UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Lived Experiences of the internally displaced Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe

By

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A Research Report submitted to the faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Migration and Displacement

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Declarations

I declare that this Research Report is my own unaided work. It is submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg for a Master of Arts Degree. It has not been submitted to any other university or institution as a requirement for a degree or any other qualification

Signature: 

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Dedications

In memory of my late father, Joseph Maesela Morris Madisha

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List of Abbreviations

AI Amnesty International

AKP Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi

FLTRP Fast Track Land Reform Programme

HRDs Human Rights Defenders

IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

IDHRDs Internally Displaced Human Rights Defenders

IDMC Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

IDPs Internally Displaced Persons

IDVGs Internally Displaced Vulnerable Groups

IRPT Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan

ISIS Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

MDC Movement for Democratic Change

NFSL National Front for Salvation of Libya

RNC Rwanda National Congress

SAHRDN Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network

UK United Kingdom

USA United States of America

ZANU-PF Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front

ZLHR Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights

AIPPA Access to Information and Protection of Privacy

IRR Impoverished Risks and Reconstruction

CSOs Civil Society Organisations

CBOs Community Based Organisations

NGOs Non-Governmental Organisations

FIDH International Federation for Human Rights

INGOs International Non-Governmental Organisations

Abstract

This qualitative study explores the lived experiences of internally displaced Human Rights Defenders (IDHRDs) in Zimbabwe. Participants in this study were selected using purposeful sampling technique. The experiences of six IDHRDs were gathered using semi-structured in-depth interviews. The study analysed data using thematic analysis. Data analysis revealed that IDHRDs experienced socio-economic and political challenges. Regarding their socio-economic and political challenges, the participants revealed that their displacement led to precarious livelihoods. They earned income from their different professions, but displacement resulted in not only loss of jobs but also loss of income. The coping mechanisms in place were not adequate for them. They received support from civil society organisations by means of grant support, but the mechanisms were inadequate. The grant support was not enough, and it did not last for as long as they were internally displaced. For those who could find employment, the employment opportunities were of low standard and disempowering. They engaged in activities such as illegal mining and manual labour. Those activities provided them with low and disempowering income. The money they received was less than the income they earned before being internally displaced. Furthermore, an activity like illegal mining could get the participant arrested. The findings reveal that participants had difficulties in integrating with members of the host community because of trust issues and safety concerns. The findings reveal that even when the host community members welcomed IDHRDs in the host community, participants felt that intentionally or unintentionally, the host community members could reveal their whereabouts. Another challenge the study reveals is that being internally displaced had an impact on IDHRDs' psychosocial wellbeing. Not having their families with them and lack of support from their families negatively impacted them. They blamed the government saying had the ruling party not been repressive, they would not have experienced those challenges. Despite the repressive regime being at the root of their challenges, the findings reveal that IDHRDs have intentions to return to community of origin. The intentions to return were in an attempt to receive their pre-displacement economic opportunities, to be reunited with their families and to rebuild their lives by finding new employment.

Key words: lived experiences, internal displacement, Human Rights Defenders

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background

This study seeks to explore the lived experiences of Internally Displaced Human Rights Defenders (IDHRDs) in Zimbabwe. It is not about the Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) who are working with internally displaced persons (IDPs). It is about the lived experiences of the HRDs in Zimbabwe who are displaced themselves. Mapp (2008) describes lived experiences as providing details of the circumstances in the manner that the person who has gone through those experiences understand them. This implies that when a person narrates the encounters they had from their own perspectives, it is their lived experiences. Vandenbuscche (2019) describes lived experiences as the experience of living through everyday events and the meanings that the person attaches to those experiences. Vandenbuscche points out that the main purpose of research on lived experiences is to acquire an understanding of how people feel, interpret and experience certain events in their everyday lives.

Howard-Hassman (2010) argues that human rights violations are rife in Zimbabwe. Chitimira (2017) states that the 2013 enactment of the Zimbabwean constitution brought some hope to citizens that the country would respect the rule of law, democracy, and human rights. The Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe (2013) brought significant changes such as: a) declaration that recognises socio-economic rights; b) institutions that are independent and support democracy; c) rule of law; d) the constitution that is supreme and independent; e) guarantee of people's freedom of expression; and f) media freedom including the protection and confidentiality of sources that provides information to HRDs.

The Universal Periodic Review Working Group (UPR Working Group, 2013) found that despite the protections that are offered in the Zimbabwean constitution, HRDs are continuously being intimidated with the use of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) to undermine their constitutionally enshrined liberties. The UPR Working Group discovered that even though the Zimbabwean constitution repealed some AIPPA sections and the offence of criminal defamation, law enforcement agencies still invoke them. For example, the UPR Working Group states that the prosecuting authorities are continuing to harass journalists using those sections. A Frontline Defenders report (2019) claims that the state

charges HRDs using Article 22(2) (a) (iii) of the Criminal Law Act and detains HRDs to the Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison.[1] The Frontline Defenders report points out that due to these laws, HRDs face arrests and detention. Consequently, HRDs decide to flee because of concerns over their safety.

The reviewed literature in chapter two provides information on the displacement of HRDs. The information is about HRDs from around the world as well as African countries including Zimbabwe which is the country of focus in this study. The reviewed literature on displacement reveals that HRDs are displaced mainly due to the repressive regimes presiding over their governments. For example, in Iraq, the reviewed literature highlights that HRDs are internally displaced by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)[2] supporters who are unleashing a crackdown on HRDs, particularly the Yazidi[3] activists. In Rwanda, the literature review reveals that the longevity of President Paul Kagame is attributed to his suppression of dissidents and opponents of his repressive regime. The reviewed literature on displacement indicates that IDHRDs seems to be a forgotten group. There is little or no available scholarship on their lived experiences while they are internally displaced. As a result, this study explores the lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe and attempts to contribute to the scholarship on the topic.

There are two reasons why I embarked on this study. The first reason is because the Zimbabwean government denied access to experts who would have been able to document the experiences of the HRDs. As Forst (2018) notes, the Zimbabwean government refused to extend an invitation to him as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of HRDs, to visit the country and conduct research on the situation of HRDs in the country.[4] The second reason was because the displacement of HRDs is a reality. In my professional capacity, I happen to work with organisations that work closely with HRDs. These organisations assist HRDs with accommodation in 'safe hubs' and that sparked my interest about their lived experiences while internally displaced to those safe hubs. This study on the lived experiences

[1] Article 22(2) (a) (iii) coercing or trying to coerce the government
[2] ISIS is a militant ultra-conservative caliphate that enforces Sharia or Islamic law
[3] Yazidis are monotheistic minority group who are indigenous to Kurdistan, a geographical region in western Asia that includes Iraq
[4] One of the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on Situation of HRDs is to study developments and challenges on the right to promote and protect human rights and seek, receive and respond to information on the situation of human rights defenders

of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe contributes not only to the general literature on internal displacement but also and more specifically to the displacement of HRDs. It has done so by highlighting aspects of their daily lives and what it means to be internally displaced thus humanising their experiences beyond just their physical safety.

Due to there being little or no available information on the lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe, the literature review focused on lived experiences of internally displaced vulnerable groups (IDVGs). The reviewed literature in chapter two looks at the lived experiences of IDVGs such as farmers and farmworkers, children, and former slum-dwellers. As the literature review highlights, IDVGs face several socio-economic challenges including loss of livelihood, homelessness, and loss of economic opportunities. The IDVGs also indicated their desire to return to their communities of origin. An example is that of the Porta Farm community members who fought for 15 years and when they were internally displaced, still took steps to attempt to return to Porta Farm.[5] My assumption was that the Zimbabwean HRDs who are themselves displaced, albeit internally, were having similar experiences.

As chapter four indicates, indeed IDHRDs are having similar experiences. For example, the findings reveal that the internally displaced HRDs are facing the following socio-economic and political challenges: a) inadequate social protection mechanisms and precarious livelihoods; b) low- and disempowering-income opportunities; c) social integration difficulties; d) family separation and fragile support structure in communities of origin; and e) psychosocial health challenges. This study also reveals that IDHRDs have intentions to return to their communities of origin. With these findings, the study attempts to contribute to scholarship on the lived experiences of IDHRDs. Furthermore, this research may also benefit those who work with HRDs to think about assisting them beyond just providing a physical refuge.

1.2. Problem Statement/Rationale

In 2019, the Zimbabwean government authorities initiated a crackdown on HRDs ahead of the protest that was organised by the opposition party (Amnesty International, 2019). The protest was against fuel hikes. The Amnesty International (AI) report states that the Zimbabwean government's crackdown led to the internal displacement of the country's

[5] Porta Farm was an informal settlement on the outskirts of Harare where people were internally displaced as a result of Zimbabwe's operation restore order or as known in the Shona language, Murambatsvina, to make way for development.

HRDs. HRDs in the country are applying to the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (SAHRDN), an organisation that works with HRDs, to assist them with alternative accommodation, away from their homes due to concerns about their safety (Africa Defenders, 2019). This study sought to explore IDHRDs' lived experiences beyond the safe hubs that organisations such as the SAHRDN provide.

The Zimbabwean government was putting measures in place to ensure that the lived experiences of the HRDs were not documented. This was evident in the country's refusal to allow the UN Special Rapporteur on HRDs in the country in 2018 (Forst, 2018). Forst expressed concerns that the government was trying to keep him from interacting with and interviewing HRDs in the country. It was because of that reason that I identified a need to invite IDHRDs to share their own lived experiences, to enable an understanding of their experiences.

This study brought attention to the lived experiences of HRDs by interviewing HRDs in Zimbabwe that are themselves internally displaced. From the literature reviewed, the internally displaced HRDs seem to have been a 'forgotten' group with regard to scholarship on internal displacement. Indeed, while literature was readily available on experiences of other IDVGs such as farmers and farmworkers, former slum-dwellers and children, there was very little that was known if at all, about internally displaced HRDs' lived experiences. This study attempts to bridge that identified knowledge gap.

1.3. Research objective and questions

1.3.1. Research objectives

The objective of this research is to document and analyse the lived experiences of the internally displaced HRDs in Zimbabwe. By doing so and by specifically focusing on the displacement of a group (HRDs) that does not seem to have attracted much scholarly attention, this study aims to contribute to broad literature and knowledge on internal displacement.

1.3.2. Main Research Question

- What are the lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe?

1.3.3. Research sub-questions

- How are HRDs' socio-economic and political conditions while internally displaced?
- What factors shape these conditions/experiences?
- How is the relationship of IDHRDs with members of their origin and host communities?

1.4. Operational Definitions of Terms

The operational definitions for this study are as follows:

1.4.1. Internally displaced people – people who have been forced to flee their homes to avoid impacts of armed conflict, political violence and situations violating their human rights. Those people must have not crossed an internationally recognised border.

1.4.2. Human Rights Defenders- they include the following: whistle-blowers and journalists providing access to information to the public, political activists, and opponents critical of oppressive regimes and human rights and civil society activists fighting for the promotion and protection of people's human rights.

1.4.3. Lived Experiences – lived experiences are those everyday experiences of a person and the knowledge that the person obtained from those experiences (Mapp, 2008). It is the provision of an understanding of an experience from the one who lived it. For the purpose of my study, lived experiences are socio-economic and political conditions of the internally displaced HRDs.

1.5. Overview of the report chapters

Following this introduction, this report proceeds in four chapters. Chapter two is the literature review which outlines the existing empirical and theoretical scholarship on the topic and identifies the knowledge gap that this study attempts to fill. Chapter three is the methodology chapter which provides a detailed description of the research methodological approaches and choices. Chapter four presents and discusses this study's findings. Finally, chapter five is a conclusion which summarises the main findings of the study and the study's significance.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This study's literature review focused on two concepts which are important to this research: displacement of HRDs and lived experiences of IDHRDs. The following is how the review process unfolded: firstly, the review sought to explore the displacement of HRDs. The aim was to establish if the displacement of HRDs is a significant phenomenon and whether the phenomenon was rife. Secondly, when the magnitude of the phenomenon was established, the review explored literature on lived experiences of IDHRDs. The literature review chapter ends with the discussion of the conceptual frameworks informing this research.

2.1. Displaced Human Rights Defenders

HRDs in many countries continue to suffer from human rights violations and abuse (Neto, 2016). The culprits of the violations include states using their organs such as members of the judiciary, the police and state security agents to forcibly displace HRDs. The literature review indicates that repressive regimes were the main cause of displaced HRDs. Below is the presentation of the literature from across the globe that supports Neto's argument.

