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FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

**THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN IN PROTECTED VILLAGES OF SOUTH
EASTERN ZIMBABWE DURING THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE FOR
ZIMBABWE (1970 -1980)**

BY

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Dedications

I wish to dedicate this research to my dad Mr. C. Shava, a man of conspicuous character, a man like no other and my wellspring of motivation. He gave me life, sustained me, taught me, dressed me, battled for me, held me and in particular cherished me unequivocally. It likewise goes to my late mother, there are no enough words I can say to portray how simply vital my mom was to me and what an intense impact she keeps on being a major part of my life. May her spirit rest in interminable peace till we meet again in the Lord's garden!

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCJPR	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia
DAs	District Assistants
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
GF	Guard Force
IDs	Identity Cards
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
PVs	Protected Villages
RSF	Rhodesian Security Forces
SEZ	South Eastern Zimbabwe
SR	Southern Rhodesia
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infectious
TTL	Tribal Trust Lands
USGCG	United States Government Counterinsurgency Guide
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African Liberation Army

Abstract

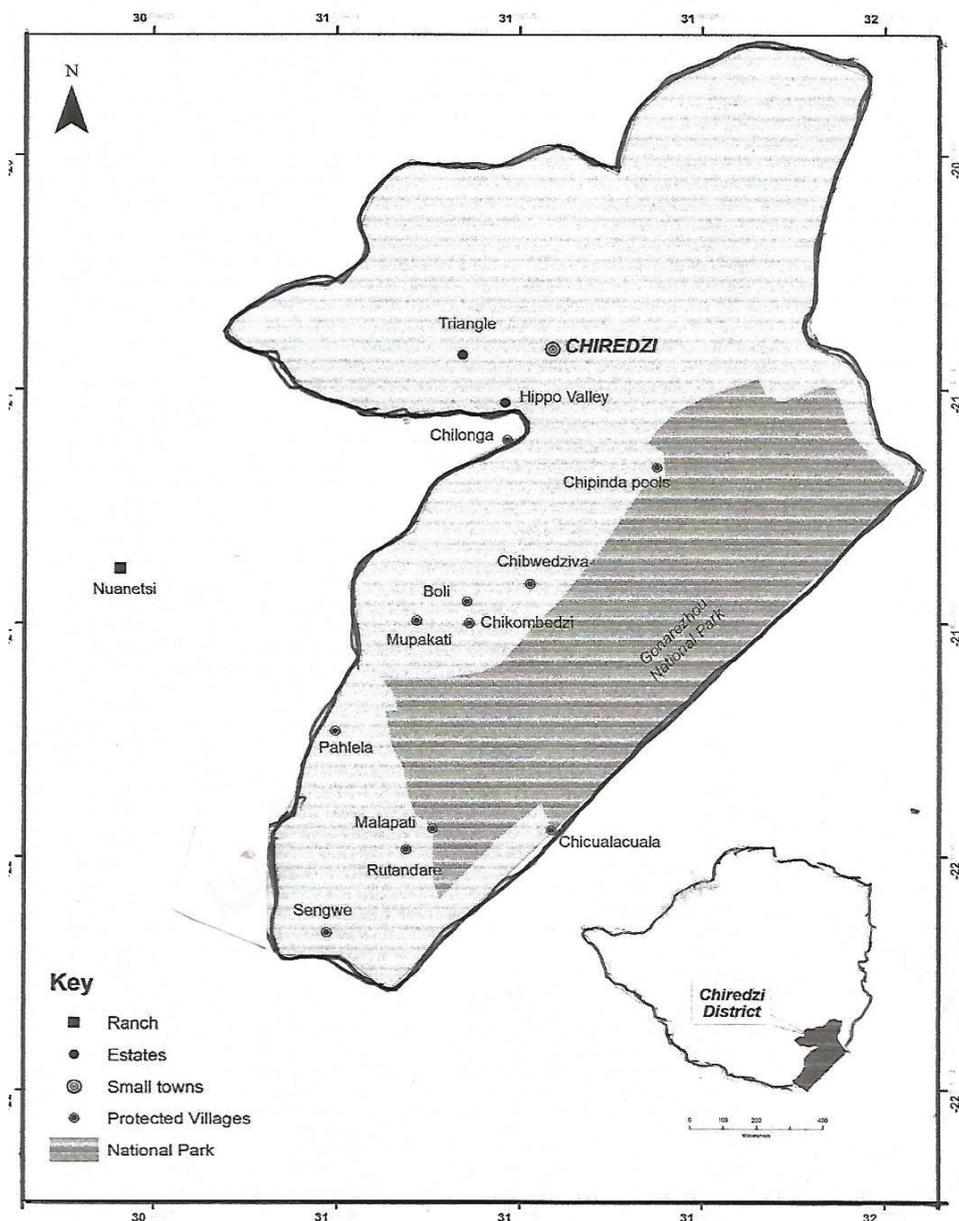
The objective of this dissertation is the exploration of the plight of women in PVs of South Eastern Zimbabwe during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe 1970-1980. The study focuses on how the establishment of the PV strategy made uneasy life for the local people especially women. The PVs were introduced by the Rhodesian government as a counterinsurgency measure to contain guerrillas. In order to complete the research objectives, the dissertation is based on various case studies of PVs in the South Eastern Zimbabwe. The plight of women in PVs of SEZ remains a less researched area in the liberation struggle historiographies. Therefore this research shows that PVs did not protect women from war crimes. The gendered dimension of life inside the Keeps left women with no choice for survival. Women were sexually abused, raped, impregnated and infected with STIs by the DAs. The study shows that with shortages which characterised life in PVs, women encountered various problems which they suffered because they were women. The research wishes to inform implementers to identify strategies and mechanisms to address crimes and human rights violations the Rhodesian government committed during the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe against the local people especially women.

MAP SHOWING PROTECTED VILLAGES IN RHODESIA



Adapted from Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia, Rhodesia The Propaganda War

MAP SHOWING PROTECTED VILLAGES IN SOUTH EASTERN ZIMBABWE



Adopted from Hove M, War legacy: A reflection on the effects of the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) in South Eastern Zimbabwe during Zimbabwe's war of liberation 1976 – 1980

Introduction

This study specifically focuses on the plight of women in protected villages of South Eastern Zimbabwe during the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe 1970 -1980. Though much has been written about the Protected Villages during the liberation war, most of the histories and the realities of the PV system have been mythologised and, this has promoted a partisan view of the PVs historiography. This has also further promoted traditional scholarship about Zimbabwe's liberation struggle to tend to be gender biased and highly romanticised. It is the aim of this study to unmask less researched areas about the plight of women in PVs and to investigate further and get to understand the various consequences which these problems left on the African women in their survival during the liberation struggles.

The works produced by historians, journalists, politicians and diplomats have treated events in PVs from different perspectives. Although many of the authors have tried to be as objective as possible, it appears that some failed to escape from political bias and ideological prejudice on gender dimensions of life inside the Keeps which need to be carefully investigated. Using an African feminist approach to the state of condition women endured during the war, this research aims to explore the suffering caused to South Eastern Zimbabwe civilian women, not only by the imposition of war, but also by the male centred demands of the Rhodesian Forces inside the cages they were locked in.¹ This is a disservice to the literature, which seeks to uncover the central spotlight of events which took scene inside the Keeps. By focusing on the South Eastern part of Zimbabwe, it is the purpose of this research to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by discussing the plight of women laying out how the PV system greatly deprived them the necessities of life or healthful environmental influences. By the virtue of experiencing various forms of abuse which includes sexual violence which threatened their health, the curfews which monitored their movements,

gender based violence, rape, unwanted pregnancies, STIs, women's survival in Keeps was in itself a period of suffering.

It is without any doubt that conditions inside the keeps were so unfavourable for women. Therefore a proper assessment of what transpired inside the keeps will promote policy makers and implementers to gain insight of the challenges faced by the local inhabitants of the SEZ during the liberation struggle especially the deadly atrocities committed against women in such a harsh unyielding environment operated by the DAs.

In justifying the study, the researcher will go on to review poor services which the keeps offered to the Africans. Poor health conditions promoted high rise of diseases, hunger and starvation which promoted malnutrition on civilians, moral decadence which drastically rose as a result of prostitution. This witnessed the occurrence of sexual transmitted infections which greatly maximised the fate of women who endured mental and physical torment from the imminent abuses which were exacerbated on them by the Rhodesian Forces. Women faced various gendered problems inside the cages. Therefore defining the Keeps as Protected Villages would be misnaming as the area was not a comfort zone specifically for the women.² Therefore a careful research will address greatly instances of war violence which women experienced in the Zimbabwean war of liberation.

Research questions

The study aims to address the following questions:

1. Did protected villages guarantee maximum protection to African women and young girls from gender problems and other wartime challenges?
2. What were the consequences of abuse which women suffered during their time of living in the Keeps?
3. What were the humanitarian problems women suffered inside the PVs?

4. How did African women and young girls managed to survive in an environment of sexual violence in PVs?
5. What psychological effects did the establishment of PVs had on women?

Research Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide a historical analysis that displays through documentation of literature the various gender problems women experienced inside the keeps of South Eastern Zimbabwe using a gender oriented human rights lens.
- To identify strategies and mechanisms to address crimes and human rights violations the Rhodesian government committed during the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe against the local people
- To have just and adequate understanding of the problems suffered by the local people as a result of wartime strategies used by the regime government to win the war.
- To promote gender sensitive lens which provide useful theoretical tools to highlight the role of women in contemporary war discourses
- To promote an intellectual decency that addresses the psychological effects PVs had on women from a non-partisan historical perspective

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research will take into consideration related scholarly works that relates to this study. In this case the literature review starts off with a short overview of the process of the establishment of the PVs and the experiences inside. Through the literature review the researcher aims to label out how different and similar the topic under study is from the existing literature. The establishment of PVs in the areas of South Eastern Zimbabwe was

greatly characterised by colonial administration's main desperate mission to curb the freedom fighter infiltration which was being accelerated and effected by the civilian support. Recourse to the use of Protected Villages is closely aligned to the concept of a total revolutionary war. It entails the concentration and resettlement of the local population into defensible villages. Mazambani and Mashingaidze mainly focused on the creation of PVs arguing that propaganda was designed to falsely cheat the international community pretending as if it was a humanitarian strategy to protect the civilians from the guerrilla insurgents¹. This was well connected with colonial myths by colonial historians who further constructed that it was the colonial government's burden to protect the people. However, the foundation of PVs is very much associated with the idea of aggregate insurgency which includes the fixation and resettlement of the local populace into defensible villages to remove their investment in the war. Mazambani and Mashingaidze further propound that for one to clearly understand the concept of PVs there is need for observing that PVs were a borrowed phenomenon from other countries, stating that it was used by the British in Malaya, in Vietnam and Algeria by France and also in Portuguese areas of influence Mozambique and Angola.² This idea was not an original strategy of the Rhodesian Government. It evolved as a result of Rhodesia's participation with Commonwealth Forces during the British crisis in Malaya. It is therefore important to note that this concept served as the basis for the British pacification effort. The United States attempted to use a similar strategy in the Republic of Vietnam and the Portuguese had initiated a similar programme during its war with the FRELIMO insurgents in Mozambique and also in Angola. In all these instances the common aim was to counter the Maoist ideal that guerrilla armies survived in a sea of sympathetic peasants, who would feed and shelter them.³

