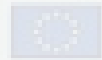


# **SUMMARY REPORT**

## The Impact of Shrinking Political and Civic Space on Operations of **Human Rights Activists** in Zambia

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION



Zambia has witnessed increased reports of attacks on civil society, religious, political and human rights activists/defenders in the past two years or more. From the human rights' perspective, there has been increasing worry and concern over the situation as these threats potentially undermine freedoms of expression, association and assembly both in the physical and cyber spaces.

From pre-independence times to date, civic and political spaces (physical and cyber) have been loaded with offences aimed at restricting their use. The main charges that are often slapped on perceived abusers in the eyes of the law enforcement agencies of the two spaces by the Zambia Police include unlawful assembly, defamation of the president and conduct likely to breach public peace and seditious practices and deportation, especially if a non-citizen is involved. The country's democracy, civil liberties and freedoms as seen in the freedom of expression, association, assembly, right to

share and receive information and right to hold to account its elected leadership is under great threat.

Therefore, the purpose of this analysis is to provide a benchmark for assessment and adaptation of AAZ engagement strategies with political and civil structures across all operational priorities and areas, especially under its work on the promotion of civic participation and state accountability. It is meant to assess the Impact of Shrinking Political and Civic Space on Operations of Human Rights Activists in Zambia. This is important to understand the key aspect to be assessed which is generally "Civic Space. The assessment of the impact of shrinking civic and political space could not have come at a better time than now when, as Kiai observed, "many of those in power often don't want to hear what people have to say. They don't want to upset the status quo, even if that status quo is catapulting us towards obliteration."

# FOREWORD

In many places around the world, civic and political space is under threat. In our own country Zambia, government has passed or maintained laws that restrict civic freedoms or make operations for civil society groups and Human Rights Activists difficult. In some cases, government has increased the surveillance of ordinary citizens, activists and civil society organisations, and in others, there has been direct repression and arrests.

I take keen interest in the observation of former United Nations Special Rapporteur to the United States of America, (July 27, 2016, Washington) on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. Maina Kiai observed that the recent terrorist attacks in several parts of the world are painful reminders of how critical a resolute and coordinated response to the scourge of terrorism is needed. However, the fundamental rights of individuals, including the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, should not be forfeited in the name of this struggle”.

Like Maina Kiai rightly observed, the Financial Action Task Force’s (FATF) recommendations have impacted CSOs and the wider non-profit sector in three fundamental ways. Firstly, they have been used as a vehicle for the imposition of new national legislation regulating nonprofit and civil society organisations across the world, and contributed to what is now a widely observed worldwide restriction of the ‘political space’ in which civil society operates. Secondly, states have been required by the FATF to adopt broad counterterrorism statutes, which have been used in a similar manner to clampdown on civil society activists. Third, in the attempt to lock terrorist groups out of the financial system, non-profits have found their capacity to move money around the world, and to fund particular activities and organisations in troubled regions, severely inhibited. The AML/FATF assessment of Zambia in 2008 strengthened the country’s case to fully enact the NGO Act N.16 of 2009. This was in response to recommendation 8 of AML/FATF Report of which Zambia needed to comply with.

ActionAid Zambia works with both formalized civil society organisations, youth groups, women movements and individual Human Rights Activists who would need an enabling civic and political space for them to advance right based initiatives which, in most cases, benefit the very poor our government claim to protect.

For some years now, ActionAid Zambia has been observing that civic engagement is getting riskier for activists, employees and volunteers working for NGOs and social movements. In addition to these personal threats, their organisations face systematic restrictions on their abilities to conduct their work.

Zambia is a multi-party democracy and legislations that exist must promote the growth of democracy and provide for citizens’ participation in both development and political processes. As an organisation, we particularly get worried when citizens begin to live in fear, fearing the systems that otherwise must protect them and provide security to them regardless of their political affiliation. We must collectively, as citizens of this country, find meaning in “Stand and Sing of Zambia, Proud and Free” by ensuring that economic and social opportunities benefit every citizen of this country without discrimination based on political party affiliation.

Zambia has been nurturing, establishing and adapting existing legal frameworks to make civic and political engagement difficult. The latest attempt was to close the cyber space with proposed Cyber Security Bills that might be taken to parliament in the next sitting in 2019.

