THE STATE OF HUMAN SECURITY IN ZIMBABWE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MUGABE'S FALL

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Abstract: The academic and public discourse about the state of human security in Zimbabwe in the post-2000 era, following the implementation of the radical land reform programme has received much attention from the practitioners and scholars emanating from disciplines such as Political Science, Public Administration, Peace and Security, inter alia. Most of the studies in this regard have been framed from a North[ern] angled perspective which is centred on Euro-American value systems. Despite this, a quick review of the existing scholarly and popular literature reveals that the state of human security during the period under review has not been uniformly understood. As such, this qualitative paper seeks to employ Afrocentricity as an alternative theoretical and contextual lens to reflect on the state of human security in Zimbabwe within the context of Mugabe's downfall. The key argument of this paper is that Zimbabwe's human security landscape can best be understood when located within the historical and African context. Regardless of the recent change of Presidency in Zimbabwe, the state of human security is still deplorable. This should be understood within the context that the setbacks in this regard cannot be reduced to an individual in the persona of Mugabe. Their complexity requires a multipronged strategy if a relevant and sustainable solution is to be found.

Keywords: Human security, Mnangagwa, Mugabe, state, Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION

The Zimbabwean crisis as witnessed during then President Robert Gabriel Mugabe's tenure traces its roots in the early 1980s. At this time, Zimbabwe experienced a steady economic decline, a sad manifestation that cannot be wholly delinked from the declining prices at the international level. Inasmuch as Zimbabwe was generally considered as the breadbasket of Southern Africa at the time, it was no immune to the negative economic conditions which have ravaged the world as a whole (Raphala 2013). Against this setback, Zimbabwe briefly experimented with the Bretton Woods institutions' (World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in the 1990s. Besides Zimbabwe, other countries such as Nigeria and Zambia who experienced fundamental economic problems in the 1980s also accepted the foreign aid which assumed the form of ESAP. ESAP was broadly considered as a short term intervention to bring about a balance of payments and address economic deficit. Nonetheless, the conditions attached to ESAP were later proven not to favour the foreign aid recipients such as Zimbabwe. Consequently, Zimbabwe embraced a capitalist orientated economy

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which forced it pursue policies of privatisation which only satisfied the needs of foreign investors at the expense of the needs and aspirations of the locals (Raphala, 2013). Continuous recourse to unsustainable, fiscally redistributive and short-lived labour expansionary policies; that is higher agricultural incomes and industrial minimum wages. These were executed without enough attention paid to issues of productivity and growth. Incompetence in revenue and expenditure areas turned budget deficits into a key contributor to macroeconomic deterioration. These came in the form of low growth rates, high budget deficits, high inflation, low foreign exchange reserves and weak balance of payments positions (Ndlela, 2018). Against this backdrop, this qualitative paper seeks to employ Afrocentricity as a theoretical and contextual lens to critically reflect on the state of human security in Zimbabwe within the context of the recent demise of Mugabe's presidency.

DEFINING HUMAN SECURITY

The human security approach is a brain-child of the year 1994 global Human Development Report (HDR). In the year 2012 the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a common definition of the concept of human security. This approach broadens the scope of security analysis and policy from territorial security to the security of people. The UNGA Resolution emphasises the role of Member States in identifying and addressing challenges to survival, livelihood and dignity of their people. On the other hand, the HDR highlighted four major components of human security, that is freedom from fear and want, speech, expression, worship and human dignity. The year 1994 HDR agreed on seven essential dimensions of human security, namely; economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political (Gomez & Gasper, n.d.). Notwithstanding the fact that human security is a key denominator in establishing the link between peace, security, stability and development; Rankhumise and Shai's (2007) invocation is that it introduction of the term human has necessitated that "a myriad of factors became responsible for ensuring the safe and secure survival of all biological, natural and material entities within states, between states and within communities of states".

METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMING

This paper has adopted a qualitative research approach because it is usually useful in investigating the questions of "why and how" of decision making. Furthermore, qualitative data comes from many sources, for example, documents, interviews, field notes and observations and in many forms like, texts, photographs, audio-and videotape (Morse and Richards, 2002:2). The choice of adopting qualitative research in this paper is based on the fact that secondary sources (documents) are used to gather data. Relatedly, descriptive research design was used because of its aptitude to generate a clear picture of the discourse on complex security issues like the one under discussion (Grimes *et al*, 2002). For the purpose of this paper, the authors

have used document review of books, published articles, reports, newspapers, and magazines, papers and statements and speeches by the Zimbabwean politicians and others with an interest of Zimbabwean affairs to generate information.

In terms of data analysis, the authors of this paper have used thematic content analysis which is one of the well-known qualitative methods of data analysis. Content analysis is defined as the reflexive analysis of documents and understanding the meaning, as well as to verify theoretical relationships (Bless, Smith and Kagee, 2006:163). The authors used this type of analysis because documents such as policy documents, articles, books, newspapers and reports were deemed crucial for the successful operationalization of this paper's research given its magnitude and financial limits. Theoretically, this paper is under by Afrocentricity as articulated by Asante (2003) and other likeminded Afrocentric scholars (Shai, 2016). The choice of Afrocentricity as the theoretical and contextual lens of this paper was largely influenced by its cognitive and functional role (Mazama, 2003). Asante and Mazama (2009:12) asseted that "the Afrocentric idea is projected as a model for intercultural agency in which pluralism exists without hierarchy and respect for cultural origins, achivements, and prospects is freel granted". Afrocentricity is a paradigm in view of African people that should re-instate a sense of organization keeping in mind the end goal to achieve rationality.

Afrocentricity can also be understood as a theory of wholeness that seeks ways of unity based on mutual respect for the cultural agency of all people. Afrocentricity materialized as a theory of knowledge in 1980 under Molefi Kete Asante's philosophical thinking while also posing a systematic challenge to Western epistemology. During the late 1970s Asante strove for the need for Africans perspective in orientation of information. In the 1980s he finally published his very own influential book "*Afrocentricity: Theory of Social Change*" (1988). This books is geneally accepted as a blueprint for the filled discussion of the concept of Afrocentricity. However, the concept of Afrocentricity existed long before Asante wrote his book. African leaders such as Kwame Krumah used the concept but Asante's book provided analytical and philosophical approaches to interpret data in order to answer textual, political, social and cultural questions related to Africans from a centred position.

Moreover, Afrocentricity can also be viewed as a revolutionary paradigm deployed by scholars who sought to change the thinking of Africans who are ill-informed, lack agency and to construct and adjust black confusion and decenteredness. Hoskins (1992:14) argue that "Afrocentricity is not anti-white, not the new form of racism and it not similar with Eurocentrism, thus Afrocentricity is a state of mind or mind-set that is embedded in African ancestral heritage". According to Asante and Mazama (2009:4) "Analytic and Philosophical Afrocentricity refers to the application of principle of the afrocentric method to written analysis. afrocentrist pursue to understand the principles of the afrocentric method in order to use theem as a leader in analysis and dissertation".

BRIEF HISTORY OF MUGABE'S RISE TO POWER AND HIS DOWNFALL

As one of the pioneers of the anti-colonial wars in Zimbabwe in the pre-1980 era, Mugabe naturally became the leader of Zimbabwe in the post 1980 independence dispensation. Until he was deposed in November 2017, Mugabe was one of the longest serving presidents in Africa. He was a teacher before he was sent to eleven years in prison by Ian Smith's white minority government. He led Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) to negotiation during the year 1979 Lancaster House Agreement. This agreement contributed to the creation of a democratic Zimbabwe. He was first elected prime minister and later president. He promoted national unity with the white minority but later side-lined his opponents through politics and force. In the year 2000, he pushed for radical land redistribution of white-owned commercial farms. Thus, contributed to the sudden economic collapse and sudden emergence hyperinflation in Zimbabwe (History.com, n.d.).

