



## Case Study

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# Post War Conflicts on Pensions and Compensation in Zimbabwe

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**Abstract:** Zimbabwe's post-war politics have been heavily influenced by the liberation war guerrillas' desire for official acknowledgement of their efforts and sacrifices during the conflict. For jobs, promotions, business loans, land, pensions, and posts in the government and governing party, veterans have made appeals to the government. This article concentrated on how the governing party tried to settle disputes over veterans' pensions, why the party took the actions it did, and how the disputes and the manner they were resolved impacted nation-building in light of the late 1990s economic crisis. Whether or whether veterans' pensions constitute restitution is another topic covered in this article. The government's 1980 move to include guerrilla veterans in an already-existing program from which they had been excluded resulted in compensation and pensions for them. In contrast, the governing party was pressured by veterans to recognize war service years for the purposes of determining retirement benefits for individuals employed by the state in 1989 and 1990. Similarly, the governing party in 1997 paid monthly pensions and gratuities to veterans for their combat service.

**Keywords:** Conflict, pension, compensation, Post-war

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1997, the governing party in Zimbabwe gave the veterans monthly pensions and gratuities for their wartime service. The chairman of the governing party was tasked with responding to and accommodating the demands of the veterans but also undermining their legitimacy and authority (Bhebhe and Ranger 1995). Veterans, however, were urged to seek more formal recognition in order to be placated. Furthermore, since their wartime hardship and sacrifices were equal to those of veterans, former political prisoners and detainees, as well as other marginalized groups, made new demands in response to government concessions. Comparable benefits to those of veterans with war-related impairments were sought by persons who were born or injured in accidents, who contended that war-related disabilities shouldn't be given preference over other kinds of disabilities. The foundation for a far larger dispute was laid when the government forced the expense of veterans' compensation on already severely taxed labor.

According to Kanyenze (2004), the Mugabe administration was forced to resume the land resettlement program that had been put on hold in 1987 when the 1980s ZIPRA dissidents took control of the joint ZANLA and ZIPRA War Veterans Association in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This led to a massive land redistribution program. Former ZANLA liberation fighters felt their own ZANLA members were too obedient to the ZANU PF political leadership, therefore they voted for ZIPRA freedom fighters to head them. Mugabe and his administration were not loyal to the

ZIPRA liberation warriors, who did not mind waging a fierce, even destructive, battle for their rights. The government was compelled to provide military veterans pensions and compensation. The government's complacency was first shaken by the 1997 war veterans' uprising. However, attributing the economic downturn to the war veterans' uprising would be inaccurate and deceptive. Since the early 1990s, the signs of economic doldrums have been there. The important moment immediately after the endorsement of structural adjustment was when Bernard Chidzero, the senior minister of finance, became sick in 1992. Ariston Chambati, who took his position, passed very soon after taking office. Between 1992 to 1997, a time of severe financial instability worldwide, a succession of acting ministers filled the void. According to Kanyenze (2004), the economic slump was made worse by the co-occurrence of both domestic and foreign problems.

ZANLA veterans' readiness to assist ZIPRA veterans as their delegates was a reflection of their common experience of being abandoned upon independence. They were only able to claim their rights by threatening the government. They learned their lesson from the trade unions, who had also started using threats to exert their influence. In 1997, the war veterans, led by Hunzvi, persuaded the government to pay out billions of Zimbabwean dollars in compensation. The war veterans' uprising and the ensuing political unrest in Zimbabwe and the surrounding area forced President Mugabe to accede to their demands. A few hundred members of the ruling class received compensation totaling around Z\$1 billion in 1996 from the Ministry of Labor, which oversaw the War Veterans Compensation Fund. The

payouts ranged from Z\$100,000 to Z\$850,000 per (Chambati, 2007). The majority of the medical certification was completed by Hunzvi, who had received medical training in Poland during the war years, under the direction of Nathan Shamuyarira, the then-minister of labor. Both planning the swindle and putting pressure on the government to provide the payments to more combat veterans were major tasks for Hunzvi. Due to the unexpected and unprecedented degree of inflation that brought about, this ended up being the last straw that broke the economy's back (Chaumba, Scoones, and Woolmer, 2003).