2.1.1. Displaced Human Rights Defenders across the globe

In Tajikistan, Furstenbenberg (2021) argues that the president of the country, Emomali Rahmon, presided over the government that has displaced political activists and opponents. To support the argument, the author referred to the *Freedom in the World*[6] report that was released in 2021 which rates nations according to civil liberties and political rights. In that report, Tajikistan was listed as among the twenty most oppressive regimes in the world. Furstenberg reveals that President Rahmon unleashed a crackdown on opposition party activists from the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) and Group 24.[7] The author points out that the crackdown drove activists into forced displacement.

In Iraq, Thibos (2014) conducted a study on *35 years of forced displacement in Iraq: contextualising the ISIS threat, unpacking the movements*. Among the study's findings is that Iraq has seen civil society and political activists being violently displaced since the Saddam Hussein era. Thibos points out that activists continue being displaced even after the fall of

[6] https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/FIW2021_World_02252021_FINAL-web-upload.pdf
[7] It is a political opposition movement that opposes the government of the Tajikistan president

Hussein. The study reveals that during Hussein's regime, forced displacement was a significant tool used against political activists who were critical of his government. Thibos provides an account of the Shi'a uprising that took place in Iraq in 1991. According to Thibos the state used the uprising to victimise and purge political activists. Furthermore, the state unleashed security forces on those political activists, used chemical weapons and burned their villages leading to their forced displacement.

According to Thibos, the post-Saddam regime is not different. Thibos' study details the account provided by a Yazidi activist.[8] The activist mentioned that violations were committed against them by the groups that support ISIS. The activist claims that the groups expropriated their properties and drove them into displacement.

In Syria, Moss (2016) conducted a study on transnational repression, diaspora mobilisation and the case of the Arab spring. The study reveals that President Al-Assad's repressive regime unleashed a crackdown on Syrian activists who opposed the government's authoritarian ways. The study reveals that the crackdown led to the displacement of activists.

Ozturk & Tas (2020) argue that while Turkey's extraterritorial autocratic government did not start under the Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP) rule, it is justified to mention that the country has increased its fight against the Gulen Movement[9] activists. The authors argue that the Turkish authorities have conducted a large-scale international purge to root out all displaced Gulen activists.

2.1.2. Displaced Human Rights Defenders in the African Continent

Al-Anani (2022) conducted a study in Egypt on *Sisi's Transnational Repression: Silencing Political Dissidents in Exile.* The author states that in Egypt, dissidents, activists, bloggers, journalists, and human rights activists have fled the country in fear of Sisi's repressive regime. The author states that the regime used security and intelligence agencies to silence HRDs and they are also using strategies such as made-up charges. Al-Anani reveals that the other method of silencing activists was portraying HRDs as conspiring against the state. The author

[8] A Yazidi fighting against forced conversion campaign carried by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)
[9] A movement that advocates for the universal access to education, civil society, tolerance and peace

indicates that many HRDs fled to countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, France and the United States of America (USA).

According to Schenkken & Linzer (2021), the regime longevity of Rwandan president Paul Kagame is made possible by the continuous suppression of his regime's political opponents. The authors state that the president uses the tactic of suppression against those who are vocal against his regime whether inside or outside the country. Schenkken & Linzer argue that the targets are political activists that are affiliated with opposition activists from groups such as the Rwanda National Congress (RNC), among others. The authors claim that the opposition party activists are targeted because they can give insights and challenge narratives about the country's politics. Additionally, the authors argue that activists are targeted because they have enough influence to persuade citizens or international partners to turn against Kagame's government. Schenkken & Linzer state that activists are forced to flee Rwanda to escape being targeted.

Moss (2016) argues that during Muammar Gaddaffi's authoritarian regime, several activists who opposed his regime were displaced in Libya. The author states that the activists fled to countries such as the UK and the USA. Moss mentions that some of the displaced activists were from the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL). According to Moss, the reason for the activists' displacement was due to their anti-regime activities.

The reviewed literature presented above indicates that the displacement of HRDs is a reality and a significant phenomenon globally and on the African continent. As this study is focusing on the lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe, It was important to establish whether the phenomenon existed in Zimbabwe. The section below presents the literature review on the displacement of HRDs in Zimbabwe.

2.1.3. Displaced Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe

According to Baptist (2010) the repressive regime of President Mugabe forced many journalists and activists to flee Zimbabwe. The author points out that the Mugabe regime clamped down on those journalists and activists who were critical or speaking out against the regime. Baptist indicates that some of the affected journalists and activists were displaced to countries such as the UK.

According to Alexander & Chitifori (2010), political activists especially from opposition parties like the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in Zimbabwe face harassment, victimisation and torture at the hands of the ruling regime, the Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party. To support their argument, the authors cite that in 2008, the ZANU-PF government unleashed an onslaught on MDC activists. Alexander & Chitifori argue that a senior ZANU-PF leader organised bases for the MDC activists to be gathered so that they could be beaten. In addition, Alexander & Chitofiri advocate that ZANU-PF saw those activists who refused to be brought to the bases they set up, as criminals and worthy of punishment. In fearing the actions that the ZANU-PF officials would take against them for their defiance, many activists fled the town of Norton to other communities in Zimbabwe.

The reviewed literature on the displacement of HRDs revealed two things. Firstly, indeed HRDs are displaced. Secondly, the phenomenon was rife across the globe including not only in the African continent but also in Zimbabwe. Now that the displacement of HRDs has been established to be a significant phenomenon, the section below looks at their lived experiences while internally displaced.

2.2. Lived Experiences of internally displaced Human Rights Defenders

The reviewed literature indicates that IDHRDs faced challenges that were common across different countries. Their experiences were socio-economic and political in nature. The following provides a brief discussion of these experiences.

2.2.1. Socio-economic and political challenges of Internally Displaced Human Rights Defenders (IDHRDs)

Furstenberg (2021) reveals that Tajikistan president Rahmon's clampdown on activists led to the internal displacement of some IRPT and Group 24 activists. The study reveals the activists' socio-economic challenges as follows: a) their associates in the communities of origin were threatened with violence or coercion by the state and b) the authorities exerted pressure through measures against their relatives in the communities of origin. The author mentions that the aim of the state was to force the displaced activists to cease their activism. One participant from Group 24 in Furstenberg's study said his relatives and family were subjected to harassment from government authorities. The participant mentioned that there was a time

when his brother was beaten by the security services. The participant also said that in addition to physical tortures, their families endured psychological torture.

The accounts provided by this Group 24 activist were like the ones that were provided by another Group 24 activist in a study by Kluczewska (2019). The activist interviewed mentioned that his parents were forced to speak out against his activities. According to him, the security services also beat up his brother and father and forced them to make a video directed to him. In that video, the authorities asked the activist to be a good son, to stop talking badly about the government and to also end his political activities and return home.

According to Moss (2016) the threats against the displaced Syrian activists and their families led to the activists being guarded on how they conducted their advocacy. For example, the author said that the activists would cover their faces during protests, post anonymously online and refuse invitations to speak to their families. These efforts were measures to try to keep their families in their communities of origin safe. The author's findings reveal that one participant even had to seek permission from his family who were left behind at the community of origin when he had to organise or be involved in demonstrations while he was displaced.

Thibos' (2014) study reveals that the Yazidi activists who were internally displaced by ISIS supporters encountered the following socio-economic and political challenges: a) loss of land b) loss of title-deeds forcing them to not have access to government loans and c) inability to farm. Thibos' study reveals that the current land on which they were living was not good for farming compared to their previous land. For example, one activist said that the land he had prior to his displacement enabled him to drill a water well. He could not do the same in the land he was displaced to because he did not have a title-deed. According to Thibos, the participant mentioned that if the government offered loans, it was not going to benefit him either due to having no title-deed.

Al-Anani's (2022) study reveals that the activists internally displaced by the Egyptian repressive regime of President Al-Sisi faced numerous challenges. These challenges included: a) threats to kill them and b) they were prevented from returning to their homes until they stop their criticism of the government c) arrest and torture of their family members.

The above literature on the lived experiences of IDHRDs reveals that they face socio-economic challenges. However, the scholarly contribution on IDHRDs in Zimbabwe is not highlighted. This may indicate that there was little or no available information on the lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe. This is what this study seeks to do in order contribute to the scholarly knowledge about the lived experiences of this vulnerable group in Zimbabwe. While the reviewed literature indicates there was little or no information, there was literature available on the lived experiences of IDVGs like farmers and farmworkers, former slum-dwellers, and children. This section below covers the lived experiences of those IDVGs.

2.2.2. Lived experiences of Internally Displaced Vulnerable Groups (IDVGs) in Zimbabwe

The literature review on lived experiences of IDHRDs indicated that there seems to be little or no available information on lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe. That is the knowledge gap this study attempts to fill. There was, however, literature available on the lived experiences of other IDVGs like farmers and farmworkers, children, and former slum-dwellers. The hypothesis was that IDHRDs in Zimbabwe might share similar experiences of those IDVGs. The reviewed literature revealed commonalities in IDVGs' lived experiences. The first commonality was that they wanted to return to their communities of origin. The second commonality was that they faced socio-economic and political challenges. The literature review resulted in two themes emerging which are: return to communities of origin and socio-economic and political challenges. The literature review on the lived experiences of the IDVGs is presented below according to these two themes.

2.2.2.1. Return to community of origin

Amnesty International and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (AI & ZLHR, 2006) conducted a study at Porta Farm in Zimbabwe. The study reveals that the residents of Porta Farm had faced a 15-year-old settlement dispute with the government. According to the study, the Porta Farm residents experienced victories and disappointments during the 15-year legal battle with government. The study reveals that at one point, the residents were internally displaced and returned to the farm when the Zimbabwean courts ruled in their favour. It also reveals that at one point the government abided by the court order and identified land where the residents could farm. However, at the end of the 15-year battle, the study reveals that the Porta Farm residents became internally displaced, and the government informed them to

return to the rural areas where they originated. According to the study, the government claimed that the affected people did not belong to the Porta Farm and that they have their communities of origin, in the rural areas where they needed to return. The report states that the intention of the government in internally displacing the Porta Farm residents was so that they could transform the land into a commercial entity.

Kreykes (2010) conducted a *Study towards a model of humanitarian intervention: the legality of armed intervention to address operation Murambatsvina*[10] in Zimbabwe. In the study, the author reveals that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) came out to address the unlawfulness that was Operation Murambatsvina that resulted in people being internally displaced. The operation violated national and international frameworks and was seen as a crime against humanity (P.338). The study reveals that there was an understanding from CSOs that the internally displaced people needed to return to their ommunities of origin. Kreykes highlights that in response, the government instructed that IDPs needed to return to rural areas because Zimbabweans have homes in rural areas.

2.2.2.2. Socio-economic and political challenges of Internally Displaced Farmers and Farmworkers

According to Mapiko & Chinyoka (2013) farmworkers who were internally displaced during Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme[11] (FTLRP) believe that they were forcibly displaced because the ruling ZANU-PF party accused them of being supporters of opposition parties. The authors argue that the participants believed their displacements were serving as retaliatory punishment for the accusations. While internally displaced, the farmers and farmworkers encountered the following socio-economic challenges: a) loss of homes b) loss of livelihood and c) poverty.

According to Hammar (2008), the period that followed the 2008 elections in Zimbabwe provides a picture of the politically driven violence and displacement. Large numbers of Zimbabweans including farmworkers were internally displaced. Senior army officers and ZANU-PF political figures accompanied ruling party militias on a violent spree (ibid). Hammar

[10] The operation was also known as operation restore order, a large-scale Zimbabwean government campaign to forcibly clear slums across the country

[11] Part of Zimbabwe's ongoing land reform and resettlement that sought to address racially skewed land distribution pattern inherited when the country got its independence

indicates that among those who were affected were farmers and farmworkers. About 40 000 farmworkers were internally displaced because of the FTLRP programme. According to Hammar's study their experiences were as follows: a) they faced assaults b) their belongings were stolen and c) encountered mass psychological torture.

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2008), the Zimbabwean government embarked on fast-tracking land that was privately owned and deemed to be in the hands of the minority to the many black Zimbabweans. The report states that by doing that, the government claimed it was addressing the distribution of the land that was skewed. The report mentions that due to the land reform not having the interest of farmworkers, many farmworkers were forced to leave the farms when land was taken from the farmers. According to the report, the internally displaced farmworkers encountered the following challenges: a) loss of land and homes; b) lack of social integration in host communities due to not being welcomed; c) loss of livelihood and d) victimisation.

