



**Australian Government**  
**Refugee Review Tribunal**

# Country Advice Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe – ZWE37027 – Mashonaland East – Macheke – Murehwa South – ZANU-PF – Land seizures – Movement for Democratic Change – Political violence

20 July 2010

- 1. Please provide any information about the location of the township of Macheke, and its distance to Harare, and whether there is any profile of political allegiances in that area which would suggest the area was a ZANU-PF stronghold or an area where there was a history of persecution of MDC supporters in the period 2000-2006.**

Macheke is a town in the province of Mashonaland East, Zimbabwe, approximately 100 kilometres southeast of Harare (see map 1).<sup>1</sup> Macheke is located in the Federal electorate of Murehwa South, a district which the ZANU-PF party has held since independence and won again in the March 2008 parliamentary elections (see map 2). The local government area in which Macheke sits, Masvingo, is also held by ZANU-PF. It would be misleading, however, to describe Macheke as a stronghold of ZANU-PF as both federal and local political power has been maintained by ZANU-PF largely through the use of violence and intimidation.



**Map 1: Macheke<sup>2</sup>**

## **Electoral History and Post Election Violence in Macheke**

<sup>1</sup> 'Population of Macheke, Zimbabwe' 2006, Mongabay.com, 17 January  
<http://population.mongabay.com/population/zimbabwe/888089/macheke> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment

<sup>2</sup> Source: Google Maps

The current Member of Parliament for Murehwa South, the federal electoral district in which Macheke sits, is Joel Biggie Matiza of the ZANU PF party. *SW Radio Africa*, a station highly critical of President Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF, asserted in April 2010 that Matiza “was present when hundreds of MDC supporters were assaulted at St Peters Mission, Mukarakate” and that he is “well known for accompanying the gun-totting former Health Minister, David Parirenyatwa, to a meeting at Musama business centre in Murehwa two years ago, threatening MDC supporters with death if they ‘revote’ MDC in the presidential re-run.”<sup>3</sup> In April 2008 the homes of local MDC officials in Macheke were burned, allegedly by ZANU-PF supporters.<sup>4</sup>

ZANU-PF sponsored election violence in the Murehwa North and South electoral districts was particularly pronounced in the 2008 elections, both during the campaigning, and in the immediate aftermath. *SW Radio Africa* reported that “[i]n some cases state agents have been seen hanging around at local clinics and state run hospitals in order to block their victims from receiving treatment.”<sup>5</sup> If true, this would inevitably affect the official statistics of violence and intimidation in the region and may have led to deaths from untreated wounds in the post-election period.

*The Standard* reported that on Election Day 2008 “hundreds” of locals in Macheke were prevented from voting by ZANU-PF supporters. *The Standard* also states that these actions were reported to a Commonwealth election observer: however, no arrests were made. Furthermore, the report asserts that many who voted for ZANU-PF in Macheke only did so after their sons were “taken for interrogation and torture” by members of ZANU-PF. *The Standard* argues that locals voted ZANU-PF because they feared that ‘war’ would ensue if the MDC won the elections.<sup>6</sup> The level of intimidation and fear undermines the suggestion that Macheke is a ZANU-PF stronghold. Rather, it suggests that the district is held under at least partial duress.

Human Rights Watch reported that four MDC activists were ambushed and three were murdered by ZANU-PF activists as they were driving to Murehwa, near Macheke, in Mashonaland East; “[o]ne escaped, but Beta Chokururama, Godfrey Kauzani and Cain Nyevehe were pulled from the car and taken away. Chokururama’s body was found on May 11 in a river in Murehwa, while the bodies of Kauzani and Nyevehe were found some kilometers away in Goromonzi district on May 17. The eyes of the victims had been gouged out, and their tongues and lips cut off. Human Rights Watch spoke to medical doctors who confirmed that the men were beaten and tortured.” Human Rights Watch also reported that in May 2008 the MDC senatorial candidate for Murehwa North, adjacent to Macheke, was murdered, allegedly by Central Intelligence Office (CIO) agents.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sibanda, T. 2010, ‘Three more ZANU PF MPs named in MDC’s roll of shame’, *SW Radio Africa*, 7 April <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news070410/shamed070410.htm> – Accessed 13 July 2010 – Attachment 2

<sup>4</sup> “‘No crisis’. Really...?” 2008, Sokwanele, 12 April

<http://www.sokwanele.com/thisiszimbabwe/archives/category/education/page/2> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 13

