

CARING FOR THE DIASPORA: The Life and Work of Nora Chengeto Tapiwa of Zimbabwe

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2010 Women PeaceMakers Program

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A NOTE TO THE READER

In the following pages, you will find narrative stories about a Woman PeaceMaker, along with additional information to provide a deep understanding of a contemporary conflict and one person's journey within it. These complementary components include a brief biography of the peacemaker, a historical summary of the conflict, a timeline integrating political developments in the country with personal history of the peacemaker, a question-and-answer transcript of select interviews, and a table of best practices in peacebuilding as demonstrated and reflected on by the peacemaker during her time at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice.

The document is not intended necessarily to be read straight through, from beginning to end. Instead, you can use the historical summary or timeline as mere references or guides as you read the narrative stories. You can move straight to the table of best practices if you are interested in peacebuilding methods and techniques, or go to the question-and-answer transcript if you want to read commentary in the peacemakers' own words. The goal of this format is to reach audiences through multiple channels, providing access to the peacemakers' work, vision, lives and impact in their communities.

ABOUT THE WOMEN PEACEMAKERS PROGRAM

Made possible through a generous grant from the Fred J. Hansen Foundation, the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice's (IPJ) Women PeaceMakers Program annually hosts four women from around the world who have been involved in human rights and peacemaking efforts in their countries.

Women on the frontline of efforts to end violence and secure a just peace seldom record their experiences, activities and insights – as generally there is no time or, perhaps, they do not have formal education that would help them record their stories. The Women PeaceMakers Program is a selective program for leaders who want to document, share and build upon their unique peacemaking stories. Selected peacemakers join the IPJ for an eight-week residency.

Women PeaceMakers are paired with a Peace Writer to document in written form their story of living in conflict and building peace in their communities and nations. The peacemakers' stories are also documented on film by the IPJ's partner organization Sun & Moon Vision Productions. While in residence at the institute, Women PeaceMakers give presentations on their work and the situation in their home countries to the university and San Diego communities.

The IPJ believes that women's stories go beyond headlines to capture the nuance of complex situations and expose the realities of gender-based violence, thus providing an understanding of conflict and an avenue to its transformation. The narrative stories of Women PeaceMakers not only provide this understanding, but also show the myriad ways women construct peace in the midst of and after violence and war. For the realization of peace with justice, the voices of women – those severely affected by violent conflict and struggling courageously and creatively to build community from the devastation – must be recorded, disseminated and spotlighted.¹

BIOGRAPHY OF A WOMAN PEACEMAKER – NORA CHENGETO TAPIWA



Photo credit: Michelle Zousmer

A dedicated activist, Nora Chengeto Tapiwa works to protect and procure the peace and human rights of her fellow Zimbabweans – in both Zimbabwe and South Africa. Currently in exile herself, Tapiwa is a widely known leader of Zimbabwean activists in South Africa. As founder and current secretary of the Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Chamber, she strives to create cohesion and unity among the Zimbabwean diaspora and within South Africa’s migrant communities at large.

Growing up in rural Zimbabwe during the liberation war, Tapiwa’s activism began before she was forced to flee her home country. A trade unionist and banker by profession, Tapiwa was a community leader, educating people on their civil rights and the constitution. Because of her activism and position as organizing secretary for the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, she was a target of President Robert Mugabe’s clampdown on political opposition. When personal threats and surveillance mounted in 2003, Tapiwa left Zimbabwe to seek refuge in neighboring South Africa. Two years later, her house was destroyed as part of Operation Murambatsvina, a demolition program that resulted in an estimated 700,000 homeless Zimbabweans.

Still in South Africa, Tapiwa began working in the refugee community and organized a group of more than 2,000 refugees and activists to form the Global Zimbabwe Forum, which is now composed of 40 Zimbabwean organizations in exile. Zimbabweans were suffering in South Africa as well, and Tapiwa participated in a delegation to push the South African government to acknowledge the plight of Zimbabwean migrants and recognize them as refugees. Their negotiations succeeded in a waiver of visa requirements for Zimbabweans seeking asylum in South Africa.

During the xenophobically charged riots against foreign migrants in 2008, Tapiwa worked at the Johannesburg Mayor’s Migrant Desk providing shelter and food to victims of the attacks and coordinating the South African Red Cross Society’s humanitarian aid distribution to migrants living in shelters. Tapiwa continues to pressure the South African Development Community to protect Zimbabwean civilians and is actively involved in efforts to help repatriate those who want to return home.

Tapiwa is writing a book on women in leadership and is also the founding CEO of Tapiwa Institute of Leadership. “I want to encourage women to have confidence in themselves and believe they are no different from their male counterparts,” Tapiwa says of her hope for women. “Women, as mothers, are more passionate in making peace. They can keep nations together the way they keep their families together.”

CONFLICT HISTORY – ZIMBABWE

Once known as the breadbasket of Africa, Zimbabwe was among the continent’s most prosperous countries. With a robust agricultural sector, Zimbabwe exported surpluses of wheat, corn and soybeans, nearly 25 percent of the world’s flue-cured tobacco and 8 percent of Europe’s horticultural imports. Today, the country is plagued with high levels of unemployment, low life expectancies, severe food shortages, a failing health system and a lack of free speech or assembly. More than 1 million Zimbabweans have died since 2000 from the combined effects of HIV/AIDS, poverty, malnutrition and systematic political violence. Millions have fled to neighboring Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa or Zambia to look for work, escape hunger, flee cholera or search for better schools. The country’s decades-long economic and humanitarian crises are rooted in a history of political power struggles between ruling elites and civil society-based opposition movements.

In the mid-1800s, European hunters, traders and missionaries began to explore the region of vast grasslands and high plateaus in southern Africa. Among them was Cecil Rhodes, a British colonial businessman who chartered the British South Africa Company in 1889 after obtaining mineral rights from local chiefs. Rhodes established the settlement of Salisbury – what would later become the Zimbabwean capital, Harare – in 1890, and in 1895, the territory was formally named Rhodesia under the British South Africa Company’s administration. In the following years, white settlers defeated the Ndebele tribe, which had settled in the area several decades earlier after fleeing Zulu violence and Boer migration in the area to the south that is now South Africa.

With the whites in power, Rhodesia became a self-governing British colony in 1923. The following decades saw the passage of laws giving rights and privileges to whites and leading to the deterioration of working conditions and wages for blacks. In 1965, Prime Minister Ian Smith signed a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). The United Kingdom considered the move an act of rebellion, and on its request, the United Nations imposed economic sanctions on Rhodesia in 1966. Smith declared Rhodesia a republic in 1970, but the international community largely refused to support the segregated social structure, which was similar to South African apartheid.

In the 1960s, two black political parties emerged in opposition to white minority rule, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU). While Smith governed, guerilla factions from both groups intensified their fight against his UDI government. The civil war – also known as the Rhodesian Bush War or the liberation struggle – reached its peak in the late 1970s. British-brokered talks at Lancaster House in London led to a cease-fire agreement and a new constitution in 1979, which provided for democratic majority rule. By then, the war had claimed more than 36,000 lives and displaced nearly 1.5 million people.

Zimbabwe became an independent nation in 1980, governed by an uneasy coalition of ZANU, with pro-independence leader Robert Mugabe, and ZAPU, led by Joshua Nkomo. ZANU won a landslide victory in the February elections and Mugabe became the new prime minister, with political support mostly from his Shona-speaking homeland in the north. Mugabe included Nkomo in his cabinet but later fired him, accusing him of planning to overthrow the government.

In the following years, resistance to ZANU leadership grew in Matabeleland, the southern Ndebele-speaking region of the country, where support was strong for Nkomo and ZAPU. A string of uprisings led to what has become known as the Matabeleland Massacres or *Gukurahundi*, a Shona

phrase meaning “the early rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains.” From 1982 to 1985, Mugabe deployed his Fifth Brigade, an elite unit of soldiers trained by North Koreans, to crush any resistance in Matabeleland. An estimated 20,000 civilians were murdered and tens of thousands of others were tortured in camps.

The violence ended by 1988, when peace talks led ZANU and ZAPU to a unity agreement that merged the two parties, effectively establishing a one-party state dominated by the newly created Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and Mugabe as the executive president. Mugabe and ZANU-PF have won every presidential and parliamentary election since 1980, but observers have found most of them neither free nor fair, and critics allege that voters have been intimidated with threats and violence and opposition members have been harassed.

Economic collapse

Despite the comprehensive scope of the U.N.’s international trade embargo on the white minority government of Rhodesia in 1966, Zimbabwe emerged in the early 1980s with one of the strongest economies in Africa, with a currency that out-valued the U.S. dollar. But the economy began to falter during the 1990s as world markets for the country’s primary exports – including tobacco, asbestos and gold – deteriorated and the country emerged from its post-independence honeymoon period. To bolster the economy, the government embraced the International Monetary Fund’s Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in 1991.

The goal of the multimillion-dollar ESAP loans was to facilitate diversification and liberalization of the Zimbabwean economy. But the immediate results included job losses and a rise in poverty – and the hollowing out of the manufacturing sector in particular. The funds also enabled ZANU-PF to consolidate power and create a progressively more repressive political atmosphere.

In 1997, the veterans of the Rhodesian civil war – the guerilla fighters of the two black nationalist armies that fought for liberation – grew disgruntled with the widening economic gulf between themselves and the economic elite. To placate them, Mugabe agreed to pay huge pensions and other benefits to some 50,000 war veterans. Also that year, Mugabe ordered a costly deployment of thousands of Zimbabwean troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to support the regime of Laurent Kabila and to protect the Zimbabwean ruling elite’s own mining investments there. Toward the end of the year, the ZANU-PF government pledged to reclaim vast tracts of land held by white commercial farmers, who comprised less than 1 percent of the population but held about 70 percent of the most arable land.

The combined economic results of these three events led to a dramatic crash of the Zimbabwean dollar – it fell by 75 percent in just a few hours – on November 14, 1997. The date became known as Black Friday, the beginning of the Zimbabwean economy’s downward spiral.

Opposition and constitutional reform

Although the Lancaster House conference paved the way for Zimbabwean independence in 1980, the resulting constitution was primarily a compromise document, focused on ending a bloody civil war. While giving black Zimbabweans the right to vote for the first time, the agreement perpetuated many of the oppressive practices of white minority rule. The new government included a weak legislature and judiciary but maintained excessive executive power. The constitution

continued to support tight state control over the media and afforded the new government the same authoritarian powers exercised by its predecessor, the white Rhodesian Front.

Throughout the 1990s, the ZANU-PF government faced growing opposition from Zimbabwean citizens and civic organizations, including labor movements, student and youth groups, women's groups, churches, business groups and human rights organizations. The trade unions were a formidable force under the guidance of former Mugabe supporter Morgan Tsvangirai, whose relationship with the government deteriorated as he became a powerful secretary-general of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, the umbrella trade organization of Zimbabwe.

Following Black Friday, these individuals and groups began to realize that Zimbabwe's growing political, social and economic problems were the result of the defective Lancaster House constitution. They formed the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) in 1997 to campaign for a new and democratic constitutional reform process. Tsvangirai led the effort, but by late 1999 the government had proposed a draft constitution that ignored citizens' concerns and granted even more powers to the executive presidency.

The NCA turned its campaign against the proposed draft and successfully convinced the majority of voters – both urban Zimbabweans and commercial agricultural laborers – to vote “No” at a February 2000 constitutional referendum. It was the first ballot-box defeat for Mugabe and ZANU-PF and a huge boost to the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which, under Tsvangirai's leadership, presented the first real political opposition to ZANU-PF since the demise of Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU party in 1987.

ZANU-PF dominance

Mugabe accepted the defeat but soon turned on his opponents. Shaken by a new sense of vulnerability, ZANU-PF began to erode civil liberties through a series of new policies designed to sustain the party's power and weaken support for the opposition, especially in rural areas since farm workers and agricultural employers comprised the majority of voters. Mugabe postponed the parliamentary elections scheduled for April 2000, and ZANU-PF supporters, including war veterans and the military, began invading private farms, harassing farm workers and attacking and killing opposition activists. Support for the opposition waned in rural areas, and ZANU-PF narrowly won the elections in June.

In the run-up to the 2002 presidential elections, ZANU-PF continued to focus attention on the opposition, detaining MDC leaders and activists on trumped-up charges and passing three new parliamentary acts that would make it nearly impossible for MDC to organize or mobilize support. The Public Order and Security Act gave the police unlimited powers to crack down on public gatherings of civil society or opposition activists. The General Laws Amendment Act facilitated rigging of the election. And the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act stifled independent print media, allowing the government to shut down private news organizations, arrest journalists accused of reporting falsehoods and bar foreign journalists from reporting in Zimbabwe. Immediately before the election, the government arrested Tsvangirai, the main opposition candidate, and charged him with treason. Mugabe went on to win the 2002 poll in an election condemned by international organizations and governments for massive irregularities.

Still, despite two years of repression, murder, torture and intimidation by the government, support for MDC remained strong. In the months following the election, ZANU-PF proceeded with the systematic eviction of white commercial farmers throughout the country as an effort to grow party support in rural areas. On government orders, police arrested farmers and re-distributed the most productive land to members of the ZANU-PF elite, including cabinet ministers, judges and army commanders. The government also continued its attack on the opposition, with systematic killings, torture and detention of MDC activists, supporters and members of parliament. By late 2004, more than 600 MDC supporters had been murdered and thousands more had been tortured or assaulted.

ZANU-PF claimed another victory in the 2005 parliamentary elections. MDC argued that the election was rigged, and support for the opposition remained strong in urban centers. Following the election, the government embarked on a large-scale campaign to forcibly clear slum areas across the country. Known as Operation *Murambatsvina* – or Operation Drive Out Rubbish – the campaign rendered some 700,000 homeless or jobless after police and ZANU-PF youth militias destroyed their homes and informal businesses. Mugabe and government officials described it as an “urban renewal campaign,” designed to crack down on illegal housing and commercial activities and to reduce the spread of infectious diseases in these areas. But MDC, civic society groups and the international community condemned the government’s actions as an effort to drive out and make homeless large sections of the urban and rural poor as punishment for supporting MDC during the parliamentary elections.

Multiple crises

The country’s economic decline started in 1997 but was accelerated by Mugabe’s controversial land reform program. As the government began to seize white-owned farmland in 2000, the hardest hit sector was commercial farming, which was the main source of exports, foreign exchange and 400,000 jobs. Much of the seized land went to ZANU-PF officials instead of to the landless rural black Zimbabweans who were supposed to benefit. The policy resulted in highly productive farms being rendered unproductive as they were taken over by government ministers, party operatives, army commanders and judges, most of whom had no farming background.

Within a few years, the gross domestic product fell 30 percent, and Zimbabwe became one of the world’s fastest shrinking economies. By 2004, unemployment surpassed 70 percent and inflation rates were among the highest in the world. By 2008, the World Food Programme estimated that 4.1 million Zimbabweans would need food aid by the end of that year. Human rights organizations estimated much higher numbers. But the government continued to downplay the extent of the crisis and used food distribution as a political weapon. By controlling the food supply, ZANU-PF officials have withheld relief from suspected opposition supporters and coerced desperate people, especially in the rural areas, into voting for the ruling ZANU-PF party.

Severe shortages of drugs and medical equipment have led to the closures of hospitals and clinics, a rise in infant mortality rates and the inability of the health system to cope with an HIV/AIDS epidemic that has become one of the worst in the world. A cholera outbreak in 2008 killed more than 4,000 people and affected some 90,000 more, according to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates. The ongoing political and economic crisis has also led to the emigration of skilled professionals, including doctors and other health workers.

In 2008, more than 80 percent of Zimbabweans remaining in the country were unemployed, and more than 80 percent of the population was living below the official poverty line. The WHO estimated that Zimbabwe had one of the lowest life expectancies in the world – 34 years for women and 37 years for men – as some 3,500 Zimbabweans were dying every week from a combination of HIV/AIDS, poverty and malnutrition.

Government of National Unity

In March 2008, Zimbabwe held combined presidential and parliamentary elections. Morgan Tsvangirai, again the MDC candidate, won most of the votes in the presidential poll, but Mugabe refused to admit defeat and called for a run-off election. After multiple detentions by police and violent assaults on his supporters, Tsvangirai withdrew his bid for the presidency. African and world leaders called the run-off a sham. Nevertheless, Mugabe was sworn in for a sixth term as president after his hand-picked electoral commission granted him victory in June.

In the following months, under pressure from the regional bloc – the Southern African Development Community (SADC) – Mugabe and Tsvangirai agreed to sign a power-sharing deal brokered by South African president Thabo Mbeki. Tsvangirai reluctantly accepted the arrangement which called for Mugabe to remain president and Tsvangirai to become prime minister. His February 2009 swearing-in marked the beginning of the Government of National Unity.

