

***Every School has a Story to Tell:
A Study into Teacher's
Experiences with Elections in
Zimbabwe***

Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe

September 2011

Executive Summary

You are going to lose your jobs if you support opposition political parties in the presidential election. As civil servants, you have to be loyal to the government of the day. You can even be killed for supporting the opposition and no one would guarantee your safety.

(Source: Daily News, 18 July 2001)¹

This summary is based on findings drawn from a national survey on teachers, covering all 10 Provinces of Zimbabwe carried out between April and June 2011, with 1,086 teachers participating. The key findings are highlighted below.

An interesting finding from the study is that teachers, whether differing by political or Union affiliation, are all regarded with suspicion in society. Some teachers were attacked because of roles they played in such activities as office bearers in trade unions that are deemed to be anti-ZANU PFF or because they were perceived to be politically active in opposition political parties, but the majority were attacked simply because they are teachers. 73% of teachers, unsurprisingly, were unwilling to disclose their political party preference.

- 56% stated that the attacks they witnessed were because teachers were suspected to be members or sympathised with the opposition parties;
- 14% stated that the attacks they witnessed were because teachers are deemed influential in society and accused of influencing people to vote for the opposition political parties, especially during the March 2008 Elections;
- The remainder stated that the attacks they witnessed were because teachers were not actively supporting ZANU PF [8%], or because the teacher was a member of PTUZ [4%].

51% teachers reported that they have directly experienced political violence of one form or another, and 55% stated that they had been forced to vote for a particular political party because of violence or threats of violence, with the worst election for such intimidation being June 2008. 68% stated that they had experienced violence in the June 2008 election, but high percentages also reported direct experience of violence in 2000 and also the March 2008 election.

The most frequent violations directly experienced were as follows:

- 79% reported having been forced to attend political meetings;
- 77% reported threats;
- 41% reported some form of extortion;
- 33% reported being assaulted;
- 31% reported being tortured;
- 30% reported having been disqualified from voting;
- 24% reported having been forcibly displaced from their work station and community.

The perpetrators for those directly experiencing violence were largely similar to those identified in other human rights reports, but the frequencies with which these perpetrators were identified were slightly different:

Comment: Were the frequencies below deduced from those directly experiencing violence or witnessing violence? This has to come out.

¹ Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Stan Mudenge addressing students and staff at a teachers' college in Masvingo.

- “War veterans” [27%], ZANU PF supporters [24%], and the Youth militia [20%] were the most frequently identified perpetrators;
- The next most frequent perpetrator was the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) [10%], which was a much higher frequency than in most human rights reports over the past decade;
- Even fellow teachers [4%] were identified as being involved in violence.

56% of teachers reported witnessing political violence. However, whilst there was a strong positive relationship between teachers experiencing violence and being a victim during an election, there was no relationship between teachers being direct victims and witnessing violence. Hence direct victims and those witnessing are two different groups in the sample.

The violations witnessed were similar in most respects to the violations experienced, but reported at much higher frequencies:

- 84% reported threats, the most frequent violation witnessed;
- In rank order, assault [53%], indecent assault [49%], torture [47%], and extortion [43%] were the next most common violations witnessed by teachers;
- However, forced displacement [33%], property destruction [20%], and abduction [18%] were also reported with high frequencies.

As was the case with those reporting direct experience of violence, ZANU PF supporters [23%] and “War veterans” [27%] were the most frequently identified perpetrators, but, unlike those with direct experience, the CIO [6%] were not as frequently reported and the Youth militia [28%] turned out to be the most frequently mentioned group of perpetrators for those witnessing violations. In identifying the perpetrators, it is evident that separating ZANU (PF) supporters from war veterans and youth militias is a matter of convenience, otherwise it is almost impossible to separate them. This bolsters the argument that political violence against teachers, like any other organised violence during the electoral cycle is largely state-sponsored.

Although the CIO were not so frequently mentioned by those witnessing, this organisation was found, when rank order correlations of perpetrators and violations were carried out, to be significantly associated with every other one of the perpetrator groups. Furthermore, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) was mentioned more frequently by this group than by those with direct experience of violence.