2.2.2.3. Socio-economic and political challenges of internally displaced former slum dwellers

Hammar (2008) states that Operation Murambatsvina was a national militarised operation that led to mass displacement affecting urban areas. The author points out that the operation left millions of people internally displaced. According to the author, the urban-dwellers experienced massive challenges while in displacement. Among the challenges that the internally displaced dwellers experienced were a) loss of homes b) loss of livelihood c) homelessness d) poverty e) lack of access to clean water and food f) loss of economic opportunities. Many of the former slum-dwellers were displaced to rural communities where they had no networks. In addition, for those who were staying in camps, they were guarded by security 'authorities' who were loyal to the ruling party (P.31).

Madebwe *et al*. (2005) conducted a study on the impact of Operation Murambatsvina. The aim of the study was to assess the impact that Operation Murambatsvina had on the internally displaced slum-dwellers' lives and livelihoods. The study's findings reveal that internally displaced former slum-dwellers lost their livelihoods. For example, a participant mentioned that raising chickens was a viable source of income. Due to the lack of proper warning, the participant in the study mentioned that they did not have enough time to

dispose of their stock at market prices. Also, their chickens had not yet matured sufficiently to be sold, at that time. As a result, the participant in Madebwe's study said they sold chickens at a loss which led to economic losses that negatively impacted their livelihoods.

2.2.2.4. Socio-economic and political challenges of internally displaced children

According to Benyera & Nyere (2015) most people who were affected by Operation Murambatsvina included children. The authors state that being internally displaced led to several socio-economic and political challenges for the children. For example, young women resorted to prostitution in order to make a living. Engaging in prostitution led to several health-related challenges such as: a) transmission of HIV/AIDS; b) lack of access to anti-retroviral medications; c) lack of access to food security. According to the authors, some children got their meals from Orphans and Vulnerable Centres[12] (OVCs) that were run by donor-funded NGOs.

Mapiko & Chinyoka (2013) conducted a study which sought to critically assess the educational opportunities that were available to internally displaced children in Zimbabwe. The children were those who were affected by the invasions on farms during Operation Murambatsvina. The study also sought to evaluate the psychosocial assistance that was afforded to the children. Mapiko & Chinyoka's study reveals several socio-economic and political challenges that were faced by internally displaced children. Among the challenges they faced were a) lack of educational opportunities b) economic responsibilities c) providing livelihoods c) lack of protection d) cultural and language differences and e) discrimination/ostracism. According to the study, they were children and should have been in school instead of having the responsibilities of seeking economic opportunities.

Conclusion

The aim of this literature review was to provide an overview of the studies that have been conducted on the displacement of HRDs to explore how rife this phenomenon was across the globe. The literature review highlights that the displacement of HRDs was indeed a reality and a significant phenomenon. Once that was established, the review of literature focused on HRDs' lived experiences while they were internally displaced. Based on the lived

[12] Centres that provide care and support to orphans and vulnerable children

experiences of IDHRDs in the literature review, they share common socio-economic challenges across the different countries. However, there was little or no available scholarly contribution on the lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe. That is the gap this study attempts to fill and by doing so, contributes to scholarship about this neglected IDP group.

Different scholars have contributed knowledge to the scholarship on the lived experiences of IDVGs such as farmers and farmworkers given the history of land redistribution that President Robert Mugabe's regime embarked upon. Besides farmers and farmworkers, there was literature on the lived experiences of internally displaced children due to the history of land invasions. There was also literature on former slum-dwellers as a result of Operation Murambatsvina. Literature was reviewed and there were commonalities that emerged. The first was that the IDVGs would like to return to communities of origin. The second was that they experienced socio-economic and political challenges while internally displaced. The hypothesis was that IDHRDs had similar experiences. That was the reason for looking at the scholarship on the lived experiences of IDVGs that are as vulnerable as IDHRDs.

3. Conceptual Frameworks

There are three conceptual frameworks that inform this research. The first conceptual framework is the Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model. The second conceptual framework is the Push-Pull theory and the third one is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) framework on durable solution for IDPs. These conceptual frameworks were selected because they are a fit to the lived experiences of IDVGs as outlined in the literature review. This study is on lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe and it is anchored around these three conceptual frameworks. The three conceptual frameworks are discussed in detail below.

3.1. The Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model

Professor Michael Cernea, a Romanian sociologist and anthropologist proposed a model which focuses on the social and economic content of involuntary displacement in the late 1990s, the Impoverishment Risks, Risk management and Reconstruction (IRR) model. Gizachew (2017) explains that the IRR model has been widely accepted and used to assess the magnitude of the impact of forced displacement. According to Gizachew the model is used to analyse the impact of forced displacement on those who are involuntarily displaced. The

author states that to explain the model, Cernea breaks down the impoverishment process into eight different but interconnected risk 'continuums' (P.69). According to the author, the impoverishment risks as a result of displacements are as follows: a) landlessness, b) joblessness, c) homelessness, d) marginalization, e) increased morbidity and mortality, f) food insecurity f) loss of access to common resources and services, and h) social (community) disarticulation. Qunying (2018) states that the IRR model provides a conceptual 'apparatus' that helps in explaining, predicting and reversing impoverishment during displacement (P. 4).

Qunying points out that the model has been widely adopted in research on involuntary displacement and applied to many resettlement projects by organisations such as the World Bank. Indeed, based on the literature that seems to be the case. For example, Amithalingam & Laksham (2014) used the model as a conceptual framework when they conducted a study on the impact of internal displacement on livelihoods. Adam *et al*. (2015) used the model as a framework when they conducted a study on households' livelihoods and project-induced displacement.

As the review of literature indicates, the impoverishment risks identified by Cernea apply to the lived experiences of IDVGs. The literature on the lived experiences of IDVGs in Zimbabwe was reviewed and presented due to little or no available scholarly contribution on the lived experiences of IDHRDs in the country. The literature review on the lived experiences of IDVGs revealed that their lived experiences while internally displaced includes the following: a) loss of food security, b) loss of livelihood, c) poverty, e) psychological torture, and f) loss of property. These are the impoverishment risks that Cernea's IRR model identified. The IDHRDs which are the focus group of this study may be facing similar challenges. This then makes the IRR model a suitable framework to test the lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe.

As Gizachew (2017) states, Cernea impoverished risks are used to assess the impact of involuntary displacement. However, this model is short of explaining the causes of internal displacement. From the literature review, a repressive regime is a causal factor of IDVGs. That is why it was important to have another conceptual framework to complement Cernea's impoverishment risks. The section below discusses that conceptual framework.

3.2. Push-Pull theory

Lee (1966) theorises that there are certain factors that either push people away from their community of origin or pull them towards a host community and vice versa, the pull-push theory. The author refers to push factors as those factors that may force people to leave their community of origin. According to Lee, one of the determinants of people fleeing is for political reasons. The political reasons that the author provided are repressive regimes and bad governance based on how governments exercise power.

As the literature review indicates the repressive Zimbabwe regime is the cause of IDVGs like farmers and farmworkers, children, and former slum-dwellers. It highlights that IDVGs were evicted from their farms and houses through political operations like FTLRD and Operation Murambatsvina. The literature review also reveals that while internally displaced, IDVGs, experienced several challenges namely: a) forceful evictions, b) being accused of being an opposition supporter c) threats d) assaults by ZANU-PF officials. This study focuses on lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe. IDHRDs in Zimbabwe had similar experiences at the hands of repressive regime as will be outlined in chapter four of this study. The push-pull theory is applied to the lived experiences of IDVGs and was tested in chapter four on the findings of this study on lived experiences of IDHRDs.

While the push-pull theory assesses the drivers of migration and identifies political factors of migration like repressive regime as determinants, it does not go further in explaining future plans of the displaced persons. The literature review of IDVGs highlights that they would like to return to communities of origin. The framework that fits the desire to return was identified and is presented in the section below.

3.3. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) framework on durable solutions

The IASC framework on durable solutions (2010) was developed with the intention of providing guidance for achieving durable solutions following, among others, displacement caused by human rights violations. One of the durable solutions principles according to the framework is returning to communities of origin. The framework states that even when IDPs return to their community of origin, they still require support until a solution of what caused their displacement is found. It states that only when IDPs no longer need protection or assistance, can a durable solution be achieved.

Nguya & Siddiqui (2020) state that it is important that IDPs' needs are addressed and the reason for their displacement also addressed to ensure that there is no recurrence. The authors argue that it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that they take steps to reduce the vulnerabilities of IDPs and to reduce the risk of future displacement. Nguya & Siddiqui point out that IDPs must be involved in determining how they want to resolve their displacement.

The IASC can be applied to IDVGs in the literature review. One of the three durable solutions is IDPs returning to their communities of origin. As the literature on lived experiences of IDVGs indicates returning was seen as a durable solution for IDVGs. An example is the Porta Farm community. The community fought a legal battle for 15 years to be returned to their land. The framework mentions that the responsible state needs to lead on finding durable solutions for IDPs. In addition, according to the framework, IDPs need to be part of the solutions for the durable solution to be achieved. The literature on returning to communities of origin highlight that the state was violating the rights of the Porta Farm community. It highlights that the CSOs viewed Operation Murambatsvina as unlawful. That may mean that if the state is the aggressor, a durable solution may not be realised.

The framework has been used by scholars such as Davis *et al*. (2018). The authors conducted a *Study of Return as A Durable Solution in Iraq* and used the framework. The framework is appropriate for my study because the internally displaced HRDs may have similar experiences to the IDVGs and have the desire to return to their communities of origin.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Phenomenological approach

According to Qutoshi (2018), phenomenology is a method of inquiry that is used as 'intellectual engagement in interpreting and making meanings to understand the lived world of human beings at a conscious level' (P.215). According to Qutoshi, it is a concept formulated by German philosopher Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl as a science that gives wider meaning to the lived experiences under the study (ibid). The author states that by using this method, the researcher gains insights into the lived experiences and interpret meaning making. This method is relevant for my study on the lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe.

Through using this method, I attempted to gain insights into the lived experiences of the internally displaced HRDs from their perspectives. The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation (ibid). The actors in a situation as mentioned by Qutoshi's study, are IDHRDs in Zimbabwe. I wanted them to be the ones providing me insights into their experiences. According to Lester (1999), in the human sphere, identifying phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors translates to gathering accurate information and perceptions. The author mentions that information is gathered through inductive qualitative methods such as interviews, from the perspective of the research participants. That is what I attempted to do with this study. Data for this study was gathered from the interviews with IDHRDs to allow them to give meaning to their lived experiences while internally displaced.

Lester argues that the phenomenological approach is based on a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and as such, it is 'concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual' (1999, P.2). Lester argues that the approach recognises the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. Additionally, the author advocates that personal perspective and interpretation are powerful for understanding the experience of the participants that the researcher is studying. Lester further mentions that only the affected people can give meaning to their lived experiences, and no one can provide insight into their lives on their behalf. To understand the lived experiences of IDHRDs using the

approach, it was important to get that information specifically from the subjects being studied, in this study's case, IDHRDs. That is what the study aimed to do.

3.2. Research methodology and design

3.2.1. Participants of the study

The participants to this study were Zimbabwean HRDs who were at the time of the interviews internally displaced in Zimbabwe. In order to establish their lived experiences while they were displaced, I interviewed six participants in total. I secured four participants from an organisation that works with HRDs. I wrote a letter to the organisation explaining to them the purpose of my research. I requested them to find IDHRDs who were willing to be part of this study. I requested that the organisation give those participants my contact number, for the participants to contact me if they were willing and available to take part in my study. Four participants contacted me, and I interviewed them. I recruited two participants through a prominent deceased Zimbabwean Human Rights Activist who was based in South Africa. The deceased passed away in December. I wrote to him about the intention of the study and requested that he finds me IDHRDs who were also willing and available to be part of this study. Additionally, I asked that he gives my contact number to those HRDs for them to get in touch with me if they were willing and available to be part of this study. Two participants contacted me, and I interviewed them.

3.2.2. Sample

The six participants in this study were identified using purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling was best suited for this study, as a technique mostly used in qualitative research. Creswell *et al.* (2011) argues that the advantage of purposeful sampling is identifying and selecting participants that have the knowledge or have experience of the subject of study. The participants that I needed for this study were Zimbabwean HRDs who were internally displaced. When I reached out to my Zimbabwean contacts at the different organisations working with HRDs, I made a request that the HRDs needed to be internally displaced in Zimbabwe at the time of conducting the interviews.

