

How can the regional and international community prevent another failed election in Zimbabwe in 2023

okay i'll
we start straight away just to welcome
everybody
who has joined us
for this the 19th
policy dialogue
session
and
my job today is both as convener and
presenter
so my job is really to
introduce the topic which is
what can the regional and international
community do to prevent another failed
election in zimbabwe
and
and uh
so i introduced our
eminent
chair
chris murlang
who i have known for many years
a fine academic
a journalist
and now in the field of
of
public policy
with the
good governance africa
gga with whom surplus trusts have been
collaborating
and
we have had joint
sessions together
and we have
previously looked at the zimbabwe crisis
in gga webinar where presented the paper
reference which i'll make
and
right now chris and the gga
are collaborating with us on the

smuggling process so chris
please take over
thank you so much um
dr mandaza certainly as you indicate
in your opening remarks our
relationship
personally and certainly even now
institutionally
is quite extensive but it's really a
privilege to be
asked today
to moderate on this important webinar
where we'll be considering in particular
how
the region the international community
can prevent another
failed election
in zimbabwe
during the elections that are planned
for 2023
well even though professor or rather dr
mandaza is the main presenter of
this dialogue series we are joined
by
a very imminent panel of discussants
and i will start off by introducing
one of those who
is
ready to
kick us off after of course
dr mandaza presents which is professor
sarah rich dorman she's senior lecturer
for politics and international relations
at the university of edinburgh
the other discussant that we have lined
up
to help us go through some of the
observations that
professor mandazu will be sharing with
us today is none other than professor of
political science
professor peter anyang
who will be joining us uh
from

kenya
i suspect
um he of course is a very well-known
political scientist and politician
as uh
dr mandaza indicated
my name is chris marilyn and i am
executive director at good governance
africa which is an applied policy
research think tank where we assess
and provide insights into all things
related to governance on the african
continent
but let's consider a few introductory
remarks
really around why we've decided to
hold this dialogue series today
as you would be aware several elections
have been held
in zimbabwe
and the question in most people's minds
when we talk of elections unfortunately
in zimbabwe is whether this will be the
moment where these elections in effect
demonstrate the capabilities of
the
electoral commission in that country the
government and various political players
to really hold an election that does not
result in a contested
outcome
which questions the legitimacy of the
results of these elections but more
importantly
we wonder whether this election in and
of itself will follow the well-worn
pattern of elections
and their outcomes in zimbabwe which is
that
of
contestation dispute
and in very many instances outright
rejection
of the outcome of these elections

but when we look at
the role of the regional and
international community
i think what we're trying to assess is
whether the regional and international
community can in and of themselves
provide impetus to delivering a positive
electoral outcome
and ultimately set a proper playing
field through
various mechanisms that we'll hear from
the discussants and certainly from our
presenters today on what the role of the
region and the international community
could possibly be
in these upcoming elections
but without further ado let me invite
our presenter for today
dr mandaza to open up our debate which
will be followed
by
observations by the discussions that are
presented today over to you dr mandaza
thanks chris
yes
those of you who have been
on this journey with us
on look on the
zimbabwean transition program
which itself several years old this
program
this doesn't seem to end
we've been looking recently at the
election process and indeed
the recent
election in zambia has given a certain
impetus to the discussion and
process towards the election
my presentation is more or less a
follow-up
to an earlier discussion which at which
i presented a paper
the webinar at gga
and the paper was published quite widely

in various newspapers and journals
it was entitled the crisis in zimbabwe
a paradigm shift from false expectations
of reform in a security state
to a conference an international
conflict resolution
and basically the context was that
the crisis in zimbabwe
has over the years been premised on the
false expectation
that the state increasingly based
and
surviving on the strength of a military
security mission can reform itself
out of power
what is required now is an
acknowledgement
and the consensus at the national
original
and global levels that the crisis
one almost similar to that which was
resolved
almost 40 years ago
through the lancaster
house conference in 1979
has to be confronted and resolved
through the agency
of consultation
initiated initiated at national level
facilitated by south african study
and the au and scaffolded by the uk eu
usa russia china and the commonwealth
leading to an international conference
model that may be a long shot the
expectation of an international council
is public
but clearly this discussion
follows very closely
on that
expectation
that
that
there will be another
failed federal religion

it is to repeat itself
inevitably as it has
over the last 20 years
the history of failed elections unless
something is done
and there's a question
what can the regional and international
community do to prevent
another failed election in zimbabwe in
2023
the first part of my presentation is the
context
looking at the history of elections in
post colonial africa
it's part as
said the previous presentation
it is part of the key national question
and the extent to which
elections
are one feature
of the unresolved
national question
uh and and so and and
people as it does on the nature
and the content of this state
we have to look at it
in the context of the historical
background one
in my view there is a relationship
between the colonial hangover
of the colonial state on the one hand
and the legacy
of the big man
and the one party state that inherited
power at independence
the inherited
korean state with the governing elite
it's a collision of
class representations of ethnic blocks
ethnic blocks largely manufactured
during the colonial era
but growing in stature on the back of
state power
and associated primitive accumulation

as we have seen in recent decades
and the growth of the
new cluster the comprador biswasi
therefore the emphasis on unity at the
expense of diversity
and unity was posed
or highlighted as a deterrent to
fracturing of an already fragile
postcolonial state
with immense potential
for ethnic as opposed to class as the
main threat
and in the subsequent decades
we have seen various experiments
including the
that of the former liberation movements
where socialist rhetoric has been the
critics
for centralization of power around the
big man
the one party state
and the introduction of such
paraphernalia
as the central community
and the political in zimbabwe for
example
and the emergence of the military
security complex
in the defense of an all-ever
enveloping
secret state which is
one the antithesis of
democracy and the requisite separation
of powers
it is given to the participate
conflation
it's a verse 2 and determined to stem
political opposition
and this security mutual security
complex
has the law over the last 20 years
been increasingly responsible
for the very content of elections
all of which have been disputed

evidence that
as in most
if not all post-colonial situations
the incumbent is inevitably the loser in
reality
even if he refuses to accept
as has happened in this bible situation
and therefore focus on the zimbabwe
question
the history of failed elections
particularly since 2000
even though some would argue right from
the very first election 1980
and secondly
the 2012 2000 general election in the
2002 presidential election
which in our view was the watershed
of the foundations of the current
secular state
against the backdrop of international
isolation
namely the sanctions regime introduced
in 2001
2002
plus departure from the commonwealth
and thirdly the 2008 elections
which many
of us
see as the
first school
and that
mugabe had acknowledged defeat
consequently under the
promptings
of nangagawa and tsuwenga
he was advised to stay put
and the elections results were cooked
to effect a
runoff which was bloody
and
clearly
one might argue there was a complicit
complicity of the sadiq
in general

