Barriers to Democratic Governance: The Case of Movement for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe (1999-2013)

By

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Research Article

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ABSTRACT

The article is mainly concerned with the challenges facing Movement for Democratic Change in its quest for democratic governance in post colonial Zimbabwe in the 21st century. Among these challenges they include ideological, problems of political acceptance, rejection from continental institutions, political violence and security problems among others. Therefore, each challenge is analysed with the sole intention of exposing how this has become a challenge to MDC’s quest for power.

Keywords: State Security forces, Democracy, opposition, regime.

INTRODUCTION

Since the year of its birth on 11 September 1999, Movement for Democratic Change has encountered a plethora of challenges in its quest for democratization in Zimbabwe. These challenges are punctuated with the following: problems of political acceptance, ideological challenges, skewed political environment, inhibitive legislative environment, security challenges, media repression as well as lack of sympathy from continental political groupings such as the African Union(AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). After the presentation of these challenges, it follows therefore that there is need to provide a deeper analysis on how the challenges impacted on the Movement for Democratic Change's quest for democracy in Zimbabwe.

Problems of Political Acceptance

Since its inception fourteen years ago, MDC has suffered the reputation of lack of political acceptance. Some sectors of the Zimbabwean population that include ZANU-PF political elite, security personnel, legion of state journalists and the intelligence community have viewed MDC as a foreign created, driven and funded political party. Notably Jonathan Moyo has this to say about the opposition political parties and independent media in Zimbabwe:

There is also documented and growing evidence that some regime change newspapers are distributing their huge daily and weekly returns free of charge and thereby distorting their sales to deceive the market under a regime change USAID subsidy designed to increase the number of people who read the UK , US, EU sponsored propaganda published by these newspapers in the vain hope of influencing the outcome of the forthcoming election including the pipe dream of inflaming a North African style uprising through the publication of naked lies about or anything and everything truly Zimbabwean particularly if it has to do with our national security and liberation struggle.

The above presentation clearly testifies that, MDC is largely unacceptable to the ZANU-PF political elite. In this circumstance MDC is fast realising that they are living in a political hostile environment.

Tafataona Mahoso, Vimbai Chivaura, Claudious Mararikwe and Isheunesu Mupepereki have presented a coterie of articles in newspapers as well as ZTV presentations that are anti-MDC as a political party. These regime scholars view MDC as a threat to national security and as a party that safeguard foreign interests. In addition, political editor of the Sunday Mail, Munyaradzi Huni, quoted former ZANU-PF politburo member and former Minister of Home Affairs (1992-2000), Dumiso Dabengwa, belittling Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC as similar to Fredrick T.Chiluba and Movement for Multi-Democracy (MMD-Zambia). As if this was not enough, he even boasted that he blocked a Morgan Tsvangirai victory in the March 29, 2008 elections.
President Robert Mugabe asserted that, "MDC was not to be judged or characterised by its black trade union face and its salaried black suburban junior professionals. Instead, it was much deeper, whiter and wider than these human superficies, for it is immovably and implacably moored in the colonial yesteryear and embraces wittingly and unwittingly to repulsive ideologies of return to white settler rule." President Robert Mugabe's statement is quite clear that, MDC are regarded as agents of colonialism that was defeated in 1980 and return in the name MDC. MDC's lack of political acceptance as genuine political player in Zimbabwe was clearly captured by Gilbert Taruwa's comment. The MDC was viewed as the counter-revolutionary Trojan horse, whose power base, like that of the Rhodesian Front melted and designed itself as farming unions, the constituency which created and controlled the unionist-cum-politicians Morgan Tsvangirai and Gibson Sibanda. The government relished on the premise that the western community sponsored labour movement had formed a puppet political party to protect the small white community in Zimbabwe whose interests were being eroded with the expiry of the Lancaster House Constitution. The birth of the MDC was therefore not viewed as an achievement of the democratization process engineered by the labour movement but rather the penetration of the evils of neo-colonialism in a sovereign state. The celebrated political dimension ascribed to the genesis of the MDC by the government tended for or to overshadow the economic policy as the catalyzing agent for the deterioration of the government-labour relations. The military had also vowed not to accept and let alone salute Morgan Tsvangirai, if he wins Presidential elections in Zimbabwe since the elections of 2002 and 2008. All these problems of political acceptance have presented a great challenge to MDC and Morgan Tsvangirai in their quest to entrench democracy in Zimbabwe. The military's interference in politics and denial of acceptance to MDC is based on their fear of the future under possibly an MDC government. The security sector's refusal of recognition to MDC leadership is also based on their longtime symbiotic relationship with the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front's military wing ZANLA and PF – ZAPU's ZIPRA since the war of liberation in the 1970s. Largely the leadership of the security sector in Zimbabwe are drawn from these liberation movements. Notable examples include, General Constantine Chiwenga, Retired General Paradzai Zimondi, Air Field Marshal Perence Shiri, Happyton Bonyongwe, the late General Vitalis Zvinavashe all of these military leaders were drawn from ZANLA, a military wing of ZANU-PF in the war of liberation in the 1970s. The late General Solomon Mujuru was at first the member of ZIPRA and latter ZANLA. The late Lookout Masuku and Phillip Valerio Sibanda were from ZIPRA. Most of these commanders owe their positions in the army to ZANU-PF’s politics of patronage. Therefore, it is quite difficult for MDC to enhance democracy in Zimbabwe under a highly partisan security forces. The military are determined to preserve their primitive accumulation of wealth that was achieved through grabbing of white owned farms, looting and plundering of diamonds in Chiedzwa fields. The security sector denigration of MDC and denial of respect and recognition is based on a calculated political desire to lengthen ZANU-PF rule in Zimbabwe and undermining of the democratization process. The top brass of the army largely believes that, the defeat of ZANU-PF also lead to the dismissal of the top leadership of the army. Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) believes that, their economic security can be greatly articulated and defended by ZANU-PF regime. This thinking is false but the reality is that the security sector has been consistently linked in the violation of human rights in Zimbabwe. Therefore fear of prosecution for their crimes against humanity in the possibility of an MDC government. The Zimbabwe Newspapers Group remains one of the stumbling block in MDC's quest for democracy in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Newspapers denigrates against MDC as a foreign funded party, an idea that is patently false and devoid of rationality. Morgan Tsvangirai has been branded as “teaboy and boycott”. These political name tags are based on hate speech and contrary to spirit and letter of the Global Political Agreement of 15 September 2008. The GPA called for tolerance and harmonious working relationship of different political parties so as to promote national interests and development. Munyaradzi Huni, Jonathan Moyo, and Tafataona Mahoso have devoted large acres of space in the Sunday Mail to belittle the Movement for Democratic Change. Despite the rejection from ZANU-PF inspired supporters, MDC has been hugely engaged in wide acceptance from students, workers, farmers and the generality of the urbanites. This did not go well with ZANU-PF which used to have the domineering effect in urban centres.

Security Sector Challenges

The security sector services have been one of the major challenges blocking MDC's quest for democratization process in Zimbabwe. The ZANU-PF government since 1980 to present day, has maintained a strong grip on the security forces. President Robert Mugabe's security chiefs, Constantine Chiwenga of the army, Perence Shiri of the Air force, Augustine Chihuri of the police, Happyton Bonyongwe of Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and Paradzai Zimondi of the Prison and Correctional Services, could not allow a situation in which they owe account to anyone except to President Robert Mugabe. Sandi observes that, these are the individuals who have been running the country from the shadows when all along people thought President Robert Mugabe was the man in charge. Therefore, for all intent and practical purposes, President Robert Mugabe has been the civilian leader of a military
government for some time now. In a normal situation we must observe the gun following politics not the other way round. The security people's interference in politics have crippled opposition, MDC's quest for democratization in Zimbabwe.

On March 29, 2008, President Robert Mugabe lost the first round of Presidential race to Morgan Tsvangirai of MDC-T. Despite losing the elections President Robert Mugabe remained in office after the security forces engaged in the violent Presidential Run-off of June 27, 2008. Most opposition leaders, supporters and members were either harassed, maimed or even killed in blood bath. For MDC to entrench democracy under such circumstances it became inconceivable because MDC supporters in rural areas were gripped with fear of being victimized by the security forces that were largely supportive of ZANU-PF rule.

