

# SPECIAL REPORT

NO. 460 | JANUARY 2020

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)

## The Challenges for Social Movements in Post-Mugabe Zimbabwe

By Gladys Kudzaishe Hlatywayo and Charles Mangongera



Zimbabwean lawyers march to demand justice for people detained in the government's crackdown on violent protests in January 2019. (Photo by Philimon Bulawayo/Reuters)

## Contents

An Arrested Transition.....	3
Zimbabwe's Social Movement Landscape.....	8
Opportunities and Constraints .....	11
Conclusion and Recommendations .....	16

## Summary

- The November 2017 coup in Zimbabwe that ousted Robert Mugabe was at best a flawed transition. Its complexities included a party-state-military conflation and a change of leadership not concomitant with a change of governance culture.
- Nonviolent social movements and campaigns played a crucial role in promoting citizen agency immediately before the coup, at a time when traditional forms of civil society and the opposition were both weak.
- Social movements may appear to dissipate but can reemerge, reflecting a cycle of ups and downs and boosts of action around trigger events. This pattern began unfolding in early 2019 in Zimbabwe.
- External actor support helped enable Zimbabwe's transparency, accountability, and good governance (TAGG) actors to push back against authoritarianism and achieve incremental democratic gains.
- External actor support effectiveness can be improved by enabling local capacities for collective action, providing alternative flexible funding for nontraditional civil society actors, and encouraging context-driven knowledge that promotes locally grounded strategies and recognizes different situational nuances.
- The international community should view engagement with Zimbabwe's government and TAGG movement actors as mutually inclusive and reinforcing.
- International support should be available throughout Zimbabwe's electoral cycles given that democracy is not restricted to voting. Intensifying grassroots TAGG activities around elections is also fodder for government propaganda efforts portraying civil society organizations as regime change agents.

# SPECIAL REPORT

NO. 460 | JANUARY 2020

---



## ABOUT THE REPORT

This report draws lessons for how the international community can support, without harming, grassroots civic initiatives in Zimbabwe. The report is based on in-country interviews and focus group discussions with social movement and community actors, civil society organizations, international actors, and policy experts, and was supported by USIP's Program on Nonviolent Action and the US Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Gladys Kudzaishe Hlatywayo is a democracy and governance researcher-practitioner and a former Chevening Scholar at the London School of Economics and Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow at University of Minnesota. Charles Mangongera is an international development expert and a 2014 National Endowment for Democracy Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow.

---

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors alone. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Institute of Peace. An online edition of this and related reports can be found on our website ([www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)), together with additional information on the subject.

© 2020 by the United States Institute of Peace

### United States Institute of Peace

2301 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Phone: 202.457.1700

Fax: 202.429.6063

E-mail: [usip\\_requests@usip.org](mailto:usip_requests@usip.org)

Web: [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)

Special Report No. 460. First published 2020.

ISBN: 978-1-60127-782-4



UNITED STATES  
INSTITUTE OF PEACE  
Making Peace Possible



Protestors called for security forces to stand down during an anti-government demonstration in Harare in November 2018. (Photo by Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi/AP)

## An Arrested Transition

In early November of 2017, Robert Mugabe—who had ruled Zimbabwe as its authoritarian president for nearly four decades—fired his first vice president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, to make way for his wife, Grace Mugabe, as his successor. The backlash came swiftly: within two weeks a military coup forced the ninety-three-year-old Mugabe from office, and Mnangagwa was sworn in as president.<sup>1</sup>

If Mugabe's ouster caused some to hope that Zimbabwe would finally undertake long-deferred democratic and anti-corruption reforms, the events of the following two years suggest that the country's democratic transition remains arrested. Those who had been at Mugabe's side during his thirty-seven years in office assumed power, and the authoritarian systems and patronage networks that sustained Mugabe remained largely intact. Civil society and social movements that were at the center of pushing back against authoritarian practices during Mugabe's rule are now having to navigate uncertain transitions and narrow civic space. This report—based on a series of focus group discussions with external actors who have supported nonviolent social movements and civic initiatives addressing transparency, accountability, and good governance (TAGG) in Zimbabwe since 2015—assesses the post-Mugabe landscape in which TAGG movements and initiatives are operating, and how the international community can continue to support grassroots civic initiatives without harming them.<sup>2</sup>

Most focus group participants agreed that the coup had less to do with the plight of people than with elite power struggles.<sup>3</sup> One participant explained, “Removing Mugabe . . . cannot be equated to a transition. The Mugabe system is still intact because these were the same actors that worked with Mugabe and enforced his rule. . . . The events of November 2017 were just an internal fight within [the ruling party] . . . not a transition of the Zimbabwean state.” Citizen mistrust has been exacerbated by the role these actors played during some of Zimbabwe’s darkest periods. Mnangagwa was minister of state security during the Gukurahundi massacres—in which as many as twenty thousand civilians were killed by Mugabe’s forces in the early years of his rule—and Mugabe used the military regularly to violently silence dissent.<sup>4</sup> Most respondents were thus skeptical about whether the new administration was genuine in its promises of democratization, respect for the constitution, economic transformation, opening civic space, and encouraging citizen agency.

State-party-military conflation has long been a key feature of Zimbabwean governance. Militarization of state institutions began well before the 2017 coup—former and serving soldiers being deployed to strategic institutions, including the state media, judiciary, and state-owned enterprises.<sup>5</sup> Mnangagwa’s administration has entrenched the military in civilian affairs, as evidenced by retired generals occupying key executive positions.<sup>6</sup> Former commander of the Zimbabwe Defense Forces Constantine Chiwenga was appointed vice president under Mnangagwa, and other military elites were assigned key ministerial portfolios.<sup>7</sup> One think tank interviewee lamented, “We are in a worse-off situation. The military is now in charge and the veneer of a civilian government is gone.” Another respondent reflected that perhaps “it was naïve to think that the military could usher in democracy because democracy is not the military’s area of competence.”

One interviewee, however, asserted that “Zimbabwe may be transitioning from a blocked democracy to a democracy, but the old regime had become so deeply entrenched that unblocking will be difficult and arduous.” At the normative level, however, the events of November 2017 demonstrated that change is possible, demystifying the idea of Mugabe as a demigod who could not be challenged. Respondents submitted that the collective psyche of Zimbabweans who rebelled against Mugabe has fundamentally shifted so much that it will be difficult for the current regime, without ramifications, to subject citizens to the same levels of oppression they faced under Mugabe. This renewed sense of agency and hope might explain the record-breaking voter turnout of 82.5 percent in the 2018 elections.<sup>8</sup> Reflecting on this changing power relationship between the government and citizenry, one of the research participants posited that “going forward power has to be negotiated with the citizens and it is no longer possible to run the country with the same hegemonic hold on power that Mugabe had. . . . Power now has to deliver. The governing elites are now forced to abide by the constitution and engage the citizens.”

Several respondents framed the events of November 2017 as a collective effort and expression of Zimbabweans’ frustration with Mugabe. “By calling it a coup, you edit out other partners and the twenty years of the democracy movement that demanded that Mugabe must go. That is why [Morgan] Tsvangirai, [Nelson] Chamisa, Tendai Biti, and other pro-democracy actors were present when these events took place,” an interviewee explained. “For Morgan . . . it was a culmination of several years of pushing for democracy and efforts of several actors, including the citizens.”



State-party-military conflation has long been a key feature of Zimbabwean governance. Militarization of state institutions began well before the 2017 coup—former and serving soldiers being deployed to strategic institutions, including the state media, judiciary, and state-owned enterprises.