But nearly two years later, there has been little unity or partnership between Mugabe's ZANU-PF and Tsvangirai's MDC. Wholesale denial of basic political and human rights continues, and the economy has seen only marginal improvements. Mugabe has refused to give up control of key government ministries and has not sworn into office most of MDC's nominees for government posts. He has also reneged on promises to consult with Tsvangirai before appointing financial and judicial leaders, and has ignored court judgments that have displeased him.

Furthermore, Mugabe has continued to approve police attacks on MDC leaders. By July 2010, there had been more than 200 attacks by police and ZANU-PF vigilantes against MDC officials, members and suspected sympathizers. ZANU-PF reopened torture chambers in four parts of the country, and Mugabe supporters have directly threatened Tsvangirai and attacked his office. They are also suspected to have arranged a March 2009 car accident that injured Tsvangirai and killed his wife. Mugabe has also prevented the re-establishment of an independent daily newspaper and harassed the distributors of critical publications produced by Zimbabweans abroad. Farm invasions have persisted, and commercial farmers said they were under a renewed wave of attacks in June 2010.

Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa

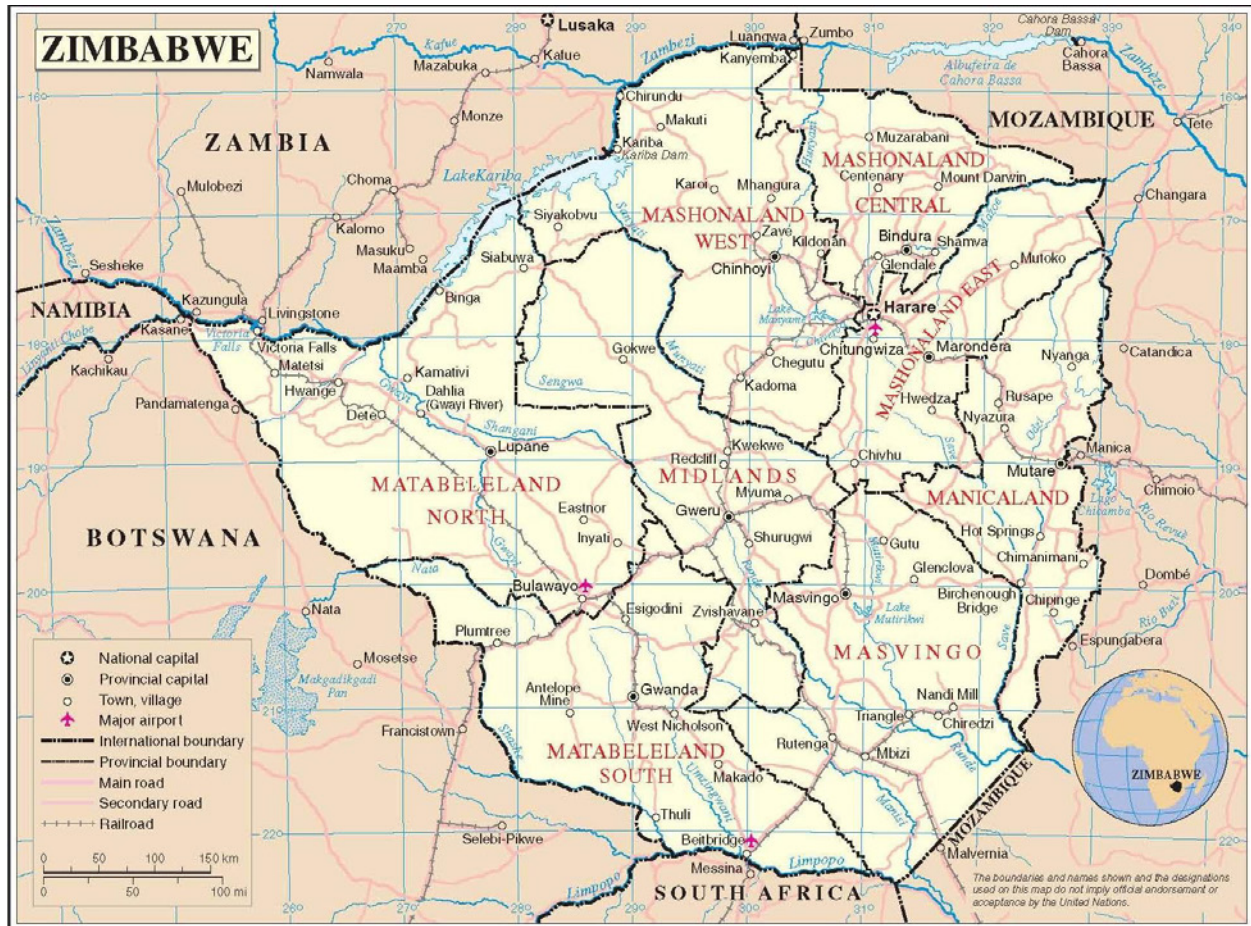
Millions of Zimbabweans have left the country, with more than 3 million fleeing across the border into South Africa, the region's economic power. Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 and the brutal aftermath of the 2008 elections have triggered particularly large waves of Zimbabwean refugees running from political violence, torture, forced evictions, extreme economic deprivation and disease.

But in South Africa, Zimbabweans have lived in a state of permanent insecurity and vulnerability. Due to an overwhelmed asylum system and unlawful deportation practices,

Zimbabweans often remained undocumented for years and therefore liable to arrest and deportation at any time. Increasing public resentment against them in South Africa has led to mistreatment by police, abuse and exploitation by employers, and arbitrary and expensive detention and removal to Zimbabwe. In May 2008, Zimbabweans were among foreigners targeted in a wave of violent xenophobic attacks that spread through townships across South Africa. Parts of the country saw a resurgence of similar attacks in May 2009. Despite their difficult situation in South Africa, many deported Zimbabweans cross back over the border within days or weeks.

In April 2009, the South African government recognized the crisis in Zimbabwe and the vulnerability of Zimbabweans to violence and exploitation in both Zimbabwe and South Africa. It announced a moratorium on deportations to Zimbabwe and began to issue “special dispensation permits” to legalize Zimbabweans and allow them to work and have access to basic health care and education. Deportations decreased, but human rights lawyers say Zimbabweans continued to be arrested and unlawfully detained. The South African government now believes the newly formed Government of National Unity in Zimbabwe has brought stability to the country and decided in March 2010 to cease the special dispensation permits and resume deportation of undocumented Zimbabweans after December 31.

The Zimbabwean diaspora in South Africa and around the world continues to mobilize and advocate for inclusion in the constitution-making process in their home country, for recognition and their rights as legitimate refugees in their host countries, and for true democracy in Zimbabwe.



Map No. 4210 Rev. 1 UNITED NATIONS January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations Cartographic Section

INTEGRATED TIMELINE

Political Developments in Zimbabwe and South Africa and *Personal History of Nora Chengeto Tapiwa*

- 1830s** The Ndebele people fleeing Zulu violence and Boer migration in present-day South Africa move north and settle in what becomes known as Matabeleland.
- 1830-1890s** European hunters, traders and missionaries, among them Cecil Rhodes, explore the region from the south.
- 1889** Rhodes’ British South Africa Company (BSA) gains a British mandate to colonize what becomes Southern Rhodesia.
- 1890** As white settlers arrive from the south, Rhodes establishes the settlement of Salisbury, what is now the Zimbabwean capital of Harare.
- 1893** A Ndebele uprising against BSA rule is crushed.
- 1923** The BSA administration ends, and Southern Rhodesia becomes a self-governing British colony.
- 1930** The Land Apportionment Act restricts black access to land, forcing many into wage labor.
- 1953** Britain creates the Central African Federation, made up of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi).
- 1960s** After nearly three decades of growing black opposition to colonial rule, two nationalist groups emerge – the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU).
- 1963** The Central African Federation breaks up when Zambia and Malawi gain independence.
- 1965** After rejecting British conditions for independence, Prime Minister Ian Smith makes a Unilateral Declaration of Independence for Rhodesia – dropping the “Southern” designation – under white minority rule. The move sparks international outrage and leads to U.N. sanctions on fuel and other imported supplies.
- 1967** *Nora Chengeto Tapiwa, the third child in a family of five girls and one boy, is born in Enkeldoorn, Rhodesia (now Chivhu, Zimbabwe).*
- 1972** Guerrilla fighting against white rule intensifies, with the militant factions of rivals ZANU and ZAPU operating out of Zambia and Mozambique.
- 1975** The Rhodesian Front mobilizes white-led troops to fight the guerilla incursions.

- 1979** British-brokered all-party talks at Lancaster House in London lead to a peace agreement and a new constitution, which guarantees minority rights.
- 1980** Veteran pro-independence leader Robert Mugabe and his ZANU party win British-supervised independence elections. Mugabe is named prime minister and becomes the first black ruler of the newly renamed Zimbabwe. He includes ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo in his cabinet. Independence on April 18 is internationally recognized.
- 1982** Mugabe accuses Nkomo of preparing to overthrow the government and dismisses him from his post. Mugabe deploys his North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade to crush a rebellion by pro-Nkomo ex-guerrillas in Midlands and Matabeleland provinces. Government forces are accused of killing and torturing thousands of civilians over the next few years in what would become known as the *Gukurahundi* or the Matabeleland Massacres.
- 1987** Mugabe and Nkomo sign a unity agreement, merging their parties to form the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). Mugabe changes the constitution and becomes president.
- Nora marries George Shoni Rusike and gives birth to a son, George Kuda.*
- 1988** *Nora begins working at Barclays Bank as a clerk in the mail department in the Harare head office. Within two years, she transfers to and becomes supervisor of the data capture department and begins to run Barclays graduate trainee department.*
- 1991** *Nora's daughter, Ashley Kundai, is born. After maternity leave, Nora transfers to a Barclays branch in Marondera and later buys a house.*
- 1992** *While spending time with her family in rural Buhera, Nora meets trade union leader Morgan Tsvangirai for the first time in her husband's shop.*
- 1993** *Nora becomes secretary of the Workers' Committee of the Marondera branch of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).*
- 1994** *Nora is elected into the National Workers' Council as a committee member. The council is part of Zimbabwe Bankers and Allied Workers, an affiliate of the ZCTU. She is one of two women on the 12-member committee, and soon becomes secretary.*
- Nora transitions from working as a bank teller to working in Barclays foreign exchange department.*
- 1995** *During a two-week bank workers' strike, Nora advocates for salary increases.*
- 1997** A group of Zimbabwean citizens and civic organizations forms the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) to campaign for an inclusive and broad-based

constitution-making process in Zimbabwe. Former Mugabe supporter and trade union leader Tsvangirai serves as chairman.

The government is accused of misusing funds intended for veterans of the independence struggle. A proposal for new taxes to finance pensions and benefits for some 50,000 war veterans causes strikes, demonstrations and the first nationwide political protest, leading Mugabe to order unbudgeted pension payments for the veterans.

Nora begins doing outreach work for the NCA and participates in the nationwide protest.

Mugabe announces plans to fund Zimbabwean military support for the government of Laurent Kabila in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and to accelerate plans to redistribute land owned by white commercial farmers.

The value of the Zimbabwe dollar falls by 75 percent in just a few hours. November 14 becomes known as Black Friday and is largely regarded as the beginning of the Zimbabwean economic crisis.

1998 ***Amid widespread downsizing of companies and businesses, Nora advocates for an improved retrenchment package for Barclays' employees. She accepts one such package and retires from the bank to pursue her own business, a computer and phone shop in Marondera.***

1999 The economic crisis persists, and Zimbabwe's military involvement in the DRC's civil war becomes increasingly unpopular.

Tsvangirai founds the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), an opposition party that becomes the biggest challenger to Mugabe and ZANU-PF rule since independence.

Nora participates in the NCA's "Vote No" campaign, which educates citizens on the government's proposed draft constitution that would increase presidential powers and encouraged them to vote against it in the upcoming constitutional referendum.

2000 Mugabe suffers his first ballot-box defeat in a referendum on the government's proposed draft constitution.

Squatters begin seizing hundreds of white-owned farms in an ongoing and violent campaign to reclaim land.

Nora begins cross-border trading trips, spending two to three weeks each month in South Africa selling Zimbabwean crafts and curios to tourists.

2001 Finance Minister Simba Makoni publicly acknowledges an economic crisis, saying foreign reserves have run out and warning of serious food shortages. Western

donors, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, cut aid because of Mugabe's land seizure program.

2002 February – The ZANU-PF-dominated parliament enacts legislation limiting media freedom and giving untold power to the police.

March – Mugabe narrowly defeats Tsvangirai in presidential elections that are condemned by election monitors as rigged and marred by high levels of violence.

2003 June – During a week of opposition protest, MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai is arrested twice and charged with treason. The charge is in addition to an existing treason charge from 2002 over an alleged plot to kill President Mugabe.

Nora's husband contracts meningitis and dies in a hospital in Harare.

Nora enters South Africa illegally via Botswana. Despite her illegal status in South Africa, she begins activism work with Concerned Citizens of Zimbabwe in solidarity with the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

2005 *Nora helps organize a mock election demonstration in front of the Zimbabwe Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa. The effort – in advance of parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe – is part of a campaign to pressure the Zimbabwean government to accept votes from its diaspora. More than 500 Zimbabweans attend the demonstration.*

March – ZANU-PF wins two-thirds of the votes in parliamentary elections. MDC claims the election was rigged.

May to July – Operation *Murambatsvina*, a large-scale Zimbabwean government campaign to forcibly clear slum areas across the country, leaves some 700,000 people homeless after their shanty dwellings and street stalls are destroyed. Government officials say the operation is a crackdown against illegal housing and commercial activities. Opposition parties, civic society groups and the international community describe the campaign as an effort to drive out and render homeless large sections of the urban and rural poor, who largely oppose the Mugabe administration.

Nora's house in Marondera is vandalized in Operation Murambatsvina.

December – U.N. humanitarian chief Jan Egeland says Zimbabwe is in a "meltdown."

Nora is issued an official asylum seeker permit, making her a legal refugee in South Africa. She becomes more public and outspoken in her activism work, giving more interviews to international news agencies.

Nora's son leaves Zimbabwe and joins her in South Africa.

Nora establishes the Zimbabwe Civil Society Organization Forum in Johannesburg.

2006 May – Inflation in Zimbabwe exceeds 1,000 percent. New banknotes, with three zeroes removed from their values, are introduced in August.

Nora's daughter leaves Zimbabwe and joins Nora in South Africa.

Nora begins meeting with other diaspora groups, including the Jewish Board of Deputies, to seek counsel and best practices for developing a diaspora community.

Nora helps Zimbabwean teachers in South Africa advocate for legal refugee status so they can help fill the post-apartheid gap of skilled math and science teachers in South Africa. After six months of meetings with the South African education officials, the teachers are accepted as refugees and employed at government schools around the country.

2007 March – Riot police brutally disperse opposition supporters in Zimbabwe after declaring an opposition-led prayer meeting illegal. One man is shot dead and Tsvangirai is arrested and hospitalized. Regional African leaders appoint South African President Thabo Mbeki to mediate.

Nora organizes the first global conference for Zimbabweans in the diaspora. More than 230 people attend, including delegates from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Japan. Nora changes her organization's name to Global Zimbabwe Forum (GZF).

2008 March – After mediation efforts in South Africa fail, Mugabe declares the elections on March 29 as the first to combine presidential, parliamentary and local council polls.

April – ZANU-PF loses its parliamentary majority, and Tsvangirai wins the first round of presidential polls by a clear margin. Mugabe refuses to admit defeat. A run-off between Mugabe and Tsvangirai is expected.

May – In South Africa, a wave of violent xenophobic attacks hits townships across the country, as poor South Africans accuse foreigners of taking their jobs. Dozens of people die and thousands of Zimbabweans, Malawians and Mozambicans return to their home countries.

After spending three days helping authorities register Zimbabweans who have taken refuge at a police station, Nora works with the Johannesburg Mayor's Migrant Desk to provide shelter and food to victims of the attacks and to coordinate the South African Red Cross Society's humanitarian aid distribution to migrants living in shelters.

Nora establishes the Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Chamber (ZDDC) to focus on employment and professional development of Zimbabweans in the diaspora.

June – Police detain Tsvangirai repeatedly as he campaigns around the country. Thousands of militants loyal to Mugabe prevent opposition supporters from gathering for MDC’s main campaign rally. Tsvangirai withdraws his bid for the presidency and pleads with the international community to intervene in the violent and fraudulent election.

The run-off election is held with Tsvangirai’s name still on the ballot. Mugabe supporters force residents to vote with threats of violence and arson. Mugabe wins the run-off election and is sworn in for a sixth term as president. Tsvangirai and many African and world leaders call the run-off a sham.

The government orders aid groups to cease operations indefinitely..

September – Mugabe and Tsvangirai sign a power-sharing deal, mediated by South African President Thabo Mbeki, making Mugabe president and Tsvangirai prime minister.

December – Zimbabwe declares national emergency over a cholera epidemic and the collapse of its health care system.