Harper (2017) maintains that his downfall was caused among other things, the expulsion of his vice-president Emmerson Mnangagwa. It was believed that he wanted to put his wife, Grace Mugabe, to the presidency through backdoors. Then, the military began by detaining the president and later seized the national Television (TV) station. They informed the nation that it was not a military takeover but instead an effort of removing criminals who surrounded the president and they wanted to bring them to justice. On the 21st November 2017, Honourable Jacob Mudenda, the Zimbabwean Parliament Speaker announced the resignation of Mugabe. That marked the end of long rulership of Mugabe and subsequently, the rise Mnangagwa (Jordaan, 2017). Mnangagwa became a natural choice to succeed Mugabe because he was very close to the military generals; who had previously expressed an unwillingness to salute anybody who has never served in the war of liberation. Apparently, Mnangwa also enjoyed the popular support at the local and international level. Such support was unfortunately not well-considered if one is to consider the fact that around the year 2000 most of the gross mistakes of the Mugabe regime we committed with the full blessing of Mnangagwa. Therefore, it is the well-considered view of this paper that replacing Mugabe with Mnangagwa as President of Zimbabwe was the futile exercise because the two subscribe to a similar mode and direction of politics.

ZIMBABWE'S HUMAN SECURITY IN PERSPECTIVE: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS

Economic security

First and foremost, it is worth emphasising that the Zimbabwean economy was once the bread basket of Southern Africa. Today the economy is degraded by

many factors; among others antagonistic relations between then president Mugabe led government and the Western countries such as the United Kingdom of Britain (UK), United States of America and Australia. With Mugabe no longer on the picture of Zimbabwe's political landscape, investors are now showing signs of willingness to pour in with a hope of revitalising the Zimbabwean economy. But such a positive posture is threatened by the re-emergence of the use of security apparatus by the governing Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) government to settle political scores members of the opposition. At times, such an abuse of security apparatus is also unleashed against the very ZANU-PF supporters and members who might join protests as it was the case in the year 2019 when presisident Mnabgagwa announced a significant increase in the fuel price. However, in terms of the state of the economy there is shaggy-dog story; with hyperinflation, high unemployment with at-least 53 percent of working-age adults employed, periodic fuel and food shortages, crippling public debt at $11.6 billion which is equivalent to 82 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a chronic lack of cash. As a result, a company named Fraym, research company, in-depth data collection, it identified that there are promising opportunities for commercial vultures and social development (Homer, 2018).

On the other hand, the African Development Bank (ADB) is also applying technology-driven identification strategies to critically analyse activities of companies, governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). It has also find-out that opportunities do exist in Zimbabwean economy. Typical example is the solution to the shortage cash. It was realised that about 85 percent of rural Zimbabweans and 98 percent in urban do have cell phones. This resulted in introduction of digital banking. Mukuru and Ecocash mobile-enabled funds transfer services which into being stabilised the shortage of cash flow around the country. This electronic money now accounts for 70% of all payments in the country (Homer, 2018). Despite this, the use of foreign currency (i.e. ZAR Rand, $ US) still dominate the Zimbabwean economic market.

Food security

Since the beginning of the hyperinflation of 2000 around the year 2008, food security is still a burden to both civilians and the government respectively. It is a public knowledge that only a small proportion of better off households in surplus-production areas still have carryover stocks from 2017. These areas have acquired improved products and profit in the current harvest. Own-produced crops remain the core source of food. Alas, own produced food stocks are very slim for the poor especially in the south, west and extreme north. These contribute to poor consumption patterns. Consumption of cereal in deficit-production areas remains steady meal. Most poor households still utilising coping strategies in the early

2018-2019 consumption period. One of the compounding factors is shortage of money and water in arid areas (Fews.Net, 2018:03)

Health security

It remains common in Africa today to realise that large quantity of people is infected by the pandemics of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Zimbabwe is not an exception in this instance, about 1.2 million Zimbabweans has died of HIV/AIDS related diseased since 2000. Today there is an estimated 1 million Zimbabweans who are believed to be positive. So, on the 16th July 2018, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) promised a five year program to the value of United States (US) Dollar (US$) 35 million which will benefit about 250,000 HIV/AIDS affected orphans, 59,500 families and 15,000 youth. The program will be operating in nine districts. It will further focus on capacitating local institutions in serving HIV infected patients (U.S. Embassy in Zimbabwe, 2018). Contextually, it is also worth noting that in addition to HIV/AIDS, Zimbabwe is also bedevilled by epidemics such as cholera, typhoid, tuberculosis and pneumonia, among others. The prevalence of epidemics in Zimbabwe cannot be de-linked from its impoverished situation.

