

Rebuking Impunity through Music: The Case of Thomas Mapfumo's Masoja Nemapurisa

Everisto Benyera

*Department of Political Sciences, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 0003,
Republic of South Africa*

E-mail: benyee@unisa.ac.za, ebenyera@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT Popular music has been used since the colonial times as an instrument of criticizing the various levels of authority in Zimbabwe. It was used as an artistic vehicle for denouncing colonialism. After independence, the same medium was used to agitate for social justice. More than thirty years after independence the same genre is being used to denounce impunity and political violence. Through the years what has changed is the language, which migrated from euphemism to confrontational lyrics, not the message, which has consistently attacked the authorities. The paper begins by theorizing popular music as an arts genre. This is followed by an analysis of songs that were critical of the colonial governments and those that criticized the post-independence government. The music of Thomas Mapfumo was singled out as protest music, which consistently spoke to the authorities about their perceived shortcomings. This view is presented using Mapfumo's song titled *Masoja Nemapurisa*.

INTRODUCTION

The role of popular music in Zimbabwe, besides entertaining and educating the people, has been to offer an alternative communication channel to air narratives, which were being crowded out of the mainstream media. In its endeavors to educate, entertain and offer an alternative voice, popular music has been accused of over-romanticizing the false to the detrimental effect of giving false hope to communities in crisis and despair. Yet at times, popular music has been accused of exaggerating the evilness of leaders. Most musicians compose to sell their messages therefore tend to 'follow the crowd', which is where the sales reside. The rationale for this paper is therefore to unpack the message in one of Thomas Mapfumo's song titles *Masoja Nemapurisa* (the army and the police) and present it as one song, which went against the grain and provoked serious reactions from both the authorities and the listeners. Using what can be termed a soft tool such as popular music to confront a prime evil such as executive lawlessness is an epic endeavor, which warrants scholarly interrogation, an exercise, which will be attempted in these pages.

As an arts genre, popular music is generally harmless (Holtzman and Sharpe 2014: xx), as it usually dwells on social issues (Whitely 2013), folk stories (Jenkins 2015) and on general commentary about daily hardships of life such as the havoc being wrecked by HIV and AIDS in

poorly resourced communities (Lemieux and Pratto 2008). However, this changed when listeners and critics were surprised to hear the hard-hitting lyrics from Thomas Mapfumo around 2002. While most were surprised by Mapfumo's seemingly undiplomatic lyrics, it is this paper's objective to demonstrate that such messages are not new in Zimbabwe's popular music as popular music has been used in Zimbabwe to criticize various authorities over the years. These ranged from God, the colonial government, the South African apartheid regime¹, the Zimbabwe government and opposition political parties. Criticizing the conduct of those in authority is therefore not new to Zimbabwe's popular musicians, what is new though is the nature in which the message is being communicated. This paper argues that there is a traceable movement away from euphemistic language to the language of direct confrontation especially in the music of Thomas Mapfumo, Oliver Mtukudzi and the late Simon Chimbetu. Equally interesting and worth noting is the fact that these musicians also engage each other in their songs, in the process, exchanging very extreme views on topical issues. Their songs "speak truth to the power", their audiences and fellow musicians.

In Zimbabwe, popular music has been efficacious in expressing the views of the ordinary citizens regarding the issues of political violence, land reform, vote rigging and the politics of long incumbency. These issues are neither

new nor resurgent. What is new here is the ever-changing language of articulation, which was formerly illusive and euphemistic and is now direct, hard-hitting and unmasked. By definition, popular music is part of popular culture, which in itself is a complex term (William 1998; Cusic 2001). As a concept it goes beyond the routine delivery of information to the consumers (Gause 2005). It is a contested constructive made up of a mixture of images, languages and voices (Gause 2001). Popular culture, to which popular music belongs, is therefore a set of meanings one constructs from the images, languages, and formats of the day-to-day lives (Doris 2006:1). Others view popular culture as a tool useful in the manipulation of the masses. For Adorno and Horkheimer (1999), it is a tool of the culture industries used to sway people toward consumption and conformity. Broadly, it can be argued that popular culture is efficacious in influencing social relations (Collins 2004: 122) and interpreting the otherwise complexities presented by group behavior (Cortes 1995). It is popular culture's ability to sway large numbers of people towards "conformity" and influence social relations that make popular culture a viable vehicle for communicating critical messages.

