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## **The Extent of Political Violence in Zimbabwe**

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### **1. Background:**

Organised violence and torture are integral features of Zimbabwean political life, and have been since the early 1960s. This has been documented in a number of publications, beginning with the ground-breaking reports of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in the 1970s. Until recently however, all reporting has been largely post-hoc, and only recently has Zimbabwe developed the capacity to monitor and report upon organised violence and torture in up to date terms. Here the Human Rights Forum has been a leading energy in the monitoring process.

This paper discusses the current violence in Zimbabwe, and outlines the major features of this violence in the context of violence in Zimbabwe generally.

### **2. The violence of the past**

Apart from the studies carried out in the 1970s themselves by CCJP, the AMANI Trust has been the single organisation that has provided detailed data on the prevalence and nature of organised violence and torture in Zimbabwe. This has involved studies on war veterans, survivors of the Chimurenga, survivors of the Gukurahundi, and now current survivors together with the other organizations in the Human Rights Forum. A selection of the reports available is given in Appendix 1.

Some crude statistics will illustrate the level of violence. Of 224 persons seen by the AMANI Trust in 1995-1996, 98% report some form of torture. As can be seen from Table 1 below, most had been detained, and a very high percentage reported a family witness to their torture.

**Table 1.**  
**History of detention and witnesses**  
**to own torture.**

<b>DETAINED:</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>WITNESSES:</b>	
<b>Adult</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Children</b>	<b>38%</b>

The kinds of torture inflicted were severe, and the average number of different forms of physical torture experienced was high: on average about 5 different forms were reported (see Table 2 over). These bald statistics can only give flavour of the violence, and do not do justice to the impact upon the community.

**Table 2.**  
**Impact torture reported by survivors.**

<b>Beating</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Severe beating</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Exposure</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Suspension, hanging</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Sustained posture</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Submarino(wet &amp; dry)</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Burnings</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Electrical shock</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Rape</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>10%</b>

However, physical torture was not the only form of torture experienced, as Table 3 below indicates, and psychological torture too was common. It is unwise to underestimate the consequences of psychological torture, for there is considerable clinical and experimental data to demonstrate its adverse effects. Furthermore, Table 1 above indicates the scale of the witnessing of violence, and supports the notion that the community was a target.

**Table 3.**  
**Psychological torture reported by survivors.**

<b>Verbal abuse</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Threats against person</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>False accusations</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Threats against family</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Simulated execution</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Abuse with excrement</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>4%</b>

These data have dealt with the individual or conventional forms of torture, those aimed at individuals, usually political activists, but they do not accurately describe the more social purpose of torture, that of destroying communal action and political will. In Zimbabwe, this purpose can be described clearly, particularly in respect of the post-Independence violence. During the 1970's, a policy of forced villagisation was instituted: termed "keeps" or "protected villages", the population was forced to reside in these villages by night with a strict dawn-to-dusk curfew imposed. Between 1973 and 1978 almost 750 000 rural people were forced into keeps throughout Zimbabwe. The life within these

villages was extremely hard, and malnutrition, starvation, overcrowding, and inadequate sanitation were commonplace, as the investigations of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) demonstrated. The people were subjected to enormous stress as their loyalty became a key issue, as the Rhodesian security forces tried in every way to neutralise the support for the guerrillas, and used every means at their disposal to do this. This is not unusual, but the inevitable consequence of modern guerrilla warfare. Even medical doctors were used, and at least one documented example had doctors and research scientists assisting the Selous Scouts in providing poisoned clothing to the guerrillas. The climate of fear and suspicion created by these undercover operations fractured community trust, and pitted neighbour against neighbour, and even family member against family member. This view is bolstered by the reports from survivors of the direct effects upon their own families, a view supported further by the reports of war veterans.

**Table 4.**  
**Effects on other members of**  
**survivors' families.**

<b>Detention</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Imprisonment</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Torture</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>Disappearance</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Deaths</b>	<b>23%</b>

In all, a picture of epidemic violence, with few escaping some experience, and a very high number reporting the torture of a relative. The effects were so severe that, nearly 30 years after the violence, 1 adult in 10 attending health care facilities in Mashonaland Central Province is a torture victim suffering the psychological consequences of torture.

This picture is seen again in the violence of the 1980s, so well described in the reports of CCJP/LRF and also ZimRights. Again, we see epidemic levels of organised violence and torture, and in particular the return of the “pungwe” in a new and horrible form as “mass psychological torture”. Here thousands of ordinary people were forced into attending meetings at which torture and executions took place, and this witnessing has resulted in long-lasting and severe psychological disorders for thousands of victims. The data from epidemiological investigation indicates that nearly 5 in 10 adults in Matabeleland is a survivor of torture, mostly from the 1980s, but not exclusively so.

I will not comment upon the Food Riots or the effects of all the various forms of impunity that have been applied subsequent to the violence, but it is important to note that there have been other epidemics of violence and, furthermore, that impunity has greatly exacerbated the suffering of the victims.