I do not work directly with HRDs. As a result, it was going to be difficult for me to be able to identify HRDs that are internally displaced. As already mentioned, I had to rely on my

Zimbabwean contacts to secure the participants of this study on my behalf. There were two reasons for that decision. The first reason was that I was not staying in Zimbabwe and could not travel to the country due to insufficient financial resources. Patton (2002) argues that purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research because it allows the researcher to identify and select cases that are rich in information with limited resources. The IDHRDs were the right people to share valuable insights into their experiences while internally displaced. The second reason was that since HRDs are a vulnerable group in Zimbabwe, it was important for me to go through contacts that work directly with them because of the established relationships and trust between them. The contacts who work with IDHRDs explained to them clearly that the research is for the purpose of my studies. They also informed potential participants that information such as their real names will be kept confidential. Once this was made clear to the participants and they agreed to take part in the study, my contacts put me in touch with them. My contacts provided them with my mobile number to contact me if they we were willing to be interviewed. Bernard (2002) argues that participants must be available and be willing to participate in the study and be able to articulate themselves clearly.

3.2.3. Challenges in the sampling process

The intention was to interview at least ten IDHRDs. During the time I was still conceptualising this study, I engaged three human rights organisations working with HRDs in Zimbabwe. One was a regional organisation that was working in Zimbabwe. The organisation provides safe hubs both internally and externally to HRDs under threat. The other two organisations were local organisations. That means they are working within the boundaries of Zimbabwe. The latter two organisations assist HRDs with legal representation. At the time, the possibility of securing ten participants and more remained high. When the time came for me to secure participants, I reached out to the same organisations. However, the process did not go as planned. I encountered numerous challenges. The first challenge was that the two Zimbabwean organisations that assist HRDs with legal representation informed me that the HRDs that they work with, were no longer internally displaced. When I reached out to the regional organisation that provides safe hubs to HRDs, the regional contact person directed me to the country focal person as the best person to help me with the contacts of IDHRDs. I made numerous email follow-ups with no feedback.

The second challenge I had was participants changing their minds about taking part in the study. I used my contacts to reach out to another organisation that advocates for the improvement of working conditions of rural teachers in Zimbabwe. I also explained the purpose of my study to them, and they put me in touch with six participants. Out of the six potential participants, I managed to confirm and interview four participants. The other two did not avail themselves to the interviews. There could be different reasons why they did not avail themselves. The Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network (SAHRDN) released a report on the assets and need assessment of Zimbabwean Human Rights Defenders (SAHRDN, 2021). Among the study's findings is that 'HRDs believe that state and non-state actors have the ability to get to them regardless of any physical security measures like security guards' (P.23). The report further states that the HRDs believe that safe houses are no longer providing them with protection. The reason they stated that was because there had been raids in those safe houses previously, according to the study. As a result, the HRDs doubt the reliability of those facilities.

The third challenge I encountered was with the untimely passing of my contact who was a prominent human rights activist. The activist helped me with securing interviews with two participants. He was still to provide me with more participants. He passed away not long after returning from Zimbabwe in December 2021. His death sparked a lot of debate with a Zimbabwe opposition party leader saying he warned the activist to not visit Zimbabwe. Due to limited time, I had to carry on and use the data from the six participants that was at my disposal to complete this study. The six participants were all HRDs who were, at the time of the interviews, internally displaced. They could share their lived experiences while displaced.

3.2.4. Sampling procedure

My contact that works with the organisation that advocates for the improvement of conditions of rural teachers assisted me by identifying the four IDHRDs who agreed to be interviewed for the purpose of this study. The participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to be part of the study. They were also selected based on their ability to articulate themselves about their lived experiences. The prominent Zimbabwean human rights activist had already assisted me with two participants by the time of his untimely death. The two participants were also selected based on their willingness to take part in this study. In total there were six participants. Dworkin (2012) argues that while there

has been a debate about how many interview participants are enough, few scholars 'suggests anywhere between 5 and 50' (P.1320). The author further states that it depends on several factors such as quality of information obtained and the usefulness of the information that the researcher has obtained.

3.2.5. Data collection

In trying to understand the meaning that IDHRDs in Zimbabwe attach to their lived experiences, I conducted in-depth qualitative interviews (Interview Guide in Appendix 1). Boyce & Neale (2006) state that in-depth interviewing involves conducting intense interviews with a small number of individuals. The author states that the purpose is to explore the perspectives of the participants on a particular issue or situation. Dworkin (2012) mentions the advantages of in-depth interview as 'more inductive and emergent in its process' (P. 1319). The author implies that compared to quantitative methods, qualitative methods are not concerned with producing generalisation to a big population of interest. Ritchie *et al*. (2003) argues that there may not be value where a large sample is monotonous and no longer contributing to adding new evidence. The six participants provided me with rich and valuable in-depth information that enabled the completion of this study.

The data collection was done using semi-structured interviews guided with open-ended questions. The interviews lasted between forty to sixty minutes. The open-ended questions that I used enabled me to understand the lived experiences of internally displaced HRDs without establishing their point of view in advance. The open-ended questions were advantageous in this study because they provided in-depth responses from the participants.

The participants in this study spoke English which meant there was no language barrier between me and them. The interviews were conducted telephonically as well as on Zoom with their video disabled to protect their identity. There were challenges with this methodology, some of the interviews were planned to take place via Zoom but we encountered connectivity issues and as a result, I had to call the participants on their mobile phones shifting from Zoom to doing interviews telephonically. Even when we shifted from Zoom to using mobile phones, there were instances where participants informed me that the network reception was poor, and the calls got disconnected. That proved interruptive to the interviews.

However, the participants seemed patient during the challenges that we encountered and availed themselves whenever I called back after the interruptions. The participants also sounded comfortable during the interviews, and some even brought up my contacts who put us in touch. This conveyed to me that the participants had level of trust in me which put both me and them at ease.

3.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis of this study was done using thematic analyses. According to Braun & Clarke (2012), thematic analyses is a method of identifying, organising, and getting insight of patterns of themes across a dataset (P.297). The authors state that by focusing on meanings across the dataset, the researcher can make sense of shared meanings and experiences. In doing that, the researcher can identify commonalities in the way the subject is spoken about and can then make sense of those commonalities. The author mentions that what is 'common is not necessarily in and of itself important or meaningful' (P.298).

The authors argue that the purpose of the thematic analysis is to identify those patterns that are relevant in answering the research question. The commonalities in the case of this study refers to meanings, themes and ideas that have been relayed by participants in this study to explain their lived experiences while internally displaced. Developing the coding system was important in order to examine the data that emerged from themes. In the case of this study, the interviews from the participants were analysed per paragraph in order to identify and write down the codes. The codes were then compared and then a list of main codes emerged. Afterwards, an analysis was conducted on the codes that were identified. Different categories were developed from the topics coded to reduce the codes.

Braun & Clarke further state that the earmark of thematic analysis is providing flexibility, in terms of the sample size of the study, the research question and method of data collection. It also provides flexibility in the way the researcher generates meanings. The thematic analysis of this study involved themes and patterns that were identified, categorised and classified to determine important information relevant to the lived experiences of IDHRDs.

3.4. Ethical issues

Approval for the research was sought from the human research ethics committee and granted before the data collection (ACMS2020-07-01). I first communicated with my contacts who work closely with HRDs including IDHRDs. I explained to them what my research was about and the purpose of my research. They then communicated with the potential participants and explained to the participants what my research was about and the purpose of it. They asked them if they consented to participate in my study and willing to talk to me. My contacts provided the potential participants with my contact details. The potential participants then contacted me and articulated their availability and willingness to take part in this study. Afterwards, I called the participants and set up the individual online meetings with them. I asked them which method between Zoom, WhatsApp and mobile telephone they would be comfortable using. At the start of the meeting, I provided background to the study and asked the participants if they consented to be interviewed as well as recording the online interview. The advantage of recording the interview was that I could focus on the participants instead of being distracted with taking notes.

Allmark *et al.* (2009) state that among the advice to be given to the interviewees is advising the participants on the types of questions likely to be asked. I informed the participants on the kind of questions that were going to be asked in the study. This was to enable them to be fully aware of the nature of the study and consent to it. Allmark *et al*. recommends the use of pseudonyms or initials and where necessary, the researcher must change other details in the report which could be used to identify the participants (P.51). This is to safeguard the privacy of the participants. The participants' real names were not used in this study to protect their identities. There were participants who signed the consent forms using their real names, but I used my discretion in this study to protect the participants' identities by not using their real names. Attention was given to information in the study which could be used to identify the participants and those details were changed. The participants were also informed that their information will be kept confidential.

After the interviews, the recorded interviews were transcribed to safeguard information and other valuable meanings provided by the participants which proved crucial when doing the data analysis.

3.5. Limitations of the study

During the process of conducting interviews there were challenges in terms of the connectivity issues. Poor connectivity resulted in our Zoom meetings being interrupted. Also, during the interviews via mobile telephone calls there were interruptions due to mobile phones network issues. Sometimes the participants were not audible due to connection challenges. Information that could have been important might have gotten lost during that process. The sample of this study was small and according to Faber & Fonseca (2014), a small sample may reduce the power of the study. Despite these limitations, the study was able to achieve its objectives.

3.6. Reflexivity

My interest in conducting this study is because of the interest I have about IDHRDs. That interest is sparked by my professional capacity. The organisation I work for provides funding to organisations which work closely with HRDs including IDHRDs. I wanted to know more about them beyond just being provided with shelter and security. I knew my contacts in my professional capacity and that is the information they shared with participants as well. As a result, the participants felt free to share their experiences with me and they considered me someone who understood the role of HRDs. The position would however change between someone who understood them and someone who did not understand what they were going through. According to Merriam *et al.* (2001) during interviews process, participants have the decision of whether to regard or disregard a researcher as one of them. During the interviews, some participants would share experiences with me in a manner that suggested they think I understood their situations while internally displaced. The participants would also say that if I knew about their situations, the organisation I work for would make available financial resources to organisations that work directly with them. I did not feel that the participants were making requests, just making statements. It was important for me to be mindful of my position as a researcher. This came up when they were sharing their socio-economic and political challenges which are outlined in chapter four of this study.

Chapter 4: Presentation and discussion of findings

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings of the study. The study's findings are presented and discussed under the following main themes: socio-economic and political challenges and intentions to return to the community of origin.

4.2. Socio-economic and political challenges

The study finds that internally displaced HRDs in Zimbabwe face socio-economic and political challenges including a) inadequate social protection mechanisms, b) low- and disempowering-income opportunities and precarious livelihoods, c) social integration difficulties d) family separation and fragile support structure in communities of origin, e) psychosocial health challenges, and f) repressive regime at the root of HRDs challenges. The following section provides a detailed presentation and discussion of these findings.

4.2.1. Inadequate social protection mechanisms and precarious livelihoods

Inadequate social protection mechanisms were one of the socio-economic and political challenges that participants in this study identified. Studies have been done on what constitutes social protection mechanisms and which actors can provide those social protection mechanisms. For example, Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler (2004) mention that social protection mechanisms come in the form of accommodation, food and cash provided by donors, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), relatives and or individuals (P. 14). Other studies on social protection mechanisms highlight how crucial social protection mechanisms are in alleviating economic vulnerabilities on those that are marginalised (Devereux & Cuesta, 2021), (Kakuru *et al*., 2019) and (Long & Sabates-Wheeler, 2017). For example, Long & Sabates-Wheeler (2017) mention that a failure to provide adequate social protection mechanisms may lead to socio-economic challenges. Those socio-economic challenges may then lead to secondary displacement or onward movement, among other things.

This finding is evident with the participants in this study. Before their internal displacement, participants were able to attend to their jobs and receive remuneration in their different professions. Their displacement led to the loss of employment resulting in the loss of income

and exposing them to socio-economic challenges while internally displaced. Internal displacement might have provided physical safety for the HRDs. They moved away from places where they suffered physical harm but they were economically vulnerable and experiencing precarious livelihoods. Precarious livelihoods have also been highlighted in other studies. For example, Scoones *et al.* (2019), conducted a study which sought to explore the different livelihoods of former farmworkers in northern Zimbabwe where tobacco production was central to the post-reform agrarian landscape. Participants in the study provided experiences of life before and after displacement.