but south africa and becky in particular
refused to acknowledge that mugabe had
lost in landslide
democracy we now know from our research
that in 2008
march 2008
on the evening of
the
elections
to saturday evening
gabe is said to have telephoned both
nikki
and
obasanjo
to concede defeat
and for more than 24 hours
ugabe had
held his ground
refusing to
stay put and agreeing to leave
it was even talk of
his wife and family
having packed their bags in the day
after
they ready to go until
the big men
nangagawa and
shwing arrived at the residence
and
the rest is history
then we have 2013 and 2018.
likewise very distributed elections
evidence of rigging
and as excel gate would have us believe
with respect to 2018 presidential poll
that the incumbent gathered only 33
against jameson 60 plus the
vote just to go back to 2013
and
in reference to
the role of the region
notably
in june
2013

a static summit was held at maputo
to
try and
influence
or develop on mugabe
to postpone the 2013 elections
these are the first elections since the
gnu
and
the region was
way aware of the put forth
and did in fact in terms of the
intelligence reports from ingutina
the emphasis reported
virtually a relation rigging
ahead of the elections themselves
and
the
summit in maputo
which i attended as the north observer
on the sidelines
ended
with indications from
mugabe that you would indeed postpone
the elections
until such time as
the pre-election process of putting
place
as required by sadek
rules
on elections
well and at the end of that summit
the head of state
zuma
a private meeting with
sangirai
bt
western mumbai and others
of the mtc delegation
to advise them
against going for the election
because as far as they're concerned
the elections were as good as done
well as we know now the

mdc alliance
ignored
that
advice and in the meantime quietly
mugabe's guys had arranged
for a constitutional application
which in the import
was meant to prevail upon the state
we're going to carry out the elections
as shared good
it's another another another
conversation for another day but it
generate the elections were held in 2013
and
it obviously happened
and
the turning point because
thereafter
one might argue
that the
process towards the coup of 2017
had begun in earnest on the back of
those elections
but what's clear
that the
unlike 2013 when sadek
tried or intervened in the smartphone
process
in the manager which i have just
explained
in the 2018 election
there was a virtual silence of
complicity on the part of starting in
the eu
a silence
which was
very much
a follow-on
won the silence
in the face of the coup in november
2017.
we had a very unusual set of
circumstances
and there isn't two coups one in uh

guinea
and the attempted one in sudan
is
a reminder
which some of us want in 2017
that the au
and sadek
should have
called it what it was a coup
and that's a dangerous president
in
our region
and on the continent
well
it was less to do
with post liberation solidarity
that has prevailed in previous elections
since 2000 in zimbabwe
then in my view
a complex
of of uh
conspiracies
in which
research is showing the level of of
involvement
of
south africa the social south african
state itself
in 2017
and also the british
government
and the silence
of complicity of the us itself
which presented itself
represented at the inauguration of
amsterdam
in after the coup
there's also the backdrop of
one might say and there's a recent book
i believe would just be published in
south africa
which uh uh
i think is it uh stridom and someone
else

writing about them back years in the
zimbabwe
experience of 2007-2008
uh one could even go back to 2000
the fear
of a president in which an emergent
opposition movement
could would take over power
from the
former liberation movement
i remember
very
very clearly
that there was more than just consensus
among the
former liberation movements
and even the states
the states of the region
uh against
uh the emerging emerging emergent
mdc
in 2000
and today
the narrative
of the role of south africa in
particular
in those elections 2002
and
2008
is a telling testimony
to the extent to which
the region
they've
stood in solidarity
with mugabe
and turned a blind eye
subsequently
to the 2017 coup as i already indicated
so what are the balance of forces as we
approached 2053
last
two weeks ago we had
a brilliant presentation by
one of our team members uh

professor pilani zamshir
the way you illustrated graphically
the the
the status quo
or the
position and condition of the zanu-pf
since the coup
it's a divided house
particular since 2014
with a large chunk of the party
including a vice president mujuru and
several provincial chairs
were suspended and all expelled from the
party in 2014
and then of course
again in 2017 2017
the party state
was divided almost down the middle
with the number of
key factors now out in exile
was in refuge in neighboring countries
there's rampant factionalism
and the fresh freshestness
never seen before there's always been
factualism
and fractiousness in the liberation
movements even before independence
not to talk about
intense and conflict
assassinations
but
in recent
years
it couldn't does no it has not been as
bad as it is now
with provincial elections parked last
week
ahead of the annual national conference
for fear
that these deliberations
uh would
burst into open conflicts
and even the talk of
attempted assassinations

and the ugly specter of ethnic conflict
again nothing new
ethnic
the ethnic factor has always been
a key feature in liberation of movements
even before independence
and it was only a significant feature in
the mugabe era
but now
most toxic altogether under naga
and
the danger of the nangagawa chiwenga
feud
coinciding with divisions along ethnic
lines
including talk of
schwenger taking on nanga for position
of party president
in the 2022 zanu pf congress
suffers to say to state here
categorically
as people who are
here on the ground the nangagawa
chiwenga feud is not a myth
it is a dangerous situation noted about
that
so much for zanu-pf
what about the opposition mbc alliance
now already
as the election results of 2018 would
illustrate
the the the
the elections were
less
for
the miss and the mgc alliance
than a vote against
nanga in particular and zanu-pf in
general
already
it's difficult to be conclusive about
the data from the election of 2018
except for the presidential elections
which in my view

as publisher and of the
jonathan moore's excel gate the seventh
books
there's no doubt my view that
uh shamisa won hands down and that
indeed msn mangaga
gun at only 33 percent
but on the other side of it is that
the parliamentary elections mdc
were
well we're really
in a nepalese state
with zanu-pf
holding many of the
parliamentary seats
across the country
and even in situations where it was
clear
that
such as matapira north as denzel and
nebulae has shown in a recent discussion
on twitter uh tweets ago
where multiple north for example
a muslim manga would only 5
of the vote
in that province
and yet
something like
7 or 10
zanu-pf
mps won the election
so it is almost evidence that many
zanu-pf
supporters
would have voted against ms mangawa
and voted for shamisa
voting for their own
candidates their own mps
and this
shows
or betrays
a startling weakness on the part of the
mdc
alliance and the suspicion that really

they are very people on the ground in
terms of structures
and
that since 2018
the situation may have become worse
especially on the back of
of the weight of the security state
determined almost to replicate the
one-party state of yesteryears
in the
disorganization of the mdc
decimation of the mdc recalls and so on
and so forth the vision of the mgc with
the whole set one section of its
draining day
was polite
in a very curious situation where you
find an opposition
party aligning with the
section of it aligning with
the ruling party
then on the civil society you have a
brave but also an amorphous civil
society
hampered as much by the fact that 70
percent
plus of all zimbabwean professionals and
skilled persons
are in the diaspora
as by the punitive and hostile political
environment
that they're fourthly the force of the
zambian president of 2021
as we indicated in the previous uh
zoom
the zambian election of 21 was almost as
if just the election is zimbabwe itself
and
since the olympia 3
with
evidence of panic
in the ruling party and state
and
euphoria

