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## **The Effects of the Revocation of the Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP) on Zimbabwean Migrants' Children Living in South Africa**

<sup>1</sup>Lorraine Matekenya, <sup>2</sup>Moses Makungu, <sup>3</sup>Priscillah Nsama, <sup>4</sup>Atupele Mbewe

<sup>1</sup>Copperbelt University, Kitwe, Zambia

<sup>2,3,4</sup>University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia

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Corresponding Author: **Lorraine Matekenya**

### **Abstract**

The Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP) is a special visa introduced to accommodate Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa following the political and economic instability caused by the 2000 presidential election dispute and land reform program. The deteriorating economic conditions in Zimbabwe forced nearly half a million individuals to migrate to South Africa, overwhelming its Home Affairs Department and leading to the creation of the Special Dispensation on Zimbabweans, now known as the ZEP. This permit has allowed beneficiaries to live, work, and conduct business in South Africa for over 15 years, enabling them to establish families and integrate into society. This study examines the implications of revoking the ZEP, particularly on the welfare of affected children. Through interviews with ZEP holders, teachers, social workers, and

psychologists in both Zimbabwe and South Africa, findings reveal that more than 90% of respondents expressed concerns about the potential harm to children's security, development, and well-being. The study argues that the revocation constitutes structural violence and generates conflict by disregarding the children's best interests. To mitigate these challenges, the research recommends policy revisions that establish legal pathways for permanent residency, ensure access to education regardless of documentation status, and strengthen child protection mechanisms. Aligning South Africa's migration policies with international human rights standards is essential to safeguarding affected children's futures while preventing social and economic instability.

**Keywords:** Migration Policy, Child Protection, Social Integration

### **1. Introduction**

Migration has long been a defining feature of regional mobility in Southern Africa, driven by economic, political, and social factors (Crush & Tevera, 2010) <sup>[11]</sup>. Zimbabwean migration to South Africa has been particularly pronounced, with waves of displacement linked to political instability, economic downturns, and land reform policies since the early 2000s (Centre for Public Impact, 2017) <sup>[8]</sup>. In response, the South African government introduced the Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP), allowing holders to reside, work, and conduct business legally in the country (Muvhuti, 2022) <sup>[25]</sup>. However, the decision to revoke the ZEP in June 2022 has raised significant concerns regarding its implications for affected migrants and their families (GroundUp, 2022; Scalabrini Institute for Human Mobility in Africa, 2022) <sup>[17, 26]</sup>.

Children of ZEP holders have been raised in South Africa, integrating into the country's education system, social structures, and cultural norms (Blessed-Sayah, Griffiths & Moll, 2022) <sup>[6]</sup>. The abrupt withdrawal of their legal status threatens to disrupt their lives, forcing them into an uncertain future in Zimbabwe, a country many have never known. Beyond legal status, this transition is likely to lead to disruptions in their education, psychological distress, and challenges in social integration (Tarisayi & Manik, 2020). While existing studies on migration policies have largely focused on economic and labor-related impacts, less attention has been paid to the effects on children, particularly in terms of identity formation, social belonging, and mental well-being (McDonald & Crush, 2017).

Research on Zimbabwean migration has extensively examined the historical and political drivers of displacement, as well as the socio-economic struggles faced by migrants in South Africa (Crush, 2013). However, discussions often overlook the

unique vulnerabilities of children who have spent most of their lives under the ZEP framework. The revocation of their legal status raises important questions about their access to essential services, their rights, and their broader sense of belonging in South African society. Structural violence has been widely explored in contexts of systemic inequality and conflict (Galtung, 1996)<sup>[15]</sup>, yet its application to migration governance, particularly to policy shifts that disproportionately affect children, remains limited (Hammar, McGregor & Landau, 2010).