The public's support for ZANU PF had diminished by 2000 due to an increase in corruption and unemployment. The political education program had been abandoned, and the governing party had become much weaker. A wave of severe violence against any political opponents of the government was spearheaded by Hunzvi. Along with idle township youths, he encouraged war veterans from ZIPRA and ZANLA to beat up or murder anybody who opposed the land takeovers. This destructive force of violence was approved as a political instrument by the government and governing party. In contrast to the majority of former ZIPRA guerrillas, the educated ZANLA militants were able to secure high-level jobs in the security forces, diplomatic service, and civil service upon independence. They had left little or nothing behind, especially the ZIPRA insurgents who had armed themselves against the government in the 1980s. The Zimbabwe Project, a non-governmental organization led by Paul Nyathi and Judith Todd, was in charge of their destiny. In charge of the erstwhile dissidents was the donor-funded Zimbabwe Project. Given the extreme dissatisfaction of jobless war veterans, the MDC's failure to solicit support from them is a reflection of its political understanding.

According to Kriger (2003), military adventurism was the only way for Zimbabwe to regain its former position of dominance in the area. In 1997, Zimbabwe used its role as head of the SADC security committee to launch a phase of military adventurism, supposedly to defend the Kabila government's sovereignty against rebel rebels. Naturally, only a few months before, Kabila had been an insurgency rebel. The administration had to deal with the war veterans' uprising the same year. According to Rugube (2003), President Mugabe made the decision to appease war veterans on November 13–14, 1997, by providing billions of Zimbabwean dollars in compensation. Further disenchantment resulted from many years of drought, which the very religious Zimbabwean populace often regarded as the ancient spirits punishing them for the wrongdoings of their rulers. Because of the almost frenzied foreign exchange exodus by everyone, but especially by the political elite, who now controlled the local banks, Zimbabwe was in danger of experiencing an economic collapse by the end of 2003. Wealthy people

were filling their own nests—not in Zimbabwe, but in bank accounts abroad.

### **Veteran's policy and demobilization**

According to Sadomba (2004), the majority of nations with peacetime war veteran policies focus on the benefits that service members get after leaving the military. Like the retirement benefits offered to public employees generally, these benefits are often outlined in the conditions of service and specified by legislation. When people leave the military due to natural attrition, these rewards are often given out during peacetime. Members of other security-related branches, such as the police, border guards, and gendarmerie, may also be eligible for military retirement in some nations. The creation of war veteran policies, however, may take on significant political and economic importance after a conflict. A new government must create a policy for veterans, or in the event of liberation fights, a new state. For a new or post-conflict state, the financial ramifications of caring for a large number of veterans may also provide a serious financial challenge.

Demobilization is the process of removing mobilized but non-professional soldiers, such as reservists, militias, or other paramilitary groups, from active service. It may also be used to reduce a too large professional force. Integrating non-statutory troops into a nation's armed forces, with or without an immediate force reduction, is one of the popular post-war choices. This might be the best course of action to aid in bringing the former fighting groups together. The demands of such an expanded military on a government's budget will often result in a force reduction via a DDR program in the medium- to long-term after the sociopolitical situation has stabilized. For example, this has happened in South Africa, Rwanda, Uganda, and Cambodia. These peacetime DDR initiatives are comparable to post-conflict efforts in other ways, but they permit more extensive planning and sometimes call for less outside supervision or participation. As shown in the case of Chad, retirement and demobilization may also be used in tandem to reduce the force (Sachikonye, 1994).

Following the battle, fighters from both statutory and non-statutory armies were demobilized simultaneously in other nations, including El Salvador, Mozambique, and Nicaragua. Only fighters of non-statutory forces were demobilized right after the fighting in Sierra Leone, Guatemala, and Congo-Brazzaville. In any case, reforming the security sector should go hand in hand with reducing the force. For example, all members of the non-statutory forces (Falintil) in Timor-Leste were released after the departure of the statutory (Indonesian occupying) forces, and a new national defense force was formed, into which some Falintil members were enlisted (Brickhill, 1995).

