

Gavin Cawthra

The Role of SADC in Managing political crisis and conflict

The Cases of Madagascar and Zimbabwe

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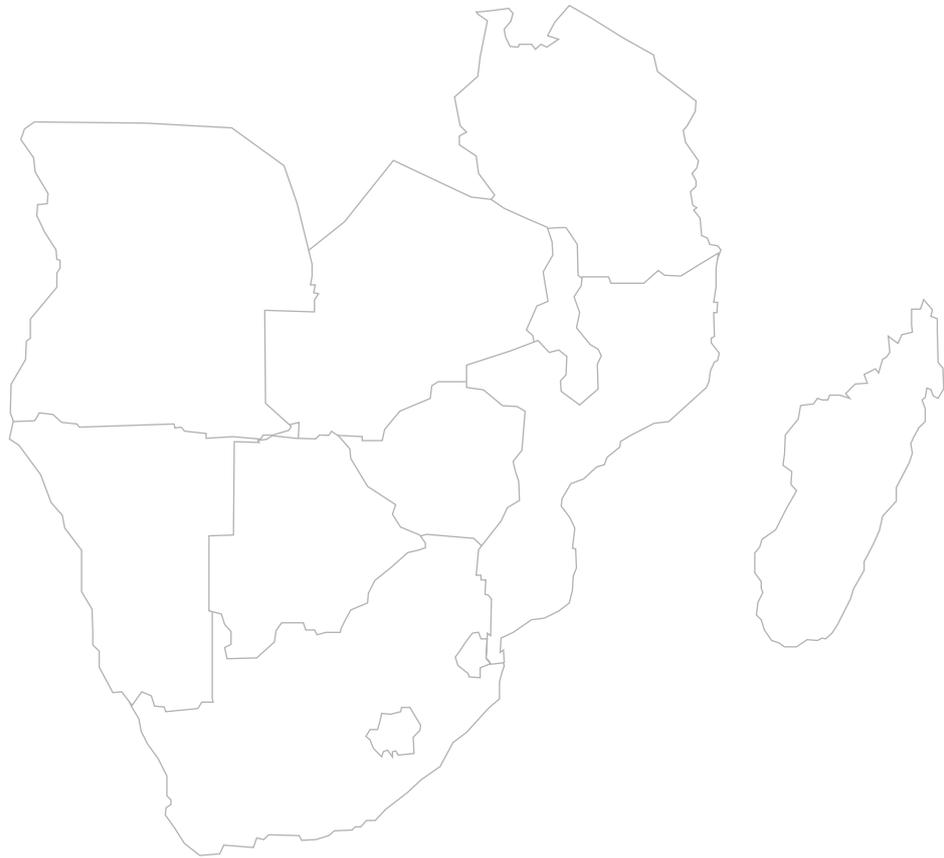
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Acronyms and abbreviations

AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act (USA)	MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change – Mutambara (Zimbabwe)
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)	MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture	OAU	Organisation of African Unity
AU	African Union	OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (International Organisation for the Francophone)
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation (Zimbabwe)	OPDSC	Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SADC)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	PF-ZAPU	Popular Front – Zimbabwean African Patriotic Union
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions	PSC	Peace and Security Council (African Union)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	SADC	Southern African Development Community
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung	SADCBRIG	Southern African Development Community Brigade
FLS	Front Line States	SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique	SADSEM	Southern African Defence and Security Management
GPA	Global Political Agreement (Zimbabwe)	SIPO	Strategic Implementation Plan for the Organ (SADC)
HTA	High Transitional Authority (Madagascar)	SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation (Namibia)
ICG	International Contact Group	TIM	Tiako-I-Madagasikara (Madagascar)
ICP	International Cooperating Partner (of SADC)	UN	United Nations
IG	Inclusive Government (Zimbabwe)	ZANU-PF	Zimbabwean African National Union – Patriotic Front
IPDSC	Interstate Politics and Diplomacy Committee (SADC)		
ISDSC	Interstate Defence and Security Committee (SADC)		
JOC	Joint Operations Centre (Zimbabwe)		
LDC	Least developed country		
MCND	Military Council for National Defence (Madagascar)		
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change (Zimbabwe)		

Executive Summary

This study concerns itself with two case studies of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) involvement in regional crises – Zimbabwe and Madagascar. The evolution and structure of SADC's security management and conflict transformation bodies are examined as a background to the two studies.

The Madagascar case examines the backdrop to the current crisis, which began in early 2009, tracing a history of periodic political upheavals and military interventions, to the point in 2001 when Marc Ravalomanana established his grip on presidential power, using his position of mayor of Antananarivo and his business empire as power bases. However, his power began to be challenged in 2008 when Andry Rajoelina, another businessman, became mayor of Antananarivo, and this challenge, based on popular protests in the capital, eventually led to Ravalomanana departing office after a military intervention.

The study examines how SADC and the African Union (AU) reacted strongly to this unconstitutional change, and how SADC set itself up as one of the principal mediators in an international coalition, eventually leading to an agreement for a transitional government. However, Rajoelina did not honour this agreement, leaving Madagascar in an ongoing situation of crisis.

The case study concludes that there were no major ethnic, political or social causes for the crisis, and that Madagascar's dependence on international aid gives the international community considerable influence over the course of events. SADC was able to act decisively because of its policies opposing unconstitutional changes of government, and its lack of economic and other interests in Madagascar.

The Zimbabwe crisis is traced back to the breakaway from the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, leading to the formation of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the subsequent loss of a constitutional referendum by ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe in 2000. This led to a period of political stalemate, increasing state repression

and political violence and hyper-inflation, in part caused by a land distribution programme which saw most white commercial farmers dispossessed of their land.

SADC was much more reluctant to intervene in Zimbabwe than Madagascar, agreeing publicly with Mugabe that the crisis was a result of the need for land redistribution and caused by Western sanctions. However eventually mediation by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa resulted in a Global Political Agreement in which Mugabe retained the presidency but the main opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, was appointed prime minister and dual executive power was established. The resulting Inclusive Government, while it has halted economic collapse, continues to be characterised by conflicts over key issues of power.

The study identifies the causes of the conflict in Zimbabwe as economic mismanagement and failures of governance, leading to social alienation and dislocation to which the ruling party responded by increasing repression. The security structures remain powerful actors and seem determined to ensure that ZANU-PF does not lose power. SADC seems increasingly divided over how to deal with the issue, and the future remains uncertain.

The study concludes that the differences between SADC's approach to the Madagascar and Zimbabwe crisis may be put down to two factors: first the fact that the economies of several SADC countries are intertwined with those of Zimbabwe but not Madagascar, and second the issue of incumbency. As a club of states, or presidents, SADC tends to support incumbents in power and the presidents and states act in mutual support of each other.

Introduction

This research was commissioned by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) as part of a wider project to ascertain how sub-regional organisations (hereafter called regional organisations) which form part of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) perform when attempting to manage regional conflicts and crises. While the focus in this study is on the Southern African Development Community (SADC), its role is examined as part of an ensemble of organisations, mostly international, which have also played a role in such crises, notably including the African Union (AU) and various bodies of the United Nations (UN). One of the key issues examined is whether actual performance matched up to expectations and conformed with formal policy and institutional frameworks.

Two case studies were carried out, on the Madagascar crisis which more or less took place during 2009, and on the Zimbabwe crisis, which is of much longer duration. For the purpose of this study the focus was on the past few years.

In both the case studies, desk research was followed by a field visit, during which interviews were carried out with key stakeholders (a list of interviewees and those met is provided at the end of the paper). As sensitive issues were under consideration, and many interviewees did not wish to go on the record, the interviews were carried out on a basis of non-attribution, although in all cases the interviewees made it clear that they had no objections to the content of their contributions being used in this study (ie. what may be termed 'Chatham House Rules').

The interviews were carried out in Madagascar 17-19 August 2009 and in Zimbabwe 18-20 November. Efforts were made to update the findings on the basis of desk research until completion of the project at the end of December 2009. Any findings and recommendations must therefore be constrained by these timeframes – in both cases the crisis-resolution initiatives were moving

ahead rapidly at the time of the completion of the research and were likely to evolve in unpredictable ways.

The study first examines the Southern African security context in general, and in particular the evolution of SADC's peace and security policies, processes and structures. It is necessary to comprehend this framework in order to understand the approaches that the regional organisation has taken to the respective crises. The study then moves on to examine the Madagascar and Zimbabwe crises, and to make some prognoses and recommendations.

The Southern African Development Community

The SADC region is probably not a 'security complex' (Buzan 1987) where the security of one state is dependent on that of all the others, nor are there necessarily strong economic, social and political ties that bind all the countries together. There is a core of states whose economies and political histories are effectively melded by the development of the South African economy based on the gold-mines of what is now Gauteng (notably through migrant labour and transport) and the overarching imperative of the struggle against apartheid, which includes Zimbabwe. Other countries of what is now SADC are not part of the Southern Africa region in terms of the AU's division of the continent (and as states were free at the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to choose which region they wanted to belong to, this constitutes in essence a self-perception). This includes Madagascar,¹ which might be termed an 'out-riders' state in terms of SADC – indeed it joined SADC only in August 2005, and traditionally has had little economic and political interaction with the rest of the region (apart perhaps from hosting the African National Congress (ANC) Radio Freedom in the struggle years).

SADC is also a very diverse region (if indeed it is a region). It includes the richest country in Africa (South Africa) as well as some of the poorest; landlocked and island states; states with some of the largest populations in Africa (the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)) as well as some of the smallest (Seychelles). The countries of the region all share one thing in common – they have all been colonised – but they were colonised in different ways and by various imperial or putatively imperial countries – Portugal, France, Britain, and Germany. These colonial histories have left important legacies in terms of culture, language and political systems, which complicate initiatives for peace and security. Liberation struggles also took different forms, and the dividing line between those countries which laboured under

¹ Tanzania, Angola and DRC also lie outside of the AU's regional definition of Southern Africa.

apartheid or settler colonialism and took up armed struggles, and those which were able to slough off the colonial yoke without resort to violence, remain strong. To further complicate matters, after independence some states attempted to take the 'socialist road' and allied themselves with the Soviet Union and its partners, while others were more pro-Western; and in the cases of Angola and Mozambique civil wars took place in part as a result of this clash of ideologies.

The current debates within SADC regarding how to manage peace and security challenges cannot be understood without making a short historical detour. With its formation in the 1980s after Zimbabwe's independence, the precursor to SADC, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), deliberately excluded explicitly political, and hence peace and security, issues from its agenda, concentrating on economic development. Security issues were the preserve of the Front Line States (FLS), an informal alliance of countries willing and able to counter South Africa's military hegemony and support the armed liberation movement.

