

Achievements and Challenges of the Zimbabwean Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC), 2009-2013 (PART B)

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Abstract

This study is second part of the already published wider research that looked at the effectiveness of the Zimbabwean Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC). JOMIC was a Zimbabwean Trans governmental organisation formed in Zimbabwe after the signing of the Global political Agreement GPA, signed in the 2009, and the body was mainly meant to monitor the implementation of the agreement and also to promote political tolerance among political players. The current study sought to establish the Achievements and Challenges of the Zimbabwean Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC), focusing on the period 2009-2013. The survey design was used. The representative sample of 30 included leaders from political parties, selected civic society organization and JOMIC board members. Data was collected using a questionnaire as the sample was relatively large. The findings indicated that JOMIC managed to fostering unity amongst warring parties, It also created a platform for peace building, oversaw reduction of political violence cases and also developed conflict resolution mechanism in the communities. Shortfalls cited include poor administration which led to poor information dissemination. Lack of enforcement mechanism such as arresting powers and failure to provide mechanisms for national healing and reconciliation among political violence victims were also cited. It was recommended that since JOMIC only existed during the life span of the GPA (2009-2013), the Government of Zimbabwe and all stakeholders must consider seriously the idea of having permanent organisation like JOMIC which must include all stakeholders, such as government, political parties, civic society, religious leaders and traditional leaders. It was also established that such an organization must have structures from national right down to ward or village level. The organisation should have its mandate also expanded to include issues of national healing, reconciliation and reparation. The organisation should also be established by an Act of Parliament in order to give it more powers for dealing with those who violates its standing rules.

Keywords: *political tolerance, political violence, conflict management, JOMIC, ZANU PF, MDC-T, MDC*

1. Introduction

Zimbabwean politics has been characterised by a culture of political intolerance of a very serious nature, resulting in each and every election and post-election period being characterised by rampant hate speeches, violence, and displacements. The country experienced this behaviour before, during and after the elections of 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008. The following reports highlight instances of such behaviour in the recent past.

The June 2008 presidential election runoff violence eventually led to the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) on 15 September 2008 and ultimately the formation of the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC). After the GPA formation, signs of intolerance remained evident through the conduct of people in general and political leaders who mainly behaved in a partisan manner.

Challenges have been experienced in the promotion of initiatives to resolve the political differences through tolerance and mutual respect. There were reports of the Finance Minister from MDC-T storming out of the Cabinet after clashing with ZANU-PF ministers over the Reserve Bank's debt restructuring plan. The ideological differences, mutual distrust, lack of transparency and disrespect caused considerable friction between parties to the GPA. The downstream effect was the continued polarity at grass roots and the attendant violence among the populace.

The Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) was a committee which was constituted under Article XXII of the Global Political Agreement signed on 15 September 2008, by the three political parties namely ZANU-PF, and the two MDC formations. The functions of JOMIC were among others, to serve as catalyst in creating and promoting an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding between political parties, to promote continuing dialogue between the parties, to receive reports and complaints in respect to any issue related to the implementation, enforcement and execution of the agreement, to ensure the implementation in letter and spirit of the agreement and finally to assess the implementation of the agreement from time to time and consider steps which might need to be taken to ensure the speedy and full implementation of the agreement in its entirety.

JOMIC was composed of four senior members from ZANU- PF and four senior members from each of the two MDC formations making a total of twelve (12). The committee was co-chaired by the members from the parties. JOMIC had full time secretariat at the national level comprising the national coordinator, the communication manager, one political liaison officer from each of the three political parties and the programs manager.

JOMIC later established provincial liaison Committees in all the ten provinces of the country. The committees were composed of four senior provincial leaders from each of the three political parties occupying the following positions, provincial chairperson, provincial chairlady, provincial youth chairperson and the provincial organising secretary or commissar. There was also a JOMIC full time secretariat at provincial level comprising of the provincial administrator, two political liaison officers from each of the three political parties and the administrative assistant. In essence the body then worked with the aforementioned structures in a bid to deal with the cases of political violence, hatred to foster unity and mutual tolerance. It is against this background that this research was carried to answer the following questions;

- (i) What were the major achievement and shortfalls of JOMIC?
- (ii) What needed to be done to improve the efficiency of JOMIC?

