

## CEADZ Brief No. 4/2018

### *Zimbabwe after the July 2018 storm: Opportunities and challenges for democratization, economic recovery, and civic engagement*

#### *In this issue*

Introduction.....	1
Key Challenges.....	1
Opportunities and entry points for enhancing civic engagement and reforms .....	10
Recommendations.....	11

#### Introduction

This brief analyzes the space for civic engagement and civil society programming priorities in the wake of critical shifts in the contextual environment following the July 2018 election in Zimbabwe. Key issues and developments are discussed based on how they have affected and continue to affect communities and civic actors, as well as where opportunities remain for constructive civic engagement. Key issues analysed include:

- the reconfiguration of the Zimbabwean state and government since the November 2017 military-assisted transition
- the reconfiguration of opposition parties in the last few months of the election period
- the controversial July 2018 elections, whose results were disputed by the opposition parties, the resulting post-election violence and the return of the legitimacy question
- the economic and health crises, highlighted by the country's \$16 billion debt, the increasing prices of basic goods, shortages of drugs, and the outbreak of cholera, which have become characteristic of life in Zimbabwe post-election

#### Key Challenges

##### *Reconfiguration of the state: increased role of military in governance*

Any attempt to understand civic engagement opportunities in Zimbabwe's post-election environment needs to begin with an understanding of how the Zimbabwean state, government, and the political governance culture has been reconfigured since the November 2017 military coup. Particularly important is the need to understand the significant role that the military and other state security apparatuses, including war veterans who constitute the reserve army, have come to play in the country's political and economic governance. This condition is evident by the deployment and retirement of army commanders to lead key posts in both government and ZANU PF party structures, which is meant to entrench the army's position in the governance of the country. Examples include:

- former commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, Constantine Chiwenga, recently appointed as the vice president of ZANU PF and the government
- former commander of the Air Force of Zimbabwe, Perance Shiri, now heading the critical Ministry of Agriculture
- former army chief of staff, Major General Sibusiso Moyo, appointed to lead the strategic Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- retired Brigadier General Mike Nyambuya recently elected as the Deputy Speaker of Senate
- retired General Engelbert Rugeje appointed to lead the crucially important Commissariat department of ZANU PF

Indeed, the military and other members of the state's security structures have played a critical role in governance since the days of President Mugabe's reign.<sup>1</sup> However, the military, particularly the army, now occupies the political front role seats in governance in what analysts like Ibbo Mandaza have described as 'the triumph of the securocratic state'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. Masunungure (2011). Zimbabwe's militarized, electoral authoritarianism. *Journal of International Affairs* 65(1): 47–64; J. Muzondidya (2011). Zimbabwe's failed transition? An Analysis of the Challenges and Complexities in Zimbabwe's transition to democracy in the post-2000 period. In T. Murithi and A. Mawadza (eds.), *Zimbabwe in Transition*. Cape Town: Jacana Press; J. Muzondidya (2009). 'Our Guns are Our Votes': *The Political-Military Alliance in Zimbabwean Politics and Prospects for Democratic Transition*. Presented at the AEGIS 3rd European Conference on African Studies, Leipzig, Germany, 4–7 June 2009.

<sup>2</sup> I. Mandaza (2014, 15 December). ZANU PF Congress- The rise and triumph of the securocratic state. *The Independent*. Available at <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/12/15/zanu-pf-congress-rise-triumph-securocratic-state/>; A.T. Magaisa (2017, 19 December 2017). BSR: implications of changes to the security sector. *Big Saturday Read*. Available at

Since the November 2017 coup, the military has secured its position within multiple governance structures by increasing its presence in important institutions like the judiciary, the electoral commission, and Parliament.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, war veterans, who were politically marginalised in the last months of President Mugabe's reign, have re-established their influence within ZANU PF.<sup>4</sup> They have secured influential positions within ZANU PF structures by taking over leadership positions for the commissariat and security portfolios at provincial, district, and ward levels.<sup>5</sup> Besides participating directly in the 2018 harmonized elections as candidates for parliamentary and local government seats, war veterans and the military also played a pivotal role in coordinating the ZANU PF campaign.<sup>6</sup> Although statistical figures are not readily available, anecdotal evidence reveals that a significant number of key figures from the security services and war veterans won parliamentary and local government seats on the ZANU PF ticket. Some few examples include the former security director in the Central Intelligence Organization, Albert Ngulube, and the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association, Victor Matemadanda. Thus, the military and other security actors have become important elements of ZANU PF's leadership structures and Zimbabwe's parliamentary democracy, particularly in the post-July election period, and are deeply embedded within all the structures of the country's legislative units and the ZANU PF structures at community level.

The increased role of the security sector in the Zimbabwean state poses a challenge for the country's constitutional democracy. Analysts who recently attended a postelection reflection meeting organized by Pact suggested that Zimbabwe might soon resemble countries like Myanmar and Egypt, in which military and civilian service is difficult to distinguish.<sup>7</sup> If Zimbabwe ends up evolving into a stratocracy, the political transformation of the state will not only violate Zimbabwe's constitutionally protected principles of separation of powers between the different arms of the state, but also complicate democratic participation in the country.<sup>8</sup> The military has its own governance culture that does not conform well with the tenets of democratic governance.<sup>9</sup> In this light, it is hardly surprising that since the November 2017 transition, the government's response to some developments in the country has been repressively harsh and lacking in tolerance for dissent. Some examples of this are the arbitrary dismissal of 16,000 nurses who had been on strike to demand better working conditions from the government and the deployment of the army who ended up randomly shooting civilians in Harare after youth demonstrated against the Zimbabwe Election Commission's (ZEC) for delaying the announcement of the July 2018 election results.<sup>10</sup>

---

<https://www.bigsr.co.uk/single-post/2017/12/19/BSR-Implications-of-changes-to-the-security-sector>.

<sup>3</sup> Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (2017). *Zimbabwe transition in a muddy terrain: Political economy under military capture terrain*. Available at <http://kubatana.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Zimbabwe-Transition-in-A-Muddy-Terrain-Political-Economy-Under-Military-Capture-Terrain.pdf>; D. Moore (2018, 3 August). A false new dawn: What was foreseen, unforeseen. *The Zimbabwe Independent*. Available at <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2018/08/03/a-false-new-dawn-what-was-foreseen-unforeseen/>; A. Kanumbura (2018, 20 July). Judges, generals and post-coup dynamics. *The Zimbabwe Independent*. Available at <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2018/07/20/judges-generals-and-post-coup-dynamics/>; O. Gagare and K. Kuwaza (2016, 28 October). Military takes over prosecuting authority. *The Zimbabwe Independent*. Available at <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2016/10/28/military-takes-over-prosecuting-authority/>.

<sup>4</sup> The relationship between Mugabe and war veterans had broken down in the last two years, over the war veterans' leadership's support for Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa for succession. See *The Independent* (22 July). War veterans' Communique on the state of Zimbabwe's economy, the Zanu PF leadership and the way forward'; *The Standard* (2016, 7 August). Mugabe, war veterans divorce: end of an era; *The Independent* (2017, 28 July). Mugabe attacks military chiefs.;

<sup>5</sup> Daily News (2018, 5 January). War vets complain of side-lining from ZANU PF party structures. *Daily News Live*. Available at <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/01/05/war-vets-complain-of-sidelining-from-zanu-pf-party-structures>.