The security sector has remained a thorn in the flesh of MDC's quest for realization of democratic governance in Zimbabwe. Under the Rhodesian styled Joint Operation Command (JOC) President Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF continue to wield great influence within the security forces. President Robert Mugabe is responsible for appointing the commanders of the different sections of the army. As such these appointees are largely loyal to President Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF ideology. It is quite impossible to see top brass of the army differing with the ZANU-PF policies.

The army Generals are war veterans who owe their positions as rewards for their participation and contribution in the liberation war and loyalty to ZANU-PF. During the days of the inclusive government the security forces failed to work with the then Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC ministers. The security sector in Zimbabwe is a privileged class and these securocrats resist any attempt to democratize the operations and activities of security sector. This resistance from the military with tacit approval from ZANU-PF leadership meant that, MDC's chances of influencing democracy was largely narrowed. Sandi had this to say about the security forces in Zimbabwe:

They played an unprofessional central role in campaigning for President Robert Mugabe in the just ended one –man run-off Presidential election. If they are removed from the picture, then ZANU-PF is doomed. If they stay on, it would be difficult to allay –whoever controls the security sector would have greater power.

The MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai and that of Professor Welshman Ncube have found it difficult to deal with security people. The security people have been dabbling in politics and uttering statements embroiled with political innuendos. Nobody has managed to control the army generals. One notable General is Douglas Nyikayaramba who always boasted that, if MDC wins the elections he will go back to the trenches. Brigadier General Douglas Nyikayaramba was quoted extensively saying:

MDC -T leader Mr Morgan Tsvangirai is a national security threat rather than a political one and security forces are justified to participate in politics to defend the country... we are dealing with a national security threat, which can only be dealt with people in uniform. If it was a normal political environment, one would hope to retire at some point and join politics. However, we can't afford to be in an akimbo where there is this foreign attack....we cannot keep quiet. We will continue speaking and as the security forces, we will not sit back and watch things going wrong.

This is constitutionally, administratively and democratically wrong for a serving soldier to speak about politics. The position taken by Douglas Nyikayaramba is the political mindset of the top brass of the army and the army's biases towards ZANU-PF meant that MDC encounters challenges in entrenching democracy in an environment that is hostile.

ZANU-PF has continued to control the security forces under the inclusive government that was born out as a result of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 15 September 2008. Violence, intolerance and use of crude force have largely characterized the security sector in Zimbabwe. Professionalism is no longer the norm within the security sector and supporting ZANU-PF rule according to them is their divine right. Due to these security sector challenges, MDC is increasingly finding it difficult to entrench democracy in Zimbabwe, ZANU-PF have maintained a heavy presence and domination within the security sector in Zimbabwe.

The armies are men of arms who for the past four decades, have lived and breathed violence and violence is what they are most comfortable with, and when challenged, it is their first course of action. Due to security sector's allegiance to violence it has become difficult for MDC to entrench democracy in hostile security environment. While elections are held regularly to choose the President, parliamentary and local authority representatives in every five years in Zimbabwe, it is now a public secret, that, even if the vote goes against ZANU-PF, the security people would still come to the rescue of ZANU-PF.

Morgan Tsvangirai in his political campaigns for President, in the harmonized elections slated for 31 July 2013, he bemoaned that himself and MDC won the 29 March 2008 elections but failed to win power. The security people running this country could not allow such a possibility. The security people have largely influenced the political process since the early 2000s and after 2007, therefore as per security thinking mode they could not tolerate MDC's bid for power because this will expose their ill - gotten wealth.
The Zimbabwe Republic Police and Zimbabwe Prison Services led by Augustine Chihuri and Paradzai Zimondi, respectively have been working in alliance to stifle the quest for democratization in Zimbabwe. On a scathing attack on the partisan nature of the security forces in Zimbabwe, Sandi had this to say,

Though Augustine Chihuri, President Robert Mugabe’s Police Commissioner-General has over the years protected ZANU-PF criminals from the law, 2007 and 2008 have seen him shifting to take a more active role in the violence, with the emergence of Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) law codification and reform section, that was created primarily to enforce the draconian Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of 2001 and support ZANU-PF’s terror campaign. With the help of Paradzai Zimondi, the Zimbabwe Prison Services Chief, Augustine Chihuri has managed to incarcerate human rights activists and opposition politicians, torturing and mistreating them while in custody. 26

Under such an environment it is difficult for MDC to enhance democracy, where opposition leaders are resisted by the security people through use of brutal force. The greatest challenge to MDC’s quest for democracy is that the security arms of the state are behaving like a ZANU-PF branch. The independence of the army to act in defending the constitution and all the Zimbabweans without regard to political affiliation is no longer available.

Another important security arm of the state that stilled MDC quest for democracy is the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO). The CIO is Zimbabwe’s intelligence agency or a secret police equivalent to Adolf Hitler’s Germany Gestapo or Joseph Stalin of Russia’s KGB, Barack Obama of USA’s Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The major preoccupation of CIO is to gather political, economic, social and security intelligence on behalf of the state. 27 After gathering the intelligence the CIO will advise the government accordingly. Zimbabwe’s CIO is a different case and the organization is largely seen as a violent institution and is known to be a fiercely loyal to President Robert Mugabe rather than the state of Zimbabwe and the government of national unity. 38 In essence, Zimbabwe’s CIO is a private army for President Robert Mugabe and they are accountable to him alone. 29

Lack of oversight by Parliament in the activities of the CIO meant that the institution’s activities and operations are done clandestinely. Hence, they lack transparency and accountability. As such this institution worked very hard to frustrate the operations and activities of MDC. Due to the largely partisan nature of the CIO, it is quite difficult for MDC to promote democratic governance. The Central Intelligence Organization has its roots in the colonial era and it was part and parcel of the police’s special branch. 30 The organization is reported to have about 3000 personnel, together with a network of informers and agents. 31 In each of the province of Zimbabwe, the CIO is represented by a provincial intelligence officer, with district intelligence officers and ground coverage teams providing local intelligence and internal security functions. 32

While Happyton Bonyongwe the Director-General of the dreaded Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) is not well known personally, but the organization he leads is notorious for murders, killing and disappearance of people since Matabeleland atrocities in the 1980s and 2000s. 33 The CIO is an arm of ZANU-PF and serves the interests of ZANU-PF only. Hence, it can be safely asserted that, CIO had worked tirelessly to infiltrate and frustrate MDC’s activities in Zimbabwe.

Since the post 2000 elections in Zimbabwe, the military have increasingly been felt in the electoral politics of the country. The military have been largely recognized in its role of blindly supporting ZANU-PF against its major political rival, Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) led by former trade unionist, Morgan Tsvangirai. On January 2002, the then Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF), commander General Vitalis Zvinavashe (Sheba Gava), fronted by his subordinates, General Constantine Chiwenga of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA), Air Field Marshall, Perence Shiri (Airforce of Zimbabwe), Retired General Paradzai Zimondi (Zimbabwe Prison Services-ZPS), on a press conference, declared that, the President is a straight jacket only fit for those with liberation war credentials and he emphasized that, they will not salute and let alone tolerate any presidential aspirant without liberation war record. 34 The press conference was designed and meant to insult and discredit Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC in their quest for democratic change in Zimbabwe. The press seemed to have been organized to support the embattled and incumbent President Robert Mugabe whose political fortunes were plummeting to the lowest political levels since the attainment of independence in April 1980.

The military interference in politics in this scenario was meant to frustrate Morgan Tsvangirai who appeared to have amassed overwhelming political support to unseat the incumbent President Robert Mugabe, who has overstayed his warm political welcome to the highest pinnacle of power in the land. The military’s pronouncement was an indictment and a clear threat to democracy. In the run-up to June 2008, Presidential run –off, the Zimbabwean people were coerced through military intimidation, threats and harassment. 35 Under this political environment MDC’s quest for democratization could not be recognized and fulfilled because the army played a partisan role by supporting the ruling party, ZANU-PF in some areas where the army was supposed to fold their arms in purely political related issues.