47% of those witnessing violence reported that the violation took place at school and during working hours, and a further 15% reported that the violation took place at home, which means that over 60% of the violations could easily have been witnessed by children. This is an exceedingly disturbing possibility, and points strongly to the need for research into the effects of the violence of the past decade on children. It also points even more strongly for the need for schools to be made politically neutral zones, and both teachers and pupils protected from political violence.

Background

Teachers are an endangered species, and probably always have been. The task of preparing the young for their future role in society makes teachers the most important socialising influence in the life of a citizen, apart from the influence of the family and the home. The education system (and by implication, teachers who drive this system) has a profound influence upon the wider society and the nation. It is for this reason that education is a political battleground, and, in Zimbabwe, has always been so. In Zimbabwe (Rhodesia before), the education system and teachers, who are the visible face of education, has been the focus for the political struggles of the country.

It is remarkable that, with all the violations that took place in Zimbabwe, and the violations that have taken place against teachers (and the education sector as a whole) during the last decade, only one major report specifically focusing on violations against teachers has been published². As regards teachers (and by implication the education and children within the education system), this is a serious gap in our understanding.

Like other forms of violence against other citizens, the increase in violence against teachers is directly linked to the electoral cycle and points to the fact that it is state-sponsored, but certainly has not been objected to by the state. Rather, the previous ZANU PF government has fostered an approach that is explicitly ideologically-oriented, even to the extent of ensuring that this ideology is fostered in the youth beyond the school³. In 2001 the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stan Mudenge made the statement quoted earlier.

Equally supporting the same view, the then ZANU PF Political Commissar, Border Gezi had this to say;

"If you want to work for the government, you should be prepared to support ZANU (PF)."
(Source: *The Herald*, 12 April 2001)

This study to document the scope, the nature, the pattern and impact of elections in Zimbabwe on service delivery in schools and in particular the suffering of teachers at the hands of politicians had its origin in the political violence which has now become a part and parcel of Zimbabwean elections since the 2000 elections

This report attempts to depart from the general approach by focusing specifically on disturbances affecting teachers, schools, and the education system. Whilst the signing of the Global Political Agreement [GPA] and the establishment of the Inclusive Government [IG] has brought some economic stability to the economy, the security of teachers has not been addressed, and this was evident in a preliminary desk top study of reports in the public domain, as well as reports to teachers' trade union.

The present report is based on findings of a field survey involving 1,200 teachers nationwide conducted between April and June 2011 and reflect the responses thereof. The objective of the study was to expose the violent nature of the political system in the country against teachers with the hope that positive reforms will be instituted to benefit the sector and the country. The study findings seek to inform the trade union movement, electoral authorities, civic organisations, the Government of National Unity (GNU) and regional groupings such as SADC and the AU of the magnitude and

²See Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2002), *Teaching them a lesson. A report on the attack on Zimbabwean teachers*, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

³See 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.

impact of violence on teachers and more importantly, the role of institutions to which teachers and students trust for their security and protection from human rights violations.

This is the first of a series of reports released in view of the current speculation about early elections in order to sensitise all to the need for serious attention to be given to the plight of teachers and their schools (including their pupils) during election periods.

Methodology

The data presented here has been gathered from a full scale national survey covering all the Provinces in Zimbabwe. A questionnaire was drafted and tested with a group of teachers randomly selected from Mashonaland East province and within and around Harare. A set of Enumerators underwent training in administering the questionnaire. Every care was undertaken to have the sample population 51% representative of women. This was however difficult, especially in the rural constituencies, where many female teachers refused bluntly to take part in the survey. The major reason given was fear of reprisal as the main structures of violence within the communities are still intact. However, despite the fears, the demographic distribution goals were achieved with 51% female respondents compared with 49% male respondents.

It is also worth noting is that the sample was largely biased towards rural areas. This is explained by the distribution of schools in Zimbabwe. It was also evident in that most of the violations reported in the initial desk study were reported in rural areas, which has been the common finding in all human rights reports since 2000. Further details of the methodology, the sampling, and the demographic profile of the sample are given in Appendix 1.

In compiling the report, selected case studies are used to illustrate points. The cases studies were derived from Focus group discussions that were held in Kwekwe and Bulawayo involving participants from the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces. Other scheduled discussions in Masvingo and Harare could not materialise owing to financial limitations. We however believe that the views expressed in the discussions were reflective of experiences of teachers throughout the country with varying levels of intensity.