<sup>6</sup> Zimbabwe Democratic Institute (2018, 13 July). Polls and militarising the village. *The Zimbabwe Independent*. Available at <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2018/07/13/polls-and-militarising-the-village/>; G. Dube (2018, 11 July). Survey: Zimbabwe Soldiers in Rural Areas Campaigning for Zanu PF Ahead of Crucial Elections. *VOA Zimbabwe*. Available at <https://www.voazimbabwe.com/a/zimbabwe-democracy-initiative-soldiers-rural-areas/4477220.html>.

<sup>7</sup> See summary notes from CEADZ Postelection Reflection and Networking Meetings: Power Mapping and Analysis (Pact Zimbabwe, 31 August 2018)

<sup>8</sup> D.B. Moore (2018, 28 August). Zimbabwe: a future finally balanced between democracy and militarization. *The Conversation*. Available at <https://theconversation.com/zimbabwe-a-future-finely-balanced-between-democracy-and-militarisation-102214>.

<sup>9</sup> U. Sundhoussein (1998). The Military: a threat to democracy? *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 44(3); B. Shannon (2010). *Understanding the Military: The Institution, the Culture, and the People* (working draft). Available at [https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/military\\_white\\_paper\\_final.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/military_white_paper_final.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> D.B. Moore (2018, 7 August). Will Zimbabwe's messy election get messier – or will a new path be taken? *The Conversation*. Available at <https://theconversation.com/will-zimbabwes-messy-election-get-messier-or-will-a-new-path-be-taken-101196>; T. Maodza (2018, 18 April). STRIKING NURSES FIRED... VP Chiwenga says protest politically motivated. *The Chronicle*. Available at <https://www.chronicle.co.zw/striking-nurses-fired-vp-chiwenga-says-protest-politically-motivated/>.

More significantly, the increased deployment of the military in government might negatively influence the country's governance practices through the importation of some negative cultures from the military. The Zimbabwe military has been accused of having a history of lack of commitment to democracy, transparency, and accountability. For instance, some of the Zimbabwean military commanders who are now in government were accused by the United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) of being heavily involved in looting diamonds during the Zimbabwean army's intervention in the DRC war between 1998 and 2003.<sup>11</sup> Some of the army commanders occupying key positions in the post-July 2018 government were also implicated in looting national diamonds in Chiadzwa between 2006 and 2016.<sup>12</sup> The same commanders and their counterparts who are still in the military have also been accused of committing serious human rights abuses during the Gukurahundi atrocities and murders of the 1980s<sup>13</sup> and similar atrocities during the 2008 elections violence.<sup>14</sup> In the past, military commanders have also been accused of not being prepared to respect the democratic will of the people in elections by arguing that the presidency of Zimbabwe is a 'straightjacket available to Zimbabweans with liberation war credentials, only'.<sup>15</sup> During the March 2008 elections, unproven reports have suggested that hardliner commanders within the military allegedly refused to allow Mugabe to hand over power to Morgan Tsvangirai after he had won the presidential election.<sup>16</sup> More recently, some of the retired and active military commanders who are now serving in the civilian government were accused of actively directing retributive violence against opposition party supporters after the 2018 elections.<sup>17</sup> The increased entrenchment of some of these military commanders who have been implicated in violence, atrocities and corruption in the past in Zimbabwe's governance structures means that the current government might struggle to prioritize issues of democracy and addressing unresolved problems of corruption, violence, and human rights abuses.

The expanding role of the military and other security actors in Zimbabwe's parliamentary democracy, as Brian Raftopoulos points out, creates a different set of problems for democracy building in the country and all this has important implications on civic engagement.<sup>18</sup> Lessons from other countries where the military has played an important role in governance, such as Myanmar, Nigeria, Egypt and Rwanda, show that the military has its own values and norms and these might influence how the former military men and women who are now in the multiple structures of government relate to citizens.<sup>19</sup> For instance, evidence from the ground suggests that while civil society organizations and human rights defenders are still able to operate in most parts of the country, in some areas they are operating within seriously confined boundaries in order to avoid harassment and censure. Hard line war veterans and securocrats in the provinces where ZANU PF has historically

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Security Council (2002, 23 October). *Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Available at <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/5170/2477.pdf?sequence=1>; K. Yamamoto (2016, October 10). How Mugabe double crossed Joseph Kabila and the DRC. *The Zimbabwean*. Available at <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2016/10/how-mugabe-double-crossed-joseph-kabila-the-drc/>

<sup>12</sup> Global Witness (2017, September). *An Inside job: Zimbabwe, The state, the security forces and a decade of disappearing diamonds*. Available at [https://www.globalwitness.org/.../GW\\_Zim\\_diamonds\\_An\\_inside\\_job\\_report\\_download\\_sng.pdf](https://www.globalwitness.org/.../GW_Zim_diamonds_An_inside_job_report_download_sng.pdf); Yamamoto (2016, October 10). How Mugabe double crossed Joseph Kabila and the DRC.

<sup>13</sup> Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (1997, March). *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: Report on the 1980s disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands*. Available at [https://archive.org/stream/BreakingTheSilenceBuildingTruePeace/MatabelelandReport\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/BreakingTheSilenceBuildingTruePeace/MatabelelandReport_djvu.txt)

<sup>14</sup> International Crisis Group (2017, 20 December). *Zimbabwe's "Military-assisted Transition" and Prospects for Recovery: Briefing No. 134/Africa*. Available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/southern-africa/zimbabwe/b134-zimbabwes-military-assisted-transition-and-prospects-recovery>; E. Mambo (2016, 15 April). Mugabe remarks expose military. *The Zimbabwe Independent*. Available at <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2016/04/15/mugabe-remarks-expose-military/>.

<sup>15</sup> M. Zimuto (2016, 13 January). Has Zimbabwe abandoned straightjacket policy? *Financial Gazette*. Available at <https://www.financialgazette.co.zw/has-zimbabwe-abandoned-straightjacket-policy/>; T. Nyandoro (2018, 14 June). Time to remove military's presidential straightjacket. *Newsday*. Available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/06/time-to-remove-militarys-presidential-straitjacket/>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-military-plot-keep-mugabe-power>

<sup>17</sup> B. Tendi (2018, 8 August). Emmerson Mnangagwa's Zimbabwe Is Old Wine in a New Bottle. *Foreign Policy*. Available at <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/08/emmerson-mnangagwas-zimbabwe-is-old-wine-in-a-new-bottle-zanu-pf-mugabe-mdc-chamisa-chiwenga-army/>.

<sup>18</sup> B. Raftopoulos (2017, 23 November). Caught between the Croc and Gucci City. *Pambazuka: Special Issue Pan-Africanist perspectives on Mugabe*.

