

An Analysis of the Challenges to National Healing and Reconciliation and Prospects for Development in the Aftermath of Zimbabwe's 2008 Political Violence

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Abstract: Zimbabwe is currently run by a power sharing government created by the Global Political Agreement (GPA) to resolve political conflict that resulted in devastating violence in 2008. This study offers a theoretical analysis of the challenges to national healing, reconciliation and development in Zimbabwe, post June 2008. The study argues that the challenges to national healing and reconciliation are embedded in the struggles for political hegemony. It posits that national healing and reconciliation are processes that have a direct impact on the political ascendancy and fortunes of the main rival political parties, the MDC and ZANU-PF. The study also discloses that national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe are bleak because the ZANU-PF regime on whose watch violence occurred still controls the levers of political power making national healing and reconciliation difficult. The study stands on Gramsci's theory of hegemony to analyse the challenges to reconciliation and healing in Zimbabwe. The theory aptly explains the struggles for power and legitimacy which are key elements in reconciliation any reconciliation process.

Key words: Reconciliation, healing, political violence, hegemony, development, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe's long history of violence dates back to pre-colonial times through the colonial era to the post-colonial period. In the 1830s the struggle for dominance on the Zimbabwean plateau between Nguni and Shona groups was pervaded by violence. The British colonised Zimbabwe in 1890 defeated the Ndebele in 1893 and crushed Ndebele-Shona uprisings between 1896 and 1897. The brutal and oppressive rule established by the colonialist behoved nationalists from the Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) to embark on violent armed liberation struggle against the white minority government until Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. At independence, the former white colonialist did not suffer retribution at the hands of blacks. The new government pronounced a policy of reconciliation then Prime Minister Mugabe stated:

If yesterday I fought you as my enemy, today you have become a friend and ally and with the same national interest, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you the wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten (Huyse, 2003)

During this period emphasis fell on reconciling blacks and whites making the fatal mistake of ignoring

reconciliation between blacks. Lingering Ndebele-Shona historical tensions soured relations between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU culminating in armed conflict. The country experienced civil war in the 1980s as the ruling ZANU-PF in search of regime security and pursuit of political hegemony clashed with opposition elements linked to PF-ZAPU. PF-ZAPU was accused of seeking counter revolution. The conflict resulted in the deaths of over 20 000 people and was only ended by the signing of the 1987 Unity Accord which paved the way for the merger of PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF to form the united ZANU-PF. Thereafter, a lull in political violence was experienced save for minor electoral skirmishes occurring until the new millennium.

Violence in the new millennium followed a very difficult period of economic decline and political confrontation that triggered the collapse of virtually all sectors of the economy as well as the moral, social and political fabric of the nation. In the year 2008 the crescendo of a new wave of political violence was reached. Zimbabwe witnessed post-independence political violence of a tremendous magnitude, comparable only to the 1980s violence in the Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces. Unlike the 1980s conflagration, this violence did not take ethnic lines it was largely racial, political, ideological and electoral. The violence disrupted social life leading to uncertainty and untold suffering which has made the need for reconciliation and national

healing imperative for the nation to deal with development conundrums and attain sustainable peace and nation building.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES

Clark (2008) defines reconciliation as rebuilding of fractured individual and communal relationships after conflict with a view to encouraging meaningful interaction and cooperation between former antagonists. To him reconciliation entails much more than peaceful coexistence it requires the reshaping of parties relationships to lay the foundation for future engagement between them.

Bloomfield (2003) perceives reconciliation as both a process and a goal he sees it as a dynamic adaptive processes aimed at building and healing. Bloomfield (2003) states that:

Reconciliation is an over-arching process which includes the search for truth, justice, forgiveness, healing and so on. At its simplest, it means finding a way to live alongside former enemies not necessarily to love them or forgive them or forget the past in any way but to coexist with them to develop the degree of cooperation necessary to share the society with them so that we all have better lives together than we have had separately

Centre for Peace Initiatives in Africa (2005) appears to concur with Bloomfield, he perceives reconciliation as finding a way to make two or more ideas, situations agree with each other when actually they seem to be in opposition. Reconciliation involves making parties in conflict establish amity after a period of quarrelling and to accept a situation because there is nothing that can be done to change it. Badza identifies three stages in the process of reconciliation namely acknowledgement when perpetrators acknowledge wrongs committed, contrition when perpetrators take responsibility for past actions to express regret and to directly request forgiveness from victims and finally forgiveness which is the victims voluntary forgiveness of past injuries.