Personal Experience of Violence

51% of the teachers reported having direct experience of political violence. On the basis that the previous informal research (as well as the myriad human rights reports) indicated that elections are highly probable times for experiencing violence, the survey explored some attitudes and knowledge about elections.

In response to the statement, *the dominant party must determine how elections are run*, 89% disagreed with the statement and only 4% agreed, whilst 91% disagreed with the statement, *Opposition parties must not campaign in strongholds of other parties*.

As regards political violence, 93% disagreed with the notion that violence is acceptable in politics, and only 3% agreed. 57% felt that the root cause of political violence in Zimbabwe is *political intolerance*, a further 33% feel that *power struggles* are the cause, and very small percentages [2%] expressed the view that the violence was due to *colonial rule* or that there was an *economic motivation for conflict* [6%].

55% stated that they had been forced to vote for a particular political party because of violence or threats of violence, and, as can be seen from Table 1 below, the 2008 Presidential Re-run was far and away the worst year for being forced to vote. Focus group discussions on the subject matter revealed that in some cases, the teachers were ordered to declare themselves illiterate and therefore 'assisted' voters to enable the Presiding Officer to vote on their behalf.

Table 1: Election years in which were forced to vote⁴

Year of election	Percentage
2000 [Referendum]	7%
2000 [Election]	15%
2002 [Presidential]	6%
2005 [Election]	14%
2008 [Election]	19%
2008 [Re-run]	58%

Illustration: Voting under Surveillance

All teachers at St. Joseph High were forced to attend a ZANU (PF) rally held at the school grounds on the 25th of June 2008. The teachers were allegedly allocated a polling station where they were going to vote. They were also allocated a number in the voting queue that was going to form on the allocated polling station. At the same meeting teachers were accused of being sell-outs who contributed to the disastrous performance of ZANU (PF) in the March 29 elections. This time around they were bluntly told to declare themselves illiterate so that they could be assisted in casting their votes.

On Election Day, 27 June teachers, their family members and maids were force marched from the school cottage to the polling station.

A similar trend is observed when the question was asked about which year was political violence experienced [see table 2]. Again the 2008 Presidential Re-run was the worst year, but the 2000 Parliamentary Election and the 2008 Harmonised Elections were also elections in which large numbers of teachers reported experiencing political violence.

Table 2: Election years in which political violence was experienced⁵

Year of election	Percentage
2000 [Referendum]	6%
2000 [Election]	20%
2002 [Presidential]	8%
2008 [Election]	23%
2008 [Re-run]	68%

Whilst there was a strong positive relationship [0.98 ; $p=0.001$] between teachers reporting direct experience of political violence and being a victim during an election, there was no relationship between having direct experience and witnessing others having this experience [0.022]. Hence, those that were reporting witnessing political violence were a different group from those being personally affected. A substantial proportion of the sample [55%] reported both being a victim of violence as well as being forced to vote [51%], and, as can be seen from Table 3. The likelihood of being forced to vote for a particular party was directly correlated with the probability of experiencing violence. It is also worth commenting that 19% of the sample reported that they had been disqualified from electoral duties, but that this was 33% of those that reported direct personal experience of violence. So, clearly, as is found in all other human rights reports, elections are very dangerous times for teachers.

⁴The percentages do not add up to 100% since respondents could have experienced events in more than one year.

⁵Again, respondents could have experienced violence in more than one year.

Table 3: Forced to vote & direct experience of violence

	Vote	Violence
2000*	9.3	8.6
2000*	22.9	29.4
2002*	8.9	10.4
2008*	28.3	32.6
2008*	77.4	84.6

*6

As indicated above, 51% of the sample reported experiencing some form of political violence, and, as can be seen from Table 4, high percentages of teachers reported various violations perpetrated against them. Threats and forced attendance at political meetings were the most frequent violations, but assault, torture, extortion, being disqualified from voting, and forced displacement were all reported with high frequencies. The profile is rather different to that reported by other human rights groups such as the Human Rights Forum, including categories not usually reported by the Forum such as indecent assault, sexual violence, being disqualified from voting, and forced attendance at political meetings, although these last two are probably recorded as political intimidation by the Forum⁷.