<sup>19</sup> E. Frank & W. Ukpere (2012). The Impact of Military Rule on Democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 33. 285-292; Civicus (2018, 1 June). Rwanda Overview. *Monitor: Tracking Civic Space*. Available at <https://monitor.civics.org/newsfeed/2016/06/01/rwanda-overview/>

exercised dominant political influence, such as Mashonaland East and Mashonaland Central, have tried to restrict civic engagement space for CSOs and community-based organizations that spearheaded voter mobilization and education programs in the just ended elections.<sup>20</sup> CSOs will need to come up with new and appropriate engagement strategies in order to find space within the evolving political dynamics. And, CSOs will also need to intensify its advocacy on issues of political freedom, democracy, human rights, transparency and accountability to ensure the government seriously commits to them. The ability of civics to hold the government to account also depends on how they are able to engage with government and Parliament in a post-election environment where the military is not only an important factor of the governance team but also where ZANU PF exercises dominant control over both.

### ***ZANU PF's increased hold over power in Parliament***

The existence of a strong political opposition and organized civil society are necessary conditions for an effective system of checks and balances on executive power by the ruling part. Since 2000, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party has acted as a convergence point for opposition political voices in the country and as a strong counterbalancing force to ZANU PF that managed to use its presence in Parliament to check some attempts by the ZANU PF government to abuse its power. The opposition MDC also has been a critical political ally for civil society, supporting the civil society electoral and constitutional reform agenda, and acting as a conduit through which some civil society-sponsored reforms could be pushed through Parliament.

However, the opposition voice in Parliament has been significantly reduced since the July 2018 elections. With 180 Members of Parliament (MPs) in the National Assembly compared to the opposition MDC Alliance's 87, ZANU PF has more than a two thirds majority control over the critically important Lower House of Parliament.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, ZANU PF's 34 seats compared to the MDC Alliance's 25 seats in the 80 member Senate gives the former majority control over the Upper House of Parliament, which is responsible for endorsing or rejecting bills from the Lower House.<sup>22</sup> The results of the 2018 elections also gave ZANU PF more leverage over parliamentary processes through its control of all presiding officer posts for both the National Assembly and the Senate (i.e. the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Parliament and President and Deputy President of Senate). Most likely, ZANU PF also will use its parliamentary majority to control all chairperson posts in key parliamentary portfolio committees, such as the Justice, Legal, and Parliamentary Reforms Committee. The opposition's decreased representation in Parliament makes it difficult to influence key decisions there. The voting patterns reflected in the recent elections of the presiding officers of Parliament, where ZANU PF MPs overwhelmingly voted for ZANU PF nominees for all four contested positions, indicate how the party will use its power in Parliament to settle issues of disagreement with the opposition.<sup>23</sup>

ZANU PF's increased hold over parliamentary power raises important concerns about the possibility of the ruling party abusing its influence to formally reverse democratic gains made in the last few years of democracy building, particularly those gains made since the establishment of the Government of National Unity in 2009 and the introduction of the new Constitution in 2013 .The party has already indicated that it will change certain provisions of the Constitution, such as Chapter 14, which seeks to devolve decision-making powers to elected officials who sit in the Provincial Councils, in favour of centralizing political and economic decision-making powers within the unelected Provincial Ministers of State who are appointed directly by the President and are not accountable to the electorate.<sup>24</sup> In addition, a number of bills President Mnangagwa outlined when he presented his government's legislative agenda for the 9th Parliament are designed to restrict individual freedoms and democratic space. Examples are the Data Protection and Cyber Crime Bill that is principally designed to control the use of social media<sup>25</sup> and the Traditional Leaders Act that is designed to increase the

<sup>20</sup> For instance, in Mutoko, war veterans and other ZANU PF leaders who were recently elected into Council and Parliament have banned organizations like Youth Initiative for Community Development (YICD) and Zimbabwe Environment Law Association (ZELA) from operating in the district because they allegedly aligned themselves to the opposition MDC Alliance during the July 2018 elections.

<sup>21</sup> Veritas (2018, 19 August). Election Watch 41/2018: Party Strengths in the New Parliament. *The Zimbabwean*. Available at <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2018/08/party-strengths-in-the-new-parliament/>

<sup>22</sup> T. Kamhungira (2018, 4 August). Zanu PF's majority enables it to amend constitution. *Daily News Live*. Available at <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/08/04/zanu-pf-s-majority-enables-it-to-amend-constitution>.

<sup>23</sup> Veritas (2018, 12 September). *Bill Watch 20/2018: Election of Speaker, President of the Senate and Deputies*. Available at <http://www.veritaszim.net/node/3210>

<sup>24</sup> L. Towindo and S. Munjenjema (2018, 16 September). Govt moves to amend constitution. *The Sunday Mail*. Available at <http://www.sundaymail.co.zw/govt-moves-to-amend-constitution/>.

<sup>25</sup> Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (2018). *The Cybercrime & Cybersecurity Bill: Grave Consequences on Internet Freedoms in Zimbabwe* (Advocacy Paper). Harare: United States Agency for International Development, Counterpart International, Zimbabwe Democratic Institute, and Media Centre. [http://kubatana.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/zdi\\_mc\\_cybercrime\\_bill\\_analysis.pdf](http://kubatana.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/zdi_mc_cybercrime_bill_analysis.pdf)

number of traditional leaders and put all resettlement areas under the control of appointed village heads and chiefs, rather than the elected village and ward chairpersons who are more accountable to their voting constituencies.<sup>26</sup>

Technically, ZANU PF has the power to amend the Constitution. However, safeguards against the amendment of key sections of the Constitution makes it difficult for the ruling party to unilaterally amend the Constitution when citizens are mobilized to resist such moves; any bill that seeks to amend sections of the Constitution that affect the Declaration of Rights is subject to public approval through a national referendum.<sup>27</sup> However, citizens' ability to express their opinions on legislative reforms, particularly during parliamentary committees' public consultation processes, largely depends on their knowledge of the legal and constitutional issues being discussed. In the past, the government often has managed to push through laws that are not consistent with the Constitution partly because citizens would not have exercised their right to express their reservations during parliamentary public consultation processes. The reasons for this limited citizen participation parliamentary consultation processes include the lack of knowledge and information among citizens about their rights, the importance of such processes and how to do it. To enhance citizen participation in legal reform processes, civics will need to embark on massive constitution educational and awareness campaigns designed to educate citizens not only about the laws, but also about the importance of participating in legal reform consultations.

By virtue of their hold over power in Parliament, ZANU PF legislators have become the most critical power-brokers, and civics' reform advocacy initiatives cannot ignore them. CSOs will need to find ways of engaging with these legislators to spearhead development and democracy in communities. For successful engagement to occur, Zimbabwean CSOs, some of whom have worked too closely with opposition parties, will need to remain non-partisan and focus on inclusive engagement and participation.<sup>28</sup> As analysts have observed in the past, Zimbabwean CSOs need to effectively analyze their abilities to act as independent drivers of change, and collectively move the reform agenda forward without acting as appendages of political parties.<sup>29</sup> To ensure that the ruling party does not abuse its influence in Parliament to enact retrogressive laws, civil society will need to influence the legislative process by actively engaging both government and Parliament, suggesting ideas about ideal reforms, crafting alternative model bills that could be adopted, and overall spending more time proffering alternative ideas than critiquing existing ones. Zimbabwean CSOs also will need to mobilize all critical stakeholders, including progressive leaders within ZANU PF and government, parliamentarians from across the political divide, regional and international actors, and, most importantly, Zimbabwean citizens from across the country, to oppose ZANU PF's attempts to push through undemocratic laws.