The effectiveness of migration policies remains a contentious issue. Proponents argue that restrictions on migration ensure national security and protect local labor markets (Smith, 2023). However, critics, including Crush (2013) and McDonald & Crush (2017), highlight the adverse consequences of such policies, particularly for vulnerable populations like children, who face legal uncertainty, social marginalization, and disrupted access to essential services. Recent analyses (Tarisyai & Manik, 2020; Scalabrini Institute for Human Mobility in Africa, 2022<sup>[26]</sup>) emphasize the need for migration frameworks that balance national interests with human rights, drawing on international best practices to create more inclusive and sustainable systems. Against this backdrop, this study examined the implications of the ZEP revocation on children's welfare, security, and social integration, hence contributing to broader discussions on child welfare, migration policy, and human rights in Southern Africa.

## 2. Research Context

### Migration Patterns in Southern Africa

Migration has played a central role in shaping Southern Africa's socioeconomic and political landscape for centuries. The region has long been characterized by patterns of labor migration, cross-border movement, and forced displacement due to economic disparities, political instability, and conflict (Crush & Tevera, 2010)<sup>[11]</sup>. Historically, labor migration systems, such as the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) and the Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA), facilitated the recruitment of migrant workers from countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Lesotho to work in South Africa's mines and farms (Adepoju, 2008). These systems laid the foundation for contemporary migration flows, with South Africa continuing to serve as the primary economic hub in the region.

The post-colonial era saw a shift in migration patterns as regional conflicts, economic downturns, and governance crises contributed to increased displacement and economic migration. The Mozambican civil war (1977–1992) led to a significant influx of refugees into neighboring countries, particularly South Africa and Zimbabwe (Hammar, McGregor & Landau, 2010). Similarly, political instability and economic decline in Zimbabwe following the land reform program of 2000 resulted in one of the largest migration waves in Southern Africa. By the mid-2000s, an estimated three to five million Zimbabweans had left the country, with South Africa being their primary destination (McDonald & Crush, 2017).

Economic factors remain a dominant driver of migration in the region. South Africa's relatively higher wages and better economic opportunities attract migrants seeking employment in various sectors, including mining, agriculture, domestic work, and informal trading

(Rutherford & Addison, 2007). The informal economy provides opportunities for migrants who may lack formal documentation, enabling them to sustain their livelihoods despite legal and social constraints (Crush, 2013). However, despite the economic benefits of migration, host countries often face challenges related to labor market competition, service provision, and social integration, which influence migration governance policies (Tati, 2008).

In addition to economic migration, forced displacement due to political instability and environmental factors has also shaped migration patterns in Southern Africa. Climate change-induced droughts and floods have contributed to rural-urban migration and cross-border displacement, further straining host communities (Mlambo, 2018). In Zimbabwe, persistent economic crises, coupled with government mismanagement, have accelerated migration flows to neighboring countries, particularly South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia (Ndlovu, 2020). These movements are not only economic but also linked to governance failures, political repression, and lack of access to essential services.

Migration remains an enduring feature of Southern Africa's regional dynamics, with economic and political factors continuing to drive mobility. However, migration governance requires a nuanced approach that considers the rights and welfare of migrants, particularly vulnerable populations such as children. The evolving policy landscape in South Africa highlights the tensions between national security, labor market considerations, and human rights obligations, underscoring the need for a balanced and sustainable approach to migration management in the region.

### South Africa's Response to Migration

South Africa has long grappled with migration management, balancing economic reliance on migrant labor with political pressures to control migration flows. The country has historically relied on foreign labor in sectors such as mining, agriculture, and domestic work (Crush, 2013). However, migration policies have often fluctuated between temporary legalization programs and restrictive border enforcement measures, reflecting shifting political and economic priorities (Landau, 2011).

The introduction of the Dispensation of Zimbabweans Project (DZP) in 2009, later replaced by the Zimbabwe Special Permit (ZSP) and eventually the Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP), marked an attempt to regulate the large Zimbabwean migrant population in South Africa. These permits provided temporary legal status to Zimbabweans, allowing them to work and reside in the country while preventing mass deportations (Muvhuti, 2022)<sup>[25]</sup>. The ZEP, introduced in 2017, continued this trend by granting approximately 178,000 Zimbabweans legal protection from deportation. However, these measures were never intended to be permanent solutions, as they did not provide a pathway to permanent residency or citizenship (GroundUp, 2022)<sup>[17]</sup>.

