



***“When the going gets tough
the man gets going!”***

**Zimbabwean Women’s views on Politics,
Governance, Political Violence, and
Transitional Justice.**

Report produced by the Research and Advocacy Unit [RAU],
Idasa [Institute for Democracy in Africa], and the
International Center for Transitional Justice [ICTJ].

November 2010

*..Because of you...
Many of us have lost our pride and dignity because of you
Many of us have lost all we had because of you
Families have been destroyed because of you
Hearts have been broken because of you
Lives have ended because of you
yet you still continue to say that you're needed.
Needed for what?
More destruction?
More heartbreak?
You're the one who says your job is to take care of women
yet you're the first one to run when problems surface
when the going gets tough the man gets going!
Because of you, my child has no future
Because of you, my sister has AIDS
Because of you, my mother is scarred for life,
and because of you
I cannot bear to look at my own reflection in the mirror.
[Munashe Mkaronda.2010]*



Introduction

In November and December 2009 the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) in partnership with the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), Institute for Democracy in Africa (Idasa) and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) conducted a survey on Zimbabwean women's views on transitional justice. This survey included questions regarding elections, violence, the inclusive government, women and peace, transitional justice mechanisms and law enforcement amongst other topics. A report entitled *Women, Politics and the Zimbabwe Crisis* was produced in May 2010, the first in a series to be produced on the results of the survey. A second, companion report, dealing wholly with the political violence experienced by women, was released in October 2010¹.

In addition to the survey, 10 focus group discussions were held to discuss the findings of the survey. These discussions were held in June 2010 with over 150 women from Harare, Chivhu, Marondera, Masvingo, Mutare, Chinhoyi, Bindura, Gwanda and Bulawayo. The aim of the focus groups was to bring women who had not participated in the survey to discuss the findings, and to substantiate the quantitative data with the qualitative findings from the discussions, as well as to get the views of the women in more detail. The quantitative data from the survey was simplified and explained in the focus groups and this formed the basis of the discussions.

Demographically, the women who participated in the focus groups ranged in ages from early twenties to sixties and they were picked from both rural and urban areas. The majority of the women were married with children and they were mostly women from a variety of different backgrounds including those who were informal traders, students, hairdressers or were unemployed. The Harare groups included women from the NGO sector, teachers, accountants, and there was a group consisting exclusively of female university students. This student group was the one that was at variance with all the other groups on most of the issues, this could be attributed to the fact that they were younger, lived in Harare and had access to more information. The civil society group also were understandably well informed.

The women's responses varied depending on the following factors, their experiences, political affiliation, age and backgrounds. There was no specific response based on their geographical locations except for the Matebeleland groups, i.e. Bulawayo and Gwanda. The fact that the Zimbabwe government has not yet addressed the Matebeleland massacres² popularly known as '*Gukurahundi*' of the 1980s where approximately 20 000 people were killed is a serious source of tension as the Ndebele people are of the opinion that they are discriminated against on tribal grounds. There were on average 12 women per group to encourage all participants to contribute their views.

The focus groups were held over one day with facilitators asking specific questions. The major focus of the discussions revolved around the findings of the first survey report, and also included issues about transitional justice, however, there were also discussions about other current issues that the participants themselves introduced.

The first report, dealt briefly with women's views on political violence, as well as women's views of elections the Inclusive Government, and peace. The findings from this first report were summarized and provided to every member of the focus discussion groups in order to provide a basis for discussion. These summarized findings are given at the beginning of each section below.

Other areas discussed, that were brought up spontaneously by the participants included the ongoing constitutional reform process and threats of violence following the June 2010 Soccer World Cup in South Africa. With regard to the latter, participants claimed that members of the security forces and the ZANU PF youth were threatening violence, saying that they didn't want to unleash violence with the international attention on Southern Africa, but wanted to ride on the back of the anticipated

¹ See RAU (2010), *Preying on the "Weaker" Sex. Political Violence against Women in Zimbabwe*. October 2010, HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT [in press].

² Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) (2007)

'*Breaking the Silence : A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands*' 2nd Edition Jacana Media

xenophobic attacks against Zimbabweans in South Africa. The motives behind these attacks were not known, but this was mentioned by groups from Chinhoyi, Bindura, Chivhu, and Marondera.

With regard to constitutional reform, participants expressed little confidence in the process. They stated that they want a people driven constitution, but, because of intimidation, they are not keen to participate in the process. They stated that in most areas people have already been chosen to speak at the outreach meetings by political party supporters and no one else is allowed to speak, so if they have already chosen people there is no use in participating, and that they will vote 'No' should a draft based on this process be put to referendum.

"We should just drop the constitutional issues because since last year nothing has come out of it. We should go for elections and the party that wins the elections is the one that should draft the new constitution."

Some of the women raised the issue that the constitutional process is being used to campaign for elections and this was the case for all political parties involved as they are just focusing on their interests and not the interests of people.

In introducing the purpose of the focus groups, the facilitators talked about Zimbabwean women's involvement in politics and one of the major problems raised by all groups was that men and women are not treated as equal; women are seen as lesser beings. The groups stated that society's perception of women is what holds them back.³ This includes both men and women, as it is said women's involvement in politics is not in line with married life and women who are seen to be involved in politics are considered women of loose morals or wanting to be like men. There is no equality between men and women. There are still certain things that are considered to be only for men and not for women and politics is one of them. Cultural beliefs were also raised as another reason why women are not participating to their full potential. This problem is compounded by the fact that women do not know their basic human rights; i.e. right to life; right to adequate standard of living; including the right to food, housing, medical care; right to freedom of movement; right to education; right to equality; right to equality before the law and right to peaceful assembly and association to mention a few. Women are lacking confidence to enter the male-dominated world of politics; this lack of confidence is not only seen in politics but in all spheres of women's lives. The women stated that confidence should start at home and NGOs should be holding workshops for ordinary women to gain confidence and at the same time involve the men so that it is not seen as though when women are confident and claiming their space they are taking power away from the men.

Each of the topics covered in the focus groups is discussed in detail below.

³ Here the women were referring mainly to the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean society, and the largely exclusive of women nature of public life in Zimbabwe. Here see RAU (2010), *Women, Politics and the Zimbabwe Crisis*, Report produced by Idasa (An African Democracy Institute), the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), and the Womens' Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ). May 2010. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT



Women and elections

The focus group discussion took the same format as the questionnaire with regard to the sequencing of the topics. The below bullet points are taken from the findings of the survey and the focus groups were to discuss these findings.

- Women believe that they should participate in politics and increasing numbers of women are voting, albeit in less numbers than are actually eligible to vote;
- Women report that their safety has become increasingly threatened during elections, and very large numbers report that they have experienced violence;
- Most women believe that violence is unacceptable during elections, and most women believe that elections should not favour any single party.

The first democratic elections in Zimbabwe were held in 1980 and parliamentary elections have been held every 5 years and Presidential elections held every six years until 2008 when elections were harmonized elections. Ever since then women have made up the majority of the voters as they make up 52% of the population, but have yet to see the influence that this might be expected to bring in representation in Parliament and government.⁴ Women represent only 18% in cabinet yet the Global Political Agreement (GPA) states that it should be 50%. In the focus group discussions the participants had somewhat different views on women's involvement in politics. The survey sought to find out, ***"to what extent do you feel that violence or intimidation is a significant issue in terms of influencing whether women vote and how this situation is different for men?"***

Some of the participants were in agreement that violence had a significant bearing on whether women voted or not as compared to men. From the discussions it became evident that women tend to put their families first and hence they do not go and vote in order to protect their families. Examples of such responses were:

- *"To a large extent because women are negatively affected by intimidation as they have a lot of issues to consider in their roles as mothers, surrogate mothers, and family pillars. They refrain from voting for fear of exposing their families to danger and humiliation."* **(Bulawayo);**
- *"Women feel they have much more to lose than men and naturally women are very protective; they don't want anything that threatens the welfare of the family. The moment someone threatens a woman, the first things that comes to mind are the children, the home itself and property. Women do not like instability so if anything threatens that they would rather stay away."* **(Civic society Group);**
- *"Yes it affects women mostly because they're the weaker sex. And if they are threatened they fear going out to vote."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"Violence is causing voter apathy amongst women amidst threats of violence after the world cup given that the continent will no longer be under international spotlight."* **(Marondera).**

On the other hand, some participants, though in agreement with the fact that violence has a bearing on how women voted, differed on the consequences of violence and intimidation. These other participants felt that women instead went to vote in numbers because of intimidation instead of staying away. Some of the comments were as follows:

- *"Intimidation makes women go and vote as they hope for change."* **(Mutare);**

⁴ According to a survey carried out in November 2009, 76% of the sample voted out of a potentially eligible 100%. In general, the actual numbers that voted were always less than the potentially eligible group by approximately 30% in any given year. See RAU (2010), *Women, Politics and the Zimbabwe Crisis*, Report produced by Idasa (An African Democracy Institute), the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), and the Womens' Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ). May 2010. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT.

- "Women vote more if they are intimidated as they feel there is a need to protect their families." **(University group);**
- "Some women go and vote out of fear, so they do it to protect their families." **(Bindura).**

Other reasons that were given on how intimidation or violence influences the women in voting are:

- "Some women do not vote because they would have run away from the violence." **(Bindura);**
- "Violence is a way of excluding women as men feel threatened that women will take over their political posts." **(University).**

On the question whether this situation was different from men, this is what the participants had to say:

- "Our society, by the mere structure of its gender roles and values, ensures that men are let off the hook from fulfilling familial, social, emotional, religious and even economical responsibilities. E.g. in religion it is mostly women that meet regularly in uniform wearing groups taking care of the sick, bereaved and under-privileged. Men are therefore not greatly affected by intimidation as women. For them, being involved in violence and intimidation can be a test of their manhood, an ego booster." **(Bulawayo);**
- "Men are usually the perpetrators." **(Mutare);**
- "Men are physically stronger, braver and take advantage of their superior positions." **(Masvingo);**
- "In the case of violence men can protect themselves better." **(Chivhu);**
- "Women can't defend themselves; hence they are exposed to sexual abuse as compared to men." **(Marondera).**

Commenting on the question, "**What other factors are preventing women from voting or more broadly engaging in politics?**" respondents expressed varying responses to this question such as:

- "Social constraints - Women who venture into 'male domains' such as politics are considered disrespectful and of low morals and are labelled as deviants in a community that has seen men dominating political processes." **(Bulawayo);**
- "Conditions of work for women as MPs are difficult as they have additional roles at home and generally politics and violence are linked so women shun such activities." **(University);**
- "Usually in our culture women don't decide for themselves, you're supposed to seek permission first from your husband so that you can do something. Secondly those women who participate in politics mostly are labelled prostitutes. So you won't feel comfortable if you're a woman and say you want to become an MP or something, they will say 'look at that prostitute' so it discourages women from participating. And in our culture we always know that men are leaders so it's another factor which discourages us. The other problem is our patriarchal societies, the cultural beliefs in our society, women think that they are inferior and cannot stand on their own. Sometimes it's fear of the unknown and sometimes it is ignorance." **(Civic Society Group);**
- "Women discriminate and degrade one another, they are overcome by jealousy and don't like other women to be promoted." **(Chivhu);**
- "Lack of information and education on politics. When talking to women you find out there is a lot they don't know and they are interested to learn and after learning about something then they would say had we known we would not have forced ourselves to do what we did. So it's lack of information." **(Civic Society Group).**

Asked to comment on “*the major obstacles to building a culture of political tolerance*” all participants agreed on the fact that there was no culture of political tolerance in Zimbabwe and that is why there was violence during election periods. The below was stated by the participants:

- *"It comes down to basic economics and also a lack of understanding between different party politics and politics in general. Why I say economics; because of scarce resources and because of wanting access to resources means that the ones who have political control have access to resources. So for people then to not want to let go of that political control it then becomes a big issue that people are willing to fight for. So that needs to be addressed because for me that is what is right at the core of it, because the one who has power is the one who has access and control. Understanding the difference between party politics and politics in general is important. In Zimbabwe it is just party politics, it's either you're on one side or the other. People don't have an understanding of what politics is and how we then get to a situation of party politics. And that party politics is just about you looking at choices and the things that you want in your life, and looking to see who it is that can help you achieve it and then holding those people accountable. It is about who you then align yourself to achieve it and using your vote to hold those people accountable.I agree with her on power and control because if you're in a position you really make other people feel that authority. So to be away from that authority is a threat on its own that I can no longer control becomes definitely the power point. Again in Zimbabwe there is impunity, it plays a very big role; if you look at our situation we've always had violence every time there are elections and unfortunately when there is violence there are always amnesties that follow. So the same people who were violent in the 1980's are still holding those same positions in 2010. So with that impunity rolling over it becomes difficult, and the person will tell you the next elections I will be there and I will see you. Then definitely you will become very afraid."* **(Civic Society Group);**
- *"People are living in the past and feel that one party should rule because of the liberation contribution, so they feel they should be one political party hence there is a mentality amongst party supporters that is either you are for us or you are against us."* **(University);**
- *"The police, soldiers, CID, CIO's are partisan and hence don't protect the citizens. Moreover human rights are being violated..."*
- *Lack of political education - people think politics means beating up people from another political party;*
- *Poverty - people are being recruited to go and kill or beat up other people. School leavers are jobless and hence are vulnerable to recruitment of this nature."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"Double standards - leaders preach peace while perpetuating violence at the same time."* **(Marondera);**
- *"It emerged that lack of honesty and openness in the current political leadership hampers progress in political tolerance. This persistent nature to misinform, divide and rule both at party and national levels are also an obstacle."* **(Gwanda);**
- *Zimbabwean politicians are immature, their power is vested in polarising society and use of the divide and rule method;*
- *Corruption- There are people who always want to be on the winning end and they would do anything to stay in power for example vote buying, intimidating constituents and rigging of election results;*
- *Nepotism- Political parties are run as magnified 'families'. A politician surrounds himself with clansmen puppets."* **(Bulawayo).**

