
Southern Africa
REPORT
PROFILE

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Head of Zimbabwe Central Intelligence Organisation, Happton Bonyongwe (left) confers with Constantine Chiwenga, Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, and President Robert Mugabe (right).

ZIMBABWE SECURITY FORCES

Even under the multi-party government, the armed forces are central to all aspects of life in Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE'S GENERALS ARE the ultimate bulwark against any change in that country. Grouped in the non-statutory Joint Operations Committee (JOC) which makes up President Robert Mugabe's inner circle, they remain antagonistic to the unity government with Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC and are increasingly distrustful of non-military politicians even in Mugabe's Zanu PF.

Access to economic opportunities has strengthened their bond to Mugabe and their willingness to defend the status quo.

While conventional military capacity and competence have declined massively since the late 1990s, Zimbabwe's security forces remain a major – and arguably the central – obstacle to settlement of the country's political instability.

ZIMBABWE'S FORMAL SECURITY forces Zimbabwe comprise the **Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF)**, the **Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP)**, the **Zimbabwe Prison Service (ZPS)** and the **Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO)**.

The ZDF in turn consists of the **Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA)** and the **Air Force of Zimbabwe (AFZ)**.

Veterans of the liberation war, under the banner of the **Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA)**, are members of the Reserve Force under the Ministry of Defence, which makes them an element of the formal security structure.

Graduates of the **National Youth Service (NYS)**, an indoctrination and basic military training programme initiated in 2001, also play an important role through an affirmative action programme requiring that they are given preference as recruits.

Zimbabwe is a highly-coordinated and militarised security state, structurally similar to that under PW Botha in apartheid South Africa, with the military directly involved in all aspects of government. Serving and retired military and intelligence officials occupy key positions in Cabinet, the civil and diplomatic service, and government parastatals.

Security forces formally interface with the 'inclusive government' through the **National Security Council (NSC)**, chaired by President **Robert Mugabe** and attended by Prime Minister **Morgan Tsvangirai**, and all ministers of the security ministries (Defence, Home Affairs, State Security, Foreign Affairs, and Local Government) and service chiefs. The NSC is theoretically responsible for the formulation and supervision of the implementation of policies on almost every aspect of Zimbabwe's social, political and economic life.

In practice the NSC is little more than window-dressing. Real decision-making takes place through the **Joint Operations Committee (JOC)**, the non-statutory strategic centre and intersection point between the security structures and Mugabe's Zanu PF party. The JOC meets Mugabe weekly to receive and review intelligence reports from across the country, and to make policy recommendations to the NSC on the basis of those intelligence reports.

The JOC is replicated at provincial and district levels where, in addition to the usual representatives of the security ministries, the representatives of the Ministry of Local Government are included. The provincial governors and the district administrators chair the JOC meetings respectively at provincial and district levels.

Since its establishment in 2006 the NSC has played a direct, and directing, role in national-level decision-making. Once the NSC has noted and adopted the recommendations, they are then presented to the Zanu PF Politburo, the party's highest decision-making body and implementation arm of the party's Central Committee. If approved by the Politburo, the recommendations will then be tabled before Cabinet for final adoption as government policy.

To ensure there are no delays in the process of policy formulation, the National JOC and NSC meetings are held every Monday, Politburo meetings every Tuesday and Cabinet meetings every Wednesday. It can thus take less than a week for JOC recommendations to pass through all the stages of approval.

Zimbabwe Defence Forces

Zimbabwe National Army

Organisation: The ZNA has a mechanised brigade, five motorised infantry brigades of three battalions each, an artillery brigade, a presidential guards' brigade, and several special forces and support units.

- The **Mechanised Brigade**, based at Inkomo Barracks, comprises two mechanised infantry battalions and one armoured regiment: three squadrons of armoured cars and one squadron of tanks. The armoured cars are Brazilian **Cascavels** armed with 90mm guns, manufactured by **Engesa Canyon**. The tanks are an assortment of Russian, Chinese and North Korean T54, T55 MBTs.

- **1 Infantry Brigade** (motorised) is headquartered at Khumalo Barracks (formally Brady) in Bulawayo. Under this brigade are **1:1 Infantry Battalion** at Induna Barracks (Bulawayo); **1:2 Infantry Battalion** at Hwange Barracks; and **1:3 Infantry Battalion** in temporary makeshift accommodation at Plumtree, near the Botswana Border.

The brigade maintains an infantry company at the Beit Bridge Border post at all times. It also maintains small detachments at the Victoria Falls and Kazungula Border posts.

- **2 Infantry Brigade** (motorised) is based at Cranborne Barracks in Harare. Under this brigade are **2:1 Infantry Battalion** in temporary accommodation at Mutoko; **2:2 Infantry Battalion** in temporary accommodation in Mudzi; and **2:3 Infantry Battalion** at Magunje, outside Karoi.

- **3 Infantry Brigade** (motorised) is based in Mutare, and the battalions are based as follows: **3:1 Infantry Battalion** in Mutare; **3:2 Infantry Battalion** in Rusape; and **3:3 Infantry Battalion** in Chipinge.

- **4 Infantry Brigade** (motorised) is based Masvingo. Its units are **4:1 Infantry Battalion** in Masvingo; **4:2 Infantry Battalion** at Mupandawana (Gutu) and **4:3 Infantry Battalion** in Masvingo.

- **5 Infantry Brigade** (motorised) and all its units are based at Battlefields in Ngezi.

- The **Zimbabwe Artillery Brigade** comprises two field regiments based at Alphida Farm in Domboshava, just on the outskirts of Harare, and an air defence regiment based at Pondorosa Barracks in Red Cliff, just outside Kwekwe. An ongoing debate over the merits of moving the air defence regiment into the AFZ remains inconclusive.

- The **Presidential Guards Brigade** is a special formation consisting of two infantry battalions, plus an armoured reconnaissance troop and a ceremonial field artillery troop.

The bomb disposal unit of the Zimbabwe Corps of Engineers has been attached permanently to the Presidential Guards Brigade. Commanders of the Presidential Brigade and units under command are carefully selected for their loyalty to President Mugabe and Zanu PF. Rank and file officers and men of the brigade have their every move closely watched. They get first preference with respect to allocation of scarce resources, although they do not receive any special allowances.

