

**BREAKING THE SILENCE, BUILDING TRUE PEACE:  
A REPORT ON THE DISTURBANCES IN MATABELELAND  
AND THE MIDLANDS, 1980 - 1988**

**A SUMMARY**

This report is a short version of a much longer book, which was published and released for sale in Zimbabwe in 1997. This first book was researched and written by the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. (CCJP ) 2000 copies of this longer book have been published, and most have been sold.

A copy was sent to His Excellency the President, and other Cabinet Ministers in Zimbabwe have also read the report. There has been no official comment about the report from the President or Government.

**Why was the first book written?**

People who live in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands know only too well what happened to them during the 1980s. Their lives were affected in serious ways by both government troops and also by dissidents and youth brigades at this time.

However, most people from other parts of Zimbabwe still have no idea what it was like for those who were suffering. They have no idea how people still suffer as a result of the violence that took place. People who were affected also do not have ways of talking to people in other parts of the country about what happened. Ordinary people all over Zimbabwe need to know what happened during those years in their own country.

**Why has this summary been written?**

The first book was very long, and had to include many details in order to make sure that the claims of the book were well supported. This made the book expensive to produce and expensive to sell.

The writing of a short version was therefore seen as a good idea. It includes only the most important parts of the first book. It has been produced more cheaply so that it can be available in communities that want to know what the report says. This shorter version has also been translated into Ndebele and Shona. In this way, people in affected regions can read how their history has been told, and people in unaffected regions can learn about it for the first time.

**How is the book structured?**

**Part One** of the report tells the history of the 1980s in Zimbabwe, written as a general story. Many types of information were used to put this history together, including human rights reports, histories by others, Government sources, and *The Chronicle* newspaper. This section tells what government ministers and dissidents and army troops were saying and doing at the time, and shows how events happened in Zimbabwe during these years.

**Part Two** includes two case studies, which are covered in more detail. These are Tsholotsho and Matobo, one district from each province of Matabeleland. These short histories tell what actually happened day by day and week by week, exactly as ordinary people who live in these districts told it to us.

We know that the stories told here are only a handful of the stories still to be told, but it is a beginning. Because of limited finance, it was not possible to include every district in one book, or to speak to every person in Tsholotsho and Matobo. But it was hoped that by including two areas in some detail, other people reading the report could start to get an idea of what life was like for those affected by the violence.

**Part Three** of the report looks at some of the problems people still face because of the disturbances. It tries to begin assessing what the real material and emotional cost has been to the region. It also looks at the problem of mass graves and shallow graves in some detail, and has some recommendations about these.

**Part Four** of the report has some important recommendations about how damage to the region can be repaired, and how steps can be taken to ensure this never happens again. The recommendations are summarised at the end of this document.

## **Preface**

Zimbabwe is currently enjoying a period of stability which did not exist twelve years ago. There are now no emergency powers in force, and people have more freedom of movement and speech than ever before. Before Independence, ninety years of colonial rule caused great injustices and suffering. In particular, the 1970s War of Liberation cost the lives of possibly 30 000 people. There were other costs to this war. Thousands lost property, livestock and suffered permanent injuries. Thousands more gave up their opportunity to get an education, or were forced to live for years in protected villages. For all these people, the suffering continues in many ways.

The events of the 1970s have been well documented. CCJP is among the many organisations that stood up for human rights during these years, and who have published books and videos making sure that there is a permanent record of these things. *The Man in the Middle* (1975), and *The Civil War in Rhodesia* (1976) are two such publications, among others. The LRF was not established until 1984.

While much has been written about the liberation struggle, there has been little written about what happened in Zimbabwe in the 1980s. This report acknowledges the historical context within which events of the 1980s took place and does not seek to blame anyone. This report now seeks to break the silence surrounding what happened in Zimbabwe in the 1980s. Over one thousand people came forward to tell their stories in recent years. The report seeks to give these people a chance to be heard. It is hoped that truth will lead to reconciliation. To help this happen, there are practical recommendations at the end of the report on how to help the people affected.

## **PART ONE: BACKGROUND**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **What happened in Matabeleland after Independence?**

Zimbabwe was a seriously divided country at Independence in 1980. Ten years of war had not only served to liberate Zimbabwe, but had created divisions within it. South Africa was also a hostile neighbour who wanted to weaken Zimbabwe. There were problems between ZIPRA and ZANLA, and outbreaks of violence in areas surrounding the guerrilla holding camps all over the country. At times this spilled over into serious violence, such as at Entumbane in 1981. By early 1982, there were groups of bandits in Matabeleland. Armed men were killing, robbing and damaging property.

The Government responded by launching a double attack in Matabeleland. The first attack was on the dissidents, and the army units used were 4 Brigade, 6 Brigade, the Paratroopers, the CIO and Police Support Unit. The second attack was on ZAPU and its unarmed civilian supporters, mainly in rural areas and at times in the cities. The units used for this second, undeclared conflict, were 5 Brigade, CIO, PISI and the ZANU-PF Youth Brigades.

The Government's attitude was that the two conflicts were one and the same, and that to support ZAPU meant to support dissidents. ZAPU denied it was supporting dissidents. Whatever the truth of this, it is clear that thousands of innocent civilians in Matabeleland were killed or beaten and had their houses burnt during these years, mostly at the hands of Government forces.

#### **Why should people know this history?**

##### **Unity - national acknowledgement**

The violence of those years was ended by the signing of the Unity Accord on 22 December 1987. Prime Minister Mugabe and Cde Joshua Nkomo shook hands and agreed they and their parties should work together from this day. However, many people say that true national unity was not achieved, that only a few leaders have benefited, and not the ordinary people who suffered through these years. People have said that true unity cannot take place until the Government is prepared to admit what happened and to discuss it openly. From truth will come reconciliation.

Unity is a good thing to aim for, to try and truly bring together people from different regions of the country. This is for the sake of all our children who may otherwise face violence in the future. Such unity only seems likely if all Zimbabweans face up to what happened in the 1980s, and take steps to prevent government soldiers from ever torturing civilians again in Zimbabwe.

But people all over Zimbabwe need first to know what happened, in order to understand the need to change some things so that it can never happen again. This is why the history needs to be known.

##### **Painful Wounds - healing through talking and being heard**

This story is not just about the past, but about how the past affects the present. There are many problems that remain in communities as a result of what happened, in particular from the murders and beatings by soldiers.

Many people can tell stories of how they have failed to get death certificates for those who died, or how such certificates have a false cause of death, which upsets them.

Others tell of mass graves or shallow graves in their areas and how this disturbs their communities. Some tell how members of their families were taken at night and have never been seen again.

Many other individuals have to live with physical injuries, which means they cannot work well in the fields, or travel easily on buses, for example. And still others lost homesteads or possessions, and have been poor ever since.

There is still much pain in the communities as a result of what happened. This affects not only the bodies, but the hearts and minds of those who suffered. Some people are bitter and suspicious of the government to this day. This means people often do not feel that their ability to contribute in Zimbabwe is recognised, or do not see any point in taking part in development projects.

Telling stories, and being listened to, can allow the healing of these painful memories to begin. While there were some people speaking out at the time atrocities were occurring, these claims were not being "heard", either in the country or outside the country. Only a few churches and human rights people, and a few journalists from overseas, really listened to these stories. Until the report was released in 1997, the story of the 1980s remained almost entirely unspoken and unheard.

This book will speed up the process of "Breaking the Silence" and, it is hoped, of "Building True Peace". It is hoped that more people will feel safe to tell their stories once they see others have done so. This means that more people will hear about it and see the need to do something to speed development in affected regions.

### **Restoring communities through development**

While the telling of stories is an important step, there is also need for some kind of economic compensation. It is difficult to obtain compensation for individuals now. Proof of injury or loss is hard to prove after so many years. Other laws prevent cases from being brought forward now.

But there is need to repair communities through development. This may mean more schools, better roads, dams, jobs and other types of economic progress for affected regions. By showing that events of the past are still damaging in the present, it is hoped that both internal and external funders, including the government, will speed development in Matabeleland.

## **II DATA SOURCES**

### **Where did the information about the events come from?**

#### **Written records from the 1980s**

We know what happened during these years because some people recorded what happened at the time. These people were mainly missionaries and also journalists and lawyers. During the 1980s, human rights groups such as Amnesty International and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights in USA also produced documents about what happened. A few historians have also included details of events in their books.

The CCJP has kept many letters and reports, including reports they sent to the Government at the time, asking them to stop the killings and beatings. They also kept the statements from victims they collected for the Government commission of inquiry into events, which took place in 1984.

The daily newspapers also provide a record of what was happening, in particular of what the Government claimed the dissidents were doing and what certain Government ministers had to say about events. The Bulawayo *Chronicle* was used a great deal to confirm opinions and dates of events. Monthly magazines such as *Horizon* and *Moto* also had information.

#### **Medical records**

Some missions still have medical records of civilians who were beaten or shot and then treated at their hospitals. Other people we spoke to still have their clinic or hospital cards and x-rays showing their injuries.

#### **Evidence from graves and mine shafts**

Skeletons have been taken out of mine shafts at Antelope in Matobo, and at Old Hat Mine in Silobela in the Midlands, some with coins showing they were killed after Independence. In 1983, bodies were also taken from a mass grave at Cyrene Mission in Matobo. These bodies at Cyrene showed clear evidence of gunshot wounds.

