

# Zimbabwe Conflict Risk Assessment

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current political, economic and social climate in Zimbabwe is characterized by significant issues which undermine the stability of the state. The political stalemate between Mugabe's ZANU-PF party and the Opposition led by MDC-T under Tsvangirai creates a climate of political uncertainty characterized by violence. The weakness of the economy inhibits its development and contributes to its low rating on the Human Development Index. However, these characteristics are not new to Zimbabwe, and the state has managed to maintain its precarious position in the past, despite hyperinflation and increasing tensions. Moreover, Zimbabwe is currently exhibiting some marginal trends toward improvement; small indicators of economic growth and the political framework established by the Unity Government agreement have the potential to slowly bring about positive change in the country. In this regard, although Zimbabwe remains in a precarious position that is sensitive to destabilizing events, it is unlikely that the status quo is going to change significantly in the near future.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS		
STAKEHOLDER	DESCRIPTION	IMPACT
ZANU-PF (MUGABE)	(+) Credited for being the champions in the fight for independence. (-) The party has remained in power for 30 years, <sup>i</sup> leading to political strife. Economic deficiencies abound, due in part to land reform policy.	Mixed
MDC-T (TSVANGIRAI)	(+) Has secured a place in the Unity Government, which brought an end to the political crisis in 2009 (-) Has had little real effect on the political climate, as Mugabe continues to dictate policy and both groups are unable to agree upon many key issues <sup>ii</sup>	Mixed

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS		
STAKEHOLDER	DESCRIPTION	IMPACT
SOUTH AFRICA	(+) Has a vested interest in the security of the region. SA's Head of State serves as a mediator in Zimbabwe's crisis. <sup>iii</sup> (-) There have been reports of Zimbabwe's refugees being mistreated while seeking refuge in SA. <sup>iv</sup>	Mixed
GREAT BRITAIN	(+) Close personal ties, especially through educational exchanges <sup>v</sup> (-) Official relations between the two countries have been strained since the land invasions on white owned farms began in 2000 and since withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 2003. The British government is negatively regarded by Mugabe's government. <sup>vi</sup>	Mixed
UNITED STATES	(+) USAID is active in providing aid in the areas of health care and democracy/governance programs. <sup>vii</sup> (-) Imposed financial and visa sanctions on some Zimbabweans, and condemns Mugabe's human rights violations and rule of law abuses. <sup>viii</sup>	Mixed

## KEY INDICATORS

Extremely High Risk	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
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## HISTORY OF ARMED CONFLICT

STABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conflict Intensity Levels: Ranks at a low intensity level of 3 since 2010.<sup>ix</sup> This is a slight deterioration from its previous record of a 2.76 intensity level, indicating that there is no significant risk of conflict.<sup>x</sup></li> <li>- Refugees Hosted: In 2005 the country hosted over 13 000 refugees,<sup>xi</sup> but this number has dropped</li> </ul>
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	dramatically, and is now recorded at 4 435 as of the end of 2010. <sup>xii</sup>
DESTABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political/Economic/Racial conflict: Mugabe passed a land redistribution law in 2000, effectively evicting white farmers from their land, and redistributing it to blacks. The eviction of white farmers affected the economy drastically, and the trend continues today.<sup>xiii</sup></li> <li>- Refugees Produced: In 2005 there were approximately 21599 refugees and asylum seekers from Zimbabwe, but this number has dramatically increased to 173,489 according to 2010 records.<sup>xiv</sup></li> </ul>
ASSESSMENT	The country's low intensity levels and reduction in refugees hosted may indicate a low risk of conflict, but on the ground realities in relation to land reform policy and the increasing numbers of refugees leaving the country indicate instability, thereby placing the country at medium risk of conflict.

### GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL STABILITY

STABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level of Democracy: scores a 1 on the Polity IV scale, indicating low democracy levels. This is an improvement from previous records indicating an all-time low of -6 in the late 90s, to about 2000.<sup>xv</sup></li> <li>- Personal Autonomy/ Economic Rights: the political, legal and economic environments were ranked low, at 33, 29 and 27 respectively, in 2007<sup>xvi</sup> indicating low autonomy. As of 2010, the numbers are 30, 27 and 27 respectively, indicating some improvement in political autonomy and the legal environment.<sup>xvii</sup></li> <li>- Corruption: World Bank data shows a slight improvement in the levels of transparency, corruption and accountability in the public sector, beginning in the year 2009 at a level 2, one point higher than the period 2006-2008.<sup>xviii</sup></li> </ul>
DESTABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regime Durability: In 2005, ranked as strongly durable<sup>xix</sup> but as of 2009 there is a sharp decline, and it is now considered at a high risk of becoming a failed state.<sup>xx</sup></li> <li>- Regime Type: A closed anocracy in 2009 with both democratic and autocratic features, and significant instability.<sup>xxi</sup> This is a decline from the regime's relative stability in 2005.<sup>xxii</sup></li> <li>- Civil &amp; Political Rights: scores a 6 on both civil and political rights, and this is an improvement from its previous score of 7, showing an upward trend.<sup>xxiii</sup> The 2008 elections resulted in violence due to suspected rigging,<sup>xxiv</sup> and new elections are scheduled for 2013.<sup>xxv</sup> Assaults on MDC supporters and civil society still take place, as do incidences of violence against opposition party members.<sup>xxvi</sup></li> <li>- Freedom of Expression: Considered 'not free', with a score of 84 in 2010. This is an improvement from 2007, where the country scored 89.<sup>xxvii</sup> In 2011, this 'not free' status remains the same, with the government controlling the broadcast sector, while its supporters continue to engage in acts of violence.<sup>xxviii</sup></li> <li>- Freedom of Religion: mostly respected in 2007, although in 2008 and 2009 the government increased harassment and arrest, and actively prevented religious groups from attending church if they openly criticized the government's action. Harassment in 2010 was sporadic as the government sought to amass political stability, especially in contested areas.<sup>xxix</sup></li> </ul>
ASSESSMENT	While the creation of a coalition government seems promising, there are substantiated concerns in regard to the treatment of anyone who criticizes the government. The coalition agreement has not been implemented. Given the looming elections and the unfavorable political climate, political stability and governance may be the point of highest risk in the country.

### MILITARIZATION

STABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Expenditures: comprised 3.8 % of GDP between 2006 and 2008<sup>xxx</sup>, which indicates some stability.</li> <li>- Armed Forces: Between 2006 and 2009, the number of armed forces personnel as a percentage of the labor force has remained at about 1%,<sup>xxxi</sup> another indicator of possible stability.</li> </ul>
DESTABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arms Trade: the government has been accused of violating UN arms embargoes.<sup>xxxi</sup> The last record of imported arms reports 20 million arms in 2006<sup>xxxiii</sup>, although no data exists to verify recent trends in importation.</li> <li>- Paramilitary Groups: The ZDI has been accused of supplying arms to mercenaries and rebel groups in other countries.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Additionally, a 2009 audit revealed that over 10 000 youth militia members were being paid by the Youth Development Ministry.<sup>xxxv</sup></li> <li>- Presence of Peacekeepers: There is no recorded presence of UN peacekeepers.</li> </ul>

ASSESSMENT	The country is spending roughly the same amounts in military expenditures, which indicates some stability. The existence of government paid militia, the arms trade the country is engaged in and the lack of an international presence in the country are more indicative of a moderate risk of armed conflict.
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### ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

STABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic growth: following negative or zero GDP growth rates from 2005-2008,<sup>xxxvi</sup> in 2009 Zimbabwe created real GDP growth of 6.0%, indicating a positive trend for the future; in 2010, Zimbabwe had the 10<sup>th</sup> highest GDP growth rate in the world at 9.0%.<sup>xxxvii</sup></li> <li>- Increased trade openness: imports are up from \$2.06 billion in 2006 to \$4.04 billion in 2010; exports increased from \$1.6 billion to \$2.54 billion<sup>xxxviii</sup></li> <li>- Inflation: after the volatility of inflation between 2006-2008, inflation rate brought down to 5.1% in 2009 and 3.7% in 2010.<sup>xxxix</sup> This is a stabilizing trend</li> </ul>
DESTABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GDP per capita at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) remains low. It remained stable between 2005-2007, but fell sharply in 2008 (\$369); however, it has been increasing slowly from \$394 in 2009 to \$434 in 2010.<sup>xl</sup> In constant USD, this trend is converted to a steady decrease from \$201 in 2005 to \$187 in 2010.<sup>xli</sup></li> <li>- Foreign direct investment (FDI) net inflows remain persistently low at 1-2% between 2005-2010.<sup>xlii</sup></li> <li>- Gross government debt increased from 52% of GDP in 2005 to 96.1% in 2009.<sup>xliii</sup> In 2010, total debt decreased to 56.3%<sup>xliv</sup>, but the volatile trend generates significant concern.</li> <li>- The Gini coefficient, which measures inequality in family income, held at 50.1 in 2006, the 24<sup>th</sup> highest inequality score out of 136 countries.<sup>xlv</sup></li> <li>- Official development assistance (ODA), as a % of GDP, increased from single digits in 2005 and 2006 to 16% and 14% in 2008 and 2009.<sup>xlvi</sup></li> <li>- While true unemployment in Zimbabwe is impossible to determine, its unofficial unemployment/underemployment rate has increased from 80% (2005) to 95% (2009).<sup>xlvii</sup></li> </ul>
ASSESSMENT	DESTABILIZING: Zimbabwe's economic performance between 2005 and 2010 saw some progress in GDP growth and inflation control, but remains considerably weak due to rampant unemployment and inequality, burgeoning government debt, low investment levels, and increasing dependence on ODA.

### ENVIRONMENT

STABILIZING FACTORS	- Forest rents account for only 2-5% of its GDP between 2005 and 2009. <sup>xlviii</sup> It therefore does not rely on deforestation for economic growth
DESTABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The average deforestation rate between 1990 and 2010 was 1.5%, but this resulted in a loss of 5% of its total forest cover, or 1.6 million hectares.<sup>xlix</sup></li> <li>- There was only 8.24% arable land in 2005, which converts to 0.25 hectares per person.<sup>l</sup></li> <li>- In 2007, the country had 982 cu m of freshwater resources per capita.<sup>li</sup></li> </ul>
ASSESSMENT	MIXED Environmental stress is moderate and prescient, especially in long-term resource preservation, but remains a less impacting issue for the present time, particularly when compared to the economic, political, and human development realms

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

STABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Life expectancy has increased from 41.7 years in 2005 to 47.0 years in 2010.<sup>lii</sup></li> <li>- Adult literacy rate improved from 90.1% of the population in 2005 to 92.6% in 2010.<sup>liii</sup></li> <li>- Maternal mortality per 100,000 births also showed a promising decrease from 830 in 2005 to 790 in 2008,<sup>liv</sup> while its infant mortality rate decreased from 100 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2005 to 80 deaths in 2010.<sup>lv</sup></li> </ul>
DESTABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The prevalence of HIV/AIDS has showed significant decline from 24.6% of the adult population in 2001 to 15.3% in 2007. Regrettably, the decline has slowed in recent years, with a drop to 14.3% in 2009, still the fifth highest prevalence rate in the world.<sup>lvi</sup></li> <li>- School enrolment has remained stable at 54.4%<sup>lvii</sup> of the relevant age group since 2006, likely indicating difficulty in serious increases in the immediate future.</li> <li>- Health expenditures also stayed flat at a puny 4.1% of GDP between 2005 and 2007.<sup>lviii</sup> Only 44%</li> </ul>

	of the total population had access to sanitation facilities in 2008. <sup>lix</sup>
ASSESSMENT	DESTABILIZING: Zimbabwe has accomplished modest gains in life expectancy and literacy rates. However, it remains the lowest ranked country on the HDI Index, and actually decreased its overall human development score (from 0.159 in 2005 to 0.140 in 2010 <sup>lx</sup> ). With barely over 50% school enrolment, a near-10% infant mortality rate, minute health expenditures, and a resilient HIV/AIDS problem, Zimbabwe's human development is a severely destabilizing factor.

### INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

STABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Zimbabwe has strong regional ties, particularly with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the African Union (AU)<sup>lxi</sup></li> <li>- Zimbabwe is also a member of various international organizations, including the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement, the IMF and the World Bank</li> </ul>
DESTABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mugabe's radical land reform program, implemented in 2000, and allegations of electoral fraud/violence have resulted in strained relationships with the West, particularly with Great Britain</li> <li>- Heavily dependent on foreign assistance</li> </ul>
ASSESSMENT	Zimbabwe's strong regional ties have had positive impacts, particularly the role of South Africa in mediating a solution to the political crisis between Mugabe's ZANU-PF party and Tsvangirai's MDC-M party. However, its strained relations with the West and the effect of the sanctions on Zimbabwe's development have had a destabilizing effect on the state.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

STABILIZING FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The population growth rate has slowed significantly, even achieving negative growth rates between 2004-2008.<sup>lxii</sup> However, these are also attributable to the impact of HIV/AIDS as well as other human development concerns.<sup>lxiii</sup></li> <li>- The urban population growth rate has also slowed significantly over the past few decades.<sup>lxiv</sup> However, evidence suggests that this is related to economic problems and concerns surrounding livelihoods.<sup>lxv</sup></li> </ul>
DESTABILIZING FACTORS	- There is a significant youth bulge, approximately 41.9% of the total population. <sup>lxvi</sup> However, World Bank data highlights a decreasing trend. <sup>lxvii</sup>
ASSESSMENT	Although the total and urban population growth rates have slowed, the relationship of this trend to human development and security concerns underlines the mixed impact on stability. The youth bulge in Zimbabwe is particularly concerning given the precariousness of the current economic and political circumstances; it is a potential source of destabilization.

### POPULATION HETEROGENEITY

STABILIZING FACTORS	- Ethnic cleavages among the African population have not had a divisive effect on the population; class and geography have been more significant. <sup>lxviii</sup>
DESTABILIZING FACTORS	- Mugabe's land reform program has exacerbated tensions between the European minority and the African majority. This catalyzed an exodus of white farmers, now only 1% of the total population, which has had a detrimental impact on the farming industry. <sup>lxix</sup>
ASSESSMENT	Among the African majority, ethnic cleavages do not have a divisive impact on Zimbabwe. However the radical and often violent nature of the land reform program has exacerbated tensions between the African majority and European minority and has contributed to Zimbabwe's current economic crisis.

### POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

#### Best Case Scenario

Economy continues to grow and the state builds on the small economic successes to date. Political relations between Mugabe and Tsvangirai stabilize and improve, allowing the Unity Government to successfully implement

positive political change. The standard of living for Zimbabweans improves and the state improves on the human development index.

### Worst Case Scenario

Zimbabwe is struck by a political and/or economic crisis that derails economic progress and exacerbates political instability. The state is no longer able to effectively maintain control and violence ensues. Hyperinflation resumes and standard of living decreases as food and human security concerns increase.

### Most Likely Scenario

Zimbabwe builds slowly on its incremental political and economic improvements. However, Mugabe continues to maintain control at a national level, despite Unity Government framework. Human development concerns and poverty continue to affect the lives of most Zimbabweans although economic improvements may marginally improve the standard of living in certain regions. The state remains in a precarious position, making it sensitive to destabilizing events.

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