The military stance against Morgan Tsvangirai and Movement for Democratic Change is predicated upon various reasons. The military leadership’s political stance and poking their noses in political affairs, an area that is exclusive to their mandate was meant to secure the political survival of ZANU-PF as a political party.
It was also meant to protect their assets acquired through violent and primitive accumulation avenues such as the fast track land reform programme, mining of diamonds in Chiadzwa, indigenization of the economy. The military strongly supported, ZANU-PF against MDC because if ZANU-PF looses the Presidency it opens up two equally unacceptable possibilities to the military and ZANU-PF barons:

Firstly, that they would forfeit their piles of economic assets and acres of prime farmland, and secondly that some of them would face prosecution for gross human rights abuses. To date no senior figure in ZANU-PF has been held accountable for the Gukurahundi campaign in which its government unleashed its North Korean trained Five Brigade in 1982, killing more than 20,000 civilians in Matabeleland.36

Due to this new found economic security, the military are ready and willing to undermine MDC’s quest for democracy. The army have also engaged in complicit in violation of human rights and therefore such a military could not tolerate a new government other than ZANU-PF.37 Has it not been the military support, ZANU-PF could have been pushed to the dustbin of history.

The army supported the ZANU-PF led government out of ignorance. It follows that, most of the army officers have little or no qualifications. Some of the war veterans are still controlling top positions in the army and this group of people are highly indoctrinated by ZANU-PF since the time of liberation struggle up to present day.38 They are hoodwinked by ZANU-PF that, if there is a new government other than ZANU-PF, the war veterans in the army will be retrenched. This is patently false, yet this has been the case used by ZANU-PF as a political ploy to control the senior members of the armed forces.

If one has to make an analogy between teachers and soldiers in Zimbabwe, one will find out that, most soldiers support ZANU-PF and the majority of teachers supports the Movement for Democratic Change.39 Teachers are conscious of their democratic rights and as such they can not be easily blindfolded and used as a political fodder by ZANU-PF. Teachers’ entry qualifications is either a Diploma in Education or a Degree in a relevant subject while soldiers can use either grade seven or ordinary level certificate.40 Only a few Advanced level graduates who are trained army cadet officers are conscious of their human rights and democracy.41 However, due to fear of purging and dismissal from the army meant that, the soldiers supported ZANU-PF as a political party.42 Some of the soldiers are sons and relatives of the war veterans, hence they were indoctrinated from childhood. The case in point is that of Sulumani Chimbutu a son of Simon Chimbutu, a late musician and a war veteran.43 The son Sulumani Chimbutu is a former soldier, now turned musician and his album, Batai munhu (crush the enemy/assault the enemy) is encouraging violence indicating a background of his previous career.

**Political Violence**

Political violence has remained one of the major problems facing the opposition political parties in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The Movement for Democratic Change has not been an exception to ZANU-PF’s culture of political violence. In the 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008 elections in Zimbabwe the opposition has been subjected to intimidation, harassment and threats.44 Since the arrival of the year 2000 there has been many violently contested general elections in Zimbabwe between ZANU-PF and MDC.45 The land invasions of February 2000 set the tone for increased political violence in a way that had never been experienced before with voter intimidation, abductions of opposition supporters and arbitrary beatings of civilians being used to coerce people to vote ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe.46 Such a scenario depicted above, have presented MDC with a great challenge in their bid to entrench democracy.

Between 2001-2004, 18000 youths’ were recruited under a controversial youth national service programme and sent for training camps where they underwent political indoctrination before they were deployed to fight partisan wars.47 The Border Gezi national youth service graduates were known as the “green bombers” have been solely manipulated by ZANU-PF where they have been used, abused and bribed for political gain.48 Due to the excessive political violence perpetrated by ZANU-PF youths since 2000, in Zimbabwe have undermined MDC’s chances of entrenching democracy in the country.

Given the intense political violence, it became clear and difficult for MDC to ensure the security of the person, security of the votes and even security of the people’s will.49 The products of the national youth service has become sworn enemies of MDC as a political party. Their political views are largely determined by the brainwashing imposed on them through training and retraining in their highly politicized camps.

The electoral field in Zimbabwe has been uneven since 1980. The state media has been used to ferment political violence. Opposition leaders such as Morgan Tsvangirai has been largely accused of being a ‘puppet, sellout and chimbwasingata’ (a sell out dog).50 The late Vice-President of Zimbabwe (1999-2009), Joseph Msika had this to say in regard to Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC,

Tsvangirai is a traitor. I came here to warn you about the machinations of the Rhodesians and their imperialist allies who we dislodged through protracted armed struggle, but now they intend to come back using one
of our fellow Zimbabweans Tsvangirai as their running dog-Chimbwasunguta. If you vote for Tsvangirai on June 27, you are voting for the former Rhodesians and thus you are voting for war.\textsuperscript{51}

Contrary to the above allegations MDC is not a puppet of the west. If they were western puppets they could have been banned. The MDC are allowed to contest elections in Zimbabwe but yet ZANU-PF threatens to go for war in the event of losing elections. There is a contradiction and split of personality in ZANU-PF, because they allow these opposition political parties to contest yet they are not allowed to take over power in Zimbabwe. If opposition parties are not allowed to take over power, it follows that, in Zimbabwe there is no democracy, and what we have is monumental democracy. In Zimbabwe we have a constitution without constitutionalism. The question that arises therefore is that, do we need the best constitution only to achieve democracy or the best democratic leaders only with worst constitution or both? Therefore, both the best constitution and best leaders will guarantee the proper functioning of democracy.

An equally insulting statement was coined and belatedly presented by former Finance Minister, Dr Samuel Mumbengegwi, when he asserted that, "This is up to you, if you want peace, you should vote for us, if you vote for MDC, we will go to war".\textsuperscript{52} All this political mockery has been done to discredit Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC. In the environment of threats and intimidation by senior government officials, it is clear that, the opposition's chance of taking over power and initiate democratic reforms is very slim. The fact that, when ZANU-PF feel threatened always invokes the legacy of the liberation war disadvantages other political players without a war record. ZANU-PF has over the years created hegemonic aspect that, if one did not participate in the war of liberation of 1970s one is not entitled to rule Zimbabwe. Therefore, the ruling party is trying to monopolize power for its selfish political agenda.

Another dimension of political violence was presented by President Robert Mugabe in the run-up to the Presidential-run-off of June 2008:

ZANU-PF fought for our rights, land and bright future. This legacy should not simply be vanquished by the stroke of the pen at the ballot just because I am not getting basic goods...otherwise a simple x would have taken the country back to 1890. The third Chimurenga can't just die because of an x. All those who died in struggle will turn in their graves.\textsuperscript{53}

Elections in Zimbabwe are simply done for political window dressing and the ZANU-PF government will not allow the opposition political parties to take over power as happened on the 29th March 2008. Even though the vote was hugely against President Robert Mugabe, he manipulated state institutions to remain in power. MDC faces an insurmountable task in uprooting ZANU-PF hegemony.

After the June 2008 Presidential election run–off, local human rights groups claimed at least 33 people had died from about 2000 incidences of torture which occurred in the run–up to the poll.\textsuperscript{54} Most of the electoral violence the country has experienced in the 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, especially in the Presidential Run-Off of June 2008 was blamed on ZANU-PF as it seeks to maintain its stranglehold on power at all costs.\textsuperscript{55}

ZANU-PF failed to market its policies to the electorate and therefore the party resorted to using political violence as a tool to secure political support. In this regard, ZANU-PF is using the Antonio Gramsci's hegemonic aspect of coercion to secure the support of the electorate. The political support has been achieved through the intense violation of human rights of the people of Zimbabwe. This is contrary to the spirit and letter of the UN Declaration of Human rights of December 1948 which encourages people to freely choose their leaders without fear or intimidation.\textsuperscript{56}

The country's security sector has been fingered as playing a crucial role in the poll violence, with security chiefs openly expressing their allegiance to ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe.\textsuperscript{57} The military's open support for President Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF has grossly undermined MDC's quest for democracy in Zimbabwe. The uniformed forces entrance into politics is a clear assault on democracy in Zimbabwe. No democracy can be realized, entrenched and function properly with a highly partisan security force that is politicized and compromised.