#### **Evidence collected from people in the 1990s**

In order to try and get a more complete idea of what it was like to be a civilian in a rural area in the 1980s, the Bulawayo Legal Project Centre (BLPC) sent interviewers into two chosen districts to collect more information. It was only possible to reach a few hundred people in this way, and it was only possible to go to these two areas. We know there are thousands of others who suffered and who did not speak to us. We also know that districts such as Lupane, Nkayi, Silobela, Gokwe, Bulilimangwe, Gwanda, Beitbridge and others also suffered violence in the 1980s. It would

have been too expensive and have taken too long to try to speak to everyone. But by choosing one district in each province we hoped to give everyone some idea of how things were in these years.

The history is far from complete. But what we have written in the original report we know to be accurate, because we used only those pieces of evidence that we felt were reliable. In the end, more than a thousand people told something of their stories. Others can now add to this history.

## **How has the information been used?**

### **Computer records**

All the names of people who suffered during these years were entered into a computer. Information from the human rights groups like CCJP and BLPC was entered into one part of the computer. Information from *The Chronicle* newspaper was entered into another part of the computer.

The computer sorted names alphabetically which meant that it was easy to see if the same person had been entered twice. It was also possible to see if the newspaper was reporting the same things as the other sources. In this way it was possible to count up all the people who had suffered different kinds of injuries, whether this was death, torture or property loss, and also to note the year, and districts where people were from. Who committed the offences, such as 5 Brigade or dissidents, was also recorded. From this information, it was possible to draw graphs showing the general way in which things happened over the years from 1982 to 1987. This is one way the information was looked at.

### **Village by village summaries**

In the two case studies of Tsholotsho and Matobo, all the information about these districts was looked at again. This time it was organised in terms of which village (or line) had been involved in the violence. This meant looking at a large number of reports about a small group of villages, and proceeding in this way through the whole district. In this way it was possible to write a detailed history on a small scale, to help others understand how it was during those years.

## **III HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

### **1. What happened in the 1970s?**

From the 1960s onwards, the people of Zimbabwe were involved in a civil war to get rid of the colonial government of Ian Smith. This civil war became more and more violent during the 1970s. There was the Rhodesian army on one side, and the two armies of ZANLA and ZIPRA on the other side. ZANLA was the armed wing of ZANU, the Zimbabwe African National Union, and ZIPRA was the armed wing of ZAPU, the Zimbabwe African People's Union. Ordinary people living in rural areas of Zimbabwe were the worst off during this war. They were caught in the middle of the conflict and suffered in many ways. They were punished by the Rhodesians if they helped the freedom fighters, and punished by the freedom fighters if they would not help them. Many of those who went to training camps or refugee camps in Mozambique and Zambia were bombed by the Rhodesians.

Some things that happened in the 1970s made what happened after Independence much more likely. In particular, certain laws were passed by the Rhodesian Front, which made it impossible for Government officials to be punished for what they did, even if they murdered innocent people. The Rhodesian Front and the governments before them, passed many laws which severely limited most people's rights to live where they chose, go to school, work, or express any freedom of thought or movement. People in Rhodesia became used to a situation where the Government showed no respect for their civil rights.

In addition, ZIPRA and ZANLA competed with each other for territory and support, and frequently fought and killed each other before Independence. This meant that they were suspicious of each other after Independence.

### **Laws from the 1970s**

In 1965, the Smith Government declared a state of emergency, in order to allow the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) to take place. Other laws were enacted, such as the Emergency Powers (Maintenance of Law and Order) Regulations, which allowed for detention without trial, the banning of public meetings and curtailment of political activity.

After Independence, these emergency powers remained in force, right up until July 1990. The Zimbabwean Government used them in the same way the Rhodesian Government did, to silence political opponents. So the bad laws put in place by the Rhodesian Front made it easy for Zimbabwe's ruling party, ZANU-PF, to deny ordinary people their basic rights whenever they so chose.

Before the first election in Zimbabwe, there was also a general amnesty granted under the peace agreement drawn up by Lord Soames, the British High Commissioner at this time. This amnesty meant that all those who had committed human rights violations could not face prosecution, whether they were Rhodesians or ex-freedom fighters. This meant people who had done terrible things during the 1970s were not punished.

Some of these Rhodesians who had tortured remained on in the Zimbabwean CIO and other units. A few used their position to act as South African agents to destabilise Zimbabwe. Others were recruited from ZANLA into 5 Brigade.

In 1988, after the Unity Accord had brought an end to violence, a second amnesty was announced in Zimbabwe. This time those who were being saved from prosecution for crimes committed against civilians were 5 Brigade, CIO, other army units and dissidents.

The very men who tortured people in the 1970s used the same methods to torture people again in the 1980s. Both times they got away with it, and were never punished. Some of these men still hold senior positions in the Zimbabwean Government and armed forces.

### **Conflict between ZANLA and ZIPRA**

Until 1963, there was one main liberation movement, known as ZAPU. At this time, the party split for many reasons, some political and some personal. A new party was formed, called ZANU. Neither party was tribalist by nature. Both had people from all tribal groups within their membership. However, over time, the two parties became quite different in certain ways. ZAPU's army was trained in Russia, ZANU's in China. They used different battle techniques and began to recruit from different parts of the country. ZAPU recruited mainly from the Ndebele-speaking western region of Zimbabwe, and ZANU mainly from the Shona-speaking eastern regions.

The two armies ZIPRA and ZANLA came to see each other as rivals for popular support. There were many battles between them when they met, both inside and outside Zimbabwe. At Independence, the two armies did not trust each other. This made it very difficult to try to make them into one Zimbabwean army. This was a very important factor in what happened in the 1980s, for example at Entumbane.

Some would say the problems between Shona-speakers and Ndebele-speakers go back to the 1800s, when Ndebele warriors raided Shona tribes and stole their cattle and women. However, other historians have said these traditional ideas were deliberately exaggerated by colonisers, and then for political reasons after Independence. The main reason people were persecuted in the 1980s was not to do with this history, but was for modern, political purposes. It was not really because they were "Ndebele-speaking" but because they were mainly ZAPU-supporting, that people in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands were persecuted.

However, one of the saddest outcomes of the violence in the 1980s is that many people have come to see the conflict during this time as ethnic in nature. It has been misinterpreted as a civil war between Shonas and Ndebeles. This is not accurate. Most people in Mashonaland had no idea what was really happening, nor would they have wished ordinary people in Matabeleland to have been persecuted. Similarly, most people in Matabeleland did not become dissidents, nor did they support what the dissidents did.

But the Government increasingly referred to supporters of ZAPU as being supporters of dissidents: ZAPU, dissidents and Ndebele-speakers in Zimbabwe all came to be seen as one and the same thing in the eyes of certain Government officials: this is clear when reading newspaper reports from those years.

It is important to remember the conflict was really more about politics than ethnicity: it was about creating a one party state in Zimbabwe.

## **2. What role did South Africa play in events?**

During the 1980s, South Africa developed a far-reaching policy of destabilising the black ruled countries on its borders. This was to make it harder for these countries to back the ANC and other groups aiming at bringing about majority rule in South Africa. It was also to justify the maintenance of white rule in South Africa.

### **Spreading false information and military attacks**

In Zimbabwe, the South Africans tried to make ZAPU and ZANU-PF dislike each other by persuading some members of the CIO to become double agents. These people then spread lies, telling the Government that elements within ZAPU were planning to overthrow them. Some of the buried weapons that were uncovered in the early 1980s and used as evidence against ZAPU, were actually planted by such agents.

In addition, there were military attacks by South Africa, such as the one that destroyed a major munitions dump at Inkomo Barracks in August 1981, and another that destroyed the ZANU-PF headquarters in December 1981. The Thornhill Air Base in Gweru was also attacked by South African agents, destroying many of Zimbabwe's Air Force aircraft. Whenever possible, the South Africans tried to blame ex-Rhodesians or ZAPU supporters for their own actions.

This behaviour by South Africa was effective in making ZAPU and ZANU-PF more and more suspicious of each other. It made the Zimbabwean Government see itself as permanently under threat, and this gave the Government an excuse to maintain emergency powers. It also made the decision to introduce curfews and massive numbers of troops into Matabeleland seem reasonable.

### **Operation Drama**

"Operation Drama" was the code name given to the undercover support the South Africans gave to a group of dissidents known as "Super ZAPU". This group was trained in the northern Transvaal, and was active in Zimbabwe in 1983 and 1984. They were few in number, probably fewer than a hundred, but their existence made the situation worse in Matabeleland.

Not much is known about this group to this day. It seems this was not a large operation, but it all added to the problems being faced in Matabeleland.

## **3. Why did some people become dissidents?**

There are various explanations of why dissident numbers grew during the early 1980s in Matabeleland:

- The Government claimed that the dissidents were actively supported by ZAPU who wished to overthrow the Government
- ZAPU believed the Government was using the "dissident problem" as an excuse to crush ZAPU completely and create a one party state
- South Africa was using the situation between ZAPU and ZANU-PF to make things worse in Zimbabwe
- The dissidents believed they had no option but to desert the army and take to the bush again as they were being persecuted within the army in various ways

There is evidence to support the last three views, but so far no important evidence to support the Government's view that ZAPU was responsible. Two treason trials, one in 1982 against Comrade (Cde) Dumiso Dabengwa and one in 1986 against Cde Sydney Malunga, failed to prove ZAPU had actively supported the dissidents in any organised way.

Whatever the cause, by the middle of 1982, there was a serious problem with armed bandits in Matabeleland. Property and human lives were being lost, as gangs of "cruel, uncontrollable, leaderless" dissidents committed crimes in the region.

### **Entumbane**

There were problems after Independence in integrating ZIPRA and ZANLA into the National Army. These problems were not only in Matabeleland, but also in Mashonaland. For example, ex-ZANLA elements attacked civilian areas in Mutoko, Mount Darwin and Gutu. Both sides hid weapons.

