



Case Study

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Lack of Legitimacy Brought Split Within Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association

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Abstract: The collaborative connection between veterans and Zimbabwe's governing party, ZANU PF, has been strained on many occasions since the country's independence, as this essay argues. The governing party employed veterans and others, particularly young people, to attempt to maintain its influence among these groups, much as it had used Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) veterans to gain influence in the army, the bureaucracy, and among urban workers. The members of the governing party endangered the power and privilege that war veterans coveted, hence they often had objectives that differed from the party's. However, because Ambassador Christopher Mutsvangwa's term has ended, several ZNLWVA veterans and members of the governing party oppose his continued leadership from 2019 until 2023. To achieve their different but related goals, the party and veterans in both eras used violence, intimidation, and appeals to the liberation fight. Political debates between "authentic" and "fake" veterans in Zimbabwe have arisen as a result of the comparison between the ZANU PF affiliate ZNLWVA and a breakaway organization. In order to assist nations in transitioning from autocratic to democratic regimes, the report recommends that elections be seen as intricate processes with a focus on "transformations rather than transitions."

Keywords: Legitimacy, Splinter group, War Veterans, Affiliate

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INTRODUCTION

ZANU PF affiliate Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) has split following the birth of a splinter group which has portrayed the Veterans of the Liberation Struggle Affairs minister Ambassador Christopher Mutsvangwa as an illegitimate leader. According to the chairperson of the ZNLWVA Mutsvangwa, the birth of a splinter war veterans grouping which he described as "Johnny-come-lately" whose objectives were to snatch their organisation's name (The Herald 15 January, 2024). The divisions among the war veterans have exposed factionalism in Zanu PF with each group reportedly having strong backing in the party. On the other note the splinter group indicate that Ambassador Mutsvangwa ceased to be chairman of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) on November 5, 2019, as his first five-year tenure had come to an end. Therefore, any statements or actions taken by him after that date are not representative of the official position of ZNLWVA. The splinter group indicate that their leader was Andrease Ethan Mathibela who they are backing.

This new executive of the splinter group led by Andrease Ethan Mathibela is currently responsible for leading ZNLWVA and making decisions on behalf of the association. The breakaway war veterans organization claimed in their statement that any information or remarks about the ZNLWVA should be asked of the existing management. The veterans of the conflict pledged that Mutsvangwa's remarks on ZNLWVA's

goals or operations are untrue and unenforceable. The new organization calls on all ZNLWVA members and associated stakeholders to treat Ambassador Mutsvangwa's comments with the disdain it merits. As previously stated, his remarks should be interpreted as not representing ZNLWVA's official stance. Even if the War Veterans Association in Zimbabwe is affiliated with Zanu PF, only a small number of former Rhodesian soldiers have joined, and this cannot lead to conflict within Zanu PF because of a lost person.

Human rights watchdogs claim that in the past, war veterans have committed acts of violence against opposition supporters while serving as foot soldiers in Zanu PF campaigns. There were a group of combat veterans who were distinct from the G40 faction during the Mathuthu period, according to The Chronicle, 07/03/2016. The G40-driven agenda, which does not present them as a "faction" but rather as a group of "loyal cadres" who are "sons and daughters" of the soil supporting Mugabe's rule, was largely legitimized during the Mathuthu era by some war veterans, like George Mlala, who demonstrated that they were members of the G40 faction. Tales like War Veterans Drop: Mutsvangwa's troubles grow Chris demonstrates how Mlala, who was not part of the war veterans' organizations at the time, is allowed to make fun of Mutsvangwa in the media (The Chronicle, 07/03/2016). Mlala labels Mutsvangwa a "drunkard" and goes on to say that "Mutsvangwa should get his act together because only a drunkard can make such statements about former President Mugabe, who was trusted by Africans." Prior to making these remarks, Mutsvangwa had said that he

no longer trusted Mugabe and likened him to a frog that "adjusts as the water gets hotter" in a sink.