in the opposition as almost as if they
had won the election
all the stem
it has given its
an immense impetus
to the
expectations
and deliberations
towards
2023 election
there is talk
of a broad alliance in the making
around the reform alliance agenda
i'm hoping that one of our team members
here on the platform
we were able to elaborate further on
this
there is also talk of zanu-pf likewise
taking some lessons
from
zambia and how to counter
the
and
and
poor water on the euphoria
that has become very pervasive
if not contagious
in the in the opposition ranks in
zimbabwe
so
what can the regional and international
community do to prevent another failed
election tradition
here i'm spending very much on my
colleague sarah
and peter
to interrogate this
what we can say on our part
we we formed the pcc
a platform for constant citizens we
formed a group
a
non-partisan group
designed to

create some kind of consensus
uh national consensus
towards the resolution of the zimbabwean
crisis economic and so and political
towards a political settlement which
will
bring us
back
to the
constitutionalism
rule of law
and return of the
military to the barracks
my colleague tonya will
be speak on the
uh to the points he made in the last
zoom
about the
the process towards the election
the the stark contrast
with what is was done in zambia namely
the
massive voter registration especially of
first-time voters
the massive
deployment of poll agents and observers
to safeguard the vote
of disgust
the intense monitoring of the counting
of the vote
and the
the
establishment of a
parallel voter tabulation system
which meant in zambia
that the results were known
by this by the saturday morning
before the official announcement on
monday evening
now clearly as jonathan moore shows in
excel gate
and as others have have
pointed out uh
the mdc

has in the previous elections shown
a
gross weakness
in terms of
these points i've just made
for example
in 2018 elections
less than 50 percent of the polling
stations had polling agents from the
opposition
allowing for field day
for for the rigging machinery
which was exposed by the observer teams
in 2018
but this happened too in 2008
and in previous elections
and it's clear
that
going into election
as things stand
the history will repeat itself
and therefore
they
the expectation that
the enough time for the opposition
forces in society
to organize
and mobilize
voter
registration put in place a missionary
for monitoring the lecture of reform
process
and ensuring electoral reform process
and with the help of the region and
international
community
to be able to
declare a foul
even before the poll is cast
it's clear to us that the state remains
adverse and opposed to any
reforms and therefore we like to go into
elections without those requisite
reforms

that mean it is something that can be done including the cure in the coup by the international community is that something can be done to prepare for what is likely to be a disputed election and and to have the international regional community to pretend the formation of a transitional authority in the field in the event of a fail another failed election in 2023. i'll stop there chris thank you so much uh dr mandaza and really thank you for painting the political dynamics but before you go dr mandaza i that there are a couple of things that i'd like to address with you um if i abuse uh chairmanship in in in this dialogue and in in reality i have a number of questions arising from your presentation and the articulation of what i agree are the the the the key challenges facing zimbabwe in essence you you position um a possible uh successful election being created by ensuring that a reform of the electoral process is carried out you also talk of the first that um we could cure the 27 crew 2017 coup by encouraging a return of constitutionalism and interestingly enough you you you bring forward this question of a transitional authority i would

imagine
this would be in place before an
election being held
i'm now focusing on the outcome
of such an election where all of these
three aspects
are undertaken
and we
receive similarly to all the other
elections that have preceded this one an
outcome that indicates that zanu-pf
has won the election
would you consider this
to be a successful election
will have difficulty
given the
our difficulty uh
predicting uh
a win for zanu pf
that's three scenarios maybe two
the tendency for the last election over
the last 20 years
has been a vote against the income
incumbency
much more than the vote for
the the incoming in there would be
incoming
government
and when i said this to shangri-la in
2008 i said well
looks like you won by
lost by a landslide he said you mean i
won but i said no
we're gonna be lost by a landslide
so i i
see
almost certainly the on the presidential
election front i can't see uh msm
nagawini at all
that's clear
there is the return of this boreham
sango
which happened in 2008 where
the no pf members would vote for the mps

but throw away the the vote for the
president
and all the indications so far is that
this is where it's going to end up
and and then and thirdly
the question is whether
the military would concede
to nagawa uh uh uh losing
safe to say that uh in 2018 the
educationally in fact
it was a military which turned things
around when it was clear that mangaku
had lost on them on the monday of the
election so so so dr mandela then i i
would say to you
your your response is slightly
contradictory
because on the one hand you're calling
for certain reforms to be instituted
which could create possible conditions
for free and fair elections however
if those free and fair elections having
engaged in this reform
uh present us with another zanu-pf
electoral victory
it seems untenable for you
no there's no contribution at all i've
made it very clear
one is and there's unlikely to be
reform of the electoral process
we are less than two years away from the
election there is no indications at all
that the the zimbabwe relations
commission is going to be reformed
there is all the evidence that the
voter voter registration is being
impeded
by a variety of employees
so i'm very firm in my view
the expectation for reforms is one that
most people hold
but i'm sorry that i don't see it
happening
the old adage is it's hardly likely that

the zanu-pf state
will agree to reform itself out of power
because it knows and i repeat it knows
that a free and fair election
they would lose
so there's no contradiction that chris
in a free and fair election
nangua would lose
and certainly even if even though many
of the zanu-pf mps
would stand their own in their
respective constituencies
but clearly
the elections the last elections have
virtually been around the presidential
and uh as people have pointed out
in 2018 uh if maybe if
xiaomi had been declared a winner
you may have a difficulty in forming a
government because zanu-pf majority of
mps so you could have
that one
an inconclusive situation
and a crisis so if i had my way
we should answer the second part of the
question
i would go for a transition authority
in the expectation
that there will not be a free and fair
elections
in the expectation
that if
elections are held
and xanopia were to lose that there
would be no transition
to the winners
if the military remains as it is
embedded in the electoral and political
process
so that's that's i hope i've clarified
the position absolutely and thank you
for the for the clarification i think
the other issue that i wanted to raise
with you with regards to

um some of the impediments to having a free and fair election really talk to the structural weaknesses of the political opposition in zimbabwe which we can attribute to both the lack of constitutionalism free and fair sort of environment for elections to be held but also internal challenges and weaknesses within the zimbabwean political opposition do you believe given these structural weaknesses in the opposition that even if all of these conditions the three conditions that you stipulate were put forward that they they they would really have the capability of unceding zanu-pf in a a possible free and fair election yeah well i think maybe a repeat of 2018 in which the presidential candidate would would win if if or if or if only because the the incumbent is the vote against him will be quite overwhelming but creating a crisis possibly in the sense that has happened in 2018 that the opposition may not have enough mps from a government and if so the more reason for a transition authority which gives room for the

for a period
before
the next elections during which uh the
political and including electoral
reforms
including the the
the implementation of the 2013
constitution which has not been
implemented fully implemented
can take place and allow for the free
and fair elections i will say very very
very assertively that
the conditions under which
elections were held in zambia
the position under which the opposition
won in zambia
uh it's it's a it's only a mirage in
zimbabwe so far
and we're talking about less than two
years
away from the election so my own
temptation would be look is it possible
to begin uh considering and defining
the transition authority a few by will
began
pushing for the testing authority in
2016.
yep on the on the eve of that coup
for the same reasons
that one
the the the state was broken
yep ruling party was afflicted by
tension and
freshness
and that the opposition itself
wasn't as strong as we expected
that therefore there was kind of a
breathing space
required that is really the nature of
the transition authority
and and
and
that would be my
card on the table