This, therefore, prompted ActionAid Zambia to undertake this study whose purpose was to assess the Impact of Shrinking Civic and Political Space on operations of Human Rights Activists in Zambia.

ActionAid Zambia has not just taken “Shrinking Civic and Political Space” as global buzzy words but has gone down to establish common apparatus and tools that the government and state institutions are deploying to shrink the civic and political space. For us in ActionAid Zambia, this is a unique feature that we have contributed to this global wisdom. We realise that shrinking civic and political space is not only affecting and impacting on the Human Rights Activists but that it has greater impact on the very foundation of democracy - the freedoms of association, assembly and expression.

For ActionAid Zambia and our partner organisations, the shrinking of civic and political space has a very direct impact on the work we do, and as such, we need to find lasting solutions to ensure that we are able to engage citizens freely.

I therefore, want to take this opportunity to implore Human Rights Activists, Civil Society organisations and Political Actors in Zambia to remain strong and stand together every time civic and political space is threatened and attacked by agents of anti-freedoms. I’m confident that the findings of this study will definitely help us to strategize, not only to find the coping strategies, but also to collectively hold hands and challenge the abuse of public resources and facilities as apparatus of shrinking civic and political space.

We must also agree that our public resources and facilities will be used for the common good and not as ‘domineering’ tool by those with “rented” power from the very people whose freedoms and rights have been tempered with!

I invite you to pay particular attention on what we can do together to reshape our destiny as Human Rights Activists, as Civil Society organisations, as political actors, as cooperating partners and, more importantly, as citizens of this great nation, Zambia.

Nalucha Nganga – Ziba (Mrs.)  
ActionAid Zambia Country Director

# 1.1 ABOUT ACTIONAID

ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights and defeat poverty for all. ActionAid Zambia (AAZ) is a member of the ActionAid International Federation and its vision is to see a just and poverty free Zambia in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity.

In trying to realize its vision, AAZ works with the poor and excluded people to end poverty and injustice inherent in the Zambian societies. ActionAid Zambia works across the four areas of advancing women's rights, education and youth engagement, inclusive and participatory governance and promoting agriculture and natural resources management.

**act:onaid**  
ZAMBIA



## VISION

A just, equitable and sustainable Zambia in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity

## MISSION

To achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication by working with people living in poverty and exclusion, their communities, organisations, activists, social movements and supporters.

## OUR VALUES

MUTUAL  
RESPECT

EQUITY &  
JUSTICE

INTEGRITY

HUMILITY

SOLIDARITY

INDEPENDENCE

COURAGE OF  
CONVICTION



## **2.0 THE SITUATION ANALYSIS AND STUDY BACKGROUND**

ActionAid has been working with citizens' groups, CSOs, state institutions and political formations in areas of governance and human rights. Over time, concerns have been rising on Zambia's legal and policy systems which are becoming inhibitive to citizens' effective participation in the available civic and political platforms. AAZ and its allies believe that an open and free civic and political space is a catalyst to national development. It is against this background that AAZ embarked on a mission to undertake a study on Shrinking Civic and Political Space in Zambia in relation to operations of human rights defenders, civic and political activists.

Human rights associated with freedom of assembly, expression, association especially, have been a target of the authorities resulting in the decline and speedily shrinking political and civic spaces. There have also been reports of perceived discrimination of citizens especially those in the civil service by those in power. Reports of retiring of government workers in national and public interest has been one of the major concerns and this in certain instances is attributed to alleged political and tribal affiliations. There is also growing concern that Government has been using silent tools of discrimination and domination on some citizens leading to these citizens having challenges accessing government economic, educational, business, land and job opportunities. These actions have potentially threatened and instilled fear in many individuals and their families to effectively utilize the civic and political spaces available resulting into their passive or non-participation and involvement in these platforms.

Furthermore, economic empowerment and social protection schemes including the access and use of public assets such as markets and bus stations and access to land is alleged to be based on political affiliation and used to undermine the freedoms of association, assembly and expression of the perceived opponents to the ruling party. Activists and citizens belonging to civic movements perceived to be anti-ruling party and the opposition political parties are not currently operating freely in markets and bus stations neither are they covered by public media. It is also perceived that economic empowerment and mostly social protection schemes, including government jobs and contracts, are selectively given to pro-government individuals and groupings.

