STILL REMEMBERED

A compendium on missing persons in Zimbabwe...
Habakkuk Trust
supported by
Open Society Institute of Southern Africa
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Zimbabwe has an unenviable legacy of enforced abductions epitomized by thousands of people who have gone missing since the height of the liberation struggle in the seventies. The legacy of missing persons through enforced abductions is a tragic blight on a country once touted as the jewel of Africa. Since the disappearance of nationalist Edson Sithole and ZAPU intelligence supreme Ethan Dube, the country has continued on a sad path with hundreds of citizens disappearing at the hands of state agents without any proper explanation.

Most recently Itai Dzamara disappeared and is still not accounted for. It is the duty of civil society to document incidents of missing persons and to compile databases of missing people; the circumstances of their disappearances, the identity of the perpetrators and the effects on surviving family members of these enforced disappearances.

Habakkuk Trust with the support of OSISA has undertaken to compile a compendium of missing persons. The compendium is not a detailed database but a snapshot into about 20 cases of missing persons from 1983 to 2015. The compendium captures the identity of the missing person, their occupation and the circumstances of their “disappearance”. Missing persons should not be collapsed into mere statistics without actually giving a human face to the victims and documenting the real lived experiences of survivors. This compendium is an attempt at compiling a few stories about “Missing Persons”.

Brief accounts are given about the nature of the disappearances, the processes that followed and the condition of the families of the victims. In an attempt to investigate how issues of missing persons are handled a few cases of non-political disappearances are also covered to explore whether the Missing Persons Act was religiously followed by the criminal justice system.

The compendium is a preliminary case study of the issue of missing persons and will curtain raise subsequent studies.

Dumisani O. Nkomo
Chief Executive Officer
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **VISION, MISSION & GOAL** 6
- **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** 7
- **ABBREVIATIONS** 8
- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** 9
- **CONTEXT** 10
- **LEGAL FRAMEWORK** 11
- **SCOPE OF THE COMPENDIUM** 15
- **INTRODUCTION** 16
- **LIST OF MISSING PERSONS:**
  - **NARRATIVES FROM AFFECTED FAMILIES** 17
- **CONCLUSION** 48
- **RECOMMENDATIONS** 49
About Habakkuk Trust

Habakkuk Trust is a Christian organization that was formed in August 2000 and subsequently registered as a trust. The organization exists to enhance citizen participation in decision making and development processes focusing on the ability of grassroots communities to determine their own destinies. Habakkuk Trust, currently works in Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South. The organization’s key competencies are advocacy, research, information dissemination and capacity building on areas of governance, social concerns, sustainable livelihoods and development.

Vision
To see informed, empowered and transformed communities.

Mission
To influence the biblical transformation of communities through, advocacy, research, information dissemination, capacity building and community development.

Goal
To contribute to an informed and active citizenship that promotes peaceful co-existence and accountable governance.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Habakkuk Trust would like to express profound gratitude to the affected families for the willingness to contribute to the production of this document.

The organisation further extends its gratefulness to Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) for their financial support which made this research and production of this document possible.

Habakkuk Trust values the outstanding contributions from the following: Dumisani Mpofu–tracing and gathering information from affected families, Mthabisi Phili for directing photography and video filming and Blondie Ndebele for editing this booklet.
### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AK-47</td>
<td>Avtomat Kalashnikova 1947</td>
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<td>B.I.C.C</td>
<td>Brethren in Christ Church</td>
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<td>CID</td>
<td>Criminal Investigations Department</td>
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<td>DNA</td>
<td>Deoxyribonucleic Acid</td>
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<td>GAP</td>
<td>Grassroots Advocacy Programme</td>
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<td>ID</td>
<td>Identity Document</td>
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<td>MDC</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
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<td>NPRC</td>
<td>National Peace and Reconciliation Commission</td>
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<td>OSISA</td>
<td>Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa</td>
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<td>POSB</td>
<td>People’s Own Savings Bank</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>ZANU PF</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front</td>
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<td>ZAPU</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African People’s Union</td>
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<td>ZHRC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission</td>
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<td>ZIPRA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army</td>
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<td>ZRP</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Republic Police</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The missing persons compendium is a collection of accounts of people who went missing at the height of successive conflicts in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is a victim of pre and post-independence conflicts that left a trail of disappearances that are still yet to be accounted for. The booklet holds accounts from surviving family members who include spouses and children of people who allegedly disappeared at the hands of the army particularly the notorious 5th brigade and the central intelligence organisation.

The state sponsored atrocities left a trail of destruction and missing persons. The compendium also presents cases of miscellaneous disappearances of Zimbabwean citizens within and outside Zimbabwe. Families of persons who went missing face an array of socio-economic challenges including the failure to obtain birth certificates, identity cards and some are living in abject poverty as they cannot access pension benefits from their missing relatives.

The current missing persons legislative framework is clear on what should be done by families. The Missing Persons Act requires families to follow a simple procedure through the magistrate court to declare their relatives dead after considering the period to which their relative went missing for purposes of acquiring death certificate.

However, the issue of missing persons directly relates to the state's perpetration of genocide in Matabeleland through abductions; an unfortunate situation that has made duty bearers including registrar’s office and the police, fail to assist the affected persons even if the case is not related to politics.

