



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe – ZWE37638 – Mashonaland
Central – Harare – MDC supporters –
Political violence – Youth militia camps –
2008 elections – 2011 elections –
Constitutional referendum

21 October 2010

1. Please provide information on the area of Kamoto, Chiweshe, Mashonaland Central, in particular on whether it has been regarded as an MDC stronghold.

No information was located which mentioned Kamoto village.

‘Chiweshe’ is a common shorthand for the Chiweshe Communal Area, a communal land holding which is situated in the north-east of Zimbabwe.¹ In their journal article, Leslie Bessant and Elvis Muringa place the Chiweshe Communal Area (formerly ‘Chiweshe Reserve’) “about 50 miles north of Harare at the closest point by road. Narrow from west to east, and long from south to north, it covers an area of about 210,000 acres, and is surrounded by the white farming areas of Glendale, Concession, Mvurwi, Centenary, and Bindura.”²

No map was located which provides the boundaries of the Chiweshe communal lands, but sources indicate it sits across the provinces of Mashonaland, the traditional homelands of the Shona people³: Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East.

The president of Zimbabwe under the Government of National Unity, and leader of the ZANU-PF party, Robert Mugabe’s home village is Zvimba in the province of Mashonaland West, and Mashonaland is described as “Mugabe’s traditional territory”.⁴

In spite of Mugabe’s personal and cultural connection to the area, the Mashonaland provinces have experienced, and continue to experience, some of the worst cases of political violence in Zimbabwe. Indeed in 2008, Human Rights Watch noted that “violence [was] concentrated in areas traditionally views by ZANU-PF as [ZANU-PF] ‘strongholds’, [including] in the provinces of Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central

¹ Chikova, L. 2002, ‘How the Battle of Chinhoyi Was Fought’ 18 April, *The Herald Newspaper*, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200204180337.html#> - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 6

² Bessant, L., & Elvis Muringa 1993, ‘Peasants, Businessmen, and Moral Economy in the Chiweshe Reserve, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1930 - 1968’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, December, Vol. 19, No 4, Attachment 5

³ Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2010, ‘Mashonaland’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/367864/Mashonaland> - Accessed 2 November 2010, Attachment 8

⁴ Mutsaka, F. 2010, ‘Mugabe Rural Home Hogs Tollgate Funds’, *Zimbabwe Independent Newspaper*, 22 July, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201007230785.html#> - Accessed 2 November 2010, Attachment 21

and Mashonaland East”⁵. The newspaper, *Zimbabwe Metro* explained that the violence in Mashonaland Central following the 2008 elections was:

spurred on by the fact that the MDC had many significant inroads, winning two parliamentary seats and countless district council wards, in a province known for declaring its unflinching support for Mugabe and his ZANU PF party.⁶

The concentration of violence may be explained by the poll results of the national elections, which indicated that although ZANU-PF won by significant margins in both Mashonaland Central (16 of the 18 contested seats) and Mashonaland East (19 of the 23 contested seats), “closer scrutiny of the polling station results indicated that the MDC made significant inroads in each of these provinces, losing by much narrower margins than ZANU-PF had anticipated.”⁷ The violence appears to be intended to punish Zimbabweans who voted for the MDC on March 29 2008, in particular those who voted in the ‘strongholds’.

In an interview with the British Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe published in September 2010, representatives of the Red Cross explained that:

Current and future political violence will follow very closely the geographic distribution of the violence in 2008, **concentrated in Mashonaland Central** and East, Manicaland and Masvingo. That is because it is targeted at areas which were previously ZANU-PF strongholds but where they lost ground to the MDC, in an attempt to regain that ground. Targets will primarily be political activists and former ZANU-PF voters who defected to the MDC.⁸

Senior police and prison service officers were identified by witnesses and victims interviewed by Human Rights Watch in 2008 as organising and participating in violence in Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland West.⁹

2. Is there information on attacks there on MDC supporters by ZANU PF in 2002/2003 or any recent attacks?

Yes, violence against MDC supporters perpetrated by ZANU-PF affiliates has been present in the Mashonaland provinces, and Mashonaland Central in particular, throughout the period 2000 – 2010. However, the proximate causes of the violence have changed as