### **3. Monitoring the current violence**

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum – the “Human Rights Forum” – has been monitoring organised violence and torture since the Food Riots in 1998, providing legal, medical and psychological assistance to victims. When it became apparent that the violence was escalating during 2000, the Human Rights Forum set up a special

monitoring project to document and report upon the violence. The Human Rights Forum issued a number of reports during and subsequent to the election, and the present paper draws strongly on these earlier reports and upon the data collected. More detailed and analytical reports will be shortly forthcoming.

The information was gathered from a variety of sources. Statements taken from victims of political violence are the main basis for the conclusions drawn by the Forum about the nature and extent of the violence. Medical assessments of the victims were made in many cases and copies of medical reports were obtained in others. The victims mentioned in reports were generally given a pseudonym or have had their names removed in an effort to avoid them being easily identified. The Forum always remains deeply concerned about the security of every individual who reported to the Forum. Many of them have good reason to believe they are still “being sought”, and several have reported further incidents subsequent to their initial statement. This is particularly the case for those victims who have elected to testify in the current petitions under the Electoral Act.

The Forum also used reports from the individual human rights organisations that are members of the Forum and from other organisations, including the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims. The Forum has drawn upon reports from teachers and health workers’ organisations, the Churches, newspaper reports, the three political parties whose members were the worst hit in the violence, the United Party (UP), the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats (ZUD) and MDC, the farm workers union, The General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ), and the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU). Where possible the Forum has tried to cross check information that has come from secondary sources, bearing in mind that particularly regarding political parties there may be a possibility of exaggeration or distortion.

The reports of the Human Rights Forum have been corroborated by the reports from other bodies, both local and international. Here we can mention the EU, the Commonwealth, the NDI, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network and the Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust. All drew largely similar conclusions.

## 4. The Scale of current Organised Violence and Torture

The current violence can be subdivided into violence that accompanies elections, and violence that is not specifically tied to elections, but serves other ends.

### 4.1 Electoral Violence

A number of organisations provided information on the violence in the context of their assessment of the fairness of the General Election. All these organisations made the comment that there was significant violence in the pre-election period. The comments made by these various organisations are now receiving empirical testing in the election petitions currently been heard by the High Court in Harare. The results of these cases are being closely monitored by the Forum, and the Forum is issuing regular reports on the petitions<sup>1</sup>.

#### 4.1.1 Human Rights Research Unit

The Human Rights Research Unit of the Human Rights Forum produced its own report on the General Election<sup>2</sup>. This report produced an analysis of both the violence and the possible effects of the violence on the voting process.

#### 4.1.2 Commonwealth Observer Group

The Commonwealth sent a high level observer mission to Zimbabwe following the meeting between the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Don McKinnon, and the President. Although the Observer Group made many observations about the electoral process and the voting, it was their comments about the violence that are pertinent to this present report<sup>3</sup>.

*The campaign was not peaceful. There was violence, intimidation and coercion in many parts of the country, especially in rural areas, both against ordinary voters and against candidates and party supporters. All parties share responsibility in this. There were incidents where opposition parties carried out acts of violence. But it would appear that most of the violence was directed against the opposition parties, especially the Movement for Democratic Change.*

*These violent acts included murders, rapes and beatings and the ransacking and burning of houses of opposition party members and supporters. It was reported that 36 people had*

<sup>1</sup> See Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– February 26, 2001, v.1, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– March 5, 2001, v.2, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– March 12, 2001, v.3, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– March 19, 2001, v.4, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– March 26, 2001, v.5, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– April 2, 2001, v.6, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– April 9, 2001, v.7, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– April 16, 2001, v.8, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– April 30, 2001, v.9, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– May7, 2001, v.10, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum– May14, 2001, v.11, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Challenges Newsletter. Copies can be obtained from [admin@hrforum.co.zw](mailto:admin@hrforum.co.zw)

<sup>2</sup> See Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2001), *Human Rights and Zimbabwe's June 2000 Election*, Human Rights Research Unit, Special Report No.1, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

<sup>3</sup> See COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT (2000), *Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group Mission to the 2000 Zimbabwe General Election*.

*been killed, thousands injured and 7,000 displaced, although the levels of violence varied—sometimes considerably—from one part of the country to another.*

*As in many elections, there were occasions when violence was the result of unplanned clashes between groups of party supporters. But for the most part it appears to us that the violence which disfigured this campaign was employed systematically as part of a strategy to diminish support for the opposition parties.*

The Observer Group also made significant comments about the pre-election period:

*It was the violence and intimidation which most concerned our Group over the weeks leading up to the elections. We received a substantial number of reports on violent incidents and ourselves met with many victims of violence. We directly experienced the climate of fear and uncertainty which characterised this election in many parts of the country, especially in some rural areas, and we saw for ourselves that in some districts intimidation prevented open political campaigning, notably by opposition parties and candidates. While the picture was not uniform, we can only conclude that incidents of violence and threats impaired the freedom of choice of the electorate.*

*In many cases of reported violence the authorities responsible for maintaining law and order failed to take action to apprehend those responsible. This is a serious situation. We deplore all incidents of politically-motivated intimidation and violence and look to those in authority in Zimbabwe to ensure that the rule of law is observed.*

*We especially regret that in some districts parliamentary candidates, notably from opposition parties and independents, were themselves victims of political violence. Obstacles were put in the way of opposition groups attempting to exercise freedom of expression and movement, including the holding of political rallies, and generally to campaign freely.*

### **4.1.3 The European Union Observation Mission**

The EU sent a very large observation mission that arrived in the country several weeks before the election, with observers deployed all around the country. The EU Mission received 248 reports of violence themselves, but only witnessed 10 incidents directly. The EU, similar to the AMANI Trust, made an attempt to indicate the responsibility for the violence.