This study acknowledges that there is thus no universally accepted definition of reconciliation in conflict discourse and thus adopts Hauss (2003)'s definition which refers to reconciliation as a number of activities that help turn the temporary peace or agreement which ends fighting into a lasting end to the conflict itself. This is because a number of activities are being pursued by the government of national unity to oversee Zimbabwe's transition from violence to peaceful coexistence. These include political reform, constitutional review, media

reform, electoral reforms and the crafting of an election road map. These are envisaged to translate the temporal lull in violence to lasting peace by paving the way for peaceful elections that should resolve Zimbabwe's political impasse.

Closely related to the process of reconciliation is healing which Hamber (2003) defines as any strategy process or activity that improves the psychological health of individuals following extensive violent conflict. To him these strategies or activities aimed at rehabilitating and reconstructing local and national communities should be integrally linked to this process. The idea is to Hamber argues is to restore normalized everyday life that can recreate and confirm people's sense of being and belonging.

Political violence can be referred to as the commission of violent actions against others with the intended purpose of effecting a change in their actions it is commonly referred to by the terms terrorism, rebellion, war, conquest, revolution, oppression, tyranny and many others. Political violence is politically motivated rather than criminal or socially generated. Typically, it is the penultimate event that precedes full-scale civil war.

Development is a relative term, Todaro and Smith (2006) perceive it as a multi dimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social systems in which there is an expansion of material wealth or economic growth accompanying technological transformations. Mabogunji (1980) conceives development as involving not only economic growth but also conditions in which people in a country have adequate food and jobs the income inequality among them is greatly reduced. National healing and reconciliation are important if development is to be achieved as development cannot take place in an atmosphere pervaded by divisions, insecurity and mistrust.

This study employs Gramsci's theory of hegemony to analyse the challenges to reconciliation and healing in Zimbabwe. Gramsci defines hegemony as the ability of a social group to direct society both politically and morally. He notes that:

The hegemonic group acquires authority through the intellectual, moral and cultural persuasion or consent of the governed population without applying violent, political or economic means of coercion. Nevertheless, coercion is always latently used in support of its hegemony. In order to become hegemony, a group must unite the features of coercion and consent through the notion of a dual perspective (Iseri, 2007)

Iseri (2007) cites Gramsci as arguing that a social group which intends to become the hegemony or the leader can either use the means of coercion or the means of consent by persuading society to accept and assimilate the norms and values of its own prevailing world-view. However, coercion does not always mean domination but may equally mean consent or the acceptance of the hegemony's leadership (ibid). Challenges to reconciliation in Zimbabwe are a manifestation of hegemonic struggles. This researcher is of the opinion that political institutions in Zimbabwe are striving to dominate and exert control over constituencies involved in the national healing and reconciliation process through coercion and consensus.

Love (2000) understands hegemony as domination across the economic, political and ideological domains of a society. To her it is about constructing alliances and integrating rather than simply dominating subordinate classes through concessions or through ideological means to win their consent. In Zimbabwe hegemony can be regarded as leadership of both the MDC and ZANU-PF that are vying for the control of political office and the influence it has on the outcome of the healing and reconciliation process.

Gramsci's comprehensive work perhaps presents the most promising place to begin an exploration of the difficulties of achieving national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Through Gramscian theory the struggle for power between ZANU-PF and MDC will be exposed as detrimental to reconciliation.

BACKGROUND TO 2008 VIOLENCE

On 11 March, 2007 the ZANU-PF regime assaulted opposition political leaders including Morgan Tsvangirai president of the MDC and civic activists for embarking on demonstration. The action ignited strong international revulsion which compelled the SADC leadership to convene an emergency Summit in Dar-es Salaam on 29 March, 2007. The beating of Tsvangirai activated the SADC led negotiation process where South African president Thabo Mbeki was mandated to facilitate dialogue between the opposition and the government. The negotiations yielded constitutional amendment No. 18 which in part paved the way for the March 29, 2008 harmonised elections.