With the Zimbabwean state maintaining a firm grip on the mainstream media, popular culture such as graffiti and protest music were used for decades to communicate alternative and otherwise contested views to the public sphere. In the colonial times, this type of music was masked in euphemistic lyrics, known in the local Shona language as *chibhende*. This is a form of expression in which one does not mean what they say. One reason advanced for the use of euphemism by musician during the colonial period was the need to escape the heavy censorship which all music and work forms had to undergo before publication. Mapfumo stands out as one musician who effectively deployed euphemism in his songs thereby achieving the two pronged goals of communicating a critical message to the masses while managing to escape the punishment which accompanied such "crimes".

1. Euphemism in Mapfumo's Music

Mapfumo has been the most critical of the authorities in their various forms (Eyre 2005). He has criticized all forms of authority, seemingly consistently, from God and the Spirits of the land

to the Black government, demonstrating his unhappiness with the conduct of leadership, especially that of the post-independence government. This did not go down well with the authorities, especially with the black post-independence leadership. Consequently, Mapfumo was incarcerated during the war of liberation for composing songs, which were against the White minority regime. After independence his poor relations with the authorities continued especially after 2000, around which period the land reform program was in progress. Earlier on, Mapfumo had joined the independence praise singers in the celebration for independence. He composed songs praising the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe and his party for liberating the country. These include *Pemberai* (Celebrate), and *Chitima Cherusununguko* (Independence Train). However, developments around the lack of social justice and corruption made him abandon ship and he continued criticizing the government, this time the new Black government led by then Prime Minister Mugabe. When Mapfumo released his album, *Chimurenga Rebel* (2002), the then Information and Publicity Minister Professor Jonathan Moyo reportedly branded Mapfumo a 'terrorist,' and allegedly instructed the national broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation not to air a number of Mapfumo's songs (Eyre 2005).

In the song, *Dai Tenzi Vaiziva*, Mapfumo appears to be questioning God's presence while Africa and Zimbabwe suffer abject poverty and starvation. He sang:

Dai Tenzi vaiziva zvavo
Vaitora hurombo vorasa
Vagopawo hupfumi kuvanhu

Only if God knew the levels of poverty among the Blacks

He would admonish (vanquish) poverty from our midst

And give prosperity to the masses

Given the context of the song, *Tenzi* can be taken to imply the colonizer. This interpretation is consistent with the euphemistic nature of the lyrics of that time given the levels of censorship music had to undergo.

Sometimes Mapfumo's lyrics were so hidden that even some of the population could not comprehend his message. In the song *Mhandu Musango*, he sang:

Kutauta handitye Mambo
Honai makuva musango Mamb

*Regai vanouraya vauraye zvavo Mambo
Tinofira chokwadi.
Uraya mhandu musango
I am not afraid of saying the truth
Look at the numbers of the soldiers dying in
the war
I would rather die than keep quite
We are prepared to die for the truth
That is why we are encouraging our soldiers to
kill the enemy (Hidden and not literal translation).
Here Mapfumo was well aware of the causal-
ities among the liberation fighters and the nu-
merous challenges they were facing. He saw it
fit to confront the enemy by predicting that they
will not win the war, neither will he keep quiet.
The White settler regime did not comprehend
that they were the ones being referred to in the
song as *Mhandu Musango* (enemies in our coun-
try). In another song, he rebuked the devil (Sa-
tan) and sections of the White population who
appeared disillusioned with the Black govern-
ment, suggesting to them that they will never
rule Zimbabwe again. In his words:*

*Ndezvenhando kugunun'na,
Zimbabwe takaitora.
Satan ibva mushure, hurumende imbotonga...*

It is fruitless to continue grappling and com-
plaining because we liberated Zimbabwe. Satan,
give the Black government a chance to rule with-
out disturbances. Join the ride on the train of
independence whose drive is Prime Minister
Mugabe.

