



# **Women, Politics and the Zimbabwe Crisis.**

**Report produced by IDASA (An African  
Democracy Institute), the International Center  
for Transitional Justice [ICTJ], the Research and  
Advocacy Unit [RAU] and the Women's Coalition  
of Zimbabwe (WCoZ)**

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## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This report gives the first findings of a national poll of 2158 women, drawn from all 10 Provinces. The women were polled in mid-November to early-December 2009.

### Women and Elections:

- Women believe that they should participate in politics and increasing numbers of women are voting, although in less numbers than are actually eligible to vote;
- Women report that they have become increasingly unsafe during elections, and very large numbers report that they have experienced violence during elections;
- Most women believe that violence is unacceptable during elections, and most women believe that elections should not favour any single party.

### Women and Violence:

- 52% stated that they had been victims of violence and 14% stated that they had been physically maimed;
- The most commonly reported perpetrators were non-state agents [ZANU PF supporters, war veterans, youth militia];
- The most common violations reported at the hands of state officials were threats, torture, assaults, and arbitrary arrest in that order;
- The most common violations reported at the hands of non-state agents were threats, assault, torture, and property destruction in that order;
- Rape was reported with a surprisingly high frequency: 2% reported being personally raped, 3% reported that a family member had been raped, and a startling 16% reported that someone in the community had been raped;
- 44% reported that women are affected differently by political violence, giving reasons ranging from their weaker physical status to their inability to go into hiding due to their family responsibilities.

### Women & Peace:

- The three most common responses to the question about what would bring peace were *an end to violence*, *free and fair elections*, and *democracy*.

### The Inclusive Government:

- 85% of women felt that they should have been consulted about the GPA, and 70% stated that women's interests were not represented in the IG;
- 80% of women stated that their lives had not changed much for the better since the formation of the IG;
- Apart from *food security*, *health*, and *education*, a majority of women expressed little trust in the IG to deliver on a wider range of issues;
- Most women [74%] believe that Robert Mugabe has the most power in the IG, with a small number [14%] believing that Morgan Tsvangirai has any power, and virtually none believe that Arthur Mutambara has any power;
- However, most [51%] expressed support for MDC-T, with only 9% and 3% expressing support for ZANU PF and MDC-M respectively. 21% stated that they were unwilling to say and 14% stated that they did not support a party.

## Introduction

One of the major challenges facing parliamentary democracy can be the restriction of people's participation in democratic processes, especially the opportunity to vote in periodic elections. Whilst an election is the standard model for resolving exchanges of political power, they do not always narrow the gap between the aspirations of the voters, the promises of the political parties, and general satisfaction with a government. How, therefore, do citizens express their displeasure with their government except through elections? How is public opinion of government performance gauged between elections or in contexts where the credibility of election results themselves has been brought into question?

Public opinion polls are widely used throughout the world for this purpose. They have their limitations, but can provide critical insights into issues of government performance. Citizen aspirations can then help to influence choices about which way a government or the state should act, even suggesting that a government needs to seek a new mandate due to its unpopularity.

The Afrobarometer, Africa's leading source of public political opinions, has conducted four national opinion surveys in Zimbabwe over the last 11 years: the first before the current crisis, in 1999<sup>1</sup>, the second in April 2004<sup>2</sup>, the third in 2006<sup>3</sup>, and the fourth in 2009<sup>4</sup>. These, and other survey results, have provided important complements to the present study and reflections on the hard facts of Zimbabwe's social, political and economic journey.

The 1999 Afrobarometer survey showed that while Zimbabweans had a very good understanding of what constituted a democracy and democratic practice, when compared with other African countries that were surveyed, they had the lowest belief that their country was in fact a democracy, with most respondents stating Zimbabwe was either *not democratic* or had *severe problems* in that regard. In 1999, even though most Zimbabweans believed that their government was fairly elected, most did not think it was governed in an acceptable way. At that point less than a quarter of those polled (23%) agreed that the existing frequently amended, Lancaster House Constitution was acceptable. While Zimbabweans felt that they enjoyed more political freedom under the Mugabe government than they did under the white minority government of Ian Smith, they were the least optimistic about the 'flowering of democracy' of all Southern Africans.

