

Commentary on April 2005 Home Office Country Report on Zimbabwe

Prepared for the Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI)

by

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Home Office responses to the author's comments are annotated in blue.

Introduction

This paper provides a commentary on the April 2005 Home Office Country Report on Zimbabwe, compiled by the Country and Information Policy Unit of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. It was commissioned by the Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI). The paper compares the information presented in the Home Office report with the sources on which it is based, and comments on the accuracy with which original texts are represented. It also evaluates the coherence of the report, and assesses the comprehensiveness of its coverage of the human rights situation in Zimbabwe, through reference to alternative, readily available sources not used in the report. In addition, it assesses the April 2005 report in terms of changes made following comments provided by the same author on the previous October 2004 version.

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As the CIPU document does not have page numbers, citations of the report in this paper make use of paragraph numbers.

Summary of findings and general comments

The April 2005 CIPU report on Zimbabwe is longer than the October 2004 report and continues to draw on a wide range of appropriate source material, reflecting the volume of easily available source material produced by international and local human rights organizations and the media. There are many ways in which the April report has improved upon its predecessor, in the light of the past set of comments and the process of updating. There have been improvements in the coherence and organization of the report, which makes much better use of cross-referencing between sections than the October 2004 report, and there has been some attempt in places to provide overviews of the scope of the source material from which quotes and facts are drawn, and to include pointers to more comprehensive original sources. The April 2005 report has made more use of the documentation produced by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, as suggested. The report now includes a new section on failed asylum seekers returned from the UK, a topic omitted from the last report. The April 2005 report has incorporated corrections to many of the specific points raised regarding information presented in misleading or inaccurate ways. Like its predecessor, the April 2005 report does not have a systematic bias derived from selective quotation, and in broad terms provides an accurate reflection of the human rights record detailed in the source documents on which it draws. The CIPU bulletin of June 2005 is a useful addition, which draws attention to the importance of Operation Murambatsvina, and gives some indication of the politics of the clearances and the scale of the humanitarian crisis created.

There is, however, scope for further improvement in the country report. This review discusses problems with the report in three broad categories: 1) structure, coherence and contextualization, 2) coverage of specific issues, 3) updating and the scope and claims of the June 2005 bulletin. The first section of the commentary highlights the potential for further use of contextualizing summary, and provision of internal and external links. Although the report makes better use of internal cross referencing and pointers to further information by comparison to its predecessor, it still takes the form of a series of juxtaposed extracts from a range of different source documents, and without greater use of contextualization and commentary, is not ‘a brief summary of the source material identified’ as it claims to be.¹ The second section discusses specific sections of the report that are inadequate because they have not made use of the full range of sources available or could be improved in other ways (sections discussed include those on returnees, medical services and HIV/AIDs). The final section turns to the adequacy of the June 2005 Bulletin as an update on the April report. Given the role of the CIPU reports in the process of asylum and human rights determination, it is important that they are not out of date, and the bulletins thus play a significant role. The June 2005 Bulletin ‘only intended to cover the situation since the launch of Operation Murambatsvina on 18 May’,² and is based on extracts from relevant media and other sources (although more is now available). The bulletin does not attempt to update on some other issues, and is thus misleading in so far as it implies coverage of changes in ‘the situation’ in Zimbabwe more broadly since the launch of the operation.

¹ CIPU Zimbabwe Country Report, April 2005, para 1.3

² CIPU Zimbabwe Bulletin, June 2005, para 1.4

HO: The June 2005 Bulletin focussed on the impact of Operation Murambatsvina and was not intended to be a general update. Information from the Bulletin will be incorporated into the October Report.

1. The structure and coherence of the report

The April 2005 report has made significant improvements with regard to its structure, although, as noted above, it is still essentially comprised of a series of juxta-posed extracts without linking commentary, reflecting the method used by the CIPU in all its country reports. The greater use of cross-referencing between sections, and pointers to external sources are welcome features of the April 2005 report, and there is scope for further development of these techniques. There is much less information that is misplaced between sections than in the October 2004 report. In some places in the April 2005 report, there are introductory summaries to sections, which also contain internal and external linkages, but in general, the report could still do more in this regard to help overcome the problems of incoherence created by the methodology.

The points below are intended as suggestions to assist with further improvements to overcome the problems created by compiling a report based on extracts from other documents.