⁵ Human Rights Watch 2008, ‘Bullets for Each of you: State sponsored violence since Zimbabwe’s March 29 elections’, *Human Rights Watch website*, June, <http://hrw.org/reports/2008/zimbabwe0608/zimbabwe0608webwcover.pdf>, pp. 14-15 - Accessed 2 November 2010, Attachment 11

⁶ Malaba, S. 2009 ‘MDC Activists still live in fear of violence in Mashonaland Central’, *Zimbabwe Metro Newspaper*, 30 October, <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/mdc-activists-still-live-in-fear-of-violence-in-mashonaland-central/#> - Accessed 26 October 2010, Attachment 19

⁷ Human Rights Watch 2008, ‘Bullets for Each of you: State sponsored violence since Zimbabwe’s March 29 elections’, *Human Rights Watch website*, June, <http://hrw.org/reports/2008/zimbabwe0608/zimbabwe0608webwcover.pdf>, p. 15 - Accessed 2 November 2010, Attachment 11

⁸ Country Of Origin Information Service (UK) 2010, ‘Zimbabwe: Report of Fact Finding Mission to Zimbabwe Harare 9 – 17 August 2010’, *UK Border Agency*, 21 September, s3.50, Attachment 27

⁹ Human Rights Watch 2008, ‘Bullets for Each of you: State sponsored violence since Zimbabwe’s March 29 elections’, *Human Rights Watch website*, June, <http://hrw.org/reports/2008/zimbabwe0608/zimbabwe0608webwcover.pdf> - Accessed 2 November 2010, p. 21, Attachment 11

the political situation has developed. Three significant peaks in violent attacks and intimidation were experienced: during the fast track land acquisitions of 2000 – 2003; the period surrounding the national elections in March 2008; and most recently, from late 2009 – present, accompanying the ‘disengagement’ of the MDC from the Unity Government¹⁰, and the initiation of national consultations on the constitutional referendum.

Incidents in the period 2000 – 2008

A report published by the National Employment Council in 2000 for the agricultural industry noted that “at least 3,000 farm workers had been displaced from their homes, twenty-six killed, 1,600 assaulted and eleven raped. The majority (47.2 percent) were supporters of the MDC; nearly as many (43.6 percent) had no political affiliation; and ... 4.7 percent were ZANU-PF supporters.”¹¹ A further update from the National Employment Council describes violence across Zimbabwe, including Mashonaland Central.¹² In 2002, Human Rights Watch reported systemic violence accompanied the ‘fast track’ land resettlement program instigated by the Mugabe regime. Areas “particularly affected were Mashonaland East, Central and West, the most productive arable land in Zimbabwe ... According to the Commercial Farmer’s Union the violence [was] worst in Mashonaland Central.”¹³ Farm workers who were supporters of the MDC were also targeted. BBC News also reported violence against farm workers across Zimbabwe in 2003, including in Mvurwi district, north of Harare.¹⁴

The violence which accompanied the March 2008 elections was documented across the Mashonaland provinces. Significant events include several described in detail in the Human Rights Watch report, *Bullets for Each of you: State sponsored violence since Zimbabwe’s March 29 elections*. For instance, a re-education meeting held in Chiweshe, Mashonaland Central was held on 5 May where over 70 villagers were beaten and tortured at a meeting at Chaona primary school. Six men were killed. The perpetrators were identified as ZANU-PF officials and ‘war veterans’, including members from the Border Gezi Camp in Mt. Darwin, Mashonaland Central (wearing a distinctive green uniform).¹⁵ In 2009, the US Department of State reported that,

¹⁰ Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) 2009, ‘Zimbabwe: Violence spikes after MDC’s withdrawal from government’, *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 27 October, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/DKAN-7X8PAZ?OpenDocument> - Accessed 2 November 2010, Attachment 13

¹¹ Human Rights Watch 2002, ‘Zimbabwe: Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe’ Vol. 14, No.1(A), 27 May, *Human Rights Watch website*, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/zimbabwe/> - Accessed 3 November 2010, Attachment 12

¹² National Employment Council for the Agricultural Industry 2000, ‘Farm Invasions Update’ 27 April, *Zimbabwe Situation website*, http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/cfu_27April.html - Accessed 3 November 2010, Attachment 22

¹³ Human Rights Watch 2002, ‘Zimbabwe: Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe’ Vol. 14, No.1(A), 27 May, *Human Rights Watch website*, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/zimbabwe/>, pp. 18-19 - Accessed 3 November 2010, Attachment 12

