



# **‘Fragility’ and education in Zimbabwe: Assessing the impact of violence on education.**

**Lloyd Pswarayi & Tony Reeler**

**December 2012**

## Executive Summary

"In a crisis, education is the strongest investment that can be made to reduce poverty."

- Carol Bellamy, *Chair for the Global Partnership for Education*

There has been increasing international debate on what role the state plays in facilitating or promoting the right to education, and, more recently, in states in crisis. This latter development is due to growing evidence that attacks have been directed on education – schools, teachers, and pupils - by governments themselves or insurgents aspiring to take over government. In Zimbabwe, attacks on education have been recorded from the struggle against colonial rule, where schools provided recruiting grounds for freedom fighters. However, in post independent Zimbabwe, the attacks have been directed at teachers, either directly or indirectly. Education has been both politicized and militarised by the setting up of militia bases in schools, attacking teachers, and exposing pupils to violence.

The impact of the attacks can have serious long-term consequences. Politically motivated violence against teachers does not only affect the teachers in person, but affects the prospects of better communities in general and the nation at large. The Research and Advocacy Unit, in collaboration with the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), conducted a national survey in 2010 to document teachers' experiences with elections. This culminated in two reports, "*Every school has a story to tell: Preliminary Report of a study on teachers' experiences with Elections in Zimbabwe*" and "*Political Violence and Intimidation of Zimbabwean Teachers*". The reports identified the profile of perpetrators of violence, and the types of attacks teachers had to contend with, including attacks in front of school children. In some embarrassing cases, the children were given whips to beat the teachers. Important to note from the findings is the politicization of education as well as militarization by setting up militia bases in schools.

This paper contends that the long term impact of violence is now being experienced and has affected the quality of education in Zimbabwe. For instance, schools in the rural areas that have experienced high levels of violence have continuously failed to attract qualified teachers and are increasingly manned by temporary teachers. The pass rates have not been pleasing with some schools recording zero percent pass rates in public examinations. Some of the more direct effects of attacks on teachers include closure of schools, as happened in 2008 when 94% of all rural schools were reported to have closed as teachers fled attacks. Even when schools don't close, attendance is affected, with the impact felt more by girl children. When militia bases are set in schools or within the proximity of schools, they pose real and potential danger of pupils to abuse, especially rape or sexual abuse of girls.

There is ample evidence that exposing children to political violence can have serious effects on the mental and social adjustment of children, and some of the possible consequences are outlined in this report. As regards social adjustment, it is important to note the possible impact of violence in engendering a culture of violence for the future of Zimbabwe: exposure to violence, especially by other youth can inculcate both a tolerance of violence and even future participation in violence. Thus, by exposing children to violence, the psychological and social consequences for the nation can be highly undesirable.

Accordingly, a number of recommendations are made. The recommendations are drawn from the previous reports by the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), and are re-stated as there has been little or no acknowledgement by the Inclusive Government of the need to address the implications of these reports:

- 1. The Government of Zimbabwe must immediately declare schools as zones of peace and as such enact laws that restrict and criminalise the use or occupation of schools for political activities, especially during the electoral period.*
- 2. Civic society and teacher unions must develop monitoring systems to detect early warning systems of attacks on education and to report political disturbances in schools in compliance with UN Resolution No. 1612 with additional modifications relevant to the situation in Zimbabwe.*
- 3. The Ministry of Education in conjunction with critical stakeholders like the police, parents and teacher unions must set up school protection committees so that social services rendered by schools are not interrupted during times of conflict like elections*
- 4. The Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) must actively investigate all reports involving political violence and intimidation against teachers, and at schools.*
- 5. The government must uphold strictly provisions of paragraph 20 to the First Schedule of Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000 (Public Service Regulations, 2000) and clauses 79, 80 and 81 of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendations concerning the Status of Teachers to negate the current insistence on teachers being compelled to support only one political party.*
- 6. The Ministry of Education must introduce civic education in the primary and secondary school curriculum which promotes national cohesion, peace and tolerance;*
- 7. The process of national healing, if it is ever going to take off meaningfully, should have a thematic area dealing with the education sector in order to restore the social bond between teachers and communities which has been weakened by recurrent election violence and politicisation of the public service.*
- 8. Overall compliance with the spirit and letter of the GPA is strongly recommended in order to curb institutionalised violence.*

## Introduction

“Fragility” is an increasingly used concept in the understanding of development and the risk to development, and is seen to be a key factor in the emergence of violence. As one study has defined this<sup>1</sup>:

*A **fragile state** is one that is particularly vulnerable to crises (economic, social, political, or environmental), where crises can easily lead to violence. The most important indicators of state resilience are:*

- *The ability of state organisations to maintain **basic security** (to be able to put down armed challenges to state authority and protect the state’s population from organised violence against their persons and property – including violence emanating from the state itself);*
- *The ability of state organisations to **raise revenues** to finance the basic functioning of their operations;*
- *The ability of state organisations to ensure their **primacy** over rival institutions among the state’s significant population (whether these emanate from families, tribes, language groups, religious organisations, regional power brokers, warlords, criminal gangs, or neighbouring states);*
- *The ability and willingness of the state to provide basic services to all citizens; and*
- *A lack of bias or favour by the state in allocation of jobs and resources among major groups.*

Whilst it is clear that fragility has a very wide set of consequences for a nation and its citizens, one area of particular concern must be for the more vulnerable members of a nation, and, in particular, women and children. This area of concern has been widened in recent years to include education as a key area in considering the consequences of fragility: education is a crucial aspect of the life of citizens and especially children and their families. At times of major societal stress, the education system can provide a critical vector for promoting safety, minimizing vulnerability, and enhancing resilience in children, as well a source of support for families. It is for this reason that UNESCO initiated the *Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack*, which identified Zimbabwe as one of the countries of concern. This concern has even reached the General Assembly of the United Nation with *UN Resolution No. 1612*.

It may be arguable whether Zimbabwe is in a state of “fragility”, and certainly very arguable that Zimbabwe is a “failed state”, but it does seem evident that Zimbabwe currently displays many of the features of “fragility” as described above. Irrespective of these debates, political violence (especially during elections), severe socio-economic decline, the extreme diminution in the state’s ability to deliver public goods such as health, education, and social welfare, and the highly polarized political environment have had , and continue to have important consequences for normal civilian life<sup>2</sup>. For

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<sup>1</sup> DiJohn, Jonathan (2008) *The Concept, Causes and Consequences of State Failure: A Critical Review of the Literature*. CSRC Working Paper No 25, cited in DFID (2010), *The Politics of Poverty: Elites, Citizens, and States. Findings from 10 years of DFID-funded research on Governance and Fragile States, 2001-2010, A Synthesis Paper*. DFID.

<sup>2</sup> It is also the case that “fragile” states tend, unless there are very serious attempts to overcome the causes of fragility, to slide into increasingly open violence: of 17 countries seen as “Fragile” between 1977 and 1989, only one remained fragile with no conflict, whilst 14 deteriorated into serious conflicts, with battle deaths in

children, and children in schools, the consequences are not trivial. It is also the case that countries characterised by high rates of organized violence also lead to similar consequences as those that might be more easily described as “fragile”<sup>3</sup>

Attacks<sup>4</sup> on education have been taking place in Zimbabwe since 2000. Although there has not been a systematic attempt to record the prevalence, there have been several reports describing the nature of these attacks. These attacks have largely been directed at the educators, who are mostly located in rural schools, and largely in primary schools. This is not to imply that tertiary institutions are immune from attacks, but the focus of the current concern is with young children who would not normally be involved in any form of political activism, as might be the case with students and young adults.