thank you
very very clear there professor mandaza
and i thank you for your presentation
and really for sharing
uh your deep insights with us on
you know what the possible
scenarios are for an election in 2023
that
allows me to bring in our first
discussant uh
dr sarah dorman
or rather professor sarah dorman sarah
you you you probably heard
what um
dr mandaza was saying with regards to
the three
conditions that could lead to a free and
fair election
fair enough i i challenged him on some
of these assumptions
but it really makes the situation
that we have asked you to address which
is what is the role of
the region and the international
community in such a complex
scenario with regards to
the elections coming up in 2023
it could be interesting really to hear
having painted this really muddy
situation what what your views are
so over to you prof dorman
thanks so much and
let me just start by saying i'm not sure
if um
um dr anyang yungo is is with us yet but
uh you know i have been reading
uh dr mandaza and and uh dr anyang yungo
since you know since i was an
undergraduate student since i've been
studying zimbabwean politics and so it's
a real honor to be here
because i've learned a lot from both of
them over the years
um let me let me however i have been

scribbling lots of notes and i had prepared some thoughts so i'm hoping i can pull them all together

i want to make just one comment about the um preliminary points that dr mendeza made on the the the first slide setting up the situation in zimbabwe which i don't disagree with any of his points but i want to throw in an extra sort of analytical concept that i think might be useful

it seems to me that a crucial part here that explains the centralization and many of those other features that you identified is the essentially the zero-sum politics the winner takes all politics and i would argue that winner takes all politics of that sort um was built into the decolonization processes of

most if not all african states and that it's that um that that uh that trend that that um tenet of politics that makes it so difficult for one regime to hand over to another or even to tolerate an opposition party um existing and contesting politics because it essentially this ties into another concept the gatekeeper state which goes right back to the colonial states and the idea that these states were designed primarily for exporting goods and the politics and the economics were so tightly tied up that it was about control of that gate the exporting goods and the taxes that were levied on importing and exporting goods and as long as you controlled as long as you were the keeper of that gate then you had political power and economic power but it's the fusing of those that has proven so difficult to disentangle and i would suggest that zimbabwe

in many ways follows this pattern but it hasn't become in if anything the the politics and the economics and the control of the gate and the importance of the control of the gate has become even more important um since 2000 and perhaps um has uh intensified in particular ways also since the coup in 2017. so it really is this isn't history or something this is an intractable intractable problem um of political institutions and um economic institutions and power at its heart and this um this is what makes reform of these institutions so difficult uh and so challenging because we're not talking just about reforming simple little things you know electoral machinery or uh you know the rules of procedure in the house of parliament it's about those underpinning structural factors which you alluded to in your presentation so i think if we think about that it it brings home perhaps even more um the challenges that that are faced but on the other hand um zambia as has been pointed out is a good example of a country a neighboring country with some similar um political and economic historical trajectories um in which power has been overturned both the first turnover um in 1991 and was it 91 92 91 i think um and more recently um in this most recent election where we've seen you know parties handing over power to other parties and and existing as an opposition party um and there are other countries that we can see this happening

in as well so i think the um it's a
challenging scenario but it's not one
that is um uh unprecedented or entirely
impossible to move um to move past
so let me move back to um some of my
prepared comments
i was canvassing some friends uh today
and asked
for their thoughts on these things and
one of them i think possibly teasing me
threw back at me
the title of an article i wrote
back in the early 2000s in which i said
make sure they count nicely now that was
something that a woman said to me in
bulawayo when i was an election observer
in papua in 2000
which was
was
a very intense and exciting election um
and that that quote the sincerity with
which this woman spoke to me make sure
they count nicely has stuck with me as
have many experiences from that time
but increasingly
i don't think it really is about the
counting
it's not about counting the the
elections the the the issues with
zimbabwe's elections
predate the counting um
you know in many ways zimbabwe's
elections are determined well before the
election day as as we have known and
other people on this call and and
elsewhere have have documented um you
know we we it's it's to do with the
electoral role and i could recite the
flaws with the electoral rule going back
to 1980 and all the way through um has
to do with the environment the ability
of the opposition
simply to actually campaign
um to organize itself the issues around

constituency delimitation
around the gerrymandering of
constituencies around the allocation of
polling stations
all of those things are baked into the
system they are part of that that
preparation the faction the the the
challenges that opposition parties have
faced in zimbabwe um not just the mdc
but previous opposition parties um are
are things that have been um planned and
and and developed um and that that that
come to fruition at the time of
elections but that that are are very
much um baked into those structural and
and political strategies
against them um you know as i said again
recently um i may have tweeted this a
while ago um you know the amazing thing
about the mdc and i was i was um
in the in the at the at the launch of
the um of the mdc
is not that it has struggled to hold
together is not that it has
um at points appeared very weak and
divided and struggled to articulate a
strong message to my mind it's amazing
that the mdc still exists now um first
because it was always a
a broad coalition
but also because of the attacks on it
over the years the the um
the violent attacks uh infiltration and
and most recently this series of attacks
of uh that have divided the party
recalled
candidates
put people up against each other um you
know this is an orchestrated campaign so
you know without that 20 years of
attacks
it is turning into what we might call
something of a of a perfect storm so i
think if we evaluate that situation

we might come to the conclusion that actually it is impossible for a free and fair election to be to be run in zimbabwe in 2023. um and i think that is something that um that we need to take very seriously and to uh um and and that i think the the international community needs to take very seriously and not continue with some sort of pretend that oh you know if we throw a bit more money at the electoral roll things might get better um important as i think the electoral role is now money can help money can help with um getting polling agents out there as we saw getting people registered but you can't pay people to get registered there's only so much you can do to get registered there are quality aspects that might that money of some sort might help um i think in previous elections there have been real issues um around uh things like the allocation of polling stations um the um you know the delimitation and demarcation of constituencies depends on a census and it depends on a census that is public and that is that is accessible um you know there are lots of things like that that zimbabwe's friends in the international community could could work with zimbabwe's existing expertise to help deliver um crucially i may have said that sorry crucially also um um polling agents as we saw in zambia and as people have said

over and over again but polling agents can only be out there in those pools if they feel safe and if they um are able to to to carry out their work so there's there's a lot more going on than simply saying right you know we need so many people and we have so much money for fuel and so forth to get them there although fuel getting to polling stations is crucial

um so what are the options i painted a very bleak picture perhaps even bleaker than what dr mandaza has painted what are the options for the international community i think there is that question of do they accept the reality of what's on the ground or are they

do they continue to think that perhaps tweaking a few things throwing some money at it as has happened in 2018 might um make enough of a difference but i think we also need to realize um that there is very little appetite within the international community not that i speak for them but from having talked to people over the years there is very little appetite for them

doing anything that is not being either driven from within zimbabwe with broad support and or preferably both supported by the region that

it's just that this this needs to bring together a lot of different actors and um you know this is not something uh any sort of of a process such as dr mandela suggested

would never be something that could be imposed on zimbabwe that would not only be illegitimate but it wouldn't work it would not be functional um but i do think it's