In response to the question, “**How can this culture of political intolerance be overcome?**”, the participants said:

- *"To defeat these and other obstacles, for instance, leaders should own up when they*

are wrong or when they cause disturbances such as the Matabeleland massacre; apologise and make way for political tolerance. Women feel that there is need for more outreach programmes on the rights of women to say NO to disharmony, as well as promotion of peace involving women across the political spectrum." **(Gwanda);**

- *"By constitutionally enshrining a code of conduct and terms of reference for emerging and existing political parties."* **(Bulawayo);**
- *"A people driven constitution should be in place, and should limit the powers of the president of the party."* **(Bindura);**
- *"There's need for political education, I think that people should be taught what real politics is all about without having any parties being mentioned. Just the definition of what politics is, because if you ask people, what exactly is politics? They will just tell you that it's a dirty game."* **(Civic society Group).**

Concluding thoughts

The fact that the women were not in agreement on the issue of whether violence and intimidation influence whether women vote or not as some said it prevents them from voting and some saying it encourages them to vote as a means to bring an end to the violence showed that the effects of violence differed from person to person. There is need for political education in Zimbabwe to bring about political tolerance and harmony among opposing political parties.



Women and Violence

As mentioned above the below bullet points are statistics collated from the survey and were given to the participants.

- 52% stated that they had been victims of violence and 14% stated that they had been physically maimed;
- The most commonly reported perpetrators were non-state agents [ZANU PF supporters, war veterans, youth militia];
- The most common violations reported at the hands of state officials were threats, torture, assaults, and arbitrary arrest in that order;
- The most common violations reported at the hands of non-state agents were threats, assault, torture, and property destruction in that order;
- Rape was reported with a surprisingly high frequency: 2% reported being personally raped, 3% reported that a family member had been raped, and a startling 16% reported that someone in the community had been raped;
- 44% reported that women are affected differently by political violence, giving reasons ranging from their weaker physical status to their inability to go into hiding due to their family responsibilities.

In recent times Zimbabwe has seen a high degree of violence, starting in 2000 with the emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as a strong opposition party, with violent elections in 2000 and 2002. Before 2000 there was violence during the liberation struggle, the 1980s Matebeleland Massacre mentioned above and low level violence around elections in the 1990s. In 2008, political violence again erupted throughout the country as a result of the contested national harmonised elections. Zimbabwean women of all ages were targeted for their political affiliations, abducted from their workplaces and homes, raped, tortured, and beaten in secret torture centres, as well as in their homes. In the survey, RAU sought to find out how women were affected by the violence they experienced. It was noted that over 50% of the participants that were interviewed said they had been victims of political violence, with 14% saying they had been physically hurt. The participants were asked to comment on these statistics. The general notion amongst all the participants was that the statistics were an under-estimate. Examples of such responses were:

- *"The statistics are a far cry from the real figures – these are only for reported cases. Women suffer emotional and physical abuse as they are raped, forced to cook and entertain these perpetrators. The unreported cases cause more emotional trauma as the victim suffers on her own."* (**Gwanda**);
- *"More than 14% of women were physically hurt but some cases went unnoticed and or women did not speak up for fear of stigmatisation."* (**Bulawayo**);
- *"The numbers are probably double or more than the ones here."* (**Masvingo**);
- *"Rape statistics are very low because most people did not report.....Statistics of being beaten are very high because we are used to being beaten up and that doesn't count as violence, but people don't tell their rape ordeals because they feel they are reliving that moment."* (**University**);
- *"It's quite true, some women suffered more than men and some of them suffered quietly they were not even able to come out in the open, we have mothers over 60 who were also raped so what it means is that the statistics are showing a smaller percentage, it could even be higher than that.....Some women didn't come out for fear of being re-victimised, and some couldn't go to report the matter to the police for fear of being arrested."* (**Civic Society Group**);
- *"In fact 52% is very low; some people in the rural areas have not come out in the open yet."* (**Chinhoyi**).

The participants all agreed that women were affected differently when they were asked the question, **"how are women affected differently to men in terms of political violence"**; their responses were as follows:

- *"Women get blamed for their husbands' mistakes."* **(Masvingo);**
- *"Men as the perpetrators tend to attack women."* **(Mutare);**
- *"Women carry the burden of taking care of the family, in any case of political violence men can easily run away but women stay behind. Even when there are displacements women have to stay behind and take care of the family and bear the brunt of all the political violence happening in that area....Women embody the enemy in situations of conflict and as such violence is then perpetrated on their bodies. It's like raping an enemy when they find a woman who is on the other side. So during a political conflict they are exposed to a lot of sexual violence."* **(Civic society Group);**
- *"Say a son was involved in politics in politics it affects women in that the mother or sister may be raped as a result of his involvement....Violations on children or the husbands affect the women directly."* **(Bindura).**

With all the various responses, the most popular response was that women suffer as a consequence of the activities of their husbands and children.

When the participants were asked to comment on the question, **"what do you think women mean when they say they're victims of violence in the Zimbabwean context"**, they all had similar views:

- *"Everything was centered on women. Say if my husband was involved in politics even if I wasn't I was affected in a certain way because if they came and didn't find my husband I ended up being raped. And if my son or my daughter, my mother or even my grand-mother was involved I ended up being victimised. So the whole politics was centered on the women."* **(Civic Society Group);**
- *"It means that women are affected, vis-a-vis being beaten to pay for their children's involvement in politics."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"Where a woman has been assaulted, raped, had her home burnt down, lost her property or insulted in the name of politics she is a victim of violence. The degrees of harm may be different but as long as she feels hurt, whether physically or psychologically, she is a victim of violence."* **(Mutare);**
- *"Being a victim of violence means something bad has happened to you because you belong to a particular political party."* **(Bindura).**

Commenting on whether there is a distinction between assault and torture, respondents expressed varying responses to this such as:

- *Assault is physical when women are hit with a closed fist and raped whereas torture can also be emotional abuse, where women are made to live under fear of the perpetrators. For example they are told to avail themselves or something will be done to them. Torture is also a planned attack on the emotions of women"* **(Gwanda);**
- *"They're different; torture entails physical pain to a point that one can get maimed whereas assault just involves being beaten.....They're a bit similar but the difference only comes with the instruments they use to inflict that pain. Torture is more extreme in that it's enforced to extract information, electric shocks can be applied to that effect and it also involves psychological trauma.....Assault is just being beaten and torture is when they force out information."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"With regards to assault someone might just get beaten up, but with torture it's more extreme in that it involves an element of force to extract information.....Torture is beyond assaultTorture is an instrument of political violence, instrument to achieve*

- something. Assault is not severe e.g. slapping."* **(Chivhu);**
- "Assault and torture are the same as they both cause trauma."* **(University);**
- "The difference between torture and assault lies in the extent in which pain is inflicted. And this ranges from inflicting pain on someone through pouring burning plastic on him/her, rape, or destruction of property....Degree of injury determines the difference."* **(Bindura).**

Generally responses showed that the women believed the two are intertwined and difficult to distinguish.

From the report statistics, it was noted that non-state agents were the most common perpetrators as compared to state agents. Participants gave various reasons for these statistics, such as:

- "These people have always been members of the ZANU PF party so they perpetrate violence because they don't want to step down from power...Violence presents an easy life for them, they take advantage of the situation to loot people's things and make them their own."* **(Bindura)**
- "Easy to mobilise for payment as they are unemployed...They are locals so they know who to target....State agents were less involved as they are regulated by the law and would be accountable for their actions...They are easy to blame were they already know their violent nature and whoever sent them can walk scot free."* **(University);**
- "Zimbabwe has a culture and history of guerrilla warfare, you'll see that for us Zimbabweans being a war vet is something that we hold being integral to our being Zimbabwean. So these things come from the highest level, from people who were strategists in guerrilla warfare, and for me that's just how young people were recruited to go to war. It's just sexy, you're Zimbabwean, and you're patriotic in that you're then aligned;*
- If you look at some of the statements that are coming out in this constitutional reform process the things that they want in the preamble that make us Zimbabwean, one of them is that we went and fought for our country, so to fight for our country at whatever level, at whatever stage, from whatever side it is that you're fighting for, is Zimbabwean by nature. And it's something that is pushed at all times at every opportunity, so for me it was just that, a guerrilla warfare tactic at its very best, just adapted to the current situation."* **(Civic society Group);**
- "They were just being manipulated by leaders of their political parties."* **(Chivhu);**
- "Others were forced and had to comply for fear of losing farms.....Others were forced to become sell-outs on promises of being put on the government payroll."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- "Lack of education, most war veterans have no formal education hence are easily manipulated...Indoctrination and cheap propaganda is what forced some of them to cause violence."* **(Marondera).**

From the survey it was noted that the frequency of violations or crime increased in these politically unstable times. Participants were asked to comment on this and these are some of the examples of what they had to say:

- "Politics affects the social and economic structures hence crime is a way of survival."* **(University);**
- "Political parties hire and pay hooligans to carry out violence thereby increasing the incidences of crime."* **(Gwanda);**
- "Some people for instance neighbours take advantage of the political situation to compensate for their grudges....People who were at bases had to steal to feed and sustain themselves."* **(Chivhu);**
- "Some deliberately instigate violence towards elections in order to divide votes...Some people deliberately commit crimes during political violence given that such cases are not attended to....Some thieves take advantage of the situation of*

- *violence to steal from people.” (Marondera);*
- *“Elements of crime take advantage of torrid political periods to engage in their own criminal activities.” (Bulawayo).*

From the survey and other reports it is evident that rape has become a political tool in Zimbabwe to fight the opposition. The statistics from the survey were presented to the participants. All of the participants said that the statistics were very low especially on personal rape and they gave various reasons on why they thought these statistics were low. Some of the reasons were as follows:

- *“I know for a fact that many women do not come out in the open to say they were raped, so I actually believe that these statistics could actually be a reversal, that the ones who said they witnessed rape were actually the ones raped themselves. It’s easier for women to talk about rape that happened to another woman than to actually say I was raped. And men were coming out in the open to say my wife was raped. Women don’t want to talk about rape because they fear the stigma that comes with being a rape victim.” (Civic Society Group);*
- *“Some men forbid their wives from reporting such cases for fear of becoming the laughing stock of the community in the case where the woman may have contracted HIV/AIDS....Culture restricts women from reporting rape, especially in the case where the rape was done by a relative.” (Marondera);*
- *“Women in rural areas are being promised more rapes if they report such matters so they can’t go to the police to report such cases.” (Mutare);*
- *“Some women are not aware of their rights, they do not know when their rights are being infringed upon. Also there are no victim friendly units as the victim ends up becoming the villains as they are interrogated on how it happened.” (University Students);*
- *“Percentage given on rape could be more because some people are still living in the bush in Muzarabani as a result of fear...Rape is under reported, people are still afraid to talk.” (Bindura);*
- *“A majority of women and school girls were raped at bases but didn’t come out” (Chivhu);*
- *“Some youths were forced to sleep with leaders at the bases on grounds that they were on the municipal payroll...Some men were also victims of rape. Some men were force to sleep together and do not report for fear of being killed.” (Chinhoyi);*
- *“Fear of further victimisation by the rapists as they are let go by a corrupt justice system.” (Bulawayo).*

The participants were also asked whether there was any difference between the elements of rape; whether it is the same in a political, domestic, or criminal context. There was a general agreement that rape is a serious matter amongst all the participants, but they went on to outline some distinguishing features of the two.

- *“Rape is just rape no matter what the context but in a political context some women are forced not to report the matter.” (Chivhu);*
- *“Domestic rape is a lesser evil than gang rape which is common in political rape.” (University students);*
- *“The difference is that the political one is deliberately instigated. They make sure that they get to a certain place, there are people there. In some cases people were raped in the presence of other people. In the other cases not the political one the perpetrators would hide in the bush and wait on somebody walking in the street, do their thing, hide and run away for fear of being prosecuted but in the political setting they do their business, walk away and you see them every day because they knew that they had the power and thus could not be prosecuted.” (Civic society);*
- *“It’s the same, rape is rape but it becomes political in the sense that people take advantage of a situation to rape other people, moreover and a person can be raped multiple times, but in a domestic context it can be once.” (Bindura).*

Concluding thoughts

The participants were of the opinion that the statistics on violence were low saying this was because a lot of people were victims of violence but because of fear and intimidation they did not report and were not comfortable to speak about it to enumerators so their experiences were not recorded. It was clear that the women understand what it means to be a victim of political violence as they stated that a person who suffers verbal insults, physical or psychological violence against a person or family or property in the name of politics is a victim of political violence. The women were also very clear on their views on rape; although rape is a heinous crime when it is done in a political context the perpetrators should be punished more severely.