In recent years, South Africa has adopted a more restrictive stance on migration. The revocation of the ZEP in 2022 was justified by the government as a necessary step to prioritize South African citizens in employment and economic opportunities. This move aligns with broader political narratives that frame migration as a national security concern and a strain on public resources (Scalabrini Institute for Human Mobility in Africa, 2022)<sup>[26]</sup>. However, critics

argue that such policies fail to account for the socio-economic contributions of long-term migrants and their families. Additionally, restrictive migration policies have been linked to rising xenophobic sentiments, with foreign nationals often scapegoated for domestic economic challenges (Landau, 2011).

While South Africa has ratified international treaties on refugee protection and human rights, the country's migration policies remain highly contested. The tension between migration governance and human rights obligations continues to shape policy debates, underscoring the need for a more inclusive and sustainable approach to migration management.

### Policy and Human Rights

The revocation of the ZEP raises fundamental questions about migration governance and human rights. South Africa is a signatory to several international conventions, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) <sup>[10]</sup>, which emphasizes the need to protect children from statelessness and discrimination. However, restrictive migration policies often conflict with these international commitments, placing children at risk of exclusion from essential services (United Nations Development Programme, 1994).

Recent analyses (Smith, 2023; Scalabrini Institute for Human Mobility in Africa, 2022 <sup>[26]</sup>) stress the need for policy approaches that balance national interests with human rights considerations. Comparative studies of migration policies in Botswana and Namibia suggest that alternative models such as pathways to regularization or community integration programs can mitigate the negative effects of forced displacement and legal uncertainty (Hammar, McGregor & Landau, 2010). Lessons from these models could inform South Africa's approach to managing long-term migrants and their families in a more sustainable and rights-based manner.

The governance of migration remains a complex issue, requiring a balance between sovereignty and human rights obligations. The experiences of Zimbabwean migrant children under the ZEP framework highlight the far-reaching consequences of migration policy shifts. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for shaping policies that promote social cohesion, protect vulnerable populations, and ensure sustainable migration management in Southern Africa.

### 3. Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach to explore the complex and immeasurable variables associated with the revocation of the Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP). The study focuses on thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and attitudes, using real experiences of affected individuals to examine the social constructivism emerging both within South Africa and the broader Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). A case study design was adopted to investigate the anticipated differences in the quality of life for child citizens if they were forced to relocate to Zimbabwe under current economic conditions. The study specifically examined their welfare, security, and development, aiming to understand the social and economic implications of this migration policy shift.

The target population included ZEP holders as representatives of affected children, whose well-being was

the central concern of this research. The study also incorporated expert opinions from psychologists, social workers, and teachers, given their professional exposure to child welfare and social dynamics. A purposive non-probability sampling technique was employed to ensure the selection of participants most relevant to the study. Although this method may introduce participant bias, it was deemed suitable as it allowed for gathering firsthand experiences from directly affected individuals. A total of thirty participants were interviewed, categorized into four groups: Affected parents, three teachers (two Zimbabwean and one South African), three social workers (two Zimbabwean and one South African), and three psychologists (two Zimbabwean and one South African).

The primary research tool was an interview guide designed to facilitate open-ended responses and capture both subjective experiences and professional insights. Data collection involved open-ended questions that encouraged participants to express their views. Content analysis was used to evaluate responses, focusing on word frequency and sentiment patterns to draw meaningful conclusions. The study was structured around two core themes which were further dissected into sub-themes. Techniques such as vivo coding, emotions coding, and simultaneous coding were applied to categorize data and derive insights relevant to policy recommendations.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### EP-Holders