- Zimbabwe's Special Forces comprise the **Commando Regiment** based at Cranborne Barracks in Harare, the **Parachute Regiment** based at Inkomo Barracks outside

Harare on the Chirundu Highway and the **Special Air Service (SAS) Squadron.**

While the SAS Squadron is an independent army troop tasked directly by the Defence HQ, it is attached to the Parachute Regiment for administrative purposes, and draws most of its officers and recruits from the regiment.

Each of the brigades and special forces regiments has the usual allocation of integral elements of signals, engineers, medical, transport, etc.

The **Grey's Scouts**, based at Inkomo Barracks, is a mounted battalion administered by the Mechanised Brigade, but tasked only by Army Headquarters. It is a normal sized battalion that is equipped and trained to conduct low intensity operations on horseback.

The ZNA has two combat engineer regiments based at Pomona Barracks in Harare, two signals regiments (one in Harare and the other in Bulawayo) and two medical companies (one in Harare and the other in Bulawayo).

Training facilities include the Zimbabwe Military Academy (ZMA) in Gweru, Zimbabwe School of Infantry at Mbalabala, All Arms Battle School at Nyanga, Army School of Logistics at Adams Barracks in Mutare, Recruit Training Depot at Imbizo Barracks outside Bulawayo, Medical Training School at Imbizo Barracks, School of Signals at Imbizo Barracks, Zimbabwe School of Military Engineering at Pomona Barracks, Army Pay Corp Training School in Harare and the School of Military Intelligence at Kabrit Barracks in Harare.

The Chinese Government is helping with funding for the construction and equipping of the Defence College. Revenue collections from the sale of diamonds are also being used to fund work on the college. There is no information as to when the college will open its doors to its first students, or what the major components of the curriculum will include. Chinese influence will undoubtedly be significant.

The statutory strength of the ZNA is 40 000, but actual strength stands at approximately 30 000. Desertions, resignations, retirement and deaths took a huge toll during the 2007-2008 political and economic crisis, with actual strength dropping to a low of 25 000. The situation has stabilised and renewed recruitment is rebuilding the army's strength.

The army is unlikely to embark on a major recruitment drive in the very near future: the administration lacks the funds for recruitment or, despite Chinese support, training.

Equipment: ZNA field artillery regiments are equipped mainly with 4 x 122mm Russian guns (towed), 12 x 122mm howitzer (towed), 25 x BM 21 Grad (self-propelled), 18 x 105mm pack howitzer and 12 x 105mm howitzer (towed).

The air defence regiment is equipped mainly with the SAM-7 surface-to-air missiles, the ZU-23 air defence guns and ZSU-23-4 Shilka.

The mechanised infantry battalions are equipped with an assortment of locally assembled APCs (precise number unknown, but believed to be about 90) based on the chassis and engine of the German Unimog-Benz, and 16 French Acmat APCs.

All the Unimog-based APCs were assembled for the



The 90mm Brazilian Cascavel. Only 10 of the 90 which had been in service in the 1980s are still in fighting order.

Rhodesian army during the civil war. Many were destroyed during the Mozambique campaign. Others were either destroyed or captured during the war in the DRC. Having seen action in Mozambique, Somalia, Angola and DRC, they are no longer in good fighting condition. The economic crisis and the deterioration of diplomatic relations with the EU countries have made it extremely difficult for the ZNA to source critical spares to maintain the APCs in good fighting condition.

The French Acmat is not configured for military operations, but for police crowd-control operations. Its introduction into the ZNA coincided with the advent of violent food riots in January 1998 and the deployment of troops on the streets of Harare in a role previously reserved for the Police Support Unit.

Prior to the delivery of the vehicle, a team of soldiers was dispatched to France where they were taught crowd dispersal drills using the APC. The APCs played a key role in dispersing rioting women demonstrating against escalating prices of food in January 1998. As with the Unimog-Benz APCs, it has not been easy to source spares for the Acmat. The APCs are therefore in a state of disrepair.

The Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) are the Russian T-54, Korean T-55 and the Chinese T-59 (30), T-63 (unknown) and T-69 (10). Most of the MBTs have already been decommissioned. They were too old and spares were becoming difficult to acquire.

The 90mm Brazilian Cascavel is the main armoured reconnaissance vehicle. Zimbabwe had 90 Cascavels at the end of the 1980s, but lack of spares forced commanders to cannibalise parts to keep some in good fighting order. Rebels in the DRC captured four, and the other 77 are grounded for reasons ranging from lack of tyres to shortage of engine spares. Most can now be seen rotting at a vehicle graveyard at Inkomo. Less than 10 are serviceable: the Cascavel fleet is currently too depleted to fulfil any armoured reconnaissance mission.

The Russian T-54s were inherited from former Zipra forces at independence in 1980, while the Korean T-55s came as part of the equipment for the notorious 5th Bri-



Made in Russia: The ZSU-23 Shilka

gade, which until the end of the civil war in Matabeleland and the Midlands, was not part of the ZNA, but was a security arm of the ruling Zanu PF party.

It is not known how many T-54/55 tanks remain operational. But despite their refurbishment by Korean technicians in 1999-2000, the majority are out of commission due to a shortage of spares and lengthy periods of disuse due to a biting shortage of fuel and training ammunition.

Recent media reports of purchases of T-63 and T-69 MBTs from China appear to be inaccurate, although ZDF and the Chinese military have agreed on a supply contract for a wide range of military hardware, including APCs, armoured reconnaissance vehicles and MBTs. Finer details of the agreement could not be obtained. Senior ZDF sources are sceptical that the contract will result in substantial deliveries of hardware.

The AK-47 assault rifle is the standard weapon for all units, but the 7,62mm FN rifle is also still in use, mainly in the special forces units.

The 7,62mm FN MAG and the Russian PK machine gun are the standard general and sustained-fire support weapons for the infantry.

The 81/82mm and the 60mm mortars are the standard infantry high trajectory support weapons, while the 75mm anti-tank gun is the main battalion-level anti-tank weapon. The British 88mm shoulder-held anti-tank rocket launcher is also still in use, but mostly for training because of shortages of ammunition.

The RPG-7 bazooka is the standard infantry platoon anti-tank weapon.