The participants in Scones *et al*.'s study spoke of the freedom that they achieved from the strict former farm-owner, but that displacement has led to their precarious livelihood. For example, a participant mentioned that prior to the land invasion he had a farm-owner who was strict to them and did not provide them with their own plot in the farm to grow their own crops. The participant however, said that under that farm-owner, life was tough but that he had a salary and 'you knew it would come' (P. 822). The participants said that after displacement, they had freedom from the previous farm-owner who was strict. The challenge, however, was that post-displacement, they had freedom, but their livelihoods were precarious. The participant in the Scones *et al*.'s study said, 'now you don't know where money will come from' (ibid).

In order to cope with economic vulnerabilities, participants in this study requested and received social protection mechanisms in the form of grant support from NGOs as well as cash support from individuals. The social protection mechanisms came from CSOs like the SAHRDN, though their 'Ubuntu hub cities' initiatives. Other support protection mechanisms came from International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)[13], Freedom House[14] and individuals. While participants shared that the social protection mechanisms contributed to cushioning them against harsh economic impacts, they also shared that the social protection mechanisms were inadequate. Below are the interview excerpts that reflect this sentiment:

I have been displaced for four months…There is no money in Zimbabwe and we don't have savings…I applied for the grant from the Southern African Human Rights Defenders and they

[13] One of mission of FIDH is to protect victims of human rights violations

[14] Freedom House defend human rights and promote democratic change, with a focus on political rights and civil liberties

*only helped me for one week. It was not enough as I needed their support for more than a week…When Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network grant came to an end, I applied for another grant from Freedom House…the grant from Freedom House is helping me a lot in terms of taking care of the necessary stuff that I need. It is not enough but at least I am still receiving it. Unfortunately, it is not a lot to extend it to my family…Fellow comrades helped me out with food and accommodation when I was still waiting for the Freedom House to help me… (*CR, HRD)

…The Southern African Human Rights Defenders assisted me for about two weeks and afterwards the assistance stopped. They said that it was because of funding constraints…I am no longer receiving the grant…There is a video where I was being tortured by the police and that video went viral…people here recognise me from that video. They have been kind to me and are assisting me with some of the things that I need…I have applied for another grant from the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) but it has not been approved…I cannot rely on the kindness of people forever as they have their own responsibilities... (SM, HRD).

I reached out to Southern African Human Rights Defenders which is where I found out that there is an Ubuntu hub cities initiative which assist Human Rights Defenders who are under threat and are in need of relocation….Ubuntu hub cities initiative is a good programme that has been helpful to the Human Rights Defenders who are in need like myself…at least I am able to send money to my family even if it is not much so that they don't go hungry and that makes me feel better…The money I send to them from the grant is not enough but it's better than nothing…(BA, HRD).

…Mr Dewa Mavhinga supports me with money from his pocket…A couple of weeks ago when I got into trouble, I called him and spoke with him that I was running away from the police…even though I was able to buy food it was not enough. You can understand that he has his own family and the people he has to take care of…I think I am a burden to him. He is helping me whenever he is able to…I am not sure if I should mention names but there are other people who also help me as well besides Dewa. They also help me when they can…I opened a tuckshop sometime back and my brother is the one running it. He sends me some money if it's possible, I use the money to buy food and pay for accommodation…the shop is in rural areas and you

know the economic situation in Zimbabwe is not sustainable. Sometimes it makes just a dollar a day… (Civil society activist*).*

From the above experiences, the social protection mechanisms are helpful. However, it is also clear that they are not adequate. The support coming from civil society organisations is clearly not adequate. For participants such as BA, the social protection mechanism is not even enough for themselves, let alone to the families that they wished to support from the grants.

Sabates-Wheeler (2019) states that the foundation of protecting IDPs is through recognising their rights even when they are in displacement. The author states that IDPs should be treated like any citizens and should be entitled to social protection mechanisms. The author however notes that it may not be possible where the state is a hostile actor. If that is the case, the author mentions that NGOs should be the actors responsible for providing social protection mechanisms. While Sabates-Wheeler provides solutions that non-state actors like NGOs can step in when the state fails, it begs the question as to which actors then needs to step in when the state is also hostile to those non-state actors. That is the case with the participants in this study. The participants highlighted that the government was hostile to them as HRDs and to the NGOs that are helping them. They stated that the Zimbabwean government is impeding NGOs from providing adequate social protection mechanisms to them as HRDs, by stifling those NGOs. Such a situation does not only have an impact on the NGOs being stifled but also the internally displaced HRDs benefiting from the support of the NGOs. The participants drew on their experiences before they were displaced as well as the lack of human rights encountered in Zimbabwe to explain why their socio-economic challenges exist. The excerpts below support their experiences:

…The government does not like being challenged…I was responsible for organising a march for fair wages of colleagues who work in the rural areas of Zimbabwe…Upon my release and out of fear, I fled…Life would be easier if I was free to attend to my job. It's not like we earn a lot of money in Zimbabwe but at least I would not be worrying about what to eat and I would not be worrying about my family… (advocacy activist).

…I am a Civil Society Activist and chairperson of an NGO. I have been vocal through my organisation on the government's illegalities like corruption, illegitimacy of the ruling party and human rights violation…I was harassed and tortured and only released after writing a

letter apologising to ZANU-PF leadership… I fled after being released because I knew they were going to come back…I could not carry on with my work and with no money I rely on other people and organisations like SAHRDN…What would make things easier would be more financial support for HRDs…The problem with SAHRDN is that it only provides support for emergency…the government is not helping. They take activists and NGOs as enemies of the state. We do not have freedom' (SM, HRD).

The above experiences indicates that the challenges facing HRDs are multiple. The HRDs are internally displaced due to the hostile nature of the Zimbabwean government. Due to the government being the hostile actor, the NGOs may be the appropriate actor responsible to providing that support. The challenge with that, however, is that the state is not providing an enabling environment for the internally displaced HRDs to be adequately provided with social protection mechanisms through the NGOs. This brings about a gap of the impact of social protection mechanisms, when the state is hostile to not only the HRDs but also the NGOs.

The marginalisation risk highlighted by Cernea (2005) fits well with the experiences of the participants in this study. The author points out that marginalisation occurs when displaced people lose the economic power that they had before displacement and slide down towards lesser economic positions. The participants in this study lost their incomes that they earned from the different professions they held such as in government and civil society organisations. The jobs they held prior to their displacement provided them with better income. The HRDs understood they will receive that income as long as they were able to do their jobs. The jobs they had prior to their displacement provided them with higher economic power in society. While in displacement, HRDs depended on social protection mechanisms from CSOs which they clearly indicated were not adequate. Participants in this study experienced precarious livelihoods as a result of their internal displacement. Also, displacement put them in a lesser economic position than they held prior to their displacement.

The experiences of the internally displaced HRDs with regard to the inadequate social protection mechanisms and precarious livelihoods laid bare a number of findings. Firstly, social protection mechanisms are important for the economic or financial wellbeing of the HRDs. Without the social protection mechanisms, the participants risked even further and possibly severe impoverishment. Secondly, while the social protection mechanisms cushioned the HRDs against harsh economic conditions, they are not adequate. Actors such

as NGOs face financial constraints and are further operating in an environment that is challenging for them due to the state's hostility. The NGOs themselves are not adequately funded as the grant support they extended to the internally displaced HRDs were for a short period of time. One participant mentioned that he was informed by an NGO that they were having financial constraints as a reason for not extending the grant support. Also, the grant support to HRDs lapsed while the HRDs were still displaced. The findings reveal that the HRDs get displaced longer than they get the social protection mechanisms. This then implies that the economic vulnerabilities they experience may only be alleviated for a short period of time. This in turn indicates that the internally displaced HRDs may further be victimised by the uncertainties they experience.

4.2.2. Low- and disempowering-income opportunities

Participants in this study highlighted the challenge of low-income opportunities. Scholars such as Oyefara & Alabi (2016) and Randell (2016) have done studies highlighting how IDPs are faced with the option of settling for economic opportunities that provide them with low income. One of the findings made in the studies by the authors, was that displacement brought about loss of higher income opportunities. That in turn led to the internally displaced people settling for lower economic opportunities. For example, one of the participants in Oyefara & Alabi's study on the internally displaced women in Badia, Lagos, was a businesswoman who owned a kiosk which generated a higher income prior to her displacement. She was no longer able to continue running the kiosk after being displaced. Without that consistent income she was earning, displacement led to her making a living out of sex work. In Randell's study on the displaced Brazilian-Amazon community, participants highlighted being displaced from land that was good for raising chickens which brought them higher income. In the host community, the land was not conducive to raise chickens and the displaced people had to find other means of earning income like getting work which brought in low income.

Brand and Burgard (2008) point out that displaced people may find that when they get new jobs, those jobs are of lower income including lower occupational status. The authors argue that compared to the jobs that the displaced people had prior to their displacement, the jobs in the host community are lower, both in income and authority. The findings of Oyefara & Alabi, Randell and Brand & Bugard are also evident with the participants in this study. The

participants highlighted that for them to financially look after themselves, they were compelled to look for employment opportunities in their host communities. While the IDHRDs managed to secure employment, the income they earned was low. The standard of the work they performed was not high either.

A participant said, 'I do some gold trading jobs in order to buy food and pay for my accommodation'. In trying to get clarity on what he meant by gold trading, he clarified that he was involved in illegal mining. Asked how he felt about being involved in illegal activities, his response was that it does not make him happy, but it was common for people in the community to make a living that way. He said 'I have no choice. I need to survive, that is the only way I am able to survive. That is how most people around here earn money and that is how things are done'. When probed if he is at least making a good income, he replied that he did not make good money.

Similarly, that was the experience of another participant. The participant mentioned that he was doing odd jobs to buy food and pay for his accommodation. He stated that:

… Now I do general work. I ask people if they don't have anything, any job for me. Things such as painting other people's houses when they ask me to. I also do work like building if such work is available, basically any work that someone might have for me, I am prepared to do'… (TG, HRD).

When asked if he ever sought any financial assistance from NGOs, he replied that he was not aware of any organisation that could help him. He said that he will find out if there are such organisations and if possible, make an application for support.

The impoverishment risk that participants in this study were exposed to is joblessness. According to Cernea (2004) joblessness as a risk refers to the risk of losing or having lost employment due to displacement. The author highlights that displacement brings about the risk of being jobless. Participants in this study had employment prior to their displacement. The employment from services in teaching and local government, among others, provided them with decent salaries. Cernea's Impoverished Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model is not only predictive but assists in planning. The author states that as people settle in the host communities, one of the positive developments that they experience is finding employment opportunities. The experiences of the participants in this study reinforce Cernea's theory.

Albeit of low income and status, participants found employment doing manual work and gold trading work.

Cernea argues that one of the positive coping and rebuilding strategies for the IDPs is finding employment. He, however, does not go further to identify the kind of jobs the displaced people do, to indicate if those jobs have a positive impact in their lives. Interrogating that may provide insight as to whether the displaced deem the jobs they secured while displaced as a positive development. For example, being employed as a teacher may be deemed to be a positive development but earning an income from doing illegal mining could be argued to not be a positive development due to the consequences from engaging in those activities. Doing the latter means one is employed and gets compensated but could get one into trouble with authorities like the police. The participants in this study transformed from engaging in legal professional jobs to doing unskilled work due to the limited available options. The participants did not seem to think that the employment activities they engaged in highlighted positive developments for them. For example, as noted above, one participant made a living from illegal mining activities. Such activities could lead to his arrest. His potential arrest may then further add to the challenges that he is already experiencing while displaced. Also, the participant sounded like he was not happy to be engaged in illegal mining but felt helpless. He said that is how things were done in that community and that he had no choice.

Finding employment while displaced is not a bad thing but not any kind of employment is good. Having an income is better than not having an income at all. This study's findings, however, reveal that the kind of employment being done by internally displaced HRDs may not be seen as a positive development. HRDs in this study had skilled, professional jobs that provided them with a steady income and provided them with higher authority in the communities of origin. In their displacement, they resorted to engaging in unskilled activities to make money. Some activities they engaged in, could create legal problems for them. They may end up in jail which might further add to their challenges. That could further complicate their lives. What led to their displacement was torture and detention at the hands of the police and security agents whom they highlighted as the drivers of their displacement. Therefore, the jobs that they were doing could put them in a situation whereby the state claims a legitimate reason to detain them as compared to the made-up charges they felt the state used when they detained them prior to being displaced.