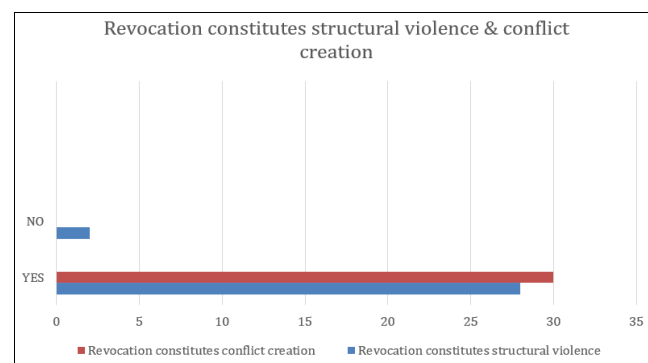


Fig 1: Revocation constitutes structural violence and conflict creation

The four (4) groups who participated in the interview revealed on average the sentiment that the affected child citizens' welfare, security and development was being structurally violated and that this move is creating conflict within them that affects their current and future relationship-building capacities which will in turn affect the societies they will form part of. The 'garbage-in-garbage-out' concept appears to be in confirmation as participants have central fears that the lifestyle interruptions to be visited upon the affected child citizens could spell social disaster futuristically.

All but two (2) who participated acknowledged that revocation of the ZEP constitutes a systematic and structural violence against the affected child citizens albeit in various degrees. From the literal academic perspective that structural violence is indirect and systemic, in that it is emerging from an institutional decision, it is agreed that it is prevailing in the manner of execution surrounding the ZEP

revocation resulting in the affected child citizens no longer enjoying the quality of life they are used to in South Africa once their only support base becomes redundant and unable to provide for them.

Participants showed concern over the child citizens' education, health services and social integration. Regarding education, even though Zimbabwe as the receiving state has very high standards, education is extremely expensive in schools where resources such as eLearning are available while the same can be afforded by any middle-income family in South Africa.

In relation to health services, it was found to be an open secret that average Zimbabweans flock across their country's borders depending which one is closest to where they are located for medical assistance and attention, amongst which South African hospitals are a choice for not only available, but also affordable medical services across all spectrums. The affected persons indicated the dread of even entertaining the thought of what they may have to endure in the event of illness once repatriated and redundant.

On the social front, the common sentiment which emerged was fear of social incompetencies emanating from resort to drug abuse as a coping mechanism on the part of the affected child citizens. It was feared that delinquency and other negative patterns to be expected may rise leading to possible depression as these children will have been separated from their peers, teachers and familiar comfort. All the participants whether as professionals or the affected persons feared resultant social incompetence and irresponsible behavior with specific mention of drug abuse as an easy potential coping mechanism.

As clearly, an inebriated population cannot chart development of any kind, sentiments already spell fears of interruptions to development whether personal to those affected or societally. As such, it was firmly and frankly mentioned by these participants that whatever was invested in the child citizen today obviously determines what adult citizen would be yielded in future. The general sentiments collectively expressed by the participants therefore are that relocation to Zimbabwe will be traumatic to these children considering that they were born schooled and their upbringing done in South Africa.

#### 4.1 Welfare

Zimbabwe has been facing economic challenges with many basic products and services being exorbitant and beyond the reach of the average earners. This scenario affects access to products and services by average Zimbabweans that at the moment are within reasonable reach of the child citizens' providers in South Africa and responsible for their current welfare. Deprivation of these otherwise achievable responsibilities in turn has negative ripple effects on the recipient child dependent. It kills their legitimate expectation of what normal standards they are accustomed to. The child citizens' welfare in such a scenario is therefore impacted by the potential loss of access or reduced quality of basic needs such as education, healthcare, and food security based on the realities herein identified.

#### 4.2 Security

The security of the affected child citizens is also impacted by the very threat to their freedom from fear, want and indignity. There are obvious glaring fears of both known and unknown instabilities that may lead to anxieties, want and all indignities resulting from the unstable environment

created by the ZEP revocation as they attempt to either cope or resist any potential downward adjustment to their accustomed lifestyle standards. Resort can easily be had to poorly coping mechanisms that hinder them from developing in the intended direction. These child citizens can thus become a danger not only to themselves but to those they peer with resulting in catastrophic consequences at societal level.

