Local Voices for Peace in Zimbabwe

Civil society perspectives on peace and conflict issues in Zimbabwe.

peace direct

Contents

About this report

This report presents the analysis and recommendations of Zimbabwean civil society activists that emerged from a practitioner workshop (called a 'Peace Exchange' in this report) which took place in Harare in April 2017. 21 peacebuilding organisations from across the country participated in the Peace Exchange, which was co-hosted by Peace Direct and Envision Zimbabwe Women's Trust. The selection of participating organisations was based on previous civil society research and mapping conducted by Peace Direct at www.insightonconflict.org. Participating organisations also surveyed more than 150 community volunteers and peace activists to gather local views on the current and future prospects for peace and these findings are also presented in the report.

The report has been written by Peace Direct to present the outcomes of the consultation, which was held under the Chatham House rule. The viewpoints presented represent the consensus of participants, while also noting dissenting views. Where quotes are unattributed, they are from participants in the Peace Exchange.

The contents of this research are the responsibility of Peace Direct. The text in this report should not be taken to represent the views of any individual participant.

Executive summary

National elections are scheduled to take place in Zimbabwe in 2018. So far, the pre-election period has not been marked by significant outbreaks of violence. However, civil society in Zimbabwe remains vigilant, not least because of previous such episodes; since independence, Zimbabwe has seen several periods of large-scale conflict. These include the Gukurahundi killings of the 1980s, the farm invasions of 2000, the forced residential clearances of 2005, known as Operation Murambatsvina, and the campaigning around the 2008 elections.[1]
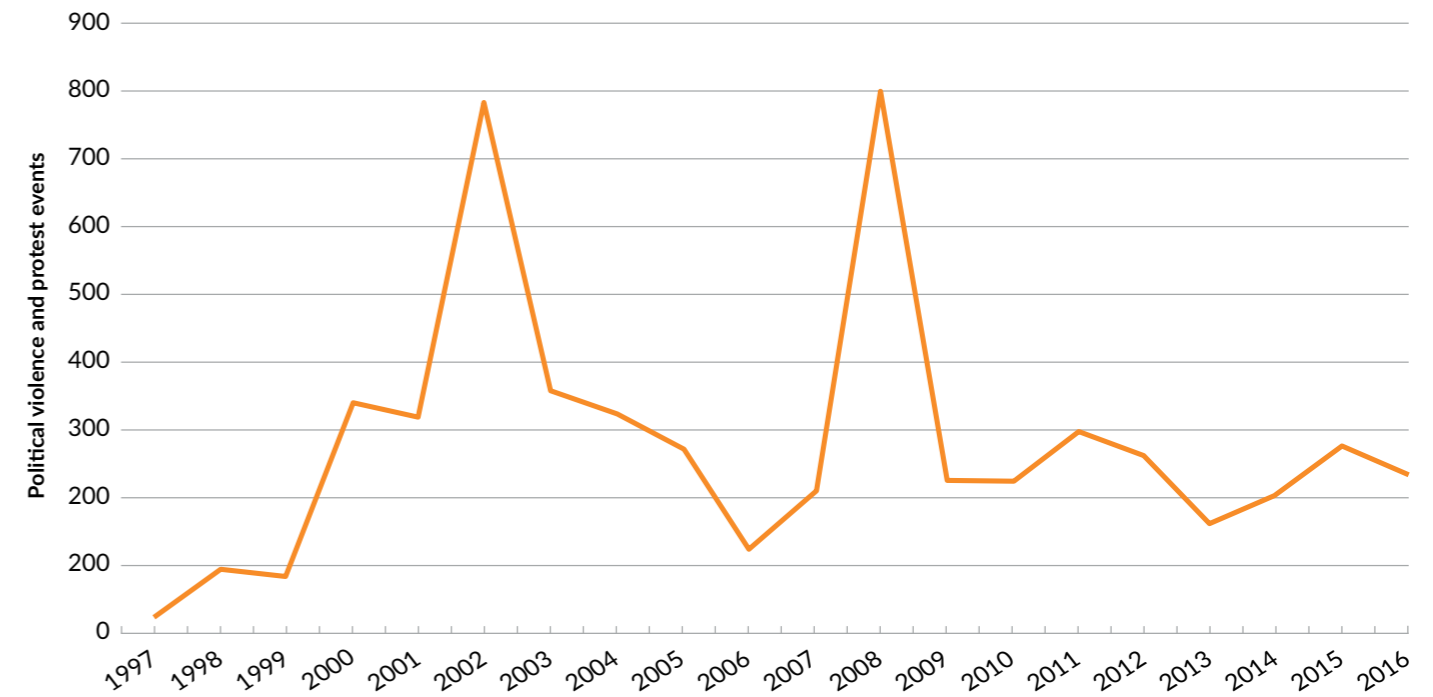
Zimbabwe exhibits many of the risk factors for violence in this campaign cycle. These include structural factors such as an ongoing economic crisis, and election-specific issues, such as concerns over voter registration. There are also concerns over the potential for conflict between and within political parties. And the politicisation of state institutions has contributed to the sense that the election is a zero-sum competition, with different factions seeking to gain total control of the state for their own purposes.

While the elections may bring some of these issues to the foreground, many others will still need to be resolved, even if Zimbabwe avoids large-scale violence during the campaign itself.
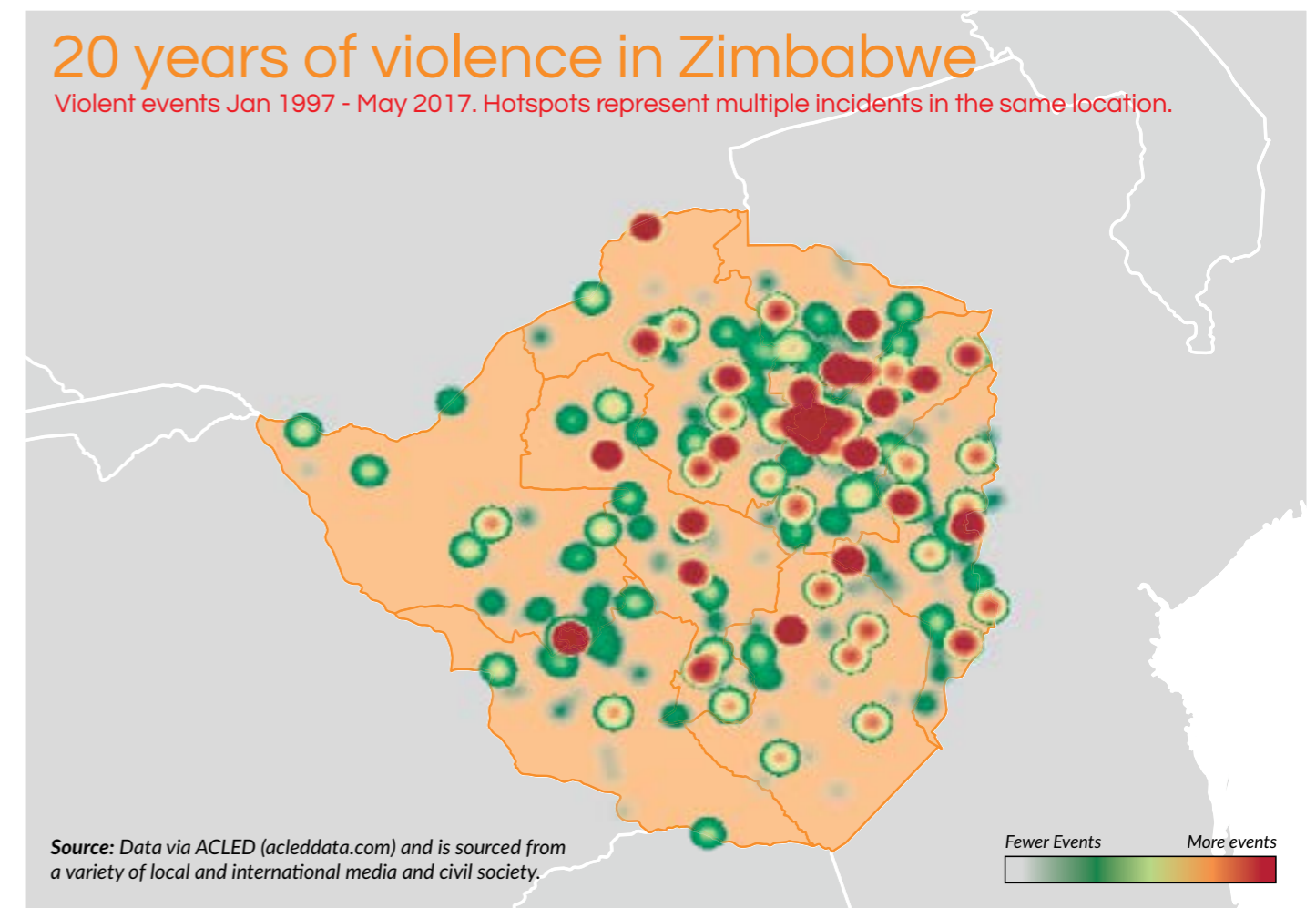
But despite a precarious operating environment, Zimbabwe has a vibrant range of civil society organisations working on all these issues: religious groups, youth networks, legal associations, microfinance projects and many others. Dedicated Zimbabweans are working on a diverse array of programmes to build social stability, regardless of the political context, but their role is undervalued by the international community. Local and international actors who wish to foster positive change in Zimbabwe can do so significantly by collaborating with or supporting these groups in their work.

