

# From Connemara to Gukurahundi Genocide of the 1980s in Zimbabwe

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## Summary

The article addresses new and emerging perspectives on Gukurahundi genocide as remembered by combatants who participated or were close to the violent clashes between former Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) guerrillas at Connemara and how their fighting resulted in a national crisis. The bulk of the literature on this subject so far has concentrated on atrocities committed by 5 Brigade and other government forces in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces between 1983 and 1987 without elaborating how it all began. This article unearths causes and course of the violence at Connemara, how it was organised and deployment of government security forces to quell it together with how the violence then spread to other barracks. The purpose of the study is to contribute interpretations and debate on this mass killing which today continues to haunt Zimbabwe. Connemara was chosen as a case study because fighting there between former ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrillas went unchecked and finally led to desertions in the army and then the Gukurahundi genocide. The story being told here is unique in the sense that it does not speak to civilian victims of violence but rather to armed men who were involved or at least close to the event. In gathering data, use was also made of secondary sources both published and unpublished. In terms of reconciliation and healing, it is important to take into consideration a multiplicity of voices, which is precisely what this article is doing.

## Opsomming

Hierdie artikel bespreek nuwe en opkomende perspektiewe op die Gukurahundi volksmoord, soos onthou deur vegters wat deelgeneem het aan die gewelddadige botsings tussen die voormalige Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) en die Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) guerrillas in Connemara, en hoe die konflik tot 'n nasionale krisis gelei het. Die grootste deel van die literatuur oor hierdie onderwerp tot dusver het gekonsentreer op gruweldade tussen 1983 en 1987 deur 5 Brigade en ander regeringsmagte in die Matabeleland en die Midlands provinsies, sonder om uit te brei hoe dit alles begin het. Hierdie artikel ontbloot die oorsake en verloop van die geweld by Connemara, hoe dit georganiseer is en die ontplooiing van veiligheidsmagte van die regering om dit te onderdruk, asook hoe die geweld na ander barakke versprei het. Die doel van die studie is om by te dra tot interpretasies en debatte oor hierdie massamoord wat vandag steeds in Zimbabwe spook. Connemara is as 'n gevallestudie gekies omdat gevegte tussen voormalige ZANLA- en ZIPRA-guerrilla's buite beheer was en uiteindelik tot drostery in die

*JLS/TLW 37(2), June/Junie 2021*  
ISSN 0256-4718/Online 1753-5387



weermag gelei het en daarna tot die Gukurahundi volksmoord. Die verhaal wat hier vertel word, is uniek in die sin dat dit nie gaan oor burgerlike slagoffers van geweld nie, maar eerder oor gewapende mans wat betrokke, of ten minste na aan die gebeurtenis, was. Met die insameling van data is ook van gepubliseerde en ongepubliseerde sekondêre bronne gebruik gemaak. Wat versoening en genesing betref, is dit belangrik om 'n verskeidenheid van stemme in ag te neem, presies wat hierdie artikel doen.

## Introduction

I should hasten to say that researching a topic of this nature was not quite an easy job. The intention of the researcher was held suspect by respondents. It was somehow difficult to get former Rhodesian security forces or members of the Zimbabwe National Army who participated in Gukurahundi to speak. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Gukurahundi is referred to as the weather event that clears away the dry scaly protective casing from cereal grain that remains although in time, this early storm also destroys weeds, crops, huts people and animals opening the way for a new ecological order.<sup>1</sup> In this case, targets of Gukurahundi became rubbish that was being swept away. Given that they know themselves, together with other security forces, as perpetrators of the genocide, and that they do accept complicity, getting to talk to them was a long winding road. Information was extracted following an agreement that their names will remain anonymous. Fieldwork was also done at a time Zimbabwe was preparing for the 2018 general elections. As such, respondents were quite curious and sceptical.