Environmental security

The Environmental Security in Zimbabwe is said to be disturbing. There is a report of high deforestation, soil erosion, land degradation, air and water pollution. Again, one may note that Zimbabwe has once had a voluminous concentration of the black rhinoceros herd. However, the numbers have been significantly being reduced due to poaching activities in the country. Furthermore, the Zimbabwean mining is tainted by poor mining practices which contribute to toxic waste and heavy metal pollution (Index-mundi, 2018). Among others, poor mining practices in Zimbabwe includes illegal mining and semi-legal mining. The former entails unauthorised mining activities by the locals and at times in cahoots with foreign companies. The latter denotes the mining activities which have not been been sanctioned by the department of minerals, but they have the blessing of the local traditional authorities. According to Shai (2018a) such an interface between the illegal and semi-legal mining operators with the government and traditional authorities can also be observed in some rural parts of South Africa. What is common about illegal and semi-illegal mining operators is the tendency to evade accountability in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Shai, 2018b).

Community security

USAID has pledged a five-year project to the sum $32.4 million which aims at redressing the current situation of water shortages within the Limpopo River Basin

and Okavango River Basin communities. Moreover, the project will provide an increased supply of safe drinking water and proper sanitation. It will service about 21 million people from South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia. It will further strengthen infrastructure necessary that will ensure healthy water systems. All in all, it will help protect the livelihood and healthy mankind, if realised (CNB-Africa, 2018).

Political security

Mnangagwa guaranteed the Zimbabweans free and fair elections during the year 2018 national polls. Unfortunately, it is still early to determine his reaction towards outcomes that are undesirable, considering his influence in the military as it was witness during the government takeover in the late 2017. Prior to the elections, the oppositions claimed that he has deployed about 5 000 soldiers in rural areas. Rural areas are traditional support bases for the ZANU-PF and the alleged deployment of soldiers there could be interpreted as a desperate move to prevent an encroachment by the opposition. This move has be viewed in certain circles as a dubious manoeuvre to rig the year 2018 national elections. Thus, has prompted the opposition like National Patriotic Front (NPF) formerly known as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) to demand the demilitarisation of the villages (Vikilahle, 2018). It is within this context the victory of Mnangagwa and his ZANU-PF has been disputed by the opposition. The basis for this electoral dispute is the fact that ZANU-PF has an undue influence over the electoral commission of Zimbabwe. If this is anything to go by, it is not farfetched to assume political manipulation by the incumbent.

The leader of the opposition, Nelson Chamisa, announced that his party is victorious in the national elections. He pronounced this before the official results were released. This is regrettable move that provided an enabling environment under which the soon to be official results culminated in the death of several members of the opposition upon violently protesting against the loss of their political parties. He (Chamisa) continued to utter that he will not accept the defeat to the point of appealing in the court of law. It is worth pointing out that Chamisa still lost in the court law in spite of the fact that he had rented the best lawyers from South Africa (i.e. Adv. Dali Mpofu). The out of this due court process is not beyond question because the independence of the judiciary from political influence in Zimbabwe is a tendency that cannot be wholly ruled out. Zimbabwe does not have a monopoly in terms of the conflation of the tendency of the governing parties to influence the judiciary. The same can be observed in South Africa. One could the deployment of the military as a counter move by the ruling party. However, the people of Zimbabwe had always wished that they could leave without the terror by military which was used by the former president Mugabe led government (Du Plessis, 2018).

CONCLUSION

In the light of the above, it has been established that the state of human security in Zimbabwe is complex. While there are signs of improvement in this regard, realities and practicalities on the ground suggest the opposite. Such a situation can be attributed to several factors, some which are economic, political and environmental in nature. In conclusion one would aver that the economic deterioration in Zimbabwe was not a one man show. Instead, there were other factors in play. In part, the so-called world powers like UK and USA played a pivotal role in paralysing the Zimbabwean economy as a way of pressurising the Harare (the capital city and the administrative hub of the Zimbabwean government) to implement changes which in their view are conducive for democracy and free trading according their standard. Political security has been threatened by the deployment of the military and the killing of six civilians during the post Zimbabwean national elections. Thus, this could deter Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), infrastructure development, entrepreneurship, social stability and so forth.

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