This also serves as a warning to you detractors.

2. The Gloves Are Off: From Euphemism to Confrontational Lyrics

Mapfumo's direct go at the government came with the release of the album *Corruption* in 1989. The album is very critical of Mugabe and his government (Vambe 2000; Mano 2007). Probably this acrimonious relationship between the artist and the government is the reason why he relocated to Eugene, Oregon in the United States of America in the late 1990s. The former colonial regime was not spared even after independence as Mapfumo accused them of sabotaging the Black government by continuously holding on to the country's assets while the majority wallowed in poverty. He sang:

*Zvino chasara chii?
Imari yatiri kushaya*

*Vapambi veRhodesia ndivo vachiine mari
Nevamwe vatema vanoba mari
Now, what do we lack in the independence
era?*

It is the resources, which we do not control
The Rhodesians and a few Black kleptomani-
as are robbing the masses.

Andrew Brown also participated in the cas-
tigation of the two dominant political parties in
the country² by asking them why they have be-
come so belligerent. In the song *Chigaro
ChaMambo*, Brown admonishes the country's
political leadership to shun politically motivat-
ed violence. He sang:

*Ko nhai vana baba tapindwa nei kuriwra
chigaro chaMambo?*

What has happened to us to fight for the
Presidency in this manner?

The use of the noun *vana baba* in this con-
text can be taken to infer to the masculinity of
violence and the fact that the leaders of Zimba-
bwe's two biggest political parties are males.

3. The Case of Mapfumo's *Masoja Nemapurisa*

When translated from Shona to English the
title of the song literally means the police and
the army although in context it was referring to
the state apparatus, which includes the intelli-
gence, and the larger state bureaucracy. The song
addresses the way state resources were de-
ployed to solve political differences and the civ-
il unrest especially between 2000 and 2008. In
the song Mapfumo asks Zimbabwe's leaders,

*Ko nhai baba muchaita seiko?
Munotumira masoja, masoja nemapurisa.
Kuti varove vanhu*

Respected leader, what are you going to do?
You send soldiers and the police to beat people
Mapfumo then asks the leaders what they
will do if one day the army and the police refuse
to obey their orders to beat the people:

*Vakaramba muchaita sei?
Vazhinji vavo ihama dzavo*

What are you going to do if they refuse your
orders?

The people, the police and the army are all
related to one another.

Mapfumo draws on history to answer the
above question,

*Tinotizira kure kunyika dzevamwe,
Tinotizira kure kuti vasatibate*

We will run away to other countries

We will flee so that we will not be caught.

In order to solidify his warning, Mapfumo gives the example of former rulers like Mobuto Sese Seko of the then Zaire now Democratic Republic of Congo and Ugandan Idi Amin.

VaMobuto vakaitwa seiko?Amin akaitwa seiko?

Vadzviniriri vakaitwa kwazvo

Nhai baba vakafira kupiko?

Vakatizira kure, kunyika dzevamwe

Vakatizira kure uko vakanofira

What happened to Mobuto Sese Seko and Idi Amin?

The dictators got what they deserved

Where did they die?