Basically, the article is divided into 5 sections. The first discusses the general background to the genocide. Information for this section is mainly drawn from secondary sources. Since the purpose of this section is to set the stage, it is brief and to the point. Second, violence that culminated in Gukurahundi has so far not been fully discussed in terms of how it started at Connemara Camp located between the towns of Gweru and Kwekwe. Connemara, just like Ntabazinduna near Bulawayo, housed integrated forces from ZANLA and ZIPRA. Using oral sources mainly, a vivid description and analysis of violence at Connemara is provided. The major sources for this section are former Rhodesian security forces who, at the time of the violence, were part and parcel of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). No escapee from former ZANLA combatants was found to respond to events at Connemara. Third, the spread of violence from Entumbane in November 1980 to other camps, starting with Ntabazinduna right up to Connemara and back again, is discussed. Events at Connemara are key because they help in explaining the Battle of Bulawayo in which former ZIPRA cadres were

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1. S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Rethinking “Chimurenga” and “Gukurahundi” in Zimbabwe: A Critique of Partisan National History: *African Studies Review* December 2012, Vol. 55, No. 3.

subdued by the 11th Battalion (former Rhodesian African Rifles). Some of the government security forces who were involved in crushing former ZIPRAs at Connemara were later deployed in various parts of Midlands and Matabeleland provinces. Their experience there is a chilling exposition of what it was they intended to achieve and the means of so doing. The subject of healing and reconciliation often evades perpetrators of violence.

Owing to sensitivity of violence and genocide committed from roughly 1983 to 1987, those who responded to my questions opted to remain anonymous. Some of them are still serving in the army while others have since retired. White, coloured and black former and serving combatants were among the respondents. Generally, these were found in and around the city of Gweru. One respondent was interviewed on his farm which is some 30 km from Gweru along Mvuma road. Snowballing was the main means of locating those to be interviewed. Data was collected during the day while nights were used for data analysis as well as digging into volumes of secondary sources. A few more respondents were picked from other parts of Zimbabwe.

## Theoretical Framework

The study makes use of the agency-oriented theory to understand genocide. It emphasises the influence of elite decision makers. The theory focuses on the role of specific individual leaders in the initiation and perpetuation of genocide. Some of the main authors in this approach are Benjamin Valentino, Manas Midlarsky, Daniel Chirot and Clark McCauley among others.<sup>2</sup> Chirot et al argue that, for elite perpetrators, mass murder is the cheapest way to overcome resistance to policies or to dispose of groups which are perceived to be in the way of realisation of desired policies. The theory also explores the role of frontline killers. According to Chirot and McCauley psychological needs, goals and emotions motivate not only elites but ordinary people to become killers.<sup>3</sup> Motivations for political killing are convenience, revenge, simple fear and fear of pollution. Ordinary people who become killers can justify their actions by arguing that they were following orders and, that way, deny responsibility. In this approach, society also becomes collectively responsible. As bystanders or otherwise, society allows genocide to happen.

Gukurahundi is defined as genocide in this study because it carries many characteristics which qualify it for that. Campbell defines genocide as

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2. M.S. Hiebert, "Theorizing Destruction: Reflections on the State of Comparative Genocide Theory", *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* Volume 3, Issue 3 Article 6, p. 311.
  3. M.S. Hiebert, "Theorizing Destruction: Reflections on the State of Comparative Genocide Theory", *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* Volume 3, Issue 3 Article 6, p. 312.

organised killing based on ethnicity.<sup>4</sup> This is of course a narrow definition especially in relation to events that unfolded in Zimbabwe. At first, the targets were former ZIPRA guerrillas who were not always Ndebele but rather made up of many Zimbabwean ethnic groups. When civilians later on became the targets, Ndebele speakers were mainly singled out and this is where the question of ethnicity comes in. Genocide is used by elites to gain control. Genocide is also explained using a theory of evil which is why some view it as madness. During the burial of Joshua Nkomo at the National Heroes Acre in 1999, the former president of Zimbabwe described Gukurahundi as a time of madness. Perpetrators of genocide, be it elites or the foot soldiers, will always argue that their actions are moral partly because the victim is labelled as evil. For example, grievances against Jews in Germany were that they were clannish, aloof, distant, clever, greedy, dishonest, striving for power and success and were also parasites among other insults.<sup>5</sup> Related criticisms were levelled against ZAPU politicians and armed cadres as justification for manslaughter.