Women and Peace

The below statement was shared with the participants from the results of the survey.

- The three most common responses to the question about what would bring peace were *an end to violence, free and fair elections, and democracy.*

In Zimbabwe, however, during the pre and post March 2008 and June 2008 elections, women from all walks of life in Zimbabwe are said to have played a pivotal role in ensuring both positive and negative peace. In the focus groups the participants were asked ***"what role do women play to promote peace,"*** and, in response, they said the following:

- *"By virtue of their social responsibilities in raising children, tending to the weak and sick in the society, comforting the bereaved, providing counseling for the 'troubled' in their communities, women can conquer political and tribal barriers in the promotion of peace."* **(Bulawayo);**
- *"Urban women should educate other women on how to persuade other women and their husbands and children to refrain from violence especially in very remote areas."* **(Mutare);**
- *"As a woman, the peace should start with me. It starts with the little things like small talk, talks about peace, moreover we shouldn't build up anger. There is need to discuss with the MPs that as women we need peace because violence is not perpetrated by men only, there are women who are really violent. We need to have programmes targeting women to say let's not practice violence ourselves....Women also have a role in building peace. For example Liberian women, where the women coming from the churches came together and were the ones who resulted in the end of war. So we need to look at what other women have done in other areas around the world in order to push for peace."* **(Civic Society Group);**
- *"We should educate our children to go to church so that they can know good morals because they're the ones who are recruited as youth militias who comply with orders to kill their mothers."* **(Masvingo).**

After these suggestions were made the next question was whether these suggestions are enough to promote peace in our country. The participants responded to this by saying:

- *"Women should involve themselves more in political decision making and governance processes."* **(Bulawayo);**
- *"There is need for women to understand politicians better so that when they're trying to instill fear we should stand firm and exercise boldness. And when they're trying to cause anger, women should just exercise patience, where they're trying to instill bitterness women should exercise forgiveness and where they're trying to sow confusion women should be more analytical, should be able to discern this, unite and*

use their tactics against them in a way that will enhance women." (**Civic Society Group**);

- *"Women should lead by example, for instance once in power and holding higher positions they should start focusing on women's goals instead of taking this as an advantage to start dating other male politicians at the top. Women in power should be respectable and not be mistaken for prostitutes."* (**Chivhu**);
- *"Women should hold positions in some of the ministries. They should advocate for a 50-50 representation because women are more considerate than men.....Women should take advantage of the electronic and print media to promote peace."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"Women should have eligible platforms such as focus group discussions, interactive workshops to discuss and build strategies around the peace initiative."* (**Gwanda**).

Accountability is taking responsibility for one's words and actions. The participants stated that the actual perpetrators and those that instructed them to commit violence should take responsibility. Thus in this light **"can there be peace without accountability?"** Below are some of the responses from the participants;

- *"No, peace can only come when perpetrators are held accountable, or pay compensation."* (**Marondera**);
- *"There can be no peace without accountability. We demand to know what the initiative for the 1980s' Matabeleland massacre was. Someone should be accountable and own up, explain and apologise before there can be peace."* (**Gwanda**);
- *"No. if there are no strict requirements for accountability, political leaders and their followers will continue to flout human rights and citizens' peaceful existence."* (**Bulawayo**);
- *"When we were in the rural areas having a discussion with the people there, someone was saying, how can I forgive someone who wronged me if he or she hasn't come to say I'm asking for forgiveness? How can I forgive somebody who killed my cow or took my cow still has it in his or her own kraal? And how can I forgive and forget a rape case of a child whom I'm nurturing? As long as justice is not seen to be done let's forget about peace. Once justice is seen to be done then it becomes easy to talk about peace. Even the Bible says, 'repent so that I can forgive you.' So until someone comes out to say it's me who torched your house on such and such a day please forgive me, and until the truth comes out in the open it's really very difficult.... People are not coming in the near future to say, I'm sorry I raped your child, I torched your home, I did this, so if we wait for that to happen then we'll have trouble and we'll never have peace."* (**Civic Society Group**);
- *"No, I cannot feel okay when a perpetrator walks scot free; they should be made to pay for their crimes.....There's no peace in Zimbabwe because perpetrators are not being convicted and there's no reconciliation."* (**Chinhoyi**).

On the other hand, participants from Bindura felt that peace could still be attained without accountability because it is difficult for perpetrators to come forward and confess.

- *"It can be impossible in the sense that accountability might entail prosecution and going to jail for the perpetrator...It's impossible given that some leaders took people's cattle and put them in their kraals so for them to account for that now becomes difficult for one to single out their cattle from that kraal as they would have been re-branded..... Acknowledgement is difficult but they can come up with strategies like Operation Garikai."*

Participants were also asked if there could be peace without responsibility and this is what they had to say:

- *"No. Political leaders and everyone else in their structures must take responsibility for their actions and penalties for disturbance of peace should be articulated constitutionally." (Bulawayo);*
- *"No, perpetrators should come face to face with victims and acknowledge their wrong doing."*
- *"For you to be able to move forward there needs to be that one person accounting for their actions and taking responsibility for what they then do. And then paying the price because in as much as you say women don't become bitter because of what their husbands do, they do, they're just very good at hiding it, that when you find that women can go for a very long time then one day just snaps, so if we go and tell people to be just quiet they will just snap. The people in Matabeleland are still talking about wanting retribution and accountability for what happened to them. Should the situation arise and they're given power they will just snap, those people who had violence perpetrated against them, should they become policemen one day, that person and that person's children and person's children's children will pay for that small thing because as humans as much as we would like to say it's in human nature to forgive, to let go and to be above it, I think the only person who was able to do that was Jesus. And it's not in the nature of a human to do it, so a situation of peace to occur there needs to be accountability, for people to have access to their rights without infringing someone's else's rights without punishment or something that then says you've infringed, it therefore means it's a free for all. Therefore that accountability just has to happen so as to curb the cycle of violence." (Civic Society Group);*
- *"No, because if you report the matter some of the perpetrators actually come back boasting that nothing can be done to them when they're set free." (Chinhoyi);*
- *"For reconciliation to take place there is need for accountability and efforts to be made at forgiveness from an informed platform. There is great need for the perpetrators to acknowledge their atrocious behaviour and apologise." (Gwanda);*
- *"No, peace can only come when perpetrators are held accountable, or pay compensation." (Masvingo).*

Concluding thoughts

Most of the participants felt that accountability went hand in hand with responsibility and reconciliation. They said this would be a process; you take responsibility for your actions so you are thus held accountable, and then the victims and the perpetrators can reconcile.



Inclusive Government

The below statistics are from the survey results;

- 85% of women felt that they should have been consulted about the GPA, and 70% stated that women's interests were not represented in the IG;
- 80% of women stated that their lives had not much changed for the better since the formation of the IG;
- Apart from *food security, health, and education*, a majority of women expressed little trust in the IG to deliver on a wider range of issues;
- Most women [74%] believe that Robert Mugabe has the most power in the IG, with a small number [14%] believing that Morgan Tsvangirai has any power, and virtually none believe that Arthur Mutambara has any power;
- However, most [51%] expressed support for MDC-T, with only 9% and 3% expressing support for ZANU PF and MDC-M respectively. 21% stated that they were unwilling to say and 14% stated that they did not support a party.

Barely a year and six months after the formation of the Inclusive Government (IG)⁵, formed on the 13th of February 2009 after the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) on the 15 September 2008 after negotiations between the political parties were spearheaded by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Zimbabweans from all walks of life have already started to question the credibility of this IG to effect its obligations under the GPA.

The survey and the focus groups asked the participants to judge the IG's performance in availing certain public goods and services since it came to power, by asking the question, "*what has improved since the IG was agreed upon?*" A majority of women concurred that the availability of basic goods and services in the economy has greatly improved; there is economic stability, peace is mostly prevailing once more, and there is also vast improvements in the health and education sectors.

- *"There's availability of foodstuffs in supermarkets....It has also managed to end the violence that was prevailing at that time."* **(Civics);**
- *"Availability of foodstuffs in supermarkets and that of fuel has vastly improved. Sanitary products are now available in shops as compared to years ago. There's a reduction of violence. Electricity supply has improved. The US\$ has brought some economic stability. Drugs are now available in clinics and hospitals. There's no more irregular price increases, in fact there's a bit of consistency now as compared to the previous years; whereby people had to stand in long winding queues just to buy what they wanted. Education has greatly improved, children are now learning in schools and teachers' strikes have since been reduced."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"Food is available in the shops, and we are now drinking tea. Education is somewhat affordable now and our children are now going to school. Clothes are now affordable. The health sector has vastly improved. We now have toll gates and we're now using a stable currency with a strong buying power."* **(Bindura);**
- *"Food stuffs are now available in supermarkets. We're now using a stable currency. There's stability in pricing. Drugs are now available in hospitals. There's job creation and economic stability and there are no more winding queues. Education is now available and somewhat affordable."* **(Chinhoyi).**
- *"Education has improved. There's availability of transport. Drugs are now available in hospitals. There's economic stability and job creation, for instance, TM, Lyons, Dairibord and other companies have re-opened."* **(Marondera);**
- *"Foodstuffs and money are now available. There's less fear and schools and clinics are now fully functional."* **(Masvingo);**

⁵ Derek Matyszak 'Law, Politics and Zimbabwe's 'Unity' Government', 2010 The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

- *"There's absence of strife and a new lease of life on politicians. Health services have also improved."* **(University).**

In response to the question, *"what areas do you think the IG is failing on?"*, the majority assigned a failing grade on the IG's ability to perform a number of tasks that ranged from upholding democratic principles in the country, such as freedom of expression (both in the electronic and print media) to upholding the rule of law. Participants also criticised the IG's commitment to implementing the things that were agreed upon in the GPA, such as the formation of a new constitution, introducing a stable currency that can be accessible to all, and fully committing itself to power sharing. Thus, according to the participants, the IG is only an agreement on paper, as the politicians are power hungry and they only look out for themselves at the expense of the masses.

- *The IG is a front, there is really no unity and once the front collapses, the truth will be revealed."* **(University);**
- *"Violence hasn't really stopped. Furthermore with the dollarisation of the economy not everyone has access to the US\$. Moreover most of what we expected did not happen with the advent of the IG.";*
- *"Mugabe still has more power than Tsvangirai; hence the militia is still oppressing people in the rural areas because they get their powers from Mugabe.";*
- *"The media is not yet independent; it's still being controlled by a certain political party. The news coverage on TV is always one-sided such that sometimes it becomes worthless to watch it, as almost on a daily basis the lead story is always centered on one particular party or person. News reporters are still being controlled and don't have the independence to research and give people genuine reports about things happening within the country and outside our borders. The information is always censored first before it meets the public; hence it's difficult to trust what is being said on the news nowadays.";*
- *"There's no democracy in the GPA. All the political parties are just focusing on their interests and not on the interests of the public. For example they are dragging the constitutional making process yet they're already campaigning for the elections. All political parties are power hungry and just want to stay in power for life; that's what most important to them not the interests of the people.";*
- *"In discussions we had with women specifically in the communities after the GPA and the IG was formed. They highlighted several things; one was that the IG happened at that high level, it was something that the people of Zimbabwe were not part of. It was a decision that was made by very few people, the IG that we see portrayed in the media and everything else, as we see them standing side by side is fake. So this whole creature, this IG, this GPA is at that high level with people discussing in cabinet and fighting over things in cabinet, with people discussing at SADC and everything else. But on the ground there is no IG, and as a result all those things that were supposed to be achieved by the GPA actually aren't going down to the grassroots because the message of what the IG is or what the GPA is never filtered down. Because you would hear people saying, okay maybe if you bring the Principals to us, (all three of them) for them to stand there and tell us, maybe we'll be better able to understand what it is. The IG was seen as selling out by the MDC; it was seen as people joining other people.";*
- *"There's suppression of opposition parties and now that the other opposition parties have been subdued in the IG, they can no longer speak of the ills that are going on in the IG because they're now part of the system hence no longer have a platform to criticise. Therefore we can safely conclude that we no longer have any opposition in the country.";*
- *"Nothing in the GPA has been followed up to now, for example it says, chiefs shouldn't be aligned but they're still aligned, the security forces should be educated about being non-aligned but they're still aligned. It says there shouldn't be any hate speeches but we still hear them, those who were displaced should be helped to go back to their areas and settle down but nobody has been resettled up to now. And*

now we're hearing of elections, how can elections be held under such an environment. So to me nothing in the GPA has been followed, including SADC which is supposed to monitor but it is not doing anything";