The establishment of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) presents a glimmer of hope for surviving families with the anticipation that breaking the silence on historical injustices will provide closure to the affected families.
CONTEXT

Zimbabwe has undergone a series of successive conflicts from independence to date. These conflicts have left a trail of destruction ranging from genocide, rape, torture and disappearances. However, the issue of missing persons is hardly discussed in public forums yet countless families are living in untold anguish, wondering whether their loved ones are still alive or dead. Soon after independence, Matabeleland and Midlands grossly suffered in the hands of the army deployed to deal with an alleged dissident menace.

The period, infamously known as Gukurahundi, which began in early 1983 up to 1987 left an estimated 20000 people dead and an unknown number of disappearances through abductions.

Gukurahundi has remained an emotive issue in the country and the government has failed to take responsibility with the former President of Zimbabwe Robert Gabriel Mugabe admitting that it was a “moment of madness” which should be left in the past while President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who was the Minister of State Security during that period has said ‘let bygones be bygones’.

Over the years, human remains are continuously being discovered in areas such as Kezi where innocent civilians were buried in mass graves. More people continued to disappear even during the fast track land reform programme and at the height of the formation of Zimbabwe’s largest opposition party at that time, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

This period of volatile political activity was also marred by violent abductions; key to note being the abduction of Patrick Nabanyama on the 19th of June 2000 and was never found since then and November 2001 saw the abduction of the Bulawayo Province War Veterans Association chairperson Cain Nkala whose body was later found buried in a shallow grave 40km southwest of Bulawayo.

The country held it’s tightly contested 2002 elections which were characterised by gross human rights violations perpetrated by ZANU PF youth militia. In 2005, Zimbabwe embarked on Operation Murambasvina which saw many families being displaced, the political environment worsening and many others being subjected to enforced disappearances.
Zimbabwe experienced its most violent election in 2008. There was an election runoff and the period saw the abduction of Zimbabwe Peace Project Director Ms Jestina Mukoko. Disappearances especially of political and human rights activists have continued until today and these are a tragedy not only to the people that go missing but largely to the family members who are left in the dark.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The issue on missing persons is enshrined in international legal instruments which emphasise on the right to life for all and the right to truth for the families with a missing relative. United Nations set aside the 24th of March to observe International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims.

The UN recognises that “The relatives of victims of summary executions, enforced disappearance, missing persons, abducted children, torture, require to know what happened to them. The right to the truth implies knowing the full and complete truth as to the events that transpired, their specific circumstances, and who participated in them, knowing the circumstances in which the violations took place, as well as the reasons for them.” The Zimbabwean government has also put in place laws on missing persons to comply with international obligations.
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

PART I

Article 1
1. No one shall be subjected to enforced disappearance.
2. No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification for enforced disappearance.

Article 2
For the purposes of this Convention, “enforced disappearance” is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.

Article 12
1. Each State Party shall ensure that any individual who alleges that a person has been subjected to enforced disappearance has the right to report the facts to the competent authorities, which shall examine the allegation promptly and impartially and, where necessary, undertake without delay a thorough and impartial investigation. Appropriate steps shall be taken, where necessary, to ensure that the complainant, witnesses, relatives of the disappeared person and their defense counsel, as well as persons participating in the investigation, are protected against all ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of the complaint or any evidence given.
2. Where there are reasonable grounds for believing that a person has been subjected to enforced disappearance, the authorities referred to in paragraph 1 of this article shall undertake an investigation, even if there has been no formal complaint.
3. Each State Party shall ensure that the authorities referred to in paragraph 1 of this article:
(a) Have the necessary powers and resources to conduct the investigation effectively, including access to the documentation and other information relevant to their investigation;
(b) Have access, if necessary with the prior authorization of a judicial authority, which shall rule promptly on the matter, to any place of detention or any other place where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the disappeared person may be present.

4. Each State Party shall take the necessary measures to prevent and sanction acts that hinder the conduct of an investigation. It shall ensure in particular that persons suspected of having committed an offence of enforced disappearance are not in a position to influence the progress of an investigation by means of pressure or acts of intimidation or reprisal aimed at the complainant, witnesses, relatives of the disappeared person or their defense counsel, or at persons participating in the investigation.
Zimbabwe’s Missing Persons Act  
Chapter 5: 14  
10. Effect of presumption of death

(1) Where an order has been made in terms of paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section five, the clerk of the court shall, within seven days of the date the order takes effect in terms of section nine, notify the Master accordingly and send a copy of the order to the Registrar-General and, notwithstanding the Births and Deaths Registration Act [Chapter 5:02], such copy shall be deemed to be a notice of death for the purposes of section 21 of that Act.

(2) Subject to section seventeen, a person in respect of whom an order in terms of paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section five has been made shall be deemed for the purposes of any law to have died on the date the order takes effect in terms of section nine, and accordingly any subsisting marriage shall, with effect from that date, be dissolved:

Provided that—

(i) where the magistrate making the order has specified a date or a date and time for the purposes referred to in subsection (2) of section five, the person in respect of whom the order has been made shall, for the purposes of determining, in terms of the law relating to testate or intestate succession, the persons who shall succeed to his property, be deemed to have died on that date or at that time, as the case may be;

(ii) notice of death shall be deemed to have been delivered in terms of section 5 of the Estates Act.