GZF is registered in Geneva, Switzerland as an international organization.

2009

January – The Zimbabwean government allows the use of foreign currencies in an effort to stem hyperinflation.

February – Tsvangirai is sworn in as prime minister, and the Government of National Unity (GNU) is formed as a coalition of ZANU-PF and two factions of MDC.

GZF drafts diaspora-focused policy recommendations for the prime minister’s office in the GNU.

March – Tsvangirai is injured in a car crash. His wife, Susan, is killed in the head-on collision.

April – The South African government begins issuing “special dispensation permits” to legalize Zimbabweans and give them work permits and access to basic health care and education. Despite the accompanying moratorium on deportations to Zimbabwe, human rights lawyers say Zimbabweans continued to be arrested and unlawfully detained.

Nora begins conducting workshops together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on diaspora participation in the reconstruction of Zimbabwe. She drafts a memorandum of understanding,

making GZF the official partner of IOM on all programs involving Zimbabweans outside of Zimbabwe.

2010

March – The South African government believes the GNU has brought some form of stability to Zimbabwe and decides to end the special dispensation for Zimbabweans in South Africa and resume deportation of undocumented Zimbabweans after December 31.

Nora travels to the United States to take part in the Women PeaceMakers Program at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice.

NARRATIVE STORIES OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF NORA CHENGETO TAPIWA

Taking Care of Teatime

Nora carefully placed the stool on the kitchen floor in front of the sink. She put her hands on either side and leaned her weight ever so gently forward, making sure the stool was solid on the ground and didn't wobble. She stepped on it with the same caution, and when she was sure of her balance, she raised onto her toes. With her arms stretched all the way up, Nora was barely able to reach the dishes on the rack above the sink: tea cups, saucers, plates, two of each. It was almost 4 p.m., and her mother would be home soon. Nora knew how important teatime was to her mother.

It didn't matter to Lillian that it was just the two of them in that house in the hospital compound – she, a nurse who worked long hours into the night at Enkeldoorn² General, and Nora, her youngest child, who was 5 and still too young to join her sisters at school. A lifetime of training at Anglican mission schools had instilled in Lillian the tradition of teatime. And even on those days when she would have to work through lunch or dinner, she always made it a point to return to the house for teatime with Nora at 10 a.m. and again at 4 p.m.

It was more than just a ceremony for Lillian. It was more than setting the table and sipping something for tradition's sake. Teatime for Lillian was a twice-daily thanksgiving of sorts. It was about appreciating the blessings in their lives. She kept her kitchen stocked with sugar, milk and tea leaves and made sure the day's meals were full of nutritious foods: bread, eggs, liver, sweet potatoes, roasted maize, cornmeal porridge with peanut butter or margarine. Teatime was a rule in Lillian's home. Her children had to empty their cups and know with every sip that they lacked nothing.

Nora had spent the afternoon playing with her dolls on the veranda outside their villa. But now she busied herself with the regular, pre-teatime routine. She unrolled a plastic floral sheet to cover the small wooden table that sat between two wicker chairs on the veranda. Then she returned to the kitchen to fetch the dishes, holding the tower of tea cups, saucers and plates close to her torso, bracing the topmost cup with her chin and taking slow and calculated steps, one foot gingerly guiding the other. When she reached the veranda with all the dishes still intact, she arranged them into two place settings and added a plate of sugar biscuits in between. Her mother loved something sweet with her afternoon tea.

Nora took a step back and examined her work. Her mother would be home any minute, and Nora wanted to please her with a flawless table setting. Then she heard a familiar call from a passerby.

“Chengeto! Chengeto! But who are you looking after?”

The other doctors and nurses who lived on the compound would often tease little Nora when they saw her hard at work. Chengeto was Nora's Shona name, and it meant “to take care of.” Nora took pride in calling back her standard response.

“Chengeto ano, chengeto mai! Me, I'm looking after the mother!”

And Lillian was always delighted to see the table ready upon her arrival. She quickly set a pot of water, tea leaves, sugar and milk to cook on the stove and roasted two cobs of maize that she had plucked from the field next to the hospital. When all was ready, she settled on the veranda with her third-born, the 5-year-old child who spent her days alone doing chores around the house so that Lillian could rest when she got home. Chengeto, the one who looked after her. Chengeto, the one who would grow up to look after many more.



At the edge of the open paved square that formed the center of the Enkeldoorn bus terminus, Lillian made a small mountain of baggage. Two square suitcases with weathered edges, stacked one on top of the other, alongside a heap of assorted canvas bags, the seams of which were straggling under the pressure of the morning's shopping.

With two steps up and a hop, Nora scrambled and hoisted herself on top of the suitcases, stood up and peered into the distance of the incoming road.

“Where is the bus, *Amai*? There is no bus! I don't see a bus!” Little Nora was almost screaming in her excitement, but Lillian's booming voice outdid her daughter's.

“CHENGETO! *Usapaparike!* Don't be overzealous!”

Nora couldn't help it. It was time for their monthly trip to visit her father and sisters in Guvakuva, a rural area some 15 kilometers east of Enkeldoorn. Simon was the headmaster of the school there, where Nora's sisters Grace and Susan were enrolled. They stayed together in the extra large headmaster's villa on the school's compound.

Lillian had spent the last few weeks clocking enough extra night shifts at the hospital to afford herself one week's time to bring her family together. She sometimes grew weary from these trips. But Nora's excitement at the prospect of a bus ride and a journey always delighted her and replenished her energy just when she needed it. For Nora, the trips were a special time, a welcome break from spending her days alone while her mother worked.

The buses would come either from the capital, Salisbury, in the north or from Gwelo³ in the west. Either way, they arrived in Enkeldoorn around mid-day, so Lillian and Nora had all morning to get their shopping done. Guvakuva was a rural area, and while the basics were available there, Lillian liked to bring her family special treats from the city. The pair set out early for York Street, the town's main strip, and hit all the usual spots.

First, Desai's Supermarket, owned by the Indians. Nora raced ahead and grabbed one of the signature red baskets, and Lillian guided her up and down the aisles filling the basket with glass bottles of lemon Krest soda, butter, jams, tinned fruits, powdered soap for washing clothes, biscuits and the girls' favorite Mazoe Orange Crush, which they would dilute with fresh spring water pulled out in buckets from the well on the school compound.

They picked up several loaves of fresh bread from the bakery before proceeding to Fred's Butchery. Fred and his wife were not the only white Rhodesian shop owners in town, but they were the ones Nora saw most often because of her mother's regular trips to buy meat.

Like everyone from Nora's 5-year-old vantage point, Fred was a large man. But in that way that people in uniform always seem grander, Fred towered over his meat counter in his white dust jacket and blue-and-white striped butcher's apron, streaked with blood and meat juice, from which his customers could tell how long he had been at his craft that day. Fred's wife worked the register. The woman, with her shiny yellow hair falling in loose waves to her shoulders, reminded Nora of her peach-toned plastic dolls.

Lillian stepped to the counter and ordered various amounts of brisket, short ribs, beef bones for soup, pork, liver, fish, eggs. Fred worked with precision and handed her package after package of meat wrapped in white paper and tied with a string. When Lillian paid her sum, Fred's wife smiled at them and wished them well. They were kind people. And Lillian was a high-rolling regular customer.

Lillian and Nora returned home to pack the suitcases and parcels of food and treats. She solicited the help of a neighbor with a wheelbarrow, and by about 11:30 she and Nora, and their suitcases and parcels, had made the 20-minute walk to the bus terminus. Nora ran ahead in her excitement so many times that Lillian made her daughter hold the bottom of her dress to make sure the child walked alongside her until they arrived.

"But where is the bus? Amai, will I sit by the window?"

"Of course you will, Chengeto. Don't you always sit by the window? The bus will arrive soon."

And soon, it did: a 64-seat charter bus, this one coming from Salisbury. Once the seats were filled and the baggage stowed away, the bus pulled out of the lot and headed east.

They had only 15 kilometers to travel, but the bus stopped plenty of times to let people off at rural spots along the way. Nora had at least an hour to soak in the sights of her country from her coveted window seat. First they went through farmlands, and Nora saw cattle ranches and lush green fields of corn and tobacco, and then orchards of citrus fruits. It was springtime in the early '70s and the farms in Rhodesia were bountiful with agricultural riches. Then the paved road ended and the gravel road guided the bus through a series of villages. Nora watched the collections of circular mud homes with grass-thatched pointy roofs pass her by one after another.

When they got off the bus and unloaded their things, Lillian once again made a small mountain with the suitcases and parcels of food and treats. But this time she didn't have a wheelbarrow to help her carry everything. It was almost 4 kilometers from where the bus dropped them off to the school compound. And Nora was too small to carry anything but the smallest and lightest parcels.

But Lillian had already made this journey several times with little Nora. She had figured out how to carry all the parcels to the school and still keep watch over her youngest child.

She lifted Nora onto the suitcases, as she had been back at the bus terminus in Enkeldoorn. Lillian bent over, looked Nora in the eyes and made certain she understood the procedure.

"OK, Chengeto, what are you to do?"

“I will be watching you, Amai.”

“Will you look away?”

“No, Amai. I will only look at you. I will not look away.”

And with that, Lillian grabbed all of the other parcels, slinging some canvas bags over her shoulders and tucking others under her arms. She gathered all she could manage to carry, leaving behind just the suitcases and Nora, who kept her eyes on her mother as she walked away.

Lillian was a large woman, in height and in girth. Her legs – substantial and powerful – hit the dirt road at a steady pace. Those legs were strong enough to carry Lillian’s person and parcels all the way to the school with ease.

But she didn’t go all the way to the school. That wasn’t the plan. Every few minutes, Lillian, with her back still to Nora, called out in the booming voice she was known for, “CHENGETO! Are you seeing me? Are you seeing me?”

She slowed her pace until she heard Nora’s tiny child voice respond, “I am seeing you, Amai! I am seeing you!”

Mother and daughter repeated this call and response until Nora’s voice was barely audible. That’s when Lillian lowered all the parcels into a small pile behind a tree, not visible from the main road. And she walked without the added weight back to Nora and the suitcases.

Lillian lifted one suitcase with each hand, took a deep breath, and started walking once again, covering the same distance she had just traversed twice. Nora went with her this time. When they reached the spot where she had left the other parcels, they were halfway to the school. They repeated the whole process one more time, with Nora atop the suitcases watching her mother walk away until her responses were no longer audible and joining her with the suitcases for the second trip.

And with that, they reached the gates of the school. Nora sprinted in the direction of her father’s office, and Lillian went the other way, taking the bags to the family’s house.

Simon’s face lit up when he saw his youngest little girl in the doorway of his office, nearly out of breath but with enough to be screaming, “Baba! Baba! *Tawuya!* We have come!”

Nora was bursting with her usual excitement upon arrival at her father’s school. At the hospital in Enkeldoorn, there was no one to look after her, so she stayed home and did the household chores. Here at the school, Lillian took care of the chores, and Nora could run around freely with the other kids. And on this day, her father made Nora’s arrival even happier.

“Chengeto, you have finally arrived. I have a surprise for you.”

Simon produced a paper package that was soft and floppy, the contents of which made Nora so ecstatic that she squealed.

“A school uniform! Thank you, Baba!”

It was beautiful – a purple dress with small white petunias on the collar and sleeves. But more than a pretty dress, it was Nora’s ticket to the start of her education. The rule at the time was that any student attending classes at public school must wear a uniform. With his privilege as headmaster, Simon could have allowed his youngest to sit in the classes wearing her normal clothes. But Nora’s father was a man of protocol. He knew the rules, and he followed them. He didn’t want to risk getting in trouble when the government inspectors made their visits. So Simon bought a uniform for Nora, thereby allowing her to attend his school officially, at least during her week-long visits.

When Nora and her father reached the house, Lillian was already busy salting and roasting the meats she brought from Fred’s butchery. There was no electricity at the school compound, so Lillian’s first order of business was to preserve the meats enough to last the week. Grace and Susan had also returned from school and were rummaging through the parcels inspecting their monthly booty.

Nora couldn’t wait to tell her mother the good news. “Amai, I’ve got a uniform! Now I can be in everybody’s class!”

Grace and Susan rolled their eyes. They knew Nora wouldn’t understand much from their lessons. Lillian knew it too, but at least it would keep Nora occupied and leave her free to spend the week tending to the household chores without distraction.

Amidst the excitement over treats and uniforms and family reunion, 4 o’clock rolled around. It was teatime. And before the girls knew it, their mother had set the table in the living room with cups of sweet milky tea, sodas, plates of biscuits and slices of fresh bread and jam.

The headmaster and the nurse sat down for a proper tea with their children. At the end of the week, Lillian and Nora would return to Enkeldoorn. But for now, they savored their togetherness around the table and gave thanks for all they were able to provide.

Chimurenga

The buzz of the low-flying fighter plane over the farmlands was not unlike the incessant buzzing of the mosquitos that kept Nora and her sisters awake at night at their grandparents' home. It was simply a bigger, badder, louder mosquito. The Rhodesian military aircraft was a nuisance, a filthy pest craving the blood of those who tried to swat it down and trying desperately to spread the disease of white minority dominance.

Esther had grown used to the sight, and she was tired of it. Everyone was. This thing – this Bush War, this new *chimurenga*,⁴ this liberation struggle, whatever people in the towns were calling it – had been going on for almost 13 years. But in the past few years, she had seen the violence intensify in scope and frequency, especially in the rural areas.

Her granddaughters were less accustomed. Grace, Susan and Nora had come to spend their school holidays in rural Buhera. Esther, thinking she could use the extra help with harvesting the ground nuts, took the girls out to the field hoping it would be a quiet day. But then that buzzing pest showed up.

She watched the plane trail out of sight.

“Mmmmm,” Esther said with a nod to her husband. “Today we are not going to have a good day.”

It was a hot, late summer morning in April 1979. The girls were pulling the ground nuts from the plants extra slow, preferring to spend more time getting caught up with each other's school gossip. All three had moved on from their father's school in Guvakuva. The older girls were now attending high schools in the capital, Salisbury, and staying with an uncle there. And Nora had recently begun 6th grade in Sinoia,⁵ a northern city where her Auntie Erika was a teacher.

The girls didn't quite know what to make of the plane. In the cities, they had heard on the news about the growing violence in the rural areas. And even after a bomb went off at the Woolworth's department store in Salisbury, killing a crowd of Rhodesians, the girls still felt removed from the war. They were immersed in their own teenage worlds – boarding schools, boys, the latest dance hits on the radio. But what did this plane mean? They looked to their grandmother for guidance.

“Keep working,” was all Esther said.

Nora gathered only two more piles of ground nuts before the next distraction: a raucous commotion from the main road some 500 meters away. A convoy of military vehicles. Some were ordinary trucks carrying teams of uniformed soldiers. Others were more like tankers, with tracks and small windows from which pale masculine faces peered out. They were Rhodesian forces, likely headed to a camp about 5 kilometers up the road.

The girls, their grandparents and Erika stood still and watched the vehicles pass in what seemed like an endless procession. Nora sensed the growing unease among the adults and even among her sisters. As the convoy rumbled out of sight, the group slowly returned to the ground nuts, only to be shaken by sounds erupting off in the distance.

First a blast powerful enough to move the earth under Nora's feet and the heart in her chest. The lead car in the convoy hit a landmine.

Then the familiar crackle of AK47s opening fire. That would be the liberation fighters, the guerillas. They were probably following the convoy from a distance and opened fire once it hit the landmine. Now it was a battle. And that's when Esther issued the next directive.

“Let's go home. We cannot be in the fields.”

She knew what was possible. More planes could come. Bombs could drop on the fields, especially if there were people moving around. The girls and their grandparents gathered their tools and whatever ground nuts they had managed to harvest, and hurried through the fields for about 20 minutes until they reached home.

They went straight to the kitchen, a separate structure from the main part of the house. As per Esther's instructions, the girls scrambled together enough food for all six of them to fill their stomachs. There was no telling when they'd get to eat again.

They locked up the kitchen and went into the main house, where Esther ordered them, quite sternly, to keep as still and quiet as possible. She was all too familiar with this drill. They were to remain in the house until the battle sounds had ceased. Their goal was to make the house appear empty of all inhabitants, to remain hidden, to stay safe from whatever hostilities would ensue. Esther kept pots in the house to use as toilets in times like this. Even her two dogs knew to remain quiet and hidden in a shaded corner of the courtyard, recognizing that the family had gone into lock-down, hide-out mode.

A few hours passed before the next rumbling of vehicles at the road. A quick peek out the window confirmed Esther's suspicions, as much as she wanted to be proved wrong. The Rhodesian military trucks were returning, carrying bodies of fallen soldiers. There had been an ambush. Tomorrow, she thought, all hell will break loose.