### **Identification and registration**

Andrew and Sadomba (2006) state that the terminology used to describe those laid off from the military is heavily influenced by the nation's political and historical background as well as the nature of the war. In South Africa, "military veterans" are defined as members of the South African Defense Force, members of anti-apartheid military formations, and anybody who enlisted freely or was drafted into the country's official conflicts. However, the word "veteran" has particular political meanings in various nations. A "war veteran" in Zimbabwe is somebody who had military training and actively and continuously took part in the independence fight. A "veteran of the national liberation struggle" in Mozambique is any citizen who actively took part in the fight for freedom, whether as a member of the clandestine movement, a combatant in the non-statutory forces, a supporter of Frelimo militants, or a participant in the fight for information, diplomacy, and propaganda.

In Chad, soldiers who have retired from duty based on one of the legally defined grounds (such as age or infirmity) are referred to as "retraité," as opposed to "définitif," who are troops who have been released as part of a DDR program (Kriger, 2003). Instead of using the word "retired," which refers to former members of statutory forces, terminology like "demobilized," "reincorporated," and "ex-combatant" are used somewhat indiscriminately throughout Central America to refer to members of non-statutory forces. The fact that members of irregular forces are often not prescribed beneficiaries, although regular, armed fighters from non-statutory forces may, is one of the most prevalent issues with veterans policy development. Whether they are regulars in non-statutory forces or even professional soldiers in statutory forces, armed or non-armed organizations such as militias, paramilitaries, reservists, or underground political operatives are often deployed in wars. In contrast, the 1996 Special Pensions Act in South Africa addressed underground members by stating that pensions were to be awarded to "persons who made sacrifices or served the public interest in establishing a non-racial, democratic constitutional order" (Kriger, 2003).

Particularly in post-conflict settings when participatory political institutions and practices are still in their infancy, corruption, political manipulation, and exclusion—which may result in future grievances—are significant dangers in the creation and execution of veterans' benefits. The identification and registration of military personnel must be complete, transparent, and fast in order to provide the foundation for inclusive, nonpartisan policies and activities. As shown by Zimbabwe, where the number of liberation warriors and war veterans registered decades after independence was far larger than at independence, prompt and correct registration is crucial (Chidawanyika, 2000).

#### **Assistance to veterans**

According to Chigwedere (1992), there is a significant difference in the benefits received by veterans in various nations and veteran classifications. Generally speaking, these rewards follow particular patterns that are mostly determined by the kind of retirement, the kind of force that a person was a member of, and the kind of force reduction. Benefits may take the shape of legally mandated benefits like pensions or other types of cash or in-kind aid. Additionally, nations often try to provide benefits to service members who are handicapped, especially those who are unable to work. In most nations, there are national pension plans. Typically, they include clauses for statutory force personnel. Thus, a soldier leaving from statutory forces is qualified to earn a pension, whether for personal retirement or as part of a demobilization. The state, as the employer, and the soldier, who will eventually get benefits, often contribute to some kind of pension fund, despite the fact that there are many different schemes. Pension plans often fail, which is a prevalent issue. For instance, the state is unable to fulfill its financial commitments in Guinea-Bissau and Burundi.

According to the terms and conditions of service, additional benefits can be available, such as a disability pension, medical aid for the disabled, and benefits for survivors of those killed in action or those who pass away while receiving veterans' benefits. Veterans or their family members are eligible for 17 distinct benefits under the Korean Veterans' Pension Act, for instance. For instance, Angola, Cambodia, Guinea-Bissau, and Bosnia and Herzegovina all have comparable laws. Participants in non-statutory forces are often not entitled by law to obtain a pension or other benefits since they do not make contributions to a pension fund. However, like in South Africa's case, a post-war administration may choose who is eligible for these military people. Angola, Burundi, and Guatemala are examples of countries where peace accords might include clauses that provide advantages to members of non-statutory forces (Marongwe, 2003).