¹⁴ BBC News 2000, ‘Zimbabwe farm workers targeted’, *BBC News Online*, 24 April, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/724344.stm#> - Accessed 3 November 2010, Attachment 2

¹⁵ Human Rights Watch 2008, ‘Bullets for Each of you: State sponsored violence since Zimbabwe’s March 29 elections’, *Human Rights Watch website*, June, <http://hrw.org/reports/2008/zimbabwe0608/zimbabwe0608webwcover.pdf>, pp. 36-37 - Accessed 2 November 2010, Attachment 11

ZANU-PF youths abducted 13 MDC supporters for attending an MDC meeting – in fact a memorial service for the six men killed in the 2008 violence. All 13 abductees sustained serious injuries. The MDC members were subsequently arrested for assaulting the same ZANU-PF operatives who had beaten them. The MDC members were fined \$20 and two were acquitted. The Four ZANU-PF youths were also charged but their trial has been indefinitely suspended.¹⁶

The exiled Zimbabwean radio station, SW Radio Africa, reported in July 2008 that soldiers and Zanu-PF militia in Chiweshe, Mashonaland Central province, forced MDC supporters to drink Paraquat, a toxic and corrosive herbicide. Many victims suffered “horrific facial injuries”, and corrosive burns from ingesting the poison, and others suffered serious wounds from beatings using weapons dipped in Paraquat.¹⁷ In addition, Human Rights Watch also reported that during the 2008 election violence, ZANU-PF created ‘no-go areas’ across

broad swathes of the countryside in the provinces of Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West and Mashonaland Central to prevent victims from leaving the provinces... thousands of people [were] unable to flee the violence and [were] left without food, water or shelter. In a deliberate attempt to punish those it suspected of having voted for the MDC, ZANU-PF supporters and their allies have blocked and threatened victims of violence in need of medical treatment.¹⁸

Although many Zimbabweans hoped the violence would subside after the controversial swearing in of Robert Mugabe in June 2008, ZANU-PF operatives continued to intimidate and assault opposition party supporters throughout 2009. The UN news service IRIN reported that the violence escalated after the leader of the major MDC faction Morgan Tsvangirai, ‘disengaged from the Unity Government in October 2009 “in protest over the re-arrest of the party’s treasurer and deputy agricultural minister designate, Roy Bennett, which had “brought home the fiction of the credibility and integrity of the transitional government”’.¹⁹

IRIN also reported that violence has “intensified in rural areas ... [including] in Mashonaland Central Province, once a ZANU-PF stronghold in the north of the country... [and that] close to 100 teachers who have fled from the province” as ZANU-PF supporters have accused the teaching profession of being allied to the MDC, and teachers

¹⁶ United States Department of State 2010, *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Zimbabwe*, 11 March, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/af/135984.htm> - Accessed 26 October 2010, Attachment 27

¹⁷ Sibanda, T. 2008, ‘Refugees attacked, several dead in weekend militia raids’, *SW Radio Africa* 24 July, <http://www.swradioafrica.com/News240708/Poison240708.htm#> - Accessed 26 October 2010, Attachment 24

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch 2008, ‘Bullets for Each of you: State sponsored violence since Zimbabwe’s March 29 elections’, *Human Rights Watch website*, June, <http://hrw.org/reports/2008/zimbabwe0608/zimbabwe0608webwcover.pdf>, p. 39 - Accessed 2 November 2010, Attachment 11

¹⁹ Integrated regional Information Networks (IRIN) 2009, ‘Zimbabwe: Violence spikes after MDC’s withdrawal from government’, *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 27 October, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/DKAN-7X8PAZ?OpenDocument> - Accessed 3 November 2010, Attachment 13; see also, ‘Prime Minister Tsvangirai Announces MDC Disengagement from GPA Cabinet and Council of Ministers’ 2009, *Official Website of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Zimbabwe*, 16 October, http://www.zimbabweprimeminister.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=222:prime-minister-tsvangirai-announces-mdc-disengagement-from-gpa-cabinet-and-council-of-ministers&catid=1:prime-minister-speeches&Itemid=60 - Accessed 3 November 2010, Attachment 26

have been told that since their party, the MDC, had pulled out of the government, they were now considered enemies of ZANU-PF.²⁰

The Teachers Union reported several incidents targeting teachers and students in several provinces, including in Chiweshe, Mashonaland Central:

Most recently [in October], in Chiweshe, over 15 teachers from Jingamvura Primary and Secondary schools were rounded up by suspected ZANU PF supporters... and beaten, apparently for allegedly being MDC supporters. Many of the teachers from these schools were victims of last year's post election violence, which resulted in [at least eight] deaths...