This report summarises the views of these local groups.

The graph shows violence in Zimbabwe during the last two decades. The first peak coincides with Zimbabwe's land reform programme, the second with the 2008 election. Data via www.acleddata.com.

These maps show the trends of violence in Zimbabwe over the last 20 years.

20 years of violence in Zimbabwe
Violent events Jan 1997 - May 2017. Hotspots represent multiple incidents in the same location.

Source: Data via ACLED (acleddata.com) and is sourced from a variety of local and international media and civil society.

Fewer Events   More events

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1. 4101 of 5683 (or 72%) of political violence and protest events recorded by ACLED from 1997 – April 2017 are categorised as violence against civilians.

The Harare discussions identified four key issues as being crucial to peace in Zimbabwe. These are as follows:

1) The elections matter – but they are not the only thing that matter

The overarching context for the next 18 months is the upcoming election. With a well-documented history of campaign violence, Zimbabweans are understandably concerned at what the polls may bring. But the groups Peace Direct consulted with are frustrated by the fact that outside attention focuses on Zimbabwe only when election time comes around. The challenges the electoral cycle brings should be addressed in the context of the broader problems the country faces. There are many groups working on issues relevant to the elections, but within longer-term programmes dealing with the broader problems. These groups should be provided with sustainable support.

2) The state of the economy undermines the prospects for peace now and into the future

The underlying socioeconomic context in Zimbabwe is grim. While the hyperinflation that marked the last decade is over for the time being, widespread poverty remains the reality for millions of people around the country. This is an important factor in Zimbabwe's prospects for peace, with both greed and grievances aggravated by the limited wealth, and in particular food, available to Zimbabweans. The state of the economy also contributes to the fact that the Zimbabwean diaspora is proportionately one of the largest in the world. Reliable statistics on this are notoriously hard to come by, but the International Organization for Migration estimates there to be between 500,000 and three million Zimbabweans abroad. The loss of their labour and expertise has weakened society, although the diaspora provides significant income from remittances.

3) Human rights need to be prioritised

The human rights of citizens in Zimbabwe are under constant threat. The police and other state institutions mandated to protect citizens under the law are often implicated in harming them. The criminalisation of dissent is commonplace, and human rights defenders and those who speak out against these and other abuses are at particular risk. Finding ways to document, highlight and ensure punishment for those who commit human rights violations is paramount – as is protecting those who undertake this work.

4) Politics rules all

Almost every aspect of daily life for Zimbabweans is determined by which political party they support, or are perceived to support. From who is appointed to key positions in state institutions, to who is granted business permits, to who distributes and receives the food aid provided by the government in times of need: it is difficult to overstate the degree to which politics impacts on every aspect of life. The consequences of this are far-reaching. Zimbabweans express political opinions at their own risk, and have little faith in the state to act as a neutral arbiter in decision-making. This undermines attempts at meaningful social change. It is crucial to support groups advocating for the structural depoliticisation of state institutions.

Future scenarios for peace and conflict in Zimbabwe

Part of Peace Direct's consultation with local organisations in Harare focused on understanding the strategic priorities for local peacebuilders. This included outlining different scenarios for peace and conflict issues during the next 24–36 months. Participating organisations also assessed the relative likelihood of each scenario taking place. The key elements of the three main scenarios are provided below.

Organisations that participated in the Peace Exchange surveyed volunteers and community leaders they work with. They were asked to describe potential trigger events that could lead to the outbreak of violence. Interviewees provided a variety of responses, including:

- Inflammatory or hate speech

- A breakdown in confidence in the electoral process

- A deterioration in the economic context, such as cash shortages

- National strikes

- A coup d'état

- The refusal to accept defeat by parties that lose in the election

- Partisan activity by the security forces

- The use of force to ensure attendance and political rallies and campaign events

- Abuses by the government, army or police

Best case scenario: free and fair elections in a context of economic growth

Participants felt that the best-case scenario would mean, in particular, the legitimisation of state institutions. For example, appointments to key positions in government, parastatal businesses and quasi-government institutions would demonstrably be made on merit and not political connections. As one member of civil society outlined: "The constitution would be clearly upheld by all organs of the state, and those accused of committing crimes would see due process: being arrested and appearing before a court of law."

13%

The likelihood of the best-case scenario taking place, as assessed by participants in the Zimbabwe Peace Exchange.

The economy and inflation rates would stabilise, and economic growth would lead to some of the Zimbabwean diaspora returning home, which would in turn strengthen the cycle of trade, investment and development.

Status quo scenario: continuation of political violence, human rights abuses and economic crisis

The status quo scenario would mean the continuation of current levels of intimidation and human rights violations. An increase in reported cases of generalised political violence as the elections approach would also be expected. However, this would likely be documented only through domestic monitoring groups, and violence might not be overt. It would instead be targeted and limited, and the Zimbabwean state would do its best to demonstrate that it could manage its own affairs, and not see the disintegration of society into large-scale conflict. The rationale for this would be to deter external criticism, and ultimately the risk of delegitimising the outcome of the election. One participant said the key objective would be to ensure "that the international community thinks everything is OK."

40%

The likelihood of the status quo scenario taking place, as assessed by participants in the Zimbabwe Peace Exchange.

The criminalisation of activism is a key concern for civil society groups. They fear the arbitrary arrest and detention of those who campaign for basic rights, or on opposition political platforms. The further deterioration of the economy in this scenario could lead to increasing abuse of citizens' rights by the state – for example, with officials seeking bribes – as it tried to ensure as high a tax base as possible.

On the other hand, the organisations canvassed did not see inter-party political conflict as being a key cause of violence in this scenario. For so long as President Mugabe is alive, they consider that this will be managed effectively.