They fled into exile

Where they died

4. Police and Military Brutality in Zimbabwe

There are two perspectives from which the song can be analyzed. The first from what the Whites (1987: 10) termed the impartiality of both realistic and imaginary narratives, which emanate from partial truths. Secondly, as noted by Griffiths (in Vambe 2004: 174) there is a need to determine whether we are listening to the singer's voice or whether the singer is singing from a position influenced by 'elite sensibilities'. This analysis is necessary given Mapfumo's somewhat uneasy relationship with the state, which according to him resulted in his staying in exile. Put simply, is Mapfumo articulating his own desires to settle old scores with the state or is he expressing the wishes of the majority or those of some elites? That notwithstanding, transitional justice remains a necessary and overdue program of action needed to heal and reconcile the people living along the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers.

Police and military abuse of human rights is well documented in Zimbabwe. According to a report by The International Bar Association (2004) titled *Violence, Torture and Brutality by the Police Force in Zimbabwe Increases*, the police and the military were employed to unleash gross violations of human rights in Zimbabwe. This view is supported by other non-governmental organizations working in Zimbabwe, such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, which posted an online report, *Torture*

by State Agents in Zimbabwe: January 2001 to August 2002 (13 August 2002), which detailed evidence about cases of politically motivated violence involving the army, police and the intelligence as primary perpetrators.

Prior to the 2000-2008 politically motivated violence, the state deployed the military in suppressing alleged dissidents in Matebeleland and the Midlands provinces between 1982 and 1984 in a military operation code named *Gukurahundi* (Legal Resources Foundations and the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice 1997). While the threat posed by dissident in the two provinces is undisputed, what is debatable is the scale and severity of the state's response, which was tantamount to a blitzkrieg. The threat posed by an estimated 250 dissidents is incomparable to the estimated number of casualties, which are put at 20,000 by the Legal Resources Foundations and the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice (1997). Probably it is this severity, width and depth of the violence, which resulted in some civil society organizations such as Genocide Watch agitating for the classification of these actions as acts of genocide (Hill 2011: 4).

Mapfumo appears worried that in light of what happened during *Gukurahundi*, the state still possesses an inclination towards repeating the same should the situation 'necessitate'. His fears are justified by President Mugabe's declaration that he has degrees in violence (David Blair 2002). Mapfumo laments the fact that the uniformed forces have been turned against the citizens,

Munotumira masoja, masoja nemapurisa

Kuti varove vanhu

You send soldiers and the police to beat people.

This is not the first time that Mapfumo expressed his displeasure in the fact that the army and the police brutalize civilians. In another song, Jojo (1991) from the album *Chimurenga Master Piece*, Mapfumo warns Jojo (a corruption of George, who is an active politician) to leave politics as others have perished while pursuing political careers. He warns Jojo,

Nyaya dzenyika Jojo chenjera

Ndakambokuyambira Jojo chenjera Siya zvenyika

Jojo unozofa

Nyaya dzenyika idzi

Jojo siyana nazvo Aiiwa-iwa Jojo,

Jojo unozofa Aiiwa- iwa Jojo,

Jojo beware of political issues
 I warned you to be careful Jojo
 Leave politics, you will die
 These political issues
 Leave these issues
 You will surely die

In the same song Mapfumo proceeds to warn Jojo on the consequences of continuing with his political career citing the examples of many politicians who continued with their political careers and lost their lives to politically motivated violence. This warning appears valid given the rampant factionalism which characterize Zimbabwean politics and prompted Masipula Sithole (1993: 35) to posit that, 'if you put two Zimbabweans on the moon today and visit them the following day, you will find that they would have formed three political parties'. This is evidenced by the fact that both ZANU PF and the MDC have split several times with MDC currently having up to four versions and ZANU PF with a single and almost defunct splinter party known as ZANU (Ndonga). That is notwithstanding the fact that ZANU PF itself split from the Zimbabwe African People's Party (ZAPU) in 1963 (Bowman 1973). Political factionalism in Zimbabwe is usually accompanied by violence, which in most of the cases will be accomplished through the deployment of state resources such as the army, intelligence and the police (Scarnecchia 2008: 22; LeBas 2006; Sithole 1980). It can be argued that it is this form of violence, which Mapfumo is weary of and he recognizes that getting transitional justice under these circumstances is complicated, hence the advice to Jojo to leave politics.