important to to emphasize that zimbabwe
has
many many friends and well-wishers at
sort of all levels of the international
community from people who've been in
town involved in town twinning people
who've made friends with zimbabwe and
diasporas right up to very top levels of
diplomats and ambassadors and people who
now are very senior in their governments
but who 30 40 years ago were involved in
solidarity work so there are
supporters out there and there are many
people who aspire to see the sort of
structural and political reforms in
zimbabwe that would enable it to take
its place fully on the world stage and
really um
fulfill its its
potential
but i also think we should
learn um from our from past experiences
zimbabwe's past political settlements
particularly those that have been
brokered by outside powers i'm thinking
here of uh
the um
the the lancaster house agreement and
the on-again off-again
unity
and of that period
um between zanu and zappo
the um the unity accord
in 1987
and of course the gnu
have to my mind um
been
been very deeply problematic and i think
most zimbabweans i'm sure have their own
their own sense of this um they created
moments of stability which were needed
at the time
but they tended to be led by politicians
they were by no means inclusive they did

not bring any sort of
consensus with them or to the table
except perhaps a desire for peace
uh you know an understandable desire for
peace um they tended to only be focused
on the really immediate
demands they weren't they were they were
they were focused on solving immediate
problems they rarely had implementation
processes or any sort of of a process of
um watching yeah of
of
anyone who is in a position to follow up
on if agreements were implemented i'm
thinking particularly here of the gnu
i think
they were also they were never designed
for long-term processes they were not
designed to resolve the sort of
political and economic structural
inequities and challenges that existed
there
they maintained that winner takes all
process they simply wind into the pie a
bit more and let a few people more
people into that pie for a limited
period until it broke down and i think
that's
the thing that strikes me most having
studied those periods of of
unity um in some detail over the years
what what strikes me on something
blindingly obvious is that in all of
those in zimbabwe's history
the
ruling party has come out of them
stronger and the opposition has come out
of them weaker and that is not a good
recipe for um enduring any sort of an
enduring settlement that is that is
simply a short-term piecemeal solution
that buys a bit of breathing time
breathing space but doesn't move things
further so i think

whatever moves forward those lessons
have to be have to be
taken on board and that makes
it a real challenge for for the
international community which is
you know use that phrase but it means
lots of different things um and and in
the past there has not always been the
political will
most notably within satic
um which ought to be
the obvious organization that uh the
zimbabweans would turn to for support
within neighbors within neighboring
civil society when we did have seen
interventions regionally
i'm using interventions very loosely
there but when we have seen the regional
groupings save right we need to
do something
where that has been has been where
zimbabwe's own civil society has been
able to um liaise with work with um
civil society and neighboring countries
and both the civil society unions
churches and others working with their
political leaders through
senec mechanisms or through bilateral
arrangements have been able to bring
something together but um as dr mendaza
said inevitably the um the solidarity
politics at the top seems to get in the
way
of
producing anything that might actually
change
fundamentally who is in power
in zimbabwe
we
if we think about what 2023 might look
like
there are
i think suggestions that can be made
about how we could make that election

more
viable
um you know let's have the opposition
have access to tv and radio um
you know that's that's a very basic
concern um as i said census constituency
demarcations an electoral role that is
not so much biometric um but which is
searchable which people which is
published which is accessible which is
searchable um where people living next
to each other are going to similar
polling stations and not sent in random
directions there are all sorts of little
tiny technical things like that that can
be done
but we also know that
if there is a risk in the past at any
rate when there has been a risk of the
ruling party losing power it has turned
to violence it would prefer not to
violence is expensive costly in many
ways um to its reputation and in other
ways but it has turned to violence
how
is there a way in which
the international community can provide
security
against that happening i'm not sure it
seems to me that that is the fundamental
thing that they might be able to bring
in
that particularly if political leaders
in the region were willing to stand up
and take a stand on this
but that without that
i don't see any of these other reforms
really um being sufficient to to ensure
that sort of turnout of um widespread uh
uh both people widespread registration
widespread turnout in the election and
people's um
you know
people's honest desires for change

coming through and being represented and
counted at the um
ballot box
i um i think just crucially just to
conclude to say i mean the transitional
authority has to come from within
zimbabwe and obviously that is exactly
what dr mandaza has been trying to do
it uh but i think that's that's you know
the international community if
in all its manifest forms manifold forms
is eager to support zimbabweans but this
has to be a process if it's going to be
a lasting process it has and it's going
to actually achieve those goals
it has to
come from within zimbabwe it has to be
supported within the region and i think
then you will see that there will be
substantial support from all sorts of
different quarters
because it's in everyone's interest that
zimbabwe's
institutions
political social economic all of them
function at their best because
and that's really that's all anybody
wants to wants to see happen but
there has to be a commitment to it
within zimbabwe and so
on the one hand we
we need to bring those two processes
together and they're both very difficult
very complex i don't need to tell you
that you know that um
and i don't want to be accused of of
underplaying those challenges but let me
stop there and i'm happy to uh to take
even some of those really hard questions
like you threw at dr mendoza
fantastic and and thank you so much uh
prof dorman for
uh your observations and really
contextualizing what the role

a possible role is of the region and the international community i do have a few of those somewhat easy questions those uh sweetheart questions that i like to ask

uh even for you uh prof uh dorman you you referred structurally to the state in zimbabwe as very akin to the gatekeeper state and having within it features that uh talk to

zero-sum politics you know winner take all

and one of the key features of that zero-sum dynamic is the frequent use of violence as a means to address these political questions even during the political

um or rather the electoral uh period and and and certainly these are features that

that that sound familiar when we look at uh the

uh state in in zimbabwe given what you have said

do you believe that there are enough incentives

that could ultimately

uh be provided to zanu-pf to consider the kind of reforms that professor or other dr mandaza

talk to us about

and more importantly whether these incentives

could really

be provided by the international community to make sure that we have a hopefully free and fair electoral outcome come 2023.

well i think we can see that those were those conditions were there in 2008

but

my unders my sense of it my understanding of it is that the regional

actors
did not
push through hard enough i think those
conditions have been there in the past
and i think there has been an
international community that's been
willing to to support zimbabwe in that
but
regional actors were concerned about the
precedence as dr mendoza said and and uh
uh particular actors within zimbabwe
obviously also
stepped back from the brink there um so
i think we've been there before
um what i really hope is that
what would be ideal for everybody's
health safety sanity would be that we
don't go to the brink like that again
you know i think that nobody wants to
see that happen
and i think that is the challenge is can
people be brought together
constructively
because otherwise the systems that right
now
are keeping people in power are keeping
many people very well off
are i worry going to spiral out of
control
yeah we have a situation of rebuilding
after that and i
that's never how zimbabwe has worked
zimbabwe has always in its in its
independent history
um kind of stepped back from that brink
and trying to build institutions
right
but but but prof you know the difficulty
i have with your scenario is almost as
if you're saying
if we can assume that zanu-pf is indeed
a rational political actor
that you are asking them to cede power
given the dynamic the structural dynamic

