



Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund

(Registered Charity Number 1145569)



MID YEAR REPORT 2018

www.zimbabwevictimssupportfund.org

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THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

My Zimbabwean friends often use vivid metaphors to express their deepest feelings. When I asked Pastor **Albert Chatindo** what the mood of the people was following the announcement of the results of the elections held on 30th July, he replied:

"It feels like when you are cruising along happily in your car, confident all is well as the vehicle has just been serviced, when suddenly a tyre bursts and it veers out of control. And in that terrifying instant before impact, in a surreal way, your mind races ahead with questions like – What now? Will there be someone to rescue me? – Is this the end?"



Expectations had been so high. After the euphoria of last November when Mugabe was ousted in a bloodless coup Zimbabweans had dared to hope a new era was dawning. Tens of thousands celebrated on the streets, embracing the army as their liberators. Nine months later that same army was deployed with live ammunition to suppress a popular protest against the rigging of the elections.



Six died in a hail of bullets, some shot in the back. The images show the stark contrast between the army as liberators and as oppressors.

The people of Zimbabwe were crushed, not by the elections which passed off peacefully enough, but by the official results announced by the electoral commission – and then dutifully confirmed by a compliant Court. The people knew the results had been rigged to give the ruling party a majority. In many instances the rigging was so blatant that only the deliberately blind could claim not to see.

In a moment the hopes of so many were dashed. This was not to be the new dawn of freedom after all. The truth about the country's wounded history was not to be faced – not yet anyway. The iron rule of the military Junta was to continue – and with it the poverty, hunger and disempowerment of the nation.

"The Struggle Continues" is the title of an excellent book by the human rights lawyer and opposition leader, **David Coltart**. He traces 50 years of tyranny in Zimbabwe, right back to the dark days of white minority rule under Ian Smith. In all this time the country has never experienced real freedom. And now the stolen election and violent suppression of the protest that followed reveal that nothing has changed. The struggle continues. Indeed it does.

For the Christian leaders with whom we work in ZVFS the challenge is how to lead a people worn down by years of oppression? Certainly our partners are not despairing. They would say with the Apostle Paul, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed, perplexed but not in despair ..." (2 Corinthians 4/8). But they surely need our prayers and every expression of solidarity.

This is one of the reasons why, within the next few weeks, I am planning another visit to the country myself. I am sure I will return with many more stories of persevering hope and undaunted faith to share with you. If it is possible within all the limitations of the situation I also hope to produce another short DVD on our work. Watch this space! I would therefore value your prayers for the visit, and please also continue to intercede for our Zimbabwean partners who are bearing "the midday heat" in their toils for the kingdom. I know they are deeply grateful for your prayerful engagement and ever-generous support. Every time I speak to them they ask me to be sure to pass on their deepest thanks.

Every blessing in Christ,
Graham

As Graham prepares to leave for Zimbabwe we bring you the word of someone just back from the country. Rev Edson Dube, also a Zimbabwean, is Superintendent Minister of Leicester (Trinity) Circuit. He brings us this word of appreciation.

Cry my beloved country Zimbabwe

The long-awaited harmonised election held in Zimbabwe had offered new hope for the suffering people of Zimbabwe while they waited for the new dawn which never was. But now that the elections have come and gone the suffering goes on, especially for marginalised poor communities. For them each day is a desperate struggle. This includes the residents of Killarney Squatter camp on the outskirts of Bulawayo who are supported through Zimbabwe Victim's Support Fund. I had the privilege of spending an afternoon at that settlement, facilitated by Graham Shaw. My visit coincided with the election period and I witnessed the tremendous work done by the Fund among the poor masses of Zimbabwe.

As I toured each shack around the settlement in the company of Pastor Albert I saw how these families struggle to survive without the basic things in life, such as food supplies, running water, medical facilities, sanitation or decent housing. I also observed the work, dedication and ministry of Pastor Albert and his team who have dedicated their time, energy and resources to be alongside the less privileged of Killarney, giving real hope to this community. I see his ministry as a calling to be alongside the marginalised of our community. After my visit to Zimbabwe I have no doubt there is still need for donors to continue providing food hand-outs to these starving people in general and the Killarney Squatter camp in particular as a matter of urgency. My final appeal to all our readers is that those who may feel moved to support this ministry should do so knowing well that their giving is helping change lives in Zimbabwe and is a worthy cause.

Edson Dube

Treasurer's Report

We are very pleased to be able to report that, after a period of uncertainty last year, the route arranged by our Bulawayo partners for sending funds to them has proved to be reliable and beneficial. Purchases can be paid for directly from the bank account in Botswana, and because payments are made with 'real' dollars (as opposed to bond notes) our purchasing power is substantially increased, meaning your gifts go further. Thank you for staying firm in your support – allowing us to send over £25,000 in the first half of 2018.

Your faithfulness makes it all the more regrettable that occasionally over the last year it has taken us longer than we would like to acknowledge individual gifts. The trustees perform their duties as volunteers and sometimes other commitments such as 'day jobs' and family responsibilities have to come first. And there are times when identifying gifts direct to our bank takes some time as we have only a partial name – or none at all! Please bear with us if this affects you; we do try to confirm receipt of gifts within 2- 3 weeks.

Christine Jones

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Sort Code:	40-52-40
Account name:	Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund
Account No:	00022807