There is widespread consensus that specialized help is necessary since demobilized individuals may not be equipped to handle the demands of civilian life. Typically, this kind of help is divided into two components. First, severance or reinsertion payments are intended to make up for the loss of income earned during military duty, whether it be official or informal. This kind of transitional safety net is often designed to meet the demobilized person's and his or her family's basic requirements for a brief period of time, usually six to twelve months. Reintegration aid is given to people who are returning to the workforce in order to help the demobilized build a new means of subsistence. This assistance may take the form of micro-projects, job referrals, skill training, or access to land.

Most people agree that veterans of national liberation wars belong to a unique group of veterans, and

many nations have given them a specific sociopolitical standing. The post-war administrations that prevailed often felt compelled to provide extra recompense for the sacrifices and services they provided to the country. According to Moyo (1991), they are often different from the standard pension plans or benefits offered to military members once a post-liberation national army is established. In comparison to other demographic groups, the kind and quantity of compensation offered to these veterans often has little effect on long-term financial viability or proportionality. Sometimes, family members who are seen to have shared the sacrifice are included in the assistance.

### **Veterans associations**

Associations of veterans, freedom fighters, or former combatants have been formed at the national level in several nations. There are officially recognized associations of reservists and retired military personnel in Colombia, each with its own articles of association, organization, goal, and procedures for participation (UNESCO, 2003). The "Fundación Toriello" was founded in Guatemala by former nonstatutory force members. Members of both statutory and non-statutory forces are welcome to join the "Associação Moçambicana dos Desmobilizados de Guerra" (AMODEG) and the "Associação dos Deficientes Militares de Moçambique" (ADEMINO) in Mozambique. Disgruntled demobilized warriors formed the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association as a forum and advocacy organization. Additionally, to meet the urgent needs of its members, former military people have established self-help organizations in a number of nations, including Rwanda, Timor-Leste, and Uganda (UNESCO, 2003).

According to Utete (2003), these groups or associations are often acknowledged by the government as legitimate advocates of their members' interests. They may become a source of political instability while typically working toward their justifiable goals, but they are also vulnerable to exploitation by political parties to further interests unrelated to those of veterans. This has happened in Zimbabwe, where political violence has been committed by veteran organizations. There have also been nonviolent efforts to influence war veteran groups for political purposes in Timor-Leste. Veterans organizations run the danger of turning into private security or paramilitary organizations. As in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where these groups even get funding directly from the national budgets for their operations, veterans associations may have a significant political impact in certain situations.

In Zimbabwe, unemployed war veterans also made an effort to address their issues and achieve their goals in a more focused or regional manner, for example, by establishing agricultural cooperatives and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the aim of self-rehabilitation. For instance, the Association of

Zimbabwe Traditional Ecologists (AZTREC) was established in 1985 by Masvingo's war veterans, chiefs, and spirit mediums (Susan, 1996). The founders of AZTREC were veterans of the war who had carried on with their plan to seize property from white settlers after independence but had been imprisoned for their 1980 effort to use military force to drive out the white farmers. Both Sub and Gonese (2000) were recruited during the ZIPA time and had served in the Gutu region throughout the conflict. While incarcerated in Chikurubi Maximum Prison, where they were serving 15-year terms, they proposed the concept of forming conservation. However, they were freed after five years by Presidential Decree (Sadomba, 2000).

