

Internationally acceptable elections in Zimbabwe: Is this possible in the current political context?

we recreate and we apologize for the title of the of this first in the series and the internationally acceptable election is involved because the election must be first and foremost acceptable to the people of the country concerned to the region the continent and of course the international community nevertheless the question is there is this possible in the culture in the colorado current context and as i said earlier on to help us in this discussion we have zamchir he was an overview and then baba bibi from the electoral resource center and ian golodema from zessen the erc and zessen will be key partners in this process as we go forward with the various sessions that we shall have we've also been bringing to play people from south africa from zambia and malawi and they did from the international community to try and inform our discussion both in terms of educating the developments about the electoral process but also

as a basis of
trying to ensure that if elections are
held they are really held in terms of
universally accepted criteria
so
and i'll call upon
to land some cheer
kick off for us
thank you
professor ibrahandeza
it has been a long day indeed just
coming out of another international
conference where in cape town
is freezing i thought it would be
freezing this time of the year
but thanks for the
invitation
and uh thank you
colleagues for attending
i i see that their people were actually
more
knowledgeable than than me in this room
so perhaps my duty is just to open up
coins of tibet
just
yeah i've got this question is zimbabwe
ready for internationally acceptable
elections
and uh professor ibu mantas has already
clarified that
what we need to do perhaps is to say is
zimbabwe ready for a local regional and
international acceptable democratic
election
and the answer in my view is no
why
i think the political environment
is only ripe for in a and democratic
election
until
something fundamental happens
i think for zimbabwe or any
constitutional democracy for that matter
to get a relatively free and fair

election
there is need to build like local
regional
and international consensus
towards a chain of democratic choice
but then the question is
what would constitute
zimbabwe's chain of democratic choice at
this juncture
and i am arguing that
it must have five premise conditions for
a pillars
that is one
information
true inclusion
three insulation
four integrity and five irreversibility
i think the
five eyes maybe that we can use to
assess
whether zimbabwe is ready for a general
election next year
so maybe i can start by by talking about
information which is one pillar and
i think it's obvious for many people in
this room that
a democratic election
entails the free formation of voter
preferences
so citizens obviously need to have
access
to both aspiring candidates and their
policies
but for this to happen you know people
must have access to the plural sources
of information
and if there's no need for candidates to
have equal
to the public space
is there equal act
of experience
will not give
we
you're breaking very badly i don't know

what's wrong with my talk
yeah
yeah you're breaking
maybe your video turn off your video am
i still broken
yeah
just turn off your video
is it better now
yes
so
where did you lose me
you know we're hearing you but you're in
a broken in a broken form
okay
so
i was talking about the five eyes and i
was talking now about information and
that uh
we should look
currently here
by elections which are also ongoing in
some form
whereby all the opposition candidates
haven't been given equal access to state
media
whether we think of it as the road that
busy chronicles
you've disappeared now
you've disappeared
hello
hello
hello
i hope he hasn't been hit by a south
african power
c
yeah he's gone i don't quite understand
why
yeah even on what's up
hello yeah i think i'm big can you hear
me now
yes we'll hear you what has happened
what did it happen
i i don't know what's happening here
i i won't dramatize

let me try to continue but if i'm real
then you can you can carry it off
okay carry on
yeah let me let me just carry on and see
alpha but be free to tell me when i'm
not being audible so i was still on the
first pillar that is information that is
not just about
the opposition leaders but also about
civil society doing work on political
and civil rights
they are also having limited access to
express
and this is not being covered
as much as it should be
the media but every time you see
civil society activists and opposition
leaders
or national
television is when they are being
excoriated
from this um one premise pillar of
zimbabwe's chain of democratic choice
that of information is still broken
at this danger so second pillar which is
inclusion
obviously citizens must have equal right
to participate without any hindrances be
they illegal
we are seeing all the kind of
laws
sorry the kind of bills that the state
is trying to introduce like your pvo
bill to contain civil society and so
forth or even
for once to universal suffrage
as we have seen during the vote of
registration process
so do all the citizens
have the equal right to participation
i think if we look at the citizens
coalition for change which looks like
the most credible
at the moment or a pope

you know it has been banned from holding
a main rallies in many rural areas uh
let's think of cookware
let's think of condo and finger and
so forth
receive also
first similar bands from exercising its
constitutional objectives
if you look at
creation they have a case in court at
the moment they are challenging
the state for denying it the right to
hold a peaceful match
so here we have the second link
to
zimbabwe's chain of democratic choice
that of inclusion which also appears to
be broken
and then the third is insulation
at once the citizens
have formed their preferences
and attained participate in election
through
registration they must be able to
express their choice freely
and the use of the sacred secret
but
i think it comes ahead in this context
because it's meant even internationally
internationally
to insulate people
from
to insulate people from outside pressure
and jew influence intimidation
it's
croatian
and even briber
are the people zimbabwe insulated
at the moment let me showcase
that it seems that the majority of
people are not insulated because i've
been looking at
uh from january 2022
and it actually signals a sage in

violence and human rights violations and
in that
kind of first half to first quarter to
half of the eight
the three top perpetrators of the
violence
during this period were
one
the cf members who accounted for
45.04 percent of the violations
then second the zimbabwe republic police
which was responsible for
33.1 percent yes of the human rights
violations then the third is the
municipal police
with 5.4
percent
they have been chasing people trying to
eat a livelihood in the informal markets
on the lower scale
the citizens coalition for change led by
nelson chamier chamisa was was
responsible for only
1.73 percent of cases
and if you look at the mdc alliance
led by douglas monzora it was
responsible for 0.15 percent of these
cases
so what you have is that
you have two institutions in the
day-to-day livelihood zanub
and
zrp
accounting for
78.14
of violations
yeah and i think there's a significant
issue here
that the involvement of zrp in about a
third of these violations
actually shows the visible role of the
state
and tends to to
to counter this narrative

that we get things like
position
versus the ruling party there's
involvement of the state here
which i think is very important
i think many colors i see in this room
including
our
eboom unders i see briar of two plus
miles i hope it's now standard you know
they've actually shown this uh symbiotic
relationship between zanu-pf and state
security institutions and to me that is
inimical to to to a democratic election
and these main perpetrators they're
actually targeting ordinary citizens
mainly
it accounts for about 95 percent
and a few
hardcore
cccs
coalition for change particularly
like
if you look at the job scarab if you
look at godfrey stoller they're both
members of parliament and also women
look at the cases of johanna mambe
cecilia chinembiri and nasa maro
occ activists amongst many others
but never yes i think zanu-pf is
actually desperate to advance the
proposition that
it is the opposition party ccc in its
resurgence
that is responsible for political
violence
so i'm not surprised that the npf is now
working with the same zrp and other
intelligence security departments
to prepare fake dossiers
implementing the opposition in violence
but with a specific purpose
to woodwind
region

i had my my sources in the drc telling
me that that was one line
that
the president of zimbabwe was repeating
that we have got an opposition party
that is very violent that also now wants
to go
underground because it doesn't want to
constitute itself
formally so that there's a danger
so so so it's kind of also bearing the
region and the international community
in terms of what might happen to the
opposition
and we are also seeing trumped up
charges of murder against trade unions
uh the case of orbit masarao
and so forth it's not this is not an
unsubstantiated in my view because if
you look at um
uh constantino chiwenga who is the
deputy president of khan
he promised to crash
a few months ago
to crush the opposition
like lies
to even a fly can no longer recognize it
you know this was the same way if we
look historically that robert mugabe
promised to crash
congo
80s with no response from international
community but one can also kind of
deduce
a victimization
from the ruling part militia and
traditional leaders some traditional
leaders in the rural hindu land
so people are living in fear
with no in insulation
and this reminds me
of the late morgan trangrai
whom i interviewed in 2017
and and he explained this to me