- "There is politics of patronage amongst SADC members hence mediators always go back without achieving anything tangible. They haven't delivered anything tangible to Zimbabweans, from the talks they have held so far. So we're back to square one where time is just moving until we get to elections and so on." **(Civics);**
- "The US\$ is hard to come by and some people even exchange a bucket of maize for grinding services at the mill. Roads are being neglected especially the Harare-Johannesburg route. Some hospitals have not been upgraded yet they're dilapidated";
- "Hospitals are not yet offering adequate services to rape victims; moreover ARVs are still beyond the reach of many. Rape victims are supposed to take these drugs within 72 hours in order to prevent infections but you find that when they get there they'll be told stocks are out and end up risking their lives. Furthermore people are still being exposed to previous infections hence there's need for more donor funding in the health sector to ensure every department has adequate resources. Then on the issue of teachers, some have not yet gone back to work given that the issue of their salaries has not yet been addressed. In some schools parents are even required to contribute money towards the payment of teachers so that their kids can learn. Therefore all this goes to show that things are not well. We're headed somewhere but we haven't yet come to that point where we can safely say it is well for our country";
- "I personally think that the IG is not really united, the unity is just on paper and we can't compare it to that of long ago, between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU. Both parties seem to be suspicious of one another and therefore can't deliberate on pressing issues together such as the present state of roads because they still want to cling on to the power that every individual is currently enjoying within their different political parties. Therefore I don't see a unity of purpose in this regard given their hunger and thirst for power, unless of course if they decide to become one party and elect one Prime Minister and as did ZANU PF and PF ZAPU. It doesn't necessarily mean that opposition parties will no longer be operational, they will be but at least if they get to a point where they can have a unity of purpose as did ZANU PF and PF ZAPU back then, that will be commendable";
- "Right now the constitutional outreach programme is in progress but people aren't being allowed to hold gatherings, and the Headmen are the ones who are always in the forefront telling people what to do and what not to do and if they don't, they intimidate them." **(Chivhu);**
- "The justice system is not yet independent. Teachers have gone back to teaching but they're not following the school curriculum. The IG is failing to end violence and to emphasise the rule of law. It's also failing to uphold the welfare of prisoners to the extent that they don't even have enough food to eat, enough blankets to warm themselves, clothes to wear etc, are living in poor health conditions and are dying in large numbers. Women's interests are also being neglected, and in other areas education is still a problem." **(Bindura);**
- "Drugs are expensive in hospitals to the extent that some people are dying as a result. University education is expensive. People are still paying \$1 per day so that their children can learn in school. If one doesn't pay his or her own child's education is neglected, and the child is not allowed to participate in class. Examination fees are expensive and beyond the reach of many in the rural areas. Power and water cuts are even worse now. There's infighting within the Inclusive Government over which constitution to implement, i.e. the Kariba Draft or a new constitution and so on";
- "In the GPA there's a section on equal opportunities but women are still being discriminated against when it comes to inheritance upon the death of a father, and this goes to show that women despite being empowered are also having their rights violated at the same time hence this section should be amended. The GPA says

people should have freedom of expression only on grounds that permission has been granted to them hence this section too should be amended. There's no freedom of speech and the rule of law is non-existent. The US\$ is still beyond the reach of many and there are no women's projects." **(Chinhoyi);**

- "There's no freedom of speech, and there's no rule of law. The US\$ is still not easily accessible and the power and water cuts are even worse now and rates are expensive. Segregation on party lines hasn't improved such that when food aid comes members of a certain political party are discriminated against, especially in the rural areas. The GPA is still not being followed and is ineffective and women projects on the other hand are not being implemented to keep women busy." **(Marondera);**
- "There is no protection for rival political supporters. Nothing has changed in the Inclusive Government and there's abuse of power." **(Mutare);**
- "Save for the availability of basic commodities in the market nothing much has improved. The IG has failed to operate as a homogenous body. There is massive failure to revive the health and education sectors. People are still being denied human rights, they still live in fear. There has been no accountability and still no transparency in the functions of the IG. It has also failed to bring about peace and reconciliation." **(Gwanda);**
- "Save for the reduction in political violence reports and ready availability of basic commodities, there has been very little improvement. The IG has also failed on the provision of affordable health care, eradication of corruption in the government employment creation, feeding the hungry, achieving economic stability and development of the country." **(Bulawayo);**
- "It has also failed on addressing educational and employment creation concerns and on the implementation of a new constitution as well addressing the wrongs of the past." **(University Students' Group);**
- "There's no freedom of expression i.e. the freedom for one to wear an MDC t-shirt. School fees are too high and teachers have to be paid at least a \$1 per day each morning by each student before lessons can begin otherwise they won't learn. So nothing has been resolved yet and the government principals are simply blaming one another." **(Masvingo).**

Asked to state their opinion of what they thought would have been different had the women been consulted about the formation of the IG, a majority of participants were in agreement that women would have better expressed the need for women's rights to be respected as well as advocated for other crucial things, such as free health care and education, given that they're respectable mother figures in society and have a voice.

- "Women would have aired out some issues better than men. Women would have better expressed the need for the change of the presidency. Women would definitely have prioritised the health of the nation, unlike men who prioritise political power." **(Civics);**
- "Women should have been consulted because they constitute 52% of the population plus they have a voice and the constitution could have better expressed what women want. The consultations were however one sided and are therefore not a true reflection of what people want. I think that if women had been consulted they would have managed to bring to attention what they went through, i.e. the challenges and problems they went through thereby creating a platform for advocacy, for women's rights." **(Chivhu);**
- "Women would have advocated to be elected into positions of power. Women would have advocated for women's welfare in the health sector i.e. pre and post-natal care. Women would have been appointed some leadership posts. Women would have talked about their problems e.g. rape and something could have been done about it. Women would have advocated for loans to kick start small businesses for women." **(Bindura);**

- "Women would have advocated for dual citizenship because when they marry foreigners while living here they lose their Zimbabwean citizenship and they suffer when they get divorced or when the men die. Furthermore women would also have advocated for the right to education and health. ARVs aren't even available in some areas."
- "Issues of acquiring a passport, birth certificate and citizenship would have been better expressed by women given that they currently can't access these things if their husbands haven't been consulted first." **(Chinhoyi);**
- "Women would have advocated for compensation, for capital to kick-start income generating projects." **(Marondera);**
- "There would have been at least one female in the top 3 principals." **(Mutare);**
- "Women would have made sure that human rights are enshrined in the IG. The Organ on National Healing would have been a true reflection of sound resolution of matters. Women would have demanded explicit recount and address of issues affecting them and constitutional issues wouldn't have been blown out of proportion as is the case now. Women would have made sure resources are shared as they should be." **(Gwanda);**
- "Had women been consulted, they would have better expressed their views and opinions on what the IG should do for them, their families, their communities and the nation at large as they're are touched by their communities' hunger, unemployment, poverty, violence, human rights violations etc. Had they been given the chance they would have spoken as the voice of their communities and asked the IG to address issues relevant to the people." **(Bulawayo).**

However, others were of the opinion that nothing would have changed regardless of whether women had been consulted or not.

- "If we look at companies like National Railways of Zimbabwe now, they want to employ retired Army personnel had they consulted us women we would have said to them, "Look here, if it's been said you have retired then it means you have come of age and therefore are no longer competent." **(Civics);**
- "I think that even if women had been consulted nothing would have been different. Maybe if there was a woman representative in the IG then maybe things would have been better. Their unity is just on paper and not genuine thus hindering development. At least one of the top three leadership positions, i.e. Tsvangirai's, Mutambara's or Mugabe's should have been given to a woman." **(Chivhu);**
- "Nothing would have changed as no points from women were ever adopted. Women are not able to articulate their issues and speak with one voice, even they had been consulted they would not have said anything meaningful." **(University Students' Group).**

Asked to state whether they would support an extension of the IG or felt Zimbabwe was better off proceeding with elections, a majority underscored the government's ability in running the country and highlighted that they would opt for elections.

- "No, the GPA in its nature is just a transitional document. It's something that's supposed to be a stop gap for us to put our house in order and start again. So for us to continue with it means that we won't have a functioning democracy and a functioning democracy needs to have opposition politics, and it also needs to have civil society that can speak out because without that, we find ourselves in the position that we are in with no opposition politics. So for me the IG is not an option, we need to have the new constitution written and then go back to elections and let the people decide. How we're going to get to that new constitution however, is a totally different debate." **(Civics);**
- "I think we should proceed with elections because at least we'll have one leader. Unlike the current scenario whereby we have this threesome government, because if

two agree on something then the other one will go behind the other's back to say no, this is not what we agreed on. Hence it would be better for us to proceed with elections than to support an extension of the IG";

- *"I think we should proceed with elections because it seems as if the top three leaders have no confidence in each other and are already competing for electoral support in the coming elections. So at the end of the day we benefit nothing from their infighting and they'll benefit instead through portraying a very good image and end up garnering a lot of support come elections. So it would be better for us to elect a leader of our choice and one to whom we'll air out our concerns to and will hear us, than to support an extension of the IG";*
- *"I think we should proceed with elections, but they should ensure that violence and intimidation do not prevail prior to elections. People shouldn't be coerced or forced to vote for a particular party and shouldn't be intimidated for that reason. Instead people should be able to vote freely for a candidate of their choice. And they should also implement proper electoral laws which should be strictly enforced in order to make sure no one tampers with electoral results as was the case in the previous elections where electoral percentages were tampered with";*
- *"Elections should be held because at present people are saying Biti is the one who is making things difficult for us and we begin to hate him for that reason as we don't know whether it's true or not. So I think it would be better for us to proceed with elections";*
- *"I think we should proceed with elections because having three leaders is quite expensive given that each one is going to need a luxurious house, car etc. So I think we should choose one leader for our country to move forward." (Chivhu);*
- *"It should not be extended; it is better we go for elections because every ministry right now is ineffective. So it's better we have a new constitution because at the moment there's an imbalance of power in the IG. It's not equal, and there's too much power centralised on one side. Therefore it's better for us to proceed with elections so that we can be able to determine who is who in terms of leadership. In my opinion I think it's better for us to lobby for a new constitution first then we conduct a referendum and go for elections because right now only one out of the three leaders that we currently have in the IG, has the final say. It's better for us to proceed with elections because basic standards are not really up to scratch. The Inclusive Government is ineffective thus going for elections without a proper constitution will be a futile exercise." (Bindura)*
- *"We should have elections because the IG is ineffective. We should have elections but constitutional issues should be resolved first. We should just drop constitutional issues because since last year they haven't been fruitful, so we should just simply proceed with the elections and the party that wins the elections will be the one to draft a new constitution. We should have a new constitution in place first before we go for elections because it's the one that limits the powers of the presidency. If a constitution that lays down the guiding principles is not put in place before then, this gives leeway for political leaders to just implement laws willy nilly yet this should be the constitutional law that should govern the nation. I think we should proceed with elections but they should be conducted freely and fairly and without any forms of violence thus the law should be panel beaten to stop election violence." (Chinhoyi);*
- *"I support the idea of proceeding with elections because the IG is incompetent, but should have a new constitution in place first before we can proceed with elections. In my opinion, I think that we should have a new constitution in place first, conduct a referendum thereafter and then proceed with elections. But political campaigns shouldn't be conducted during this period because that is when fear is instilled in people. We should proceed with elections but international observers should be present during the whole campaigning and electoral period. The IG should not be extended besides it has a lot of members as compared to the previous government." (Marondera);*

- *"Zimbabwe should proceed with elections so that we can choose our own leadership and have some measure of control over our future."* (**Bulawayo**);
- *"Zimbabwe should proceed with elections."* (**Gwanda**);
- *"Elections are the only way to a better Zimbabwe. Right now the IG is like a polygamist, there are three wives with supposedly equal access to the husband but there is a favourite who is more equal than the others."* (**Mutare**).

A few, however, were of the opinion that the IG should be extended giving various reasons.

- *"I support the extension of the IG because if we proceed with elections we will be beaten and intimidated again. So I think it would be better for us to wait until they really get united and get a deeper understanding of the law so that the next time when we go for elections they'll be the first ones to shun violence and have the justice system ready and better prepared to deal with perpetrators of violence, and also make sure that the police force is not coerced to instigate violence."* (**Chivhu**);
- *"The IG should be extended until an 'act of God' happens! We all know that without that this country will remain as it is. It is important to guarantee our safety rather than running to an election we all know the result of";*
- *"Zimbabweans are not prepared for an MDC loss in a free and fair election and this may cause further violence, so until our politics is mature, the IG should be maintained";*
- *"We can't have elections now as people are still bitter about 2008 and are still recovering from their loss. I support the extension of the IG in the hope that a better generation of leaders will take over. There's no point in having elections as they are not changing anything. So for the sake of peace let's just continue with the Inclusive Government and besides elections will never be free and fair and will only bring violence and trauma at a time when some people are still trying to heal from their ordeals."* (**University Students' Group**).

