

# Matebeleland Genocide (Gukurahundi)

## *lest we forget, Genocide Justice NOW*

Petition 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018

The citizens of Zimbabwe call upon the Government of the United Kingdom to acknowledge and lead a campaign here and with others [below] to show that Genocide was perpetrated in Zimbabwe between 1983-1987.

We also call upon the United Nations Genocide Watch, the African Union [AU], South African Development Community [SADC], South Africa, the European Union, The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Military Dictatorship currently in control in Zimbabwe to RECOGNISE, ACCEPT and ENACT that in Matebeleland and Midland Provinces, Zimbabwe, there was a GENOCIDE [referred to as Gukurahundi] and other HEINOUS CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY.

We do not make this claim lightly the actions of the infamous Fifth Brigade under the apparent control of the then President, and other co-conspirators has been studied and recognised by several erstwhile organisations. Their commentaries are added below for your consideration.

The current ruling Military Dictatorship in Zimbabwe has for its "President" and "Vice President", two individuals allegedly complicit in the Genocide. These two are currently engaged in trying to maintain power in spite of their promises to hold Free and Fair Elections.

### Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

#### REPORT ON THE 1980S DISTURBANCES IN MATABELELAND AND THE MIDLANDS

Compiled by the *Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe*, March 1997

***"It is only once all Zimbabweans have acknowledged this part of their history, that it can be put aside. The belief that truth and reconciliation are not mutually exclusive is the belief of those who have motivated this project. In fact, it is believed that lasting reconciliation is contingent on truth."***

Those who would rather that events of the 1980s should remain shrouded in secrecy have claimed that discussing them will "reopen" old wounds. However, it was clear during the interviewing procedure that, for thousands of people, these wounds have never healed: people still suffer today, physically, psychologically and practically as a result of what they experienced in the 1980s. Far from "reopening" old wounds, the victims' being allowed to speak out and having their stories validated by a non-judgmental audience has begun what is hoped will be a healing process, after more than 10 years of people suffering in fear and isolation.

Critics of this project have been quick to point out that in April 1980, Mr Mugabe made a magnanimous speech, in which he "drew a line through the past", and forgave those whites and others who had persecuted the black majority in the country, particularly during 10 years of increasingly bitter war in the 1970s. Why, then, it is asked, does this report seek to hold the very Government, which was so forgiving, accountable for its own shortcomings in the next decade?

While the signing of the agreement of National Unity in 1987 was an important step towards reconciliation, there are many issues that still need to be aired by ordinary citizens of Zimbabwe and taken into account by its national leadership, if we are to prevent a recurrence of violence between future generations of Zimbabweans.

While those who came forward gave evidence freely, some told of other victims who were still too afraid to tell their stories. That this fear was not unjustified was borne out in our second case study area, where the CIO made what were perceived as intimidatory appearances at interview sessions and interrogated at least one person who helped the data collection process, and where certain councillors also actively discouraged their ward members from giving statements.

According to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, enabling the victims to talk freely and not to be dismissed as liars without being given due consideration is an important aspect of "restoring the dignity and honour as well as the good names of victims"

The full scale of the impact of the civil conflict on those who survived it has yet to be forensically established. However, from interviews now on record, it is apparent that those years have left people with a legacy of problems which include physical, psychological and practical difficulties. Some of these negative legacies, as apparent from the data base, are listed below.-

- Families were left destitute, without breadwinners and without shelter. -
- Many people, possibly thousands, suffered permanent damage to their health as a result of physical torture, inhibiting their ability to seek work, or to maintain their lands and perform daily chores such as carrying water.-
- Possibly hundreds of murder victims have never been officially declared dead. The lack of death certificates has resulted in a multitude of practical problems for their children, who battle to receive birth certificates, and for their spouses who, for example, cannot legally inherit savings accounts.

-Others who fled their homes to protect themselves were considered to have deserted their employment without due notice, and forfeited benefits including pensions as a result. -

- Many people, possibly thousands, who were either victims of physical torture, or forced to witness it, continue to suffer psychological disorders indicative of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Such disorders as unexplained anxieties, dizziness, insomnia, hypochondria and a permanent fear and distrust of senior government officials are evident in victims. Typically, such victims pass on their stress to their children and create a heavy extra burden on existing health care structures.

It was in 1995/96 that the archival material was examined in detail and also in 1995/96 that interviewing took place in earnest in the 2 case study areas. The interviews conducted in the 1990s reflect how the years 1982/88 are currently perceived by the more than a thousand people who reported to project personnel. This report is therefore focussed on events of the 1980s both as a history and as a part of the present.

## United States Institute of Peace

*1 September 1983*

Zimbabwe Commission of Inquiry into the Matabeleland Disturbances (also known as the Chihambakwe Commission of Inquiry)

Dates of Operation: September 1983 - fall 1984 (approximately 12 months)

The Commission was composed of four male members and was chaired by Zimbabwean Judge Simplisius Chihambakwe.