#### 4.3 Development

The disruption caused by relocation must be expected to impact on the development of these child citizens in that interruptions in their education due to curriculum and environmental adjustments associated with the inevitable change of the environmental systems is an unavoidable factor. This impacts their academic progress, force a compromise in choices in the academic areas to specialize in due to many factors including availability of required resources and subsequent support to see their desires through. These factors certainly affect future opportunities available to them in this competitive global environment.

One South African psychologist and teacher, however, contended that the use of the word "violence" is rather strong preferring instead to view it as a change in conditions that results in a downward lifestyle adjustment where the average ZEP-Holder's basic quality of life at the moment in South Africa enables those committed to earning an honest living a basically decent standard economically in comparison to the currently prevailing experience in Zimbabwe for the time being.

All the interviewed teachers agreed that the prevailing economic environment in Zimbabwe is not conducive for any child citizen as there already are challenges being experienced by those of them on the ground. They agree that adapting to the current environment will definitely affect these child citizens negatively because they will be adding the burden to the already dwindled resources in the learning environment currently being experienced in Zimbabwe. They agree that the child citizens will be affected psychologically through changing environments thus affecting their confidence, welfare, security and development.

Overall, it is indicated that an abrupt and uncushioned relocation to Zimbabwe should be expected to have significant negative effects on the welfare, security, confidence, and development of child citizens who have been living in South Africa under the ZEP.

### 5. Intervention Measures to Mitigate Expected Damages

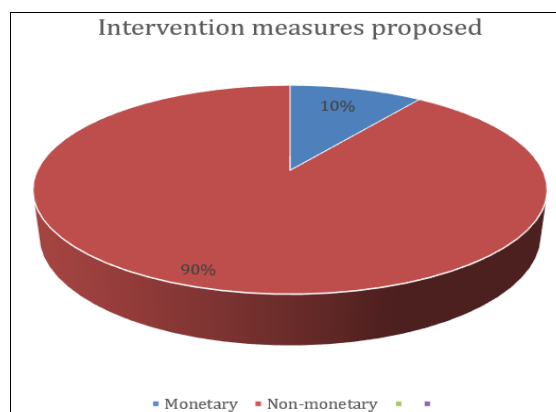


Fig 2: Proposed intervention measures

The finding that the ZEP-Holders themselves have proposed solutions that the South African government can consider in order to avert the potential of their decision to revoke the ZEP becoming a humanitarian crisis indicates a willingness on their part to meet the South African government at some kind of compromise which will be mutually beneficial. As 90% of the participants proposed non-monetary compensation, it is viewed as practically best to heed these possible solutions.

One of the proposals that the ZEP not be blanketly revoked without considering the specific circumstances of each ZEP-Holder ties in well with (Watadza, 2022) <sup>[27]</sup> in his article which proposes that the revocation process being of a blanket approach, should be revisited so that it singles out migrants who are beneficial to the economy of South Africa such as entrepreneurs and small business proprietors who are in good standing with the laws of the country. The article decries the requirement that the ZEP revocation is not considering factors such as successfully running small-holder businesses and how their closure subject to the ZEP revocation not only affects the South African economy negatively, but also renders these proprietors redundant upon repatriation to a place where the skills they have now amassed will not be utilized due to the unfavorable investment environment currently Convention on the Rights of a child, (1989) <sup>[10]</sup>, prevailing because of the economic challenges being experienced by Zimbabwe.

The very important proposed finding that suggests the South African government grant naturalized citizenship to the affected child citizens and permanent residency to their ZEP-Holder parents and guardians is generic to this situation. As a stakeholder brainstorm showing creative effort in reaching a compromising solution which is as practical as possible by non-violent means its reasoning is within the pillars proposed in the Human Development Report (UNDP, 1994; Mahapatra, 2020).

The findings in respect of this aspect reveal the need for the involvement of social experts and child considerations advocates in the making of decisions such as the revocation of the ZEP. Their involvement was considered pivotal and to be made paramount as their valued guidance will have a positive to fair influence on beneficial decision-making and policy frame working.

