

stated that victims are feeding hatred into their offspring and they believe that Gukurahundi will recur again if it is not addressed.

Proponents of this perception argued that it was instigated by the Shona peoples' attempt to exterminate the Ndebele people through genocide since the Government at the time was headed by a Shona-speaking President. Consequently, truth telling was very important to bring closure. However, some expressed fear of reprisal from the State, and as result, they suggested Government should guarantee the protection of the participants in the exercise people must be protected during and after the truth-telling process. Truth telling was suggested as a vehicle for reconciliation. Further, the victims must be given a platform to openly talk about their experiences.

In this regard, it was suggested that the Chiefs should conduct outreach with other key stakeholders and allow the communities to speak about what happened. Special concern was raised regarding women who required safeguarding mechanisms such as a safe environment to freely articulate their issues to ensure healing. Another point of view was that perpetrators of the atrocities should also be allowed to face their victims so that the root cause of the conflict would be addressed to facilitate the healing process.

4. Counseling and Psychosocial support

It was indicated that some women who were victims of Gukurahundi suffered from trauma due to alleged rape incidents orchestrated by State Security Operatives. Consequently, counseling and psychosocial support were needed to bring the matter to closure. In addition, some of the women who were allegedly raped had given birth to children attributed to these heinous acts. Thus, the children themselves also required the same support.

It was suggested that some victims required psychosocial support and medical assistance from the State amongst other social welfare requirements. Counseling of the direct victims was proposed to facilitate healing from the trauma attributed by Gukurahundi.

c. Issues requiring attention

Although the specific demands will only be presented after Chiefs meet the communities, the Stakeholders have highlighted the following as demands:

- Acknowledgment and Apology
- Consultation of victims
- Reburials, Exhumations, and Memorials
- Reparations/ compensation [Compensation on individuals and communities] ;
- The payment of pensions and salaries;
- Documentation;
- Social Security Benefits (Health services; Psychosocial support; Free Basic Education);
- Request for ZIPRA Trust properties, war records, and memorabilia;
- Binga and the Zambezi valley issues;
- General development in the region;
- Infrastructure development (e.g., roads); and
- Natural resources.

Below are some of the issues requiring attention in detail:-

1. Acknowledgment and Apology

It was noted that the Government should not start by compensating the victims but should acknowledge and apologize for what transpired. Further, this allows the bereaved to accept pain and share the pain when upon acknowledgment. It was further expressed that an acknowledgment validates the experiences of the victim, and it is believed that a significant step has been taken by the President through the statement that he has made, and by endorsing the assignment of the Chiefs.

On the issue of a public acknowledgment and apology, there were conflicting views on whether the Government should proceed with a public acknowledgment or apology. It was indicated that an apology was not aimed to humiliate or embarrass Government. One of the stakeholders quoted Pope Francis who gave a speech in December 2018 stating, "Our differences are not detrimental or dangerous, they are

a source of richness. Forgiveness cannot be given when it has not been sought and you don't get to apologize after you have been forgiven rather forgiveness comes after acknowledgment of wrongdoing and apology".

It was indicated that there was a need for a "Speech Act" by leaders to create an environment that enables the people to speak freely. The conduct of leaders through statements should encourage healing through acknowledgment.

Concern was raised that the focus was on the victim but there was silence on the perpetrator who is the State. However, some stakeholders inquired about how the victim could face the State as the perpetrator, "Inkalakhatha" (the key thing) is not only about the money, there is a need for "mayuyu" (apology) from the perpetrator.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that they were legal implications involved in issuing an acknowledgment and apology since this could trigger legal action against the State.

The majority of the stakeholders pointed out that the acknowledgment should come from the Government through the Head of State. However, it was acknowledged that Government could use emissaries such as Chiefs in conflict resolution. It is common for people to use emissaries to apologize to their neighbors (the example of cattle straying to a neighbor's field was stated).