Table 4: Frequency of alleged violations experienced personally

Violation	Percentage
Abduction	9%
Assault	33%
Disqualified from Electoral duties	30%
Extortion	41%
Forced displacement	24%
Forced attendance at political meeting	79%
Indecent assault	13%
Other violence	4%
Property destruction	7%
Rape	1%
Sexual violence	4%
Threats	77%
Torture	31%

Another distressful finding is that teachers reported disqualification from performing electoral duties [30%] either as Voter Educators, Polling Officers or Presiding officers. This was confirmed during focus group discussions where teachers reported that they were vetted out by CIOs for their perceived alliance with opposition political parties, certain civic society organisations or Trade Unions. Those who got the green-light to perform duties as presiding officers gave testimonies revealing that they were called for interrogation by a four-member panel which included District Public Service Inspectors and three other security details. They were made to answer questions on why they thought the ZANU PF candidate lost at their respective polling stations.

⁶Spearman rank order correlation [$p=0.001$].

⁷See, for example, Human Rights Forum (2008), *Can the elections in Zimbabwe be Free and Fair?* Paper produced by the Research and Advocacy Unit [RAU] for the Human Rights Forum, HARARE: ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO FORUM.

Illustrative Case: Attack on voter educators

Teachers at Muzinda and Machiva 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 Gwenzi (not real name) severely injured and hospitalised at St. Antony's Mission Hospital. Teachers at Muzinda, Machiva, Judea and Dzoro 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.

As can be seen from Table 5, "War Veterans" are the most frequently alleged perpetrators by teachers accounting for 27% of the violations cited, followed in rank order by ZANU PF supporters, the Youth Militia, the CIO, the ZNA, Traditional leaders, teachers themselves, and lastly the ZRP. It is interesting that the CIO rank so high when they are generally mentioned with a very low frequency in other human rights reports, and probably accords with the importance that teachers are given for influencing communities.

Table 5: Frequency of alleged perpetrators of personal violence

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

As noted above, 55% reported being forced to vote and 51% reported experiencing violence. 43% of the total sample described themselves as victims of political violence, but this was 86% of those that described themselves as victims. Nearly all [84%] of this latter group stated that they had sought medical assistance as a result of the violence they experienced, although only 16% stated that they had been physically injured as a consequence of the violence, and only 11% of those that had sought medical attention reported going to any kind of medical facility.

Only 11% of those reporting experiencing political violence reported this to the police, with the reasons ranging from the police receiving a report but taking no action [74%], the police refusing to take a report [16%], and in only 8% of cases was an arrest made. By failing to protect victims of violence, it is understandable that when asked the question what they would do if violence occurred again, a large percentage [50%] responded by saying they would flee the area and move to urban schools. However, as can be seen from Table 14 (Appendix 1), whilst 75% of teachers reported transferring from one school to another, only 13% reported doing so because of *political disturbances*, which suggests that teachers remain committed to their work in spite of considerable pressure.

Perpetrators and their association with types of violation

The relationship between the various types of perpetrators was examined by conducting correlations for the rank order frequency of perpetrators. The data is summarised in **Appendix 2**.

There are strong significant correlations between “War veterans”, the CIO, and ZANU PF supporters with virtually every other group, except, interestingly, the Youth militia. The Youth militia have positive, but not significant relationships, with all groups except the ZRP. This is very much the picture seen in all other human rights reports, but the absence of a significant relationship between the Youth militia with ZANU PF supporters and “War veterans” is a very different finding, and suggests that there may be a different process going on with teachers in comparison to other victim groups.

There are some other interesting relationships that need brief comment.

Firstly, as was noted earlier, there is a much greater frequency in the alleging of the involvement of the CIO than is commonly found in other human rights reports. With teachers, however, the CIO was reported more frequently than either the ZRP or the ZNA, and, furthermore, show strong relationships with not only ZANU PF supporters and “War veterans”, but also with the ZNA and teachers, and less strong relationships with the ZRP and Traditional leaders. The citing of CIO so frequently needs some brief clarification here: dubious characters whose affiliation could not be easily explained, and in the business of wanting to know about teachers’ activities, were generally agreed to be in the CIO category.