President Mnangagwa's initial rhetoric on democratic reforms impressed some respondents. One said, "It appears this government is made up of a mixture of those who would want to proceed on a democratic trajectory and those pulling back." Still, most were skeptical of the notions that Mnangagwa was a reformer and Vice President Chiwenga a standpatter. "President Mnangagwa is a covert operator who indicates right when he is turning left. . . . The narrative that Chiwenga is a hard-liner and

Mnangagwa means well for the country may be deceptive and a case of playing good cop/bad cop," one discussant asserted. Respondents argued that despite clear signs of a political rivalry between the two, Mnangagwa and Chiwenga actually agree on how to govern the country.

Respondents agreed that the transition seems fragile in light of President Mnangagwa's narrow, disputed victory in the 2018 elections. Furthermore, divisions are evident in the executive, as is mistrust between the military and the police and intelligence services. At the executive level, tensions are reportedly growing in the presidium, pitting President Mnangagwa against Vice President Chiwenga. As the perceived power behind the throne, Chiwenga is believed to be pushing to take over the reins in the next general elections in 2023.<sup>9</sup> This heightens the fragility of the transition and may have long-term ramifications for peace and stability in both Zimbabwe and the broader region of Southern Africa. The country's socioeconomic implosion—with the inflation rate hitting 175 percent in June 2019 and more than 60 percent of the population living in households unable to obtain enough food to meet basic needs—further complicates matters, leaving the current government on decidedly shaky ground.<sup>10</sup>

## SIGNS OF A COMPETITIVE AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

In light of the deepening economic crisis, the government appears desperate for international recognition and the financial support that would potentially come with it. The government's promise of fundamental change has been met with skepticism, however. "The claims of reform are a facade meant to sell a dummy to the international community," one focus group participant asserted. The president appointed some technocrats with private-sector and international development experience to key cabinet portfolios.<sup>11</sup> Human rights groups recorded fewer cases of abuses between November 2017 and July 2018. Whereas the Mugabe regime would openly demonize TAGG movement actors as puppets of the West, the current government initially adopted a relatively conciliatory approach under the mantra "Zimbabwe is open for business."<sup>12</sup> The government also repealed the onerous Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act, which allowed the government to take over foreign-owned businesses and transfer ownership to local Zimbabweans, and replaced it with more investor-friendly regulations. The Constitutional Court ruled that Section 27 of the Public Order and Security Act, under which police permission was required to hold demonstrations and protests, was unconstitutional.

TAGG research participants reported a slight opening of civic space in the immediate aftermath of the coup that has been steadily closing since the 2018 general elections. The day after the July 30 elections, six unarmed election protesters were fatally shot by security forces in the

capital, Harare. Additionally, respondents expressed concern over the arrest of and assaults on leaders of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) for mobilizing a demonstration against the government's decision, in October 2018, to levy a tax on mobile money transactions. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum tallied widespread human rights abuses by the military that occurred during protests in early 2019 following the government's announcement of fuel price increases, including seventeen extrajudicial killings, seventeen rapes and other sexual violations, twenty-six abductions, sixty-one displacements, eighty-one assaults consistent with gunshot attacks, at least 586 incidents of assault or torture, and 954 arrests and detentions.<sup>13</sup> The Forum was itself targeted for documenting human rights abuses.<sup>14</sup> A survey released by Afrobarometer in March 2018 revealed that 69 percent of respondents disapproved of the military and 73 percent did not feel safe and free to criticize it.<sup>15</sup>

President Mnangagwa has largely retained the systems that sustained Mugabe, namely a captured judiciary, biased state media, draconian laws, repression, deep-rooted patronage networks involving traditional leaders, a corrupt political establishment, and a partisan security sector. Alignment of laws in accordance with the new constitution has also been slow to occur. Respondents bemoaned delays in implementing the independent transitional justice framework set out under the 2013 constitution.<sup>16</sup> In the face of mounting domestic and international pressure, the government reverted to its old anti-West rhetoric, blaming the West for the shutdown violence of January 2019.<sup>17</sup>

Although Mnangagwa made fighting corruption a key priority of his presidential campaign, respondents doubt his commitment. "There have been some cosmetic moves toward curbing corruption," one said, "yet patronage remains intact and well-known corrupt individuals remain part of the 'new' administration." Individuals accused of corruption continue to serve in government institutions, and those removed from government positions were reassigned to the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party headquarters, where they are wielding significant influence over government policy under what appears to be an attempt to borrow from the Chinese model of governance, characterized by the supremacy of the party over government. So far, those arrested for corruption appear to be political opponents who belonged to the so-called Generation 40 faction, an informal group within the party advocating for younger leadership.<sup>18</sup> Even when individuals were charged, most were merely placed on bail.<sup>19</sup> Central bank directors suspended on allegations of corruption and collusion with oil companies were subsequently cleared and reinstated.<sup>20</sup>

Respondents from Manicaland Province in eastern Zimbabwe noted the absence of a substantive investigation into the alleged looting of diamonds in Marange-Chiadzwa. Both local actors, such as the Centre for Natural Resources Governance, and international actors, including Global Witness and Partnership Africa Canada, reported a lack of transparency in Zimbabwe's diamond mining sector, where a combination of smuggling, underreporting, and undervaluing may have cost the country as much as \$2 billion in lost revenue over the last decade.<sup>21</sup> "It is disheartening," one respondent lamented, "that under the 'new' government, resources continue to benefit a few elites without benefiting the local community in developmental projects such as construction of schools, roads, and hospitals. . . . The diamond mining companies do not employ locals [from Manicaland] and have invested very little in . . . social responsibility programs."

# Deciphering Social Movements

Social movements consist of citizen mobilization clusters that use collective nonviolent action, have change-oriented demands and goals, are sustained over time, and involve some degree of unity building and organizing. These initiatives deploy a variety of tactics, including extra-institutional tactics that are sometimes combined with institutional measures.<sup>a</sup> Three key dimensions of social movements are civic entities (organizations), nonviolent action (behavior), and citizen agency (mobilization).

First, social movements can be catalyzed and sustained by a variety of nonstate actors, including civic leaders and activists; informal groups of concerned citizens; coalitions, alliances, and networks; civil society organizations (CSOs); unions; professional organizations; informal issue-based or community-based associations; and faith-based organizations. Some actors in the social movement sphere may

stay the course. Others move in and out but maintain relationships and affiliations. Formal CSOs, for example, often provide technical, legislative, and policy expertise, or legal, counseling, and other services necessary to sustain a movement. International actors, then, have many potential direct and indirect counterparts for engagement and support in social movement ecosystems.

Second, social movements can be understood in terms of behaviors such as strategy and planning, community organizing, communications, and tactical selection and sequencing. Types of nonviolent tactics run into the hundreds.<sup>b</sup> More familiar methods include civil disobedience, noncooperation, strikes, boycotts, petition drives (offline and online), low-risk mass actions (offline and online), and (often high-risk) demonstrations. Equally important, particularly in the TAGG realm, are capacity building, community

empowerment and problem solving, information gathering, community monitoring, face-the-public forums, cultural expressions and gatherings, and positive reinforcement and solidarity for government reformers and integrity champions.<sup>c</sup>

Third, citizens have agency. When mobilized, people can be a source of collective power and legitimacy to seek TAGG goals. They participate on a voluntary basis, contributing their time, capacities, and resources to the cause even in the face of poverty and repression. Social movements emerge organically from the grassroots, from which they derive strength and resources. The starting points for engagement are “do no harm,” and “respect the needs, wishes, and judgments of civic actors.”<sup>d</sup>

— *Shaazka Beyerle, senior research advisor to USIP’s Program on Nonviolent Action*

## Notes

- a. This definition of social movements is adapted from Nancy Whittier, “Meaning and Structure in Social Movements,” in *Social Movements: Identity, Culture and the State*, edited by David S. Meyer, Nancy Whittier, and Belinda Robnett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- b. Michael Beer, *Civil Resistance Methods in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, forthcoming).
- c. Shaazka Beyerle, *Curtailing Corruption: People Power for Accountability and Justice* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2014).
- d. Beyerle, *Curtailing Corruption*.