Worst case scenario: outbreaks of mass violence

The worst-case scenario envisioned by Zimbabwean civil society organisations sees violence taking place in a variety of ways. Intra-party violence, fuelled by succession battles and access to resources for party leaders, could manifest itself in demonstrations by competing factions within different parties. This could also see the arrest and expulsion of politicians who have become unpopular. The fear of some members of civil society is clear: "The law will be selectively applied in how these people are dealt with."

47%

The likelihood of the worst-case scenario taking place, as assessed by participants in the Zimbabwe Peace Exchange.

The deliberate disenfranchisement of the electorate – by, for example, burning the homes of known supporters of particular political groups – is a key risk. This would affect people's ability to take part in the elections.

Impunity would be the norm, with few or no arrests made of the perpetrators of such violence, and brutality and the abduction and incarceration of activists would be commonplace.

This intimidation of and fear among the electorate would in turn increase the chances of a tainted election campaign, and risk a crisis of legitimacy for the incoming government. One participant in the consultation was clear about the relevance of this: "[Whoever wins] needs to have the sanction of the international community, so this is a key issue."

Fortune Moyo, ©Global Press Journal Zimbabwe

Seniors camp out on the pavement outside a local bank in Bulawayo as they wait in line to withdraw their monthly pensions. Most of them travel long distances from rural homes to access their funds in cities and towns, and sometimes must wait days to withdraw the full amount each month.

One factor in the worst-case scenario is the implosion of the economy. If the economy deteriorated such that a 'back to 2008' situation took hold, society might once again become cashless, or see hyperinflation lead to food and fuel shortages. A crash in the economy could also see the displacement of people from fertile land and further land grabs as others seek to control agricultural production. It should be noted that some participants in the consultation said signs of this were already present.

The liquidity crunch envisaged in this scenario would also lead to import and export difficulties, damage to the commercial sector, and malnutrition affecting the weakest and most vulnerable in society; stunting is already a serious problem in children under five. Businesses could collapse and corruption could increase as a result of these economic issues, which would lead to further crime, unemployment, black marketeering, generalised insecurity and the continuation of the brain drain. This would further increase the size of the Zimbabwean diaspora, and decrease the number of people able to contribute to Zimbabwe's problems on the ground.

All of this could lead to the invocation of a state of emergency, with the potentially serious breakdown of society that would entail.

Scenario planning in Zimbabwe: guidance but not a guide

These scenarios are not fixed, and not intended as a prediction of exactly what the future will bring in Zimbabwe. But they do highlight specific issues that civil society says are important to building peace. The next section of this report considers some of these in more detail. Supporting civil society organisations implementing programmes to address these issues would help reduce violence in Zimbabwe.

Youth engagement: working with the next generation

The National Association of Youth Organizations works with young people across Zimbabwe on a variety of projects and programmes.

"We do a lot of work that encompasses different areas of development. The key element in all of this is to redefine and enhance the role that we as young people play in our society. History has given us negative roles in our country.

"We called our first programme the civil peace service. We went to communities, trying to identify young people that had been involved in violence directly – as victims or perpetrators – and through a process of rehabilitation with them, empowered them to play positive roles in their communities and stand as role models.

"We try and break up the youth gangs that appear around election time, by carrying out themed workshops in communities. We ask people to discuss topics that are connected to this theme, that they are passionate about, and that they want to do something about. At first you might not hear them, but after a day, believe me, the issues are pinned up on the wall.

"We only facilitate, and then we ask if we can provide technical and financial support to help young people address their issues. We want to give them the belief and skills to influence their own community processes. One very good product of this has been the formation of peace clubs. These are where local people with these skills now deal with different conflict scenarios in their communities.

"We also have an annual event called the Jacaranda Youth Festival, which coincides with the International Day of Peace. We take the UN theme, we might contextualise and tweak it a bit, and through this we bring youth artists to do messaging on peace. In the journey since 2011, we have compiled an album with youth artists, we go to communities and create spaces for young people to display their work, for example to the mayor of their city. We want them to be able to showcase their creativity and their skills: to celebrate their work, tell their story, and connect them with people who can do things for them that we can't.

"Of course, peace issues are very sensitive and involve the security sector. One year we had a dialogue between young people and the big guys, who play a significant role behind the curtains of these communities. The idea was for young people to get an idea of how that machinery operates, and to give them the chance to learn about how they might be able to work together in positive ways.

"This has been one of the most significant stories of change, because we have seen a lot of different empowerment coming through the festivals we have done."

"Another exciting project that we did was what we called the Joint Working Group (JOWOG), during the era of the government of national unity (GNU). Levels of polarisation leading into that process were very high. So we brought together young people from political parties, civil society, from the church, and we went through a process of different peacebuilding initiatives.

"One thing we saw as part of that was young people from the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the other parties working together. In the previous dispensation they would not see each other, but they were able to share a joke and talk about their issues, and have a bigger conversation about how in the context of

the GNU period we could have development, build society and have peace.

"And you know what? The GNU period was relatively peaceful, and I'm sure that our work helped. Violence is sometimes a choice for young people to survive. We try to empower them to choose a different route.

"But of course, the GNU ended and people retreated into their camps, and some of the people whom we had developed strong relationships with retreated into factionalism. So with an election like the one coming up we are back to the drawing board. But we will not give up."

– The National Association of Youth Organizations

Key conflict issues and peacebuilding strategies in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwean peacebuilders classified the myriad of conflicts and issues they work on into four key challenges for the country. Here is their analysis of the issues – as well as success stories of projects and programmes Zimbabwean organisations are implementing to address them. These are key areas for investment by civil society to tackle the root causes of conflict in Zimbabwe.

2018 elections

The upcoming election is an inescapable concern for civil society. Election campaigns marked by violence, voter intimidation and procedural irregularities are a feature of Zimbabwean history. Although there is a danger of overplaying the threat – the 2013 elections although marred by allegations of vote rigging were not as violent as some feared they would be – activists are still worried by the potential for conflict.

Voter registration and turnout

One key concern is around the voter registration process. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) is due to introduce a new Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) system in advance of the next elections. This is intended to ensure the digital capture and storage of voter information, such as fingerprints. But information on the new system is lacking – as is a clear timetable for it to be set up and implemented – and many are worried about the implications for the voter registration process. One concern was made clear by a participant in the Zimbabwe Peace Exchange consultation: "The confusion around the BVR will play a big role in the way that people vote, if they think it can be traced." This would have a big impact on the legitimacy of the elections.

As in many places, voter apathy is also an issue. Civil society activists are concerned that some people may not vote because they have done so in the past and have seen no change. Political intimidation can also influence participation, a process that can be brutally transparent in Zimbabwe. One method of political coercion is the use of respected local authorities – such as village chiefs – to intimidate voters in their area, for example by threatening to remove access to food aid, or forcing 'politically incorrect' people from their area.

Power struggles and protest

More broadly, there remains considerable uncertainty over who will run for election, and how tightly contested it will be. President Robert Mugabe has been confirmed as the candidate for the governing ZANU-PF party. But Mugabe is now 93, and within the party there are factions jockeying for position to take over power in the long term.

There is considerable potential for such succession struggles to turn violent, especially considering the sharp divisions in Mugabe's traditional campaign base of the liberation war veterans. On the opposition side, it remains unclear whether the different opposition groups will coalesce around one candidate capable of challenging to win the presidency. It is possible that the degree of competition over the election will influence the amount of violence that is seen.

> The next election in Zimbabwe is scheduled to take place in 2018. The country's constitution states that 'Parliament is elected for a five-year term which runs from the date on which the President-elect is sworn in and assumes office.' Because President Mugabe was sworn in on 22 August 2013, the earliest date for polling to take place is 23 July 2018. The last date it can take place is 21 August 2018.