Secondly, there are strong relations between teachers involved in perpetrating violations against their fellow teachers, even if the reported frequency is not high in comparative terms [4%]. Teachers are strongly associated with ZANU PF supporters, “War veterans”, the ZNA, and Traditional leaders. PTUZ is of the view that the cases of teachers being cited as perpetrators of violence, although relatively few, can be accounted for by other teachers, trained or untrained, who went through the National Youth Service commonly referred to as the Border Gezi Training Camps. Government of Zimbabwe, through a recent audit of civil servants, revealed that there are about 75,000 ghost workers on the payroll.

Thirdly, the ZRP are reported with low frequency generally, and have relationships only with “War veterans”, the CIO, and teachers.

Whilst at the conception of the research and the design of the questionnaire, School Development Committees (SDCs) were not identified as perpetrators of violence against teachers, it emerged from the focused group discussions that teachers singled out members of the SDA/SDC as perpetrators (see the Illustrative case below).

Illustrative Case: SDC as Perpetrators of Violence

On the 30th of April 2008 at around 1400Hrs, a member of the SDC for Gosha School in Goromonzi District, (Identified), arrived for a political meeting at the school with two war veterans and a member of the army. The meeting was attended by villagers. At the meeting, all male teachers were made to stand up and four teachers were labelled MDC supporters and threatened strongly with unspecified action. The war veterans were using a light blue Mitsubishi pick-up with old registration plates number 296-647R without a licence disk. The meeting ended at around 1700Hrs.

Witnessing Violence

In addition to asking about teachers' direct experience of political violence, there were additional questions about the various violations that they might have witnessed. 56% of respondents reported witnessing political violence against other teachers or members of staff.

Table 6: Types of political violence witnessed by teachers

Violation	Percentage
Abduction	18%
Assault	53%
Extortion	43%
Forced displacement	33%
Indecent assault	49%
Other violence	4%
Property destruction	20%
Rape	2%
Sexual violence	9%
Threats	84%
Torture	47%

As can be seen from Table 6, very serious violations were witnessed with a high frequency, but, as with direct experience, threats were the most frequent violation. However, assault, torture, indecent assault, property destruction, extortion, and displacement were reported with high frequencies, and with higher frequencies than in the group that experienced violence directly. A cause for concern is the incidence of indecent assault [49%] which has repercussions on the female teacher's safety and possible rural staffing. This statistic is worrying amid other published reports highlighting "Rape" as being used as a political tool in Zimbabwe in recent times. Issues such as female teachers ordered to report any male visitors to the local leadership and their intended duration of stay were highlighted in the focus discussions. In some cases where the male teacher (husband) had fled the area for safety, the spouses were not spared from attack as shown in the illustration below;

Illustrative: Attack on Female Teachers for Spouses' Perceived Political Affiliation

At a ZANU (PF) rally held on Sunday 22 June 2008 at one stadium located in the peri-urban industries of Kwekwe a city in the Midlands Province, a lady teacher was flouted before a gathering of over one thousand people. She was unreservedly told of her husband's affiliation to the MDC and by ridiculous association was also labelled an MDC supporter. She pleaded with the war veterans and party officials who had come to address the rally that she be regarded as an individual who could have separate political views from her husband. The party officials went on to charge that the teacher should dig a small hole in the ground using her fingers and spit into it in a typical cultural gesture to show deep repentance for one's sins. The lady complied and volunteered to be an assisted voter during the presidential run-off election on 27 June 2008.

Table 7: Frequency of alleged perpetrators witnessed

Perpetrator	Percentage
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%

As was found with the experience of direct violence, ZANU PF supporters, youth militia and war veterans were the most commonly identified perpetrators. The CIO was not as frequently mentioned as was the case for those that directly experienced violence, but, overall, the profile is very similar to that found in other human rights reports over the past decade.

There are strong, statistically significant relationships in the associations between the various types of perpetrators and the violations, which bolster the general findings reported above, but are worth pointing out in some small detail.

Witnessing of violations

As pointed out above, the types of political violence witnessed by teachers was similar in most respects to that directly experienced, with the difference that *being disqualified from voting* and *forced to attend political meetings* were not categories sampled. When these two categories were removed, then there were significant correlations [0.89 ; $p=0.001$] in the rank order frequencies between experiencing and witnessing violence. The results are shown in Appendix 3.