Vazhinji vakaenda pamusana penyika
Vakawanda vakapondwa
Vadiki vakapondwa pamusana penyika
Vadiki vakapondwa pamusana penharo
Vana mai vanochema pamusana penyika
Mhuri dzakatsakatika pamusana penyika
Saka ndati kwauri shamwari yangu
 Many died due to politics
 Many people were murdered
 Young people were murdered for the country
 Youths were murdered because they refused to take advice
 Mothers are crying due to politics
 Families perished because of this country
 This is why I am warning you my friend
 Mapfumo is quite aware that politics in Zimbabwe led to the destabilization of families and

warns Jojo that young people risk not only death, but also having their entire families killed. While the threats that participating in Zimbabwean politics brings cannot be denied, it is very difficult to pinpoint examples of families that disappeared due to the participation of a family member in politics. These are cases in which *chimurenga* music 'attempts to create an alternative discourse of struggle which runs parallel to, but consistently attacking, contesting and undermining official truths' (Vambe 2004: 178). The official truth about politically motivated violence is that it is a phenomenon perpetrated by the Movement for Democratic Change and agents of imperialism sponsored by the British and American governments who desire to effect regime change in Zimbabwe (Chigora and Ziso 2011; Peta 2004). While the desires of the British and American governments to effect regime change in Zimbabwe are undeniable, using them as a scapegoat to brutalize citizens is both undemocratic and unconstitutional. In this regard Mapfumo is correct in agitating for an end to impunity.

5. Will Zimbabwe's Army and Police Refuse to Take Orders to Beat People?

The central theme in Mapfumo's song is predicated on the assumption and probability that Zimbabwe's uniformed forces will one day refuse to take orders to brutalize citizens. This assumption resonates with regional events notably in Malawi where the Vice President, Joyce Banda was appointed president after the death of President Bingu wa Mutharika. In her first week in office, President Banda sacked the head of the country's police among others (BBC 9 April 2012). It is widely believed that the former police chief was sacked due to the manner in which he handled public protests against was Mutharika. This may not be the end of the former police head's problems. In fact this could as well be the beginning as he is likely to face criminal prosecution. His frosty relations with the Attorney General will most likely help expedite his downfall.³ A key lesson from Malawi for Zimbabwe is that the era of unfettered human rights abuses appears to be over. Events from elsewhere (Tunisia, Egypt and Libya) attest to this.

One might ask what is the probability that sooner rather than later, the army and police will refuse to take orders to abuse citizens? The an-

swer lies primarily in the country's long history of patronage politics and the strong relationship between the uniformed forces and the state. On those considerations, it can be argued that it is highly unlikely that uniformed forces will refuse to take orders that violate human rights. The state in Zimbabwe successfully captured most, if not all, institutions of statecraft and rendered them subservient to the ruling party (Masunungure: 2009). Another fact which belies Mapfumo's claims is that the state President is also the Head and Commander in Chief of the Defense Forces rendering Mapfumo's insinuations at least unpractical and at most a pipe dream given the ensuring political dispensation and balance of power in the country. The service chiefs are on record saying that they will not salute any other leader except President Mugabe (Media Institute of Southern Africa 2011). Events on the ground render Mapfumo's prediction a desperate one based only on an untenable combination of wishful thinking and political speculation. However, as a warning, Mapfumo's message helps remind both the politicians and the uniformed forces that everything comes to an end.