The reasons for the attacks, it has been established, have been politically motivated, and research in Zimbabwe has revealed that violence is state-sponsored, or at least state-condoned<sup>5</sup>. As shown in many reports, the violence that ensues is directly linked to the electoral cycle, with all violations increasing significantly during elections periods, but not exclusively: Operation Murambatsvina had little to do with elections, but all reports indicated that this caused significant disruption to the education of many children<sup>6</sup>.

In 2012, the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), in collaboration with the Progressive Teachers’ Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), published an initial report based on a national survey of teachers in

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excess of 1,000 per annum. See WDR (2011), *Conflict, Security, and Development*. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.

<sup>3</sup> The *World Development Report 2011* defines organized violence as the use or threat of physical force by groups, including state actions against other states or against civilians, civil wars, electoral violence between opposing sides, communal conflicts based on regional, ethnic, religious, or other group identities or competing economic interests, gang-based violence and organized crime, and international, non-state, armed movements with ideological aims. Although these are also important topics for development, the WDR does not cover domestic or interpersonal violence. At times, violence or conflict is used as shorthand for organized violence, understood in these terms. Many countries address certain forms of violence, such as terrorist attacks by non-state armed movements, as matters that are subject to their criminal laws. See WDR (2011), *Conflict, Security, and Development*. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.

<sup>4</sup> The use of the term “attack” may seem pejorative in the Zimbabwe context, but is used in keeping with the UN and UNESCO positions. Here the term is used to reflect the wide range of violations under the umbrella of Organised Violence and Intimidation (OVI). This would include violence against teachers, witnessing of violence and intimidation by school children, use of school facilities for intimidatory activities, etc.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the many reports of the Zimbabwe Human rights NGO Forum [www.hrforumzim.org]

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, ActionAid (2005), *An in-depth study on the impact of Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order in Zimbabwe*. ActionAid International in collaboration with the Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Combined Harare Residents’ Association (CHRA) and the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP). November 2005.

respect of their experiences with elections over the last decade<sup>7</sup>. This was followed later by the more comprehensive report<sup>8</sup>.

This survey was done with the specific aim of bridging the gap in information regarding teachers' experiences with elections, and establishing how best to restore the education sector as the pillar of political and social stability, a role it played in the transformation of Zimbabwe at independence. This may not be so simple. It is reported that since 2000, Zimbabwe has lost nearly 70,000 trained teachers to mainly neighbouring South Africa. The reasons were associated with the state of the economy, but politically motivated violence against teachers was also an important factor<sup>9</sup>. Zimbabwe is amongst 31 countries in the world in which attacks against education have been documented. Some of the countries include Iraq, Palestine, Ivory Coast, and Burma/Myanmar. The list includes some countries included countries that are in an obvious state of war, and Zimbabwe does not fit into that category. However, it is undisputed that Zimbabwe has seen serious violence since 2000, especially in 2008, and that Zimbabwe would now conform to a "complex emergency", and perhaps a "fragile state"<sup>10</sup>.

This paper contends that Zimbabwe, no doubt, is in a state of uneasy transition, but does not easily fulfill such descriptions as "failed state" or a "fragile state", but it may well conform to a complex emergency. All the systems of a state in charge are in operation. It then becomes interesting why a country not in a state of war can be described by in such pejorative terms and the impact that this complex emergency has had on education. In answering this question, it is important to understand the genesis of the crisis in Zimbabwe and put matters into perspective. These issues have consequences for education and perhaps explain why education in Zimbabwe is under attack.

It is common knowledge that Zimbabwe's education system, prior to 2000, was deemed among the best on the African continent. It was built on the basis of a strong stable state that pursued a socialist ideology and deliberately adopted a strategy dubbed Education For All (EFA), aimed at addressing the colonial imbalances and extending access to education to previously disadvantaged black children. During the period 1980 to 1985, the educational budget represented 30% of the total budget allocation, but, following the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Policy (ESAP), there were significant reductions to an average 14% of the budget allocation through the 1990s. During the period 1991 to 2001, Zimbabwe spent only 7% of GDP on education, and, from

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<sup>7</sup> PTUZ (2012), *Every School has a Story. A Preliminary Report on Teachers Experiences of Elections in Zimbabwe*. Report produced by PTUZ and RAU. February 2012. HARARE: PROGRESSIVE TEACHERS UNION OF ZIMBABWE and RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT.

<sup>8</sup> PTUZ (2012), *Political Violence and Intimidation of Zimbabwean Teachers*. May 2012. Report prepared for the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe [PTUZ] by the Research and Advocacy Unit [RAU]. HARARE: PROGRESSIVE TEACHERS UNION OF ZIMBABWE.

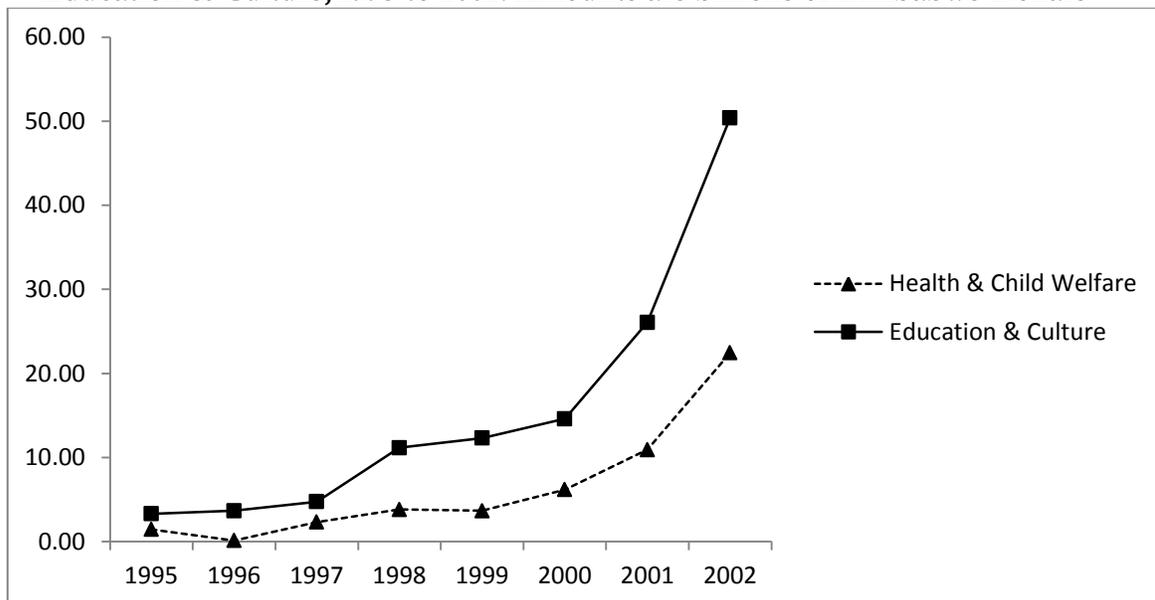
<sup>9</sup> 91% of the teachers interviewed in a refugee sample in South Africa gave "political violence" as the reason for their leaving Zimbabwe. See SACST (2008), *Victims of Organized Violence and Torture in Zimbabweans attending Refugee Reception Offices in South Africa: Prevalence & Associated Features*. March 2008. JOHANNESBURG: THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CENTRE FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE.