around the state both economically
politically um and and and so forth and
especially within the context of of uh
the fact that in actual fact a lot of
people say this compact has been for
formed with the
the the armed forces
creating the securocratic state in
essence which is the gatekeeper state
do you really think zanu-pf is going to
seek power
and engage in these reforms as suggested
engage in a transitional authority what
are those incentives well that's why i
was with those um who said at the time
of the coup that this is not going to
lead to reform some people really did
hope that reforms would come in
and things would would change not
necessarily that zany would reform
itself out of power but that reforms
would come in and no i've never felt
that the party in that form i think
there are many great good people in that
party um and many people have joined it
over the years with
absolute best intentions i'm not trying
to dismiss them i do think that the
party is a party as you say functions to
stay in power and functions the same
power at all costs
and as i said that's because of the
system because it's almost impossible to
that gatekeeper say it it's
it's impossible to conceptualize of
being in the opposition whereas in a
state which has had one turnover of
power you can realize that actually it
is possible to keep on functioning as
long as all power is not controlled
everything it does not go through um
cartels and and purchasing and so forth
that prevent others from
engaging in economic growth and and in

sort of broad social life

so

yes i think those are those are
absolute challenges on the other hand
you know as my colleagues um chia said
you know maybe xeno is not as strong as
it as it appears there is the appearance
and then there is the reality um
you know i uh i

so

i think we need to keep bear those
things in mind that said we also know um
i don't think i'm telling anyone
anything that we don't you know that's
that's new to them um but zanu always
comes together for elections it has
these factional fights over party
positions it has contestation um
particularly election
primaries but usually once it comes to
the election they pull together um
and

so perhaps i guess we might also go back
to that point about

the distinction between individual mps
many of whom are popular within their
constituencies um and the question of
the presidential election which
is always a much more challenging
struggle as we

have seen in in past elections
interesting so prof final question
you uh presented us with a scenario
where you said one of the things that
the international community could do was
to accept the reality as you put it in
your own words and tweak a few things
and these are a few technical things
maybe as an attempt to
try and create the conditions maybe for
a free and fair election given what you
said

would that be enough really to present
us with a sound platform of engagement

for the regional international community
if not then

what else are you suggesting because it
sounds like that's all we can do tweak
around

accept the reality
gatekeeper state
zero sum game
and move

um i'm sorry i i may have misspoken or
not been very clear i was trying to say
that the international community can
either

accept that this election is not going
to be fair and i suppose
and that no amount of fiddling around
the edges is going to really change that
i see um and so there are two options i
suppose one it which is just

accept that that is kind of where
zimbabwe is going and it
may i don't think it's in very many
people's interests but um there may be
that may be just a real politique

um it's not worth pouring you know more
bad money new money after old bad money
afternoon whatever the right metaphor is
there um

i think there is also a point where you
it's not a very nice metaphor but you
know knock some heads together pull some
people together find somebody who or
work with somebody i'm sure there are
senior respected people out there who
would be

willing to engage

and i think that is very much where dr
mandaza is directing us
the other the other

way would be to i think keep hoping that
maybe

with

some more you know election
you know voter education things might

change
and i think that's where
you know as i said i've been watching
zimbabwean elections
since the 1990s
i think
i think
we should take the lessons from those
elections
and realize that uh
it will take something more than just
that
to
um really enable zimbabwean voters to be
able to
articulate their political preferences
at the polls
indeed
prof dorman thank you so much for
allowing me to really press you on some
of these issues just to get a bit more
clarity
we had indicated that uh professor
anyang would be our second
discussant but i'm informed right now
that he's in france and he's been unable
to
beat the traffic over there in france
and
join us for what is proving to be a very
very interesting
discussion but i noticed here within the
audience that we have uh
my fellow countrymen and someone from
within the region and that is
i don't know if you're still with us
uh if you you you'd like to join in
and give us a sense of um
what you are thinking with regards to
the role of the regional and indeed the
international community you've heard
from uh
profit at dr mandaza and prof uh dorman
if if you're with me

what's what's your view sir
hi chris and hello to everybody yes i'm
with you
and uh
and i've been listening very attentively
to the presenters and your
uh interrogation of them um well
i come from the solidarity with this
environment struggle
during the last 21 years
so
i think the
what like i can't
really address myself to what the
zimbabweans should do
to get free and fair elections at home
and what
they should do to get rid of the
military regime
that's for the zimbabweans to
decide upon
however i think in terms of the question
uh of this webinar
they they
my experience of involvement with
solidarity would be the struggle
since 2000
it it is that
the zimbabweans have to realize they have
to provide the leadership
to the international community and to
the regional players
about what they should do
in connection with supporting them in
their struggle
against what we all recognize is
very brutal
and illegitimate regime in zimbabwe and
we can talk until the cows come home but
uh i don't think anyone needs convincing
that zanu pf is a bad government
but
what my own experience in working with
mdc during the last

20 years especially during the
leadership of mark and sangrai
and i was part
of the kosaku the congress of south
african
trade unions initiative
to support uh the mdc to support the
democratic forces in zimbabwe and
what what we learned from that
is that the zimbabweans have to take
leadership if they don't take the
leadership of
of of those who support them
as sarah dorman pointed out there are
many people in the world who were well
wishes for support
but but the zimbabweans have to provide
guidance and leadership as to what they
want us to do
because you know we have our other
businesses as well
in terms of our
own countries my own country
we had a massive riot a few weeks ago so
we have our own problems ourselves uh
what i learned from
from the uh
from the last um 20 years
of of supporting mdc
one of the things we we presented to mdc
is we we have to put pressure we have to
help them to put pressure on the zanu
government
now
the biggest trading partner on zimbabwe
is south
and the mother's trade at the end of the
day
the workers and south africa have a big
sale on it going
backwards and forward because
so we offered to we asked nbc at one
stage
do you want us to block by bridge

do you want us to to put up a blockade
to put pressure on the on the zonal pf
regime
well
the embassy said no
so so then we did nothing about it
there was even a possessive delegation
that was said that went to zimbabwe to
show solidarity with mbc of course this
is what it was deported the minute they
landed
at our effort but we
we had
made the point
that there is whatever this afc
government was doing with zanu-pf we had
a another constituency in south africa
that thought differently about the
future of zimbabwe and and and so this
is one of the things that for me
moving forward this is the crux
of the matter what do these zimbabweans
want us to do to help them and they have
to tell us
and as morgan told us
don't locate the country don't impose
sanctions let trade flow freely
et cetera et cetera
at the end of the day we had to agree
because we were supporting mtc
but we could see that he
is weakening his own deliverance but by
not using his support in southampton
in south africa we have we have a huge
zimbabwe population
and i have said to mdc many times
are you mobilizing this population in
south africa
and
i get
kind of stairs as if i i'm asking some
fantastically
uh complicated question
so those are the dyna