The Red Arrow, a Chinese wire-guided anti-tank missile launcher, was acquired during the DRC campaign in 1998 and extensively used, particularly on the Eastern Front against advancing Rwandese and Ugandan columns. But the weapon's performance was not satisfactory, and has not found its way into the ZNA equipment tables. The antiquated weapon's major disadvantage lies in the wire-guidance system, which diminishes the weapon's effectiveness whenever there is an obstacle between the launcher and the target – a limitation demonstrated in the DRC where the numerous water bodies characterising the vast

equatorial rain forests affected accuracy.

The ZNA's standard infantry troop carrier and first- and second-line logistics fleets (the Austrian Steyr and the French Acmat) are largely depleted. Attempts to replace the third- and fourth-line logistics vehicles (8-tonne, 10-tonne and 30-tonne Benz and Scania trucks) have been unsuccessful: the fleet of 200 Chinese Dongfeng trucks was unable to adapt to local conditions. Just a couple of dozen remain operational, but in a poor state of maintenance.

The entire available ZNA transport fleet would barely be sufficient to transport a battalion. Ambulances and recovery vehicles have depleted. MBTs cannot be deployed as the trucks and low-loader trailers needed for that purpose have also depleted. Most of the low-loader trailers have been auctioned to the public.

The artillery pieces cannot be deployed because of a shortage of trucks to tow them. There is a similar shortage of ammunition trucks.

The army supply system is in tatters. All third and fourth line transport resources are depleted. Ammunition boxes (trucks adapted to carry ammunition) have depleted, and some of them have been auctioned. Troop-carrying vehicles are not there anymore. Refrigerated trucks to transport perishable food items have all depleted.

Apart from standard plant equipment for construction of roads and Bailey bridges, ZNA engineers have an assortment of earthmoving equipment, mostly graders and caterpillars (most currently deployed on the farms of senior army officers). The graders and dozers are now mostly obsolete. Some have been auctioned, while some had their parts stripped and sold on the black market, mainly to earthmoving companies and chrome miners on the Great Dyke. The army engineers have not received any new or replacement equipment for years.

The ZNA engineers benefited from the de-mining programme funded by the US, which provided vehicles and de-mining equipment. But cooperation with the US Army in this area has since been suspended, and the de-mining programme has almost collapsed. The engineers have recently taken delivery of nine 8-tonne vehicle-borne bridging equipment vehicles. The source is unknown.

In terms of communications, the ZNA has not acquired any new HF or VHF sets. They still use the A76 and the A81J pack radios for VHF communications, and the B22 and B85 station radios for HF communications. WRS was the local agent for the radios and was also responsible for battery supply.

The A76 was inherited from the Rhodesian Army, and it is small, light, compact and very efficient radio suitable for use in low intensity operations. But its batteries are not rechargeable or reusable, so troops will have to bear the extra weight of the batteries when on patrol.

The A81J was purchased as a replacement for the A76 – and several senior commanders are understood to have received commissions from the transaction. The radio was inadequately tested and proved unreliable in operations, and has largely been abandoned.

The B22 was inherited from the Rhodesian Army. While it was a very efficient radio, spares are increasingly difficult to source. It is being phased out and replaced by the B85.

The strategic 10 Signals Squadron in Borrowdale, responsible for radio interceptions, is understood to have received equipment from China recently. Information on this matter is very scarce.

Operational efficiency: Until about 1997, the standard of training of the ZNA was high. Both individual and unit training were conducted as per the schedules in the Army Commander's Annual Training Directives.

The active participation of armour, artillery, combat engineers and air support resources in all major tactical exercises to simulate real battle conditions ensured some degree of realism in the training.

However, the advent of the economic depression in 1997 and the collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar against major world currencies saw fewer and fewer resources allocated for training. The deployment of the ZDF to the DRC in August 1998, without proper preparation in terms of material resource mobilisation, exerted further pressure on already steadily depleting resources.

Prior to the DRC deployment the Zimbabwe government reviewed and amended its defence policy to adapt to what appeared to be a lasting peace in Southern Africa. The 1994 advent of democracy in South Africa was the culmination of a series of key developments: the attainment of independence by Namibia in 1989, the first peace agreement in Angola in 1992, and the 1992 Rome Peace Agreement between Frelimo and Renamo in Mozambique.

Zimbabwe's strategic defence objectives were realigned. From the early 1990s, they focused on defence of Zimbabwe's territorial integrity and air space, and contributing to UN and African Union peace support operations. This required a smaller, but well-equipped and mobile force, which Zimbabwe's budget could, at the time, sustain. The ZNA's statutory strength was cut from 51 000 to its current 40 000.

But the rationalisation exercise was poorly implemented, resulting in an increase in the number of top posts, the shrinking of the fighting formations and an expansion of non-essential administrative ("bottle-washing" in the ZNA jargon) units. Resources were to support the new strategy and structures were never found.

The ZNA lost many of its well-trained, experienced and battle-hardened officers and men. At the same time, Aids began decimating ZNA units, forcing the commanders in 1993 to disband four motorised infantry battalions, and to close down the barracks at Bindura, Gwanda, Nyajena and Birchenough Bridge.

The ZNA did not recruit and train enough to stem the wastage through deaths, terminal illnesses and retirements. And when they finally resumed recruitment in the mid-1990s, suddenly the number of women recruits in the training camps was unprecedented.

When war broke out in the DRC, and Zimbabwe and Angola deployed troops to support the Kabila government against Ugandan and Rwandese forces in the east, the ZNA had been dislocated and its fighting efficiency compromised. Infantry brigades had only two poorly trained and under-strength battalions each, instead of the usual three. The entire transport fleet, except for recently-purchased Steyr and Acmat soft-skin troop carrying vehicles,

had been grounded. Only a handful of senior officers had seen real action. The balance was drawn from non-combat units – promoted because of political connections rather than competence.

Escalating involvement of the Ugandan and Rwandese armies and proxy rebel groups acting as their proxies in the Eastern Front, forced the ZNA to embark on a massive, unprecedented recruitment drive to make up for the acute shortages of manpower.

To get troops to the battle fields, the ZNA compromised on training – actually closing down several training facilities to release personnel for the DRC campaign.

ZNA training has never fully recovered. The withdrawal of the British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT) in 2001, and the withdrawal of all forms of assistance associated with their presence in Zimbabwe, coupled with military sanctions by the UK and other Western countries, compounded the problem. Military training exchange programmes with countries such as the US, the UK and Nigeria, which had immensely benefited the ZNA, have been suspended.

