



NATIONAL
TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE
WORKING GROUP
ZIMBABWE



CSV
The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation

2018 TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE POLICY SYMPOSIUM

Amagugu Heritage Village, Bulawayo



Day 2

(22 November 2018)

www.ntjwg.org.zw/symposium.html

Site Visits: Memory and Community Healing (*hosted by Ukuthula Trust and Ibhethshu LikaZulu*)

Day 2 of the NTJWG Conference being in Bulawayo began with participants visiting different historical sites and heritage centres which depict Zimbabwe's conflict history and community healing practices. Visited places include; the Entumbane Reintegration Camps sites, the Queen of Peace Roman Catholic Church and Amagugu International Heritage Centre. In order to fully appreciate the experiences of the victims and survivors of conflict, witness stories by victims and survivors of the Gukurahundi atrocities were narrated. Reflections were also shared by different practitioners who are working with communities to overcome their lived trauma and while implementing different community level transitional justice mechanisms.

Site Visits: From Sites of Atrocities to springs of Healing

Entumbane Reintegration Camps

Participants visited Entumbane community, a site where uprisings between the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) forces started fighting while they were in reintegration camps (known as assembly points). A former ZIPRA War Veteran (name withheld) took the participants through the reintegration camps spaces and narrated their experiences. It was learnt that Enos Nkala's address to ZANU PF supporters at a rally held at White City Stadium could have prompted the uprisings. Mistrust and political tempers had been flaring between ZAPU and ZANU forces in the camps, but on the day in question Nkala allegedly told rally participants that they should establish vigilante groups to defend themselves against possible ZAPU mutinies. The following day after his address is when gunfire started in the camps. It was also noted that;

- There were 4 reintegration camps in Entumbane; Camp 1 and 3 were occupied by ZIPRA forces, Camp 2 was occupied by ZANLA forces while Camp 4 was hosting the Rhodesian Front forces.
- The reintegration camps are, however, not easily identifiable as the residential places have been upgraded and marks of the gun shootings are no longer visible.

The participants also visited The Queen of Peace Roma Catholic Church. The church was built at the height of the Gukurahundi conflict. The church's uniqueness is that it houses memories of the Gukurahundi and pictures showing R.G Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo agreeing to turn their weapons into ploughshares with the help of the late Archbishop Karlel and Pop John Paul II.

Unfortunately, the picture, which has been visible to visitors since 1985, has since been concealed from the public using a curtain. The current Archbishop supposedly covered it from the public because the people of Matabeleland are not happy with the Unity Accord because it did not address their grievances. The Unity Accord is the agreement signed by ZANU PF and ZAPU to end the Gukurahundi atrocities.

Telling Painful Stories: Memories never die (*Amagugu Heritage Site*)

Numerous experiences of violence during the Gukurahundi were narrated with reflections on the future of healing and reconciliation processes. Phathisa Nyathi began by welcoming participants at Amagugu International Heritage Site followed by an eyewitness story of a mother who lost his siblings during the Gukurahundi atrocities. She recounted that her sibling was killed on February 18, 1984 when soldiers came to their home area and mobilised men and school kids to a site where they would be victimised. The soldiers' vehicle carrying her sibling and other school kids, however, crushed before reaching the site and several kids died. Her family was later forced to bury the body

after three days. The family was only able to rebury their beloved one and putting a memorial mark at the site where he was killed after 34 years –putting their soul to rest – with the help of Ukuthula Trust.

With reflections from Counselling Services Unit, Ukuthula Trust and other participants, the story helped participants learn that;

- Communities are desperately in need of healing and reconciliation interventions
- Without facilitating reburials, erecting memorial sites and other transitional justice mechanisms, there would be continued trauma among the victims of violence
- Cultural sensitivity is crucial when facilitating transitional justice interventions
- It is possible for communities to participate in their own healing when there is ownership of the processes.
- There is need to gather more evidence and understanding various conflict issues that took place in Zimbabwe's history to provide a holistic approach to TJ.
- The government has not been supportive of the healing and reconciliation efforts by CSOs, particularly on reburials of the victims of the Gukurahundi. For example, a church leader from the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe pointed out that he was once threatened by a Governor to stop supporting reburials for the Gukurahundi victims or he leaves the community from where he was deployed to preach.
- The cases of mass graves are also peculiar in Manicaland. There are about 124 sites known as mass graves with some people buried in disused mines.
- While Gukurahundi stopped it has been continued through economic marginalisation and social inequalities perpetrated by the government including denial of job opportunities and land.

Chief Mathema also reflected that the cries of the people of Matabeleland are that they want to know the person who started Gukurahundi before healing and reconciliation issues are facilitated. He emphasized that the affected communities want the perpetrators should come out in the open and take responsibility of their omissions. The Chief also cited there are cases where some corpse would show that someone was killed by more than eight bullets –an indication that it was a planned killing as opposed to a mistake.