<sup>10</sup> "Complex emergencies are situations of disrupted livelihoods and threats to life produced by warfare, civil disturbance and large-scale movements of people, in which any emergency response has to be conducted in a difficult political and security environment. Complex emergencies combine internal conflict with large-scale displacements of people, mass famine or food shortage, and fragile or failing economic, political, and social institutions. Often, complex emergencies are also exacerbated by natural disasters." *Environmental health in emergencies and disasters: a practical guide* (WHO, 2002)

2000 onwards, the rapidly spiraling inflation had a devastating effect on all government services, and education was no exception.

There has been a general trend in the expenditure of the Zimbabwean government to spend significantly more on education than on health. This can be seen in Figure 1, and it is evident that the gap between the two in favour of education rises dramatically as inflation begins to bite more strongly from 1997 onwards. Thus, in terms of government's clear expressed and economically supported desire to provide education to its citizens, the subsequent allowing of disruption, violence, and waste of resources and schooling time due to politically motivated violence and intimidation is difficult to understand. One would expect a government willing to commit so much of its resources to one sector of public life to defend that investment very strongly. This, alas, does not seem to have been the case from 2000 onwards.

**Figure 1: Government fiscal appropriations to Ministries of Health & Child Welfare and Education & Culture, 1995 to 2002. Amounts are billions of Zimbabwe Dollars**



Though there were criticisms about the manner of expending the budgets during these formative years, especially the fact that the majority of the budget allocation was gobbled by salaries and very little spend on infrastructure development, many would argue that it is the success of the government of Zimbabwe's Education for All Policy at Independence that has contributed to stability and development of democracy. This stability allowed the state to have a firm grip on the politics and centralize the very institutions that would serve the state to the fullest. In fact, Zimbabwe developed a state-centred model of development, that relied on the state to play a critical role in all socio-economic-political needs. Once the state decided to shift policy in the 1990s and attacked the foundations of this stability, the cost recovery processes set in place had profound consequences for access to education for many of the poorer families in Zimbabwe. The difficulties accelerated after 2000, and, in addition to the economic difficulties faced by many families, and especially the rural poor, came the problems of political partisanship, accompanied by political

violence, into which even the education system was drawn. And in the new crisis, teachers, schools, and pupils were not exempt from the violence.

Whilst the earlier reports sought mainly to highlight the extent and nature of violence experienced by teachers and called for legislative mechanisms that declare schools as Politics Free-Zones (PFZ), this paper is a follow-up. It explores, in a preliminary fashion, the impact of the failure of the state's to protect education for the learners, the quality of education delivery system in Zimbabwe, and the psychological well-being of children.

## Tracing the crisis

What makes the Zimbabwe case interesting is the fact that attacks on education take place without the state demonstrating apparent concern, or taking steps to prevent this from happening. As pointed out earlier, Zimbabwe cannot be considered a country at war and it is a country where there are demonstrably strong state structures that could very plausibly prevent such attacks from taking place. However, the increasingly serious challenges to ZANU PF's hegemony produced an apparent change in the attitude to many institutions, and the education system was no exception, but did not receive the same attention as the events around the invasion of commercial farms. It became apparent in the wake of the 2000 Constitutional Referendum that the white commercial farmers and the 350,000 worker families were a direct threat to ZANU PF at the polling station, and it is strongly argued that the "land invasions" were less an attempt to redress an obvious problem than an attempt to provide a political rationale for neutralizing a serious threat at the polling station<sup>11</sup>. The consequences of this "land reform" process have been well-described in many reports, but little attention has paid to effects of education<sup>12</sup>. Many commercial farms had primary schools for the children of their work forces, and these schools (and especially their teachers) became foci for political violence and intimidation. One study estimated that 82% of the schools on farms had been closed or significantly downsized<sup>13</sup>. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents alleged that workers in authority on their farms (which included teachers) were specifically intimidated. Three quarters of all workers were intimidated, forced to join ZANU PF, and forced to attend political meetings: these last did not exclude children, and hence children not only had their education disrupted but also experienced political motivated intimidation, and witnessing political violence. However, the violence in schools and against teachers was not confined to the commercial farms, but was

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<sup>11</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2001), *Politically motivated violence in Zimbabwe 2000–2001. A report on the campaign of political repression conducted by the Zimbabwean Government under the guise of carrying out land reform*, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

<sup>12</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2007), *Adding Insult to Injury. A Preliminary Report on Human Rights Violations on Commercial Farms, 2000 to 2005*. Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum and the Justice for Agriculture Trust [JAG] in Zimbabwe. June 2007. HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM; GAPWUZ (2009), *If something wrong...The invisible suffering of commercial farm workers and their families due to "land reform"*. Report prepared by the Research & Advocacy Unit and the Justice for Agriculture Trust. November 2009. HARARE: GENERAL AGRICULTURAL AND PLANTATION WORKERS UNION OF ZIMBABWE.

<sup>13</sup> JAG/RAU (2008), *Reckless Tragedy: Irreversible? A Survey of Human Rights Violations and Losses suffered by Commercial Farmers and Farm Workers from 2000 to 2008*. Report prepared by the Research and Advocacy Unit [RAU]. December 2008. HARARE: JUSTICE FOR AGRICULTURE TRUST.

widespread, as a report of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (the Human Rights Forum) demonstrated<sup>14</sup>.

There seemed to be two main reasons for the attacks on teachers. The first was the most obvious: that they are amongst the most educated and influential members of local communities. Teachers are in a special position to influence communities, and, of course, in immensely important positions to influence their pupils. For example, the history of the Liberation War is resplendent with stories of young people being made aware by their teachers of the political inequities of the Rhodesian state, and becoming politically active as a consequence, even joining the military struggle by training as freedom fighters.

The second was related more directly to their education and had to do with the involvement of teachers as returning officers in elections. Teachers as returning officers in elections would be in special position to uncover any vote rigging during elections, and hence can be a decided nuisance to any political party wanting to acquire an unfair advantage during an election. This has been going on since 2000 as the case below illustrates.

***Bikita East***<sup>15</sup>  
7 February 2002

*Just after break, a group of about 70 Zanu PF youths went to Dungu School asked for AM, and accused him of being a member of MDC. A number of them took turns to assault him using thick sticks and copper wire, open hands and whatever they could find. When they were tired, they chased him from his work place and threatened him with death upon being seen at the school or reporting for duty. The assault took place in full view of ten teachers and over 460 pupils. The case was not reported to the police as he had been threatened with death if he did so. The victim also did not seek treatment due to the threats.*

The elections from 2000 onwards merely confirmed that the opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was there to stay and ZANU PF had to contend with that. There was a refractory period after the 2005 Parliamentary elections when, apart from the brief (but extremely serious) aberration of Operation Murambatsvina, political violence was in noted decline. However, the dramatically worsened economic situation and the massive hyperinflation had consequences for schooling and teachers: many teachers were forced out of education in order to find ways to support their families, many fleeing to South Africa. As Daniel Makina demonstrated in his research on Zimbabwean refugees, the major reason for migration between 2002 and 2005 was “political”, and this altered thereafter to either “economic” or “employment”<sup>16</sup>. Over 7% of Zimbabweans migrants in South Africa, sampled in 2005, were teachers, and the Zimbabwe government itself estimated that

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<sup>14</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2002), *Teaching them a lesson. A report on the attack on Zimbabwean teachers*, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

<sup>15</sup> Case taken from Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2002), *Teaching them a lesson. A report on the attack on Zimbabwean teachers*, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

<sup>16</sup> Makina, D (2010 ), *Zimbabwe in Johannesburg*, in J. Crush, & D. Tevera (eds), *Zimbabwe's Exodus: Crisis, Migration, Survival*. CAPE TOWN & OTTAWA: SAMP & IDRC.