Military commanders have turned their attention more and more to partisan politics, and have started channelling more and more resources to non-military activities such as land reform, Zanu PF campaigns, and elections, at the expense of military programmes such as equipment procurement and training. The result is a seriously compromised level of professionalism.

Resources: The ZNA has not yet recovered from the erosion of its resources during the 2007-2008 political and economic crisis, when extreme shortages of foreign exchange and Zimbabwe's international isolation seriously eroded its resource base.

The diversion of the few remaining resources to non-military activities meant to support Zanu PF's campaign efforts, and large-scale corruption by senior army officials, have worsened the situation.

The ZNA is short of food rations, clothing, fuel, spares for vehicles, weapon systems and other equipment.

All military facilities, such as shooting ranges, office and living accommodation, and training camps across the country are in an extreme state of disrepair. Damaged barrack equipment (beds, mattresses, lockers, tables, desks, etc) have not been replaced.

Operational equipment is not being repaired. Of the 90 Cascavel armoured reconnaissance vehicles supplied by Engesa of Brazil, less than 10 are serviceable.

Despite having been refurbished by North Korean technicians in 1999 and 2000, most of the main battle tanks and tracked armoured reconnaissance vehicles are out of commission. All tank transporters are out of commission: even ZNA's serviceable tanks cannot be deployed.

In the mid-1990s the ZNA was forced to de-commission the Puma, the armoured troop-carrying vehicle inherited from the Rhodesian Army, because of difficulties in sourcing Benz spares (the Puma is built on the Mercedes Benz engine and chassis). All the other soft-skin Benz trucks, including the highly versatile, all-terrain Unimog, have also been phased out for the same reasons. Of the 20-odd 30-tonne Benz and Scania trucks, only two are apparently



**Defence
Minister
Emmerson
Mnangagwa**

serviceable – ZNA sources claim even these are now out of commission.

All current construction projects under the Public Service Investment Programme (PSIP) have been suspended for lack of funds. Notable are housing projects at Headquarters 4 Brigade in Masvingo and 3 Brigade in Mutare, which have been abandoned halfway through. The proposed construction of the headquarters of the Presidential Guards Brigade in the Mount Hampden area north-west of Harare, and the proposed construction of a boarding school for children of army personnel in Ngezi are among the many major projects stillborn through lack of funds.

At least two infantry battalions, which had initially been disbanded but later re-formed in 1999 for the DRC campaign, are permanently accommodated in field tents at Masvingo and Plumtree.

Dollarisation of the Zimbabwe economy has brought some relief to the officers and men whose earning power had been eroded by inflation. The lowest paid soldier now gets about US\$200, and the government is under pressure to improve the salaries of all public employees. Minimum wages are expected to rise to US\$300.

Political alignment: In the ZNA, this is largely determined by rank – with support for Zanu PF generally clustered in the upper ranks, although there are pockets of support throughout – primarily through the integration of former NYS members into the army. Opposition to Zanu PF (and, to a lesser extent, support for MDC) is widespread, but apparently unorganised and largely passive.

Although there remain pockets of ideological support for the rightwing nationalism espoused by Zanu PF, loyalty is increasingly towards the near-mercenary system put in place by Zanu PF, rather than to the party itself. Consideration given to installing a military presidential successor to Mugabe reflects this.

Political patronage in exchange for military support includes effective legalisation of looting – state coffers, land

seized under the land reform programme, other state resources such as wildlife of state reserves, and minerals smuggled out of the DRC during the Zimbabwe military campaign there – and, crucially, protection against prosecution for criminal activities.

Former ZNA head (now Defence Forces Chief) General **Constantine Chiwenga**, and the Commander of 3 Brigade, Brigadier General **Douglas Nyikayaramba**, are primary beneficiaries of the politico-military relationship. The pair are widely believed to have been responsible for the murder in the mid-1980s of ZNA Captain **Shepherd Nleya** in Hwange in the mid-1980s to prevent his exposure of their involvement in illegal ivory and rhino horn trading.

Beneficiaries of the land reforms include many senior and middle ranking officers as well as some of the former NYS incorporated into the ZNA.

A majority of the former NYS members deployed in the ZNA are veterans of the Zanu PF indoctrination camps and, with little education, had to be exempted from ZNA enlistment qualifications. They too have a strong incentive in maintaining the system.

Ranged politically against these are the majority of those who joined the army after independence. Ex-Rhodesian soldiers (all black – the last white soldier, a W/O Cunningham, left several years ago) resent the controversial affirmative action programme under which ex-guerrillas were routinely promoted ahead of them. They, and post-independence recruits, also resent the collapse of the professional military regime established after independence.

Hostility towards Zanu PF, which they blame for their circumstances, is widespread, although seldom aired publicly. Loose accusations of support for the MDC (a label which inhibits promotion, has resulted in unfair dismissal, and even detention and torture) have reinforced antagonism towards Zanu PF.

The vast majority of the rank-and-file in ZNA and a clear majority among junior and middle-ranking officers are antagonistic to Zanu PF. But the presence of former Green Bombers (NYS graduates), routinely deployed to identify and report on any criticism of the military status quo or of Zanu PF, inhibits open articulation.

In 2002 the army deployed officers in the rural areas to help Zanu PF to mobilise support ahead of the presidential elections of June that year. After the elections some of the officers were withdrawn, but a few were left in areas of MDC strength.

In 2008 larger numbers were sent to their homes where they faked retirement and started actively working with local Zanu PF structures to attack MDC structures. Most of these soldiers have not returned to barracks. They remain on full pay and benefits, and they have become the backbone of Zanu PF provincial and district structures.

It has been impossible so far to establish the number of soldiers deployed in rural areas.

Morale: Morale has improved since its almost complete collapse at the height of the hyperinflation period when the desertion rate spiked at nearly 30% – South Africa and Botswana are now home to thousands of ZNA deserters, where they are suspected of involvement in increased levels of violent crime. In January 2007 the Commander of

the Army, Lieutenant General **Philip Sibanda**, had more than 4 000 resignation applications on his desk – 10% of the statutory strength is 40 000. He refused to authorise most.

Material conditions have improved markedly since then. Salaries, although still inadequate, are paid on time. The situation in the dining rooms has improved. Medical supplies in camp hospitals are now available. New uniforms have been issued, although the combat boots from China got reduced to threads within weeks of being issued.