In any case, it is significant to note that with the exception of the British exertion, the strategy in Rhodesia was a disappointment. Consequently, PVs immediately demonstrated deficient,

compelling individuals to live without access to sustenance clean water, food and even toilets. This had to a great degree lamentable outcomes and brought ruin. Haven was constrained and as the cool season arrived, individuals constantly died from exposure. The Smith government justified itself by stating that these conditions were constrained by the violence initiated by the ZANLA forces, and that the absence of sufficient facilities was just brought about by their failure to construct the base rapidly enough. Hove corroborates that the rural people were moved into protected villages, designed to cut the insurgents off from their supplies of food and comfort and to encourage the loyalty of the rural people by protecting them and providing them with new services.⁴

Of much value to note is that these villages were never satisfactorily policed or ensured and the general population were not included in their administration or induced of their need. The interminable deficiency of fund blocked legitimate improvement of the towns. They were often constructed too far from the peasants' fields and women as the main land practitioners suffered a blow. A key factor which was ignored was that in Malaya the concept had worked because it protected a Malayan majority against a Chinese minority, whereas in Rhodesia the insurgents were sons of the villagers. A further mistake was not to start by establishing the PVs in the less affected areas rather than the most subverted. Attempts at food control were by and large ineffective and in later years would include the use of defoliants on crops in areas from which the peasants had been removed.

Protected villages aimed to separate guerrillas from peasants by grouping them in fortified villages where they could be mobilized into anti-communist if not loyalists.⁵ Of much consideration is the pointer fact that in all the above laid examples, the PVs system was in all instances used for military reasons of cutting civilian support towards armed revolutions, nevertheless aiming not at all on protecting the people it intended to.

Cilliers emphasized the participation of the civilians in the liberation struggle through voluntary co-operation caused by the resentment of the Ian Smith regime.⁶ This evidence that civilian support was so crucial to the guerrillas in the liberation struggle. Therefore in an attempt to counter the Maoist, 'fish and water' guerrilla tactic, used by the freedom fighters, the Rhodesian Ministry of Internal Affairs introduced PVs in war zones especially those along border areas in 1976. The Rhodesians who were also veterans of armed conflicts in Malaya and Kenya anticipated that PVs would cut the contact between guerrillas and the rural people.⁷ They believed that such a move would in turn deny guerrillas material supplies, food and intelligence information. In the long term it was trusted the strategy of using PVs would conciliate and induce the steadfastness of the local people by ensuring them and giving them services there. In Rhodesia PVs may have produced more social change than political transformation however they involved a gigantic spot in national serviceman's legend. As an anti-insurgency measure, the Emergency Laws empowered the District Commissioners to force peasants in operational areas into intra-rural relocation. Starting in Chiweshe locale in 1974, trailed by the huge zone from Dande in the upper east to Chiredzi in the southeast, the state deliberately constrained a monstrous dislodging and resettlement of local people from their customary villages into secured ones. Cilliers states that by 1979 a total of 750,000 people mostly women were resettled in about 234 PVs.⁸ No people in the historical backdrop of colonial Zimbabwe had ever experienced such a thorough rebuilding program. First developed and implemented by the British in Malaya in the 1950s, but unlike the British, the Rhodesians did not have the financial and human resources to invest in these villages.⁹ A Protected Village in Rhodesia was essentially an estate parcel pegged off by the state a long way from ranges effortlessly available to guerrillas. They were fenced, gated, and were brutishly observed by the Guard Force. Researchers propose different viewpoints of what transpired in the keeps. Cilliers supports the point that in South Eastern Zimbabwe several PVs were set up especially when pressure from the ZANLA forces culminated.¹⁰

Complimenting with the above Hove in his works noted the existence of PVs in Gaza province which includes Chipinda, Boli, Chibwedziva, Rutandare, Chikombedzi, Chiteya, to mention but a few.¹¹ It is of much need to be considerate with the observation that on being driven into the camps coercion and violence accompanied the process. As a result people were made to leave behind their food reserves which were burnt, entering into PVs where food and water supplies were limited with only rationing systems operating. In addition to these problems, there were neither sanitary nor health facilities. Harassment from armed guards was the order of the day and also reports of young women being raped by the guards abounded. Concern was expressed by locals over the PVs encouraging a society of abuse of women by the DAs and this was accounted for offering ascent to endless sex related diseases, undesirable pregnancies and different other deadly results.

The foundation of PVs in Southern Rhodesia was connected with savagery, terrorizing, severity and exposed utilization of force. Mazambani and Mashingaidze argued that what made the whole situation more callous were the fact that the regime legalised and legitimised violence and this legitimisation of violence empowered the state to commit acts of violence on the defenceless civilians.¹² The DAs and the Guard Force who ensured the PVs were evaded for their ethically debauched conduct, for example, assault and prostitution which they prompted on the Shaangan women. The PVs had enormously poor sanitary facilities and different other PVs had no sanitary services at all and this to a great extent women's survival inside these constrained pens. The levels of morally decadent behaviours such as prostitution rose alarmingly in such atmosphere of overcrowding and shortages. Besides, conditions in the PVs were greatly shocking, convenience was packed with no proper sanitary and water facilities, this regularly constituted a health hazard. In SEZ, medical facilities were simple in many PVs aside for Chikombedzi where a mission hospital stayed operational. Due to the absence of comprehensive medical support systems most people who had contracted diseases

died. Families living in PVs suffered from overcrowding, inadequate and substandard accommodation, lack of essential social services, hunger, humiliating body searches, harassment, and punitive punishment by guards.¹³ This also piled up to the various difficulties women suffered inside the keeps. Even then Minister of Internal Affairs, Jack Musset, under whose Ministry the PVs fell, admitted that PVs constituted “a social upheaval of serious proportions,” and the peasants’ move into PVs could lead to a “traumatic experience.”¹⁴ Other liberal white government authorities saw the foundation of PVs as a genuine blunder in judgment, disfavour to them who indicate to esteem edified guidelines. Notwithstanding, such voices were suffocated by those white men who contended that Africans understood just the dialect of force.

Women suffered a pile of various gendered problems inside the Keeps. Chadya sustained that for women living in overcrowded PVs life was made more intolerable by being under the constant gaze of guards, who besides monitoring their every movement and demanding to see identification cards on a regular basis, also thoroughly searched their bodies and luggage.¹⁵ This is further approved by the reason that when women went out of the PVs to work their fields, fetch water or firewood, or to do laundry in the river, they were always suspected of carrying food to guerrillas. Therefore, they were searched thoroughly on both leaving and returning. Sometimes women were made to jump up and down until the guards were satisfied that they were not hiding anything. Women felt that the groping hands of young guards were inappropriate and dehumanizing.¹⁶ Body searches touched the centre of women's nobility and respectability, particularly for senior ladies. They abused sex, generational, and behavioural standards that ladies lived under traumatic encounters.

NhongoSimbanegavi proposes the viewpoint that the Rhodesian Guards demanded sexual favours from young women and accordingly young girls hardly passed puberty because the RSF forced them into womanhood before they were geared up.¹⁶ Women and young girls got

to be casualties of assault by the Rhodesian Guard Force who were accountable for the PVs and the quick after effects of this were unwanted pregnancies, illnesses particularly the sexual transmitted diseases, harm to regenerative organs, criticism and abandonment. More-so marriages were ruined as the sexual demands were also directed to married women as they would culminate into pregnancy which could not be escaped by the victim. With poor medical health facilities inside the keeps the spread of infectious diseases became rampant and the blame was laid on women who suffered stigmatisation from all the ends of the liberations struggle.

Taking advantage of the power wielded by the guns they held, guards made sexual advances to unmarried and even married women. In a rural society where women hardly talked about sexual abuse, they suffered in silence. Parents in the PVs resented the loss of control over their daughters' sexuality and, by extension, their chances of fetching a good *lobola*.¹⁷ Government forces brought freedoms with young ladies with no aim to wed. Guardians whose daughters were impregnated by the Rhodesian forces couldn't provoke them as they were unquestionably sound for. These embarrassments were in absolute dismissal of a focal precept of the African society which advocates reverence to married women. It is important to note that various women opted to enter into relationships with Guard Forces so as to avoid being raped but this was a faulty solution since it left them even more vulnerable to abuse by one guard after another.

Survival in the PVs was so hard for the African women, both married and unmarried women faced a number of problems as they were forcibly interned. An average population of about 2,700 were squeezed into one PVs. Living under such nervous conditions proved unbearable to women. Always under the gaze and surveillance of the Rhodesian Guards, they sometimes opted to spend most of their time outside the PVs doing other chores. Women went out of the PVs to work in their fields, fetch water or firewood, or to do laundry in the river²¹. This

however was just a poor way to emancipate them as they were always suspected of carrying food to guerrillas every time they went out. As a result they were searched all over by the Rhodesian guards who took that as a chance to unmorally and abusively investigate their bodies. Furthermore women did report cases of rape to their husbands but it was also ineffective as the violence perpetrators were equipped with guns and this meant had vast authority to do whatever they deemed necessary to their captives.

