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NPRCWATCH

NEWSLETTER

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STAKEHOLDERS, FRIENDS AND PARTNERS

In this Edition

Although the year 2019 started like any other year, by mid-January it had become clear that it would bring its challenges that would affect the day-to-day lives of ordinary Zimbabweans. While there had been hope that the post-Mugabe era in Zimbabwe would be marked by peace, respect for human rights and economic stability, the fuel protests of January 2019 followed by the government clamp down on the citizenry and civil society, accompanied by the ever-increasing cost of living, dashed these hopes. As the year progressed and the situation worsened it became clearer that national dialogue is not only necessary but also long overdue. Amidst all the chaos of 2019, there were some significant developments in the transitional justice sphere in Zimbabwe as well as internationally.

In this newsletter, we package the highlights of the year 2019 for you using the lens of transitional justice. We cover the activities of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), the National Transitional Justice Working Group (NTJWG), the NTJWG stakeholders and global developments. As always, we welcome your feedback.



AROUND THE WORLD

African Union Adopts the African Union Transitional Justice Policy

During the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, the African Union (AU) adopted the AU Transitional Justice Policy. The Policy is a continental guideline for AU Member States to achieve sustainable peace, justice, reconciliation, social cohesion and healing which calls for peaceful resolution of conflicts, respect for the sanctity of human life, and the condemnation and rejection of impunity. This is a big step for transitional justice in Africa, where many countries have been struggling with dealing with the past and moving towards reconciled, peaceful and just societies.

Conviction at The Hague, Netherlands

On the 8th of July 2019, the International Criminal Court convicted a notorious rebel commander by the name Bosco Ntaganda known as “*The Terminator*”, of eighteen counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes including murder, rape and sexual slavery for his role in atrocities in a bloody ethnic conflict in a mineral-rich region of Congo in between 2002 and 2003. This is a victory for transitional justice across the world and also puts on notice perpetrators of gross human rights violations.

NPRC ACTIVITIES

Outreach Program and Establishment of Provincial Peace Committees

On the 7th of June 2019, the NPRC concluded its countrywide outreach program which is to be used to identify the aspects it should prioritize in its work. The outreach program was followed up with the establishment of Provincial Peace Committees (PPCs) in each province with the mandate of solving conflicts in their areas through promoting peace and tolerance building.

The establishment of the PPCs was followed up by an induction and orientation of the Deputy Chairpersons of the Committees on the 25th of September. Following the establishment of the PPCs, it appears only the Bulawayo PPC has convened a meeting which was held in December, six months after the establishment of the PPCs.

The NTJWG looks forward to reports from the NPRC about the work being done by the Committees in their provinces.



Building the NPRC Secretariat

June 2019 saw the NPRC constituting some of its secretariat by recruiting 32 officers out of the 103 required.

The NPRC also set up its offices and is now located at the following address:

7th Floor, First Mutual Building
99 Jason Moyo Avenue, Harare
Tel: 0242 792676-9, 792469, 792390, 791 757
Email: info@nprc.org.zw

The Safe Spaces Initiative

In September 2019, the NPRC launched its Women Safe Spaces Initiative aimed at promoting meaningful participation of women to ensure inclusive and transformative healing and reconciliation. The initiative also seeks to expand the scope for women's meaningful participation peace and reconciliation efforts.

Building NPRC Departments

In the course of the year 2019, the NPRC launched a number of departments aimed at enhancing its work. The NPRC launched the Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution and Transformation Department whose mandate is to give policy guidance on conflict management, conflict prevention, conflict transformation and guarantee of non-recurrence. Another department the NPRC launched was the Complaints Handling and Investigations Thematic Department whose mandate is to receive and consider complaints from the public, and conduct investigations into any dispute or conflict within the mandate of the NPRC. On the 6th of November 2019, the NPRC issued a press release outlining the procedure of making a complaint to the NPRC.

The NPRC also launched the Research and Knowledge Management Thematic Department whose goal is to produce evidence-based research for informed policy and decision making and the desired outcome of the thematic department's work is policy recommendations. On the 2nd of November 2019, the NPRC published a press release introducing the Victim Support, Gender, and Diversity Thematic Department whose mandate is laid out in terms of section 9 of the NPRC Act. The Department has a particular mandate to assist all victims of diverse groups, traditions, cultures, and languages with an emphasis to target all vulnerable victims of conflict especially women, young girls and persons with disabilities.

NPRC in the Press

On the 6th of October 2019, The Standard newspaper published an article titled "*Cracks Emerge in the NPRC over Funding*." In that article, the newspaper alleged that the NPRC has been rocked by divisions with some Commissioners said to be unhappy over the government's lack of commitment in addressing past human rights abuses which was evident from allocation of inadequate funds to the NPRC for its operations. The NPRC dismissed these claims in a media release on the 7th of October 2019, in which it acknowledged that the NPRC is not well resourced but that this has nothing to do with the political will of the government.