According to Zanu-PF, a group of war veterans who are part of President Emmerson Mnangagwa's team (Team Lacoste), including Christopher Mutsvangwa, are "bad apples trying to ordain Mnangagwa as the heir to the throne." Stories with the title Politburo boots out Mutsvangwa highlight this (The Chronicle, 04/03/2016). War veterans expelled Mutsvangwa and threatened to stage a protest against him; they also removed Mutsvangwa supporters (The Chronicle, 13/02/2016). According to the accounts, Chris Mutsvangwa is accused of being boycotted by his fellow war veterans and subordinates when he attends a meeting to discuss the welfare of the war veterans in Bulawayo. Because they are accused of disrespecting Mugabe and the first family, Mutsvangwa and members of the Team Lacoste group are demonized. According to the reporters questioned, The Chronicle accepted the G40 orientation and claimed to be a G40 "conveyor belt" that sought to gain support from party members and other residents since they were unable to protest articles that the editor forced upon them. A "rogue war veteran" who led a band of dissident war veterans, Mutsvangwa is most scandalized during the Mathuthu period.

In an interview, another journalist said that they were "pawns" pushing succession questions. According to the journalist, articles that didn't live up to the editor's standards, particularly when it came to factional matters, would be spiked. We were forced to support the G40 side since the editor was pushing a divisive agenda, even if reporting on G40-related topics wasn't always essential. 27/09/2017 (Reporter 2) Stories that fell short of the editor's standards, particularly when they dealt with factional matters, would be flagged. (Reporter 2, 27/09/2017) We were wiped into line that supports the G40 faction since the editor was pushing a factional agenda, even though it wasn't always required to cover G40-related problems. But the manner succession tales and faction members were presented changed after the Mathuthu period. While members of Team Lacoste are mostly exalted, individuals from G40 were considered to be scandalized.

War veterans who were openly backing the Team Lacoste faction, including Mutsvangwa (chairperson) and Victor Matemadanda (secretary-general), were accused of introducing tribalism into factional politics during the same Mathuthu period. When commenting on matters pertaining to war veterans, rival veterans like George Mlala are considered trustworthy sources of information in articles like Mutsvangwa's troubles continue to grow (The Chronicle, 07/03/16). Some furious war veterans, like as Mutsvangwa and Matemadanda, who had been expelled from the party, are no longer classified as rogues in the post-Mathuthu. It is believed that the G40 members are being used by the party's enemies to "tirelessly divide

Zanu-PF" (28/07/18). The term "Mafikizolo" (an isiNdebele word meaning newcomer) refers to party newcomers, those who lack the qualifications of the liberation war and thus have no right to succeed Mugabe.

ZANLA and politics

Robert Mugabe led the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), which included the armed wing known as the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), and Joshua Nkomo led the Zimbabwe African People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), which was the armed wing of the ZAPU (see Jackson 2011; White 2007; Young 1997). Alexander (1998) said that the two guerrilla groups were split along ethnic lines, with the Shona controlling ZIPRA and the Ndebele controlling ZANLA. As a result, the provinces of Mashonaland and Matabeleland were the primary locations for their recruiting, respectively. The British Military Advisory Training Team BMATT oversaw the incorporation of insurgent armed formations into the new ZNA between 1980 and 2001 (Kriger 2003). The goal was to make sure the ZNA was technically up to international standards and trained in military ethics, as well as to make sure the newly established army followed certain professional standards, codes of conduct, and instructions (Tendi 2013).

There were still distinct ethnic differences and loyalty lines within the new army even with the BMATT present (White 2007). According to Jackson (2011), Alao (2012), and Alexander (1998), this was made clear in 1983 when the 5th Brigade—which was mostly composed of ZANLA personnel and trained by the North Koreans—was sent to Matabeleland province to destroy weapons depots and put down a purported revolt by ZIPRA dissidents. As "the first rain which washes away the chaff," the operation was named "Gukurahundi" (White 2007; Jackson 2011). In this instance, it was believed that the Ndebele people should be wiped off. According to Alexander's (1998) views of the new ZNA, the previous ZIPRA troops were oppressed by ZANLA forces, which resulted in their desertion. Leaders of the ZAPU, including Lookout Masuku and Dumiso Dabengwa, were imprisoned indefinitely without a trial after being captured and then found not guilty. When Masuku was released from jail, he died of meningitis, however there were some questions over what caused his death. The forced exile of Joshua Nkomo, the commander of ZIPRA, contributed to the defection of former ZIPRA troops.