The other area which plenty of historians fail to ignore in discussions about PVs is the curfew systems. Curfew generally refers to a time after which people must stay indoors and is usually enforced during wartime situations. According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary, curfew refers to an order or regulation enjoining withdrawal of persons from streets, or closing of business establishments or places of assembly at a stated hour, usually, though not exclusively, in the evening.¹⁸ Curfews can be also explained in some terms as an order that after a specific time, certain activities and movements are prohibited. The Rhodesian authorities through curfews made free terminating zones in many parts of the nation in a move they thought would stamp out the guerrilla risk in the influenced zones. The Rhodesians embraced this idea from Malaya from where they had duplicated the protected village idea. Just like people in the no-go areas, those in the protected villages were also liable to curfews.¹⁹ The conditions in the PVs were exacerbated by the presentation of nightfall to day break curfews and the 'free firing zone' directions. To intensify the circumstance of the civilians, the forced curfews made appropriate tending of crops troublesome. In this way sustenance turned out to be rare. With women being the most specialists of agribusiness they were denied bounty time outside to do the field work. There were 6am and 6pm curfews which observed that all villagers must be in the PV by 6pm and anybody not in the PV by the stipulated due time was viewed as a terrorist and was to be shot at sight. Curfews denied the African women the right to movement and privilege to

development. The thoroughly upheld day break to nightfall check in time left women with almost no opportunity to work their fields. The long distance between the PVs and farms, the guard-imposed village confinement, and the general insecurity caused by the war made it impossible for people to tend to their crops, leading to food shortages and even starvation.²⁰ These curfews violated the right to movements for the local people who were expected to undertake various activities of the day which needed their hands and then at the same time reporting back to the PVs in time.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative research techniques for information accumulation were utilized. Quantitative information aides were utilized in understanding the magnitude and scale of a humanitarian crisis by giving a numeric photo of its effect on the influenced South Eastern Zimbabwe individuals. The exploration draws majority of its proof from oral confirmations caught and recorded by the researcher on women's survival inside the keeps. Through their voices and collective life stories, the paper shows the extent and nature of the suffering endured by female PV inmates. Semi structured interviews were held with victims of colonial violence in the different areas of SEZ. Interviews were also conducted with various people who were also victims of the PV system and various others with shared war experiences connected to the period of the establishment of PVs. Interviews were held in territories that were hot spots in the foundation of the PV system so that the level of familiarity with the different types of abuse endured in the zone of study can be accomplished. The focal centre of interviews was coordinated to gatherings of women of various ages, social foundations and instructive status who lived in the South Eastern part of Zimbabwe amid the war. The interviews were done in both controlled and uncontrolled situations, intending to say, some meetings had direct prepaid inquiries, while different inquiries aroused in the process. 15 meetings were completed; however 30 had been set out.

Others didn't figure out how to react to the solicitation giving the reason to different legitimate procedures they said should have been taken first. A while likewise rose of absence of financial compensation hence some interviewees were not happy to give the required information. However the meetings were a win following numerous inquiries asked were replied in a way which elevated further inquiries to be made.

In this study, secondary sources were additionally utilized as a move down to supplement the primary sources, with the goal of giving applicable data required on the above laid research topic. These included academic books, articles, reports, diaries, daily papers, to specify however a couple. Secondary sources include speculation, investigation, union, understanding, or assessment of the first data and this permits the study to concoct an all around educated contention. The benefits of optional sources in this study were that, they were snappy and simple to get to, ease to gain them and permitted elucidation of exploration inquiries.

Chapter Breakdown

This dissertation has been arranged into three chapters. Chapter one focuses on the historical background of the establishment of PVs in Africa, Rhodesia and in South Eastern Zimbabwe. It demonstrates that the counterinsurgency strategy has been used in Rhodesia as a borrowed phenomenon derived from the Malaya experience for war reasons as it was characterised by coercion and violence in its implementation. Chapter two focuses on gender problems which characterised life in PVs of Rhodesia. It highlights the gendered dimension of life women experienced inside the Keeps of SEZ. Chapter three explains the occurrence of sexual violence inside the PVs. It shows the various consequences of sexual violence which women encountered as a result of being sexually violated inside the PVs.

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CHAPTER 1: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROTECTED VILLAGES

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the establishment of Protected Villages. A brief historical background of the establishment of PVs in Africa will be given. This will help to show that the PV strategy in Rhodesia was a borrowed phenomenon once practiced elsewhere as a military strategy by the colonial masters. This chapter will also explain at a local level the introduction of PVs in Rhodesia and also in the South Eastern Rhodesia. Focus will be further directed to the relocation process of the people with much emphasis on how the local people were being forcibly displaced from their homelands into a new confined place without their consent. It will be shown that coercion and violence accompanied establishment of the PV strategy.

1.1 History of Protected Villages in Africa.

Protected Villages in Africa have been a commonly used counter-insurgency measure in many liberation wars fought. According to the USGCG insurgency is the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify or challenge political control of a region.¹ This consequently bring up that counterinsurgency is basically a political battle in which both fighting sides use furnished power to create space for their political and economic perfection to be successful. The USGCG goes on to say that the best counterinsurgency campaigns integrate and synchronize political, security, economic, and informational components that reinforce governmental legitimacy and effectiveness while reducing insurgent influence over the population.² This has been the case with a number of wars fought in Africa which then promoted the offshoot of the PV system as the best strategy to subdue guerrilla success.

The PV system erupted firstly from the British forces which were able to employ the relocation method with considerable success during the Malayan experience. The full implementation of the programme in 1950 initiated the relocation of Chinese Malaysians into Protected Villages under the control of British forces. The MCP was effectively waging successful counter blows to the British forces as a result of the support ushered by the Chinese in the rural Malayan areas. The guerrillas received material benefits in form of food, military supplies and others. By the end of 1951, an estimated number of about 400,000 ethnic Chinese had been relocated into the PV settlements. Mazambani and Mashingaidze support this by saying this military tactic was a strategy designed to win the hearts and minds of the Chinese squatters.³ It was this legitimate execution of the PV system which yielded positive results for the British and compensated them a communists defeat which brought about the unification and independence of Malaya.

The counterinsurgency measure of the PV system was also used by the French in Algeria. The French counterinsurgency in colonial Algeria was a barbarous one. The French soldiers aimed to separate the guerrilla from the population that offered him material and moral support, hold possession of the zones that the guerrillas previously operated from and coordinate patrols over a wide area for a time enough to deny guerrillas connection with the population centres that could support him.⁴ Forced resettlement methodology of local people was utilized additionally by the French and the Americans in Vietnam. Secured Villages for the French was required to give social and financial services to the peasants and this would draw in the adoration for the legislature by the general population. Beillbrunn argues that the French believed that the new villages would provide better defence against the Viet Cong, as it would provide schools, medical and social services, and electricity to make them attractive to the local population.⁵ It is thus vitally important to note that such a scheme was supposed to be of benefit to the local population as a community. Living conditions in PVs were to be

verifiably superior to outside as there should be power, running water, schools and clinics to make it attractive to the general population. This counterinsurgent strategy unfortunately failed in Vietnam. Various reasons have been labelled for its failure but mostly it lacked fundamental funding. Beilbrunn supports this by saying that the strategy failed because it was badly planned, implemented and also badly coordinated as the United States which mainly funded the project did not provide adequate funding.⁶ As a result the failure of the programme reverberated to the regime's detriment.

The PV strategy was also part of the Portuguese war plans in its colonies. The Portuguese applied this strategy of mass population displacement in Mozambique and Angola respectively. In Mozambique the PV strategy was called 'aldeamentos' and like elsewhere, the primary thrust was to reorganise the African population and uproot its link to the terrorists. Portuguese officers were trained in Algeria with French units and also British as well. Cann argues that Portugal's counter insurgency strategy relied on delicate military mobilization to the three theatres of war Mozambique, Angola and Guinea.⁷ The procedure incorporated the widespread utilization of insight, counter terrorism and powerful populace fixation to back off however much as could reasonably be expected the uprisings. It should be highlighted that endeavour to advertise PVs was finished by method of offering reasonable training plans intending to enhance living conditions and offer job chances to local people. This is supported by Junclannian who argues that the Portuguese implemented the system and marketed it by promising fertile lands, clean water, improved communication lines, and defensive conditions to the locals.⁸

Munochiveyi confirm that indeed in many colonies across the continent, but particularly in settler colonies such as Rhodesia, Kenya, South Africa, and Algeria, colonial authorities deployed political incarceration as a style of governance in order to deal with the threat of African nationalist movements.⁹ It is of value to note that in all these colonies, African

political activists were severally criminalized. For example in Rhodesia they were referred to as terrorists, agitators in Kenya or as bandits in the case of Algeria. The foundation of PVs has additionally been very much associated with administrative laws which were utilized to authorize it. In Rhodesia, the Law and Order Maintenance Act of 1960 developed as the key security law checking the detainment of people. In Kenya the Emergency Powers Act of 1953 had administrative to manage the general population and in Algeria it was the Special Powers Act of 1953. Buttressed by all these specially designed sets of draconian security laws, colonial authorities deployed the PVs as a strategy of control capable for discouraging guerrilla connection with the local people.

It has been shown that the counterinsurgency concept of shepherding people into PVs was at time used in Malaya by the British, in Vietnam and Algeria by the French, in Angola and Mozambique by the Portuguese. It's quite interesting to observe that at all instances the PV strategy was being devised for the purpose of military benefit, winning the people's hearts and cutting down their association with the guerrillas. Complimenting with this Mazambani and Mashingaidze contend that it should be pointed out that in all cases humanitarian reasons were advanced to mask the military strategy to carry favour with the International community.¹⁰ Though the implementation of the system was accompanied by strategic developments to win the people's 'minds and hearts' the real motive for establishing the PVs was nevertheless that of protecting the local people. Instead, it aimed to inactivate the guerrilla and separate them from the suppliers of food and information, the people.

1.2 The introduction of PVs in Rhodesia

As a result of the fruitful implementation of the counterinsurgency strategy in Malaya, Smith's government was optimistic for its success also in Rhodesia. The Malaya experience became the foundation on which the Rhodesian government built solid faith of victory if the

counterinsurgency strategy could be implemented well in Rhodesia. With the initial aim to exclusively cut guerrilla network in Rhodesia, the PVs were established. Cillers argues that the recourse to the use of PVs is closely aligned to the concept of a total revolutionary war which entails the concentration and resettlement of the local people into defensible villages.¹¹ Therefore the consolidation of this strategy was to be achieved by political, socio-economic, administrative and policing measures.

The Rhodesian government wanted to isolate the freedom fighters from the local people by encountering the Maoist 'fish and water' which was being effectively used by the guerrillas. Having carefully observed that the pressure the guerrillas were purging on RFs was a result of the civilian participation, the colonial regime believed with the PVs guerrillas would be importantly denied material supplies, food and intelligence information. This would mean failure of the Maoist strategy used by the guerrillas as the fish now will be left without water. As according to the assumption, since villagers inside the Keeps would be provided with provisions, the Rhodesian forces would soon be at the core of people's hearts and minds at the expense of the freedom fighters and this would make it easier to deal with the isolated guerrillas. The strategy was itself laid hand in glove with scorched earth policy idea of starving the enemy by destroying anything which can be of use to him and in this case the local people were the main target. Mazambani and Mashingaidze maintain that PVs were manufactured and designed to politically castrate the guerrillas since the government had realized the inadequacy and failure of propaganda, persuasion, rewarding system and other colonial measure which had been drafted to isolate the guerrillas.¹²

Sir Robert Thompson as quoted by Cillers stated that:

“Unless communist subversive political organization in the towns and villages is broken and eliminated, the insurgent guerrilla units will not be defeated. If the guerrillas can be isolated from the population... then their eventual destruction becomes automatic.”¹³

Compelling control of the populace inside the PVs was the principle need if contact with insurgents was to be ultimately broken. This clearly brings up that strict control of movement got to be fundamental. According to the arrangement this was to be accomplished just by the introduction of IDs, curfews, to say however a couple.