2. Consultation of victims

The majority of stakeholders emphasized that the process must be victim-centered. Stakeholders expressed the need to protect the victims when giving evidence to avoid victimization to build trust and confidence in the process. It was recommended that the process should involve victims only. It was pointed out that there was a mass exodus of victims of Gukurahundi from rural areas to urban areas and the diaspora.

documentation. Further, there were security concerns that needed to be considered when issuing documentation.

2. Underdevelopment and Marginalisation of Matabeleland region

It was alleged by some stakeholders that the people of Matabeleland North and South were experiencing poverty and underdevelopment because of regional marginalization and alienation. Some stakeholders said that Gukurahundi had devastating effects because of the lack of cohesion and dysfunctionality within the communities affected, therefore, there was a need to address the social and economic needs of the victims. For instance, it was insinuated that the region lagged in developing infrastructure linked to education and health services.

In addition, it was mentioned that residents of the region had been alienated in the management of natural resources since the majority of beneficiaries of land and mineral rights came from other regions. Therefore, restorative justice was essential for people that were affected by Gukurahundi to foster development in their communities. Some of the stakeholders argued that they should be compensatory development by Government through targeted development programs in communities or individuals affected by Gukurahundi.

It was argued that the most affected people were women and youth from the region. Consequently, the youth were segregated from development initiatives, in particular, it was pointed out that there was inadequate infrastructure in the education sector to support the comparative advantage witnessed in other regions. Stakeholders indicated that the youth in the region felt that the effects of Gukurahundi were recurring and continue to affect them.

3. National Healing, Reconciliation, and National Building

Some stakeholders pointed out that the region was experiencing intergenerational hatred and tribalism. Intergeneration hatred had been passed on to people who were not involved in the Gukurahundi issue but were very angry because they were being socialized to be anti-Government. It was observed that there was too much bitterness in this country because this matter has taken too long to be resolved. It was also

- The youth in Matabeleland do not feel as if they are part of Zimbabwe 40 years after independence.

Below are some of the effects in detail:-

1. Documentation (Birth, National IDs, and Deaths Certificates)

Concern for the need to facilitate birth and death certificates was expressed by stakeholders during the consultations. It was argued that this was necessary to end generational statelessness which was caused by the non-resolution of Gukurahundi. Thus, there was a need to consider relaxing Government protocols regarding the issuance of documentation. It was recommended that as a safety net Chiefs should corroborate in their jurisdictions the eligibility of applicants to be issued with Zimbabwean nationality.

It was indicated that the people in the region are facing challenges in securing identity documents, for instance, some people don't even have bank accounts because they lacked identity documents.

The issue of death certificates was also raised during consultations. It was stated that it was difficult to ascertain whether the surviving heirs were the dependents of the deceased victims. Some of the participants bemoaned that the purported dependents of those casualties were deprived of benefits such as pensions, life assurance, and other benefits claimable if they had been issued death certificates.

Consequently, after noting the outcry by stakeholders on the need for documentation the National Council of Chiefs invited the Registrar General's Office to make representations on the matter. The Registrar General's Office apprised the Chiefs of the legal frameworks that facilitate the issuance of both birth and death certificates. It also suggested that there should be a clear policy directive on how to provide services to alleged victims of Gukurahundi. The Chiefs noted that there was a need to streamline processes to expeditiously facilitate the issuance of documentation. Additionally, it was proposed that a testimonial letter from a Chief was a sufficient endorsement in support of an applicant's claim. The Registrar General's Office argued that the country's laws provided adequate procedures for the issuance of

3. Reburials, Exhumations, and Memorials

The issue relating to exhumations linked to Gukurahundi was also raised during the proceedings. It was indicated there were shallow and mass graves particularly in Matopo (Bhalagwe), Lupane, and Tsholotsho, among others. Further, it was discussed that Chiefs were appropriately placed to determine whether or not the alleged victims required exhumations. However, the Chiefs were required to verify the purported relatives of the victims of Gukurahundi, subject to identifying the sites of those allegedly wrongfully buried. Exhumations would only be conducted at the instance of the affected families.

