



March 29 Harmonized Election Post Mortem

An analysis of Trends, patterns and predictions for Electoral Run-Off

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Introduction

While the run up to the 29 March 2008 harmonized elections was relatively calm, scenarios in the post election period reflect a far cry from this. The post election era witnessed frightening increases in politically motivated violence with 4359 cases having been recorded in April 2008 by Zimbabwe Peace Project, indicating a 470% increase in monthly recordings from pre election levels of 795. The nature of violence has shifted from incidental election violations to systematic and organized forms characterized by increases in malicious damage to property, torture, abductions, rape, displacements. Manifest in these new forms is the need to inflict permanent harm on the victim. These phenomena, if not urgently curbed, are set to disenfranchise a very significant percentage of the voter population in Zimbabwe! The Zimbabwean voter is at high risk of being short changed!

Also disquieting is that this violence scourge, just like an infectious disease, is fast spreading from the traditional hot spot zones of Manicaland, Midlands, Mashonaland East and Masvingo to the other provinces of Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West. Even the relatively calm provinces of Matebeleland North, Matebeleland South and Bulawayo are slowly bulking to politically motivated violence.

Viewed from this backdrop, the resuscitation of *Violations Early Warning Systems* [VIEWS] in 2007 by the Zimbabwe Peace Project was indeed a timely intervention. It heralded a paradigmatic shift from short term, urban biased, ad hoc, and reactive monitoring approaches to broader, more proactive, systematic and long term monitoring and documentation practices. Earlier monitoring approaches tended to reduce elections to events on the polling day- a fixation that seriously compromised capacity to capture and unravel the entire dynamics of election violence-hence the often heard premature conclusions on electoral processes!

Country-wide, rural-focused and long term pre and post monitoring systems are needed to pick trends and patterns that would help predict levels of violence in impending elections. They are also needed to generate a credible data base from which to provide timely warning signals on any practices that pose a threat to the voter's inalienable right to determine his/her socioeconomic destiny. Respect for citizen vote is critical to political stability, democratic governance and socioeconomic development.

In line with this approach, ZPP has put in place a three-tier country-wide information gathering network comprising Monitors, Provincial Coordinators, and Investigators- an operational framework that has placed these actors in a strategic position to quickly verify evidence in terms of source, circumstances, perpetrators and victims before relaying information to ZPP offices for documentation. Underlined here are visible attempts by the

ZPP to inculcate and nurture practices of credibility, transparency and accountability in its information gathering and documentation processes. Information gathered from these monitoring activities has since last year been released through VIEWS, Information Alerts and related reports.

This Report reviews these documented reports in an effort to enrich ongoing protracted efforts by ZPP to create a more peaceful, humane and voter-friendly post election era. This entails reviewing trends and patterns of violence, mapping torture bases, and on the basis of past practices, make tentative predictions on post 29 March 2008 election violence.

TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE

The run up to the 2002 presidential elections

A cursory review of ZPP documents posits a very close link between post 29 March 2008 electoral behavior and the 2002 presidential elections. They also highlight the need to cast unfolding violence dynamics within the broad play of politics in Zimbabwe. Suggested here is that by and large, the events that are currently unfolding before us are a replay of the run up to the 2002 election. The election violations that have been observed in the post 29 March era are largely a carry-over from the pre and post 2002 election period, of course with some reformulations and perfections here and there.

The run up to the 2002 presidential elections was one of the most politically volatile post independence election era ever experienced in Zimbabwe. It experienced the highest record of gross forms of violence in comparison with the 2005 and 2008 election violence records combined. Topping the list in terms of election violations were the four provinces of Manicaland, Mashonaland East, Masvingo and the Midlands with Mashonaland West and Central as serious hot spot contenders. These provinces are incidentally ruling party strongholds.

Manicaland led the hot spot race, with most of its cases occurring in Makoni North, Makoni East, Mutare South, Mutare West, Chipinge North, Mutare Central and Chipinge South while in *Mashonaland East*, constituencies such as Mutoko South, Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe, Marondera East, Marondera West, Murewa South, Mtoko North, Mudzi, Wedza, Ruwa, Goromonzi and Musami were cited as no go areas for opposition political players. In *Masvingo*, areas like Zaka, Gutu and Bikita West were identified as no go constituencies while in the *Midlands* hot spot zones included Gokwe Nembudziya, Silobela, Kwekwe, Gweru rural, Chirumanzu Zibagwe, Chiwundura, Shurugwi North, Shurugwi South, and Mberengwa West.

While variations in the types of violence were recorded, there was a noticeable similarity in forms and patterns of election violations, with a visible presence of gross cases. While some cases pointed to incidental election violations, violence patterns and forms generally point

to systematic and politically motivated incidents. This systematic feature was also manifest in the way the other forms of election violence were committed. Acts reflect an almost similar pattern characterized by harassments of members or those suspected to be supporters of the opposition, unlawful arrests, selective application of law by the police, forcing people to attend ruling party political meetings or produce party cards or chant ruling party slogans, harassment of civil servants, beating of people in high density areas and night clubs by the army.