Internal cross-referencing

The greater use of internal cross referencing to other sections of the report has made information more readily accessible to the reader, and helps overcome the problem of topics being split between sections. In general, it is probably most useful if pointers to other parts of the report are placed at the start of sections, immediately under the title heading. In some places in the report, they are located in the middle or end of sections and could be moved. In the section on 'Parliament' for example (para 5.7-5.15) the cross reference to the 2000 parliamentary elections could be moved to immediately under the 'Parliament' title (together with a new pointer to material on the March 2005 parliamentary elections, not yet fully covered in the report, as they had not happened when it was written).

The provision of external linkages to the websites of human rights organizations providing more comprehensive information than in the CIPU report is an excellent addition to the April 2005 report (such as para 4.63, at the end of the sections on 'incidents of political violence', which provides the reader with a link to the more comprehensive documentation of reported incidents produced by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum) Such linkages and related commentary on the comprehensiveness or otherwise of information in the CIPU report could be used more regularly throughout the report. Once again, it is important to reflect on where to position such pointers, to maximize their value to the user.

HO: We will continue to improve upon this aspect of the report in line with the above suggestions.

Use of summary and commentary

There has been an attempt to provide summaries in some places, but there is scope for further commentary on sources used. The sections on incidents of political violence

in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 5, for example still do not start out with an indication of whether the specific instances detailed are comprehensive or how selection has been achieved (though there is now a link at the end of the 2005 section to more comprehensive sources, as noted above). These sections could be introduced by a statement to the effect that the coverage of each year includes overviews and a non-comprehensive selection of key incidents of violence. It is not clear why internal and external linkages are only included in the sections on 2004 and 2005 and not earlier years.

HO: We are looking at substantially slimming down this section of the report substituting what is currently there with a brief overview of the main events for each year. We will continue to include the links to the original sources, and as suggested we will include the links to earlier sources.

Misplaced information and ‘back to contents’ pointers

The sections on ‘The lead up to the 2005 parliamentary elections’ (paras 4.111-4.125) and ‘ZanuPF – internal dissent’ (paras 4.126-4.135) are misplaced. They should not fall under the heading ‘History of local and by-elections’, and should be moved to a more appropriate place, perhaps after ‘2005 incidents of political violence and intimidation’ (para 4.54-4.63).

HO: Agree.

Para 4.65 is about a by-election in 2001, yet appears under the heading ‘by elections 2000’. It should be moved to the section on by –elections 2001.

HO: This will be removed for the October report. Only election history dating back to 2003 will be kept. However, any information removed will be available for use by caseworkers.

The rationale for the location of the ‘back to contents’ pointers is sometimes unclear. Often the pointers appear in the middle of a section, such that if a reader was reading online, they would be directed back to the index before reading to the end of a particular issue, and might thus get a distorted perspective. It would be useful to look systematically at where the pointers have been placed throughout the report and to make alterations where necessary. For example, the following ‘back to contents’ pointers appear to be misplaced: the pointer at the end of 4.50 should appear at the end of the 2004 section, after para 4.53 rather than in the middle of the section; the pointer in the middle of the by-elections in 2001 section should appear at the end of the section, after para 4.72. The pointer at the end of para 5.59 is in the middle of a section on prisons and prison conditions. There is a pointer in the middle of the section of medical services, para 5.78. The pointer after para 6.20 appears in the middle of the section on journalists. The pointer after para 6.112 is in the middle of the section on farmworkers.

HO: We will look at this and make amendments where appropriate.

2. Specific problems

This part of the commentary deals with problems relating to the content of particular sections of the CIPU report, highlighting improvements that could be made to sections

that are incoherent or misleading, or do not draw on key available sources, sometimes because they have become available after March 2005. The commentary raises such issues as they occur in the report rather than in order of importance.

Recent History (para 4.10-4.12)

The three paragraphs making up the 'Recent History' section are incoherent. They comprise: a) a quote about deteriorating living standards and strikes through the 1990s leading to the emergence of the MDC opposition, b) Two sentences about the occupation of white owned farms, c) A few sentences about treason charges against Morgan Tsvangirai. I suggest this section heading be followed by a statement to the effect that; 'The 1990s were characterized by deteriorating standards of living, strikes, and towards the end of the decade, popular unrest, food riots and the emergence of a new opposition party (with a reference to the source used in 4.10). The following two paragraphs can be replaced by a statement to the effect that other key events include land invasions and land reform and persecution of the new opposition party, with references to appropriate sections. Alternatively, these two paragraphs can be deleted entirely, given that land reform is covered in para 4.18

HO: We agree that this section can be improved upon and will look at incorporating Dr McGregor's suggestions.