The elections were held after fundamental reforms to the electoral playing field which gave the opposition space to campaign and organise. For the first time in a long time the opposition was given a significant amount of time to sell their manifesto on state controlled radio and television. The police largely accused to be staffed by ZANU-PF sympathisers and ready to use the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) to curtail opposition activities

largely took a neutral role and gave greater freedom to the opposition to hold rallies, meetings and distribute pamphlets thus enabling the opposition to make inroads in ZANU-PF strongholds.

Although, the polls were held in a tense atmosphere, elections were relatively free and fair. There were few incidences of violence recorded prior to the election day and on the day of polling itself. The results of the parliamentary and senatorial elections gave the opposition control of the lower house and significantly reduced ZANU-PF's control of the upper house. The announcement of presidential election results was delayed by 6 weeks during which time political tensions soared between ZANU-PF and the MDC. The MDC was accused by ZANU-PF of prematurely announcing results and inviting white farmers to reoccupy land while the MDC accused ZANU-PF of withholding results for the purposes of rigging and of launching a brutal campaign of violence against those it suspected of having voted against it. This triggered massive violence between supporters of MDC and ZANU-PF resulting in the deaths of >400 people.

When the results were finally announced the MDC candidate Morgan Tsvangirai emerged victorious with 47% of the vote while Robert Mugabe of ZANU-PF obtained 42% of the vote. Tsvangirai success was not enough to avoid a run-off election which was slated for June 27, 2008. Violence escalated dramatically in the run-up to the election, state security services and the entire ZANU-PF structure was mobilised for the run-off election. According to Muzondidya (2009) between April 4 and June 20 ZANU-PF supporters launched operation makavoterapapi (Operation where did you put your cross?). The strategy was designed to dismantle MDC party structures ahead of the elections. ZANU-PF youths and militias harassed, murdered, abducted and tortured the opposition in a terror and intimidation campaign. In light of this Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew from the run-off election.

The violence and Tsvangirai's subsequent withdrawal from the presidential run-off election research in ZANU-PF's favour. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) refused to recognise Tsvangirai's withdrawal resulting in Mugabe emerging resoundingly victorious in the 27 June election with 85% of the vote in an election largely regarded by the international community as bogus and a sham. In the face of international hostility Mugabe was forced into negotiations with opposition so as to legitimise his rule which resulted in the signing of the 15 September, 2008 Global Political Agreement (GPA) which created a power sharing government mandated to heal and reconcile a nation torn by strife.

The 2008 political violence that visited Zimbabwe mutated and took various forms as it was hijacked by social miscreants, criminal elements and persons harbouring social grievances. Rape, beatings and other forms of violence were occasionally appraised as politically motivated violence. The conflict resulted in murders, torture, maimed figures and a huge number of internally displaced people. Communities and relatives turned against each other along partisan and ideological identities. Many livelihoods were lost due to the widespread destruction of property and the uneconomic environment that prevailed in the wake of the violence. Against this backdrop Article VII of the GPA created the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) to deal with the post electoral civil strife and facilitate healing and reconciliation.

CHALLENGES TO NATIONAL HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

A plethora of challenges stand in the way of a successful national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe to a point where Mashingaidze (2005) refers to it as illusive mirage. National healing and reconciliation programmes require the trust and stakeholder confidence and support but a chronic deficiency of these hamper success. Zimbabwe instituted a politically-orchestrated national healing and reconciliation project that is state driven, politicised, top-down and elitist. This has deprived it of popular participation and has alienated important contributions from stakeholders. The success of the project has also been compromised by the partisan character of politics on Zimbabwe's political landscape.

The healing and reconciliation process is led by the co-Ministers of the ONHRI John Nkomo (ZANU-PF), the late Gibson Sibanda (MDC-M) and Sekai Holland (MDC-T). The organ lost credibility and legitimacy since, the objectivity and integrity of these political figures is seriously compromised by directly representing victims and perpetrators of the violence. Healing and reconciliation processes should be led by respectable persons of integrity that are acceptable to a wide cross section of the population for instance in South Africa renowned Clergyman Archbishop Desmond Tutu presided over a largely successful reconciliation process. Machakanja (2010) says he could claim moral authority and legitimacy to lead the national healing and reconciliation as opposed to politicians who are viewed as not having the moral integrity to remain neutral or separate national issues from party political agendas.