## Background to Gukurahundi

Father Fidelis Mukonori (Society of Jesus) recently (2017) provided a background to what he saw as the precursor to Gukurahundi. He argues that those who became the so-called dissidents were not motivated by the alleged ethnic differences between the Shona and the Ndebele and Ndebele ethnic groups. Rather, it was the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) split in 1963 which created permanent animosities which culminated in Gukurahundi. That split led to the formation of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), a political party which won the 1980 general elections. Personal differences of the political leadership and their un-willingness to work together to suture existing problems led to a violent rupture.<sup>6</sup> He goes on to forward that, while the political leaderships had exchanged only harsh words, their armed men went a step further by exchanging bullets and blood. Of course, these differences could still make sense to the senior commanders who then went on to start violence at Connemara and other barracks. To argue that they had meaning to former ZIPRA guerrillas who deserted the army, or those who had already been demobilised and chose once more to take up arms, is to

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4. B. Campbell, Genocide as Social Control, *Sociological Theory* Volume 27. Number 2, June 2009, p. 150.

5. B. Campbell, Genocide as Social Control, *Sociological Theory* Volume 27. Number 2, June 2009, p. 155.

6. F. Mukonori, *Man in the Middle: A Memoir*, Harare, House of Books, 2017, pp. 233-244.

miss the point. Rather, former ZIPRA guerrillas were faced with existential threats where they had to choose between what they suspected as imminent executions in camps and deserting. Those who were to become the so-called dissidents (ex-ZIPRAs) chose the latter path. Related to the above, the 11th Battalion (formerly Rhodesian African Rifles or just RAR) did not integrate former guerrillas in to their ranks for fear related to issues of discipline. According to Luise White, RAR had not been integrated because their officers had counselled the BMATT against it: they did not want *guerrillas* in their regiment. They feared the disruptive behaviour from forces that were recently enemies who had fought on opposite sides in a war to be in one peacetime regiment. Above all, it was argued that there were enough RAR who had deserted and joined guerrilla forces to make such integration untenable.<sup>7</sup> Generally, the Rhodesian security forces were highly protective of their regiments. It was too early to expect them to allow former guerrillas as equal members among them.

During the 1970s, there was violence between ZIPRA and ZANLA forces in Tanzania. These fighters had tried to come together under Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) but again failed. Surviving ZIPRA cadres found their way back to Zambia through the bush. Little or no cooperation among these forces at the front defined the struggle for Zimbabwe thereafter. In some cases, they even fought running battles with each other. They also de-campaigned one another for the rest of the war. Their political/elite leadership was attempting to outwit each other for the ultimate privilege of ruling the imagined Zimbabwe. Therefore, when they were integrated into the national army, these differences persisted. Integration itself was partially unsuccessful. In November 1980 for example, there were major clashes between ZANLA and ZIPRA forces awaiting integration into the national army near Bulawayo. Therefore, putting former ZANLA and ZIPRA cadres next to each other was on its own a time bomb.

As immediate cause to the genocide, Father Mukonori also blames the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) politicians for provocative hate speeches. He alleges that the then Minister of Education and Culture, Dzingai Mutumbuka, addressed a rally at Barbourfields Stadium where he pointed that English and Shona will be compulsorily taught in all Zimbabwean schools. This is said to have incensed Ndebele speaking people resulting in the Minister having to be whisked out of the venue by his security team.<sup>8</sup> His speech led to street violence which mainly targeted the Shona

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7. L. White, *Whoever Saw a Country with Four Armies?: The Battle of Bulawayo Revisited*, *Journal of Southern African Studies* Sep., 2007, Vol. 33, No. 3, p. 622.