... [Y]outh training centres have also been set up in Gutu, where students are being forced to do training drills by ZANU PF militia members. [A representative of the Teacher's Union added] "[a]lmost on a daily basis we have at least three schools reporting threats and beatings by ZANU PF supporters and youth militia".²¹

The *Zimbabwe Metro Newspaper* reported Mashonaland Central is a "volatile province" which was "on the verge of another major escalation of political violence" after the MDC disengagement in October 2009. The *Metro* continues,

Hundreds of villagers in Chiweshe district last week fled to the mountains to seek refuge from the marauding ZANU PF militias... [There] was sufficient evidence to prove that the rape of women and girls was also being extensively used as a means of political persecution...[and] torture and other cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment are normal practices [were] used by the militias during attacks on MDC supporters in the province... When fresh violence erupted in Chiweshe last week, 50 homes belonging to known MDC supporters, were burnt down by ZANU PF militias. The disturbances were led by a well known district coordinating committee chairman named as Gatsi.²²

2009 - 2010

The power-sharing arrangement between Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF and Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC-T party negotiated after the controversial 2008 Presidential election provides for constitutional reform process to take place before elections planned for 2011.²³ The current constitutional debate is the third time Zimbabwe will have attempted to enact a new constitution to replace the Constitution put in place by the 'Lancaster House Agreement' at Zimbabwe's independence from British rule in 1979. Negotiations broke down in 2000 and again in 2007 (the 'Kariba Draft') after constitutional drafts were heavily criticised for being developed secretly by the government and for significantly expanding presidential discretion.²⁴ The Kariba Draft has again been put forward by

²⁰ Integrated regional Information Networks (IRIN) 2009, 'Zimbabwe: Violence spikes after MDC's withdrawal from government' 2009, *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 27 October <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86773> - Accessed 9 August 2010, Attachment 13

²¹ Bell, A. 2009, 'Violence Against Teachers on the Rise in Rural Areas', *AllAfrica*, 27 October, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200910271151.html#> - Accessed 26 October 2010, Attachment 4

²² Malaba, S. 2009 'MDC Activists still live in fear of violence in Mashonaland Central', *Zimbabwe Metro*, 30 October, , <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/mdc-activists-still-live-in-fear-of-violence-in-mashonaland-central/#> - Accessed 26 October 2010, Attachment 19

²³ 'Robert Mugabe: Zimbabwe unity deal should end next year' 2010, *BBC News*, 15 October, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11551493#> - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 3

²⁴ Sokwanele 2009, 'Presidential Powers in the "Kariba Draft Constitution"', 29 June, *Sokwanele.com*, <http://www.sokwanele.com/thisiszimbabwe/archives/4341#> - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 25

ZANU-PF during the 2010 Constitutional Outreach Program as an option.²⁵ Writing for the newspaper, *The Zimbabwean* in April 2010, Iti Mabasa and Tony Saxon report that support for the Kariba Draft is being encouraged through the deployment of the ZANU-PF force, 'the Green Bombers', who identify MDC supporters, interrogate "and torture them at their bases".²⁶ Mabasa and Saxon go on to note that there are

widespread reports that the violent revolutionary party has re-engaged its violent tactics countrywide in a bid to force the electorate to forcibly accept the Zanu (PF) favoured Kariba Draft as the constitution of Zimbabwe.²⁷

The Zimbabwean human rights advocacy blog site, *Zimbabwe Democracy Now* reported in March 2010 that torture camps were being set up again by ZANU-PF youth who had been incorporated into state security forces after the 2008 elections. The site posits the youth "are taking part to [make sure] the constitutional process is disturbed and that the elections are to be held under the Kariba Draft... They are making sure to do their best to intimidate, torture, and instil fear, so people will vote for the Kariba Draft in the referendum."²⁸