# Zimbabwe's Social Movement Landscape

After the disputed 2013 elections, in which Robert Mugabe was reelected to a sixth term as president and his ZANU-PF party took two-thirds of the seats in the House of Assembly, traditional civil society and the political opposition were severely weakened. In part this was due to the leadership vacuum left by the deteriorating health of Morgan Tsvangirai, the main opposition leader, though fatigue, infighting, decreasing international support, and widespread citizen hopelessness following successive disputed elections also played roles. Funding for democracy and governance work dwindled in the aftermath of each round of elections. The post-2013 landscape for Zimbabwe's social movements was also affected by reengagement efforts between some of the major international actors and the government, donor fatigue, and shifting priorities.<sup>22</sup> Citizens, especially in urban centers, became disillusioned and disengaged. The response for many was to find individual solutions when the public sector failed to deliver—such as buying water from private suppliers or drilling wells, or using cooking gas when the electricity was cut.

It was in this context that new platforms emerged to reinvigorate citizen agency and foster hope among Zimbabweans that they could change their circumstances. These social movements also took inspiration from the Arab Spring movements of 2010 and 2011. The period between 2015 and the November 2017 military coup can be called the heroic and honeymoon phase of most social movement activity, mainly through social media in response to the deepening political and socioeconomic crisis. In the aftermath of the coup, most social movements dissipated and entered a disillusionment phase.<sup>23</sup> By early 2019, however, there were signs of a revitalization of “people power” campaigns—from a rural teachers’ strike to a stay-away in response to fuel price hikes.

## REFORM MOVEMENTS

Social movements in Zimbabwe generally fall into one of two categories: reform-oriented movements or transformation-oriented movements. The majority of civil society campaigns in Zimbabwe seek democratic reform in specific areas. For example, election-focused organizations run reform campaigns aimed at pushing for diaspora voting rights, civic education and voter registration, transparency in electoral processes, a professional electoral management body, and the nonpartisan conduct of traditional leaders and the military, among other demands.

#ThisFlag is a citizen movement founded by Pastor Evan Mawarire in April 2016, when he posted a video of himself wearing a Zimbabwean flag wrapped around his neck while calling for action on corruption, poverty, and injustice. The video and hashtag went viral internationally, and the emergent nonviolent movement played a key role in mobilizing citizens who had traditionally remained aloof from governance issues. #ThisFlag organized stay-aways in partnership with the ZCTU in July 2016 and January 2019. In both cases, Mawarire was arrested and accused of inciting public violence.

The workers’ movement has long been active in the reform arena. The nonviolent campaign by the “women of Hwange” in solidarity with their husbands, who were owed five years’ salaries and benefits by Hwange Colliery Company, is a case in point. Launched in 2013, the women carried



out sit-ins, rallies, and marches. Their first protests were met with police brutality. Later, the Centre for Natural Resource Governance, the National Mine Workers Union of Zimbabwe, and the ZCTU joined them. Civil society organizations (CSOs) helped the women mobilize through education about nonviolent strategies and action and other skills-building strategies, as well as opportunities for exchange with women in other mining communities. In 2018, a high court ruled against the company in a petition to evict them, and the women secured their spouses' back pay.<sup>24</sup>

Citizens' Manifesto is a civic platform that brings together labor, civil society, faith, student, women, and youth constituencies. Founded in 2016, Citizens' Manifesto launched the Defend the Vote campaign during the 2018 elections, and in December 2018 it helped organize a 170-mile march to advocate for better wages for rural teachers.<sup>25</sup>

## TRANSFORMATION MOVEMENTS

Transformation movements seek to overhaul political and state structures and are usually associated with contexts where reform is blocked. The Occupy Africa Unity Square movement was founded by Itai Dzamara, a journalist and political activist who began a one-man protest in Harare's Africa Unity Square, where he sat and held a sign that said, "Failed Mugabe must step down." In October 2014, his protest became nationally known after he hand delivered a petition to President Mugabe demanding that he resign from office. Dzamara was abducted by suspected state agents at a barbershop in Harare's Glenview suburb on March 9, 2015. His whereabouts remain unknown and no serious investigation has been undertaken.

#Tajamuka was a group of youth organizations from traditional civil society and opposition political parties that united for a series of peaceful protests and demanded that President Mugabe step down, in part for his role in the economic crisis. The most notable of its street actions were the 2016 protests against Statutory Instrument 64, which prohibited the import of certain basic commodities (affecting both informal traders and regular citizens), and against then Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko's lengthy stay at a five-star hotel at taxpayer expense. The group was active between 2015 and 2017, during which time its leaders were arrested and repeatedly assaulted by the police and security forces.

Opposition political party campaigns can be classified as transformative movements given that they seek state power and aim to fundamentally change state and political structures. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance, led by Nelson Chamisa, mobilized citizens around its Plan and Environment for a Credible Election (PEACE), which sought to secure electoral reforms ahead of the July 2018 elections.<sup>26</sup> A group of young people also coalesced in support of Chamisa's presidential candidacy under the banner #GenerationalConsensus and was instrumental in mobilizing voters in the 2018 elections.

## THE EVENTS OF NOVEMBER 2017

The 2017 coup d'état embodied a confluence of the will to power (of military elites who were motivated by self-preservation) and the will to transform (of TAGG movement actors that were driven by a desire to change the socioeconomic and political fundamentals of the country). Yet, as a Bulawayo focus group participant explained, "the highest common denominator was the demand that Mugabe must go."



Protesters take part in a demonstration outside the parliament building in Harare in November 2017, days before the resignation of long-time president Robert Mugabe. (Photo by Ben Curtis/AP)

Although the military had protected Mugabe by violently suppressing his opponents, it saw an opportunity to legitimize the coup by capitalizing on anti-Mugabe sentiment and portraying him as a failed leader. When then Commander of the Defense Forces Chiwenga issued a statement on November 14, 2017, threatening to intervene, he cited deteriorating social, economic, and political conditions—which social movements had long been highlighting. Indeed, those who argue that the coup was not a military one point to increased citizen mobilization before November 2017—including the hundreds of thousands who marched demanding Mugabe’s resignation.

While social media provided valuable and effective means for airing grievances, digital resistance was not enough, according to respondents. Social movements, they explained, “were a fad that quickly faded even before November 2017 because they lacked a strong ideological foundation and did not have structures on the ground beyond the social media bubble.” To change the existing power structure, initiatives needed to galvanize the majority population of rural citizens, most of whom did not have smartphones. They needed, as nonviolent action and social movement scholars noted, to organize beyond social media.<sup>27</sup> “A phone is a useful tool to raise one’s consciousness but on its own it is not enough,” one interviewee explained. “We needed an integrated approach that combines social media campaigning and real community organizing.”

TAGG movement actors were caught by surprise, respondents observed, and thus did not have a coherent plan to respond to the coup. The capacity of civil society to take advantage of the window of opportunity was also limited by brain drain, dwindling funding, and limited scenario planning.

## Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities may nonetheless be emerging for nonviolent action, and possibly meaningful (if limited) engagement with those in power. First, the government is anxious for international reengagement. Zimbabwe currently has an external debt of \$8 billion, including to international financial institutions, which has made it impossible to access new financing to shore up its battered economy.<sup>28</sup> At the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in September 2018, Zimbabwean Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube presented an arrears clearance plan predicated on economic and political reforms. The United States and other international actors have repeatedly called on the government to implement these reforms. The Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Amendment Act of 2018 set conditions for the country's reengagement with the United States, including holding free and fair elections, upholding the country's constitution, implementing economic reforms to promote growth and reduce unemployment and underdevelopment, and taking "concrete steps towards . . . good governance, including respect for the opposition, rule of law, and human rights."<sup>29</sup> CSOs can leverage international reengagement efforts to test the government's commitment to political and economic reform efforts. TAGG movement actors have a critical role in shaping demands for reform and assessing progress on reforms. For example, in October 2018 Citizens' Manifesto initiated a "citizens' cabinet" whose purpose was, in part, to monitor the performance of government ministries and present alternative policies.

Second, Zimbabwe's 2013 constitution presents an opportunity for democratization and could provide a foundation for TAGG movement actors to develop clear benchmarks for progress. In addition to an expanded bill of rights that upholds basic democratic rights—such as the freedom to demonstrate and petition—the constitution created independent commissions such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. The devolution of power, stipulated in chapter 14 of the constitution, created an institutional basis for TAGG movement actors to engage with provincial and local authorities on anti-corruption, accountability, governance, and development-related issues closer to affected communities.

Third, increasing use of social media has opened new channels for citizen engagement and international solidarity in a media landscape in which traditional media overwhelmingly represent political and corporate interests. Citizen journalism has also helped expose human rights abuses in a way that has forced would-be perpetrators to think about the ramifications of their actions.

Fourth, Parliament, as the only branch of government that includes voices outside the ruling ZANU-PF party, presents an opportunity for citizens and CSOs to voice concerns and to hold government leaders accountable. TAGG movement actors can, for example, engage directly with the parliamentary portfolio committees that oversee government expenditures.<sup>30</sup> Some respondents remarked that the office of the speaker of Parliament has been more open to engagement with TAGG protagonists than in the past.

Despite these opportunities, social movements and CSOs reported challenges in their efforts to engender a culture of democratic and accountable governance. First, civic space has been shrinking since the 2018 elections. As one respondent remarked, “Between November 2017 and the elections, it was a safe working space, but now hazards are back [and it is] no longer a safe space. . . . It feels like the government we have is a different government from the one we had between the military coup and elections.” Second, respondents also reported an increasing, and often terrifying, presence of soldiers in communities. Surveillance of TAGG activities—by military intelligence in addition to the police and the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO)—is growing. According to a number of respondents, this increased militarization is a clear sign that the regime fears the power of organized citizens. One concluded that “the system is now aware of the capacity of citizens to rise.” It also reflects mistrust and divisions among security forces, namely between the military on one side and the police and the CIO on the other.<sup>31</sup>

Third, the government has begun to reimpose reporting and registration requirements on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Zimbabwe and even curtailing the kinds of work they can undertake. The government is again requiring NGOs to sign memoranda of understanding (MOUs) before being allowed to operate. One focus group participant was dismayed that “the MOUs also come with a lot of conditions, such as demand for reports, disclosure of donors supporting organizations and financial statements.” Respondents recounted that, in some cases, local authorities in rural areas have insisted that NGOs fully fund council meetings—often with sizable allowances paid to sitting councillors—to process the MOUs. In Matabeleland, some civic groups reported that they were told not to provide capacity-building assistance to local councillors, and that only the Ministry of Local Government would now be allowed to carry out such activities.

Fourth, respondents noted that ever since the 2013 elections resources for TAGG work in Zimbabwe have been dwindling. One factor has been the global shift to other, competing priorities.<sup>32</sup> The interviewees argued, however, that the lack of resources for addressing Zimbabwe’s democracy and human rights deficits will have implications for migration, human security, and terrorism. When faced with a collapsing economy and an oppressive government, Zimbabweans will try to seek safe havens in stable countries abroad.<sup>33</sup> Some respondents also cited poor administrative practices of Zimbabwean CSOs—including “incestuous relationships” in which friends appoint each other to boards, financial mismanagement, and abuse of donor resources—as contributing to diminishing financial resources. One participant who represented a major donor remarked that “internal democracy and corporate governance within CSOs is very weak, [and] some organizations are run like personal entities with no accountability. . . . Such situations encourage donor flight.”

As a result of shrinking resources coupled with Zimbabwe’s worsening economic climate, some key activists have left the country. This brain drain, which affects TAGG actors’ long-term ability to strategize and mobilize, may have hindered their capacity to meaningfully shape and influence the post-November 2017 coup trajectory. Respondents noted that the fierce competition for resources among social movement organizations (SMOs) and CSOs has led to mission creep. Organizations recounted shifting their missions to fit calls for funding, which in turn compromised their ability to advance their core mission as they ended up implementing activities for which they were not well-suited in terms of capacity and experience. In a few instances, CSOs moved away from popular advocacy initiatives to policy advocacy programs because donors supported the latter.



Fifth, respondents noted that the current regime still considers CSOs to be instruments of a “Western” agenda. Public accusations may have slightly abated in the government’s effort to send a positive message to the international community, but the relationship is still far from constructive. A presidential spokesperson accused two local groups—the Counselling Services Unit and the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum—of “readily” sharing their report on a surge in human rights abuses following the 2018 elections with Western governments while they were “not prepared to share it with Government.”<sup>34</sup>

Sixth, November 2017 political changes have brought in different actors and have destroyed relationships that civil society groups had built with previous community gatekeepers. For example, new district administrators, most with military backgrounds, are being appointed. CSOs and social movement participants noted difficulties engaging with such officials, who have essential responsibilities coordinating government and development activities, including aid, supervising respective district development committees and traditional leaders, as well as working with nonstate actors. “The mindset of the military is difficult to understand,” one said. “They have a ‘commandist’ approach and a ‘complain after order’ mentality. . . . They have no time for negotiations. . . . How then are we expected to work with such people?”

Finally, some donor respondents said that CSOs and social movement actors have failed to exploit opportunities since the coup to engage with the government and remain trapped in a confrontation mode. In contrast, some local groups insist that rhetoric has run ahead of action and view the call for engagement with the government as a euphemism for cooptation.

## GAUGING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

External actor support in Zimbabwe dates to the days of the liberation struggle, when the black majority received solidarity, funding, and material support from both regional and international actors. Respondents acknowledged that more recent international support fostered an enabling environment for democratic gains. “External actor support in all its forms—from funding, exchange programs, solidarity, among others—has been extremely vital and catalytic in the ability of the Zimbabwean people to push back against authoritarianism and achieve significant victories,” one said.

External support has also directly and indirectly helped TAGG movement actors, from capacity building of activists to implementation of homegrown activities, as was the case in the national constitutional reform movement that galvanized public debate and action for a people-driven charter. Composed of civic groups and citizens, the movement was active from the late 1990s to 2013. International funding contributed to TAGG movement actors’ efforts to engage the Southern Africa Development Community and the African Union and lobby for reforms. Equally important was boomerang diplomacy, namely the international community’s diplomatic pressure on regional actors to intervene in Zimbabwe, resulting in dialogue between ZANU-PF and the MDC and a subsequent power-sharing agreement. Although this arrangement had a number of challenges, it provided a measure of economic and political stability from 2009 to 2013, as opposition leaders held key government posts, including the treasury. It also produced the progressive and democratic constitution in 2013.