2. Literature Survey

The Mandate and Functions of JOMIC

According to Chigora and Guzura (2009) the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) is a Zimbabwean multi-partisan panel that was first launched on January 30, 2009, pursuant to the 2008 Zimbabwean power sharing agreement. The panel finds its mandate on Article XXII: 22 where its goals can be summarized to include ensuring the implementation in letter and spirit of the Global Political Agreement, to assess the implementation of this Agreement from time to time and consider steps which might need to be taken to ensure the speedy and full implementation of the Agreement in its entirety, to receive complaints and reports in respect of any issue related to the implementation, enforcement and execution of the agreement, to serve as catalyst in creating and promoting an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding between the parties, and to promote continuing dialogue between parties. Its composition was made of the then MDC-M which later became known only as the MDC, ZANU- PF and MDC-T. According to the implementation mechanism article XXII section 22.1 'to ensure full and proper implementation of the letter and spirit of this Agreement, the parties hereby constitute a Joint Monitoring and Implementation (JOMIC) to be composed of four senior members from ZANU-PF and four from each of the two MDC formations. The functions of the committee included to ensure the implementation in letter and spirit of the agreement, to assess the implementation of this agreement from time to time and consider steps which might need to be taken to ensure the speedy and full implementation of this agreement in its entirety, to receive reports and complaints in respect of any issue related to the implementation, enforcement and execution of this agreement, to serve as catalyst in creating and promoting an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding between the parties and to promote continuity of dialogue between the parties. In this vein, it can be outlined that JOMIC had a multiplicity of functions needed to help the parties in government operate well and this was further stated in section 22.4 which said JOMIC shall be the principal body dealing with the issues of compliance and monitoring of this Agreement and to that end, the Parties hereby undertake to channel all complaints, grievances, concerns and issues relating to compliance with the Agreement through JOMIC and to refrain from any conduct which might undermine the spirit of co-operation necessary for the fulfillment of the Agreement. This meant that JOMIC as a committee was given the sole responsibility of ensuring that indeed parties put what they had signed for into practice by walking the talk.

3.0 Methodology

The study employed the survey design. The study sample was drawn from a population that included leaders from the three political parties who constituted the inclusive government namely MDC, MDC-T and ZANU-PF who were based in Harare. It also included civic society organizations in Harare that deal with peace issues as well as senior members of JOMIC. Purposive sampling was used to come up with a sample size of 30. The sample included 5 members from each of the three political parties (15), 9 leaders of civic society organizations and 6 senior JOMIC members (2 from each political party). The questionnaire was the sole instrument used to collect data.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

Table 4.1 Response rate

Sample Category	Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaires Returned	% Response Rate
Political Parties	15	12	80%
CSOs	9	8	89%
JOMIC	6	6	100%
Total	30	26	87%

Political party's response rate was 80%, civic society 89% while JOMIC secretariat was 100%. Thus average response rate combined is 87%. The low response rate was recorded from political parties, who probably because of the busy schedules in government were too busy to answer the questionnaires. The civic society organisations failed to return only one questionnaire. This was precipitated by bureaucracy and unavailability of the organisation's directorate.

4.2 Major Achievements and Shortfalls of JOMIC

The respondents outlined a multiplicity of factors which they considered to be achievements of JOMIC, with 75% of the respondents pointing out that there were more important achievements by JOMIC than the shortfalls. The majority also pointed out that most of the failures were due to institutional defects than performance related. Respondents also confirmed that JOMIC brought warring parties together. It should be understood that serious political hatred existed in the Zimbabwean society prior to the formation of the Government of National Unity. This was mainly between ZANU PF and the two main opposition parties that is the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC then led by Professor Arthur Mutambara. There was little hope that the three would be brought to work together at one time. JOMIC helped create to peaceful dialogue amongst these parties which were considered to be the first steps towards the attainment of a just society and political tolerance.

Apart from bringing these parties together, JOMIC helped eradicate the use of violence as a way of attaining political goals. The reports and complaints sent to JOMIC and the subsequent actions of JOMIC contributed to the decrease of political violence. The 2013 harmonised elections were held in a peaceful manner and this can be attributed to JOMIC. Respondents also pointed out the teaching and implementation of conflict resolution mechanisms as an achievement by JOMIC. Through its workshops mainly by the youth desk, JOMIC taught the citizenry how to handle and resolve political conflicts other than using violent measures against each other. JOMIC also promote peace building in communities through the formation of local structures such as district and provincial liaison committees to localise peace making mechanisms.