From the 2004 survey, the picture that emerged was less optimistic, and suggested that Zimbabweans had a significantly reduced faith in the future of democracy than in 1999. This survey also showed Zimbabweans were more accepting of the status quo rather than change, and were even more pessimistic about the possibility of liberal democracy taking root in Zimbabwe than in the survey 5 years earlier: Two disputed elections later and 4 years of increasingly repressive behaviour by the government, it is perhaps understandable that many had resigned themselves to these political realities. In fact, Zimbabweans exhibited the largest decline of faith in democracy of any African country surveyed by the Barometer in 2004. Indeed, support for democracy slipped 23 points between 1999 and 2004. However, despite the sharp decline in their socio-economic and political well-being, for which the people polled clearly blamed the ZANU PF government, there was a paradoxical increase in the popularity of President Robert Mugabe with his overall ratings increasing by 31 points, a fact which the Afrobarometer attributed mostly, but, not entirely, to "propaganda". This level of support, however, would not last much beyond 2004.

In 2006, a third report by the Afrobarometer, on the effects of *Operation Murambatsvina* (2005), did not directly test public opinion on issues of democracy, but did indicate that the mass displacement

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<sup>1</sup> Chikwanha-Dzenga, A. B, Masunungure, E, & Madingira, N (2000), *Democracy and National Governance in Zimbabwe: A Country Survey Report*. Afrobarometer Paper No.12.

<sup>2</sup> Chikwana, A., Sithole, T., & Bratton, M. (2004), *The Power of Propaganda: Public Opinion in Zimbabwe, 2004*, Afrobarometer Report No. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Bratton, M, & Masunungure, E (2006), *Popular Reactions to State Repression: Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe*. April 2006, Afrobarometer Working Paper No.59.

<sup>4</sup> Afrobarometer (2009), *Summary of Results. Round 4 Afrobarometer Survey in Zimbabwe*. Compiled by MPOI.

had resulted in serious erosion of support for ZANU PF, as well as discrediting the police and other state institutions in the eyes of the Zimbabwean citizenry.

The 2009 report by the Afrobarometer [AB4], summarising the fourth round of surveys on Zimbabweans' opinions, pointed to a further significant slide in ZANU PF's popularity. In May 2009, 81% of the sample expressed approval of the performance of the Prime Minister, Morgan Tsvangirai, whilst only 24% approved of the performance of the President, Robert Mugabe. In response to the question about who they might vote for in an election tomorrow, 57% (54% of women) said that they would vote for MDC-T, with only 10% for ZANU PF, and none for MDC-M. It should be noted here that 25% refused to answer and a further 4% stated that they would not vote. It is not possible to deduce whether the 25% that refused to answer were "uncommitted" MDC-T or ZANU PF supporters, but, assuming the latter, then ZANU PF support could be as high as 35%.

Additionally, 66% of the sample thought that the setting in place of the Inclusive Government [IG] was the best way forward, and, in response to perceptions about how the IG was performing in 18 key areas, gave positive responses on 10 of the areas. However, it should be pointed out that the views on the performance of the IG were polled just three months after its inception.

Most recently, Freedom House, in a study, polled in September 2009, on *Public Attitudes towards Transition in Zimbabwe*, results also demonstrated that Robert Mugabe and ZANU PF had lost significant support amongst the citizens of Zimbabwe<sup>5</sup>. Whilst 55% of the sample indicated support for Morgan Tsvangirai's party [MDC-T], only 12% were willing to admit public support for ZANU PF. With a further 33% uncommitted to either (and probably fearful of giving an opinion in the polarised political terrain of Zimbabwe), this strongly suggests that on the basis of admitted support, ZANU PF would be hard pressed to win a majority in any genuine election.

None of the polls has presented a separate analysis of the views of women. This is interesting, especially in the aftermath of *Operation Murambatsvina*, where it was evident from several reports that women and their families had been the most serious victims of the forced displacements<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, other reports had strongly suggested that women activists (and their children) had been suffering gross human rights violations, as a direct result of their protests about the Zimbabwe crisis<sup>7</sup>. It may well be that women might have rather different views about the crisis, its consequences, and its resolution than do their menfolk.

In late 2009, the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) in a project funded by the Gender Support Programme, partnered with IDASA (An African Democracy Institute), the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) to conduct a survey to find out women's views on transitional justice and a number of other issues. The interviews covered issues as follows:

- Basic demographic details;
- Women and politics [Violations & Witnessing of violations];
- Consultation about the Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation;
- Special Processes and Commissions;
- Truth Telling;
- Accountability;
- Compensation;
- Rehabilitation and Reintegration;
- Inclusive Government;

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<sup>5</sup> *Public Attitudes towards Transition in Zimbabwe*. 11 December 2009, Freedom House & Mass Public Opinion Institute.

<sup>6</sup> ActionAid (2005), *A Study on the Impact of "Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order" in 26 Wards of Harare High Density Housing Areas*. ActionAid International in Collaboration with Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) July 2005; ActionAid (2005), *An in-depth study on the impact of Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order in Zimbabwe*. ActionAid International in collaboration with the Counselling Services Unit (CSU), Combined Harare Residents' Association (CHRA) and the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP). November 2005.