**EU findings on election violence**  
(source: HRRU.2001)

<b>EU report findings</b>	<b>Zanu (PF)</b>	<b>MDC</b>
Complaints submitted by	4.0%	41.0%
Responsibility for violence reported	68.3%	7.0%
Victims belonged to	5.8%	52.7%

The EU, both in its preliminary report and in its final report, made very damning comment about the violence.<sup>4</sup>

*The election campaign was marred by high levels of violence and intimidation. Most areas of the country were affected. An assessment of political violence since February 2000 made by the EU Observer Mission, together with reports from EU Observers deployed across the country since early June, attributed the bulk of political violence to ZANU-PF. The evidence showed that between February and June ZANU-PF was engaged in a systematic campaign of intimidation aimed at crushing support for opposition parties. Key groups of the electorate whom ZANU-PF deemed to be opposition supporters were targeted by war veterans and other party supporters operating from bases on white-owned farms they had invaded, from militia camps in other rural areas and from Government and party offices in rural towns. Farm labourers on white-owned farms across the country were threatened and abused, forced to attend party meetings and taken off to re-education camps. Thousands of incidents of assault, torture, abduction and rape were recorded. Several prominent MDC organizers were murdered.*

The EU Observation Mission report also noted, whilst acknowledging that MDC had been involved in violence, that ‘their responsibility for such activities was far less’. The EU Observation Mission also noted that there was strong evidence for government condoning the violence and also in not ensuring an end to the violence.

*In campaign speeches, ZANU-PF leaders seemed to sanction the use of violence and intimidation against political opponents and contributed substantially to the climate of fear that overshadowed the election campaign. Calls for peaceful campaigning and efforts to restrain party supporters, including war veterans, were often ambiguous. The police frequently witnessed violence and intimidation, but appeared to be under instructions not to intervene.*

## **4.2.1 Violence during by-elections**

### **4.2.1 Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN)**

ZESN made strong comments about the violence that accompanied the by-elections in Bikita west and Marondera West. As they commented about Marondera West:

*Long term monitors who were deployed in the constituency from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 27<sup>th</sup> November reported various levels of political violence characterised assaults, threats of a return to war or evictions and killings. Furthermore, the media, especially the independent press, also highlighted reports of the same. Two people lost their lives when this political violence flared up. Several people were also injured with one person reported to have sustained a broken leg.*

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<sup>4</sup> See European Union (2000), Report of EU Observation Mission on the Parliamentary Elections which took place in Zimbabwe on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> June 2000, 4 July 2000.

*Other forms of violence were psychological in nature involving inculcating in people's minds about the ruling party being able to know which candidates people voted for. Fear, anxiety and despondency became paramount and it could be ascertained that this has a serious effect on the voting patterns of the people as well as deterring other people from going to vote.*

As they also commented about Bikita West:

*Given the fact that in the June 2000 Elections, Bikita West was, relatively speaking, one of the most peaceful constituencies, the violence in the election was unexpected, as was the interest aroused in the media. Both political parties were guilty of initiating violence against rival party members and against the defenceless electorate. Many physical injuries and damage to property were reported. The constituency became a war zone, unsafe not only for strangers but also for the inhabitants themselves.*

#### **4.2.2 IRCT**

Apart from the reports of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network on the two by-elections held in Bikita West and Marondera West, the IRCT also made some observations on the Bikita West by-election. The report issued by the Research and Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims [RCT] and the IRCT again confirmed the existence of wide-spread torture in Zimbabwe. As the RCT commented:

*Representatives of RCT examined 9 persons who had participated in lawful campaigning during a by-election in Bikita, Zimbabwe in January 2001. All 9 persons reported that they had been beaten, some that they had been ill-treated in other ways by the ZANU-PF, War Veterans and /or the police. In all 9 cases there was agreement between the history of ill-treatment, the ensuing symptoms and the result of the clinical examination, i.e., all 9 testimonies were on medical ground found to be valid. Six of the interviewed men reported that they identified MP Dr. Chenjerai Hunzvi among the aggressors.*

*The fact that many persons, who supported a legal election campaign, on that ground were arrested and beaten in the same manner by three groups: the police, ZANU-PF and the War Veterans, must be seen as an indication of a pattern of organised violence, involving the security forces, the political party in power and its supporters.*

*The fact that an MP participated systematically and overtly, further stresses the political responsibility and indicates an unfortunate confusion and abuse of legislative and executive power.*

*The findings fit to the description of the present human rights crisis in Zimbabwe given by other organisations.*