By the end of 1980, only 15 000 troops out of 65 000 had been placed in the army. Some of the remaining ex-combatants were moved to the cities. Many ex-ZIPRA cadres were given housing in Entumbane in Bulawayo, where they lived right next to civilian suburbs.

In November 1980, Cde Enos Nkala made remarks at a rally in Bulawayo, in which he warned ZAPU that ZANU-PF would deliver a few blows against them. This started the first Entumbane uprising, in which ZIPRA and ZANLA fought a pitched battle for two days.

In February 1981, there was a second uprising, which spread to Glenville and also to Connemara in the Midlands. ZIPRA troops in other parts of Matabeleland headed for Bulawayo to join the battle, and ex- Rhodesian units had to come in to stop the fighting. Over 300 people were killed.

The government asked Justice Dumbutshena, the former Chief Justice of Zimbabwe, to hold an inquiry into the uprising - to date the findings and report have never been released.

### **Army defectors**

Many ZIPRA cadres defected after Entumbane, mainly because they were afraid of staying in the army, as they felt some of their colleagues were disappearing mysteriously. They were also annoyed because they felt ZANLA cadres were being favoured for promotion. It was these issues rather than any clear political policy, which caused them to leave the army, taking their guns.

This situation became worse after the finding of arms caches in February 1982. ZANU-PF now openly accused ZAPU of plotting another war and ZAPU leaders were arrested or removed from cabinet. However, the treason trial in 1982 involving Comrades (Cdes) Dabengwa, Masuku and four others failed to prove a case against them. All were released although Cdes Dabengwa and Masuku were redetained without trial for four years. Possibly thousands of ex-ZIPRA cadres deserted the army after this. Most of them now claim that they saw this as necessary to stay alive. With their leaders all locked up or in exile, they felt there was nobody to protect them within the army. "We were threatened, that was why I decided to desert," said one dissident.

### **How did the dissidents operate?**

The dissidents took a while to get organised, but in late 1983 they divided Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands into three operational zones. Several bands of 15 to 30 dissidents worked within each area, under a commander. They had serious problems getting ammunition and supplies, especially as they had little popular support.

The ex-ZIPRA dissidents were suspicious of "Super ZAPU", the South African backed dissidents. They said they did not want "to be like UNITA", whom South Africa backed in Angola. Partly because the ex-ZIPRA dissidents would not support them, Super ZAPU did not last long: by mid 1984 it had more or less collapsed.

There were others who became dissidents who were not ex-ZIPRA, mainly youth from Matabeleland who felt persecuted by 5 Brigade, or who desired revenge against 5 Brigade after the wide-spread killings by 5 Brigade in 1983. There were also some "pseudo dissidents", who were really the "hit squad" of ZANU-PF politicians in the region. It has been said that the gang which killed sixteen missionaries in Matobo in 1987 was this group of pseudo-dissidents: they killed the missionaries over a land dispute.

Around 75% of the dissidents either had been killed, captured or had left for Botswana by the amnesty in 1988. Only 122 dissidents handed themselves over at this time.

### **Did the dissidents have popular support?**

Ordinary people living in rural areas did not willingly support the dissidents, especially after early 1983. People could see no point in this conflict of the 1980s. What was its purpose? People had understood the need to suffer in the 1970s, in order to bring about independence for Zimbabwe, but what could be hoped for from more violence in the 1980s? It was people living in rural areas who suffered worst once more, mostly from the activities of 5 Brigade, but also at the hands of dissidents. These were drought years, and it was hard to be forced to cook food for dissidents, especially knowing the punishment that could well follow. The dissidents often raped women, which made them unpopular. They also killed people they thought were sell-outs.

### **What did the dissidents do?**

The dissidents murdered at least 33 white commercial farmers or members of their families. This forced farmers to move into town, leaving their farms unproductive. The commercial farmers in Matabeleland suffered more in the 1980s than during the 1970s civil war. The dissidents also murdered civilians in rural areas, especially sell-outs. The evidence suggests the numbers of rural civilians killed by dissidents is not that high, particularly when compared to murders at the hands of government troops in the same areas. Their methods of killing people were very cruel nonetheless.

The dissidents also destroyed property, especially government property: "where the Government put money, we destroyed that thing." There were also many armed robberies committed by dissidents, who robbed stores and buses.

### **Summary**

The dissidents were a small, organised group of men on the run, who tried to stay loyal to ZIPRA ideals, even though they were ultimately leaderless. There were many types of dissidents, including ex-ZIPRA cadres, youth, criminals, "Super ZAPU" and pseudo-dissidents. They did not have any clear policy, apart from staying alive and causing damage where they could. They also did not have much support from people in rural areas. There is no evidence linking them to ZAPU leaders. Their swift surrender at the end of the disturbances was a result of their loyalty to ZIPRA ideals of discipline. They never numbered more than 400, and numbered only 122 by March 1988.

## **4. How did the Government respond to the increasing banditry?**

The Government said quite rightly that it was their responsibility to try and maintain law and order during these years. However, their response to the problem was seen by many as being too harsh. From early 1982, the Government used emergency powers to enforce widespread curfews, road-blocks, detention without trial and house to house searches.

### **Kidnapping of six tourists**

When six foreign tourists were kidnapped allegedly by dissidents in Matabeleland North in mid-1982, large numbers of troops were sent into Matabeleland. The tourists were killed within a few days of capture, but this was not clear for some years. In the meantime, troops mounted widespread searches for them.

The kidnapping caused the Government to bring back a law first used by the Rhodesian Government in 1975, preventing the prosecution of anyone in the security forces no matter what they did, as long as it was done to "preserve security" in Zimbabwe. As soon as this law was enforced, there was a growing number of reports of people being randomly or systematically detained, and of troops abusing civilians.

### **"Dissidents" or ordinary civilians?**

From mid-1982 onwards, the Government increasingly failed to distinguish between "dissidents" and those they alleged were "supporters of dissidents". Even Prime Minister Mugabe himself stated in April 1983 that when troops were in rural areas where people were thought to be feeding dissidents, "we eradicate them. We don't differentiate when we fight because we can't tell who is a dissident and who is not". Other Ministers made similar statements, and the complaints of abuses of civilians continued to grow. In November 1982, CCJP met the Prime Minister to express their concern about this.

However, the worst was yet to come for civilians. In early 1983, the Government unleashed the 5 Brigade on rural areas, thus beginning in earnest what could be called a "double edged conflict". On the one hand, the Government continued to target genuine dissidents, with the help of 4 Brigade, 6 Brigade, the Paratroopers, the Police Support Unit and the CIO. On the other hand, they deliberately targeted civilians, through the use mainly of 5 Brigade, but also through CIO and, in 1985, ZANU-PF Youth Brigades.

## **5. Who were the 5 Brigade?**

In October 1980, Prime Minister Mugabe signed an agreement with the North Korean President, Kim Il Sung that they would train a brigade for the Zimbabwean army. This was soon after Mugabe had announced the need for a militia to "combat malcontents". However, there was very little civil unrest in Zimbabwe at this time.

In August 1981, 106 Koreans arrived to train the new brigade, which Mugabe said was to be used to "deal with dissidents and any other trouble in the country". Even by August 1981, there had been very little internal unrest. Joshua Nkomo, leader of ZAPU, asked why this brigade was necessary, when the country already had a police force to handle internal problems. He suggested Mugabe would use it to build a one party state.

Mugabe replied by saying dissidents should "watch out", and further announced the brigade would be called "Gukurahundi", which means *the rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains*.

5 Brigade was drawn from 3500 ex-ZANLA troops at Tongogara Assembly Point. There were a few ZIPRA troops in the unit for a start, but they were withdrawn before the end of the training. It seems there were also some foreigners in the unit, possibly Tanzanians. The training of 5 Brigade lasted until September 1982, when Minister Sekeramayi announced training was complete.

The first Commander of 5 Brigade was Colonel Perence Shiri. 5 Brigade was different to all other army units, in that it was not integrated into the army. It was answerable only to the Prime Minister, and not to the normal army command structures. Their codes, uniforms, radios and equipment were not compatible with other army units. Their most distinguishing feature in the field was their *red berets*. 5 Brigade seemed to be a law unto themselves once in the field.

### **Deployment of 5 Brigade - Matabeleland North, 1983**

In late January 1983, 5 Brigade was deployed in Matabeleland North. Within weeks, they had murdered more than two thousand civilians, beaten thousands more, and destroyed hundreds of homesteads. Their impact on the communities they passed through was shocking.

Most of the dead were shot in public executions, often after being forced to dig their own graves in front of family and fellow villagers. The largest number of dead in a single killing involved the deliberate shooting of 62 young men and women on the banks of the Cewale River, Lupane, on 5 March 1983. Seven survived with gunshot wounds, the other 55 died. Another way 5 Brigade killed large groups of people was to burn them alive in huts. They did this in Tsholotsho and also in Lupane.

At the same time as 5 Brigade was sent into the area, the Government had introduced a strict curfew on the region. This prevented anybody from entering or leaving the area, banned all forms of transport and prevented movement in the region from dusk to dawn. A food curfew was also in force, with stores being closed. People caught using bicycles or donkey carts were shot. No journalists were allowed near the region. This situation meant that it was very hard to get news of events out of the region, and hard to judge the truth of the early accounts. However, as some people managed to flee the area, stories of the atrocities began to spread.