**Report:** No official report was issued because the government argued that the publication of the report could spark violence over past wrongs. To counter the government's silence, two Zimbabwean



human rights organizations, the Legal Resources Foundation and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace produced a report entitled "Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace" in 1997. The report was produced independently from the Chihambakwa Commission of Inquiry and was an attempt of civil-society to interrupt the state-sanctioned silence around the events in the early 1980s. The unofficial report called upon a variety of sources, such as statements from victims; records from missionaries, journalists, and lawyers; interviews; documents from Amnesty International and the Lawyer's Committee for Human Rights or evidence from graves and mine shafts.

#### **Official Conclusions**

The findings of the commission's official report are unknown because the government refused to release the results.

#### **Unofficial Report Conclusions**

The unofficial Summary Report issued by two Zimbabwean human rights organizations found that the dissidents accused of sparking the violence were loyal to ZIPRA ideals, but ultimately never numbered more than 400 and were incapable of such a widespread and organized campaign of violence. More than 20,000 civilians were killed by security forces during the operation, and evidence of mass graves was discovered in addition to the location of mine shafts where bodies had been deposited.

#### **Unofficial Recommendations**

The unofficial report recommended a national reconciliation process, a proper burial for the victims and compensation packages for those affected, with accelerated development for the affected regions of the southwest.

<https://www.usip.org/publications/1983/09/commission-inquiry-zimbabwe>

## **Zimbabwe's Gukurahundi: Lessons from the 1980-1988 Disturbances**

4 September 2007

### **The Royal Institute of International Affairs**

Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE

#### **Chair**

Alex Vines - Head of Africa Programme Chatham House

#### **Speakers**

Mike Auret – former Catholic Commission for Peace (CCP)

Eileen Sawyer – former Chair, Legal Resource Foundation (LRF)

Nokhuthula Moyo – Chair, Legal Resource Foundation (LRF)

Noel Kututwa – Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum

**Final Remarks** - Noel Kututwa – Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum

This meeting is called "Zimbabwe's Gukurahundi – Lessons Learnt." Yet many of the lessons from Gukurahundi have still not been addressed. Paragraph 79 of the NEPAD strategic framework document states that:

*'It is generally acknowledged that development is impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance.'*

There is a lack of all these things in Zimbabwe. This isn't a joyous 10-year commemoration, more a chance for us to get together and discuss ongoing issues. These include: the need for a more open society; acknowledging the gross atrocities that have taken place; and the necessity for the recommendations put forth in the Gukurahundi report to be taken forward.

Zimbabwe as a state continues to support human rights violations and act with impunity. From 2001-2007 an estimated 25,000 violations have occurred under Mugabe's watch. The lessons from Gukurahundi have not been learnt by the state.

However, we are grateful that 10 years on, the standards of the first report into Gukurahundi have been upheld. We also give thanks to Chatham House and to you for attending. A meeting like this shows us that this fight is not ours alone. There are concerned people in the world that will support and help us.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Africa/040907zimbabwe.pdf>

## Genocide Watch

### **Calls for prosecution of Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe and co-conspirators for genocide**

Washington, DC and Capetown, South Africa

16 September 2010

Genocide Watch, Chair of the International Campaign to End Genocide, based in Washington, DC and Capetown, South Africa, today called for prosecution of President Robert Mugabe and other Zimbabwean leaders for genocide and crimes against humanity for the "Gukurahundi," the mass murder of over 20,000 Matabele citizens of Zimbabwe in 1983 and 1984.

*"There is no statute of limitations for genocide or crimes against humanity," said Dr. Gregory Stanton, President of Genocide Watch. "We campaigned for over thirty years to bring the leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia to justice for genocide and crimes against humanity, and they are finally on trial. We call upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to conduct a full investigation of the Gukurahundi, with the aim of establishing a mixed UN — Zimbabwean Tribunal to put Mugabe and his co-perpetrators on trial for their crimes. They think they have gotten away with mass murder. It is time to end such impunity in Zimbabwe."*

<http://genocidewatch.net/2013/03/19/genocide-alerts-zimbabwe/>

### **Recommendation to refer to the ICC**

Genocide Watch also calls on the United Nations Security Council to refer the situation in Zimbabwe to the International Criminal Court, so that those perpetrating the crimes against humanity there, including Mugabe himself, will be brought to justice.

<http://genocidewatch.net/2013/03/19/genocide-alerts-zimbabwe/>

## International Association of Genocide Scholars

We call on governments and international organizations to condemn policies of the Zimbabwe government that target the Matabele ethnic group, the urban poor, and political opponents of the Mugabe regime.

- Zimbabwe's neighbours, the Republic of South Africa above all, should exert political and diplomatic pressure on the government to reverse these malign policies.
- The African Union should take similar actions in coordination with the Commonwealth and the European Union.
- The United Nations' World Food Program should insist that the food aid it has recently agreed to supply be distributed to all in need, without regard to political affiliation.