20,000 teachers had fled to South Africa<sup>17</sup>. One study suggests that less than 47% of teachers have managed to continue in their former profession after migration<sup>18</sup>.

In 2008, after the March elections, the violence returned at new and higher levels in the aftermath of ZANU PF's loss at the polls, with civil servants, and especially teachers, targeted for violence as a consequence of the "disloyalty" shown in the election. This followed major inroads made in formerly ZANU PF rural strong-holds where MDC gained control of the House of Assembly for the first time since its formation in 1999, taking control away from ZANU PF, a control it had had since Independence in 1980.. The teachers were also accused of rigging elections for the MDC in their role as electoral officers. Some of the charges leveled against teachers were that they were guilty of 'distorting' the history of the struggle and teaching politics in schools.

So it becomes clear that, at the core of the attacks on education in Zimbabwe, lies the state and thus the solution is a simple one – getting the State to commit and act on its word, by legislating, if need be, for the ban of all forms of political activities in schools and guaranteeing professional freedom and safety for the educators. The creation of schools as zones of peace thus becomes critical.

### **Long term Impact of attacks on education: the youth factor**

Whilst the evidence about political violence against teachers and in schools is highly persuasive and teachers have quite clearly reacted by leaving both the profession and the country in large numbers it is also important to demonstrate that these attacks on education have had an actual negative impact on the quality of education and the attainment of the right to education as enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Charter. It is important to understand whether the political violence and intimidation has affected the children's education directly as well as in ways other than their educational attainment, and here there are different possible effects. One is that children's psychological health and development can be adversely affected, and the other is that exposure to violence may result in an increased propensity for violence in youth as they become adults. We will deal with the latter first.

One of the major advantages of schools is the engagement of children and adolescents in productive occupation, and, of course, the schooling system has a major role as child care for many families. Thus, the closure of schools is not merely an issue related to loss of learning opportunities, but can have much wider social and psychological consequences. For example, in 2008 alone, UNESCO reported that 94% of rural schools had to close down because the teachers had fled political persecution. As pointed out before, this was also worsened by the economic situation where runaway inflation eroded all earnings, and many children were forced out of school. This is obviously serious, but, added to this, children were forced to witness violence perpetrated against their teachers, and probably many witnessed the political violence perpetrated in the community.. The report "*Every School has a story to tell*" observed that a high percentage of attacks on teachers took place at schools during working hours in full view of the pupils, perhaps to send a clear message to their parents of the consequences of supporting or entertaining opposition politics. Is this creating future citizens that embrace violence from a youthful age? The question is raised in relation to the militarization and politicization of the education system as well as the more general question about

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<sup>17</sup> Chireshe, R, & Shumba, A (2011), *Teaching as a Profession in Zimbabwe: Are Teachers Facing a Motivation Crisis?* Journal of Social Sciences, 28(2), 113-118.

<sup>18</sup> Chetsanga, C (2003), "*An Analysis of the Cause and Effect of the Brain Drain in Zimbabwe*", HARARE: SIRDC.

exposing children to violence. And there is the more general question too about the effects of high unemployment amongst the youth.

The failure of the state to come up with alternative skills' acquisition programmes that absorb the youths into formal structures of employment is evident has been pointed out as a factor predisposing the youth to participation in violence<sup>19</sup>. From 2000, reports on political violence indicate youths playing a prominent role in the violence. Subsequently, it is interesting to note the use of unemployed youths in political processes by all political parties. There are allegations that a notorious youths' militia group, Chipangano, based in Mbare high density suburb in Harare, is being used by the ZANU PF Harare provincial leadership to unleash violence on any perceived MDC supporters. ZANU PF denies this link, but considerable anecdotal evidence suggests otherwise, and some senior ZANU PF officials have expressed concern about Chipangano<sup>20</sup>. Other rowdy unemployed youths have in the past caused problems demanding that they be issued contracts by government or city councils. The characteristics of these youths' groupings suggest that they are school dropouts, perhaps victims of the 2000 and 2002 political processes now manifesting a decade later. There have also been allegations that the MDCs have employed youths in violent activities<sup>21</sup>.

As many studies in other African countries have shown, the recruitment of young men and even children has become a very distressing aspect of civil wars and low intensity conflicts. The worst cases seem to have come from West Africa – in Liberia and Sierra Leone – but there many other countries – Uganda and Mozambique, for example - where youths and child soldiers have been recorded as participating in serious violence. Involving young persons in violence seems to follow a similar pattern in most countries, and revolve around both inducements and coercion, with there being at least two main methods for the latter:

*Both methods use well-known psychological techniques. The first revolves around creating a forced commitment: quite simply, get someone to participate in an act and they will be more likely to continue to do so. .... This will be more effective if allied to a strong psychological induction process. The second method also relies upon compliance, and is produced again through exposure to violence: witnessing the torture of others for their political or religious beliefs will produce a strong self-protection motive, identification with the aggressor, and at the least compliance to the aggressor.<sup>22</sup>*

As has been shown in many Zimbabwean reports<sup>23</sup>, the youth constitute a significant proportion of the alleged perpetrators of violence, and, as seen in Table 1, also constitute a significant proportion of those perpetrating violence against teachers and at schools.

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<sup>19</sup> Solidarity Peace Trust (2003), *National youth service training – “shaping youths in a truly Zimbabwean manner”*. An overview of youth militia training and activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 – August 2003. 5 September, 2003. ZIMBABWE & SOUTH AFRICA: SOLIDARITY PEACE TRUST.

<sup>20</sup> *Mutasa rebukes Harare province*. The Herald Online. Tuesday, 24 July 2012

<sup>21</sup> *Violent clashes at MDC-T meeting*, The Chronicle, Wednesday, 22 August 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Reeler, A.P (2003), *The role of militia groups in maintaining Zanu PF's political power*, Report prepared for ZWNEWS, March 2003.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, CSVR (2009), *Subliminal Terror? Human rights violations and torture in Zimbabwe during 2008*. June 2009. JOHANNESBURG: CSVR.

**Table 1: Frequency of alleged perpetrators of personal violence**

<b>Perpetrator</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
ZANU PF	24%
Youth militia	20%
War veterans	27%
CIO	10%
ZNA	7%
ZRP	3%
Traditional leaders	2%
Teacher	4%
Unidentified	3%

Bear in mind that slightly more than 50% of teachers reported that they had had direct experience of political violence in 2008, and nearly half (47%) of these alleged that they had been the victim of political violence at the school where they worked, during working hours, and hence in front of the school children (see Table 2). Most of the schools in the rural areas of Zimbabwe are primary schools, with children attending from 5 to 12 years, and thus the exposure to violence is happening to very young, impressionable children. It is also worth commenting, and seen in Table 2, that virtually all the violence against teachers happened in public, not merely at schools, and all of this could be witnessed by children.

**Table 2: Place where violence took place**

<b>Place of violence</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
At school during working hours	47%
At community meeting	28%
At home after working hours	15%
At militia base	9%
Others	1%

As was seen in Table 1, youths were identified in 20% of the violations committed on the persons interviewed, but, for those teachers that witnessed political violence, slightly more, 28%, of these violations were committed by the youths. In focus group discussions following up on the teachers' responses, some teachers identified their own students participating in attacking them.