There is a gross lack of confidence in the drivers of the reconciliation process. The leaders of the Zimbabwean

process are people of no great stature and have been ineffectual in their offices. Sekai Holland it would appear lost the support of many Ndebele after describing the founder of the Ndebele state, Mzilikazi and his descendants as a plunderers mob. John Nkomo ruffled the feathers of victims of violence when he said that pro-ZANU-PF war veterans were heroes who deserved the peoples respect despite the significant role they played in the 2008 violence. Gibson Sibanda died before his office could become functional and his replacement Moses Mzila Ndlovu was strangely arrested, incarcerated and charged for holding a healing and reconciliation meeting without first seeking police approval as provided for under the draconian Public Order and Security Act (POSA). The arrest undermined his influence as one would assume that a minister charged with driving national healing would be spared the bureaucratic red tape involved when discharging duties relevant to his office. Given this background the ONHRI to all intents and purposes can be argued to be dysfunctional and moribund. This has taken thus away the trust and belief that the population should have in the reconciliation exercise.

The healing and reconciliation process also suffers from lack of trust. Human rights organisations such as the Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe (ROHR) and Victims Action Committee (VAC) have dismissed the Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation for being a ZANU-PF gimmick meant to give false hope to victims of ZANU-PF's election violence and atrocities. These organisations view it as a trick meant to hoodwink the Zimbabwean populace and therefore deny them justice. One official from the Restoration of Human Rights Organisation said. How can there be healing and reconciliation when just the mention of prosecuting perpetrators in parliament will see ZANU-PF MP's flocking out? (<http://www.zimdiaspora.com>).

It is imperative for civil society to play a more visible role in peace building but attempts by various bodies like the church to assist communities with reconciliation and healing have scored little success. This is because of the magnitude of the polarization and animosity within the communities as a result of the violence perpetrated by known individuals in the same communities. Apparently this is beyond the capacity of various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) civil society organisations and Faith Based Organisations (FBO) to handle unless adequate training is provided. This therefore, calls for training NGOs and civil society groups in areas of conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation if they are to be meaningfully involved in the process of bringing about national reconciliation and healing.

The ONHRI is under pressure as it is working within the bounds of the GPA which was initially given a two year lifespan. It is trying to complete its task before the lapse of the power sharing government. A serious reconciliation process ought not to be rushed as this limits the amount of participation and consultation which are integral if victims and perpetrators of violence are to live in harmony and establish durable peace. Furthermore, a rushed process does not offer conflict managers adequate time to mobilise resources and carry out awareness and education campaigns so that citizenry has sense of ownership which is critical if a successful healing and reconciliation process is to be achieved.

Acknowledgement and contrition are essential components in reconciliation and healing. In Zimbabwe these may not be realised because the perpetrators of violence in the run-up to and immediately after the June 2008 presidential run-off elections have not accepted wrong doing and neither have they shown remorse. Instead violence in some parts of the country has continued unabated evidenced by the violence that has pervaded the new constitution making process.

The fact that the perpetrators of violence are still in power presents a gargantuan challenge for reconciliation. Victims of violence will find it difficult to forgive people enjoying ill-gotten political power and economic wealth acquired via a bloody campaign of electoral violence. Forgiving perpetrators of violence in the context of the prevailing status quo would be regarded as rewarding perpetrators of violence with power. Victims of violence are unlikely to be compensated by perpetrators lest they lose political mileage because such action could be construed as an admission of guilt which may have a negative bearing on their political fortunes.

The largest portion of political violence has been ascribed to ZANU-PF which controls government therefore it would not be an understatement to argue that as long as it does not acknowledged wrong doing, show contrition and if it continues to sit on the pedestal of power victims of the violence will find it difficult to be reconciled with their abusers who committed acts of brutality in its name. Sachikonye (2011) concurs by saying the process of acknowledgement and contrition appears remote as long as the impunity of perpetrators remains intact. This makes some pundits pessimistic about a breakthrough in the absence of regime change.