The case of splinter groups in ZANLA

The Nhari insurrection, which broke out inside the ZANLA army, was an even more serious division within ZANU. Within ZANLA, the Nhari faction formed to oppose Tongogara and the military high command's leadership. Additionally, they opposed ZANU's political leadership. Their ascent and decline represented a significant period in ZANLA's history. ZANLA had

grown from 200 insurgents in 1972 to over 3,000 in 1974, as was previously said, and many more were joining every day. For a leadership that had spent years dealing with a small group of devoted and highly experienced guerrillas who were completely prepared for and used to the hardships of war, the management issues this presented were especially challenging. The management issues may still be resolved when ZANLA expanded to a few hundred due to an inflow of ZIPRA fighters who were more disciplined and well-trained. The influx of thousands now included university students and illiterate peasants, a far more varied, less orderly, and more erratic population.

Due to the outdated system of feeding the guerrillas using grain donations from the Mumbwa farmers, these new recruits were severely short on food. Additionally, recruits were forced to eat what little food they had on leaves or with their bare hands due to a lack of dishes. There was a severe lack of weapons and ammunition, which made it impossible to take advantage of the many military possibilities that immediately presented themselves, but these physical sufferings might have been tolerated given the high morale and the anticipation of triumph soon. Disillusionment was rapidly spreading among the thousands of young men who were lingering without food or weapons.

The leadership had already benefited from the fruits of triumph in the form of favors from several ladies who admired them, but the taste of success had also led to complacency and corruption. Junior officers were jealous or more austere, and they were deeply offended by their superiors' mistreatment of women. A handful of instances of flagrant privilege misuse incited ire. A high-ranking ZANLA official was accused of impregnating a teenage girl. Later, she had an illegal abortion, which led to her later hospitalization. The instance of Badza, a junior officer, was another. Badza responded to Tongogara's mistreatment inside ZANLA by announcing in a letter discovered among his files that he would establish a "Biafra" of Zimbabwe. This was a Zimbabwean adaptation of the David and Barsheeba tale, with Badza losing his wife to his senior commander when he was dispatched on a perilous front-line assignment. Badza joined the uprising against the ZANLA leadership as a result of this personal disagreement.

An additional challenge was that the ZIPRA guerrillas, who had joined ZANLA a few years before, quickly discovered that they were more educated and skilled than their senior ZANLA leaders, who were often chosen from the less educated peasants. While some of them were college graduates from the top Soviet military institutes, young former ZIPRA officers questioned the authority of commanders with just a few years of schooling. Having benefited from this training, they also questioned the rationality of ZANU's and ZANLA's skepticism of Soviet backing, since they felt that more

Soviet weaponry and support would boost their chances of winning the war. Instead of Soviet assistance, ZANU had Chinese support. A number of young Marxists also realized that their leaders were completely uninterested in Marxism, not just unaware of it. It was the belief of this group that the Zimbabwean revolution ought to be Marxist, and that it was necessary to remove the intellectually bankrupt veterans from their positions of leadership.

Following their commander, Thomas Nhari, the disgruntled young officers quickly established what became known as the Nhari group. With the help of Badza, Nhari was able to bring together the many factions of dissatisfaction and led the front-line young officers in an assault on the ZANU and ZANLA leadership in Lusaka. The fact that the assault occurred at the same time that Lusaka's independence talks got underway may have been a coincidence, but both proponents and opponents of the proposal were certain to interpret it as a sign of détente. In reality, it meant that ZANU, the only organization with a legitimate army, was dealing with a revolt, with guerrillas and weaponry removed from the front. The targets of these weapons and bullets were now its own leaders.

The confusion and mistrust that resulted from the utter surprise of both the ZANU and ZANLA leaders developed. In particular, John Mataure, the political commissar, and Chitepo, the ZANU chairman and head of the organization's external wing, felt that they need to pay attention to the young officers. However, Tongogara, the target of the young officers' criticism, felt that entertaining these officers amounted to treason and inciting revolt. Members of ZANU and ZANLA were confused at this time, unsure of which group to trust: the young officers who were complaining of neglect, corruption, and poor management, or the established military leadership under Tongogara.