The principal justification of the concept of PVs in Rhodesia has been that it is essential to safeguard the local population from attacks and intimidations from the insurgents. With guerrillas being accused of spreading diseases at the same time killing people, PVs were ordained necessary tool to protect the people. This protection doctrine was emphasized by the Minister of Internal Affairs who stated that PVs were part of the defense plan to provide protection to the African civilian population from the terrorist's onslaught.¹⁴ However, at one point as reported by the CCJR, The Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Jack Musset was more honest than others have been when he declared in parliament that the PVs have been a vital anti-terrorist operational necessity which would not have been launched had there been an alternative.¹⁴ The Rhodesian Herald also quoted one government official saying that:

“Protected Villages form merely one of a number of antiterrorist measures, it is necessary to take.”¹⁵

This evidence it well that PVs in Rhodesia like elsewhere where it had been formerly applied was a counterinsurgents strategy used as a trusted tool to curb terrorism under the hideous conviction of protecting people. Explaining further about PVs, Christopher Adrew and Simona Tobia, argued that a hearts and minds campaign was introduced in 1975 along with psychological operations to compliment the counter insurgency strategy but unlike in Malaya the Rhodesian strategy concentrated primarily on the eradication of the guerrilla challenge.¹⁶ This evidence that the PV scheme in Rhodesia had its primary mission emphasized on incarceration. In their aim and impact the PVs can be seen as the glorification and praise of state political brutality amid the liberation war. Supporting this view Gorman argues that they marked the complete invasion of people's lives through surveillance so as to depoliticize the

population, transform and disorientate normal life and destroy community life and social relations so as to render them ineffective for political mobilization by the guerrillas.¹⁷

This policy of counterinsurgency effectively vexed the normality of rural life as evidenced through various challenges Africans faced within the Keeps. The Rhodesians, who were likewise veterans of armed conflict in Malaya and Kenya, foreseen that PVs would cut the contact between guerrillas and the masses. Such a move would in turn deny guerrillas material supplies, sustenance and information. It was trusted the strategy of utilizing PVs would induce the steadfastness of the masses by securing and giving them basics inside. The legislature through the containment of the local populace in PVs professedly asserted the security principle to shield Africans from the terrorists. It is however confusing that the people were being ensured against their saviours, the guerrillas who were additionally their children. Such was the propaganda by the regime that it sought to depict the guerrillas as ‘terrorists’ whose sole aim was to rape women and commit various other devilish atrocities.

The CCJPR supports this by saying:

“Government policy as far as the media is concerned is to give minimum of news, to simplistically presume that justice is done by the Security Force and that atrocities are the norm of the terrorist.”¹⁸

It is of value to note that the centre of gravity in this conflict was the rural population. The local population was proving to be a third hand to the guerrillas which profoundly crucial in their success. Therefore in realisation that the most imperative element that maintained the guerrilla energy was backing from the local populace, the Rhodesian government pursued a genuine, yet defective endeavour to separate the guerrilla forces from the rural masses. This meant that normal village routine was disrupted, further threatening the local people and reinforcing their resolve to dispose the Smith administration.

The official declaration of the PV technique was proclaimed by Minister of Law and Order in 1973 in the Mt Darwin and Centenary regions. That turned into the onset to different PVs

which took after to be set up in TTLs in the Zambezi Valley. By 1975 the procedure of moving individuals into solidified villages had thrived around the nation particularly to spots where guerrilla exercises were effectively advancing. Almost all villages in the Eastern Rhodesian border with Mozambique from north to south were exclusively turned into PVs by 1975.

Gorman argues that early attempts at consolidated villages had been instituted in the Zambezi Valley north west of Zimbabwe in 1973 and that when the policy was extended to Chiweshe it was done so in a more exacting manner.¹⁹ This is supported by Cilliers who says that By March 1974 the situation in Chiweshe had grown tense that Operation Overload was launched on 25 July 1974 and 49960 people in the area were moved into 21PVs.²⁰ In that same manner the system was stretched forth to the South Eastern area of Zimbabwe in a severely and unremittingly way. This was all precisely done hand in glove with the government propagation of the lie that people had requested for these centralized locations for their own protection. On top of that the government withheld the pointer factor that consultations and enquiries have been made to the people as part of its policies and the people had appreciated the process because it promised a maximum guarantee of their safety. In support of this, Mazambani and Mashingaidze propagates that the government advanced an argument that PVs were established with the sole humanitarian and benevolent aim of protecting the African people from the terrorists.²¹ This was quickened by the administration controlled media with daily papers and parliament sitting reports upholding for the security of Natives from the guerrillas.

Thousands of villagers were forced to leave their homes to go into PVs. Hubert Morsink argues that these were small, fenced camps where peasants of an area that was considered a high level of guerrilla activity were concentrated so that they would not come into contact with the freedom fighters.²² Individuals were watched by an uncommon unit of the security

powers called the Guard Force. The prisoners of these PVs had their flexibility of development seriously confined. For instance the entryways would just be opened for a couple of hours of the day when the villagers were permitted to leave the camps to take a shot at their fields. No go zones were created outside the PVs and enactment was passed making it legitimate for the security to destroy anything thought to be valuable to the guerrillas.

The history behind the establishment of the PVs in Rhodesia was largely accompanied by political motives and agendas of the colonial regime. However, another main argument of the government was that through the keeps it was continuing with its civilising mission as the African population of Rhodesia was to become more urban and more professional. This was done to accommodate that the government was leading in constructing better African suburbs. Weinrich pointed out that a government newspaper attempted to convince blacks that PVs were “havens of peace, where work, study and play can be carried on in an atmosphere of tranquillity and order.”²³ This was however untrue in light of the fact that most PVs prove hopeless living conditions and oppressive control by individuals from the Guard Force. Cillers argues that if the PV system fails to provide at least a neutral community, it result in one which is actively hostile and sympathetic to the insurgent cause because simply herding people behind barbed wires and uprooting their traditional lifestyle with no material compensation provides an extremely fertile area for insurgent recruitment.²⁴ Not prosperously this appeared to be the Rhodesian case. The PV strategy did not turn into a fruitful experience in Rhodesia as a result of different vital reasons which were for the most part financial.

1.3 Introduction of PVs in South Eastern Rhodesia

The South Eastern Zimbabwe became one of the targets of Operation Overload, the route to preventing the advances of the guerrillas. The Rhodesian Ministry of Internal Affairs introduced PVs in war zones, especially along border areas and this becomes the reason why the South Eastern Zimbabwe became one of the areas of interests as it witnessed heavy infiltration of ZANLA forces from the Mozambican corridor. Hove argued that during Zimbabwe's war of liberation, South Eastern Zimbabwe was part of the ZANLA's operational area called the Gaza province. Cillers supports this by saying that the area was deeply contested between ZANLA and the RSF who employed 'Operation Repulse' or 'curb the go east spree.'²⁵ The inhabitants of the SEZ having been observed of their war participation in support of the ZANLA forces, they were forced into the Protected Villages as a strategy designed to cut the interaction between them and guerrillas by the RSF.

Invading into Rhodesia from the Gaza area ZANLA forces needed to cross the Gonarezhou ranch and the outskirt minefield raised along the south eastern border. Going through the region implied clear association with the general population. This became obvious that the populace in the zone was supposed to be all put in PVs. Various PVs were set in the South Eastern Zimbabwe as evidenced by the Ministry of Internal Affairs documentation. These included Chikombedzi, Diti, Sengwe, Matibi No.2, Chilonga, Boli, Chingele, Domisa, Chipinda, Chibwedziva, Chicualcuala, Chiteya among others.

Like in other PVs set in Rhodesia, the PVs in the SE Rhodesia were accompanied by the introduction of curfews. The curfew system side by side with the PV strategy was designed to always control the local people's movements and create free firing zones for the Security Officers. Weitzer proposes that curfews were imposed as free fire or no go areas declared

along the border with Mozambique.²⁶ Any person violating curfews or caught inside no go zones was fair game to the security forces. When questioned about the shooting of curfew violators the Minister of Defense pointed that as far as he was concerned the more curfew breakers were shot the better and the sooner it is realized everywhere the better.²⁷ Curfews were executed to ensure nobody would risk leaving PVs without authorization or meandering around after a specific stipulated due period of time. Curfews were executed to adequately manage the individuals who violated its stipulations.

The physical structure of the PVs comprised of a divider around the whole compound with an invigorated "Keep" situated at its most vital point. There was a solitary passageway which was monitored all day and all night. The region was watched for the duration of the night, and a border compass was expert at day break, before permitting the tribesmen to leave for the day. Family unit were dispensed little pegged spaces where their effects were dumped. Individuals were being evacuated and left in expansive fenced territories to assemble cabins for their safety. Gorman supports this by saying that gathered in trucks, the people and their possessions and what they could harvest of their crops were dumped in large high fenced areas approximately 100 acres in size and left to build huts.²⁸

The Rhodesian government designed a well calculated offensive propaganda campaign to persuade the African people to accept PVs and isolate the guerrillas. Mazambani and Mashingaidze argue that to psychologically prepare the inmates of PVs and make them acceptable as 'safe havens', the Rhodesian government poured out propaganda designed to create fear and uncertainty within these communities so that the government would appear as good Samaritans who wanted to save the people from marauding terrorists.²⁹ Moreover In addition propaganda turned into an apparatus particularly intended to intentionally distort actualities about the war circumstance in Rhodesia and to keep outside of anyone's ability to see the conspicuous reality that conditions inside the Keeps were abominable and insensate.

1.4 Coercion and Violence in the Establishment of Protected Villages

The establishment of PVs was accompanied by coercion and violence. The force was physical and could not be resisted. Mazambani and Mashingaidze made firmer that the establishment of PVs in SR was associated with violence, intimidation, brutality and naked use of force. This was so because the local people were unwilling to resettle because being driven into the keeps would mean destruction and sudden end of their normal life.³⁰ In addition to that, they were even not sure how true was the government's propagation that the keeps were to provide good economic and social structure for them. To the local people, the place that ushered them guaranteed protection was their homes. This therefore made them to resent the PVs from the start and the result was forceful and violent means by the government to resettle them.