he said
i traversed the breadth and length of
rural zimbabwe in early
2017. the people are aware of the
challenges that affect them
must want a change of government
however
the biggest problem is
fear they are afraid to vote for the
opposition
the fear factor is the greatest istanbul
before the opposition come out with a
strategy to deal
with the fear factor
it is going to be difficult
it is from this interview whereby i
conceptualized this as harvest of fear
in my in my political works so fast
forward
you know has anything changed in terms
of insulating the citizens
communities
remain convinced that the 2023 elections
are going to be a nightmare there's a
recent report which came out this year
uh the state of pierce numerous
which reads that
there was consensus
all the communities that participated in
the report in the research that
elections presented a nightmare rather
than an opportunity many community
members are expecting bloodshed ahead of
the 2023 election
they attribute the violence to violent
nature of the ruling party so again
this is kind of
evidence that one link
to zimbabwe's chain of democratic choice
that i'm proposing that of insulation
is broken
then the fourth is about integrity
integrity integrity
and this is about the professionalism

independence and competence of electoral institutions
you know such as the zimbabwe electoral commission
other management institutions but including the judiciary i was very happy to see that
sungai is here because the judiciary is also an important aspect of this electoral process they must these institutions
must be at the center of the integrity of any democratic election in order to avoid
institutional bias in the management of the elections
so
those those in charge of this of management of elections must also be able to demonstrate
that they equally treat the contesting candidates in their subjects
so so so a democratic election should therefore take place
with the confines of an autonomous non-partisan
and independent institution that enjoys the confidence of the citizenry and the contesting parties
is this reflective of zimbabwe today you know a poetry 38 percent of zimbabweans trust isaac
again
the recent state of peace report by zim rice found that
communities have no confidence in electoral systems capacity to deliver democrats
many are convinced that the election outcome is pre-determined
because the institutions are captured
and this confidence is also eroded because of the continued

militarization of zack
chu goomba the chairperson of zeke
acknowledged
you know that was in february 2018
that close to
15 percent
of the zika
permanent
secretariat
of
383 members then
had a military background
but she said she saw nothing wrong with
that
and more recently on the 22nd of january
2022
goomba was also adamant that
who continued to employ the members of
the security sector
during an interview she had with ztn
because
no law
based them
however
there's a history of conflation
of this ruling party and the military
and it has deep historical
rules
i am therefore inclined on this matter
to agree with professor mason
who argues that
antagoning was ruled
we have the security sector controlling
state institutions
everyone knows the role that the army
played in the 2017 coup that ousted
mugabe
given those circumstances when
ex-members
constitute a significant number of the
electoral management board workforce
members of the public are then forced to
ask questions
of impartiality

and credibility of zack
in law
for sure
zeke cannot buy them
but from the public perception it is
problematic
so here again another link uh to my
proposed zimbabwe's chain of democratic
choice that of integrity is broken
and then finally
is the pillar
is
irreversibility as a pillar
i think that winners of any election
must be able to take state power and
exercise their power in line with the
constitutional term limits
hence an election must be decisive
ex-ante as well as irreversible exposed
and to me once this happens then
zimbabwe's chain of democratic choice
flourishes
and no violations
you know due to
irreversibility can include one
stopping winners of the ballroom from
taking state power in 2023
this has happened to shangri-la in 2008
and arguably to chinese in 2018
oral 2
allowing the winners to take power then
frustrate their operations through to
tillage
so so chamisa who is most the most
likely candidate from the opposition
groupings to win
can be allowed
to to get state power
but under conditions that he literally
becomes a hostage of the military with
the military being the guardian not only
of him but as they believe that they are
the guardians of the sovereign interests
of the post-colonial state in zimbabwe

and three
the non-violations can include
masterminding a coup
before the constitutional rights of the
winner's offer
so the opposition can get in
but there can be another
who
as we have read all over the world a
coup usually begins a a another coup
so i zimbabweans setting
of irreversibility
of the votes in 2023
if they happen to
vote for the opposition
the answer to me is most unlikely
if not is cleared no
not until the military coup is cured
and it is not likely to be cured
through
in my view
a general election held by the same
institutions
and now in the absence of these five
eyes i've spoken about it is therefore
not surprising
to hear zanu pf senior officials like
patrick chinamasa saying i quote
as far as we are going
2023 election is a foregone conclusion
in fact it's over before the people vote
unquote
so to me this signals
elections
characterized by procedural
uncertainty
and outcomes eternity fortunately
professor ebola was talking about zambia
zambia managed to back this trend
because of the integrity of because the
integrity of the institutions actually
prevailed
and we can even think also of of america
whereby

donald trump
tried to call
georgia to say no you need to find me
eleven thousand votes and so forth and
in that context the integrity of the
institutions also
also prevailed
but zimbabwe's context
is that
is signaling a political ritual in 2023
or a political theater
meant to legitimize the incumbent
and we have witnessed that on the
african continent in jibbers in shady
uganda the republic of congo
and in zimbabwe this is
going to be exacerbated by two factors
first is the militarized politics which
is prevailing in zimbabwe and on the
african continent togo sudanese mali and
egypt confirmed that militarized
politics is an anathema to electoral
democracy
and second
and interrelated
is the big many politics trumping
institutions in zimbabwe
you know we have seen that governance by
strong men
has failed to deliver electoral
democracy uh in africa by sago of
equatorial guinea in power for 41 years
he had a sham election in 2016 where he
said he got 93.7 percent of the vote
you look at your sister of egypt
he held a sham election as well in 2018
with a dramatic 97 percent win
go to cameroon spoke
in power for 38 years
he had another phony election in 2018 he
should be 89 years old now
and paul kagan of rwanda a strong man on
the continent also seems allergic to
electoral democracy now in zimbabwe you

have got this new strong man munangagwa
who has shown
non-pensions
for genuine democratic
reforms despite his promises when he
took over power
the country now heads for another
political ritual in 2023 disguised as a
general election let me conclude for the
sake of time by saying that
i think it is important
to look at the five eyes that have
proposed
as analytic
and prescriptive lens
analytic in this sense
to to to help practitioners
to assess
whether zimbabwe is ready for a
relatively democratic election
constitutionally due in 2023
and prescriptive uh may be in the sense
that it can help practitioners
to build local
regional
and international consensus
that that the five eyes
information
inclusion
integrity
insulin integrity insulation and
irreversibility
constitute zimbabwe's chain of
democratic choice
and to make sure that
whatever political transitional
arrangements and or reforms
prioritize investment
in the five
eyes
thank you chairperson
ever
thank you very much
devastating account we're worried that

your
technology there might
have let us down but
we have really come through and you have
in doing so you have really set
at the frame
of the discussion not only for today
but
in the
nine sessions that follow
in subsequent months and i just wonder
what we can say
anymore that you have said already in
this discussion
he has laid out
the prerequisites
for a free and fair election in zimbabwe
and devastatingly it demonstrated that
we don't have
any of those five pillars yet
on the contrary all the indications that
we are in
for a disastrous 2023 election
unless and until
as you have said in your concluding
remarks
we attend
analytically
and prescriptively
to the five pillars thank you very much
i think it's is most informative
as devastating as it is uh i think
it helps to highlight
and now i see some of our
honest
discussion this this morning on with
joan richie and colleagues of salo
i hope joan that
sam cheers account has answered some of
the issues raised this morning
so now we turn to erc
to barbara baby
oh baba is not is not too intimidated
by