**Table 3: Frequency of alleged perpetrators witnessed**

<b>Perpetrator</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Chiefs	2%
CIO	6%
Fellow teachers	2%
Ministry of Education officials	1%
Police	2%
Soldiers	7%
War Veterans	27%
Youth militia	28%
ZANU PF supporters	23%
Unknown	1%

What this data suggests is that children will be frequently exposed to political violence, and a significant proportion of this violence will be carried out by young persons. This may have the highly undesirable consequence of modeling violence for the younger children, with the implication that political violence is acceptable. This is not a trivial observation; there is considerable psychological evidence on the effects of modeling behavior, good or bad, on children, and the effects of peer modeling are common knowledge. So, young person assaulting or humiliating older persons, especially persons of authority such as teachers, will have a profound effect on children. We consider some of these consequences later. This modeling of violence is worsened considerably by the militarization of society that takes place around the schools, and the blunt political education that frequently takes place in and around the schools.

A significant number of respondents (23%) responded that a militia base was set up in their school, or at least in the vicinity of the school premises. The effect of these bases was disruption of the learning programmes, where in some cases teachers were summoned for political re-orientation programmes. In the worst cases, assaults and torture of the teachers were carried out. Though there has not been an independent study to specifically verify the existence and continued operation of militia bases in schools, an earlier report claimed that, of the bases identified in the 2002 Presidential Election, 41% were placed at schools<sup>24</sup>. This was corroborated by a more recent study of 15 constituencies that reported high rates of political violence in 2008<sup>25</sup>.

What makes the state suspect is its reluctance in dismantling the structures of violence that have been set up in communities, and a significantly high number are set up in government or local government buildings. Militia bases established at or around schools can easily be identified and removed. However, this has not yet happened and every election sees the return of bases. Some

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<sup>24</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2002), “*Are They Accountable?: Examining alleged violators and their violations pre and post the Presidential Election March 2002*”, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

<sup>25</sup> See *The Anatomy of Terror* [available at <http://www.sokwanele.com/node/2334>].

bases are reported to be associated with Operation Taguta, the so-called agricultural support programme set in place in 2006, which justifies a military presence in communities. The presence of these bases creates a highly politicised environment in a community, and it is scarcely possible that children will be unaffected by this.

A second example comes from the many reports about the surveillance of teachers for evidence of their loyalty to ZANU PF. There are reports that former “green bombers” have been deployed to schools as youth officers attached to schools or setting up “bases” near schools<sup>26</sup>. This has a highly intimidatory impact. One activity is reportedly monitoring the daily activities of teachers and ensuring that the dominant ideology understood by all shall be that prescribed by ZANU PF. Here it is important to stress that all available evidence indicates that the graduates of the National Youth Service Training scheme have undergone rigid ideological training<sup>27</sup>. It is difficult not to see parallels with other highly autocratic regimes such as Germany under Hitler or Russia under Stalin, a point that has been made before<sup>28</sup>.

The effects on teachers of the presence of bases and youth militia are extremely serious. The respondents interviewed (50%) expressed concern about their security as they confirmed that the alleged perpetrators are still living in the very same communities in which they inflicted violence. 48% of the respondents could even identify the militia base commanders or the perpetrators of violence against them. In spite of the establishment of the Organ on National Healing, Integration and Reconciliation to specifically address how communities can reconcile and work towards promoting unity under the Inclusive Government, not much progress has been made as teachers are still viewed with suspicion by political parties.

Furthermore, many rural schools have headmasters who are seconded by ZANU PF, and the School Development Associations (SDAs) are frequently highly politicized, comprised of party loyalists that report to the party structures. Unsurprisingly, 57% of the teachers interviewed reported wanting to leave their duty station at some point, 25% said “often” or “very often”. There are many reports of teachers forced to leave schools because of their alleged involvement in opposition politics, and the teachers themselves point out, in the vast majority (78%), that victimisation occurs because they are “seen as an opposition supporter”, “seen as being too influential in the community”, or “not supporting ZANU PF”, rather than being actually “politically active” (8%).<sup>29</sup> It seems evident that the only safety for teachers is to declare public affiliation to ZANU PF, and there is no place for alternative views or

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<sup>26</sup> *Militia posing as youth officers, say parents*, The Zimbabwean. 27 July 2009 [<http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/23006/militia-posing-as-youth-officers-say-parents.html>].

<sup>27</sup> See again Solidarity Peace Trust (2003), *National youth service training – “shaping youths in a truly Zimbabwean manner”*. An overview of youth militia training and activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 – August 2003. 5 September, 2003. ZIMBABWE & SOUTH AFRICA: SOLIDARITY PEACE TRUST.

<sup>28</sup> Scarnecchia T (2006) *The 'fascist cycle' in Zimbabwe (2000–05)*. Journal of Southern African Studies 32(2): 221–237.

<sup>29</sup> See p12 in PTUZ (2012), *Every School has a Story. A Preliminary Report on Teachers Experiences of Elections in Zimbabwe*. Report produced by PTUZ and RAU. February 2012. HARARE: PROGRESSIVE TEACHERS UNION OF ZIMBABWE and RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT.

neutrality. The “fear factor” identified by human rights reports seems to have particular significance for teachers in rural areas<sup>30</sup>.

### **Illustrative Case: Teachers evicted from schools**

*Teachers at [School names withheld] schools in Zaka West Constituency were attacked by ZANU (PF) youths led by the losing ZANU (PF) local government election for a ward in the constituency. On this tragic day, the 2nd of June 2008, teachers who were voter educators were accused of campaigning for the MDC. The attack resulted in one teacher, Tuarai Gwenzji (not real name) being severely injured and hospitalised at St. Antony’s Mission Hospital. Teachers at [school names withheld] four schools deserted the schools from the 2nd of June and only came back after 30 June after the run-off elections. The matter was reported to the District Education Offices and the police.*

In addition there can be the influence of traditional leaders whose strong ZANU PF connections have facilitated the expulsion of teachers in schools.

It is therefore not a coincidence that communities which have strong party influences, and experience high levels of violence, have not attracted qualified personnel. Instead, the schools have ended up manned by temporary teachers who in most cases are only given single term contracts, with the consequence that it becomes very difficult to plan or run a school efficiently. It is no surprise that the results of the public exams for these rural schools have not been impressive, with several rural schools recording a zero percent pass-rate. Even the President, Robert Mugabe, has bemoaned the poor school pass rate:

*“This (high failure rate) is not only a problem here in Shurugwi. Everywhere pupils are failing. It is Us, Us, and Us everywhere. And ‘U’ stands for underground. They are going six feet down if we allow them to fail like this. In Silobela they had three percent pass rate. Shurugwi has a pass rate of eight percent. In other areas it’s six percent, 19 percent, and 27 percent has been the highest so far. Our education standards have fallen partly because of lack of resources, but we must lift them up.”<sup>31</sup>*

It is this continued militarization of the education system that is working against the operation of efficient schooling, as well as the undoubted challenges of the limited economic resources.

### **Assessing the impact of attacks**

It is clear that the severe economic decline of the past 10 years has had a serious impact on education. There is an urgent need for both greater recurrent expenditure on education as well as a

<sup>30</sup> For example, see Bratton, M, & Masunungure, E (1012), *Voting Intentions in Zimbabwe: A Margin of Terror*, August 2012. Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 103.