It should be noted that propaganda had failed to entice the African people into PVs voluntarily and as a result the regime legalised and legitimised violence because the it aimed to contain the people for war reasons. Therefore the army pursued policies of systematic torture to forcefully drive people into the keeps. Gorman propounds that with no warning the resettlement of Chiweshe's 48 960 was initiated in July 1974.³¹ Weinrich supports this by noting that the process was completed within 3 weeks and was the largest operation of war with twenty one such PVs being set in Chiweshe from 1974 to 1979.³² Christopher Andrew and Simona Tobia further argue that the list of human rights abuses was in addition to intimidation and threatening behaviour by the security forces, the burning of huts and crops, the confiscation or killing of livestock and the forcible displacement of communities into PVs which were often at a considerable distance from worked fields and lacked water.³³ This issue of violence was further evidenced by a black Member of Parliament in 1978 who stated in his report that:

“Firstly the establishment of Protected Villages and consolidated villages led to the disruption of normal tribal life. There is an overgrowing feeling that the authorities are taking unwarranted excessively harsh repressive measures in setting up these PVs.”³⁴

This clearly shows that the process of setting the PV strategy was not a peaceful one. People were being driven out of their homes not by virtue of agreement but by violent means.

The Rhodesian government designed a well calculated propaganda campaign to drive and force the African people in PVs and isolate the guerrillas. The establishment of Protected Villages in South Eastern Rhodesia was associated with violence, and intimidation. Violence was legitimised as long as it was done in pursue of war aims. The Emergency Powers Act was one of the most notorious forms of legislations manufactured to spearhead an active setting of PVs. Not only did it equip the government officials with powers to forcefully and violently drive the local people from their homes into defendable villages. It also appreciated the destruction of their property that is burning their huts and confiscation of their livestock and crops. The use of lethal force against civilians was one means whereby the regime believed it could strike fear into rural population and thus deny succour to insurgents.

By 1975 when the temperature of the war climbed, the ambushed administration discovered it progressively critical to evacuate all lawful structures on the security powers' operations. This was meant to legitimize violent and repression means that were done in setting these PVs. The security was given extreme opportunity, without any confinements to slaughter voluntarily for the benefit of appropriate portion of the PV program. The Rhodesia's 1975 Indemnity and Compensation Act among others excused the security strengths for acts benefited in concealment of terrorism. This empowered wanton killing, destruction of property and fields, beating, aggregate discipline and pulverization of animals which became the order of the day as the war escalated. It is of significance to note that individuals saw their homes being destroyed to the ground the minute they cleared out and this to a great extent

bothered them. Mr Muzondiwa supports this in saying that For instance, some had left few belongings and grain in granaries due to the immediateness of the relocation process. Unfortunately, when they returned to collect more items, only dumbfounded to see the entire home razed to the ground.³⁵ This disheartened the Africans and made them unenthusiastic and less hopeful about their future inside the Keeps.

Several enactments were embedded to defend the PV technique and make it a win and these incorporated the infamous Emergence Powers Regulation which gave forces to persuasive migration of populaces and the setting of PVs. Like what happened in Chiweshe, the South Eastern Rhodesia local people were not at all notified in time that a resettlement plan was being strategized for them. All of a sudden, chiefs, headmen and kraal heads were informed that there would be a movement in government arrangement as to where local people lived. Gorman supplement that as the powers of traditional leaders had been usurped through a succession of colonial legislations, no traditional leader could refuse a direct order from a Native Commissioner.³⁶ This unquestionable ultimatum promoted violence in the community reshuffling process which swept them away from their normal clans and rehabilitated them inside the wired cages. This was so because many people of the SE Rhodesia denied the PVs for various strategic reasons. Some withheld the fact that their crops and livestock needed their everyday attention while others validated cultural reasons. This in itself became the justification for the forceful measures the government structured to sweep the local population inside the keeps proclaiming that it was for the people's own safety.

There was a sense of uncertainty and lack of information and consultation between the government and the people about the move. In most areas like Boli, people were told by their headmen that they will relocate in three weeks. Gumbo stated that some just even got rumours about it hence nobody tend to mind about it and instead, the unexpected happened within five days as everybody was ordered to leave their homes for the designated PVs.³⁷ The

immediateness of the move compounded the difficulties of relocation, as the people were not well prepared. This social disruption resulting from forced resettlement led to highly emotional reactions to the strategy on the part of moderate African civilians.

The Rhodesian forces in achieving its agenda initiated and legitimized police brutality in the process of establishing PVs as peaceful means like persuasion were thought to promote less progress in achieving the main goal. The driving process of local population of the SE was undertaken by the security force which comprised mainly of trained black guards. Their record of resorting to violent and torture in dealing with the locals is captured by Gorman who states that:

“the guards ... were mostly blacks although whites were the overall leaders and those black soldiers were really bad mercilessly beating up civilians as the force was backed by the government.”³⁸

The people of SE Rhodesia area suffered from atrocities committed by security forces during the implementation of the Keeps and these cases of violence increased alarmingly from 1975 to 1979 a period when the PVs were fully implemented. This is given added weight by the evidence laid by the CCJPR which states that:

“the broad intention of the security forces was clearly to terrify the local people to report the presence of terrorists and to punish them for not doing so.”³⁹

The torturous measures were committed with the aim of extracting information about the movements of insurgents, or of compelling the population to cooperate with the authorities or to punish villagers suspected of having assisted the guerrillas. As if that was not enough, the legislature went on to bare any court procedure for the atrocities committed in pursuit of the war including wanton killing, torture of innocent people or destruction of property.

Coercion in the establishing of these PVs was added weight by the scorched earth strategy designed to cripple the civilian ability to sustain their support to the guerillas and force them into the PVs as the Rhodesians destroyed boreholes and poisoned food if they did not burn it. The idea was to have the civil populous under constant observation and make them ineffective for the liberation support. However these villages proved to be poorly constructed, poorly managed and poorly defended. Even though tens of thousands of Africans were moved into these villages they generally did not have enough supplies of resources to function in the way they in which they were intended to.

1.5 Conclusion

It has been demonstrated in this chapter that Keeps were established for military reasons and that the strategy had a history, originally been borrowed from its use by the British in Malaya. The French used the strategy in Vietnam and Algeria while the Portuguese implemented it in Mozambique and Angola respectively. It has been explained that in all the cases laid above the PV has been initiated as a military measure to cut civilian cooperation with the insurgency. It has been demonstrated that in Rhodesia like elsewhere, the system was established not as a protective residential schedule to safeguard the African people as the government claimed. Instead it was a mere systematic military scheme installed by violence and coercion which disrupted the local people's lives. It has been shown that the legitimisation of violence by the regime to accompany the implementation process largely affected the locals who were left with no option except to accept the forceful resettlement programme.

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CHAPTER 2: GENDER PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH LIFE IN PROTECTED VILLAGES IN SOUTH EASTERN ZIMBABWE

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the plight of women in Protected Villages with specific concern being well directed towards various gender problems they suffered during the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe from 1972-1976. Sexual violations in Rhodesian PVs have been captured by various scholars. However the plight of women in PVs in SEZ has largely remained unknown. It will be demonstrated that women faced problems which were gender specific in PVs. Women suffered numerous problems in PVs because they were women. It will be demonstrated that all problems women in PVs of SE Zimbabwe suffered were gender oriented. These problems include shortages of basic amenities, sexual violence, unwanted, pregnancies, and others. The corrupted DAs made it difficult, if not impossible for the already impoverished female PV inmates to escape their undesirable situations. It is the aim of this chapter to show the gender dimensions of life inside the PVs which has largely been neglected.

2.1 Sexual Violence in PVs

Sexual violence in the PVs of SEZ manifested in a way that left women victimised like objects in their day to day lives. Sexual violence in keeps was mainly perpetrated by the Security Force who made sexual advances to women time and again. Hove argues that women and girls became victims of rape by ZANLA guerrillas and the RSF especially the Selous Scouts and the Guard Force who were in charge of the PVs.¹ The fighting forces both demanded sexual favours from young women and accordingly young girls hardly passed puberty because the RSF and freedom fighters forced them into womanhood before they were

geared up. The DAs used all possible means to encircle women into sexual activities. The DAs enjoyed the sexual benefits of their authority inside the keeps and this was a disadvantage to young girls who were being feasted and losing their virginity by military means. Sexual violence became the obvious tool to punish women for any alleged minor offence.

The occurrence of abusive body searches inside the PVs is another gender problem which grieved women who were the main victims. These body searches were part of women's movements in and out of the PVs because they were being suspected of carrying food stuffs to the guerrillas. Their way out and passage was liable to critical examinations. At the point when women left the PVs to do their typical local errands; work their fields, bring water or to do the laundry in the stream, they were extremely investigated to ensure they had no any concealed belonging. Consequently, they were looked altogether on both leaving and returning. Once in a while women were made to jump here and there till the security gatekeepers were fulfilled that they were not stowing away anything. Their exit and entrance was subject to massive investigations. The Security guards abused their powers and forced women sometimes to strip naked off their clothes as part of the body searches. Chadya propounds that for women living in overcrowded PVs life was made more intolerable by being under the constant gaze of guards, who, besides monitoring their every movement and demanding to see identification on a regular basis, also thoroughly searched their bodies and luggage.² The guards groped women's bodies with their hands, sexual abuse at its apex. This was evidenced by Chirumbula who testified that young men enough to be her son because had the privilege of the possession of a gun could embrace breasts and buttocks of poor silent women during the process of these so called body searches.³ As advanced by Simbanegavi this was indeed inappropriate and dehumanizing as the process touched the core of women's dignity and respectability.⁴

Of much to consider as far as this issue of body searches is concerned, the DAs mainly did the process with severity on women so as to abuse them. Men likewise did support the struggle countering their support from the PVs. However when it comes to these rudimentary body searches, they were not searched with extreme strictness as compared to how it was done to women. The CCJR argues that in the PVs when women were being searched, the guards made sure they touched every part touching the breasts while their man watched helplessly.⁵ This in itself shows that the Guard Force cherished the body searches as they pledged chance to touch women's bodies all over thus abusing them.

From the interviews undertaken, it was observed that quite a good number of women had this to say in common that they were subordinated to the lowest position inside the Keeps. This was the foundation of all the other gendered problems they later suffered. In support of this Gorman eludes that generational respect for women was assumed, old or young women were simply not treated well.⁶ The provocation and humiliation of women by the DA was characterised by sexual violence which has never been seen in the history of Rhodesian war. Women were subordinated and lowered to the position of being mere sex toys by the DAs and all of this meant that within the PVs there was no one to protect the people from the protectors.⁷ From such a limelight, it becomes crucial to observe that the DAs subjected women to reproduction objects. Women were lowered to the position of being sex slaves who were compelled to provide sex whenever the security guards needed it. The sexual violence women encountered was spearheaded by the perpetrators' conclusion that concentrated women had no right over their bodies whenever those with power needed them for service. It would be historically biased to justify sexual violence of this nature advocating that it was merely wartime violence done in dissolving terrorism as most colonial officials historians proclaimed.