some cheers outline
thank you so much uh ebal for uh giving
me the flow uh good evening everyone uh
thanks pilani for
raising uh those very you know pertinent
issues uh from um
the political environment regarding uh
whether or not uh zimbabwe is ready uh
for an election that will be acceptable
but
at the domestic level at the domestic
level at the regional level and at the
international level
in the morning i did a
request for your presentation at pilani
and unfortunately
that wasn't ready for me so uh for the
purposes of this conversation you allow
me uh to actually go to my nuts and ah
to highlight i'm going to refer to your
presentation but also uh just add to to
what you've already uh highlighted
i think our discussion uh for today um
we need to frame it uh from the
perspective that from the point of view
that um
a lot of recommendations uh that uh
international domestic uh regional and
international observers
gave after the 2018 elections uh remain
uh unimplemented and because of that uh
i think uh zimbabwe is not really ready
uh for um the environment is not
conducive for every and fair uh election
so i'm going to highlight uh some of the
issues uh that i think um
you know point uh to this uh to this
fact
uh the first one is really the issue um
what uh pilani referred to as uh the
integrity the integrity pillar from the
five pillars that he shared with uh with
us today so the issue concerns the
pending alignment of the electoral act

uh to the 2013 constitution
uh for those that uh have been following
developments uh you you probably are
aware that the int uh developed a draft
bill which took into consideration the
recommendations from observers and the
two bills that were drafted by uh civil
society this is the veritas
bill as well as the zesny bill
the model int uh electoral amendment
bill is currently uh under review by the
attorney general's office
but the bill uh itself uh if it is
passed in into law is going to help
address uh some of the the weaknesses uh
in the electoral framework and also help
to improve uh the integrity of the
election
uh the second uh point uh or critical
issue that i would like to to raise uh
here concerns uh zac the zeke
administration
that is our issues regarding uh
strengthening the independence of the
electoral commission and the way that
the commission uh generally conducts
itself uh as pilani has already
mentioned this there are contestations
by political parties or should i say the
political class in terms of the
impartiality of zack
some of the issues
raised by observer missions concerning
zak conduct remain unaddressed
like for instance
the ineffective continuous voucher
registration processes
lack of communication or should i say
effective communication with
stakeholders
uh issues regarding um
voter education
where there is need for more
comprehensive implementation of voter

education and uh the contentious issue around voter registration we do know that uh zach has conducted voter registration blitz exercises uh in the past month uh to try and ramp up uh the statistics uh on voter registration but the figures uh continue to be low and there is need for zek uh to actually uh do that but in addition to that i think uh the the issues related to the integrity of the voters role uh itself uh is the erc we have uh we did and at uh several anomalies uh with uh the january 2022 uh voters role that uh was available to uh political parties and um we note that uh when we approached uh zach uh when we sent our recommendations to zach uh concerning uh some of these some of the anomalies that we we unearthed uh in the 2022 uh voters role uh zek was not forthcoming in terms of um actually talking to us and uh informally informing us in terms of how they were going to address uh those issues so i think for um for an election a credible election to be held i think the voters role needs to be um to be acceptable uh to stakeholders i do know that uh you know nobody's role is perfect but at least it should meet some minimum conditions and uh it should be available to stakeholders uh for audit purposes so that stakeholders can also uh give recommendations to zach for it to be improved i think that's one issue that's another issue and then the dead issue really uh concerns uh deepening political polarization and this is an issue that uh i think pilani uh spoken uh discussed in is highlighted in this

presentation

at length um

i think the role of the security uh in the application of newly introduced laws such such as the maintainance of peace and order act

is one uh one issue that uh i i would like to highlight

if we look at the by-elections uh the recently held uh by-elections the by-elections that were held in march uh the opposition uh was the the security uh forces uh they used uh this law uh the mpo a law uh to actually restrict uh

the opposition um

opposition activities and so there is need for uh the the appropriate application of the law in order to create an environment that's conducive for all political players uh to campaign uh we've also seen the treatment of politicians um that this treatment of politicians actually compromises security uh in the sense that um

it does uh it can provoke uh violence uh when uh other political when the opposition for instance uh decides to uh retaliate uh due to that impartial you know our behavior from the security uh there are issues related to what buying uh abuse of state resources amongst others those are issues that really compromise the integrity of the election

and also uh above everything else uh the lack of accountability for human rights abuses and the excessive use of force by security agencies against civil civilians also kind of exacerbates uh existing tensions

um i also would like to note that uh the recommendations from the mongolian you

know uh commission uh for instance they remain um unimplemented uh recommendations around uh getting those that perpetrated the violence to be accountable to be held to account and then the fourth issue that i would like to highlight uh contains creating a level playing field and an environment that is conducive for an inclusive election campaign pilani has already mentioned this that the campaign environment is currently not level um we he did highlight issues concerning uh the fact that uh the opposition is not even able to campaign in rural areas uh and the fact that civil society itself uh we always forget civil society the fact that civil society is also unable to conduct its activities uh freely uh the recent case of the crisis coalition um match that was uh the crisis coalition meeting prayer rally that was dubbed by the police um these are issues that compromise uh the credibility of an election and then lastly uh issues to do with uh media related um legal reforms um i think i will not dwell much on this because uh pilani in his uh presentation did speak to this uh at length uh under his under the what he called the information uh pillar but i'll let me allow me to uh talk about this from the perspective of disinformation that we need mechanisms for countering you know disinformation and um this is important because uh if you go on twitter for instance uh there's a lot of disinformation that is

happening and that on itself uh that in itself can actually compromise the integrity of an election uh in the sense that if our people are not getting uh accurate information it can uh affect the electoral process so that's one thing that perhaps uh at this platform we may need to discuss in terms of what can be done uh to challenge uh disinformation uh from the political players and also another question that i would like to pose is um concerns uh the security pilani did highlight that um the security uh there is there is that conflation between zanu-pf as a political party and uh the security sector and that the security sector seems to be in control of the actual of the institution that is supposed to deliver the so-called uh you know a credible election uh and that is supposed to manage all the electoral processes so if that is the case the question that i would like to pose uh is what can be done uh how can we build the citizens confidence uh you know given that there are these personalities that we've already highlighted the military in zach and how can zach build his confidence build citizen confidence uh in it as an institution uh with that given that we are already saying that it is compromised because of the personalities of the individuals that are within that institution and also because of the conflation between these key institutions uh zach included amongst you know the police also included and other you know key institutions that are critical for the holding of um

of free and fair elections i think i
would just uh end here uh but maybe
let's just out i would be interested in
hearing what we have to say about
dealing with uh you know the security
sector
how can we build uh the confidence our
you know the the public's confidence uh
on on on zach what can zach do and what
can services
public confidence in that institution or
to push for a more um to push
for zach to be more accountable
to the public
i think i'll end there
yeah thank you barbara
you just helped to highlight
problems that uh some chair had raised
and the question really is do we are we
what are we going to do about it you
talk about zach
he took the militarization of politics
you talk about confidence
we are less than a year away from
elections
is there any hope that we
can remedy these problems in time
for the elections and there therefore
have to ask
uh boridema from zessen this mob literal
support network
an organization very
central
uh in the electoral process in terms of
monitoring
the process towards the election
what
how do you see things
in the light of what both samshir and
barbara have said
goradeva
well thank you very much
i will also try not to i also want to
open the video because i'm not sure you