Electoral issues: priority peacebuilding activities

Civil society needs to monitor, observe and partner with ZEC, and to provide communities with information on the Biometric Voter Registration process so voters know what they have to do. Many civil society groups have little confidence in ZEC, which has been accused of favouring the government, and engages with civil society insufficiently and only at election time. Regional organisations such as the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa could help, but they work more closely with ZEC than with grassroots communities.

Local organisations should coordinate a push to ensure politicians sign and renew their commitment to the code of conduct, denouncing and refusing to engage in political intimidation and violence. Some say those who name and shame anyone engaging in political manipulation should be supported, with citizens provided with training to identify and resist attempts to be manipulated.

One key target is traditional leaders, who are a key source of authority, especially in rural areas. One civil society member says that these leaders: "Must be empowered to work for peace [and against violence and political manipulation] by emphasising that their traditional role is to protect their own communities."

To help achieve this, civil society also needs to intensify the civic and voter education process in order to ensure participation and discourage voter apathy. Civic education in particular can help build people's confidence in their own capacity for change. Some civil society actors believe that there is a limit to what can be achieved by working only towards the upcoming elections, and with adults, many of whom will have already made up their minds. So educational activities should also focus on children, in schools and elsewhere, to ensure that future generations know how to secure change in the future.

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Civil society safety
In order to continue to operate effectively, civil society groups in Zimbabwe need to look after their own staff; to create safety nets and security plans for human rights defenders, and engage foreign embassies to provide safe havens and protection if necessary. Digital security training is an area of major concern where dedicated training could be of immediate benefit.

Civil society training
Participants noted that a 'training of trainers' approach would be particularly appropriate for these and other security issues, and civic and voter engagement. This would mean that if the space for civil society groups to operate is closed significantly – for example if the arrest of activists becomes widespread and they cannot travel or work – then greater numbers of community members would have been trained in election monitoring and administration, and to resist fraud, intimidation and manipulation when taking part in the elections.

Civil society groups also believe that there is a need and opportunity for them to reflect more deeply on their own training and other needs: "Let's task ourselves with reading, learning: how did the Serbs, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Junior win, using the methodology of non-violent resistance?"

Electoral reform, lobbying and advocacy
Peacebuilders say that a priority area of change for Zimbabwe is electoral reform. They are sceptical that there will be much legal or administrative change in the immediate future, but are keen to ensure that it features as an issue during the campaign. They have highlighted the importance of leading civic action including peaceful demonstrations domestically, and undertaking lobbying and advocacy towards regional neighbours and blocs.

Envision Zimbabwe Women's Trust:

"Some of our work targets traditional leaders. One project is called 'Building Bridges'. We started in 2010, when the atmosphere was very tense because of what happened in 2008/2009. At first, it was difficult to bring people together and attend workshops from across the political divide. They would refuse to eat because the 'enemy' was there, and they were afraid of being poisoned.

"But after two years of interaction, and holding peace and conflict transformation exercises, we conducted a monitoring exercise to see what we had achieved. One of the leaders stood up and made a confession. He was a traditional leader who was known for inciting political violence and destruction. But he had changed his ways. Now he goes out, talks peace, mediates, and advocates for a peaceful community.

Fortune Moyo, ©Global Press Journal Zimbabwe

"His confession was a success in and of itself; his wife was there and testified to his previously violent character. So there has been a lot of reconciliation: people are less tense, they are free to share their stories. This leader is promoting an environment in which people can do the same. The community has a saying – that they know there is peace in their communities because their cows are smiling and the grass is green."

– Envision Zimbabwe Women's Trust

Such action must also include a 'consistent dialogue' with the Zimbabwe Judicial Service Commission, the Ministry of Justice, the ZEC, and the Zimbabwean Parliament on the need for civil society demands regarding electoral reform to be taken seriously. And it should include raising awareness among Zimbabweans of the rights their constitution confers on them – a constitution which many in civil society believe is a progressive document on paper.

The second priority area is the political environment for organisations at the community level. Civil society groups say they should lobby ZEC on the accreditation and registration of community organisations in election activities, such as monitoring and observation. This tends to take a long time, which diminishes their effectiveness: "In most cases, [organisations] are only accredited towards the end of [electoral] processes."

The scale of community monitoring and observation, in particular of human rights abuses, should be increased and clear lines of communication with ZEC should be established to help signal and investigate abuses. ZEC itself must be properly funded or its whole remit will be affected and there will be a ready-made excuse for it not to do its job properly.

At the community level, potential violent hotspots should be monitored, and communities empowered to deal with the conflicts coming out of them. In order for this to happen, as with many items proposed, the challenge will be to ensure civil society collaboration by province and across the nation.

Voting and the secrecy of the ballot

A further priority is work around the voting laws. Civil society must ensure it knows what the registrar looks like, and ensure the government sticks to its own timeline on introducing the Biometric Voter Registration system. Zimbabweans must be informed about how the voter registration process will work, so that it cannot be abused.

Related to this and during the election period iitself, there is an overarching concern about the secrecy of the ballot. Zimbabweans must know how this will be guaranteed, by running text message campaigns, ensuring that people understand the mechanisms by which their vote will be kept secret, and providing them with safe avenues to report electoral fraud so that people do not feel intimidated by state agents.

Observers and party agents must be treated properly at polling stations, and they must be able to access the information they need. Key advocacy targets for this include ensuring the multi-party liaison committee plays a key role (and ideally continues its work beyond the election), especially in pushing ZEC and the political parties to ensure their members do not intimidate people on the ground. On a practical level, communities should establish their own social safety nets and rapid response mechanisms, for people to receive medical or other assistance if they are affected by violence.

Gamuchirai Masiyiwa, ©Global Press Journal Zimbabwe

Sharon Hofisi holds up a book of poems on constitutional rights and other modern Zimbabwean topics. Hofisi and the other poets wrote in Shona, one of the local languages.

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Fortune Moyo, ©Global Press Journal Zimbabwe

Bongani Ndlovu, left, digs holes while his brothers Themba Moyo, middle, and Silas Ndlovu, right, plant maize by dropping the seeds and using their feet to cover the hole with soil. The brothers' field, pictured in January, is located in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second-largest city. People plant maize during the rainy season, which generally takes place between November and April, using naturally treated organic seed. Genetically-modified seeds aren't allowed in Zimbabwe.

The economic crisis

Civil society groups view the economic situation as a key enabling factor for violence. The fragility of Zimbabwean life on a day-to-day basis means many potential conflict issues are heightened by the financial difficulties Zimbabweans face.

$860
Zimbabwean gross national income per capita (World Bank, 2015)

For example, much of the country has gone hungry in the last ten years as drought and hyperinflation combined, reducing the availability of food. Food aid to mitigate this hunger, and the systems to collect and distribute it, are often allocated along party lines. People's politics are therefore susceptible to being bought. "Green on the fields doesn't necessarily translate to a good harvest," as one participant in the consultation put it.

Similarly, although the 2017/2018 agricultural season looks good – the best in 10 years – farmers are urged to sell their crops only to the government-run Grain Marketing Board, but may never actually see payment for it. Land and agriculture overall play a key role in the life of many Zimbabweans, but there is little clarity over the ownership of land and this and related issues need to be resolved.

Political-business issues include, for example, the politicisation of loan-making, making the ability to raise finance dependent upon having political connections. Unregulated differences between the formal and informal economy has also led to communal conflict. For example, some street traders and retailers pay taxes, while others do not – but the way in which local authorities investigate these is arbitrary. Related to this, corruption at all levels is a cross-cutting issue that frustrates business and citizens and hampers economic activity in Zimbabwe.