Currently, the Lancaster House Constitution, section 15 states that, no person shall be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading punishment or other treatment.\textsuperscript{58} However, there is no legal definition of torture in Zimbabwean law. In the absence of the legislation, common law provisions on offences such as assault or rape are used to prosecute in cases of torture.\textsuperscript{59} In a statement issued on June 26, 2012, Crisis Coalition said, despite the existence of article 18 of the Global Political Agreement, which exhorts the state to “apply the laws of the country fully and impartially in bringing all perpetrators of politically motivated violence against MDC supporters, although known, remain protected by highly compromised prosecuting authority.”\textsuperscript{60} The perpetrators of violence against MDC supporters continue to taunt the victims and boast they have not been prosecuted for their heinous crimes against humanity because, “tisu tirkutonga or tisu tiri panyanga”(We are ruling and in charge of the country).\textsuperscript{61} Highly critical of the state's failure to deal with human rights offenders and provide redress for torture victims of the 2008 election, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (Zim Rights), said no material governments efforts have been made to cater for those who survived the political atrocities of 2008.\textsuperscript{62} Due to intense political violence, the prospects of MDC's quest for democratization were crippled.
In the March 2008 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe, Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC were the victims of the unbridled political violence. Roadblocks or checkpoints by ZANU-PF youth militia were witnessed throughout the entire nation. The most affected areas due to political violence include Bikita, Mutoko, Murehwa, Mberengwa, Sanyati and Gokwe. In the run-up to Presidential run-off of June 2008 at roadblocks people were forced to repeat ZANU-PF slogan such as "Kuvhotera paMasvingo", indicating ZANU-PF's political symbol of Great Zimbabwe ruins and there were also other slogans such as, "27 June Mugabe muoffice". People were also victimized through the ZANU-PF operation codenamed “makavhotera papi” (whom did you vote). People were forced to reveal the party which they have voted on 29 March 2008.

According to ZEC principles they say “your vote is your secret”. While ZEC in theory emphasized secrecy of the vote but ZANU-PF violated the secrecy when most voters turned out to be assisted voters even though they could read and write. Due to fear of ZANU-PF political violence people endorsed ZANU-PF candidate President Robert Mugabe. Relatives, friends and neighbours were now at loggerheads because of politicization. The rich, and well to do families in rural areas were the main targets of ZANU-PF militia. Houses belonging to MDC supporters in rural areas were burnt down. The rural areas were gripped with climate of political fear emanating from ZANU-PF militia. Overwhelming political violence obstructed MDC's quest for democracy.

Some elderly people who are old enough to be grandmothers and grand fathers were forced to lie down and were beaten thoroughly by the ZANU-PF youth militia under the operation code named “kundendeuka” (defecting from MDC back to ZANU-PF). Some of these youths were too young to engage in this political violence mantra. ZANU-PF also used the political bases to violently campaign for the 27 June 2008 Presidential –run off plebiscite. The political bases were a reminder of the liberation struggle's night vigils known as "pungwes" in the 1970s. During the encamping in these political bases the youths engaged in songs that greatly undermined MDC as a political party. One of the ZANU-PF youth militia's political songs goes as follows:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Morgan usatengesa, nyika kumabhunu, watokanganwa, ZANU-PF} \\
\text{Yakakurera ukakura. Morgan usatengesa nyika kumabhunu, watokanganwa ZANU} \\
\text{Yakakurera ukakura. (Morgan Tsvangirai you are the puppet of the west. You have forgotten the party that} \\
\text{liberated you and that also created the ZCTU)}
\end{align*}
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The song's political undertones were meant to denigrate Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC's association with white community in Zimbabwe. To President Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans. This meant that, the whites are excluded from the definition of being Zimbabweans. Rural folks have been misinformed that the white communities are not part of Zimbabwe. President Robert Mugabe once remarked that, ‘keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe’. As if this is not enough President Robert Mugabe, further asserted that, “instil fear in the hearts of the white men, he must tremble.” In this regard, we are now living in a globalized village and for President Robert Mugabe to advocate for cutting of connection with England is asking for political, economic and social disengagement which is completely wrong. The whites could have done wrong in the colonial era but for President Robert Mugabe to ask for violence against whites indicates ZANU-PF’s culture of violence and politics of barbarism. MDC are finding it difficult to entrench democracy because some ZANU-PF are always asserting that, this party want to return the country to the whites who were defeated in 1980. The saying that, they want to return Zimbabwe to the British is not only wrong but falsehoods peddled by political elite as propaganda to discredit MDC.

The activities and operations of ZANU-PF political bases in June 2008 were a clear threat to democracy. There was brazen looting and plundering of the local community resources that include goats, cattle, chickens, pigs, grains, groundnuts, and groceries among others. This looting spree was meant to feed the ZANU-PF youth militia in the political bases. Resourceful MDC supporters were main targets of the ZANU-PF youths who religiously engaged in this orgy of political violence. ZANU-PF political bases there was serious political indoctrination. ZANU-PF youth were not only taught to hate but to totally eliminate Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC on the Zimbabwe political landscape through political violence. MDC and Tsvangirai were viewed as “puppets, sellouts and stooges of the British and Americans.” MDC leadership were also branded as front and agents of British’s neo-colonialism. This political characterization was misplaced, biased and deliberately lacked honest and constructive criticism of MDC’s political ideology.

MDC in its bid for realization of democratic governance it faced verbal political violence from ZANU-PF leadership and its militia. In the political bases in June 2008 the ZANU-PF youth militia were overheard saying “pasi naTsvangirai nemachinja ake” (down with Tsvangirai and his MDC followers). The slogan “pasi naTsvangirai”, it symbolizes ZANU-PF ‘s political mantra of violence and death. ZANU-PF ‘s political hatred against MDC is based on its failure to realize that political power in 21st century is borrowed from the practice of democratic traditions, norms and notions. Due to political violence meted out against MDC supporters in 2008 seriously hampered all efforts of MDC to entrench democracy.
In the Presidential run –off of June 2008 in Zimbabwe, the ZANU-PF youths engaged in political violent songs. Liberations songs gone by were revitalized to provide political legitimacy and moral boosting to ZANU-PF political rallies and bases. The masses especially in rural areas were forced to sing these political choruses against their political will. Hence, the 2008, Presidential run –off was a great assault on people’s conscience. Some of the songs that dominated ZANU-PF rallies and political bases read as follows:

*Tsvangirai waita, chipatapata. Kutsvaga bonzo muderere, muderere.*
*Tsvangirai waita chipatapata kutsvaga bonzo muderere, muderere…* (Tsvangirai is desperate to search for a bone in a relish of okra).  

In English translation it meant that, Tsvangirai and MDC ’s challenge could not be realized because these politicized youth view MDC as enemies and not as opponents who have an alternative democratic policies to unseat ZANU-PF. Tsvangirai and MDC are stampeding in attempting to change the ZANU-PF government which according to overzealous ZANU-PF youth is largely impossible.

Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC campaigned vigorously for the June 2008 election. Tsvangirai simply used his familiar and now popular slogan which reads “Morgan is more”.  

The release of the voters roll just before or on the eve of elections is ZANU-PF strategy used to delay possible amendments that may be needed. There is possibility that, ZANU-PF have unlimited access to the voters roll than other political parties as a result, this disadvantages MDC and other opposition forces.

The violence in 2008 used against civil society and supporters of the MDC political formations was particularly overwhelming. The ZANU-PF organized campaigns involved widespread and systematic abuses, which led to the killing of up to 200 people, the beating and torture of 5000 more and displacement of about 36 000 people as well as violence and torture perpetrated by members of ZANU-PF controlled security forces.