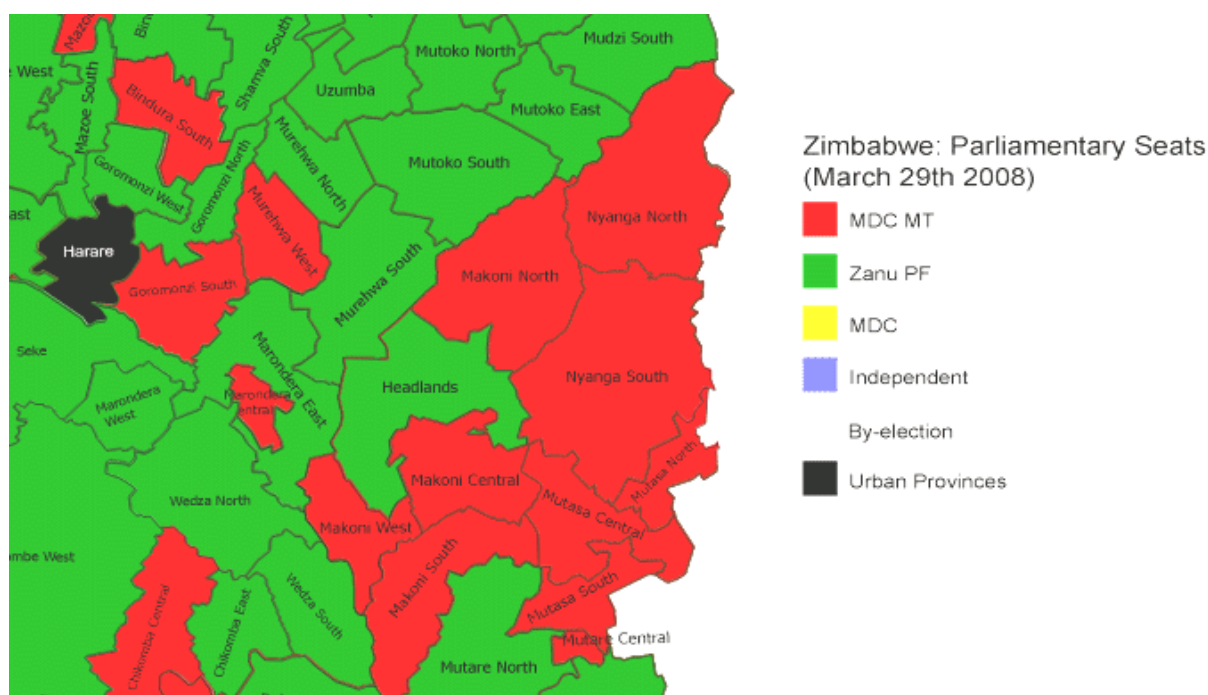
<sup>5</sup> Karimakwenda, T. 2008, ‘MDC Candidate Abducted At Gunpoint in Murehwa’, All Africa Global Media, source: *SW Radio Africa*, 22 May <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805220875.html> – Accessed 13 July 2010 – Attachment 3

<sup>6</sup> Nyakazeya, P. 2000, ‘Murehwa Villagers Will Neither Forgive Nor Forget Terror Unleashed By War Veterans’, All Africa Global Media, source: *The Standard*, 3 September <http://allafrica.com/stories/200009030073.html> – Accessed 13 July 2010 – Attachment 4

<sup>7</sup> Human Rights Watch 2008, “*Bullets for each of you*”: *State-sponsored violence since Zimbabwe’s March 29 elections*, June <http://hrw.org/reports/2008/zimbabwe0608/zimbabwe0608webwcover.pdf> – Accessed 21 July 2008 – Attachment 5

In 2005 the region re-elected Joel Biggie Matiza of ZANU-PF in the electorate of Murewa South.<sup>8</sup> Less reliable information has been located on the conduct of ZANU-PF in this electorate during the campaign.

After the 2000 election a number of incidents were recorded by ZimCrisis in Macheke, including: the firing of a man, Robert Bhito, allegedly for supporting the MDC; a Mr F. Ngwende was assaulted and his house was looted; a Ms Irene Ndlovu was kidnapped and assaulted and her house was also looted.<sup>9</sup> No reports of killings taking place during the campaign have been located; however, in June 2000 the house of another local MDC official, Musekiwa Matute, was set on fire by “suspected war veterans and Zanu PF militias”. Matute reportedly lost farming equipment and property “valued at nearly \$10, 000 in the fire which gutted his two-roomed house. He was away in Harare with his family at the time of the attack.”<sup>10</sup>



Map 2: the Distribution of Parliamentary Seats in Mashonaland East after 2008 elections

### Other ZANU-PF Violence & Intimidation in Macheke

In March 2010 the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association reported that armed members of the fourth brigade soldiers forced Macheke residents to attend a funeral of ZANU PF activist Javas Takavada. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Association also reported that the fourth brigade soldiers were acting on the orders of Masvingo governor Titus Maluleke.<sup>11</sup> Masvingo is the local government area (LGA) in which Macheke sits.