11 Cancellation of order for appointment of administrator

Where an order has been made in terms of paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section five, a magistrate of the court of the province concerned or a judge may—

(a) before an administrator is appointed, on good cause shown; or

(b) at any time, if he is satisfied that the person in respect of whom the order is made has reappeared; cancel the order.
SCOPE OF THE COMPENDIUM

This booklet focuses on persons who went missing in Zimbabwe and particularly in Matabeleland region as a result of conflicts. The compendium has also taken a deliberate attempt to focus on other people who went missing as a result of unknown reasons as a way of highlighting how the law and various agents of the state deal with issues of missing persons in the country. The booklet contains interviews from the affected families who narrate their stories on how it happened and the socio-economic struggles they undergo as a result of the incidents. The compendium is telling untold stories that will provoke thought processes and actions to influence the state to take preventative and restorative measures to protect its citizens.

This is hardly an exhaustive list as it contains few interviews and largely focused on Matabeleland region. Some interviews could not be conducted because some families are still afraid to talk. Constraints in resources also limited the study.
INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a summary of the many cases of forced disappearances and missing persons that happened in Zimbabwe. Worthy to note is the behaviour of the police in dealing with the cases. The subject of missing persons has been associated with state abductions as a result of the conflicts that marred the country over the years.

The number of the affected usually increase during the elections. State security agents are often implicated in abductions and the police seem uninterested in attending to the cases. However, it has turned into a culture of not attending to anybody with a similar problem as presented in the accounts of the individuals’ interviews during this study.

The accounts also present a lot of inconsistencies in terms of the application of the law by the police; at times they allegedly do nothing when such cases are reported or they pretend to be doing something and at times they allegedly refuse to even take statements.

The issue has presented an array of challenges to surviving families especially in accessing civil documents including certificate of deaths for the missing persons and their pension benefits.

Families who managed to acquire documents for their missing loved ones would have been persistent and made a lot of effort following up on them, moving from office to office until the respective offices assisted them. In some cases where the missing persons were allegedly abducted by state agents, families were given death certificates with details that are contrary to what happened to the person.

A lot of them who were victims of Gukurahundi were given death certificates with incorrect narratives, some written that the person died of multiple injuries or died in a cross fire yet their bodies were never recovered. In an effort to obtain birth certificates for the victims’ children, some women had to ‘donate’ their children to relatives so that they can be registered and be able to access social services such as education.

As a result of the enforced disappearances, some affected families are living in abject poverty because of failure to access benefits (such as pension benefits) they were supposed to access when their relatives disappeared. Some affected families are still in serious conflicts after abductions that remain unresolved as there are suspicions that some family members would have sold out resulting in their loved ones disappearing.
LIST OF MISSING PERSONS:
NARRATIVES FROM AFFECTED FAMILIES
Joza Ncube trained as a ZIPRA cadre and returned home in 1980 like many others. Sometime in 1984, Joza was taken from his home by soldiers who force-marched him to a nearby military base in Maphane – Gwanda. His father followed to find out what was happening, when he got to the military base, he was temporarily detained and heavily assaulted.

The father was not given a chance to see his son, Joza and that was the last time they heard of him. A year later, Joza's wife made a report to the police in an attempt to get assistance to obtain birth certificates for their children but no assistance was offered.

The wife persistently visited the registrar’s office in Kezi which is about 80kilometres away from her home.

In one of her visits to obtain birth certificates for the children, about 15 years after Joza's abduction; they found his identity card at the registrar’s office in Kezi. According to the wife, the ID card was retrieved from a cardboard box full of ID documents that were said to have been retrieved from Bhalagwe, which was a notorious detention centre situated at the west of Antelope Mine in Matobo District. She was allowed to use that identity card to obtain birth certificates.

Family
Joza's two sons dropped out of school and the wife left and re-joined her family in the nearby village. After his disappearance, his wife was hunted down by the military. She was assisted by a neighbour to escape and settled in Bulawayo until after 1988.
PLOT NDLOVU

Sex: Male
Year of Birth: 1935 - Tumasi Village, Matobo District Ward 11
Occupation: Was working in Kezi as a District Assistant and retired in 1979. He was a tailor at the time of his disappearance
Year of Disappearance: 1984
Place of Disappearance: Sontala, Matobo Ward 12

Details
Plot Ndlovu was married and blessed with five children. He spent most of his time as a tailor. He was a traditional leader (a kraal head now referred to as village head). Plot did not possess any known political history but worked for government under the colonial regime.

On the 9th of March 1984, Ndlovu was abducted by soldiers from the 5th Brigade in Mbembeswane- Matobo ward 11. The 5th brigade had set up a holding camp in the area.

He was abducted and detained together with other villagers. According to those who were later released from the holding camp, Ndlovu was relocated to another 5th brigade holding camp in Sontala in neighbouring Ward 12.

Sources who spoke to the wife revealed that he was badly injured by the time he left Mbembeswane holding camp. This was the last time the family ever heard of him. A police report was made and no follow up investigations were done as the police refused to take a statement.

Family
After Plot’s abduction, his spouse failed to pay school fees for the children who subsequently dropped out of school at primary level. Like any other school leavers during that time they also migrated down south. The wife attempted to obtain birth certificates for her children but faced a lot of difficulties because she didn’t have their paternal identity documents.
The first three children had to be adopted by his brother who then registered them as his own so that they could obtain birth certificates. 23 years later, in 2007 the wife was able to obtain a death certificate which was then used to register the other two as Plot Ndlovu’s children.