**Targeting civilians:** *during these early weeks, 5 Brigade behaved in a way that shows they had clearly been trained to target civilians.* Wherever they went, they would routinely round up dozens, or even hundreds, of civilians and march them at gun point to a central place, like a school or bore-hole. There they would be forced to sing Shona songs praising ZANU-PF, at the same time being beaten with sticks. These gatherings usually ended with public executions. Those killed could be ex-ZIPRAs, ZAPU officials, or anybody chosen at random, including women. Large numbers of soldiers were involved in these events, sometimes as many as two hundred, and often forty or more.

It is clear 5 Brigade was following orders when they targeted civilians in this way, because the pattern is similar throughout the regions affected.

### **Early response to events**

In spite of the curfew, news spread and by early February the first efforts were being made to tell everyone what was happening and to get the Government to stop 5 Brigade activities. These efforts were met with denial on the part of Government officials. Minister Sekeramayi claimed the foreign press was "spreading malicious stories about the so-called atrocities". In March, officials from CCJP met with Prime Minister Mugabe, showing him evidence of atrocities. Mugabe made a public statement a few weeks later, on 6 April, denying atrocities and accusing his critics of being "a band of Jeremiahs". However, a few days later, the curfew was lifted and it was agreed atrocities would be looked into.

The Government continued to make contradictory statements during these months, sometimes seeming to express regret at atrocities, and at other times clearly seeming to encourage them. The Minister of State Security in charge of CIO, Emmerson Mnangagwa, told a Victoria Falls rally in March 1983 that the Government could choose to burn down

"all the villages infested with dissidents". He added that: "the campaign against dissidents can only succeed if the infrastructure that nurtures them is destroyed."

### **5 Brigade: April to December 1983**

By the end of April the curfew had been lifted. 5 Brigade also changed their behaviour, and the mass killings stopped. Random killings and beatings on a small scale continued throughout the year, except for a month midyear when 5 Brigade was withdrawn, for retraining.

### **Deployment of 5 Brigade - Matabeleland South, 1984**

In January 1984, 5 Brigade was deployed in Matabeleland South. Once more, this coincided with a strict curfew. However, this time the curfew was very strictly applied to food supplies, in addition to restrictions on transport and movement around the region. It was the third successive year of drought, and people had no food apart from drought relief from donors and what they could buy in stores. All drought relief food was stopped, and all stores were closed.

The Government's reasoning was that if there was no food, the dissidents would starve. However, there were no more than 200 dissidents in the curfew region, and it was the 400 000 civilians who suffered most. They were brought to the brink of complete starvation.

5 Brigade used a more sophisticated strategy to intimidate the civilian population in 1984. In addition to the food curfew, thousands of civilians were detained and transported to large detention centres where they were then tortured. This meant that beatings and killings in the village setting were less common than before. In these big camps, people did not know each other, which makes it hard to work out how many people were affected at this stage. At Bhalagwe camp in Matobo District, several thousand civilians were detained at any one time, and there were daily deaths in this camp. The dead were thrown down Antelope Mine, and in 1992, bones were taken out of the mine shaft. People in the region claim there are many other mines with bones in them.

### **5 Brigade: Retraining**

Late in 1984, 5 Brigade was withdrawn for intensive retraining. When they were re-deployed they seemed to behave much better: the proof of this is that there are few complaints against 5 Brigade on record after 1984. This makes it hard to say where they were deployed in 1985 and what they were doing. The last recorded complaint against 5 Brigade is that they tortured several groups of young men at Dhlamini Rest Camp in late 1985. In 1986, 5 Brigade was finally withdrawn and had conventional military training under the British Military Advisory Team. The Brigade was then disbanded and its members attached to other brigades.

### **Exceptions to the rule**

Not every member of 5 Brigade took part in the atrocities. There was a commander in Lupane who refused to commit atrocities, and others who on rare occasions apologised for bad deeds by the men under their command. There are also several reports of ex-members of 5 Brigade who are now severely troubled by the deeds they committed. Some have tried to approach communities they harmed to seek forgiveness. However, victims have so far not felt in a position to forgive what happened.

### **Official reasoning for using 5 Brigade**

People who support the Government's use of 5 Brigade against civilians say that this strategy "brought peace very, very quickly" (Lt Col Lionel Dyke, commander of Paratroopers, 1983-84). This implies that without the massive killings and beatings of civilians, the dissidents would not have been brought under control. This argument is not supported by events. There were actually more murders by dissidents after 5 Brigade was withdrawn than before. 5 Brigade made the situation worse in every way. It was not 5 Brigade, but the signing of a political agreement, the Unity Accord, that brought an end to the violence.

### **Lasting impact of 5 Brigade in Matabeleland**

One of the saddest outcomes of the 1980s violence is that people in Matabeleland believe themselves to have been the target of a war not against dissidents, but against the Ndebele and ZAPU. This was the result of the 5 Brigade being Shona-speaking, and targeting any Ndebele-speaker including women and children. The 5 Brigade would say things like "all Ndebeles are dissidents". Rapes were seen as an attempt to create a generation of Shona babies.

While 5 Brigade failed to change people's support for ZAPU, which was re-elected in 1985 in Matabeleland, people were very clear that they were also being targeted for political reasons. People who talk about 5 Brigade now will often

say: "You can never have another political party in Zimbabwe or you will be punished." This is the message they have learnt.

People also remain afraid that the violence of the 1980s can be repeated at any time in Matabeleland. Having once experienced violence that was totally unexpected, which to this day cannot be explained, and having never had an apology or a guarantee that it will not happen again, it is not surprising people remain afraid.

"We can still be eliminated at any time. This wound is huge and deep. The liberation war was painful, but it had a purpose, it was planned face to face. The war that followed was much worse. It was fearful, unforgettable and unacknowledged".

### **Summary**

5 Brigade used different strategies in Matabeleland North and South. In Matabeleland North in 1983, there were widespread public beatings and executions. In Matabeleland South in 1984, there were beatings, widespread detentions and a cruel food curfew that caused great hardship to thousands. In both provinces the violence was sudden and intense and caused massive suffering among civilians, which has not been forgotten to this day.

## **6. What else was happening in Zimbabwe at this time?**

### **Chihambakwe Commission of Inquiry**

From 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> January 1984, a four-man commission of inquiry took statements in Bulawayo about the atrocities committed in 1983. They found hundreds of people waiting to give evidence, and had to come back again in March to hear more statements. The commission was given plenty of evidence of atrocities involving hut burning, mass beatings, executions by 5 Brigade. The findings of the Chihambakwe Commission have never been made public in Zimbabwe. This is in spite of the fact that the Prime Minister had promised the people of Zimbabwe that all would be made known. In November 1985, Minister Mhangagwa announced the report would not be released.

### **Disappearances**

Throughout the disturbances, there were cases of people who disappeared. These became more common from mid-1983 onwards, and were at their worst during 1985. This was an election year, and in early 1985, possibly hundreds of people were detained under mysterious circumstances in the middle of the night. Some of these were later released, but others have never been seen again to this day. These people are believed to have been taken mainly by CIO and PISI. Some cases are very well documented, including the case of nine men who disappeared in Silobela in 1985.

The impact of disappearances on communities is profound. It is culturally very important for families to give their deceased a dignified burial and pay due respects. Failure to do so causes great emotional pain. The spirits of the dead who have not been given proper rites are considered to be restless and angry, and have been blamed in Matabeleland for the droughts and hardship in the region.

Not just the disappeared, but the spirits of those buried in mass graves or in mine shafts cause serious upset in Matabeleland and Midlands communities to this day.

### **ZANU-PF Youth brigades**

From late 1984, there was an increase in violence in urban centres as well as in rural areas. This was related to the upcoming election, and was once more aimed at ZAPU supporters rather than at dissidents. The ZANU-PF Youth Brigades were responsible for much of this violence. They intimidated Ndebele-speakers with mob beatings, property burning and murders. ZANU-PF Youth were modelled on the Chinese Red Guard, and were groups of young men who forced people to attend ZANU-PF rallies, buy ZANU-PF cards, and who beat anyone who stood in their way.

Between June 1984 and August 1985, they caused extensive damage in Gweru, Beitbridge, Plumtree, Silobela and Harare. This left around 4000 homeless, hundreds injured and scores of people dead. The Government seemed to sanction their behaviour: few were ever charged or brought to trial for the destruction. After the 1985 elections, Prime Minister Mugabe gave a speech in Shona in which he told his supporters to "go and uproot the weeds from your garden". This led to three days of rioting against Ndebele-speakers in Harare, the hacking to death of a ZAPU candidate and the killings of several other civilians.

### **The CIO**

The CIO was also responsible for serious human rights abuses during these years. Its members played a role in the disappearances. They also detained possibly thousands of others who were later released. They used many methods of torture on those they detained and interrogated. These were well documented in a CCJP report on Torture in Zimbabwe, and many others have documented abuses too. Methods included electric shocks, falanga (beating on the feet), submarine (putting a person's head in a bucket of water). There are also reports of people having their legs tied to a tree branch and their arms to the bumper of a car, which was then reversed until the person was "on the wrack". People were also suspended by their wrists, or interrogated naked.

People in detention were kept in terrible conditions. They were overcrowded, under fed, could not clean themselves, and had poor bedding. In addition they were kept within ear shot of others being tortured, so they could hear their screams. Tortured people would be returned covered in blood to communal cells.

Once more, such torture seemed to have Government approval. A CIO official who was found guilty of cold bloodedly shooting dead a detainee in Esigodini, was immediately given a Presidential pardon.

### **Police Internal Security Intelligence Unit (PISI)**

PISI was a secretive and elite division within the Ministry of Home Affairs. They were similar to the CIO. They wore plain clothes and had powers of arrest. Cde Enos Nkala was made Minister of Home Affairs in late 1985, and he used PISI as his personal unit. Cde Nkala had a long standing hatred for ZAPU, and he used his Ministerial powers to try to crush ZAPU altogether. Soon after entering office, Nkala said: "We want to wipe out the ZAPU leadership à. The murderous organisation and its murderous leadership must be hit so hard they it doesn't feel obliged to do the things it has been doing."