The most common perpetrators, as was the case for those directly experiencing violence were ZANU PF supporters and "War Veterans", but there were also very high frequencies for the Youth Militia, the ZRP, and teachers themselves. However, the CIO topped the charts, being significantly associated with every single other group of perpetrator, and clearly have an important role in the perpetration of terror. As pointed out before, the implication of the CIO in human rights violations at such high frequencies is very different to the pattern observed in other human rights reports.

It is also interesting that the ZRP are identified with such frequency, which is quite a different picture to that reported above by those directly experiencing violence. For the experiencing group, the ZRP were only associated with "War veterans", the CIO, and teachers (and mostly only in threats), but, for the witnessing group, the ZRP were strongly associated with ZANU PF supporters, the Youth militia, "War veterans", the CIO, the ZNA, teachers, and traditional leaders, and were involved in threats, assault, indecent assault, torture.

Given that many reports in the past have indicated that political violence has taken place at schools, and even that schools have been used as "bases"⁸, teachers were asked about this. As can be seen in Table 8, a very high percentage observed violence taking place at their school, and during working hours, which corroborates the earlier reports that schools are used as "bases" and certainly as places where political activities are taking place. Here it must be borne in mind that violations taking place during working hours most certainly meant that the violence and intimidation must have been witnessed by children, as probably was the violence that took place at a teacher's home. It takes little imagination to understand the serious consequences upon the children's psychological and emotional development.

⁸See, for example, Reeler, A.P. (2003), *The Perpetrators of Gross Human Rights Violations in Zimbabwe from February 2000 to March 2003*, Paper presented to "Civil Society and Justice in Zimbabwe: A Symposium", organised by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Themba Le Sizwe and the International Bar Association, Holiday Inn, Johannesburg, 11-13 August 2003.

Table 8: Place where violence witnessed

Place of violence	Percentage
At school during working hours	47%
At community meeting	28%
At home after working hours	15%
At militia base	9%
Other	1%

The issue of “bases” is raised in many human rights reports, and this survey explored this through a number of questions.

Firstly, teachers were asked whether a “base” had been set up at their school in the period 2000 to 2011, and 23% answered in the positive, and 14% stated that a “base” was still operational at their school. Of this group, 50% stated that they could identify the base commander, and 48% could name this person⁹.

Secondly, the teachers were asked whether the level of security personnel presence had increased since the announcement of possible elections in 2011, and 92% stated that there had been such an increase. However, the effects of such deployment were uneven. 12% stated that soldiers had been deployed and were actively patrolling in their area, and a further 12% stated that soldiers were present but not involved in local affairs. 65% reported that the presence of security forces was either minimal [31%] or there was no presence at all [34%]. No analysis has yet been done to see the relationship between the actual areas and the presence of security forces as there may be a pattern that is not evident from these gross statistics. However, it is important to understand psychological effects of presence of certain persons such as the military in relation to the violence that was reported in the 2008 June election.

A pressing question, raised at the very outset of this report, is why one of the most valuable resources in nation’s development should be treated so appallingly. The answer is very simply answered by the teachers themselves: **they are not trusted by politicians**. As can be seen from Table 9, they are either seen as “*opposition supporters*”, “*too influential in the community*”, or not actively “*supporting ZANU PF*”. These three reasons accounted for 78% of all responses. Thus, it is scarcely surprising that 73% of the sample were unwilling to disclose their political party affiliation if they had one.

Table 9: Reasons for teachers being targets for political violence and intimidation

Reason for Violence	Percentage
Seen as opposition supporter	56%
Seen as too influential in community	14%
Not supporting ZANU PF	8%
Being politically active	8%
Various other reasons	6%
Being member of PTUZ	4%

The effect of being targets clearly affected teachers’ willingness to remain at their posts. As can be seen from Table 10, more than 50% of respondents contemplated leaving their post due to the possibility of being targets for politically motivated violence. In actuality, and was noted in respect of direct experience of violence teachers stayed at their stations, and only 13% actually moved because

⁹The ability to name the major perpetrators has been found in other recent reports. See, for example, Anonymous, *The Anatomy of Terror* (June 10, 2011, distributed by Sokwanele). <http://www.sokwanele.com/thisiszimbabwe/archives/6800> (accessed September 9, 2011).

of political disturbances, but it is also evident from Table 14 that, including political disturbance, the working environment is not seen as very desirable by a significant number of teachers.