<sup>31</sup> *Rural schools record zero percent pass rate.* The Sunday Mail. 16 January 2010.

growing need for infrastructure rehabilitation. But these are only part of the reason behind the calamitous decline in education standards and pass rates: the human resource has been seriously depleted, and not only because of these factors, as was pointed out earlier.

The earlier report explored what was the driving force behind teachers wanting to transfer from one school to the other. Since the survey was carried out after the violent 2008 elections, the violence was expected to be the leading push factor. There were also other earlier elections in which there was serious violence, as well as other serious disturbances. In 2005, the Government of Zimbabwe embarked on Operation Murambatsvina which resulted also in schools destroyed leaving many children out of school<sup>32</sup>. Make-shift schools had to be put in place to absorb the displaced children, but, almost a decade after the operation, these structures remain in place. The land reform programme also meant the creation of new schools to cater for the new settlements, but very little support has come from the government to set up proper infrastructure.

Surprisingly, and in view of all the above very compelling reasons to leave because of the difficult conditions and the political risks, the majority of the teachers in the survey were motivated by the desire to be with one's family [53% and 32% respectively] as reasons for transferring or wanting to transfer. But, conditions were also a motivating factor, and, as can be seen from Table 4 (over), a good percentage of the respondents cited “*poor infrastructure*”, with 11% of the respondents having actually transferred, and 14% wanting to transfer.

**Table 4: Reasons for transferring from current post**

<b>POSSIBLE REASON</b>	<b>Reason for actual transfer</b>	<b>Reason for intended transfer</b>
Health reasons	3	3
Desire to stay with family	53	32
Political disturbance	13	14
Poor relations with school admin	8	7
Poor infrastructure	11	14
Promotion	10	27
Poor relations with community	0	3

Additionally, in a snap survey of 20 schools in Gokwe North and South, it was discovered that only 3 teachers are originally from Gokwe, and only there because of work. The rest have no desire to be there and would transfer as soon as a teaching vacant opens in their district or town of origin. These are then the pull factors that attract qualified personnel, and these may not be wholly independent of the drive factors: teachers may well feel safer in communities where they are well-known and supported by family. The impact has been significant when one looks at the quality of results from

<sup>32</sup> ActionAid (2005), *An in-depth study on the impact of Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order in Zimbabwe*. ActionAid International in collaboration with the Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Combined Harare Residents' Association (CHRA) and the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP). November 2005.

these schools. In most cases they are manned by temporary teachers with little or no experience in the field.

## **Psychological Impact**

In 2008, the crisis in Zimbabwe reached its peak both on the economic and political front. In summary, and repeating earlier points, inflation levels were uncontrollable and it became virtually impossible to plan. All these effects were arguably of a political nature. The impact was felt in the education sector to the point where teachers could not afford transport to go to school. Absenteeism was the order of the day. It is not far from the truth to allege that the better part of the year was a total waste in education circles with only private schools that offered a subsidized allowance to their teaching staff conducting lessons. Even calls to suspend the public exams that year were not misplaced. The situation also worsened on the political front after the unleashing of violence targeting teachers especially in the rural areas.

Now it is clearly very important to assess the effects of the political violence and disruption on the education of Zimbabwean children, and this can be done through a comprehensive analysis of a range of indicators such as enrollment rates, pass rates in public examinations, number of days schools are closed, the loss of teachers (the qualified-unqualified ratio), and others. This would obviously be an enormous statistical exercise, but nonetheless one that the government should contemplate, particularly in order to ascertain the extent of compensatory education that might be needed. Here, one thinks of the enormous investment in the early 1980s to overcome the educational deprivation of the 1970s, and including all those former freedom fighters that gave up chances at schooling in order to free the country.

However, this issue is outside the scope of this paper, and the concern here is to understand the possible effects of violence taking place at schools, involving teachers, and witnessed by young children (and adolescents too). This is an area in which there has been an enormous amount of international scientific research over the past decades, and, despite some dissent<sup>33</sup>, it seems evident that a number of conclusions can be drawn from the literature that are applicable to Zimbabwe.

However, before undertaking a very brief review of the major applicable findings, it is worth a brief digression about the obligations towards children expected of states today. Most fundamental is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>34</sup>, to which Zimbabwe became a signatory in 1990. Article 19 of the Convention (below) places an obligation upon the State to take all possible steps to protect children no matter in whose care children are, and against all forms of abuse. Allowing violence to occur at schools is hardly commensurate with this obligation.

### ***Article 19***

*States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or*

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<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Gilligan, C (2009), *Highly Vulnerable? Political Violence and the Social Construction of Traumatized Children*, Journal of Peace Research, vol. 46, no. 1, 2009, pp. 119–134

<sup>34</sup> *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, G.A. res. 44/25, annex, 44 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 167, U.N. Doc. A/44/49 (1989), entered into force Sept. 2 1990.

*exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*

Article 39 deals with the obligation of the State to provide effective services to child victims for all forms of abuse, including armed conflict. Now, as we have argued above, it may be debatable that Zimbabwe is suffering from armed conflict, but it is indisputable that there have been epidemic levels of political violence and intimidation.

### **Article 39**

*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.*

These two articles, taken together, provide the kind of framework necessary for a health and social welfare system for children: Article 19 can be argued to prescribe the development of a prevention and promotion system, whilst Article 39 lays the basis for the development of a curative and rehabilitative system. That it was felt necessary to include these two articles in the Convention derives from the deep understanding about how damaging political violence can be for children. It is also worth pointing out that, in Article 5, the UN Convention requires the State to ensure that families and communities are protected in their responsibilities to provide for the effective development of children. Intimidating or allowing violence against parents or teachers because of their political beliefs or affiliations is hardly acting in a manner that suggests adherence to this Article. In addition, there has been enormous attention given to the effects of war and civil conflict (on children and education too), and there are a very large number of authoritative reports indicating the problems and suggesting solutions<sup>35</sup>. The general consequences of organized violence have recently been summarized by the World Bank, and provide a startling perspective, especially in respect of the effects upon children<sup>36</sup>. Children living in situations of violent conflict comprise:

- 60 percent of the world's undernourished
- 61 percent of the world's impoverished
- 77 percent of children not in primary school
- 59 percent of children not in secondary school
- 70 percent of infant deaths
- 64 percent of unattended births
- 71 percent of child under 5 deaths
- 43 percent of persons living with HIV/AIDS
- 65 percent of people without access to improved sanitation

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, DFiD, *The Politics of Poverty: Elites, Citizens and States. Findings from ten years of DFID-funded research on Governance and Fragile States 2001–2010*. A Synthesis Paper.

<sup>36</sup> See again WDR (2011), *Conflict, Security, and Development*. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.

Now, as stated above, it is beyond the scope of this report to provide a detailed overview of the existing knowledge about the effects of political violence on children, but some broad findings about the effects of political violence can be described, and these undoubtedly have application to children as well as adults.

Firstly, the scale is not trivial: reliable studies estimate that, in the past decade, more than 2 million children had died as a direct consequence of armed conflict worldwide, more than three times as many had suffered serious injuries or disability, and 20 million had been made homeless<sup>37</sup>. Secondly, much of the literature deals with refugee populations, and this has some applicability to Zimbabwe where we have both a very large refugee population (mostly in South Africa), but also a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The size of this latter population has fluctuated over time, with Operation Muramabatsvina being perhaps the largest displacement, but the displacements of the commercial farm workers and their families must be similarly large.