in terms of this particular webinar we are discussing it of what should the international community and the regional community do uh to to try and make sure that the 2023 election uh is free and fair well this is uh the zimbabweans want free and fair elections one democracy map have to provide guidance and leadership to the international community and to i mean if we go back to the anti-smith struggle zanu-pf and and and example they provided the mbc they went to the chinese and said give us guns they went to the soviet union and said give us guns and training they went to the mozambique and said give us a space for our guerrillas to operate they went to kaunda and zambia and said give us faces that was providing leadership to the world and to the neighbors and it went well they have to do the same now for those insights um i i want to bring in uh professor brian roftopoulos um into the debate i can see your hand is up and i can also see tony rila's hand is up uh prof it's so good to see you after such a long time uh you you you you've heard what uh and that dembeki has said he's he's saying it's up to the zimbabwean body politic to provide the leadership to the region not the other way around with regards to the upcoming 2023 elections what's your observations thanks chris and it's nice to see you as

well
look i think first thing to say is that
we should not
underrate
what the opposition has already done in
zimbabwe
oftentimes because of what the situation
is now
people forget how far actually the
opposition has come
they changed the debate in zimbabwe
around the constitution
they won elections but were not allowed
to take up power
they they in fact in 2017 munangawa
regime
uh appropriated the narrative of the
opposition for re-engagement and
constitutionalism that was all the
opposition narrative for 20 years
so let's not underestimate what they
have done to change the politics to the
point where
the crisis that we see in zanu-pf is
partly as a result of the pressures that
have been built up not only by
the opposition but by the civil society
itself
having said that i think the opposition
now
faces its biggest challenge since its
formation
in some ways is at its weakest
it's facing a regime which is
systematically dismantling it
through removal of resources removal of
counselors parliamentarians
but it's also because of the internal
falls of the opposition itself
and i think what's needed now
within the opposition within broader
discussions is to have a good look
at the state of the opposition
and to understand what the crisis is

we know what's going on the broad
broader speaking but i think the
opposition itself is time for some
critical thinking about what has
happened and this dates back to the
split in 2005
to the succession after swangyray
uh to the to the kind of uh uh
anti-female politics we've seen within
the mdc
the
sometimes anti-intellectualism within
the mdc
and so i think it's
it's a good time for the nbc to reflect
on its history as as a start if it's
going to have a strategy for the future
it's got a thing long term and long term
means critically looking at its own
history because from the region and
south africa we can't expect anything
south africa is going through its own
existential crisis
it doesn't have the confidence to lead
on zimbabwe on pretty much anything at
the moment
sadaq as we know is a weak structure it
won't move unless particular governments
move particular areas and at the moment
mozambique is more important than
zimbabwe in that respect
and you know the au will follow the the
lead of this
that's how that's how the continental
organizations work
nothing can come from the international
community partly because zimbabwe is not
a priority uh certainly not for so kind
of like for the u.s certainly not more
for the eu
the uk has had its very ambivalent uh
sometimes duplicitous relations with
various politics within zimbabwe
so i would say we have to think long

term i don't think there's any traction
for a transitional authority at the
moment
there's no internal forces enough to
push for that
and so i would say it's a good time for
the opposition to take a look at itself
and begin to think long term how it has
to restructure for the future thank you
so so be
before you go prof so i i are you
calling it curtains for 2023 basically
i think the 2023 election is highly
unlikely that there will be any other
results because
uh we've seen as in other past elections
the conditions are even worse now
because the mdc is much more fractured
there's no intention of zion we have to
produce any kind of serious reforms
before the election the opposition has
no very little resources to put in place
the kind of structures that it would
need to fight this
and as sarah said and we have written
this is a zero-sum game
because the private sector is not uh
is so weak in zimbabwe it's not the
center of a community the state is the
center of accumulation as in many
postcolonial states
so for the people to see itself moving
away from that center of accumulation at
this stage
is um optimistic to say the least
so i think we have to think longer term
than that
interesting stuff um
profits as always thank you so much for
your your deep insights let me bring in
tony rila
tony i know i i haven't discussed this
with you but i i would really appreciate
it also as as you as you muck in here in

our debate
if you can also um begin to
uh summarize and give us a view of some
of the the
the the perspectives that have been
presented today um i i would be deeply
indebted to you if you did that for me
thank you chris um
since ebo took my name in vain
raise the issue that how do you call an
election
i'd i'd like to start going back to the
original quest i mean you've had very
eminent people analyze the
improbability
of a free and fair election
and the dilemma that the international
community will have
in dealing with it and um you know bruce
archons sailor man shows
so i want to begin to address something
slightly different
if i may and i'll come back to your
point and remind me about it
if if you're the international community
and you observe elections
one of the critical things about
zimbabwe
is there is a vast amount of evidence
about
what goes on
okay
i mean to control the media the violence
etc etc
but if you international community and
they're very very very reluctant
ever to say
this doesn't look promising
and very reluctant as we've seen
endlessly in zimbabwe
apart from i think the ndion 2000
who said
this cannot be a free and fair election
and forever had odium

because of that
the basic
way of observing it
is not to do
what
international observers actually should
do and that is to audit an election in a
proper way
excuse me
now this is a very clear process
okay
i'm going to leave aside uh
delimitation i mean there's a whole
series of things about the limitation
but there are a series of
issues
that demonstrate the transparency and
the validity of election
the first of those
is voter registration
and we have seen endless games in
zimbabwe
about this and one of the key things
that international observers
and international governments can do
is to see whether
local people
can
independently audit the votes israel
the zambia electoral commission makes it
impossible to do that
and if you do it and it's very difficult
to do it you find extraordinarily
strange things
you find in 2013
that there are about three hundred
thousand voters
genuinely registered with genuine ids
who have two ids
now this is very very strange and when
70 percent of them are in
bulawayo
north and south
and then zonopia from seats in there

it's an indication that the first thing
you have to be able to see is is there
an
independent verifiable
audit of the voters rule
if that is not possible to do
black mark
the second one is to do with the
printing and allocating a balance
now in zambia as i am aware
opposition political parties have been
able to go and observe the printing
they've been able to
the the ballots being uh collected
they've been able to travel with the
ballots and they've been able to see the
allocating of the ballots per
constituency
including the reserve for each uh
constituency
now if the opposition are not in there
from beginning to end and we know there
have been all these allegations about uh
stuffing and all sorts of funny games
if they are not able to do that and that
is absolutely totally transparent black
mark
the third thing is about observation
what does observation mean
if you're going to have a genuinely
transparent uh election and i'm very
much in mind in 1994
and what came out of cadessa
you would have long-term observers who
quite happily join zek
they join uh the zimbabwe human rights
commission they interact with the police
they find out that all sorts of
complaints and nastiness about people
being beaten or tortured or disappeared
or
treating by giving people
may seed and accept accepted they're
able to observe all of that and they're

able to say without doubt that no attempt to manipulate the electoral electorate is there and you do that for a long way ahead and good government and good election will say you can come and look at our process completely openly but if you can't do that and they say you can only come at 90 days and when 90 days starts you can only get there in 30 days and sometimes you can only get there in 10 days black mark the fourth thing these are all pre-election things by the way uh is the recording and publicizing of results now anywhere in a democracy when you have voted and everybody's counted the votes make sure they're all accurate and you've allocated them and the constituency ward registrar says do you agree this is a result and everybody says yes and they sign it and they stick it on the outside of a polling station that is publication at that particular point any citizen can take a picture of it write it down and send it to someone else and say this is what happened in ward 11 in harare east okay it doesn't have to wait for the whole meandering of all the way up to zek for the endless announcing of results bit by bit they're public that's in our constitution once a result is public it's public so therefore will all citizens be able to record the votes will they be able to send them to a newspaper to their political party to an ngo are they able to do that is that