This, perhaps, is reinforced by the provision in the Constitution of the ruling party which, in ARTICLE 3 illustratively states, "the Party shall ensure that all the public institutions, State-owned enterprises and popular mass and similar organizations are led by persons who are members of the Party and who are uncompromisingly committed to achievements of the Party", and further in the same Constitution states that "The Party is the supreme organization and the guiding political force in the land. Its aims and objectives as expressed in this Constitution shall provide guidelines for all persons associated to it." These provisions have had telling effects on available state and government opportunities especially to non-party members thereby undermining multiparty democracy, co-existence, interparty democracy. These practices have potential to contribute to disunity and fierce electoral competition, realignment of citizens based on political persuasion where those in opposition want, by all costs, to grab power to also enjoy the trappings of power and opportunities associated with being on the saddles of state power.



Although Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides for the right to peaceful assembly and association, these rights have continued to experience renewed or sustained restrictions and threats. In its 2016 report, *State of Civil Society*, CIVICUS notes that for countries like Zambia, public order laws are increasingly being used to restrict and decline the space, limiting the right to expression, association and peaceful assembly – the three fundamental rights on which civil society’s ability to act rests.

In Zambia like many African countries, the phenomenon of shrinking civic and political space is happening at a fast pace. In an article written by Charles Kojo Vandyck, a Human Rights Advocate on 8th August 2018 in the Blog Post – *The International Consortium on Closing Civic Space*; Charles proposes: “This dire situation calls for a new approach that mobilizes citizens’ response to these restrictive measures”. Current initiatives focus more on highlighting and amplifying the various dimensions of shrinking space through research, documentation, and policy advocacy at national levels. However, effectively addressing the crisis, confronting civil society and the political actors in Africa requires developing citizens’ skills and knowledge on effective measures to address human rights violations. This can be done through public education and awareness raising, online community mobilization, town hall meetings, and targeted convenings that include the participation of faith-based groups, voluntary associations, citizens’ movements, and community-based organizations.

Maina Kiai, the former UN Rapporteur on Freedoms of Assembly and Association stressed, “Unless there is renewed commitment from the world’s leaders, away from fear and control of their own people, and toward respecting the dignity of all, the situation will remain precarious for civil society globally.” Kiai noted that his mandate was created at a time – late 2010 – when it was increasingly clear that individuals were demanding a larger say in public affairs and in decisions that affect them and covered a period during which the world faced a series of severe crises, ranging from growing poverty and inequality to violent extremism, to climate change, to failing states. “It was – and still is – a time when assembly and association rights were needed most, as an avenue for people to peacefully speak out, contribute their talents, share their ideas and help society work towards solving its problems,” he further noted that, yet many governments have reacted to these crises by taking destructive and counterproductive measures. “Instead of allowing assembly and association rights to flourish, and instead of listening to what people have to say, they have responded by closing the space for civil society voices and actions,” Kiai said. “The message from this trend is clear: Many of those in power often don’t want to hear what people have to say. They don’t want to upset the status quo, even if that status quo is catapulting us towards obliteration.”

Charles further added that: “An effective response should focus on highlighting and evaluating the triggers and root causes of closing civic space on a country-by-country basis. The inability to invest resources in identifying and mitigating the root causes puts civil society in a defensive posture and prevents the kind of proactive discourse, mobilization, and action that is needed to strengthen and expand the space for civil society”. Like Charles proposed and Kiai stressed, shifting from the current emphasis on the effects of government restrictions and their implications for human rights to building the resilience and support base for civil society and political actors would go a long way in stemming the tide of growing restrictions. There must also be an extensive examination of the

operational strategies of citizens' movements and their pushback tactics.

Stakeholders consulted in five 5 provinces strongly agree with the observations by the authorities cited above and recommended that the design of coping initiatives should be sustainable and flexible, if the defense for civic and political spaces was to be a reality. Political actors, CSOs and Activists submitted that the priority by those interested in protecting citizens' rights and freedoms should be to help NGOs and citizens develop the skills needed to deal with a shifting environment for civil society and political actors to effectively operate. Such skills include the capacity to analyze the existing, new and proposed laws and regulations. They further submitted that there is need for digital and Internet security, security awareness trainings, mass mobilization and movement building, policy advocacy and public engagement, networking and alliance building, and digital activism.