8. F. Mukonori, *Man in the Middle: A Memoir*, Harare, House of Books, 2017, p. 243.

people. It appears that following the election loss of Joshua Nkomo in the 1980 elections, his supporters felt that they were being squeezed by the ruling ZANU-PF to the limit. There was yet another more serious uprising in 1981 which led to the return of hundreds of former ZIPRA guerrillas back to the bush. Of course others fled to Botswana and South Africa.

Another immediate cause of violence that culminated in Gukurahundi was the failure by the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe to restrain his ministers from insulting Joshua Nkomo and his supporters. Enos Nkala for example, referred to Nkomo as a self-appointed Ndebele King.<sup>9</sup> Tekere was also quoted saying that “Nkomo and ZIPRA are germs in the country’s wounds and they have to be cleaned up with iodine. The patient will have to scream a bit”. Even at the time of writing his book in 2007, Edgar Tekere was still convinced that indeed Nkomo had been an enemy of independent Zimbabwe.<sup>10</sup> At a rally in Bulawayo in November 1980, Nkomo was defined as the enemy by Enos Nkala. As if that was not enough, Mugabe himself equated Nkomo’s role to having a cobra in the house. He went on to suggest that the only way to effectively deal with the snake is to destroy its head.<sup>11</sup> Obviously the head of ZAPU and ZIPRA in this case was Joshua Nkomo. Former ZIPRA guerrillas in camps could not answer back to this rhetoric simply because they had no platform to do so. The only way to respond was to desert ZNA. Josiah Chinamano, the ZAPU vice president, counselled against insulting men under arms who could not answer back but to no avail.<sup>12</sup> The politicians in ZANU-PF could not have any of that. They were not prepared to moderate their voices.

Personal differences between Joshua Nkomo and Enos Nkala have a long history whose source has not been uncovered. They were one of the drivers towards Gukurahundi. At the funeral of Enos Nkala, who died in 2013 aged 81, Mugabe alleged that Nkala offered to deal with Nkomo, since they were both from Matabeleland. That was way back in 1963 as reported in the

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9. M. Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent since independence*, London, Simon and Schuster, 2013, p. 622.
  10. E. Tekere, *A Lifetime of Struggle*, Harare, SAPES Books, 2007, p. 130. Tekere claims to have heard that former ZIPRA guerrillas were planning to assassinate him. He also claimed that he could not report the matter to the police because the Minister in charge (Joshua Nkomo) continued to have the allegiance of ZIPRA elements in the service.
  11. M. Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent since independence*, London, Simon and Schuster, 2013, pp. 622-625.
  12. L. White, Whoever Saw a Country with Four Armies?: The Battle of Bulawayo Revisited, *Journal of Southern African Studies* Sep. 2007, Vol. 33, No. 3, p. 623.

Newsday of August 30, 2013. Still, Mugabe skipped the role played by Nkala during the Gukurahundi period as well as his languishing after dismissal from government in 1987. When I interviewed Dumiso Dabengwa, the former intelligence chief of ZAPU in 2012, he indicated that he did not know the source of animosity between the two but acknowledged that it was personal and intense. This is an area which still requires further academic enquiry.

Speeches by government ministers linked to ZANU-PF constituted a prelude to organised violence.<sup>13</sup> Already, there was psychological torture in the sense that some of the ZIPRA guerrillas still in Assembly Points were just disappearing. Some of them were never seen again. Hostilities mounted because the ruling ZANU-PF suspected that the ZAPU political leadership was supporting dissidents. Of critical importance to mention here is the result of Gukurahundi. The activities of dissidents and the actions of government forces resulted in the abandonment of 200 000 hectares of land in Matabeleland, murders of thousands of civilians (estimated at 20 000),<sup>14</sup> destruction of many homes, robberies and untold suffering of people. The major problem with Gukurahundi was that when it came to an end with the signing of the Zimbabwean Unity Accord of 22 December 1987 between Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, no restitution or compensation whatsoever of the victims of the violence was attempted. Worse still, there was no public admission of guilt for the atrocities or measures proffered for reparations. Rather, only a blanket amnesty was offered to all those involved in the genocide. Former ZIPRA guerrillas who had been *dissidents* subsequently laid down arms by surrendering at the nearest police station.