<sup>7</sup> WOZA (2008), *The effects of fighting repression with love*. A report by Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA). March 2008. ZIMBABWE: WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE ARISE; OZA (2008), *The traumatic consequences of gross human rights violations suffered by WOZA women*. HARARE: WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE ARISE.

- Law and Order;
- Livelihood (within Zimbabwe and out of Zimbabwe);
- Political Party Affiliation.

This short report reflects only a section survey findings as it attempts to answer the question; what do women understand about the crisis in Zimbabwe and what do they want?

## Demography

The average age of the sample [2158] was 38.8 years. Interestingly, those that expressed overt support for ZANU PF were significantly older, an average of 45.9 years, supporting the common assertion that ZANU PF draws its support from an older and more rural population<sup>8</sup>.

5% of the sample came from the Diaspora [Botswana and South Africa], and, of the Zimbabwean sample, 65% were from rural areas, and 35% were urban locations. As can be seen from the table below, higher proportions of the sample came from Harare, Manicaland, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland West. However, the spread is very similar in most respects to that obtained in AB4.

**Table 1: Geographical distribution of respondents**

Province	Survey	AB4
Bulawayo	4%	6%
Harare	19%	16%
Manicaland	15%	14%
Mashonaland Central	6%	9%
Mashonaland East	18%	10%
Mashonaland West	12%	10%
Masvingo	5%	11%
Matabeleland North	6%	6%
Matabeleland South	7%	6%
Midlands	9%	13%

There were also a small number of respondents from the Diaspora, with 3% coming from South Africa and 1% coming from Botswana. A majority [54%] were rural, with 41% being urban; 5% gave details that were not possible to verify.

**Table 2: Age distribution of respondents**

	Survey	AB4
18-24	9%	26%
25-34	32%	32%
35-44	27%	16%
45-54	18%	13%
55-64	9%	8%
65-74	3%	4%
75 and older	1%	1%
Don't know	1%	1%

As can be seen from Table 2, there are differences between the present survey and AB4 in the age distribution of the two samples. The present survey has higher frequencies of older women than AB4

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<sup>8</sup> Data for this survey and the AB4 data are given under Demography for purposes of comparison. See also comments under Methods.

in the 35-54 age range, whilst AB4 had higher frequencies in the 18-24 year age group. However, there is moderate agreement between the two samples in the overall distribution [ $0.78$ ;  $p=0.05$ ].

The majority of respondents were married but there were a high proportion of women that were widowed: these were significantly more likely to report being a supporter of ZANU PF, whilst single women were more likely to claim allegiance to MDC-T.

**Table3: Marital status**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Single</b>	14%
<b>Married</b>	56%
<b>Separated</b>	5%
<b>Divorced</b>	6%
<b>Widowed</b>	19%

Over half of the respondents had secondary school education, and a fairly high number had attended some form of tertiary education, suggesting strongly that most women had completed education before the crisis. It should also be noted that the present sample had double the number of women with tertiary education compared with AB4, which may have been a confounding factor in the responses.

**Table 4: Education**

<b>Education</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>AB4</b>
<b>None</b>	5%	7%
<b>Primary</b>	19%	13%
<b>Secondary</b>	60%	58%
<b>Tertiary</b>	16%	8%

The majority [80%] described themselves as “Shona”, with 10% describing themselves as “Ndebele”, and the remainder distributed amongst another 17 ethnic groups. Again there is very good agreement with the findings of AB4 [ $0.99$ ;  $p=0.001$ ].

**Table 5: Ethnic affiliation**

	<b>Survey</b>	<b>AB4</b>
<b>English</b>	0%	0%
<b>Ndebele</b>	10%	13%
<b>Shona</b>	80%	81%
<b>Venda</b>	1%	2%
<b>Kalanga</b>	2%	1%
<b>Tonga</b>	2%	2%
<b>Nambya</b>	0%	0%
<b>Nyanja</b>	2%	0%
<b>Other</b>	3%	1%

Unsurprisingly, the majority [94%] described themselves as “Christian”, but the next most frequent religion was “Traditional”.

**Table 6: Religion**

Religion	Survey	AB4
Christian	93%	86%
Traditional	5%	
Muslim	0.3%	0.3%
Other	5%	14%
Refused	0%	0.3%

## Elections

The survey asked women about their attitudes towards elections, and specifically about the participation of women in politics, asking them which of the following statements they agreed with.