### *Political violence*

Compared to other general elections that have been held in Zimbabwe in the past, the 2018 harmonized elections were relatively peaceful elections as compared to other elections held in the country since independence.<sup>30</sup> Despite the absence of widespread outright violence during and before the elections, violence continued to be a key issue defining Zimbabwe's political processes across the political divide. For instance, the candidate nomination processes in the two main parties in the 2018 elections- the ruling ZANU PF and the opposition MDC Alliance was characterized by violent intraparty contestations for positions. Throughout the period leading to the July 30 elections, members of both parties used various forms of violence and intimidation, including overt and covert methods, to try to silence their critics, contenders and opponents. For instance, after the death of the MDC-T's founding president Morgan Tsvangirai in February 2018 the MDC-T plunged into organizational chaos as his three deputies, Elias Mudzuri, Thokozani Khupe and Nelson Chamisa, all competed to take over leadership of the party, and their supporters engaged in intraparty violence as they pushed for their candidates' takeover bids.<sup>31</sup> Through a sustained campaign of violence and

<sup>26</sup> B. Mashaya (2018, 26 March). Govt to install chiefs in resettlement areas. *Daily News Live*. <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/03/26/govt-to-install-chiefs-in-resettlement-areas>; Sunday News Online. (2018, 13 May). Government embarks on emplacement exercise. *The Sunday News*. <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/government-embarks-on-emplacment-exercise/>.

<sup>27</sup> Section 328 of the Constitution.

<sup>28</sup> A. Hungwe (2013, 5 September). Uncomfortable questions for Zimbabwe civil society! *The Financial Gazette*. Available at <https://www.financialgazette.co.zw/uncomfortable-questions-for-zimbabwe-civil-society/>.

<sup>29</sup> R. Fontanes. Electoral Reform: The impact of a shared advocacy voice among Zimbabwean civil society. *Ace Encyclopaedia*. [http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/on/civil-society/default/mobile\\_browsing/onePag](http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/on/civil-society/default/mobile_browsing/onePag).

<sup>30</sup> Daily News (2018, 2 August). SADC Observers hail 'peaceful' Zim poll. *Daily News*. Available at <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/08/02/sadc-observers-hail-peaceful-zim-poll>; Anglican Communion News Service (2108, 30 July). Zimbabwe Council of Churches report peaceful elections in historic presidential poll. Available at <http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2018/07/zimbabwe-council-of-churches-report-peaceful-elections-in-historic-presidential-poll.aspx>.

<sup>31</sup> Financial Gazette (2018, 14 February). Morgan Tsvangirai Dies. *Financial Gazette*.

intimidation, Khupe and her supporters were eventually pushed out of the mainstream party structures. Likewise, intraparty violence was dominant during the ZANU PF primary elections that were held to select the party's candidates for the 2018 elections during the month of April.<sup>32</sup> The youth were mainly involved in these cases of political violence, often acting as foot soldiers carrying out violent acts on behalf of political elites.

The increasing role of the youth in perpetuating violent politics in Zimbabwe was particularly evident in the few days after the elections when the MDC Alliance's supporters demonstrated in Harare on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August against the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's (ZEC) delay in announcing presidential election results. During this August 1<sup>st</sup> demonstration, the protestors engaged in aggressive political activities, including rioting, vandalizing public property, threatening the public, the Police and members of the public, seizing and controlling facilities of public good.<sup>33</sup> The continued propensity for violence among Zimbabweans, particularly the youth, during elections is a worrying trend that has a significant negative impact on both youth political development and democratic advancement in the country.

Violence during the 2018 elections was not just confined to physical violence. The increased use of online media, particularly social media platforms such as Twitter and WhatsApp, in Zimbabwe provided fertile ground for the perpetuation of online violence against political leaders and activists.<sup>34</sup> Women were particularly targeted for online violence and bullying, with most political activists targeted for sexual and misogynist attacks on social media.<sup>35</sup> Many women who contested in the election, including Khupe and Joice Mujuru, as well as other electoral stakeholders who included the ZEC chairperson, Priscilla Chigumba, were targeted for sexist bullying and intimidation by their political opponents who sexually labelled them prostitutes and threatened to expose their sexual promiscuity on social media platforms.<sup>36</sup>

While incidences of state-orchestrated violence against citizens significantly reduced after the November 2017 transition, the implication of government security services in postelection violence against opposition party supporters serves to highlight how Zimbabwe continues to struggle to rid itself of the negative culture of violent politics. Although both the government and ZANU PF continue to deny involvement in this violence,<sup>37</sup> evidence shows that the violence was orchestrated by the state<sup>38</sup> and, like in 2008, systematic and efficiently organized. The methods used and targets selected demonstrated that the violence was designed to achieve specific political objectives, i.e., to close political space through intimidation of political and civic activists, particularly the youth, who played active roles in voting and mobilizing people to vote. The majority of the targets were MDC Alliance candidates, polling agents, and civil society observers who provided the MDC with evidence of electoral malpractices that might have occurred during the elections.<sup>39</sup> Human rights defenders (HRDs) who helped the victims were similarly targeted for violence. And, female relatives of targeted activists, including wives, sisters, and mothers, were deliberately targeted for politically motivated sexual harassment, including rape.<sup>40</sup>

---

<http://www.financialgazette.co.zw/morgan-tsvangirai-dies/>; Tsvangirai's death deals heavy blow to MDC party. *Daily News*, 15 February 2018. The Chronicle (2018, 22 February). They wanted to kill me: Khupe; *Daily News* (2018, 23 February). Looting, violence mar Tsvangirai's burial.

<sup>32</sup> *Daily News* (2018, 18 June). Primary elections increased intraparty violence. *Daily News*. Available at <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/06/18/primary-elections-increased-intra-party-violence>

<sup>33</sup> The Zimbabwe Mail (2018, 1 August). MDC Alliance demonstrators throng ZEC command centre. *The Zimbabwe Mail*. Available at <https://www.thezimbabwemail.com/main/mdc-alliance-demonstrators-throng-zec-command-centre/>; The Chronicle (2018, 3 August). Observers condemn postelection violence. *The Chronicle*. Available at <https://www.chronicle.co.zw/observers-condemn-post-election-violence/>

<sup>34</sup> Eyetro Digital (2018, 21 March). *The Digital Review*. Zimbabwe records 50.8% Internet penetration: 2017. Available at <https://www.eyetrodigital.com/2018/03/21/zimbabwe-records-50-8-internet-penetration-2017/>

<sup>35</sup> IFES (2018, July). *Violence against Women in Elections in Zimbabwe: An IFES Assessment*. Available at [http://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/vawie\\_in\\_zimbabwe\\_july\\_2018.pdf](http://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/vawie_in_zimbabwe_july_2018.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> S. Bosha (2018, 31 August). Politics, hate speech and violence against women: Mugabe's lasting legacy for Zimbabwean politics. *Blog*. Available at <https://aidsfreeworld.org/commentary/2018/8/31/politics-hate-speech-and-violence-against-women-mugabes-lasting-legacy-for-zimbabwean-politics>; IHarare (2018, 17 July). ZEC Boss Chigumba in Cyber Bullying storm as attackers put spotlight on sex life. Available at <https://iharare.com/chigumba-in-cyber-bullying-storm/>

<sup>37</sup> B. Mashaya (2018, 5 August). ZDF disowns rogue soldiers. *Daily News Live*. Available at <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/08/05/zdf-disowns-rogue-soldiers>.