PISI was involved in detaining and disappearing people as well. Often it was hard to tell when it was CIO and when it was PISI involved.

### **More arrests**

In 1985, Minister Nkala had five ZAPU Members of Parliament and eight high ranking ex-ZIPRA members in the army detained. They were held for several months while the Government decided whether to formalise treason charges against them or not. Cde Sydney Malunga, the ZAPU chief whip, was eventually charged with aiding and abetting dissidents, but the evidence against him was not convincing, and he was acquitted. However, he and the others were kept in detention without trial until September 1986.

By the end of 1986, there were very few ZAPU officials from the top leadership down to minor office bearers, who had not been detained, harassed, beaten, killed, or forced into exile.

### **Dissident activities between 1984 and 1987**

There was an upsurge in dissident violence in the wake of the general election of 1985. One of the worst cases was the murder at Mwenezi of seventeen Shona speaking villagers, including small children. They were murdered by dissidents by being herded into a hut which was set on fire. As people tried to run out, they were shot, including two 2-year olds. This attack was immediately widely condemned by many, including CCJP, who expressed shock at the "abhorrent and cowardly violence" and called on "all those with real or imagined political grievances to forsake violence and to address their grievances to Government in a peaceful and responsible manner."

In 1986, there was very little press coverage given to dissident activities. During 1987, there was a noticeable increase in dissident crimes, including 66 murders, 44 property losses and 17 assaults. There was a major attack on a farmers' club near Gweru, and two tourists murdered on the way to Victoria Falls. Six clinic staff were also murdered in Nkayi: although this incident was attributed to dissidents, some aspects of the case suggest this could have been carried out by Government agencies.

At the end of November 1987, weeks before the signing of the Unity Accord, dissidents hacked 16 missionaries to death in Matobo, among them five children.

### **Moves towards Unity**

Although ZAPU won 15 seats in the 1985 election, it was unable to operate well as a party. Too many of its leaders had been detained or had fled the country. ZAPU councils in rural areas were dissolved under emergency powers and ZAPU supporters were still suffering from the effects of 5 Brigade.

From late 1985, ZANU-PF began negotiating with ZAPU leaders to dissolve ZAPU into ZANU-PF. Several ZAPU leaders were released from jail to accommodate this, including Cdes Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku, who had been detained for many years. Masuku died a few days later. There was slow progress towards Unity reported in the press. However, in June 1986, Minister Nkala announced the banning of all ZAPU rallies. This was followed with the closing of ZAPU offices and then on 22 September, Nkala effectively banned ZAPU altogether. He ordered that "all ZAPU structures be set aside. From now on ZAPU would be viewed in the same manner as the MNR bandits in Mozambique".

However, by 30 October, talks seemed to be resuming, and on 1 December ZAPU offices were reopened.

### **The Unity Accord**

On 22 of December 1987, Prime Minister Mugabe and the leader of ZAPU, Cde Joshua Nkomo, signed the Unity Accord. This effectively dissolved ZAPU into ZANU-PF.

### **The Amnesty**

On 18 April 1988, Prime Minister Mugabe announced an amnesty for all dissidents, and Minister Nkomo called on them to lay down their arms. A general ordinance was issued saying all those who surrendered before 31 May would get a full pardon. This was extended not just to dissidents but to criminals of various types serving jail terms. Over the next few weeks, 122 dissidents surrendered.

In June, the amnesty was extended to include all members of the security forces who had committed human rights violations.

The 1980s disturbances were finally at an end. This brought relief nation-wide, but in parts of the country it has left a behind many problems which remain unsolved to this day. These include poor health, poverty, practical and legal problems and a deep rooted suspicion of Government officials.

## PART TWO : FINDINGS

### CASE STUDY I - NYAMANDLOVU INCLUDING TSHOLOTSHO

#### Summary of 5 Brigade impact in Nyamandlovu, including Tsholotsho

The way 5 Brigade behaved in Matabeleland North has already been talked about in this report in the history section. 5 Brigade were deployed to Matabeleland at the end of January 1983. Thousands of atrocities, including mass murders, mass beatings and burning of whole villages took place in the next six weeks. 5 Brigade was withdrawn for a month mid-year and retrained. They then returned to the region. Detentions and disappearances then became more common than murders.

Any village which had experienced 5 Brigade atrocities lived in a state of intense anxiety and fear, unsure when they might return or who they might target next time. Many hundreds of people, especially young men, fled the area for Bulawayo or Botswana, to avoid being accused of being dissidents.

At times villagers had to watch those close to them dying slowly from untreated wounds. They had been warned not to seek medical help, and could be shot as curfew breakers if they tried. Many others have permanent disabilities, and cannot work well in their fields or carry loads any more. Others still suffer mentally, with headaches, dizzy spells, nightmares and depression.

Families have been left without breadwinners, children without parents, and with the trauma of having seen their parents, husbands, community leaders harmed and humiliated.

There are practical problems left behind. People need death certificates for the missing. Without them, their children have failed to get birth certificates, they have lost out on pensions and been unable to inherit savings accounts.

#### 5 Brigade atrocities in Nyamandlovu / Tsholotsho

<b>Killed:</b>	900 named or numbered victims
<b>Property losses</b>	345 homesteads (involves burning of 26 villages entirely)
<b>Individual assaults</b>	314 named victims
<b>Mass beatings</b>	74 ( whole villages beaten together)

#### Summary of dissident activities in Nyamandlovu / Tsholotsho

The information on dissidents is mainly from *The Chronicle* newspaper. There is some reference to dissident murders and beatings in BLPC and CCJP interviews. The dissidents mainly targeted white farmers in this area, and it was also in Nyamandlovu that the six foreign tourists were kidnapped. Dissidents also destroyed Government equipment, burnt several buses and robbed many stores. Their impact was mainly on the commercial farmers, many of whom left their farms and moved into Bulawayo following the brutal murder of many farming families.

#### Dissident atrocities in Nyamandlovu /Tsholotsho

<b>Killed:</b>	50 ( newspaper reports)
<b>or</b>	39 (HR reports)
<b>Property losses</b>	94 homesteads burnt (Newspaper reports)
	dam building
	equipment destroyed
<b>Assaults</b>	30 (newspaper reports)
<b>or</b>	32 (HR reports)

The atrocities recorded here are not all those committed in this region. They are just those which we were told about, or which we could find out about from written documents. We know these numbers do not show how much suffering there was. The following piece is taken from the "Village by Village" summaries from the original report. This refers to only seven villages, or lines, from south-western Tsholotsho.

The original report looks in detail at **177 villages** (lines) in Tsholotsho, and 17 commercial farms.

The numbers in brackets record BLPC interview codes:

\*\*\*" indicates source is CCJP archive;

\*\*\*\*\*" indicates perpetrators are dissidents.

NESHANGO LINE (next to Ningombeneshango Airstrip):

3 February 1983: Mass beating of villagers and shooting of 2 young pregnant girls, followed by their being bayoneted open to reveal the still moving fetuses. These two girls (already pregnant) and several others had been raped by members of the ZNA in November of 1982, who reportedly left by helicopter after several days of raping these girls. (1146 - 1168 inclusive).

Raped: 8

Dead: 2

Beaten: 6 named victims, 50 estimated total

KUMBULA SCHOOL, PUMULA VILLAGE (approx. 5 km SE of Pumula Mission)

13 February 1983: Whole village beaten, and 7 shot dead, including a teacher, after digging their own grave. Witnesses refer to a fountain of blood from the pit. (file H, all named,\*\* CCJP case files confirms 1 name, also 298-9, 310-11)

April 1983: Several ZAPU officials badly beaten, one named victim (323)

Dead: 7

Beaten: 50 estimated (January), plus 10 estimated (April).

CAWUNAJENA (10 km SW of Pumula Mission):

8 February 1983: Entire village rounded up, and many were beaten very severely. 12 men and women, including 2 school teachers, were shot dead. This happened during the night. The 5B camped nearby and the dead were not buried until a year later, by which time many bones were scattered around.(File H has all names, also 479).

2 other men abducted and killed here in February. (315, 318)

A woman was also abducted into the bush and shot with her baby on her back. (314)

Another woman was also abducted in February and shot. (481)

Dead: 17

Beaten: 50 estimated

GULAKABILI (approx. 20 km SSW of Pumula Mission)

12 February 1983: Whole village abducted from nearby to the Pumula Mission area, where they were beaten. Some were then forced to dig a mass grave, made to climb in, and were shot. They were buried while still moving, and villagers were made to dance on the grave and sing songs in praise of ZANU-PF. Number of dead given as 12. (File H has all names, also BLPC 300, 305-9 incl.)

One victim locked in a hut and burned to death. (296)

MARCH 83: 5B burnt 5 homesteads one morning. (3246-48)

ZNA soldier killed while trying to visit his mother, on leave. (304)

2 others from this area also killed by 5B, circumstances unclear. (478, 484)

A woman was accused of cooking for dissidents and was shot dead. (293).