There is still no money for training, and in the absence of operational commitments, soldiers report for duty just to be accounted for and occasionally to do fatigue. HIV-Aids is still a problem – an estimated 30% of personnel are positive, with a huge proportion of them at varying degrees of sickness.

Desertion rates remain high – possibly as high as 10%.

Air Force of Zimbabwe

Organisation: The AFZ has three main air bases: Suri Suri Field Air Base near Chegutu, Manyame near Harare, and Thornhill in Gweru. There are also Forward Air Fields at Grand Reef near Mutare, Buffalo Range near Triangle, Kotwa in Mudzi, and at Hwange.

The air force is organised in four wings (stationed at the airbases at Manyame, Suri Suri and Thornhill): the Engineering Wing, Administration Wing, Flying Wing, and Regimental Wing.

The Flying Wing is the fighting unit of the AFZ and is organised into eight squadrons. The AFZ's statutory strength is 5 000, but the actual strength is unknown because of massive desertions, resignations, and deaths mainly due to Aids-related illnesses.

Equipment: The equipment inventory of the AFZ includes an assortment of Western and Eastern equipment. The British Hawker-Hunter, inherited from the Rhodesian Air Force, is being retired because of difficulties in acquiring spares, and replaced by the upgraded Chinese K-8E. Twelve have been delivered. The AFZ has also taken delivery of six K-8 trainers, with a further six expected.

The Chinese-built Chengdu F-7 multi-role aircraft is used both as an interceptor and in the fighter ground attack role. Of the 24 supplied, two were lost in the DRC and six are grounded for lack of spares. This aircraft is also being phased out and replaced by the Chinese FC-1. The first batch of six FC-1s was delivered in mid-2006 and the second batch of another six was delivered in 2007. There is no record of further deliveries.

The AFZ also flies the Russian MiG-23 multi-role aircraft for interception and fighter ground attack functions. The MiG-23 was supplied by Libya as excess to their requirements. In 2008 six were serviceable, but not in use. They remain in hangers in Gweru. An order has also been placed for the JF-17 Thunder lightweight multi-role fighter. There is no record of delivery, but pilots and technicians have been trained to fly and maintain the aircraft.

The AFZ is still flying the old SA.316B Alouette III and the Augusta Bell 412SP helicopters, which were extensively



The aging French-made SA.316B Alouette III. Only three are known to be serviceable in the AFZ.

used in the fire-force role during the civil war in Matabeleland and in the Mozambique campaign. They are mainly used in the tactical transport role and for intimate fire support to ground forces. They are armed with Browning machine guns, and the Bell 412 was armed with launchers for unguided missiles during the DRC operations. Only two Bells are flying and three Alouettes are known to be serviceable.

The AFZ took delivery of Russian Mi-35 attack helicopter gun-ships in 1998 during the DRC war. There are six Mi-35 (including two Mi-35P) in the AFZ inventory. All are serviceable, but are confined to hangars as there is no fuel for them.

The CASA C.212-200 and the Britten-Norman BN-2A Islander are the main fixed-wing tactical transport aircraft in the AFZ. Only four CASAs (of 14 delivered) and two Islanders (of six delivered) are still serviceable.

The AFZ also acquired one Ilyushin IL-76 and one Antonov An-12 transport plane from Russia during the DRC war.

Chinese air defence experts have been working on Zimbabwe's integrated air defence system for over 10 years. They regularly upgrade the system, most recently in 2006. The integrated air defence system is based on two CEIEC 408-C long-range air surveillance radars, which serve as the prime sensors. They operate from the ground and each has a range of about 600km. Several gap-filler radars complement them. The system is largely dysfunctional: two long-range radars are insufficient to effectively cover the Zimbabwean airspace, leaving too many gaps to be filled by gap-filler radars.

AFZ officers were apparently highly embarrassed during an air show in Cape Town, South Africa last month. First, the range of the aircraft is so short that they had to land often to refuel. Second, because of a lack of navigational transponders, AFZ aircraft had to be escorted by the South African Air Force.

Resources: : Like the ZNA, the AFZ has been badly affected by the shortage of spares – for aircraft and other equipment.

Sanctions by the UK compelled the air force to look East. Although China has stepped into the breach, supplying materiel and systems, providing training and other support, the 'Look East Policy' has not yet enabled the AFZ



The Chinese-built Chengdu f-7 currently being phased out and replaced by the Chinese FC-1.

to achieve the levels of efficiency and effectiveness that were standard prior to the DRC war.

But the AFZ remains less politically pressured than the ZNA. Zanu PF rarely turns to the AFZ for resources to support its partisan political programmes, routinely misappropriating ZNA resources. AFZ administrative infrastructure and living accommodation is better, and repair and maintenance work is undertaken regularly. The AFZ also has more competent managers than the ZNA.

But like all government departments, the AFZ has been affected by a critical shortage of cash for food rations, medical supplies, uniforms, transport, fuel, etc. The lack of spares for aircraft and equipment, coupled with the pathetically low salaries, has resulted in engineers and technicians leaving the air force in large numbers to join the private sector, or to join the growing Zimbabwean exile community. The economic depression has also resulted in the AFZ failing to maintain some of its infrastructure, particularly the runways, bunkers and aircraft hangers at most of the air bases and Forward Air Fields.

Operational efficiency: The level of training of AFZ pilots, engineers, technicians, gunners, Air Defence personnel and other support staff has improved with Chinese support since the DRC campaign. AFZ pilots, engineers, technicians and air traffic controllers are receiving training in China, and Chinese trainers are present in the country to conduct on-the-job training and to evaluate the performance of personnel trained in China.

But the fighting efficiency of the AFZ has been badly compromised by the departure and deaths of experienced and battle-hardened fighters, and the AFZ's inability to attract replacements due to unattractive conditions of service.

Experienced pilots, many with combat experience in Mozambique during the civil war there between 1982 and 1992, died in the DRC, either in action or of malaria and other killer diseases.

Many experienced transport pilots have left for greener pastures in countries such as South Africa, Australia

and New Zealand, as have large numbers of engineers and technicians.

Political alignment: Divisions within the AFZ are similar to those in the ZNA, although pro- and anti-Zanu PF fault lines are both horizontal and vertical.

AFZ chief Air Marshal **Perence Shiri** is a guerrilla war veteran and was commander of the notorious 5th Brigade – the Zanu PF private army responsible for the Gukurahundi campaign.