<sup>38</sup> Tendi, 2018; Moore, 3 August 2018.

<sup>39</sup> The Standard (2018, 12 August). Army crackdown against opposition widens as NGOs raise alarm. *The Standard*. Available at <https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2018/08/12/army-crackdown-opposition-widens-ngos-raise-alarm/>

<sup>40</sup> Tayana (2018, 3 August). Police Surround Tendai Biti's Mother's House. *Pindula News*. Available at <https://news.pindula.co.zw/2018/08/03/police-surround-tendai-bitis-mothers-house/>.

The political violence that swept across Harare and other parts of the country soon after the July 2018 elections is one of the key developments that will continue to significantly influence political and civic engagement in the country in the immediate and long-term futures. The violence did not only result in the tragic loss of lives, but also destroyed people's livelihoods as people's homes were burnt and others fled their home areas out of fear of being targeted.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, the 2018 violence was not as widespread as before; for example, the June 2008 violence was felt across the country. The provinces of Matabeleland and Bulawayo, for instance, were not targeted for violence, partly because of ZANU PF's concern about invoking the people's memories of the Gukurahundi massacres that continue to shape the state's relationship with citizens in those regions.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the 2018 post-election violence affected various parts of the country differently. Harare's townships, where the opposition MDC Alliance's youthful supporters resided, was most affected.<sup>43</sup> Provinces like Manicaland, where the opposition parties managed to draw significant support in the 2018 elections, were also targeted for political retribution.

Although the violence was mainly confined to Harare and some rural districts, its effects were felt far and beyond and its legacy will likely continue to be felt for years to come. The violence created a restrictive political environment, characterized by fear and insecurity among citizens across the country, particularly in the affected communities. The ruthless manner in which the violence was executed, especially the army's shooting of unarmed civilians after the MDC Alliance supporters' demonstration on 1 August and the abduction and torture of some opposition political leaders and activists in the middle of the night, helped revive political insecurity in the country.<sup>44</sup> Further, most political and civic activists fled their homes, while those who remained live in fear.<sup>45</sup>

The violence also helped to increase suspicions and tensions among Zimbabweans. Many people are now afraid to talk openly about politics in public spaces,<sup>46</sup> and there is a pervasive sense of insecurity even in some provinces that were not directly affected by the post-election violence. The environment before and during the election that began after the removal of Mugabe's repressive rule in November 2017 was generally peaceful, carried a spirit of hope, and had opened space for political freedom, but this disappeared in those few weeks of post-election violence. Evidence from a perception survey conducted by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI) and Afrobarometer after the July 2018 elections suggests that the violence, alongside the allegations of election rigging, divided the nation and demoralized many Zimbabweans, particularly the youth who had pinned their hopes of a better future on a possible political transition.<sup>47</sup> The violence also eroded people's confidence in democratic processes like elections.

### ***Increased marginalization of women and youth from political leadership***

Although ZEC has not yet published disaggregated data on the number of people who voted and contested in the 2018 elections, anecdotal evidence from electoral observers and the media reveal that a significantly high proportion of women and youth actively participated as voters and contestants for leadership positions. According to Zimbabwe Electoral Commission figures, women constituted 52% of the registered 5.7 million voters in the 2018 harmonized elections while 60% were young persons under age 40.<sup>48</sup> However, members of these social groups had mixed experiences and feelings about the election results and outcomes. For instance, the millions of youthful opposition supporters in the urban areas who voted for the MDC Alliance as an

<sup>41</sup>Newsday (2018, 28 August). Post-election violence spiral. *Newsday*. Available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/08/post-election-violence-spirals/>; The Standard (2018, 12 August). Army crackdown against opposition widens as NGOs raise alarm; Human Rights Watch (2018, 3 August). Zimbabwe: At Least 6 Dead in Post-Election Violence. *Human Rights Watch News*. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/08/03/zimbabwe-least-6-dead-post-election-violence>.

<sup>42</sup> D. Ngwenya (2017). *Healing the Wounds of Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A Participatory Action Research Project* (Durban: Durban University of Technology)

<sup>43</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2018). *Post-Election Violence Monitoring Report*.

<sup>44</sup> J. Burke (2018, 1 August). Zimbabwe election unrest turns deadly as army opens fire on protesters. *The Guardian*. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/01/zanu-pf-wins-majority-of-seats-in-zimbabwe-parliament-elections>.

<sup>45</sup> Newsday (2018, 28 August). Post election violence spiral. *Newsday*. Available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/08/post-election-violence-spirals/>

<sup>46</sup> M. Ndlovu (2018, 8 August). Impact of Zim's post-electoral violence. *Newsday*. Available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/08/impact-of-zims-post-electoral-violence/>; T. Zivira (2018, 19 August). Fear grips Mutoko as violence returns. *The Standard*. Available at <https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2018/08/19/fear-grips-mutoko-violence-returns/>.

<sup>47</sup> Afrobarometer (2018, 11 September). Who will heal Zimbabwe? Public opinion points to steps toward nation-building. *Afrobarometer*. Available at <http://www.afrobarometer.org/press/who-will-heal-zimbabwe-public-opinion-points-steps-toward-nation-building>.

<sup>48</sup> The Independent (2018, 2 March). Youths to decide 2018 elections. *The Independent*. Available at <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2018/03/02/youths-decide-2018-elections/>

alternative party that could bring in democratic change and development were disappointed and demoralized by the results. The youth have particularly suffered worse from the current crisis and lack of jobs, and their hopes for change in the country's politics and economy largely accounted for their impressive turnout for voter registration.<sup>49</sup> The youth's disillusionment with the results could negatively affect their faith in elections and participatory democratic decision-making processes. As it is, most assessments of civic engagement programs have revealed that Zimbabwean youth have had a history of minimum participation in civic engagement processes.<sup>50</sup> Some youth may decide to disengage completely from democratic participation processes. Others might adopt radical political ideologies of engagement that include violent protests and demonstrations like that organized by MDC Alliance youth on 1 August. A number of studies on youth conducted across the globe suggest that youth are prone to engaging violent political contestations when they feel frustrated and marginalized from existing political and economic systems.<sup>51</sup> Given these two possibilities, CSOs must focus on mobilizing youth for participation in decision-making at both local and national levels by creating platforms for them to contribute their ideas and experiences. There is also need for youth's continued political education to enable them to understand the benefits of civic participation.