As the news service *Voice of America* observed in July 2010, "[v]iolence is escalating as the country moves into the public outreach phase of its constitutional revision process."²⁹ The public outreach program designed to educate Zimbabweans about the process of constitutional reform, rolled out in the latter half of 2010, was put on hold in September after an MDC supporter was killed during a meeting.³⁰

The MDC have been reporting throughout the latter half of 2010 that their supporters were being harassed and 'war veterans' loyal to ZANU-PF were again setting up bases in rural areas to intimidate people.³¹ The United Nations news service, the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), reported in October 2010 that violence has flared in Mashonaland Central where, where reports indicate that "30 families had been displaced

²⁵ Karimakwenda, T. 2010, 'Zimbabwe: Zanu PF Using Soldiers, Chiefs and Militia to Attack MDC', *SW Radio Africa* as hosted at *All Africa Global Media*, 4 August <http://allafrica.com/stories/201008040999.html> - Accessed 28 September 2010 – Attachment 15. For a critique of the Kariba Draft, see Sokwanele 2009, 'Presidential Powers in the "Kariba Draft Constitution"' 29 June, *Sokwanele.com*, <http://www.sokwanele.com/thisiszimbabwe/archives/4341#> - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 25

²⁶ Mabasa, I. and Saxon, T. 2010, 'Zanu Beating MDC Supporters for Wearing Red', *Zimbabwe Metro*, 19 April <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/zanu-beating-mdc-supporters-for-wearing-red/> – Accessed 14 July 2010, Attachment 17

²⁷ Mabasa, I. and Saxon, T. 2010, 'Zanu Beating MDC Supporters for Wearing Red', *Zimbabwe Metro*, 19 April <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/zanu-beating-mdc-supporters-for-wearing-red/> – Accessed 14 July 2010, Attachment 17

²⁸ Zimbabwe Democracy Now (Nxwala) 2010, 'Torture camps reemerge', *Zimbabwe Democracy Now blog*, 14 March, <http://www.zimbabwedemocracynow.com/2010/03/14/torture-camps-reemerge/#> - Accessed 2 November 2010, Attachment 30

²⁹ Zulu, B. 2010, 'Zimbabwe's MDC Releases Report Naming Perpetrators of Political Violence', *VOA News.com*, 6 July <http://www.voanews.com/zimbabwe/news/politics/Zimbabwes-MDC-Releases-Report-Naming-Perpetrators-of-Violence-97876909.html> – Accessed 28 September 2010 – Attachment 32

³⁰ 'Robert Mugabe: Zimbabwe unity deal should end next year' 2010, *BBC News Online*, 15 October, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11551493#> - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 3

³¹ Integrated regional Information Networks (IRIN) 'Zimbabwe: Election call raises fears of more violence', *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 22 October, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4cc672ff1e.html> - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 14

and soldiers deployed in the three districts of Muzabarabani, Shamva and Bindura in the ZANU-PF stronghold.”³²

Further reports of escalating violence throughout 2010 associated with the constitutional reform process are provided through situation reports collated by the *Zimbabwe Metro Newspaper*, including:

- April: Villagers in **Chiweshe, Mashonaland East**, victimised by the ZANU-PF force, the ‘Green Bombers’, for wearing red, the official colour of the main MDC faction led by Morgan Tsvangirai.³³
- August: ZANU-PF militia were parading and singing threatening songs ahead of Constitutional awareness meetings in Guruve, **Mashonaland Central province**.³⁴
- August: National Youth Service (NYS) loyal to ZANU-PF camped out at St Francis secondary school in Guruve, **Mashonaland Central province**, disrupting lessons and performing drills and singing during classes. The NYS “threatening to cause disturbances if the discredited Zanu PF Kariba draft is rejected by the people in the Constitution-making process”.³⁵

And the *RadioVOP* news service:

- October: MDC officials charged with “undermining the authority of or insulting President Robert Mugabe” while addressing a constitutional awareness meeting in **Chiweshe, Mashonaland Central**.³⁶

Finally, media have reported that Zimbabwean police have been ordered not to protect MDC supporters who attempt to report abuses by ZANU-PF organisations, during the 2008 election period - see for instance, Daniel Howden writing for the UK based *Independent Newspaper* reporting on murders and severe beatings of MDC councillors and their families in Mashonaland Central in July 2008³⁷; and during the current

³² Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) ‘Zimbabwe: Election call raises fears of more violence’, *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 22 October, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4cc672ff1e.html> - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 14