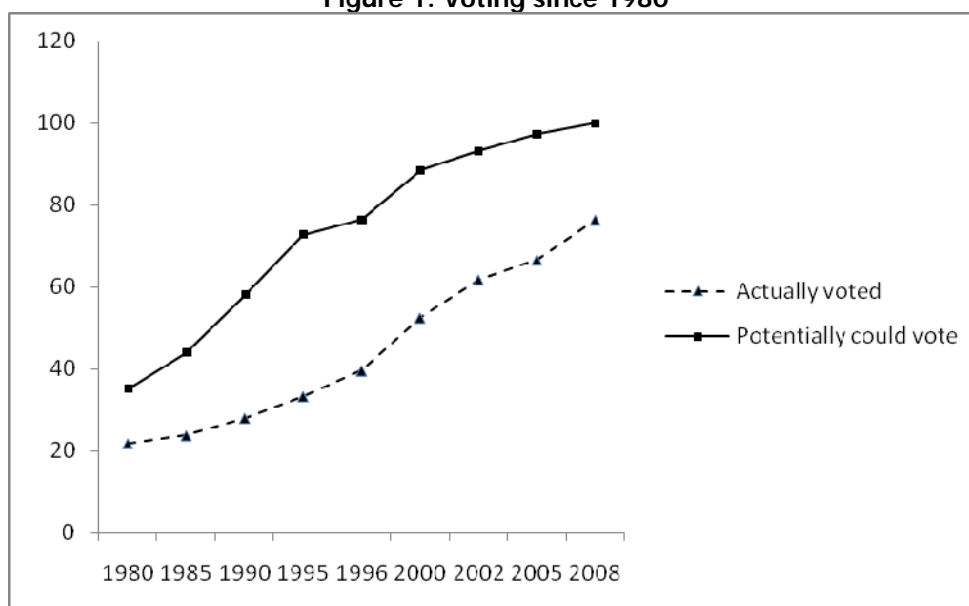
*Women should be home and not involved in politics? Yes=7%*

*Women and men must have equal rights to engage in politics? Yes=74%*

*Women must only participate in politics with their husband's permission? Yes=18%*

Evidently women feel that they have the right to participate in the political life of the country, and this is further evidenced by their increased involvement in elections since 1980.

**Figure 1: Voting since 1980**



The figure above is largely self-explanatory: by 2000 a majority of women respondents in this survey were voting in elections. However, not all women were voting, as can also be seen from Figure 1 above, mostly because they were ineligible due to being under age. Of the reasons for not voting in any particular year, it can be seen from Table 7 below that these remain fairly consistent across elections, with no marked changes over time. There is a small increase in attributions of violence and intimidation, but improvements in the number of women having access to an ID, and no changes in women not being placed on the voter's roll.



**Table 7: Reasons for not voting**

Year	Long queues	Intimidation	Violence	No ID	Not on the voter's roll	Other
1980	0.8%	0.3%	0.1%	17%	2%	13%
1985	0.7%	0.4%	0.1%	16%	2%	13%
1990	0.7%	0.4%	0.1%	16%	3%	14%
1995	0.9%	0.5%	0.1%	13%	3%	16%
1996	1%	0.8%	0.2%	11%	4%	15%
2000	1%	2%	0.8%	8%	4%	17%
2002	1%	2%	1%	5%	4%	13%
2005	0.8%	2%	1%	4%	3%	12%
2008	0.3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	11%

This trend, which suggests a healthy electoral climate is counter-balanced by a series of questions about women's perceptions of the electoral climate, and, as can be seen from Table 8, there is an increasing trend towards women feeling *unsafe* – and more markedly *extremely unsafe* – in elections since 2000.

**Table 8: Feelings of safety during elections since 1980**

Year	Extremely safe	Safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Unsafe	Extremely unsafe	Don't know
1980	14%	11%	1%	1%	0.5%	5%
1985	14%	14%	1%	1%	0.3%	4%
1990	14%	16%	2%	2%	0.4%	4%
1995	16%	19%	2%	2%	0.6%	4%
1996	16%	21%	3%	4%	0.9%	3%
2000	10%	20%	8%	17%	5%	2%
2002	7%	20%	7%	24%	10%	2%
2005	6%	16%	5%	0	46%	0
2008	5%	6%	3%	16%	52%	1%

Perhaps even more telling is the significant increase in reported violence since 1980: 2008 was evidently the worst year, and, interestingly, 2002 was seen as significantly worse than 2000. Additionally, 59% reported that they felt forced to vote for a particular political party because of violence or threats of violence.

**Table 9: Experience of violence during election since 1980**

Year	Number [%]
1980	0.1%
1985	0.3%
1990	0.3%
1995	0.2%
1996	1%
2000	9%
2002	20%
2005	19%
2008	62%

Another set of statements dealt with the conduct of elections, and were aimed at tapping perceptions about election bias and the vexed issues of freeness and fairness. As regards the notion that political parties should determine the manner of running elections, the majority clearly indicated that political parties should not be in such a position.