Concluding Thoughts

The discussions on the Inclusive Government showed that the women were very cognizant of the issues and problems surrounding the government. Although they were not in agreement on how to process, the women however agreed on the fact that the government is flawed and that it does not represent the interests of women. On the issue of whether it should be extended or we go to an election raised a lot of debate and the best way to capture the sentiments was stated by one woman who said that Zimbabwe is in a Catch 22 situation, we cannot proceed to elections and we cannot stay with the Inclusive Government.



Transitional Justice

Transitional justice is a response to systematic or widespread violations of human rights. At least twenty-five truth commissions have existed or currently exist in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Guatemala, Canada, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, South Africa, Rwanda, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, to name a few. Research on these commissions has examined whether truth telling mechanisms can contribute to sustainable peace, and, if so, how and under what conditions. This is done by examining whether truth telling contributes to the following elements, all of which are deemed to be constitutive of sustainable peace: reconciliation, human rights, gender equity, restorative justice, the rule of law, the mitigation of violence, and the healing of trauma.

Transitional justice seeks recognition for victims and to promote possibilities for peace, reconciliation and democracy. Transitional justice is not a special form of justice but is a justice process adapted to societies transforming themselves after a period of pervasive human rights abuse; in some cases, these transformations happen suddenly, while in others they may take place over many decades⁶. The main goals of transitional justice are to ensure that perpetrators who committed crimes are held accountable, redress for the victims and generations that have to live with the past, it is also about determining the truth about past events. Transitional justice is achieved through 4 pillars; truth commissions, criminal justice, reparative justice and institutional reform.

Except for the University students and the Civil Society group, the women in the focus groups did not know much about transitional justice; they did not know what truth commissions or what other transitional justice mechanisms were. But, after having these explained, they mostly chose truth, justice, **and** reconciliation as the best mechanism to deal with Zimbabwe's past. They said this was the best because it included the element of justice: perpetrators have to be punished for their crimes before they can ask for forgiveness. It was said that it is only those that did not suffer violence that would advocate for national healing without justice. The women also said the majority of

⁶ (www.ictj.org/en/research/projects/ddr/thematic-studies/3500.html -accessed 6 September 2010)

Zimbabwean women did not know that there are such mechanisms to deal with past abuses; NGOs should have awareness-raising activities to bring this knowledge to people, so that should the time come for people to decide which mechanism they want, they will know the pros and cons of all of them and be able to articulate their views. They said that this should be done by NGOs who are apolitical, not political parties as they always have an agenda.

Special processes and commissions

The survey results found the following:

- 80% stated that a special process needs to be set up to establish what happened and deal with past;
- 78% stated that a commission should be set up in Zimbabwe to determine how best to deal with wrongs of the past;
- 6% wanted a Truth Commission;
- 8% wanted a Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
- 60% wanted a Truth, Justice & Reconciliation Commission;
- 4% wanted only a Historical Commission;
- 4% wanted a Judicial Tribunal;
- 65% stated that it will be important for women to give their testimonies in special hearings in which they are separated from men, but only 46% thought that it will be important for women's stories to be heard by female commissioners only.

A truth commission is a commission tasked with discovering and revealing past wrongdoings, in the hope of resolving conflict left over from the past. The establishment of truth commissions has helped several countries, emerging from a regime marked by grave and serious violations of human rights, to face the complex challenge of how best to deal with the past.

The survey sought to find out from the generality of women whether they understood what commissions are by asking them to describe various special process and commissions. After a brief explanation of transitional justice, the focus group participants were asked to deliberate on which would be the types of commission that would best work for Zimbabwe. When the participants were asked if they knew generally ***"what is a truth commission?"*** the majority of the participants did not know. For the minority who knew, this is what they had to say;

- *"Truth commission is an organ that assists in giving people the opportunity of saying out what really happened at that time?...By implication people took truth commission to sort of mean witch hunting and the truth and reconciliation to mean bringing the people to justice and reconciliation to mean bridging the gap between people."* ***(Civic Society group);***
- *"It assists in highlighting what happened and further assessing what can be done....it entails fostering accountability...Entails accountability for our crimes."* ***(Chivhu);***
- *"It entails telling the truth on the part of perpetrator...I think it's a commission that goes on a fact finding mission to bring out the truth of what happened."* ***(Marondera).***

Since most of the participants did not know much about these commissions, and they said it was not any different on the ground, they said civil society and to a lesser extent political parties should educate the people about these commissions.

After every participant had some understanding of commissions, the participants unanimously said that the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation commission would work for Zimbabwe. The next question was on how such a commission should be formed and the responses were:

- *"Through consultations with citizens of Zimbabwe and various organisations."* **(Bulawayo);**
- *"It should be formed through consultation with the various civil groups who deal with the communities. Presidential appointments on to the commission would jeopardise the truth-telling process as some of those appointed may be the violence initiators."* **(Gwanda);**
- *"The commissions should be composed of church representatives, judges who are apolitical and appointed on merit, counsellors and civil society members. People should be consulted on the composition of the commissioners otherwise we'll run the risk of having appointees who serve their own interests."* **(Marondera);**
- *"The UN in conjunction with local NGOs, but the UN should do thorough investigations of the NGOs first."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"Parliament should be behind their formation because there will be debates which will also be broadcast in the media."* **(Civic society Group);**
- *"Neutral bodies should be on the commissions to avoid bias."* **(University).**

On any other suggestions for special/specific processes that should be employed to deal with violations against women, some of the participants felt that a special commission should be established to cater for women.

- *"Commission on Women's Rights should be established."* **(Bulawayo)**
- *"A department within the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission should be for women alone because men might intimidate them and they won't speak."* **(Masvingo);**
- *"Women should be given space to be themselves and that is not possible in the presence of men."* **(University);**
- *"Women should have their own space separate from men. Take for example the time Tsvangirai, Arthur Mutambara, Sekai Holland and Grace Kwinje were beaten up, Sekai Holland and Grace Kwinje's case didn't receive extensive coverage in the electronic and print media as compared to that of their male counterparts."* **(Civic society Group);**
- *"Important to have a process just for women."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"Just the presence of female commissioners only will give female victims the freedom to freely express themselves in the absence of men."* **(Bindura).**

However, the participants from Mutare, and some participants from the Civic Society felt that one commission to cater for all victims was enough.

- *"No, just one commission is enough to deal with both male and female cases."* **(Mutare);**
- *"Special processes should be set up to deal with issues of sexual violence and should cater for both men and women otherwise they'll be a duplication of roles."* **(Civic Group).**

On the question of how the panel of commissioners should be appointed, whether females should be attended to by female commissioners, or by a mixed panel, the responses varied, and only a small number supported that women's cases be attended by female commissioners only.

- *"Women should be attended by women so that people can be free to tell their stories."* **(Civic society group);**
- *"Women must speak only with female commissioners as they understand and appreciate the way a woman's body reacts when it is injured."* **(Masvingo).**

However, other participants felt that they should be a mixed panel to deal with the cases.

- "The commission should have 50-50 representation or have more of women than men as there are more women in the country." (**Marondera**);
- "Composition of commission should have a gender balance, all cases should be heard in view of both men and women." (**Mutare**);
- "The commission should be a mixed one where men consult men, women consult women and youth with youth for situations where one has to expose a certain part of their body that they may not be comfortable with." (**Masvingo**).

Truth Telling

The survey results were as follows;

- 88% agreed with the view that it is necessary to reveal the truth about what happened in the past in order for Zimbabwe to move forward. 7% felt that the period should cover the Liberation War [1960-1980];
- 32% felt that the period should cover the Matabeleland massacres [1980-1987];
- 49% felt that the period should cover the recent past [1998-2008];
- 29% felt that the period should cover the entire history [1960-2008]. 51% thought that truth telling open old wounds and result in political instability in Zimbabwe, but still 81% felt that it would be helpful for victims of political violence to be given the space to talk about what happened to them as a form of healing.
- 74% stated that it is important for all those who were involved in violence to publicly acknowledge their wrongdoing.

"Truth telling" involves relating or narrating an event exactly as it was, without adding or subtracting anything, and has come to play a pivotal role in the post-conflict reconciliation processes around the world. The most common claim amongst scholars and practitioners has been that truth telling is healing and will lead to reconciliation⁷. Thus, in order for societies coming out of periods of violence to move forward, they must in some way examine, acknowledge, and account for past violence committed by various groups, and one mechanism for producing and delivering this truth is through the setting up of truth commissions.

Recent psychological research examined whether witnessing in the '*gacaca*', (i.e. the Rwandan village tribunals for truth and reconciliation after the 1994 genocide), was beneficial for psychological health, and the results from this survey of 1,200 Rwandans demonstrated that '*gacaca*' witnesses still suffer from higher levels of depression and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than do non-witnesses⁸. Furthermore, it was also discovered that longer exposure to truth telling has not lowered the levels of psychological ill-health, nor has the prevalence of depression and PTSD decreased over time. Thus this study strongly challenges the claim that truth telling is necessarily healing, and presents a novel understanding of the complexity of truth-telling processes in post-conflict peace building. Thus, following examples in post conflict African countries, research and debate in Zimbabwe, being spearheaded by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, is opening up the questioning about what form of transitional justice process would be suitable for Zimbabwe⁹. This is building on the recommendations of a broad-based meeting on this topic held in 2003¹⁰.

⁷ www.redress.org/downloads/publications/The%20right%20to%20rehabilitation - accessed 6 September 2010.

⁸ Karen Brounéus, (2010), "*The Trauma of Truth Telling: Effects of Witnessing in the Rwandan Gacaca Courts on Psychological Health*". <http://jcr.sagepub.com/content/54/3/408> - accessed 8 September 2010.

⁹ Human Rights Forum (2010), "*Who Will Dare Begin the Process of Recovering the Truth?*" *Taking Transitional Justice to the People*. Outreach Report, Volume 2. HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

¹⁰ Themba Lesizwe (2004), *Civil Society and Justice in Zimbabwe*, Proceedings of a symposium held in Johannesburg, 11-13 August 2003, PRETORIA: THEMBA LESIZWE.

Therefore, given this background amid the unresolved Matabeleland massacres and in the face of fresh allegations pertaining to the pre- and post-June 2008 elections violations, the survey sought to find out what the women's thoughts are concerning which period truth telling should cover? The most common response to this question in the focus groups was that it should cover all periods given that each period had its own victims and who are still suffering to date. Examples of such responses were:

- *"Personally I support the 29% which covers the period from 1960 to 2008 because, isn't it right now we're trying to make peace by reconciling everybody? So if we say the period should cover 1998-2008, there are still some people out there whose children disappeared whilst others lost their limbs. So if we say they should compensate people from the 1998-2008 period then those who suffered before will be bitter and ask you why you chose to compensate people from that era instead of them. So I think this truth telling should cover all eras because victims of the Gukurahundi are still surviving even the perpetrators too. So the period should cover the entire history so that no-one is left out."* (**Chivhu**);
- *"Start from the first Chimurenga as we need to get rid of the problem from the roots."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"Entire history of Zimbabwe. If it covers the 1998-2008 periods aren't we being tribalistic? Because I think the 49% of the people said this because these events were recent and still fresh in people's minds otherwise this doesn't mean that those who suffered the Matabeleland massacres and the massacres during the liberation struggle have already healed."* (**Marondera**);
- *"Let us start from the liberation struggle, war vets are overshadowing helpers of the struggle hence everyone should be acknowledged for the part they played in the struggle."* (**Mutare**);
- *"1960-2008 – let's not discriminate anyone who has been violated, all the problems that we are facing now stem from the liberation struggle. Let's look at the whole history of Zimbabwe."* (**University**).

Commenting on the question, "what are the major obstacles for a 'truth telling' agenda in Zimbabwe?", respondents had varying responses to this question:

- *"With truth telling comes responsibility and accountability, and right now people aren't ready to take up responsibility and accountability. People don't want to lose whatever they have. Perpetrators are also politicians. There's no platform for people to say out these stories. People are afraid of being beaten again. Leadership is not organised to protect the people. There are no records to support the stories."* (**Civics**);
- *"Some people end up concluding that making such reports is pointless as they benefit nothing at the end of the day and it would be better for them to just keep quiet about it and suffer inside."* (**Chivhu**);
- *"Fear of prosecution on the part of the perpetrators that ordered and that were ordered to perpetuate violence. Truth telling might lead to political instability and disturb peace. This was done by high profile people hence its risky to talk about it. People treasure the peace that's there."* (**Bindura**);
- *"Because the people we are supposed to report to are the ones who suppress the truth from being exposed. The government is afraid of having the truth exposed. There is a culture of fear amongst the people, even amongst the police."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"There's no justice, perpetrators are still walking scot free. It is state sponsored violence. If the judgments are not in their favour they make amendments."* (**Marondera**);
- *"Leadership is not organized to protect the people. There are no records to support the stories."* (**Mutare**);
- *"Laws aren't secure enough."* (**Masvingo**);

- *"There is no trustworthy body that can stand up and give the women a platform to air their views and be sure that something will be done."* (**Matabeleland-Gwanda**);
- *Refusal by perpetrators of political violence to acknowledge their wrong doing and accept responsibility for their actions. Failure by the justice system to bring perpetrators to book."* (**Bulawayo**)

However the most commonly reported responses to this question were that people fear re-victimisation and that the top brass was behind the perpetration of this violence.