Table 10: Frequency of wanting to leave duty station

	Percentage
Very often	15%
Often	10%
Sometimes	32%
Rarely	12%
Never	30%

Conclusions

As indicated at the outset, this is a preliminary report, released in order that the dilemma that teachers, pupils, and schools find themselves in during elections be rapidly addressed. It may be that elections are still some considerable time away, but, equally, they may not, and it critical that steps are taken as soon as possible to return the schooling system to the neutral, enabling position of old.

As the brief results from this survey show, teachers (and, by obvious implication, their families and their pupils) have been subjected to unacceptable violence and intimidation, with distressingly high rates of gross human rights violations reported. The frequencies of reported violations and the witnessing of the same increase significantly during elections.

It is also evident that teachers are special targets for political violence and intimidation. As they point out themselves so clearly, their position of influence in their communities makes them targets rather than the valuable members that they are, and always have been. This is no new phenomenon and carries echoes of the dangers faced by teachers during the Liberation War.

This perception of the potential influence of teachers thus leads them to receive special scrutiny from various state agencies and other politically-interested groups, both to suborn their loyalties or neutralise their influence. It is of note that the reported frequency of the involvement of the CIO in the perpetration of gross human rights violations is much higher than in other human rights reports. For example, the Human Rights Forum, in its report on the 2008 elections, indicated that the CIO were alleged to have been involved in 4% of reported cases, whilst the Solidarity Peace Trust, in a similar report on 2008, reckoned the involvement of the CIO to be no greater than 2%. Here, in respect of teachers, the involvement of the CIO is 10% in cases of direct violence against teachers, and 6% in cases of violence witnessed by teachers. It takes no genius to understand that the CIO has singled out teachers for special scrutiny. However, it is not the CIO alone, and the findings indicate a wide range of other groups, including other teachers, Ministry of Education officials, and traditional leaders.

That so much of the violence and intimidation has taken place in public where children might witness this is of considerable concern. Less than 10% of the violations took place at a base (which arguably is not a public place), but, when 47% of the violations are reported to have taken place at school and during working hours, it seems evident that teachers are being made a public example, and their potential influence neutralised in a very deliberate fashion.

Recommendations

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 ever 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 on institutionalised violence.

Appendix 1 Demographic details

The allocation of survey instruments was determined by the number of schools in each province and district. The targeted sample was 1,200 teachers, randomly selected from schools, with a bias for 51:49 female teachers. In addition, the sample of teachers was drawn from 16% of the schools in each Province, which finally worked out as an average of 17 schools per District from 54 Districts sampled. The sampling was based on data from the Ministry of Education.

Table 11: Schools per Province:

Province	Total No. of Schools per Province
Bulawayo	197
Harare	265
Manicaland	1062
Mashonaland Central	455
Mashonaland East	809
Mashonaland West	1012
Masvingo	1183
Matabeleland North	617
Matabeleland South	647
Midlands	1042
TOTALS	7289

Source: Ministry of Education

A total of 1200 questionnaires were distributed to the enumerators, and a total of 1159 completed questionnaires were finally received, which was a 97% return rate. Of the returned questionnaires, 1086 were available for analysis after cleaning, which then gave a 91% return rate (or 94% of the actual returns). This was felt to be an acceptable rate of return given the difficulties in doing community surveys in current Zimbabwe.

Only one Province, Mashonaland East, had a return rate below the 3% confidence level for the rate of return, and three Provinces , Mashonaland West, Matabeleland North, and the Midlands, had rates that were greater than the expected return rate. In all, samples were obtained from 53 different districts, with an average of 21 questionnaires per district.

Table 12: Expected versus Obtained return rates

	Expected	Received
Bulawayo	2.60%	2.5%
Harare	3.70%	2.1%
Manicaland	14.60%	14.2%
Mashonaland Central	6.30%	5.5%
Mashonaland East	11.10%	4.6%
Mashonaland West	13.90%	17.8%
Masvingo	16.30%	17.3%
Matabeleland North	8.40%	11.3%
Matabeleland South	8.90%	7.9%
Midlands	13.30%	16.9%

There were more females than males as was expected: 51% female to 49% male. The average age of the sample was 37 years [s.dev.7.5 years]. The majority were married, with an average of 2 children, and an average of 5 people living in the house they occupied or owned.