One contentious issue concerning international solidarity has been the impact of targeted EU and US measures in response to electoral irregularities and human rights abuses. ZANU-PF used the



In the TAGG sphere, the international community should broaden its scope of civil society to include SMOs, faith-based organizations, residents' associations, vendor associations, and community-based organizations.

measures to bolster its own Pan-African rhetoric and to mobilize continental support against what it perceives to be an “imperialist” agenda.<sup>35</sup> The ruling party also blamed the measures for Zimbabwe’s economic collapse, despite rampant government corruption, patronage, and harmful policies.<sup>36</sup>

External support in Zimbabwe’s TAGG sphere has tended to have a macro-level focus at the expense of the micro-level. Respondents highlighted that funding often targeted

larger and more established NGOs at the expense of smaller entities operating at the community level. As one participant at the focus group discussion in Mutare noted, “These big organizations often have huge operational costs such as hefty salaries and vehicles that limit the dollar amount getting to the grassroots.” Similarly, social movements and CSOs based outside Harare complained that donors tend to fund organizations headquartered in the capital and that those operating in the periphery suffer because decisions are made in Harare where “people meet in pubs and bars to discuss funding.” They argued that allocating huge sums of money to TAGG movement actors deemed to have a national presence is not helpful because these organizations will still tap into the structures of regional organizations and community-based organizations to implement their programs. Some of the big organizations recycle old ideas yet continue to receive funding ahead of smaller or newer organizations that may in fact have more innovative ideas, one focus group participant said. For example, the Heal Zimbabwe Trust has adapted the traditional practice of *nhimbes*—in which diverse members of a community pitch in to help with plowing fields and harvesting crops—to nationwide peacebuilding activities.<sup>37</sup> Such contextually driven activities resonate with citizens and can build collective responsibility and ownership to tackle shared problems, which ultimately contributes to social resilience and collective action.

Respondents also emphasized that some donors have shunned funding community-based organizations because they have limited administrative capacity and may fail to write funding proposals that satisfy all of the funder’s requirements. A think tank leader observed, “So far, the discourse on focusing at the grassroots level has been largely rhetorical because operating at the grassroots requires long-term investment and is less glamorous. Yet once it takes root it cannot be uprooted because it builds a lasting political culture.” Changing attitudes and behaviors is a long-term process that may not always meet the quick turnaround requirements of donor cycles. However, it is possible to provide support through intermediary organizations.

Some grassroots respondents indicated that external actor support often comes with conditions—for example, requiring organizations to work with the government. Given the unequal power relationships, CSOs sometimes feel pressured to go along with donor preferences.

In regard to TAGG actors such as the hashtag movements, the majority of international interviewees indicated that they did not have modalities to support them because it was too sensitive an area and that social movements lacked structure and accountability. One donor observed that “social movements have a more subversion agenda, and no donor wants to be associated with that.” Another interviewee voiced similar challenges: “Our funding is only for registered organizations with boards and clear accountability mechanisms. We emphasize due diligence [and] accountability, and we can’t fund social movements due to the fluidity and loose arrangements.”



Supporters of the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change take part in a November 2018 protest against the government in Harare. (Photo by Philimon Bulawayo/Reuters)

Research participants representing both local and international entities expressed concerns about the withdrawal of funding by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) from three prominent CSOs just before the 2018 elections in response to allegations of misappropriation of funds.<sup>38</sup> One donor observed that “the timing could have been more strategic and the decision could have been delayed to after elections or measures could have been taken to mitigate the effects of weakening CSOs in a crucial election. . . . The decision was also opaque [in that] it did not provide any definitive information to allow the organizations to deal with the challenges internally.” Because the organizations were at the forefront of civil society electoral campaigns, such as voter registration drives, the loss of funding had a crippling effect on their electoral strategy and activities. The timing of USAID’s decision, and the absence of steps to ensure the CSOs could still implement a coherent electoral strategy, ended up benefiting ZANU-PF. It also fed into regime propaganda against CSOs in general.<sup>39</sup>

External actor policy appears to have fractured following the 2017 coup. Consensus on how to deal with the new regime was elusive. Previously, Western governments were for the most part uniform in their approach to the Mugabe regime. After the coup, multiple approaches emerged: some believed the new government was committed to undertaking democratic reforms; others were skeptical. One diplomat reported that their government had adopted a “pragmatic approach anchored on gradual reengagement [with all stakeholders].” Another insisted that they “want[ed] to see real action beyond words before [they made] any changes to . . . current policies.”

## THE 2018 ELECTIONS: A MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

If the July 2018 elections were a litmus test of the government's commitment to reform, they left many observers with the impression that change was going to be a long and arduous process. "The election failed to settle the legitimacy question," the representative of an international organization explained. Many election experts reported some progress over previous electoral processes, including an opening of democratic space and the presence of international observers, but concluded that international or regional standards had not been met.<sup>40</sup> Improvement was evident in some areas, most notably in the use of a new biometric voter registration system that weeded out ghost voters.<sup>41</sup> Turnout was also high, and women participated as presidential candidates. Nevertheless, respondents raised concerns over the lack of independence of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and military presence in communities. They also reported a perceived bias of state media and traditional leaders in favor of ZANU-PF as well as the abuse of state resources by the party.

More significantly, respondents noted that the events of August 1, the day after the elections, overshadowed the entire electoral process. Soldiers opened fire that day on citizens protesting what were deemed flawed results, killing at least six people in Harare. Reports of overnight abductions, beatings, and torture of civilians by soldiers in the suburbs followed. Although the government empanelled a Commission of Inquiry, the recommendations in its December 2018 report have not yet been implemented. "The August 1st events were a clear demonstration that Zimbabwe is far from democratizing and militarization remains deeply entrenched," one external actor concluded. "We had all hoped that the election would go smoothly to put to rest the legitimacy deficit of this government."

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The overriding lesson from Zimbabwe's recent experience is that diplomatic pressure will remain essential if the regime is to undertake and sustain comprehensive democratic reforms. Yet also vital is international support that will enable social movement and community-based TAGG actors to leverage emerging opportunities and defend the modest democratic gains made thus far. Global actors committed to sustainable peace, social justice, and inclusive democracy and development are increasingly having to navigate political and economic shifts and narrow civic space. Nonetheless, the following recommendations point to strategies and policies they can adapt across particular contexts.

**Pursue engagement with both the government and TAGG movement actors.** Countries undergoing complex transitions require sustained international attention to mitigate the possibility of backsliding into full-fledged dictatorships. The international community should view engagement with the government and TAGG movement actors as mutually inclusive and reinforcing. Thawing diplomatic relations with the government in Harare should not, therefore, mean abandoning TAGG changemakers.

Political transitions within competitive authoritarian regimes call for a carrot-and-stick strategy that acknowledges positive changes when they occur but also insists on substantive political and economic reform. Engagement with these governments should be based on their living up to the



# Transitions, Civic Space, and Nonviolent Action

A number of lessons can be drawn from the Zimbabwean experience for policymakers likely to encounter political transition and closed civic space challenges in other contexts around the world.