Election violence also took the form of hate speech and hate politics from both main presidential contenders, however with ruling party candidates on the lead- ruling party political rallies generally laced with slogans such as *Pasi ne MDC*, fist pointing, use of military language, swearing, labeling of other contestants as enemies of the state, sellouts and stooges of the West, betrayers of the revolution and declarations by the service chiefs that they would not salute any presidential winner who does not have war liberation war credentials.

Election campaigns were spearheaded by war veterans and youth militia, with most road blocks countrywide manned by the militia. Clinics, hospitals, schools, resettlement areas, business centers and growth points were converted into base camps where those with dissenting views to the ruling party went through a reorientation process in which incidents of assaults, torture, rape and forced denunciations of own political party were cited.

Why this escalation in election violence?

This escalation in violence in the run up to the 2002 presidential elections has to be understood within the context of the following developments:

- The emergence of the MDC and its visible inroads into areas that had hitherto been ruling party strongholds. Viewed from this angle, organized violence may have been utilized as a political weapon designed to fence off these areas from opposition penetration.
- The resort to liberation war campaign strategies characterized by the setting up of liberation-war style bases.
- The resuscitation of the youth militia training program and the subsequent absorption of militia graduates as part of the election campaign structure.
- The 2002 presidential elections had occurred hot on the heels of a shocking “NO VOTE” referendum generally viewed as reflecting the views of the ruling party- a vote out-turn which the ruling party interpreted as part of a grand imperialist strategy by the MDC, the white commercial farmer and the British to stab the Zanu PF-initiated land acquisition agenda on the back. Thus, within ruling party thinking, the NO VOTE was a warning signal that its “liberation agenda” was under siege!
- The resuscitation of the land issue and its quick conversion into an election campaign political good- a development that tensed up the political temperature and polarized society- as criticism of land implementation was treated as total

rejection of the land redistribution agenda and what the liberation war was fought for.

- The declarations by the service chiefs that they would not salute any winner without credentials [implying that they will not recognize any election outcome to the contrary].

THE RUN UP TO THE 2005 AND 2008 ELECTIONS

While incidents of election violence continued to increase during the run up to the 2005 and 2008 elections, ZPP provincial records indicate that:

- A total of 3946 violations were committed in the run up to the 29 March 2008 elections.
- There was a shift from gross cases to other forms of election violence such as assault, malicious damage to property, harassment, and intimidation.
- That there was a change in the profile of election campaigners and violence perpetrators- with a noticeable visibility in the involvement of traditional leaders [chiefs and kraal heads].
- The provinces of Manicaland, Mashonaland East, Masvingo and the Midlands [incidentally Zanu PF strongholds] maintained their hot zone niche throughout.
- In Manicaland, violence has been most prevalent in Nyanga, Mutare West, Mutare North, Mutasa North, Chimanimani, Mutare Central, Buhera South, Makoni East, Makoni West, Makoni North].
- In Mashonaland East the ten constituencies of Marondera West, Marondera East, Murehwa South, Marondera West, Murehwa North, Mtoko South, UMP, Goromonzi, Mudzi East, and Goromonzi feature throughout as hot spot zones.
- In the run up to the 2005 March parliamentary elections, the whole of Masvingo save for Zaka West was literally on fire, a scenario that may be attributed to the involvement of war veterans and the youth militia in the election campaign.
- In the Midlands, violence has been concentrated in Gokwe Nembudziya, Gokwe Mapfungautsi, Zhombe, Kwekwe, Silobela, Mberengwa West, Zvishavane, Shurugwe, Chirumanzu, Gweru rural, Gweru Mkoba, Gweru Urban, and Zhombe.
- The provinces of Matebeleland North, Matebeleland South and Bulawayo [which incidentally are MDC strongholds] have remained relatively calm throughout the period, however with Tsholotsho, Mangwe, Umzingwane and Binga featuring as troublesome spot zones throughout.
- In the Harare Metropolitan [an MDC stronghold] violence has featured mostly in the high density suburbs of Budiro, Warren Park, Kuwadzana, Dzivarasekwa, Mabvuku, Tafara and Chitungwiza with reported cases of soldiers beating up revelers in night clubs and other ordinary people suspected to be MDC.
- Mashonaland Central and West [Zanu PF strongholds] have been serious hot spot zones. Mashonaland Central has remained largely a self declared one party province-a no go area for the opposition with the ruling party militia, war veterans,

and senior army officers directly involved in the election campaign. Mostly affected areas are Mount Darwin North and South, Bindura and Mazowe. In Mashonaland West, Chinhoyi, Hurungwe, Karoi, Chegutu, Mhangura, Mutorashanga, Norton, and commercial farms in Tengwe featuring as hot spots.

- In the harmonized elections areas such as Mangwe, Umzingwane [Matebeleland South]; Bulawayo; Mwenezi and Chiredzi, Zaka East, Masvingo North, Gutu South, Gutu North[Masvingo]; Gweru Rural and Gweru Urban, Gokwe Nembudziya [Midlands]; Chipinge South, Mutare West, Mutare South, Mutare Central, Makoni North[Manicaland] and Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe and Mutoko North[Mashonaland East] were hot spot zones.
- Most schools, business centers, clinics, growth points, resettlement areas operated as base camps.