Thirdly, it must be pointed out that, in a sustained emergency such as Zimbabwe, the distinctions between migrants, refugees and IDPs, in the possible experiences that they might have had, may be much smaller than in other contexts. As was found in a recent study of the aftermath of ethnic violence in Indonesia, IDPs had higher rates of experienced violence and psychological disorder than non-IDPs, and there was a clear “ripple effect”; that is, the further away from the violence the less likely a person was to suffer a trauma disorder<sup>38</sup>. However, in this study it was clear that non-IDPs were not immune from the consequences of the violence: through the media, people’s stories, and the socio-economic fallout of the ethnic violence, non-IDPs were aware of what some have termed “high war zone stress”. An even more comprehensive meta-analytic study – of 161 reports of studies carried out in 40 countries, and 81,866 victims – concluded that, irrespective of whether the victims were refugees or persons living in conflict countries, torture was predictive of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and cumulative exposure to Potentially Traumatic Events (PTEs) was predictive of depression<sup>39</sup>. In summary then, these two studies concretise the common understanding of workers in the field of trauma: that the more closely one experiences organized violence and torture the more probable it will be that the person will suffer psychological distress, and that the type of violence will determine the type of disorder. Torture will most likely cause PTSD, and the cumulative experience of PTEs – for example, the witnessing of organized violence and torture – will probably cause depression.

Fourthly, for children exposed to political violence the risks appear little different to adults<sup>40</sup>. For example, a recent study of the violence in the Central African Republic, found no violence against the very young – children under 5 years – but, for children aged 5 to 17 years, recruitment, intentional injury, sexual abuse, rape, and abduction were all experienced, but at lower rates than

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<sup>37</sup> Krug EG, Dahlberg LL, Mercy JA, Zwi AB, Lozano R. *World report on violence and health*. Geneva, World Health Organization; 2002.

<sup>38</sup> Turnip, S S, Klungsoyr, O, & Hauff, E (2010), *the mental health of populations directly and indirectly exposed to violent conflict*, *Conflict & Health*, 4:14,

<sup>39</sup> Steel, Z., Chey, T., Silove, D., Marnane, C., Bryant, R.A., & van Ommeren, M (2009), *Association of Torture and Other Potentially Traumatic Events With Mental Health Outcomes Among Populations Exposed to Mass Conflict and Displacement. A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis*, *JAMA*, 302, 537-549.

<sup>40</sup> Attanayake V, McKay R, Joffres M, Singh S, Burkle F, Mills E. (2009), *Prevalence of mental disorders among children exposed to war. A systematic review of 7,920 children*. *Medicine, Conflict, & Survival* . 25(1):4-19.

adults<sup>41</sup>. As regards the effects of the violence, a study of the long-term effects of the Rwanda genocide on children (which obviously is one of the most extreme situations to be studied) found that 41% had witnessed the murder of a parent, and 44% had PTSD, with the rates higher in children aged 8-13 at the time of the genocide than children that were in the 3-7 age bracket. The probability of PTSD increased as a function of the number of trauma experiences<sup>42</sup>. However, not all children developed a subsequent disorder (which may seem surprising), and this had led some to question the inevitability of disorder following political violence, and to assert that children may have greater “resilience” than previously understood<sup>43</sup>. The major criticisms of the research on “vulnerability” are methodological, and, in general, argue a lack of cultural sensitivity by researchers, the over-emphasis on PTSD, and assumptions about the uniformity of child development across cultures. However, these criticisms are met by a very extensive literature on the effects of political violence against children, many of which do address the concerns of the critics.

The questions about the vulnerability and resilience of children are important. Building on Rutter’s original conception<sup>44</sup>, there has been considerable interest in understanding the limits of resilience and the extent of vulnerability, and while these concepts are not without their critics (see footnote 34), a large body of evidence has accumulated that suggests that the concepts have high utility in understanding the effects of political violence against children. One regular finding from the literature is the mutual supporting role that families and schools can have in ameliorating the consequences of organized violence, and this has been the basis of considerable international activity in the past decade. For example, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCEA) has published a number of guidelines for preventing violence in the short-term<sup>45</sup>, whilst other groups have started looking at measures that will provide prevention in the long-term through developing “conflict sensitive” education policies<sup>46</sup>.

The point here is that schools, teachers, communities, and parents have critical overlapping roles in fostering healthy child and adolescent development, and, when this nexus between these is damaged or destroyed, the consequences for children will be serious<sup>47</sup>. This is the case when there are natural disasters, but even more so with man-made disasters, and fostering resilience and reducing vulnerability depends on the effective co-ordination between these groups. For example, Gillian Straker, in examining the consequences of organized violence during the 1980s in South Africa found that the adjustment of children after violence and displacement, and their vulnerability or

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<sup>41</sup> Potts, A, Myer, K, Roberts, L (2011), *Measuring human rights violations in a conflict affected country: results from a nationwide cluster survey in Central African Republic*, Conflict and Health, 5:4

<sup>42</sup> Schaal, S, & Elbert, T (2006), *Ten Years After the Genocide: Trauma Confrontation and Posttraumatic Stress in Rwandan Adolescents*, Journal of Traumatic Stress, 19, 95-105.

<sup>43</sup> Gilligan, C (2009), ‘*Highly Vulnerable? Political Violence and the Social Construction of Traumatized Children*, 2009 *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 46, no. 1, pp. 119–134

<sup>44</sup> Rutter, M. 1985. *Resilience in the face of adversity: Protective factors and resistance to psychiatric disorder*. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 147: 598-661.

<sup>45</sup> GCEA (2011), *Study on Field-based Programmatic Measures to Protect Education from Attack*. December 2011. NEW YORK: GLOBAL COALITION TO PROTECT EDUCATION FROM ATTACK.

<sup>46</sup> *Conflict Sensitive Education Policy. A preliminary Review*. Education Above All. Doha. June 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Gabarino, J (2001), *An Ecological Perspective on the Effects of Violence on Children*. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 29, 3, 361-378.

resilience, were determined very simply by good caring parenting and success in school: children with disrupted homes and not coping in school had much poorer adjustment<sup>48</sup>.

Now one issue that seems to matter enormously is best described as the “accumulation of risk” for children, and, simply put, involves an understanding of whether organized violence is protracted (or even continuous in some communities) or not, and hence the number and range of possible traumatic events that a child may experience. And, as was pointed out earlier, these traumatic events can be direct, as in torture, or indirect, as in exposure to PTEs. In Zimbabwe the possibility of avoiding political violence since 2000 seems extremely small, as is well described in the many studies since 2000 of the effects of the organized violence and torture. These studies have covered a wide range of different populations – displaced commercial farm workers, victims of Operation Murambatsvina, refugees in South Africa, and women activists from Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) – and hence it is possible to assert, with a reasonably high degree of confidence, that the “ripple effect” in Zimbabwe since 2000 has been extensive. Much has had to do with elections, but not exclusively so.

There are few specific studies in Zimbabwe from which we can draw conclusions about the effects of violence on children, but several studies allow us to extend the finding from the school study. An early study of displaced commercial farm workers indicated that 55% of the children in these families had witnessed violence against their parents or other community members<sup>49</sup>. This high frequency of witnessing must then be seen against the background of extremely high rates of organized violence and torture reported since 2000, indicated by the very high rates of psychological distress and disorder reported. As can be seen from Table 5(over), and these are the rates reported for adults, the common finding in the international literature, that violence results in psychological disorder, is replicated in Zimbabwe. It would be exceptionally unusual if this finding in adult Zimbabweans was not replicated in Zimbabwean children.