This functional division initially continued with the foundation of SADC in 1993, with a position being raised that SADC *per se* should concentrate on economic issues and that security issues should be dealt with by a separate structure. This may seem like an arcane institutional disagreement, but at the core of the issue was whether member countries were willing to accept potential *de facto* South African hegemony over both economic and political spheres, as well as the involvement of what are now called International Cooperating Partners (ICPS) in political and security affairs. The FLS had also operated much as a 'club of presidents' and there was some resistance to any institutionalisation. In addition, President Robert Mugabe wished to preserve the tradition that the longest-standing president (in this case himself) retained the chair. The matter was resolved only as late as 2001, with the agreement that the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (OPDSC) should report to the SADC Summit of Heads of States

(even though the OPDSC would function at the level of heads of state), thus in effect integrating political and security functions. A Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation was adopted, which set out a wide range of ambitious issues which the Organ (and the Summit) should address, including key issues related to peace and security cooperation. These issues were due to be implemented through a Strategic Implementation Plan for the Organ (SIPO) adopted in 2004.

In short, it is only in the last five years or so that a comprehensive plan for peace and security management in the SADC region has been agreed. The Organ is tasked with, *inter alia*, promoting regional co-operation on matters related to defence and security, preventing, containing and resolving inter- and intra state conflict by peaceful means, 'enforcement action ... as a matter of last resort ... only with the authorisation of the United Nations Security Council', promotion of democracy and human rights, promoting cooperation between police and state security services, encouraging the implementation of UN and other international treaties on arms control, disarmament and peaceful relations between states, and developing peacekeeping capacities (SADC 2001: article 2).

The Organ operates at Summit (heads of state) level as well as at ministerial level (from each country a number of ministers are involved, for example foreign affairs, defence, police, intelligence and home affairs) and at the level of officials. Two committees make the key decisions, the Interstate Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) and the less active Interstate Politics and Diplomacy Committee (IPDC). Both of these function at ministerial level as well as at the level of senior officials (chiefs of defence for example). The ISDSC in particular has become a key actor in SADC security matters, as will be seen in the case studies.

The Organ and its subsidiary committees are serviced and supported by the Directorate of Politics, Defence and Security at the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone, Botswana. In practice, this is a rather weak directorate with a small

staff who are obliged to spend a lot of time out of their offices, resulting in the directorate playing only a relatively small role in conflict resolution issues, although the Executive Secretary of SADC, Thomaz Salamao, has often been tasked with a key role in such arrangements.

SADC has been only partially active in conflict resolution, mainly through the appointment of mediators (typically a serving or retired president) and was active in attempting to resolve the crises in Angola, Lesotho, the DRC and elsewhere. These interventions met with very mixed results at best, but are not the subject of this paper.

SADC also forms part of the AU's African Peace and Security Architecture (ASPA), and in this capacity it has established one of the five proposed regional brigades, SADCBRIG. This consists of a small planning element at SADC headquarters in Gaborone, and earmarked military units based in the various SADC member states, as well as a civilian and a police component. Various training exercises have been carried out to test the brigade's effectiveness, most recently Exercise Golfino held mostly in South Africa in September 2009. The brigade aims to deploy on peacekeeping operations, eventually including enforcement tasks and carrying out complex multifunctional peace support operations. However, SADCBRIG does not have a dedicated conflict resolution capacity.

SADC is technically a subsidiary body of the AU, which in turn derives a security mandate from Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which gives (unspecified) regional organisations the right to carry out activities in terms of both Chapter VI and Chapter VII of the Charter, in other words including the right to utilise force in the resolution of conflicts, although only subject to mandate by the UN Security Council.

As well as the regional brigades, of which SADCBRIG is one of the most advanced, the AU has established quite an elaborate set of structures responsible for peace and security. These are serviced by the Commission of the AU, consisting of officials, and headed by the Peace and

Security Council (PSC) which functions at heads of state level. The PSC has a wide range of powers including not only diplomacy and peacekeeping, but also 'intervention' (meaning the deployment of force without necessarily the approval of the government concerned) in extreme circumstances, including gross human rights violations, threats to a constitutional order and genocide. A Panel of the Wise is also provided for, to which eminent people might be appointed to carry out mediation.

Both SADC and the AU have adopted a number of treaties, protocols or solemn declarations that set out to entrench democratic norms and in particular, reject non-constitutional changes of government. The latter began with the AU's predecessor, the OAU, which in 1999, at a decision taken in Algiers, opted to ban from summits 'all governments that had taken power through a coup since the last summit' (OAU 1999). This, together with other democratic principles, was cemented in the OAU's Lome declaration and subsequently SADC adopted the same principle.

THE MADAGASCAR CRISIS

Background

While the immediate crisis in Madagascar began in early 2009, its roots may be traced to the difficult history of democratic transition in the country, and the failure to consolidate democratic processes and structures. Madagascar also remains a least developed country (LDC) with 70 per cent of the population living on less than US\$2 per day (*Pax Africa*, Vol 5, No 1, 2009: 30). Given an estimated population in excess of 20 million, this means that there are large numbers of people living in extreme poverty, as well as deep and probably growing inequalities.

Following independence in 1960, power was first handed to the military in 1972, in a context of widespread unrest. In 1975 a military coup brought Didier Ratsiraka to power, who ruled through authoritarian/military means – under a banner of Marxism-Leninism - until 1993, when he was obliged to bow to pressure to hold elections in which Albert Zafy was elected to the presidency. After another constitutional crisis in 1996, Zafy (who had moved to further centralise presidential powers) was impeached for breach of the constitution and Ratsiraka was voted back into power. He continued in office, further consolidating the power of the presidency, until December 2001 when democratic elections led to a disputed result. Ratsiraka's challenger in these elections was Marc Ravalomanana, one of the wealthiest men in Madagascar who had developed a power base as mayor of Antananarivo, and who used his own personal wealth and charisma to project a populist cause. He claimed victory with 52 per cent of the votes and declared himself president although official results showed he had not reached the majority required to avoid a second round. This produced a stand-off, with Ravalomanana gaining popular support in the capital, and Ratsiraka and his supporters establishing themselves in the coastal regions, especially in Taomasina (which they declared to be the new capital), and attempting to seal off Antananarivo through an armed blockade, pushing

the country dangerously close to civil war. Despite a declaration of martial law in the capital by Ratsiraka, the military remained relatively neutral and refused to clamp down on tens of thousands of pro-Ravalomanana demonstrators. A complex set of judicial and political manoeuvres ensued, with increasing international involvement, especially from the OAU, which denied recognition to the Ravalomanana administration, and negotiations in the Senegalese capital Dakar established a framework for a 'High Transitional Council', although the two camps radically disagreed over the interpretation of this.

Eventually, however, Ravalomanana established his grip on power, including over the military, and after legislative elections international support gradually shifted in his favour. His government was eventually recognised internationally and Ratsiraka was obliged to flee the country for exile in France after the collapse of his support base, in particular the militias he had set up. The OAU, by now the AU, held out recognition for some time, on the basis of the principle of not supporting unconstitutional changes of government (even though by then Ravalomanana had secured the support of the High Constitutional Court for this presidency).

Despite his controversial rise to power, Ravalomanana and his party, Tiako-I-Madagasikara (TIM), dominated the polity (and many would argue the economy) until the crisis of 2009. In August 2005 Madagascar joined SADC, which some took as indication of an intention by Ravalomanana to move away from the traditional French post-colonial influence – he was also seen as moving closer to the US and opening up the country to Eastern interests, notably China and South Korea. The alleged lease – or agreement to lease – of 1.3 million hectares of land to the South Korean company Daewoo for farming proved controversial, as did the decision to purchase a presidential jet for US\$60 million (although this was not directly carried out by Ravalomanana himself).

Andry Rajoelina, a former disc jockey, emerged as the key political opponent of Ravalomanana, and in January 2008 he won a local election to become mayor of the

capital Antananarivo – a position formerly occupied by Ravalomanana. A wealthy and popular public figure, at least in the capital, Rajoelina owned a television channel, VIVA, which was shut down by the government in December 2008 when it attempted to broadcast an interview with former president Ratsiraka.

Rajoelina's supporters took to the streets of Antananarivo in a series of increasingly large popular demonstrations (numbered in the tens of thousands by most accounts). The Madagascar council of churches, in which the Catholic church was prominent, attempted to mediate, and a number of international actors, including SADC, became engaged (as discussed below). When demonstrators marched on the presidential palace, a protected area, on 7 February, several were shot dead by soldiers and others wounded – in total up to 100 were killed by the end of the confrontations.

The events of early 2009 made it clear that Ravalomanana's position was increasingly untenable, not least because he appeared to have lost the support of the security forces. A relatively small but powerful unit of the army, responsible for technical and personnel support, CAPSAT, mutinied. On 17 March Ravalomanana handed over power to the highest ranking officer in the armed forces asking that a military *directoire* be set up to rule the country. The military promptly handed over the keys of office to Rajoelina, arguing that a popular uprising had taken place and a legitimate government already existed, and Ravalomanana was obliged to leave the country, hoping to gather international – including SADC – support for his return, while his supporters in turn took to the streets of Antananarivo. They eventually retreated to a private property owned by Ravalomanana, where they held daily rallies. Rajoelina and his allies established a High Transitional Authority (HAT) which became the *de facto* government, as well as a Military Council for National Defence (MCND), which accommodates the higher-ranking generals but does not play an active role in government. The seizure of power was widely condemned internationally as a coup d'état: certainly it was an unconstitutional change of government, as there

was no provision in the constitution for Ravalomanana to hand over power to the military, nor for the military to in turn transfer power to Rajoelina.

Despite this the High Constitutional Court soon ruled that the transfer of power was legitimate, even though Rajoelina, in his mid-30s, did not even meet the age requirements for assuming the presidency. However, no recognition was forthcoming internationally, and Madagascar was suspended from both the AU and SADC. The crisis precipitated an economic plunge, throwing investment and trade deals into confusion and leading to the termination of most external funding for the government (constituting about 70 per cent of its income). With Ravalomanana in exile, and with the Rajoelina government *de facto* in power but not internationally recognised, a stand-off ensued, and the focus shifted to negotiations to secure a way forward.