know whether my internet is stable
enough
thanks a lot to the colleagues that
spoke before me um
uh barbara
um thank you very much i think you did
this plenty job off um
give us giving us an expose of um where
things stand
in in the likelihood of us having
elections that can be accepted locally
and also internationally
and
i think after all this that is being
said allow me to
to sort of also summarize
the important highlights that i think we
should um also speak to in the
deliberations that will happen after
um the speakers are done
and and then firstly i think in in what
barbara said in what um uh
dr zamchi also said it is very clear
that there's something very wrong with
our political culture because um
political culture is what determines
the standards or the the norms that get
to be accepted in
a
setting and then so there's something
very wrong with the norms and the
behaviors that our political interests
find acceptable because these are the
ones that have led for us to be in
situations whereby
after key electoral processes there is
huge contestation
for me
the electoral framework is quite key in
in helping to support an election
um that can be regarded as an election
that meets the critical integrity
requirements for a free and fair
election

so so yes there are things that we need to work on in order to improve the quality of of electoral laws that are in place but we cannot end with the electoral laws alone we need to look beyond the electoral laws to include the other critical pieces of legislation that need improvement and and as it stands we really are falling behind in that regard because after every electoral cycle is what barbara has already alluded to the a series of recommendations that are evidence-based that election observation missions always proffer to the different stakeholders in any election and when you look at our own scenario in zimbabwe we have a raft of them this i think summarized over 225 recommendations from electoral stakeholders from electoral observation missions and then summed them up into 115 recommendations so very little has been done to in terms of uptick by the relevant authorities of these recommendations and what that points to is us getting into the 2023 elections without a significant improvement in the political flows that are in place in the way that the election management body has been managing his processes when you compare with the previous electoral cycle so that is why the cause of concern um is this in in this barbara also alluded to we tried to learn from the past because it's a bad practice to introduce a raft of new laws on the eve of an election so we started from 20

on the 2018 in december 2018 to work on
on on enlisting civil society and other
stakeholders views on what
sections of the electoral laws need to
be changed
and and you can imagine from that time
there's really not been a significant
movement uh in parliament with regard to
um moving those amendments yes there's
significant and unprecedented
consultations that have happened but it
appears there's no political will from
the politicians themselves to see uh
significant changes in the current laws
the speakers complained the the alias
speakers also complained about the
the conduct of critical stakeholders
like the security services
um the sector their role in elections
and unfortunately one of the
important ingredients that was going to
help
change in the conduct of the security
services
is
what
the constitution in its wisdom had
suggested you know the setting up of an
independent complaints mechanisms you
know that allows for your ordinary
citizens to be able to
lodge complaints against the security
sector's conduct whenever they feel that
they are agreed and so that doesn't that
doesn't happen you know section 210 of
the constitution has not been
operationalized and that's um an
important component that needs to come
on board you know for us to then be able
to better reign in on the conduct of um
the the uniformed forces um
and and also try to moderate
their role in contribution in elections
i think we also agree that

the role of traditional leaders has not necessarily been helpful in in strengthening the integrity of electoral processes they've really played the outright partisan role in the man in which they involved themselves in elections and this is very sad and again um the constitution again suggested the setting up of um the ethics and integrity um you know uh committee for the traditional chiefs and then if this had been set up you know it would be easier also i believe to reign on the conduct of traditional chiefs because that committee would be given the mandate of making sure that the traditional leaders act is adhered to um and so unfortunately um like what the previous speakers have said it's uh it's it's it's a gloomy picture that we have to paint unfortunately just look at what is currently obtaining there's much work that needs to be done in very little time much that needs to be done to improve the the quality of legislation that's available we are aware that beyond the civil society model law or or which we prepared uh we know the exec itself is um he sort of audience with the minister of justice to try to get their own amendments considered ahead of next year's election unfortunately this is not shared with the other stakeholders what these um recommendations look like but it's very clear that on either the the side of the of the electoral stakeholders and also on the side of the commission it's very clear everyone one certain

part of the electoral law improved uh
some was repealed some parts are meant
that it's very clear that um there is a
consensus on that bit but as to whether
this will happen
whether whether significant amendments
or reforms to the current act will
happen
ahead of 2023 is still uh something that
we all wonder because of the pace at
which uh these conversations have moved
it appears uh we are moving around in
circles in time is first running out
because the window for
uh for seeing these amendments coming
through is also closing
but um
in as much as we may talk about
improvements that need to be
made to the to the existing legislation
i think it's also very clear that um
the the conduct of the politicians the
political will um to do what is right
uh to behave within the confines of the
law is also something that's very key
and it's also something that has been
causing or eroding the quality of
electoral processes in the country
because of um the many um i think any
general anecdotal pieces that the good
doctor gave us about uh specific um
instances where political actors have
been caught um on the wrong side of the
law um doing things that erode the
confidence intellectual processes um and
that he wrote the quality of electoral
processes that day so so this is the mix
of things that we need to see coming
through
improvements at law but more importantly
in my view improvements in the in in how
politicians conduct themselves is they
are going about canvassing for votes is
there participating in elections that is

i think the one thing that is quite key
and then so i'll throw this back to the
meeting and say so how do we then
influence
um the the political culture
that is currently existing because it's
the one that's that is toxic this one
that is not very being very helpful so
that's also something that i see is that
is a key piece or key component that
needs um to change
um so i don't know but they might be to
you um
dr madison
thanks
thanks very much
so here we have it
all
three speakers
the last two echoing the first
we have if there was an audit
the audit will be very negative one
so at the end of this i'll be asking
the panelists but especially zessen and
drc
to answer the question that if
by october november
the audit shows that we cannot have
a valid election
what do we what do we do
can we honestly come to the to the
platform
and say it clearly
that we are not likely to have free and
fair elections
and if not
what then
is the question i'm going to raise but
i take it it's a question that all of us
can consider now
as i invite
you to make
comments as you wish
raise your hands

and let's go
yes tony
turn evening
yeah
hello can you hear me
yes
thank you thank you very much everybody
thank you phil
thank you barbara and thank you ian
as a partner in this process with uh
sapphires
i'll point out that round saplings have
been working on elections for
considerable time certainly 2000 and
2018
and i think in that time
we've learned a number of things that
are relevant and important right now and
probably more important than that
the first point i want to make is that
it is indisputable
that zimbabwe
is the most violent country in the
region when it comes to elections
finland raised those points quite
clearly
but it
makes us an outlier of a very serious
kind
so that's incredibly important and that
really speaks to this whole notion
that fidan raised
on inclusion and i posted a little bit
of a report that rao wrote recently on
organized violence and torture and
elections and it's a very very sorry
tale
so we should not uh
underestimate
the problems of reducing inclusion
not merely the organized violence and
torture but we also need to look at the
ways in which the population is
manipulated through clientelism and

through patronage and through various other mechanisms
the second point relates to phil's point about information
and in particular the closing off of civil society space
and here one has to talk very bluntly about the pvo act whose intention is quite clear is to constrain and even eliminate the capacity of civil society and human rights groups to be able to document the violence intimidation coercion that takes place during elections
zimbabwean civil society has been exemplary in the way in which it is able to document the violations that take place and it's quite clear and any person who reads the pvo act from its beginning a long time ago never mind the completely egregious amendments to it the intention was to stop us being able to influence elections in any particular way at all
the third point and this is very important and this is about irreversibility
and this links to the analysis that jonathan moyo did unfortunately too few people have been able to read this book because it's not online
but the point he makes in the process of the 2018 elections is the centrality of the courts being able to be in able to influence the outcome of an election
it was an astounding constitutional court decision
it was brief
avoided the main issues and in the end

came to a decision about that election
with complete consensus
and anybody who analyzes the behavior of
the supreme court in the constitutional
court
over the past decade or so
will be in under no illusion
that when the court has to deal
with
deep and difficult political
decisions
it is unanimous
now that in itself
is a a red flag
judges
never
come to complete consensus there's
always a dissenting judgment or a point
in lemonade
this courts and our courts come to
consensus without any demure
and that's a fundamental point about the
whole point about
the whole thing about irreversibility is
the court's a major problem
and then you come to
some of the minor points and the only
one i want to raise right now
and this is one of these technical
issues is the whole issue of the votes
as well
and the ability of citizens to
interrogate their voters wrong now we
can tell you from rao from our own
bitter experience
the difficulty
in having
the ability to
analyze it
is enormous zach plays enormous
difficulties in the way of being able to
scrutinize the voters wrong
in
2013