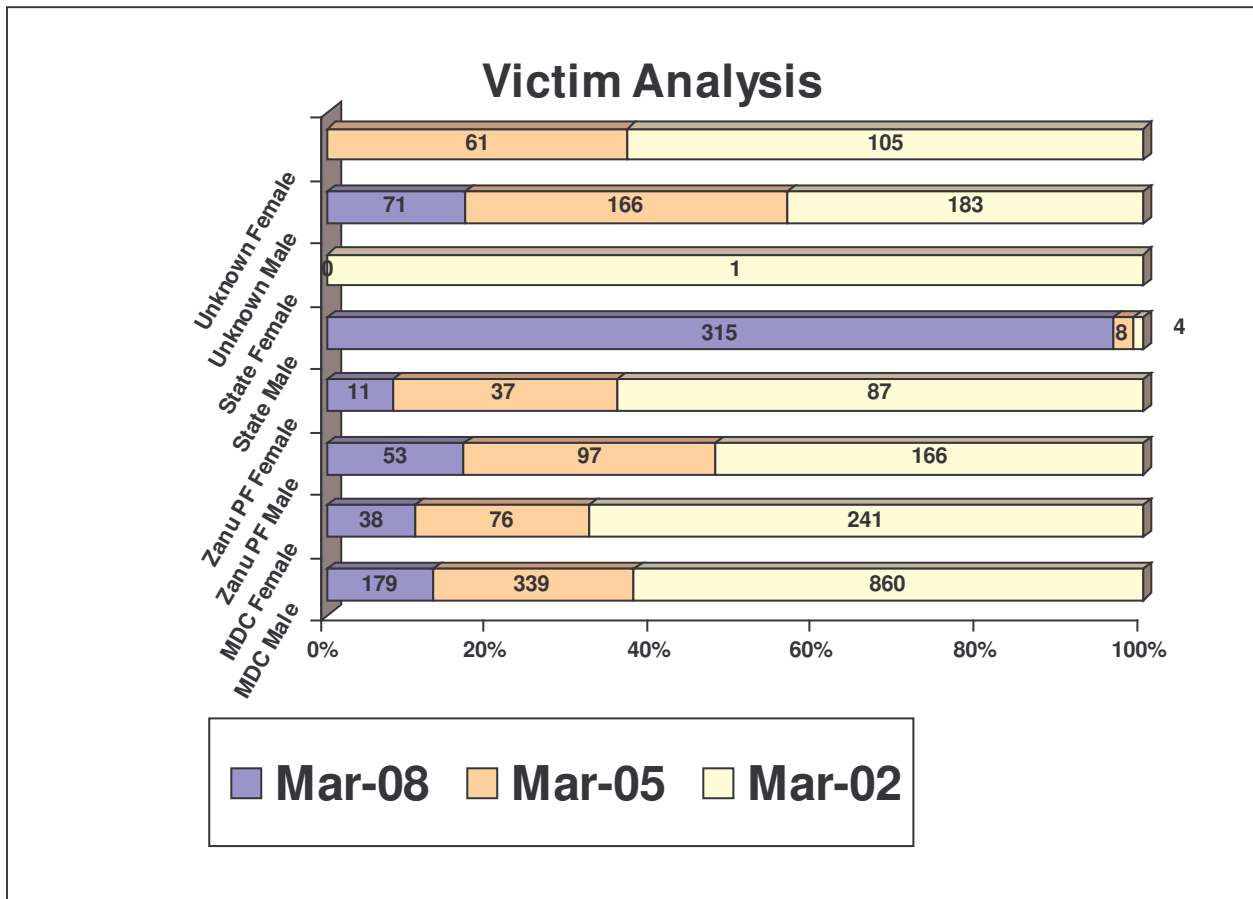
Below are some of the base camps that have been traditionally used over the years from 2002- 2008:

PROVINCE	PROVINCIAL-CONSTITUENCY-WARD LEVEL SPREAD OF HOT SPOT AREAS	WARD LEVEL
	CONSTITUENCIES	
MANICALAND	Makoni Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugoi Base Camp near St Killians'school
	Makoni West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 13 [Dorowa, Dowa, Bvekera, Chiwetu School, Rupfunde, St Teresa • Ward 16 [Tsanzaguru Business centre, Chinyadza Clinic]
	Makoni North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 24 [Masvosva hospital area and growth point] • Ward 25 [Chigora Clinic, Matsika school and hospital, Chiduku settlement • Ward 39 [Devedzo clinic, business centre and school] • Ward 5 [Chiendambuya Growth Point and Weya Settlement and Schools
	Musikavanhu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 23 [Muembe settlement and schools, Matsuro primary school, Nyazvikari primary and Zamchiya settlement and school] • Ward 21[Rimbi Area , Mugandi, Nyabadza] • Ward 23 [Muembe settlement and schools, Matsuro primary school, Nyazvikari primary and Zamchiya settlement and • Ward 21[Rimbi Area , Mugandi, Nyabadza]
MASVINGO	Masvingo North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 6 [Gokomere, Kapota, Rufaro Schools • Ward 4 [Maraire, Chiwenga, Mutonhodza, Muvhiringidze, Buwa settlement and Rushinga primary school
	Mwenezi East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 2 [Negari, Zvirikure, Rata, Matenda] • Ward 5: Neshuro, Sarahuro, Mushava and Chizumba
	Chiredzi East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 3: Tshovani and Hlangani • Ward 8: Chibwedziva and Masivambe