A key development in 2016 was the introduction of bond notes by the government. The new currency, which is legal tender in Zimbabwe only, was intended to try and combat inflation, but problems continue. Some civil society groups have in particular accused the government of using the bond notes to 'buy' dollars from the public, in order to build its own reserve of foreign currency for political activity.

Linda Mujuru, ©Global Press Journal Zimbabwe

People wait to access cash at a CABS bank in Harare. Cash shortages in Zimbabwe prompted plans to introduce bond notes.

Activities to deliver on economic changes needed:
Civil society groups have identified a wide variety of top-level lobbying and advocacy priorities to improve the economic environment for peace in Zimbabwe. They are also clear on the specific training and programme work that they say needs to take place to enable NGOs and other organisations to address the issues above, as well as hold government and business to account.

The business environment
One area for reform is investment and banking services. Currently, these are dominated by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) and the Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe (CBZ). Other banks do not have access to capital and resources, money does not circulate, and this affects the business environment. The banking system in general has little credibility, and this affects business and investor confidence. Decentralisation in the business governance of banking has been suggested as one mechanism to improve the efficiency of decision-making.

Research should also be commissioned on how to make public-private partnerships work in Zimbabwe. Education and awareness-raising campaigns for all areas of Zimbabwean society need to be led on transparency and corruption issues, especially regarding the involvement of the diaspora in politics.

Some civil society groups feel that centralisation by the state is a problem, and therefore of relevant peacebuilding concern; if wealth and resources are distributed in unclear and unaccountable directions, it can fuel grievances and violence. The devolution of the political administration has been suggested as a solution to this. For example, one change suggested for the political organisation of the Zimbabwean state is for Rural District Councils (RDCs) to be supported to develop and tax their own areas and then use the funds locally, in contextually-appropriate ways, rather than the state taking taxation directly at a local level. But consultation participants noted that this is a very contentious topic for the government.

Swathi Sridharan 2

Agriculture and the food supply
Civil society groups say that farm management and workers need better agricultural training, including on how to develop entrepreneurial activities and adapt their businesses to the issues raised by climate change. This type of support should in particular be made available for women; farm education is usually focused on men, even though women are often those responsible for actually doing the work. A priority advocacy target should be to support women to acquire loans from banks and the title deeds to farm their own land.

59

Zimbabwean life expectancy at birth (World Bank, 2015)

Farming skills gaps and retention of skills is important. Anecdotally, one participant in the Zimbabwe Peace Exchange discussed a government programme that sends Zimbabweans to Cuba for training in farm technology.

"Many of them are on presidential scholarships, and in some way related to a political figure. Many are also not coming back. So although there are Zimbabweans who have been very well trained, there is still a gap in skills on the ground in Zimbabwe."

"The problem is that when the government initiates such programmes, it says that it consults relevant parties, but they are not real consultations. So civil society organisations need to identify the gaps, say what training is needed, and push for a real conversation about how to boost farming capacity in Zimbabwe and how to deal with the politicisation of scholarships."

Work on the political end of farming is important in other ways. For example, many agricultural officers in government have little training or understanding of practical farm operations. This also needs to be addressed.

Civil society is pessimistic about Zimbabwe's ability to cope in the event of the worst-case 'back to 2008' economic scenario, which would see massive increases in food prices. However, they highlighted efforts to prevent supplies diminishing in advance – for example, with community farming projects. As one participant said: "People, please start your gardens. By next March, there needs to be food available."

Similarly, working with civil society organisations with expertise in savings and loans schemes in advance could help. There are some well-established programmes operating around the country that would prepare people to use some kind of barter system in the event that the currency collapses. Raising awareness of food and famine issues that will become relevant if the economy crashes is important in general, so that people are aware of them and how to respond.

The role of the diaspora

The Zimbabwean diaspora provides a significant lifeline and support to many inside the country, in the form of remittances and hard currency from abroad. Ideally, an improved political situation would see them return, but interim measures could also be taken. The Zimbabwean indigenisation policy should be reviewed to encourage foreign direct investment. Consultation participants said that the return of diaspora Zimbabweans is unlikely while trust in this policy remains low. On the other hand, participants also suggested that an outreach programme to set up an emergency 'brain gain' could be feasible. This would see diaspora Zimbabweans contacted to ask if they would return on a temporary basis to carry out, for example, emergency medical work. This could be a first step to re-engaging Zimbabweans abroad with problems on the ground.

Kudzai Mazvarirwofa, ©Global Press Journal Zimbabwe

Tatenda Bhachila stands in front of his home in Domboshava, a village north of Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city. Bhachila was raised on Sussexdale Farm, where his father was a gardener. The farm was owned and operated by Mark McKinnon, a white farmer, until he and his family were evicted in September 2016.

Ulrika Andersson

Human rights abuses

Lack of respect for human rights is a key concern for local peacebuilding organisations. The intimidation and arrest of community activists is commonplace; the criminalisation of activism concerns many groups who fear that their work will be targeted for political or other reasons.

Civil society groups face practical difficulties in undertaking their work such as getting clearance to work in particular areas. Trust needs to be built with the police and other structures at a local level, so that if high-ranked officers hear about work involving the police and civil society they do not react with scepticism and fear, and jeopardise the work even taking place.

The question is how to engage with the police in the first place, when there is very little public trust in its work.

However, some civil society groups have been able to overcome suspicion in constructive ways. Often this can come down to an issue of how work is framed. As one peacebuilding group noted, if they say "we want to work with militia," that is likely to lead to difficulties. However, if they present their work as "targeting young people, and building their trust on issues related to trauma and torture," it can be made clear that the work is not a challenge to the police. This is because young people in this example are not designated as a potential threat, and therefore a group who need to be pacified, rather than engaged with.

Activities to deliver on changes in the human rights environment needed:

Existing legal support for those affected by human rights abuses should be consolidated and developed. This includes, in particular, outreach and referral networks. Safety networks for civil society members also need to be established and maintained – for example, providing safe houses. This will be particularly needed in the next year or so. Related to this, security training and drills for those involved in civil society work will be of importance to keep human rights defenders safe.

"If you say something against one person, perhaps 25 people will turn up as a gang outside your home," said one participant in the Peace Exchange. "How do communities protect themselves in the face of such intimidation?"

Popularising digital security training and understanding was also recognised as a small but important step that could be taken. For example, training on how to set up Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) so people can still use social media platforms in the event that the state attempts to shut them down.

Regardless of which scenario develops as the elections approach, there is a continuous need for civil society to engage the security sector constructively and to improve the documentation of human rights violations. Engagement and connections with the state need to be made now, participants stressed, before the situation deteriorates. Community, women, youth, and LGBT groups all need to be engaged.

More broadly, raising awareness of all these human rights issues, and the ways in which they can be addressed, is vital. Theatre, dialogue and other workshops are some tools civil society considers to be particularly useful in this.

Dealing with the past to address the future

The past is always present in Zimbabwe. One example of how the country's history has a very clear impact on peace and conflict issues comes from an organisation involved in trauma healing work. The organisation has noted the need to focus on this not only for past victims, but also past perpetrators. For example, many of the individuals known as Zimbabwean war veterans, who have often been involved in violence during election periods, have themselves suffered extreme violence in the past.

This informs their potential actions – and violence – today. In order to break this cycle, similar organisations say, anyone who is attacked in the upcoming election cycle must be provided with proper trauma healing as soon as possible. From a position of victimhood, their experiences must not be allowed to transform them into future perpetrators, as has happened, for instance, with some of those involved in the Gukurahundi massacres.

One participant involved in trauma healing work said this was vital, while acknowledging the very sensitive nature of this work: "Although Zimbabweans are often very angry with perpetrators, if we really want to address a factor in potential future violence, we need to deal with this issue on an ongoing basis."