It is imperative, now more than ever, that public and private sector stakeholders step up and harmonize their response to the threat of closing civic, religious, media and political spaces. However, doing so effectively requires going beyond reactive national-level efforts to beat back restrictive measures. What is needed in Zambia are grassroots efforts to empower, mobilize, and grow constituencies for human rights activism before the next crisis or challenge to civic space deteriorates into authoritarianism if it is not there already!

Statistics indicate that the population of the youth in Zambia, between the ages of 15 and 35 years, is placed at 4.8 million (36.7 of National Population) and more than 50 percent of this population is female (UNFP, August 2016). Currently, university bursaries have been conditional and there are instances when University students lose their bursary support when found demonstrating against any form of human rights abuses including poor and delayed funding to students' bursary schemes. This has affected the level at which young people in tertiary institutions especially those with a reasonable reasoning to express themselves and this has affected their freedom of expression and association. At the same time youth and women empowerment schemes are directed at women and youth who seem to be allegiant to the ruling party.

It is also important to appreciate that by 2017, Zambia's population stood at 16,405,229. Of this 8,017,270 were males (49.9 %) while 8,387,959 were females (51.1%) (CSO/Ministry of Labour 2017 Labour Force Survey). Women participation is thus an important aspect in both civil and political spaces and in furtherance of a sound and inclusive democratic process in Zambia. Equal participation in local and national leadership is one of the key ways of protecting women and advancing substantive gender equality. Further this is key in ensuring that women experiences are fully integrated in the socio-political and economic spheres, which directly impact the socio-economic and political outcomes. The right to participate in leadership and decision-making spheres is important in empowering women, youth and persons with disabilities as individuals and as groups to end the inherent marginalization and discrimination affecting this section of our society.

The roles political parties would play in gender balancing are important. Currently, these roles still are discriminatory of young people, persons with disabilities and women. For example, a total of 3,284 councilors were adopted by four political parties (FDD, PF, UNIP, and UPND) to contest for 1,624 seats at local government level. About 3, 013 of those adopted were men (91%) while 271 adopted

were women at local government level. In terms of the aggregate number of men adopted (4,141) and elected (1,323) as compared to female candidates at (425) adopted and (132) elected to local government positions in 2016 local government elections. About 331 (88%) Men compared to 40 (12%) women are holding executive positions and chairing council sub-committees in relation to their various skills. The trend was similar at mayoral and council chairperson level, where the Zambia National Women's Lobby (2016) reports that, of the 38 women who contested, only 9 out of the 104 elected mayors or council chairpersons were female, which translates to 8.65%.

Historical Archive of Parliamentary Election Results website shows that when Zambia transitioned into multiparty democracy in 1991, only seven of the 150 elected Members of Parliament were women. This means women constituted only 4.7 percent of elected Members of Parliament. In the next decade, that number steadily grew, and by 2006, the representation of women in Parliament had increased to 14%. In the period between 2006 and 2011, the IPU Historical Archive shows that the number of women elected as Members of Parliament plateaued. For example, in 2011, out of the 158 members of parliament (MPs) elected and nominated by the President in Zambia, only 17 were women, translating to a 10.7% representation. In the Cabinet, constituted after this election, there were only two female ministers out of 28, and only four female deputy ministers out of 18. The statistics in the National Assembly of Zambia further show that there has since been a marginal increase in the number of female MPs. Of the 169 members of the National Assembly inclusive of the Vice-President, the Speakers and the deputy Speaker in the House as of January 2018, only 32 were female, accounting for 18.7 percent, whereas the 138 male MPs accounted for 81.3 percent. In the Cabinet, out of the 32 members (including the President and Vice President), only 11 were female, accounting for 33.3 percent, while the 22 males accounted for 66.7 percent (Unpublished PANOS Report (2018) and International IDEA Report (2014).