Additionally, there were traditional and customary implications of exhumations linked to rituals and ceremonies to appease the dead. Some of the stakeholders indicated that families felt deprived of properly burying their relatives so there was a need to conduct the "Umbuyiso" ritual to appease the unburied, wrongfully buried, and angry dead. It was noted that exhumations would require technical expertise from forensic anthropologists to determine accurate identities of the deceased (i.e cause of death, stature, sex, age, and other defining features of the uncovered remains).

The issues around exhumations are not a straightforward matter, for example, Paul Temba Nyathi stated that "I have never understood why there are problems with exhumations since there should be family driven." In contrast, Phathisa Nyathi indicated that "anyone who died in conflict is an angry person and people who were buried in mass graves are angry persons. The Ndebele culture has no exhumation because the ancestors were wise. They did not bring the angry dead back home. Therefore, the bitter dead should not be part of the Umbuyiso". There is also the belief that at a spiritual level the nation never demobilized that's the reason why we have problems in this country because after the war the rituals were not performed to appease the heroes who fought for this country.

The issue of erecting Memorials in honor of the dead was also raised during the consultations. Some stakeholders lamented that they were being deprived of properly mourning their relatives by certain individuals who destroy Memorials even though the President has opened up the space for people to freely grieve their loved ones as part

of the process to find closure. It was emphasized that the right of relatives and communities to commemorate and mourn a human loss in a culturally appropriate manner was essential.

4. Reparations and Compensation

Regarding reparations and compensation of victims of Gukurahundi, it was indicated that the primary reparation should be community-driven projects. It was suggested by some participants that the Government could compensate or reparate the victims affected by Gukurahundi through affirmative action programs or granting the victims preferential treatment in development programs. The meeting was informed that reparations were paramount in ensuring that the victims feel recognized in that their loss is ameliorated in one form or another. Reparation should be subject to consultations with the victims. Some stakeholders suggested that there were multiple forms of reparations that should be restorative.

5. Social Security Benefits

It was stated that the alleged victims of Gukurahundi lost their livelihoods, pensions, spouses, and relatives, including parents. As a result, there was a need for social security for the dependants of the victims of Gukurahundi. It was proposed that the Government could establish a Gukurahundi compensation fund to provide social security benefits. On the other hand, it was suggested that lack of documentation hindered the dependants from claiming benefits derived from the estates of their deceased parents due to Gukurahundi.

In addition, it was suggested that there was a need to identify beneficiaries and quantify the degree of loss if such a program was established by the Government. There was fear that unscrupulous individuals would take advantage of the exercise. Therefore, the Chiefs were in a strategic position to verify the legitimacy of those claims.

Among all other organizations such as NGOs, NPRC, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, and other State institutions, stakeholders stated that there were more comfortable working with the Chiefs. However, some stated that they needed clarity on the role of the NPRC and Traditional Leaders in matters of conflict resolution.

It was expressed by some stakeholders that the NPRC should be involved in the processes. However, some stakeholders had reservations about the capacity of the NPRC to resolve and put the issue of Gukurahundi to rest as they had not managed to address the issue within the region.

b. Effects of Gukurahundi

The following are some of the effects of Gukurahundi as pointed out by the stakeholders: -

- Documentation (Birth, National IDs, and Deaths Certificates);
- Underdevelopment and Marginalisation of Matabeleland region;
- People lost lives;
- Women were raped;
- People are still traumatized;
- People lost breadwinners and their loved ones;
- Peoples lives were affected;
- People lost their property, pensions, salaries, and identity;
- Some people want to perform rituals but they don't know where their children were buried;
- Gukurahundi caused migration;
- Most people from the region did not benefit from the land reform program;
- Gukurahundi caused poverty and underdevelopment;
- Disabled people from Gukurahundi should be state supported;
- Lack of trust in Government institutions and resentment of Government programmes;
- Businesses were destroyed;
- Some people are perpetually on drought relief handouts;
- Some victims are experiencing mental challenges; and

1. Support for the President's opening up on the Gukurahundi discussion

During the consultations, there was overwhelming acceptance and support for His Excellency, the President Cde. Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa for opening up the space to discuss the Gukurahundi issue. It was seen as a major positive step to resolving the Gukurahundi issue for Zimbabweans. Stakeholders emphasized that there was no need for foreigners to come in, therefore, the nation should avoid foreign theories in resolving the issue.