The establishment of joint forums or steering committees, for example of community actors, would enable the collaboration necessary for this work to take place. This would see local people in relevant positions in their communities trained as human rights monitors, advocates and livelihoods advisors. This would help the identification and initiation of relevant programmes, and support local actors to access the support to run them effectively.

Women massage their hands, face and legs as a relaxation technique during Tara Rokpa therapy at the Rokpa Support Network in the Harare suburb of Monavale, Zimbabwe.

Tatenda Kanengoni, ©Global Press Journal Zimbabwe

Whose rights?

It was also noted that care should be taken when considering different rights. People often talk about property and free speech, civil society groups note, but basic issues such as access to food, health and education are a serious problem for many Zimbabweans. And rights in general are a politically sensitive topic. When the need to protect property rights is overemphasised, for example, this can be interpreted as a political statement because of conflict over white and black ownership of property.

However, "If you say 'a million people in Zimbabwe don't have access to education, that is a powerful statement. If people are able to demand these economic, social and cultural rights that might be a way in to demanding civil and political rights."

This is another area where the legacy of past conflict, such as the Gukurahundi killings, plays a clear role.

A civil society member explains: "For them, the issue is: what's the way forward with our lives? Some don't have birth certificates, which means they don't have identity documents. We worked with an old man who was homeless. He was being sheltered by the church. We tried to get him into an old peoples' home, but they wouldn't let him in because he didn't have a birth certificate. It was burnt during the Gukurahundi. They tried to make him provide a witness to his birth. But he was 69 years old. Because of our advocacy, we managed to resolve this particular situation. But how many other people are there that we can't get to? We need to work with people on the ground to identify and define their specific problems, and help them deal with the specific issues in their lives."

The politicisation of state institutions

From the top to the bottom of society, political affiliation often determines decision-making throughout Zimbabwe. Membership or the alleged membership of a political party is often a reason for – or barrier to – needed access in a wide range of political, economic or social matters. This includes, for example, the provision of basic services, or whether a business is granted a licence to operate in a particular area.

Who you know, not what you know

One consequence of this politicisation of the state is that Zimbabweans have little trust in the state to arbitrate fairly on legal, technical and administrative matters. Participants said that most, if not all, Zimbabwean state institutions have been captured by the government: the police, the judiciary and the 'Chapter 12' institutions (those provided for under Chapter 12 of the Zimbabwean constitution, whose remit is to provide support to democracy, such as ZEC). A high degree of corruption and patronage networks ensures continuity of power and influence and key personnel are rarely appointed on merit.

"A key example of politicisation," one participant said, is ZEC. "ZEC is highly compromised in terms of its staff complement – many, for example, are former military. As long as ZEC is in this form, the elections will be compromised. But how do you actually bring about change in recruitment practices? Currently, the list of nominated ZEC members is public, but the final list is sent to Parliament, and then the President, for appointment. But the parliament is dominated by ZANU-PF, so this is itself skewed."

Civil society groups fear that even if processes are improved, there are other ways of loading the system: for example, ZEC could be starved of resources, hampering its effectiveness.

The political context: how to work across a divided society?

In a context as politicised as Zimbabwe's, it is difficult to engage people across party lines or with state officials without arousing suspicion. But some groups have demonstrated that at a local level it is possible to secure cooperation across the political divide. There is some hope that this can help address the basic issues that cause hardship, which then worsen other problems.

The Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) is one organisation working on these issues.

"The 2008 elections saw a lot of violence. After this period, we brought people together from different political parties to discuss common issues in rural communities. One of the main problems was bread and butter – a basic lack of food.

"We came up with a solution to this problem: community 'peace gardens'. These are gardens developed by traditional leaders in their communities. A space is identified and the leaders provide land to cultivate for food and vegetables. They help provide equipment and irrigation, and everybody participates in the tending of the land. This is based on the traditional Zimbabwean concept of 'Zunde Ramambo', which sees land farmed to generate a communal food store for when times are tough.

"The gardens provide food and income for all the community. They have been a big success, distributing benefits for the benefit of everyone, unlike the politically-determined food distribution that many face. People have been working together across party lines, for the communal good, in 10 different provinces, where there is a garden in each."

– Zimbabwe Human Rights Association

In some areas, the peace gardens have not succeeded. People can be reluctant to work with village chiefs if they are suspected of supporting the ruling party while they are for the opposition. So the concept demonstrates the need for confidence in the chief as a coordinator. This highlights the importance of traditional leaders as key actors in political action in Zimbabwe. The context is important: such leaders may want to support this type of work, but be under political pressure not to do so.

Devolution as solution?

Recent decades have seen many countries pursue policies of political devolution of power, an approach that can improve governance issues. However, this approach has not been pursued in Zimbabwe where power remains highly centralised. Some politicians have argued that devolution could lead to the transfer of power to ethnically-based communities, implying that this could cause trouble. However, civil society groups reject the idea that ethnic divisions should be used as a counter-argument to devolution. They argue that ethnicity is not a key cleavage for conflicts in the country, a feeling reflected in the survey of community peace volunteers carried out as part of Peace Direct's consultation. Only seven of 150 respondents listed it as a key conflict concern.

Only

7 in 150

respondents in a survey of community peace volunteers listed ethnicity as a key conflict concern.

Civil society groups believe that one strategy could be to campaign for political devolution in less contentious areas. For example, one group has identified an opportunity around the Mines and Minerals Act to enforce the remit of money directly to communities by mining companies.

Challenges to civil society collaboration

For civil society to advocate successfully, there needs to be collaboration between and within communities. But civil society groups sometimes disengage during periods of violence in order to protect themselves. So they need to devise mechanisms to maintain their visibility, and safety networks for community members, if and when violence occurs.

This will be difficult as the elections approach because attempts will be made to prevent civil society from having access to communities. The fear instilled in communities – with threats made to those who engage with civil society – is a challenge to peacebuilding, and civil society must find a way to deal with the restricted operating environment during election times. Communities themselves can also be understandably reluctant to engage when, for example, food and resources can be deliberately restricted to ensure political allegiance.

Similarly, competition between local organisations themselves is an obstacle. Many say they wish to work together, and many are members of Zimbabwean peacebuilding networks, yet do not send key decision-makers to participate in meetings. Collaboration is therefore only superficial. To combat this, groups say they should explore opportunities for coordination and collaboration. For example, if groups can agree specific recommendations on particular policy points then they can present these jointly to government.

They also noted the need for groups to be proactive in their networking and identification of such opportunities. Basic information sharing between groups from different areas could also have an impact. If, for example, an organisation in one area notes a need for a specific type of project that an organisation in another area has expertise in, they can consider running awareness-raising activities to signal where help is available. Civil society is also keen to eplore the idea of developing consortiums.

Participants in the Peace Exchange were asked to rate how important they considered collaboration with other Zimbabwean peacebuilding organisations was before the consultation.

65% of participants said it was only 'slightly important', 'not important' or 'not important at all', while 35% of participants said it was 'important' or 'very important'.

However, asked to rate how important they considered collaboration with other peacebuilding organisations would be after the Peace Exchange, 100% of participants said it would be 'important' or 'very important'.

This demonstrates the benefit of providing civil society with a safe space to network and discuss ideas for collaboration. This also suggests that further support to Zimbabwean society to meet and coordinate – something few groups have the resources to do – should be a priority for international organisations looking to support peaceful change in Zimbabwe.

Politicisation: priority peacebuilding activities:

Lobbying for merit-based appointments in state institutions is a key priority for the reform of Zimbabwean governance. This reform should also include providing military officers in state institutions with conflict transformation training, as has been done with some police officers. "Most civil servants are retired Brigadiers," said one participant. "They have been trained to kill, and this is what influences the decisions they take."