The next day, the patrols began. Armed Rhodesian forces – white soldiers – crisscrossed through the village looking for any residents they could shake down for information. They were big men, broad-shouldered, clad in dark green camouflage uniforms and tall black boots, the heft of which notified the hiding family of the soldiers' proximity and the consequent need to be extra still and quiet. When the boots got louder, Nora held her breath and struggled to suppress any tickles in her throat or nose.

The soldiers banged on the front gate and yelled out in their learned Shona, “*IKUPI GANDANGA? IKUPI GANDANGA?*” Where are the terrorists?

No one moved. They sat frozen as statues, keeping their eyes shut to avoid blinking. After a few minutes, they heard the boots walking around again. And then a rustling from among the fruit trees at the side of the house. The soldiers were helping themselves to the family's peaches and grapefruits. While they snacked, their hand-held radios crackled to life with static, beeping and back-and-forth instructions on the day's missions. They spoke fast and in military jargon, ending each transmission with the standard “over,” which they uttered in a heavy Rhodesian accent – a peculiar lilt that fell somewhere between British and Afrikaaner – and so frequently that all Nora and her

sisters heard was “Ova, ova? Ova, ova? Ova, ova?” For the rest of their lives, they would refer to any hand-held radio as an “ova-ova.”

Something like an eternity passed, though it was a mere five minutes. The boots finally walked away. Esther let out her breath and said a silent prayer. She knew it was best to avoid any encounters with the Rhodesians. They wanted to know the hiding spots of the liberation fighters – the black terrorists. Those who told them would end up targeted by the fighters themselves, labeled as sell-outs and beaten in public places, sometimes to their deaths. Those who could not answer would come face to face with the butts of the Rhodesian soldiers’ guns.

The family listened to the boots and the ova-ovas come and go all day long. The Rhodesians retreated to their base just before sunset. But after dark, that’s when the liberation fighters took their turn to sweep through the village. And again the family – and the dogs – kept silent, pretending they were not at home. Again they listened to armed men passing by the house. This time the warning sounds were the calls and responses of male voices promoting the chimurenga – the struggle against the colonial fascists. The songs told stories of previous eras, former chimurenga heroes and the lessons they passed on.

<i>Mbaya nebanda kufa vachitaura shuva</i>	Nehanda died saying the truth
<i>Kuti zvino ndofira nyika</i>	That she was dying for the country
<i>Shoko rimwe ravakatiudzwa</i>	The only one word she told us
<i>Tora gidi uzvitonge</i>	Take the gun and liberate yourself

<i>Wasara kuHondo</i>	You are left to go for the war
<i>Shuva here?</i>	Are you sure?
<i>Woto mbanya mbanya nemasongo</i>	You run in the bushes and war zones
<i>Wotitora antiair</i>	You get a rocket missile
<i>Kutiruzhinji rizvitonge</i>	So that the majority are liberated

Answering to the liberation fighters was no more favorable than answering to the Rhodesians. Esther counted her blessings and said another prayer when the singing faded and the soldiers passed without knocking on the gate.

Other villagers weren’t as good at keeping quiet that night. The fighters rounded up the ones who stirred and frog-marched them away for a brief stay at a nearby camp. Esther knew what happened there. She had been to that camp. Everyone in the village had been to that camp. That’s where they learned how to take cover during a battle. It’s where they learned how to respond to Rhodesian soldiers. It’s where they were taught the chimurenga songs, the importance of independence, the reasons for the war.

The camps were part of the liberation fighters’ rag-tag strategy of mass indoctrination and intimidation. The message was clear: Everyone must support the liberation fighters by providing food, clothing, shelter, information or whatever else they needed. The fight for independence had no room for sell-outs. Anyone who refused would face death. And not a quick and easy death either. The liberation fighters didn’t have bullets to waste on civilians. News of the unlucky spread quickly. Most recently, there were stories of decapitated sell-outs, shop-owners in nearby towns who couldn’t – or wouldn’t – provide the necessary rations. Children recognized the shop-owners’ heads as the dogs dragged them through the streets.

But this time, Nora's family was spared a visit to the camps. When the liberation fighters left the village, the girls and their grandparents ran to the kitchen hut to cook and eat. Back in the main house, from crouched positions next to the windows, they watched the battle light up the sky in the near distance: orange streaks of gunfire and the occasional starburst when a Rhodesian plane was shot down.

The fighting continued like that for two more days, with Rhodesian forces patrolling during the day, liberation fighters making their sweeps in the evening, and fireworks all through the night. For two more days, Nora and her family practiced silence and stillness.

As soon as it ended, Esther packed up Erika and the girls and sent them away. The buses weren't running, but Esther wanted her granddaughters out of there as soon as possible. They were too young for the camps. They were too young to see dead bodies. They had seen enough already.

The girls and Aunt Erika set off early in the morning on foot. They stayed away from the main roads, which were littered with land mines. They followed cattle tracks and passed through villages and farms. They kept their heads down and walked as quickly as possible. At times they ran, the older girls pulling Nora by the hand, and Nora struggling to keep up. They made it to Enkeldoorn, some 60 kilometers from the rural home, by early evening and hopped on the first bus to Salisbury. From there, Nora and Erika continued on to Sinoia.

Dirty and exhausted, Nora collapsed in her bed in Aunt Erika's apartment. She was glad to be back in the city. She was ready to go back to school and not worry about hiding from armed fighters, white or black. She closed her eyes and prayed for a dream to replace a nightmare. Her grandmother's parting words echoed in her head as she drifted off to sleep: "Don't come back until independence."

The Skirt of Protest

Nora had felt it from an early age – the grumbling insistence in the pit of her stomach when she knew something just wasn't right, the bubbling warmth in her veins that would grow to a raging fire and wouldn't cool down until she did something about it.

Before her brother was born in 1982, Nora grew up as the third of five daughters – the middle child. She knew what was expected of her and most of the time she filled her role dutifully and without complaint. This meant being respectful enough to take orders from the older girls and responsible enough to help the younger girls with their chores. It also meant sometimes getting lost in the middle.

Like the time when she and her sisters were home from their respective boarding schools during their mid-term holidays. The older girls went shopping for new clothes. They were teenagers now, and they had a certain image to maintain. They couldn't return to school in Harare wearing old clothes. The younger girls were still young enough to cause a fuss. So they got new clothes too. But Nora was somewhere in between: too old to be fussy and too young to be fashionable. Nora returned to school without any new clothes.

At 15, Nora was, in fact, old enough to feel hurt and neglected and young enough to not let those feelings pass. She had to do something about it. She had to say something. She sent her sisters a letter at their boarding school:

Grace and Susan:

You got new clothes because you are teenagers. Dorothy and Lydia got new clothes because they are young and they will cry.

Ko ini wepakati ndoita sei? *What about me, the middle one?*

- *Nora*

And when she put the letter in the mail, she felt better. She didn't dare protest to her parents, but at least she had made a statement to her sisters.

To Nora's horror, her sisters sent the letter to their parents, letting them know that Nora had complaints about being the middle child. And when the next mid-term break rolled around, Nora's parents welcomed her home with a small allowance of money for new clothes. Nora took the money to Chivhu town and came back with a knee-length corduroy skirt the color of sand. That skirt was the result of Nora's first protest. It was a lesson to Nora that she could change her own situation. All she had to do was speak up and take action.



Nora wore that corduroy skirt throughout her high school years and even after giving birth to her first child. When she started her first job in 1988, as a clerk in the mail department at the Barclays Bank head office in Harare, the skirt hung in her closet alongside the Barclays uniform.

It hung there still as Nora advanced at Barclays, moving from the mail department to the data capture department, from clerk to supervisor, before running the bank's graduate trainee program, and finally transferring to a branch in Marondera, some 75 kilometers east of Harare, after the birth of her second child.

It might have been the sight of that skirt in her closet every morning that encouraged Nora to speak up at every staff meeting in response to the grumbling and rising warmth within her. No concern was too minor to be mentioned.

She didn't understand why her co-workers kept their concerns confined to the break room. Mostly they lamented their working conditions. During the rainy season, the bank lost electricity, and the workers complained that the phones didn't work, the computers were offline, and they were delayed in getting statements to their clients. And wouldn't it be nice to have a refrigerator in the staff kitchen?

"Why don't you say things when the manager is there?" Nora would ask them. "You're the ones who talk and talk and talk, but you don't say anything in the meetings!"

Minutes were taken at every monthly meeting, and those minutes were sent to the head office. Nora knew that if the workers voiced their concerns at the meetings, someone in the higher echelons of the Barclays banking world – where decisions were made – would read about it.

Still, the others seemed afraid to address their managers. So Nora did it for them.

"Can we have a fridge in the staff kitchen?" she said, watching the minute-taker scribble her words. "We should have a generator so we can keep up with work during the rainy season."

"If we have good suggestions, management will listen," she would tell her colleagues back in the break room. She was right. The next circular that came from the head office at the end of the month announced that all branches would be getting generators. And the bankers in Marondera soon had a refrigerator in their kitchen.

"See," Nora told the others, "all you have to do is speak up."



By the early 1990s, independent Zimbabwe was off to a rocky start. After violently crushing a growing resistance in Matabeleland, Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-party rule reached a unity agreement with Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU party, and the two merged to become ZANU-PF. But shortly after the violence ended, Mugabe emerged victorious once again after another questionable election.

The post-independence honeymoon period was coming to an end. The government had adopted the World Bank's Economic Structural Adjustment Program in 1991, and the immediate results included downsizing of companies, job losses and a rise in poverty. People were growing discontent with their leaders. Students, trade unionists and workers began to demonstrate.

In 1993, Nora's tendency to speak up earned her a spot as secretary on the Workers' Committee at her Barclays branch in Marondera. At monthly meetings, the committee discussed local workers' issues – salary increases, benefits, uniforms. The committee was the most local unit of a larger network of unions that brought together workers from all sectors to advocate for their rights.

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), the umbrella organization for all the trade unions, was being led by Morgan Tsvangirai, a man Nora knew from her hometown. She had seen him the previous year at Christmas having a beer outside of her husband's grocery shop in rural Buhera. Everyone in Buhera knew Morgan as their local star who had made his way up the ranks, first in the mining industry and then in the mine workers' union.

It wasn't until 1996 that Nora would see Morgan more frequently. She was now making regular trips to Harare to represent Barclays on a national level, and he had become well respected in the labor movement as the secretary-general of the ZCTU. At one of the quarterly meetings, Nora joined labor leaders from around the country at the ZCTU headquarters, on the fifth floor of the Chester House building in Harare. Morgan chaired the meeting from his seat at the front of the boardroom.

The discussion that day focused on economic policies and creation of jobs. Companies were still downsizing; people were still losing jobs. As with most discussions during those years, the blame fell on the decisions of the ZANU-PF government and the president's refusal to consider the needs of the workers. And the 1995 parliamentary election resulted in the creation of more government ministries, which meant even more power for the government.

“Our constitution is flawed,” Morgan declared to the more than 40 people crowded into the modest boardroom. “It's giving the president so much power that he cannot accept what the people are saying. We need to have a constitution which cuts the presidential powers. The president and his ministers, they must be accountable to the people.”

As Nora listened to Morgan talk, she realized how little she knew about the country's constitution. She knew it wasn't a proper constitution. Rather, it was the Lancaster House Agreement – the cease-fire agreement that ended the liberation war – with some amendments, among them the Presidential Powers Act, which allowed Mugabe to bypass governmental review and oversight procedures and gave him the power to veto anything.

“He is the law unto himself,” Morgan explained. “So let's change the constitution and remove that act.”

Nora returned to Marondera amazed by Morgan's vision and bold statements against the president. She remembered his words every day as she continued to clock her hours at the bank. But back in Harare, Morgan Tsvangirai was doing more than just talking. The ZCTU was busy mobilizing the community – students, church groups, women's groups, businesses, human rights organizations – to join the labor movement in calling for a new constitution. In 1997, they formed the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), with Morgan as its chairman, to campaign for constitutional reform. The people were starting to realize that many of Zimbabwe's growing political, social and economic problems were the result of the flawed Lancaster House constitution. Only a new and democratic constitution could offer any hope for solutions.

Nora signed up to support the cause and represent the NCA in Marondera. She began meeting with community groups there, educating them about the flaws in the constitution. But she had little convincing to do. The need for reform became even more evident later that year when Mugabe granted nearly 50,000 veterans of the liberation war 50,000 Zimbabwe dollars each in reparations to silence their demonstrations in Harare, which had been causing the government a good bit of embarrassment. The payouts, an unforeseen expense that had not been budgeted for, served a sharp blow to the economy. On November 14, 1997, the Zimbabwe dollar fell by 75 percent in just a few hours. The date would forever be known as Black Friday.

Shortly thereafter, Nora accepted a buyout – as Barclays too was downsizing its operations – and ended her 10-year career at the bank. She started her own business: a computer, Internet and phone shop in Marondera. That gave her flexibility and more time to continue campaigning for the NCA. By early 1999, the NCA had begun drafting a new constitution, and Nora was doing her part to help gather people's opinions on what should be included.

But it wasn't long before the government hijacked the process, having realized that it was being left out of a growing national movement. Although the NCA agreed to work together with the government on the process, the government simply took over, assigning its own commissioners to survey popular opinions and producing a final draft that no longer represented the grassroots sentiments. Most appalling was that the final draft actually extended the presidential powers, adding the power to appoint the senate and the prime minister, and requiring the prime minister to consult the president on all matters. This was the draft that would be considered at a constitutional referendum scheduled for February 2000.

The NCA quickly regrouped and changed their campaign. NCA activists were now calling on people to vote against the proposed draft constitution. In Marondera, Nora and other activists spent several weeks on the streets distributing "VOTE NO" T-shirts and pamphlets that highlighted the contentious clauses of the proposed draft constitution. They held meetings with community groups to explain what the government was trying to do. They continued their campaign until the day of the referendum.

The polling center in Marondera was set up in a community hall. Nora cast her vote and then went home to wait for reports on the evening news. The newspapers, television and radio announced the vote tallies as they came in over the next few days. The final counts showed the country had rejected the draft constitution, with the "no" votes outnumbering the "yes" votes by at least 100,000. Everyone tuned in to hear Mugabe address the nation:

"The government took great care to accommodate all interests and colors in order to make the whole process both truly democratic and representative of the diversity of our nation," he said. "Let us all winners and losers accept the referendum verdict and start planning our way forward."⁶

Nora couldn't believe it. The campaign worked. The NCA's efforts had convinced even people in rural areas – those most susceptible to ZANU-PF intimidation – to vote "no." And now, here was Mugabe on national television accepting the results – accepting his defeat.

Over the next few days, the buzz amongst the NCA crowd was both joyous and cautious. They were happy to have defeated the government; it was a victory for the people. But they were

also uneasy with Mugabe’s reaction. He was calm and composed and quick to accept the defeat. It was unlike him. They wondered what was going to happen next.

Crossings

“Amai, they came looking for you again.”

It wasn’t the greeting Nora had been hoping for upon returning from her latest three-week cross-border trading venture to South Africa. She was tired. She had been on the road for 20 hours, traveling by bus first from Johannesburg to Harare and then to her home in Marondera. And although the comforts of South Africa had become more and more enticing with each subsequent trip, the commute was still long and tiring. All Nora wanted to do was share a hot meal with her son and sister, have a bath and go to bed.

But her son welcomed her with this unsettling news. Again. And Nora responded the same way she had the previous month and the month before that. She took the 15-year-old boy’s hand in hers and looked him straight in the eye.

“Kuda, *who* came looking for me?”

“I don’t know, Amai. They were four men in dark suits and dark glasses. They came in a white car.”

“Did you take the plate number?”

Her son looked away. He was now old enough to start understanding the signs. “Amai, there were *no* plates on the car.”

Nora’s heart skipped a beat. It was getting worse. Now they were coming in unmarked vehicles.

“What did they say, Kuda?”

“The same thing they always say: ‘Where is your mother?’” Kuda looked worried. “Who are they, Amai?”

They were agents from the Central Intelligence Office (CIO), Mugabe’s ZANU-PF cronies. They had been looking for Nora for some time now.

After the draft constitution was voted down in 2000, Mugabe and his militias had spent two years canvassing the country and intimidating people with brutal violence and threats. He was successful; in March 2002, he won yet another presidential election, defeating the predominant opposition party, Morgan Tsvangirai’s Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

With that victory, Mugabe regained his sense of power and control and started working even harder to silence the opposition. He dispatched ZANU-PF militias and CIO thugs to deal with the dissenters.

Nora had been hearing the stories of opposition leaders and sympathizers. People would disappear, and they would never be seen again. Or their bodies would be found days or weeks later dumped in a field somewhere. One young MDC supporter survived his abduction, only to be found with the letters MDC carved into his back with a knife. At the house of Dydmus Munhenzva, a prominent MDC leader, a petrol bomb was thrown through the bedroom window.