On the other hand, some stakeholders were apprehensive about whether or not the State was sincere, serious, and genuine in resolving the matter.

2. National Council of Chiefs leadership in the Gukurahundi discussions

During the consultations, there was a great reception by the stakeholders over the assignment of Chiefs to take the lead in resolving the Gukurahundi issue. It was noted that since the inception of the Second Republic in 2017 under His Excellency, President Cde. Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa the space had opened up to discuss matters concerning the Gukurahundi incidents. Further, a majority of the participants during the consultations applauded the President for endorsing Traditional Leaders to bring the issue of Gukurahundi to closure. In this regard, stakeholders indicated that the decision to assign Chiefs was appropriate since most of the alleged victims of Gukurahundi resided in their areas of jurisdiction. Unlike other organizations, the National Council of Chiefs is proportionally balanced and representative of all the regions.

It was suggested in the consultations that the Chiefs were custodians of tradition, custom, and the land and were entrusted by Section 281 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013, to resolve disputes that concerned the people in their jurisdictions, respectively.

Further, it was advised that the Traditional Leaders should not present themselves as agents of the State because people view the State as the perpetrator. The Chiefs were encouraged to be independent and impartial in addressing this mandate. Some stakeholders indicated that Chiefs were also victims and survivors of Gukurahundi so they cannot represent the perpetrator who is the State. This was however, viewed as a way of dividing the people and the Chiefs.

6. ZPRA War Veterans Trust

In their opening remarks, ZPRA War Veterans Trust stated that "we kneel before you our Chiefs because when you make decisions it's for the benefit of all Zimbabweans.... thank you for uniting us, the Chiefs Council of Zimbabwe you are the right institution to resolve this problem". ZPRA believes that the playing field of Gukurahundi is theirs, and Government has been playing the Gukurahundi ball without them. They indicated that the platforms to negotiate were destroyed by the previous Government. ZPRA requested the following:

- An apology should be through the Chiefs which will open doors for reconciliation;
- Reconciliation and rehabilitation for the victims;
- ZIPRA combatants cannot access their benefits; and
- Return of ZPRA properties, ZAPU records, and memorabilia; (including Magnet House).

ZPRA Trust suggested that one of the key factors to resolving the Gukurahundi issue was for the Government to facilitate the return of ZPRA properties, memorabilia, and records that were seized during that period. It was argued that the return of ZPRA records would ensure the posterity of its history. Further, the memorabilia was also central to preserving the history of its exploits and legacy. It bemoaned that its history was not accessible to researchers, thus, a distorted narrative was peddled against it. One of the properties to be returned to ZPRA was Magnet House. ZPRA advised the Government not to make the process a talk show without implementation.

It stated that the NPRC did not manage to execute its mandate during its first term of office. Further, its membership trusted the Chiefs will do the right job, in contrast to the NPRC which was a lion without teeth that cannot address the Gukurahundi issues. A message was conveyed to His Excellency about the need for Traditional Leaders to carry out rituals to appease the heroes who perished outside the country. ZPRA bemoaned that it was still being called an unlawful, terrorist organization; it required to be treated fairly like any other independent organization.

d. Issues from Binga and the Zambezi valley

Due to peculiar circumstances concerning Gukurahundi, we addressed the issues affecting Binga and the Zambezi valley below:

- The typical killing by the 5th Brigade was not very pronounced; instead, they suffered incidents of rape and killings from the dissidents who were running away from the 5th Brigade from the Ndebele predominantly speaking areas.
- The bitterness that remains which they seek healing was the compensation from the relocation from the Zambezi valley during 1956-60 to construct Kariba Dam, by the Rhodesian Government.