The political environment under which the reconciliation process is being carried out is far from conducive. Political tensions are still high in an extremely polarised environment in which the main political contestants the MDC and ZANU-PF are jockeying for power and hegemony. It would appear that ZANU-PF is

using the Government of National Unity as an opportunity to restructure and regain lost ground while the MDCs is using the time to push for democratic reforms to enhance its chances of success at the next polls. This has left the political environment extremely volatile. Numerous clashes have been occurring between supporters of the MDC and ZANU-PF therefore, compromising attempts at reconciling Zimbabweans. Fear and mistrust still pervade the political and social relations making confessions from perpetrators and victims difficult. Even where confessions are obtained people's narratives, recollections or memories of the political crisis and violence are highly fractured and politicised to such an extent that there is little consensus on what happened, how it happened and why it happened (Machakanja, 2010). As long as the environment does not allow victims to open up and disclose their experiences and feelings, the national healing and reconciliation will remain a dream.

The main political parties charged with healing and reconciliation are ideologically divergent on the manner of reconciliation. The MDC would on the one hand prefer in the least restorative justice but are aiming at retributive justice and truth telling while ZANU-PF elects the path of forgiveness, amnesia and amnesty. These differences have affected the effectiveness of the reconciliation process. Restorative justice and retributive justice threaten the edifice upon which ZANU-PF stands. Any action in pursuit of the above is therefore, likely to be resisted by ZANU-PF as it may erode its credibility.

The Organ on National Healing is beset by funding problems which are important for effective outreach programmes. No special funds have been set aside by government to oversee this process which casts a dark shadow on existence of the political will and commitment on the part of government. The unavailability of adequate funds has had a direct impact on the organs capacity to summon experts to assist with the conduct of the reconciliation process.

A further challenge to reconciliation is that the GPA is a transitional power sharing agreement to facilitate constitutional reforms that should open the way for the writing of a constitution that will lead to elections. This has kept tensions high amongst political rivals therefore, limiting chances of successful reconciliation. Reconciliation in the near future may remain a dream given that in the last decade elections have triggered political violence. The fact that the current reconciliation process is taking place with elections looming on the horizon has put the main rival parties in election mode, a euphemism for a state of war preparedness. Newspaper reports carry stories that allege that ZANU-PF has already deployed the security personnel and militias into rural areas to

intimidate and the voters while MDC youths are alleged to have carried out exercises to counter violence from their opponents. This is a massive stumbling block for reconciliation because clashes between the two parties tear apart communities rendering reconciliation virtually impossible in this era.

The people of Matabeleland have been sceptical and cynical of reconciliation. To them it appears as though reconciliation is a Shona project because when they were visited by violence in the 1980s there was no creation of an organ of healing and reconciliation while talk of compensation for the victims of Gukurahundi (1980)'s Matabeleland and Midlands massacres) was ignored. The question they ask is why now? Their question is directed at which only created the government an organ on reconciliation and healing following 2008 violence that was experienced mainly in the Shona speaking parts of the country. This has stirred animosity towards the organ in the Matabeleland and the Midlands regions. People doubt the sincerity of government they feel that the exercise is no more than a charade by political parties.

In Machakanja (2010)'s analysis of Article VII of the GPA that created the Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation, she criticises the ambiguity and vagueness in addressing critical human rights issues of equality, national healing, cohesion and unity. She argues that the article is vague on the steps that need to be taken in setting up structures of transitional justice. Mashingaidze (2005) concurs when he says that the organ on national healing does not have binding and well laid-out instruments for achieving national healing and reconciliation. Mashingaidze and Machakanja thus present a gloomy picture for reconciliation and healing in Zimbabwe.

Within the power sharing government ZANU-PF has continued to appropriate power to itself for instance Mugabe unilaterally appointed ambassadors, provincial governors, the Reserve Bank Governor and the Attorney General at the behest of ZANU-PF hardliners who are averse to the sharing power. Mashingaidze (2005) reveals that since the signing of the GPA >30 political activists have been abducted and some remain detained under torture in police custody and maximum prisons. The arrest of ministers Elton Mangoma and Jameson Timba and Moses Mzila Ndlovu apparently upon the advice of hardliners adds credence to the suggestions lack of commitment, political will and common vision blights healing and reconciliation.