	Zaka Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 15: Majuru primary school, Chivamba primary • Ward 13: Chinorumba and Tovane
MASHONALAND EAST	<p>UMP</p> <p>Marondera East</p> <p>Mudzi South</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 10 [Chidodo secondary School] • Ward 8 [Chipfunde, Katiyo, Mushambanhaka, Marowe, Uzumba and Manyika Schools, • Ward 11[Chimhodzi primary school and Health centre, Karimbika, Rudawiro and Mugabe schools, Mutawatawa, Maramba Health centre and schools, • Ward 14 and 16 Rujeko Township, Waddilove School area, St Tom Primary, Diggleford primary, Wenimbe resettlement, Chinatsa and Dimbe Eldorado, • Ward 15, Nyamutowa and Chikwizo mission
MIDLANDS	<p>Gokwe Nembudziya</p> <p>Zhombe</p> <p>Gweru Urban</p> <p>Chirumhanzu Zibagwe</p> <p>Mberengwa West</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 36: Nembudziya growth point • Ward 11: Chinyenetu, Kuwirirana area, Makore secondary, Batsiranai primary, Chikarimatsito primary • Ward 11: Zhombe health centre and settlement, Genzimkhulu school, Gomala health centre, Somalala • Ward 1: Ridgemont, • Ward 4: Ivene, Bata estate • Ward 8: Ascot Surburb, Montrose Plots • Ward 2: Senga area • Ward 3: City Centre • Ward 12: Mvuma, Njerere, Nyikavanhu, Ward 1: Umlala Park, Chimwaoga school Gangarabwe, • Ward 31: Sherwood, Munyati, Katamai primary school

A GENDER-VICTIM-PERPETRATOR ANALYSIS [2002, 2005 and 2008 Elections]

VICTIM ANALYSIS

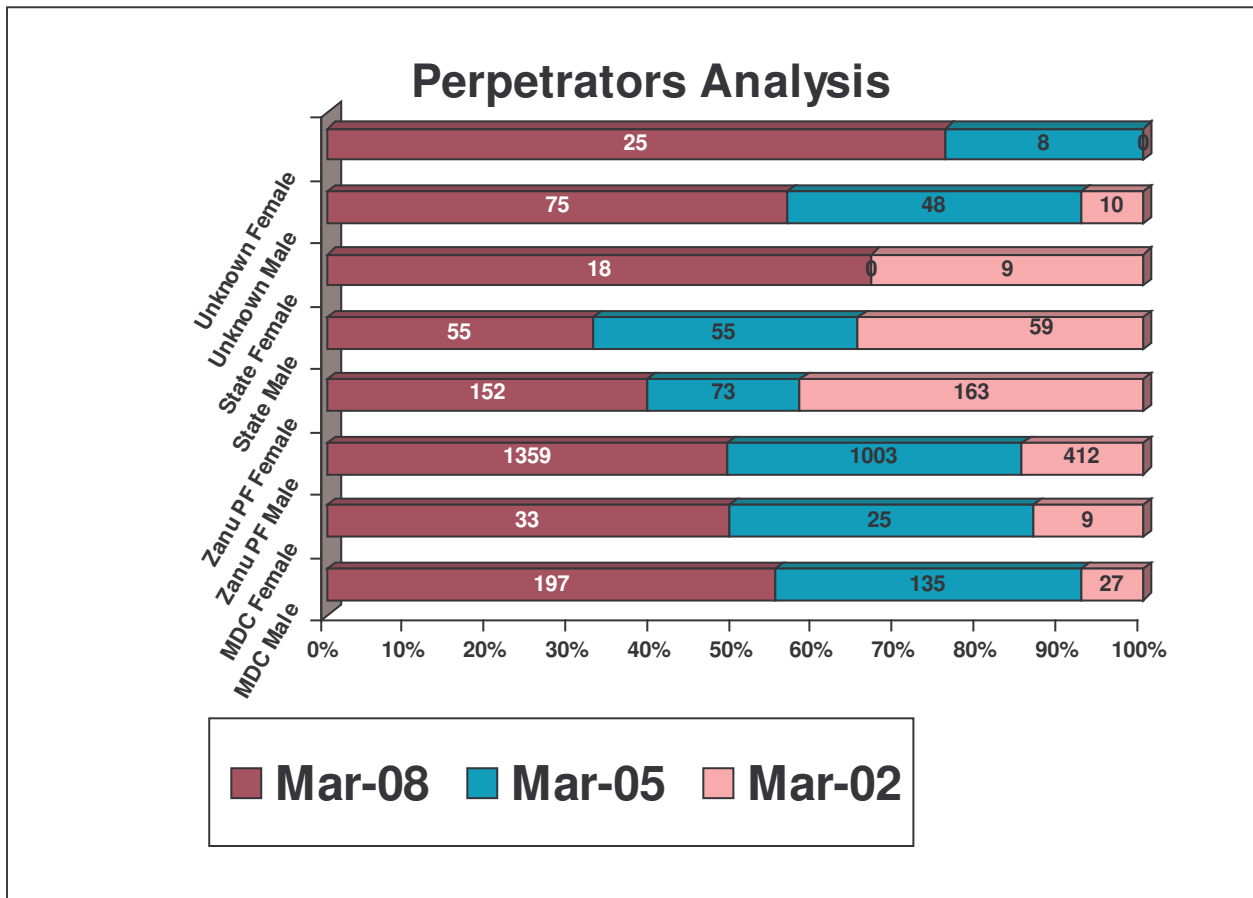


Analysis of these statistics clearly suggests that:

- While both political parties have suffered from election violence, more are MDC.
- Women have also been affected by election violence, the majority being from the MDC. This scenario is highly regrettable as it invariably affects other vulnerable groups like children who are under the direct care of women!
- That the Unknown Victims constitutes a very significant percentage, a pointer to the degree of polarization in the country.

- That there are more victims of the MDC and those of unknown affiliation in Manicaland, Masvingo, Midlands and Mashonaland East.
- That there are more of male victims from both the opposition and the Unknown category as compared to the female from the same category.
- Victim distribution is consistent with ZPP observations that election violence is mainly targeted at the main opposition.

PERPETRATOR ANALYSIS



Perpetrator spread indicates that:

- While both parties have contributed to election violence, ZANU PF is way ahead, with its male category featuring as main perpetrators. This strongly points to organized political violence!
- There is visible State involvement in the perpetration of violence-suggesting the possibility of state sponsored violence.

- Women are also actively involved in violence, a significant percentage being from the ruling party.
- The four provinces of the Midlands, Masvingo, Manicaland and Mashonand East [incidentally ruling party strongholds] are home to most of the perpetrators.

Salient Remarks on the period 2002 to March 2008 Presidential Elections

Provincial patterns and forms of violence in the pre 2008 March harmonized elections suggest:

- High levels of politically motivated and organized election violence. Organized violence is being employed as a political weapon to manipulate election outcomes in favor of incumbent political powers.
- That organized violence is most concentrated in areas where the ruling party feels politically under siege. The case of Tsholotsho as a hotbed in a region that is generally low on election violence comes to mind.
- That the unemployed youth in both rural areas are very vulnerable to political manipulation.
- Similar patterns of violence were recorded across the provinces-suggesting the possibility of organized election violence. For instance, the post 2005 show similarity in shifts from gross to other forms of violence across the province.
- That while election violence occurs in both MDC and Zanu PF strongholds-politically motivated violence is more pronounced in ruling party strongholds-hence Masvingo, Manicaland, Mashonaland East and Midlands featuring throughout as hot zones of violence with Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West as serious political hotbed contenders. In these areas, political related violence is mostly in the rural areas-which incidentally are in the main, ruling party constituencies.
- That state involvement [service chiefs, government officials etc] in election violence is very high-pointing to the possibility of state sponsored violence.
- While both parties have their own share in the incidents of election violence recorded, most violators are from the ruling party. In all the ten provinces surveyed, perpetrator-victim analyses point to the main opposition as the main victim.
- Where the militia and war veterans have been actively involved in election campaigns levels of zero tolerance to opposition politics has been very high.

THE POST 29 MARCH 2008 HARMONIZED ELECTIONS

While a resemblance of peace prevailed during the 29 March 2008 harmonized elections, post election scenarios strongly point to an escalation in post election violence. In April 2008, 4359 cases of politically motivated human rights violations had been recorded, ten of which were politically motivated murders.

Cursory reference to acts committed during this period show a visible shift in terms of composition and levels of gravity/seriousness. Composition has drastically changed with the appearance of new forms of violence such as theft/looting, malicious damage to property and displacements. In terms of gravity, there is a shift to physical and gross cases of violence.

ZPP April records show that acts of harassment topped the list with recordings of 439 in Manicaland, 417 in Masvingo, 188 in Mashonaland East and 125 in Midlands. Displacements are second on the list with 823 cases in Manicaland, 187 cases in Mashonaland Central, 99 cases in Mashonaland West and 63 cases in Mashonaland East. Acts of Malicious Damage to Property [MDPs] are third on the list, with 252 cases having been committed in Manicaland and 54 in Mashonaland East. Compared with the previous months shown in the following cumulative table the rise in acts perpetrated in the month of April is acute.

CUMULATIVE TABLE FOR VIOLATIONS 2008

VIOLATIONS	Month												
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	October	November	December	TOTAL
2008													
Murder	0	0	7	10									
Rape	1	1	4	4									
Kidnapping/abduction	3	7	5	149									
Assault	163	178	219	767									
Theft/looting	14	6	8	80									
MDP	20	12	28	345									
Torture	6	2	5	157									
Unlawful Detention	18	8	6	125									
Harassment/Intimidation	343	449	475	1484									
Displacement	15	12	23	1219									
Discrimination	10	10	15	19									
TOTAL	593	685	796	4359									

The profile of violence acts also show a disturbing orientation towards criminality as reflected in increases in acts of theft/looting and malicious damage to property. Malicious damage to property is characterized by burning of homesteads and destruction of livestock, a practice that is fast spreading in Manicaland and Mashonaland East, especially in Uzumba. These evolving patterns of violence are consistent with *pasi politics* [hate politics] where political opponents are viewed as *enemies* rather than political contestants. It is the

most unethical form of election violence as it is directed at destroying the target' source of livelihood!