The Prime Minister too did not do much to stabilise the situation. Mr. Mugabe told Parliament that there were “sinister undertones” and a “definite organized pattern” among certain elements of the ZIPRA forces that had resulted in the factional fighting in Bulawayo and at Connemara in the Midlands.<sup>15</sup> Those ZIPRA cadres who deserted were defined as “dissidents” and, overnight, this made them outlaws who were bent on overthrowing a legitimately elected government. The Government therefore saw itself as

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13. S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Nationalist-Military Alliance and the Fate of Democracy in Zimbabwe, *African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes*, 25 June 2006.
  14. C.S. Stauffer, “Acting out the Myths: The Power of Narrative Discourse in Shaping the Zimbabwe Conflict of Matabeleland, 1980-1987”, A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy School of Economic Science and Management, Faculty of Management Studies, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2009, p. 143.
  15. T. Hawkins, Factional fighting flares up in Zimbabwe; Clash of Mugabe, Nkomo groups threatens stability, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 13 February 1981.

justified to take stern action against them. Some had escaped to their homes whereas others went back to their liberation war operational areas . At the same time, ZAPU believed (rightly) that Mugabe was trying to eliminate them and the situation within the ZNA had become so unpredictable that many felt they had no option other than leaving.<sup>16</sup> As they left, they took with them arms. This made their claims of victimisation to lose weight.

## **Connemara**

This barrack between the cities of Gweru and Kwekwe was occupied by 4 Brigade (4B). It was composed of former ZIPRA and ZANLA guerrillas who were then being integrated in to the national army. When violence broke out in February 1981, the camp was under an ex-ZIPRA commander. Brown, a former Rhodesian fighter in the Rhodesian Defence Regiment and who was now in the army, is of the view that in 1981, this commander organised the attack against former ZANLA forces. He claimed that all former ZANLA fighters were told to go off-duty while their colleagues from ZIPRA were to be on duty as guards and duty officers. Around midnight, a whistle was blown and all ZIPRA guerrillas ran to the armoury and came back armed. The information is also corroborated by Luise White who asserts that it was former ZIPRA guerrillas who took over the armoury. Former ZANLA guerrillas were not aware of the plot against them. Some were shot while still in their blankets sleeping while those who escaped in some cases arrived at the Drill Hall in Gweru naked where Brown was on duty as a guard. He did not return home at daybreak but proceeded to the rescue operation at Connemara. The challenge with this claim is that it resonates well with more or less the version from Mt Darwin at the time. Maturi, an ex-ZANLA guerrilla, claimed that he was at a camp in Mt Darwin together with former ZIPRA. He asserts that ex-ZIPRA guerrillas planned to attack their colleagues from ZANLA at night when they were apparently on duty as camp guards, just like the case with Connemara. Since Maturi was fluent in Ndebele, he overheard the plan and went on to inform his colleagues from ZANLA. By evening, all former ZANLA guerrillas had deserted the camp. In fear of being attacked when they realised that none of their targets was in camp, ex-ZIPRAs then ran away taking with them arms and ammunition. While we cannot establish whether this is true or false, the assertions help to justify government's ruthless action which culminated in mass killings.