Electoral Problems

Electoral problems remain one of the challenges facing the opposition in their bid to capture power and promotion of democracy in Zimbabwe. The Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC) which later gave birth to Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) was a historically discredited institution. While the ESC has been theoretical described as independent it lacked independence, largely because there has been always the hidden fist of ZANU-PF behind the ESC. Elections management have been under the office of Registrar –General’s office since independence until 2005 when the Electoral Supervisory Commission took over.  

Tobaiwa Mudede has been the Registrar-General since 1982. His office has been running subsequent elections since 1980s until the founding of ZEC. Tobaiwa Mudede has been largely accused of being biased towards ZANU-PF as compared to other political parties in the conduct of elections. He is very loyal to President Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF and as a result he has been often accused by MDC and other opposition parties of rigging elections in favour of ZANU-PF. Registrar General’s office is largely responsible for registration of the voters and the office always refuses to release the voters roll in time so that the opposition could not audit. The release of the voters roll just before or on the eve of elections is ZANU-PF strategy used to delay possible amendments that may be needed. There is possibility that, ZANU-PF have unlimited access to the voters roll than other political parties as a result, this disadvantages MDC and other opposition forces that are mobilizing for the realization of democracy in Zimbabwe.

The heavily skewed voter registration exercise managed by ZANU-PF ultra –loyalist and Registrar-General Tobaiwa Mudede has undermined MDC’s quest for democratic governance. Some two million potential voters aged 18-30, a group that overwhelmingly favours the MDC , failed to register, and there are about one million dead people still on the register, which leaves plenty of scope for vote rigging. MDC Secretary –General and Former Finance Minister, Tendai Biti argues that, several thousands could not manage to register because Zimbabwe Electoral Commission(ZEC) officials frustrated them and therefore, there is great suspicion that, it may have been from the top. Therefore , even though elections are held regularly, they are largely cosmetic or for rubber stamping , ZANU-PF engages in fraudulent electoral activities, to avoid its ouster from power.

ZEC has been largely controlled by state security agents, who have a close relationship with the ZANU-PF government. Notable examples include the then President of High Court, George Chiweshe and under his leadership, ZEC was exposed its structural weakness as an institution. ZEC failed to release the Presidential results for one and half month in the harmonised elections of 29 March 2008. Chiweshe kept the citizens anxious to know what had transpired during the elections. The long delay in the release of the results indicate that, the possibility for the overall defeat of ZANU-PF candidate in the elections was very high and the regime might have changed the results to stop Morgan Tsvangirai’s clear majority vote. George Chiweshe is a former war veteran of the
war of liberation in the 1970s. Due to his close links with the ZANU-PF party and government, it was not possible for George Chiweshe to be impartial in his exercise of duty. In short, most ZEC officials are aligned to ZANU-PF and are partisan. The senior officials are appointed with the approval of President Robert Mugabe and therefore they do whatever, possible in their power to safeguard the ZANU-PF hegemony in Zimbabwe politics.

Although Rita Makarau, who chairs the ZEC, is regarded as having done a far better job than her predecessors, ZANU-PF seems to have enough levers to pull in the commission to mount its own challenge. In mid-July 2013, President Robert Mugabe appointed a raft of new High Court judges without consulting Tsvangirai, as he should have under the terms of the Global Political Agreement of 2008 which emphasizes power sharing between these two political rivals. The appointment of judges was a good insurance policy in case of any messy court room appeals against election results. Given, the circumstances surrounding ZEC management structures, it is difficult to have free and fair elections.

Dzinisa asserted that, the inclusive government in tandem with provisions of the GPA appointed a new ZEC in March 2010, this was meant to reduce political tension in the country. The Electoral Bill that, was subsequently gazetted on 27 June 2011 designed to promote free and fair elections has been stuck in Parliament for over a year. Interestingly enough ZEC was established after it had been realized that, the Registrar –General ran the country’s electoral process, including voter registration, provision of electoral staff, declaration of results and custody of election materials. The mere fact, that a Registrar –General was conducting all this important political work meant that, there was possibility that, this senior civil servant might be under pressure to support ZANU-PF thrust during the elections. The political biases and lack of impartiality by the Registrar-General meant that, he would disadvantage other political players. Hence, it is easier for democratic governance to be suffocated in the presence of a partisan Registrar –General. It must be noted that, the ZEC Secretariat, is composed of the staff that include ex-army officers who are accused of manipulating the 2008 polls and sympathetic to ZANU-PF, was not changed.

Without a credible electoral system, MDC’s quest for democratic governance could not be realized. ZEC remains drastically under capacitated and would struggle to organize properly an election called at short notice. Meanwhile, the voter’s roll that was first drawn up in 1985 is still a shambles, with a grave presence of “ghost voters”. It contains the names of many dead voters and of persons who have left the country and no longer qualify to vote according to the current regulations. In the run-up to the 2008 elections, the MDC –T had also accused ZANU-PF of manipulating the voter registration process by concentrating mobile stations in its traditional strongholds such as Marondera and Zvimba. Therefore, a credible voter’s roll is a prerequisite for a sustainable democratic governance.

Most people believe the absence of physical violence signifies free and fair electoral contest. For elections to be considered as free and fair there must be minimum standards to be observed. There must be non-violence before, during and after elections, the contesting political parties and electorate must have access to the voters roll at least three months before the elections, there must be no restriction in regard to foreign people who wanted to be credited as observers, all parties must have free access to the media and there must be transparency and accountability in the printing and management of the election material including ballot papers. The printing of election material must not be solely the preserve of one certain political party.

After the elections any political party that feels shortchanged by the ZEC must have access to the used and unused ballot papers and other materials used during the elections. This will be in spirit of reducing vote rigging and promotion of democratic governance. The Constitutional court refused to release the used and election material as demanded by Morgan Tsvangirai who have challenged the results of 31 July 2013 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe. Tsvangirai and MDC withdrew their election petition challenging the outcome after the Constitutional court refused with material used during the election. Without the election material used the MDC legal defence team could not see their case succeeding without the evidence they needed. To show his political duplicity, ZANU-PF controlled Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku went ahead and delivered a verdict in a case that had been withdrawn. The bottom line of the story is that, the Chief Justice wanted to score a political goal.

The process of inviting election observers must not be the case of the President and the ruling party alone but it must encompass all political players in the country. This will go a long way in enhancing democratic governance in the country. This was not the case in Zimbabwe, where the dominant ZANU-PF government only invited its friends from the African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). Those invited were less critical of ZANU-PF politics and shared the same interests of fighting against colonialism and this disadvantaged MDC whose sympathetic friends in the west were not invited.

In 2002 Presidential elections European Union Observer Mission leader(EUOM), Pierre Schori was deported after ZANU-PF suspected that, he will produce a damning report on the elections since the west were hostile to ZANU-PF government. The mere fact, that ZANU-PF government did not allow the European Union observer mission meant that, they have something to hide. If they were confident of winning a free and fair contest, they were not supposed to deny EU team to observe them. Due to its oppressive policies such as Murambatsvina (operation
controlled Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and Zimbabwe Newspapers group are uncompromisingly anti-Zimbabwe. Both print and electronic media has been marshaled by partisan officials in these state institutions to promote ZANU-PF, resulting in well-grounded demands to free up the nation's airwaves ahead of future polls, independent press that, were supportive of MDC such as Daily News in September 2003.

In the final analysis another MDC political formation bemoaned lack of democracy in Zimbabwe. Welshman Ncube, who broke away from Tsvangirai in 2006 to form another MDC, argued that, the elections must be used to resolve the national leadership crisis: “For the past 33 years, we have had a leader who does not subscribe to democratic principles, someone who does not understand that economic development hinges on political stability and not self-aggrandisement.” This alone indicates some of the challenges of opposition that are fighting long incumbency of the African nationalist leadership in Zimbabwe.