³³ Mabasa, I. and Saxon, T. 2010, ‘Zanu Beating MDC Supporters for Wearing Red’, *Zimbabwe Metro*, 19 April <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/zanu-beating-mdc-supporters-for-wearing-red/> - Accessed 14 July 2010, Attachment 17

³⁴ Mhaka, R. 2010, ‘Constitution Outreach: News Round-Up’, *Metro Zimbabwe*, 4 August, <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/constitution-outreach-news-round-up-28-july-4-august-2010/> - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 20

³⁵ Mhaka, R. 2010, ‘Constitution Outreach: News Round-Up’, *Metro Zimbabwe*, 4 August, <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/constitution-outreach-news-round-up-28-july-4-august-2010/> - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 20

³⁶ Radio VOP 2010, ‘MDC Treasurer’s Anti-Mugabe Slur Trial Set for November’, *www.news.radiovop.com*, 20 October, http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/oct21_2010.html - Accessed 26 October 2010, Attachment 23; The trial has been set for 10 November, 2010, Radio VOP 2010, ‘MDC official’s Mugabe slur trial in November’, as reprinted in *The Zimbabwean Newspaper online*, 22 October,

http://thezimbabwean.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=35074:mdc-officials-mugabe-slur-trial-in-november&catid=69:sunday-top-stories&Itemid=30# - Accessed 26 October 2010, Attachment 23

³⁷ Howden, D. 2008, ‘Inside Mugabe’s torture camps: beaten, maimed and poisoned with weedkiller’, *The Independent Newspaper*, 1 July, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/inside-mugabes-torture-camps-beaten-maimed-and-poisoned-with-weedkiller-857659.html#> - Accessed 3 November 2010, Attachment 10

constitutional referendum consultation in October 2010 – see for instance, Jane Makoni writing for the *The Zimbabwean Online* in October, 2010.³⁸

3. Deleted.

4. Deleted.

5. Is there any information on youth base camps around 2002 in that region, where they were located, and what took place at these camps?

Most reports from 2002 describe nationwide violence, with Mashonaland provinces listed as experiencing worse than usual abuses. Two camp locations in Mashonaland Central were mentioned in human rights reporting during 2002:

1. *SW Radio Africa*³⁹ and *the Independent Newspaper* (UK)⁴⁰ notes a militia base at Tetra farm in Howard, Chiweshe; and
2. Human Rights Watch mentions the Border Gezi Camp in Mt. Darwin.⁴¹

No more extensive lists of camp sites or activities could be located; however, BBC News reported in 2004 that Mugabe planned to increase the number of youth camps from six to ten in the lead up to 2005 elections. Grant Ferrett reported that,

[the] youth training camps were first set up ... ahead of the presidential election of 2002, which saw Robert Mugabe returned to power after a campaign punctuated by violence... the human rights group Amnesty International said youth trainees were involved in various crimes directed against the opposition, including murder, torture and arson. Former trainees have talked of widespread sexual abuse within the camps.⁴²

In 2002, Amnesty International reported that more than 1000 cases of torture and ill-treatment were recorded in youth service camps across Zimbabwe:

ZANU-PF youth militia, trained in national youth service camps established throughout the country... and were implicated in the widespread harassment and torture of the political opposition. The number of reported cases of rape and other

³⁸ Makoni, J. 2010, 'Cops ordered not to protect MDC', *The Zimbabwean Online*, 27 October, http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=35171:cops-ordered-not-to-protect-mdc&catid=69:sunday-top-stories&Itemid=30# - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 18

³⁹ Sibanda, T. 2008, 'Refugees attacked, several dead in weekend militia raids', *SW Radio Africa* 24 July, <http://www.swradioafrica.com/News240708/Poison240708.htm#> - Accessed 26 October 2010, Attachment 24

⁴⁰ Howden, D. 2008, 'Inside Mugabe's torture camps: beaten, maimed and poisoned with weedkiller', *The Independent Newspaper* (UK), 1 July, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/inside-mugabes-torture-camps-beaten-maimed-and-poisoned-with-weedkiller-857659.html#> - Accessed 3 November 2010, Attachment 10

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch 2008, 'Bullets for Each of you: State sponsored violence since Zimbabwe's March 29 elections', *Human Rights Watch website*, June, <http://hrw.org/reports/2008/zimbabwe0608/zimbabwe0608webwcover.pdf>, pp. 36-37 - Accessed 2 November 2010, Attachment 11