The death certificate was issued without an inquest into his death and his death certificate indicates that he died as a result of multiple injuries yet he was never seen by anyone after his abduction and his body was never seen.

“I explained to them (registry officers) that I know he might be dead because he has gone for so many years and has never came back but I never saw his grave. We had a tough time trying to get a death certificate”
Paul Ncube

Sex: Male
Year of birth: 1917
Occupation: Farmer
Year of Disappearance: 1985
Place of Disappearance: Donkwe- Donkwe, Matobo Ward 14

Details
Paul worked in South Africa for many years before he retired and went back home in Matobo to concentrate on his fields. On the 5th of February 1985, at around 10am, the family had an unusual visit from men in military uniforms who claimed to know Paul and that he was very receptive to the freedom fighters during the liberation struggle.

They mentioned some of the famous names of freedom fighters who used to interact with Paul during that. The family served them with tea, lunch and they left around 4pm. At around 10pm, dogs started barking continuously indicated danger and at around midnight, military men carrying AK47 headed straight to Paul’s bedroom hut, knocked and door was open and Paul spoke to them.

He was alone in his hut as his wife had travelled to Bulawayo for a workshop. A few minutes later, the voices faded and the children quickly rushed to Paul’s hut only to find him gone. He was wearing a vest, short and farmer shoes when he was abducted.

A report of the abduction was made at Kezi Police station but no investigation was done. Twelve years later, the family tried to obtain death certificates with the assistance of Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe and through the courts.

An advert was posted on the Chronicle newspaper and the family was issued with a presumption of death in September 1995.
Interestingly, an officer from the registrar’s office refused to sign the document citing that he will be in trouble for signing a document with the cause of death being written missing. The family was therefore referred to Gwanda Provincial Registrar’s Office where they were referred back to Kezi.

The family eventually abandoned the efforts to get a signed certificate as all children already had birth certificates. Paul was supposed to get benefits from South Africa when he was involved in an accident while he was working there. His family failed to trace the benefits as they did not have a death certificate.

“We believe there is someone somewhere who knows what eventually happened to our father and we wish that one day we will be able to access that information. If we had seen even one of his bones, we would find closure.” Lameck Ncube (son)
Samson Ncube

Sex: Male
Year of birth: 1937
Occupation: Teacher
Year of Disappearance: 17 February 1985
Place of Disappearance: Balagwe Area, Matobo

Details
Samson was a teacher at Tshehondo primary school before his abduction. On the 17th of February 1985 at around 11pm, Samson’s family was visited by two people in civilian clothes who were carrying guns. They knocked at their bedroom hut before Samson opened the door and spoke to them. They asked whether the military was still at Balagwe Camp and whether he had seen vehicles going to the camp. Samson replied that he had seen few vehicles passing by the road and believed that there were few soldiers left. However, the two unknown men insisted on being taken to the gate to be shown the way to Balagwe Camp. Samson was wearing a trousers and farmer shoes when he accompanied these unknown persons and was never seen again.

In the morning, his family followed his shoe print which disappeared about a kilometre away where a vehicle they were using is believed to have been parked. A police report was made and the police assured the family that they were going to look into the issue but no investigation was done.

A month after his disappearances, Samson’s wife and mother wrote an affidavit stating the details of his disappearance and requesting access to his salary at the POSB bank. However they failed to get any benefits to date.
In 2006, the children tried to obtain death certificate for missing Samson in order to access pension benefits he left behind. They made several visits to Bulawayo until they abandoned the mission due to travelling costs. their uncles.
The family failed to access any benefits, the school never did anything about the issue and the family struggled to survive after Samson’s abduction.

He had 8 young children and most of them failed to finish secondary school while two younger ones were eventually adopted by

“Our hope was to get pension benefits our father left behind. No matter how small it was, it was going to make a difference. We could not obtain a death certificate. We lost our father and all he had worked for all his life.” Sinikiwe Ncube (daughter)
I, REBECCA NGUBE, Nat. Reg. Number (80) 02-432069, do hereby take oath and swear that:

1. I was born in 1951 on the 22nd of July, in the Silumve Area, Sontala Kasi.

2. I got married to SAMSON NGUBE in 1973 when he was teaching at BALAGWE SCHOOL.

3. I have got eight children with SAMSON NGUBE and our homestead is near BALAGWE Mountains in the TSHEVONGO Area.

4. Before my husband was abducted, he was teaching at TSHEVONGO SCHOOL which is near our homestead.

5. I recall on the 17th of February, 1985 at about 2100 hours when I was asleep with my husband at our homestead hearing a knock at our bedroom door. My husband opened the door when he was ordered to come out of the house to join the people who were outside.

   When my husband had joined them outside, I heard the assailant asking him whether the soldiers were still at BALAGWE CAMP. After this question, they then asked whether he and not seen vehicles going to the Camp, but to this, he told the assailant that he only heard vehicles passing by the road.

   When my husband got out of the house, he was wearing trousers and farmer shoes only leaving his identification particulars in the house.

   I believe that he might have left the POST OFFICE SAVINGS ACCOUNT BOOK in Bulawayo since he did not show me Book when he returned from Bulawayo. My husband always get his Salary from the Post Office Bank.

   At the present moment, since my husband was abducted by the assailants and did not come back, I find it very hard to survive with the eight children I have got at Home.

   Since we married, we did not obtain a marriage certificate and now it has become hard for me collect my husband's Salary without the marriage certificate.