e. Perceptions created by the Gukurahundi

During the consultations, it was clear that there exists serious and deep feelings of hate and anger over the years because of the issue of Gukurahundi to the extent that they have become real and true. These include the following: -

- Some people in the Matabeleland regions believe that they are left behind in development initiatives;
- There are fewer schools in the region as compared to other provinces in the country;
- There is a vicious cycle of poverty caused by Gukurahundi in the region;
- It was alleged that the land reform programme benefited the Shona predominantly (e.g., the farm of Siphosami Malunga the son of Sydney Malunga was repossessed by Government and reallocated to a Shona person);
- Military and the Central Intelligence Organisation are the faces of Gukurahundi; this has led to low recruitment to the Security Services especially the Zimbabwe National Army;
- Bad omens are attributed to Gukurahundi (e.g., drought in Matabeleland caused by shallow graves; failure to get married; failure to conceive children was due to their relatives not buried properly);
- Appeasing the dead is now intergenerational, and now real because of time;
- People in Matabeleland feel inferior to other regions;

iv. Civic Society Organisations and Faith Based Organisations

The following is the list of Civic Society Organisations and Faith Based Organisations that attended the consultations: -

1. Rev. Shadreck Ncube	ZCA
2. Rev. Siphos Mafu	ZCA
3. Rev. Useni Sibanda	ZCA
4. Rev. Maxwell Sibanda	EFZ
5. Bishop Ndumiso Khumalo	EFZ
6. Gugulethu C. Mabhena	Trinity Project
7. Sikhathale Mhlanga	IDT
8. Hildegard Nyathi	LWDT
9. Phanuel Sibanda	Matabeleland Collective
10. Millot Ncube	ZPRA
11. Cetshwayo Sithole	ZPRA
12. Job Ndlovu	ZPRA
13. Petros Sibanda	ZPRA
14. Grace Noko	ZPRA
15. Basera Magwizi	ZPRA
16. Magodonga Mahlangu	WOZA
17. Effie Ncube	MAT
18. Jenny Williams	WOZA
19. Alfred Sithua	SANCT
20. Patience Museva	SANCT
21. Dumisani Ngwenya	Grace to Heal
22. Governor Musaka	Basilwizi Trust
23. F. Mbuso	Ibhetshu Likazulu
24. Tandekile Moyo	Ibhetshu Likazulu

a. Preliminary Views

The following were the views expressed by the Stakeholders during the consultations:

-

- 27. Matupula
- 28. Saba
- 29. Shana
- 30. Mtshane
- 31. Siansali
- 32. Sinansengwe

iii. Chiefs from Matabeleland South

The list of Chiefs from Matabeleland South who attended the consultation meeting comprised of the following Chieftainships:-

- 1. Kandana
- 2. Bakwayi
- 3. Tshitshi
- 4. Hobodo
- 5. Sangulube
- 6. Bango
- 7. Gwebu
- 8. Sigola
- 9. Mathe
- 10. Khoma
- 11. Sitaudze
- 12. Mphini
- 13. Mathe
- 14. Bidi
- 15. Madlambudzi
- 16. Nyangazonke
- 17. Masuku
- 18. Masendu
- 19. Sibasa

- Unity accord was a bandage on a wound that had pus and blood which means the wound is getting worse (anger);
- They don't feel that they are part of Zimbabwe;
- Belief that Reburials will unlock the fortunes of the family [Marriage, getting jobs, having children, and being successful in life];
- Natural resources are harvested by people from other regions; and
- Civil Servants are not from the region and speak other languages.

f. Recommendations and Way Forward

Matters for Guidance by His Excellency, the President Cde. Dr. E.D Mnangagwa

The National Council of Chiefs sought guidance on the following issues: -

- How to deal with political actors such as the ZANU PF leadership in Gukurahundi affected areas, the Politburo, the Central Committee, POLAD, and former high ranking ZPRA members
- The need for a comprehensive budget to implement the recommendations.
- The need for consistency by other senior and high-ranking Government officials on the President's position which needs to be understood by ruling party members.
- Engagement with stakeholders and victims outside the Matabeleland region such as the Midlands province.