The respondents also outlined a number of shortfalls that they thought affected the effectiveness of the organisation in achieving its goals.

- JOMIC did not have enforcement or arresting powers. This meant that it could only work by making recommendations to relevant authorities. Therefore the obligation of arresting perpetrators was in the hands of the Zimbabwe Republic Police. This rendered JOMIC ineffective, 95% of the respondents shared this view.
- Poor administration of JOMIC also was blamed for the failure to disseminate information widely as well as reaching out to all districts and wards in the country, was observed by 35% of the respondents.
- The focus on political parties in the GNU made JOMIC narrow as well as ineffective was observed by 55% of the respondents.
- JOMIC also failed to create a mechanism to help those already affected by political violence. The organisation only stood to focus on the future and current perpetration of violence rather than reconciliation and national healing, this was the view of 15% of the respondents..
- Also the failure by the GNU to implement the agreement in its entirety can be seen as a failure of JOMIC and 65% of the respondents made this observation. Reforms recommended by the GPA such as media reforms and security sector reforms were not implemented, and JOMIC did not do anything to ensure that these were achieved as per its mandate outlined in Article XXII of the GPA.

The achievements and shortfalls of JOMIC can also be summarised in the table below

Table 4.2 JOMIC achievements and shortfalls

	JOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS	JOMIC SHORTFALLS
1	Fostering unity amongst warring parties	Poor administration hence poor information dissemination.
2	Created a platform for peace building	Lack of enforcement mechanism such as arresting powers
3	Reduction of political violence cases	Failure to provide mechanisms for national healing and reconciliation among political violence victims
4	Development of conflict resolution mechanism in the communities	Failed to institute reforms such as media and security sector reforms.

4.3 Respondents’ recommendations on ways to improve the effectiveness of future organisation such as JOMIC

Respondents proposed the following issues as ways to improve future organisations in the likes of JOMIC:

4.3.1 The organisation will need more officers in rural areas so as to foster understanding of the importance of attaining political tolerance, and also taking into cognisance the fact that in rural areas incidents of intimidation and violence are rife and they also go unreported, this was the view of 75% of the respondents.

4.3.2 The administration of the organisation should be devolved across the country so as to end up having ward teams that would help the dissemination of information and this was the view of 83% of the respondents.

4.3.3 Fliers and newsletters should be written in local language to increase readership and as such allow many people to understand the information easily, 64% of the respondents shared this view.

4.3.4 Just like other Trans governmental organisations, JOMIC should have enforcement powers. The organisation should be governed and protected by an act of parliament. This would subsequently empower and mandate the organisation to effect punitive measures on perpetrators of violence, most of the respondents 95% shared this view.

4.3.5 The organisation should have support systems for national healing and reconciliation, raised by 25% of the respondents.

4.3.6 More effort is required to improve the inclusivity. The organisation should bring on board more players like the other political parties, religious and traditional leaders, this was the view of 85% of the respondents.

5.0 Recommendations

In view of the research findings the following recommendations were made:

5.1.1 Given the polarised nature of the Zimbabwean political environment, the government of Zimbabwe, political parties and civil society organizations should seriously consider the idea of having a permanent future institution in the model of JOMIC to effect political tolerance and eliminate political violence.

5.1.2 The presence of JOMIC during the 2013 harmonized elections proved beyond any reasonable doubt that whenever there are platforms where members of different political parties are able to meet and engage in dialogue political tension is diffused thereby avoiding political violence. The institution should involve all stakeholders such as government, political parties, civil society, traditional leaders and the marginalized groups such as the disable, women and youths.

5.1.3 If there is going to any institution like JOMIC in future it must be constituted by an Act of Parliament which will spell out binding rules and regulations for all players involved. Also this act of parliament would provide a support mechanism for the institution in enforcing its decisions as well setting out punitive measures against defaulters.

5.1.4 The organisation should set up structures from national level right down to ward levels. Proper systems and communication channels should be put in place. This will promote the effectiveness and efficiency of operations of the organisation.

5.1.5 The future organisation should also set up support systems for national healing and reconciliation. This can be achieved by working with the Civic Society Organisations, religious leaders, traditional leaders and other relevant stakeholders.

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