- **Civic space is not static.** Its fluidity is influenced by a number of factors, ranging from the extent to which an authoritarian state's political hegemony is threatened to the measures social movement actors take to upend the status quo.
- **Democracy, or undertaking democratic reforms, is not necessarily a military's area of competence.** Equally important is that authoritarian regimes recognize the power of organized citizens engaging in collective nonviolent action (people power). That is why such regimes use both the coercive apparatus of the state (such as the military) and subtle strategies (such as media attacks and cooptation) to silence social movements. Although authoritarian regimes view human rights as a measure of their benevolence, the realization of such rights is often born of nonviolent struggles, a direct product of people power.
- **External actor support in all its forms—from funding to exchange programs, diplomatic pressure (from governments, multilateral institutions, and international bodies) and people-to-people solidarity for TAGG movement actors—is vital and can be helpful in pushing back authoritarianism and advancing social change.**<sup>a</sup> Supporting TAGG work is a long-term investment. Change takes time because transparency, accountability, and good governance involve behavioral changes as well as political, policy, legal, and even economic reform or transformation. A weak and underresourced civil society—including social movement actors—is less effective in influencing a political transition. In such instances, the transition is likely to be hijacked by retrogressive elements and result in reversals and stalling. On the other hand, providing financial resources to nascent social movements can be a double-edged sword. It can support nonviolent activity or cause divisions leading to the movement's eventual demise. Nonfinancial support is often more valuable.
- **An overreliance on social media by social movements at the expense of community organizing is detrimental to the resilience, sustainability, and capacity of TAGG movement actors.** An integrated approach that combines multiple strategies, including those that reach out to the rural communities, is more likely to achieve goals.
- **For genuine and progressive transitions, TAGG actors need to target the dominant political culture rather than individuals.** The objective should be to change the governance system by building strong democratic institutions from the bottom up rather than replacing individuals at the top. That is, they should focus on dictatorship beyond the dictator—the will to transform beyond the will to power.
- Finally, **democracy, transparency, accountability, and good governance applies to society as a whole. Thus, external actors should hold TAGG movement actors to account.** To be credible and effective, TAGG movement actors need both to avoid close political associations and act as brokers and facilitators, and to acknowledge the need to stand with and empower the marginalized in society.

## Note

- a. May Miller-Dawkins, "Understanding Activism: How International NGOs, Foundations and Others can Provide Better Support to Social Movements," Atlantic Council, July 2017, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54c7f971e4b0d312f4d794ef/t/59655b4446c3c406d8e91f32/1499814725501/Understanding+Activism+July+2017.pdf>.



A newspaper vendor reads the news as police block a street ahead of a planned antigovernment protest in Harare in August 2019. Police patrolled the streets while many residents stayed home fearing violence. (Photo by Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi/AP)

principles and benchmarks they have laid out and agreed to follow. In Zimbabwe, where international isolation stemmed largely from human rights abuses and disputed electoral processes, the international community should ensure that these issues are addressed before writing an open check to the government. The international community should

not lower its bar on global norms and standards and create a harmful precedent by condoning military coups; instead, it should insist on norm adherence to norm-violating regimes.

**Adopt a TAGG movement ecosystem approach.** Rather than giving up in contexts such as Zimbabwe's, it is critical to support a variety of TAGG movement actors to push the transition toward full democratization. This will help ensure that the limited window of opportunity created by a change of leadership is widened and used to the advantage of pro-democracy elements and TAGG movement actors. Without their participation, the transition risks being blocked by standpatters and hard-liners. Such support during complex political transitions guards against democratic stagnation and reversals.

Some of the greatest contributors to positive social change do not fit donor funding templates. In the TAGG sphere, the international community should broaden its scope of civil society to include SMOs, faith-based organizations, residents' associations, vendor associations, and community-based organizations. Funding modalities should recognize challenges faced by start-ups, informal movements, and small organizations. To take advantage of windows of opportunity for nonviolent action, as well as to grow and maintain people power momentum over time, they can best benefit from rapid response, flexible, modest grants without stringent requirements such as audited statements and boards. External actors should also post fair and transparent criteria for the merit-based evaluation of proposals.

In a movement ecosystem, civil society actors play multiple roles. The international community should support in-country think tanks to conduct user-friendly, robust research to promote evidence-based objectives, information, and policy recommendations that TAGG social movements can deploy. To overcome the core-periphery problem, external actors should also channel support to grassroots communities. This support will enable TAGG movement actors to engage and mobilize both rural and urban citizens, which is crucial in countries such as Zimbabwe, where most of the population live in the countryside. Support to the core and periphery is not



mutually exclusive, however. Taking the time to understand the movement ecosystem, including how the different parts of civil society and their actions can be mutually inclusive and reinforcing (or not), is essential. Rather than shifting focus from national to local organizations, international actors should avoid engendering competition between civil society and social movement organizations and support all levels—because they have different capacities and different roles that can be complementary and build power.

Funding should also be available throughout the electoral cycle and not just before elections. Democracy—and the requisite education and mobilization—is an ongoing process. After all, intensified TAGG activities in communities at election time can provide fodder for government accusations that CSOs are agents of regime change. Core funding that is not tied to a specific program or project is vital to the sustainability of TAGG movement actors' work.

**Support local efforts to build citizen agency and enable people power.** In complex transitions, people power remains an effective bulwark against authoritarian encroachment and consolidation. Only when citizens resist atomization and act as a collective can sustainable change be achieved. Organic coordination platforms and coalitions should be supported to ensure well-coordinated programming and collective action. This allows TAGG protagonists, including social movements, to bridge the rural-urban divide, cooperate across silos, build unity, involve regular citizens and marginalized groups, and understand the bigger picture beyond specific concerns.

Funding is not a panacea; nor is it always wanted or needed. To mitigate the demobilizing effects of grants to social movements and government efforts to discredit and repress civic initiatives, donors should base support on the stated needs of grassroots actors. In terms of nonfinancial support, among the most notable are solidarity, local capacity-building opportunities (such as leadership, strategic nonviolent action, community organizing, and negotiation), skills training, counseling for victims of trauma, legal assistance, and material support (such as education and communication resources). Donors can also enable scenario planning, strategic thinking and planning, and culturally grounded uses of theater, music, and art. Such assistance can be direct or indirect.

External actors should also scale up access to networks, exchange visits, and peer-to-peer learning. Professional and youth fellowships and leadership development programs are particularly important. A more systematic effort should be made to involve TAGG movement actors—including grassroots activists—in these programs and to develop more comprehensive content on strategic nonviolent action and movement building.

**Maintain international solidarity for TAGG movement actors.** International solidarity with TAGG movement actors, when they desire it, can be immensely valuable. It draws attention to their efforts regionally, nationally, and often globally, which is particularly important in repressive contexts with constrained civic space. During political transitions, when governments are seeking international legitimacy, diplomatic pressure for reforms can help buttress TAGG movement demands and engender top-down and bottom-up synergies. Solidarity also energizes local movement actors and gives them a sense that the world stands on the side of human rights, democracy, and development.

As one focus group participant explained, “External actors have often exerted diplomatic pressure to the Zimbabwean government to reform in a manner that provided the much-needed solidarity to the suffering masses of Zimbabwe.” Social media is an easy way to gauge such

outcomes. For example, Twitter posts by American officials and diplomats in support of TAGG goals, human rights, and nonviolent action typically garner a much higher volume of likes and sharing than posts on other subjects. Finally, nonstate bodies can also increase solidarity with TAGG movement actors, including diaspora groups; international nongovernmental organizations and coalitions; and federations or alliances representing trade unions, professions, occupations, religions, women, youth, and even academia.

**Focus on contextual intelligence and deference to local actors.** Although lessons can be drawn from similar contexts, TAGG work is not based on standardized frameworks and methods. It is incumbent on donors to rethink their engagements as well as their traditional monitoring and evaluation frameworks, such as log frames, which are not especially flexible. Thus, in practice, donors should not dictate programming priorities for local actors. Rather, they can encourage the durability of civic initiatives by ensuring both grassroots ownership and the use of indigenous knowledge systems and community resources. Context-driven knowledge that promotes locally grounded strategies and recognizes nuances is essential. The articulated realities and needs of local people should determine programming priorities. To move away from hierarchical donor-grantee relationships, the international community needs to see local TAGG movement actors as partners with vast knowledge and insights in a given context.

In complex environments, it is crucial for external actors, in collaboration with TAGG movement actors, to undertake periodic political economic analysis to better understand the changes in the environment and among various actors and their respective interests. Finally, international actors in closed environments should exercise caution to avoid both instrumentalizing local TAGG movement actors for their own benefit and power imbalances in donor-grantee relationships. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness—which is centered on the five pillars of local ownership, alignment with local objectives, harmonization to avoid duplication, managing results, and mutual accountability—provides valuable guidance.