Media Repression and Demonization of the Movement for Democratic Change

The public media is biased and deceptive in political communication during election campaigns and this is designed to promote ZANU-PF, resulting in well-grounded demands to free up the nation's airwaves ahead of future polls, there have been mixed developments in the media reform arena since the establishment of the inclusive government.106 Media has been used as a political instrument to undermine MDC's quest for democracy in Zimbabwe. Both print and electronic media has been marshaled by partisan officials in these state institutions to deny MDC a credible voice among the electorate. The calls for the reconstitution of the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), which is believed by some to be sympathetic to ZANU-PF, have fallen on deaf ears.107 ZANU-PF controlled Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and Zimbabwe Newspapers group are uncompromisingly anti-MDC and even during the life span of the Government of National Unity they continued to belittle the efforts of then Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC ministers.108 Zimbabwe Newspapers group is constituted by the following papers that include, The Herald, Sunday Mail, Kwayedza, Chronicle, Sunday News, H-Metro, B-Metro, Umthunywa. In addition, there is New Ziana, which is largely composed of regional newspapers such as Gweru times and Indosakausa. The New Ziana is a government news feeder to international community like what Reuters does in the western countries.

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), especially MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai has been vilified in the state press. The Zimbabwe state press like the Rwandan state radios of 1994 genocide, promotes and nurtures hate speech and peddled malicious falsehoods against MDC-T and the opposition forces in the country.106 The preoccupation of the state media is to tarnish the image of the MDC. In the state press MDC leaders are presented as white men's “puppets, stooges and sellouts”.110 These are derogatory terms used by state press to demean the opposition. They quickly forget, their ZANU-PF masters have auctioned the country to the Chinese through some opaque mining deals which are shrouded in secrecy since the year 2000.

According to the state media the oppositions are incapable of nothing good. ZANU-PF leaders in the state press are presented as the courageous people who jealously safeguarded the nation's sovereignty and integrity from the machinations of the western nations who bend on regime change agenda through MDC in Zimbabwe.111 MDC is receiving unfair and biased reporting. Despite claiming the death of MDC after the 2013 elections the party remains the thorn in the ZANU-PF flesh.

The Global Political Agreement of 15 September 2008 called for media reforms, that encompass democratization of airwaves. However, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), the sole licencing authority for radios, televisons has largely been partisan in its approach of licensing the new players in the media. The Chairperson of BAZ, Dr Tafataona Mahoso is a well known political activist of ZANU-PF in the intellectual community. He is largely biased towards ZANU-PF and therefore he had been instrumental in denying potential broadcasters in both radio and television licences for operation.112 Those perceived to be pro-MDC have been denied licence to operate radio and televisions stations. During the life cycle of BAZ, it only issued licences to partisan individuals aligned to the ruling party, ZANU-PF. One recipient of this licensing is none other than Supa Mandiwanzira, who was given the green light to establish ZiFM which is under the control of AB Communications, an entity critics allege is linked to President Mugabe-therby squandering an opportunity to build a truly diverse and independent broadcasting industry environment.113 Supa Mandiwanzira is now the current Deputy Minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services and doubting as Member of Parliament for Nyanga. The Star FM has been given the licence to operate. The Star FM is wholly owned by Zimbabwe Newspapers Group. Star FM simply represent the image and editorial policy of its parent company. It is difficult, if not impossible for MDC to entrench democracy in a hostile media environment.

The passing of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), Access to Information of Privacy Act (AIPPA), have jeopardized the activities and operations of the media institutions and journalists. The passing of these two pieces of legislation have contributed to the muzzling of media and in turn it contributed to the closure of the independent press that, were supportive of MDC such as Daily News in September 2003.114 The two laws seem to promote and defend the interests of the ZANU-PF regime. POSA and AIPPA tended to criminalize democratic activities and institutionalize crime. POSA made it impossible for the opposition to apply for a rally before the actual
day arrives. More often than not the partisan Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) always decline clearance letter for MDC to stage a rally citing the shortage of manpower. This was the case of MDC-T final rally held in Harare on 29 July 2013 at open grounds opposite Rainbow towers was not sanctioned citing shortage of manpower from ZRP.115

However, a close analysis of the situation indicates that, it was a strategy to delay and frustrate MDC’s bid for power and democratic governance. When ZANU-PF feels there is need to stage a rally, they request at short notice and it will be cleared. ZRP’s blocking of MDC and opposition rally was not surprising because ZRP Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri has declared publicly his allegiance to ZANU-PF.116 Police Commissioner General Augustine Chuhuri ended up making decisions that are politically motivated instead of being professional. ZRP had worked in undermining democracy in Zimbabwe. Apart from ZRP frustration on MDC, it is equally important to note that, MDC rallies are rarely covered by the state press and if they are covered, MDC is always presented in the negative sense.

In the state institutions like ZBC, people who are perceived to be pro-MDC are not safe. Some of the journalists have to flee away for their lives. A case in point is that of Eric Knight and Ezra Sibanda who left ZBC for United Kingdom in 2002, because they were targeted for victimization by the security state agents.117 The state media created fictitious divisions within the MDC. For instance the Sunday Mail has tried many times to sow seeds of discord and political acrimony as well as tension between MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai and his Secretary-General, Tendai Biti.118 The state media always alleged that, Tendai Biti is working for the B-project 2016, meant to topple Morgan Tsvangirai’s leadership.119 Such an argument by the state media lacks credibility because of lack of substantial evidence to back up their claims.

Inhibitive Judiciary Environment

Judiciary in Zimbabwe has remained largely weak and compromised.120 The judiciary has been used as a willing political pawn to undermine Movement for Democratic Change’s quest for democratization. The executive in Zimbabwe have been interfering in the operations and activities of the Judiciary. The Judiciary has increasingly come under fire from ZANU-PF since the turn of the 21st millennium. Due to the strong political challenge from MDC, ZANU-PF engaged in the purging of judges who were perceived to be anti-ZANU-PF in their delivery of justice121 Chigora, in his academic work entitled, The Challenges Facing Opposition Political Parties in Rural Zimbabwe Within 2000-2008 noted that, the ZANU-PF government initiated resignations, removal from the bench or forced retirement of judges perceived hostile to their policies.122

The victims of this orchestrated political assault on the independence of the judiciary in Zimbabwe were Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay, Justice McNally, Justice Smith, and Justice Ibrahim.123 Recently Justice Hungwe came under fire from ZANU-PF political hardliners because they saw him as pro-MDC by granting the members of the party bail outs in some political related issues.124 The forced removal from the bench of these judges was part and parcel of ZANU-PF grand political scheme to undermine MDC’s democratic influence within the judiciary circles. Chigora further noted that, the perceived MDC sympathisers on the bench were replaced with pro-ZANU-PF judges and notable among them Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku, Justice Ben Hlatshwayo and Justice George Chiweshe.125 One way or the other these individuals have liberation war credentials or a close relationship with leading ZANU-PF politicians.

Under this inhibitive judiciary environment, cases involving MDC leaders and members were not very successful. More often than not, MDC leaders, members and supporters are usually arrested on flimsy charges and they are denied a fair hearing or proper representation in the courts. There is lack of impartiality in the delivery of justice in the Zimbabwe courts, because the judges owe their positions from ZANU-PF’s politics of patronage.126 The case in point is the harmonised elections of 31 July 2013, the ZANU-PF controlled Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku dismissed the need to extend the dates of the polls further so that media and security reforms could be carried out as advocated by the Global Political Agreement of 15 September 2008.127 Welshman Ncube of MDC and Morgan Tsvangirai of MDC-T, charged that, then Minister of Justice Patrick Chinamasa’s application to Constitutional court to post pone as advised by SADC was weak and it was a deliberate political ploy to undermine MDC’s quest of democratic governance in Zimbabwe.128

