



ABOUT THIS BRIEFING

The Issues

From a number of issues raised by stakeholders, the following issues require the attention of the Office of the President as it related to the healing process in Zimbabwe.

Setting the tone for the Healing Agenda in Zimbabwe

The NTJWG notes the current administration has shown commitment to transitional justice. This is evident in enactment of the NPRC Act, the creation of the Office of the Special Advisor to the President on National Healing and Reconciliation and the continuation of the practice of delegating one of the Vice Presidents to that agenda. The President further made comments in Davos, Switzerland highlighting his commitment to ensuring that the past is addressed. These are commendable.

NTJWG further encourages the Presidency, through these structures to start thinking of a more comprehensive reconciliation policy that is beyond a single commission. This will enable all other departments of the start to design strategies that fit into the national reconciliation agenda.

While many Stakeholders expected the President to address the reconciliation issue at

This briefing was presented to the Special Advisor to the President on National Peace and Reconciliation. The briefing draws from the monitoring work done by NTJWG and the views obtained by NTJWG from Stakeholders who are concerned with the national peace and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. Of great significance is the Stakeholders' Conference held on 07 February, 2018 where stakeholders deliberated on the process and made a number of recommendations regarding the process.

his inauguration or at his State of the Nation Address, these two addresses did not give any policy direction. The President only made strong pronouncements in Davos after being pressed by foreign media. Reconciliation should not be an attachment to an investment policy but rather, must be a separate issue requiring the full attention of the executive.

It is recommended that the Presidency prepare a Special Address to the nation to highlight the Government's commitment to a comprehensive programme of reconciliation. A plan must be put

in motion to draft a national reconciliation strategy in which all other Government departments must be involved to ensure a holistic approach to reconciliation.

The Role of Traditional Leaders in National Healing

On 16 January 2018, the media reported that Vice-President Kembo Mohadi made remarks that insinuated that the Government would approach traditional leaders to help deal with the *Gukurahundi* issue. It is reported that the Vice-President said that Traditional Leaders would help in spearheading healing. NTJWG Stakeholders do respect traditional leaders and appreciate the role they can play in Zimbabwe. However, at the just ended stakeholders' conference, stakeholders noted that the proper body to lead reconciliation has already been identified in the Constitution and that is the NPRC.

Some Stakeholders noted that some traditional leaders have been implicated in past violations hence they may become subject to investigation. In that regard, the statements by the Vice-President did not sit well with stakeholders. The independence of the NPRC is already in doubt. It is important that the Executive avoids making statements that may seem to suggest that they are now giving direction to the NPRC. The NPRC must be given space to develop its own strategy and execute it without the interference of the Executive.

Operational Independence of the NPRC

Stakeholders have noted with concern matters that may seem to affect the independence of the NPRC. Firstly, it is the matter raised above which relates to Executive statements. Secondly, it is the issue of the continued presence of Executive staff in the activities of the NPRC. At a recent meeting in Bindura on 19 February, 2018, participants who had come to attend an NPRC meeting ended up being addressed by Advocate M. Bimha who is the Minister of State for Mashonaland Central Provinces. Stakeholders raised this issue as part of the Executive's interference which undermines the confidence of the public in the NPRC and its independence.

While the Executive is responsible for administering the NPRC Act, efforts must be put in place to ensure that this Administration is not seen to be interfering with the operational independence of the NPRC.

NPRC Chairperson

NTJWG notes and commends the Executive for the appointment of the NPRC Chair announced on 20 February, 2018. This is a matter that stakeholders had noted and it is a commendable step.



From left, NTJWG Coordinator D. Bere, NTJWG Chairperson A. Muchadehama and the Special Advisor to the President Prof. Clever Nyathi

NPRC Capacity Issues

Many of our stakeholders believe that the NPRC is not yet fully capacitated to deal with matters at hand. A major issue raised is the issue of resources. The NPRC currently has no Secretariat, no office and it appears the funds are limited. The Constitution obliges the Government to ensure that the NPRC is funded to perform its tasks. NTJWG encourages the Government to expeditiously ensure that all resources required by the NPRC are made available. While some development agencies are interested in supporting the NPRC, this will not be possible without functional structures. Resource starvation can affect the independence and capacity of the NPRC as the commission has to depend on the benevolence of other actors.

Dealing with Past Issues

The NPRC is one among many not so successful Commissions. The NTJWG notes that for many

stakeholders, the success of the NPRC will depend on the sincerity of the Executive to allow it to work. NTJWG stakeholders have called on the Government to show its sincerity by publishing outstanding reports of past Commissions of Inquiry such as the *Chihambakwe* Commission and acting on the recommendations of other Commissions like the *Chidyausiku* Commission. It is the hope of many stakeholders that this will help in boosting confidence in the NPRC.

Conclusion

These are some of the issues for the Executive, among a number of other issues. Attached to this briefing is the summary of the conference outcomes which may assist in understanding the issues raised. NTJWG remains committed to ensure the success of Zimbabwe's reconciliation process.

Response from the Special Advisor to the President Prof. Clever Nyathi

Following the presentation of the concerns above, Prof. Nyathi gave his response and addressed the following points.

- That the President is indeed aware of the public sentiments regarding the process and there are processes ongoing to address the concerns of the public.
- The NPRC has resources currently to enable it to hire its Secretariat and acquire its offices.
- The Commission is currently working on its strategic plan which is a major hold back.
- Key persons will be funded this year to enable the NPRC to do its work.
- The Vice President appreciates that the issue of traditional leaders and appreciates that traditional leader come into the process like any other stakeholders just like churches and other entities.
- A Constitutional body does not work in a vacuum. It needs local knowledge and community wisdom.
- While the NPRC will have its independence guaranteed, operational interdependence is unavoidable. They cannot function without administrative support from the executive or technical support from stakeholders.
- Regulations of the NPRC have been finalised and are now with the VP. There is a lot of work behind closed doors. The government is seized with the task of ensuring that government departments open up to the work of the NPRC.
- We need to guard against the politicisation of this important national process.



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