabe. In 2018 they did not stand up for Mnangagwa in Parliament claiming that the elections were rigged. This was a nonviolent way of showing that they did not recognise the rule by Mnangagwa and Mugabe. Writing in *The Herald* Columnist

Reason Wafawarova opined that “firstly, the strategy of boycott politics itself does not really work in the context of Zimbabwean political culture, where ZANU-PF has never relied on endorsement of its success or victories by political opponents, a predicament largely emanating from the tenacious adherence to protest politics by the opposition” (*The Herald*, 22/05/2015). The MDC also threatened a policy of no reform, no election which was meant to force ZANU-PF to institute electoral reforms. During the GNU, Tsvangirai boycotted cabinet meetings and cut off communication with Mugabe. This was to force ZANU-PF to implement outstanding issues in the GNU.

The MDC used communication strategies as nonviolent tools against the blackout from state media which did not give the party media coverage. The MDC did not receive positive coverage from the state media namely *The Herald*, *The Chronicle*, *The Sunday Mail* and ZBC TV. Gilbert Nyambavhu asserted that “research has shown that, quite apart from being ‘passive receivers’ of media messages, listeners/viewers and readers actively mediate the communication process by interrogating encoded content and, very often, reject outright the influences of media propaganda” (*Nehanda Radio*, 20/12/2009). Attempts by various people to set up radio stations in Zimbabwe failed. In 2000, Mike Auret jnr and Gerry Jackson attempted to set up Capital Radio but failed to do so as the radio station was shut down before it went on air.

Pirate radio stations became the last resort as legal action against the government yielded nothing. Many people resorted to the pirate radio stations for news on the political goings on in the country and on MDC political programmes. Various MDC linked organisations distributed short wave radios to the people in the rural areas for them to receive pro-MDC messages. While these radios became an MDC identity in the rural areas, ZANU-PF members threatened those who were receiving information from pirate radio stations. Government Spokesperson

George Charamba equated the pirate radio stations to “media terrorism” (*Nehanda Radio*, 20/12/2009). In an interview with *SW Radio* Nelson Chamisa argued that “it was an ‘empty ban’: It’s laughable, ridiculous and misconceived. There is no way you can put effective ban on the hearing of people. You cannot put an effective ban on the ability of people to talk” (*SW Radio*, 20/02/3). The Co-Home Affairs Minister in the GNU, Theresa Makone, went on to say “I was very clear that airwaves are still restricted to other parties, that is why my party is distributing radios to our poor rural members...in the meantime the government will have its engineers verify that the radios are simple receivers” (*SW Radio*, 20/02/3). During the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe the ZANU resorted to broadcast from Maputo; the MDC did the same. *The Voice of Zimbabwe* radio became the communication and mobilisation tool during the liberation struggle. The MDC attempted to set a radio station in early 2000, however it was quickly shut down by the government.

Just like the Civil Rights movement in the USA whose songs such as “Keep Your Eyes on the Prize,” “This Little Light of Mine,” “Oh Freedom,” and “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Us Around” which helped the civil rights movement, the MDC supporters recorded several songs which were used to convey the MDC messages. They were distributed for free at rallies and its offices countrywide. Songs like Famba Tsvangirai Famba (Go ahead Tsvangirai), Saddam Waenda Sare BOB (Saddam is Gone Next is Mugabe), Tsvangirai chikara Che ZANU (Tsvangirai, The Lion to ZANU-PF). These songs provided entertainment but with deep political undertones. They helped to prop the image of MDC and Tsvangirai. One of the popular MDC songs is handicheuke (I will never look back) by Paul Madzore. It is about consistency and pledging never to return to ZANU-PF.

Scholars have defined this form of resistance as creative cultural resistance. Nardine Bloch defines it as “the broad use of arts, literature,

and traditional practices to challenge or fight unjust or oppressive systems and/or power holders within the context of nonviolent actions, campaigns and movements” (Bloch, 2012a). The purpose of the MDC songs, dance and drama was to inspire others to face the dictatorship. Artists have been powerful conveyors of protest music which has helped mobilise support. The work of the MDC songs was akin to what music was during the liberation struggle. To the older generations of MDC supporters, music brought the spirit of Chimurenga back though this time without the gun. During the liberation struggle various musicians composed songs to mobilise people to join and support the struggle. Notable musicians of that time were Cde Chinx, Thomas Mapfumo, the LMG Choir and many others. Songs which were inspirational then were “Hokoyo’, ‘Pfumvu paruzevha, Tumira Vana Kuhondo by Thomas Mapfumo... ‘Nzira Dzemasoja’ guided the conduct of the guerrillas in the bush while Mtukudzi’s compositions were about people’s power, freedom and hope. He also did ‘Mutavara’, a song about a man bidding farewell as he leaves home to join the war.” (*The Patriot*, 1/10/2015). At various pungwes (Night vigils) around the country “the songs, war cries of the struggle, clearly defined the objectives of the liberation war. ‘Mukoma nhongo bereka sabhu tiende’, ‘Nyika yedu yeZimbabwe’, ‘Ruzhinji rwatsidza’, ‘Sendekera mukoma chakanyuka’ and ‘Emoyeni Kuyatshisa’ are some of the songs that were continuously sung and danced to by freedom fighters and the armed struggle” (*The Patriot* 1/10/2015). Under the prevailing circumstances of TV and radio black-out from the Zimbabwean government, the MDC music acted as the gun against black-out from radio stations. In fact, MDC musicians used music as a mobilising tool and for bonding during the years of violence under the ZANU-PF government.

This chapter delved into the furnishing of empirical evidence of the MDC nonviolent struggle against dictatorship. The major findings of the chapter are that, since 2000, MDC has been a victim of endemic and

systematic violence perpetrated by ZANU-PF. This violence was in different forms namely structural, direct and psychological. However, the MDC responded to the violence through gratuitous acts of peace. The MDC used various methods of nonviolent resistance such as songs, dance, strikes, mass mobilisation, rallies and radios to counter that. The MDC reflected the supremacy of peace in confronting and dealing with those who relied on might rather than brains. The next chapter critically explores the intractable linkages between nonviolent resistance and human security in Buhera South Constituency.