**Table 10: Attitudes to running elections**

	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Don't know
Dominant party should determine how elections are run	10%	82%	3%	3%
Opposition parties not allowed to campaign in strongholds of other parties	6%	88%	3%	2%

Furthermore, a majority [83%] felt that any control by political parties over the running of elections will affect the results (and obviously in their favour), and felt that restrictions in campaigning will also affect the results [Table 11 below].

**Table 11: Attitudes to elections and results**

	Affects results	Doesn't affect results	Don't know
Dominant party should determine how elections are run	83%	12%	4%
Opposition parties not allowed to campaign in strongholds of other parties	74%	20%	5%

Again the majority rejected the notion that violence was acceptable in elections, although a small percentage did think it was acceptable. Interestingly the 9%, shown in Table 12 below, that agreed that violence is acceptable show that there is a perception that violence and elections are inseparable. This was a view given across the political divide.

**Table 12: Violence during elections**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Violence is acceptable sometimes in elections	4%	5%	2%	31%	55%	1%

The majority attributed the causes of violence to either struggles for power or political intolerance. Few [10%] thought it had anything to do with the legacies of colonial rule, which has been a recurrent theme for the ZANU PF regime, together with land, since 2000.

**Table 13: Causes of Violence**

	Colonial rule	Power struggle	Political intolerance	Economic motivation for conflict	Other	Don't know
What are the root causes of violence in Zimbabwe	10%	36%	41%	6%	7%	2%

## Violations

The women were also asked to indicate the kind of violations they had been subjected to during any election period<sup>9</sup>. 52% stated that they had been victims of violence and 14% stated that they had been physically maimed<sup>10</sup>. They were also asked to indicate whether they had been violated by an official, non-official, identified individuals, or unknown individuals. Those that fell into the official category were defined as state agents; police, army, and officers from the Central Intelligence

<sup>9</sup> A more detailed report on violence will be issued in the near future.

<sup>10</sup> This is a very high frequency of reported violations, but covers all years and both direct and indirect violence.

Organisation (CIO). The non-official category included youth militias, war veterans, ordinary people and supporters of political parties.

**Table 14: Experience of violence**

Form of violence	By officials (e.g. police)	By non officials (e.g. war vets, militia)	Don't know who
Abduction	2%	5%	1%
Arbitrary arrest	6%	2%	0%
Arson	1%	6%	1%
Assault	8%	20%	1%
Forced disappearance	2%	4%	1%
Indecent assault	2%	5%	1%
Property destruction	3%	16%	1%
Rape	2%	2%	1%
Sexual violence	1%	3%	0%
Threats	15%	30%	2%
Torture	9%	17%	1%
Other	2%	3%	1%

Generally, there was a greater frequency of violations reportedly at the hands of non-state agents [non-officials], which has been the common finding in most human rights reports over the past decade, and generally violations at the hands of non-state agents were twice as frequent as those at the hands of state agents. The highest reported violation revealed in the survey was threats, with twice as many threats being given by non-officials as opposed to officials. The more serious violations of torture and assaults were also reported with high frequency, and much higher at the hands of non-officials. 5% of the women indicated that they had been subjected to indecent assault by non-officials, and 3% reported that they had been subjected to sexual violence and that this violence had been perpetrated by non-officials. 1% indicated that they had been sexually violated by officials.

Interestingly the witnessing of rape was much more frequently reported than the actual experience of rape, which seems improbable. As can be seen from Table 15 below, the frequency of rape increases as a function of the remoteness from personal experience of rape. Few women report their own rape, but slightly more report rape of a family member. However, if the figures for reports of rape in the community are accurate [16%], then rape is extremely prevalent and massively under-reported. However, this figure should be used with extreme caution, and the whole issue of political rape deserves very serious investigation, probably with some form of epidemiological study. It should nonetheless be noted that rape, both political and opportunistic, is common in countries where there is war, civil war, or low-intensity conflict.

**Table 15: Reported rape**

	Rape by official	Rape by non-official	Rape by unidentified
<b>Personally raped</b>	2%	2%	1%
<b>Family member raped</b>	3%	7%	1%
<b>Community member raped</b>	6%	16%	2%

In addition, the survey asked whether the women thought women were affected differently by violence and 44% answered *very much*, and, when asked why, gave a variety of answers ranging from the fact that women are considered the weaker sex due to the fact that women could not fight

back as they had domestic responsibilities, and, therefore, could not run away and leave the home (something many men chose as an option to escape violence).