International actors had become involved in the crisis at an early stage, and the next phase of the crisis was characterised by a fairly complex negotiation process. Initially mediation had been carried out by the Madagascar Council of Churches, but this soon passed to the international community in the form primarily of the AU and the UN. Given the relative lack of coherent political parties, the mediators invited the participation not just of the Ravalomanana and Rajoelina camps, but also the two former presidents, Ratsiraka and Zafy. These four leaders established themselves and their followers as self-styled 'movements', a development which was accepted by the international mediators. In part, the involvement of the former presidents represented an acknowledgement by the international community that the current crisis had its origins in previous cyclical conflicts and constitutional breaches.

The second phase of the negotiations took place from 20 to 22 May 2009 and led to agreements amongst the four movements about the holding of elections as soon as possible as well as the establishment of a wide range of transitional structures, including a High Authority of the Transition (HAT), a National Council of Reconciliation,

an Economic and Social Council, a government to be headed by a prime minister, a Congress of the Transition, a Committee of Reflection on Defence and Security, a high court of the transition, and an independent electoral commission amongst others. The issue of amnesty was also broached.

Further complexity was added to the negotiations by the wide range of international organisations involved, including the International Organisation of la Francophonie, the AU, SADC, the Indian Ocean Commission, the European Union and the UN, which were jointly grouped as the International Contact Group (ICG). On 20 June SADC appointed the former president of Mozambique, and an accomplished mediator, Joaquim Chissano, as the principal mediator of the negotiations (although the AU remained formally in charge of the negotiations, thus leading to some tensions between SADC, the AU and other international actors). Chissano convened a meeting in Maputo, Mozambique from 5 to 8 August 2009 where the four movements met in face-to-face negotiations. They agreed to a 15 month transition process and a government of national unity with a president, a prime minister, three deputy prime ministers, 28 ministers, a legislative body with a higher chamber of 65 members and a 'congress of the transition' with 258 members, as well as the other transition bodies agreed to in May. Rajoelina returned to Madagascar in triumph after the agreement with his position as president of the transition virtually agreed; it was decided that Ravalomanana would only be able to return to the country when 'favourable political and security conditions' were in place (*Charte de la Transition*, 12 August 2009). Furthermore, it was agreed that only the president of the transition, and not other members of the transitional government, could present himself as a presidential candidate at the end of the transitional period. All this added up to a strong probability that Rajoelina would be able to consolidate himself in power.

The optimism that accompanied the Maputo agreement soon evaporated as it became increasingly evident that Rajoelina thought he could go it alone and disagreements

arose over who would fill which positions. A second conference held in Maputo, which aimed amongst other things to allocate posts in the transitional structures, fell apart without agreement. Rajoelina then went on to unilaterally declare a transitional government, in which he secured some support from members of the previous administration (including the former minister of defence) but which was widely rejected by the international community as not being representative and being a betrayal of the Maputo agreements. A game of brinkmanship ensued, with Rajoelina arguing that he would stick to the Maputo terms, only if the international community removed sanctions: a position rejected by all international actors.

A further twist took place in a third round of negotiations held in Addis Ababa in October, when the three opposition groups agreed that Rajoelina could remain as head of the transitional government provided he did not stand in the planned presidential elections, and two 'co-presidents' were appointed from the opposition. A formal agreement on the transitional arrangements was signed by the four parties on 7 November, with consensus being reached on the main leadership posts, although the issue of interim cabinet posts remained disputed.

This temporary accord was again thrown into doubt in December, when the opposition parties unilaterally appointed a unity government after a further meeting in Maputo, in the absence of Rajoelina. He retaliated by preventing their return to Madagascar and pledging to go ahead with parliamentary elections on 20 March 2010 and rejecting further international involvement. Thus did the posturing and positioning ahead of the planned elections continue.

Causes and the nature of the conflict

There was general consensus amongst most of those interviewed that the long-term causes of the conflict can be traced back to the post-independence history of Madagascar, which saw long periods of autocratic and authoritarian rule, periodic crises involving military

intervention in politics (in 1971, 1991 and 2001/2) and a failure to establish a consolidated democracy or effective governance. The general conditions of poverty and marginalisation were also identified as factors, and this was seen to have worsened under Ravalomanana's rule. Respondents were not willing to identify ethnic or regional divisions as underlying causes, although some pointed to tensions between the coastal region and the highlands, especially Antananarivo, and that to some extent this corresponded to ethnic differences between the minority merina population, based in the highlands, and the cotiers, those of predominately African origin and mostly resident in the coastal areas. However, these divisions were not generally seen as the cause of the crisis.

The more immediate cause was widely perceived – including by some former Ravalomanana supporters – to be failures of governance by the Ravalomanana administration, perceptions that he had used his position as president to benefit his extensive business interests (through control of regulations, contracts etc and by monopolisation) and by an essentially authoritarian and capricious management style. Certainly Ravalomanana seemed to have alienated many of his senior colleagues and little room was left for political dissent, with parliament marginalised and decisions increasingly taken in a centralised manner by the presidency. This was not helped by the fact that widespread perceptions remained that his presidency was not legitimate in the first place.

A second important factor was the alienation of the military and the security structures as a whole. When the CAPSAT mutiny took place, although it was carried out by only one unit (consisting of 500-600 personnel out of a total security establishment of around 25 000), is it noticeable that neither the military, nor the police, nor the gendarmerie were willing to intervene in support of Ravalomanana. Some of the factors given for this alienation included Ravalomanana's perceived favouritism in senior promotions and his disdainful treatment of senior officers; his attempts to reign in military privileges; attempts at security sector reform

which were driven by a senior German advisor with little concern about local sensitivities (for example downgrading the navy to a coastguard and merging the powerful gendarmerie into the police); the failure to address chronic problems in the military including a lack of facilities such as accommodation and the top-heavy structure of the armed forces; the use of the security forces to physically protect Ravalomanana's business interests; and simmering resentments arising from the 2001/2 crisis, which had resulted in the imprisonment of some military personnel from outside the capital.

Perhaps the most important immediate cause, however, was simply personal animosity between Rajoelina and Ravalomanana, and a struggle for power between the two – although most respondents indicated that they did not believe that Rajoelina had expected to be able to seize power and did not have a master-plan for this: he simply grabbed the opportunity when it arose as a result of a chain of circumstances. Nevertheless, as mayor of Antananarivo, Rajoelina had orchestrated a challenge to the central government, precipitated by the closure of his television station, which included two months of street protests. Many observers also believed that the competition between the two men was fuelled by their competing business interests, and the advantage that they could gain by fusing political power with business.

While not a cause, there was an international dimension to the crisis. France has traditionally been the major international influence in Madagascar. Ravalomanana, who has extensive business interests in Southern Africa, was seen as steering the country away from the French sphere, emphasising stronger links with the USA, South Africa, and the East. While no respondents believed that the French orchestrated the events of 17 March 2009, it is evident that the French government was quick to work with Rajoelina, and gave him some protection at crucial periods leading up to and immediately after the coup. Although France does not officially recognise Rajoelina's de facto government and is publicly even-handed, most respondents (from all sides of the spectrum) believed that France has played a behind-the-scenes role in support of

Rajoelina (Ravalomanana has gone further by labelling him a 'puppet' of France). This may have been motivated by the belief that it was the best solution to prevent the country from sliding into chaos and civil war, but most respondents also thought that the intention was to restore and shore up French influence and business interests in the country.

Actors and their interests

As indicated above, it is not evident that there were major political, social, ethnic, regional or other divisions between the Rajoelina and Ravalomanana camps. Both are ethnically merinas (highlanders) and although as noted above there are ethnic divisions in Madagascar between the merinas and the cotiers, this potential conflict fortunately does not seem to have been exploited in the conflict between the two men. Their competition was based on a power-struggle and personal animosities, and to a lesser extent on competing business interests.

Since it has gained power, it appears that the Rajoelina camp's principal aim has been to retain it, and to keep Ravalomanana from being restored to his position as president. The power-grab is justified as a popular uprising against a regime that had violated the constitution, and which was carried out with the support of major national institutions, including the security forces. The Rajoelina camp, supported by the security forces, also believes that an attempted return to power by Ravalomanana would plunge the country into chaos and perhaps civil war, and it certainly fears that such a turn of events would expose it (and the mutineers in the defence force) to prosecution, if not persecution. It will therefore probably do everything it can to prevent Ravalomanana even from returning to Madagascar, especially, according to several informants, as he retains quite high levels of support and substantial financial means, and could pose a threat to the Rajoelina movement should free and fair elections be held.

To retain effective power, however, Rajoelina needs to actually legitimise his rule through securing domestic and international recognition (the latter is proving

difficult as evinced in particular by his failure to be given permission to address the UN General Assembly) and restoring the proper functioning of government. This will require the restoration of intergovernmental aid on which the Madagascar government is dependent, especially from the EU. In short, without securing international recognition, it is doubtful if the Rajoelina administration can survive over the long term, hence requiring his participation in international negotiations and a willingness to make compromise agreements. This does not mean, of course, that a degree of brinkmanship or threats to 'go it alone' are excluded as strategies. Indeed, after agreement was reached in Maputo in August 2009, it became increasingly clear that Rajoelina did not actually want to accept the terms, feeling that he had compromised too much, and repeatedly seeking ways of going it alone. One of the difficulties his camp faces is that there are serious internal divisions in the alliance of forces that brought him to power, which are increasingly evident, and it is uncertain that he would be able to win power in a free and fair election, in the light of a weakening support base.

There are remarkably strong parallels between the way Ravalomanana came to power and the way Rajoelina did: both were mayors of the capital who used populist mobilisation in Antananarivo, including street demonstrations and strikes, to force the issue of their accession to the presidency; both were embroiled in complex judicial and political manoeuvres and international negotiations over a period of some months while their status was contested; both presented themselves as 'new brooms' sweeping away the old corrupt order; both sought strategic alliances with the military at crucial junctures. To an extent, both are genuine reformers: Ravalomanana was seen as bringing business principles to a country which had previously pursued bureaucratic-socialist ways; Rajoelina presented himself (as Ravalomanana had done earlier) as a 'Young Turk' ready to change the old ways. As noted earlier, there are also no discernable ideological differences between the two. Both men also have a vested interest in securing internationally-guaranteed amnesties, to

prevent any prosecution for their actions taken during the period of transition, as provided for in the Maputo agreement.

The objective of the Ravalomanana movement was in the first instance to restore Ravalomanana to the presidency: this he sought to do by appealing to SADC and to a lesser extent the AU and other international actors, in the hope or expectation that they would act decisively to remove Rajoelina. When it became evident that these expectations would be dashed Ravalomanana reportedly explored the possibility of using a mercenary force to bring about his return (ironically, the same tactic had been explored by Ratsiraka in his standoff with Ravalomanana). Whether these reports are accurate is unclear; it is almost certainly the case that the logistics involved in such a venture would have proved extremely difficult, and since the substantial security structures in Madagascar would undoubtedly have fought off such an operation, the consequences would have been dire.