The NPRC went on to state that Treasury allocated ZWL\$2,463million to it in the 2019 budget and this figure was supplemented by the ZWL\$4,5million allocated to it in the 2019 supplementary budget.





Stakeholders Conference

On the 29th of August 2019, the NTJWG hosted a Stakeholders' Conference which was attended by seventy-one from civil society practitioners and church leaders who form the NTJWG. Issues such as the strategic direction, institutional strengthening, including filling of vacant positions and representation of survivors in the Working Group were discussed.

Training of Trainers on the Mandate of the NPRC

On the 30th of August 2019, the NTJWG convened a training workshop for survivors to build their awareness on the mandate of the NPRC. The training was aimed at capacitating these survivors to then facilitate training of other survivors in their communities on the mandate of the NPRC. This initiative was necessitated by the realisation that the NPRC has begun engaging communities and these communities need to be capacitated to enable them to effectively engage with the NPRC when it visits their regions.

Community Dialogues

In 2019 the NTJWG carried out thirteen community dialogues to build awareness on the mandate on the NPRC. These were aimed at capacitating survivors to clearly understand the mandate of the NPRC so that they can effectively participate in NPRC activities in their communities. The community dialogues were done across the country in areas including Zvishavane, Tsholotsho, Nyanga, Murewa, Binga, Bikita, Bulawayo, Marange, and Gwanda. To read more about these community dialogues you can visit:

[Community Dialogues >](#)

Radio Programs

Throughout the course of 2019, the NTJWG hosted several radio programs meant to spread the transitional justice message across the country and reach a larger audience. These radio programs covered several topics such as

exhumations, national dialogue, the role of leadership in facilitating reconciliation and healing processes, the promotion of a victim-centred approach in transitional justice processes and establishing structures to ensure non-recurrence. To listen to these radio programs you can visit:

[Radio Programs Available Here >](#)

NPRC-Survivor Interface

On the 9th of December 2019, the NTJWG convened an NPRC-Survivor Interface in Masvingo which was attended by twenty survivors, three Commissioners from the NPRC who included the Deputy Chairperson Lilian Chigwedere, Commissioner Netty Musanhu, and Commissioner Golden Chekenyere. This interface was aimed at providing survivors of past violations with relevant information and knowledge on the national peace and reconciliation processes in the country to ensure and encourage their informed participation. Issues of concern raised by the survivors were regarding the visibility of the NPRC and the PPCs, reparations, and extension of the tenure of the NPRC.

NTJWG PUBLICATIONS

Executive Briefing

In June 2019, the NTJWG met with the Permanent Secretary in the Vice President's office to present the Executive Briefing for January to March 2019. The NTJWG and the

Permanent Secretary discussed issues around the increased involvement of the security forces in civilian affairs, implementation of the recommendations of the Motlanthe Commission, the constitutional requirement for the establishment of the independent complaints mechanism for receiving and investigating complaints from members of the public about misconduct of members of the security forces, the need to respect the independence of the NPRC, extension of the lifespan of the NPRC, funding for the NPRC and adoption of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy and a National Transitional Justice Policy for Zimbabwe.

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Annual Report: 2017 to 2018

In August 2019, the NTJWG produced its annual report detailing the activities that were implemented by the Working Group, its stakeholders and the NPRC in the year 2017 to 2018. The report was launched at the NTJWG Annual Stakeholders' Conference held in August 2019.

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NPRC Briefings

In April and October 2019, the NTJWG met with the NPRC to present the NPRC Briefings. In these Briefings the NTJWG highlighted its concern regarding outstanding NPRC reports, NPRC's role in the POLAD process, and inclusion of survivors in Provincial Peace Committees, extension of the lifespan of the NPRC and the lack of funding for the NPRC.

[NPRC Briefing - April 2019](#) >

[NPRC Briefing - October 2019](#) >

STAKEHOLDERS IN ACTION

Seeking extension of the NPRC Lifespan

On the 13th of March 2019, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) approached the courts seeking to have the tenure of the NPRC extended. This is because the NPRC was established by the Constitution in 2013 but the enabling Act was only enacted in 2018, bringing to life the NPRC at that stage. As such ZLHR argued that the NPRC's tenure started running in 2018. This interpretation was accepted by Justice Mafusire in the High Court, who ruled that the tenure of the NPRC must expire in 2028 as the Constitution gives it a 10-year lifespan. This ruling was a big victory for transitional justice in Zimbabwe. The government appealed this decision in the Supreme Court, and the case is currently pending before the courts.

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