A woman and her child were taken from here to Pumula Mission and killed (292, also file H)

7 others from this area met individual deaths - one was detained trying to get to Plumtree and was never seen again, another went missing from a house in Bulawayo, and his wife and child were apparently killed by 5B, while trying to flee to Botswana. Another man had his throat cut and bled to death. (file H)

Dead: 25 named victims

Beaten: 50 estimated

Destroyed: 7 known homesteads

SOLOKWE: (4 km north west of Pumula Mission, now resettled)

\*\*JUNE 1983: CCJP Comm of Inquiry report of 22 villagers including women and children burnt to death in a hut, after being brutally beaten first. The owner of the hut begged for the lives of his 4 youngest children to be spared, and this was allowed, although the life of an older daughter was not spared. (file A, file H also refers, also 316-17, 322, 462)

Dead: 22

Burnt: 1 hut

PELANDABA (west of Pumula Mission):

29 January 1983: 5B rounded up many men from the area, tortured them until they couldn't walk and shot them. File H names 8 victims, \*\*CCJP case files also reports 11 other named deaths here in 1983, probably same day, and 1 death in 1984. BLPC names 2 more victims from Jan incident. (342-346)

3 others killed, including a married couple who went to report dissidents in the area. (345, 348)

Dead: 25 named victims

Beaten: 50 estimated

SEQWINI: ( approx. 15 km due north of Pumula Mission):

15 April 1983:1 person killed by 5 Brigade, bayoneted to death. (1232)

Dead: 1

KORODZIBA (west of Pumula Mission, now resettled):

February 83: 5B came to the school and took about 60 pupils aged over 14 years. They were all beaten and asked about dissidents. 20-30 girls were raped and then ordered to have sex with some of the boys while the soldiers watched. They were beaten for 3 hours. (3311)

4 MARCH 1983: 5 villagers were murdered at night for being PF-ZAPU members. (1223-27 incl.)

Also MARCH: 2 children out of a group of children died of starvation trying to run away from 5 Brigade in this area. They were trying to reach Ngamo railway siding, which is about 100 km NE of Korodziba. The dead were aged 9 and 14, the survivor was 15. (1234-5)

Dead: 5 plus 2

Raped: 25?

Beaten: 60

## **CASE STUDY II - MATOBO (KEZI)**

### **Summary of events in Matobo**

CCJP have good records of much that happened in Matobo. There is a lot of information about the terrible effects of the food curfew, which lasted throughout the early months of 1984. The embargo on food was total: stores were closed, drought relief food deliveries were stopped, houses were searched and food found was destroyed. The missions kept records of the situation, and tried to feed people when they could, but this was difficult for them. They had to watch children fainting from hunger at school, and know they were being beaten and detained as well. There was a real concern that people would begin dying in large numbers if the curfew continued. This was conveyed repeatedly to officials, who eventually responded by lifting the curfew in April. CCJP also recorded many atrocities in the region during the 1980s, mainly by Government troops.

BLPC also interviewed people in Matobo. However, they did not speak to as many people as they had in Tsholotsho. This was partly because there was not enough time and partly because people were afraid to talk. There was still enough information collected to give some idea of what things were like here, and what Bhalagwe camp was like.

5 Brigade had its first impact on Matobo in early 1983. The northern edge of Matobo was affected by the first curfew, and young men were taken off the buses at this time and never seen again. By the second half of 1983, 5 Brigade had been reported burning homesteads and beating people in Matobo. However, it is in January 1984 that 5 Brigade begin a systematic process of mass beatings and mass detentions in the region. People were taken from their villages to detention centres at Sun Yet Sen and Bhalagwe.

### **Bhalagwe Camp**

Bhalagwe Camp was originally a military camp. In 1982, the mainly ZIPRA army unit there were accused of being dissidents. The camp was shut down, and not used much. It became a feared place in 1984, when thousands of civilians from all over Matabeleland South were trucked in and detained there. They were brutally tortured and many were killed. People were kept in very bad conditions. They were overcrowded and beaten daily.

CIO as well as 5 Brigade also gave people electric shocks, submarine and other forms of torture. There was a lot of sexual torture at Bhalagwe. Women were raped, and had sticks forced into them. Men had their genitals tied in rubber and beaten. People had to dig graves for those killed. Later, these bodies were removed, and those who died were thrown down mine shafts in the region.

The detentions of people, thousands at a time, continued from January until May 1984. After this, detentions eased off, although some ZIPRA ex-combatants and ZAPU officials were kept on in detention for some months.

**The figures for atrocities in Matobo do not reflect the scale of what happened, because only a few people were interviewed.** But the following numbers are what we were told about.

Dead or missing	220
Tortured assaulted	610
Mass beatings	27 villages
Mass detentions	18 villages
Property burnt	35 homesteads

The following "village" summary reflects events in one area of south western Matobo. Some villagers in the more northern part of this area were taken directly to Bhalagwe on their detention. This is particularly the case for those who lived in the vicinity of St Joseph's Mission. There was a small 5 Brigade base near to the mission, at Bidi, and people were often rounded up to this base, and from there to Bhalagwe.

\*\*\* indicates source is CCJP archive:

\*\*\*\* indicates perpetrators are dissidents.

The numbers in brackets record BLPC interview codes:

ST JOSEPH'S MISSION: (approx. 30 km south west of Kezi)

[For the purposes of this report, the designation "St Joseph's Mission" refers to an area of approximately 10 km in radius around the mission, inclusive of many settlements which are not always clearly indicated by name on topographical maps of the region.]

\*\*\*\*November 82: Bango Area: unknown people came at night and shot dead 2 men, an ex-ZIPRA and his uncle. (3451/2)

\*\*\*\*November 1982: dissidents tied up a woman and abducted her daughter and 2 other young girls, whom they raped and released in the morning. (3477/8)

\*\*End February 1983 (CCJP report): Enos Nkala addressed a rally at Kafusi Dam and people were trucked there from all over Mat South. The Provincial ZAPU treasurer was detained for 2 months after this meeting, was given electric shock treatment, and severely beaten. He was detained because he challenged Nkala who said people willingly supported dissidents: the ZAPU official asked Nkala when in history people without guns had been able to arrest those with guns. He also asked if the 5 Brigade really intended to kill all the Ndebele, as they kept saying. This same man had been badly beaten by the army a month earlier. (3456 also reports the incident). *The Chronicle* also reports on this rally (on 1 March), and on the first comment made by this man, although it neglects to mention the man's subsequent detention and torture for this comment.

December 1983: Mgulatshani area: 8 named men and women plus "many others" were detained by a ZNA unit (not 5 Brigade). Some were demobbed ZIPRAs. All were severely beaten. They were tortured by CIO and given electric shocks to the testicles, at Kezi Air Strip.

One of those detained in 1983 was detained again in May 1984 at Bhalagwe. He was with other ex-ZIPRAs, held for 4 months and regularly tortured. Many of the ZIPRAs just disappeared during this time, and others were threatened with ending up "down mine shafts". 5 named. (3459-68)

January 1984: ZANU-PF officials addressed a rally at Mbembeswana in central Matobo. People were forced to attend and were trucked in from all over the region, including St Joseph's.

\*\* (CCJP formal report) On the way home from this rally, an army puma crashed, killing 6 school children from St Joseph's Mission and injuring 104 others, some very seriously. The CCJP report comments that *The Chronicle* reports the incident, but gets the location of the accident wrong. ( 3469-76 also refer, giving all names of dead).

February 1984: villagers in the area were rounded up first to the 5 Brigade camp near St Joseph's and then to Bhalagwe. (Tshipisane village mentioned, among other unnamed villages). Victims, both men and women, refer to being beaten with "logs" and also thorn branches. People talk of being tortured into making false confessions. There is also reference to women having sharp sticks pushed into their vaginas. (3418-3424 incl., 3448-50 )

A man found herding donkeys west of the mission was beaten by 5 Brigade for "curfew breaking", taken to Bhalagwe where he was tortured and detained for three months. (3447)

February 1984: an elderly woman who ran a grinding mill was severely beaten by 5 Brigade at Bidi Store for breaking the curfew and the food embargo. The next day her female co-workers were also beaten, and forced to open the store so the 5 Brigade could drink beer. (3481)

2 villagers (ZAPU branch secretary and 1 other) were severely beaten by 5 Brigade in the bush, and were hospitalised for 3 months. ((3482/3)

2 villagers, a man and a woman were severely beaten in their home by 5 Brigade one morning. (3484/5).

2 women, 1 with a baby, badly beaten by 5 Brigade, one of them on 2 occasions. (3486/7)

A husband and wife found on the road were badly beaten, the wife stripped naked first. Another was beaten with them and taken to Bhalagwe. (3488-90).

A woman, her brother and 2 others were removed from their homes, beaten, taken to Bhalagwe, and the woman had sharp objects forced into her vagina, along with further beatings. (3491/3)

February 1984: an old man and 1 other were severely beaten for `parenting dissidents", and were taken to Bhalagwe for several months. (3494-7)

February 1984: MZOLA DAM area: a group of at least 8 elderly men (named) were severely beaten by 5 Brigade for eating at 11 in the morning. They were forced to do strenuous exercise while being beaten throughout the day. One was then released, while the others were kept overnight, transferred to Guardian Angel and then Mabisi Dip. Torture continued and several of the men collapsed completely and one was finally beaten to death (named).(3497-3504 incl.).

February 1984: near St Joseph"s dam: 5 Brigade summoned an old man across a field and beat him for not running. He fell over and was beaten with sticks until his nose and mouth bled. His family took him home by wheelbarrow. (3505).

April 1984: a man found driving a car at Bidi Shopping Centre was accused of being senior ZAPU and beaten, His wife and child were beaten and his car was shot full of holes. He was then detained at Bhalagwe for 3 months and was tortured by CIO. (3453-55)

November 1984: Mtsuli village: 9 members of 5 Brigade severely beat a man in front of others and kicked him in the diaphragm until he vomited blood. (3446)

\*\*11 February 1985 (CCJP formal report): a man from Bidi was among many abducted throughout Matabeleland in nightly raids by CIO. By Nov 1985 he had not been located.