During the negotiations, Ravalomanana and his supporters appeared to take a longer-term view, hoping that in due course new elections would be forced and he would be able to return to Madagascar and regain the presidency through electoral means. A key element in Ravalomanana's calculations was, as always, his considerable business interests: following his overthrow his businesses were severely disrupted – they were targeted by demonstrators, and his inability to continue combining government with business impacted severely on his empire. Some respondents indicated, however, that they believed that Ravalomanana might eventually realise that his return to Madagascar, at least as a public personality, would become untenable and that he would concentrate on running his businesses by remote control and internationalising them, particularly in Southern Africa.

The interests of the other two main players in the Maputo talks, Albert Zafy and Didier Ratsiraka, the former presidents, and their 'movements' are a little more difficult to decipher. Ratsiraka threw his lot with

Rajoelina at the time of the transition, but appears to have fallen out with his camp subsequently. Ratsiraka was also prominent in promoting a general amnesty for all previous offences, in an effort to heal the wounds not just of the immediate past but of the crises that had afflicted Madagascar since independence.

The military is an important actor in the crisis. While it does not want to seize power for itself, it has made clear what its bottom lines are. In particular, it will not accept anyone other than Rajoelina as the transitional president, and will not accept political interference in military structures. In this regard, it has made it clear that it rejects Article 22 of the Maputo agreement, which aims to set up a Committee for Reflection on National Defence and Security, which would consist of two representatives from each movement. The military argues that it held its own reconciliation conference shortly after the coup, and worked out a way forward, including the release of imprisoned military personnel dating from the Ravalomanana-Ratsiraka conflict and addressing issues of cohesion and unity within the armed forces. It has made it clear – supported by informants in this study – that it will act against any perceived attempt to interfere with its internal workings, or to implement Article 22, or to replace Rajoelina as head of state.

In general terms, the overwhelming interest of the international community has been to prevent a decline into civil conflict or civil war in Madagascar, and return the country to normality and stability - a position that one informant described as 'peace at all costs'. That said, there have clearly been differences of approach between the international actors. The French, as noted earlier in this study, are close to Rajoelina, although they purport to be even-handed. They are interested above all in maintaining stability in Madagascar and preventing any slide towards civil conflict, with the aim of protecting their extensive economic and political interests. The USA was an important backer of Ravalomanana, viewing him as a moderniser who was introducing free-market principles and as an ally of the US – under his administration construction was embarked on a huge new embassy,

emblematic of US support and renewed interest in the island. Like the EU and France, the US withdrew non-humanitarian aid after the seizure of power by Rajoelina.

The South Africans are increasingly important players although they have only limited economic interests in the country, but these are growing as a result of South African participation in international development contracts. South Africa is perceived by most respondents as having played a fairly neutral role, much less militant in its support for Ravalomanana than Swaziland for example, and seems to have moderated SADC's positions (see below). Like most international actors, South Africa has not imposed sanctions, but has terminated co-operation agreements and is unwilling to sign any agreements with the High Transitional Authority. South Africa was somewhat demonised by the Rajoelina camp in the early part of the crisis, with accusations being made that South African 'mercenaries' had been assisting Ravalomanana and had been seen stirring up the anti-Rajoelina crowds (the South African embassy in Antananarivo insists that only two South Africans were present at the presidential palace, working officially in installing security protection systems). Although Ravalomanana was subsequently accused of attempting to raise a mercenary force in South Africa, it seems highly unlikely given the South African government's extremely strong stand against mercenarism, that any such plots would have been even contemplated.

Other SADC governments seem to have even more limited interests in Madagascar (indeed, the only SADC country other than South Africa that retains an embassy in Madagascar is Mauritius, which has not been a major player in the crisis). Swaziland was drawn into the crisis mainly as a result of the fact that it chaired the SADC OPDSC at the time – and the regime of King Mswati III seems to have taken a strong position in support of Ravalomanana more out of regime solidarity than anything else – while Mozambique was drawn in also because of its position on the OPDSC Troika as incoming chair, and because of the role allocated to its former president, Chissano, as chief mediator. It also probably

also detected an opportunity for consolidating its regional position as a peacemaker.

There have also been important divisions within the complex array of organisations within the ICG, especially between the UN (through the representative of the secretary-general, Tiedebe Drame) and the AU Commission Chair (Ablassé Ouedraogo) on the one hand, and the OIF the other (Edem Kodjo), with the AU and OIF tilting towards Rajoelina while the UN took a more neutral perspective. SADC was initially party to these disagreements, by taking a much firmer position than the other international bodies against the unconstitutional change of government, although it later came more into line.

The role of SADC

As noted above, SADC countries (with the exception of South Africa) have few interests in Madagascar and there is only very limited diplomatic representation. At the same time, there is an almost complete lack of knowledge within Madagascar about SADC, and the Rajoelina camp likes to project the country's involvement in the regional community as a personal project of Ravalomanana, carried out for business reasons (with some justification). Despite this, SADC was involved at an early stage in the crisis, although it took it some time to make any sustained interventions.

The foreign minister of Swaziland, Lufto Dlamini, visited Madagascar in February 2009 as the crisis began to unfold, but had nothing much to show for it. The day after the unconstitutional change of government on 17 March, Zambia called for Madagascar's suspension from the bloc, while the OPDSC met on 19 March and took a position of refusing to recognise Rajoelina, indicating that it would consider imposing sanctions if the constitutional order was not restored. The following day, the AU's PSC followed suit. According to the chair of the Council, Bruno Nongoma Zidouemba, the Burkina Faso ambassador, 'what occurred in Madagascar is an unconstitutional change of government ... very quickly,

we will consider taking sanctions against the authorities of Madagascar. It can be interpreted as a coup.' (*Mail and Guardian* 20.3.2009). At the extraordinary summit of the OPDSC held on 31 March, Madagascar was suspended from membership, with the executive secretary of SADC, Thomaz Salamao, urging Rajoelina 'to vacate the office of the president as a matter of urgency, paving the way for unconditional reinstatement of President Ravalomanana'. (*Mail and Guardian* 31.3.2009). Sanctions were again threatened, and more controversially, the option of a military intervention using SADCBRIG was mooted by King Mswati, and logistics, such as the provision of transport aircraft by Angola were discussed. This came as something of a shock to most Madagascans, and was exploited by Rajoelina, who whipped up nationalist fervour around the issue. Indeed, military respondents in this study divulged that the armed forces were actively preparing to fight back against any SADCBRIG intervention – certainly the consequences, both politically and militarily, would have been disastrous for SADC, although in reality SADCBRIG was never in a position to carry out such an operation and there was no political authorisation for it. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) also supported the option of military intervention to restore democracy, in a statement adopted at a summit held in Zimbabwe and chaired by King Mswati III of Swaziland. The irony of the authoritarian regime of Mswati adopting such a position, and in crisis-ridden Zimbabwe, appeared to be lost on the participants.

Ravalomanana also descended on Swaziland, to lobby for support, military or otherwise, and at the end of March, a summit of SADC itself affirmed its earlier position of supporting his reinstatement and suspending Madagascar from membership. Rajoelina responded to these developments by announcing that Madagascar would quit SADC. The former prime minister of Swaziland, Absalom Themba Dlamini, arrived in Madagascar on 11 May to convey SADC's position to Rajoelina. However, mediation was under way under auspices of the UN and the AU, and Dlamini realised that SADC's position was both untenable in terms of realities on the ground,

and out of phase with that of other international actors, and he returned to Swaziland on 29 May, apparently urging a rethink. A further delegation, representing the Organ Troika, visited Madagascar at the end of April. In the meantime, the ICG had been formally constituted, involving SADC but under the formal leadership of the AU.

On 20 June SADC held another extraordinary summit at heads of state level to consider what to do about Madagascar. Here it moderated its original strong position, and appointed Joaquim Chissano, assisted by a team of mediators, to try to reach a compromise position leading to new elections. The emphasis thus moved away from the restoration of Ravalomanana towards an approach of all-party dialogue within the framework of the ICG. This eventually led to the convening of the Maputo meeting from 5 to 8 August (see above), where the framework for elaborate transitional arrangements, leading to elections in 15 months time, were agreed by the four Madagascan 'movements'. It was really only after this that the spectre of a SADC 'invasion' was laid to rest and that SADC was perceived by most actors as being even-handed and in line with the ICG as a whole. As more than one informant put it, the appointment of Chissano 'changed everything' and SADC was perceived to be acting more even-handedly – and King Mswati played an increasingly less important role as Mozambique began to prepare for its chairing of the OPDSC through the annual process of rotation (which took place at the SADC summit in early September). Most respondents indicated to the author that subsequent to Chissano's appointment they could detect little difference between the positions adopted by SADC and that of the other actors in the ICG. Most accepted that SADC had a leading role to play given the chief mediator function of Chissano, even if the AU was officially the lead agency. However, a further crisis broke out when SADC states, acting as a bloc, prevented Rajoelina from addressing the UN General Assembly at the end of September 2009. This sparked an angry threat by the Rajoelina government to refuse visas to officials from SADC states.

Prospects and recommendations

At the time the research was carried out, before the failure of the second Maputo conference and the unilateral declaration of a transitional 'unity government' by Rajoelina in September 2009, there was cautious optimism amongst most respondents that the Maputo agreement might work, although there was general concern (which proved to be correct) that the parties would be unable to agree on a division of the spoils in terms of appointing personnel to lead the transitional structures. Some respondents also thought that the Rajoelina 'movement' (with *de facto* support from some of the ICG partners) was preparing a scenario in which Ravalomanana would be prevented from returning to contest elections in Madagascar. There appear to be some players in the international community (France, the OIF perhaps) who would be willing to accept the exclusion of Ravalomanana from the envisaged elections as the price for peace. Some scepticism was expressed about the cumbersome nature of the transitional arrangements and the likelihood of confusion, contestation and inefficiency as a result, and some respondents indicated that a transitional government of neutral technocrats is what is required rather than one of representatives of the four 'movements'.

The international community does have trump card to play, in that it is difficult to envisage that the Rajoelina regime can survive without international aid. No doubt it hopes to play off one faction of the ICG against another but providing the international community retains a reasonably united front, this is a game that simply cannot work in the medium- to long-term. Rajoelina's regime may calculate, however, that it can hang on until the proposed elections in 2010, in the face of a weakened and divided opposition (several previous stalwarts of the Ravalomanana 'movement' joined the 'unity' government unilaterally established by Rajoelina in September).