Women were also among the main losers in this election. Very few women were nominated by their parties to participate, and those who were nominated struggled to get enough votes to be elected into office. A gender analysis done by the Women in Politics Support Unit (WIPSU) on the nomination court results revealed that only 15% of candidates in parliamentary elections and 13% of candidates in local government elections were women.<sup>52</sup> The outcome of the 2018 election indicates a general decrease in the number of women elected into both Parliament and local government. While in the 2013 constituency-based elections for the 210 Parliament seats 29 women (13.8% of total) were directly elected, the figure dropped to 26 (12.3%) during the July 2018 elections. In the local government elections, the percentage of female councillors dropped from 16% in 2013 to 13.3% in 2018.<sup>53</sup> And, the four female candidates who contested for the presidency—Joice Mujuru of the People's Rainbow Coalition, Thokozani Khupe of MDC-T, Violet Mariyacha of the United Democratic Movement, and Melba Dzapasi of #1980 Freedom Movement Zimbabwe—collectively garnered less than 5% of the vote.

For a long time, women have struggled to have equal representation in Zimbabwe, and the results of the July 2018 elections risk entrenching women's marginalization decision-making processes. The situation is particularly dire for young women, whose representation in governance structures remains miniscule. This situation requires civics to build on some of the gains of 2018, such as the growing confidence by women and youth to take on leadership positions and these groups' increased interest in active participation in elections, to intensify initiatives designed to enable women and youth to have equal and meaningful representation and participation in all facets of governance and decision-making. This entails intensifying political education, mobilization, advocacy, and campaign activities aimed at enhancing women and youth's active participation in governance and decision-making. CSOs will need to focus more on pushing for implementation of the various progressive provisions of the 2013 Constitution that are designed to end discrimination on the basis of age or sex and to facilitate gender equality and equity, such as in Section 17.<sup>54</sup> Women's representation in the structures of governance at both local and national levels have been negatively affected by political parties' failure to implement these provisions. All political parties nominated few women to run for political office. Only 17% of the candidates nominated to contest for parliamentary and local government positions were

<sup>49</sup> Afrobarometer, 2018; S. Skweyiya (2018, 27 July). Zimbabwe's jobless generation hopes election will mark change. *Reuters*. Available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-zimbabwe-election-youth/zimbabwes-jobless-generation-hopes-election-will-mark-a-change-idUSKBN1KH1UQ>.

<sup>50</sup> Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (2017). *Assessment of Issues Influencing Youth Participation in Elections and Decision making in Zimbabwe*; Afrobarometer and MPOI (2016). *Civic Disengagement in Zimbabwe* (Afrobarometer Dispatch 70); ActionAid (2013, March), *Eager or Slumbering? Youth and political participation in Zimbabwe* (ActionAid Denmark).

<sup>51</sup> D. Ojok and T. Acol (2017). Connecting the Dots: Youth Political participation and Electoral violence in Africa. *Journal of African Democracy and Development*, Vol. 1, Issue 2. pp 94-108; Mandela Institute for Development Studies (2016). *Youths Participation in Elections in Africa: An Eight Country Study* (Johannesburg: Minds); Mercy Corps (2011). *Understanding Political Violence among Youth: Evidence from Kenya*. Available at <https://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/understanding-political-violence-among-youth>.

<sup>52</sup> WIPSU (2018). *The Absence of Women: Gender analysis of the Nomination Court results for direct elected seats*.

<sup>53</sup> R. Butaumocho (2018, 14 August). Election 2018: Women fail to gain ground. *The Herald*. Available at <https://www.herald.co.zw/election-2018-women-fail-to-gain-ground/>.

<sup>54</sup> Section 17 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe obligates the state to take all measures that ensure that both genders are equally represented in all government institutions, agencies, and levels.



women.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, civic advocacy initiatives for gender equality and equity must target political parties so they align their party constitutions to the national constitution.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Worsening economic and social crises***

The July 2018 elections were supposed to present Zimbabwe with a key opportunity to move the country toward political and economic recovery after years of heavy internal power contestations; deep political, economic, and social crises; and international isolation. Many observers expected the country's prospects for recovery to improve once it held an undisputed, free, and fair election. Although we are in the early days of the new administration, Zimbabwe seems to have temporarily sunk deeper into crisis in the post-election period. The dispute over presidential election results, post-election violence, and the outbreak of the cholera epidemic, which has so far claimed around 49 lives and resulted in the hospitalization of over 3 000 patients across the country, have created new challenges for the country.<sup>57</sup>

The government has a difficult job to address these current crises, with the country experiencing a serious liquidity and foreign currency shortage, inflation soaring rising and the government's debt now at \$16 billion.<sup>58</sup> To worsen matters, a significant proportion of the population, particularly the millions of villagers living in drought prone provinces such as Masvingo, Matabeleland South, Midlands and Matabeleland North, are experience food insecurity.<sup>59</sup> While it is currently engaging the international community for budgetary support and fresh lines of credit, the Zimbabwean government is less likely to receive adequate support because of the controversy over election results and post-election violence. Without the much-needed external help, the government likely will struggle to address its service delivery obligations for the next few years, particularly in the critical areas of supply of clean water, reliable refuse collection, and repairing of burst sewer and water pipes, which have led to the cholera outbreak. Zimbabwean CSOs have an important role to play in ensuring that the government prioritizes service delivery in its budget allocation and spending in the next few years. They have an equally critical role to play in partnering with the government to carry out initiatives meant to address some of the country's development and governance challenges.<sup>60</sup> This includes assisting government departments to deal with rampant corruption and accountability problems that continue to ensure basic delivery issues are not addressed even when resources are available.<sup>61</sup>

Countries like China, who have established close economic ties with ZANU PF and care little about democracy and human rights, could be an alternative source of bailout for the government of Zimbabwe.<sup>62</sup> Before the elections, China signed a \$153 million loan to expand and update Harare's international airport, a \$1.4 billion to expand the country's power generation capacity, and \$230 million loan to build a new Parliament.<sup>63</sup> And, since his assumption of the presidency, Mnangagwa has signed several business deals with China. Despite the existence of constitutional provisions on principles of public financial management clearly stipulating that public borrowing and all transactions involving national debt should be carried out transparently and in the best interests of Zimbabwe, the terms and conditions of the ZANU PF government's deals with China have remained opaque. Civil society needs to play a much more critical role in ensuring transparency and

<sup>55</sup> WIPSU (2018). *Gender Analysis of the Nomination Court*.

<sup>56</sup> New Zimbabwe (2018, 7 March). Parly Speaker to women: Take your parties and government to ConCourt over gender parity. *NewZimbabwe.com*. Available at <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/parly-speaker-to-women-take-your-parties-and-government-to-concourt-over-gender-parity/>.

<sup>57</sup> Chronicle (2018, 27 September). Cholera death toll hits 49. *Chronicle*. Available at <https://www.chronicle.co.zw/cholera-death-toll-hits-49/>

<sup>58</sup> Newsday (2018, 3 October). Monetary policy fuels economic strife: Business. *Newsday*. Available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/10/monetary-policy-fuels-economic-strife-business/>

<sup>59</sup> The Herald (2018, 3 October). 350k need food aid in Masvingo. *The Herald*. Available at <https://www.herald.co.zw/350k-need-food-aid-in-masvingo>.