In order to guide the peasants in restoring holy places that had been damaged during the war, the group sought to bring together spirit mediums, war veterans, and traditional leaders. Despite having distinct national and regional goals, it began operations in Masvingo Province. Spirit mediums from as far away as Guruve were called upon by the organization to conduct rituals in Masvingo in 1998 (Participant observation, Masvingo, 1998). In the same year, Comparing and Supporting Endogenous Development organized a continental training session on indigenous knowledge and development at AZTREC (Rugube, 2003). African religion and conservation philosophy and practices were articulated by AZTREC in order to conserve and restore the environment. For instance, the organization started a program to restore mapa, or chiefs' burial sites, which are considered holy sites in Shona culture because they are connected to the local spirits of the land. During the euphoria of freedom, when the civil service left over from the Smith Regime was at its weakest and unable to enforce conservation rules, these locations had been damaged. The artesian wells and springs (Zvitubu) and Marambatemwa are among the areas where AZTREC was successful in starting conservation efforts. The group encouraged farmers to stop using artificial fertilizers and pesticides by promoting African agronomic practices (Rugube, 2003).

The Zimbabwe Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (ZIRCIK), a national non-governmental organization whose members included organizations interested in advancing African knowledge in resource management and use, was also mentioned by Alexander (2003). The organization was established in 1996 and included several non-governmental organizations that concentrated on indigenous food processing, cultural, and spirit medium groups, including the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association, which was created by Professor Gordon Chavhunduka. ZIRCIK seldom took donations and adhered to strong self-reliance ideals. It worked on World Bank programs and made contributions to studies on the use of indigenous knowledge in teaching. Additionally, it collaborated with NUFFIC/IK-Unit, the Netherlands Organization for



International Cooperation in Higher Education/Indigenous Knowledge.

### **Legal basis for benefits**

Governments have always established a somewhat complex legal foundation for veterans' benefits. It's important to note that occasionally, rules for veterans are set or changed only years after the battle has finished. It could be hard to tell who was a warrior by then. Soon after gaining independence in 1975, Guinea-Bissau published a law defining who is a freedom warrior; nevertheless, it took another 11 years to define rewards. Eleven years after independence, Mozambique also enacted a decree on pensions and other benefits (Durkheim, 1995). Twelve years after gaining independence, Zimbabwe passed the War Veterans' Act in 1992. On the other hand, two years after taking office, the Eritrean government issued a special proclamation in 1993 that established rewards for past liberation warriors as payment for their contributions during the battle for independence (Sachikonye, 1994).

According to Barnes (1995), a distinct legal foundation is needed for the Zimbabwe Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) initiatives. In the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program, for example, the government issued a ministerial order defining eligibility criteria for the demobilization of members of ex-armed groups, a decree establishing the institutional structure responsible for the program, and a ministerial order establishing the demobilization criteria. Similarly, the amounts and methods of payment for reinsertion compensation in Chad were specified in a ministerial directive. In Burundi, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Sierra Leone, for example, peace agreements often provide a foundation for laws addressing significant military reductions (Barnes, 1995).

### **Pensions and compensation challenges faced by war veterans**

The state has the authority to enact laws and set policies pertaining to veterans. But as the history of these laws and policies shows, they may cause more issues than they fix if they are not properly planned for, administered, and funded, and if there is not political will to implement the laws in a transparent manner (Balch, 1995). The disparity between what can be funded and what is passed in legislation is at the core of most issues. The establishment of rich and wide-ranging rewards for former fighters may be motivated by security and stability considerations, such as the idea that such benefits would "buy" peace. However, pressure on the public coffers will ultimately drive changes that can provide a fresh political issue if such perks are unsustainable. The terms of the pension plan for government officials may be applied to soldiers who have retired from the forces. Nonetheless, the soundness of the national pension system determines how long military pensions can last. Such programs are often

unworkable in low-income nations, and while retired military personnel are entitled to pensions, they could not get any or the full amount they are due.

Huge legal advantages that have no connection to long-term financial viability might wind up serving the interests of the powerful instead of the intended recipients. The situation of Guinea-Bissau serves as an example as the government essentially ignored the suffering of the liberation struggle's rank and file. Among the main causes of the June 1998 coup d'état were unpaid pensions and the liberation warriors' animosity against the authorities who got substantial backing. In Zimbabwe, the government used the dissatisfaction of thousands of war veterans with the way the benefits system was being administered as a political tool to demand higher rents from other segments of the population without distributing the money more fairly. Once established, it is politically very difficult to rationalize such arrangements. The two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina recently modified their formerly unsustainable, generous veterans' benefits program, but the transition has been very challenging, partly because of the veterans groups' significant political clout (Bhebe and Ranger 1995).