It needs to be highlighted that for specifically married women, life was horrific inside the keeps. Their fate cannot be compared to that of other PV inmates because to them gender based violence was infiltrating from all their war male counterparts. These were the guerrillas, the DAs and their husbands. Married women faced the challenge of getting to know which side they were to fall under control. To save their marriages, their husband deserved all the respect but to save their lives, the DAs and the guerrillas came first. Women were abused by the DAs through rape and widespread sexual harassments. Instead, their husbands would be on the charge and nail them with accusations that they lured the DAs. The South Eastern part of Zimbabwe is well dominated by people who are of the Shangan origins. Culturally they believe that a woman should respect her matrimonial marriage and therefore guarding it is what she ought to do with all her mighty powers. With this perception well stipulated in their cultural norms, the men failed to justify their wives for the hell they were going through. Various interviews with male ex PV dwellers evidenced it well that women survival in keeps was dominated by patriarchal systems which believed women to have been raped because of their weaknesses. However it is important to note that as far as the issue of sexual abuse in the PVs is concerned, women did not volunteer to be abused. Therefore, women suffered in silence as they were left with nowhere to sort refugee and report their fate. This indeed shows that the PVs were a living hell specifically for women.

2.2 Sexual Transmitted Infections inside PVs

As already observed that sexuality occurred inside keeps, the high levels of its occurrence resulted in the spread of STIs. It is important to note that women were the main victims of these diseases as they contacted them as a result of sexual activities like rape and forced prostitution. Various people inside the keeps contracted these STIs and the blame was laid on women and young girls who were being accused of immorality. The government itself took no implementation to correct its Security Forces on the stances of immoral behaviour and the

spreading of these STIs. Neither did it even propose legalities to protect women from being raped, impregnated and given these STIs. Weitz supports this by saying that, on those relatively rare occasions when the behaviour of the security forces was criticised, the authorities promptly attempted to discredit accusers.⁸ This provided the security forces to take liberty at raping women and infecting them with STIs who could not report their situation because if they ever did, the blame laid back on their shoulders.

It is of value to observe that the advent of the PVs was characterised by a violence which resulted in closure of schools, shops and hospitals. As a result, the PVs had no operational hospitals ready to cater for medical needs of the PV inmates. As a result most women who contracted STIs remained untreated because there were no hospitals. The only hospital which was functional in SE area was at Chikombedzi had no medical care for STIs patients. As if that was not enough, women were even abused in the condition of illness. Fearing stigmatisation, women suffered in silence as they were afraid to tell their fate. This witness well that woman suffered from being infected with STIs. It was a double blow of being infected with STIs at the same time blamed for the case.

2.3 Pregnancies in PVs

As a result of forced relationships and widespread occurrence of rape, women and young girls inside the keeps of SEZ fall victims of unwanted pregnancies. Women and young girls impregnated suffered discrimination and stigmatisation from both sides of the war. For the DAs, impregnating African women was just a recreational and luxurious duty as they did so with no any intention to marry them. On the African side of the war, these women impregnated by the DAs were accused of being sell outs as they were said to have collaborated with the enemy through the relationships they had. Such a nervous scenario left women with nowhere to run to free themselves.

The DAs deflowered young girls without any determination of marrying them. This resulted in widespread numbers of young girls becoming mothers to fatherless children. Such a situation of whereby a minor become a parent was in itself burdensome to impregnated young girls of SEZ. Some were even more unfortunate as their plight was added weight by complications they encountered at giving birth. Mukachana a former PV inmate at Chingele supported this by saying that many young girls experienced birth complications at the place we lived and this was because they were made pregnant whilst they were not yet strong enough to deliver a baby.⁹ This increased their plight as they were forcefully being driven into parenthood before they were ready.

For young girls, being impregnated by the DAs did not guarantee any chances of being married to them. The SEZ is characterised by people who believed that a girl is compelled to know one man who will be the father of her kids. A former PV Mr Gapare noted that their culture strongly believes that a man who breaks a girl's virginity is the one who marry her.¹⁰ This however was the contrary to what happened at Chilonga. The uncultured guards broke girls and impregnated them but not one guard married these girls.

For young girls falling pregnant to a fatherless child was a great challenge which tormented them. As a result various girls could not face the reality of being deflowered and impregnated by somebody who rejected them for marriage. Some eventually committed suicide while quite a large number resorted to abortions. For these pregnant women, abortions became the best way to get rid of the child of rape and at the same time avoiding the challenge of shortages women with babies faced. It is also important to note that with no proper aborting facilities, girls sorted traditional ways which further risked their lives and as a result some died in the process. Those who did not attempt would bear kids and that gave them endless memories of the rape cases they encountered. Psychologically this had greater effects which it left in the lives of women inside the PVs.

The challenge of pregnancies was also a tormenting experience to married women. As they did also fall victims to rape and forced prostitution, their plight was worsened by the fact that their marriages broke. Even at some point women were raped and abused in the presence of their husbands, when it get to the point of being pregnant their husbands rejected them. With no any contraceptives provided to avoid these pregnancies, women's fate became more serious than ever. Several incidents of women trying to abort by traditional means have been exemplified by the informants met. They all agreed that both married women and young girls found it hard to accept a child of rape in their lives. Many of them tried abortions though in vain as there were no proper medical facilities needed for abortions. This shows that pregnancies women received from the DAs were themselves a gendered problem which women experienced inside the SEZ keeps.

Women impregnated by the DAs became the main victims of a witch hunting practice which was undertaken by guerrillas at "pungwes," which they were compelled to attend. War testimonies reveal that guerrillas carried into war traditional gendered notions of witchcraft. With the common traditional belief that immorality and witchcraft goes hand in glove, women impregnated by the DAs became the main targets of this practice. They were punished for carrying the enemy's babies. From a gender oriented scope of events, it is important to note that women were regarded as wicked, witches, prostitutes and accused of collaborating with the enemy by falling in love with the DAs. These women were denied justice as no one minded that they were unwillingly impregnated. Women had got in sexual activities with the DAs not because they loved them but it was as a result of constant fear from intimidations the DAs waged upon them. This intensified the gravity of their plight in their survival inside the keeps.

2.4 Basic Amenities

Life inside the Keeps of SEZ was made more calamitous for women because of shortages of basic amenities. Women's health inside the keeps was put at risk. As far as the issue of provision of basic amenities women needed, the PV system largely failed. One is credited for observing that the fate of women was exacerbated by the conditions of life inside the PVs which were characterised by rampant shortages of basic needs. Severe hunger and starvation among others made women more vulnerable that they eventually got forced into sexual relationships with the DAs. Nhongo-Simbanegavi supports this by saying for women in PVs where basic provisions were scarce, those in control often did subject women to exchange for access to scarce consumables.¹¹ Such a situation of dilemmas made both young and married women to engage in sexual activities as a survival strategy

Beckett notes that conditions varied in PVs, but many lacked sanitation and other basic facilities.¹² Dr. Hill supports this commenting about conditions in one of the PVs:

“Conditions at Nyashanu PV where 200-300 people are behind wire are appalling. There was no sanitation or running water and apart from one asbestos shelter people were living in the open... it is like picking animals and moving them from one field to another.”¹³

The above sentiment shows it well that the sanitation and water supply conditions within the overcrowded PVs were often appalling. This made the social welfare for women inside the SEZ keeps to be a nightmare.

The PVs created a highly gendered environment which contributed to the gendered problems women suffered especially in terms of their health. Women's health remained at risk as there was no sanitation ware and other health facilities. With shops have been closed, there was nowhere to get sanitary pads and it was a great challenge for women to monitor their menstrual cycles without the adequate material to manage the process. With no contraceptives also it was problematic for the women who had been unwillingly got

impregnated by the DAs to manage these unwanted pregnancies. All this report it well that women inside the keeps were treated less than human and therefore PVs promoted maximum discomfort for them.

It needs therefore to be highlighted that women eventually engaged in relationships with the Guard Force as a desperate survival mechanism in exchange of food and other basics. However, it is important to note that, the GF took the nervous conditions women experienced as a passport for their sexual advances on women who were left with no option except to give in. In reality, the shortages of basic amenities inside the Keeps added up the load of challenges women headed in addition to various others which were being experienced by other inmates inside the Keeps.

2.5 Women with Children in PVs

Women with children were another segment among the population which was herded inside the Keeps. Chadya propounds that it is true that women with children were the majority of the rural dwellers during the war because of colonial preference of male labour.¹⁴ The war raised the imbalance to a higher level, as more young men were conscripted into, or voluntarily joined, the Rhodesian or guerrilla forces. The result was a preponderance of widows and female-headed households, leaving rural women to carry the burden of the war. Therefore, by the time when the PV system was put in place, a large number of women and children were the largest part of the mob driven inside the camps. However the gendered dimension of life which characterised the atmosphere inside the Keeps provided challenges which women with children encountered in day to day life. Their plight was worsened by the obvious fact that on top of their personal challenges, they were supposed to take care of their children's needs inside the keeps.

By the virtue of being key food providers women with children inside the PVs had a gender role of monitoring the family food security. Gorman supports this women iconic role as food providers inside the keeps when she argued that food security remained a role pursued by woman inside the PVs.¹⁵ It is therefore important to note that the chronic shortages of food inside the keeps worsened the pressure on women. Food shortages came forth as the main challenge of survival for many of the mothers interviewed during discussions about the various burdens they met inside the Keeps. Women with children were the most distinct group among the PV inmates who suffered the effects of hunger and starvation. This was so because they were in the position of taking care of their children and food provision was one of the best responsibilities they were compelled to bear. The establishment of PVs threw agriculture into a state of disorder and confusion. No proper tilling of the land was to commence as the people's home were now part of 'no go areas' where the PV inmates were restricted business. This promoted high levels of hunger and starvation inside the Keeps. Evidence of cases of malnutrition was reported various informants who had formerly lived at Chiredzi PV. Such dietary shortage diseases were mainly affecting children and this further added weight to the plight of their mothers. In addition to that it is important to note that women with infants were largely affected by food shortages. Breast feeding in itself can be healthy and reliable if the source is being well fed. Unfortunately women who were breast feeding were not adequately producing for their babies.

It is also valuable to note that as far as the issue of food security is concerned, various women with children sacrificed themselves to save their children. With scarcity in provisions of food some eventually gave in to relationships with DAs to sort connection with the limited basics. Simbanegavi supports this by saying that for women in places like the PVs where basic provisions were scarce, those in control could and often did subject women to abuse in exchange for access to scarce consumables.¹⁶ In it important to observe that for desperate

women with children this barter trade was not optional as they wanted to save their children. This made women burn from both ends as their plight became doubled.