Marondera was a small town. Everyone knew of Nora's history with ZCTU, the labor movement from which MDC emerged. Everyone knew she had campaigned with the NCA. Nora's past was aligned with Morgan Tsvangirai. To make matters worse, Marondera was a predominantly ZANU-PF town, and Nora was one of the few people who had been absent from the ZANU-PF meetings and rallies, the ones in which people were convinced that Morgan was a puppet of the West and that only ZANU-PF could "take back our land."

The first few times Nora heard that people were looking for her, she shrugged it off. She wasn't home much anyway. Her phone shop was no longer sustaining her, so she had taken up cross-border trading, spending two to three weeks of every month selling Zimbabwean crafts and curios to tourists in South Africa. Before returning, she would stock up on supermarket items that were no longer available or affordable in Zimbabwe – powdered soap, cooking oil, bread – to stock her own kitchen and those of her parents and siblings.

But now the men in dark suits and dark glasses were visiting Nora's home more frequently. And they were coming in unmarked vehicles. When she came home between her trips to South Africa, she mostly stayed in the house. There was no telling which of her friends or acquaintances in Marondera was selling her out. Nora didn't want to disappear.

And when the men returned and knocked on her gate, Nora and her son and sister sat still and silent until they went away.



The next time Nora returned from South Africa, she decided to go to Buhera to visit her parents. On her way, she passed through Chivhu and took a walk through the town while she waited for the bus. The shelves at Desai's Supermarket were not as cheerfully stocked with goodies as they once were. The other shops on York Street looked just as sad and hungry.

She turned a corner and came upon an open square. There was a commotion at the opposite end of the square. A man's voice was screaming out in anguished bursts between rhythmic thuds of thick rubber hitting flesh and muscle and bone. Four men in plain clothes – everyone knew they were CIO – were beating a man they had chained to a telephone booth. Nora got closer and recognized the victim; it was Pinel Denga, an MDC activist and Nora's friend.

They were beating him in broad daylight, in a public place, for everyone to see. But nobody was watching. People looked away and scurried by, as if it wasn't happening. Was Nora the only one who was seeing this? Was she the only one hearing his cries? As horrible as it was, she couldn't look away. She had heard about violent crackdowns on dissenting voices and opposition leaders around

the country, but here was her friend, a well-known member of the community, being battered by four men with baton sticks. What was happening?

Nora stood watching for a few moments before one of the aggressors noticed her.

“What are you looking at?” he barked. “Move!”

And she continued walking, just like everyone else.



Nora stood patiently in the queue inching her way toward the front, where the ward counselor was selling rations of maize meal. Since the drought struck in late 2002, this was the only way to get enough of the staple flour to keep her family fed. Sacks of maize meal were too heavy to carry back with her from South Africa.

After at least two hours in the queue, Nora finally reached the front. She handed the ward counselor her ID card and began to count out her cash. But the counselor simply tossed her ID back at her with a grunt.

“Oh-seven,” he said, referring to the code that identified her home district. “People from Buhera must go and buy their maize meal from the British. They are the ones feeding your Tsvangirai.”

Nora sighed and walked home empty-handed, her stomach grumbling more from anger than from hunger. It was the third time in three days that she had been denied food.



In the 15 years since Nora married Shoni, Gogo-Rusike had become more like a sister than a mother-in-law. After phoning her own mother every week during her trips to South Africa, Nora always dialed Shoni’s mother next. And they would chatter away like school girls, Nora giving updates on her cross-border trading, and her mother-in-law filling her in on the latest happenings in Harare. Despite continuing economic and political troubles in the country, the elder woman always managed to sound cheerful.

So Nora knew something was wrong when she phoned Harare in early July 2003 and Gogo-Rusike answered the phone with a nervous sigh.

“Nora, your husband is here with us now. He’s not feeling well. He has a headache.”

Shoni rarely got sick. And when he did, he was reluctant to close his shop in rural Buhera even for a day. There wasn’t much on the shelves anymore, but Shoni kept the shop open in hopes that things would get better. But now he had closed the shop and gone to his parents’ home in Harare complaining of a headache.

“Nora, you should come back.” She could feel the urgency in her mother-in-law’s voice.

Nora got on the next bus leaving Johannesburg for Harare. She arrived to find her husband lying in bed, clutching his head and whimpering in pain. She rushed him to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with meningitis.

After a week in the hospital, Nora took Shoni home with a round of antibiotics. But she could see he was deteriorating. He couldn't move, his limbs felt weak. He started to have seizures, like an epileptic, then something like a temporary stroke, his body going stiff for 10 to 15 minutes at a time.

Nora couldn't sleep at night. Every time she came close, she would be jolted awake with panic, remembering that she had a very sick person in the bed with her. At regular intervals throughout the night, Nora would put her hand under his sweater to feel if his body was still warm. She could see that her husband was dying. She was watching him die. It was excruciating; she was grateful that her children were away at school.

The first round of antibiotics lasted 14 days. Once upon a time in Zimbabwe, the hospital would have provided the next round too. But now, Nora was on her own to purchase the medications from a private pharmacy. She also had to purchase other essentials that the hospital could no longer afford to provide, like bed linens and pajamas.

And cash was hard to find. People were sleeping in queues outside the bank and still going home empty-handed. The banks had instituted limits on withdrawals, so Nora and her in-laws split up and queued at different banks around town. It took them two days to gather enough money for the next round of medications for Shoni. Even with cash in hand, it sometimes took half a day to get to the hospital. Taxis had become scarce and expensive thanks to a fuel shortage.

Meanwhile, Shoni's seizures and strokes continued for a couple of weeks. His nervous system was breaking down. Between episodes, Nora fed him and engaged him in conversation. And when he told her, "I'm going to die tomorrow," Nora pretended not to hear and continued to spoon potatoes, bananas or squash into his mouth. He ate with a healthy appetite. Between bites, he reminded his wife, "I'm going to die tomorrow." He told her the same thing every day for a week. "I'm going to die tomorrow."

The day Shoni stopped eating, Nora called an ambulance to take him back to the hospital. When she went to see him the next morning, he told her, "You know what? I nearly died last night." Nora made a joke about it, laughed it off and changed the subject. She kept him talking and fed him tiny bites of porridge and sips of tea throughout the morning. When he asked about the man in the next cubicle, Nora changed the subject again. The curtains on that cubicle were already drawn when she arrived. The man had been dead since morning. His family hadn't been as lucky in finding money for his medications.

By the time Shoni's mother and sister arrived for an afternoon visit, Shoni was no longer talking. They called out to him, "Shoni, how are you? How are you feeling?" But he responded with a blank stare and silence. Nora wondered if her husband had already spoken his last words to her.

The next morning when Nora was wiping Shoni's face, she let her fingers linger under his jaw, feeling for a pulse. It was barely there. When she tried to feed him, she found his jaws were locked. The nurse came and gave him a drip. Nora went home and never returned to the hospital,

not even when the nurses called with the news. The next time she saw her husband was at his funeral.

And she didn't cry when she saw his body in the coffin. Why should she? For one month, she had witnessed Shoni's deterioration. She had experienced his death as it was happening, as his body broke down and his spirit withered away. She had walked with him and watched him die.

Through it all, Nora was also watching her country crumble. Zimbabwe was also dying. The activist in her wanted to speak up, to say something, to scream for democracy, human rights, a decent standard of living. But the protests of just a few years back were no longer being tolerated here.

Things were bad in Zimbabwe, and Nora knew there was a better life across the border. In South Africa, there was food on the supermarket shelves. In South Africa, there were taxis on the street. In South Africa, there was money in the banks. And in South Africa, Nora would be free to scream to the world about the deteriorating situation at home.

And so, after saying goodbye to her husband in August 2003, Nora decided to say goodbye to her country as well. She had no reason left to stay.

The Crossing

Nora had 200 rand in her pocket, a backpack of clothes and one blanket. She didn't have her children. She didn't have her parents or siblings. She didn't have her husband. She didn't have any remaining sense of security or comfort in Zimbabwe. She had only memories of how her country once was – when the farmlands were verdant, when the banks had money, when food was abundant, when speech was free and life was easy.

And so, Nora was leaving, escaping, fleeing, moving on. She was determined to start a new life in South Africa. She wasn't quite sure what this new life would look like, but at least she'd be able to breathe easier across the border.

After her husband's funeral in August 2003, Nora spent several weeks cleaning up her old life in Zimbabwe. She emptied her house in Marondera, selling some of her furniture and dispersing the rest of her belongings among her parents and sisters. She paid the fees for her daughter's boarding school and made sure her son was safe and comfortable at her sister's house in Harare. She also processed their passports. Nora didn't know when she would see her children again, but she did all she could to make sure that when the time was right, George Kuda and Ashley Kundai would be able to join her in South Africa easily and legally.

Her own passage wouldn't be so easy or legal. For three years, Nora had been crossing into South Africa legally to sell Zimbabwean crafts. But during her last trip home, the South African government had changed the procedures, leaving Nora without a valid visa or enough cash to get a new one. This time, she would have to cross the border illegally.

She decided to check out Beitbridge first. A southern border town, Beitbridge lay just across the murky Limpopo River from Musina, South Africa. The Beit Bridge itself led travelers through an official border post and was popular among day migrants who made daily trips to Musina to stock up on commodities that were increasingly scarce in Zimbabwe. But the surrounding area was becoming known as a staging post for Zimbabweans so desperate to leave that they would pay the police on both sides to turn a blind eye while they waded across the Limpopo's crocodile-infested waters with their belongings held high above their heads.

It was November, summertime in southern Africa. The river was at its fullest height, too voluminous for Nora's slender frame to cross. Her sisters had been blessed with their mother's round face, thick frame and powerful limbs – the shape of a strong African mother. But Nora kept her slim and delicate features so long into adulthood that people were often shocked to learn she was a mother of two.

My mother could have done this, Nora thought as she stood on the river bank staring into the water and longing for what she knew was on the other side. She asked a police officer on patrol how much he would take to let her cross.

“200 rand.” The price was not open for discussion.

That was all the money Nora had. She would arrive penniless on the other side. Crossing at Beitbridge was out of the question. Nora caught a taxi back to Bulawayo and considered her other options. She would have to go through Botswana.

Zimbabweans didn't need a visa to enter Botswana, so Nora crossed over on a southwest-bound, 12-hour bus ride from Bulawayo to Gaborone without any problems.

As she had done on every bus trip since her childhood, Nora took a window seat. Dusk fell as she watched her homeland pass her by. Semi-arid farmlands, rows of *mopani* trees with their butterfly-shaped leaves and thin, flimsy seed pods, and the occasional wild buck in the distance. The vegetation was completely different than in Nora's native, lush Mashonaland region. But still, Zimbabwe was beautiful. As the bus lulled her to sleep, Nora tried hard to remember the breathtaking sights, willing her eyes to act as cameras capturing every last image of the country that made her.

The bus crossed the border at about 10 p.m., and when dawn broke, Nora rubbed her eyes awake and began taking in the new sights, paying particular attention to the signposts that announced the towns they were passing and the distances between them.

Once she was fully awake, Nora began thinking of what would come next. She needed money. What little remained in her pocket after paying for the bus ticket to Botswana was not enough to continue on to Johannesburg. She would have to stay and find work in Botswana. Nora had heard of Zimbabweans working odd jobs in Botswana for any cash they could get. It wouldn't take long for Nora to earn enough money to continue her journey, but she had to figure out her accommodations and how to find work.

A Zimbabwean couple about Nora's age were seated across the aisle and one row back from Nora on the bus. During the early leg of the trip, she had listened to them talk for quite some time about their regular trips to Botswana. She hadn't felt much like talking to them then, but now she could use their help.

"Excuse me," Nora said, as she shifted to the empty aisle seat. "You are going to Gaborone for work? Do you know where the Zimbabweans stay?"

The couple told Nora about a house in the suburb of Gaborone West whose owner charged Zimbabwean migrant laborers only a few pula a night for a corner of floor space to sleep on. She went straight there and sorted out her first few nights of accommodation: a spot in a room with nine other Zimbabweans. They slept head to toe, and in the mornings they set out to various neighborhoods to find work for the day.

Nora quickly learned the routine. They would frequent the black middle-class neighborhoods; those offered the best chances for a decent wage. They would pick a different area each day and wander through the streets knocking on the gates of any home with a shaggy hedge.

"Can we cut your hedge for you today?" they'd ask the owners. "Can we maintain your garden?" It was quite a step down from Nora's banking days and business aspirations.

If all the gardens looked well-groomed, all the hedges neatly trimmed, they would ask to do people's laundry. Some jobs would pay as much as 30 pula, others as little as 10. Nora took whatever she could get.

In two weeks, she managed to save 100 pula, about 120 rand. It was more than enough to take her to Johannesburg. She took a taxi from Gaborone to Tlokweng, a small town about 20 kilometers away. And 15 kilometers east of that town was an official border post. But Nora was more interested in the patch of road just outside the town that was lined with food shops, gas stations and street-side barbeque stands, and she was particularly interested in the small gravel lot that sat off to one side. That was the hitchhiking terminus, where trucks on the way to Johannesburg would pick up those who wanted to cross the border illegally as well as those crossing legally who couldn't afford the bus.

When Nora arrived, there were no trucks with engines running. There were only parked trucks, whose drivers were enjoying the *braai* and beer at the nearby shops. Nora stocked up on water and snacks and sat with her bags at the edge of the gravel lot. She was ready to hop on to the next truck that came through.

As she waited, she noticed one particular shop on the other side of the lot. It was selling Zimbabwean crafts and curios, the same carved wood giraffes and zebras that she used to sell to tourists in South Africa on her cross-border trading trips. The owners were packing up. *They must be going to South Africa too*, Nora thought. She walked over to the shop to talk to them.

"Nora! Is it you?" They were two boys in their early 20s. Nora had sold crafts alongside them often in South Africa. "What are you doing here? Are you selling in Botswana now too?"

"No, I'm not selling anymore," Nora explained. "I'm going to South Africa to stay. But I don't have a visa this time. And I've never used this border. I don't even know how to do it."

"It's OK, Nora. We will help you." The boys had visas, but they had seen plenty of others cross the border illegally. Nora felt her body relax just the slightest bit. The biggest challenge was still ahead, but at least she was now traveling with people she knew.

Together they began waving down passing trucks. The first two didn't stop, but the third did. A giant blue-and-pink double P logo adorned the sides. The truck was delivering goods for Pick 'n Pay, South Africa's largest supermarket chain, and was on its way straight to Johannesburg.

"Me, I don't have a visa. Will you take me to Johannesburg?" Nora asked the driver.

"I've got another one too who hasn't even got a passport," he said pointing to the cab of the truck, which was already carrying three other passengers. "I'll take you. I have enough room for all of you."

"How much?" Nora asked, praying that she would have enough.

"60 rand."

She paid the driver and climbed into the passenger seat while the boys joined the three other passengers in the back row of the truck's cab – the space usually used as the driver's sleeping area.

It was about 5 p.m. by the time they neared the border post. Some 500 meters before joining the queue of vehicles proceeding through the checkpoint, the driver pulled the truck to the side of

the road and stopped. The man without a passport scrambled out of the cab. Nora didn't know what to do.

“Leave your bag in the truck,” the driver told her. “Go with him. Quickly!”

Nora climbed out of the truck and followed the man, hoping he knew what he was doing.

“It's OK. I've been crossing here for six months. I know the way,” the man assured her. “Just follow me and do as I say.”

As the sky grew dark above them, the two walked away from the road until they could no longer see the truck. Now they were going through farmlands, and the man instructed Nora to walk low, to crouch down among the grass to keep hidden from any border officials positioned high in towers.

After about 30 minutes, they reached the fence – three flimsy rows of coiled barbed wire stretching through the farmlands. They crouched under a tree.

“We have to wait,” the man said. Between them and the fence was a path that soldiers patrolled at regular intervals. “But when I leave, you must stay here and watch how I cross. Keep your eyes on me. Cross over only when I signal you.”

When the next patrol came and went and the path was clear of soldiers, the man scurried low to the ground through the grass and then stood up and sprinted across the patrol path. When he got to the fence, he dropped to the ground, belly down, and carefully pulled his weight with his elbows, inching his way under the bottom-most rung of barbed wire. It didn't look easy or comfortable. But Nora was ready to follow him exactly. She didn't know this man well, but somehow, she trusted him. She had made it this far and was determined to get to the other side.

From the other side of the fence, the man stayed low and watched the path for a few more moments. Then he waved his hand high in the air twice quickly. It was Nora's signal to cross over. She did exactly what he did. The barbs grazed her back as she crawled under the fence, but she ignored the tiny stings and kept going until she met the man on the other side.

They scrambled through more farmland, following cattle paths and ducking behind trees until they came close to the main road. From where they were, they could see their Pick 'n Pay truck still on the Botswana side of the checkpoint. One hour had passed since they had left the truck. And they had moved faster than the queue of vehicles.

They huddled low next to a large tree from where they could see the road. They waited in silence. Nora tried to focus her mind on the moans of the cattle moving about on the farms behind them, the rumbling of the vehicles passing on the road in front of them, and the various bird calls coming from all directions. But panic started to creep in.