The following morning following skirmishes at Conemarra, a report was made to the commander of Drill Hall called Ransburg. He talked directly to

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16. P. Jackson, *The Civil War Roots of Military Domination in Zimbabwe: The Integration Process following the Rhodesian War and the Road to ZANLA Dominance*, 2011, ore.ac.uk, 24 March 2021.



the Commander-in-Chief, Robert Mugabe. He was ordered to ensure that sanity prevailed at Connemara. Mugabe directed that only former Rhodesian forces were to be deployed against Connemara. No ex-ZIPRA or ZANLA was to be part of the contingent to be deployed to the epicentre of violence. A military convoy finally left Gweru around lunch time towards Connemara. Ahead of the convoy was a stop group of Rhodesian armoured cars at Zarowa. After Zarowa, the convoy was met with a rudimentary road block and a boom gate mounted allegedly by former ZIPRAs. Upon noticing the convoy, the former guerrillas all escaped into the forest. It was assumed that those who had fled and others who also left Connemara were travelling towards Zhombe. Those at Connemara all surrendered and were taken to Donga Camp beyond the small town of Shurugwi near Chachacha. They were subsequently discharged and given warrants to go back to their home areas.

In the wake of this incident, soldiers had to be sent to areas which were assumed to harbour former ZIPRA guerrillas who were abandoning Connemara. 2 Brigade (2B) was initially deployed to deal with the threat of violence after the Connemara incident. It was supposed to patrol areas in Lower Gweru which it actually did for a short period. However, it was quickly withdrawn on grounds that its loyalty was questionable given that some of its forces were from ZIPRA. It was replaced by 5 Brigade. What is found here is that any attempt at creating a professional army, which was supposed to be produced by the process of integration, was failing at all levels. The army was still full of tribalism which interfered with professional operations. Once more, irate Ministers in Mugabe's government continued to castigate ZIPRA and people of Matabeleland. Tekere belittled Nkomo by forwarding that ZAPU and ZIPRA "contributed (to the liberation struggle) in their small way and we have given them a share proportional to their contribution".<sup>17</sup> After fighting between ex-guerrillas in Bulawayo in November 1980, Tekere added that Nkomo was in government as an act of mercy. Notwithstanding that 5 Brigade was a Shona Praetorian Guard, Emmerson Mnangagwa, the then Minister of State Security, at a rally in Matabeleland North in April 1983 told people that the army had come to Matabeleland like fire and in the process of cleansing the area of dissidents, had also wiped out their supporters.<sup>18</sup> These kinds of speeches contributed to the running away of former ZIPRA guerrillas in Assembly Points.

Speeches such as those above gave a completely distorted picture that all people of Matabeleland were in sync with the so-called dissidents. In actual fact, if they refused to give the *dissidents* food they were killed by *dissidents* themselves. If they gave them food and shelter, they were killed by government forces. Brown indicated that when the army was deployed into Mata-

17. S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, The Changing Politics of Matabeleland Since 1980, Solidaritypeacetrust.org, 25 June 25, 2018.

18. N. Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Postwar Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics, 1980-1987*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 134.

beleland, they went on a killing rampage. At any home, they would gather the family together and demand to know where dissidents were. If no answer was forthcoming, they would shoot dead one member and ask the same question to the remaining. That way, they were forcing people to talk. The whole family could get killed if there was no answer.

## **Events at Connemara and their Impact**

Brown went on to claim that after attacks at Connemara, former ZANLA combatants contacted their colleagues based at Ntabazinduna. In turn, they attacked the former ZIPRAs across the fence. Under attack, ex- ZIPRA guerrillas contacted Entumbane who then clashed with former ZANLA cadres. It was then that ZIPRA enlisted the services of Gwaai who started advancing towards Llewellyn (now Mbizo) barracks. Thornhill was then ordered to hit those tanks thereby foiling the rescue attempts. This is what then led to the Battle of Bulawayo. Gradually, violence which had started at Connemara was getting out of hand. Exodus of former ZIPRA guerrillas from the army, not only at Connemara but in other barracks, created what was dubbed the dissident problem. In the search for them, lasting to the Unity Accord officially signed in 1987, about 20 000 people are said to have died. This does not include destruction of homes and other infrastructure as well as stagnation and failure to progress as a result of being held back by conflict.