Whatever the case, a freeze on international aid by the EU, US and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) amongst

others is likely to continue hurting the Madagascar economy, and the US has another ace to play in the form of suspending Madagascar from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) which underpins its extensive textile industry. Nor do any of the developments discussed above actually mean that the Maputo agreement is dead: it remains formally the framework agreed by all parties, supported by the ICG. Rajoelina is more in the business of 'rationing' it by implementing the articles that he sees as serving in his favour, and delaying its implementation, rather than tearing it up.

Even if the envisaged 15-month transition phase leads to elections, however, there is no guarantee that the transitional institutions will have sufficient time and resources to provide a firm basis for free and fair elections. Much will depend on the willingness and ability of international actors to put in resources. In this regard SADC's resources are very limited, although it does have increasing experience in election-monitoring. Some respondents indicated that they feared that although the international monitors would most likely be able ensure the integrity of elections in urban areas, the same could not be said of remote rural areas, where one or another of the 'movements' would dominate and be able to manipulate the electoral process through patronage, corruption and cheating.

The response of the international community to the crisis has been to secure peace (perhaps not at all costs but at some cost) and to this extent it has largely succeeded in preventing a slide into more widespread conflict, although the Malagasy people and their institutions can also take credit for that.

SADC – and the AU – initially took the strongest position on the unconstitutional change of government, but eventually SADC painted itself into a corner and marginalised itself, in that it was out of sync with its international partners, while the situation on the ground (especially the position of the armed forces) prevented a mere return to the status quo. However, this does not make the issue go away. The fact of the matter is that if

SADC and the AU are not able to draw a line in the sand that prevents unconstitutional changes of government, there is a danger that old African practices of coups and the like will continue. Already the AU has backtracked by allowing some regimes that came to power by unconstitutional means to re-legitimise themselves by the simple expedient of holding elections, and a similar approach to Madagascar would further consolidate this tendency.

It is also not clear that SADC took a principled position, or whether its support for Ravalomanana was informed more by solidarity between heads of state, who form a kind of informal club at the core of SADC; in other words, 'regime solidarity'. There was a widespread belief amongst informants, partly shared by the author, that what motivated SADC's apparently principled stand was mostly a fear of contagion: that in other countries, populist leaders might emerge with support from key security institutions to overthrow existing regimes.

With regard to SADC, there has been a palpable lack of capacity to support the mediation process. It has been proposed that a secretariat be established in Antananarivo to assist the transition, but perhaps more importantly, SADC's rather ad hoc approach to mediation should be replaced by a more institutionalised approach. Certainly, the secretariat of SADC played relatively little role in the negotiations, which were left to political heads, with all the problems associated with this (for example, the personal position of the autocratic King Mswati III and his lack of credibility as an advocate for democracy). The establishment of a dedicated, professional, full time secretariat to assist in tracking crises, working out possible solutions and supporting mediation or negotiation efforts would be an important step forward. There was also little if no involvement of civil society in the process. A professional mediation unit could assist in involving civil society organisations which could contribute a wide range of skills, expertise and credibility to the process, which was otherwise the preserve of the 'club of heads of states' and their ministers or senior officials. This, however, needs to be

seen in the context of a generally weak civil society in Southern Africa, and its almost complete absence in Madagascar, apart from the churches.

Nor did SADC cover itself in glory in the way it handled the possible use of force and the deployment of SADCBRIG. The brigade, with its civilian, policing as well as military standby arrangements, constitutes a potentially important instrument in the resolution of regional conflicts, but it needs to be a credible agency and the political processes behind its use, or the threat of its use, need to be clarified. Considerable progress has been made with developing the military frameworks but little thought has been given to the political decision-making entailed in its use in a multi-dimensional not just narrow military way: King Mswati and his allies in SADC seem to have merely taken a knee-jerk position of a military response. A further problem here is that there seems to be little understanding of, or involvement in, SADCBRIG in Madagascar. To the extent that the Madagascar security forces have participated in peace missions training this seems mostly to have been through the French RECAMP programme.

SADC should also give some thought as to what role it could play in the future development of Madagascar and the consolidation of democracy in that country. Some respondents, for example, indicated that the regional organisation could play a role in security sector reform and the consolidation of democracy. In this regard, the policy frameworks that SADC has developed, including the elections guidelines, will be important instruments. SADC itself can play an important role in the supervision and monitoring of elections. While the integrity and stability of the armed forces is fragile and important to maintain (on the basis of the 'reconciliation' agreement reached by the armed forces themselves) this does not obviate the need for a significant programme of security sector reform, in particular to ensure that democratic political control over the armed forces is secured. In this, SADC, or member states of SADC such as South Africa, Namibia or Mozambique, could also play an important role (there was considerable interest in training

programmes put on in 2008 by the Southern African Defence and Security Management Network (SADSEM)).

Breaking the cycle of repeated constitutional crises and violations will require the development and consolidation of much deeper forms of democracy, including the development of sustainable political parties based on principles of transparency and accountability, as well as the consolidation of civil society. With the notable exception of the Madagascar council of churches (especially the Archbishop of Antananarivo), civil society appears to have been unable to play any role in mediating or at least mitigating the crisis.

SADC has an important role to play in all these transitions and transformations. To do this, it has itself to strengthen and consolidate its institutional capacities, and to be able to mobilise actors within the community's member states that have undergone kindred transformations from authoritarianism to democracy. There is an assumption that once a country has engaged in a democratic transition there is a linear process to consolidate democracy. The recent crisis in Madagascar has demonstrated (once again) that this is untrue, that reversals – or cycles – of repeated violation, are possible if not probable.

Many Malagasy people – at least based on the submissions of the informants in this study – regard the intervention of SADC and other external actors as violating Madagascar's sovereignty. This is true. However, sovereignty has not been 'god-given' for some centuries: it has to be earned through support of the citizens through institutionalised democratic means, as well as the acceptance not only by other sovereign states but by multinational institutions. Pre-eminent amongst these is the UN, but subsidiary regional organisations – in this case the AU and SADC – play a vital role. If SADC is to find the strength to deal with endemic, cyclic, systemic crises like that in Madagascar, it really needs to improve its institutional, conceptual and mobilising potentials. First it needs to actually bring Madagascar into the SADC community. Then there are thin lines between painting oneself into a corner, having the capacity to

actually engage with realities on the ground and dealing with sometimes converging international interests, and maintaining and promoting common principles of good governance.

THE ZIMBABWE CRISIS

Background to the crisis

There is a background of political conflict in post-independence Zimbabwe, initially based on contestation between the Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African National Union (ZAPU-PF), the two competing liberation movements, which were differentiated to some extent along ethnic and territorial lines. The principal victors of both the liberation war and the independence elections of 1980, ZANU-PF was bound by constitutional limitations set at the Lancaster House negotiations, and adopted a policy of national reconciliation with the white population. However, efforts to integrate the military forces of ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU rapidly fell apart and armed dissidents began to operate in the PF-ZAPU stronghold of Matabeleland (more limited integration with the former Rhodesian forces was carried out successfully). President Robert Mugabe turned to North Korea for military support and unleashed ZANU-PF-dominated military units (notably the 5th Brigade) in Matabeleland. Conflict reached high levels during the mid-1980s and according to most estimates thousands of people were killed as a consequence of political violence. The conflict ended with a unity accord between the two parties in December 1987, which however eventually took the form of the de facto absorption of most elements of PF-ZAPU in ZANU-PF. With the decline of the white Rhodesian vote (and seats in parliament guaranteed under the Lancaster House constitution) Zimbabwe became de facto almost a one-party state. A growing political factor, however, were the 'War Veterans' – mainly but far from entirely disgruntled former combatants of ZANU-PF who demanded welfare and other assistance from the state, including land reform.

The current economic and political crisis may be traced to February 2000, when President Robert Mugabe lost a referendum on a new constitution. This formed the first major recent challenge to his rule and that of his

party, ZANU-PF, and followed hard on the formation of an opposition alliance, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), headed by Morgan Tsvangirai.

While elections in Zimbabwe had been almost completely dominated by ZANU-PF after the resolution of the Matabeleland crisis, the parliamentary election following the lost referendum, held in June 2000, was both closely contested and marked, according to international observers, by significant electoral irregularities. A subsequent presidential poll held in March 2002 was characterised by violence and, according to most international observers, by vote-rigging. Crucially, however, many African countries, including South Africa, declared them legitimate (the South African electoral observer team bizarrely declared that they were not free and fair, but nevertheless legitimate). One of the few dissenting African voices was the SADC Parliamentary Forum, although the SADC Secretariat approved the elections. All this took place against the background of a paroxysm of land reform, where virtually all of the white commercial farmers, who continued to dominate the economy more than 20 years after independence, were stripped of their land amidst heightened nationalist rhetoric. In turn, this resulted in an economic collapse, as inflation and joblessness spiralled.

These developments led to a significant involvement by the international community, which however did not speak with one voice. SADC appointed President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa as its principal go-between and he played a prominent part in making sure that the Mugabe no longer continued as the Chair of the OPDSC at the SADC Summit in August 2001. Beyond this, however, Mbeki and SADC took little action, repeatedly declaring support for Mugabe and, importantly, characterising the crisis as one of land reform rather than governance, thus playing into the nationalist rhetoric of ZANU-PF. The EU and the US imposed 'sanctions' (according to ZANU-PF) or 'restrictive measures' (according to the MDC), not so much against the country, as against its leadership, and a number of other countries (initially Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Switzerland) followed suit: in later

years, these were progressively, although not massively, increased in scope.

The following years (until 2009) followed a common pattern, with minor variations: economic collapse with hyper-inflation; political stalemate; increasing divisions within the MDC and ZANU-PF; and increasing, although variable, international isolation. Mugabe faced growing challenges to his rule within his party, resulting in purges and imprisonments. The MDC had its own internal challenges mainly due to personality clashes. This led to a split in the party in 2005. The smaller group is now headed by Arthur Mutambara. As neither of the groups was willing to give up the name MDC they are now referred to as MDC-T (Tsvangirai's group) and MDC-M (Mutambara's group). Mugabe resorted to Maoist-type tactics of passing over the party and inciting militia, first the 'War Veterans' – who were never really under ZANU-PF control – and then youthful 'Green Bombers', both of which functioned like pale reflections of the Chinese Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. Tsvangirai and his followers were repeatedly put on trial (to the partial credit of the judiciary most the charges were dropped); further local elections in 2003 and 2004 were marked by violence and intimidation.