Key international institutions that could help with this include the African Union, and the UN's Human Rights Council, in particular, to engage processes such as the Universal Periodic Review. The experience of civil society groups indicates there is potential for radio projects and programmes to raise awareness of issues relating to human rights, the constitution, and participation in electoral processes. There also needs to be more organised advocacy around demanding information on where income from mining and natural resources goes to. This often does not find its way back to the communities it is supposed to help.

Linking these communities to the institutions governing them is important. For example, although local governors in Zimbabwe are often accused of being involved in creating problems, they are in the middle of a system where decisions are taken at the top. So trying to bring about room for political manoeuvre for mid-level officials is a key objective.

Economic bodies also need to be depoliticised – for example, the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI). Civil society groups say that many such organisations have a clear mandate but end up working along political lines.

The potential for Early Warning in Zimbabwe?

As in other conflict zones, there are peacebuilding and human rights groups in Zimbabwe aiming to link monitoring work – observing and recording incidents of violence – with organisations able to respond immediately to such incidents. The objective is to try and prevent the escalation of conflict. There is good civil society monitoring capacity already established in Zimbabwe, and participants in the Peace Exchange noted the potential for these to work together more effectively.

Civil society groups are keen to explore collaboration, in particular on approaches that might assist with ensuring the safety of civil society organisations and their staff. Even basic information sharing (for example, via WhatsApp or other social media channels) would alert human rights defenders to signs of increased risk for their work.

Civil society groups are effective at detecting context-specific warning signs. For example, if vehicles in particular areas begin appearing without number plates, this could be a sign that people active in opposition politics will be targeted for kidnapping. Participants stressed the need for response plans to be set up in advance: evacuation routes, safe houses and communications chains for potential targets to leave their communities. Other indicators might include, for instance, an escalation in domestic and gender-based violence. Participants noted that this could be a proxy for increased violence to come.

Such locally-specific indicators are vital for any early warning system, and Peace Exchange participants noted the need to identify them for specific contexts around Zimbabwe. As other research has noted[2], more coordination among civil society organisations working on this would help ensure that relevant information can be collected, aggregated and interpreted in the Zimbabwean context. In particular, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (see box), a nationwide monitoring project, has called for collaboration on identifying relevant indicators to help inform its work on where violence is most likely to take place.

The Zimbabwe Peace Project

One group monitoring politically-motivated violence and human rights violations in Zimbabwe is the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP).

"The project began operating in 2001, and first covered elections in 2002. The historical information gathered from this early work has informed the design of the indicators used to monitor violence.

"In order to do this, ZPP has two monitors in each electoral constituency. They report on incidents and send information to us. At the moment, we are battling to have the full complement of 420 that we require. But even with this, we cannot cover the length and breadth of Zimbabwe – we need input from others.

"When incidents occur, it is critical to verify and corroborate what has happened. If the Zimbabwean Human Rights commission says 'there was an incident in your report and we want to be able to follow up,' we need to be able to give them the information to do that.

"We are aware that Zimbabwe has a culture of violence. Our own liberation struggle was violent, as was what happened in Matabeleland in the 1980s and what has happened at every election since. But at times, because we don't talk about these things, citizens pass off the abuses they face as not being violations.

"For example, if people are denied medical attention in a community because of their political affiliation, they don't see that as a violation of their rights. They accept it as something that is normal in the community. We need to get Zimbabweans to understand that it is not just a broken arm, a swollen face or a dead body that is a human rights violation.

"We have templates to fill in providing the information that we need for a particular incident. This is where we see a potential for collaboration with any groups who are interested in helping and providing information. It is important that there is no doubt about the exact location of where an incident happened. We need to be able to speak out and raise flags to say that there is a situation brewing. And when we say that, we need to be able to respond. We call our response groups 'service provision organisations'. It is important to know who does what, so that communities are able to plan what they will do if they hear that something is happening."

– The Zimbabwe Peace Project

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2. https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20161116-Zimbabwe-Early-Warning-Report.pdf

The role of the international community

Zimbabwean civil society organisations at the Harare consultation had a range of views on what role the international community ought to play in Zimbabwe. A key overall point of analysis is that these actors often underestimate Zimbabwe's potential, operating on the assumption that community organisations are weak and fragmented. The international community also considers that the political situation, and brain drain to the diaspora, have neutered the capacity for change. Of course, these issues have an impact, but local organisations are implementing projects and programmes because of, not despite, the turmoil. The challenge is to provide flexible support so these groups can adopt different strategies as the context changes.

These are some reflections and recommendations generated from the Peace Exchange for donors, policymakers, and other external actors engaged with Zimbabwe.

- Collaboration must not be imposed on civil society for the sake of it. Civil society itself has noted the need for increased coordination, but this must be sensitive to the political context. Close partnerships cannot be developed 'out of the box' in Zimbabwe. Trust needs to be built first, with all parties.

- Similarly, some organisations feel they can be forced to engage with the government when that is not what they are set up to do. There are concerns that not only does this put specific organisations at threat, but that

it could compromise the watchdog role of civil society by eroding trust between local organisations themselves, and between civil society and the broader Zimbabwean population. On the other hand, some organisations feel that engagement between government and civil society should be a key priority. They see their role as to complement government efforts, and not to oppose it for the sake of it.

- Civil society organisations are keen to partner with external actors on specific peacebuilding projects. But they also want their other work to be supported, as it is designed to contribute more broadly to building sustainable peace. Zimbabwean groups are keen to emphasise that Zimbabweans want change and welcome support, but external actors should stand by communities which are developing multi-faceted responses to social problems.

- To improve this, one key request is to lower the bureaucratic hurdles to civil society organisations engaging with external actors. The funding and accounting model should aim to deliver smaller amounts directly to local organisations. And it should specifically provide support to regions and organisations outside of Harare; change will only come with work beyond the capital. It should also be noted that civil society acknowledges that individuals may try and influence funding inappropriately, and that this plays a role in how the international community interacts with Zimbabwean organisations.

- Changes in international strategy need to be driven by consultation with local communities. Local organisations have noted occasions when large donors have changed their policies and priorities, and then expected civil society to develop projects and programmes to suit. This places the power of setting the overall agenda for civil society with external actors, rather than local civil society.

- To address all these issues, to enable external actors to access local organisations outside of the capital, and to ensure local groups are able to raise awareness of their concerns, a comprehensive study of the organisational capacity of groups in Zimbabwe should be conducted. A listening exercise to understand the priorities of local organisations and the communities they represent should be central to this.

- There is a flawed assumption that because there has been no outright armed violence in recent times, the situation has improved.

This could mean disengagement, even by the Southern African Development Community. Civil society urges external actors to maintain their engagement at all appropriate levels.

- Local organisations are aware that they also need to try and proactively inform the international community. This should include establishing links with groups around the country to feed into the Harare-based international representatives. Local groups are open to the possibility of establishing virtual regional and international networks to help facilitate this.

Conclusion

Peace Direct organised the consultation this report is based on with a broad range of civil society organisations from across Zimbabwe, to highlight their analysis of the current situation and key priorities for peace. Their in-depth, articulate and politically astute analysis demonstrates the capacity that local organisations have to diagnose problems in their own society.

These organisations also identified solutions. Despite the constraints, the examples in this report show what civil society is already achieving in Zimbabwe. Local organisations are ensuring communities receive their fair share of food. They are running successful savings and loans schemes, and generating business growth despite a stagnant national economy. They are engaging at appropriate levels with community leaders, and building trust across political dividing lines. They are monitoring violence and human rights abuses, and, with considerable bravery, speaking out about those who commit them. They are working on all these issues – and in a multitude of ways – with young people, who are the future of the country. The response of young Zimbabweans to the problems they will undoubtedly face over the next few years will determine what kind of Zimbabwe emerges from the 2018 election.