Commonly targeted for retribution are MDC activists, human rights activists, known supporters of other political parties and local election observers. As was the case in the 2002 presidential elections, commonly cited perpetrators of violence are war veterans, ruling party supporters, youth militia, soldiers and of some MDC supporters and youths.

Political bases reminiscent of the liberation war era have been resuscitated throughout the country. As was witnessed in the run up to the 2002 presidential elections, schools, hospitals, business centers, farms, clinics and churches, especially in the rural communities of Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central, Manicaland have been converted into bases.

Also disturbing is the possibility that election violence may spread into provinces such as Matebeleland North, Matebeleland South and Bulawayo, regions that had hitherto been relatively calm.

Equally disconcerting is the possibility that the ongoing displacements, burning of homesteads and loss of identification documents may lead to the disenfranchisement of many people by the time of the 27 June 2008 elections. It looks like voter *disenfranchisement* is gradually taking shape as a form of violence- its format being to *disable target voters* by destroying all the documents that one has to produce at the polling booths.

LINK BETWEEN ELECTION RESULTS AND ELECTION VIOLENCE

Post 29 March 2008 scenarios point to a possible link between election results and election violence. While the MDC has over the years posed a major challenge to ZANU PF, this challenge was mainly urban based, scenarios which had given the impression that rural areas were the unchallenged political enclaves of ZANU PF. Over the years theories had also been advanced claiming of an organic and symbiotic link between ZANU PF and the rural areas [where incidentally ZANU and ZAPU had waged the liberation struggle].

However with the results of the 29 March 2008 harmonized elections, the organic link claim seems to be under duress as election results reflect visible inroads by the opposition [MDC Tsvangirai, MDC Mutambara and in some cases the Independents] into rural constituencies which hitherto had been Zanu PF strongholds. In Manicaland 18 parliamentary seats are now under the opposition, leaving ZANU PF with only seven [7]. In Masvingo, ZANU PF and MDC emerged at par with 13 seats out of the 26 contested parliamentary seats. Implied in this vote turnout is that both parties enter the run-off race under immense pressure. On one hand ZANU PF is under mounting pressure to reclaim its traditional hold while on the other hand, the MDC is also under pressure to sustain its

performance in the 29 March elections, especially given its lean/small margin win in most rural areas!

While in the provinces of Midlands, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland Central, Zanu PF is clearly in the lead in terms of seats spread, closer analysis of vote cast reflect the thin margin scenario alluded to above, implying stiff competition from the opposition even in the hot spot zone strongholds of ZANU PF. A brief look at the following randomly sampled constituencies helps to situate these arguments:

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RESULTS		
CONSTITUENCY	PARTY	RESULTS
SHURUGWI SOUTH	MDC- T	553
	MDC T	1 977
	ZANU PF	5 068
	MDC	754
HURUNGWE EAST	MDC-T	6 526
	ZANU PF	6 377
MAKONDE	Zanu PF	6 526
	MDC-T	1 254
	Independent	2 928
	MDC	709
MAZOWE CENTRAL	MDC T	5 573
	ZANU PF	4 136
	MDC	1 094
	Indep	119
	ZPPDP	79
MUDZI NORTH	ZANU PF	8 041
	MDC T	6 593
	UDP	329
MUTOKO NORTH	ZANU PF	6 922
	MDC T	3 063
	Independent	1 065
	MDC	3 025
MUZARABANI NORTH	ZANU PF	7 691
	MDC T	3 913
	INDEPENDENT	973
UZUMBA	ZANU PF	13 396
	MDC T	2 158
	MDC	814
MARONDERA EAST	ZANU PF	6 514
	MDC T	2 268
	MDC	708
	INDEP	321
CHIREDDI SOUTH	ZANU PF	5 147
	MDC	1 271
	MDC T	2 205
CHIREDDI WEST	PAFA	67
	ZANU PF	4542
	INDEP	619
	MDC T	6259
BIKITA WEST	ZANU PF	7029
	MDC T	7048

A cursory analysis of vote distribution in these twelve constituencies mainly from ZANU PF strongholds highlights:

- That there is stiff competition between ZANU PF and MDC, even in the traditional ruling party strongholds.
- That, except in isolated cases, the main political contestants were winning by small votes margins
- That a significant percentage of votes was shared between the independents and other minor parties. Winning this vote is therefore critical to both political parties.
- That in some cases either ZANU PF or MDC loss may have been due to the fielding of two candidates.

Suggested in these observations is that while the MDC urban support base is relatively secure, this is no longer the case for ZANU PF in its traditional strongholds. The contestation that was initially confined to urban areas has shifted to rural areas. If the 29 March 2008 results are anything to go by, neither party is assured of easy victory! The loss of seats, especially in rural areas engendered a feeling of *political insecurity* within the ruling party-hence acts of retribution that were visited upon rural residents. The insecurity factor also accounts for the establishment of camp bases in rural constituencies such as Chipinge South, Nyanga South, Uzumba, Mutoko, Mudzi etc. In fact ZPP records point to 10 base camps having been set up in Manicaland [incidentally where the MDC has won 18 parliamentary seats out of the 25 contested parliamentary seats.