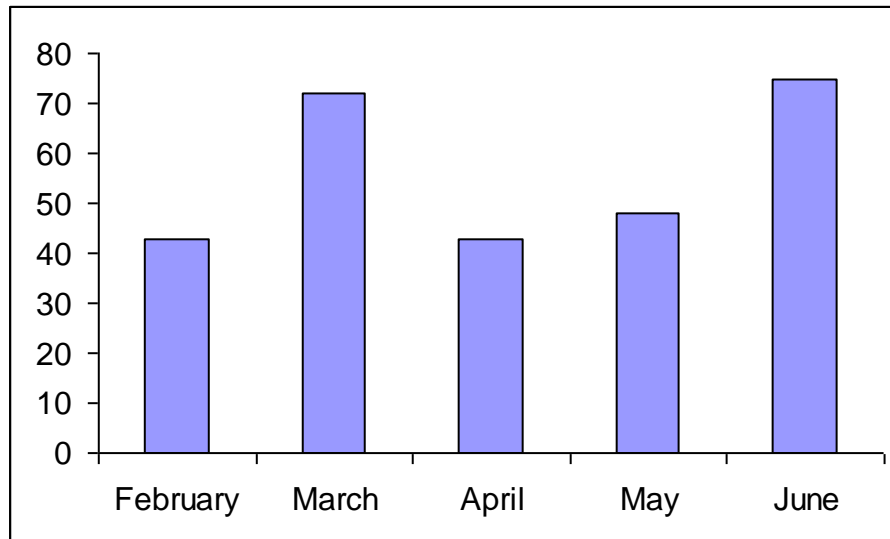
### 4.3 Continuing violence

Continuing violence and torture has been documented during the post-election period, with an indication that this has been increasing in the past months of 2001<sup>5</sup>. These reports are again based upon the actual cases seen by the Forum, and thus we have high confidence that these are accurate reports. Of course, we are unable to give any clear statement about the prevalence of the violence and torture, but it is evident that the violence is increasing especially in Mashonaland Central Province. However, we can make some brief overview of the organised violence and torture according to our information.

#### 4.3.1 General findings on Organised violence and torture

Although there will be more detailed reports issued in the near future on the organised violence and torture, it is possible to draw some trends from the data currently available. As will be seen from Figure 1 below, there are a consistent number of cases being reported to the Forum over the past few months. There is some variation over the months, but very little real difference overall. Bear in mind here that the Forum saw nearly 1,000 cases during 2000, and the trend this year would suggest that we would see at least 600 more new cases. To this number we should also add the victims testifying in the election challenges, most of whom we have not seen before, and this number will in the region of another 1,000 cases. So overall, the Forum will end up with nearly 3,000 cases on our database as opposed to only 70 from the two previous years. These cannot be taken as absolute numbers and must be regarded as only indicators that violence is continuing. The vast majority of cases do not report to the Forum.

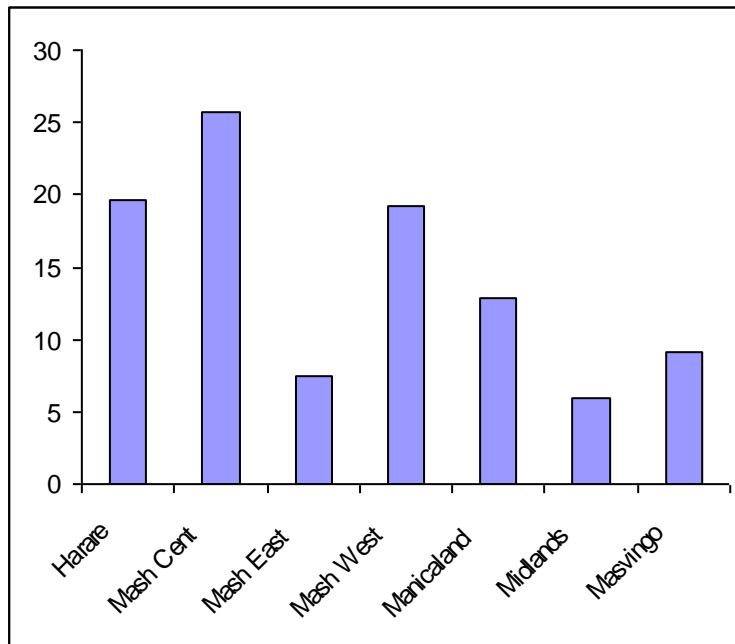
**Figure 1.**  
Numbers of cases of gross human rights violations reporting to the Forum per month.



<sup>5</sup>See *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2001), Report on Organised Violence and Torture during January 2001, prepared by the Human Rights Legal Unit*; *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2001), Political Violence Report for February 2001*; *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2001), Political Violence Report: March 2001*; *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2001), Political Violence Report: April 2001*.

The spread geographically is interesting, and here we have not included data from Matabeleland for two reasons. Firstly, the available evidence suggests that the number of gross human rights violations in Matabeleland is generally much lower than the other provinces, and secondly cases from Matabeleland do not generally report to the Forum in Harare. As can be seen from Figure 2, Harare and Mashonaland Central lead the field in gross human rights violations, as was the case during the general election in 2000.