when we finally managed to get a copy of
the votes as well rao found something
like 170 000
people on the voter's role who had
duplicate ids
and they were distributed
75 percent of them
in math north matt south and bulaware
now you can imagine the ability of
partisan voters
with duplicate voters
ids to be able to vote in multiple ways
and thus
that audit
demonstrated why the result in 2013
showed this enormous change in that
ability
commentators claimed that because of the
splitting of the boat actually it wasn't
due to the splitting of the vote it was
due to the ability to vote multiple
times
and therefore the ability of civil
society and anybody to look at the vote
as well and to do an analysis of it
which cannot be tampered with zek
continuously claims that any access to
the voter's role will result in
tampering this is complete nonsense the
only way you can tamper with the voters
orders if you can get into the machine
that controls the voters will
but the copies of the voter's role
should be open to scrutiny and public
scrutiny it should be on the internet it
should be available to everybody in the
way that it is
in
some democratic countries like south
africa
so the point i'm making is that the
hurdles
in front of this election are
considerable

and the major point of this whole exercise between rao and sap is is that every election stands and falls on the outcome what results are announced very rarely do we come to a position where we say we've done the analysis on the pre-election uh climate and all the technical conditions that should make for decent election and if they are not present then we have to call the election foul ahead of time because the history we have is that we call the election foul after the time and then as zebo pointed out in the beginning then all the internationals leave they write pious reports and a government that is largely illegitimate because of an illegitimate election moved steadfastly from de jure today from de facto today in a matter of months this cannot happen in this election and that's why the series of webinars the ninth coming are critical for understanding why a pre-election audit must be to some kind of conclusion about the conditions and if those conditions are unfavorable what will be the next steps thank you very much thanks tony uh reference bender hussein expanded have you withdrawn no i have not uh thank you so much well first thanks to dr table for

and suppose for uh you know affording
this opportunity
i think it's really bringing
the much needed capacity in terms of uh
vigorous intellectual thinking
about dialections before we get there
i just wanted to find out
from doctors francis you know what one
thing could be done
that could turn things around
um that's my my first question but also
i wanted to say maybe we need to be i'm
sure maybe part of your
uh series that's coming
might be to say what are the solutions
because i think we need to bring some
thought leadership
into say okay yes we've described the
problems we know what could happen
we see it but really what is the
solution what one thing could be done or
several things that could be done to
shift things so that this election turns
out differently and then in terms of
information i'm wondering if any
research has been done
to say as we stand now what is the reach
of that pistol what's the reach of herald
and chronicle are they really important
now considering the reach of the social
media most people are receiving
information through whatsapp
through facebook
which is penetrating into the rural
areas
so what is the reach of zpc now i know
people are worried let's have zpc and so
forth but
um what's the alternative studio seven i
think at one point i remember they done
their research and they were talking of
reaching over a million maybe now it's
much much more that was some years back
how many people are reached by studio

seven develop and shona programming um
so where should people invest democratic
forces why should we invest in terms of
you know yes it's good to push the
public media to actually give space to
other people agree but what are the
alternatives the elections that have
been won in the region zambia has been
more in social media the young people
being reached through social media
the work has not been on the
public media station
it has been more on social media
what will be the impact of the community
radio stations that are being opened now
maybe that's another thinking that needs
to be done to say there's so many
community radio stations that are
indigenous languages that are being
opened what would be their impact to be
like
and then in terms of
well i'm glad that you you had explained
earlier on about
that we shouldn't it's good to focus on
what is acceptable to the international
community but i think what would be our
local
threshold as zimbabweans
you know
what would we want to see if if the
people say we want to see our election
this is the election we want
this is the kind of election we want
i i don't know for example erc how much
work has been done to make zimbabwe and
say
this is the election we want
yes
this is the kind of an election that we
want and there's about when we begin to
work towards it
uh what work has been done
by these institutions thank you and

thanks uh reverence abandon i think
you've raised two very important points
one
in addition to
outlining the pathologies that i
attended to the process so far
what could be done
to turn things around
is certainly a
a topic that you want to
to take up
and and and we can also say that some of
us have been looking at this and we we
made reference to the idea of an
international conference
during which the audit will be done
and and at the end of which we must
decide that if elections are to be held
wha what is the role
of civic society
of zimbabwe as a whole
the region
and the international community my own
view of prima facie is that
the the
it's hardly likely that we were able to
turn things around in time for election
and unless
we
insist on some kind of international
internationally supervised elections
a tall order but i can't see how we can
have
a free and fair election
one is reminder of 1980 elections
which was which were really
internationally supervised to certain
extent
is that a possibility
you know we will discuss this these and
other issues as we go on
with the series
you raised the issue of the state media
and i wondered what what was the input

of your of your question do you think
the state media outreach
is of any use given that state media is
captured as well
and lastly the point you make about what
are the minimum conditions
acceptable to zimbabweans to go ahead
with the election
these are some of the cool issues we're
going to discuss
as we proceed with our our series the in
the weeks and months ahead
but now i see
hand is up
oh yeah
amanda
yes
oh yeah sure so um
okay can you hear me yes
okay so you did ask the question what
would happen
uh if we were to get closer to the
election and
the
conditions that we've just highlighted
uh still are still the same um
my response to that is that uh is um i
think it would be unwise for us to get
closer to an election and still have you
know been talking about the same issues
why am i saying that i think
because we we need to begin to uh think
about ways in which we can push for a
more congestive environment for
elections to be held and also we need to
begin to think about what we can learn
uh from other countries like the kenya
election uh that you spoke about uh at
the beginning of the meeting
there are a lot of things that we can
learn
from kenya
they didn't just you know wait till the
last minute to address uh some of the

issues uh in the in the electoral environment but they started months back to actually work on the electoral environment and push for reforms so what i would say is that uh we need to be very practical in terms of how we uh we engage with this election combining our philosophical thinking about the political environment about the previous elections with more practical you know uh approaches in terms of what exactly needs to be done like for instance if the if we need the uh the electoral act to be aligned uh to the 2013 constitution we need to push that and make sure that uh it is aligned and take the boxes in terms of what exactly has been included in the in in the amendment in the in the new act so so let's be practical in terms of how we we approach the election that's one thing uh that i would say uh and also let's try and uh learn from from other countries uh and also learn from from history in terms of what happened in the past and how can we change and maybe lastly just to say that let's try and change the narrative you see this narrative that says uh the election is a foregone conclusion is not going to help motivate civil society to push for reforms neither is it going to help the citizens out there to go out and register to vote and to vote on election day but it will only serve to make everybody you know reluctant or just to say i am not going to participate in a flawed process but as civil society actors how do we balance highlighting the issues the contentious issues that are in the environment with ensuring that we continue to build that momentum you know within uh civil