Though the establishment of PVs was claimed by the government to be a way of promoting urbanization and enlightenment, almost all PVs in SEZ had no hospitals except for Chikombedzi. This in itself denies the urbanity claim by the government. People's health status inside the keeps remained at stake. With chronic hazardous conditions which characterised overcrowded life inside the keeps, children's health remained a burden for their mothers. As far as the issue of health was concerned women with children experienced a doubled burdensome sense of responsibility. They were supposed to monitor both their health statuses together with those of their children in an environment characterised by rampant health hazards. Almost everybody interviewed in this research witnessed the occurrence of diseases like cholera, typhoid and dysentery in the keeps of SEZ. These diseases were being culminated by the unhealthy conditions of life inside the keeps. It is important to note that the children became the earliest victims of these diseases. No provisions of safe water to drink were there inside the keeps. This promoted cholera and this was further flourished by improper toiletry systems of the keeps. Such a condition impacted negatively on children's health and because children were not able to protect themselves, their mothers loaded their plight. Mrs Mhlaba a former Boli PV resident supported this by saying that she struggled with her three children's healthy inside the keeps after they were attacked by unrecognised diarrhoea only to later be saved by traditional treatment.¹⁷ Such an experiment shows it well that women with children faced challenges as they were supposed to cater for both their welfare and their children's too.

2.6 Conclusion

In locating women's different experiences inside the PVs, there is need to understand the context of the daily struggles for survival which bounded women's lives as a result of the gender dimension of life inside the PVs. Women in Protected Villages were not protected at all. They experienced various gendered problems which were beyond their ability to rescue and liberate themselves. They were faced with a situation whereby they would try to escape one problem by getting into another. The period of the PVs made many women to regret their biological sex in a world where God created both man and woman. Women were made sexual slaves by being raped, assaulted and forced into prostitution which resulted in unwanted pregnancies and STDs. The government cared less about their health situation and therefore no sanitation ware was provided for them. With war call having attracted various males, women were left with the challenge of monitoring family needs. These included the economic and social welfare of their children. Operating in an environment characterised by severe diseases, hunger and various other health hazards, women's lives inside the Keeps became an unforgettable experience. This sums it all in explaining the plight of women which was added weight by the gendered dimension of life in the PVs of SEZ during the liberation struggle.

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CHAPTER 3: SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN PROTECTED VILLAGES OF SOUTH EASTERN ZIMBABWE

Introduction

This chapter focuses on sexual violence which women and young girls suffered inside the Keeps. The problem of sexual violence in PVs in SEZ has largely escaped thorough attention of historians. Nhongo-Simbanegavi and E.O' Gorman provides a basis for understanding the prevalence of sexual violence in PVs. It will be demonstrated that women were raped, impregnated and infected with STIs by the DAs. Women were further molested through the forceful body searches which violated their privacy. Gender based violence against women within the contained sphere was widespread as to be regarded as normative. Sexual violence, and in particular rape, was used as a means to punish and control women. Hunger, starvation and shortages of basic necessities forced women into prostitution as a survival strategy. It is important to note that in all these instances, the victims were blamed for spreading immorality inside the PVs.

3.1. Sexual abuse of women in PVs

Women inside the keeps were forcefully driven into sexual relationships with the DAs. It is important to note that the DAs accused women who refused their demands. They accused them of being wives of terrorists and these accusations were in themselves the genesis of all the severe beatings and floggings women would face. Such a scenario made women more vulnerable as they were left with no choice except to do whatever their owners wanted. Nhongo-Simbanegavi support this when she said that Zimbabwean women have been subjects of military disputes in the past but never before in the history of the country had their bodies had been used as terrain for military and political contestation.¹ This therefor shows

that the PVs were nevertheless “Protected” zones as implied by their name. Instead they remained slave camps which molested the women of SEZ. It needs to be highlighted that women were forced into sexual activities by situations that were beyond their capacity to change. Women were voiceless in expressing the right to their bodies and their ‘no’ became powerless to somebody wielding a gun. This leaves one justifiable for noting that forced prostitution, rape and any other forms of sexual abuse from the DAs troubled women who could not rescue themselves.

It is important to note that sexual violence violates women and human rights. The Programme of the Research and Advocacy Unit captured this and says:

“Forced concubinage is a situation in which women are coerced into a sexual partnership with a man and/or compelled to perform the wifely duties expected by the partnered male ... it occurs predominantly, but not exclusively, in areas of conflict, whether violent or non-violent. ... It is a gross violation of human rights which must be prevented, and, if it occurs, must be investigated and punished.”²

What was occurring inside the Keeps was human rights violation at its highest level. Young girls in PVs were severely abused in an institutionalised manner with nowhere to run refugee.

The report goes on to say that:

“Rape and sexual violence have accompanied warfare in virtually every known historical era. Military circles supported the notion that all persons, including unarmed women and children, were still the enemy, with the belligerent having conquering rights over them. Institutionalised sexual slavery and enforced prostitution have been documented in a number of wars.”³

This has been the case associated with the lives of women inside the Keeps. They were subjected to legitimised gender based violence hidden behind the military project of demotivating their support of war. Rape became the weapon to punish women. The physical and psychological damage rape caused on them were immeasurable as the victims were secluded to a lifetime of pain and regret. Victims of rape did not only suffer from post-traumatic stress which results from fear and stress but also are victims to unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, depression which may result in self-harm, and

even suicides. This evidences the human rights atrocities and the international instruments that formed the normative framework of the criminalisation of sexual violence against women which emerged during the PVs era.

An Anti-Apartheid Movement Publication on Rhodesia testified that:

In either case, the African inmates of the fenced camps are supervised day and night by armed troops who far from 'protecting' the residents, are known to frequently abuse their position. Numerous instances of rape and assault against African villagers have been reported in the Rhodesian press, together with cases of insubordination and indiscipline.⁴

This demonstrates that sexual violence was the order of the day for women inside the keeps. Regardless of their age and status women were victimised through forced sexual relationships. Both married women and young girls were subjected to severe rape and groping of their private parts by the Security Guards. The DAs legitimised rape inside the Keeps to be the only law to govern all the accusations which included women. As a result, women received no any better punishment for alleged mistakes, they were raped and as a result a large number of innocent women was infected with sexual infectious. This traumatised women and left them still in need of a shield to defend them from their protectors the DAs.

The introduction of identity cards and passes which allowed one to move out of the PVs, subjected women to abuse like in any other different scenarios. As evidenced from the interview made with one former Chikombedzi PV inmate Gapare, the security guards would select their targets of interest among various women who were in the keeps that they can confiscate their identity cards.⁵ It is important to note that this strategy was being used to ensnare the wanted targets. Those who were unfortunate would be accused of any minor offense of the DAs thinking and at times their I.Ds would be taken away. Without the I.D card women were restricted any movement especially on exit and entering. For the confiscated I.Ds to be handed back to their owners, one had to go for negotiations with the

security. It is through this negotiation channel that most women were baited and forced into giving in their bodies to get back their identity cards as losing them would mean severe beating also.

Various scholars have failed to observe it that women's wartime experiences in Keeps were so dilemmatic. Thus they were antagonists with alternatives equally conclusive against them. The above laid sentiment has evidenced that whatever way women survived, whatever decision they would take in trying to sort protection and escape danger, they would even remain more vulnerable and unprotected. Same incident has been captured by the CCJPR in an interview with a Chiweshe resident who expressed it in his own words saying that:

“... they use the method of checking situpas when going out and coming in. The women the DAs want to make love with get their passes held as if checking for something until others go and he tells the women: “I want to see you...”⁶

Quite a great number of women were victims to sexual abuse through the confiscation of their I.Ds. Such a situation shows in itself the gendered dimension of life inside the Keeps. The taking away of their I.Ds made women to be sexually abused time and again so as to get them back and re attain the freedom of movement.

The introduction of the Selous Scouts intensified the challenge of sexual abuse to the women inside the PVs and further forcefully enclosed them on a vice. This military sect was introduced to disguise the people by pretending to be guerrillas. Motive was also directed on tarnishing the guerrilla image as these SS raped and severally killed women especially every time they exited the PVs to do various domestic chores outside. The SS dressed well like guerrillas and various women who channelled guerrilla support from PVs were victims to this group. An Anti-Apartheid Publication on Rhodesia stated that the SS was an elite tracker unit by far the most notorious unit within Rhodesia's armed forces.⁷ It goes on to state that its main function was to seek out and destroy guerrilla units a task at which they are claimed by the regime to have been extraordinarily successful.⁸ It is important to note that the regime has

been propagating the argument that guerrillas were raping women as evidenced by all colonial administrators and writers. Therefore, the SS was specifically designed to fulfil this argument. They raped and infected women with STIs so as to pass it to the guerrillas if they were to engage in sex with these women. The result was a rise in number of STIs victims. Claiming to be guerrillas they sometimes called for night meetings and it is then they would take that chance to rape women. It is of value to note that these measures were implemented to fix and destroy the guerrillas. However, the women's body was the play centre of all these atrocities. Women especially those inside the keeps who had remained behind in communities whilst some were recruited by the guerrillas were severely raped by the SS. There was a drastic rise in the cases of rape during the time of the SS and women were left in confusion with the state of war but they had nowhere to run.

Sexual abuse inside the keeps played a role in the destruction of marriages. This was so because the consequences of these sexual abuses were obviously unwanted pregnancies and STIs. As a result various married women were divorced by their husbands and labelled prostitutes. Women were raped by the DAs even at gunpoint if they tried to resist but their husbands accused them of luring the DAs. Such a situation left women in a desperate position with nowhere to sort refugee. This shows that their plight in PVs never did lose weight.

To say that the PVs were strategically developed to ensure the sole protection of the African people would be totally misleading and historically biased. This is so because the protection doctrine was merely advocated by the regime government to cheat the International Community by masking a military perpetuated strategy under the humanitarian motive. Mazambani and Mashingaidze propounds that the Rhodesian government used various methodologies to justify the creation of PVs in Southern Rhodesia.⁹ Accordingly the government wanted to create an impression that PVs were established for humanitarian reasons and for the good and betterment of the African people.

3.2 Young Girls and sexual abuse inside the Keeps

PVs of SEZ failed to give protection to young girls of the area. Young girls were abused by the Security Force and the DAs who sexually molested them time and again. The guards took advantage of the power wielded in them by their possessions of guns to abuse girls. Though they made sexual advances to any women of their choice, whether married or unmarried, young or old, girls at adolescent were their first choice as they were labelled to be still fresh by the DAs. Sexual violence on young girls was celebrated as a virtue and sign of heroism by the DAs rather than be condemned. Girls suffered in silence as they had nowhere to report their fate. Guards took liberties with young women, impregnated them and even affected them with STIs. It is important to note that in the event of pregnancy, parents had nowhere to report their cases. At some time young girls would be raped and touched all over in the sight of their helpless parents. As power had shifted from chiefs and kraal heads to the men with guns who settled disputes with the barrel of the gun, nobody could help them.