in place if it is not
black mark
now if you've got all of those black
marks
the condition for international people
must be to say the conditions are not
propitious for a bona fide election and
we're saying we don't believe that this
will be a
genuine free and fair election now that
is not a difficult process to do and the
government can make all of those things
available now that's apart from the
media
and all sorts of other process an
election has to be ordered and these are
the key steps in which you take an audit
election in order to be able to say
it's january free and fair now we saw
that in america where trump made insane
allegations about those things and what
did the audit proof everybody came back
and said the election result is
absolutely spot on there are no funny
games here from start to finish
now if those conditions are there
you can say
this does not look right
yep then you're next left with
the outcome
you know the disputed election all the
ones we've had
and therein lies another process
and it is in the way in which the courts
treat
election petitions
now there are two ways zimbabwean courts
have treated election petitions in 2000
they managed to delay
every single electoral petition for
almost five years so that every single
zombie of mp who was challenged all 38
of them served the entire purpose in
2002

judge schleswager gave a judgment where
he said
application dismissed never gave a
judgment and that one died as well okay
then we have
subsequent challenges which we're not
satisfactory and we get to the challenge
in the 2018 election
in which instead of unpacking a deeply
deeply disputed election
the constitutional court rules that
you've got 20 minutes to present your
arguments not
this election as per malawi deserves a
thorough
thorough audit of what happens
so the next step in dealing with this
is does the election petition
meet the standards of good objective
justice and if it doesn't
and you add up the pre-election process
and you add up the pro-selection process
and the two basically pawn to a
wholly unsatisfactory election then you
say we will not accept this election
and that's a very simple straightforward
process in my view
very
tony i'm very cognizant of the time
okay
and and and i wanted to put that in
because part of the question is what do
you do when you have a bad election yeah
fundamental point here is if you don't
have your own data
then what you are is reliant on the
locals and that's exactly what happens
okay
in every single election everybody says
oh well there's a dispute you sort it
out internally in the same way
to my good friends the political
scientists who are saying zimbabwe has
to solve this problem all by itself

well actually you know uh to be part of
an international community is you have
to demonstrate
both legitimacy
and legality
and that's the point so if you cannot
demonstrate those things then you must
call an election file
and zimbabwe has a history from 2000 to
2018 in which the conditions are well
understood by the international
community that they do not
uh obey the kinds of conditions for them
making an independent decision about
that
tony
very clear my friend unfortunately
i i do have to let you go here and and
thank you
for those key points
sarah sarah dorman you you you asked
to come back and um you you did indicate
that there was something as we wrap up
tonight this evening
um that you wanted to add to this
equation around 2023 elections go ahead
ma'am thanks so much sorry i guess i
just wanted to say um
bearing in mind um
brian's comments and other things uh
i think
the other thing that i would be
worried about and watching out for is a
risk that
uh any sort of a move towards
mediation towards some sort of a a
transitional arrangement um simply stops
elections from happening because i think
that that would be um
one part not a not a way forward in
terms of building strong institutions
but i also think if i'm to be bluntly
honest that that's what zany would be
very happy with that you know and i i

think that there is a risk in pushing
for a mediation type arrangement or some
sort of a transitional arrangement that
it plays into
those hands
so i i just wanted to sort of throw in a
i'm sorry to sound i i'm afraid uh
i always come on and sound like the
voice of doom and gloom but
i think i think it's important to be
aware of the risks and it seems to me
that there is that there are risks there
that need to be factored into
um any move forward as well thanks
thank you so much uh there sarah
dr mandaza uh sir i think my
role and my task
as moderator for this evening has has
arrived at an end i just want to thank
the
various contributors this evening for
their deep insights and being willing
to
accept the questions
that have been put to them
this is really a continuation of a
dialogue that we will be having
as we move towards the 2023 elections
and more importantly as we continue to
assess the state of politics
in zimbabwe with that said it's been a
privilege being with you and i hand over
to our convener and the presenter
dr ebermann thank you thanks chris
thanks very much indeed um i want to try
and
summarize what has happened
except to highlight the three points one
is that
it's unlikely that we'll have reforms
before the election
that is inevitable the election will be
disputed if it takes place
and

thirdly on the transition authority
if the question is not whether the
transition authority preempts
elections i think it's more the question
of under what conditions
would a transition authority be possible
or feasible
or desirable
before the election
and one of these
is one
the acknowledgement that elections are
going to be a waste of time
and in my view it appears futile
that we should be going through an
election when we know it will not be
free at fair
and secondly the dynamics within zanu-pf
itself
i made reference to the
internal feuding
the factionalism
and let's say for example there is a
showdown next year in 2022
between chuwanga and nangaga
and let's suppose that there would
be
a consensus even within zanube itself
uh and we have a number of
star wars including people at the top
we have been arguing
privately to us for the need of a
decision authority
given that even within zanu-pf
the power
struggles are in are inclusive
that
the the lines of succession are blurred
that national electrician is taking its
toll
that the the world veteran association
is no longer a factor
that there's no longer a wheels uh use
use there is movement

there's no women's league anymore
that things are really
falling apart
and
the the the possibilities therefore
started for
a kind of
the
consensus
that in such circumstances we need some
kind of
a holding operation
is that context that it comes across to
you
otherwise
i will go along with tony and brian
that's
it's not a question of and i'm gonna
take from alice's point
i don't know what more
zimbabwe should do
to convince
the region and the international
community
that all is not well
that election won't be a solution
that the question is repeating itself
that attrition continues
that we have 75 percent of our
professionals are skilled outside the
country
that the economic economic
situation is getting worse every day
that these sanctions are reality on the
in the especially in economic and
financial field
is it to question as i was asked that we
have to wait for blood more blood on the
floor before we
actually ignore the jesus crisis
this is the point
and it's not true that the international
community is not able to do anything i
mean you've had this

what are the futural sanctions exercise
for last 20 years
you you i mean
is it not possible
to put some timelines
along the lines that chris has suggested
uh where
uh some kind of incentives
or some kind of uh modalities are put in
place
to to to convince
the the powers that be
that they have reached a dead end
they're going norway
and i think
that there are possibilities uh at both
regional
and international uh level to do so
we raise the question as we have uh
share
in the knowledge that we are at work
as your way
in building a national consensus
and improving
and creating linkages with sex factors
in the international community
so it's working progress
we've been in touch with yourselves
thank you very much
and in closing i just want to say that
we have in our collaborative
efforts with the gga
gga has offered to
assist in
expanding
and consolidating our audiences around
the webinars and zooms and we'll be
making available
some kind of membership
the graduates on the base of which book
can come on board
for discussions gratis
and we'll be informing you in due course
so thank you very much chris special

thanks to you
making this possible and also my
colleague
sarah
and i'm sorry peter wasn't able to make
it
thank you very much
and good night
okay
you