Also considered by (Brown & Ward, 2013; Evans & Schamberg 2009) <sup>[7, 14]</sup>, the substantiation of the best interests of children must dictate decision-making processes whose results affect them. The former went further as to address the need for children to actually take a leading role in the making of decisions that affect their lives. Although this proposal is desirable for the current times and lifestyles, it falls short of indicating the practical age groups of child citizens to be given this opportunity, as clearly, certain age groups that may be affected by the same or similar factors may not appreciate the import of their participation in any decision-making scenarios.

It was also raised how important it is to always invoke all important instruments relevant to child citizens' interests whether developmental or legal as guiding pillars whenever governance decisions are made. As these instruments, whether legal or developmental are already in place, such as the Declaration of the Rights of a child, (1959) <sup>[12]</sup>, the Convention on the Rights of a child, (1989) <sup>[10]</sup>, it is desired that it be seen that their influence plays a role in decision-making that affects livelihoods at all times.

One such important instrument to rely on is the (UNDP, 1994) Human Development Report which brought a whole new understanding to what human security should entail by observing that the subject matter of human security must in this era no longer be limited merely to "alliances, borders and territories". In its introductory remarks, the report states thus, "The 1994 report introduces a new concept of human security, which equates security with people rather than territories...through a new paradigm..." This new approach does not only broaden the definition on paper, but also gives credibility to efforts on the ground to prioritize human needs. By observing security in light of the people brings a lasting solution to a number of threats as all of them emanate from human machination, ignorance or indeed as a by-product of human conflict.

The findings of this study, when analyzed in terms of this report, reflect these factors of insecurity as necessarily because they deprive a sense of belonging empowered by economic and personal security, among basic human livelihood necessities, as psychological experts state that human beings are inherently social by nature and is present in the experiences of the ZEP-Holders and the affected child citizens. Concerns on this loss of the sense of belonging due to the interrupted growth of these child citizens are particularly glaring once the effects of the revocation of the ZEP begin to manifest.

According to this 1994 Human Development Report, it is clearly envisaged that all global citizens must be entitled to live a life that is economically and personally secure free from fear, want and indignity. This standard has been found as falling most appropriately on the situation of the affected child citizens in their current experience. In this respect the downward adjustment in lifestyle, insecurities of not being guaranteed of an affordable quality education and healthcare as well as social security is being brought about at first glance merely by the revocation of the ZEP.

According to (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 2018) the fears intimated above are to be addressed with the degree of care that aims as much as possible to be preventive. This brings to life the words of (Annan, 2005), Secretary-General of the UN, "...we are not only all responsible for each other's security, we are, also in some measure, responsible for each other's welfare". This holistic statement clearly influences the acknowledgement that the South African government had observed these principles at its inception of the special dispensations on Zimbabwe leading to the ZEP spanning up to a decade and a half. They all culminated to the fulfilment of personal security which on aggregate benefits society as a collective factor. The same spirit of "Ubuntu" embroils itself in article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) providing for community duty to protect the rights of others was therefore apparent and in practice all along, until the decision to revoke the ZEP.

It also emerged from the findings that those in power have a major role to play in what takes place in the communities that they lead. These contentions agree with (Abel, 2019) <sup>[11]</sup>, who postulated that societies are actually engineered by those in power in a theory named "Social Engineering" coined by Roscoe Pound, an American sociological jurist. This theory aptly relates to a strategic structuring of systems mainly reliant on using the law which is deliberately executed to regulate society's conduct and even reactivity to certain stimuli. It also affects the social tectonics theory (Jackson & Butler, 2015; Jeong, 2000 <sup>[23]</sup>) stating that social

factors are evolutionary thereby affecting the states of peace and conflict in a kinetic fashion also aptly illustrating the finding that is acknowledging the various changes that society is experiencing in the situation currently prevailing in South Africa psycho-socio-economically concerning the issue under research.