C. READING OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE CDE. E.D. MNANGAGWA'S RESPONSE

President of the National Council of Chiefs informed the meeting that the following were the responses proffered by His Excellency, the President to the concerns aforementioned above: -

- An acknowledgment was not an issue of contention with the Government.
- An apology remained an issue of contention even during the consultations of the 23 stakeholders.
- No chiefs would intrude in another Chief's area of jurisdiction. Further, each Chief was limited to his or her domain.

- However, he indicated that a Chief was free to request support from his peers, but it was ultimately a Chief's responsibility to handle the matter in his or her area.
- Reburials and exhumations to be conducted by observing a family's customs and culture-specific norms would have to be observed.
- Chiefs had the responsibility to identify the victims.
- Chiefs were tasked to identify families that lost pensions, and even if the deceased person did not qualify because of years of service, His Excellency would declare an exception on the matter.
- The Chiefs were tasked to bring the names of those families that required assistance in obtaining lost salaries including social security benefits where the records were available.
- Health services would be provided for the disabled and those incapacitated due to Gukurahundi.
- Support available was not limited but also available to persons with mental disorders requiring psychosocial support counseling.
- The government would also offer support for Education to victims.
- Cabinet had discussed a budget to build more than three thousand schools in the country and the budget deliberately allocated construction of more schools, in the Matabeleland region.
- ZIPRA had established a forum to discuss issues with the President. Therefore, ZIPRA cadres should continue engaging His Excellency at that forum.
- It was indicated that the Government had commissioned a contractor to rehabilitate the road from Beitbridge to Victoria Falls.
- Chiefs should inquire from their people and record those genuine cases of victims of Gukurahundi and furnish the information to the government. The government was willing to address those issues as long as there were genuine and authentic.

D. PLENARY WITH CIVIC SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS

The following are the major interventions that Civic Society Organisations and Faith Based Organizations raised:-

1. Where does the National Chiefs Council get its mandate?

12. Chief Gwebu

Matabeleland South.

ii. Chiefs from Matabeleland North

The list of Chiefs from Matabeleland North who attended the consultation meeting comprised of the following Chieftainships: -

1. Tategulu
2. Mvutu
3. Dingani
4. Magama
5. Deli
6. Pashu
7. Sinamunsanga
8. Sinakatenge
9. Sikobokobo
10. Siamupa
11. Nekatambe
12. Gampu
13. Siachilaba
14. Hwange
15. Nkalakatha
16. Sivalo
17. Madliwa
18. Sinampande
19. Sinakoma
20. Tshugulu
21. Dakamela
22. Sinamwenda
23. Dobola
24. Mabhikwa
25. Siabuwa
26. Nondo

From the 3rd to the 4th of September, 2021 the National Council of Chiefs presented the report of the consultations with stakeholders to the Chiefs of the Matabeleland North and South as well as, the endorsement by His Excellency, the President to the process. The meeting was also attended by Government Officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage in particular the Registrar General's Office. The Officials responded to questions by the Chiefs on issues around documentation of victims who reaffirmed Government's position to facilitate the same.

The National Council of Chiefs convened a meeting from the 10th to the 11th of March, 2022. On the 10th of March, 2022, the meeting was attended by 22 Civic Society Organisations and Faith Based Organisations that had attended the 29th of July to 1st of August, 2021, and the 4th to 6th of August, 2021 consultative meetings. The purpose of the meeting was to give feedback on the report presented to His Excellency, the President as well as present the President's responses to that report. Furthermore, the meeting also allowed the stakeholders to further enhance their contributions to the process by suggesting possible enablers to the road map.

B. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

i. National Council of Chiefs

The list of members of the National Council of Chiefs who attended the consultations comprised of the following: -

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Chief Charumbira | President, National Council of Chiefs (Chairing); |
| 2. Chief Khumalo | Deputy President, National Council of Chiefs |
| 3. Chief Shana | Chairperson, Matabeleland North; |
| 4. Chief Masendu | Chairperson, Matabeleland South; |
| 5. Chief Siansali | Matabeleland North; |
| 6. Chief Siabuwa | Matabeleland North; |
| 7. Chief Mathuphula | Matabeleland North; |
| 8. Chief Sikhobokhobo | Matabeleland North; |
| 9. Chief Nyangazonke | Matabeleland South; |
| 10. Chief Masuku | Matabeleland South; |
| 11. Chief Sibasa | Matabeleland South; and |

2. Whether or not the process should involve an International Commission of inquiry similar to the Montlante Commission?
3. Whether or not there was a need for a Statute to be promulgated to facilitate the processes?
4. Whether or not the Government would officially acknowledge the incident?
5. Whether or not it was appropriate for the Chiefs to hold consultations in the domain of another Chief?
6. Why the Midlands Province was not included in the Process?
7. There was a need to ensure that the reports of the incidents should be written in the victim-friendly language.
8. There was a need to set up a Steering Committee comprising of CSOs and Faith Based Organisations. It was proposed that the Chiefs residing in the affected areas would establish Provincial Implementation Committees led by the Provincial Assembly of Chiefs' Chair person to engage affected people.
9. There was a need for a budget to ensure there is adequate resources for the exercise.
10. There was a need to identify the actual victims that were affected for them to get closure.
11. The Gukurahundi issue should not be treated as a Matabeleland issue but as a national issue.
12. There was a need to avail the Dumbutshena and Chihambakwe reports to comprehend the intricacies involved.
13. Whether Bye-Elections which were being conducted by Government would conflict with the exercise considering political parties were campaigning and some of the perpetrators were political figures. There was a need for affected victims to openly debate and participate freely.
14. There was a need to establish healing teams comprising people with different expertise to enhance the process.
15. The final report that will be submitted by the Chiefs should be availed to the general public.
16. There was a need for full cooperation among all stakeholders to ensure the process is not stifled.

17. There was a need to avail of the report produced by the NPRC concerning the matter.

18. There was a need to ensure that victims that were no longer residing in the areas are allowed to heal.

E. RESPONSE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHIEFS

The President of the National Council of Chiefs indicated that the Chief's mandate was derived from the Constitution in terms of Section 281 and the Traditional Leaders Act which mandate to Chiefs to resolve disputes within their jurisdictions and promote a culture of peace and reconciliation. Moreover, the Head of State had mandated the National Council of Chiefs to resolve the matter. He indicated that the institution of Chiefs was derived from God and that the structures that existed had been distorted due to colonization.

The President of the National Council of Chiefs also highlighted that the matter was historical and of a localized nature and its sensitivity required that the solutions for genuine redress be localized, thus an International Commission of Inquiry was unnecessary. He assured the stakeholders that the Chiefs were the appropriate institution to deal with the matter since the Chiefs had direct access to the victims and could easily identify genuine cases within their respective jurisdictions. Zimbabwe could take a cue from the experience of Rwanda's Traditional Gacaca Courts.

With regards to the formulation of a Statute Instrument, it was indicated the country had sufficient laws to conduct the work that was beforehand. Furthermore, the Government would launch the program through His Excellency, the President. The Statement by the President and the fact that the issue was being discussed on these various platforms was sufficient acknowledgment of the incident.

President of the National Council of Chiefs reiterated that no Chief would interfere in another Chief's domain in the implementation of the process. The house was assured that the decision to respect the domains of the Chiefs was a resolution by the Chiefs

A. INTRODUCTION

Consultations with regard to the issue of Gukurahundi commenced after His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Cde. Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa heeded the invitation extended to him on the 21st of March, 2019 by Matabeleland Civic Society Organisations working under the banner of Matabeleland Collective to come to Bulawayo to discuss issues affecting the Matabeleland region.