ZanuPF - Internal dissent (4.126-4.135)

This section currently draws on press sources to cover the election of Joyce Mujuru as second vice-president, and the expulsion of Jonathan Moyo. It would be useful, however, also to include excerpts from the analysis of internal Zanu(PF) politics produced by the International Crisis Group, to provide context and explanation for the incidents described in the press extracts incorporated into the CIPU report. See for example, the discussion in the most recent report: 'Post election Zimbabwe: What Next?' Africa report 93, June 2005.³ The ICG draw not only on categories such as the old guard vs new party members (alluded to in some of the CIPU materials extracted), but also on conflict between the Mnangagwa and Mujuru factions, the latter being ascendant and having purged members of the former. Ethnic politics is also described as increasingly important within the party, also influencing the extent to which the MDC opposition has been able to make inroads in particular constituencies, and should be covered in the CIPU report. Friction between two sub groups of 'the Shona', are particularly important – particularly between Mugabe's own Zezuru group and Karanga speakers, but persistent Shona/Ndebele tensions are also important. As the Crisis Group describe, there has been a 'Zezurufication' of major government/party/state positions. It is suggested that the CIPU report make some extracts from this report, as internal struggles within Zanu(PF) are likely to become increasingly important. The relevant section of the Crisis Group report (section 3, 'ZanuPF: Battles on Two Fronts', concludes as follows:

ZANU-PF infighting -- which appears to be a struggle dominated by competing ambitions rather than any discernible policy or ideological differences -- is a dangerous addition to Zimbabwe's already chaotic

³ Available online from <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3499&l=1> [accessed 6 August 2005]

political scene. On 16 April 2005, Mugabe named a new cabinet, which reflected both an ethnic balancing act and an effort to reward Mujuru loyalists, but there is little to suggest that the power struggle has been resolved. A particular worry is the continued fight for ethnic control of the security services. Even though the highly partisan Zimbabwe National Army has always conceived of itself as a praetorian guard deeply loyal to Mugabe, recent charges and counter-charges of a potential coup suggest that the armed forces are not immune to the ethnic divisions and quarrels that plagued ZANU-PF in the run-up to the March elections. The on-going purge of Mnangawa supporters is likely to affect some in the armed forces, with far-reaching consequences for their stability, especially when Mugabe leaves office.⁴

Another source on internal factionalism within Zanu(PF) is the report of the Redress Trust, 'Zimbabwe: the face of organized torture and violence', March 2005,⁵ and it would be useful for the CIPU report to make reference to it. The report provides reviews of material relating to violence by one Zanu(PF) faction against another in the context of the run up to the internal Zanu(PF) party elections (January 2005) and in the run up to the March 2005 elections. It contains useful case studies discussing the torture by the CIO of Zanu(PF) youths in struggles surrounding the war veteran leader Jabulani Sibanda in late 2004, and the abduction and torture of members of a 'spy ring' accused of passing state secrets to South Africa, charged in court in February 2005 (case studies 6 and 7, pp. 26, 31). Redress concludes 'The spy scandal is another example of intra-Zanu(PF) fighting in which state agencies are directly involved in one side or the other; Chiyangwa and his supporters [in the supposed spy ring] are known to be Mnangagwa supporters and have apparently become victims in the succession battle between rival camps following Joyce Mujuru's elevation to the vice presidency.'⁶

HO: We will look again at this section and re-structure taking account of these suggestions.

Internal security, legal rights and detention (5.46-5.57, 5.37-5.44)

The internal security section now includes useful cross references to sections on the war veterans and youth militias. The rationale for what material is in the internal security section and what falls under legal rights and detention is, however, not clear, and some of the material in the latter should perhaps be placed in the internal security section. It would thus be useful to cross reference the two sections.

