



**NATIONAL
TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE
WORKING GROUP
ZIMBABWE**

NTJWG Report on the Establishment of Provincial Peace Committees by the NPRC

The NPRC Embarks on Establishing Provincial Peace Committees

On 29 May, 2019 the NPRC announced that it will be devolving its operations to Provinces by establishing Provincial Peace Committees beginning 31 May, 2019 ending on 2 July 2019. The NPRC announced that the Provincial Peace Committees will be mandated to solve conflicts in their areas because a “one-size-fits all” approach has proved impractical.

The dates were as follows:

- Mashonaland West: 30-31 May, 2019
- Mashonaland Central: 3-4 June, 2019
- Harare: 5-6 June, 2019
- Matebeleland North: 9-10 June, 2019
- Matebeleland South: 12-13 June, 2019
- Bulawayo: 17-18 June, 2019
- Manicaland: 20-21 June, 2019
- Masvingo: 24-25 June, 2019
- Midlands: 27-28 June, 2019 and
- Mashonaland East: 1-2 July, 2019.

The NTJWG stakeholders such as CCJPZ, IPLG, CSU, Tree of Life and ZLHR were elected into the committees in their individual capacities. The NTJWG commends the NPRC for managing to implement its programme within the announced dates and looks forward to the full report.

Roles and Responsibilities of the PPCs

According to the NPRC (2019), these peace committees are designed to promote peace, tolerance building within provinces, conduct public education on national peace and reconciliation and raise awareness about conflict indicators within Provinces and responding to issues identified in the Provinces, among other roles.

Chairpersons and Deputies of the PPCs are as follows, respectively:

- Mashonaland West: Commissioner Choice Ngoro, Deputised by Mr. Godfrey Mavhankeni.
- Mashonaland Central: Commissioner Charles Masunungure, Deputised by Dr. Savir Munoriarwa.
- Harare: Commissioner Lilian Chigwedere, Deputised by Professor Medial Hove.
- Matebeleland North: Retired Justice Chairperson Selo Nare.
- Matebeleland South: Commissioner Leslie Ncube.
- Bulawayo: Retired Justice Chairperson Selo Nare and Mr. Johnson Mkhandla and Ms. Nokuthula Dube.
- Manicaland: Commissioner Patience Chiradza, Deputised by Dr. Solomon Mungure and Ms. Getrude Chimange.
- Masvingo: Commissioner Dr. Golden Chekenyere Deputised by Rev. Themba Siwela and Ms. Netsai Mushauri.
- Midlands: Commissioner Netty Musanhu, Deputised by Conelius Mupereri and Mrs Ethel Mkwende and
- Mashonaland East: Commissioner Dr. Godfrey Chada Deputised by Shillah Rugonye and Emmanuel Manyati.

What are the challenges the PPCs might face in the near future and what can the NTJWG do about it?

Inclusion of survivors in establishing PPCs

From the onset of the setting-up of PPCs, the criteria used to invite participants to the induction training of the Peace Committees was not specified. One of the major issues which was glaringly evident in the process was that survivors were not included. The NPRC meetings were not victim-centred, but mainly invited and elected other transitional actors into the committees. The problem was only rectified after one of the NTJWG's stakeholder and leader of a survivor group Mr. Sekai Gombe requested a meeting with Commissioner Netty Musanhu in Harare on 19 July, 2019 to encourage the Commission to put survivors at the centre of national peace and reconciliation processes.

From 20 June, 2019 going onwards, the NTJWG noted the NPRC's efforts to invite and include survivors in setting-up PPCs so that people elected into the committees would value concerns and prioritise the needs of survivors. From the onset, there was need to co-create and co-facilitate PPCs with people in touch and contact with survivors, who grapple with the past on a daily basis. Placing victims and survivors at the centre of this work also requires ensuring that victim's rights and views are fully respected in the implementation of the transitional justice process (Guiding Principles for TJ Policy and Practice in Zimbabwe, 2015: 20). This includes the use of victim-sensitive procedures that

guarantee victim's safety and dignity and the development of specific capacities to assist, support and protect victims and witnesses (U.N, 2010:6).

Failure to adhere to these and other principles prescribed in international and regional statutory instruments perpetuates a vicious cycle of violence that will re-victimise the victim and prevent justice from being served, undermine respect and compassion, equality and fairness, but most importantly effective participation of survivors in national peace and reconciliation processes (Minimum Standards for an Effective NPRC, 2015:5-6).

Constitution of PPCs

From inception, constitution of PPCs must be acceptable and reflective of the people who choose it, but in particular should be a committee that has deep understanding and is seen to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of survivors. If the people who are elected into the committee are compromised, it suffers from legitimacy and acceptance by the people which it purports to represent, protect and advance their needs. A befitting example is the recently established PPC in the Midlands Province set-up on 27-28 June, 2019. Against the background of the report received from one of the NTJWG's stakeholders who attended the meetings, two people from ZANU-PF and the security service, respectively were elected as the two deputies of the PPC. History in Zimbabwe has shown that political parties and the security service been at the centre of gross human rights violations from Gukurahundi, Operation Murambatsvina, political violence, the 1 August, 2018 shootings in Harare to the clampdown on the recent #zimbabweshutdown protests in which many people were left dead, injured or displaced.

The NTJWG is of the view that once people who are perceived to be central to human rights violations in Zimbabwe are elected into crucial committees meant to deal with the past, the PPCs are bound to fail and sabotaged from the onset. From the reports the NTJWG received from its stakeholders in Gweru, people were not happy with the election of the two people mentioned above into the PPC and this automatically kills a PPC at birth.

To resolve these two issues, the NPRC should firstly listen to the sentiments shared by survivors to ensure that they are put at the centre of all national transitional justice processes.

Secondly, to resolve the imminent crisis looming in the Midlands, the NPRC should dissolve the PPC in the Midlands and re-establish the PPC. This should be followed by an enactment of a 'soft law' that prevents people in the security services and political parties from assuming prominent positions in PPCs. The PPC must be constituted by people who are respected in the community, neutral and apolitical, preferably from the church, FBOs and CSOs. At this stage, political parties and security services must be relegated to the terraces and only be constituted as committee members of the PPCs.