# Notes

1. This report acknowledges the lack of unanimity over the framing of what transpired in Zimbabwe during November 2017. Although different terminology has been used to refer to these developments, such as military intervention and military coup, this report—in keeping with the views of most respondents—uses the latter.
2. A link between democracy and more responsible and effective governance is clear. A movement toward democracy can trigger improved governance practices. This relationship is reflected in the aspirations of the majority of Zimbabweans. Seventy-five percent of Zimbabweans polled in a recent Afrobarometer survey support democracy as their preferred form of government (Robert Mattes, “Democracy in Africa: Demand, supply, and the ‘dissatisfied democrat,’” Policy Paper no. 54, Afrobarometer, February 2019, [www.afrobarometer.org/publications/pp54-democracy-africa-demand-supply-and-dissatisfied-democrat](http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/pp54-democracy-africa-demand-supply-and-dissatisfied-democrat)).
3. Six focus group discussions were conducted in October 2018 in Harare, Mutare, Masvingo, and Bulawayo with thirty-eight social movement and community-based actors in the transparency, accountability, and good governance sphere. In addition, the authors conducted nineteen in-depth interviews in October and November 2018 with informed think tanks and international actors based in Zimbabwe.
4. Gukurahundi was masterminded by the Mugabe regime to destroy the Joshua Nkomo-led Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU), another liberation movement that was more popular among the Ndebele ethnic group. A North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade was deployed in Matabeleland and Midlands, resulting in the death of more than twenty thousand people in the early 1980s (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe and the Legal Resource Foundation, “Breaking the Silence and Building True Peace: Report on the 1980s Disturbances in Matabeleland and Midlands,” 1997, [www.hrforumzim.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/breaking-the-silence.pdf](http://www.hrforumzim.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/breaking-the-silence.pdf)).
5. Eldred Masunungure, ed., *Defying the Winds of Change: Zimbabwe’s 2008 Elections* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009).
6. This phenomenon has its roots in the liberation legacy. The two Zimbabwean liberation movements, ZANU and ZAPU had military wings that were later incorporated in the Zimbabwe National Army after 1980.
7. S. B. Moyo, who announced the coup on the state broadcasting outlet, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), was a major general in the military and was appointed foreign affairs and international trade minister. Perence Shiri, former head of the Air Force of Zimbabwe, is now minister for land, agriculture and rural resettlement. He was head of the Fifth Brigade and was also accused of organizing violent land seizures in the early 2000s.
8. Zimbabwe Election Support Network, “Report on the 30 July 2018 Harmonized Elections,” [www.zesn.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Final-ZESN-2018-Harmonised-Election-Report.pdf](http://www.zesn.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Final-ZESN-2018-Harmonised-Election-Report.pdf).
9. Chiwenga was the commander of the Zimbabwe Defense Forces at the time of the November 2017 coup.
10. UN Human Rights, “Once the breadbasket of Africa, Zimbabwe now on brink of man-made starvation, UN rights expert warns,” November 28, 2019, [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25363](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25363).
11. Mthuli Ncube, former vice president of the African Development Bank and an academic, was appointed finance minister. Winston Chitando, former chairman of Hwange Colliery, was appointed minister of mines and mining development. Kirsty Coventry, an Olympic swimmer, was appointed minister of sports, arts, and recreation.
12. The term “TAGG movement actors” encompasses formal and informal nonviolent civic entities active in the TAGG social movement sphere in Zimbabwe.
13. Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, “On the Days of Darkness in Zimbabwe: An Updated Report on Human Rights Violations Committed between 14 January to 5 February 2019,” <http://img.bulawayo24.com/pdf/Shutdown-Atrocities-Report-6-February-2019.pdf>.
14. *Sunday Mail*, “Shady NGO caught offside on violence,” August 19, 2018, [www.sundaymail.co.zw/shady-ngo-caught-offside-on-violence](http://www.sundaymail.co.zw/shady-ngo-caught-offside-on-violence).
15. Simangele Moyo-Nyede, “Most Zimbabweans trust the army but reject military rule, don’t feel free to voice criticism,” Afrobarometer Dispatch no. 195, March 20, 2018, [http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ab\\_r7\\_dispatchno195\\_zimbabwe\\_military.pdf](http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ab_r7_dispatchno195_zimbabwe_military.pdf).
16. The commission was finally signed into law in January 2019. Other constitutional commissions, including the Anti-Corruption Commission, Human Rights Commission, and the Gender Commission, have also faced operational challenges such as executive interference and underresourcing.
17. Jason Burke, “West stirring up unrest in Zimbabwe to force regime change, says ZANU PF,” *The Guardian*, February 7, 2019, [www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/07/west-stirring-up-unrest-in-zimbabwe-to-force-regime-change-briefing](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/07/west-stirring-up-unrest-in-zimbabwe-to-force-regime-change-briefing).
18. The G40, a ZANU-PF faction led by Grace Mugabe, was a rival of the Lacoste faction of Emmerson Mnangagwa and the military. After the coup and Mugabe’s resignation, it effectively disbanded.