In 2009 it was reported that a young man was “murdered by seven Zanu PF thugs in Macheke after going to the home of a local Zanu PF chairman to ask for his outstanding wages.” The Zimbabwe Civic Action Support Group’s Sokwanele website states that the

<sup>8</sup> ‘VP Mujuru Registers Resounding Victory’ 2005, All Africa Global Media, source: *The Herald*, 3 April <http://allafrica.com/stories/200504040579.html> – Accessed 13 July 2010 – Attachment 6

<sup>9</sup> ‘ZimCrisis#143 -- Post Election Violence and Intimidation’ 2000, ZimCrisis, 28 August <http://zimcrisis.rhonet.org/143.html> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 7

<sup>10</sup> ‘Minister’s car linked to political death’ 2000, Zimbabwe Situation, source: *Daily News*, 30 June <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/2julb.html> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 14

<sup>11</sup> ‘Macheke residents forced to attend ZANU PF activist’s burial’ 2010, Kutabana, source: Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, 6 May [http://kubatana.net/html/archive/hr/100506zimrights.asp?sector=HR&year=2010&range\\_start=31](http://kubatana.net/html/archive/hr/100506zimrights.asp?sector=HR&year=2010&range_start=31) – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 8

young man was found with wounds “made by redhot iron rods through the stomach.” They also report that Minister Didymus Mutasa had the perpetrators released after they received only fines as punishment.<sup>12</sup> The US Department of State named the victim as 16-year-old Arnold Mosterd and reported that he had previously been accused by his killers of supporting the MDC. The US Department of State also repeats the accusation that Minister of State in the President’s Office, Didymus Mutasa, “ordered the release of the suspects on bail three days later” and adds that “Mutasa also allegedly told villagers to “deal with strangers who visited the area inquiring about the killing, as they would be MDC supporters.”<sup>13</sup>

In July 2009 *The Zimbabwean* reported that a Macheke police constable, Admire Takawira, was detained for thirty one days and then dismissed from the police “after he had attempted to investigate Zanu (PF) youths who burnt down suspected MDC supporters’ houses.” *The Zimbabwean* states that Takawira is one of over one thousand policemen who have been dismissed by Police Commissioner, Augustine Chihuri, “for investigating perpetrators of Zanu (PF)’s terror campaign.” According to the paper’s sources, “Zanu (PF) youths in Mashonaland East made lists of police officers who stopped them from abducting MDC supporters during the election period” and forwarded the names to “Zanu (PF) Provincial Headquarters and Assistant Commissioner Mthambeni of Marondera district before they were submitted to Chihuri for further action. Chihuri would immediately order the arrest of the policemen and eventual dismissal.”<sup>14</sup>

In April 2009 the MDC Home Affairs Minister in the coalition government, Giles Mutsekwa, was involved in a car accident in Macheke. An investigation was launched following the accident as eyewitnesses claimed that the car carrying the minister was deliberately rammed from behind by a larger vehicle. According to *Metro Zimbabwe*, Mutsekwa was the long time Intelligence and Security chief of the MDC before becoming Minister for Home Affairs.<sup>15</sup> There have been a number of apparent assassination attempts made on MDC politicians and figures in the past while driving along country roads.<sup>16</sup>

In 2007 *SW Radio Africa* reported that sixteen members of the ‘Women and Men of Zimbabwe Arise’ movement were arrested and beaten by state security agents while “playing a game of netball and mixed soccer” at Macheke Stadium. *SW Radio Africa* reports that the “victims spent two cold nights in police cells in their sports uniform. They were released after being forced to pay admission of guilt fines.”<sup>17</sup>

In 2008 it was reported that ZANU-PF ‘thugs’ arrested in Macheke had begged for forgiveness from their victims during a controversial reconciliation process. MDC officials and many locals condemned the process and the apology as a means for such people to escape punishment before an MDC leader takes control of the Ministry of Home

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<sup>12</sup> ‘Zimbabwe Inclusive Government Watch: Issue 8’ 2009, Sokwanele, 7 September

<http://www.sokwanele.com/thisiszimbabwe/archives/4674> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 9

