

# Pastoral Statement on the 44th Celebrations of the Zimbabwe's Independence: A call for An Inclusive and Comprehensive Dialogue towards Unity, Peace and Development



*"...I am not asking on behalf of them alone, but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I am in You. May they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me..."*

*John 17 vs 21*


The Zimbabwe Council of Churches joins the country and all the citizens inside and outside Zimbabwe in celebrating the 44th Independence Anniversary of the Republic of Zimbabwe. Our Independence was obtained through a liberation struggle that demonstrated how a united people can overcome their challenges regardless how difficult they maybe.

This year's theme Unity, Peace and Development towards vision 2030 resonates well with the call by the Church for unity and peace inspired by the word of God in John 17 vs 21 where Jesus prayed for the believers to be one. The Church continues to pray for unity and peace in the country as we continue to search for prosperity and development.

As the country celebrates 44 years of independence, the Church takes a deeper reflection on the progress that we have made in reaching the goals that the people of Zimbabwe fought for during the liberation struggle. Indeed sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers perished inside and outside the country in search for a better Zimbabwe.

The Church commends the people of Zimbabwe and the Law Enforcement Agencies for the relatively peaceful environment that prevailed in 2023 despite it being an electoral year. There was a general improvement in the level of peace, particularly physical violence, before, during and after the 2023 harmonized elections when compared to the previous elections.

The church continues to give glory and honor to the almighty due to abundant blessings that he has given us as a nation. Zimbabwe is endowed with vast natural resources which include precious minerals like gold, diamond, platinum, lithium, among others. The recent discoveries of critical minerals such as lithium, oil and gas is testimony to how God has loved us as a country and people. The Church further calls upon all Christians, humanitarian agencies, Faith Based Organizations and Government departments to work together and ensure that we do not lose any lives due to the drought the country is experiencing.



The people of Zimbabwe are resilient and hard working. The church celebrates with all the Zimbabweans including those who are in the diaspora who have contributed significantly to our economy and the country. Diaspora remittances are contributing significantly to the national income promoting growth and development. As the country turns 44 years, the church draws national authorities and the people of Zimbabwe to deeply reflect on 1 Corinthians 13 vs 11, and we quote:

*“...When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I understood like a child, I thought like a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things...”*


The country of Zimbabwe has experienced 44 years of self-governance hence should put away childish things to be more united and peaceful for development. The church calls on the nation to address the following as we march towards vision 2030:

**Strengthening our democratic governance systems:** The church is aware that one of the major reasons why the people of Zimbabwe engaged in the war of liberation was to achieve one man one vote. It is therefore imperative that as we mature as a nation we deepen our democratic systems so that we as a nation are able to conduct free, fair and credible elections.

**Address issues of past hurts to achieve just peace for all citizens:** Responsible authorities should continue to make efforts towards addressing unresolved issues of past hurts including the Gukurahundi and other past conflict issues as they continue to affect our people and the development of our country. This year's celebrations come at a time when the country is awaiting the launch of the consultative process on Gukurahundi to be led by our Traditional Chiefs in Matabeleland. For a long time, the people of Matabeleland, Midlands and the entire country have not been able to fully celebrate independence as they continue to be haunted by the negative impact of Gukurahundi which occurred soon after Independence.

**Comprehensive response to climate change related disasters:** The Church is aware that climate change is upon us as evidenced by the El-Nino induced drought that we have experienced as a nation. Authorities are called upon to utilize national resources from the extraction of our God given precious minerals to address food insecurities and other disasters brought about by climate change.





**Promote Inclusive and Just economy:** The Church is aware that as we celebrate our 44th Independence, our economy is hurting for many of our people, producing unemployment, inequalities, poverty, poor delivery of health, education services, and many other undesirable outcomes. This is so despite the fact that our country is endowed with vast mineral resources, human capital, land and strategically positioned in the Southern Africa region. There is need for dialogue and engagement towards rebuilding our economy to ensure that the economy delivers for the citizens including delivery of basic social services such as health, education, and sanitation.

The Church continues to call on all the people of Zimbabwe and authorities to an inclusive and comprehensive dialogue to resolve our challenges as a nation that have continued to present a gridlock to national unity, peace, and development. As we mature as a nation, let us cultivate a culture of dialogue and engagement. Let us not allow politics, greedy and tribal differences to divide us. We are one nation and we are one people. Let us fulfill Christ's desire that we may be one.

**END//**