**Figure 2.**  
Percentages of cases reporting to the Forum by region.



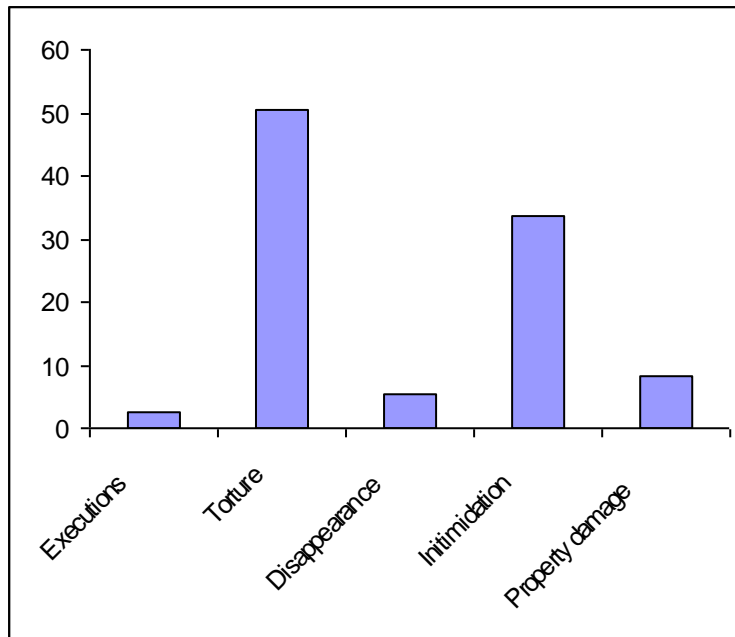
As will be seen from Figure 3 overleaf, torture remains the most frequent form of gross human rights violation seen in the current period, as it was in previous eras. I have separated intimidation and property destruction as they are often reported as distinct from torture, but it must be borne in mind that these are forms of psychological torture and conform to the general definition of torture given in the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment.

There are 4 elements to this definition, as shown below:

1. Severe **pain and suffering**, whether physical or mental;
2. **Intentionally** inflicted;

3. With a **purpose**;
4. By a state official or another acting with the **acquiescence** of the State.

**Figure 3.**  
Percentages of different types of gross human rights violations reported to the Forum.



#### **4.3.2 Extra-judicial killings and summary executions:**

Summary executions and extra-judicial killings are terms to describe murder by State officials. Which term is used depends upon the nature of the killing: sometimes the killing resembles an execution, whilst at other times it resembles a murder. The term that is used thus depends on the facts. As can be seen below, the murder of Mrs Olds would be described an extra-judicial killing.

*Mrs. Gloria Olds (aged 72) was shot 15 times and killed on 4 March 2001 at Silver Streams Farm, Nyamandlovu. The gunmen shot and killed three dogs and broke the padlock to the farmhouse. Her son, Martin was shot dead in Nyamandlovu in April 2000. Police are treating the case as a robbery. However, a large amount of money in the house was not stolen and other valuable property was left untouched. The 4x4 Toyota Hilux that the assailants used as a getaway vehicle was recovered in Pumula South in Bulawayo the following day. Olds had been involved in a dispute with Wolfeden Stans, a war veteran, over rental payments; he had not paid rent for 10 months. Mr. Stans was questioned by the police. During the questioning Mr. Stans was reported to have said that "heavyweight politicians were behind the killing".*

The case reported below has more the features of mob justice, and thus could be better described a summary execution.

*In Chiweshe, 60 ZANU (PF) supporters attacked N.M., beat him to death, and then hung him so that his death would appear to be an act of suicide. A threat was also issued to N.M.'s brother, G.M., that 10 people would die in retaliation for the death of a ZANU (PF) supporter, E.C., who was shot and killed on 23 March by an MDC supporter. G.M. was told that he would be one of those ten killed. Three people have been subsequently murdered. Police have refused to comment.*

Two recent cases from Mashonaland Central illustrate both extra-judicial killings and summary executions.

*In Dambakurima, eighty ZANU (PF) supporters chased P.M. into the Musengezi River where he drowned. In Hoya, war veterans and ZANU (PF) supporters beat R.C. with heavy logs and gouged his eyes out. R.C. subsequently died.*

### **4.3.3 Torture:**

As indicated above, torture has been very commonly reported in Zimbabwe and not only in the past years. It has been one of the most common human rights violations for the past three decades, as is amply described by all human rights organizations.

*In St. Mary's, on 5 February 2001, unidentified, uniformed soldiers dragged MDC MP Job Sikhala from his home and severely beat him, his wife and children and T.M. His guard was assaulted on 25 February by 10 members of the Z.R.P. support unit. The ZRP members were reported to have been driving a green vehicle and fired shots in the air at his home.*

As can be seen from the case above, not even members of parliament are immune from the possibility of being tortured, as are students.