Sections in the CIPU report covering the CIO (in the paragraphs comprising the internal security section) could usefully make reference to the analysis of CIO use of torture in the Redress report noted above. Redress describe the use of torture on the part of the CIO and certain sections of the police as 'deeply ... ingrained', and highlight patterns of use against the MDC and more recently against Zanu(PF)

⁴ ICG 'Zimbabwe Post Election: What Next?' p. 12

⁵ Available online from <http://www.redress.org/publications/ZimbabweReportMar2005.pdf> [accessed 8 August 2005]

⁶ The Redress Trust, 'Zimbabwe: the face of organized torture and violence', p. 31.

members.⁷ The report provides an historicized perspective on the continuities in the use of torture in Zimbabwe.

The role of the CIO at the airport, their interrogation of returnees and allegations of beating, torture and disappearances, has been an important aspect of the debate about the fate of deportees from the UK since they were resumed in 2004, and in the early period of removals, which should be covered in the CIPU report, either in the section on internal security or the section on returnees, with appropriate cross referencing (see below comments on returnees).

This section will need to be updated (and/or to provide cross references) in the light of Operation Murambatsvina, which included arrests of tens of thousands of informal sector vendors (as described in para 2.10 of the June bulletin). The International Crisis Group has highlighted the security implications of the operation, which should be mentioned in appropriate sections. Fear and intimidation have been important in preventing organized protests to the operation. The ICG comment for example, that ‘Through June 6, more than 30,000 people have been subjected to an “arrest-detain-release” intimidation cycle, including in rural Masvingo and Mashonaland provinces’.⁸ Other comments on the coverage of this Operation are provided below.

HO: We will look again at this section and re-structure it taking account of these suggestions.

Medical services and HIV/AIDS (5.71-5.81, 5.86-5.98)

This section is much improved, and now uses a range of appropriate and up-to-date sources. Much of the out of date material, from sources before the year 2000 has been removed. As recommended in the previous set of comments, this section now includes appropriate material relating to the flight of health professionals to other countries and its impact on state services, makes reference to violence against health staff and to victims of violence being prevented from access to health treatment. When the report is updated to cover the recent clearances and demolitions (Operation Murambatsvina, currently covered in the June bulletin only), there should be cross referencing to this section, to highlight the negative impact of the Operation both on the health of those affected, and on access to health facilities associated with displacement to poorly served rural areas.

The section on HIV/AIDS in the April 2005 report is also much stronger than in October 2004. It draws on a number of relevant press releases and human rights reports, but could still make more use of reference to specifically medical/health sources and statistics. For example, greater use could be made of statistics and other information on prevalence and access to treatment produced by the World Health Organization. The WHO country summary website for Zimbabwe, produced under the ‘3 by 5’ initiative to scale up treatment for HIV/AIDS contains a useful review of up-to-date relevant information. The numbers in need of treatment are estimated most recently to stand at 295,000, of which only 15,000 are receiving antiretroviral therapy. Major challenges in responding to the country’s health needs are summarized in the following way:

⁷ The Redress Trust, ‘Zimbabwe: the fact of organized torture and violence’, p. 2

⁸ International Crisis Group, *Zimbabwe Post Elections; What Next* p. 19.

The impact of HIV/AIDS, the prevailing harsh economic conditions and reduced donor support have all combined to severely strain the delivery of health services. The shortage of human resources is one of the major constraints, as trained health personnel continue to emigrate to other countries, and a growing number of other health workers succumb to HIV/AIDS. Shortage of funding, drugs and supplies is another major constraint that is essentially due to high and rising costs and the inadequate availability of foreign exchange reserves.⁹

Regarding access to antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS, WHO notes:

As of June 2004, an estimated 6000 people were receiving antiretroviral therapy, of which most were catered for by private practitioners and largely via their own means. As of November 2004, 8000 people were reported to be receiving antiretroviral therapy. Of this number, an estimated 760 people were being catered for by operations research projects such as Development of Antiretroviral Therapy in Africa and the Zimbabwe Aids Prevention Programme. Both are concentrated in urban areas. A rural faith-based organization also provides some treatment in Mutoko. As at March 2005 a reported total of 12000 people were receiving antiretroviral therapy, and by May 2005, 15000 people were receiving antiretroviral therapy in Zimbabwe.¹⁰

Access to HIV/AIDS treatment will also have been negatively affected by Operation Murambatsvina, as antiretroviral therapy is most accessible in the urban areas, and as lack of food undermines the effectiveness of treatment.