- International financial institutions on which Zimbabwe depends for investment and loans should make it clear that assistance is conditional on government policies that deal equitably and humanely with the needs of all citizens.
- NGO's should publicize the escalating humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe and advocate preventive responses by all members of the international community.

Adopted unanimously at the biennial meeting of the **International Association of Genocide Scholars**, Boca Raton, Florida, June 7, 2005.

*Prof.. Gregory Stanton (First Vice President,) Prof. Ted Robert Gurr, and Dr. Helen Fein*

<https://www.genocidescholars.org/sites/default/files/document%09%5Bcurrent-page%3A1%5D/documents/IAGS%20RESOLUTION%20ON%20ZIMBABWE%207%20June%202005.pdf>

## Council on Foreign Relations

Blog Post by John Campbell

27 April 2017

"As Zimbabwe spirals down under Robert Mugabe and the unresolved questions about his successor, the 1983-84 massacre of Ndebele in Matabeleland will be part of the context of whatever regime finally emerges. The International Association of Genocide Scholars estimates that the 5th Brigade of the Zimbabwean army murdered some 20,000 Ndebele in Matabeleland."

"Stuart Doran has just published a follow-up article that looks at British and American reaction to the massacre while it was occurring. If you are American or, presumably, British, it makes for thoughtful reading. Doran shows that officials of the two countries knew what was going on in broad terms. They did, indeed, protest, if not very vigorously. But realpolitik prevailed. They were invested in Mugabe and his promises of reconciliation and stability, and feared that any other leader would be worse. They were afraid that if they pressed Mugabe too hard, he would bolt for the Soviet Union and/or North Korea. But, Doran also concludes that the western protests, however feeble they were, convinced Mugabe that there was a limit. And, "as long as he did not verge on the mass extermination that had occurred in 1983, he could kill, starve and torture his people, and outsiders would do nothing." Ever since, Mugabe has used measured violence, rather than mass murder. And he gets away with it."

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/matabeleland-massacre-and-contemporary-zimbabwe>

## Dr Hazel Cameron, a lecturer in international relations

Article in the Guardian

16 May 2017

*"British officials repeatedly downplayed the massacre of thousands of innocent civilians by Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe in the 1980s to protect the UK's interests in southern Africa and their relationship with the former colony's new ruler, new research has claimed."*

According to thousands of documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by Dr Hazel Cameron, a lecturer in international relations at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, British officials in London and Zimbabwe were "intimately aware" of the atrocities but consistently minimised their scale.

Stuart Doran, a historian and author of a forthcoming book on the atrocities, said: "The Gukurahundi was driven by Mugabe and Zanu-PF from start to finish. This was a domestic issue [but] there's no

doubt that serious misjudgments were made by the British ... By 1983, when the massacres began, members of the high commission were swallowing much of Mugabe's propaganda without adequate reflection. It had become a habit ... and they weren't alone. Plenty of other western diplomats were in the same place."

"None of the perpetrators have been held accountable for the atrocities of the 1980s. Those implicated include many who are now senior political figures in Zimbabwe. Mugabe recently celebrated his 93rd birthday and has been in power for 36 years."

*"Emmerson Mnangagwa, the 70-year-old vice-president, is mentioned in the new documents in a letter from tycoon Roland "Tiny" Rowland to the US ambassador."*

*"Rowland, whose Lonrho conglomerate had major investments in Zimbabwe, wrote that he was "absolutely convinced" that Mugabe knew about the atrocities and claimed that Mnangagwa, then secretary of state for security, was "fully aware"."*

Mnangagwa, who denies any responsibility for the killings in Matabeleland, is tipped by many observers to succeed Mugabe on his death.

*"The alleged main perpetrators are still in charge of the political and military infrastructure in Zimbabwe. It is still very difficult for survivors and their relatives to have any form of justice," Cameron said.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/16/uk-downplayed-killings-zimbabwe-mugabe-guard-interests-study-claims>

## Petition to Mnangagwa

**The secessionist Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP)**

16 November 2016

"We the people of Matabeleland do hereby serve you with this petition, letting you know that you are not welcome in our land. Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa during the Gukurahundi, you took the lead and you were in the fore-front killing our people. Surprisingly, up to today you never apologised, neither your government," states part of the petition.

"Today, Mnangagwa you are in the forefront together with your company and associates destroying people's homes, grazing land as well as graves some of which are victims of Gukurahundi genocide in which you are personally guilty of killing them. Is this not the second Gukurahundi genocide you are up to?"

<http://nehandaradio.com/2016/11/16/mthwakazi-petitions-mnangagwa-gukurahundi-atrocities/>

## Petition to force President Emmerson Mnangagwa to set up a Truth & Justice Commission

12 January 2018

*"To help afford the people of Matabeleland a voice nearly 35 years since the commission of the atrocities, we are appealing to you fellow Zimbabweans, fellow Africans and members of the international community to add your voice by adding your name to this petition," it reads.*

*"This petition will be handed over to the Zimbabwean government urging it to institute a truth and justice commission to preside over the events of the early 1980s, which saw more*