The marginalization has also been evident in the way political parties select their presidential election candidates. An analysis of an unpublished PANOS Report (2018) on "Assessment of Political Party Systems and Structures that Marginalize Women" and International IDEA (2011) report on "The Analysis of Political Parties' Policy Documents from A Gender Perspective: Case Study Report for Zambia" and an analysis of presidential candidates since Independence in 1964 by Gewald, J.B et al in a book titled One Zambia, Many Histories (2008) show that Zambia has had only two women nominated to stand for election as president. These are: Gwendoline Konie who contested once (in 2002), and Edith Nawakwi who has contested on four occasions (in 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2016). According to Gewald, J.B et al (2008), a third female presidential aspirant, Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika failed to file her nomination in 2001 after failing to raise the requisite number of supporters to file her nomination. A list of candidates published on the Electoral Commission of Zambia website shows that in the 2016 general elections, only two out of the nine presidential running mates were women. In Zambia, therefore, from the time the country returned to multipartism in the 1990s, all the political parties have had less than 30%, let alone the 50% women representation target in decision making in their structures set by the 2008 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. This glaring gender disparity in leadership has potential to, if not already, created difficulties for women to thrive and compete with men who are already dominating and have to deal with the deep-rooted beliefs and attitudes that leadership is for men. This is despite the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 28 (2010) and the

Committee of all forms of Racial Discrimination General Recommendation No. 25 (2000) highlights the right to participate on basis of equality in public and political life as a central feature in the concept of inclusive democracy.

Furthermore, Local platforms visited such as Ward Development Committees (WDCs) are chaired by men; women roles are more relegated to committee members or secretary or treasurer utmost. This affects the level of influence in pushing for gender-oriented services in local authorities. Additionally it creates biases in implementing gender related pieces of legislation such as clauses in the Constitution and Gender Equity and Equality Act (2015) that though fully cover women rights, their application leaves much to be desired. This has contributed to high poverty levels among women (about 57 percent poverty level in female headed households) CSO; 2015 LCMS.

In terms of Civic and political spaces, Zambia has passed or maintained old laws that restrict civic freedoms or make operations for civil society groups and Human Rights Activists difficult. In some cases, government has increased the surveillance of ordinary citizens, activists and civil society organisations, and in other instances there has been direct repression and arrests including detention and jailing of activists. Despite Zambia being a multi-party democracy for years now, discrimination based on perceived or real political party affiliation and attacks and threats on human rights activists and defenders has been on the increase. Zambia has had reports of attacks, harassment, intimidation and threats on including jailing of civil society, opposition party sympathizers and leaders and human rights defenders in the past two years.



These happenings have resulted in growing concern and uncertainty on the future of the freedoms of expression, association and assembly both in the physical and online spaces and has put civic and political activism in the country under threat. Legislation that exists has, largely, not promoted the healthy growth of a democratic process that provides for citizens' effective participation in both development and political processes.

It has been realized that shrinking civic and political space is not only affecting and impacting on the Human Rights and political Activists but the very foundation of democracy-the freedoms of association, assembly and expression and the overall developmental agenda of the country as some people are left behind because of their affiliations. This is against the spirit of the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) which has a motto of not leaving anyone behind and undermines the spirit and aspirations of the Vision 2030.



## 3.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY



This study was premised around the following objectives:

- **Legal and Policy assessment of Shrinking Political and Civic Space on Operations' of Human Rights Activists in Zambia;**
- **Assessment of engagement strategies, the civil and political structures being used to shrink the political and civic space and the best adaptation mechanisms given the current civic and political environment; and**
- **Assessment of how the Human Rights Activists and political actors operate in the context of shrinking political and civic space.**

## 3.1 STUDY METHODOLOGY



Given the nature of the assessment which was more qualitative, the Assessment Team mainly applied the Purposive sampling. Simple random sampling was only used where the criteria of selection was not purposefully defined and that the target population was more than the required numbers. This approach ensured that those that understood the subject area were the ones selected to participate in this important study. The outcome of the study is believed to be representative as it covered six provinces, namely Lusaka, Copperbelt, Western (Sesheke and Mongu), Southern (Livingstone and Choma), Eastern (Chipata) and Northern (Nakonde). The division of the selected provinces also takes care of political dynamics based on strongholds of both the ruling and opposition political parties. Besides key stakeholder consultations, the report was consolidated from literature review of relevant policies and legislations.