19. Former Energy Minister Samuel Undenge, broadcaster Oscar Pambuka, and politician Psychology Maziwisa were arrested on charges of defrauding Zimbabwe Power Company but have since been released on bail.
20. Fidelis Munyoro, "RBZ Quartet cleared," *The Herald*, December 14, 2018, [www.herald.co.zw/rbz-quartet-cleared](http://www.herald.co.zw/rbz-quartet-cleared).
21. Global Witness, "An Inside Job: Zimbabwe: The state, the security forces and a decade of disappearing diamonds," September 2017, [www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/conflict-diamonds/inside-job](http://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/conflict-diamonds/inside-job).
22. Zimbabwe Democracy Institute, "Zimbabwe Country Report: Governance, Politics and the Shifting Political Economy," August 2015.
23. Adapted from "The Movement Cycle," Movement Net Lab, [www.movementnetlab.org/movement-cycle](http://www.movementnetlab.org/movement-cycle).
24. Shayna Greene, "Zimbabwe: How Democracy and Unions Are Intertwined," Solidarity Center, June 21, 2018, [www.solidaritycenter.org/zimbabwe-how-democracy-and-unions-are-intertwined/](http://www.solidaritycenter.org/zimbabwe-how-democracy-and-unions-are-intertwined/).
25. Phil Wilmot, "Despite Crackdown, Teachers in Zimbabwe Keep Pressure on a Regime in Transition," *Waging Nonviolence*, January 15, 2019, <https://wagingnonviolence.org/2019/01/zimbabwe-teachers-union-artuz-strike>.
26. The MDC Alliance was a coalition of seven opposition political parties under the leadership of Nelson Chamisa: Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai; Movement for Democratic Change; People's Democratic Party led by Tendai Biti; Transform Zimbabwe; Zimbabwe People First; Zimbabwe African National Union-Ndonga; and Multi-racial Democrats.
27. For more, see Beyerle, "Digital Resistance for Clean Politicians: Brazil," in *Curtailing Corruption*, [www.nonviolent-conflict.org/resource/curtailing-corruption-people-power-for-accountability-and-justice-chapter-4](http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/resource/curtailing-corruption-people-power-for-accountability-and-justice-chapter-4); see also Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict," *International Security* 33, no. 1 (2008): 7–44, [www.nonviolent-conflict.org/resource/why-civil-resistance-works-the-strategic-logic-of-nonviolent-conflict-article](http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/resource/why-civil-resistance-works-the-strategic-logic-of-nonviolent-conflict-article); and Marshall Ganz, "Leading Change: Leadership, Organization and Social Movements," in *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: A Harvard Business School Centennial Colloquium*, edited by Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2010), <http://marshallganz.usmblogs.com/files/2012/08/Chapter-19-Leading-Change-Leadership-Organization-and-Social-Movements.pdf>.
28. Minister of Finance and Economic Development Professor Mthuli Ncube, "Austerity for Prosperity," 2019 Budget Speech delivered to Parliament, November 22, 2018, <https://t3n9sm.c2.acecdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2019-National-Budget-Speech.pdf>.
29. Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Amendment Act of 2018, S. 2595, 115th Cong.
30. Jeffrey T. Smith, "U.S. should Rethink Democracy Promotion in Southern Africa," *Huffington Post*, March 10, 2013, [www.huffingtonpost.com/jeffrey-t-smith/us-must-rethink-democracy\\_b\\_4017720.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeffrey-t-smith/us-must-rethink-democracy_b_4017720.html).
31. The police and the Central Intelligence Office have been closely linked to former President Mugabe and the G40 faction; the military has been linked to President Mnangagwa. The current government is in the process of purging those aligned to the former president.
32. Rita Abrahamsen, "Sacrificing Democracy for Security? Shifting International Priorities in Africa," Centre for International Policy Studies, March 6, 2016, [www.cips-cepi.ca/2016/03/06/sacrificing-democracy-for-security-shifting-international-priorities-in-africa](http://www.cips-cepi.ca/2016/03/06/sacrificing-democracy-for-security-shifting-international-priorities-in-africa).
33. United Nations Development Programme, "The Potential Contribution of the Zimbabwe Diaspora to Economic Recovery," *Comprehensive Economic Recovery in Zimbabwe* working paper no. 11, 2010, [www.zimbabwesituation.com/old/WP11.pdf](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/old/WP11.pdf).
34. "Shady NGO caught offside on violence," *Sunday Mail*, August 19, 2018, [www.sundaymail.co.zw/shady-ngo-caught-offside-on-violence](http://www.sundaymail.co.zw/shady-ngo-caught-offside-on-violence).
35. Brian Raftopoulos, "The Sanctions Debate on Zimbabwe," Solidarity Peace Trust, April 11, 2014, <http://solidaritypeacetrust.org/1690/the-sanctions-debate-on-zimbabwe/>.
36. Obey Munayiti, "Don't blame ZANU PF for poor economy," *Newsday*, April 23, 2019, [www.newsday.co.zw/2019/04/dont-blame-zanu-pf-for-poor-economy](http://www.newsday.co.zw/2019/04/dont-blame-zanu-pf-for-poor-economy).
37. Kubatana, "Nhimbres: An Effective Tool to Achieve Inclusive Peace and Reconciliation," June 12, 2019, [www.kubatana.net/2019/06/12/nhimbres-an-effective-tool-to-achieve-inclusive-peace-and-reconciliation](http://www.kubatana.net/2019/06/12/nhimbres-an-effective-tool-to-achieve-inclusive-peace-and-reconciliation).
38. The three NGOs were the Counselling Services Unit, Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, and Election Resource Centre.
39. For example, see Felex Share, "US confirms NGO funds abuse, hints at probe," *The Herald*, July 3, 2018, [www.herald.co.zw/us-confirms-ngo-funds-abuse-hints-at-probe](http://www.herald.co.zw/us-confirms-ngo-funds-abuse-hints-at-probe).
40. The final report of the Commonwealth observer mission concluded that it was "unable to endorse all aspects of the process as credible, inclusive and peaceful." The EU observer mission asserted the process did not meet international standards, and the IRI/NDI said the process "did not meet the mark." The election also failed to meet Southern Africa Development Community guidelines. See "Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group: Zimbabwe Harmonised Election," *The Commonwealth*, July 30, 2018, [www.thecommonwealth.org/media/news/Zimbabwe-election-commonwealth-releases-observer-group-report](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/media/news/Zimbabwe-election-commonwealth-releases-observer-group-report); Farayi Machamire, "Elections failed to Meet International Standards," *Daily News*, October 11, 2018, [www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/10/11/elections-failed-to-meet-international-standards](http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/10/11/elections-failed-to-meet-international-standards); Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "Zimbabwe's 2018 Elections fail to pass the credibility test," August 1, 2018, [www.kubatana.net/2018/08/01/zimbabwes-2018-elections-fail-pass-credibility-test](http://www.kubatana.net/2018/08/01/zimbabwes-2018-elections-fail-pass-credibility-test).
41. Zimbabwe Election Support Network, "2018 Voters Roll an Improvement over 2013 Preliminary Voters Roll," July 19, 2018.

## ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

---



The United States Institute of Peace is a national, nonpartisan, independent institute, founded by Congress and dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practical, and essential for US and global security. In conflict zones abroad, the Institute works with local partners to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent conflict. To reduce future crises and the need for costly interventions, USIP works with governments and civil societies to help their countries solve their own problems peacefully. The Institute provides expertise, training, analysis, and support to those who are working to build a more peaceful, inclusive world.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

---

Stephen J. Hadley (Chair), Principal, RiceHadleyGates, LLC, Washington, DC • George E. Moose (Vice Chair), Adjunct Professor of Practice, The George Washington University, Washington, DC • Judy Ansley, Former Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor under George W. Bush, Washington, DC • Eric Edelman, Hertog Distinguished Practitioner in Residence, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, DC • Joseph Eldridge, University Chaplain and Senior Adjunct Professorial Lecturer, School of International Service, American University, Washington, DC • Kerry Kennedy, President, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, Washington, DC • Ikram U. Khan, President, Quality Care Consultants, LLC, Las Vegas, NV • Stephen D. Krasner, Graham H. Stuart Professor of International Relations at Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA • John A. Lancaster, Former Executive Director, International Council on Independent Living, Potsdam, NY • Jeremy A. Rabkin, Professor of Law, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA • J. Robinson West, Chairman, PFC Energy, Washington, DC • Nancy Zirkin, Executive Vice President, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Washington, DC

### Members Ex Officio

Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State • Mark T. Esper, Secretary of Defense • Frederick J. Roegge, Vice Admiral, US Navy; President, National Defense University • Nancy Lindborg, President & CEO, United States Institute of Peace (nonvoting)



## THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE PRESS

---

Since its inception in 1991, the United States Institute of Peace Press has published hundreds of influential books, reports, and briefs on the prevention, management, and peaceful resolution of international conflicts. All our books and reports arise from research and fieldwork sponsored by the Institute's many programs, and the Press is committed to expanding the reach of the Institute's work by continuing to publish significant and sustainable publications for practitioners, scholars, diplomats, and students. Each work undergoes thorough peer review by external subject experts to ensure that the research and conclusions are balanced, relevant, and sound.

## OTHER USIP PUBLICATIONS

---

- *Displacement and the Vulnerability to Mobilize for Violence: Evidence from Afghanistan* by Sadaf Lakhani and Rahmatullah Amiri (Peaceworks, January 2020)
- *Strategic Implications of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor* by James Schwemlein (Special Report, December 2019)
- *Engaging the Post-ISIS Iraqi Religious Landscape for Peace and Reconciliation* by Ann Wainscott (Peaceworks, November 2019)
- *Insurgent Bureaucracy: How the Taliban Makes Policy* by Ashley Jackson and Rahmatullah Amiri (Peaceworks, November 2019)
- *Managing the Secure Release of Sensitive Detainees in Libya* by Fiona Mangan and Lillian Dang with Nathaniel L. Wilson (Special Report, October 2019)



**UNITED STATES  
INSTITUTE OF PEACE**  
**Making Peace Possible**

2301 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
(202) 457-1700  
[www.USIP.org](http://www.USIP.org)