### Women and peace

Women were asked to indicate in their own opinion what they regarded to be the three most important ingredients that would bring peace to Zimbabwe. The end of violence (39%) was considered to be the first key ingredient. The second ingredient was free and fair elections (32%) and, democracy (21%) was the third most frequently indicated ingredient necessary for peace. These results support claims that Zimbabweans know what democracy means and how it can be achieved<sup>11</sup>. Further, the results suggest that many women in Zimbabwe understand the root causes of the crisis in the country and the necessary steps that need to be taken in order for the problem to be resolved. Table 16 shows the ratings assigned to various indices of peace, rated from 1 to 3.

**Table 16: Ratings of indices of peace**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>End of Violence</b>	39%	7%	10%
<b>Free and Fair Elections</b>	20%	32%	13%
<b>Democracy</b>	9%	6%	21%
<b>Reconciliation</b>	4%	5%	6%
<b>Development</b>	1%	3%	8%
<b>Inclusive Government</b>	3%	4%	1%
<b>Justice</b>	4%	10%	8%
<b>Live Without Fear</b>	9%	13%	8%
<b>Newly elected Government</b>	7%	14%	18%
<b>All</b>	4%	0%	1%

### Inclusive Government

A further set of questions addressed the Inclusive Government [IG] and its performance. As can be seen from Table 17 below, most women [86%] thought that there should have been consultation on the setting up of the IG, and a sizeable number [70%] thought that the interests of women were not represented in the IG.

**Table 17: Consultation about the Inclusive Government**

	<b>Definitely</b>	<b>Maybe</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Should people of Zimbabwe have been consulted about the inclusive government?</b>	71%	15%	2%	4%
<b>Do you think that the interests of women are represented in the inclusive government?</b>	14%	27%	43%	15%

There was not great enthusiasm for the achievements of the IG with 80% stating that not much had changed in their lives for the better.

**Table 18: Effects of the Inclusive Government**

	<b>Very much</b>	<b>Not much</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Worse than before</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Has your life changed for the better since the inception of the inclusive government?</b>	15%	64%	15%	1%	2%

<sup>11</sup> See page 1.

A further set of questions looked at key areas and the views of women on how these areas had fared under the IG, asking *do you trust this government to improve the following?* This finding was similar when disaggregated by party affiliation [see Appendix 1].

**Table 19: Trust in the Inclusive Government's ability to deliver services**

	Yes		No		Don't know	
	Study	AB4	Study	AB4	Study	AB4
<b>Food Security</b>	69%	56%	18%	39%	12%	21%
<b>Education</b>	47%	51%	41%	44%	12%	5%
<b>Health</b>	52%	64%	37%	30%	11%	6%
<b>Water &amp; Sanitation</b>	38%	52%	46%	40%	15%	8%
<b>Electricity</b>	34%	42%	51%	51%	14%	7%
<b>Job creation</b>	25%	33%	60%	52%	15%	15%
<b>Personal security</b>	27%		52%		21%	
<b>Law &amp; order</b>	24%	49%	55%	37%	21%	14%
<b>Election conduct</b>	23%		47%		29%	
<b>Constitution</b>	24%		43%		32%	
<b>Healing the nation</b>	26%		41%		32%	

The results suggest that Zimbabwean women have significantly declining faith in the IG. Compared with results of the AB4 report, faith in the IG had dropped significantly since May 2009. Apart from food security, education, health, and, marginally, water and sanitation, the majority of the sample expressed distrust in the IG's ability to deliver change. This lack of trust could be related to women's perceptions of who has the most power in the IG, with the overwhelming majority [68 – 71%] identifying Robert Mugabe as still in charge. There was even agreement between MDC-T [71%] and ZANU PF [70%] supporters that Mugabe remains in charge. It is noteworthy that very few of the respondents see Arthur Mutambara [and MDC-M] as having any political power at all.

**Table 20: Power in the Inclusive Government**

	Mugabe	Tsvangirai	Mutambara	Equal	Don't know
<b>Who has the most power in the inclusive government?</b>	70%	14%	0.2%	8%	7%

These results, at least as far as women are concerned, do not indicate much enthusiasm for the IG; they see the IG as being largely unable to deliver change or improvement in most keys areas of civic life, and accurately perceive that Robert Mugabe and ZANU PF remain in control of the political life of Zimbabwe. However, the majority express support for MDC-T, and these results show a further decline in overt public support for ZANU PF from the time of the Freedom House survey: down from 12% to 9%.<sup>12</sup> Again, as noted in the introduction, large numbers of respondents in these surveys declined to express a political party affiliation and it is possible that this includes supporters of ZANU PF unwilling to express a preference.