- *"Afraid of being beaten again."* (**Civics**);
- *"Threats of being be-headed if this comes out, they'll definitely keep quiet about this for fear of losing their lives."* (**Chivhu**);
- *"Afraid of being beaten again."* (**Mutare**);
- *"Fear of victimisation because the process is not yet transparent."* (**Bindura**);
- *"Fear of victimisation on the part on the people who should talk, people have disappeared because of speaking out."* (**University**);
- *"Fear of further victimisation by the perpetrating institutions, non-state agents and some arms of the state."* (**Bulawayo**);
- *"Fear of mostly the very people who should be protecting us".* (**Gwanda**).

And the second most popular response to this question was:

- *"Those in power are the guilty ones... The problem is the leaders themselves don't want to tell the truth and the people themselves are in denial that the Gukurahundi ever happened."* (**University**);
- *"The 'big' political leaders have been involved in the perpetration of violence against women and they thus will do anything to cover up their 'sins'."* (**Gwanda**);
- *"This was done by high profile people hence its risky to talk about it."* (**Bindura**);
- *"The government is afraid of having the truth exposed."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"Perpetrators are also politicians."* (**Civics**);
- *"It is state sponsored violence hence if the judgments are not in their favour they make amendments."* (**Marondera**).

Asked to comment on "how truth telling leads to political instability by asking the question, how does truth telling lead to political instability? (What are the stages / dynamics of one leading to the other?)" Zimbabwean women seemed to concur that truth telling would open up old wounds resulting in a war of vengeance and re-victimisation.

- *"I think truth telling is very important, But it might lead to political instability in that if someone starts reminiscing and talking about what may have happened to him or her during the previous years, the memories might just resurface and become so vivid so much that if unguarded they may lead to violence, I mean violence might just break out there and then."* (**Chivhu**);
- *"This truth telling also led to 'Operation who sent you?' whereby some perpetrators were asked to account for their political crimes and also led to name blaming and finger-pointing."* (**Chivhu**);
- *"Can spark clashes between parties."* (**Bindura**);
- *"It can lead to re-victimisation because the perpetrators are not convicted."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"Truth telling at the present moment becomes sort of a crime because one will be re-victimised."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"Truth telling will lead to instability as it re-open the pain experienced and further fuel the hate between people. As the truth is told and the violence is re-lived it will give birth to a feeling and need for revenge as no amount of apologising or compensation can ever undo what was done."* (**Gwanda**).

However there were others who differed from this notion saying that truth telling is to some extent quite positive in that it is constructive, and examples of positive truth telling as highlighted by these women are as follows:

- *"Truth telling from the leaders themselves might result in the general public admitting their wrongs."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"If commissions are set up just like in Rwanda, I think it will not lead to political instability."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"Truth telling will give perpetrators peace of mind because in our culture there is a belief that such behaviours will bring misfortunes if one doesn't own up somehow."* **(Marondera);**
- *"Truth telling cannot lead to instability. It is good for healing and transparency."* **(Bulawayo);**
- *"No, there is no instability; on the other hand it can pave way for a better Zimbabwe."* **(Mutare)**

On the question of whether the prospect of political instability suggests that Zimbabweans shouldn't talk about truth telling, the general consensus amongst the majority of the women was that the truth should just be said no matter what or who the master-mind of this violence was. A few however commended the peace that is prevailing so far and reported that it should stay as it is.

- *"The truth should just come out in the open, regardless of who committed the crime."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"Let the truth be said at whatever cost."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"We should start now and nurture a culture of truth-telling forthwith."* **(Gwanda);**
- *"Not at all. Zimbabweans should engage in all phases of truth telling and proceed to effect justice and engage in a reconciliation process."* **(Bulawayo).**

Asked to comment on whether truth telling is only about victims, all women said that it should be about everyone who was affected by violence whether directly or indirectly. The process of truth telling should be for all Zimbabwe, including those that did not experience any violence or claim that it did not exist. It is important for them to hear the truth. However, only a few women from the Masvingo group begged to differ, citing that it should be about victims and perpetrators only, as witnesses might bail out on victims.

- *"No, everyone who was involved should be involved in the process."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"It shouldn't be about victims only, but about everyone else i.e. everyone who was involved, saw or heard anything. Everyone should be there including those who instigated and commanded people to cause violence."* **(Bindura);**
- *"Everyone should say what they saw, this can be evidence."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"It's about everyone who was affected, the victim and the witnesses because they might help the victims to explain fully what would have transpired... It should be about the victim, witnesses and the perpetrators so as to reduce the element of bias during truth telling on the part of the perpetrators. Plus it gives room for all of the above individuals to receive counselling."* **(Marondera);**
- *"Truth telling is about everybody because in one way or another, everyone needs the truth. Truth telling should be for both victims as well as the perpetrators of violence."* **(Gwanda);**
- *"Everyone should be there to support victims."* **(University);**
- *"No. It is also about the perpetrators who need to understand the pain and suffering they have caused and pave the way for rehabilitation where possible."* **(Bulawayo);**
- *"It moves in circles even those perpetrators were also victims so everyone should say what they experienced."* **(Civics);**
- *"No, society as a whole needs to be present because it's our duty to know what goes on around us."* **(Masvingo);**

- *"Everyone should say what they experienced."* (**Mutare**);

On the question of how they might get a broader range of Zimbabweans to engage or reflect on what had happened the women expressed varying responses, such as:

- *"People should be assured of their security before they start exposing the truth, commissioners should lead the process and the community at large should help to expose the truth, Those subordinate to the commissioners should be in the provinces, districts etc extracting such information, then set up dates for when such cases can be arbitrated and the victims and the perpetrators should be the ones to say the truth."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"Such cases should be arbitrated in the presence of victims, perpetrators witnesses, non-witnesses and representatives from the Victim Friendly Unit".* (**Marondera**).

However, it was also felt that extensive educational outreach on truth telling is needed as there are more victims within the communities who still live in fear of the perpetrators and thus need the truth to come out so they can be healed. Women called for more interactive focus group discussions to get the women to be confident, stand up for themselves; and face the truth of what really transpired. Thus, the Organ on National Healing should be an independent body that facilitates honest and transparent dialogue and recommendations for interaction between victims and perpetrators, as well as the community at large.

Accountability

The results of the survey on accountability are as follows;

- 100% stated that there needs to be accountability for what happened in the past, and 84% stated that every person involved in political violence be held accountable regardless of their political position.
- 70% stated that the people who were in charge of organising and commanding the violence (in election periods in past years) bear more responsibility than those they instructed to carry out the violence.
- 66% stated that special attention should be paid to perpetrators of violence against women.

The survey asked what official process or structure would be best placed to preside over, hear and make decisions on issues arising from political violence and the answers are below;

- 22% stated that these should be heard in the formal courts;
- 3% stated that these should be dealt with by traditional courts;
- 30% stated that they should be dealt by a special commission;
- 8% stated that they should be dealt with by a judicial commission;
- 21% stated that they should be dealt with by an international court.
- Only 23% stated that it is necessary for the government, in the spirit of reconciliation, to pardon all those people who were involved in the perpetration of political violence.
- 61% stated that if the people who committed politically motivated crimes in the past are allowed to go free they are likely to repeat the crimes they previously committed.
- Only 23% stated that everyone who admitted publicly to wrongdoing not be prosecuted in the courts.

"Accountability" is a concept in ethics and governance with several meanings. It is often used synonymously with such concepts as responsibility, answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and other terms associated with the expectation of account-giving. Thus in short, accountability is taking responsibility for words and actions.

Political accountability on the other hand is the accountability of the government, civil servants, and politicians to the public and to legislative bodies such as parliament. In a few cases, recall elections can be used to revoke the office of an elected official. Generally, however, voters do not have any direct way of holding elected representatives to account during the term for which they have been elected. Additionally, some officials and legislators may be appointed rather than elected. Constitutions or statutes can empower a legislative body to hold their own members, the government, and government bodies to account. This can be through holding an internal or independent inquiry. Inquiries are usually held in response to an allegation of misconduct or corruption. The powers, procedures, and sanctions vary from country to country. The legislature may have the power to impeach the individual, remove them, or suspend them from office for a period of time. The accused person might also decide to resign before trial. In parliamentary systems which, the government relies on the support of parliament, gives parliament power to hold the government to account. For example, some parliaments can pass a vote of no confidence in the government.

The survey sought to find out from the women whether they know what accountability entails by asking the question, ***"what does accountability mean to you?"*** Most of the women in the focus groups said that it entails an element of responsibility and owning up to one's actions. Others, however, thought it entails forgiveness, exercising justice, and owning up to one's actions by paying compensation.

- *"Means being responsible for your actions...Means owning up to your actions and not blame others...Entails justifying your actions...Entails that justice must be seen to be done."* **(Civics);**
- *"Forgiveness...It entails paying compensation for the crimes that one committed."* **(Bindura);**
- *It means being responsible for one's actions.* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *It means being responsible for one's actions and receiving a penalty for one's crimes.* **(Marondera);**
- *"It means that responsible political leaders should acknowledge their wrongs."* **(Bulawayo);**
- *"Accountability entails accepting what one has done and being prepared to face whatever consequences of their actions."* **(Gwanda);**
- *"It entails accepting responsibility for your actions."* **(University).**

On the question of whether persons found to have been involved in political violence should be removed from their political position, women across the board seemed to echo the same sentiments: that they should indeed be removed because they are not leading by example and are likely to perpetuate further violence in the future. Therefore, if possible, they should face prosecution so that they may serve as an example to future leaders. Others, however, were of the opinion that people can still hold office ONLY if they are accountable for their past actions, and if they have taken actions to apologise and compensate the victims (Gwanda).

- *"Yes if possible...Yes, they should be put in prison."* **(Civics);**
- *"Yes and there should be a commission in place to vet the people so that those who are guilty of crimes do not get appointed to positions of high office again."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"Yes, in fact those who commanded people to commit such crimes should be prosecuted for their crimes. Yes they should, because they're not leading by example."* **(Bindura);**
- *"Yes, because they will perpetrate further violence. Yes, because a leader should be exemplary and act against perpetration of violence."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"Yes, they should be put in prison."* **(Mutare);**
- *"Such persons should not hold any political office again as they would have failed to represent the people and at the same time abused the position."* **(Gwanda);**
- *"Yes because they are most likely to repeat the same wrongs, remove them and set an example for other political leaders."* **(University);**

- *"Yes, this should serve as an example to everybody else, that this is what will happen to offenders."* **(Marondera).**

On whether perpetrators of violence (including those who organised and commanded) should be able to hold public office, and whether there should be a process to identify and remove violators of human rights from public service, the general consensus amongst the respondents was that they should not be allowed to hold public office ever again because they are likely to perpetuate further violence. The Marondera Group, however, felt that only those who were giving orders should be removed from office as opposed to their junior officers because they were just simply following orders from above.

- *"Yes, there should be a process to identify and remove violators of human rights from public service because there shouldn't be impunity and leaders should lead by example. So yes there's need for that process."* **(Civics);**
- *"No, they shouldn't hold public office because they cannot lead by example and people have nothing good to emulate ...No, they shouldn't hold public office because they will perpetuate more violence."* **(Bindura);**
- *"No, they shouldn't hold public office because they will perpetuate further violence and yes there should be a process to identify and remove violators of human rights from public service because it restrains people from wrong doing.";*
- *"No, they shouldn't hold public office, especially those who hold high office and yes there should be a process to identify and remove violators of human rights from public service, and I personally think that, this should also appear on these person's CVs when applying for a certain positions in the public sector so that they don't get appointed."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"Perpetrators of violence are not cut out for public office and should not be allowed to hold any. The truth telling sessions should expose the violators of human rights and the truth commission should be responsible to ensure that such individuals are removed from public service. The service should be kept clean."* **(Gwanda).**

Asked to account for possible reasons why perpetrators of violence have been allowed to go free in the past, participants expressed various responses, but the near unanimous responses to this question were that it was as a result of fear, a partial justice system, lack of accountability, impunity, corruption, and violence perpetrated as a result of directives coming from the top brass who now want to protect themselves.

- *"Lack of accountability, if a person in power turns a blind eye and doesn't get the perpetrator prosecuted; everyone doubts the credibility of the media in exposing the truth. ...Corruption in the legal system."* **(Civics);**
- *"Fear, corruption and impunity."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"Corruption...the perpetrators have protection from top party leaders and have the powers to dodge going to jail. Victims fear reporting the matter to the police. The justice system is coerced not to attend to such cases."* **(Bindura);**
- *"Corruption in the justice system. The justice system is considered to be on the payroll of a certain party. Hence the judiciary is forced to arbitrate cases in favour of that particular party, and become partisan in the long run leading us to conclude that the justice system is not independent at all."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"Orders were coming from above hence the top brass will be trying to protect themselves. Then the other thing is they would also want to use these perpetrators in the next election."* **(Marondera);**
- *"Unfair/ Partisan justice system which did not bother to probe reported cases of violence. Some arms of the State were used to perpetrate violence."* **(Bulawayo);**
- *"The current political leadership comprises the actual perpetrators of violence. As a result they use their positions of authority to crush any attempt at judgment for their actions."* **(Gwanda);**

- *"The perpetrators themselves are in power... there is a lot of corruption perpetrators pay for their freedom." (University).*

On whether it is necessary to consult the public before a pardon is granted especially for political violence, there was unanimous agreement amongst all women that making consultations before a pardon is granted is very crucial as it gives the citizenry the liberty to choose whom they think should be pardoned and whom they think should remain in prison.

