

On the eve of Zimbabwe's July 31st Election

The Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) book launch



South Africa – Zimbabwe Relations: Volume 1 – Pre-colonial to 2006

**By the Southern African Liaison Office (SALO)
Published by Jacana Media**

SPEAKERS

Session 1

CHAIR: Tawanda Sachikonye, SALO's lead researcher for the book

Bella Matambanadzo, Zimbabwean feminist activist, SALO Reference Group

Ambassador Sten Rylander, Former Swedish ambassador, Harare

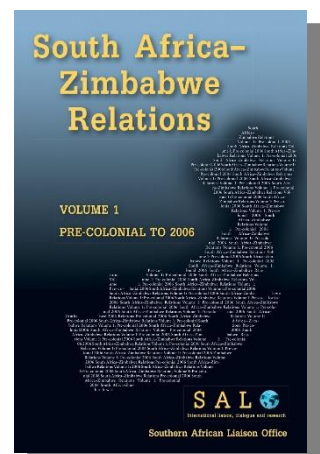
Session 2

CHAIR: Sambulo Mathebula, SALO researcher

Dr Tara Polzer Ngwato, Editor of the book

Professor David Moore, University of Johannesburg

Closing Remarks: Clever Chikwanda





Building International and Regional Consensus

Policy Dialogue Report No. 17:

Book Launch

South Africa-Zimbabwe Relations: Volume 1 – Pre-colonial to 2006

16 July 2013

Burgers Park Hotel, Pretoria

First Session

Tawanda Sachikonye, lead SALO researcher for *South Africa-Zimbabwe Relations: Volume 1 – Pre-colonial to 2006* introduced the first speakers for the book launch. The first was **Ambassador Rylander** who expressed great pleasure to have been one of the first financial supporters of the book, back in 2007. He indicated that in order to understand the contemporary political developments in Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe's role within the regional dynamics in Southern Africa, it was necessary to grasp the historical relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe, with its nuances and complexities. Ambassador Rylander expressed admiration for the work of SADC and South Africa's mediation during the long process leading up to the elections on the 31st of July 2013. However, there were still concerns and his sense was that even after the elections, SADC, the South African mediation, and SALO would need to continue to be engaged. Regarding SALO, the Ambassador expressed his admiration for SALO's sustained contributions over nearly ten years.



When the goings were rough you were always there to provide necessary platforms for dialogue and peacefully negotiated solutions. I have been with you for most of this time and I count the journey we travelled together as one of my proudest achievements during my professional career ...



The second speaker, **Bella Matambanadzo**, acknowledged the many guests present who had been SALO's supporters and friends from its beginnings.

I'm of the view that although the book bears the name of SALO, really, it carries the spirit of the questions that have been raised in the SALO space – the public spaces, and the private spaces. So in as much as all of you may not have been mentioned, I'd like to say thank you very much for the spirit that all of you have brought to SALO meetings and to the relationships between Zimbabwe and South Africa.

For Ms Matambanadzo, the book presented multiple themes: the blood ties and family relationships between Zimbabwe and South Africa; South Africa's role in, and relationship with, Zimbabwe in relation to diplomatic negotiations and policy shifts within a regional as well as international context; "nuances of what it means to be African in the twenty-first century"; and questions of race, ethnicity, class, and overall, of belonging, among others. She said, "at the heart and at the soul of the text, for me is a story of migration, of love and diaspora: it's a story of citizenship and identity."

Tawanda invited comments and questions from the floor. Along with the two presenters, contributors included **members of youth groups**, **Megan Bradshaw** from the United States Embassy in Pretoria, **Professor David Moore** of the University of Johannesburg, **Jos Martens** with the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, **Richard Smith**, a SALO Board member, and **Carmen Smidt**, an ANC International Relations Manager.

Second Session

Sambulo Mathebula, a SALO researcher, introduced the next presenters, beginning with **Dr Tara Polzer Ngwato**, the book's editor. Dr Polzer Ngwato emphasised that she was speaking on behalf of many at SALO, all of whom had made the book possible. In particular, she thanked the SALO researchers who were central to the process.

The book was key to fulfilling SALO's main mandates: to promote informed debate and policy about political crises; to build consensus and improve mutual understanding among decision makers by clarifying positions and interests; and to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders in different sectors – government, diplomatic community, civil society – and at different levels – local, national, regional and



international. These are done through providing a 'safe space' where difficult political conversations can be held in an open and confidence-generating manner. She emphasized that the book had tried to maintain this balance by having a principled stance on the need for an open dialogue and for understanding many perspectives without excluding or judging voices.

She said the book also tried to make clear that situations of political conflict are incredibly complex, and accordingly, one must adopt a multi-dimensional view of the relationships between the various facets that include diplomatic relations, political party relations, personalities, and to some level, economic relations, and domestic politics, to name a few. The book posits, as does SALO, that history fundamentally informs the present and the future, but that accounts of history must not be taken for granted nor leave us stuck in them.

As to what informed the thinking behind writing a book on South Africa/Zimbabwe relations, she indicated that this was partly due to SALO's history and structure which was rooted in concerns about Zimbabwe, while being based in South Africa, and understanding particular institutional political spaces in South Africa. "This ... is a book that is fundamentally out of, and part of, a set of political engagements that SALO is continually facilitating."