Internal Challenges within the Movement for Democratic Change

Like any other political party MDC has been rocked by divisions among its rank and file. Before October 2005, the factionalism within the MDC was a perceived threat. The party managed to contain it. Lack of democratic tendencies and practices within MDC created wider divisions in the party that led to the final and official breakaway of MDC, degenerating into two distinct political formations. The first political formation was renamed Movement for Democratic Change-T and the second was known as the Movement for Democratic Change. However, for purpose of identification it was later known as MDC-Mutambara. The October 2005 Senatorial elections finally led to MDC split
into MDC-T and MDC-M. Various reasons have been advanced to explain the split of the major opposition political party in post-colonial Zimbabwe. First, it is said 33 members of the National Executive Committee voted in favour of participation in the elections and 31 voted against participation. However, the pro-Tsvangirai voted against participation in the senatorial elections slated for October 2005. After, the vote Tsvangirai endorsed the view that, MDC will not participate in the elections during a press conference after the voting process at his party headquarters. The pro-senate group led by Professor Welshman Ncube countered their President Morgan Tsvangirai by asserting that, MDC will participate in the elections since the party was formed to wrestle power from ZANU-PF and one such way of wrestling power from ZANU-PF was through participating in the elections. This was a serious litmus test for a young party like MDC. This political horse trading between the two political factions could not do MDC any good. It weakened MDC’s resolve to defeat ZANU-PF hegemonic project in Zimbabwe. Secondly, Morgan Tsvangirai in his autobiography argued that, the divisions within MDC is attributed to the infiltrations of the party by external forces. Morgan Tsvangirai singled out Welshman Ncube as Central Intelligence Organisation operative meant to divide and destroy MDC. It has been further alleged that, Arthur Mutambara, Priscilla Misihairambwi-Muhonga, Gibson Sibanda were recruited to Welshman Ncube’s political gospel to destabilize MDC.

Third explanation to MDC divisions was provided by Welshman Ncube. Welshman Ncube responded that, Morgan Tsvangirai had dictatorial tendencies and was indecisive in making crucial political decisions for the party. The party to which President Morgan Tsvangirai belongs, stand accused of by-passing leaders in party structures and rely on his “kitchen cabinet” for advice, the situation that has greatly compromised the sustainability of party activities and operations. It must be noted that MDC is not a united democratic movement. The party desperately needs unity if it ever hopes to capture the reins of power from ZANU-PF. Charity begins at home. If MDC leaders could not successfully practice democratic governance within their party how can they be trusted to promote and nurture democracy across the Zimbabwe’s broad spectrum.

Lack of a united front from MDC worked in lengthening of ZANU-PF regime. The lack of unity with MDC as a democratic movement meant that there is no coherence of efforts and unity of purpose and it follows the movement failed to speak with one voice. Due to political differences MDC political formations present a cacophony of confused ideas and very few people could entertain the message of a divided house. ZANU-PF regime was a dead political horse whose political life was revived by MDC political formations who played a pivotal role in reviving economic and services ministries during the life span of the inclusive government.

MDC's lack of unity have helped the political survival of ZANU-PF regime in the harmonized elections of March 2008. In the run up to the harmonized elections, the MDC fielded multiple candidates. This political situation worked in favour to ZANU-PF candidate who narrowly survived defeat. For instance Flora Bhuka (ZANU-PF) in the Gokwe –Nembudziya constituency survived defeat because MDC-T fielded two candidates outpolled the votes of the final winner and ultimately (MP)Flora Bhuka) in the March 2008 elections.

**Ideological Challenges**

Ideology has presented challenges to the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in its bid for power and democracy in Zimbabwe. The nature of ZANU-PF’s historical background has served the party well and worked to the detriment of the opposition party, MDC. ZANU-PF comes from a radical nationalist background with socialist leanings and this with its liberation war history has also presented an uphill task to any opponents and Its liberation war history has enabled ZANU-PF to maintain a close grip and control over the security forces. Chigora remarked that,

*Another dimension of the party is that, it embarked on the construction of the hegemonic project, that saw the emergence of revived nationalism delivered particularly in a virulent form with race as a key troupe within the discourse and a selective rendition of the liberation history deployed as an ideological policing agent in the public debate in the post February 2000 referendum period.*

The ZANU-PF ideology as cited above clearly undermines the prospects of MDC’s quest for democracy. The liberation war history has been used by ZANU-PF to make it impossible for new political parties to oust it from power. However, with fourteen years of existence it remains to be seen if MDC could be in a position to rival the fifty year history of ZANU-PF that spans from 1963 to present day.

The membership of MDC was destined to provide the party with serious political problems. MDC is a loose political alliance of various interested groups. The groups of people are constituted as follows: students, intellectuals, trade unionists, urban workers, employers, lawyers, farmers, farm workers, human rights activists, industrialists and business people. Kagoro noted that, with this kind of various interested groups in the party it was very difficult to produce and sustain a coherent and purposeful ideology.
composition, MDC was in a moral quandary and they could not separate labour issues with politics. The weakness of MDC’s ideology is that, the party accepted all groups that were dissatisfied with ZANU-PF rule from 1980 to 2000 and beyond. In fact all groups that were largely opposed to ZANU-PF took advantage of using MDC as a sanctuary. Some of them were not necessarily for democratization but were eager to settle their political differences with ZANU-PF politicians using MDC as a political shield. These people include Gabriel Chaibva and the late Patrick Kombayi who nearly tested death because of the shooting by known CIO operatives. Instead of representing a worker oriented platform, MDC ended up embarking on the liberal ideology. The former Finance Minister, Tendai Biti’s tight fiscal policies were more inclined to liberal economics that are embedded in globalization process that embraces liberalization of the economy, market oriented policies as well as a limited role of government in the economy.

This has not been different to ESAP religiously embarked upon by ZANU-PF government from 1991-1995. ESAP has left a legacy of crippling the living and working conditions of workers. MDC, a party born out with the assistance of Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), were no longer resonating with workers interests as per their thrust when the party was founded. Workers activists with socialists leanings like, Munyaradzi Gwisai were ousted from the party for questioning the direction of the party in 2003. Instead of being a worker oriented party, MDC also embraced known capitalists and former Rhodesians such as Eddie Cross, Roy Bennet, Ian Kay and former Rhodesian policeman cum- lawyer and human rights activist, David Coltart. MDC’s quest for democracy has been seriously curtailed by its social classes in the party. The whites in the MDC were quite good in its bid for easy fund raising the financial resources and was presenting the party’s multi-racial approach to politics. However, the presence of the whites in MDC has been interpreted by ZANU-PF regime as a way of importing back white supremacy that was defeated in 1980 by ZANU-PF and other nationalist forces. The presence of the white people like Roy Bennet has not been taken lightly by President Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF.

Whites in the MDC were not viewed as genuine Zimbabweans fighting for democratic change. ZANU-PF used these whites for propaganda purpose arguing that, they were there to reverse the gains of the land reform and revive their white privileges, they used to enjoy in the Rhodesian state. This cheap political propaganda has worked to discredit MDC amongst the rural folks who largely viewed MDC as a party of the white people. The challenges of the MDC was even made worse by the people who received land through the ZANU-PF government’s Fast Track Land Reform Programme between 2000-2008. These constituency of the rural people resist MDC message for democratic change arguing that, if MDC wins they will lose their land and brought back to the pre-2000 era.

Maroleng noted that, as a political party, the MDC was created by a coalition of civic groups that were united more by the hatred of Mugabe and ZANU-PF than any unity of political programmes. Kagoro posed some interesting questions in regard to MDC class composition and they asserted that, what common interests could labour share with capitalists, peasants with white commercial farmers?. Kagoro also argued that, MDC’s struggle for democracy has been inhibited by a multiple of challenges of cohesion in the struggle between “the doves and hawks, the leftist and conservatives, the young and old, patriarchs and feminists?. Lack of clear ideology by MDC has been taken advantage by their political rival, ZANU-PF to label the party as the creation of the west and working for regime change.

MDC has often been accused by ZANU-PF of lacking home grown policies. Lack of clear principles guiding the party’s philosophy has been a political avenue largely used by ZANU-PF to vilify the party’s challenge to its hegemony. The thesis really appreciates that, the diverse interests within the MDC has created contradictions and ambiguities. This laid a difficult and a mammoth task for the rise and enhancement of democratic governance by MDC in Zimbabwe, because the security sector is hoodwinked by the ZANU-PF government into believing that, MDC is designed to return the country to colonialism. This is not true, it is simply cheap political propaganda carefully crafted to hoodwink the unsuspecting electoral audiences in Zimbabwe and it is designed to undermine MDC’s challenge to ZANU-PF’s repressive rule.

