



WOZA MOYA

WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE ARISE (WOZA) September 2011

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WOZA means 'Come forward'. By women for women and with women, across race, colour, creed, class or political persuasion. Empowering women to be courageous, caring, committed and in communication with their communities.



21 September is International Day of Peace

The year, the 30th anniversary theme is:

Peace and Democracy: Make your voice heard!

The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by resolution 36/67 of the United Nations General Assembly to coincide with its opening session, which was held annually on the third Tuesday of September. The first Peace Day was observed in September 1982. In 2001 the day was established as an annual day of non-violence and cease-fire. The UN invites all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities during the Day, and to otherwise commemorate the Day through education and public awareness on issues related to peace. **This year - - the Day's theme is Peace and Democracy: make your voice heard".**

Peace and democracy are inextricably linked. Together, they form a partnership that promotes the well-being of all. Embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, democracy supports an environment for a host of political rights and civil liberties.

In line with the Day's theme, something profoundly remarkable is happening around the world. Young women and men everywhere are demonstrating the power of solidarity by reaching out and rallying together for the common goal of dignity and human rights. This powerful force brings with it the potential to create a peaceful and democratic future. Add your voice! There are many ways to participate in democratic practices, including taking part in dialogue on constitutional processes, advocating for civil society empowerment, joining the struggle for gender equality and against discrimination, engaging in civic education and promoting voter registration.

WOZA WISH ALL ZIMBABWEANS PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE NEAR FUTURE

Background - Our Mission: Our aim is to mobilise Zimbabweans, and in particular women, to demand social justice on a non-partisan basis, educate them about their civic rights and persuade them to participate in all civic processes. We will mobilise people to the movement through civic education and non-violent action to demand leaders who will be accountable and who will deliver all aspects of social justice and a people-driven constitution.

Members of WOZA have completed a study on Transitional Justice and the results will be launched soon but this is a preview. We wanted to understand Zimbabweans understanding of 'Transitional Justice' and to see what people think of the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration. We also wanted to find out the effect of human rights violations and who is responsible and how victims feel. Establish how far back we should go; the chance of a free and fair election and get recommendations on the way forward.

Some of our Findings

54% of members and non members have never heard of 'Transitional Justice' before?

74% of people said it means FREEDOM to them? What does it mean to you?

80% of people have experienced personally or had a close relative experience human rights abuses?

28 % said they had experienced Assaults and 26% said they have experienced torture themselves. They said the result of this for 49% was Minor Injury e.g. beatings with no injury, slapping, detention and 26% said they experienced Major Injury e.g., rape, torture, arson. Other details: Matabeleland North interviewees were Traumatized; experienced starvation and disability. Matabeleland South mentioned madness, trauma, hatred, hunger, detention. Harare non member experienced being burnt with plastics.

The 40% majority of perpetrators were security agents with political activists scoring 37%. Security agents are clearly abusing the role of protecting the nation; instead they are the majority of perpetrators under the study. They are also highly active during volatile periods like run up to election and post election periods areas that oppose/ contest political power are easy targets for the powers that be.

82% of victims said they are 'BITTER' and 64% said they are 'STILL STRUGGLING'

Other comments included feeling pain; another said they want to move to another country. Matabeleland South interviewees said they are very hurt as a result of the torture; another said they are haunted by the past. People really need reconciliation and healing but need to participate in how it can be done to benefit the suffering. While it is clear that the majority of the respondents are either struggling or bitter, it is also a sign to the powers that be and all relevant stakeholders that transitional justice cannot be given lip service but needs to be prioritized. The same can be said for the table that follows.

45% of people said perpetrators can NEVER repent. 28% said MAYBE. This was in response to the question - Do you think the perpetrators can repent?

42% of people said they can NEVER be healed. 29 % said maybe.

45% of people want to be compensated for losses and suffering. An indication of desperation for a people Prescribed mechanisms that include views of victims into a way forward. 20% were of the opinion that prosecution of the perpetrators was ideal so as to foster healing and reconciliation. Closure was also cited as important for reconciliation with 16% of the respondents saying so. 6% argued that it was important to move on with no reparation or prosecution taking place since everyone was affected and that the abuses took place during a time of crisis.

Responses to the following question - What do you think is key to bringing about national healing, reconciliation and Integration in Zimbabwe? **28% said they want the setting up of a Truth and reconciliation Commission. 21% said the perpetrators must be prosecuted in a court of law.**

Members were also asked who they think can be trusted with leading the national healing, reconciliation and integration in Zimbabwe? 25% said The churches; 23% Civil society and an also for an international Body; The organ on National reconciliation and integration and The government both scored 12%.

The survey also dealt with the issue of what time period a Transitional Justice should deal with? If we have to address the past cases of human rights abuses, how far back should we go? **51% replied 'Just After independence'**. Of special note are responses from Matabeleland regions. This is because they wanted the process to cover the Gukurahundi era. It is also important to take into account the effect of Operation Murambatsvina of 2005. A period that saw a lot of abuses being perpetrated against the general population.

To the questions - Who do you blame for the abuses? **40% placed the blame fairly and squarely on showing the political parties and in support of this 34% said the political leadership of the country.** 99% said the Zanu PF party perpetrated most abuses. 15% were the opinion that the perpetrators in their personal capacity were to be held accountable for the activities. It is clear that people strongly feel that the political leadership of the country should be held accountable and answerable for the various abuses. It has been noted from the survey that most of the human rights violations are concentrated around election period and are happening right under the nose of the political leaders.

As the Peace day theme deals with Democracy we also share the results from the questions relating to Elections. **Question - Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It is possible for the next elections in Zimbabwe to be free and fair?**

38% Disagree; 31% strongly disagree; 16% Agree; 8% strongly Agree

What do you think is most important for free and fair elections in Zimbabwe? 35% said they would need a **Democratic Constitution** first! 23% said they would need to involving International observers.

We asked - Do you have any personal fears now pertaining to human rights violation? **52% said they are always afraid when it comes to elections.** 39% said because of political parties causing human rights abuses during this period.

Lastly, we asked - Have you ever heard about the Organ on National healing and reconciliation? **52% said they had heard of it but when asked to assess the performance of the Organ, they 35% said it performed very badly but 33% said they had not heard of it.**