6. When I took my National Registration card, I used my husband's name, and in case my parents refused me to have a marriage certificate before my husband finish paying the LOZCLA.

7. Since my husband has not yet returned, I wish I could be given his Salary since I have got no money to support the children with, and some of our children are at School.

    That is all I can say in connection with the aforementioned.
Ozie Ncube worked as a police officer during the Ian Smith regime. He retired from the police service in 1980 and joined the Tsholotsho Rural District Council as a sales person. Ozie was promoted to the post of manager which he held until 1983. He was a known ZAPU supporter.

Ozie was arrested at his workplace and detained at a temporary military holding place in Tsholotsho Centre with his workmates. After 3 days of detention, Ozie and five others were moved to another detention centre which is about 20km from the centre at Zibungululu Secondary School. Those who were released from the detention centre suspect that he could have been killed there.

According to the information given to the brother who remained in charge of his family, this military base was a holding centre for mostly civil servants and local authority employees. It is suspected that the area has a mass grave for those who were killed during the detention period.

Family

Ozie left behind three children and a wife who, despite her age at the time, decided to remain with the family till this day. Ozie’s young brother, Andrew Ncube, a trained ZIPRA cadre who later joined Siphepha Hospital as an admin clerk at independence was later arrested the same week.
Andrew was shot by the 5th Brigade while at work, he ran to the nearby police station where they followed him and shot him in cold blood in front of his colleagues. His family also became the elder brother’s responsibility.
Ozie’s first child was registered by his brother, Obert Ncube, as they did not have official documentation to prove his abduction and subsequent disappearance.

After persistent visits to the registrar’s office Ozie’s family was finally issued with a death certificate indicating that Ozie died in cross fire. It is this document that they then used to obtain birth certificates for the other two children. Ozie’s family was advised that if they don’t want to accept the assertion that he died in a cross fire they will not be assisted to get civil documentation.

“When we were obtaining death certificates, we were told to write that they died on cross fire otherwise if we had said anything about Gukurahundi we were not going to acquire any documents,” said Obert Ncube (brother)
NAME: STEVEN SIKHOSANA

Sex: Male
Year of Birth: 1939 and resided in Gulathi Communal land in Matobo Ward 15
Occupation: Self-employed
Year of Disappearance: 1985
Place of Disappearance: Gulathi, Matobo

Details
Steven was the chairperson of ZAPU in the area. On the 13th of February 1985 at around 9am, the Sikhosana family had an unexpected visit from military personnel. They had a lengthy discussion with Steven in his homestead. According to his wife, Steven was a friendly man.

When they were leaving, they were given pumpkins, sweet reeds and green maize. Steven’s wife tried to pressure her husband to escape as she had a bad feeling about their visitors but Steven refused claiming that there were no threat to his life. The fear for Steven's life was compounded by the abduction of a local Headmaster and a Mr Sibanda, a villager two days before the visit.

This Mr Sibanda was said to have been abducted at night 2 days before by armed men whose description fitted those who visited Steven's homestead. On the night in question, the same men came back and asked for Steven claiming that they forgot to ask something.

While they were outside, a heated argument ensued. Out of curiosity his wife came out of their heart to investigate the yelling, one soldier ordered her back, followed her into the room and raped her. He told her not to move out of the room as they had asked Steven to accompany them to their base. Steven left that night and never returned.
The woman made a report police. She was detained for some time before being referred to Mpilo Hospital for a check-up. Steven’s wife never stopped searching for her husband. She reportedly moved from one office to another until in 1990 when she was referred to court and issued with a presumption of death for Steven Sikhosana, her husband.

Unfortunately, Mrs Sikhosana despite having that death confirmation from the court, has failed to obtain a death certificate for her husband.
SEVEN NDLOVU

Sex: Male  
Year of Birth: Not ascertained  
Occupation: Not Employed  
Year of Disappearance: 1985  
Place of Disappearance: Gwitshi village, Nkayi

Details
Seven Ndlovu was the ZAPU chairperson of the area. He was abducted together with his brother’s son Ndonda Ndlovu sometime before the 1985 elections. Seven was in polygamous marriage with 4 wives and had his own separate bedroom hut.

Armed men arrived in his homestead in the middle of the night, went straight to Seven’s bedroom hut, broke the door and force-marched him out of his home. He was reportedly abducted in his underpants and barefooted.

All his important documents including his identity card and party files were confiscated. That was the last time he was seen by anyone.

A report was made to the police the following day and they indicated that they didn’t have such a person in their holding cells. No assistance was offered except for an order that they should go back home.

The family was advised by the police and other relatives to burn all materials and documents that linked him to his political activism, this included his photographs. After Seven’s abduction, the family temporarily left their home only to find their property looted and their cattle stolen.

The family searched for Seven after the signing of the unity accord in 1987, but he had seemingly disappeared into the ether.
Through the assistance of a former ZAPU official, the family was able to get a death certificate which they used to access benefits for former liberation war detainees. Unfortunately, the payment of gratuities has caused serious conflict between surviving family members. The money is being accessed by one child from the first wife.