Shiri is particularly harsh in rooting out suspected political dissent. In this he has been backed by all senior AFZ officers – all of whom have benefitted substantially from government land reallocations. All were also involved in mineral pillaging during the DRC campaign.

In the middle and junior officer ranks, political divisions tend to be vertical – between different units: liberation war veterans and ex-Green Bombers are mainly grouped in the Regimental Wing, responsible for physical security of air force installations. Members of the unit are routinely deployed in rural constituencies, before and during election campaigns, to enforce support for Zanu PF. For many, loyalty is based on land allocations they received under the land reform programme.

The AFZ's administrators, logisticians, fighter pilots, technicians and engineers in the Engineering Wing, Admin Wing and the Flying Wing, most of whom joined the AFZ after liberation and directly from college or university, are overwhelmingly apolitical professionals (as far as this is possible in today's Zimbabwe) or hostile to Zanu PF.

Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association

Background: There are an estimated 30 000 former guerrillas of the two liberation movement armies, Zanla and Zipra, including those serving in the security forces – although the number is inflated by individuals who took advantage of the lax vetting process when the government agreed to pay pensions to ex-guerrillas in 1997.

There are two representative bodies for war veterans; the **Zimbabwe Liberators Platform (ZLP)** and the **Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association (ZNLWVA)**. The ZLP, which opposes most Zanu PF policies and practices, has little influence in the security forces.

The ZNLWVA is a wing of Zanu PF and a powerful influence in both the party and the government. The entire staff officer corps and most middle-level commanders of the army, air force, police, prison service and CIO are members of the ZNLWVA.

A Department of War Veterans' Affairs in the Office of the President is responsible for the day-to-day administration and welfare of war veterans. But when deployed as members of the Reserve, war veterans fall under the Ministry of Defence, and operationally under military or police command.

Security function: Veterans have been called up for ser-

vice in the Reserve – as was the case when they were deployed in 2007/08 to assist the police to enforce price controls. They more commonly operate as an independent command, however, under Zanu PF.

In this capacity they operate as enforcers, particularly in the rural areas, to ensure high Zanu PF electoral turnouts – a role they fulfilled successfully early this year in mobilising rural peasant support for Mugabe's anti-sanctions petition. They also succeed in mobilising high Zanu PF turnouts in parliamentary and presidential elections.

The veterans' support comes at a high price: their 1997 protests forced Mugabe to introduce war pensions. The resulting drain on the fiscus was a key trigger factor in the ongoing economic crisis and one of Mugabe's motivations for launching his land reform programme.

Political alignment: The war veterans are deeply divided between support for Mugabe, for Vice-President **Joyce Mujuru**, and for 2008 presidential candidate **Simba Makoni**.

Although Mugabe enjoys the support of key war veteran leaders – **Joseph Chinotimba**, who commanded the farm invasions, and **Jabulani Sibanda** in 2007 proposed Mugabe's appointment as life president – he is no longer convinced of their long-term reliability. He has instead put his faith in a ZNLWVA splinter group led by retired Colonel **Sebastian Beta**. Beta holds regular secret meetings with Mugabe at the president's Borrowdale Brooke residence. He is also a regular at Mugabe's rural homestead in Zvimba.

Beta works closely with AFZ's Shiri. He is widely favoured to be given control of ZNLWVA in the not-to-distant future.

Resources: The war veterans have no resource allocation from central government, apart from the budgetary allocation to the Department of War Veterans' Affairs for staff salaries, allowances or administrative expenses. For their operations, the war veterans draw resources either from Zanu PF or from relevant security force departments. They have recently agreed to contribute a percentage of their monthly pensions towards the building of a trust fund.

Zimbabwe Defence Industry

The Zimbabwe Defence Industry (ZDI) is a government company manufacturing, importing and selling weapons, ammunition and other defence related items. The managing director is retired Colonel **Tshinga Dube**, a former commander of the ZNA's Signals Directorate, and a close confidante of former Army Commander General **Solomon Mujuru**. The board is appointed by Mugabe and is made up of political allies and senior serving and retired military officers, and controls the ZDI.

ZDI is the principal importer of weapons and ammunition for the security forces, and has the capacity at its factory at Alphida Farm in the Domboshawa area northwest of Harare to produce mortar bombs, mines and small arms ammunition for domestic use and export.

Small arms ammunition output – much of it traditionally bought by US hunters – has decreased considerably

since Washington imposed sanctions on ZDI (US hunters were, until then, ZDI's major ammunition customers). Current small arms ammunition is mainly for training ammunition for domestic security services.

The factory continues to function, but at much reduced level of productivity. International isolation, sanctions and an exodus of qualified personnel have restricted its capacity.

Exports were limited by 2008 to small arms and ammunition, mainly to rebel groupings in Africa, from excess stocks held by the services.

ZDI has in the past supplied weapons and ammunition to the Ugandan rebels, the Lord's Resistance Army, to Rwandan Hutu rebels (Interahamwe) operating from the eastern DRC, and the Sri Lankan army, for which it manufactured mortar bombs for use in the final stages of the war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam guerrilla movement.

Zimbabwe Republic Police

Organisation: The ZRP, Zimbabwe's national police force, is organised into three branches: Crime/Operations, Administration and Personnel.

The force is headed by a national commissioner-general (equivalent to the head of ZDF), with each branch headed by a deputy commissioner-general. Since 2000, as the political challenge to Zanu PF grew, ZRP has been comprehensively militarised and politicised, with senior and middle-ranking officers undergoing military training and political indoctrination courses. Use of the ZRP against political and social opposition is routine.

Commissioner-General **Augustine Chihuri** is an active Zanu PF supporter and acts forcefully against any police force members suspected of hostility to Zanu PF. Although his health is failing as a result of Aids, Chihuri's position is secure: an initiative to replace him with current commander of the ZNA, Lieutenant General **Philip Sibanda**, as part of the militarisation process has been abandoned and Chihuri's term extended. Mugabe's nephew, **Innocent Matibiri**, promoted to the rank of deputy commissioner-general last year, is expected to take over from Chihuri when he retires. Matibiri, who has been linked by Zimbabwe Revenue Authority customs officials to a smuggling operation illegally exporting cigarettes into South Africa, has just 10 years' police experience.

In addition to the standard policing divisions the ZRP has three special units: the innocuous sounding Support Unit (SU) and, within the CID, the Law and Order Maintenance unit and the Police Internal Security and Investigations (PISI).