<sup>13</sup> US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2009 – Zimbabwe*, 11 March – Attachment 10

<sup>14</sup> ‘Chihuri sacks cops for probing Zanu (PF) atrocities’ 2009, Zimbabwe Situation, source: *The Zimbabwean*, 22 July [http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jul23a\\_2009.html](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jul23a_2009.html) – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 11

<sup>15</sup> Harper, G. 2009, ‘MDC to probe Home Affairs Minister, Mutsekwa accident’, *Metro Zimbabwe*, 19 April <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/mdc-to-investigate-home-affairs-minister-mutsekwa-car-accident/> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 12

<sup>16</sup> The most high profile death in a suspicious vehicular collision was Susan Tsvangirai, wife of Morgan Tsvangirai, in January 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Gonda, V. 2007, ‘16 WOZA activists released but two more arrested’, *SW Radio Africa*, 9 August <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news090807/woza090807.htm> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 15

Affairs following the March 2008 elections.<sup>18</sup> Following the formation of the coalition government, MDC Intelligence and Security chief Giles Mutsekwa was appointed Minister for Home Affairs. As mentioned previously, Mutsekwa was the victim of an apparent assassination attempt made on him in Macheke in April 2009.

### **Farm Seizures in Macheke**

The Macheke district has witnessed ‘hundreds’ of seizures of white-owned farms by so-called war veterans. In 2000 Macheke was the scene of the first killing of a white farmer, David Stevens, by ‘war veterans’. One source reports that some of the war veterans were “wearing Zanu-PF T-shirts”.<sup>19</sup> *The Independent* reported that four of Mr Stevens’ neighbours went to his aid and were subsequently reported missing.<sup>20</sup> The four turned up the following day beaten severely, however alive. The *Financial Gazette* named one of the ‘war veterans’ involved in the killing of Stevens as Herbert Goso, and added that “the rest of the angry group could not have been veterans of the 1970s war as they clearly looked very young and tender.”<sup>21</sup>

*BBC News* reported that as a consequence of the intimidation and seizures, approximately fifty farming families had left the Macheke district by April 2000.<sup>22</sup> In 2001 *Zimbabwean Independent* reported that in one week ‘war veterans’ “closed down 27 farms in the Virginia farming area of Macheke, threatening production of wheat and tobacco in moves that will seal-off over \$300 million worth of revenue and cost thousands of jobs.”<sup>23</sup>

In 2003 the *Financial Gazette* reported that prospective settlers in Mashonaland East had accused local ZANU-PF officials of seizing the best white-owned farms for themselves.<sup>24</sup> The Macheke district is famed for its climate and formerly famed for its high yields of tobacco.

### **Attachments**

1. ‘Population of Macheke, Zimbabwe’ 2006, Mongabay.com, 17 January <http://population.mongabay.com/population/zimbabwe/888089/macheke> – Accessed 14 July 2010.
2. Sibanda, T. 2010, ‘Three more ZANU PF MPs named in MDC’s roll of shame’, *SW Radio Africa*, 7 April <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news070410/shamed070410.htm> – Accessed 13 July 2010.

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Zanu (PF) thugs ask forgiveness’ 2008, *The Zimbabwean*, 30 September <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/2008093015494/weekday-top-stories/zanu-pf-thugs-ask-forgiveness.html> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 16

<sup>19</sup> ‘CFU Director Axed To Death’ 2009, new ZimSituation, source: *The Zimbabwe Times*, 30 August <http://newzimsituation.com/14662d/cfu-director-axed-to-death--the-zimbabwe-times.htm> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 17

<sup>20</sup> Babbington, A. 2000, ‘Zimbabwe’s High Commissioner summoned’, *The Independent*, 16 April <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/zimbabwes-high-commissioner-summoned-721681.html> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 18

<sup>21</sup> ‘Zimbabwe: Eyewitness: The Smouldering Ruins Of Stevens’ Farm’ 2000, All Africa Global Media, source: *Financial Gazette*, 20 April <http://allafrica.com/stories/200004200279.html> – Accessed 13 July 2010 – Attachment 19

<sup>22</sup> ‘Killings deepen Zimbabwe crisis’ 2000, *BBC News*, 16 April <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/715001.stm> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 20

<sup>23</sup> Ndlela, D. 2001, ‘War Vets Close Down 27 Farms’, All Africa Global Media, source: *Zimbabwean Independent*, 11 May <http://allafrica.com/stories/200105110255.html> – Accessed 13 July 2010 – Attachment 21