In the meantime international involvement continued, to little effect. The British under Tony Blair had initially led the charge against Harare, no doubt in large part because of concern about the redistribution of white-owned farms and the effect the crisis might have had on the large number of UK nationals resident in the country, and the US followed suit. However, both countries met a blank wall and eventually agreed to pass the baton to Thabo Mbeki (as George W Bush called him, his 'point person' on Zimbabwe). In August 2004, SADC adopted a protocol governing elections, specifying a raft of criteria including freedom of association, of the media and of campaigning. While this was not specifically aimed at Zimbabwe, it clearly had import. It did not prevent SADC from declaring the 2005 elections free and fair, on the basis of reports from its electoral observers. SADC opposed external sanctions, calling on

the restrictive measures adopted by Western countries to be dropped, and it continued to attempt to mediate to find a resolution of the ongoing impasse: in March 2007 Mbeki was officially appointed as principal mediator by a SADC emergency summit in Dar es Salaam, a role unofficially recognised by the rest of the international community, although the MDC expressed doubts about his neutrality.

While the economy continued to disintegrate and the stand-off between the MDC and ZANU-PF continued, the next round of presidential elections took place in March 2008, coinciding with parliamentary and local government elections for the first time (the parliamentary elections had been brought forward). These took place under a different set of rules than previously, thanks in large part to SADC efforts, which had secured greater transparency and accountability in the elections procedures. The MDC-T accused the state run media of bias, and handouts and other mechanisms aimed to secure the rural vote for ZANU-PF.

Despite this, the elections were carried out in a relatively freer and fairer environment than before. Most observer teams declared them to be free and fair - although invitations to observers had been carefully vetted and those from Western countries excluded. But the process soon ran into a crisis when electoral authorities failed to release the results for almost five weeks – during this period there was feverish speculation that Mugabe had lost the vote, and would be willing to step down, only reportedly to be persuaded by his generals not to – or alternatively that time was needed to tamper with the election results. The electoral commission eventually declared that Tsvangirai had won 47.9% of the vote against Mugabe's 43.2% and that the MDC-T and MDC-M had won a combined majority in the House of Assembly. With no party officially achieving a 50% majority in the presidential election (although the MDC claimed that it had actually done so, but the results had been fixed), a run-off was scheduled for 27 June. This was the signal for a renewed campaign of violence and political intimidation, causing Tsvangirai to withdraw

from the process. The previously apparently united position of SADC began to show cracks, with Botswana and Zambia breaking ranks and condemning the conduct of the elections.

Given the closeness of the result, and the fact that the MDC-T had in effect won, the emphasis later shifted to the establishment of a national unity government as way out of the impasse, as it was evident to most observers that ZANU-PF would be unwilling to concede power. Under Mbeki's leadership, a series of negotiations ensued amidst the total collapse of the economy (with inflation growing to 231 million per cent in July 2008, at which point it became impossible to continue measuring it). These resulted in September 2008 in a Global Political Agreement (GPA) which set out a broad framework for a power-sharing agreement. Tsvangirai was appointed prime minister with Mutambara as his deputy, while Mugabe retained the presidency. A kind of dual executive was established through setting up a council of ministers chaired by Tsvangirai alongside a cabinet chaired by Mugabe, and key executive posts were divided between the three parties – although ZANU-PF managed to retain control over most of the more sensitive posts, including justice, foreign affairs, land and defence. A joint National Security Council (NSC) was set up, but it failed to meet for many months. The GPA also provided for the writing a new constitution, but this process was also slow to get off to a start, amidst chaotic contestations regarding representation. On the economic front, however, things improved rapidly during 2009. Hyperinflation was arrested (even reversed) by the simple expedient of abandoning the worthless Zimbabwe dollar, and civil servants started to receive rudimentary salaries. However, the MDC-T, which was responsible for most of the economic functions, failed to secure significant inward investment, as donors argued that the political situation was still too fragile to lift restrictions on loans and grants.

By October 2009 the Inclusive Government (IG) was in deep trouble, and the MDC-T suspended its participation in joint structures, although it did not withdraw from

the agreement per se (and returned to cabinet in mid-November). The MDC-T was insisting on the replacement of the attorney-general and reserve bank governor, and also protested the arrest on treason and terrorism charges of its deputy agriculture minister, Roy Bennett. For its part ZANU-PF argued that the MDC-T was not meeting its side of the bargain by securing the lifting of targeted restrictive measures by the West (although the MDC-T was hardly in a position to do so). An emergency SADC summit was held in Maputo, Mozambique on 5 November, and the parties were given a deadline of 30 days to resolve outstanding issues and get the IG back on track. While the deadline passed without the substantive issues being addressed, negotiations continued, now under the office new South African president, Jacob Zuma.

Causes and the nature of the conflict

Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 was the result of historical compromises made at the Lancaster House Conference. One of the unresolved issues from the conference was the question of land, with a mere 6 000 white farmers being left in possession of 40 per cent of all agricultural land, being responsible for three-quarters of agricultural output and employing a third of the wage-earning labour force (Meredith 2005: 618). This situation was left almost unchanged until the early 1990s, when the ZANU-PF government began a process of land redistribution. This was initially supported by British aid but the assistance was cut off after evidence of corruption in the process.

The first decade of Zimbabwe's independence was marked by economic growth and rapidly improving delivery of education, health and other social services. However, in the 1990s the country was persuaded to enter into a structural adjustment agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the economic effects of which led to growing alienation of workers and poor Zimbabweans and increasing unemployment, while the War Veterans became increasingly insistent in their demands for redress. In 1997 Mugabe capitulated to their demands, which cost the country an estimated

US\$400 million (off budget), causing a currency collapse and plunging the economy into a crisis from which it has never recovered. The economic crisis was exacerbated by Zimbabwe's military intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1998 to support the regime of Laurent Kabila which was under threat from Uganda and Rwanda. This operation, dubbed 'Sovereign Legitimacy', was enormously costly (press reports estimated it at US\$3 million per day) and was funded off budget.

By the end of the 1990s, the economic crisis had intensified, and an increasingly militant labour movement (the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions) which had been supportive of ZANU-PF until the end of the 1980s, began to exert an independent political voice, eventually to form the opposition MDC. In short, multiple political crises during the 1990s placed extreme stresses on the economy and in turn led to the rise of a 'social movement' based on organised labour, in the form of the MDC. The government responded to these challenges by raising the tempo of its nationalist rhetoric, using increasingly repressive tactics to try to assert control, and rapidly speeding up land redistribution, partly in the hope of regaining popularity (although it should be noted that the MDC also supported land redistribution). All this in turn led to international pressure from Western countries on issues of human rights in particular, and declining inward investment, while Zimbabwe's defaulting on its debt servicing to the IMF led to the disengagement of international financial institutions, further deepening the economic crisis.

While ZANU-PF likes to focus on the land issue and western pressures as the source of Zimbabwe's woes, it is clear that failures of economic management and of governance, leading to social alienation and dislocation, are at the root of the problems. In essence, there is now a political struggle for power between the MDC-T, which is built on the trade union movement, and ZANU-PF, the victor of the liberation war and the first independence elections. There is a strong demographic element to this divide, with ZANU-PF maintaining support mostly in rural areas and from the older generation who have

strong memories of settler colonialism and the liberation struggle. The MDC-T has a clear power base in the urban centres but is making more and more headway in the rural areas where it defeated ZANU-PF in many constituencies in the 2008 elections. Time is therefore not on ZANU-PF's side as the voting population gets progressively younger. It is also increasingly unable to exploit the land issue, as redistribution has been virtually completed. On the other hand, ZANU-PF has the enormous advantages of incumbency and as a result of the politicisation of the state and the security services is able and willing to wield these instruments against the opposition, and to use patronage networks within the state to gain support.

Actors and their interests

The two main political parties, ZANU-PF and the MDC, are the main actors in the drama, with the splinter MDC-M playing a minor role. At the centre of the struggle is the conflict over control of the state and its resources: given the decline of the private sector, patronage through the state remains the principal leverage for wealth.

Perspectives on the nature of the crisis differ dramatically between the two sides, with the MDC focusing on governance issues, while ZANU-PF blames Western "sanctions". ZANU-PF still sees itself as a liberation movement and as a target for Western, especially British, imperialism and racism. Western countries, so the argument goes, want regime change in Zimbabwe because President Mugabe and ZANU-PF have dared to challenge their hegemony internationally and have threatened their economic interests and the interests of their 'kith and kin' by taking the land from former white settlers. The structural adjustment reforms of the 1990s are seen as the thin end of the wedge of regime change, the agenda for which slipped into full gear once the land reform process got under way. There is also a perception that the West wanted autonomous Zimbabwean independence and nationalism to fail lest it be seen as an example for post-apartheid South Africa to follow, and the West resented Zimbabwe's role in countering the interventions of Western-supported Rwanda and

Uganda in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the late 1990s. The script is that Zimbabwe was on the Western hit list for regime change after the successes of transformation in Eastern and Central Europe – ZANU-PF made little secret during the 1980s of its desire to bring in a one-party socialist system (even while it was treating with the IMF).

ZANU-PF is determined to maintain itself in power, for to lose control of the state is to lose practically everything, and given the changing demographics, there will probably be no way back. The departments of state, and especially the higher ranks of the security agencies (defence, police and especially intelligence) are dominated by ZANU-PF 'cadres' as a result of years of politically-motivated placements, and the state is, as noted above, the principal vehicle for patronage. Moreover, the party sees itself, especially with regard to the land, as engaged in a new liberation struggle – the 'third *chimurenga*' or liberation war (the first being the resistance to the early white settlers, the second the war against the Ian Smith regime). It is no coincidence that the slogans and rhetoric (and some of the political mobilisation methods) of the liberation war are used in the present.

Mugabe and other senior leaders of ZANU-PF as well as military and police officers and intelligence operatives also share a concern that if they lose power they might face retribution or legal prosecution (domestically or internationally) for actions carried out in Matabeleland in the 1980s or more recently. For ZANU-PF, members of the MDC-T are puppets or instruments of Western neo-liberal agendas, unpatriotic and naïve ciphers who pursue Western agendas or opportunists with their own narrow interests, and the stakes therefore cannot be higher in opposing the opposition's rise to power. The standard insult directed at the MDC-T is that they are 'sell outs' (again a term adopted from the liberation period). While this rhetoric may seem absurd to outsiders, it still resonates amongst sections of the Zimbabwean population and ZANU-PF continues to play this card for all it is worth.

ZANU-PF regards the IG as a temporary shelter or *musasa*, to which it had to agree to stop the economic rot and to get sanctions lifted and to rein in the MDC-T. It regards the IG with suspicion and does everything it can to reduce the power and influence of the MDC-T, which ZANU-PF claims runs its own unofficial parallel government.