2 other named men went missing in this area in Feb 1985 (3339/40)

\*\*\*\*May 1987: dissidents accused people in Mtsuli village of being sell-outs. They severely beat 2 men. The incident was reported to ZRP and the 2 dissidents were later shot. (3457/8)

Missing : 3 named, plus others implied

Dead: 9

Tortured: 16

Raped: 3 plus others implied

Assaulted: 41

1 mass beating

104 injured in accident

Detained: 16

## RESULTS - ALL AREAS

Apart from the two case study areas, victims from other areas whose names were on the files were also counted up. These figures are very low compared to what seems to have really happened, but they do give an indication of events, and of which areas suffered. They show which years were the worst, and how offences changed from killings to detentions to disappearances.

The graphs that follow show how many atrocities occurred, and where they occurred. One of the graphs shows who committed the most crimes against civilians. **80% of all atrocities were committed by 5 Brigade.** The CIO is next highest, with 6.5%, followed by "the army" with 4.5%. **Dissidents committed only 2% of reported crimes.**

An effort was made to add up all the information to say how many people we now know to have suffered various offences. The numbers are much lower than what really happened, but they provide a starting point to which future information can add. The full report shows where these figures have come from.

**Deaths:** confirmed dead number over 2000: almost certain dead number between 3000 and 4000: possible dead could be double this or more.

**Property loss:** confirmed homesteads burnt number 680. This is conservative, but the true figure is not known.

**Detentions:** at least 10 000 detained. This is also conservative.

**Tortured, wounded:** not less than 7 000 beaten or tortured. Again, this figure is very conservative.

Only further research can establish more accurate figures.

## PART THREE : IMPLICATIONS OF RESULTS

### I ORGANISED VIOLENCE: ITS IMPLICATIONS

Organised violence is violence committed against civilians by an organised group of people, which may be Governmental or not. There are several definitions of organised violence. The most important theme across all these definitions is:

*organised violence is violence which deliberately inflicts pain and suffering to achieve a political objective*

#### FORMS OF ORGANISED VIOLENCE

1. **Physical Torture:** Physical torture is the deliberate causing of extreme pain on a person in a position of complete helplessness. The number of types is virtually limitless. However, the most common type of physical torture seems to be beating on the body or head. Other types include electrocution, falanga (beating of feet), asphyxiation (cutting off breathing), suspension by arms or legs, painful body postures, burning or use of heat, sexual torture, rape.

All these types of torture were reported as having occurred during the 1980s in Zimbabwe. 80% of people reported beatings, with all other kinds of torture occurring to a lesser extent. Electric shocks, falanga, rape and having burning plastic bags dripped on to the body were all reported. The effects on the body of all these types of torture can be severe and long-lasting. Studies of civilians who suffered in the 1970s War of Liberation, show that many have permanent physical disabilities. Falanga can damage nerves in the feet permanently, and people who were beaten show seriously reduced ability to perform normal activities. Carrying loads, walking for the bus, chopping firewood and many other activities are difficult for survivors of serious beatings to perform. There are also the more obvious disabilities such as loss of eye sight, deafness, loss of limbs or paralysis of limbs resulting from physical torture.

2. **Deprivation:** Deprivation is the deliberate withholding of something in a way that causes extreme stress to others. Withholding of food, water, space, sleep, or needed medical attention are all examples of this.

Deprivation was used as a deliberate weapon at times in the 1980s. The food curfew in Matabeleland South in 1984 is the clearest example, where adequate food was deliberately withheld from people for several months. People were also told not to seek medical help after serious beatings, and were kept in deliberately overcrowded conditions at Bhalagwe and other camps.

3. **Sensory over-stimulation:** This is the relentless exposure of a person to sensory input. It is a technique easier to use in a prison situation, rather than in the community. Exposure to constant lighting or noise are examples. This experience was reported in holding camps and police camps. Whether this was deliberate or merely a consequence of lack of concern for detainees is not clear.

4. **Psychological torture:** this is the creation of extreme fear in a position of uncontrollability. Physical torture is almost invariably accompanied by psychological torture, or the experience of extreme fear. Not infrequently, psychological torture occurs in the absence of physical torture. Examples are threats to oneself or one's family, mock executions, sexual verbal assaults, abuse with excrement, forced nudity.

Psychological torture was extremely wide spread in the 1980s. *It can be extremely effective in causing both short term and long term damage and should not be considered a lesser form of torture.*

5. **Witnessing:** This is used as a deliberate strategy to undermine and terrorise large numbers of people in a short time. Forcing people to witness those they love or respect being tortured or executed is a very effective way of destroying the morale of entire communities.

Forced witnessing was extremely widespread in the 1980s as this report has already shown. Those who witnessed torture and executions in villages or camps in the 1980s, still show marked signs of anxiety and distress, or suffer from flashbacks and nightmares.

- 6. Disappearances:** this refers to the use of forced disappearances as a type of psychological torture. Individuals are abducted and kept in secret detention for long periods of time. They are frequently executed. Disappearances serve two purposes: they rid the Government of leadership of the opposition, and secondly they cause huge distress in the remaining community. The effect of not knowing how or when or where your loved one died, causes profound damage to the families left behind. In Zimbabwe, disappearances occurred during the 1970s in that many people went off to train and never returned: where they were killed is not known to this day, and studies have documented the long-lasting pain this causes for the families. In the 1980s, disappearances were used as a deliberate Government strategy, especially around the election in 1985. There are several hundred disappeared persons on record.

## CONSEQUENCES OF ORGANISED VIOLENCE

### Individual consequences:

**Psychosomatic:** torture causes short term and long term physical and psychological damage for individuals. Assessing which symptoms are physical in origin and which are psychological is not necessarily easy. Studies in primary health care settings in Zimbabwe have shown a high percentage of people suffering from anxiety and depression, and related psychosomatic disorders. Many of the headaches, stomach aches, poor sleep patterns and other vague disturbances that people present with are linked to psychological stress. Certainly, survivors of violence frequently display these kinds of symptoms, and counselling for their histories of torture can reduce these symptoms.

**Psychological:** people will frequently show post traumatic stress in the immediate wake of torture. This includes symptoms of sleep disturbance, flashbacks, anxiety and over-reaction to events reminding one of the torture. However, some years after the torture, one is more likely to find a pervasive sense of depression and apathy in survivors, a low self esteem and sense that life is pointless or unfair. This has been referred to as "continuous traumatic stress syndrome".

**Physical:** in addition, there are very real physical consequences of torture, some of which are distinctive. These include signs of joint pains and over stretching in joints. Pains may also be associated in a symbolic way with the torture: for example a man who has had electric shocks to the testicles may be impotent afterwards, even though there is no lasting physical damage. Brain injury, paralysis, fractures, damaged organs, deafness, blindness and altered functions are all consequences of torture, and all are hard, if not impossible, to rehabilitate years after the event.

### Consequences for society:

Organised violence often serves the purpose of terrorising whole communities. This is intentional on the part of organised groups: it is a very effective way of silencing political opposition. Sadly, the long term effects of organised violence can profoundly affect people's abilities to lead full, social lives.

*There is a sustained climate of fear amongst the affected population.* People remain afraid of officials, official places, official programmes, or even attending functions such as rallies or social events where there are large numbers of people together.

*There may be an increase in violent behaviour in affected populations:* studies in South Africa and Northern Ireland show an increase in random violence and all violent crimes in areas where organised violence has been widespread.

*Silence in group situations:* People are afraid to voice their opinions in public gatherings for fear of being victimised later. This severely undermines the chances of true democracy in a nation.

*Concern for human rights in future:* the transition from strong repressive government to a weak democratic government can give rise to more violence. There is also the problem of future generations wanting revenge for the past.

## Conclusion

There is great cause for concern in Zimbabwe when one considers the high numbers of survivors in the country. Many of these are survivors from the 1980s violence, and the multiple impact on people in physical, psychological and material terms has been enormous. People have been tortured, seen their dead ones murdered or abducted, had their houses burnt. No efforts have been made to alleviate their plight, and those who caused the damage have not been

made answerable. The possibilities of healing or repairing the damage in this situation remain slim and would require the input of resources and good will on the part of the authorities.

## II LEGAL DAMAGES

It is not the intention of this report to claim for compensation on behalf of those who suffered. In any case, this is now mostly impossible in terms of current laws. In terms of the Prescription Act, claims for damages have to be made within three years of the alleged injury, and the 1980s disturbances are now ten years in the past. At the time, people were too afraid to claim damages, or did not know how to, and now it is too late.

Claims against individuals who tortured others has also been made impossible by the Emergency Powers (Security Forces Indemnity Act) which was declared in July 1982, and the general amnesty declared in June 1988.

Those who suffered violence and loss in the 1970s are able to claim compensation through the War Victims Compensation Act. However, those who suffered after 1980 are not included in terms of the fund, and cannot claim compensation through these channels. It is nonetheless quite clear that many suffered huge material and personal damages. If individual compensation is not possible at this stage, communal reparation should be considered.

However, the Zimbabwean Government itself stated in its report in 1996 to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights that:

***pursuant to the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987, [the Government] had decided to compensate all families with missing relatives, regardless of whether there were court proceedings concerning the circumstances of the disappearance.***

This undertaking has yet to be legally challenged by families of missing people.

The legal damages chapter of the original report set out to look at what legal damages would have been forthcoming to claimants who suffered, if they had claimed before the three-year prescription period was up. Ten typical cases involving death, injuries and property losses were assessed in terms of existing Zimbabwean laws and case precedents. The damages were worked out in terms of US\$ value at the time of injury.