4.2.3. Social integration difficulties

Participants in this study highlighted the challenges in socially integrating with members of their host community. Jacobs *et al.* (2020) points to local integration being a complex process that may unfold smoothly for some people while being a bumpy process for others. The authors attribute that to the different dimensions of integration. Firstly, they say that displaced people may not feel that they fit into the community. Secondly, the displaced people may face discrimination in their host communities. They further add that integration in the host community does not depend only on the individual displaced. They mention that it also depends on the availability and the willingness of the host communities to accept the displaced people.

Scholars such as Batson & Powell (2003), De Waal (2008) and Hartman *et al*. (2021) have contributed to literature on the determinants of support for IDPs in the host community. One of the determinants the authors highlighted was empathetic altruism. For example, Hartman *et al*. state that empathetic altruism refers to the fact that shared experiences of violence create transecting identities that provide an explanation as to why some individuals are more likely to support displaced people (P.6). This implies that if local people feel that they share similar experiences or have something in common with those who are displaced, they are inclined to be empathetic. The opposite is also true, that if local people feel that that the displaced people do not share their experiences, they may not possess empathy for them. Empathetic altruism does not apply only regarding the relationship of local people towards the displaced but also the displaced people towards the host community members. That is also the case with the participants in this study. Participants shared that the community members were sceptical when they arrived, implying mistrust. Participants also feared freely integrating with the host community members as a precaution against their identities being possibly revealed. The excerpts below are in support of these views:

…initially, the conversations about politics created problems because some of the people started questioning my motives and thinking that I am part of the undercover police who were trying to find out about people who were trying to revive ZAPU in the community and report them to the police'… (MT, HRD).

*My pictures are all over social media and everyone knows who I am because of those pictures and videos that circulate…The people have been welcoming and encouraging me to not give up on the struggle. They see my struggle as not only for myself but for themselves as well…I am happy that they have been supportive, but I also worry that they will talk about me and the news will spread. That could lead to the authorities discovering where I am staying… (*BA, HRD*).*

*Some people have been curious about my life, about where I am from, If I have a family and where my family is. I am happy that they are welcoming me, but I try to not reveal much about myself because I don't know what they will do with the information. Maybe they will tell other people who in turn may tell others. Then the government agents will know where I am, currently…(*TG, HRD).

Borovynska (2019) conducted a study on the sense of community belonging among internally displaced persons with high level of successfulness. The participants in that study highlighted that they enjoyed being with people from their native group because they had the sense of familiarity with each other. Participants also said that being with their fellow HRDs allowed them the opportunity to reminisce and share stories about their lives in both their communities of origin and the host community. That is also the case with participants in this study. Participants highlighted moving to host communities where their fellow HRDs were residing. Just like the participants in Borovynska's study, this study's participants mention that being with their fellow HRDs provided them with some familiarity and could talk about the work that they do as HRDs. Additionally, they mention that being with people who were similar to them, allowed them the protection of their whereabouts not being revealed to the authorities. While that provided them with comfort, it risked the challenge of them exclusively integrating with only a certain population and excluding themselves from the rest of the host community members. It may look like they are creating a community within a community. More importantly, the participants revealed that there is information they are not willing to disclose to those fellow HRDs. The excerpts below support these findings:

In my case I am at an area that has a ghost panel. Members in the ghost panel are people who are like me. These are the people that I trust. We don't tell each other our names because we want to avoid telling on each other even if it is not intentional. We understand each other very well and support each other… (CR, HRD).

…When I moved into this community, I met fellow comrades…I have my close comrades that I am moving around with…if I need any items my comrades are the ones who go out and find the things that I need…I stay indoors if I am not with them…I am not interacting with anyone except my comrades because there is a possibility that once the people here find out who I am, they can report me to the authorities'… (civil society activist).

Similarly, another participant moved into a community with relatives. He said the motivation was that he was not risking exposure to the Zimbabwean authorities. He said that he did not have enough time to plan his host location. He said that 'I did not have much time to plan where I am moving to. After I was released by the police, I called my cousins and they informed me that I can 'come lie low.' Lying low implies that the participant was not open to integrating with the rest of the host community members besides the relatives.

Cernea (2005) indicates that there are multiple components to marginalisation. In applying the marginalisation risk, the author points out that the societal status of displaced people is eroded when they move into the host communities. He says that in the host communities, the displaced people get regarded as strangers which in turn may lead to isolation. The author points out that trust between the host community and the displaced people plays an important role in the displaced being properly integrated. The lack of trust impacts how well the displaced and host communities relate to each other. That is evident with the participants in this study. Firstly, participants highlighted that the host community members were suspicious of their intentions. For example, a participant highlighted that at first, they thought he was an undercover agent. Secondly, the participants highlighted not trusting host community members to not reveal either their identities or their locations even if it was not intentional.

Difficulties in socially integrating with members of the host community encountered by the internally displaced HRDs highlights that empathy or the lack of it played a role in the host community welcoming the displaced HRDs. It also plays a role in the internally displaced HRDs feeling welcomed by the host community. Empathy minimised complete isolation for the displaced people. The findings, however, reveal that there is a downside to empathy. For example, one participant mentioned that he was worried because although the host community members had accepted him and could identify with his struggle, they could reveal his whereabouts. He said they can perhaps reveal his location out of excitement. Existing links

in the form of comrades and relatives proved to be significant in IDHRDs socially integrating in the host community. However, they can also confine the displaced HRDs within their own people and rob them of the opportunity to fully integrate with the broader host communities' members.

4.2.4. Family separation and fragile support structure in communities of origin

Separation of family and fragile support structure in communities of origin was highlighted as a challenge by the participants in this study. Katsisaficas *et al*. (2021) argue that the support of host community members is conditional to those that are displaced. This implies that it is important for displaced people to also maintain a healthy relationship between themselves and the members of the community of origin including family. Yigzaw *et al*. (2019) and UNCHR (2006) conducted studies on how displacement affects the multiple aspects of the displaced person's life. The studies highlight the impacts of displacement. Among the impacts highlighted is that displacement breaks up families and leads to separation between families. This is particularly true with the participants in this study. The participants in this study highlighted that when they fled their communities of origin, they left behind their immediate family members like wives, children, and parents. Due to worrying about their own safety and the safety of their families, they avoided communicating with them even by phone. That then impacted the relations they had with their families. The once strong relationships that the participants had with family members in their place of origin became fragile. A participant stated:

I am avoiding even calling my family…although I am staying with my cousins, I asked them to never reveal my whereabouts to my parents. I suspect that the police are trying to find out about my location through them because for a while, they kept asking me where I was'… (civil society activist).

The participant was asked why he thought that the parents were going to be in trouble and also be used to reveal his location. In response, the participant provided incidents where authorities, meaning undercover police officers, visited his parents posing as his friends to try and find out about his whereabouts. He said at first, he used to call his parents but after the police visited them, he thought it was best that he ceases calling them. He stated:

One day my father called me and told me that two guys came to our house and identified themselves as my friends…They told my father that they were my friends, but my father said they did not look like my friends because they refused to reveal their names and friends reveal their names.

Another participant shared similar experiences of being separated from family and avoiding contacting them as he feared it could lead to his whereabouts being identified. He said:

*It really happened where the security agents visited my mom and asked about my whereabouts…I have no capacity to provide them help and security and so the concerns are not really about myself only but about my family as well, my mom, my wife and my kids… (*BA, HRD*).*

When asked if he at least calls his family members back at home, the participant responded that 'it is risky to them because you never know if the authorities are listening in on our calls in order to identify my location'.

There was a participant who resorted to 'telling lies' to his family about his location so that they do not attempt to visit him in his host community. He said, 'as I am speaking to you, I lied to my mom and said I am in Harare because I do not want her coming'. I attempted to clarify the statement as it seemed contradictory. Firstly, he said that he was avoiding even calling family but then mentioned that he resorted to telling lies to them, indicating some calls happened. He clarified and stated that 'when I arrived here, I was in contact with them by phone, even then, I did not let them know where I was'. Additionally, he stated that over time, the fellow HRDs he was residing with at the area he called the ghost panel, advised him to no longer call them. The reason for advising this was that the authorities could set a trap on the family. The participant said the trap could be 'in tapping the cell phones of my family who knows...they can also force network providers to give them information and track my location through the calls'.

Yigzaw *et al*. (2019) mention that displacement leads to ties between the displaced people and their families being severed. They also state that displacement leads to the breakdown of support structure (P. 38). This implies that the structured way of doing things such as updating each other on their lives including their wellbeing, was no longer in place. That is evident with the participants in this study. A participant said he avoided his family due to the

anger that they had towards him because of displacement. A participant said that he was not in touch with his family because the family does not want to get involved and be implicated. He stated 'It is actually pathetic my sister. No one in my family wants to be involved. They don't want me. They are angry. They don't want to be implicated. They don't want to get themselves in shit'.

Asked if that meant he never got in touch with his family, the participant responded that he was communicating with his neighbour to keep himself updated. He said that the neighbour 'understand my situation and also understand how the police operate'. To add to the above statement, the participant provided an example of a visit by the police looking for him as proof of how helpful his neighbour has been. He said:

Last week, just last week on Wednesday, they visited my place, asking for my whereabouts. They had my pictures in their phones, seven of them and one of my neighbours had to call me to say that they were looking for me. He told me that I must move from wherever I was'… (SM, HRD).

Another participant shared similar experience and said 'my children do not yet understand my work…my wife on the other hand is angry at me. I think she resents the work that I am doing…so you could say that there is a lot of disappointment from my family.' He said that he consoled himself by reminding himself that it was for their own safety and that as soon as he was 'comfortable about things getting better, I will return home'.

The impoverishment risk that applies in this study is the social disarticulation risk. Cernea (2005) argues that displacement tears down the social fabric that exist between families. He said that when displacement occurs, social ties become dismantled. Relationships disintegrate and families disintegrate. This is the case with participants in this study. The participants' displacement led to the strong relationships they once had with their families deteriorating. The participants highlighted that their family members like their wives were angry at them for being displaced. They mentioned that the children were also confused due to not understanding the nature of work done by their parents. For some, so as not to jeopardise their safety and that of their families, they intentionally avoided calling their families. These findings are indicative of a social structure between the displaced and their families being fragile.

Displacement does break down the social fabric of the community and families. The IDHRDs in this study were caught between worrying about their own safety and the safety of their families. Those concerns further put strain on the relationship that they had with their own families. IDHRDs being uncertain about how their families were coping with the separation, could not reach out to them out of safety concerns. For those who could not stand the thought of not knowing, neighbours became that link for them. That is however concerning should the family members realise that the displaced family members stay connected to them using neighbours and not calling them directly. Depending on the level of understanding, it could further put strain on the already fragile relationships.

4.2.5. Psychosocial health challenges

Participants in this study highlighted the psychosocial health challenges that were brought about by their displacement. According to Campbell (2013), social relationships, including social support and disintegration have been known to have an impact on a person's health. Additionally, the author argues that socioeconomic conditions have a negative impact on the wellbeing of a person.

Al-Samarrai *et al*. (2020) argues that anxiety and depression are common among IDPs. The author undertook a study to assess the impact displacement had on internally displaced students. The study confirmed that displacement had a severe impact on the internally displaced students' psychological wellbeing. The authors state that the internally displaced students and their families lacked fixed income that impacted their psychological wellbeing as it made continuing funding their studies difficult. The experiences of the participants in the study of Al-Samarrai *et al*. are like the experiences of the participants in this study. Displacement led to loss of employment which led to precarious livelihoods while internally displaced and that resulted in a negative impact on their psychosocial wellbeing

Ramirez *et al*. (2016) conducted a study, *the Ghosts in the big city: surviving and adapting to internal displacement in Colombia, South America*. The findings were based on the reflections of a mother and daughter who were internally displaced. The study mentions that their displacement led to their health being negatively impacted due to the conditions such as the loss of income that they were experiencing. This is similar to the experiences of the participants in this study. The participants highlighted that the socio-economic challenges

they were encountering while they were displaced, affected them psychologically. They highlighted that they were having feelings such as failure and doubts about their family's faith in them. They were also worried about the wellbeing of their families which in turn impacted their own psychosocial wellbeing.

A participant said that his family was disappointed in him as they blamed their separation on his HRD work. He said that there was anger and resentment from his family and that affected his psychosocial wellbeing to the point of seeking intervention. He stated that:

… My wife is angry and disappointed. She has no understanding of this work that made me to be far away from her and the children…it is affecting me a lot and sometimes I can't think…so, I should also mention that I have been talking to the local Methodist Church Bishop who is also a trained psychologist about all these feelings that I am having… (MT, HRD).