The citation from the World Bank report of 1999 (para 5.73) should give the date in the text, as it is otherwise potentially misleading, given that the source is so old.

HO: We will revise in the light of these suggestions. In a couple of areas we have already re-drafted the report in a similar manner as suggested by Dr McGregor.

Human Rights Abuses (para 6.80-6.90)

This section contains extracts from HRNGO forum reports for the year 2004, but only up to October 2004. It is not clear why it stops at that date.

HO: At the cut off date for the report (1 March 2005) the later dated reports had not been added to the HRNGO website. Recent reports will be added to the October reports.

Shona (6.100)

This section should note that 'Shona' is a composite ethnic group, comprising subgroups of Karanga, Zezuru, Korekore and others. It could also make cross reference to the increasing prominence of the Zezuru (Mugabe's own group) in key

⁹ WHO Zimbabwe country summary, http://www.who.int/3by5/june2005_zwe.pdf [accessed 4 August 2005]

¹⁰ WHO Zimbabwe country summary, http://www.who.int/3by5/june2005_zwe.pdf [accessed 4 August 2005]

institutions, and to Karanga/Zezuru faction fighting within the ruling party, as discussed in the section on Zanu(PF) ‘internal dissent’, paras 4.126-4.135.

HO: This is very useful and will be incorporated into the report.

Women (6.119-6.128)

Section 6.128 could usefully make reference to other sections on WOZA eg para 6.86 and 6.62

HO: Agree.

Treatment of Failed Asylum Seekers (6.255-6.257)

When I commented on the October 2004 CIPU in January, I argued that it was important to include a section on the potential risk to deportees from the UK. I suggested that what evidence then existed for violence against returnees should be presented and discussed (including that from late 2001 early 2002, given there was then so little evidence from the period after removals had been resumed in late 2004), that the concerns raised by Amnesty International, UNHCR and UK based asylum seeker support groups about the resumption of removals should be represented, particularly concerns regarding CIO monitoring at the airport. I also argued that statements from Zimbabwean government spokesmen regarding the hostility and suspicion towards deportees from the UK, and intentions to screen arrivals from the UK should be included.

In response to these comments, the April 2005 CIPU report has a new brief section on returnees, written in March 2005 (paras 6.255-7). The section now comprises three paragraphs. The first covers Jonathan Moyo’s statement about the need to be vigilant towards UK deportees on the grounds that they were regarded as spies, as suggested. This is followed by what the CIPU report describes as an ‘apparently contradictory statement’ by Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa, stating that Britain has exaggerated human rights abuses, and that those being returned from the UK are mostly economic migrants rather than political refugees. The final paragraph comprises an extract from The Voice of 9 February 2005, regarding claims that some deportees have disappeared, and that others have been interrogated, threatened and tortured, made on the part of an anti-deportation group, the Zimbabwean Community Campaign to Defend Asylum Seekers, and also detailing the case of one failed asylum seeker returned in December 2004, who claimed that on return he was detained by immigration officials for eight hours, and following his release was attacked by a local youth militia on the grounds he was a British spy, and was hospitalized for a week.

It is still the opinion of this commentator that extracts from the statements from Amnesty International and UNHCR, first stated in December 2004 and restated since, that conditions within Zimbabwe are not propitious for return, should be included in the CIPU report. At the time the April report was written, there were some further press sources on the fate of deportees not used by the CIPU report,¹¹ but more have

¹¹ These included documentation from the earlier phase of removals detailed in the last set of comments, which it was suggested should be included due to being relatively detailed and including

become available since, and are detailed in the section on updating below. It is suggested that the revised section provide a summary overview of the range and scope of sources publically available.

The two statements by then ministers Moyo and Chinamasa reflect two positions the Zimbabwean government has taken fairly consistently, and are not as contradictory as they sound when contextualized. The view that asylum seekers are disloyal and potential spies has been articulated as part of a broader rhetoric on the perfidy of Blair and the British government, which was a theme of the Zanu(PF) campaign for the March 2005 elections,¹² as it had been in previous elections. The Zimbabwean government has at the same time, consistently tried to refute and downplay evidence from human rights organizations that it has committed human rights abuses, and denying that any asylum seekers to Britain are anything more than economic migrants is one aspect of this.