In other words, local organisations are building peace around the country. These groups are not naïve. They are well aware of the need for whole-of-society change to bring about lasting peace, and their room for manoeuvre is limited. A potentially violent election is looming, and those who are sceptical about the likelihood of peaceful change can point to obvious examples in Zimbabwean history to support their pessimism.

But whatever happens at the top, for peace to last it will have to be based on trust at the bottom. Individuals must feel safe. Communities must build on what unites them, and not fall apart because of what divides them. And everyone must have confidence that their lives will be governed by the rule of law. Local peacebuilding organisations are key to achieving this. Anyone who is serious about building a just world, free from violent conflict, should see the real benefits to supporting change from the bottom in Zimbabwe, while waiting for change at the top.
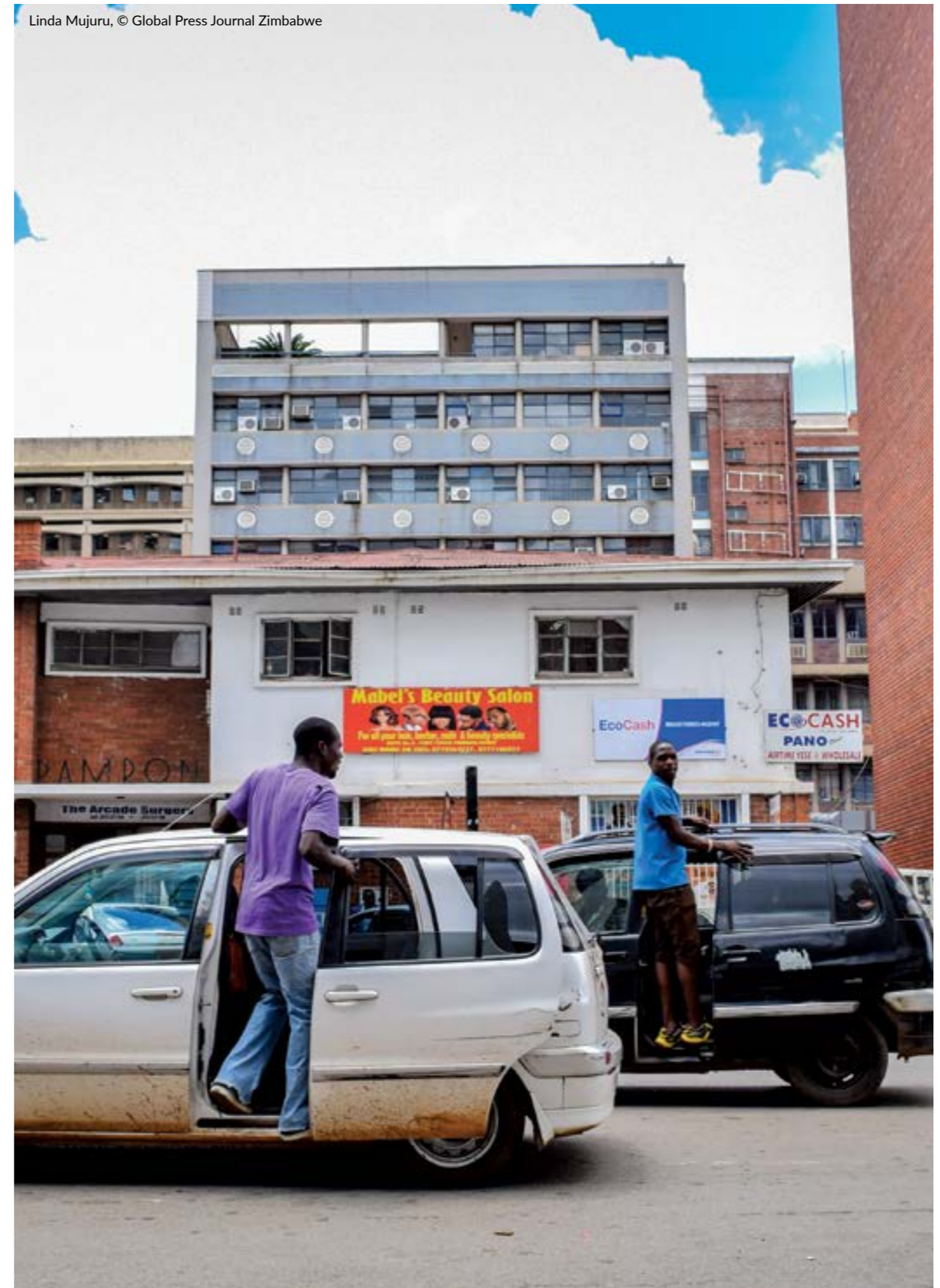
Linda Mujuru, © Global Press Journal Zimbabwe

Further information

To see an interactive map of 47 local peacebuilding organisations in Zimbabwe, visit Peace Direct's online research project Insight on Conflict at: https://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/zimbabwe/

This research formed the initial basis for participants for this consultation.
Short profiles of participation organisations are included below.

Participating organisations

The following organisations participated in the consultation held for this research.

Africa Centre for Peacebuilding & Conflict Transformation
The Africa Centre for Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation (ACPC) is a locally-led peace organisation registered as a trust in 2008 by a group of peace graduates and activists in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

Basilwizi Trust
The Basilwizi Trust aims to advocate for and protect minority rights in Zimbabwe, based on four thematic areas of education and cultural rights, governance, health, and sustainable livelihoods.

Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation
The Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation partners with local government, civil society and communities to seek culturally appropriate means to strengthen societies' capacity to deal with conflicts constructively.

Christian Legal Society Zimbabwe
The Christian Legal Society of Zimbabwe works to promote access to justice and legal approaches to conflict transformation in Zimbabwe.

Envision Zimbabwe Women's Trust
Envision Zimbabwe is a conflict transformation and development organisation that works with women from diverse backgrounds.

Grace to Heal
Grace to Heal is an interdemoninational organisation that works on peace, reconciliation, justice and conflict transformation issues in Zimbabwe.:

Heal Zimbabwe Trust
Heal Zimbabwe Trust aims to strengthen the peacebuilding efforts of local communities in Zimbabwe in order to prevent violence.

National Association of Youth Organizations
The National Association of Youth Organizations works with young people on peace and development issues around Zimbabwe.

Rebuild Sakubva
Rebuild Sakubva ensures that social capital, trust and peace are built among the residents of Sakubva Township in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

Research and Advocacy Unit
The Research and Advocacy Unity produces research and reports on human rights and governance issues in Zimbabwe.

Tree of Life Zimbabwe
Tree of Life is a Zimbabwean peacebuilding organisation that conducts group-based community-based trauma healing and psycho-education workshops.

Zimbabwe Election Support Network
The Zimbabwe Election Support Network is a network of Zimbabwean non-governmental organisations which play a central role in promoting democratic processes, particularly free and fair elections, in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe Peace Project
The Zimbabwe Peace Project is a human rights organisation that monitors and documents politically motivated human rights violations in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe Human Rights Association
The Zimbabwe Human Rights Association was formed to ensure that Zimbabweans are informed of their rights as citizens, and equipped with the knowledge to defend those rights.

Eight other organisations also participated in this consultation, but did not wish to have their details published.

About Peace Direct

Peace Direct works with local people to stop violence and build sustainable peace. We believe that local people should lead all peacebuilding efforts, and this report is the third in a series canvassing local views on violent conflicts around the world in an effort to highlight local capacities for peace and local expertise.

For more information on this series of reports, please contact us.

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