The CCJPR states that sexual violence in the liberation struggle involved the forced conscription or kidnapping of young girls to wash, cook, porter, and have sex with soldiers and militiamen.¹⁰ Similar trends of violence involving the use of young girls during the Mozambique liberation struggle have been described by Thompson who argues that girls were treated as 'war booty' and as property to be used or distributed by the highest ranking male.¹¹ In line with this argument Nhongo-Simbanegavi argues that young girls hardly passed puberty and the war made them women before they were ready.¹² Such a scenario was frightful as young girls were being driven from girlhood into womanhood before they were fully grown-ups. This had psychological effects which were hurtful to their lives. Weitzer argues that prosecution of members of the security forces for abuses was believed to be embarrassing to the government and demoralising for security.¹³ This simply shows that these

widespread incidents of rape were justified by the regime. This was supported by the CCJPR which stated that:

“The legal system operating in Rhodesia at the time present affords in practice almost no redress or compensation to innocent African victims of ill-treatment by the Security Forces.”¹⁴

The above laid sentiment labels it well that no legal system was implemented by the Rhodesian regime to protect the African people. As a result young girls were sexually victimised time and again with no any redress to compensate for the human rights atrocities committed against them.

It is important to note that most of these DAs were not accompanied by their wives in their stay in keeps. The CCJR stated that they usually come from other districts possibly attracted by the relatively favourable salaries they were given.¹⁵ The fact that they DAs seldom had relatives in areas of their operation gave them chances to sexually abuse many women of their wanting as they were hardly known. Such behaviour has been evidenced by the CCJR when it states that:

“Also disquieting are reports that have been received quite frequently concerning the behaviour of some DAs... who abuse their authority to elicit favours, including sexual favours.”¹⁶

The virtue of being unknown in their areas of operation promoted the DAs with malicious cruelties like sexual abuses they spearheaded to young girls inside the keeps and being given better salaries, they used that as an instrument to lure young girls who were suffering various shortages of basic commodities.

Various historians and other war sources have evidenced the occurrence of prostitution and the gradual lapse of morals inside the Keeps. The government laid the conviction that African women and girls were to blame for the occurrence of prostitution and moral decadence in the PVs. They were even accused of spreading STIs. This same sentiment was even believed by some Africans especially who had their wives sexually abused by the DAs. They commonly

held onto the conviction that their wives sexually lured the DAs therefore they deserved the blame for immorality. It is crucial to observe that a blind eye has been directed to the obvious fact that women were being forced by circumstances. However from a gender perspective, it is important to observe that women were raped and fell victims of STIs and unwanted pregnancies but not at their luxurious will. The DAs were feasting on them and enjoyed themselves by touching their bodies all over. Girl's buttocks and breasts were caressed time and again by the DAs. All this add up to show an unbearable nervous state women lived in during the PV era. Referring to these villages as "protected" is therefore highly misleading because people were just being kept rather than being protected.

3.3 Sexual Transmitted Diseases in PVs

The occurrence of STDs inside the keeps is the most under researched area which has suffered omissions in various Zimbabwean liberation struggle historiographies. PVs were, by any standards, seriously overcrowded. Quite a huge number of about 2700 were concentrated into one PV. It is important to observe that the overcrowded PVs were prone to the quick spread of diseases not only the STDs. Other diseases like cholera, dysentery and typhoid spread quickly from one person to another. This same applied to the spread of STDs. With the occurrence of various sexual activities which included rape and forced prostitution, such an overpopulated environment catalysed a quick spread of STIs. The problem was worsened by the obvious reasons that like everywhere else, the PV system in the South Eastern Zimbabwe was characterised by closure of hospitals. The only hospital which was functioning was at Chikombedzi but it did not have enough medication for STIs. With the DAs forcefully demanding sex from women in the keeps, it was not only the rise in the number of girls who were impregnated but a high number of both men and women contacted STIs. Both married women and girls were the main victims of this problem. The challenge was further exacerbated by the fact that those who contacted the diseases had no the guts to

openly confess about it. This was mainly because of simply being shy, afraid of being discriminated and even afraid of tearing their marriages apart especially for those who were married. One of the interviewee Tovela presented it that many young girls who contacted the STIs like gonorrhoea were afraid to tell their parents that they were ill and this was because they were afraid that the community would label them prostitutes as STIs were believed to be prostitute diseases.¹⁷ This conviction witness it well that because of the fear of how gendered life was inside the Keeps, women appreciated to suffer in silence with no one available to address their plight.

It is important to note that with guerrillas having been intertwining with people inside the PVs time and again, they are believed to also to have been engaging in sexual activities with young girls. This prudently evidence it well that at one point or the other, they contracted these STIs and when they did, the women would be pointed a traitor or sell out. This was so because to the guerrillas the STIs were enemy diseases only contracted by those who collaborated with the enemy and so likewise was this to the DAs. Both contending forces heavily punished women for infecting them with STIs. This in itself further shows that women's body became the theatre of all the wartime violence which occurred. The two contesting forces were exchanging blows on the women's body. As a result, women and young girls became the main victims of these STIs.

Of much to consider is the pointer fact that STIs were in them believed to be women diseases as if they were the ones who invented them. Women and young girls suffered in silence especially in the case of having contacted these STIs. Mutyari former PV inmate of Chiredzi stated that with no medication for these STIs, women virtuously suffered in silence and only those who were courageous enough would turn to traditional medication from grandparents who knew the traditional treatments.¹⁸

Crucially important is to observe that sorting traditional medical relief from grandparents was also a challenge especially to young girls in a traditional society where sexual activities were rarely discussed with young age. Such a situation made most young girls to suffer in silence as they were afraid of being convicted prostitutes by the DAs and even their society of origin. Mlilo, complimented on how her junior daughter by then was victimised by these STIs and suffered in silent afraid to report the matter. She stated that her daughter only sixteen years of age by then was swollen all over down area and they only noticed after three weeks that she has contracted STIs which she said that it was these securities who had infected her.¹⁹

The above sentiment clearly shows a doubled pain for both the mother and the daughter. The way women were grieved inside the keeps should not be at all taken for granted. In reality their harvest was indeed that of thorns. The fate of young girls was further extended by the fact that some had never been engaged in sexual activities and therefore they had less knowledge as far as the issue of sexuality was concerned. As a result various young girls contracted STIs unaware and only to observe it after the conditions get beyond the point of treatment. Such a situation of having less knowledge meant that the more they were abused, the more their partners contracted the STIs and further spreading it to other women. This in itself quickened the spread of the diseases from one person to another and all the blame was laid on women. This added gravity to their plight inside the Keeps.

Married women also contacted STIs as they were also included in sexual abuses by the DAs. They were sexually molested without any consent of their marital statuses. However for married women their plight was added weight by the fact that they would obviously infect their husbands with the disease. To them, suffering in silent solved nothing as their husbands would observe it when they entered the matrimonial bed with their wives. For married women infecting their husbands with STIs obviously meant divorce and rejection. Their husbands would reject them and so as well did society as they would be labelled prostitutes.

Married women who engage in sexual activity with another man were indeed prostitutes and to the African community prostitutes were pure sell-outs. The African communities together with the regime probed a blind eye on how women contracted STIs which was obviously widespread rapes. Such a situation eliminated peaceful environment for women and their survival inside the PVs was that of pain.

3.4 Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that the survival of women inside the keeps was characterised by sexual violence which had far reaching consequences on their lives. Both young girls and married women were raped and forced into prostitution as the conditions inside the keeps deprived them emancipation. It has been highlighted that as a result of this widespread sexual abuses, women became victims to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Girls were ravaged by STIs and suffered in silence as reporting the matter would mean further trouble from their elders. For married women STIs became the obvious evidence that they had engaged in sexual activities outside their marriages and the result was divorce and rejection. It has been evidenced that women were labelled prostitutes and sell-outs in the keeps by either sides as they were accused of spreading STIs. Sexual violence denied women the right to peaceful survival and women remained in bondage with no one to free them.

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17. Interview with Tovele, Ex-Inmate, Chicualacuala, 17/12/16
18. Interview with Mutyari, Ex- Inmate, Chiredzi, 16/12/15
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Conclusions

This study was set to explore the plight of women inside the PVs of SEZ during the liberation struggle. It has been demonstrated that the establishment of PVs in Rhodesia was nonetheless a way to promote urbanised societies and the betterment of African people's lives as claimed by the regime. Having adopted from Malaya, Vietnam and elsewhere the strategy have been applied and designed as a counterinsurgency mechanism to cut a cross pollination between the guerrillas and the local people. Therefore the strategy was designed for military purposes not for a humanitarian role. The manner in which the establishment of PVs was undertaken has been shown that it did not at all evidence the caring for the local people as the Rhodesian regime claimed. Propaganda was strategically designed and legitimised to sweep all Africans in warzones into the established Keeps with the regime proclaiming humanitarian reasons. Coercion and violence characterised the relocation process and this witnessed various losses on the side of Africans. Loss of property, homes, cattle and even food stuffs promoted hunger, drought and this made the Africans hopeless about their future inside the enclosed concentration camps where they were herded into.

It has been reasoned that promoting the welfare of PV inmates was not part of the strategic plan though the Rhodesian government claimed so. Therefore the regime was concerned with military benefits of PVs not the humanitarian risks it ushered to the local people. As a result, conditions of life inside the PVs were a living hell for women. SEZ women suffered various gender problems. Life inside the PVs was characterised by rampant shortages and this made life unbearable for the inmates. In an environment characterised by shortages of basics, women and young girls became the most vulnerable as they suffered various gender problems.

The establishment of PVs affected women in various ways. Women and young girls inside the PVs were sexually abused by the DAs. They were impregnated and infected with STIs. Young girls were forcefully deflowered and married women lost their marriage as a result of sexual violence they experienced. Sexual violence was normalised in PVs by the DAs as a weapon to punish women. Through the pass laws and the curfew system, people's movement was restricted and women were left with no time to cultivate land. It has been also discussed that the body searches which women encountered at their exit from PVs touched the chore of their dignity. Such a situation of abuse made Africans to conclude that the cages were rather be called Keeps not PVs. This was because people were being kept instead of being protected. It has been evidenced that all these atrocities done by the DAs were justified by the government because they were said to be done in good faith of countering terrorism. Such a scenario promoted crimes and human rights violations against women and left lasting effects on them which need address.

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