It is also evident from the very large number of reports on political violence since 2000 that a disproportionate amount of the violence has taken place in rural communities, and at victim’s homes, and it is reasonable to assume that children may have been victims themselves, but highly probably witnessed the violence perpetrated against their families. Additionally, many of these families fled from their communities and became internally displaced. So, one of the protective axes, a secure and safe home environment with parents able to protect them, has not been operative for many children. There is no good data to provide an estimate of how many children have been affected, but a good guess is a very large number if the figures of adults are anything to go by.

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<sup>48</sup> Straker , G. (1993), *Faces in the Revolution*, CAPE TOWN: DAVID PHILLIP.

<sup>49</sup> Amani (2002), *Preliminary Report of a Survey on Internally Displaced Persons from Commercial Farms in Zimbabwe*, HARARE: ZIMBABWE.

**Table 5: Zimbabwean studies of the prevalence of CMD and Trauma**

[Source: adapted from Parsons, R et al. 2011]<sup>50</sup>

Study	Sample	Instrument	% prevalence
Amani Trust [2002] <sup>51</sup>	Commercial farm workers	SRQ-8	81%
Action Aid International [2005] <sup>52</sup>	Victims of Operation Murambatsvina	SRQ-8	69%
Idasa [2006] <sup>53</sup>	Zimbabwe refugees in South Africa [street survey]	SRQ-8	47%
ZTVP [2007] <sup>54</sup>	Women refugees in South Africa [clinic attendees]	SRQ-8	71%
SACST [2008] <sup>55</sup>	Zimbabwe refugees in South Africa [multiple sites]	SRQ-8	49.5%
WOZA women [2007] <sup>56</sup>	WOZA members	HTQ	53%

It is also evident from the research into violence against teachers that the other axis, a safe and secure school, has also been severely compromised. 25% of teachers reported a violation taking place at school during working hours, and this clearly means that this could be witnessed by children. As was pointed out earlier, this generally means, given the greater number of primary schools in Zimbabwe, that young children were exposed to the violence.

Thus, it is possible to speculate about the effects upon Zimbabwean children, and a very vicious cycle can be seen. A home in which a child's parents do not overtly conform to the public demand for unqualified allegiance to one political party, or even worse has parents that actively support the other political party, will not be a place of safety. This is reinforced at school where teachers, in much the same position as the child's parents, can be attacked, where public statements can be made denigrating, explicitly and by implication, a child's parents or teacher. This can be further reinforced by the conversations between children themselves, and create a sense of being an outsider and

<sup>50</sup> See Parsons, R., Reeler, A., Fisher, J., & Mpande, E (2011), *Trauma and Mental Health in Zimbabwe*, November 2011, HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT.

<sup>51</sup> Amani (2002), *Preliminary Report of a Survey on Internally Displaced Persons from Commercial Farms in Zimbabwe*, HARARE: ZIMBABWE.

<sup>52</sup> ActionAid (2005), *An in-depth study on the impact of Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order in Zimbabwe*. ActionAid International in collaboration with the Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Combined Harare Residents' Association (CHRA) and the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP). November 2005.

<sup>53</sup> Idasa (2005), *Between a Rock and a Hard Place. A window on the situation of Zimbabweans living in Gauteng*. A Report by the Zimbabwe Torture Victims Project. September 2005. PRETORIA: IDASA.

<sup>54</sup> Zimbabwe Torture Victims/Survivors Project (2006), *Women on the run: Women survivors of torture amongst refugees in South Africa*. Report produced for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition. November 2006. JOHANNESBURG: CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF VIOLENCE AND RECONCILIATION.

<sup>55</sup> SACST (2008), *Victims of Organized Violence and Torture in Zimbabweans attending Refugee Reception Offices in South Africa: Prevalence & Associated Features*. March 2008. JOHANNESBURG: THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CENTRE FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE.

<sup>56</sup> WOZA (2008), *The effects of fighting repression with love*. A report by Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA). March 2008. ZIMBABWE: WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE ARISE.

having to be careful about what one says for risk to oneself or one's parents. This would conform exactly to living in a situation of experiencing Potentially Traumatic Events (PTEs).

Now, this is not to assert that political violence has not occurred in the past, and clearly children have experienced political violence and lived in an atmosphere of PTE during the Liberation War (and also during the Gukurahundi period of the 1980s). However, there does seem to be a significant difference between previous periods and the period since 2000, and this is the effect on community cohesion for the recent period. During the Liberation War and Gukurahundi, communities were under threat from agencies and forces from outside the community, and hence communities (and families) could maintain some kind of cohesion and support for themselves, no matter how limited, but, 2000 onwards, the violence, intimidation, and displacements has operated within communities, dividing them and creating out-groups, often pitting family members against each other. This full frontal assault on community cohesion will have serious effects on children's development. The need to understand this through careful research is imperative in order that appropriate services can be developed, and the likely costs of traumatised children and youth, and even worse violent youth, can be overcome.

## **Conclusions**

“Fragile states”, “failed state”, or “complex emergencies” are all terms that can or have been applied to Zimbabwe, and there can be considerable argument over which is more applicable. However, it is not debatable that Zimbabwe has suffered serious socio-economic decline, that extremely large numbers of Zimbabweans have left the country (whether as migrant or refugee), that there have been high levels of organized violence (and particularly during elections), and there is a sustained political crisis. It is also not disputable that the education system has been severely affected over the same period, and that thousands of teachers have certainly left the schooling system, with many migrating away from Zimbabwe. There have even been periods when many rural schools have been closed, both because of the extreme hyperinflation and the political violence.

Thus, as we forge ahead, the state has to rethink its role in building communities and investing in education in a sustainable way. All the Millennium Development Goals hinge on quality education if they are to be attained. Whilst second chance education is important in providing life skills to those that have not done well in their first attempt, it is important that financial resources are channeled towards addressing the core of the problems such as addressing political violence in schools, investing in infrastructure, and developing curricula that promote a culture of tolerance and promote peace.

## **Recommendations**

The recommendations below are drawn from the previous reports by the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), and are re-stated as there has been little or no acknowledgement by the Inclusive Government of the need to address the implications of these reports:

1. The Government of Zimbabwe must immediately declare schools as zones of peace and as such enact laws that restrict and criminalise the use or occupation of schools for political activities, especially during the electoral period.
2. Civic society and teacher unions must develop monitoring systems to detect early warning systems of attacks on education and to report political disturbances in schools in compliance with UN Resolution No. 1612 with additional modifications relevant to the situation in Zimbabwe.
3. The Ministry of Education in conjunction with critical stakeholders like the police, parents and teacher unions must set up school protection committees so that social services rendered by schools are not interrupted during times of conflict like elections
4. The Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) must actively investigate all reports involving political violence and intimidation against teachers, and at schools.
5. The government must uphold strictly provisions of paragraph 20 to the First Schedule of Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000 (Public Service Regulations, 2000) and clauses 79, 80 and 81 of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendations concerning the Status of Teachers to negate the current insistence on teachers being compelled to support only one political party.
6. The Ministry of Education must introduce civic education in the primary and secondary school curriculum which promotes national cohesion, peace and tolerance;
7. The process of national healing, if it is ever going to take off meaningfully, should have a thematic area dealing with the education sector in order to restore the social bond between teachers and communities which has been weakened by recurrent election violence and politicisation of the public service.
8. Overall compliance with the spirit and letter of the GPA is strongly recommended in order to curb institutionalised violence.