The damages on just these ten cases worked out to have a US\$ value of approximately US\$ 200 000. This figure was used as a base line to cost all currently documented cases of damage or injury, and the very conservative estimate of final damage for these known cases was over US\$ 68 000 000 (in Z\$ at an exchange rate of 40 to 1, this is Z\$ 2 720 000 000)

The compilers of the report suggest that this amount be sourced through Government and international donors as a basic minimum, and used to establish a Reconciliation Trust, whose agenda would be communal reparation for those regions which suffered in the 1980s.

## III HUMAN REMAINS

Throughout Matabeleland and in parts of the Midlands, communities are disturbed by the presence of mass graves, shallow graves and human remains in mine shafts. In some cases, people know who the dead are, in other cases they do not. In all cases these human remains cause concern: people have at times mentioned a desire for reburial, or for ceremonies or shrines to commemorate the dead, and allow them to rest at peace.

Those murdered by Government forces were disposed of in four ways.

- i. **burial denied:** at times relatives were forbidden from burying their dead and had to watch them being scavenged, until bones were either buried or removed by Government forces. Chances of recovery are now almost non-existent.
- ii. **mass graves:** these lie scattered throughout the region, particularly in Matabeleland North. If communities so wished, it would be possible to investigate such graves. In many cases, identification could be possible and in all cases, dignified reburial could take place.

- iii. **people buried under huts:** there are at least nine cases in Tsholotsho alone where people were burnt to death in huts and then buried in the same place. If communities so wished, such sites could be forensically investigated. Chances of identifying and returning bodies would be good, in places where those involved are known.
- iv. **mine shafts:** there have been many reports made of shafts in which bodies were dumped during the 1980s, particularly in Matabeleland South. Bodies have been retrieved from two mine shafts in recent years. While cause of death could be established forensically, exact identification would be hard to prove at this stage.

Expert forensic teams would be able to help Zimbabweans exhume human remains. This is a specialist task, which requires specifically trained persons. The Argentinean Forensic Team is one such expert group. A professional exhumation requires much work before the bodies are actually retrieved. This involves the collecting of information about those in the graves, counselling for the families involved, and gathering information about exactly how each person died. This can all help with identification.

The process of reburial of the dead could be positive in many ways, if it was what communities decided they wanted. It could help heal the suffering of families, if they could have back the bodies of their loved ones and mourn them decently. It could help establish cause of death and therefore the truth about the history of the region. It could encourage the rest of the nation to acknowledge this history.

This chapter of the original report recommends careful consultation with communities to establish what is culturally appropriate and desired with regard to the human remains in the region.

## PART FOUR : RECOMMENDATIONS

*Peace is not the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice*  
Martin Luther King

This report is not just a history. It tells the story of continued suffering for thousands of people. It may appear on the surface that there is peace in Zimbabwe, and that people have forgotten and forgiven the past. However, talking to over a thousand Zimbabweans in Matabeleland has shown that this is not the case. People still feel deep rooted fear, anger, and distrust. Their wounds have not healed: indeed they are festering and need to be acknowledged and cured if peace is to be guaranteed in the future.

In order to facilitate this, the report makes the following recommendations:

1. **National acknowledgement:** we need the truth of what happened to be revealed, so that reconciliation can begin. There are large parts of Zimbabwe which have no idea of what happened in the western part of the country, while they were enjoying the early fruits of Independence. We therefore recommend:
  - that this report be published and be made available to the public;
  - that the Chihambakwe Commission report be made available to the public;
  - that the Government appoints a fact-finding committee if they dispute the truth of this report;
  - that nation-wide discussion across all ethnic groups be encouraged to promote reconciliation.
2. **Human Rights Violators:** all those who committed human rights violations, whether security forces or dissidents, are immune from prosecution because of the amnesty of 1988. However, we recommend that:
  - known human rights violators should be removed from positions of authority which may enable them to violate human rights again in the future.
3. **Legal Amendments:** there are currently no legal mechanisms through which those who suffered from damage in the 1980s can claim compensation. The victims of the 1980s are therefore in a different position to those of the 1970s, who can claim through the War Victims Compensation Act. There are also problems surrounding birth and death certificates which arise directly from these years. At the same time, the Government undertook in its report to the United Nations in 1996 that it would pay compensation to families of persons who disappeared during the 1980s, but has yet to do so. We therefore recommend the following:
  - that the Government publicise its undertaking to pay victims, as stated to the UN in 1996;
  - that the Government should devise mechanisms to process claims by victims;
  - that the War Victims Compensation Act should be amended to include those who suffered during the 1980s;
  - that there should be an inquiry into the Births and Deaths Act to find a policy making it easier to register births and deaths for those families affected by the disturbances;
  - that the Government should amend the Agricultural Finance Corporation Act to cancel debts incurred by farmers during the years of disturbance, where it can be shown that such debts were the result of human rights violations which occurred before 22 December 1987.
4. **Human remains:** it has been noted that there are many unmarked graves and graves of missing persons in regions affected by the disturbances. Communities need to be consulted to find out what their wishes are in respect to this issue. We therefore recommend that:
  - a neutral team of anthropologists and psychologists conduct research to determine the desires of communities affected by such graves and human remains.
  - Government undertake to protect such grave sites pending the outcome of this research
  - Government should not hinder or prevent qualified teams from helping the process of identifying human remains and reburying them, if this is the wish of communities.
5. **Health:** it is clear that entire communities have suffered and are still suffering severe psychological trauma. Those who perpetrated crimes may also be suffering psychological pain as a result. Psychological healing is an essential component of reconciliation. We therefore recommend that:
  - Government and donors provide the necessary financial and logistic support to enable professional teams of counsellors/psychologists/health practitioners to work in affected areas

- those non-governmental organisations already doing work in the field of psychological rehabilitation, send teams to work in affected communities forthwith
- 6. Communal Reparation: Reconciliation / Uxolelwano Trust:** individual compensation for everyone is now an impossible task, although some could be eligible if certain laws were altered as recommended above. Government cannot afford to compensate all individually. In any case, entire communities were targeted and entire communities could begin healing if Government acknowledged their role in the suffering. Reparation to whole communities could take the form of development in strategic areas. There would need to be a body that was accountable for identifying what communities wanted and overseeing development projects, to prevent abuse of funds. We therefore recommend that:
- a trust be formed called the "Reconciliation / Uxolelwano Trust" to facilitate the process of communal reparation
- 7. Constitutional safe-guards:** Zimbabweans need guarantees that human rights violations on such a massive scale can never take place again. We therefore recommend that:
- citizens of Zimbabwe and the Government begin a debate to consider what safeguards we need to add to the constitution to prevent human rights violations ever occurring again.
- 8. The Future:** this report is a starting point in what should become a serious debate surrounding what happened in Zimbabwe in the 1980s and why. This will require sensitivity and restraint from all parties concerned. We therefore recommend:
- that Government, universities, churches, non-governmental organisations and others do not make inflammatory comments and instead promote sensible dialogue among all Zimbabweans.

## **EVENTS SINCE THE REPORT**

### **UMTHWAKAZI RECONCILIATION GROUP**

It has been decided that the formation of a formal Trust is not appropriate at this time, although this may still happen at some point in the future. Instead, a loosely aligned group of concerned non-governmental organisations are meeting regularly to exchange ideas of how best to go ahead with the report's recommendations, in the hope that sooner or later Government will join the initiative.

They have called themselves the "Umthwakazi Reconciliation Group" and their declared intention is "*Working Together for Healing, Development and Reconciliation*". The group has no formal structure, constitution or agenda, apart from a shared desire to promote healing and development in the region. They meet to exchange information and progress in this regard, so that their activities can be mutually helpful and avoid duplication of efforts.

The following organisations are those that to date have agreed to affiliate themselves to Umthwakazi. The number of such organisations grows with each meeting:

AMANI Trust, Legal Resources Foundation, Imbovane, Zimrights, Zimbabwe Project Trust, World Vision, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, and Transparency International.

The AMANI Trust is a non-governmental organisation which rehabilitates survivors of psycho-social trauma. It has been operating in Mashonaland Central since 1994, rehabilitating survivors of the Chimurenga, and training nurses to recognise and deal with a range of psychological issues. Since January of 1998 it has been operating in Gwanda District, similarly identifying and counselling survivors of violence from both the 1970s and the 1980s. AMANI is training health workers and also priests and Catholic personnel to do counselling work in the provinces of Matabeleland and the Midlands.

### **ZCBC MATABELELAND COMMITTEE**

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference have formed their own task committee whose intentions are similar to those of the Mthwakazi Reconciliation Group, namely to try to promote healing in Matabeleland. This committee will remain independent of other initiatives in the region, although it recognises the importance of work being done in this field by others and will network with them when appropriate.

The committee will facilitate the collection of further information in affected areas and in fact this process has already begun. The aim of the new round of data collection is to establish in more detail the scale of the violence in affected areas and also to begin to collect some ideas from people on what they think they need in the future to heal.

A new interviewing format was devised, which included sections which enabled people to indicate what development there has been in their regions since 1980, what further development might be most needed, and might be seen as an act of reconciliation. This information was requested on the understanding that no development might take place, in order not to raise false hopes.

Information was collected relating to current legal problems from those years and to whether people wanted reburials or shrines or ceremonies to help with the problems surrounding the mass graves and shallow graves in their areas.

This information is going to be combined with information from community meetings and presented in a detailed report. This will give parishes in regions that have been affected by violence an idea of what people perceive to be needed in their areas.

The committee further aims to conscientise the faithful and to publicise in various ways the need for healing the wounds which remain from the violence.