ZANU-PF is divided and much weakened as a result of the cult of personality built around Robert Mugabe and subsequent power struggles over secondary positions, although Mugabe remains firmly in command – he was unanimously re-elected as party leader at the most recent party congress in December 2009.

Some elements of the party hope that it can resurrect its revolutionary networks in Zimbabwean communities and use its grip on the state and especially the security services to maintain itself in power and see off the MDC-T. Senior supporters of ZANU-PF informed this researcher that the military remained one of the strongest redoubts of party 'cadreship', that military personnel were deployed in civilian dress during the second run-off for the last presidential elections (27 June 2009) to mobilise the villages and communities in which they were active during the liberation war, and that reviving *chimurenga* networks of 'community intelligence' were the key to restoring the party's fortunes. Similarly, nothing wrong is seen with the development of the party-oriented 'Green Bomber' militias (estimated by the MDC-T to be 10 000 strong), who are seen by ZANU-PF as key to restoring the patriotism of youth and their memory of the liberation struggle, but are viewed by the MDC and most external observers a brutal party militia. In many ways, then, ZANU-PF still sees itself as engaged in a revolutionary nationalist struggle against the depredations of the West and its cat's paw, the MDC - and its activists at any rate seem to believe that resorting to the old *chimurenga* values and techniques of struggle will be the key to the party's continued control of the state. On the other hand, some elements of the party might be willing to reach an agreement with the MDC-T. Vice-President Joyce Majuru, for example, avoids criticising the MDC-T too openly to present a moderate face of ZANU-PF.

The MDC-T sees things very differently and has alternative interests. It regards itself as a 'social' or democratic movement and like ZANU-PF is intent on gaining state power, not to complete the unfinished business of the *chimurenga* but to bring about a new phase of democratisation, based on liberal-democratic values. There is a wide range of political beliefs within the MDC-T, which is united mainly by its desire to see the end of Mugabe's presidency and ZANU-PF rule. The party membership ranges from radical left-wing trade unionists, through liberal NGO and church activists to former supporters of the Rhodesian regime (although the latter all disown their past activities, their former allegiance is exploited to the full by ZANU-PF, which claims that 'Rhodesians' are trying to make a come-back).

Like ZANU-PF the MDC-T sees the IG as a temporary arrangement, and although it also sees it as a way of bringing an end to economic hardship it had different motives to those of ZANU-PF – to demonstrate its ability to govern, to hopefully relieve the relentless pressure of government repression and as a strategy to eventually complete the transfer of power to itself, based on a new constitution which needs to be drawn up. It sees the IG as a transitional phase which will culminate in free and fair elections, which it expects to win, and (although the opinion of respondents was divided on this) most elements within the MDC-T probably want a relatively short life for the IG. There are of course risks involved in sharing the governance of a country in dire straits – the MDC-T might end up tarred with the same brush as ZANU-PF and there is always the danger of co-option and being used for political window-dressing while Mugabe continues to exercise power. Indeed, there are strong factions within the MDC-T who hold this view, and who initially opposed joining the IG. As the MDC-T holds the economic portfolios in government, and is also responsible for the public service, it could be held responsible for economic failures and unpaid public sector salaries. On balance, however, it seems to have benefited politically from the turn-around in the economy and the partial restoration of basic services, even if it has been unable to attract significant new capital inflows.

The MDC-M headed by Arthur Mutambara plays a minor role, and has joined the IG with Mutambara as deputy prime minister. This sometimes gives him the opportunity to play a 'balance of power' role, for example when the MDC-T temporarily withdrew from the IG Mutambara remained in government, and at other times, and increasingly, has tactically given his support to some ZANU-PF positions. The party's electoral appeal remains slim, however, and for this reason it probably has a vested interest in seeing the survival of the IG rather than facing fresh elections.

The security agencies are crucial actors in the Zimbabwean crisis, and many analysts believe that the Joint Operations Committee (JOC), which is a command-and-control structure of police, intelligence and the military - incidentally a structure resurrected from the Rhodesian period – remains the principal locus of decision making. A core group of generals are believed to be the power behind the Mugabe throne. The security services may be less monolithic than often supposed, however, and this assertion was supported by several respondents in this study. The Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) is highly politicised and loyal to Mugabe, as is most of the officer corps of the police and defence forces, and in the military former combatants continue to meet as a 'commissariat'. However, junior ranks are less loyal, and indeed discipline has become a problem, with a number of cases of mutinous behaviour having taken place.

The role of SADC

SADC's position for many years with regard to the Zimbabwe crisis was to agree with President Mugabe that it was primarily a land question, and to issue regular statements from SADC summits congratulating the Zimbabwe government on the successes in its land redistribution. It remained publicly silent on issues of human rights, and although it did encourage the promotion of free and fair elections, it failed to exercise any criticism of electoral processes, congratulating the 'people of Zimbabwe' and the government after each election. During the early period of the crisis SADC did not

give itself any mediation role, and it was only when the matter of Zimbabwe was referred to the AU at its Sharm-el-Sheik summit in June 2008, that the AU directed that SADC be put in charge of mediating a solution to the crisis. SADC's mandate thus came directly from the AU. In turn, at its 2008 Dar-es-Salaam conference, SADC appointed then South African president Thabo Mbeki as chief mediator. The appointment of Mbeki proved to be controversial, with the MDC-T arguing that he was pro-ZANU-PF.

The AU's role in the subsequent negotiations has been minimal: it is best seen as playing an oversight role over SADC, and rubber-stamping its decisions. However, the AU is much more clearly divided over the crisis, with many countries openly supporting the MDC-T and condemning the ZANU-PF regime as undemocratic and as violating human rights. These divisions are one of the reasons that the AU has been unable or unwilling to take the lead on Zimbabwe: the other has been the principle of 'subsidiarity' in which it delegates sub-regional conflict resolution to SADC.

SADC has generally presented a united front, which most observers have interpreted as being in support of the incumbent regime, and it has been widely criticised internationally for failing to take a public stand against human rights violations, breaches of the rule of law and repression. As a successor to the Front-Line States grouping, which was for many years led by Mugabe, SADC was seen in the early stages of the crisis as acting as if the Zimbabwean liberation struggle was still under way. Solidarity was the keyword, and public statements against the government of Zimbabwe were not made. This was reinforced by the culture of consensus, closing of ranks and secretiveness necessitated by the FLS struggle against the apartheid regime, and continued to a significant extent in the OPDSC, the political and security arm of SADC.

But there are serious and growing rifts within SADC over Zimbabwe. President Ian Khama of Botswana openly broke ranks after the fiasco of the 2008 presidential

elections, condemning Mugabe as repressive and calling for internationally-supervised elections, and Zambia and Tanzania are also increasingly willing to speak out against Mugabe/ZANU-PF and support positions taken by the MDC-T. On the other hand, the dominant trend within SADC is the continuation of the liberation solidarity of the FLS period, with the former liberation movements, SWAPO, MPLA, FRELIMO and ANC lining up in solidarity. They are joined by the DRC, the government of which owes its very survival to the 'SADC allies' who intervened in 1977/8 (Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe), by authoritarian Swaziland and Malawi. However, this 'liberation alliance plus', is under some pressure, with South Africa and Mozambique's position gradually changing as they lose patience with ZANU-PF.

There has also been a slight shift in position since Jacob Zuma took over as president of South Africa, and in particular since Zuma was formally appointed as mediator. A team consisting of Zuma's international advisor, Lindiwe Zulu, and two former cabinet ministers, Charles Nqakula and Mac Maharaj, was appointed. The media often presents South African solidarity with Zimbabwe as a result of an alliance between ZANU-PF and the ANC. Historically, there was no such alliance – the ANC supported ZAPU. However, after Zimbabwe's independence the ANC needed struggle facilities in Zimbabwe and Mbeki was a major go-between between the two parties, establishing a *modus vivendi* whereby the ANC was allowed political offices but not military bases in the country. According to some informants, Mbeki thus has a visceral sympathy for ZANU-PF. It is certainly true that during his presidency he pursued an Africanist agenda, which, while it stressed good governance, also implied solidarity with African countries, particularly in the international arena. Above all, South Africa was not – and is not – willing to act unilaterally in African affairs. It will always hide behind what some might call the fig-leaf of sovereignty. It is very conscious of the limitations of its political and military power and its rather fragile diplomatic credibility on the continent. It is also argued that Mbeki, in his stand-off against South Africa's major trade union movement, the Congress of South African

Trade Unions (COSATU) feared that the South African union movement might follow the MDC's example and become the basis of a new opposition movement.

SADC is a fundamentally conservative organisation, working by consensus and operating on the 'lowest common denominator' principle of decision-making. As a weak organisation, with little to hold it in common, consensus is a vital principle of survival. It also fears to show its hand publicly. Behind closed doors, however, informants in this study indicated that SADC has taken much stronger positions against the Zimbabwean government than it has admitted to publicly. This has particularly been the case under the Zuma presidency in South Africa, but Mozambique under President Armando Guebuza has also been to some extent breaking ranks with the 'liberation alliance'. The November 2009 emergency SADC summit in Maputo is seen by many as a turning-point. Informants in this study indicated that Mugabe was privately told in Maputo that he had to make the IG government work and move towards free and fair elections. This pressure was increased in early December 2009 when the 30-day deadline for the resolution of outstanding IG issues set in Maputo expired without significant progress, although Mugabe appeared to make concessions on some of the issues related to senior government appointments. However, Mugabe has long proved a master of political manipulation when it comes to SADC, promising changes but failing to deliver.

Reasons given for Zuma's differing position to Mbeki include that he is closer to COSATU and its ally the South African Communist Party, and indeed to a large extent owes his presidency to their support. He is also seen as being considerably less rigid than Mbeki and a better listener, open to alternative viewpoints. Whatever the case, it is evident that opinion within SADC is shifting against Mugabe and ZANU-PF, although the interests of 'regime solidarity' may in the end hold out.

Prospects and recommendations

It is often asked why South Africa doesn't use its economic power to bring about a settlement in Zimbabwe, for example by closing the border or threatening to cut off electricity supplies or cutting financial investments – in a similar way to what it did when it acted against the regime of Ian Smith in the dying days of Rhodesia. Apart from the fact that the situation is now fundamentally different (Zimbabwe has strong economic links to its other neighbours for a start), South Africa will not act unilaterally, as argued above.