HO: This section will be re-worked in the light of these suggestions, taking account of suggested sources.

3. Update on issues and suggested sources

An update to the April 2005 report is provided through the June 2005 Bulletin, which primarily covers Operation Murambatsvina. As noted above, the bulletin usefully draws attention to a crucially important episode and is based on appropriate sources available at the time it was written. The operation has changed the humanitarian and security landscape of the country, provoking a widespread crisis. By focussing primarily on this Operation, however, the bulletin does not provide a more comprehensive update, and the statement of its aims is somewhat misleading. This section highlights some key developments that will need to be included when the report is updated, such as new evidence regarding the fate of returned asylum seekers, on-going harassment of human rights organizations other NGOs in the country. The April 2005 report was written before the result of the March 2005 elections, and thus needs to be updated in the light of documentation on the elections. Some suggestions regarding useful sources on these topics are mentioned below.

HO: We agree that the aims of the Bulletin could be more clearly stated. But as noted above, the Bulletin will shortly be incorporated in the next edition of the Report.

Operation Murambatsvina

The June 2005 Bulletin aimed to ‘cover the situation since the launch of “Operation Murambatsvina” in Zimbabwe on 18 May 2005, which is a critically important issue that needed to be covered. The legacies of this operation and the severe crisis it has created will have implications for many of the other subsections of the report (eg health, food shortages, education, human rights organizations, legal rights/detention

accounts of procedures at the airport and the role of the CIO. Regarding the more recent removals, the claims of the returnee ‘Ratidzo’ to have been interrogated and threatened by the CIO at the airport, and only released when her uncle (an army officer) intervened, were also covered in the press. See Zimonline 2 February 2005, available online at http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/feb3_2005.html [accessed 8 August 2005]

¹² Redress Trust argue, ‘the official ZanuPF campaign is simply and overtly “anti Blair”; the rhetoric is that a vote against ZanuPF is a vote for recolonization...’, p.1

etc), which will require updating in the light of the operation, and appropriate pointers and cross-referencing will need to be put in place. The coverage of the areas affected in the June bulletin gives a flavour of the broad national scope of the operation, but needs to make clear that rural growth points and other parts of the countryside have been affected in addition to the all major cities and small towns.¹³ Moreover, the debate over the politics of the operation has also developed, with commentators such as the Crisis Group suggesting that it needs also to be looked at not only as a short term response to the March elections, but as a longerterm strategy aimed at shaping the response to the next elections in 2008 and beyond. Enoch Musunungure at the University of Zimbabwe is quoted as saying: ‘The politics of the crackdown is more complex than we think. ZanuPF does not operate on short term strategy. “Murambatsvina” is a medium to long term strategy hatched in response to the outcome of the March 2005 elections to radically alter the demographic profile of the urban centres by depopulating these opposition enclaves of Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare Gweru and other provincial towns ahead of the next elections in 2008 and 2010’¹⁴

The June 2005 Bulletin is based on press reports and statements by Amnesty and the International Crisis Group, which provide useful insight into debate about the politics of the operation, and begin to indicate the scale of its impact. There are now a range of full length reports and other sources on the Operation produced by international and local human rights organizations, to which reference should be made, and from which extracts could usefully be drawn.

These include:

- The report of the UN envoy on settlement issues, Mrs Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka was released on 18 July 2005, entitled ‘Report on the fact finding mission to Zimbabwe to assess the scope and impact of Operation Murambatsvina’¹⁵ The report describes how ‘the destruction of shantytowns and markets has left an estimated 700,000 people without their homes and livelihoods or both and affected a further 2.4 million people. It said Operation Murambatsvina - Drive Out Trash - had "unleashed chaos and untold human suffering" in a country already gripped by economic crisis.¹⁶
- A local church based NGO, the Solidarity Peace Trust report ‘Discarding the Filth – Operation Murambatsvina’ June 2005.¹⁷ This report usefully highlights the impact of the operation not only on food and health/access to medical services, but also on education. It estimates that 300,000 school children have dropped out of school in the wake of the operation (see p.13).