The ethnic composition was interesting. 45% were Shona or derivatives of Shona – Karanga, KoreKore, Manyika, or Zezuru – but fully 25 % did not disclose their ethnic origin. 8% were persons of Ndebele origin.

Finally the sample was comprised of PTUZ [43%], ZIMTA [27%], and TUZ [3%], but a large number [20%] refused to disclose their affiliation. Political affiliation was even more problematic, where 73% were unwilling to disclose their political affiliation, but 18% claimed support for MDC-T, 4% for ZANU PF, and 2% for MDC-M. This unwillingness to be publicly identified is extreme by comparison with other opinion surveys, but, as will become evident, teachers have particularly good reasons for being circumspect about things political.

Most [60%] were primary school teachers, with an even spread of experience.

Table 13: Years of post-qualification experience

0 –5 years	5 - 9 years	10- 15years	15 years+
24%	29%	25%	23%

The mean number of schools taught at in the past 11 years was 2.5 [sdev. 1.5]. The range was from 1 to 10, with a median of 2 schools in the past 11 years.

The majority [71%] were ordinary teachers, with no other responsibilities.

Table 14: Reasons for transferring schools

POSSIBLE REASON	Reason for actual transfer	Reason for intended transfer
Health reasons	3%	3%
Desire to stay with family	53%	32%
Political disturbance	13%	14%
Poor relations with school administration	8%	7%
Poor infrastructure	11%	14%
Promotion	10%	27%
Poor relations with community	0	2%

75% of teachers reported transferring from a previous school, whilst 73% expressed desires to do so. As can be seen from Table 14, the reasons were varied, and only small percentages gave reasons to do with political disturbance. However, when political disturbance is added to by *poor relations with school administration* [8%] and *poor infrastructure* [11%], then the numbers that are unhappy with their work conditions is relatively high [32%].

Appendix 2

Frequency of direct violations experienced by perpetrator type

	ZANU PF	Youth militia	War veterans	CIO	ZNA	ZRP	Traditional leader	Teacher	Unidentified	Total	Total %
Abduction	25	28	37	6	3	0	1	1	1	102	2.1
Assault	95	113	121	10	24	2	0	7	7	379	8.0
Disqualified from voting	74	63	77	22	28	7	6	36	32	345	7.3
Extortion	141	140	161	25	21	4	27	23	8	550	11.6
Forced attendance	303	312	326	56	126	9	49	50	22	1253	26.3
Forced displacement	54	66	70	14	13	5	7	7	1	237	5.0
Indecent assault	33	54	38	4	7	1	0	10	0	147	3.1
Other violence	13	6	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	31	0.7
Property	19	28	25	0	3	0	0	0	4	79	1.7
Rape	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.1
Sexual violence	2	15	6	0	0	0	0	0	8	31	0.7
Threats	295	5	301	326	78	93	16	49	68	1231	25.9
Torture	90	94	104	18	29	10	4	14	6	369	7.8
Total:	1145	926	1272	482	332	137	110	197	157	4758	
Total %:	24.1	19.5	26.7	10.1	7.0	2.9	2.3	4.1	3.3		

Appendix 3

Frequency of violation witnessed by perpetrator type

	ZANU PF	Youth militia	War veterans	CIO	ZNA	ZRP	Teacher	Ministry of Education official	Traditional leader	Unknown	Total	Total %
Abduction	50	85	110	34	21	9	0	0	7	6	322	4.4
Assault	230	319	248	29	66	20	24	1	12	14	963	13.3
Extortion	197	214	243	53	37	12	25	32	11	2	826	11.4
Forced displacement	191	175	166	52	65	13	7	3	22	5	699	9.6
Indecent assault	216	307	246	36	71	23	20	1	11	19	950	13.1
Other violence	11	5	2	0	3	1	1	2	5	0	30	0.4
Property	97	124	85	7	23	2	3	0	6	9	356	4.9
Rape	1	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20	0.3
Sexual violence	27	45	48	5	13	0	0	0	0	0	138	1.9
Threats	453	477	537	159	149	56	48	46	45	10	1980	27.3
Torture	228	293	278	39	55	16	20	13	17	13	972	13.4
Total:	1701	2053	1972	414	503	152	148	98	136	79	7256	
Total %:	23.4	28.3	27.2	5.7	6.9	2.1	2.0	1.4	1.9	1.1		



Canada 