What if we are stopped on the way back to the truck? What if they ask for passports and visas? What if the truck is stopped later on? They will send me back to Zimbabwe. What will I do then? Will the CIO find me? Will I disappear? No, I will turn around and try again. That's what I will do.

Nora took some deep breaths and settled her thoughts. *I'm in South Africa*, she reminded herself. *I don't know what will happen now, but at least I've made it here.*

When they saw the truck approaching, Nora and the man with no passport ran to the road and quickly climbed into the cab. The truck rolled on into the night toward Johannesburg. The driver had become friends with the three men who crossed with him legally, and they continued their chatter about football and politics. The radio was tuned to the 8 o'clock evening news on the local South African station. Nora was too tired to pay attention. She leaned her forehead against the passenger side window and promptly fell asleep.

It was about 3 a.m. when the driver shook her awake.

“We have arrived,” he said. “Johannesburg.”

Nora looked out the window. They were parked in an empty Pick ‘n Pay lot, just in front of the loading dock. The other men had gathered their bags and were heading off in various directions.

“I have to take this truck into the garage. Do you have somewhere to go?”

“I'll go to my uncle's place in Soweto,” Nora told him. “But I won't find a taxi until morning.”

“OK, listen. I have a car over there. You can sleep in that car. I'll come and wake you in the morning.”

Nora was glad to have brought one blanket from her home. The next morning, she took a taxi to her uncle's house in the townships about 25 kilometers away.

John Vuma, Nora's mother's brother, had been in Johannesburg since the 1950s. He was now more South African than Zimbabwean. Nora had stayed with him during her cross-border trading trips. When she arrived this time, he welcomed her in the usual way. He didn't know that she had come a different way this time.

“Chengeto! You're back again! How long will you stay?”

“*Sekuru*,⁷ I'm not going back to Zimbabwe.”

Changing the Ways of the Diaspora

For two years, Nora lived under the grid in Johannesburg. Without legal status in South Africa, she couldn't get a job, and she knew the risk of deportation lay around every corner. The South African police were known to perform random ID checks in the streets and at public transportation hubs.

Undocumented immigrants ended up at the Lindela Repatriation Centre, on the outskirts of Johannesburg. It was a forbidding, prison-like structure surrounded by high concrete walls and barbed wire, from which stories of beatings, starvations and unlawful detentions emerged and rippled through the various immigrant communities. A stay at Lindela led to deportation. For Zimbabweans, that meant finding themselves on an intelligence or police list for being arrested, supporting the opposition party or in some way promoting real democracy. And it meant they'd have to face the consequences.

Nora learned to keep a low profile. She spent most of her time in her uncle's home. When she ventured out on occasion, she did all she could to go unnoticed as a foreigner. She adopted the South African penchant for casual dress, borrowing jeans and sneakers to wear instead of her more formal skirts and high heels. And on public transportation, she picked up the peculiar South African habit of offering up the cheerful Zulu greeting, "*Sanbonan!*", to a busful of strangers upon boarding. She also learned to remain silent for the rest of the ride until she became more fluent in the local languages. South Africans weren't accustomed to speaking English amongst each other as was the norm in Zimbabwe. And every time the bus neared a checkpoint, Nora prayed to pass through it without being asked to show ID. It worked.

The only regular trips she took in town were to try her luck at getting an appointment at the local refugee reception office. At first, she would go two or three times each week and join a queue that stretched a kilometer or more from the office gates. She started seeing the same people in the queue at every visit. They were from Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Pakistan and Burma. And they never seemed any closer to the entry. It seemed hopeless. Would she ever get inside that building?

The stress of it all estranged Nora from her family in Zimbabwe. She wanted to check on her children, but she was too ashamed to call them. She had nothing positive to report. No job, no status, no money and no idea when her luck would change.

Her visits to the refugee office became fewer and far between. They became more of a hobby, an excursion to pass the time, than an effort to get papers. Then in June 2004, the refugee reception officers decided to assign everyone in the queue a fixed appointment time for the first of three interviews required to become a legal refugee.

Nora's first appointment was seven months later in January 2005. At that interview, she had to prove she was from Zimbabwe. She described the colors of the Zimbabwean flag, listed the major cities and described the political parties. Then, Nora told her story:

"I'm seeking asylum because I'm fearing for my life. In Zimbabwe I was working with the ZCTU and the NCA. There were people who were looking for me at my house. You know how the

situation is in Zimbabwe, the way it comes in the newspapers. People are being victimized, and people disappear.”

Nora left the interview with a temporary asylum seeker’s permit, a photo ID that signified she was in the process of applying for asylum. It gave her legal status and even allowed her to work or study in South Africa. She had two more interviews scheduled, but with that temporary permit in hand, Nora could live more freely and become more vocal.

She went straight to the offices of the Concerned Citizens of Zimbabwe, an organization whose posters she had seen at bus stops for some time. She wanted to help. She was ready to be vocal again. They put her to work doing administrative tasks – managing e-mails, phone calls, keeping books – making use of strengths from her banking background. The work was unpaid, but it gave Nora entry into the systems of civic society in South Africa.

She also started talking about Zimbabwe to anyone who would listen, including the news media. Nora gave interviews to television and newspaper reporters in South Africa. She spoke about the harrowing plight of Zimbabweans in the country and those trying to escape. She promoted demonstrations planned in cooperation with the Congress of South African Trade Unions. And she used her real name every time.

Nora returned to the refugee office for her second interview in March. She brought a stack of newspaper clippings and video cassettes to submit to the Department of Home Affairs – evidence that her life would be in danger if she returned to Zimbabwe. Most of the materials were from South African outlets, but among them was one clipping from a Zimbabwean government-run newspaper identifying Nora as an outspoken activist in South Africa and claiming that she was recruiting people to overthrow the Zimbabwean government.

“Now the Zimbabwean government knows about me,” she explained. “There’s no way I can go back.”



“*CHINJA?*” Solomon “Sox” Chikowhero cried out from the podium.

“*MAITIRO!*” the crowd roared in response, as people held up their right hands, with fingers spread and open palms facing out – the MDC rally symbol that called for an open democracy. It was a visual contradiction to the ZANU-PF’s tightly closed fist in the air.

Sox put up his palm, flipped the chant around and called out, “*MAITIRO?*” And the crowd threw back a booming “*CHINJA!*”

Chinja maitiro – “change your way of doing things.” That was the message for the day. It was late March 2005. More than 500 Zimbabweans gathered in front of the Zimbabwean embassy in Pretoria to demonstrate. The parliamentary election in their home country was in a few days, but Zimbabweans abroad had no right to vote. So they staged a mock election in protest.

Sox Chikowhero fled Zimbabwe two years earlier after being arrested and tortured by Zimbabwean police at the infamous underground torture chambers in the Goromonzi police

station. A former MDC security officer, he remained an active MDC leader in South Africa. As he addressed the demonstrators from the podium, Nora surveyed the scene.

A mass of energized Zimbabweans were gathered neatly in front of the podium on the street in front of the embassy. They wore matching green t-shirts emblazoned with a strong condemnation of their situation with the words “A diaspora vote is a toasted vote” and the image of a paper ballot being burned to a crisp. They listened attentively to Sox and others spread their messages. They chanted in Shona and Ndebele. They sang new versions of old liberation songs, remade to reflect the newest struggles. They carried banners demanding a diaspora vote.

Throughout the morning, a stream of participants broke away from the podium area to file steadily through the makeshift polling station set up in a series of tents. They filled out ballot forms, dipped their fingers in purple ink and returned to the crowd. Exactly 500 votes were cast that day: 450 for MDC, 50 for ZANU-PF.

As she watched the demonstration unfold through the afternoon, Nora recognized the untapped potential among the Zimbabwean diaspora. These 500 participants were from the Johannesburg area alone. They were men and women of all ages. Some were prominent activists, others Nora had never seen before. Many were professionals – teachers, lawyers, journalists, nurses, doctors, engineers – or at least they had been in Zimbabwe. Others came to represent organizations they had formed in South Africa. There were youth groups, women’s groups, humanitarian groups, groups for political victims and torture victims.

Nora watched these groups mingle and share their various agendas and platforms with each other. It seemed as if some Zimbabweans had no idea the others existed in South Africa. The nurses didn’t know about the women’s group. The journalists didn’t know there was an organization providing assistance to torture victims. But Nora knew if they started to work together, to support each others’ causes and promote common agendas, the strength in their numbers could protect and define them as a community.

In the weeks leading up to the mock election, the organizers divided into various committees to plan the event. Nora was assigned to a committee on post-election activities, with four other people, including Daniel Molokele, a journalist and lawyer who had been a prominent student activist in Zimbabwe in the ‘90s. The committee discussed ideas to develop a more stable, cohesive Zimbabwean community in South Africa. They imagined their own schools and churches, their own medical facilities and cultural activities.

But they kept their discussions limited because there was no telling how many Zimbabweans would return home after the election. The mood at the demonstration was jovial and optimistic. Since the Zimbabwean government agreed to the electoral principles of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 2004, people were hopeful that the political climate, which had been growing increasingly tense and polarized since 2000, would at least begin to reverse its course. Of the House of Assembly’s 150 seats, 120 were up for election. With SADC electoral principles guiding the process this time, people were expecting MDC to win the majority of those seats. And when that happened, they planned to go home.

As she rode back to Johannesburg with a busful of her countrymates later that afternoon, Nora couldn’t shake the questions that had overwhelmed her mind during the demonstration. *What*

if there was a way to connect all the groups of Zimbabweans in South Africa? What if we all started working together? What could we accomplish?

The parliamentary elections took place on March 31. Five days later, the results were announced. President Mugabe’s ruling ZANU-PF party won with an even larger majority over MDC than in the previous election five years prior – 78 to 41, with one independent. The results gave ZANU-PF a two-thirds majority in the legislature, allowing the government to change the constitution.

In Zimbabwe, MDC denounced “the sham elections,” claiming it had been marked by massive electoral fraud. The opposition alleged voters had been threatened with starvation or violence if they failed to support ZANU-PF. Furthermore, ZANU-PF candidates had taken control of grain stocks and sold maize only to those who had attended ZANU-PF rallies and pledged electoral support. The MDC claimed it would have won 90 seats if the vote had been honest.

“The elections cannot be judged to be free and fair,” an MDC statement said. “The distorted nature of the pre-election playing field and the failure to address core democratic deficits precluded a free and fair election.”

In South Africa, a grim realization set in among Zimbabweans. They weren’t going home any time soon. Those who had hoped to wait it out in South Africa would have to start looking for jobs.

Nora decided to move forward with her ideas to unite the diaspora community. The first step would be to create an umbrella organization to connect and network the existing groups of Zimbabweans and to share the resources appropriately. She sold the idea to a few other interested activists, and the group began planning the establishment of the Zimbabwe Civil Society Organization (CSO) Forum, with Nora as the national coordinator, Daniel Molokele as the director and Sox Chikowhero as the chairman.



The title to the house in Marondera was Nora’s most prized document. The single sheet of paper, adorned at the top with the official seal of the Zimbabwean government, was testimony to her proudest accomplishment. Dated May 1994, the title told of the transfer of ownership of a three-bedroom family bungalow with a small garden in Marondera, Mashonaland East, Zimbabwe, to Nora Chengeto Tapiwa, date of birth: September 2, 1967. Five years into her banking career, Nora had purchased her own home at the age of 27. The title gave her a sense of identity. Nora had become a young professional and a home owner.

When she fled Zimbabwe in 2003, Nora wrapped the title securely in two envelopes and tucked it away in the bottom of the single backpack she took with her when she crossed the border. She had to leave the house behind, but having the document would remind her of what she had once achieved and what she was capable of achieving again.

In June 2005, Nora unwrapped the title, considered the simple, official language that had once made her feel so independent and powerful, and wondered what any of it meant anymore. Her

sister had just phoned from Zimbabwe with news that her house had been vandalized. The windows were shattered, the doors busted in and the walls left with holes and cracks.

It was happening in urban areas all over the country. The Zimbabwean government had ordered police to begin forcibly clearing slum areas, claiming to crack down on illegal housing and criminal activities. Bulldozers were demolishing entire structures. Houses were being burned to the ground. Mugabe described it as “an urban renewal campaign.” The government dubbed the activities Operation Restore Order. The rest of the country called it Operation *Murambatsvina* – Operation Drive Out Rubbish.

In Zimbabwe, the ZANU-PF was always carrying out some sort of “operation.” If people seemed too wealthy, the ruling party would initiate Operation *Marivaywanakupi* – Operation Where Did You Get Money? Just after elections, it would be Operation *Wakavoterapapi* – Operation Who Did You Vote For? *Murambatsvina* was the latest. The purported mission was different, but the tactics and underlying goals were the same – intimidate, frighten, silence, control.

“They are targeting my house,” Nora explained at her third and final interview at the refugee reception office. She showed the officer her once treasured title. “This Operation *Murambatsvina*, it’s not about illegal dwellings. Because, you see, I own my house. They rigged the election, and now they are targeting those who supported the opposition.”

Nora and the other activists knew what was really happening. The government was punishing the urban poor for voting for MDC during the March parliamentary elections. The cities were traditionally full of MDC supporters, and the government was succeeding in driving out large segments of the urban population, making them homeless or sending them back to remote rural locations where the ZANU-PF could more easily control opposition sentiments. The police, military and youth militias were destroying livelihoods, instilling fear and displacing people by the hundreds of thousands.

“I own my home there in Marondera, but it doesn’t matter anymore,” Nora told the refugee reception officer. “I can’t live there anymore.”

It was enough to make her case. Nora walked out of that interview with a new most cherished document – a red card adorned with an embossed golden seal of the South African government. When she got home, she packed away her old house title and with it any lasting notions of comfort, belonging and security. The red card gave her a new identity that felt quite the opposite. Nora had become an official refugee.



“There is no war in Zimbabwe. That’s what they are telling us. They are turning us away. The Congolese, the Somalis, they can be refugees. But we are not supposed to be refugees because there is no war in Zimbabwe.”

Three Zimbabweans sat in Nora’s office and described their common troubles at the refugee reception office. One of the first endeavors of the newly established Zimbabwe CSO Forum was to encourage Zimbabweans in South Africa to organize as groups according to their professional skills. After the election, it became clear that returning to Zimbabwe was no longer an option.

Zimbabweans now had to focus on developing their professional opportunities in South Africa. The first step to doing that was to band together as journalists, lawyers, doctors and engineers. The three in Nora's office – the first to have come to her for assistance – represented the teachers' organization.

They spoke to Nora about why they had left Zimbabwe. The ZANU-PF had been targeting teachers in particular since the 2002 presidential elections, accusing them of promoting MDC agendas in the classroom and teaching students in rural areas about democracy. Operation Murambatsvina had sent displaced Zimbabweans over the border *en masse*, and many of them were teachers who had long been deprived a living wage.

But their training, skills and experience meant little in South Africa. Like many other Zimbabweans, they were doubted by refugee reception officers, or the police stopped them on the street and tore up their temporary asylum seekers permits, or they were sent to Lindela and deported. In each case, they all heard those words that made them cringe: "There is no war in Zimbabwe."

To further salt their wounds, South African officials went so far as to laud Mugabe for his ongoing land seizures and evictions of white farmers. Mugabe was rightfully and properly redressing the colonial legacy, they said.

There was no war in Zimbabwe, but there was a crisis. The land seizures led to job losses and food shortages. The ruling party was maintaining its power by violent intimidation and brutality. People were dying, being displaced or going hungry. Any Zimbabwean who fled was assumed to be an MDC supporter. If they went back, their lives would be at risk.

The teachers just wanted to teach and earn a decent salary. But even those who did get refugee status were having trouble because the South African Department of Education did not recognize their Zimbabwean teaching diplomas as proper credentials equal to the South African teaching degree. It didn't seem to matter that Zimbabwe's educational system was modeled on Britain's, or that the teacher qualifications were considered excellent by education experts at foreign universities, or that the country had long held a literacy rate of more than 90 percent, among the highest in Africa.

"Nora, please help us arrange a meeting with the Department of Education," the teachers told Nora in her office. "We want to tell them to accept us into their system. Look here, they are planning to bring teachers from India. But we are teachers, and we are already here."

They showed Nora a news article from the previous day. It highlighted the post-apartheid drop in the quality of math and science education in the South African school system. It also mentioned the government's plans to fill the gap by importing 1,000 teachers from India.

Nora phoned the Department of Education and arranged a meeting with the director general, Duncan Hindle. On the day of the meeting, she set off for Pretoria with the chairman, vice chairman and secretary of the teachers' organization.

The teachers explained their proposal. It was silly to pay for teachers to come from as far away as India when there were already several hundred skilled teachers in the country eking out

livings as restaurant workers or security guards. Some did manage to find teaching positions at inner-city private schools in Johannesburg, but without legal documents they were often exploited as vulnerable cheap labor. If they questioned their meager pay, they were swiftly replaced with other undocumented teachers. The teachers implored the department to help them get legal status and accept them into the government school system.