- *"It is always good because these people are always going back to the communities. Plus there's need to analyse how others have done it i.e. South Africa and Rwandan (Gacaca)." (Civics);*
- *"Yes, because it gives us the opportunity to say who should be pardoned and who shouldn't be pardoned...Yes consultation is important and we should take examples from other countries like S.A." (Chivhu);*
- *"The public should be given the opportunity to pass their comments during a hearing process of a perpetrator. The public should be consulted so that they can also give their go ahead if necessary." (Bindura);*
- *Yes, the public should be consulted and they should execute the will of the people. Yes, because we're the relatives of the victims. If the government wants to govern well then it should consult the public first before implementing anything because it will need the same persons again to vote for it in the next elections. (Marondera);*
- *The public should indeed be consulted as they are the wronged party and are therefore the ones to give the forgiveness. Pardon without consultation only causes more torture for the public in general and the victims in particular. To see a perpetrator being pardoned by the state when the victim is still hurting is not a solution. (Gwanda).*

On whether giving pardons or amnesties contributes to preventing further violence or not, women across the board seemed to be in agreement that giving pardons/amnesties does not prevent further violence from occurring but actually fuels more violence given that the perpetrators will be quite confident that they will get away with it.

- *"In Zimbabwe it's causing more political violence and it has become a culture we need to move away from...i.e. pardons for Willowvale scandal promoted further violations." (Civics);*
- *"Yes. It will perpetuate further violence of the same nature later on e.g. the Willowvale scandal. No to pardons as they'll cause further violence. No, impunity will prevail." (Chivhu);*
- *"If a perpetrator is not punished it becomes easier for him or her to perpetuate further violence. It encourages them to perpetuate further violence later on as they know they have back up." (Bindura);*
- *"Yes they will continue perpetuating further violence because these people know that they have protection and will be pardoned. Thus they should be judged accordingly otherwise it will take a very long time for violence to end. The justice system at the present moment is one sided...Yes because they would not have suffered enough to deter from that behavior." (Chinhoyi);*
- *"Such amnesties actually contribute to the promotion of further violence. The perpetrators feel they have nothing to lose as they will be pardoned and set free to go and cause more trouble with the full knowledge that amnesty and pardon await them." (Gwanda);*
- *"It increases violence as the perpetrators bank on pardons. It creates a circle of revenge as victims try to avenge their losses." (University).*

However part of the Marondera and Bulawayo groups seemed to think it all depends on the severity of the sentences passed on them; for example, if harsh sentences are passed, then this will prevent

further violence, but, if the sentences are mild, then this will not prevent further violence from occurring.

Compensation

The survey results were as follows;

76% stated that victims of politically motivated violence should be compensated.

Who should compensate victims of politically motivated violence?

- 32% said the government;
- 12% said the perpetrators;
- 15% said those that incited the violence;
- 19% said all of them.

Who should receive that compensation?

- 63% said the individual victims;
- 36% said the victim's families;
- 5% said it should go to the communities that had victims.

62% stated that everyone who truthfully testifies should not be exempted from paying compensation, and 40% stated that women should be compensated differently to men.

- 71% stated that women victims of sexual violence need to be compensated differently from women who were victims of all other forms of violence which is not of the sexual kind;
- 78% stated that women victims of sexual violence who contracted HIV/AIDS need to be compensated differently from all other sexual violence victims;
- 78% stated that women who bore children as a result of sexual violence should receive special assistance.

"Compensation" is defined as something that is given or received as an equivalent for services, debt, loss, injury, suffering, lack, indemnity, etc. In Zimbabwe, however, following the liberation struggle and the last presidential elections, there has been talk concerning the compensation of victims. The survey sought to find out from the women who should compensate these victims, what sort of compensation they would need, and how that compensation can be pursued in a situation of limited and competing priorities.

On the issue of *who* should compensate victims of violence, respondents expressed different opinions. Whilst some thought the previous government should pay compensation, given that they *'were the major perpetrators'*, others thought that the sitting government should pay given that they fought for it. Another group of women thought that the perpetrators should be responsible for paying this compensation, whilst yet another group thought that civil society and the donor community should pay, because both governments and the perpetrators do not have adequate resources to pay that compensation. However, still others were of the conviction that there were some wealthy perpetrators out there, and they should pay.

On the question of how reparations or compensation can be pursued in a situation of both limited resources and competing priorities, some respondents gave responses such as seizing the assets of perpetrators, especially those that had become wealthy, so that they can contribute towards the payment of compensation, as well as forced community service for those perpetrators that can't afford to pay compensation. Others, however, expressed concern regarding the identification of such perpetrators, given that during this period of violence, some perpetrators wore party T-shirts that belonged to their opposing political party, and then went out to cause havoc in that party's name. Therefore, according to this last group of women (part of the women from the Civic Organisations'

Group), compensation in this regard can only be pursued on assumption that it was clear that a particular political party was causing all this violence.

- *"It depends, those who have the means and have been identified as perpetrators owning some resources should compensate the victims. I'm against the idea of the Government paying compensation because I'm a tax payer thus we will be perpetuating impunity and it's the victim's tax that will be catering for that. Therefore individual perpetrators should pay compensation if they are identified... Perpetrators should be identified and made to do community service."* **(Civics);**
- *"Community service is better than letting them go scot free."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"The government should compensate victims because an individual perpetrator that was part of a group cannot come out openly for fear of being made to pay compensation on his/her own...The government should take 100% responsibility and force perpetrators to compensate victims even if the perpetrators are members of a certain political party because the government alone has the power to do that...The sitting government should compensate victims so that next time that same government will enforce laws against people who commit and instigate such violence...The government should seize the assets of perpetrators like ministers, sell them and use the proceeds to pay compensation."* **(Bindura);**
- *"In a case of limited resources then that perpetrator should be sentenced to jail... Since the government has no money it should pay victims by doing something symbolic for the whole community."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"The government should source for these funds; it should find the means to compensate these victims."* **(Marondera);**
- *"Compensation should be pursued whatever the state of resources, because a lot of resources were used to perpetrate violence. Those who funded and resourced the violence should now be made to do the same for the compensation. The issue of limited resources is out. The process should be given high priority and must be spearheaded by government."* **(Gwanda).**

Asked to comment on whether reparations should be targeted at individuals, collectives, or both, most women seemed to concur that they should be targeted at both given that they all were victims of violence, regardless of whether they were affected directly or indirectly. However, only women from the Marondera group begged to differ, and suggested that the reparations should go to individual victims only and not the entire community, because if compensation should go to the entire community, then that compensation might not even benefit anyone at the end of the day, and also, because some community members may never have been affected by this violence in the first place and this may create resentment due to unfairness.

- *"If a family was affected because a family member was hurt or killed then that compensation should go to the family of that particular victim."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"Primary victim and secondary victim in the case where the primary victim is deceased."* **(Bindura);**
- *"Primary victim but if deceased then that victim's family should receive that compensation."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"Individual victims and their families need to be compensated and in some cases the reparations go beyond just individual and family to encompass whole communities."* **(Gwanda).**

Rehabilitation and Re-integration

The results from the survey are summarised immediately below;

- 85% stated that it is necessary for all survivors of organised violence and torture to receive trauma counselling:

- 6% stated that only Primary Victims should get counselling;
- 1% stated that only Secondary Victims should get counselling;
- 76% stated that both Primary and Secondary Victims should get counselling.

82% stated that it is important for special trauma counselling centres to be set up to cater for women victims of organised violence and torture.

46% stated that it is necessary for perpetrators of organised violence and torture against women to receive counselling.

61% live in a community where they know and see perpetrators of violence:

- Only 4% stated that they felt safe with perpetrators in their community;
- 24% stated that they felt unsafe;
- 16% stated that the presence of perpetrators made them feel afraid;
- 19% stated that the presence of perpetrators made them angry;
- 5% were indifferent to the presence of perpetrators.

In the spirit of reconciliation, transitional justice's objective is to bring about social transformation that will prevent a resurgence of conflict in societies between victims and perpetrators through implementing mechanisms such as, "Rehabilitation" and "Re-integration", which by definition refers to the process of restoring an individual's full health and reputation after the trauma of a serious attack on one's physical or mental integrity. It is also aiming to restore what has been lost and seeks to achieve maximum physical and psychological fitness by addressing the individual, the family, local community and even the society as a whole. "The re-establishment of trust, re-building of "social capital" i.e. the networks, norms, values, trust, and other social relations that bind communities together and forge links with other communities and the State, and the restoration of "social cohesion" i.e. both horizontal social capital (linkages between individuals and different groups) and vertical social capital (linkages between citizens and groups and the State and its institutions) between ex-combatants, the communities and the State, respectively¹¹.

On the question of who should be responsible for setting up counselling centres to cater for women survivors of political violence, considering the poor state of the Zimbabwean economy, all women said that it should be the community, the government, political parties, clinics (which present a neutral ground), independent bodies, donors, NGOs, women's groups and churches at large.

- *"To a greater extent it should be community based with the help of the Government of course, and independent bodies...Churches can also pose as counselling centres...support clinics being a neutral place at least it can't be associated with stigmas that come with visiting any other places other than a clinic. Clinics can also have a Victim Friendly Unit...Donors can help...It should be an independent centre; it should be set up by the government." (Civics);*
- *"Even though the government doesn't have money it should squeeze in their budget a certain percentage to cater for setting up of such centres...support the idea that it's the government that should be responsible for setting up such centres given that it already has some infrastructure in place countrywide. Moreover most institutions in this country fall under the government so they can take advantage of such facilities to set up a counseling centre say at a school, and turn one of the classrooms into a counselling centre. The only challenge they'll face will be how to source for funds to pay the Counsellors so that they may be able to travel to and from different areas to offer such counselling services...Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) in conjunction with other bodies because churches are already on the ground offering other services to people in the communities...It should be community based with the help of the*

¹¹ www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/06/54/02/7545e870 - accessed 6 September 2010.

government and other independent bodies at clinics...Churches should offer counselling services say on a Wednesday afternoon...Clinics should have victim friendly units." **(Chivhu);**

- "The government should take responsibility because no individual group is capable of doing it...Donors in conjunction with government clinics and hospitals...People feel comfortable going to public institutions as opposed to private institutions for fear of having fingers pointed at them. So it would be better to use public institutions like hospitals and clinics to set up counselling centres. The Government should because individuals are not financially capable. Churches should because the word of God can heal. NGOs should fund the programmes in hospitals and clinics because they're very good at giving medical assistance as this doesn't also make them prone to victimisation." **(Bindura);**
- "They should be set up at government hospitals...Each political party should have counselling centres for its members...Professional counselling bodies that are non-partisan...Churches should preach the gospel of reconciliation." **(Marondera);**
- "Women's rights organisations and churches in conjunction with parliamentary structures." **(Bulawayo);**
- "Donors can help, but it's us the citizens of Zimbabwe who should take the initiative. It should be set up by an independent centre. It should be set up by the government." **(Mutare);**
- "The Government should allow other NGOs to come in and assist in setting up these centres. We look up to such organizations as churches, women's groups, support groups, to provide counsellors, of course with funding sourced by government." **(Gwanda).**

Asked to state what they think should happen to perpetrators if they should not be reintegrated back into their communities, participants seemed to be divided on the issue. For instance, while some thought that they should be banished from society for good, others thought it would be better for them to be re-integrated back into society after they have served their jail sentences, and after they have received counselling given that they would have nowhere else to go and that this would also serve as a lesson for others. Chasing them away would only lead them to commit more violence or cause them to be rejected by the communities to which they are forced to move. The responses from the Gwanda group and Bulawayo groups respectively seemed to be stronger because of the handling of the Matebeleland Massacre. Whilst the Gwanda group seemed to think that such perpetrators should be sent to resettlement areas where they should start new lives, the Bulawayo group on the other hand hinted that they wanted them to cut all ties with their previous communities by being sentenced to life imprisonment or being hanged for their murder and rape charges.

- "After counselling people should go back to their areas or else they will end up in the streets...Chasing them doesn't help because they will go and commit other crimes where they go to because they were not corrected." **(Civics);**
- "I don't think that the idea of ostracising them from the communities will work, because there'll come a time when their jail sentences will be up and they'll have to be released and go somewhere. Therefore I think that they should serve their jail sentences first and foremost, then receive counselling and get re-intergraded back into society...I agree with the point that we should accept them back into our communities because the entire purpose of the justice system is not to have them ostracised from their communities forever. But to have them taken away for some time, so that they may serve their sentences and get re-integrated back into society after some time. And this will also serve as an example to other community members as they'll take note of the years spent in jail by a perpetrator who then comes back reformed...They should be re-integrated back into the community, but they'll never have peace of mind even if victims don't approach them." **(Chivhu);**
- "They should come back as they will have no home...If they have been sentenced and served the sentence then we can accommodate them back into the community." **(Bindura);**

- *"It doesn't work as news travels so no one will accommodate them so they should be reintegrated in to the old community after counselling."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"Yes, only if they've served their sentences...because they can't relocate their houses. Yes, only after serving their sentences because they might be having a changed heart. Yes, because if they go somewhere else they might commit further violence so it's better to deal with them in our communities."* (**Marondera**).