<sup>60</sup> For more detailed discussion of possible roles that civil society can play in partnering with government to address development challenges, see K. Zigomo (2012, 2 April). A Community-Based Approach to Sustainable Development: The Role of Civil Society in Rebuilding Zimbabwe. Solidarity Peace Trust. Available at <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/1159/community-based-approach-to-sustainable-development/>

<sup>61</sup> Daily News (2018, 17 September). Masiyiwa outrage: Officials attempt to exploit Econet cholera fund. *Daily News Live*. Available at <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/09/17/masiyiwa-outrage-officials-attempt-to-exploit-econet-cholera-fund>; Newswire (2018, 17 September). Harare suspends officials after Masiyiwa blows whistle on cholera scandal. *The Zimbabwe Mail*. Available at <https://www.thezimbabwemail.com/zimbabwe/harare-suspends-officials-after-masiyiwa-blows-whistle-on-cholera-scandal/>.

<sup>62</sup> E. Graham-Harrison (2018, August 3). Zimbabwe president can count on one clear foreign backer – China. *The Guardian*. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/03/zimbabwe-president-backed-by-chinese-over-election-protests>.

<sup>63</sup> Fin24 (2018, 2 June). Zim gets \$1bn loan for power generation. Available at <https://www.fin24.com/Economy/zim-gets-1bn-chinese-loan-for-power-generation-20180602-2>; Reuters (2017, 6 December). Zimbabwe agrees first post-Mugabe loan deal with China. <https://af.reuters.com/article/africaTech/idAFKBN1Eo1YL-OZATP>.

accountability in economic governance in the post-election period by demanding information on all economic agreements that the government signs with external financiers and developers.

## Opportunities and entry points for enhancing civic engagement and reforms

Despite the above outlined challenges, there are a number of opportunities for enhancing citizen engagement in governance and reforms in the post-election period.

### *Peaceful campaigning and political engagement*

One of the most notable positive developments associated with the new government is its relative tolerance of dissent, highlighted by the peaceful campaigning and political engagement that Zimbabweans experienced during the 2018 elections. These elections took place against a backdrop of 18 years of political crisis and violence. During this period, severe limitations on political space and a series of elections, some characterized by violence and widely perceived as flawed, weakened public confidence in democratic institutions and the electoral system. During the 2018 elections, the country's political climate remarkably improved, with opposition parties able to campaign and hold rallies around the country. In most parts of the country, citizens were able to express their political views more freely and to engage and challenge solution-holders in open debates. Civics can build on these experiences to mobilize more citizens for democratic participation. This will help to create a sustained culture of community engagement that is not just restricted to election seasons.

### *Increased voter turnout*

The increased voter turnout in the 2018 elections created an opportunity for enhanced democratic participation among Zimbabweans. The voter turnout of 4.8 million voters (85% of the registered 5.7 million voters), according to the ZEC,<sup>64</sup> was generally impressive and represents a significant renewed increase in interest in elections as a medium for participation in governance and decision-making. The voter turnout in past general elections had been declining, so the challenge for civil society is how to keep this renewed citizen interest alive.

### *Increased participation of women and youth*

With women constituting 52% of the registered 5.7 million voters and 60% being young persons under age 40, the July 2018 Election was a watershed event in which a record number of women and youth participated as voters. And, although statistics on the actual number of women and youth who voted in the elections are not readily available, media reports noted that women and youth from across the country turned out in huge numbers to vote. Zimbabwean youth have been apathetic to elections in the past, and their increased levels of participation in this election was a positive political development.<sup>65</sup> More importantly, a significantly high number of youth contested for leadership positions in the 2018 harmonised elections as independent parliamentary and local government candidates. Also, a significantly higher number of women than before contested for leadership positions in a development that serves to highlight how women are gradually gaining confidence to take up leadership positions at both national and local levels. The majority of women who contested for leadership positions, including the four women who made history by contesting for the presidency for the first time, did not win. However, the increased participation of women in elections as candidates, rather than just voters, is a positive development that helps to boost women's political confidence. Likewise, youth's active participation in elections as voters and contestants for leadership positions helps to inspire their counterparts to participate more in elections and other related governance processes in future.

### *Electoral petitions and commitment to constitutionalism*

Despite concerns over its autocratic tendencies, the Mnangagwa administration has displayed some levels of commitment to constitutionalism by agreeing to allow the electoral result dispute over the July 2018 elections to be resolved through the country's court system.<sup>66</sup> The hearing of this case in a televised court session created an important precedent in the country's electoral history and legal jurisprudence and provided transparency in the administration of justice because the nation was able to directly follow the case. Besides the constitutional court case over presidential results which has already been finalized, the electoral courts

<sup>64</sup> The Standard (2018, 30 July). Zimbabwe election: High turnout in first post-Mugabe poll. *The Standard*. Available at <https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2018/07/30/zimbabwe-election-high-turnout-first-post-mugabe-poll/>.

<sup>65</sup> Research Advocacy Unit (April 2017). *Framing the Debate: youth voter registration in Zimbabwe in preparation for the 2018 elections* (RAU Opinion 1/17); Available at [http://researchandadvocacyunit.org/system/files/Framing%20the%20debate%20Youth%20voter%20registration%20in%20Zimbabwe%20-%20Opinion%20piece%201\\_17%20final.pdf](http://researchandadvocacyunit.org/system/files/Framing%20the%20debate%20Youth%20voter%20registration%20in%20Zimbabwe%20-%20Opinion%20piece%201_17%20final.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> B. Mhlanga (2018, 11 August). Chamisa takes ED fight to ConCourt. *Newsday*. Available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/08/chamisa-takes-ed-fight-to-concourt/>.

have yet to rule on 17 petitions challenging the legislative elections.<sup>67</sup> The successful filing and hearing of these electoral cases by the courts is an important development that helps maintain the courts as an important space where electoral and other legal disputes can be fought and resolved. The Zimbabwe government is most likely going to maintain judiciary independence as part of its strategy to show the world that is committed to reforms and upholding the rule of law. The government knows that maintaining the rule of law is an important part of its attempt to attract economic aid and foreign direct investment needed to rebuild the economy.

### *Government commitment to market economy*

The new government seems committed to the market economy, which could open opportunities for reforms in both the political and economic arenas. The government has expressed its willingness to take bold steps to 'liberalize and introduce a market-based system; building an economy in which enterprises can thrive and is encouraged and protected; an economy capable of empowering its entrepreneurs and fostering innovation at every level'.<sup>68</sup> The new government also has emphasized the role of the private sector in powering sustainable growth.<sup>69</sup> In this regard, to facilitate domestic private sector investment, the new government is emphasizing speeding up the ongoing 'Ease of Doing Business Reforms'. These economic reforms present Zimbabwean civics with a good opportunity to engage government on broader governance reforms. In terms of its strategy thrust, the new government is prioritizing foreign investment, which it regards as the key ingredient for powering the economy.<sup>70</sup> Its focus on outside investment gives key international actors some leverage over the government on reform issues. Civic engagement and lobbying initiatives outside Zimbabwe will need to focus on engaging key international and regional actors, such as South Africa, USA, UK, China and Russia, to ensure that investments made and loans given to Zimbabwe are transparent and are not used to undermine people's interests.