<sup>12</sup> Past opinion surveys in Zimbabwe have reflected that a sizeable proportion of interviewees are unwilling to state their political party preferences, and this survey was no different. 21% of interviewees were unwilling to state their preference.

**Table21: Political party affiliation**

	<b>Number [%]</b>
<b>MDC-T</b>	51%
<b>ZANU PF</b>	9%
<b>MDC-M</b>	3%
<b>Mavambo-Kusile-Dawn</b>	1%
<b>ZAPU</b>	0.3%
<b>Ndonga</b>	0.2%
<b>NAGG</b>	0.1%
<b>Don't want to say</b>	21%
<b>No Party</b>	14%

## **Conclusions**

Despite the methodological problems outlined below, the sample was nonetheless broadly representative of the Zimbabwe population, and, accordingly, one can have some confidence that the views expressed are representative of Zimbabwean women. It should be noted that there was a significantly higher percentage of women with tertiary education, and hence, to some extent the findings may have been affected by a class factor: it is evident that urban and educated Zimbabweans have tended to support MDC-T.

Accepting the reservation expressed above, the trend towards diminishing support for ZANU PF, seen in AB4 and the Freedom House surveys, is continued. Also interesting was the perception, from all groups, that Robert Mugabe remains in charge, and that Arthur Mutambara's smaller MDC faction is seen as largely irrelevant.

On elections, the sample, including ZANU PF supporters, believe that women should actively participate in politics, and increasingly have done so, as the data on participation in elections demonstrates: the percentage of women voting in elections has risen from 22% in 1980 to 77% in 2008<sup>13</sup>. Although the number that did not vote was very small, the reasons for not doing so remain largely constant over the years, with a small increase in reports of violence and intimidation since 2000.

However, the response to questions about how safe women have felt during elections clearly shows a significant increase in the percentage of women reporting that they have felt unsafe during elections since 2000, and a very high percentage reporting feeling *extremely unsafe*. This is both supported and compounded by the very high percentage of women reporting that they had experienced violence during the same period. 2008 was far and away the worst year, with 62% of women reporting that they had experienced violence.

A majority of women [86%] disagreed with the notion that some violence is acceptable during elections, which is very similar to the findings of the Freedom House survey where over 80% of all political groupings – MDC-T, ZANU PF, and other – agreed with the statement that *"the use of violence is never justified in Zimbabwe politics"*. This must be read together with the finding that women found elections increasingly violent in their own experience and were correspondingly increasingly unsafe during elections [see above section on elections]. It should also be noted that women represent a large number of victims of violence, and those that were not victims witnessed it either when their family members were victimised or when there was violence in their communities.

The perpetrators were either non-officials who were mainly youth militia, war veterans or supporters of the political parties, or less frequently state officials; police or army. As was found in the Freedom House survey, the frequency of violations involving personal injury was much lower than the reports of injuries to family members, and intimidation was much higher than either of these, especially

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<sup>13</sup> Obviously the number of women eligible to vote has risen with population growth since 1980, but it is nonetheless interesting that women are still choosing to participate in politics, This is consonant with the assertion by a majority of women that they have a right to participate in politics.

during elections<sup>14</sup>. Freedom House reported that 45% of the sample fear political intimidation during election campaigns which corresponds to the increasingly high percentages of women that reported experiences of violence during elections, and the equally high percentages of women that reported feeling *extremely unsafe* during elections.

Women are not happy about the inclusive government, in contrast to the earlier findings of the Afrobarometer, which may only reflect the different times of sampling, but may equally represent real changes in attitude; from cautious optimism to frank mistrust and cynicism. They feel that there has been insufficient consultation that their interests are not well-represented, and a large majority [80%] feel that their lives have not changed for the better. Furthermore, they do not believe that the IG will improve most of the key areas of their lives, and this held for MDC-T, ZANU PF, and the supporters of other parties. This represents, at least for women, a strong drop in support for the IG since May 2009.

The results also support the trend, seen since 2005, of a steady and consistent drop in support for ZANU PF. On the present findings, even were all those unwilling to state a party preference closet ZANU PF supporters (which is unlikely), ZANU PF would struggle to even obtain a blocking third in parliament. Of course, opinion polls do not always directly indicate electoral results, but, allied to the voting preferences seen in March 2008, this, and the other polls, do not augur well for ZANU PF.

However, perhaps the most significant of these preliminary findings are women's views on peace; an end to violence, free and fair elections, and democracy. These are embedded in understandings about the violence they have experienced, the elections that have filled them full of fear, and their strong misgivings about whether the present political arrangement will deliver them from fear and ill-treatment. They also speak to the continuous demand by Zimbabwean citizens to live in a full democracy.