It is important to note the above in light of the contentions of (Galtung, 1996) <sup>[15]</sup> with the latest mention of the same principles being as far back as (Galtung, 2004) <sup>[16]</sup>, which added the concept of “the six spaces” that contribute to a state of peace or conflict and affects not only relations but security and development as well. This concept of the ‘six spaces’ which affect the state of conflict and peace, are, firstly nature as depicting the surrounding environment, secondly, person as the actor involved, thirdly, social setting as an enabling or disabling factor, fourthly, culture and its influence, fifthly, time as in the age or era involved and lastly the contribution of the world at large.

It is therefore prudent in view of the above contention that while the affected societies, that is the ZEP-Holder population and the South African government and its nationals, are shifting in terms of their goals and ideals, they construct themselves peacefully in order not to compromise each other’s security hence development.

The realistic fear, even from the gathered data indicates that ripple effects of these disturbances can cause escalation that presents itself in the form of a culture of confrontations, antagonisms, mistrust and in the worst-case scenario direct conflict which in the past has presented itself in the form of xenophobic attacks that these same child citizens have been so often exposed to. In all scenarios, personal security of these child citizens is at risk because it is the core human security that enables or disables them from healthy functionality and contributes to the translation of their social competence which speaks to society’s development.

It should follow therefore, that governance systems created to observe human securities give confidence and contentment to populations thereby generating a culture of peaceful relations where violence of any kind is minimized. It is vital to note that societies are defined by the systemic forms which determine their lifestyles, livelihoods and habitual norms. The structures built to manage these societies necessarily shape them into their respective identities. These in turn define each society’s priorities, intermediate and last resort reactions to various stimuli.

## 6. Conclusion

This study concludes that the revocation of the ZEP constitutes structural violence on the affected child citizens and their ZEP-Holder parents and guardians. The revocation of the ZEP has drastically affected the quality of life on the affected ZEP-Holders and their children in terms of welfare, security and the sustainable development goals (interpreted in line with poverty alleviation efforts globally), the Harambee concept together with vision 2030 and agenda 2063.

There are clear indications that the cursory revocation of the ZEP runs parallel to these principles. It creates a contradiction in principle because South Africa is a notable participant and signatory to some of these guiding principles. The above agendas being futuristic guiding pillars of human development and security means they should be invoked during decision-making which impacts child citizen interests. This enables due respect and

observation of their welfare, security and development interests.

Highlights in this research are that decisions that have an impact on child welfare, security and development must not be made cursorily and without prior consultation with child welfare experts. It is not tenable and sustainable for the decision-makers to merely target the apparent short-sighted interests of some and deliver to certain circles at the expense of others. It is important that policymakers consider the effects of their decisions beyond the intended immediate ends. In short where a child stands to be affected by a policy decision that negatively affects its sponsor, measures must be put in place to adequately protect such child in all spheres of their life. Most importantly, the security of children as posterity must be jealously guarded irrespective of each child’s origin to secure a properly functional citizen in the future.

When acknowledging how in the end, sovereign decisions remain a reality that should be given their place in societies, this factor should, however, not mean exclusion of the interests of other components of humanity that could be affected negatively out of the desire to satisfy the demands of some. The discord that is so far occasioned because decision-makers do not consider child securities as an asset to national, regional and global security, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development influences undesirable outcomes that expose child citizens unfairly. In the current globalized environment, it is advised that the suitable universally accepted standards of guidance in decision-making particularly those which accommodate integration be taken into account by all policy-makers so as to guarantee the relevance of their decisions to the prevailing times and the cooperation of all affected.

## 7. Recommendations

It is recommended that there be a re-visitation of the decision by the government of South Africa through its ministry of Home Affairs with the view to include input from the ZEP-Holders and other stakeholders. In order to achieve this, the decision-making process on the revocation of the ZEP could involve establishing a joint working group or task force to develop and implement a comprehensive response plan, which includes measures to provide compensation, support, and other forms of assistance to those affected. Both the South African and Zimbabwean governments can work together to ensure that the citizens from both countries are counselled to co-exist in an environment that fosters peace hence welfare, security and development not only of the child citizens in question, but all of their peoples.

## 8. Further study

The Aftermath for the ZEP-Holder families after repatriation from South Africa.

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