The nexus between uniformed forces and politics in Zimbabwe deserves to be unpacked. The army, police, prison service and air force are seen in Zimbabwe as fertile launching pads for political careers (Krieger 2000). The militarization of parastatals presents an even more incentive for the uniformed forces to be political (Alexander 2013). Over the years, the ZANU PF government entrusted the administration of state owned enterprises in the hands of mostly army personnel. Examples include Retired Colonel Samuel Muvuti who headed the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) before his dismissal in 2008, and Retired Air Commodore Michael Karakadzai who was the General Manager of the National Railways of Zimbabwe until his death on 19 August 2013. The National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM) was at one time led by Retired Colonel Christian Katsande, who is now deputy secretary to the Cabinet. Other former army personnel who served in the cabinet include Retired Major-General Mike Nyambuya and Brigadier Ambrose Mutinhiri. While this practice is not unique to Zimbabwe, the manner in which it is carried out is devoid of meritocracy and lacks transparency and accountability.

According to Cheeseman and Tendi (2010), what complicates the relationship between the uniformed forces and the state is the existence of the Joint Operation Committee (JOC). It consists of top uniformed personnel plus the Reserve Bank Governor and the Head of Intelligence. Resuscitated in 2000, JOC has structures that run down through to the provincial level and ironically is a creature of the Ian Smith administration, which was created to coordinate the war (Felsman 2008). This presents a challenge in that it acts like a parallel administration as it reports directly to the President thereby shadowing the cabinet. The implication is that the uniformed forces in Zimbabwe have both military and governance responsibilities and in both cases they report directly to the President. When power is hierarchized in Zimbabwe, JOC occupies the top position because they have double lines of reporting to the President. On second spot is the cabinet, which also reports to the President. What makes JOC more efficient is its lean structure. JOC has only eight members⁴ compared to the cabinet with 48. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Mapfumo appears ignorant of the balance of the power, which is in favor of the army and police such that instead of taking orders to violate citizen's human rights, they have the propensity to initiate the violations.

Mapfumo speculates through his music that one day the police and the army may refuse to take orders to beat the people because they have relatives among the people to be beaten. Again this is a fallacy. Violence in Zimbabwe knows no kinship. There are numerous reports about intra family, politically motivated violence (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 2008). Politically motivated violence, which Mapfumo is preoccupied with, follows party not kinship lines in Zimbabwe. This explains the intensity of violence during the 2008 Presidential elections. There are reported cases in which violence was intra family but targeting members of the opposite political party. It can also be argued that the reality of not having a parliamentary majority for the first time since 1980 ZANU PF was so desperate to hold on to power against all odds. This was compounded by other factors such as ravaging hyperinflation, which peaked at official figures of 231 million percent (Kadzere 2008) and unofficially at 650 million percent (6.5×10^{108} percent), equivalent to a daily inflation rate of

ninety-six percent (Henke 2008). In November 2008, others like Chitiyo (2009: 1) put Zimbabwe's inflation rate at 90 sextillion percent (90,000,000,000,000,000,000,000%). Against this background it became 'necessary' for ZANU (PF) to deploy soldiers and the police to suppress discontent and civil unrest.

6. Impunity and Exile in Mapfumo's Song

Mapfumo suggests that dictators rely on fleeing into exile in order to escape prosecution thereby enjoying some form of amnesty in exile. During their term of office, dictators would have accrued a reasonable number of like-minded leaders who will accord them a safe haven. Here the musician is correct. There are a number of former rulers who fled to exile. These include former Ethiopian leader Mengistu Haile Mariam who fled Ethiopia for Zimbabwe in 1991 and Idi Amin who fled to Saudi Arabia. South Africa housed Jean-Bertrand Aristide from Haiti and Madagascar's Marc Ravalomana. However, the lengthening of the arm of the law through the coming into effect of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has compromised the safety of these havens. The norm in transitional states has been that embattled former leaders are offered an opportunity to safely go into exile in countries of their choice. However, under the Rome Statute, which set up the ICC countries harboring, ICC inductees are required to hand them over for prosecution (Article 87: 5). However, the manner in which Gaddafi remained defiant preferring to die in Libya provides an interesting perspective. In a televised address on 22 February 2011, he said,

...I am not going to leave this land. I will die as a martyr at the end. I shall remain, defiant. Muammar is Leader of the Revolution until the end of time.