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<sup>14</sup> The Freedom House survey reported that 37% were personally affected by *politically motivated intimidation, threat, or harassment*, 12% had received a *politically motivated personal injury*, and 22% had had family members affected by *politically motivated personal injury*. These are comparable to the percentages seen in the current survey.

## Methodology

The questionnaire was developed from a previous RAU instrument used in surveying women, and modified by the incorporation of new questions. The questionnaire went through four rounds of internal discussions between the three main organisations involved – ICTJ, Idasa, and RAU - before being translated into Shona and Ndebele. A small pilot, involving 53 women, was carried out by RAU to test the validity of the questionnaire, following which further modifications were included.

A two-day training session was then held for potential enumerators, who were provided mostly by the member organisations of the Women's Coalition. Following selection and training, the enumerators were deployed for a small pilot phase, and both the questionnaire and the ability of the enumerators were re-examined. A small number of the enumerators were eliminated, and the major survey was begun.

As pointed earlier, a total, 2200 interviews were conducted throughout the country, as well as a smaller sample of Zimbabwean women living in Botswana and South Africa. Each interviewer was required to do 50 interviews in their local area, with the cases selected from every 10<sup>th</sup> household. It was not possible to strictly control the sampling behind the selection of the households, but it is evident that the study did achieve the objectives of obtaining wide geographical coverage, broad representation of ages. The interviews were conducted in the language of choice for the interviewee: English, Shona, or Ndebele, using the appropriate questionnaire. All respondents were informed of the confidentiality of the results, and that no individuals would be identified.

The sample was drawn from all 10 provinces of Zimbabwe, and the distribution and demographic features were mostly similar to previous surveys [see Tables 1, 3, 4, and 5 above]. Budgetary constraints did not allow checking on a sample of the interviews as would be required of a randomised, stratified probability study.

The data was entered on a purpose built data base, and frequencies were calculated for all fields.

This study did not adopt strict methods for sampling as would be required for a randomised, stratified probability survey, and hence cannot claim that its findings are representative of the national views of women. It should be borne in mind that randomised, stratified probability surveys are extremely difficult in Zimbabwe currently; the last census was done in 2002, and there has been massive internal and external displacement since 2000, increasingly so since 2005, and Operation Murambatsvina where an estimated 750,000 were displaced by forced removals.

However, it is evident that the findings do strongly agree with the demographic data for AB4, except with respect to age, and even in respect of age there is moderate agreement with the data from AB4. Furthermore, and as a final comment, it should be noted that, whilst the methods do not accord with strict random stratified sampling, the data itself is strongly corroborated by the findings of a large number of previous reports, especially in respect of violations, witnessing, and elections.



**Appendix 1**  
**Frequency of responses on attitudes to the Inclusive Government by political affiliation**

<b>Food Security</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
MDC-T	71	17	11
ZANU PF	71	19	10
Other parties	71	16	13
Not want to say	70	18	12
No party	73	16	11
<b>Education</b>			
MDC-T	45	43	12
ZANU PF	45	41	14
Other parties	45	48	7
Not want to say	45	41	13
No party	50	41	9
<b>Health</b>			
MDC-T	48	40	11
ZANU PF	43	42	15
Other parties	48	42	10
Not want to say	46	41	13
No party	56	33	10
<b>Water And Sanitation</b>			
MDC-T	37	46	16
ZANU PF	32	50	18
Other parties	42	45	13
Not want to say	35	47	17
No party	41	46	13

<b>Electricity</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
MDC-T	33	52	14
ZANU PF	28	57	15
Other parties	36	55	10
Not want to say	31	53	15
No party	37	50	12
<b>Job creation</b>			
MDC-T	24	60	16
ZANU PF	21	60	19
Other parties	26	62	13
Not want to say	21	60	18
No party	25	59	15
<b>Personal Security</b>			
MDC-T	26	50	23
ZANU PF	21	50	29
Other parties	36	48	16
Not want to say	23	50	25
No party	32	46	22
<b>Law And Order</b>			
MDC-T	23	52	23
ZANU PF	19	52	28
Other parties	36	52	10
Not want to say	22	51	26
No party	30	50	23
<b>Election Conduct</b>			
MDC-T	24	46	29
ZANU PF	22	47	29
Other parties	36	32	32
Not want to say	24	44	31
No party	27	42	31

<b>Constitution</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
MDC-T	25	43	31
ZANU PF	24	46	29
Other parties	36	32	32
Not want to say	23	44	31
No party	25	40	35
<b>Healing The Nation</b>			
MDC-T	26	41	32
ZANU PF	21	42	35
Other parties	36	36	29
Not want to say	23	39	37
No party	27	38	34