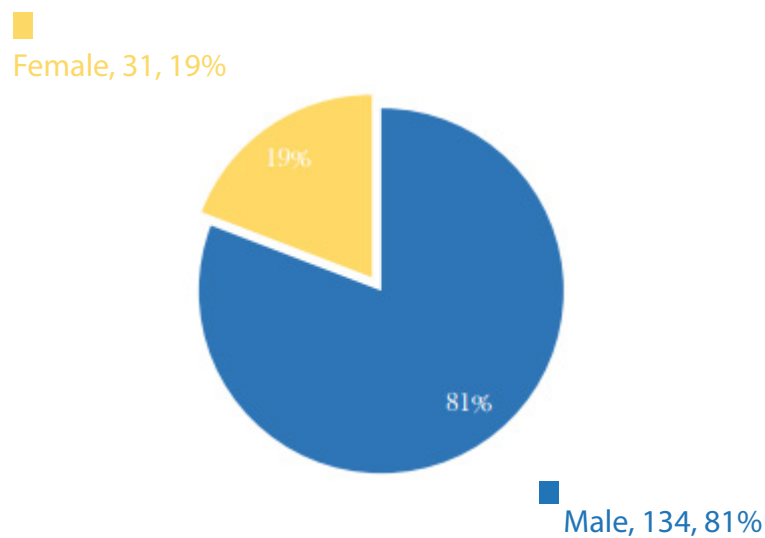
# 4.0 KEY FINDINGS

SN	KEY RESULT AREAS
4.1	Established age and gender sensitive quantitative and qualitative data and information on participation in the civic and political spaces for human rights activists;

## 4.1.1 Gender

Gender From the field consultations, particularly meetings with political parties, revealed that financial and education limitations are drivers for lack of women and youth participation in politics and economic opportunities. Political parties further identified family, marital support and violence as other factors that contribute to either effective or ineffective participation of women in civic and political space. Few women therefore apply for adoption at national and local government levels. In the recent presidential election in 2016, only one female candidate contested for presidency while during the mayoral by-election in Lusaka, only one woman participated out of the over five candidates that contested. These women candidates both did not make it. In the National Assembly, only about 31 (about 19%) members of parliament are women out 165 parliamentarians (<http://www.parliament.gov.zm/members/gender>).

Figure 1: National Assembly of Zambia Representation by Gender



Women make up about 52 percent of Zambia’s population while in terms of the voting numbers, women still outnumber men with 51% compared to 49% for men. This means inclusive development discourse would be a pipedream if women are still left out of meaningful participation, especially in leadership and public sphere. Subsequent general elections have seen the female local government representation at a paltry 7% and 9% in 2011 and 2016 respectively, further raising questions as to what needs to happen

to change the low trends. The table below shows the number of women who were adopted by selected political parties in the August 11, 2016 general Elections.

Table 1: Local Government Councillors adopted by Political Parties for 11 August 2016 Elections Percentage Political Party Total Women Men Women Men PF 1,561 145 1,416 9 91 UNIP 53 7 46 13 87 MMD 114 21 93 18 82 UPND 1,556 98 1,458 6 94 Total 3284 271 3013 9 91 Source: Local Government Association, 2017

Table 1: Local Government Councillors adopted by Political Parties for 11 August 2016 Elections

Political Party	Total	Women	Men	Percentage	
				Women	Men
PF	1,561	145	1,416	9	91
UNIP	53	7	46	13	87
MMD	114	21	93	18	82
UPND	1,556	98	1,458	6	94
<b>Total</b>	<b>3284</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>3013</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>91</b>

**Source: Local Government Association, 2017**

In terms of adoption in the four political parties presented above, a total of 3,284 councillors were picked by four political parties. About 3,013 of those adopted were men (91%) while 271 were women at local government level. About 331 (88%) men compared to 40 (12%) women are holding executive positions and chairing council sub-committees in relation to their various skills.

The trend was similar at mayoral and council chairperson level, where the ZNWL (2016) reports that of the 38 women who contested, only 9 out of the 104 elected mayors or council chairpersons were female, which translates to 8.65 percent.