Regrettably, an analysis of Gaddafi's decision to die in Libya is beyond the scope of this paper.

Whether the current leadership in Zimbabwe goes into exile voluntarily or otherwise is besides the issue. What should be disturbing to them is the growing 'success' of the International Criminal Court especially against African suspects of gross human rights abuses. Here the rapid downfall of former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi serves as a case in point. His son Salif Islam is now wanted by the ICC to answer

to charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

A dictator with close ties with any permanent members of the United Nations Security Council especially China and Russia stands real chances of escaping prosecution. Like the United States of America, China and Russia have consistently used their permanent seats to protect their allies from being accused of gross human rights violations. This may explain why China's close ally Sudan's leader Omar al Bashir continues to rule even with an ICC warrant of arrest issued against him. Furthermore, there are a number of African and Arab countries that have openly supported al Bashir by not arresting him when he visited their countries. Chad, Malawi, Djibouti, Iraqi, Saudi Arabia, Zimbabwe and Kenya have all refused to arrest the Sudanese leader while on their territories. While exile in a friendly country is a real option for dictators, their safety is not guaranteed in case there is change of government in their host countries. In such circumstances, they risk being handed over to either the ICC or back to their countries of origin.

7. Mobuto and Amin Examples

Mapfumo draws parallels between what happened to former dictators Joseph-Desire Mobuto, popularly known as Mobuto Sese Seko, of the former Zaire, now Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda's Idi Amin. His obvious intention is to deter current leaders using these two experiences as a possibility that such demises could befall any dictator. Mobuto and Amin are not the best examples for Zimbabwe as the current leadership in Zimbabwe was elected in an election that was declared free and fair (credible). What is disputed is the abuse of state resources by sections of the government, which amounts to impunity (Thomson and Jazdoska 2012: 77). There are more differences than similarities between Mugabe, Mobuto and Amin. The major difference being that the two late dictators were army personnel and that Mugabe's literacy level is way superior and incomparable to Mobuto and Amin's. One notable similarity is that all three were born in humble families, a background which others argue influenced the way they ran their respective administrations especially their treatment of adversaries, both real and imagined.

The choice of Amin as one of Mapfumo's example is interesting. The similarities between Mugabe and Amin in terms of how they ran their respective governments is not a subject of this paper as it warrants a detailed analysis which is not possible here. One similarity worth mentioning is their official titles in relation to the uniformed forces. While it is common that the head of state is the commander in chief of the country's defense forces, it is rare to officially affix the title 'Commander in Chief of the Defense Forces' to the President's official title. As such, the official title of Zimbabwe's head is 'His Excellency, The Head of State and Government and Commander in Chief of the Zimbabwe Defense Forces'. This compares favorably to Amin's first part of his official title 'His Excellency, President for Life, Field Marshal, Al Hadji, Doctor, VC (Victorious Cross), DSO (Distinguished Service Order), MC (Military Cross), Lord of all the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Sea, Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and Uganda in Particular and Professor of Geography' (Benatar 2011; Hale 2011: xi). The significance of these titles for both leaders is that it authenticates their stronghold on power while simultaneously communicating to their adversaries that their spheres of power are limited. For Zimbabwe these titles are a message to the opposition political parties that real power resides with the President, that is the Head of state, Head of government, head of army, air force, police, prison and intelligence services.

The extent of their deployment of force is also comparable with figures ranging between 100,000 and 500,000 people reportedly killed during Amin's 8-year rule ((Briggs 1998; Museveni 1997). Bodies were dumped into the Mabira Forest and the Nile River because graves could not be dug fast enough (Kasfir 2012). The Legal Resource Foundation and the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice also reports that 20,000 people predominantly in Matebeleland and Midlands province were killed during the army's Operation *Gukurahundi*.