As a result, His Excellency, the President convened a consultative meeting with the Chiefs from the Matabeleland region on the 24th of June, 2019 to discuss issues that were raised in the invitation letter referred to above. Another meeting was held on the 22nd of August, 2019 between a high-powered Government delegation led by His Excellency, the President, and the Matabeleland Collective as part of the efforts to continue cooperation and dialogue. At the 22nd of August, 2019 meeting, it was resolved to involve Traditional Leaders to spearhead the Gukurahundi issue.

Additional meetings to that effect were held on the 24th and 30th of October, 2020 wherein His Excellency, the President met with Chiefs from the Matabeleland Provinces to receive their respective reports on the consultative processes relating to the issue of Gukurahundi which they conducted in their areas of jurisdiction. Furthermore, on the 30th of October 2020, His Excellency, the President met the National Council of Chiefs wherein all the members of the National Council of Chiefs endorsed the initiative of Traditional Leaders taking leadership in resolving issues of Gukurahundi. The meeting culminated in two interfaces between the National Council of Chiefs, Matabeleland Collective, and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) on the 22nd and the 26th December, 2020 to map a way forward concerning the issue of Gukurahundi.

Furthermore, the National Council of Chiefs from the 29th of July to the 1st of August, 2021 and from the 4th to 6th of August, 2021 held consultative meetings with Matabeleland Civic Society. The findings of the consultations were presented to His Excellency, the President on the 21st of August, 2021 wherein he reaffirmed the commitment of Government to resolve the issues with respect to Gukurahundi.

Contents

A. INTRODUCTION	2
B. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	3
i. National Council of Chiefs.....	3
ii. Chiefs from Matabeleland North.....	4
iii. Chiefs from Matabeleland South.....	5
iv. Civic Society Organisations and Faith Based Organisations.....	6
a. Preliminary Views	6
1. Support for the President's opening up on the Gukurahundi discussion....	7
2. National Council of Chiefs leadership in the Gukurahundi discussions.....	7
b. Effects of Gukurahundi	8
1. Documentation (Birth, National IDs, and Deaths Certificates).....	9
2. Underdevelopment and Marginalisation of Matabeleland region.....	10
3. National Healing, Reconciliation, and National Building.....	10
4. Counseling and Psychosocial support.....	11
c. Issues requiring attention	12
1. Acknowledgment and Apology.....	12
2. Consultation of victims.....	13
3. Reburials, Exhumations, and Memorials.....	14
4. Reparations and Compensation.....	15
5. Social Security Benefits.....	15
6. ZPRA War Veterans Trust.....	16
d. Issues from Binga and the Zambezi valley	17
e. Perceptions created by the Gukurahundi	17
f. Recommendations and Way Forward	18
C. READING OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE CDE. E.D. MNANGAGWA'S RESPONSE	18
D. PLENARY WITH CIVIC SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS	19
E. RESPONSE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHIEFS	21

themselves. Furthermore, it was also the discretion of the Chiefs to elect to invite another Chief to assist when there was a need to do so.

It was highlighted that although the Midlands province was also an area that was affected by the Gukurahundi incidents, the program would be rolled out first in Matabeleland province. The launch of the program in Matabeleland North and South provinces would serve as a litmus test before rolling it out to the Midlands province.

President of the National Council of Chiefs highlighted to the meeting that the purpose of the engagement was not to criticize the process that had been done thus far but to enhance the process by providing practical solutions on how best to capacitate the Chiefs in the affected areas. He indicated that the matter of language in writing reports had been taken on board. Moreover, the CSOs and FBOs should take the opportunity to market their particular expertise that would be useful to the process.

President of the National Council of Chiefs indicated that His Excellency, the President Cde. Dr. Mnangagwa had assured the Chiefs that there was a platform for ZPRA cadres to engage the Government. Therefore, the issues raised by ZPRA should be raised at that platform. However, retired Colonel Magwizi from ZPRA indicated that the platform was not functioning as the Office of the President and Cabinet was refusing to facilitate meetings to resolve their issues.



Zimbabwe

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