The SU is a paramilitary unit divided into three formations of approximately 1 000 men each, garrisoned at Chikurubi (Harare), Fairbridge (Bulawayo) and Birchenough Bridge (Manicaland). SU personnel are trained for both counter-insurgency and public order policing functions.

The Law and Order Maintenance unit is responsible for countering "situations that threaten law and order". PISI is an intelligence gathering and analysis unit.

In 2002 authorities introduced an affirmative action

programme in which former members of the NYS and ex-Zanla guerrillas are promoted ahead of other members of the ZRP.

All senior and middle-ranking officers have, since 2002, been required to undergo political indoctrination and military training courses at a special bush training camp at Buchwa Mine, near Zvishavane in the Midlands Province.

Although the restructuring programme has succeeded in militarising ZRP and politicising key units, combined with the affirmative action programme it provoked widespread dissatisfaction in the conventional police units, resulting in escalating desertion rates.

Growing political dissatisfaction and the crisis of the hyperinflation period triggered desertion rates above the 30% experienced by the ZNA. Introduction of a continuous recruitment programme has offset desertions, which remain high although significantly below their peak. The force now replenishes at a rate exceeding wastage.

Operational efficiency: In 2007 the government embarked on a massive recruitment drive in the rural areas to offset the rising desertion rates and to increase capacity in response to growing political opposition. A former army cantonment area at Ndabazinduna in Bulawayo operates

as a police recruit training depot, to complement the main training depot at Tomlinson in Harare. An average of 1 000 constables join the ranks of the ZRP every three months.

Resources have been depleted to such an extent that officers take days to react to reports of crime – if they respond at all – because they lack even the most basic equipment. The standard police unit has few serviceable vehicles, uniforms are in short supply and even typewriters – most ZRP units do not have computers – frequently break down. Stationery is in short supply and many stations are without furniture. The shortage of vehicles is compounded by abuse by senior officers who are in the habit of taking service vehicles for personal use on their farms.

Officers are no longer provided with living accommodation.

Morale: Morale in the ZRP is extremely low. Loyalty in senior ranks is assured among senior ranks and special units through a similar system of enrichment and reward to that provided in the military.

Political alignment: The ZRP rather than the ZDF has been the government's first line of defence against challenges to its tenure. This is both because the challenge is political rather than military and because Mugabe has greater confidence in the ZRP than in the military (he has a police officer for personal protection, not a military aide-de-camp, while military personnel above the rank of lance-corporal have been forbidden to enter his Zimbabwe House residential complex since 1987). Since Mugabe's agreement to a unity government last September, the military and the CIO have asserted themselves at the expense of the ZRP.

Despite Mugabe's greater faith in the ZRP, and Chihuri's harsh treatment of any police personnel suspected of disloyalty to Zanu PF, dissatisfaction is if anything greater in the ZRP than in the military. This is reflected in the desertion rate, and in the frequency with which police officers can be overheard making disparaging remarks about Mugabe and Zanu PF in public places such as bars and commuter buses.

As in the military, dissatisfaction does not appear to translate into any organised opposition.

The Joint Operations Command



Robert Mugabe with Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri (left) and former Armed Forces head, Vitalis Zvinavashe (right).

THE Joint Operations Command (JOC) is a formal but non-statutory structure made up of most of Zimbabwe's security establishment. It has no relationship with Zanu PF structures, but because members of the JOC are also Zanu PF officials, the one cannot be distinguished from the other. It meets once a week to advise President **Robert Mugabe** on security and political issues. Its members are:

- General **Constantine Chiwenga**, commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces;
- Air Marshal **Perence Shiri**, commander of the Air Force of Zimbabwe;
- Commissioner General **Augustine Chihuri**, commissioner of the Zimbabwe Republic Police;
- Major General **Paradzayi Zimondi** (retired), head of the Zimbabwe prison service; and
- **Happyton Bonyongwe**, director-general of the Central Intelligence Organisation.

The commander of the Zimbabwe National Army, Lieutenant General **Philip Sibanda**, does not participate, apparently opting for the role of non-political professional soldier over that of political-seurocrat.

Zimbabwe Prison Service

The Zimbabwe Prison Services (ZPS) falls under the Ministry of Justice and is responsible for managing all prisons.

ZPS has been militarised since the replacement in 1997 of a civilian director general with Major General **Willings Paradzai Zimondi**, a Zanu PF official, a war veteran and serving chief of staff of the ZDF Reserve. Zimondi is a close friend of former army commander General Mujuru.

He immediately set about reorganising ZPS, replacing senior personnel with military and police officers and training and retraining prison warders in ZNA training institutions.

He created a Prison Police unit, formally to serve the same function as military police. The unit is also responsible for maintaining political uniformity within the ZPS – officers in the ZPS say the Prison Police exercises ongoing



Army Commander General Constantine Chiwenga (left) with Defence Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa

surveillance over officers and warders.

Extreme political intolerance, low pay and poor conditions of service translate into low morale.

Central Intelligence Organisation

The Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) is responsible for State Security. It was created out of the police Special Branch in the early 1960s under Prime Minister Winston Field and subsequently served Prime Ministers Ian Smith, Abel Muzorewa and Robert Mugabe. Under Smith, the CIO was widely feared and notorious for torture and political assassinations.

Post-2008 election reports that Mugabe has initiated a second intelligence operation, based on the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association and located in the Department of War Veterans' Affairs, suggest tension between Mugabe and the CIO over the unity government agreement signed in September 2008.

It reached a low point shortly thereafter, starved of resources and facing widespread resignations. This undermined its effectiveness. It is recovering but remains well below its peak of the mid-2000s.

Organisation: The CIO falls under the Ministry of State Security in the Office of the President. The minister and political head is **Sydney Sekeramayi**, a Mugabe confidante.

Retired ZNA Major General **Happyton Bonyongwe** is the operational head as director general.

The CIO is structured into six functional branches, each headed by a director:

- **Internal Branch:** This is the ranking and most politically active CIO unit, responsible for internal security. It is divided into two units, Counter Intelligence (CI) and Serious Crimes Unit (SCU).