They also spoke about the few of those private schools in which almost all the teachers were Zimbabwean. Parents from the townships were sending their children on two buses to attend those schools. The community had already accepted Zimbabwean teachers.

“They have faith in us,” the teachers told the director general. “You should too.”

Hindle listened attentively, and he mostly agreed with the teachers. It was a good idea. He was a former teacher himself and had spent time teaching in Rhodesia earlier in his career. He had no doubt that the Zimbabwean teachers were well qualified and could help fill South Africa’s education gaps. But until this meeting, he had no idea there were so many skilled Zimbabwean teachers who were in South Africa but unable to work. He also knew public school enrollment rates had been declining, but he never realized parents were sending their children to be taught by Zimbabweans in private schools.

He thanked Nora and the teachers for bringing the issue to his attention and suggested a follow-up meeting one month later. He needed time to discuss the issues with the Department of Home Affairs and others in the education department.

For the next six months, the Zimbabwean teachers returned to Pretoria for subsequent meetings with Hindle. In October 2006, the South African government formally announced that it was going to employ Zimbabwean math and science teachers in its public schools.

Nora was elated when she read about the decision in the newspaper. She knew how hard it was to be a refugee. She knew the importance of feeling accepted and appreciated. And now she knew that her efforts and her organization had played a role in helping hundreds of Zimbabweans have a better life in South Africa.

Foreigners

The television screen flickered with images that would have been unthinkable if not for the fact that Nora's homeland across the border had been rife with unthinkable scenes for several years. But now, what Nora was watching on television just seemed absurd. She tried to understand what she was looking at.

Mobs of black South African men were parading through the township streets, armed with clubs, machetes and torches. They were angry, screaming and chanting, their eyes burning with pure hatred. A young man waved a sharpened wooden stake at the camera and proclaimed, "If I see a foreigner here, I will kill him. I will stab him in the face."

A man cowered on the ground, protecting his face, while four others stood over him slamming him repeatedly with heavy sticks, stones and the soles of their boots. Riot police shot rubber bullets at the crowds trying to quell the chaos. Houses burned, and so did people. A man in flames crawled in anguish on his hands and knees while the mob stood in the street and watched. More than 20 people had died, hundreds more were injured, and the numbers continued to rise.

The phone rang. It was the secretary from the Johannesburg Mayor's Office.

"Nora, are you safe?"

"Yes, I am home with my kids. We're safe. I'm just watching these things on the news now."

The violence had started over the weekend in Johannesburg's Alexandra Township, when poor locals started attacking migrants from Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. They claimed foreigners were taking their jobs and taking their women, too. For four days, the riots continued and spread to other shantytowns and squatter camps, but there was no sign of any hostilities in Nora's white-collar suburb of Elsburg. These clashes were between the poorest of the poor.

"Nora, we need your help in Alexandra," the secretary implored. Hundreds of Zimbabweans had taken refuge at the police station. Local authorities wanted to offer them food and medical assistance, but the Zimbabweans were refusing to cooperate, fearing deportation if they gave the police their real names. "Please, Nora, can you come and talk to your people?"

It was late May 2008. In the three years since becoming a legal refugee in South Africa, Nora kept busy as an organizer and activist for Zimbabwean concerns and continued to develop the network of Zimbabwean organizations in South Africa. In 2007, she had organized an international diaspora conference, which was attended by more than 200 delegates including Zimbabwean activists from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan and New Zealand. The conference resulted in the establishment of six new chapters of Nora's organization, the Zimbabwe CSO Forum, in regions around the world and consequently a new name: Global Zimbabwe Forum. Nora continued to give media interviews on Zimbabwe and refugee issues. And in early 2008, the Johannesburg city government invited her to be a representative on the mayor's Migrant Desk, a working group of leaders from various communities in Johannesburg.

Now, the mayor's office needed Nora's help both in assisting the Zimbabwean victims and in convincing them to register as asylum seekers. They sent a car to pick her up on Wednesday

morning and take her to the Alexandra police station. When she arrived, she met Wandile, the mayor's Migrant Desk manager, who looked weary from concern and lack of sleep.

“You know, Nora, we are having problems,” he explained. “People from Zimbabwe, we want to write them down so that we'll know how many people we've got, so that we can get food and all the assistance. But they are afraid. They're saying, 'If we give you our names, you're going to deport us.' Please, can you talk to them?”

Mozambicans had taken refuge there too, but within a few days, their embassy officials had arranged their transport to other towns or back to Mozambique. Only the Zimbabweans were left unassisted.

Wandile took Nora to a large enclosed structure – a warehouse of sorts – adjacent to the police station's parking lot. Inside, at least 100 people huddled in small groups scattered about the warehouse floor. They were old and young, individuals and families. Most had no more than one or two bags of belongings – whatever they could grab before their homes were vandalized or burned down. Others had fled at the insistence of their South African landlords, who feared for their own lives because they were renting to foreigners. The Zimbabweans had been at the police station for almost four days. But the station was not equipped to shelter that many people. There was no food; there were no beds or bathing facilities.

“There will be more this evening,” Wandile said, with a hopeless sigh. “Many people are going to work from here. They will come back here to sleep.”

Nora continued to survey the scene as she thought about what she could do to help. In one corner, a man with a bloody gash in his head sat with a blank stare while his two friends periodically dabbed at his wound with a torn T-shirt. “We want to get him medical assistance, but he is refusing,” Wandile said.

Against the opposite wall, a woman cradled a baby in each arm and sang a soft lullaby as she rocked gently back and forth. The babies wailed, each piercing cry sounding out on behalf of the fear, panic and discomfort of everyone in that warehouse. “They are 3 months old,” Wandile told Nora. “Twins. They're hungry. They shouldn't be staying here in a police station. Please, Nora, talk to them. They will trust you.”

Nora took a deep breath and began making her way around the warehouse. She went first to the man with the open wound on his head. She told him who she was – Nora Tapiwa, national coordinator for Global Zimbabwe Forum, a Zimbabwean activist, a friend – and she asked about his injury.

“I don't even know what happened,” the man told Nora. He was dazed, still in shock and wincing in pain. “They came in the night. I was sleeping. It was a group of youth in the township. I don't know how many. They had knives and sticks. Three of us, we stay together in a small house. They kicked the door and dragged us out. They were saying all foreigners must go. They took everything from my house, even my new blankets. I have nothing left. I don't know who hit me. I don't even know what happened.”

Nora left the man to rest and moved to the next group of men, who told her they worked night shifts as security guards. They had been away from their homes when the attacks started. When they returned in the early morning, they found their shacks destroyed or burned, their belongings looted and their neighbors gone. They came to the police station because they had nowhere else to go.

Nora spent three days at the Alexandra police station. At night she slept on chairs in the board room. During the day, she continued to speak with the Zimbabweans who had been attacked. They were not the type of Zimbabweans with whom Nora typically worked. They were not activists, businessmen or affluent. These Zimbabweans worked in construction, in restaurants and as maids. They lived in flimsy shacks in the townships. Many were illegal and undocumented.

As she listened to their stories, Nora also shared her own. She told them how she became a documented asylum seeker and eventually a legal refugee. She told them how she had helped others stay in the country. Since 2005, Nora had been making weekly visits to the Lindela Repatriation Centre, assisting with procedures to free wrongly detained Zimbabweans, whose family members had come to her for help. From those efforts and from her increased involvement with the Zimbabwean activist community, Nora had become well-versed in the specifics of South Africa's immigration and asylum laws and regulations. She told the others what she knew and asked them to trust her.

For three days at the Alexandra police station, Nora engaged in what she had come to know and love best: talking. She talked to her fellow Zimbabweans, encouraging them to cooperate with the local authorities and insisting that the police simply wanted to help them and would not deport them. She talked to the authorities too, and conveyed their message to the people: Those who were illegal would immediately be processed for temporary asylum seekers permits. As she talked, Nora moved around the warehouse with a clipboard registering each person's name, legal status and most pressing needs. Every evening, the Red Cross and local churches delivered aid parcels – boxes with bread, tins of beans and beef, diapers for the babies, blankets – which Nora helped distribute as she collected people's information.

On the second day, the local authorities convened a meeting. Political and government representatives, humanitarian workers and community leaders gathered in the police station's boardroom to make sense of what had happened and why. Nora took a spot at the back of the crowded room and listened as the group discussed a variety of possible causes. Most agreed that the violence was about jobs; South Africans in the townships were tired of being poor and blamed the foreigners for taking their jobs. There was also finger pointing among local representatives of South Africa's political parties. The Inkatha Freedom Party alleged that corrupt African National Congress counselors in Alexandra had rented or sold housing subsidized specifically for South Africans to foreigners. The attacks, they said, started when angry South Africans took it upon themselves to reclaim their rightful homes. South Africans were frustrated with their own situation: poverty, lack of education, corruption. They had little opportunity to address their government with their concerns. So they attacked the foreigners instead.

Nora left the Alexandra police station on Friday afternoon. Her body dragged with exhaustion. Her mind swam in a jumble of stories, theories, sights and sounds from the previous three days. And her spirit floated amidst sadness and helplessness. She desperately wanted to help her fellow Zimbabweans have a better life in South Africa. But how?

It was true that foreigners were taking jobs. But Nora couldn't accept this as a cause for the xenophobic violence. The jobs in question were those that South Africans wouldn't or couldn't do. The Zimbabweans in the township worked either at menial, labor-intensive jobs, which they found each day by begging door to door, or they worked in restaurants and hotels, where their English skills provided better customer service to visiting tourists. And Nora knew Zimbabweans were hard-working people. They had no government to support them; they worked to survive. But the roots of the problems for Zimbabweans felt deeper to Nora. She wanted to get them out of the townships, to free them from the mercy of exploitative employers, corrupt landlords and angry mobs.

A few months prior, Nora had established the Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Chamber (ZDDC) as an economic development branch of the Global Zimbabwe Forum. The organization was still in its infancy, but after the xenophobic attacks of May 2008, Nora knew what its mission would be. Now more than ever, there was a pressing need to economically empower Zimbabweans in the diaspora. She wanted to encourage Zimbabweans to start their own businesses and to train them in the necessary skills. She wanted them to develop their own income and perhaps even contribute to the reconstruction of their own country.

From her office in Johannesburg, Nora spent the next two weeks working with the city government and the Red Cross, coordinating volunteers to distribute humanitarian aid to affected Zimbabweans around the region. As the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees stepped in and set up camps for the displaced, Nora focused her attention on shaping her vision for ZDDC and for the future of the Zimbabwean diaspora.

When Things are in Order

If I die today, where will I be buried? Here in South Africa? Back home in Zimbabwe? What about my kids? If I'm buried in Zimbabwe, and my kids go there, how will they come back? They are refugees. They don't have passports. Who will help them come back? If I'm buried here, what about my parents? They are in Zimbabwe. How will they see me? How can I die? I've never planned my death. I never told people where to bury me. And my work, my organization, nobody knows what I'm doing. Who will continue? No, God. It's not my time. I'm still a refugee. I cannot die now. I'm an orderly person. I want to die when things are in order. Not now. Not like this ...

Nearly two weeks had passed since Nora checked in to the hospital. For months, she had been traveling around South Africa, meeting Zimbabweans, organizing meetings, attending media events, supporting her son and daughter and nursing her sister, who was sick with cervical cancer. That was Nora's style; she liked to keep herself busy. But this time, the stress got the best of her. She felt dizzy and collapsed. Then she collapsed again. Then she was hospitalized.

Nora needed a blood transfusion. It took the doctors about seven days to find a match. And even then, only two of the four pints they ordered had arrived. It was just enough to get started. The doctors put the blood in Nora's left arm, hoping to rejuvenate her energy, her strength and her stamina.

But the blood had different plans for Nora. Her left arm grew large and hot. It was septic, no longer functional. It had swelled to three times its size and turned a sickly green-gray color, like algae. The doctors ordered more blood, put a drip in Nora's other arm and moved her from the medical ward to the surgical ward.

A few more days passed, and still no blood. Nora was weak. She tried to lift her head, but she felt like a baby, struggling to balance the weight of her head on her neck and shoulders. The nurses brought some cereal. Nora took two bites but could barely manage the strength to open her mouth. She couldn't eat.

What's happening to me?

Nora's hemoglobin was low. That's what they told her. And she knew what it meant. Her mother was a nurse; she had grown up in a hospital compound.

It means my brain is no longer receiving oxygen. So ... I'm dying. And the blood hasn't come. My hemoglobin level is getting lower and lower. I need more blood.

Nora spent much of that day in a foggy sleep, too weak to hold her eyes open or eat anything. She started to wake in the evening, only to feel a trickle of warmth run down her legs. She had soiled herself. She pressed the call button. The nurse cleaned her up and brought her a bedpan.

What's happening to me? My body is no longer functioning. My brain is not instructing my nervous system. I'm dying.

Nora's arm was throbbing now, pulsating in pain, ready to explode. And hot, her arm was so hot. Her arm, her feet, her head, everything was burning. Nora was on fire but too weak to scream out in pain.

The phone rang. It was her sister.

“Pray for me,” Nora told her. “I don’t know what I’m feeling. I don’t know what’s happening to me. I’m not OK.”

And Nora prayed for herself.

Oh, God. Can you give me blood? Ezekiel asked for seven years, and you gave him 14. Can you just give me blood?

And Nora slipped into darkness.

I don’t know where I am. I hear a voice saying, “these are your fathers,” and I see a row of old men. I’m calling to them, but nobody is responding. Now I’m in another town, at the home of Jay Jay. He died in 2007. I see his sister there in the house. Can’t you open the gate for me? She’s ignoring me too. Now, there is a big tree near, and I see Shoni’s late uncle from his mother’s side. Was his name Ed? He’s blocking my way. He’s kneeling, asking me to pray with him.

I’m awake! Ah, I’m in the hospital. But I’m seeing Nora there. I can see that I’m floating. This white florescent thing. I’m floating. I’m in the hospital, but I’m not on the bed. I’m floating above. I’m lying in the hospital, but I’m seeing Nora above. So white. Now I can see infrastructure, basements, cars, factories, industrialization. But ah, what is this voice? What is it saying? It’s saying, ‘Don’t go there. That area is reserved for people of Zimbabwe.’

Nora woke up in her hospital bed drenched in a pool of sweat. She didn’t know how long she had been gone. She couldn’t tell if what she saw was a dream or something more. As she tried to sit up in bed, the nurse came rushing into the room.

“You’re awake! Your blood is here.”

“Blood?” Nora asked in a faint whisper. “What time is it?”

“It’s 3 a.m.”

It couldn’t have been a dream. In that hospital, patients never received any medications or treatments after 8 p.m. The blood had arrived at 8 p.m., and the nurses had tried to shake Nora awake. But she was unconscious. They had been monitoring her, and when she awoke, they quickly administered the new blood.

This time, it worked. The next day, like magic, the swelling in her arm went down, and the pain went away. Nora regained control of her body, her appetite came back, and she was jubilant and healthy when people came to visit her.

Two days later, Nora went home. She went to the home she shared with her son and daughter. In a house that had electricity and water. In a town where the shops had food. In a country where she could speak out on behalf of her country and its citizens.

No, God. I’m still a refugee. I cannot die now.

A CONVERSATION WITH NORA CHENGETO TAPIWA

The following is an edited compilation of an interview conducted by IPJ Program Officer Jennifer Freeman on Oct. 19, 2010, in the Peace & Justice Theatre of the IPJ, and select interviews conducted by Sofia Javed between Sept. 13 and Nov. 5, 2010.

Q: After a violent liberation struggle, Zimbabwe gained its independence and held its first elections in 1980. What do you remember about the mood in Zimbabwe at that time and the aftermath of those elections?

A: Everyone was excited because the black people, it was their first time to cast a vote. But also people didn't like war. Many people lost their children. Many people lost property. There are some people who went to war and never came back. Nobody knew what happened to them. So people never wanted to re-experience those four years again. The ZANU-PF were saying, "If we don't win this election, we'll go back to war." But people didn't want that because that war was also painful for the ordinary person. The liberation, the guerillas, were being supported by the ordinary citizens.

So people were voting to not go back to war. They just said, "Let's put our own government in power." But they didn't know about human rights. They didn't know that some things were going to be robbed of them. And from 1980 to about 1985, people never questioned what the government was doing because they were so jovial. We were in a honeymoon. In a marriage, when you are in a honeymoon, you don't know that your husband is a drunkard. He can abuse you. He can do that. People were in a honeymoon. Everything was OK for the first five years. And that was the time when I was in high school. I didn't know much about all these things.