On the question of whether women played a role as perpetrators in the Zimbabwean situation and whether they thought that there is need for special processes or mechanisms to deal with women perpetrators, the participants said that women surely did play a role as perpetrators in that they acted as informers, inciters of violence, and sold each other out, and sometimes were also responsible for beating up other women. Thus there is a need for special processes or mechanisms such as counselling services to be offered to such people. However, there were others (part of the women from the Chivhu Group) who seemed to think that there were women who could have been forced to sell out others and thus, for this reason, should not be treated the same as men given that their circumstances were different.

- *"Yes, some women were used to intimidate people hence there's need for them to receive counselling. Relatives should also be involved in dealing with women perpetrators. One woman was made to come back to her senses by relatives after she had abandoned her husband a stroke patient and started paying attention to base commanders and their meetings";*
- *"They should be treated like men."* (**Civics**);
- *"Yes, they did, women sold each other out because of personal grudges, personal vendettas and petty jealousies... Yes women were also responsible for beating up other women. Therefore they should be treated the same as men...should receive counselling...should be removed from positions of power and they should be dealt with harshly because women are not expected to do that in the first place, they should pose as educators instead."* (**Chivhu**);
- *"Yes, some watched other women's movements and sold them out...hence the need for them to be educated because some of them are illiterate and thus susceptible to indoctrination...they should be concientised on the consequences of violence and should also receive counselling."* (**Bindura**);
- *"Some women acted as sellouts...They watched other women's movements and sold them out...Some women invited trouble themselves and supplied perpetrators with accommodation...Some women were responsible for beating up other women....hence they should be treated the same with male perpetrators because they all committed crimes."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"Some women were singing motivational songs during the violence...Some women acted as sellouts."* (**Marondera**);
- *"Yes, they were the biggest sell outs."* (**Masvingo**);
- *"Yes, women were involved in the political violence in some cases. Some women in leadership positions initiated violence to crush the opposition. However all perpetrators of violence should be treated the same regardless of whether they are men or women."* (**Gwanda**);
- *"Women acted as informers and snitched on others...They also assaulted opposition party members...They also incited violence...A crime is a crime there should be no special treatment for women perpetrators."* (**University**).

Asked what role they think traditional leaders should play in the reintegration or reconciliation process at the local level, most participants were of the view that traditional leaders should be apolitical and should execute their chiefly roles to the fullest. Some however were of the view that they should continue teaching people to respect their culture and also encourage people to live in harmony (Marondera Group). Others thought that they should spearhead the setting up of truth and reconciliation commissions in their areas (Gwanda Group), and mobilise people to reconcile just as they were able to mobilise people to vote for a certain party (University Students Group).

- *"Should pass stiff penalties for violations and should be non-partisan."* (**Civics**);
- *"They should stand for the truth, shouldn't be biased and take advantage of their positions to disregard the laws...They should uphold justice, and be apolitical."* (**Chivhu**);
- *"They should be impartial, so to avoid bias in the adjudication of cases."* (**Bindura**);
- *"They should be impartial in the adjudication of cases."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"They should be non-partisan."* (**Mutare**);
- *"They should have meetings to enforce laws and not to be biased towards any political party."* (**Masvingo**).

On the question of what role spirit mediums should play in the reintegration or reconciliation process at the local level, most of the focus group participants had no confidence in the spirit mediums' ability to lead the reintegration/reconciliation process at the local level, given that they lie and no longer have influence. Thus, they should stick to cleansing ceremonies. However, contrary to this, the University Students Group seemed to think that spirit mediums still do play a pivotal role in guiding people. So they can help given that there still are a very large number of Zimbabweans who believe in culture and tradition and things like the holding of national *biras* country-wide. However, they cannot work in isolation, but should work with traditional leaders.

- *"They lie, without going any further let's just think of the Chinhoyi diesel n'anga case whereby the infamous diesel n'anga." – (Rotina Mavunga hoodwinked top Zanu-PF officials and the greater nation at large that she had discovered diesel oozing from rocks.)* (**Civics**);
- *"I don't see them doing anything to help...They should advice chiefs because they're the ones who have the power to influence their subjects...They should not be involved in politics but should encourage people to uphold their culture."* (**Chivhu**);
- *"They don't play any role because they don't warn people before hand of the impending perils...Some spirit mediums are fake."* (**Chinhoyi**);
- *"None because people do not believe in spirit mediums...They don't play any role because they don't warn people before hand of the impending perils that may be coming their way...They play a role in cleansing ceremonies only."* (**Marondera**);
- *Conduct cleansing ceremonies for the perpetrators for community reintegration.* (**Gwanda**);
- *"Help in the process of appeasing the spirits of the murdered victims and cleansing ceremonies."* (**Bulawayo**).

On what role political leaders should play in the reintegration or reconciliation process at the local level, most focus group participants underscored the political leaders' capability to lead this process, claiming that, since these politicians were actually the ones perpetrating violence, they should lead by example. Others however professed different opinions. For instance, the Marondera group seemed to think that if opposition party leaders unite this might make people feel better to the point that they may even decide to forget about everything that once happened as a result of this unity. However on the other hand, the Bindura and Chinhoyi groups seemed to think that political leaders themselves should lead the campaign against violence; and also take bold stances in exposing the truth.

- *"All politicians were perpetrators themselves, thus they also need to go through the truth, justice and reconciliation processes. They're supposed lead by example so that we may be able to look up to them as role models."* (**Civics**);
- *"They should be apolitical and should promote peace instead of inciting violence... Some of them were perpetrators so can we really trust them to play a role in reconciling the people they wronged? ... They should lead by example and repent from their sinful ways. Only then can they be able to go back to the people and reconcile them. However there are some leaders who even if they decide go back to the people and try to reconcile them will never be accepted."* (**Chivhu**);

- *All politicians were perpetrators themselves, so they themselves also need those processes they're supposed to be leading so that we may be able to look at them as role models...General populace has no confidence in the politicians because it's the same faces of the politicians who were perpetrators who are supposed to preach reconciliation to me now, it doesn't work.* **(Mutare);**
- *"These are expected to spearhead accountability of violence and show responsibility for their actions. Also they should ensure that there are national healing programmes for all affected."* **(Gwanda);**
- *"They should start by acknowledging their role in violence...They should go out and meet the victims."* **(University);**
- *"They should acknowledge wrongs and apologise."* **(Bulawayo).**

With regards to what role religious leaders should play in the reintegration or reconciliation process at the local level, again there was also near unanimous agreement amongst all focus group participants that all of them should remain apolitical and also play a pivotal role in leading the reconciliation process.

- *"Religious leaders-Some of them are unpredictable and seem to be aligned to both sides of the political parties...They all have an agenda they're pushing and are aligned to a certain political party e.g. the Anglican Church...Some of them can help but it seems politics has penetrated the church circles...Religious leaders should just play their role as church leaders and also intercede for the people."* **(Civics);**
- *"Churches mustn't be involved in politics but should preach the word of God as it is...They should preach the gospel of repentance."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"They should preach love and reconciliation...They should pray for people...They should preach forgiveness."* **(Bindura);**
- *"They're the only ones who are better able to emphasise the need for reconciliation than anyone else."* **(Marondera);**
- *"They should be in the forefront with setting up and running counselling centres and should be involved in the reintegration of perpetrators into the community."* **(Gwanda);**
- *"They have to be strong people with good command of their congregation and push for peace... They should make a combined stance against violence like the catholic commission."* **(University);**
- *"Spearhead reconciliation process."* **(Bulawayo);**
- *"They should stop being hypocrites as well as mixing politics with religious issues. Instead they should preach peace and conduct peaceful demonstrations."* **(Masvingo).**

Conclusion

All the focus groups stated that they felt the survey results are a true reflection of the situation as it was at the end of 2009. They did however state that the figures on victims and rape were understated as the culture of fear and stigma that exists prevents people from revealing what happened to them. They all stated that they would be interested in participating in further programmes of this nature as they found it interesting and enlightening. The participants also stated that they would go and share the information with others, be it in their political structures, or with their church groups and their friends.

Commenting on how the survey findings resonate with varying realities on the ground, almost all of the focus group participants were quick to point out that the survey findings are a true reflection of the realities on the ground although the rape and murder statistics seem to have been under-reported, given that most victims could have decided not come out in the open for fear of being victimised.

- *"It's a true reflection of what has been happening...The numbers might be higher given that the environment isn't conducive for people to come out...I think it's a general reflection."* **(Civics);**
- *"Yes most of it but the percentages on rape could have been understated, because some women might not have come out in the open due to fear...Report is a true reflection of the realities on the ground but the numbers could be higher as the environment is not yet conducive for people to speak out."* **(Chivhu);**
- *"The report is a true reflection of what is on the ground...There is need for more research on rape in the rural areas because the current statistics are very low...Murder percentages are also under-stated."* **(Bindura);**
- *"Yes, the report is a true reflection of what is on the ground, but rape statistics and assault statistics are understated....Centres should be set to record these rape statistics."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"Yes, the report is a true reflection of what is on the ground, but I believe not all areas were covered."* **(Marondera);**
- *"Women basically feel that statistics on abuse and violations of women's rights grossly under represent the situation on the ground. Most women suffer in silence and are afraid to come out and report cases of abuse. Some of them are afraid of societal stigmatisation while others are afraid that their families' breadwinners will be sent to prison if prosecuted and sentenced...Politically, while some women have very good ideas and contributions politically, our society has always, since time immemorial, placed the running of our country in the hands of men. Women parliamentarians and chiefs are few and far between and society usually looks upon the few with disapproval...Women feel that the government should consult them on issues that affect the country as women are also part of the country. We are sick and tired of political violence, intolerance, tribalism, corruption and poverty. We would like to see the country's economy stabilising, unemployment reduced and human rights respected."* **(Bulawayo);** *"The findings echo the actual feeling of the women in the Gwanda community. There seems to be a lot of work to be done to create a level ground to implement the wishes and demands of the people. That the Zimbabwean economy is still struggling presents a picture that it will be difficult to implement any programmes. The Organ of National Healing which is meant to spearhead national healing only visited Gwanda once and had a meeting with a few people at the hotel. This is not the way women feel it should be run. The reality on the ground dictates difficulty in implementing the results of the findings."* **(Gwanda).**

Women felt that there is need for more information sharing and capacity building workshops to prepare women for political leadership roles. Information and capacity building will make them more versatile and provide more input. Women were very emotional about most issues, and attributed the

lack of justice towards perpetrators to the fact that the leadership is itself implicated. The women also said these focus groups should have also included men so that they hear what women think about certain issues, but they were also cognisant of the fact that women become intimidated when men are present. Others said focus groups should be held with perpetrators so that their motivation for violence is known and understood. It was suggested that more programmes like this are needed especially in the rural areas and those in very remote areas, as rural women always get left out. They also suggested that more women from different political parties should be brought together to discuss issues relating to women and put aside their political differences.

It was suggested that the results of the survey and other related information especially on transitional justice should be simplified and distributed as fliers and brochures in vernacular languages. Educational workshops are one surest way of making inroads into the rural areas in as much as information dissemination on such findings is concerned.

In conclusion, commenting on RAU's decision to carry out these focus group discussions, all focus group participants expressed the same sentiments that the survey was an eye opener. Furthermore, whilst they were very happy to have taken part in these focus group discussions, in the future such focus group discussions should also include males and rural women who participated in the survey, and more people from different political parties. Such focus group discussions could yet be another avenue to gathering people around to deliberate on pertinent issues affecting the country in order to map the way forward. Therefore in this regard fliers, brochures, and fact sheets, as well as educational workshops in the vernacular on such major findings, could also be one sure way of making inroads into rural and other remote areas in efforts to disseminate such information to people from all walks of life.

- *"The survey was an eye-opener...Fliers and fact sheets on the major findings of this survey are one surest way of disseminating such information out there."* **(Bindura);**
- *"Fliers or brochures in the vernacular are one way of making inroads into the rural areas in as far as information dissemination of such findings is concerned."* **(Chinhoyi);**
- *"Church meetings ward meetings, fliers and brochures in vernacular as well as educational workshops are one sure way of making inroads into the rural areas in as much as information dissemination on such findings is concerned."* **(Marondera);**
- *"There is need for more information sharing and capacity building workshops to prepare women for political leadership roles. Information and capacity building will make them more versatile and provide more input. We as women are very emotional on most issues, and attributed the lack of justice towards perpetrators to the fact that the leadership is itself not clean."* **(Gwanda).**



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