“We believed he was sold out by one of his brothers. His abduction really affected us as a family and created a lot of conflicts,” Siqaliso Ncube (daughter)
FRASSER
SIBANDA

Sex: Male
Year of Birth: 1919
Occupation: Bulawayo City Council Bar Manager
Year of Disappearance: 1985
Place of Disappearance: Brethern in Christ Church, Mpopoma

Details
Frasser was an unswerving congregant for Brethren in Christ Church in Mpopoma, Bulawayo. The church is positioned next to Mathonisa beer outlet.
Sometime in October 1985, there was a ZANU rally that was held at Mathonisa. It was on a Sunday and the rally coincided with the church service at BICC. At the end of the church service, two police officers who seemed to be from the rally came to church and arrested four people after ordering everyone to stand in a queue.
Frasser was arrested together with three youths. They were taken to West Commonage police station where they were detained the whole day.

Frasser was separated from the other members and taken away by a known Central Intelligence Officer [name supplied]. That was the last day Frasser was ever seen. Frasser was a supporter of the then opposition leader Joshua Nkomo as he used to put on a barge with an inscription Father Zimbabwe and Nkomo’s photo.
The other two young men were released after being cautioned to never attend a Ndebele church, since they were of Shona origin. The remaining youth was transferred to Mabutweni Police Station where he was tortured and released but ordered to report to the police station once a week. His case was never referred to court.
In 1989, Frasser’s wife approached the Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace and Bulawayo Legal Projects Centre to report her husband’s disappearance. Police claimed that they handed Sibanda to the army. An application to the High Court was made for a presumption of death order, which in turn led to a compensation claim against the army. She was issued a presumption of death in 1991 and a compensation of $35000 was eventually paid out by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Despite having been assisted by local lawyers and non-governmental organisations to fight Frasser’s case, his body was never found. Interesting to note is that one of the youth who was arrested along with Frasser recognized the abductor from the police station and gave details to the authorities investigating the case but nothing was done. The youth insisted that Frasser’s abductor was still alive and had been spotted in Bulawayo.
MLAGA MAPHOSA

Sex: Male
Year of Birth: Was in his early 70s.
Occupation: Farmer
Year of Disappearance: 1984
Place of Disappearance: Zamanyoni, Matobo

Details
Mlaga was abducted from his homestead in Zamanyoni – Matobo District. According to those who knew him, he was a simple man who depended mostly on farming. Mlaga was not an active politician although he had a history of supporting ZAPU. As an elderly person in the community, young political activists used to frequent his homestead for guidance.

After his abduction which is thought to have happened on a Friday in February of 1984, he was never seen or heard of again. The matter was reported to the police and follow up efforts were fruitless. The family never lived a normal life after the incident, they reportedly plunged into poverty. Over the years, his wife passed on.
MABHEKA NCUBE

Year of Birth: Not Ascertained
Occupation: Farmer
Year of Disappearance: 1984
Place of Disappearance: Mbembeswane, Matobo

Details
Mabheka resided in Malaba village Matobo District. He was arrested along with other villagers from the area immediately after the introduction of a curfew in January 1984. The reason for his arrest is still yet to be ascertained. In the same week many people of his age were rounded up by the army and taken to detention centers. Mabheka is believed to have been taken to Mbembeswane, a notorious detention centre in another Ward in the same District. It is there that he was last seen by those who survived. He is also reported to have been a well-known ZAPU supporter in his community. His captors are reported to have arrived in an army truck with a list of names of villagers they were looking for.

Soon after the incident, the family was scattered. It is not clear whether the family ever attempted to report the case to the police. According to those who lived with him, the army truck that arrested him with others included two police officers who are believed to have been members of the Support Unit. The support unit is a para-military unit of the ZRP which provided tactical assistance during the period in question.
NDODA NDLOVU

Sex: Male  
Year of Birth: Not ascertained  
Occupation: Farmer  
Year of Disappearance: 1985  
Place of Disappearance: Gwitshi village, Nkayi

Details
Ndoda was secretary for ZAPU in the area. He went missing sometime in 1985 just before the elections. The kidnappers seemed to be the same people who abducted Seven Ndlovu. The report also indicates that it was on the same night. Ndoda could have been abducted first before Seven Ndlovu. He was abducted by three armed men and was never seen again. The family reported the case to the police where they were advised to stay out of the case and to destroy all documents belonging to Ndoda including photographs.

He was in a polygamous marriage with three wives and was considered to be a fairly rich man. He reportedly had about 80 herd of cattle, an unknown number of goats, sheep and many donkeys and used to help many of his neighbours. The family moved to Bulawayo soon after the incident, when they returned 2 years later all his wealth was gone. Two of his wives are still alive and living in abject poverty and attempts to find answers after Unity Accord were in vain.
ZAKHARIA MHLANGA

Sex: Male  
Year of Birth: Was in his late 60s when he disappeared  
Occupation: Dip tank attendant  
based at Nyashongwe Dip tank  
Year of Disappearance: 1984  
Place of Disappearance: Mbembeswane, Matobo

Details
Zakharia Mhlanga came from the same village with Mabheka. They were reportedly arrested on the same day by the same army officers. His political activism is not very known but like other men of his age, he was believed to be a ZAPU supporter. Zakharia was last seen at Mbembeswane by those who survived at the detention centre. His wife allegedly tried to make follow ups after the unity accord in 1988 but did not get much assistance from the authorities.
MAGANGENI
JUBANE

Sex: Male
Year of birth: 1959
Occupation: None
Year of Disappearance: 1983
Place of Disappearance: Manondweni, Tsholotsho

Details
It was around 8pm when eight people in military uniforms visited Jubane's homestead. Young man, Magangeni was left with her siblings at the homestead while their parents had gone to a funeral of a village head who was killed by the army that same week.