*On April 8, Ludas Moyo returned to his home on the campus of UZ after a week visit to Bulawayo. There were disturbances on campus at the time and he was chased by riot police. The riot police assaulted Moyo with baton sticks and with booted feet. Moyo's assailants included three uniformed policemen, a number of plains-clothes policemen and two college security guards. Despite Moyo's attempts to explain that he was not party to the student riots, and had only arrived on campus a short time earlier, the police continued to assault and threaten to kill him. After the police had thrown tear gas into the Halls, Moyo was arrested with other students from Complex 2 and 3. Those who were arrested were told to sleep on their stomachs, imitate love-making positions and were further assaulted as the police watched and laughed. Moyo and the other students were taken to Avondale Police Station then to Harare Central CIO department where they gave their statements. On Monday, the arrested students went without food and on Tuesday, some students were given tea. Moyo was refused medical attention. One of the police involved in the assault is Sergeant Munyanja, based at Avondale Police Station.*

It is important to see that it is not only the usual agencies that are involved in torture, but that many different agencies from the State are involved. This is important for the purposes of establishing the definition of torture [see below].

*U.T. (aged 40), a lab technician living in Chitungwiza, was terrorized by the police. His home was raided in the middle of the night and he was abducted and tortured at police headquarters. They destroyed the entrance gates to his property.*

The definition also allows the possibility that agencies acting with the “acquiescence of the State” can commit torture and thus these acts will also conform to the definition of torture.

*ZANU (PF) members and war veterans assaulted P.M., (aged 35) living in Dotito, on 8 March 2001 in Hotera Village. Three of the attackers were identified as: Jigu, Joseph Kambanje, Cain Muchena. They struck him with planks and sticks on his back and his buttocks, while he was lying face down. He fainted, and his buttocks were set afire resulting in severe burns. He suffered multiple injuries and developed blisters. His attackers returned on 23 March 2001 and ordered him to leave his house and go to Morgan Tsvangirai, head of the MDC, for a place to stay. The matter was reported to the ZRP of Mount Darwin, but no action was taken. He fled the area with his family. His wife and other members of his immediate family are staying with relatives.*

*K.M. (aged 32) was assaulted in the Tshovani Township by the chairman of the war veterans, Boniface Mutemachani, and a second assailant with a pick handle. He suffered a broken leg. He received medical treatment in Chiredzi.*

The last case does not conform to the definition of torture, but would be better described as organised violence since there are no State officials or agents acting with the acquiescence of the State.

*MDC supporters severely attacked Chief Chiweshe in Centenary town on 15 April with machetes, sticks and clenched fists. Chief Chiweshe sustained serious injuries and was taken to St. Albert's Mission for treatment. It is suspected that the chief was attacked because he is thought to have led ZANU (PF) supporters in disrupting the funeral of Ndogo Mupesa. Mr. Mupesa was an MDC supporter allegedly murdered by ZANU (PF) supporters. Linceman Usavihwevhu and Skinner Chimusisi were arrested for the attack on Chief Chiweshe and charged with attempted murder.*

The findings of the Human Rights Forum are additionally supported by the findings of the IRCT, which conducted a mission again to Zimbabwe in June 2001. The responsible person, Dr Inge Genefke, Honorary Secretary-General of the IRCT, examined 5 victims. Some were tortured during the pre-election period last year, while some were tortured this year. She also interviewed 5 others. The conclusions are quite plain:

*As regards the examinations, there was clear evidence of torture in all 5 cases. Several of the examined persons had been tortured more than once, and it appears that the second bout of torture occurs to discourage these victims from giving evidence in the election*

*All the examined persons were currently in enforced hiding because of threats.*

*The types of torture seen were very similar to the torture seen in June 2000. Severe beatings all over, threats (including death threats), threats to give up political beliefs, threats with guns, mock executions, witnessing the torture of other persons, threats to family members, and humiliations. Thus, there were both physical and psychological forms of torture seen again.*

*Some of the victims had required emergency medical treatment, due to the severity of their injuries, or unconsciousness, or both. All showed degrees of physical impairment and psychological disorder.*

*The situation in 2001 is very similar to that seen in 2000 during the previous IRCT mission. It also conforms to the observations made by the Research and Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (RCT) during their mission in January 2001.*

*Thus, it can be concluded that there is persistent torture in Zimbabwe. It is, of course not possible to estimate the extent or the numbers affected, but, given the reports continuously emerging from within Zimbabwe, it is likely that the numbers affected may be very large indeed*

The IRCT went on to make some even more alarming comment about “mass psychological torture”.

*Certain remarks should be made about the mass psychological torture. It was observed in June 2000 that this was occurring, and several cases again illustrate this deplorable situation.*

*Forced attendance at political meetings, public humiliation of people for their political beliefs, threats and intimidation of family members, and being forced into hiding due to threats, all are forms of psychological torture. There is persuasive evidence from many sources that this has occurred and still continues to occur.*

Such torture must be condemned in the strongest possible terms, and the government and political parties must make every effort to put an end to this outrageous human rights violation.