society and amongst citizens for them to participate we already know that uh as it is the registration figures are for for young voters is very low so if you go to a young person and you tell uh the young person some of the things that we've talked about here uh that young person will not be willing to register to vote because they'll be like oh so if this election is going to be stolen why should i register to vote so how do we balance uh the narrative in civil society and as civil society how do we also collectively work together like for instance uh in in kenya we had uh e-log uh an observation group uh a com which is like a collection of uh civil society organizations faith-based institutions coming together to collectively uh monitor the electoral environment election day and we did see how uh this group actually was uh instrumental was at the forefront of releasing the result of telling the results and releasing them to the public i think it's something that we may need uh to think about and lastly maybe uh the issue concerning uh the management of the results itself uh there is a lot of um we can learn a lot from uh from kenya in terms of how they actually uh managed uh the results uh process uh although of course uh towards the end of the process we did see that um somehow they stopped updating uh you know uh their portal with the results and that prompted uh is it the azimio uh coalition to then think that the election had been stolen but i must say that that you know uh system itself uh was seemed to be transparent and accountable and it is a welcome development that maybe a

zimbabwe we need to think about and to
say how can we push zach for a more
transparent and accountable result
management system so that we can uh
to use uh
kilani's uh as killer so that we can
also
perhaps protect uh the votes at the end
of the day
thank you
yeah thanks barbara i'll be coming back
to you at the end as i said
nonetheless to ask the same question
what do we do come
november and we come to the conclusion
that
the conditions for free fair and
peaceful elections are not there
that the five pillars that some chairs
refer to are not in place
that to quote zamcha
that there is unlikely to be a free fair
and free and fair election
in the context of a military
state
militarized
zac
and and to add the point he made there
can be no free and fair elections and
until
and unless the coup is cured
it's something to consider at the end i
could now call on amanda emma amanda
welcome and nice to see you again yeah
thank you very very much and i i just
want to first of all recognize all the
um incredibly deep and articulate and
moving inputs from from all of you who
presented and commented and
you know being a bit far away in
scandinavia but still in my entire body
feeling um you know feeling what we're
talking about here but um so there's a
lot that's been covered and i'm

support the the insights and everything
when i was just trying i just want to
bring up a few a few things okay so the
things that have been laid on the table
are not unfamiliar to us it's so it's
not so much that we don't know and that
we've yet to understand we are more
deeply understanding as we go along and
there's more to be done and
a lot of the institutions and the ones
that barbara and ian in particular
represent and suppers and and rao and
others
we we know a lot of this we've witnessed
it we've seen we've literally seen it in
our eyes if we've anybody seen the film
democrats we've watched
literally in our in front of our eyes
what zek was doing in the constitutional
courts um
you know during the 2018 elections okay
so there's a huge amount of work to be
done barbara you're incredibly up um i
love and feel the optimism and the the
sort of
the energy and i think there is there is
that and and there are more
visible and more subtle ways in which to
support the things that you're talking
about but what i'm going to come to
more is that we know that
let's say the international and the
regional the trans-african perspective
or dimension is that you're talking
about some lessons from you know
learning lessons from kenya or zambia
but i think it's more than having to
learn lessons one can observe what
they've done
i'm very interested about where the
alliances are i don't mean just within
zimbabwe but where are regional
trans-african alliances in the sense of
countries that have established

democratic practices that have
credibility
is there any way in which and and who
would make those moves to
um strengthen the alliances of those
outside of zimbabwe to whom
some greater accountability
buys on epf by zac by by the
institutions that are constitutionally
formed in zimbabwe where there is a
level of accountability
diametrically
opposed to um impunity because we the
things that have been laid on this table
are known
broadly speaking more details are needed
but
the the need for reforms are there but
the lack of reforms the lack of
commitment to reforms the lack of
accountability in domestically is just
extraordinary
so where
are there possibilities for alliances
and and we know those can't be
you know with with um
western countries so much but within the
continent where are the commitments
within the continent where are the
alliances within the continent that
strong bodies inside zimbabwe can work
with and and build up
another kind of layer of accountability
not just during the elections but as you
say
calling this this pre-election audit
that audit is part of free and fair
elections but it's one thing to do it
internally but
as barbara you were talking about an
external um observation mission but
okay can somebody talk about african
alliances
thanks

thanks amanda thank you
we will leave the panelists to respond
to your question earlier but and this is
someone
else in the in the audience who wants to
attend to that but i think the point
you've made is very very important
that the red flag is up really on the
survival situation it has been up there
since 2017 and even earlier
and given that uh many of those in the
in the so-called international community
supported the coup in 2017
and they prepared to come to the to the
platform now
and and and and and and
in the context of an acknowledgement
that things have got gotten worse
that the 2018 election itself defied
the odds
a year after cool early year after the
coup you're expecting a free and fair
elections under under a coup government
is that crazy
and so what what what is to be done not
only by zimbabweans but by zimbabweans
in concert with the international
community
with the region with the continent
to ready to to to highlight these
problems that some shares
has done so well
and to which both uh barbara and
and ian have responded
and to take up the points that barbara
has raised and yourself amanda
and and reverend hussein is ubanda
is anything can be done
before
the audit before the elections
to turn things around
any more comments before i call on the
panelists to come in
any more

tony your end up again
tony is your hand up again
yeah sorry to be a ball but amanda's put
the problem on the table
and you raised it at the beginning
you said elections have to be acceptable
to us to the region
to africa as a whole and then to the
world well the problem is
domestically and i'm going to be
conflictual about this
if the opposition
plays fast and loose with elections
then we have a problem
now you can't go into an election
claiming that you can be winners at the
same time that you say
the election is going to be flawed
now you have to have a conditionality in
that unless the ccc and the opposition
political parties
look at the pre-election audit and they
call it foul ahead of time and they take
a decision about what needs to happen
next then why should anyone else listen
to us because then we go through the
same game
that two parties contest for an election
and everybody waits to see the result
and we've just seen that in kenya and
then everybody goes oh gosh that was a
disaster
but it's your problem now
so unless there's clarity within
zimbabwe on this pre-election audit why
should anybody else listen to us
can i just clarify but i'm not
suggesting that we i'm suggesting that
this alliance is part of
working in the order the audit needs to
be something quite wide
i would say and get and get a sort of a
strength and a support for it from more
than just i mean it is an internal audit

but it surely needs
alliance allies that's all i meant
no i i heard you i think that's that's
that's why the idea of the international
conference in november
to provide not only an audit
but also in anticipation of a negative
of a qualified audit
and therefore to decide what to do
in the months ahead in the seven months
or to eight months for the election what
must be done given that elections will
be held
with or without uh the approval of civic
society of the political parties
there is no powerful proceed this
there's a mobile state to proceed with
the elections come what may
not at least when they expect
as they as they've done in the past that
they'll they're they're going to win
inventor commerce
so any more comments i'll take three
more and then we
go back to the panels
anybody else
john you want to come in john brigio
joan
in that in that case i will now go back
to the panels
and ask
or begin with uh
ian gorediema
your last words
not only about what we have discussed
which is really the negative aspects
the pathologies of this mobile situation
but also what you think can be done
up to the audit at least in november to
turn things around
ian
um thanks a lot um
it is a really hard question because the
things that need to be done are very

difficult and for me like i said earlier
on
the absence of political will to
deliver a clean election then there's
not much that any
civil society or other stakeholders can
do because at the end of the day
the politicians being the primary
stakeholders in an election
are the ones that are totally
responsible for determining the quality
of electoral processes we can enjoy as
well as um allowing the commission to do
its work and in that or unimpaired and
then so if politicians decide to um get
in the way of the commission in
delivering a credible election
in delivering credible electoral
processes it's very difficult for anyone
else to do anything because at the end
of the day they will
the power
and and they have access to um
the law enforcement agencies who they
can
instruct um to to behave one way or the
other in a manner that then obviously um
entrenches or you know
the rise in the enjoyment of rising
political rights by other electoral
protesters
so so
the the things that are required
you know for um
a government to play ball
with electoral reforms obviously uh
debating i'll put it squarely on again
the opposition to say what kind of
political um
political pressure are they able to come
up with because the the things that we
are talking about uh having an audit of
intellectual processes and then
expecting that body to determine whether