Asked about the impact the sessions were having on him, he said that he was starting to work on his feelings of regret and failure. That was evident when he said that th*e* 'bishop has been very helpful in terms of counselling and helping me to understand that what happened is not my fault. It has been helping a lot to talk about my feelings'.

Another participant shared similar experiences of being so heavily impacted by the socio-economic conditions brought by displacement. He said 'It affected me a lot especially psychologically. I value my family a lot though I regard myself as a selfless leader. Knowing that my family was suffering because of my work traumatises me a lot.'

The participant said that while he had at times reflected on his HRD work, he realised that being an HRD is the path he was meant to take. He said he would even sacrifice his life if it was what it takes. While that is the case, he said that the way in which his family was affected by his displacement was what 'hits him hard' because they too were suffering. He stated 'I question whether they would value the work that I do should I die. Though I told myself that they will be proud, the separation between me and my wife took its toll as well. I found comfort in alcohol, and I started drinking heavily.'

Cernea's increased morbidity and mortality impoverishment risk indicates that displacement has a negative impact on the displaced persons' health. The author argues that displacement can be associated with several psychosocial health conditions such as increased stress. He

also says that displacement can lead to psychological trauma. This fits well with the experiences of the participants in this study. Participants in this study highlighted that the separation with their families and the socio-economic challenges that they were experiencing due to job losses contributed to their psychosocial wellbeing being compromised. One participant was fortunate in getting the psychosocial intervention that he needed to deal with his emotions while another was not fortunate and found solace in alcohol.

The findings on psychosocial health challenges reveal the multi-faceted challenges displacement causes. On the one hand, IDHRDs faced economic hardships with the grants support they were receiving being inadequate. On the other hand, it was the low-income opportunities such as illegal and manual labour they were doing. To add to that, they had to face social challenges whereby the relationships with their families were fragile. The findings reveal that if there is no proper and adequate socio-economic support, the challenges lead to their psychosocial wellbeing being negatively impacted. Without the economic means to seek professional intervention for their psychological health challenges, alcohol may remain the easily accessible solution to the problems. The challenge with the alcohol option is that it may in turn cause more physical health problems. The positive highlight of these findings reveals that HRDs are not completely isolated. For example, a participant mentioned free psychological support by the Bishop of the Methodist church which was helping him to deal with the feeling of guilt and failure that he was having. The findings also reveal that when the socio-economic conditions of the HRDs are adequately met, the health risk may possibly be minimised.

4.2.6. Repressive regime at the root of HRDs challenges

The participants of this study highlighted repressive regimes being at the root of their current socio-economic challenges. Studies by Lischer (2017), Bertocchi & Guezoni (2011) have contributed to literature on the impact of political violence on displacement. For example, Lischer argues that when a person is faced with political violence or threats of violence, that person has the choice of fighting, attempting to escape or giving up and likely suffer terrible consequences. Such is the case with participants in this study. Faced with political violence, the participants in this study fled their communities of origin. Some of the reasons that the participants provided were that the regime governing the country was repressive and did not respect the rights of the citizens particularly the HRDs. They also mention that the authorities

were hostile towards HRDs. To support the claims, they provided examples of the torture that they endured at the hands of the authorities.

The participants also decried the use of security agents by the ruling party to intimidate, harass and torture them. With those experiences at the hands of the police, they decided to escape. They made the choice to flee as remaining in their communities of origin would have brought suffering and further harm. Political conditions of displaced groups have also emerged in other studies as well. For example, Williams (2019) conducted a study on displacement and security implications in 10 African countries. In the findings, the author mentions that in the 9 of the 10 countries, the greatest number of people displaced was a result of persecution and authoritarian-leaning governments (2019, P.9-12).

Despite recognising the dangers faced under the repressive regime, participants indicated that continuing to push back against the government was the only solution. The excerpts below support these:

*…I was bundled in a police van and taken away to the central police station by the authorities who locked me for five hours. I was only released after I provided details such as home address to the authorities…the government does not like having dissenting voices. If Zimbabwe was a democratic country like South Africa, then I would not be facing this situation as an HRD in Zimbabwe…If Civil Society Organisations come together and speak in one voice, they can be able to make presentation to the SADC and the African Union which will help in putting pressure on the Zimbabwean government to respect the freedom of expression which could make the lives of the HRDs to not be in danger'…(*civil society activist).

The *government in Zimbabwe is repressive and the constitution is not respected…. So I think the constitution not being respected and the government not respecting the rights of people has led to the situation where Human Rights Defenders are being victimised when they try to fight for their rights and the rights of people'… everyone and not only the HRDs need to stand together and be united…People and not only HRDs need to keep standing up for their rights…that's the solution…* (SM, HRD*).*

…The government of this country is just deaf to the rights of the people. The government is not a listening government, they are showing their true colours and thwarting any democratic means. They have taken to themselves to supress the voices of the people. Dissenting voices

are being punished…the only solution is for the nation to stop being divided and speak in one uniformed voice…The country is a divided nation because if you look at the teachers, when they fight, they fight alone, if the nurses fight, they fight alone and if hawkers fight, they too fight alone… (CR, HRD).

…The challenges that the Human Rights Defenders face in this country is because of the ruling regime. The government see me as an agent of the opposition party leader. They believe that anyone against their human rights abuses is pro Zimbabwean opposition leader…the solution to the HRDs challenges is the fighting spirit. What hinders Zimbabwean government the most is the impact of the fighting spirit. …My vision is to see a free Zimbabwe, my blood if possible, will water the struggle. I may not enjoy the fruit of my struggle but those who remain will enjoy the fruits of the new Zimbabwe… (BA, HRD).

…I faced constant harassment, detention and torture because I was seen as anti-ZANU-PF supporter by the ruling regime… the government does not like those who are against them. They are abusing our rights…They are clamping down on dissenting voices because of corruption… their intended goal is very simple. They want to keep themselves in power so that they can continue looting. These guys are really looting…the issue of lack of information needs to be addressed so that people are properly informed about the challenges of Human Rights Defenders. That will keep pressure on the government…There should be campaigns for constitutionalism and also campaign aimed at liberating the security forces as they are being manipulated… (MT, HRD).

...The challenges in Zimbabwe come from history of the current people in government who are presiding over the government of the day… Those people in government are the architectures of human rights violations…the constitution does make provision for the protection of human rights but the government of this country is not respecting the constitution…the atrocities being committed are being swept under the carpet…the solution is for the state to respect the rule of law. There needs to be a separation between the organs of the state… (TG, HRD).

Lee (1966) theorises that there are factors that push people away from their communities and pull them to a host community, the pull-push theory. The author refers to push factors as the conditions that may force people to flee their community of origin. One of the determinants of people fleeing are political reasons such as autocratic government, bad

governance and the manner in which government exercise power. Participants in this study highlighted that had it not been for the repressive and autocratic regime which did not respect the constitution, they may not have been displaced. They may not have had to push back on the government that was abusing citizens' rights. They may not have fled and as a result, be exposed to the socio-economic challenges that they faced while in displacement. While being internally displaced still means living under the same regime, fleeing their communities of origin was the immediate measures the HRDs could take at the time. Also, there may not have been many options available at their disposal.

Not everyone is able to flee their country even if the governance system exercised by the party in power is autocratic. The participants in this study could not leave, despite citing the repressive nature of the government as the root cause of their challenges. According to participants, the Zimbabwean government is repressive. The internally displaced HRDs were detained, tortured, and harassed by the police and security agents. As a result, they were driven out of their communities. In some cases, their own families experienced harassment as well due to the activities of the internally displaced HRDs. It is evident that displacement may be a short-term solution for the IDHRDs because the state is at the centre of their challenges. It might be up to the international community or International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) to come to the rescue of the HRDs. The HRDs are not free from danger while internally displaced. They are still within the borders of Zimbabwe which means they are still vulnerable to detention, torture, and harassment. That is why the international community and INGOs become effective actors in providing safety for the internally displaced HRDs. The HRDs can only assess their conditions on a day-to-day basis and take measures that ensure their safety.

4.3. Intentions to return to community of origin

A common future plan highlighted by the participants in this study, was returning to their community of origin. Previous studies on IDPs done by Adekola *et al.* (2022) and Collado (2019) highlight that the majority of the internally displaced persons have the intentions to return to community of origin. For example, in the study on the *determinants of return intentions among internally displaced persons (IDPs) of Marawi City, Philippines,* Collado (2019) cited several studies conducted where the IDPs preferred returning home rather than making their host communities a permanent home. In support, the author referred to a

survey that was done in 2014. The author cited similar studies that have been done where the IDPs expressed their intentions to return. The studies that the author cited were done in Bangui, Central African Republic, North Waristan in Pakistan, Georgia, and Maiduguri in Nigeria.

In all those studies, the majority of people who were displaced had planned to return to the communities of their origin. In the study done by Adekola *et al*. on the economic drivers of voluntary return among IDPs in Nigeria, the majority of the participants wanted to return. The determinants to return cited in Collado's study were attachment to their place of origin, good memories of their place of origin, reintegration, financial recovery as well as employment opportunities. That is also the case for the participants of this study. Among the reasons the IDHRDs provided for their intention to return were wanting to find employment opportunities with big CSOs and return to their communities in order to reclaim their former jobs. A participant said:

…Civil Society in South Africa are still functioning well. I would love to have a permanent status in South Africa…I would love to relocate to South Africa but there is a legislation that says one cannot work in one country and be involved in the politics of another country…I would like to work for one of the big CSOs as mentioned…either way if the big organisation is here in Zimbabwe, then that's fine, if it's in South Africa then that's fine too'… (civil society activist).

While he was not certain about the long-term plans of his career, he was certain about his short-term plan which was returning to his community of origin. That was evident when he said: 'as soon as I am comfortable about things getting better, I will go home'.

Another participant also shared his intentions of returning to his community of origin. He stated:

To be honest, I want to return home…I want to be more on the advisory role and no longer as active as I used to be…I can't say that I am no longer going to carry on with my activist work, but I would like to not be as active as I was before the displacement. I will just be providing political advises… (MT, HRD).

Besides returning to his community of origin to work as an 'adviser', the participant also planned to write a book about his life and wants to get it published. It was another reason for

wanting to return, completing it and finding a publisher. He said 'It is about my life and the work that I have been doing as a teacher and activist. I am currently busy with it. It is not published, I am still busy with it.' The participant also hoped to get back to his teaching service which he lost when he was displaced. The other reason was wanting to be reunited with family. He mentioned 'I am hoping that I can go back to doing my teaching job. I also hope to be reunited with my family. It is hard being away from family but it's even harder as a parent when you are away from your kid.'

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs (2010) cite return as one of the solutions for the IDPs. The aim of the framework is to provide guidance for achieving durable solutions following among others, displacement caused by human rights violations. The framework recognises that while return is a durable solution, the challenges of the IDPs do not automatically disappear. It says the IDPs still require support even when they have returned. The IASC framework applies to the participants in this study. The participants made decisions that returning to their community of origin was the best solution for them. The framework suggests that the state take a lead on reintegrating the IDPs into their community of origin. That might pose a challenge to the participants in this study which are the internally displaced HRDs. The government is not the actor to facilitate reintegration of internally displaced HRDs into their community of origin. In their case, the state is the hostile actor. The framework however, highlights that in the event the state is the hostile actor, then NGOs should be the ones facilitating reintegration. At the time of the interviews, participants were still considering returning as an intention and therefore it remained to be seen if they were going to do the process themselves or find an NGO to assist them while resettling. What was clear at that point, was that the internally displaced HRDs considered returning as an option.

Perhaps not surprisingly, this study reveals that internal displacement is not easy for HRDs. As the study finds, life is not pleasant for internally displaced HRDs with families left behind in their place of origin. Their careers are left behind and as a result, they are faced with economic challenges while displaced. Even with the support from NGOs through the social protection mechanisms, the challenges persist because those mechanisms are inadequate. The findings also reveal that IDHRDs are faced with strained relations with members of their own families because of displacement. Taking all these factors into consideration, the

intentions to return became a future plan of the internally displaced HRDs. The participants recognised that when they return, they may still find the same challenges that drove them into displacement. NGOs may need to assist them. After all, the IASC framework states that a durable solution can only be achieved when those who were displaced, no longer have specific assistance and protection needs.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to document and analyse the lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe. More specifically, the study sought to investigate a) the socio-economic and political conditions of IDHRDs while in displacement b) the factors that shape those conditions/experiences and c) the relationship between the internally displaced HRDs with members of their origin and host communities. By doing so and by specifically focusing on the displacement of a group of HRDs that does not attract much scholarly attention, the study aimed to contribute to the broader scholarship on displacement.

Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher targeted HRDs who were internally displaced to gain insight into their experiences, from their own perspectives. Only the affected people can give meaning to their lived experiences, and no one can provide that insight of their lives on their behalf (Lester, 2019). To understand HRDs' lived experiences, it was important to get that information specifically from them as the subject being studied. To this effect, the study used in-depth qualitative interviews with selective participants.

This study finds that the lived experiences of IDHRDs in Zimbabwe are characterised by numerous socio-economic and political challenges. The first challenge the study reveals is the inadequate social protection mechanisms and precarious livelihoods. While the social protection mechanisms cushioned the IDHRDs against harsh economic conditions, they are inadequate. Actors such as NGOs face financial constraints and are further operating in an environment that is challenging for them due to the state's hostility. The NGOs themselves are not adequately funded as the grant support they extended to the internally displaced HRDs were for a short period of time. One participant mentioned that he was informed by an NGO that they were having financial constraints as a reason for not extending the grant support. Also, the grant support to IDHRDs lapsed while the IDHRDs were still displaced. The findings reveal that the HRDs get displaced longer than they get the social protection mechanisms. This implies that the economic vulnerabilities they experience may only be alleviated for a short period of time. This in turn indicates that the internally displaced HRDs may further be victimised by the uncertainties they experience.

The second challenge the study reveals is the low- and disempowering-income opportunities. Finding employment while displaced is not a bad thing but not any kind of employment is

good. Having an income is better than not having an income at all. This study's findings, however, reveal that the kind of employment being done by IDHRDs may not be seen as a positive development. IDHRDs in this study had skilled, professional jobs that provided them with a steady income and provided them with higher authority in the communities of origin. In their displacement, they resorted to engaging in unskilled activities to make money. Displacement led to precarious livelihood for them. The odd jobs that a participant mentioned did not mean a guaranteed income. Another participant engaged in illegal mining and that could create legal problems for him. He may end up in jail which might further add to his challenges. That could further complicate his life. What led to HRDs' displacement was torture and detention at the hands of the police and security agents whom they highlighted as the drivers of their displacement. Therefore, engaging in illegal mining to earn an income could lead to a situation whereby the state claims a legitimate reason to make an arrest, compared to the made-up charges they felt the state used to detain them prior to being displaced.

The third challenge the study reveals is the social integration difficulties. The difficulties highlight that empathy or the lack thereof, played a role in the host community welcoming the displaced HRDs. It also played a role in IDHRDs feeling welcomed by the host community. Empathy minimised complete isolation for the displaced. The findings, however, reveal that there is a downside to empathy. For example, one participant mentioned that he was worried that although the host community members had accepted him and could identify with his struggle, they could reveal his whereabouts. He said they can perhaps reveal his location out of excitement. Existing links in the form of comrades and relatives proved to be significant in HRDs' socially integrating in the host community. However, they can also confine the IDHRDs within their own people and rob them of the opportunity to fully integrate with the broader host communities' members.

The fourth challenge this study reveals is the family separation and fragile support structure in communities of origin. Displacement does break down the social fabric of the community and families. The HRDs in this study were caught between worrying about their own safety and the safety of their families. Those concerns further put strain on the relationships that they had with their own families. HRDs who were uncertain about how their families were coping with the separation, could not reach out to them out of safety concerns. For those who could not stand the thought of not knowing, neighbours became that link for them. That

is however concerning should the family members realise that the IDHRDs keep tabs on them using neighbours and not calling them directly. Depending on the level of understanding, it could further put strain on the already fragile relationships.

The fifth challenge the study reveals is the psychosocial health challenges. The findings on psychosocial health problems reveals the multi-faceted challenges displacement bring. On the one hand, IDHRDs faced economic hardships with the grants support they were receiving not being enough. On the other hand, it was the low- and disempowering-income opportunities such as illegal and manual labour they were doing. To add to that, they had to face social challenges whereby the relationships with their families were fragile. The study reveals that if there is no proper and adequate socio-economic support, the challenges lead to their psychosocial wellbeing being negatively impacted. Without the economic means to seek professional intervention for their psychological issues, the cheapest method of dealing with problems which in this case is alcohol, remains the option. The challenge with the alcohol option is that it may in turn cause more health problems and physical health problems. The positive highlight is that HRDs are not completely isolated. For example, a participant mentioned free psychological support by the Bishop of the Methodist church which was helping him to deal with the feeling of guilt and failure that he was having. The study also indicates that when the socio-economic conditions of the HRDs are adequately met, the health risk may possibly be minimised

The study reveals that repressive regimes are at the root of HRDs' challenges. Participants indicated that indeed the Zimbabwean government is repressive. The internally displaced HRDs were detained, tortured, and harassed by the police and security agents. As a result, they were driven out of their communities. In some cases, their own families experienced harassment as well due to the activities of the internally displaced HRDs. The study indicates that with the state at the centre of the HRDs challenges, it might be up to the international community or International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) to come to the rescue of the HRDs. The HRDs are not free from danger while internally displaced. They are still within the borders of Zimbabwe which means they are still vulnerable to detention, torture, and harassment. As this study reveals, repressive regimes are the cause of HRDs' challenges, which contributes to the body of knowledge on the determinants of IDHRDs.

The study reveals that IDHRDs planned to return to their community of origin. It reveals that internal displacement is not easy for HRDs. Life is not pleasant for IDHRDs with families left behind in their place of origin. Their careers are left behind and as a result, they are faced with economic challenges while in displacement. Even with the support from NGOs through social protection mechanisms, the challenges persist because those mechanisms are inadequate. Findings also reveal that IDHRDs are faced with strained relations with members of their own families as result of displacement. Taking all these factors into consideration, the intentions to return became a future plan of IDHRDs. The participants recognised that when they return, they may still find the same challenges that drove them into displacement. NGOs may need to assist them. After all, the framework states that a durable solution can only be achieved when those who were displaced, no longer have specific assistance and protection needs.

Through its findings, the study speaks to the broader empirical and theoretical literature on internal displacement. More specifically it engages with literature on internal displacement and livelihoods, local integration, and psychosocial health.

Regarding internal displacement and livelihoods, the study adds empirical evidence to already established conclusions that displacement often leads to precarious livelihoods (see for example Scones *et al* 2019; Oyefara & Alabi, 2016; Randell, 2016 and Brand & Bugard, 2008).

With regard to displacement and psychosocial health, the study findings are in line with existing evidence that displacement impacts a person's psychosocial wellbeing (see for example: Ramirez *et al*. 2016; Campbell, 2013 and Al-Samirrai, 2020).

Finally, regarding internal displacement and local integration, the study lends additional empirical evidence to scholarly arguments that empathy and trust play an important role in the displaced people integrating with members of the host community and the host community members welcoming the displaced people to integrate with them (see for example Jacobs et al. 2020; Borovynska, 2019, Hartman *et al,* 2021 and Batson & Powell, 2003).

Perhaps the most important contribution of this study is that it sheds light on lived experiences of an IDP group (displaced HRDs) that rarely features in scholarship on internal

displacement. In addition to this scholarship contribution, this study can inform future policy and humanitarian responses.

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Appendix one: Interview guide

Interview guide questions: These questions focuses on the lived experiences of Human Rights Defenders who are internally displaced in Zimbabwe.

Questions:

1. Could you please tell me in detail, about how life has been like for you, as an internally displaced Human Rights Defender since leaving your place of origin?
2. How can you describe in detail, your interaction as an internally displaced Human Rights Defender with people in your host city?
3. Could you please tell me as to how your internal displacement has impacted relations between you, your family and friends who are still at your place of origin?
4. Are there any opportunities that you can describe for me in detail, of being an internally displaced Human Rights Defender in your host city?

Appendix two: Access letter

University of the Witwatersrand,
African Centre for Migration & Society, +2711 717 4093

[Organisation address]

02 June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: access to conduct research with internally displaced Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe

My name Brenda Madisha and I am studying for an MA in Migration and Displacement in the African Centre for Migration & Society at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking access to the internally displaced Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe.

I am conducting research on the lived experiences of internally displaced Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean Government is putting measures in place to ensure that the lived experiences of the Human Rights Defenders are not documented and this is evident in the country's refusal to allow the UN special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in the country back in 2018. The special rapporteur expressed concerns that the government was trying to keep him from interacting and interviewing Human Rights Defenders in the country. It is because of that reason that I believe there needs to be more effort in place to get the internally displaced Human Rights Defenders to share their own lived experiences, in order for people to have an understanding of their lived experiences while internally displaced.

The study will bring attention to the lived experiences of Human Rights Defenders by interviewing Human Rights Defenders that are internally displaced in Zimbabwe. From the

literature review, the internally displaced Human Rights Defenders seem to be a 'forgotten' group for those who study internally displaced groups and subsequently very little is known if at all, about their lived experiences. The study will bridge that gap in bringing an understanding of them.

I am requesting permission to have access to the internally displaced Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe as an organization that works with Human Rights Defenders in the region including Zimbabwe. In one of your organisation's reports, you mentioned that you receive request from Human Rights under threat to be relocated to 'safe hubs'

Participants will be asked to give their written or verbal consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the organisation) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

The results will be communicated in my research report. The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during the study without any penalties.

All research data will be destroyed after the research is concluded which in my estimation will be after March 2022.

I therefore request that you put me in touch with Human Rights Defenders who are currently internally displaced. The internally displaced Human Rights Defenders must be willing and available to be part of my study. I am kindly asking that should they want to be part of my study, you provide information about me including my name, my contact details and the purpose of my study. If they are willing and able, they may then get in touch with me.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as it is convenient. I am conducting this study under the supervision of Dr Jean-Pierre Misago and should you require to confirm with him, his details are Jean.misago@wits.ac.za and +27 (0) 11 717 4093.

Yours sincerely,

Brenda Madisha
+27 79 749 7824
1805636@students.wits.ac.za

Appendix three: information sheet

07 July 2021

Dear Participant,

My name is Brenda Madisha and I am Masters Student in migration and displacement at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am conducting a study on the lived experiences of internally displaced Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe as part of my studies.

The objective of this research is to document and analyse the lived experiences of the internally displaced HRDs in Zimbabwe. By doing so and by specifically focusing on the displacement of a group (HRDs) that does not seem to have attracted much scholarly attention, this study aims to contribute to broad literature and knowledge on internal displacement.

I am kindly requesting that you take part in this study and avail yourself for the interview. The interview will be conducted telephonically and will take about 45 minutes. With your permission, I would also like to digitally record the interviews. Your anonymity will be ensured should you wish for the interview to be conducted in that manner.

Please note that you will not incur any personal costs if you take part in this study. There will be no benefits from participating and you will not be penalized should you choose not to participate or withdraw from this study. You will be free to not answer any questions that you do not want to answer. The information you will provide will be held securely. Should you experience any distress, the interview will be stopped or reschedule for a different time.

In case you have any questions, please feel free to contact me on bmadisha@yahoo.com. The study will be written as a research report which will be available online through the University of Witwatersrand's library website. The data collected from this research will be stored electronically on a hard drive and kept for a period of five years.

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical procedure of this study, please contact the university's Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-medical) on hrec-medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za. You may also contact my supervisor Dr Jean-Pierre Misago on Jean.misago@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Brenda Madisha

Appendix four: consent form

CONSENT FORM

Research Project- Lived experiences of the internally displaced human rights defenders in Zimbabwe. My name is Brenda Madisha and I am Masters Student in migration and displacement at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am conducting a study on the lived experiences of internally displaced Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe as part of my studies. The objective of this research is to document and analyse the lived experiences of the internally displaced HRDs in Zimbabwe. By doing so and by specifically focusing on the displacement of a group (HRDs) that does not seem to have attracted much scholarly attention, this study aims to contribute to broad literature and knowledge on internal displacement.

Name of Researcher: Brenda Madisha

Definitions

- **Participants**- the people who are going to be interviewed and asked questions
- **Researcher**- the person who will be conducting the interviews and asking questions

I, (**participant's name)** agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report	YES NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES NO
I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.	YES NO

(Signature)

(name of participant)

(date)