#### **4.3.4 Disappearances:**

Disappearances are a particularly sinister form of human rights disappearance, because, apart from the obvious distress for the abductee, there is the concern that the abductee’s family will have. In fact, disappearances have become a major form of “community torture”, and have been implicated all over the world and not merely in Matabeleland. The distress that this causes to the families can be even worse than torture, since the family may never see their loved one again and may also never know what happened to that person. The most notorious case in recent Zimbabwe history is that of Mr David Coltart’s election agent, Patrick Nyabanyama, who was disappeared during the 2000 election. This case is particularly horrible since the kidnappers are pardoned under the

amnesty of last October, and thus cannot even be prosecuted for kidnapping let alone the probable murder.

*In St. Mary's, nine unnamed MDC members have disappeared and it is still unknown what happened to them. One hundred other youth have been sleeping in the bush for fear of further victimization after being attacked by a group of ZANU (PF) supporters.*

This case has now resolved, and it appears that the 8 persons have been in police custody all along. However, there are other cases being reported, and it is worrying that this might become a trend.

#### **4.3.5 Intimidation:**

Intimidation may seem like rather a mild form of human rights violation, but it must be stressed that psychological torture is not a less serious form of torture, but is regarded as torture in exactly the same way as any form of physical torture. Thus, threats can be very serious form of torture, especially when there is a very high risk of physical torture and a situation of extreme fear. It is very important to stress that threats to individuals can have even greater impact when issued or supported by senior members of the State.

*Josiah Hungwe, the ZANU (PF) provincial governor in Masvingo, threatened the residents of Masvingo with death if they did not vote for ZANU-PF in the upcoming mayoral election.*

The case below illustrates the effects of threats upon a political party member when these are issued by members of the State.

*C.M. (aged 26) was terrorized and hunted by CIO agents, war veterans and ZANU (PF) members on 7 March. He often accompanies MDC MP Mutendadzana. The victim has fled to the bush.*

Intimidation is not merely restricted to political party members as the case below illustrates.

*O.S. (aged 27), a teacher in Sadza, was forced to flee the area on 22 March after repeated death threats from Inspector Majora, which began on 28 February 2001. He fears for his life and repeated victimization. In May 2000, he was forced to surrender his MDC membership card and T-shirt by ZANU (PF) youth, who had stormed into his school. They threatened to assault and kill him. He endured abuses and threats at daily ZANU (PF) meetings that he was forced to attend. He could identify two of the victims as Desmore and 'Squares'. In mid-May the ZANU (PF) youths returned to the school and ordered him to pay Z\$5.000. He refused and fled for his life. He returned from exile immediately before the parliamentary elections and reported the matter to the Regional Director for Mashona East at the Ministry of Higher Education. On 16 July 2000, six ZANU (PF) youths threatened him and his*

*friends at the Sadza Growth Point because they did not surrender their MDC T-shirts. One assailant was identified as Cuthbert Maphumo, who ripped the T-shirt from the victim's body with a pocketknife. The matter was reported to the Sadza Police and a docket was opened (CRB NO C534/2000). Three court hearings were held on this matter at Chivhu Magistrate Court: 18 August, 15 September and 25 October 2000. No judgement has been rendered. On 20 July 2000 he was attacked in a bar by a group of ZANU (PF) supporters holding a victory celebration party. He was beaten until he lost consciousness and was taken to the Sadza Hospital. He suffered injuries on the upper lip and hip joint. The matter was reported to the Sadza ZRP and Inspector Majora took a statement that included the names of the attackers and witnesses. Investigations followed, but the accused fled and the case was closed because of "irregularities".*

### **5.3.6 Property destruction:**

There are many different forms of intimidation that can result in psychological torture, and there are ways of applying pressure to people that do not seem like torture. Property destruction, with the consequent impoverishment of people, has become a very common form of psychological torture in Zimbabwe.

*Hwarari Admore and another unnamed perpetrator, both ZANU (PF) supporters, seriously harassed N.M. N.M.'s home was ransacked, and his MDC cards and t-shirts were confiscated. The ZANU (PF) supporters threatened to kill him and burn his home because he had supported the MDC in the run-up to the June 2000 elections*

As the case above illustrates, as well as the case below, destroying people's houses and property can provide a very effective form of psychological torture, as well as an extremely effective method of intimidating whole communities.

*MDC Supporter Show Goriati had his house razed to the ground by ZANU (PF) supporters in an attack in the early hours of 17 April. It is suspected that the attack was in retaliation for the assault of Chief Chiweshe. ZANU (PF) supporters also burnt down the house of MDC supporter Arunero Mawachi on 17 April. This attack is suspected to be part of retaliation efforts after the attack on Chief Chiweshe.*

The destruction of property can even become a method of attacking and controlling whole communities as the report below illustrates.

*In Kairezi Village on April 18, ZANU (PF) supporters and war veterans marched Wellington Rwaninga out of his house, then burnt four huts and damaged his property. War veterans in the area have set up bases at Chandereka and Chimoi business centres and are forcing people to attend "pungwes", all-night parties. Over the Independence Day holiday, war veterans and ZANU (PF) supporters burnt granaries and huts, as well as raided livestock and food.*



#### 4.4.1 Attacks upon witnesses

It has been especially distressing to see that the victims testifying in the election petitions before the Zimbabwe High Court have been subjected to further torture. Several of these witnesses were examined directly, as can be seen from the cases above. It was also noted from the available reports that there seems to be a systematic campaign to discourage witnesses from testifying<sup>6</sup>, and this is condemned very strongly. The most outrageous case involved the Chairperson of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, Mr Tawanda Hondora, who was attacked whilst following up witnesses in the election petition on Chikomba, Dr Hunzvi's constituency.