we have an election or not
it can only be done by people with the
adequate muscle intellectually financial
um the the people behind them to be able
to send a strong and clear and
unambiguous message to the powers that
be that you can't proceed with an
election because you've not met abcd um
criteria so it's easy to have an audit
but unless
those that are conducting they already
have that kind of power they have that
kind of influence have that kind of
muscle then still that body do not
necessarily achieve the desired or
required you know effects or impacts on
the the course of our election so so i i
don't want to sound like i'm a pessimist
you know by saying that but i'm just
saying
um when you look at our electoral
processes so far between 2018 and now in
as much as we know we've not made
significant strides
but yes they are marginal you know small
improvements that we begin to see
look at the census and statistical edge
that that that amendment came through
because of
sustained uh pressure from specifics um
to say please uh move forward the census
uh process so that at least we can allow
for the boundary limitation to happen
and and then be concluded within the
time frames that um are given by the
constitution small gains small victories
you may think they are inconsequential
but i would believe with the kind of
muscle that we currently have we have
uh the power to be able to impact or to
on on incremental changes to the process
to the electoral law to the behavior
of
the political agents that is well within

the power that we currently have i need
someone to convince me that with power
for a revolution because that's an
entirely different ball game all
together you really need different
tactics different muscle you need you
really need to have the people behind
you and all of them are the majority of
them you know so so so for me i think we
also need to take stock of what we are
capable of doing
yes we want uh heaven on earth we want
um the best electoral processes but we
also need to be very
i think honest with ourselves to say so
what what power do we have
what are we able to achieve with that
power and then be able to then
realistically expect certain things to
happen so so so this is what i throw
back to the meeting and saying if um
we could get you know any reflections of
that that would be nice also what are we
realistically able to achieve
with the power that we have with the
resources that we have access to um
thank you
no i will throw a question back at you
uh here in korea yes
not your personal capacity but existence
what do you
you have been on the on the scene for a
long time just
you know obviously you are you are
witness to what we're discussing
exactly
what have you what have you considered
as the possible options
in the light of what has been said you
know in the light of what you know to be
the the the obstacles to a free and free
election or are you as certain just
going into the next election as you have
done before

what is what are the conditions there so
you're just prepared for the next
selection come watch man
or you have other
considerations
yes so so so i think i i think allow me
to explain
the role that we play is
because there are things that we are not
in the
things that we are
so we are a domestic election
observation group
we saw responsibility and if you look at
our mission statement it outlines this
we are responsible for providing
sustained oversight over electoral
processes
now when we do that what we are doing is
that we are gathering the evidence to
then say to what extent is the
is the election management body and the
other electoral stakeholders ideating to
set
intellectual codes of conduct as well as
the electoral law itself and once we
gather that evidence our role is to
disseminate that information
not just disseminating the information
but our role is to then utilize the
information for lobbying in advocacy
purposes so that at least our action
points our advocacy points are not
informed by opinions or
or or preferences but they are evidence
based to say this is where we are
falling short this is what we need to
work on now many stakeholders are not
too happy with such a strategy because
they expect you to be able to overtake
an election result to be able to um to
do to move mountains that you can't move
our contribution is very clear once we
do that we expect political actors to

take up our recommendations
um then um be able to galvanize you know
their supporters towards the course of
action having been informed on exactly
what pitfalls or what shortfalls are
they intellectual processes so so this
is not a job for one organization or one
institution really they are collective
and quantitative efforts that all the
stakeholders in the country must be
ceased with
there is a unique contribution of
political parties there is something
that if they don't do there's nothing
that's the civil society may be able to
do so if they don't do their be the
civil side will not be able to achieve
much so we have limitations as to what
we can do as organizations and we are
very clear about that
so so so this is my answer to you to say
we we we don't we you know we apart from
continually looking at how we can
improve our electoral process in
suggesting the best way forward uh
helping with the adequate research on on
in competitive studies on how others are
handling their business
um there's only so much we can do like
for instance i gave you an example we
would require the constitution
sections 187 for the traditional leaders
ex ethics and the integrity committee we
also want to tend to be operationalized
which allows for citizens to have a
recourse whenever they feel their rights
have been violated by those in
the uniformed forces so apart from that
if that is not there you can imagine
what what can jesus do against um the
military what again they do we don't
have much power against that we are also
wanting these other points to be in
place so that at least we can also

leverage on existing law to be able to then uh move things forward so so that's my long and winding answer and i think it also expresses the frustration that we also have about the limited capacity that we have in influencing some of these processes like for instance i've given you we started in 2018 working on uh pushing for amendments you can imagine in the absence of um the executive playing ball then then really all those efforts will come to not and there's nothing we can do about that we can't force the attorney general to craft uh or to draft the law this way or that way we we really can't so so so that these are some of the uh i think i think frustrations that we feel about the current political environment that currently obtains the culture that is there and in in like i'm saying these efforts to improve the laws and practice in elections it cannot be one advocacy group or one civil society group working on it alone it needs concerted efforts from different stakeholders and multiplicity of stakeholders all needs to put their hands on debt and do their bids um which is why on to the point that barbara made earlier on why we said sometimes it looks like we should ourselves in the food whenever we then write off a process and then at the end of the day then decide to participate in it um because at the end of the day you will have one section of stakeholders dismissing an electoral process to the point where all those people that we want to participate in the interface with the voter registration with the actual voting will

feel is useless to do so
so we still want them to participate but
when then we make these sweeping um
conclusions then you can imagine i'm
just speaking
on how i perceive that other segment
which sits on the fence which decides
not to participate how they feel they
feel it's of no use
um so also i don't know how we can then
strike the balance to say yes your vote
matters yes you must participate in
voter registration and also in voting
and then at the same time uh continue to
call on these um weaknesses that we
currently see in the in the existing
electoral law and in practice by both
the zak and also the political
contestants so it's a fine balance that
needs to be to be achieved i know but it
has to be achieved so that at least we
can then decide whether we are going
forward or we are not um
uh going forward at all and i remember
in in years past we we once had a
conversation about whether it's even
useful to have elections so again it's a
difficult question
because if you don't have them then what
alternative do you have these are
difficult questions that we are
grappling with uh and and then for me i
think the the major issue is whatever
option we get to decide on after that
audit
after the old stakeholders conference
that you mentioned it needs to be built
up by a strategy um that that is well
resourced so that at least we can be
able to achieve the pressure that we
want to achieve otherwise then then
boycotting a process is of no use if we
are not going to then make uh signals
that i can can be interpreted or

understood to provide the kind of
pressure that is required so so for me
that's the difficult balancing is that
needs to be pursued
thanks ian thanks very much
i just want to assure you that we're
together in this it's not just this and
it's all hum yes thank you and but
although we we it's a journey that this
and was join us
as we go forward
and it's clear that we cannot continue
to allow history to repeat itself with
every election
you know and and pretend everything is
normal and it's business usually we have
to we have this this is the whole
purpose of this discussion
is to try and put an end to this
impunity
this mess we're the only were the only
odd odd man out in the region
as a country you know
disgraceful
okay uh barbara
same question to you how to see the arc
moving on on this journey towards the
audit and beyond
okay that's fine uh thank you for um for
the question and uh maybe just to say
thank you to ian for uh saying uh for
responding to your question in such a
passionate manner
uh as the erc there is a lot that we are
doing uh but i wanted to uh respond to
your question the the initial question
that you raised uh to say what are we
going to do uh what would we do if uh
what are we going to do when we get to
november
and the conditions are still the same
and i wanted to say that perhaps the the
framing for for the question uh should
be what i propose um