Compensation for wartime injuries was nonexistent in Zimbabwe. There were no programs for war-wounded and disabled people to get rehabilitation. Many veterans of the war did not get even the little aid packages to which they were entitled. Their exclusion during an age of triumph and widespread hope created a divide between the veterans and the broader public and is crucial in understanding why they continue to feel like they are in a precarious situation (Munyaradzi, 2003). Many were dejected and alienated after being shunned and, in many instances, on the verge of poverty. Young has shown how, in an America attempting to turn its back on a catastrophic war, the diagnosis of "post-traumatic stress disorder" emerged from the US Veteran's Administration in response to outrageous funding for rehabilitation and reintegration (Moyo, 1991). The Zimbabwean veterans may have had an even more intense feeling of alienation since, although having won their own war, their lack of appropriate demobilization and reintegration gave a clear message that they were now to be forgotten. Veterans of the war thought their suffering was being ridiculed.

Demobilization was not always completely accepted by war veterans. To drive the Whites off the country, they were determined to keep the conflict going. In 1980, for instance, some former ZANLA War Veterans in Masvingo organized to carry on the war by attacking White farmers because they believed that the nationalist leaders had abandoned the goals of the armed struggle by failing to seize land from the colonialists and leaving holy sites in the hands of foreign settlers (Mugabe, 1983). Following many encounters with spirit mediums led by one who

claimed to be Nehanda's medium, they made the decision to launch this campaign. The new security agencies hunted them out, arrested them, and sentenced them to lengthy jail terms—an average of 15 years.

## CONCLUSION

Together, veterans from both within and outside of state institutions pressed the president in 1997 for a presidential apology for official negligence and a promise of massive compensation payments for their combat service, among other perks. The argument might be made against seeing these concessions as compensation since the President gave up these perks to save his party from collapsing and because the veterans' moral claim of complete or partial government neglect is dubious. In fact, the favored position of veterans prompted demands from other social groups, including civilian liberation war organizations and the crippled who were not involved in the war, who wanted similar privileges. Veterans' pensions created equity problems among veterans, between veterans and other liberation organizations, between veterans and the ruling class, and between workers and veterans, which led to an unending battleground throughout the liberation struggle. Legitimation and nation-building programs of the governing party, which were reliant on its version, were constantly threatened by competition for war donations and rewards.

In Zimbabwe, responsibilities other than direct combat engagement were seen as secondary to the war effort, and aid for veterans of the conflict was contingent upon evidence of actual combat. Consequently, female combatants had to rely on males to validate their veteran status. Men were ultimately in charge of determining women's status and military contributions, according to Ngara (1999). Finding out how many women, if any, profited from Zimbabwe's compensation program for over 50,000 former fighters in 1998 has proven to be very challenging. But according to research, many women still lacked official rank confirmation by 2000, twenty years after independence. The majority of fighters, according to Durkheim (1995), are occupied with survival, negotiating, cultivating ground nuts or maize, or peddling vegetables on the street. They have been waiting patiently for government compensation for a long time, but even if it were available, many would not be able to afford the bus trip to town centers to apply for such compensation. Parades and monuments are likewise past due for their "symbolic payment."

In many settings, veterans of the liberation struggle aspired to get formal acknowledgment for their unpaid military service. In the context of pensions, this essay concentrated on their efforts to get formal recognition. The ruling party gave in to the political pressures of veterans to provide other pension benefits, such as the recognition of war service years for state-employed ex-guerrillas in the computation of retirement

pensions and veterans' compensation payments, with the exception of war-disability pensions, which were a government initiative. Veterans also used political negotiating to get recurrent increases in war-disability benefits. The degree to which the governing party's legitimacy and authority were reliant on the political backing of veterans was a major factor in its readiness to accommodate disputes with rebel veterans over pensions. The foundation of veterans' power was found here.

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