The knocked at the door, Magangeni opened and they started talking outside the hut before he was abducted.

A lot of young men in the village were taken that same night and some, including Magangeni were never seen again. No follow up was done and no police report was done because it was at the height of Gukurahundi and people were afraid.

His parents were devastated when they heard the news and his mother developed a heart problem since then.

“Our mother died a very bitter woman, she always wanted to see her son’s bones and merely have information on what happened to him,” Sakheleni Jubane (sister)
PATRICK NABANYAMA

Sex: Male
Year of Birth: 1947
Occupation: Bulawayo City Council liquor department
Year of Disappearance: 2000
Place of Disappearance: Nketa 6, Bulawayo

Details
Patrick grew up in Umguza commercial farming area but his political activism dates back to the 1960s. In 1966, he was arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison. He was once detained at Khami Maximum Prison for allegedly blowing up a train. At independence Patrick continued his political activism under ZAPU and ZANU post-unity accord. In 2000, he joined the MDC and was once a poling agent for the opposition parliamentary candidate in his area.

Zanu PF activists in the area particularly those who had previously worked with him were allegedly not happy when he moved to join the opposition. His fateful day came when a local war veteran's office was set on fire.

They accused Patrick of being an architect of the arson. He was abducted at 4pm by 9 known Zanu PF activists in the area. He was never seen since then. The family tried to find him, with the assistance of political activists, local NGOs and neighbors but failed. The suspects were taken to court but no one got convicted for the case.

The family managed to process a declaration of death in accordance with Missing Persons Act. This enabled them access to his pension benefits. The family still lives in fear as strange visitors still get to their place of residence.
ITAI DZAMARA

Sex: Male
Year of Birth: 1979
Occupation: Journalist/ Political Activist
Year of Disappearance: 09 March 2015
Place of Disappearance: Glen Norah, Harare

Details
Itai was allegedly abducted in 2015 after advocating for the occupation of the Africa Unity Square to show dissatisfaction with President Robert Mugabe and the Zanu PF government. He was abducted by unidentified men while at a barbershop in Harare's Glen View suburb and is believed to have been abducted by state security agents. Before his abduction, Itai wrote a petition to President Mugabe and hand-delivered it to the President's Office where he was sent to several offices before being released and advised not to go on with his plans.

Itai and his colleagues went back to the President's office where they were taken to holding area by armed police officers and severely questioned about the protest. His last encounter was when he was severely beaten by the Zimbabwe Republic Police Support Unit force and was admitted at the hospital for some time. The family is still looking for answers as to what happened to Itai on that fateful day.
Details
Paul left his home around 8pm on the 8th of February 2012 and what happened to him after that remains a mystery. His car, white twin cab Nissan Hard body Registration number ACJ 3446 was also missing, only to be found five months later dumped at Beitbridge border post with only a pair of his shoes being found in the car. His friends fear that he may have been murdered, hijacked or abducted.

Police transferred the case of the missing Paul to the Criminal Investigations Department because it was rendered as a suspected murder case. However, his family gave contrasting statements saying that it was not his first time he had gone missing and indicating that he may have been involved in a domestic dispute and will come back. Paul’s whereabouts still remain unknown.
**GEOFREY MANDA**

**Sex:** Male  
**Year of Birth:** 1938  
**Occupation:** Worked at Bulawayo City Council where he retired in 2002.  
**Year of Disappearance:** 2003  
**Place of Disappearance:** Francistown, Botswana

**Details**

Geofrey resided in Bulawayo - New Lobengula Suburb. He was last seen preparing to visit Botswana on the 15th of September 2003. After his Botswana visit, he communicated with his family claiming to be proceeding to somewhere outside Francistown where there was a temporary job he was supposed to do.

Relatives from Francistown reported him missing and wanted to confirm with the Bulawayo relatives if he had come back. In early 2005, his wife made a report of a missing person at Magwegwe Police Station. The family was advised to make a police report in Botswana Francistown police.

The wife and the relatives travelled to Francistown to make a police report. A missing person file was opened in Botswana (In Magwegwe the police refused to open a file). The Botswana police advised the family to also make a report in Bulawayo for them to act on the matter.

The family went to Bulawayo Central Police Station where they were advised that it was too late for them to open a case. The officer insisted that it will help them to visit the prophets as they will not get assistance from the police.
Simanga Dube

**Sex:** Female  
**Year of Birth:** She was very old  
**Occupation:** None  
**Year of Disappearance:** 2016  
**Place of Disappearance:** Dombo village, Silozwi, Matobo

### Details

Simanga disappeared on the 28th October 2016. She left home visiting a neighbour in a resettlement area. Two days later they were told she never arrived at her place of visit. A Police report was made at Matopos police station but no assistance was availed.

Villages from Matobo Ward 16 and Ward 23 mobilised each other and began a search which proceeded until the start of rains in 2017. The search effort was eventually called off. In all these searches the police were not involved.

In August 2018 they were informed of human remains found near a stream in the nearby farm and a police report was made for the second time.

The sight of the remains was visited by the family and some villagers. A few bones were found lying along the stream bank which included what they think it’s a thigh bone, backbone and a few ribs.

Next to the remains, about 15metres to 20 metres away, there was a small bag and few torn clothes which the family believed belonged to Simanga Dube.