Due to lack of a clear ideology in MDC, there has been a silent struggle between the intellectuals and trade unionists. The split of MDC on 12 October 2005 was attributed to the clash of personalities. However, the struggle between intellectuals and trade unionists is not credible explanation although that notion is perceived to be there within the MDC. The veteran trade unionist Gibson Sibanda sided with Professor Welshman Ncube in the breakaway of MDC in October 2005. Hence, ethnicity may be a possible factor that influences politics in Zimbabwe

Lack of Support from Continental Groupings

Lack of support from continental groupings has greatly undermined MDC’s quest for democratization in Zimbabwe. Southern African Development Community (SADC) has done MDC great disservice. It is of great importance to note that, most governments in Southern Africa achieved power after waging wars against white settler regimes. They fought gallantly against the entrenched vestiges of colonialism. In Southern Africa the liberation movements that were transformed into governing parties include the African National Congress (ANC - South Africa , 1994 ), South

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West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO, Namibia, 1990), Front for Liberation of Mozambique (FLERIMO, Mozambique, 1975) and Movement for Total Liberation of Angola (MPLA, Angola, 1975). There is also Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM, Tanzania, 1961), (ZANU-PF, Zimbabwe, 1980). These liberation movements turned ruling parties do not tolerate and trust the new opposition political parties such as Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD, Zambia, 1991) and Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-Zimbabwe, 1999), United Labour Front (ULF, Malawi, 1993), Mozambique’s Movement for National Resistance (RENAMO, 1977, Mozambique).

The new political parties are viewed as creations of the western countries that are bent on destabilizing the region and effecting regime changes in Southern Africa. The liberation movements turned ruling parties in the region view MDC as the creation of the Tony Blair labour government in United Kingdom that ruled from 1997-2010. They argue that, MDC’s attachment to human rights and democracy discourse may pass it to be West minister’s political project. While this may not be true, it has become the universal truth among the governing parties in Southern Africa, with the exception of Botswana’s Democratic Party (BDP), which remained critical of ZANU-PF’s dictatorial excesses. MDC is also viewed as a party rooted in westernization philosophy. ZANU-PF government asserted that, MDC is bidding for power in order to protect the few white minority’s interests. The ZANU-PF government also argued that, MDC is against the land redistribution and indigenization programmes exercise that is meant to benefit the black majority who were disadvantaged by the colonial policies.

However, if the truth is to be told ZANU-PF policies are far away from democratization as leading government officials are multiple farm owners and indigenization is benefiting few rich blacks who are taking away wealth from rich whites. This could not be passed as indigenisation of natural resources but it is rather elite’s wealth transfer. Despite overwhelming evidence of ZANU-PF failure in question of democracy, SADC are still supporting it, in the spirit of African brotherhood. Due to this nature of SADC’s biased and partisan approach to Zimbabwean crisis, MDC is finding it difficult to be accepted by this club of liberation governing parties. In fact, MDC is viewed by SADC governments as an outsider because these governments are attached to each other through the experience of liberation wars as well as the political, economic and social challenges in the post-colonial era. These new opposition are not acceptable to the political web of SADC governments.

The SADC governments are facing similar challenges faced by ZANU-PF government from the opposition, MDC. Despite ZANU-PF’s complicit in the violation of human rights and undermining of democracy in Zimbabwe, SADC remained silent. Therefore, there is speculation that, SADC may be an accomplice in the Zimbabwe crisis. SADC stood by President Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF government from 2000-2008. Despite the intense violence churned out by ZANU-PF youth militia and the military against MDC leaders, members and supporters in the Presidential run-off of June 2008, SADC remained silent as nothing was happening. The African Union under the former chairperson Jean Ping also failed to condemn the violence perpetrated by ZANU-PF militia and security forces against opposition supporters in May and June 2008.

A glaring shortcomings of SADC in Zimbabwe were displayed by Thabo Mbeki’s facilitation of negotiations in Zimbabwe. Thabo Mbeki’s quite diplomacy has passed to be one of the worst policies in resolving a conflict. Thabo Mbeki’s quite diplomacy was a political guise to support ZANU-PF rule in Zimbabwe. ZANU-PF government launched one of the worst ‘policies in post 2000 era such as land reform, operation removal of trash (murambatsvina), operation dzikisa mutengo (price reduction) and operation makavhotera papi (which party did you vote for) and serious political violence. Despite of all this ZANU-PF political thuggery and mafia style of politics SADC and AU never acted against ZANU-PF policies, thereby raising the suspicion that, the AU is a club for enhancing dictatorship and underdemocratic tendencies in Africa. MDC like any other democratic forces in Africa are fast realizing that, it is not easy to achieve democracy with continental institutions that could not speak up and stand up for democratic ideals, ideas and policies.

In the just ended harmonized elections in Zimbabwe of 31 July 2013, the leader of the AU Observer team argued that, “the elections were free and fair” and the outcome was the expression of the will of the people of Zimbabwe. The major problem with AU is that, they only see the elections at face value which gives a semblance of democracy, while failing to realize that, behind the Zimbabwean politics there is a façade of ruthless regime that uses well oiled state machinery to strengthen its vote rigging using organisation like NIKUV. The current chairperson of AU, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma is a political suspect and her views regarding Zimbabwe elections cannot be taken seriously. As South African Foreign Minister under President Thabo Mbeki, she used the so-called quite diplomacy which failed to yield any positive democratic results and she is likely an accomplice in ZANU-PF politics.

Use of Traditional leaders to Deny Movement for Democratic Change Political Space

With the dwindling of its political support base ZANU-PF resorted to use of traditional leaders as a way to consolidate its position in the Zimbabwean politics. The 124 chiefs in Zimbabwe are entitled to government benefits such as salaries and cars. Like the Rhodesian state of yesteryear, ZANU-PF government in the face of serious challenge
to its hegemony it has mobilized the chiefs to its cause. The chiefs are a new political class, that is pampered and respected within ZANU-PF circles. The recruitment of the chiefs to ZANU-PF political hegemony project has created challenges to MDC’s bid for power and democracy in Zimbabwe. The rural areas has become no go areas for opposition political parties since 2000.162 The closure of access to rural areas meant that, MDC could not access the rural voters. The rural areas represent the largest numbers of population163 and failure of MDC to access this important constituency meant that, the party remain largely confined to urban centres and this reduces its chance of winning elections and power in Zimbabwe.

The ZANU-PF also used its old strategy of the politics of patronage soon after, the Presidential Run-off of June 27, 2008. ZANU-PF distributed material benefits to its avowed supporters in rural areas and the chiefs were also included. ZANU-PF through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) led by Gideon Gono, they distributed tractors, scotch carts, ploughs, harrows, seeds and fertilizers in rural areas.164 This was a political reward for voting ZANU-PF and supporting it against its main political rival MDC in Zimbabwe. Traditional leaders campaigned vigorously for the political survival of ZANU-PF in their respective areas. The chief’s interference in politics has largely eroded their respect and integrity among the people they lead. The neutrality of chiefs in politics is no longer the norm. Currently the Council of Chiefs is led by Fortune Charumbira, who is a member of ZANU-PF and even if MDC complain to him about the ill-treatment of their members in rural areas, he is sure of doing nothing.

CONCLUSION

The chapter was preoccupied with analyzing various challenges militating against the opposition, Movement for Democratic Change’s quest for democratic governance in Zimbabwe. From the foregoing analysis it follows that ideology, security challenges, electoral problems and political violence remains the major factors blocking the need for and achievement of democracy by the opposition. The opposition political parties are allowed to exist legally, operate and even to the extent of contesting the elections. Even though they contest the elections the ZANU-PF regime do not allow these parties to win and take over power. Therefore, opposition forces remains as established force to legitimize the ZANU-PF rule, though it appears as if there is a semblance of democracy. In fact democratic governance is conspicuous by its absence in Zimbabwe.

ENDNOTES

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