## Recommendations

*Expand young people's political and civic participation opportunities:* The public disillusionment with the election results could negatively impact public interest in elections and other civic engagement activities, particularly among the youth, who were mostly disappointed by the election results and the use of violence to suppress dissent. To ensure the public does not lose faith and interest in democratic participation, CSOs will need to initiate various civic engagement programs that help Zimbabweans realize the value of sustained engagement, such as social accountability and campaign programs that result in action and positive change. Social accountability and public campaign programs that could result in the youth getting interested in active participation in civic engagement activities could include anticorruption campaigns that result in corrupt public officials being removed from office and improved utilization of public resources for local development. Youth interest in civic and political participation could also be revived if civics involve youth in programs aimed enhancing public participation in local natural resource governance activities that result in locals benefitting more from employment and improved local economic investments by companies. Interventions that seek to address women and youth's economic livelihood challenges, including programs designed to assist women and youth get access to jobs, could incentivise young women and men to participate more in civic engagement processes.

*Build on 2018 successes to sustain citizen interest in elections and other public engagement processes:* The increased voter turnout in the 2018 elections created an opportunity for enhanced democratic participation among Zimbabweans. CSOs need to find innovative ways of keeping citizens interested in elections that entail implementing continuous voter education programmes even outside the election cycle period and mobilizing citizens to participate in all forms of elections, including for local government and even community-based committee positions. To enhance citizen participation in legal reform processes, civics will need to embark on massive constitution educational and awareness campaigns designed to educate citizens not only about the laws, but also about the importance of participating in legal reform consultations. Citizen participation parliamentary consultation has been limited mainly because of lack of knowledge and information among citizens about their rights, the importance of such processes and how to do it. Zimbabweans' interest in civic participation will be sustained once they are fully aware about the importance of their participation; they

<sup>67</sup> CNBC Africa (2018, 14 August). MDC Alliance court challenge shows that democracy is now alive in Zimbabwe – Temba Mliswa. *CNBC Africa*. Available at <https://www.cnbc africa.com/videos/2018/08/14/mdc-alliance-court-challenge-shows-that-democracy-is-now-alive-in-zimbabwe-temba-mliswa/>.

<sup>68</sup> Government of Zimbabwe (2018). *Towards an Upper-Middle Income Economy by 2030: New Dispensation Core Values*. p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

become accustomed to participation through regular involvement; and begin to experience the dividends of participation.

*Mobilize more women and youth to participate in governance and decision making:* CSOs need to build on the interest shown by women and youth in civic participation during the 2018 elections to significantly invest into initiatives aimed at mobilizing women and youth to participate in the electoral process, both as candidates and voters. This entails investing more in the youth's continued political education to enable them to understand the benefits of civic participation. Contesting for leadership positions in numbers has the potential to increase the levels of women and youth representation in decision-making platforms and to inspire more women and youth to participate actively in decision-making processes in future.

*Advocate for Expansion and Extension of Women and Youth Quota systems:* The 2018 election resulted in the increased marginalization of women and youth from national leadership. CSOs need to prioritize advocating for the extension of the lifespan of the constitutional guaranteed quota system that sets aside 60 seats for female parliamentarians in the National Assembly in order to guarantee women's representation in important decision making platforms such as Parliament. The quota system, which came into effect in 2013 and resulted in the doubled increase in women's representation in Parliament (from 16% in 2008 to 34% in 2013), is bound to expire in 2023. The quota system helps to counterbalance the negative effects of the country's highly competitive constituency-based electoral system that is unfriendly to under-resourced, economically and politically marginalized women candidates. Advocacy initiatives also will need to push for extending the quota system provisions to include women's representation in local government and representation of women and youth in all governance structures.

*Invest more in building democracy in organizations and community structures:* The recurrence of violence in political contestations at local and national levels requires civics to invest more into building cultures of democracy among Zimbabweans at micro levels, i.e. right from the organizations and institutions of governance operating at community level. The increased cases of intraparty violence during the 2018 elections, even among those organizations that have committed themselves to advancing democracy, requires civics and other stakeholders supporting democratic advancement in Zimbabwe, to invest more into building internal democracy within political parties, civil society organizations and other community structures where people converge to engage in decision making. Building such cultures of democratic governance requires focusing on building internal standards and cultural institutions of discipline and self-control, open competition, regulatory frameworks, transparency, accountability and inclusive and participatory decision making within community and organizational structures.

*Adopt innovative tools and strategies to monitor and manage violence:* Violent politics has the impact of side-lining minorities and marginalised groups, including women, youth and people living with disability, from meaningful participation in political and electoral processes, including contesting for leadership positions, at both local and national levels.<sup>71</sup> Addressing political violence, particularly against women and other marginalized groups, is a central process in ensuring inclusive democracy. While Zimbabwean CSOs have over the years played a critical role in monitoring and managing political violence, the increasing trend towards sophisticated violence, including online violence and covert state-orchestrated violence, requires civil society to adapt more innovative tools and strategies in their violence monitoring and mitigation processes. Most CSOs are used to monitoring physical violence, focusing on documenting, reporting and tracking incidence of violence through traditional indicators.

*Pursue legal and political reforms in the courts and Parliament:* Civic engagement and reform advocacy initiatives in the next few years will need to make maximum and strategic use of both Parliament and the courts to promote the implementation of the constitution and to advance reforms that will enable Zimbabwe to have more democratic elections. The list of reform issues that might need to be prioritized include the grey areas in both the Electoral Act and the Constitution that have and will continue to create room for manipulation of the law and disputes among contesting parties. CSOs will also need to prioritise reforms in all laws that lay the framework for elections in Zimbabwe, such as AIPPA, POSA and the Broadcasting Services Act. They will also have to push for reforms in the constitution of ZEC and its mandate in order to ensure that it becomes an impartial and non-partisan body. Providing legal clarity in electoral laws will help enhance the possibility of future credible, free, and fair elections

<sup>71</sup> Zimbabwe Peace Project (2017, August). *The Impact of political violence on Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Zimbabwe*. Available at <http://kubatana.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ZPP-PWD-Research-1709.pdf>; IFES (2018, July). *Violence against Women in Elections in Zimbabwe: An IFES Assessment*. Available at [http://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/vawie\\_in\\_zimbabwe\\_july\\_2018.pdf](http://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/vawie_in_zimbabwe_july_2018.pdf)

*Engage ZANU PF Parliamentarians and local leaders in advocacy and reform initiatives:* By virtue of its increased control over both Government and Parliament, ZANU PF has become the most critical power-broker in the post-July 30 period. CSOs will also need to influence the legislative process by actively engaging ZANU PF leaders both government and Parliament, suggesting ideas about ideal reforms, crafting alternative model bills that could be adopted, and overall spending more time proffering alternative ideas than simply critiquing existing ones. At the local level, the ZANU PF local party leadership also controls almost all formal and informal platforms of engagement and have the capacity to frustrate civic engagement and advocacy initiatives if they are antagonistic to a project. CSOs will need to positively engage these ZANU PF local community leaders, particularly progressive officials, in all community engagement initiatives to ensure that they are supportive, rather than antagonistic, to their programs.