It is on this basis that the police concluded that the bones belonged to Simanga Dube; without the rest of the bones which included the skull the family proceeded to bury the remains.
Even though the remains were initially taken to United Bulawayo Hospitals, no DNA or Forensic tests were done. What worries the family is that the area where the remains were found was thoroughly searched soon after she disappeared but nothing was seen.

The family believes that if advertisements were done as promised by the police and had they also moved quickly, it would have made a difference. It took them a week to start the search.
MTHETHELELI ELIJAH NTAMBO

**Year of Birth:** Not Ascertained  
**Occupation:** Garden Boy in Avondale, Harare  
**Year of Disappearance:** 1998  
**Place of Disappearance:** Harare

**Details**  
Information from the employer indicates that Mthetheleli Ntambo had a live-in girlfriend. On the day in question, he reportedly had an argument with his girlfriend resulting in him assaulting her. It is after the assault that he left and never returned. The parents who are since late visited Harare on several occasions, made police reports which yielded nothing. A report was also made at Mbembesi Police Station and no assistance was forthcoming.

**Other Information**  
The so called live-in girlfriend was never met by the family, all his property including his clothing was left intact and had to be collected by the parents. They have never heard anything until date.
**GRIFITHS KONA**

**Sex:** Male  
**Year of Birth:** 1969, Mbembesi, Umguza District.  
**Occupation:** Spent most of his time at Jairos Jiri  
**Year of Disappearance:** 2017  
**Place of Disappearance:** Last heard of him in Bubi District

**Details**  
Griffiths Kona was deaf and dumb and communicated through writing. He spent most of his time at Jairos Jiri Training Centre. The family last heard of him in 2017 in Inyathi area- Bubi District. The case of a missing person was reported at Mbembesi police station and allegedly no assistance was provided. The police allegedly refused to open a case of a missing person claiming that he might come back.

Three days later, the family mobilised its neighbours to carry out a search and it continued for a month but they got nothing. The family then abandoned the search and went to the police who seemed not concerned at all. Family concerns had they moved immediately without waiting for the police for 3 days, they were likely to have found him. The area has small mine claims and they fear that he might fallen into pits or killed by gold panners around the area.
Saziso was staying in Nketa suburb in Bulawayo but frequently visited small mines in Filabusi where she used to sell vegetables and small grocery items before she disappeared. She was last seen sometime in 2004 when her cousin left her in the bus on her way to Filabusi. She left behind two children. A report was made at Bulawayo Central Police station but no assistance was offered. Adverts of a missing person were also aired in South Africa but did not yield any results.

Friends and her suspected boyfriend were consulted and participated in the search but no clue was found. Saziso’s last born child was left with no birth records. Years later another police report at Bulawayo Central police was made with the assistance of a relative and a report was obtained which the family used together with the ID of the missing Saziso to obtain a birth certificate for the child.
CONCLUSION

The missing persons compendium presents real stories from the surviving immediate families of people who went missing either through enforced disappearances or for unknown reasons. The booklet is a highlight of the many people who went missing and continue to disappear in the streets of Zimbabwe on a daily basis. It presents unique angles of how security agencies and various government departments deal with the issue of missing persons and the challenges that the communities encounter as they pursue justice, search for their loved ones and attempt to obtain identity documents.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- The birth and deaths registration requirements should be relaxed to facilitate civic document acquisition which will enable affected families to access state and other personal benefits entitled to citizens.
- The government, through the Registrar General’s Office should adequately assist all families who want to amend documents of their missing persons to carry a precise statement that indicates the truth behind the disappearance.
- The government should ratify to and be party to the International Convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearances.
- The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission should include the subject of missing persons in their quest to bring justice, healing and reconciliation in the country.
- There is need for memorialisation of the victims of enforced disappearances in Zimbabwe.
- The lifespan of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission should be extended so that it adequately deals with past injustices.
- Trauma healing and counselling should be provided to the affected families including development projects as a way of compensation and equalisation.
- Civil society should conduct further research on the subject, document more stories, and lobby government for legal reforms that will put an end to the culture of enforced disappearances in Zimbabwe.
- There is need for international advocacy on the legacy of missing persons in Zimbabwe.
- Survivors of enforced disappearances should be supported.
- In-depth researches and documentation of the missing persons should be done by civil society organisations together with communities.
- Knowledge on Missing Persons Act should be shared with local communities as a way of empowering them to be able to acquire death certificates to facilitate access to birth certificates.
END NOTES

The International Day for the right to the truth concerning gross human rights violations and for the dignity of victims

International Convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/disappearance-convention.pdf
I recall on the 17th of January, 1985 at about 2:00 p.m. when I was home all alone at our household hearing a knock at our door, and the man who knocked on the door was my husband. I opened the door and my husband greeted me and told me that he had come home from work. I asked him why he had come home so early and he replied that he had finished his job early.

I have never experienced this before in my life. I was fortunate to have a husband who loved me unconditionally. He was the pillar of my life and I knew that he would always be there for me.

I believe in marriage, and I believe that marriage should be based on love and trust. My husband was always there for me, and I never felt alone or forgotten.

I have never felt so lucky to have a husband who loved me and always put my needs first. I am grateful for the years we spent together and I hope that we will continue to do so.

In conclusion, my husband has always been my rock and I am grateful for the love and support he has given me over the years. I hope that our love will continue to grow and that we will always be there for each other.
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