One version has it that the fight started as a disagreement at Connemara Bar between a ZIPRA and a ZANLA commander. According to a former white operative who was then serving in the Zimbabwe National Army, Vander, they were accusing each other of something. That quarrel is said to have led to plots against each other. A former ZIPRA guerrilla Mkhululi Nyathi claims that he was in charge of communications when information was received from some ZANLA commander that they were to kill former ZIPRA guerrillas that night. He alleged that he did not pass the information to his ZANLA senior at Connemara but rather to his ZIPRA boss. It was then that the decision to attack ZANLA was undertaken. Such responses from both parties indicate that none wants to be held responsible. Alternatively, it means actions which were undertaken against each other are justifiable. There is of course a clear case of denying responsibility.

From oral interviews undertaken, it would appear that former ZANLA guerrillas at Connemara died in large numbers. More than 100 former ZANLA guerrillas are thought to have died. The following day after the violent night, bodies were loaded into National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) refrigerators and ferried to mortuaries in Gweru. Surviving ex-ZANLA guerrillas either ran past Mandindi to Guinea Fowl or ran through the bush straight to Gweru. They were accommodated at both places. All they were trying to do was to get out of the killing zone.

Another unfortunate result was the tumbling of former ZIPRA guerrillas as second class war veterans and elites from the now defunct Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF-ZAPU) as second class politicians. They are incorporated when it is to the advantage of politicians from ZANU-PF. I have had the privilege of interviewing formerly high ranking members of ZIPRA. They include Dhuurani and Joseph. Since they were thought to be linked to dissident, they were heavily tortured during these disturbances and were either not allowed to join the army or simply discharged. As such, they were unable to enter politics or to secure high paying jobs. They generally remain forgotten only maybe waiting to be retrieved and get buried at national or provincial Heroes Acres upon death. The mass murders of alleged opponents of the regime can as well be defined as monopolistic genocide which is a tool for the elite to monopolise and centralise power. It is the most frequent cause of genocide in the twentieth and early twenty-first century.<sup>19</sup> This type of genocide is anchored on achieving total power and elites in Zimbabwean politics were successful in that direction until maybe after the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change as an opposition party in 1999. Gukurahundi also enabled the ruling elite to monopolise the official history of the nation, particularly that of the liberation war. Political elites were therefore great beneficiaries of this violence.

There are also other consequences of these clashes beginning at Connemara. The persecutions by the police and army that took place in the wake of deserters in other formerly ZIPRA fronts remain badly under-researched. For example, Mashonaland West was a ZIPRA front during the liberation war. Fearing execution, some former guerrillas fled there. This led to military follow-up which my preliminary survey has shown to be equally brutal. However, focus of Gukurahundi studies remain on Matabeleland and parts of Midlands. In addition, ZIPRA was not a Ndebele army as generally believed. Many former guerrillas from non-Ndebele communities particularly in Mutare, Masvingo, Mashonaland East, West and Central were the hardest hit. Often they were reported to the police as soon as they arrived home. Usually, the police deliberately was slow to understand them and often they were seriously beaten and sometimes killed. It is important to undertake research of Gukurahundi in these areas.

## Conclusion

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19. Daniel Feirstein, *Toward a typology of genocide social practices, Genocide as Social Practice: Reorganizing Society under the Nazis and Argentina's Military Juntas*, Rutgers University Press, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wq9vn.7>>, 18 March 2021

The article has argued that factional fights which started at Connemara and spread countywide was largely instigated by reckless politicians. The motivating factor was the destruction of ZAPU as a political opposition party and the subjugation of its guerrilla movement. Intolerance by elite politicians was used as justification for attacks on alleged dissidents and civilians who were assumed to support them. Furthermore, in these early years of independence, the new government did not have total control of the army. Consequently, political elites sided with ex-ZANLA against ex-ZIPRA. The end result of the battles which started at Connemara was increased power over the army by political elites, destruction and co-option of ZIPRA, mass killings and finally the unity between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF. Many questions surrounding Gukurahundi remain to be answered particularly by men under arms, be it former Rhodesian forces and ex-guerrillas who actively participated in this sad moment in the history of Zimbabwe.

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FROM CONEMARA TO GUKURAHUNDI..

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