But in 1985, things started to change. We would hear the sentiments – although I was in high school and I didn't really understanding what was happening. There was this Matabeleland Massacre, which happened in 1983, whereby more than 10,000 people were killed by the Fifth Brigade Army, which was trained by the North Koreans. They were saying that they were squashing dissidents who wanted to overthrow the government. So after we had witnessed Mozambique in their civil war, and Angola with Jonas Savimbi, people in Zimbabwe didn't want to go into another war. So they thought the soldiers were crushing the dissidents. But at the end of the day, we realized that many innocent souls were crushed.

When I became an activist, I then realized that it was not about the dissidents. It was about squashing the opposition voters. It was a strategy by Mugabe that for the next elections in 1985, he wanted to squash the voter registration in Matabeleland, because they had voted for Joshua Nkomo, the leader of ZAPU.

Q: As a banker, what was your experience when the economy started to decline in Zimbabwe?

A: There was a time when the liberation war veterans were given money. That money was not budgeted. Statistics say that there were about 50,000 war veterans who were given 50,000 dollars each. And we ran short of hard cash at the banks, so the country just had to print money. Printing money fuels inflation. That was the start of the runaway inflation in Zimbabwe, in 1997.

The Zimdollar fell on November 14, 1997. It was a Friday. We call it Black Friday. I was working in the foreign exchange department. And the rest is history. It was very stressful because the government forced us to liquidate foreign accounts for customers without their consents. And the following day, a Saturday, when the customers saw that it was favorable for them to liquidate their foreign currency account, they came to the bank, and we had to greet them. What we had done was not correct.

They would say, “Who put this money in my account?” And they would just be told to go to the foreign department. And then they would come to me. I would give them the duplicate deposit slip, and say, “You know, we had to convert your U.S. dollar account or your pound account or your rand account yesterday. This is your copy of the deposit slip.” And then when the client looks at the copied deposit slip and the current exchange rate on that particular day, it was so different. And they said, “How come it changed at this stupid rate instead of changing at this favorable rate?” So we had to explain now the policies of the government at that level, whereby you didn’t have any choice because the government was saying, “If you don’t do that, the bank will lose its license.” If I didn’t do that, I would lose my job.

Q: How did the economic downfall affect the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans?

A: People in Zimbabwe used to live pretty. I don’t want to lie: We used to live pretty. But it’s something which just happened; people just lost all the basic commodities overnight, and people were panicking. They were not used to hardships. Things were just so good for them. You were having breakfast with egg and bacon and sausage, and all of a sudden you cannot even have sugar. So it was just so traumatic for the people on the economic side.

Q: What is the plight of a Zimbabwean refugee in South Africa?

A: To be a refugee, it’s not by choice. No one ever chooses to be a refugee. It’s a very difficult situation because there are so many challenges which you face: separation from family, adapting to new cultures and languages and the environment. And you always have a sense of not belonging wherever you go.

“To be a refugee, it’s not by choice. ... It’s a very difficult situation because there are so many challenges which you face And you always have a sense of not belonging wherever you go.”

I came from Zimbabwe without knowing any one of the South African vernacular languages. But the people there in South Africa, 70 percent of them, they communicate in their vernacular. So you really need to work on adapting to the language. And also the environment in South Africa, they don’t have refugee camps, they don’t have assistance for refugees. They just give you documentation, and you are on your own. You just compete with South African people. So it’s a very difficult situation for a refugee from Zimbabwe, especially in South Africa.

The laws of South Africa, I say they are not very friendly to the refugee community – any refugees, not only Zimbabweans. That’s why they ended up having these xenophobic attacks because the normal South African person is competing for the same menial job with a refugee. And also some companies, they don’t want to employ refugees because your permit will have to be renewed every two years. They want somebody who is a permanent citizen. So it’s a very difficult position for refugees.

Q: How did you bring Zimbabwean refugee groups together in South Africa? What common cause did you find among them?

A: After the elections in 2005, I lobbied with other leaders of various organizations, saying that if we can come under an umbrella it will be easier because people do different roles. Some do humanitarian, some do advocacy and some provide counseling services. So all those other groups, I had to think and sell the idea to people. We were going through the Internet. That was my main form of communication, just sending out e-mails – “Can we have this meeting?” – until we managed to have the initial meeting which we did in June 2005. And to my surprise, according to the attendance register, 11 different organizations participated.

So in my role as South Africa national coordinator, I don’t deal with individuals. I deal with organizations. If a Zimbabwean comes to my office, first and foremost, I will ask them their interest. We have now organized even business people. We have organized professionals. So I ask them what is their field so that I will refer them to the correct organization. If they are lawyers, I will say, “Oh, we’ve got the organization for the lawyers. This is the phone number of the chairperson for the lawyers. This is their e-mail address. Those are your people.”

So we are still encouraging people to be in their respective groups. Not many people are activists. Not many people like to do politics. Not many people can be humanitarians. We have our own different capabilities. But normally, they would come to my office, and they’d say, “No, Nora, I’ve got nothing to do with politics.” And I’d say, “Oh, but you are here because of the politicians who made laws which were not favorable to you. So some way, somehow, politics affects you.”

Q: What will be the Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Chamber’s role in creating a better future for Zimbabwe?

A: My ideal Zimbabwe is the one where every person has access to basic things, and whereby everyone is economically empowered. With the struggle in Zimbabwe, I always tell people that it was not a political struggle. It was an economical struggle which was turned political during my days at the ZCTU [Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions]. The workers were challenged to form their own party. So it was an economic thing. So as long as the ordinary citizen is not economically empowered, we will never have democracy because it’s about the haves and the have-nots.

Through the Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Chamber, we realized that civic society was doing something halfway through. We need to take it further, so we called it civic society engineering development. It must go beyond advocacy and lobbying. It must also go into empowerment by economic development.

Q: How does Zimbabwe today compare with the country you remember from your childhood?

A: The things which were done by ZANU-PF – coercing people to do things– are the ones which they are still doing now, things which were done when I was 12 years old. Now I’m 43 years old, the same things are being done. So what did people fight for if we are in the same realm? So there’s no peace in real terms. It was only a change of power, a change of people who were running the government. My mother used to say, “Governments will never change. It’s the people who come to eat the money who will change.” So it’s something which I’ve realized.

Were liberation wars necessary or not? The late Ian Smith said to Robert Mugabe something like, “Oh, I didn’t know you just wanted to have power so that you change the street names. I would have changed the street names.” Because that was so paramount to them, to change the street names and all the names of the towns. He could see that things were not going well for the new government. There was no balance of power before between black and white, but the ordinary citizen never lacked compared to the way they are lacking now. So are we liberated, or not?

Q: There is now a Government of National Unity (GNU) in Zimbabwe. And some believe it has created some sort of peace between Mugabe and his ruling party and Morgan Tsvangirai and the other opposition forces in Zimbabwe. Yet Mugabe is still in power. How do you see the future of your country with this Government of National Unity?

A: When the GNU happened, our press statement said that we “cautiously acknowledge” them. The country was so polarized that everything was at a standstill. So it was a window of opportunity. If people really want to engage, they must use this platform to engage with everyone, with all stakeholders, not only two political warring parties. That’s what we really called for. It’s not an issue of ZANU-PF and MDC [Movement for Democratic Change], or Mugabe and Tsvangirai. It’s a national issue. So it’s an opportunity for people to think outside that box and engage everyone else, not just to take citizens as doormats.

But we were not consulted as citizens. We were not asked if we want this partnership or not. We used to challenge the mediators of the South African government, saying, “We are here in South Africa. We don’t even know about the outcome of these negotiations. Instead of us knowing what is happening, we only hear these things from the media. Why are you sidelining us?”

South Africa had its own selfish motives to push us into that GNU. It had more to do with peace in the region and the World Cup than solving the Zimbabwe problem. They were fearing an anarchy in Zimbabwe would dent the prospects of the World Cup. And we actually went to the South African government and argued with them that, “You cannot force these things on the Zimbabwean people because it’s not about the two warring political parties. It’s also about the Zimbabwean citizens.”

Unfortunately, as of now, that system is breaking down. When I go back to South Africa, there are going to be more Zimbabweans than when I left.

BEST PRACTICES IN PEACEBUILDING

GLOBAL ZIMBABWE FORUM (GZF)

ACTIVITY <i>What?</i>	DESCRIPTION <i>How?</i>	PURPOSE <i>Why?</i>
Advocacy and lobbying	<p>GZF executive committee members, along with other community stakeholders, meet with the South African government's Office of International Affairs two to four times a year.</p> <p>GZF writes petitions to the South African Development Community (SADC) to promote certain actions on Zimbabwe issues.</p>	<p>GZF aims to promote governmental action on issues concerning Zimbabwean refugees and migrants in South Africa.</p> <p>GZF hopes to influence the SADC secretariat on their involvement with the Zimbabwean government.</p>
Mobilization	GZF facilitates monthly public forums for Zimbabweans in South Africa.	Gathering Zimbabweans from different areas and sectors allows GZF to hear and collect the views and ideas of the community at large, to celebrate national holidays and major events and to share GZF's mission and visions.
Media outreach	GZF members attend media briefings on all issues involving Zimbabwe or migrants in South Africa. The organization issues regular press statements expressing the opinions of the Zimbabwean diaspora on national and international events.	Regular contact and participation with media agencies ensures that the voices of the Zimbabwean diaspora are heard.

ACTIVITY <i>What?</i>	DESCRIPTION <i>How?</i>	PURPOSE <i>Why?</i>
Policy drafting	GZF executive committee members drafted a diaspora policy for inclusion in Zimbabwe's next draft constitution. They solicited comments and suggestions from GZF regional members and sent the draft to the prime minister's office in Zimbabwe.	Acknowledgement of the diaspora in the constitution of Zimbabwe is the first step to mobilizing diaspora contributions in the development and reconstruction of Zimbabwe.
Referrals for services/assistance	The GZF office in Johannesburg serves as a referral point for newly arrived Zimbabwean refugees or migrants. Nora meets them and refers them to other organizations that can offer needed services, such as trauma counseling, humanitarian aid or legal assistance.	GZF acts as an umbrella agency that maintains networks with all other Zimbabwean organizations in South Africa to offer Zimbabwean refugees or migrants as much assistance as possible.
Volunteer coordination	In the immediate aftermath of the 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa, GZF members mobilized groups of volunteers to assist the Red Cross in distribution of food and humanitarian aid to victims of the attacks.	With no support or assistance from the Zimbabwean government, GZF works with international groups to provide assistance to Zimbabweans in need.

ZIMBABWE DIASPORA DEVELOPMENT CHAMBER (ZDDC)

ACTIVITY <i>What?</i>	DESCRIPTION <i>How?</i>	PURPOSE <i>Why?</i>
Training workshops	ZDDC organizes periodic training workshops in business awareness. A one-day pilot workshop in 2008 trained 300 people in basic economic principles, non-violent conflict resolution and civic responsibility.	ZDDC aims to educate Zimbabweans in the diaspora about the basics of economic standards and encourage them to start their own businesses.

ACTIVITY <i>What?</i>	DESCRIPTION <i>How?</i>	PURPOSE <i>Why?</i>
Population survey/skills database	<p>ZDDC conducts workshops together with the International Organization for Migration and collects information on the skills and training of Zimbabwean migrants and refugees.</p> <p>In 2007, volunteers distributed questionnaires to 4,650 Zimbabweans in and around downtown Johannesburg. It was ZDDC's preliminary effort to gather information on the needs of Zimbabweans in the diaspora, the reasons they left Zimbabwe and their educational qualifications.</p>	Creating a database of skills will help the community and the Zimbabwean government know what skills and expertise exist in the diaspora that may be of help in the reconstruction of the country.
Remittances procedures	ZDDC lobbies the South African Reserve Bank and the Zimbabwean government to create procedures that will make it easier for Zimbabweans to send remittances through formal channels.	A greater flow of remittances through formal channels will lead to a greater contribution to the Zimbabwean economy.
Research	ZDDC works together with professors in various institutions to research health, economic, political and social issues in Zimbabwe and southern Africa.	Through extensive research, ZDDC hopes to focus on the best business practices for the reconstruction and development of Zimbabwe and the southern Africa region.

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JOAN B. KROC INSTITUTE FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

The mission of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ) is to foster peace, cultivate justice and create a safer world. Through education, research and peacemaking activities, the IPJ offers programs that advance scholarship and practice in conflict resolution and human rights. The institute, a unit of the University of San Diego's Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, draws on Catholic social teaching that sees peace as inseparable from justice and acts to prevent and resolve conflicts that threaten local, national and international peace.

The IPJ was established in 2000 through a generous gift from the late Joan B. Kroc to the University of San Diego to create an institute for the study and practice of peace and justice. Programming began in early 2001 and the building was dedicated in December 2001 with a conference, "Peacemaking with Justice: Policy for the 21st Century."

The institute strives, in Joan B. Kroc's words, to not only talk about peace, but also make peace. In its peacebuilding initiatives, the IPJ works with local partners to help strengthen their efforts to consolidate peace with justice in the communities in which they live. In Nepal, for example, for nearly a decade the IPJ has been working with Nepali groups to support inclusiveness and dialogue in the transition from armed conflict and monarchy to peace and multiparty democracy. In its West African Human Rights Training Initiative, the institute partners with local human rights groups to strengthen their ability to pressure government for reform and accountability.

In addition to the Women PeaceMakers Program, the institute has several ongoing programs. The Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series is a forum for high-level national and international leaders and policymakers to share their knowledge and perspective on issues related to peace and justice.

WorldLink, a year-round educational program for middle school and high school students from San Diego and Baja California, connects youth to global affairs.

Community outreach includes speakers, films, art and opportunities for discussion between community members, academics and practitioners on issues of peace and social justice, as well as dialogue with national and international leaders in government, nongovernmental organizations and the military.

In addition to the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies includes the Trans-Border Institute, which promotes border-related scholarship and an active role for the university in the cross-border community, and a master's program in Peace and Justice Studies to train future leaders in the field.

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

Chartered in 1949, the University of San Diego (USD) is a Roman Catholic institution of higher learning located on 180 acres overlooking San Diego's Mission Bay. The University of San Diego is committed to promoting academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse community and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical and compassionate service.

The university is steadfast in its dedication to the examination of the Catholic tradition as the basis of a continuing search for meaning in contemporary life. Global peace and development and the application of ethics and values are examined through campus centers and institutes such as the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, the Values Institute, the Trans-Border Institute, the Center for Public Interest Law, the Institute for Law and Philosophy and the International Center for Character Education. Furthermore, through special campus events such as the Social Issues Conference, the James Bond Stockdale Leadership and Ethics Symposium and the Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series, we invite the community to join us in further exploration of these values.

The USD campus, considered one of the most architecturally unique in the nation, is known as Alcalá Park. Like the city of San Diego, the campus takes its name from San Diego de Alcalá, a Franciscan brother who served as the infirmarian at Alcalá de Henares, a monastery near Madrid, Spain. The Spanish Renaissance architecture that characterizes the five-century-old University of Alcalá serves as the inspiration for the buildings on the USD campus. The architecture was intended by the founders, Bishop Charles Francis Buddy and Mother Rosalie Hill, to enhance the search for truth through beauty and harmony. Recent additions, such as the state-of-the-art Donald P. Shiley Center for Science and Technology and the new School of Leadership and Education Sciences building carry on that tradition.

A member of the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa, USD is ranked among the nation's top 100 universities. The university offers its 7,500 undergraduate, graduate and law students rigorous academic programs in more than 60 fields of study through six academic divisions, including the College of Arts and Sciences and the schools of Business Administration, Leadership and Education Sciences, Law, and Nursing and Health Science. The Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies opened in Fall 2007.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
BSA	British South Africa Company
CIO	Central Intelligence Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Program
GNU	Government of National Unity
GZF	Global Zimbabwe Forum
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPJ	Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN	United Nations
USD	University of San Diego
WHO	World Health Organization
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People’s Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZDDC	Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Chamber

ENDNOTES

¹ A version of this paragraph first appeared in the article “‘Women Cannot Cry Anymore’: Global Voices Transforming Violent Conflict,” by Emiko Noma in *Critical Half*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2007). Copyright 2007 Women for Women International.

² Place names in independent Zimbabwe were changed in 1982. Enkeldoorn would later become Chivhu.

³ Salisbury later became the Zimbabwean capital of Harare. Gwelo later became Gweru.

⁴ *Chimurenga* is a Shona word meaning “revolutionary struggle.” It’s now used to describe a struggle for human rights, political dignity and social justice. The African insurrections against British colonial rule from 1896 to 1897 were known as the First Chimurenga. The guerilla war against Rhodesia’s white minority regime from 1966 to 1980 became the Second Chimurenga. More recently, the Zimbabwean government’s land reform program, which began in 2000, is sometimes called the Third Chimurenga by the ruling ZANU-PF party.

⁵ Sinoia later became Chinoyi.

⁶ “Zimbabwean Government to Accept Referendum Results,” Xinhua News Agency, February 16, 2000.

⁷ Shona for “uncle” or “grandfather.”