Although some analysts regard Zimbabwe as a failed state, this is an exaggeration – for all the failures to provide basic services, pay civil service salaries and provide even a modicum of financial stability, the state as a whole has remained operational, and its security institutions have remained largely intact. The worst case scenario from South Africa's point of view – and that of Zimbabwe's immediate neighbours – would be a slide into civil war or anarchy, with the disintegration of the security services and the compartmentalisation or total collapse of the state into warring factions (as happened for example in Liberia, Sierra Leone or Somalia). South Africa will do everything in its power to prevent this – and it believes it has to treat with ZANU-PF in order to do so. A military deployment is certainly not an option: without a major war risking much blood and treasure, South Africa simply does not have the capacity to militarily intervene in Zimbabwe, especially given that its armed forces are tied up with peacekeeping operations and weakened by transformation imperatives and that the Zimbabwean forces are battle-hardened and will probably unite if subjected to an external intervention. Even if it had the capacity, South Africa completely lacks the inclination or political will to intervene militarily nor would there be justification under international law.

On the other hand, there is little doubt that even if SADC is unable to take a united position on putting pressure on Zimbabwe, a 'coalition of the willing' (as with the 'allied' military intervention in the DRC in the late 1990s) would

be able to enforce its will. If Zimbabwe's neighbours - South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia - closed their borders and cut off supplies the Zimbabwean regime would crumble. But that is most unlikely except in an extreme case, given the analysis above – and there is certainly no guarantee that a collapse of the Mugabe regime under such circumstances would result in a democratic outcome although it would almost certainly provoke a humanitarian catastrophe.

At present, the IG, based on the GPA, is the only game in town. A shadow or parallel government has been put in place by the MDC in the portfolios it has been allocated but they remain weak through lack of state resources. A fragile multi-party government exists, although real power is still exercised by President Mugabe. At some point the IG has to be dissolved or will fall apart, either through ZANU-PF repression (the prosecution of MDC-T MP Roy Bennett may be a harbinger of this) or through MDC-T withdrawal. Hard-liners in both parties are pressing for dissolution.

What happens then is uncertain. If the process is conducted in an orderly and consensus-based way with SADC support, and a new constitution is put into place, then it could lead to democratic elections for a new parliament and a new presidency. The likelihood, although not a certainty, based on recent electoral trajectories and opinion-polls such as Afro-Barometer is that the MDC will win these providing they are reasonably free and fair (and it seems in the current climate that SADC, which will be supported by the AU and the international community, will find it far more difficult than before to support a seriously flawed election). The question will then be whether such an outcome will be accepted by ZANU-PF and the security services. ZANU-PF is playing for time (whilst it continues to use the state as a source of wealth) and for guarantees against prosecution or persecution. The MDC-T may be willing to reach certain compromises, along the lines of those in the South Africa transition, where under so-called 'sunset clauses' the outgoing apartheid apparatchiks were given guaranteed pensions, exit packages or job security while a Truth and

Reconciliation Commission (providing for amnesties on the basis largely of confession) was put in place instead of Nuremberg-type prosecutions.

This is the most optimistic scenario: even if it materialises, it will certainly not be a smooth process, as strong vested interests are at play. ZANU-PF is quite likely, even if it accepts a new constitution, to try to string out the process and seek to gain electoral advantage through a variety of non-democratic strategems. There are other scenarios as well. Both the main parties are divided. The MDC-T might collapse under the weight of its own internal contradictions, the pressure of repression or the lure of wealth and power, with significant sections of it being absorbed into ZANU-PF (certainly sections of ZANU-PF hope that this might be the case, building on the experience of absorbing PF-ZAPU in the late 1980s – and it must be remembered that many MDC-T leaders are ex-ZANU-PF). This seems unlikely, given the momentum and popular support behind the MDC-T. On the other hand, ZANU-PF might splinter and disintegrate (the death or retirement of Mugabe would be a catalyst for this) or a fourth party might emerge. This was a surprisingly popular prognosis amongst those interviewed (sometimes given as a 'third force'). This would be most likely in a scenario of the prolongation of the IG and the dissipation or merger of the principal parties. It is possible that a political framework might emerge which is both nationalistic and democratic (the two are not necessarily in opposition) and that a compromise agreement might emerge through the process of negotiating a new constitution. The alternative would be a return to the process of state decay, economic collapse and militaristic repression.

It is clear that major transformations need to take place within Zimbabwean political, security and economic sectors for sustainable democracy to emerge. To some extent the IG has brought about institutional reforms in the political sphere, although these remain far short of power-sharing as the MDC-T has not really penetrated the state, and especially its security structures (although it controls municipal police). One of the most important

issues is that of security sector transformation or reform. How (or even whether) this should be carried out is a matter of major dispute within Zimbabwe, which is unsurprising given the prominence of the security sector. For this to take place, security decision-making will need to move from the JOC to the multi-party National Security Council, the role of parliament and the judiciary in security oversight will need to be affirmed, the militarisation of government reversed, and then institutional reforms carried out in security forces and the judicial system, accompanied by the disbandment of para-military structures. Alongside this, major reforms will need to take place in the political sector and the economy brought back on track – all of this will eventually depend on the adoption of a new constitution and the evolution of some degree of political stability. In this economic and political reconstruction SADC countries, in particular South Africa and Zimbabwe's other immediate neighbours will have a crucial role to play, although given SADC's weakness as an institution it is unlikely that the organisation itself will be able to do much more than provide a political framework for such actions.

CONCLUSION

The differences between SADC's responses to the Madagascar and Zimbabwe crisis are marked, especially with regard to the initial responses. Over the several years of the Zimbabwe crisis, SADC repeatedly reaffirmed its solidarity with the ZANU-PF government and publicly ignored violations of human rights, breaches of the rule of law and political repression. While it may have taken a firmer stand behind closed doors, it nevertheless allowed the Mugabe regime to act with impunity, blaming external actors and in particular sanctions (which it totally opposed) for the crisis. When it eventually took on a mediation role, it is notable that this was done not in a multinational context (save for the endorsement of the AU) but was devolved to South Africa. It certainly did not consider any interventionist action, although it did construct an electoral code of conduct for the region and did succeed to some extent in improving Zimbabwe's electoral processes on a technical level.

In contrast, SADC acted with considerable speed to the political crisis in Madagascar and while it did not impose any sanctions, acted swiftly to suspend the island state from membership of the organisation, in concert with the AU. It even went as far as discussing military intervention, although this was in practice highly unlikely. And its diplomacy took place in a multilateral framework, involving a range of international organisations, although this was probably more a result of the nature of the circumstances than a conscious decision. The organisation remained engaged with mediation throughout the crisis, and repeatedly issued strong statements calling on all parties to resolve their differences, and even went as far as preventing Andry Rajoelina from addressing the UN General Assembly.

The differences can be explained by two main factors. First, SADC countries have relatively few economic and political interests in Madagascar, compared to Zimbabwe, the economy of which is closely entwined with that of its immediate neighbours (and which shares economic interests with other countries such as the DRC), and

which has a shared history of anti-colonial and liberation armed struggle with a number of SADC member states. Second, incumbency. SADC is essentially a club of states, or more to the point a club of presidents, since all key decisions are made by the summit of heads of state. The states – and the presidents – act in mutual support of support of each other and certainly would not like to see the contagion of non-constitutional overthrow of an incumbent president, as happened in Madagascar. Whether the strong action against Madagascar was taken as a result of adherence to constitutionalism or out of this mutual interest is a moot point, although it is probable that both elements converged.

SADC's track record with regard to the two crises is thus a mixed one. To ensure greater consistency of action and more effective diplomacy SADC would do well to establish a firmer and more explicit normative regime around issues of human rights and the rule of law, and put in place a dedicated capacity for mediation support. This might consist of a specialised arm or division of the SADC Secretariat consisting of professional and experienced officials with whom diplomats could interact, and which would keep records and documents, liaise with other international actors, brief the media and answer enquiries as well as offer background support. There is also scope for improving relations with the AU and other international actors. SADC has not always acted in harmony with the AU and as both organisations lack institutional depth, liaison and cooperation is often superficial or crisis-driven.

As with the UN and other international organisations, it is easy to be critical of SADC, but one must consider how things might have been had it not existed, even if the role it played in both crises has been limited and problematic. In Madagascar SADC has emerged with a very bruised reputation, and is seen as being partial to the now largely discredited Ravalomanana: internationally, its reputation has also taken a beating over its position on Zimbabwe, with donor countries in particular losing confidence in the organisation's ability to deliver.

List of interviews and meetings

Madagascar

17 August 2009

General Désire Ramakavelo, former minister of defence and member of the High Authority of the Transition

Colonel Roger Ralala, former secretary of the cabinet for defence

Mr Marius Conradie, first secretary, South African embassy

18 August 2009

Jean-Eric Rakotoarisoa, law professor, University of Antananarivo and advisor in the international negotiations

General Ranto Rabarisoa, vice-president, Military Council for National Defence

Mrs Cécile Manorohanta, former minister of defence and rector, University of Antsiranana

19 August 2009

Mgr Odon Razanakolona, archbishop of Antananarivo

20 November 2009

Mr Government Phiri, Lecturer, University of Zimbabwe

Ms Petra Rumbidzai Chinyere, Lecturer, University of Zimbabwe

Mr Anywhere Mutambudzi, Director Communications, Ministry of Media, Information and Communications, Government of Zimbabwe

Mr Sam C Mhango, Head of Policy, Research and Training, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Zimbabwe

Mr Wilfred Mhanda, Zimbabwe Liberation Veterans Forum and Zimbabwe Peace and Security Programme

Zimbabwe

18 November 2009

Dr Tafataona P Mahosa, Executive Chairman, The Media and Information Commission of Zimbabwe

Ambassador Christopher H Mutsvangwa, Commissioner, The Media and Information Commission of Zimbabwe

Lt Col Bassie Bangidza, Director, Centre for Defence Studies, University of Zimbabwe

19 November 2009

Hon James Timba, Deputy Minister of Information, Government of Zimbabwe

Dr Martin Rupiya, Principal Director International Relations, Prime Minister's Office, Government of Zimbabwe

Mr Emmanuel Chimwanda, Principal Director Security, Prime Minister's Office, Government of Zimbabwe

Mr Abisha Nyanguwo, Principal Director Social Policy, Prime Minister's Office, Government of Zimbabwe

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The study at hand is part of a series of studies that investigate how regional organizations in Africa deal with conflict and political crises in their member states. The protocols and declarations at the basis of the regional security architectures in Africa are generally considered as progressive and comprehensive. Yet, while the expectations on Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as part of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) are generally very high, as well as own ambitions, the actual performance often falls short of these hopes. Therefore, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung issued three studies

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Zimbabwe

Kidist Mulugeta: The case of IGAD and Somalia

Gilles Yabi: The cases of ECOWAS and Guinea/
Guinea-Bissau

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