The use of the army to protect incumbent regimes instead of citizens can be seen in all three countries. It can be argued that one of the major reasons why the Mobuto regime could not defend the country against the sustained onslaught of the *Banyamulenge* rebels was because they were used to suppressing unarmed civilians. When faced with real warfare against other soldiers, not unarmed civilians, women and children, Mobuto's army stood no chance and

they crumbled and succumbed in record time. This is not however to insinuate that the Zimbabwean army can be compared to the then Zairian army. Quite on the contrary, Zimbabwe possesses one of the best armies in the region judging by the way they executed their mandates in the DRC and Mozambique. However, the manner in which both related to their unarmed civilians in the process of propping up incumbent leaders is more similar than dissimilar.

8. Significance of Dying in Exile

Death occupies a central place in the life of Zimbabweans (Kazembe 2010: 66). It signifies the passage from one form of life to the other (Masaka and Chingombe 2009:190). The place where one dies is important, so is the place where the human remains are kept. Adult Zimbabweans across tribes and ethnicities prefer to die among their loved ones. Hence, when one gets very sick, they are 'taken home to rest'. Dying in exile is a preserve of the cowards and criminals who cannot return home even in spiritual form. For Zimbabwean politicians, their place is the National Heroes Acre, where they must rest among their like-minded ones, protecting what they fought for. Fleeing and possibly dying in exile must be too ghastly to contemplate for those ordering and those executing violence.

For a former head of state to die and be buried in exile is both a reflection of their failure to rule and a curse from God. Mapfumo used Amin to demonstrate his point because of the manner in which Amin died in exile. In 2003 Amin's family reported that he was in a coma and pleaded the Ugandan leader Yoweri Museveni to allow Amin back into Uganda so that 'he spends the remainder of his life in Uganda'. Museveni refused stating categorically that Amin would be held accountable for his actions the moment he arrives in Uganda (Mulindwa and Kibirige 2003). Amin died in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and is buried there. Like Amin, Mobuto also fled to exile. He initially went to Togo, and then finally to Morocco in May of 1997 where he died of cancer in September of the same year in Rabat. Like Amin, he was also buried in exile where he died.

CONCLUSION

Thomas Mapfumo's song, *Masoja Nemapurisa* did well in terms of warning dictatorships that impunity is no longer tolerated. The song is important not only because of the na-

ture of the message it portrayed but also because it is among the first Shona songs to explicitly denounce impunity. This kind of music composition helps widen the audience for transitional justice in states like Zimbabwe, which can be argued to be states in transition. The use of popular music to convey contemporary discourses such as the intolerability of human rights abuses in general and transitional justice in particular is a growing phenomenon, which needs replication across music genres and other forms of art. This widens the transitional justice audience and helps enlighten both conflict and post conflict societies on the undesirability and intolerability of impunity.

NOTES

- 1 Simon Chimbetu composed a number of songs lambasting the apartheid government in South Africa for the gross human rights abuses. Among them was a song about former prime minister and State President Balthazar Johannes Voster (John Voster). In the song, Chimbetu laments the fact that John Voster died without telling his descendants that South Africa belongs to the Blacks and as such the apartheid regime should give up power without causing much bloodshed.
- 2 These parties are the ruling Zimbabwe African national Union Patriot Front (ZANU PF) and the Morgan Tsvangirai led movement for Democratic Change (The MDC)
- 3 Relations between the former police chief and the Attorney General worsened when the office of the former was broken into. Two suspects were apprehended by the AG's staff and handed over to the police who released the suspects and instead arrested the AG for allegedly assaulting the suspects.
- 4 JOC members include the Defense Minister, Commander of the Zimbabwe Defense Forces, and Commander of the Zimbabwe National Army, Commander of the Air Force of Zimbabwe, Commissioner of the Zimbabwe Republic Police, Head of the Zimbabwe Prison Services, The Reserve Bank Governor and finally the Director General of the Central Intelligence Organization.

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