what can we do
uh to ensure that we change things
so that when we get to to november we
are able to um
to count or to point at some of the
changes that would have um that would
have happened uh so that we don't have a
situation where we are discussing uh the
same issues
uh in response to that uh to the
question that i've just crafted um
i would like to say that uh civil
society it seems like a civil society's
voice uh is not loud enough
uh to push the state to act
i think that uh civil society currently
has been acting uh in silos
and it's time we decided to come
together a civil society
uh that way uh we'll be able to uh to
counter you know some of the actions of
the state
like for instance as it is uh igbo i
heard you talk about uh the incident
that happened at your offices
we had a similar incident where
one of our staff members car
vehicle was bent
you know at his house
and this is uh because a civil society
we are not acting together we do not
even know what is happening uh you know
to either staffing not in other
organizations or to other organizations
and the staff and the state has been
able to uh is targeting us individually
because we are not working together so i
think that the first thing that we need
to do is to figure out how we can make
our voice a civil society louder
louder to loud enough for the state uh
to act
and then the second thing is uh we the
issues that we highlighted uh during

this call are not new
um these are issues that were
highlighted after the 2018 elections uh
by various observer mission groups
uh we continue to highlight those things
the militarization of the state
militarization of zac amongst other
issues those are issues that we already
know of
but
what can we do what are the low-hanging
fruits
where can we have quick wins in civil
society so that when we get to november
we do not
cry about the law registration figures
right for instance that's a low hanging
fruit
there is continuous water registration
the continuous water registration
exercise is ongoing right
so why can't we a civil society come to
hanging fruit when we get to november
we'll be saying oh their figures have
increased
what are the issues amongst in our audit
of the electoral environment can we
highlight as low-hanging fruits and
chase those so that three months from
now uh we are able to point at those
issues as successes and we are not at
the same level so that's to me uh
something that we need to do but back to
your question in terms of what ersc has
been doing or what the artist intends to
do we have been uh doing a lot in terms
of ensuring pushing uh for a conducive
environment for free and fair elections
we have been pushing for the
independence of zac highlighting some of
the issues uh with the commission
we have uh been at the forefront of
highlighting some of the issues with uh
some of the problems with the water's

role and i think uh some of you may have read our our report uh with regards to that and we have also you know put pressure on zach to actually make sure that they avail the voters role to the public because that is the right we have also been pushing trying to ramp up you know our voter registration statistics taking young people to voter registration centers utilize we utilize the voter registration blitz we continue to utilize the continuous water registration processes so that the figures for voter registration are increased we continue to uh educate citizens on key electoral processes we are working with we are forging alliances across africa we have forged alliances with uh civil society organizations in kenya in south africa in uganda in south africa and in other countries where we are trying to learn lessons from them to say what can we do how can we get some of some of the issues that are happening in country amplified in the region and across the continent so that's one that those are some of the things that we are doing we are also working with political parties uh building their capacity on various key uh you know political processes like recently we were working with uh assisting political parties to understand the delimitation process so i'm not going to say uh a lot more about what we are doing but those are some of the things that we are doing and i think a civil society we also need as we talk about these issues we also need to celebrate some of the things that we've managed to do some of our successes that will give us fresh energy that will give

us energy that we are progressing but if we do not if we forget the narrative uh that says we have done something we have won you know we have gained something in our journey uh we will then get tired so i think maybe even as we frame our discussions uh moving forward let's try and balance the narrative and change the narrative i think i'm i'm saying this for the second time but trying to balance the narrative that says the environment is not conducive but also how do we try and uh you know get you know civil society to have energy because as it is people seem to be tired how do we energize civil society and how do we energize the voters i think our end for now thank you yes it's a long journey we're together with the alc who's listen don't get tired barbara all of us don't get tired i'm sorry to hear about the incident that you're a drc where the car was burnt yeah we're the our gazebo restaurant went down last week wednesday night and the you know suspected us yes that is the the story and uh i thought about that yeah and uh we just fear that the as some share said uh earlier the the campaign of violence we fears will get worse as we proceed to elections and so last but not least cheer yeah uh thank you chair preston uh i think we should really appreciate the work that

civil society organizations are trying
to do
and also think things that
you preside over
or for the sake of time
i think that uh tony's issue firstly
about
debating about that 2018 court judgment
is is very very important i hope that as
the series go on
you will be able to unpick that
but also looking at other jurisdictions
like malawi like kenya
and um
really see
what what was the issue and the
independence of the judiciary and so
forth so it can be reversed but i think
there are lessons that can be learned
because i was talking about integrity of
these institutions
and and
just to say that you know there's this
common narrative
in the social media that's why i want
this thing to be really debated
that uh the petition that the mdc put in
the court had no v11 forms
you know you create popular narratives
that are myth and and then they end up
like the truth
but if you actually go and look at an
extra a of that court petition
there was a symbol of some v11 forms
you know but what luke malawa the chief
justice wanted
was
an analysis
of those v11 forms that had been
submitted
against the v11 forms
that were in the ballot uh
boxes
so

it is
that was going to be the primary source
of evidence according to the chief
justice so having the v11 forms
according to the
to the court was not going to solve the
problem i see ian marcon is here it was
not going to solve the problem because
of all these institutions like integrity
at the moment like the judicial they
wanted the analysis of the v11 forms
that are in an extra a of that
application versus the v11 forms that
were in the ballot boxes of which those
v11 forms
uh were in custody of zag and there was
no
shift of
danger building of proof
i leave it there but tony i think take
that up with the lawyers i'm using my
limited political science
approach then secondly the thing i
reference wonder about state media state
media is very important because it takes
players money radio zimbabwe is still
reaches out far and wide in the rural
hindu land on whether people have power
if you look at all the statistics of any
service
theory of the people in zimbabwe are not
happy and what is not being utilized is
people power that is revolution
from the law to some extent
there is no
one driving trying to
drive and organize people from below but
the majority of the people are not happy
the narratives about trying to be
positive i respectively
disagree they bring to practitioners
they believe belong to politicians they
belong to civil society
uh they can't belong uh to

to to intellectuals like us i remember
in 2018 when i was having a conversation
with people around morgan chandra they
were telling me no
we need we need to tell um dara the old
man the positive narratives
but then when i had an interview with
morgan chandra in 2017 he was very clear
that there are certain things that you
can't hide you can't go around and say
that people are insulated when they are
not look at the zim rice report the
people themselves know that they are not
insulated
the answers that they were not giving so
it's beyond
taking assist approach
it needs a much broader
big idea amanda hammer i agree with you
that there's need for alliances for
democratic transition but there's also
need for alliances against autocracy
look at scotland all the other african
countries that
that
that i've mentioned and these global
issues that i've talked about inclusion
it's also about citizenship it's also
about voter registration
information integrity installation
irreversibility they are local they are
regional they are there they are there
they are international
so
i think that
for tonight's
perhaps
i can i can end there and thank you very
much once again for the
uh for the opportunity
oh really
i can't thank you all free enough in
particular for
for the man in which all three of you

have
raised the flag
uh beginning with some cheer with will
whose five
pillars
we we
are going to use as we move forward
information
include inclusion
insulation
integrity integrity integrity as he
emphasized
and irreversible irreversibility
these are very important
they're also signposts
as we do the audit as we move forward
we take the point made
passionately by some
it is not too late to turn things around
and that one one of the purposes of
producers of this
series
is to see really how in addition to
consciousness bubbles about their rights
democratic rights
is to see how they can ensure on their
part that we have a free and fair
election next year it's not too late
it's never too late
until it is late
thank you very much
again tezara
zamcha
barbara and ian thank you very much and
all of you have joined us
amanda
and others thank you very much bye
you
happy