The Internal Branch has an extensive network of agents

and informers throughout Zimbabwe (see below). It was responsible in 2005 for *Operation Murambatsvina* (literally **Operation Throw out the trash**), the forced removal of more than 700 000 urban poor living in informal settlements. The operation was widely interpreted as a move to break the MDC's support-base, still seen at the time as primarily urban. It has also been responsible for post-2008 election black operations to undermine implementation of the September 2008 unity government agreement.

- **External Branch:** This branch is responsible for external security and is divided into two units, Analysis and Liaison. The Liaison unit is responsible for all CIO operatives assigned to diplomatic missions around the world. Its capacity in SADC has diminished considerably since Zimbabwe's economic crisis. The CIO depends primarily on declared intelligence officers at embassies to cultivate contacts. In South Africa the CIO occasionally used Zanu PF loyalists in the expatriate community on a semi-covert basis.

- **Security Branch:** This branch is divided into CSU (Close Security Unit) and GPSI (Government Protection Security Inspectorate). The branch has the responsibility for VIP security and important government installations. It cooperates closely with the ZNA's Presidential Guards and the police.

- **Economics Branch:** This branch, divided into the Policy Planning Unit and the Economic Analysis Unit, advises the government on economic policy. It analyses the impact and effectiveness of government's economic policies. The chronic socio-economic catastrophe is widely attributed to recommendations from the Economics Branch.

- **Administrative Branch:** This branch is responsible for providing the CIO with the administrative and logistical support necessary for its effective functioning. It is divided into five units, namely, Personnel, Training, Finance, Resource Management and Transport.

Both the military and police intelligence structures link

directly into the CIO. The Chief of Defence Intelligence (CDI) – the head of the military’s intelligence in the ZDF – reports to CIO. So too do the police PISI, and Law and Order Maintenance units.

This gives the CIO unique reach and influence. The formal CIO staff complement is approximately 3 000, supplemented by a comprehensive network of informers and agents.

The CIO is represented down to the lowest administrative structure of the government. It is represented at the provincial level by a Provincial Intelligence Officer (PIO) in each of the 10 province: Harare, Bulawayo, Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, Midlands, Masvingo, Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland West.

Below the PIOs are District Intelligence Officers (DIOs) and below them are an extensive network of Ground Coverage teams which operate a comprehensive network of informers and agents. CIO networks coordinate and overlap with similar – but less extensive – networks run by the ZRP’s PISI and ZNA’s military intelligence ground coverage teams.

The CIO also manages agents and informers in virtually all locations and organisations in Zimbabwe. At one time it had agents in practically every village, street, school, hospital, hotel, business, church and so on, and CIO operatives in practically every professional association and leisure club. Agents held office in labour unions, student unions, civil society organisations and NGOs, and penetrated opposition and exiled structures in southern Africa and wherever there are large exile communities – in the UK, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and the US. Although considerably weakened by Mugabe’s crisis of confidence after the 2008 elections, it retains a considerable information-gathering reach.

As the principal intelligence outfit for the country, the CIO’s tentacles tap into the police and defence structures.

The CIO avoids penetration by recruiting exclusively among Zanu PF youth activists, from relatives of Zanu PF supporters and from the ranks of the NYS.

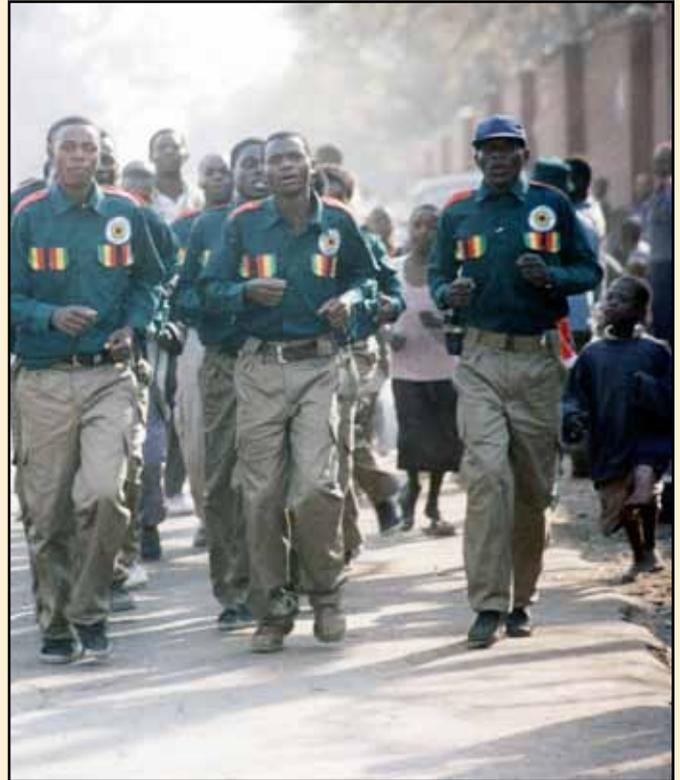
The CIO budget, which comes under the President’s vote, is not accounted for, and there is no parliamentary oversight.

Morale: CIO began deteriorating in 2008-2009 as operatives and staff went for months without salaries and allowances. Resignations became the order of the day, and analysts and others with access to sensitive information resorted to exchanging information for money. Hostile intelligence agencies found it easy to recruit CIO officers. Some officers faked prosecution and sought political asylum in foreign countries, among them the UK.

Its situation has stabilised, and with salaries and agents’ pay coming regularly morale is improving, although it is no longer the all-seeing eye of the Zanu PF government.

The Chinese government is constructing an intelligence college for the CIO, the Robert Gabriel Mugabe University of Intelligence. By the beginning of 2011 all the ground work for the commencement of work on the college had been completed. Committees have been created to work on the curriculum and other issues.

National Youth Service



National Youth Service graduates in their formal uniforms.

The NYS was established in 2001 for youths between 10 and 30 “to transform and empower youths for nation building through life skills training and leadership development”. It was disbanded after an investigation by a parliamentary committee found that young people in NYS camps had been starving and that female recruits had been subjected to sexual abuse, but it has since been re-launched.

An estimated 40 000 young people have completed the programme.

The role and influence of graduates of the programme is significant, however: since 2002 government departments have been required under an affirmative action programme to give employment preference to NYS graduates, as are all training institutions: teacher training colleges, hospital schools, the army, air force, prison service, national parks and wildlife management, the Zimbabwe Judicial College, agricultural colleges, and so on. NYS graduates make up the core of government loyalists in the lower ranks of all security force branches. ♦

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