¹³ See for example, ICG *Zimbabwe Post Elections: What Next*, p. 14, .19

¹⁴ ICG *Zimbabwe Post Elections*, p. 20

¹⁵ http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/zimbabwe/zimbabwe_rpt.pdf

¹⁶ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/27/AR2005072702434.html>. Other press coverage of the report includes the Associated Press report of Friday, July 22, 2005; <http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/africa/07/22/zimbabwe.un.report.ap/>

¹⁷ <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org.za/Reports/driving%20out%20filth%2027%20june%20with%20pics.pdf>

HO: We intend to incorporate much of the information contained in the Operation Murambatsvina bulletin into the October report. This will also be strengthened through the use of the UN report and other sources suggested.

Post elections attacks on human rights organizations and NGOs

As the April 2005 report was written before the elections were held in March 2005, it needs to be updated to report on their results, and events thereafter. The June bulletin provides a brief sentence on the elections in para 2.5, but this will obviously need fuller coverage. A range of reports on the elections are readily available from international and local organizations such as the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, the Crisis Coalition and others. A particularly useful overview and summary of the results, procedures and aftermath is provided by the International Crisis Group in the report *Zimbabwe Post Elections: What Next?*, referred to above.

Since the March 2005 elections, and particularly in the wake of churches' and human rights groups' condemnation of Operation Murambatsvina, the state has increased its controls over and disruption to the work of human rights and other NGOs, as well as churches engaged in humanitarian relief. These developments need to be included in the revised report, with appropriate linkages and cross references. In April 2005, the government set up a new task force to inspect and investigate NGO activities. The taskforce was appointed by Minister of social Welfare, Nicholas Goche and includes CIO members and is seen as having politicized goals. Sources on the increased controls on NGOs include press coverage, such as Zimonline,¹⁸ the ICG report *Zimbabwe Post Election*.¹⁹

The Amnesty International report of May 2005 provides a useful summary of mounting pressures and constraints on NGOs in *Zimbabwe: Human Rights Defenders Under Siege*.²⁰ It details a number of specific acts of violence against human rights NGOs, including 'assaults by the Zimbabwean police on several human rights campaigners and a failure to bring those responsible to justice'; 'the arbitrary arrest of hundreds of human rights campaigners, including a two-year persecution of the women's activist group Women of Zimbabwe Arise' and 'the use of state-controlled media to intimidate human rights campaigners and discredit the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and its recently published report on the human rights situation in Zimbabwe'. Amnesty International concludes: 'This sustained attack on Zimbabwe's human rights campaigners speaks volumes about the length to which the government will go to cover up human rights abuses and prevent criticism of its actions.'²¹

Press sources covering specific incidents since May 2005 include:

¹⁸ Zim Online (SA) 26 April 2005. http://www.zic.com.au/updates/2005/26april_2005.htm [accessed 1 August 2005]

¹⁹ <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id-1233&l=1> [accessed 8 August 2005]

²⁰ The report is available online at <http://www.amnesty.ca/zimbabwe/news/view.php?load=arcview&article=2452&c=Zimbabwe-Reports> [accessed 8 August 2005]

²¹ See summary on <http://news.amnesty.org/index/ENGAFR460072005>

- Reports of further harassment of the NGO Zimrights on 19 July.²²
- Raids on churches on 20 July in Bulawayo. These police raids targeted churches in Bulawayo where people were sheltering after their homes had been destroyed. The police arrested 50-100 people in each, and detained four clergymen for questioning. A spokesperson from the Solidarity Peace Trust was reported as saying ‘This action against church leaders is taking place at a time when church leaders from South Africa have been calling for closer collaboration between churches in Zimbabwe and South Africa to respond to the enormous humanitarian crisis that is unfolding in Zimbabwe...As such, it points towards a deliberate retribution campaign on the part of the ruling party against church and civil society leaders for offering support and refuge to those displaced by the violent destruction of their property, and for allegedly giving negative reports to the United Nations and the South African Council of Churches’.²³

HO: We intend to incorporate much of the information contained in the April bulletin on the Zimbabwean Election into the October report. We are grateful for the suggested sources regarding attacks on Human Rights organisations and NGOs which will also be incorporated into the report.