This *insecurity factor* also accounts for perceived shifts to gross forms of election violence, with disenfranchisement of suspected members of the opposition among them. In traditional strongholds such as Midlands, Masvingo, Manicaland, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West, election violence is used to fence off possible opposition infiltration, instill fear into the opposition and if possible, discourage them from casting their vote. Use of force has over the years worked to the advantage of the ruling party by creating voter apathy, rural people voting for the ruling party in fear of retribution, fear of being denied access to Government subsidized food, or in some cases, opposition candidates withdrawing their candidatures- scenarios that have seen a number of constituencies going as uncontested areas, of course to the advantage of the ruling party. These unethical practices have been widely used in hot spot zones such as Gokwe Nembudziya, UMP, Mberengwa West, etc where ZANU PF has been winning with obscenely big margins!

In fact, the link between election results and election violence is summed up in the program, *Operation Makavhotera Papi* [literally, where did you put your vote?]- a program that has seen war veterans, soldiers, militia, and ruling party youths inflicting retribution to suspected supporters of the opposition, in both rural and urban areas.

TENTATIVE PREDICTIONS ON THE BASIS OF PAST INCIDENTS

Scenarios strongly point to a dramatic escalation in politically motivated violence. All indications are that the nation is set for a replay of the ugly scenes that accompanied the run up to the 2002 presidential elections. As was the case in the highly volatile 2002 presidential elections, the ruling party is currently operating under the framework that the “liberation agenda” is under siege and hence has to be protected at all cost!

It should also be noted that just like in the 2002 presidential elections, the 27 June 2008 presidential runoff is taking place just after Zanu PF has received a political slap. Its defeat in the just ended harmonized elections in both the parliamentary and presidential contest [though both failed to garner the needed 50%+ one vote] coupled with the embarrassing prospect of a defeat in the 27 June 2008 runoff is too ghastly to contemplate for a party that has not known defeat since 1980! If what followed after the 2000 “NO VOTE” to the referendum is anything to go by, all is set for a highly restive pre and post 27 June election period! In 2005, following the announcements of the 2005 March parliamentary elections in which it was apparent that the majority of urban residents had voted for the main opposition MDC, urban residents were destroyed under the guise of Operation Murambatswina- an operation that left 750 000 people homeless, according to the UN Report. Reports of acts of retributions being conducted by soldiers, war veterans, militia, and ruling party supporters in the rural areas [especially where the ruling party either met stiff challenge or was defeated by the opposition] may be understood within these contexts.

Disruptions in the farming sector are set to increase in the pre and post election period. Past experiences strongly suggest that whenever the ruling party political base is under stiff competition, the land issue is resuscitated, quickly polished and made a central tenet of its election campaign! Following the shocking NO VOTE and its controversial win in the 2002 presidential elections, organized farm invasions were experienced throughout the country. Also, immediately after the release of the 29 March harmonized parliamentary elections in which the main opposition emerged the winner, there were reports of fresh farm invasions by war veterans at Mitchell farm in Masvingo Central, Boland Farm in Masvingo West, Godard Farm in Masvingo North and Dodderier Farm in Masvingo Central. Other reports of fresh farm invasions by Zanu PF youth were reported at Beatrice farm, almost 35 km away from Harare along Masvingo road. By early May 2008, there were also reports of war veterans in Manicaland threatening to invade New Year’s Gift tea estate owned by a Zimbabwean tea brand Tanganda in Chipinge Central.

Unfolding evidence also strongly point to higher levels of organized violence and torture by state agents, war veterans and youth militia. Since April 2008, there have been documented reports of soldiers camped in the mountains, reports of bases that have been established throughout the country, reports of the resuscitation of youth militia training and their use as part of the election campaign structure. Past precedents have

demonstrated that where war veterans and youth militia have spearheaded election campaigns, election violence has not only escalated but has also tended to be heavily skewed towards gross cases.

The resort to liberation war campaign strategies characterized by the setting up of liberation-war style bases, use of war language, fist pointing, swearing at election rallies, hate speech [such as sellouts, *Pasi!*, stooges/fronts of the West] and hate politics [reference to other contestants as anti-liberation agenda, etc] is set to not only poison the political landscape but also raise political temperature-a recipe for election violence!

Gross cases of violence [physical attack, intimidations, abductions and torture] are poised to worsen in the pre and post 27 June elections. Documented reports point to a growing disgusting and disruptive political culture of converting schools, clinics, business centers, and resettlement farm houses into base camps under the guise of political reorientation camps. Below are some of the base camps that have been established since the release of the 29 March 2008 harmonized Elections:

BASE CAMPS IN THE POST MARCH 29

ELECTION

PROVINCE	BASE CAMPS
MASHONALAND EAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mudzi:Chitangazuva primary school, Fuchira, Dendera, Vhombozi, Nyamande, Chifamba and Suswe • Mtoko: Katekwe, Lot, All Souls, Nyamuzuwe, Chimurenga schools, Corner Store and Janhi Township. • Uzumba:Chidodo,Mugabe, Kambika, Rudoviro, Zengenene, and Nyahondo School • Maramba Pfungwe:Mutata, Guyu
MASHONALAND CENTRAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chibara village, Shamva clinic, and Chahwada.
MIDLANDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holly Cross mission, Driefontein mission, St Joseph Hama mission and Mayor farm.
MANICALAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nyanga South:Crossdell Secondary Schools, Nyarukowa, Tsatse, Mapako, Mutendebvure and Sunday Munemo primary. • Nyanga North: torture bases have emerged at Nyautare primary, Manderere farm, Clear water near Mvurachena river, Clear water section 2, Mootlas farm, Scarrick Farm ward [Muchakata] and Lalus farm.
MATEBELELAND SOUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sigodo Business Center, West Nicholson factory, Sitezi business center, Mzimuni hall and Nkazhe primary school
BULAWAYO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bases have been set up at municipal offices and schools

Cases of Malicious Damage to Property [MDP] are set to worsen. By May 2008, ZPP had recorded 345 cases of MDPs. ZPP Information Alerts refer to cases of burning of property of opposition polling agents in Mt Darwin during the weekend of Zimbabwe's 28th Independence celebrations, reports of torching of the huts of 160 ex-farm workers at Logan farm in Shamva South, of homes and property in Mutata village in Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe, Mudzi South and Mutoko South, and of three houses at Rapid farm.

Public intimidation and harassment is also set to scale new heights. In Kondo village in the Mudzi constituency of Mashonaland East, there are increasing reports of the intimidation of opposition campaign team members and those donning main party opposition regalia. In former Zanu PF strongholds of Nyamuyeruka village in Mutoko, Lot in Mutoko East, Meza and Chikwizo villages in Mudzi South, war veterans are reported to be moving around [in new vehicles] harassing people. In the Midlands, soldiers [donning masks] are said to be beating up unsuspecting revelers in bars and late night shoppers in Gweru urban and Mkoba accusing them of "voting incorrectly". These acts are said to be conducted under *Operation Makavhotera Papi [Where did you put your vote?]*. There are also reports of intimidation, unlawful arrests and harassment of local observers from NGOs such as ZESN. In the Hwange Central constituency of Matebeleland North and Dzivarasekwa of Harare, there are reports of state services [police and soldiers] beating up people for celebrating their party's victory based on results on the walls of the polling stations.

A significant percentage of people are set to have been deliberately disenfranchised by the time of the 27 June 2008 runoff presidential elections. Most likely to be affected are those who have been physically attacked and have fled from their homes, those who had homes and property torched as well as those who have been displaced from their rural villages. There are increasing reports of villagers that have been displaced from their villages as punishment for having voted for the main opposition.

Politicization of public service provision is poised to worsen. In Masvingo, there are cases of withdrawal of buses donated by the RBZ during election campaigns, from constituencies that did not vote in favor of the ruling party in the harmonized elections. In Manicaland, RBZ donated buses are reported to have been removed from regular routes in Chimanimani, Chipinge, Nyanga and some parts of Bocha as a punishment to people who voted for the main opposition.

The possibility of these hypothesized scenarios is extremely high because the main victims of election violence [who as records indicate, are mainly members of the opposition] are, as put by political scientist Bruce Baker, "denied the oxygen of publicity". The post 29 March harmonized election in Zimbabwe has witnessed a flagrant disregard of SADC Guidelines and Principles for Democratic Elections and an almost total denial of space to the main political contestant- a practice that has fuelled post election violence as most unethical practices committed by state apparatus, ruling party supporters, war veterans etc

are blocked from public eye. Where the police is partisan to incumbent political powers-further blackout is exercised through an undeclared policy of either keeping a blind eye to the perpetrators of violence or through selective application of the law. Report of electoral malpractices in the pre and post election era will receive a further blow from the heavy restrictions that are currently applied on media accreditation. Only a few foreign media outlets, mostly from countries that are friendly to the ruling party, are set to receive accreditation!

There is also high possibility that the ruling party may not accept the election outcome if it goes the other way. Declarations by the service chiefs that they will not salute presidential winners without liberation war credentials point to this possibility. Some public statements by ruling party elites generally reflect this thinking.

Also at issue is how MDC which in the 29 March 2008 harmonized elections had emerged as the winner with 47.9% [however failing to meet the 50% + one vote requirement] will react if ZANU PF wins! In line with its quest for peace, ZPP exhorts respect for the votes because embraced in the vote are citizen rights and aspirations to define their socioeconomic destiny!

While possible scenarios may not be exhausted in this paper, events since the announcements of the results of the 29 March 2008 elections strongly suggest the need to interrogate other arrangements, in the event of an impasse. For instance, is the *winner-take-all* model the best solution for Zimbabwe? Are there no other peaceful arrangements to augment the election outcome? If the Government of National Unity option is pursued, is there visible political will within the contending political leaders to work together and sustain its momentum?

These questions are critically pertinent given that past mediation efforts have come to naught. Also, experiences in other countries suggest that Governments of National Unity are not a stroll in the garden park, especially if they involve political parties with seemingly diametrical ideological leanings. But if at independence in 1980, the leadership swallowed with pride the painful idea of saluting former war enemies and even embracing them in the first black government-does the call of national responsibility not oblige us to do the same today?