Shari Eppel closed the reflections by showing participants evidence of reburials of the victims of Gukurahundi and how much the families had healed. She demonstrated how the power of reburials can facilitate healing and how it can assist in developing memory as well as gathering evidence of what happened during the conflict.

Key Speech of the day: The Matabeleland Question - Siphosami Malunga

The keynote speech for Day Two was delivered by Mr. Siphosami Malunga, the Executive Director of the Open Society Institute for Southern Africa (OSISA). He opened his speech by noting that he was going to address three key issues, and these were outlined as below:

- That Gukurahundi and the Matabeleland question is a continuing atrocity
- Understanding the bitter truth of state involvement in healing
- The limitations of the NPRC and the alternatives to accountability

Sipho's personal experience with Gukurahundi

Sipho began his speech by telling a story of how Gukurahundi has engulfed his entire life and that he considers himself a victim of Gukurahundi. He noted that his entire family was a victim of Gukurahundi. He noted that his father, Mr Sydney Malunga, a veteran of the liberation war in Zimbabwe was accused of treason at one point on allegations that he was aiding and abetting dissidents in Matabeleland and that he was in the war Council for ZAPU. Sipho narrated how these charges looked bizarre for reasons that one of the key witnesses in the trial was his father's compatriot. To make matters worse, the trial was held on a Sunday to ensure that there would be no resistance on any other weekday.

Sipho went on to describe his difficult childhood wherein he was sent away from school for weeks on end because his school fees had not been paid since his father was in prison. What surprised Sipho in the end was that at any given time after being sent away from school, the school headmaster would always call him back after a few weeks of school. He later found out that the headmaster had been paying his school fees without Sipho knowing.

Sipho mentioned that after his father was released from prison, his grandfather died. One thing that worried his father was that he had been warned that if he dared travel outside his hometown "things would not go well". He noted that it was then arranged that his older brother would attend their grandfather's funeral. His brother went to the funeral and for four days no one knew where his brother was. The period at that time was an intense one because a lot of things had been happening including the killing of Jean Ntuta.

Gukurahundi came to define Matabeleland

With the narration of this story, Sipho noted that Gukurahundi came to define Matabeleland. He however lamented that, what people failed to realise was that Matabeleland was just like any other place in the country. Matabeleland "was the place to go" – for example places like Hope Fountain had the most prominent business people even from the Shona. It was not just a place for the Ndebeles.

Gukurahundi created a sense that Matabeleland was a place for Ndebeles. Sipho noted that ***"I don't believe that the intention of ZANU PF was to eliminate Ndebeles but to destroy ZAPU but since the political party was based in Matabeleland, the outcome was genocidal"***. Sipho noted that ***it was possible that no one knows the mission or instructions of the political conspiracy"***. He mentioned that Enos Nkala should have known about some of the issues and since he was now deceased he could mention him.

What happened with Gukurahundi

Sipho noted that what happened was that a few people who intended to destroy the only political institution that time is the most painful part. In his speech, Sipho narrated that he does not believe in injustice and that he expects that justice must be seen to be done. He mentioned that because of his beliefs he had defended someone who had killed 200 people in 30 minutes in East Timor. What was important was that the accused went through the process, witnesses came forward but he was still found guilty. He noted that he was available to defend anyone in Zimbabwe. Sipho noted that for now it was fortunate that no one had come forward to be tried in the courts as it left good chances for other options to achieve justice in Zimbabwe for Gukurahundi victims. He mentioned the following:

- Prosecution
- Truth processes
- Apologies and forgiveness

- Local customs and cultural norms (there is at times a stance that the family will sort it out) and this is at times is not easily understood by outsiders be it from Zimbabwe or abroad.

Perpetrators must step forward for they left a horrible legacy of ethnic hatred

Sipho noted that there are so many other possibilities but the truth of the matter is that the perpetrators must step forward. Sipho argued that there was no doubt that the perpetrators decided in 1981 to finish off ZAPU by removing the 20 reserved seats and in that process left a horrible legacy of ethnic hatred. Sipho contended that the people who committed Gukurahundi are known and should come forward.

The process was never just about the Ndebeles alone

He also noted that he believes the agenda was not to exterminate Ndebeles alone because there are clear examples of people from other tribes that were hounded by the Gukurahundi perpetrators such as Nziramasanga. However, the unfortunate part is that the hatred sown has gone to a social level where for example even if football teams Highlander and Dynamos are playing in Barbourfields, Bulawayo you will hear Ndebeles saying “shayi Shona”. Sipho lamented that the situation was never like that before. The ethnicization of politics into Karanga, Zezuru etc in Zimbabwe is what he lamented.

Crimes and guilt cannot be collective

Sipho noted that those who commit crimes must personalise and take ownership of their deeds and not try to collectivise their guilt. Sipho implored the participants in the meeting not to misdirect their anger lest it consumes them.