Compensation of victims is important in post conflict situations. Given financial challenges that encumber the power sharing government it is difficult for the organ of national healing and reconciliation to advocate for the compensation of victims of violence. The government is

burdened by a debt of seven billion and has struggled to adequately pay civil servants (www.newzimbabwe.com).

The question of involving international actors in Zimbabwe's reconciliation process has sparked debate and divided government. The MDC has welcomed foreign assistance with the argument that it allows for a more comprehensive reconciliation and healing process and lends it legitimacy. ZANU-PF views outsiders with suspicion especially as it is in the midst of repelling what it considers a western funded regime change agenda. This conflict robs Zimbabwe of critical funding and expertise necessary in any reconciliation process.

Mashingaidze (2005) is of the opinion that the on-going consultation about national healing is flawed by being conceptualised in selective racial terms because it excludes the white community. This oversight makes reconciliation unlikely because whites have been accused by ZANU-PF of resisting land reform and also of sponsoring the regime change agenda. The white community was not spared in the violence of June 2008 many have suffered harassment, brutalization and lost their farms despite the establishment of the GNU. There is thus a need to engage the white community if reconciliation is to be achieved.

Advocate Matshobana Ncube sees the absence of an Act of Parliament to constitutionalise its existence as the major drawback that has affected significant healing, justice and reconciliation. He argues that there should have been an Act of Parliament with set chapters and articles to be used as points of argument in case any members of the organ decide to deviate from the proper set rules (<http://dailynews.co.zw>). This has in the main left the organ as just a mere agreement by politicians. Given this background peace, security, reconciliation, national cohesion as well as healing and stability remain a major challenge in Zimbabwe.

A polarised media environment has placed obstacles in the path of attaining reconciliation and healing. The state media refers to Mugabe not only as the President but with a string of other titles: Head of State, Head of Government and Commander in Chief. While this is true the language is in no way reconciliatory, it riles MDC supporters who are reminded that power is not shared equally in the government of national unity as they expected. Therefore, without equal sharing of power healing and reconciliation become difficult to accomplish. In the same vein the independent press uses derogatory terms when referring to Mugabe terms such as octogenarian, senile, demented dictator are frequently used. Such discourse is violent as it angers ZANU-PF supporters who regard alternative media sources as MDC mouthpieces.

The employment of violent discourse such as propaganda and hate speech by the media has presented enormous challenges for healing and reconciliation. Hate speech has been used to injure the dignity, feelings and self-respect of those of different political persuasion. Ordinary Zimbabweans have adopted some of the derogatory terms used in various political discourses. It is common place in Zimbabwe to hear people across political divides trading insults picked up from the media. Hate speech has been used to incite violence or prejudicial action against perceived opponents. As a result of the use of hate speech social disharmony has been sown in Zimbabwe therefore thwarting attempts at healing and reconciliation.

Propaganda has also been effectively used by political rivals to influence the attitude of Zimbabweans. It has involved the selective presentation of facts to produce an emotional rather than rational response so as to further a political agenda. Propaganda has also displayed a tremendous ability to influence and control the thinking of ordinary people. It has excited hostility and propagated hateful motives and thoughts that have come to be expressed through actions. Political encampments have been guilty of deliberately trying to hoodwink the Zimbabweans through the use of half-truths, lies, suppression of truth, concealment and distortion of facts. Propaganda has thus been employed as an instrument of conflict and controversy and has served to exacerbate violence in a politically polarised and charged Zimbabwe. Perhaps the persistence of violence well after the presidential run-off elections of June 2008 can be explained by the use of propaganda that has precipitated in assaults, abductions, torture, murder and other acts of unbridled aggression therefore presenting enormous challenges for healing and development.

Healing and reconciliation will remain a challenge in Zimbabwe since none of the major parties political parties in Zimbabwe has apologised asked for forgiveness shown contrition or acknowledged its role in the political violence that engulfed the country in 2008. These are important elements for the success of any true reconciliation process.

PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Development is all about creating and distributing wealth, raising people's standards of living and improving social indicators. Apparently prospects for development in Zimbabwe are largely bleak because reconciliation and healing have been illusive and elusive. The political will and commitment has not been forthcoming from the government of national unity. For development to take place peace, stability, unity, cooperation should be promoted but instead hegemonic struggles have negated development prospects.

Regime change politics threatens prospects for reconciliation. ZANU-PF's obsession with defending the nation's sovereignty against a regime change agenda crafted by the MDC and its western allies prompted the ZANU-PF government to use repression in search of regime persistence while the MDC's action of courting western support in its quest to supplant ZANU-PF perhaps polarised Zimbabwean society and triggered political violence in 2008. The two parties antagonism towards each other creates an uncertain economic and political environment which kills development therefore as long as battle lines are drawn between the MDC and ZANU-PF development prospects remain bleak.

Development can only occur in Zimbabwe if in the new constitution a law is enacted which will set parameters for the organ on national healing to follow. Advocate argues. This law will give credibility to the organ so that even as it does its research people do not see it as a waste of time (<http://dailynews.co.zw>). This will thus enhance the chances of success of the organ in its quest to heal and reconcile Zimbabweans which in turn will create a platform for development to occur.

Without reconciliation the chances of achieving sustainable development are remote. The success of any reconciliation and national healing process depends on the extent to which it is inclusive and consultative of all key stakeholders at all levels of society. ONHRI has not been inclusive and consultative its effectiveness has been minimal. Community participation has been almost non-existent and communities divided by political violence have remained divided thus forestalling development because development starts in communities and spreads to cover the nation.

It would appear that amnesty has prevailed over justice. The failure to bring to book perpetrators of violence creates a culture of impunity which threatens development as impunity fuels violence. Once those that have commit crimes discover that they escape justice then it is likely that they will engage in future acts of violence thus retarding development. What Zimbabwe desperately needs is a peaceful environment that will facilitate reconciliation the lingering political tension, hate speech, hate language and political conspiracy deals a heavy blow to healing and reconciliation. If elections are held under the current volatile political environment and before transformation of behaviour, attitude and mind-set of the electorate that perceives elections as a period of anarchy, violence, torture, loss of property, murder, harassment, intimidation and pillage then development will remain elusive in Zimbabwe.

If institutional reforms are not carried out in Zimbabwe then prospects for development will remain dim. Institutional reform of state security services is important to brighten possibilities of reconciliation. State

security institutions were fingered as having been complicit in the 2008 violence. Various NGOs and the opposition political parties claim that the army, central intelligence organisation and criminal investigation department operated in cahoots with ZANU-PF youths and militia in the harassment abduction and beating of opposition supporters. The ZEC is alleged to have rigged results in favour of Mugabe to allow a violent run off presidential election to be possible. If these institutions are not reformed and are allowed to interfere with the electoral process and directly participate in violence or facilitate its occurrence then development may not be realised in Zimbabwe.

Every cloud has silver lining, the future is not altogether dark for reconciliation and development in Zimbabwe. Machakanja (2010) notes that in certain rural communities, victims and perpetrators have been coming together sometimes at the behest of perpetrators feeling the need to confess and pay their dues through the rebuilding of destroyed homes, returning of stolen goods and conduction of healing ceremonies. If such overtures that have been witnessed at grassroots level could spread country wide then reconciliation might be possible thus creating a solid foundation for development.

CONCLUSION

Development can never take place in polarized communities. There can be no development in communities where people are hurting or angry against each other. The perpetrators of violence are known in the communities and until the pain and the anger that people feel is dealt with it is a waste of time to talk of development. Reconciliation and national healing cannot occur without justice there can be no room or tolerance for retribution as retribution perpetuates the cycle of oppression and suffering.

For reconciliation and development to take place there is a need for a paradigm shift on the understanding of the state. The state is not the president or parliament these have been delegated by the electorate the people to speak on their behalf and have to remain accountable to the population. People are the state and their voice should be supreme. Since, the people are still to find their voice, development and reconciliation in Zimbabwe will remain a distant dot on the horizon.

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