Professor Moore then shared his thoughts starting with a brief contextual and historical analysis of how the multi-faceted dynamics of the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe informed the past and present situations in terms of elections in that country. In contextualizing SA's role with regards to Zimbabwe and indeed globally, he alluded to the changing global structures, citing the emergence of the BRICS as an example. Furthermore, he discussed how the book detailed and raised questions about recurring historical moments, decisions, and themes such as funding or national sovereignty in the discourse of

politicians. "... history is not destiny, but we can learn from history, otherwise we might be doomed to repeat it. The question is, at what moment do the spaces open up so that change can come from the bottom?"

Prof Moore spoke about how the book managed to capture the 'multiple levels' of dialogue in relation to SA and Zimbabwe relations; in essence an encompassing dialogue that is broad based and representative, which takes place through various channels. He commended SALO, pointing out that "... SALO has actually played a much more active role in having people talk about Zimbabwe and South Africa than is actually in the book."

Prof Moore also noted that the study is able to provide a necessary balance between theoretical analysis and 'clarity of narrative' that captures the nuances of the complex relationships between 'state, party, civil society' when observing SA-Zimbabwe relations. "It's a very subtle book too

because it has to balance all of those relations – state, party, civil society and so on – and balancing academic theory with clarity of narrative with the multiple dimensions that Tara was talking about.”

Sambulo then invited comments and questions from the floor. Along with all the presenters and Chairs from the day’s sessions, contributors included **Richard Humphries** from the South African Foreign Policy Initiative of the Open Society Foundation, **Showers Mawowa**, a SALO researcher, **Trevor Maisiri**, with the International Crisis Group, and **Sox Chikoya** from the Global Zimbabwe Forum.

Trevor Maisiri, a senior analyst for Southern Africa at the International Crisis Group, was requested to give an update on the current election scenario. Mr Maisiri stated that although the recent Maputo meeting, a “game changer”, held on June 15th had highlighted the reforms that must be in place before a credible election could be held, there was a failure to follow up after that meeting.



Once again you see a backward and forward movement by SADC. I mean, a lot of us have praised SADC for the momentum that they’ve built, but I think what SADC has failed to do is to follow-up on that particular momentum. It has failed to push for implementation of the very brave and courageous issues that it has raised, and that has become one of the slumps in terms of the process in Zimbabwe.

He stated that the framework in which President Mugabe was operating was borrowed from other lessons across the region – Madagascar and Zimbabwe had a semblance of similarity in processes: in 2010, Madagascar’s Rajoelina made threats to pull out of SADC; Madagascar used internal legal processes to push back intervention by SADC; and the suspension of Madagascar from SADC did not directly have an impact on the illegitimacy of Rajoelina.

He said that at that moment in Zimbabwe, a lot of the reform issues had fallen away from public debate, and much was centred around the voter’s roll, from the voter registration processes which ended on the 10th of July. Some of the statistics out of this roll that were going to be used for the elections were that:

- There were about 6.2 million voters. This meant that in comparison to the national population statistics taken in 2012, the voter’s roll excluded about two million youths of the ages between eighteen and twenty-five.
- The roll included about 900 000 duplicate entries, so there was already a distortion of about 1.8 million voters.
- There were about 109 000 people technically above the age of 100 years.

- The roll increased the numbers of voters in the rural areas, and very much reduced voters in the urban areas.
- Some of the constituencies had more registered voters than the total number of people populated within them, according to the 2012 statistics.

The contention now was around the MDCs' calling for an audit of the voter's roll before the election. However, the processes did not cater for such an audit after the closure of voters' registration. For there to be an audit, it required the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to bring about a special instrument agreed to by all the parties.

Trevor also reported that early voting had taken place for the uniformed forces. However there were disagreements around the exact number of the eligible voters within the police force. The early voting was also marred by logistical challenges, which spoke to the issue of funding for the election process. Many have asked where the funds are going to come from. However, was the question one of availability of funding or of someone holding onto the funding, releasing it only when it was convenient to do so, thus making it easier to prevent checks and balances?

Trevor Masiri in his analysis asserted that in the event of a disputed election:

it depends on who wins and who disputes. For example, if ZANU (PF) wins and the MDC disputes, it's going to be based on what is the MDC going to dispute on. Because the general feeling in SADC at the moment is that a lot of focus is on political violence and intimidation, which unfortunately or fortunately, is very minimal. And if SADC continues to focus on political violence and intimidation which is minimal, then an eventual MDC dispute of an election in that kind of a scenario is also going to be non-consequential.

However Mr Maisiri pointed out that an important encouragement was that there had never been as much exposure of electoral process irregularities as had been seen in the last two months. The media, particularly social media, and technology had played a large role in this.

Lastly, **Clever Chikwanda**, a SALO researcher, recapped the day's presentations. He thanked SALO's supporters and funders who made the publication possible, and everyone for their input and participation.



The analysis and recommendations included in this Policy Dialogue Report do not necessarily reflect the view of SALO or any of the donors or conference participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. The contents of the report are the sole responsibility of SALO, and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the donors who provided financial assistance for this policy dialogue session.

About the Southern African Liaison Office:



The Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) is a non-governmental organisation which promotes informed process and debate about regional conflicts and crises. SALO does this by organising dialogue events and forums for informed discussion amongst key government and civil society actors from South Africa, the SADC region and internationally, as well as through advocacy, documentary media production, and research and analysis.

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