<sup>24</sup> ‘Zanu PF Politicians Besiege Mash Farm’ 2003, All Africa Global Media, source: *Financial Gazette*, 17 July 2003 <http://allafrica.com/stories/200307170459.html> – Accessed 14 July 2010 – Attachment 22

3. Karimakwenda, T. 2008, 'MDC Candidate Abducted at Gunpoint in Murehwa', All Africa Global Media, source: *SW Radio Africa*, 22 May <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805220875.html> – Accessed 13 July 2010.
4. Nyakazeya, P. 2000, 'Murehwa Villagers Will Neither Forgive Nor Forget Terror Unleashed By War Veterans', All Africa Global Media, source: *The Standard*, 3 September <http://allafrica.com/stories/200009030073.html> – Accessed 13 July 2010.
5. Human Rights Watch 2008, "*Bullets for each of you*": *State-sponsored violence since Zimbabwe's March 29 elections*, June <http://hrw.org/reports/2008/zimbabwe0608/zimbabwe0608webwcover.pdf> – Accessed 21 July 2008.
6. 'VP Mujuru Registers Resounding Victory' 2005, All Africa Global Media, source: *The Herald*, 3 April <http://allafrica.com/stories/200504040579.html> – Accessed 13 July 2010.
7. 'ZimCrisis#143 -- Post Election Violence and Intimidation' 2000, ZimCrisis, 28 August <http://zimcrisis.rhonet.org/143.html> – Accessed 14 July 2010.
8. 'Macheke residents forced to attend ZANU PF activist's burial' 2010, Kutabana, source: Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, 6 May [http://kubatana.net/html/archive/hr/100506zimrights.asp?sector=HR&year=2010&range\\_start=31](http://kubatana.net/html/archive/hr/100506zimrights.asp?sector=HR&year=2010&range_start=31) – Accessed 14 July 2010.
9. 'Zimbabwe Inclusive Government Watch: Issue 8' 2009, Sokwanele, 7 September <http://www.sokwanele.com/thisiszimbabwe/archives/4674> – Accessed 14 July 2010.
10. US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2009 – Zimbabwe*, 11 March.
11. 'Chihuri sacks cops for probing Zanu (PF) atrocities' 2009, Zimbabwe Situation, source: *The Zimbabwean*, 22 July [http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jul23a\\_2009.html](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jul23a_2009.html) – Accessed 14 July 2010.
12. Harper, G. 2009, 'MDC to probe Home Affairs Minister, Mutsekwa accident', *Metro Zimbabwe*, 19 April <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/mdc-to-investigate-home-affairs-minister-mutsekwa-car-accident/> – Accessed 14 July 2010.
13. "'No crisis". Really...?' 2008, Sokwanele, 12 April <http://www.sokwanele.com/thisiszimbabwe/archives/category/education/page/2> – Accessed 14 July 2010.
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15. Gonda, V. 2007, '16 WOZA activists released but two more arrested', *SW Radio Africa*, 9 August <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news090807/woza090807.htm> – Accessed 14 July 2010.
16. 'Zanu (PF) thugs ask forgiveness' 2008, *The Zimbabwean*, 30 September <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/2008093015494/weekday-top-stories/zanu-pf-thugs-ask-forgiveness.html> – Accessed 14 July 2010.
17. 'CFU Director Axed To Death' 2009, new ZimSituation, source: *The Zimbabwe Times*, 30 August <http://newzimsituation.com/14662d/cfu-director-axed-to-death---the-zimbabwe-times.htm> – Accessed 14 July 2010.
18. Babbington, A. 2000, 'Zimbabwe's High Commissioner summoned', *The Independent*, 16 April <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/zimbabwes-high-commissioner-summoned-721681.html> – Accessed 14 July 2010.

19. 'Zimbabwe: Eyewitness: The Smouldering Ruins Of Stevens' Farm' 2000, All Africa Global Media, source: *Financial Gazette* , 20 April <http://allafrica.com/stories/200004200279.html> – Accessed 13 July 2010.
20. 'Killings deepen Zimbabwe crisis' 2000, *BBC News*, 16 April <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/715001.stm> – Accessed 14 July 2010.
21. Ndlela, D. 2001, 'War Vets Close Down 27 Farms', All Africa Global Media, source: *Zimbabwean Independent*, 11 May <http://allafrica.com/stories/200105110255.html> – Accessed 13 July 2010.
22. 'Zanu PF Politicians Besiege Mash Farm' 2003, All Africa Global Media, source: *Financial Gazette*, 17 July 2003 <http://allafrica.com/stories/200307170459.html> – Accessed 14 July 2010.