The quest for Never Again

Sipho noted that Zimbabwe must get to a point where as a people we say [These lines can never be crossed again]. He observed that Zimbabwe has continued to suffer from policies of impunity stretching from Ian Smith’s era into all the other epochs of violence in Zimbabwe. He noted that some of the amnesties had pardoned some of Zimbabwe’s people who had raped and killed their own people and that could not be condoned. He gave examples of the murder of a white man by Edgar Tekere and his immediate pardon.

Pain cannot go away unless addressed

Sipho mentioned that victims generally hold on to their pain until their grievances have been addressed. He noted that the pain for the people in Matabeleland is never going to go away until addressed. He observed that it is more alive now than ever as the grievances pass from one generation to another. Sipho noted of a phenomenon that had struck him when one of his colleagues had mentioned that at least 68% of children in the Matopos area did not have birth certificates and thus could not access government services.

Is it possible to have healing led by the state?

Sipho observed that he understood the scepticism that people have that the same people who perpetrated violence could not be party to resolving the same conflict. He mentioned that there are days when he is on that same line of thought.

He however noted that the state cannot be avoided for many reasons:

- They committed the offences and thus they are part of the conflict
- The state has many obligations to fulfil in response to the atrocities in Matabeleland and cannot plead the innocence of the 2nd or 3rd Republic if ever that were possible in Zimbabwe.

Sipho noted in strong terms that it was nonsensical to defend the perpetrators who are now in government on the reasons that since they are now in a new government their obligations had been obliterated. He argued that they cannot wash their hands off Gukurahundi.

- The state has a responsibility and civil society, victims and survivors have a duty to hold it accountable for Gukurahundi crimes

He acknowledged the low hanging fruits that the opportunities presented by the so-called new republic noting that it would have been possible 3 – 5 years ago to hold such meetings as today in Zimbabwe.

He noted that the new government was willing to take certain risks and believe that it can manage the aftermath.

Minding the fear of the perpetrator vs acknowledging the fears of the victims and survivors

The presenter noted that there is a phenomenon where the perpetrator is afraid of the victim and vice versa where the victim is also afraid of the perpetrator. The fear is always the same however, it is the people's collective interests that the process to come forward for perpetrators is facilitated.

Sipho noted that he understood that for victims there is always the case that they do not want anything to do with the perpetrators and he is not going to prescribe to them what to do but he wanted to discuss how people can take advantage of the opportunities presented by the current situation. The follow up question for Sipho was:

What can the government do?

He acknowledged the setting up of the NPRC and their involvement in the work of civil society, victims and other stakeholders. He noted that even the commission's presence at Matopos was important and showed a sign of changing things. He noted that the NPRC had created spaces instead of Command Commissions and they had abandoned the "you come to us approach of yesteryear Commissions".

Sipho noted that he respected all the Commissioners but had problems with how they had been appointed which threatens their credibility. His argument was on the fact that the Commission had been set up by President Mugabe and left without even a chair and no money at all. Sipho noted that the credibility of the Commissioners was not all lost and they could still regain it with a few changes.

What to do with the NPRC?

- **Composition of the Commission:** He noted that the NPC needs to be revisited by the President so that the issue of its ownership is re-established. He argued that the composition of the NPRC will be key.

- **Need for respectable people from the region in the NPRC:** Siphos noted that he did not have challenges with the current Commissioners but noted that there is a need for better regional representation so that the Gukurahundi issues could be dealt with better in the Commission. He acknowledged Justice Nare's presence and Chair of the NPRC but argued that the NPRC could do with some more regional and relevant representation. He argued that this would raise the people's confidence in the Commission.

The NPRC needs resources/funding: Siphos argued that there has not been much change from the old regime and if the new government wants to be seen to be different then it must put its mouth where its money is. He argues that it is strange that in Zimbabwe there is always money somewhere for this and other things but never money for important things such as healing and reconciliation.

Siphos noted that one way to push government to hold perpetrators accountable was in pushing them to fund the NPC and their commissions fully. He noted that these demands can be made by the people arguing that a stronger NPC would allow them to be able to decentralise and have more people reporting cases or testify.

He argues that if the government were to fund the NPRC well, it would be one practical way of showing its seriousness and commitment to the process of healing in Matabeleland.

There is a need for a separate Gukurahundi process: Siphos noted that there was nothing to stop the NPRC from establishing a special Gukurahundi Committee

A response to Siphos' Speech by Pathisa Nyathi

Pathisa Nyathi acknowledged Siphos' speech and noted that the Gukurahundi was an attempt to destroy the ZAPU political and military infrastructure leading to ethnicisation of politics. Ethnic politicisation has therefore created animosity and hatred among Zimbabweans. In closing Pathisa echoed that what is needed in Zimbabwe is building a nation(s) where people feel secure, happy and welcome as opposed to state building that is coloured with power struggles.

Note – This report does not capture the experiences of all groups. As soon as such reports are received, the report will be updated.