*The Chairperson of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) was assaulted along with a witness in the parliamentary election petitions in ZANU (PF) instigated violence in the Chikomba constituency on Saturday, April 7. Two lawyers working for the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum narrowly escaped. In a letter to the Commissioner of Police in Harare, Mr. Tawanda Hondora, of ZLHR, stated that members of ZANU (PF) assaulted him while police watched. Mr. Gabriel Shumba and Mr. Godfrey Mupanga, both of the Forum, managed to escape but were threatened with assault when they arrived at the local Sadza Police Station to make a complaint.*

However, it was not only lawyers who have been attacked, but many ordinary people have been attacked, tortured and threatened because they have wished to tell their stories in the High Court as the following case illustrates:

*K.M., aged 32, an assistant welder and MDC organizing secretary, was assaulted on 22 February 2001. He was assaulted with whips by a group of ZANU (PF) youths led by war veteran, Boniface Mutemachani. He received serious injuries and bruises all over his body. His assailants accused him of being "a key witness against their party". He was further attacked with a pick handle on his left shin. K.M. identified one assailant, Farai Kahlamba, as the instigator of the assault. K.M. was left for dead, and could not walk to find help. He suffered a severe bone fracture, and received treatment at Dr. Mungwazi's surgery. The matter was reported to the police but no arrests have been made in the matter.*

The attacks upon witnesses have not been confined to those cases which are actively before the High Court, but have also involved cases that will appear in the future. Attacks upon witnesses have been reported from Chiredzi North, Buhera

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<sup>6</sup> See Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2001), *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newsletter: February 26, 2001, v.1*; *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newsletter: March 5, 2001, v.2*; *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newsletter: March 12, 2001, v.3*; *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newsletter: March 19, 2001, v.4*; *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newsletter: March 26, 2001, v.5*; *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newsletter: April 2, 2001, v.6*; *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newsletter: April 9, 2001, v.7*; *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newslette: April 16, 2001, v.8*; *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newslette: April 30, 2001, v.9*; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2001), *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newsletter: May 7, 2001, v.10*; *Zimbabwe Election Challenges Newsletter: May 14, 2001, v.11*.

North, Mount Darwin, Hurungwe [Karozi], Kariba, Makoni West (Rusape), Chikomba and Makoni East

*Mrs. Erica Nyaunde, a witness in the Makoni East election petition, told the High Court that she was the victim of harassment stemming from her willingness to testify in the case. She stated that on 17 April, three men followed her into a phone shop. One man, who she could identify only as 'Douglas', was wearing a ZANU (PF) t-shirt. Mrs. Nyaunde had gone to the phone shop to make a call about a check she was trying to cash. Douglas produced handcuffs and told her that she would 'cash her check at the cemetery'. The men also said, 'you gave us problems and your name is among 68 going to the High Court'. The men dispersed after the proprietor of the shop called police. A policeman then escorted Mrs. Nyaunde to a terminus.*

## **5. Conclusions:**

This brief expose cannot do justice to the incredibly complicated story of the organised violence and torture in Zimbabwe. It is the case that organised violence and torture remain the most persistent form of political problem solving that is used in our many political crises. This brief expose cannot certainly do justice to the understanding of the terrible legacy of suffering that all this unnecessary violence has brought. We have barely begun to deal with the legacy of the 1970s and the 1980s when we bring about another vast crop of new victims: we will be dealing with the consequences for yet another decade at the least.

At least in part this problem emerges from the militarized approaches of our government and the failure of this government to form a revolutionary party to a contemporary democratic party. This is so well put by Chenjerai Hove:

*"Our government consists of men coming from the Bush : no law, only the law of the jungle. These men came into government and put their whole mechanism of violence into law. Torture people. Kill people. So the Bush has come to town. There's a lot of Bush in this town."*

It is imperative that we find a new way to deal with political conflict. It is imperative that we find ways to heal the thousands of damaged victims, and ways to rehabilitate the perpetrators. We need to find a new way to see ourselves, as Chenjerai Hove has so elegantly put it:

*"We need a new leadership of African love, care, compassion and justice. African philosophy about life is set on the dignity of the human being: hunhu. That is a very philosophical term. It means respect for the self, for others, for nature, for environment, for gods, rivers and mountains. It means more than a dignified person; it has to do with a strong and beautiful person that gives life to others so that they can you life. Leadership needs to know that if you kill someone, something will come to kill you. If a leader kills, he will be a leader of death...You didn't create life, you can't take it away. You must have hunhu; you must respect life; you must respect that African philosophy. African culture is*

*full of forgiveness, of reconciliation, genuine reconciliation; it is overflowing.  
We need a leadership of redemption.”*

We will need to consider how we can do this in ways that are commensurate with justice, for, if we do not, then we may be condemned to endlessly repeat the cycles of the past.

## **Appendix 1.**

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