Food shortages

Food shortages and the politicization of food access were a major concern in the run up to the March 2005 elections, and have continued to be thereafter. After the elections, a national task force was set up by president to oversee responses to the food crisis. It was headed by CIO chief and Minister for State Security in the President’s Office, Didymus Mutasa, enhancing fears of politicized distribution. Sources include Zimonline and the International Crisis Group.²⁴

Local human rights groups have highlighted the potential for the huge scale of the displacements from the urban areas to exacerbate food shortages, as people whose livelihoods, assets and shelter have been destroyed have been forced into the countryside, where they can be more easily controlled not least through partisan access to food aid. Sources include the Solidarity Peace Trust report on Operation Murambatsvina and the ICG report, *Zimbabwe Post Elections: What Next*, which includes a discussion of readily available press and other sources on the food situation and the politics of hunger.

HO: We have reduced the section on food shortages, removing many of the older sources. However, new information along the lines suggested by Dr McGregor has already been added to the draft.

Returnees

The June bulletin did not attempt to update material on the fate of returnees. Coverage of this issue in the main country report obviously needs to be updated in the light of the sources now available (and any further appropriate external sources that

²² Zimbabwe: police force entry into Zimrights premises. Pambazuka news <http://www.pambazuka.org/index.php?id=28985> [accessed 1 August 2005]

²³ ‘Policy arrest 4 Bulawayo Clergymen’ Zimbabwe Independent 22 July 2005

²⁴ See Zimonline 15 April 2005, and ICG, *Zimbabwe Post Elections: What Next*, p. 7.

become readily available following the consideration by the IAT of new evidence compiled by the Refugee Legal Centre in October).

Sources currently readily available include a flurry of articles in the press, which cover the claims of asylum-seeker support groups and anti-deportation campaigns, and also discuss the case of individual returnees. As noted above, statements on the part of major international organizations such as UNHCR and Amnesty are relevant and should also be included.

Press sources include the following:

- Coverage of a deportee ‘Sithembile’, whose family reported their concerns because they did not know her fate, reported in *The Times*, 24 June 2005.
- Coverage of the case of six returnees, reported in ‘Tortured and dumped: the fate of those sent home to Mugabe by UK’, in *The Independent on Sunday* 3 July 2005.
- ‘Usher’ and a fellow asylum seeker, reported in *The Times*, 4 July 2005.²⁵ The report described how they were handed over the police at the airport: ““We were punched on the head and neck and asked why we didn’t have the right travel documents. Then four agents from what we took to be the Central Intelligence Organization appeared and we were moved to separate rooms. They kicked me and kept shouting that I was a British spy”. After two days of interrogation, Usher was driven to the central prison in Harare, where he was repeatedly beaten on the soles of his feet. Over the next three weeks in custody he says that he was subjected to electric shock treatment to his chest and testicles. “They told me I would suffer for going to England”, he said. Last month he appeared in a Harare court with other deportees and magistrates warned them that they faced charges carrying long prison sentences. As they were led from the dock one official thought that Usher had been given bail, and he took his chance to escape.’
- Coverage of ‘Zuka Kalinga’, who claims to have been interrogated on arrival in Harare, and further interrogated and threatened with disappearance at the police station in his home town of Bulawayo, when reporting, and who subsequently fled to South Africa, into hiding, see *The Guardian* 10 July 2005.²⁶

HO: This section will be updated, taking account of Dr McGregor’s suggestions regarding appropriate source material.

Conclusion

The April 2005 Zimbabwe CIPU report continues to makes use of a broad range of appropriate and readily accessible sources, and has made significant improvements on its predecessor. This commentary has highlighted improvements in the internal structure of the report, and in its contents, which included a new section on returnees

²⁵ Available online: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,2-1679910,00.html> [accessed 8 August 2005]

²⁶ Available online: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Zimbabwe/article/0,2763,1525447,00.html> [accessed 8 August 2005] see also a very similar case, discussed under the pseudonym ‘Vincent’, reported in *The Times* 5 July 2005, available online: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,2-1680785,00.html> [accessed 8 August 2005]

and amendments to sections that were misleading or inaccurate. The June 2005 bulletin usefully drew attention to the devastating impact of Operation Murambatsvina. This commentary highlighted three main areas of the April 2005 report (and June update) which were problematic and where there was scope for further improvement. First, it discussed the potential for further improvements in the structure and coherence of the report, and for further use of summary. Second it discussed sections of the report where the content could be improved, including those on returnees among others. The final part of the commentary pointed to the importance of updating the report beyond the material included in the June 2005 bulletin, highlighted some key issues and appropriate sources.