⁴² Ferrett, G. 2004, 'Zimbabwe plans more youth camps' 13 November, *BBC News*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4010029.stm> - Accessed 29 October 2010, Attachment 9

forms of sexual torture perpetrated against women suspected of supporting the political opposition [also] increased.⁴³

In 2002, the Zimbabwean Women Lawyers Association estimated that approximately 1000 women were held in militia camps while Zimbabwean NGOs advocating for women's rights reported that there were 14 politically motivated rapes the same year; "although the figure may well be higher due to underreporting of what is a cultural taboo".⁴⁴ Significantly, while instances of rape were increasing from June 2001, human rights groups documented that while women held at militia camps in the period 2000 – 2001 were often humiliated and physically abused, relatively "few were raped or sexually abused" during this period.⁴⁵

A similar report was located in the Human Rights Watch report, *Fast-Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe*:

Several people from the same village reported that they could not return to their farms because there were war veterans militia living on the farms and they had a base there. Other villagers told how they had been held hostage in such camps. I spent two to three months in the camp. There were three of us from our area but more than one hundred in the base camp. I had an MDC t-shirt and party card which were taken away. Most of those in the camp were Zanu-PF. About ten of them I know were really forced to go. The base commander and the war veterans were saying that if they see anyone belong to MDC, this country does not belong to MDC, it belongs to Zanu-PF. At the camp I was not abused but the most disappointing thing was the period of holding me which made me lose my job. There was no way to escape. The war veterans were manning the gates. If you went out, they were there.⁴⁶

6. What is the latest information on whether elections will take place in 2011?

Although reports throughout 2010 have been inconclusive⁴⁷, a news report from the UNHCR in October 2010 indicates that elections in 2011 are likely. Mugabe is quoted,

⁴³ Amnesty International 2003, 'Amnesty International Report 2003 – Zimbabwe', *United Nations High Commission for Refugees website*, 28 May, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3edb47e46.html> - Accessed 29 October 2010, Attachment 1

⁴⁴ United Kingdom: Home Office 2003, *UK Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate Country Report - Zimbabwe*, 1 October, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/402a3cfa4.html> - Accessed 2 November 2010, s6.107, Attachment 27

⁴⁵ United Kingdom: Home Office 2003, *UK Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate Country Report - Zimbabwe*, 1 October, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/402a3cfa4.html> - Accessed 2 November 2010, s6.107, Attachment 27

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch 2002, 'Zimbabwe: Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe' Vol. 14, No.1(A), 27 May, *Human Rights Watch website*, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/zimbabwe/> - Accessed 3 November 2010, Attachment 11

⁴⁷ See for instance the BBC reported in October 2010 that the BBC's Jonah Fisher, in Johannesburg, says that with Mr Mugabe's patience in coalition government clearly running thin, his statement has raised the possibility that Zimbabwe might vote without a new constitution in place. The country has once more suspended its public outreach programme on a new constitution due to funding problems." In 'Robert Mugabe: Zimbabwe unity deal should end next year' 2010, *BBC News*, 15 October, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11551493#> - Accessed 1 November 2010, Attachment 3; and democracy advocacy blogger Nxwala comments, "[s]igns are slowly showing that Zanu-PF is starting to prepare for the elections, which many strongly believe will be next year. Torture camps are cropping up, which is a clear indication that Mugabe will call for elections soon, if not next year." In Zimbabwe Democracy Now (Nxwala) 2010, 'Torture camps reemerge', *Zimbabwe Democracy Now blog*, 14 March, <http://www.zimbabwedemocracynow.com/2010/03/14/torture-camps-reemerge/#> - Accessed 3 November 2010, Attachment 30

“we want to get elections and get into a situation where ZANU-PF can rule the country. We do not want to pass June [2011] without elections.”⁴⁸

There is still uncertainty surrounding the constitutional referendum, and it is possible that a failure to provide a free and fair referendum process will stall presidential elections⁴⁹; however, a representative of the Red Cross speaking with the British Fact-Finding Mission in Harare in 2010, suggested that the elections may not take place before 2012, “for a variety of mostly practical reasons including both main parties’ lack of resources to fund a campaign and the need to get the constitutional referendum out of the way.”⁵⁰

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