The bulk of University of Zambia instructors and students from Zimbabwe were actively in favor of the independence movement. Naturally, the Nhari group's presence in Lusaka included trips to the university, and shortly after, a lot of students were persuaded to join them since they were more intelligent and revolutionary. Some of us teachers, fortunately, were more wary of the rhetoric and were able to convince the University of Zambia ZANU members not to join Nhari and his gang too quickly. The gang quickly demonstrated that it was in Lusaka not only to voice its complaints but also that it was ready to assassinate the leaders if its demands were not fulfilled when it used force to kidnap ZANU and ZANLA officials.

The rebellion's aftermath caused greater division and confusion within ZANU and ZANLA, and its effects were seen decades later inside ZANU and throughout Zimbabwe. There was suspicion in the air during a trial that Herbert Chitepo ruled over in

Chifombo. Certain veterans, like Tongogara, suspected Chitepo of covertly aiding the rebels since he had previously consented to meet with them informally. In the strained détente climate, it seemed doubtful that Tongogara's detractors could have publicly airing their objections at a more official meeting with Tongogara present might have saved the day. It was thought that political figures like Chitepo supported a power-sharing arrangement for black majority rule, which would have undoubtedly made Tongogara and the military less powerful.

The first week of February 1975 was when the Chifombo trials were held. Chitepo was present, along with every other external leader save Noel Mukono and Mukudzei Mudzi. Fearing retaliation for his explicit backing of the insurgents, Mukono had fled, leaving Mudzi in command of things in Lusaka. I got into possession of the cassette recordings of the trial after Tongogara left Zambia. The Nhari group's plot to withdraw from the front and march on Lusaka was met with unquestionable proof that they had murdered a significant number of opponents. About seventy of the Nhari group's opponents had been killed. Political commissar John Mataure, a well-known and well-liked political figure, was charged with aiding and abetting the rebels. The rebels' actions, especially the murder of their fellow fighters, were denounced by Chitepo. Among the many penalties meted out to the insurgents were demotions in military rank. He ordered their transfer to the Mozambican government for further sanctions.

The political and military leaders of ZANU were to clash over these extrajudicial deaths, leading to further internal strife. John Mataure's execution was one of the most contentious topics; he had met with the rebels in Lusaka but had not taken part in the killings at the front. Since he was a part of the political leadership rather than the military, many people thought that Tongogara's military high command had executed him in order to eliminate a potentially strong opponent since Mataure would have had both political and military legitimacy. He may have offered the much-needed link between the military and political leaderships that had been apart for a long time.

Just to put it briefly, certain incumbents in Africa have lost elections, but they have refused to give up power to their rivals. In these situations, incumbents who are sit-tight purposefully create post-election violence in order to maintain their hold on power at all costs. The emergence of power-sharing as a tool for settling post-election problems in Africa has compounded this process, which is another kind of unlawful change of administration. Regional leaders and the international community have had a tendency to look for a compromise in the shape of "governments of national unity" or "power-sharing" agreements in instances when incumbents have exacerbated post-election problems by refusing to accept loss. ' Indeed,

after African election disputes, power sharing gained favor among its proponents and negotiators, leading some experts to question if power sharing has emerged as the continent's "new" democracy.

CONCLUSION

Another tactic often used to conceal unlawful transfers of administration in Africa is an effort by incumbent power holders to encourage term elongation in office. African presidents who gave in to pressure and tried to extend their rule beyond the two-year limit did so legally by asking parliament to change the constitution: Using legitimate institutional routes instead than extra-constitutional ones, some leaders have been able to get around the ban on running for more than two terms in office. We only argue that leaders now face more formal regulatory constraints when attempting to get their desired result (Posner and Young 2007).

Elections should be seen as complicated procedures in the case of Chris Mutsvangwa. In addition to their capacity to assist nations in transitioning from authoritarian to more democratic regimes, "transformations not transitions" should be prioritized. In order to help political parties resolve their differences and to provide security to the opposing parties, the roundtable participants emphasized the significance of political processes in ensuring inclusivity and the legitimacy of the election process. Elections by themselves do not reveal a nation's level of democracy, and they have been shown over and again to incite widespread bloodshed. Elections need to be a component of a larger political system that supports equitable political participation, the rule of law, and effective administration. Although there is still more to be done, Africa has made great strides in the last several decades in establishing democratic and good governance principles, both in terms of norms and in actuality.

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