Historical Archive of Parliamentary Election Results website shows that when Zambia transitioned into a multiparty democracy in 1991, only seven of the 150 elected Members of Parliament were women. This means women constituted only 4.7 percent of elected Members of Parliament. In the next decade, that number steadily grew, and by 2006, the representation of women in Parliament had increased to 14%. In the period between 2006 and 2011, the IPU Historical Archive shows that the number of women elected as Members of Parliament plateaued. For example, in 2011, out of the

158 members of parliament (MPs) elected and nominated by the President in Zambia, only 17 were women, translating to a 10.7% representation. In the Cabinet, constituted after this election, there were only two female ministers out of 28, and only four female deputy ministers out of 18. The statistics in the National Assembly of Zambia further show that there has since been a marginal increase in the number of female MPs. Of the 169 members of the National Assembly, including the Vice-President, the Speakers and the deputy Speaker in the House as of January 2018, only 32 were female, accounting for 18.7 percent, whereas the 138 male MPs accounted for 81.3 percent. In the Cabinet, out of the 32 members (including the President and Vice President), only 11 were female, accounting for 33.3 percent, while the 22 males accounted for 66.7 percent (Unpublished Panos Report (2018) and International IDEA Report (2011)).

The marginalization has also been evident in the way political parties select their presidential election candidates. An analysis of an unpublished Panos Report (2018) on “Assessment of Political Party Systems and Structures that Marginalise Women” and International IDEA (2011) report on “The Analysis of Political Parties’ Policy Documents from A Gender Perspective: Case Study Report for Zambia” and an analysis of presidential candidates since Independence in 1964 by Gewald, J.B et al in a book titled One Zambia, Many Histories (2008) shows that Zambia has had only two women nominated to stand for election as president. These are: Gwendoline Konie who contested once (in 2002), and Edith Nawakwi who has contested on four occasions (in 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2016). According to Gewald, J.B et al (2008), a third female presidential aspirant, Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika failed to file her nomination in 2001 after failing to raise the requisite number of supporters to file her nomination. A list of candidates published on the Electoral Commission of Zambia website shows that in the 2016 general elections, only two out of the nine presidential running mates were women (Panos, 2018).

In Zambia, therefore, from the time the country returned to multipartism in the 1990s, all the political parties have had less than 30% women in decision making, far below the 50% women representation target in decision making in their structures set by the 2008 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. This glaring gender disparity in leadership has potential to, if not already, create difficulties for women to thrive and compete with men who are already dominating. Women also have to deal with the deep-rooted beliefs and attitudes that leadership is for men. This is despite the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 28 (2010) and the Committee of all forms of Racial Discrimination General Recommendation No. 25 (2000) highlighting the right to participate on the basis of equality in public and political life as a central feature in the concept of inclusive democracy.

Equal participation in leadership is one of the key ways of protecting women’s human rights and advancing substantive gender equality – ensuring that women experiences are fully integrated in the socio-political sphere, which directly impacts the socio-economic one. The right to participate in leadership is important in empowering individuals and groups in order to end marginalisation and discrimination.

It is clear that in Zambia, leadership is a male-dominated arena in terms of numbers of people holding decision-making positions at various levels of society despite the Constitution promoting a 50-50% representation especially when it concerns appointment to top positions. The gender disparity in leadership creates difficulty for women to thrive as they compete with men, who are already dominating. Women also have to deal with the deep-rooted beliefs and attitudes that leadership is for men.

The poor participation of women in civic and political spaces has a negative bearing on economic and social status of women. Accordingly, about 56 percent (CSO: 2015 LCMS) of female headed households are poor. Poor representation robs women of opportunities to regulate policies and legislations towards women empowerment. Legislations and policies end up not favouring women, thereby depriving them of economic and social opportunities.

Lillian Kiefer, Panos Institute Southern Africa Executive Director, highlights the following as some of the underlying causes of the gender inequality in leadership:

*Traditional values that undermine women economic independence, limit women freedom of movement and assembly and offers narrow view of women vision, ambitions, and their aspirations;*

*Gender stereotypes that limit women opportunities to be appointed to senior positions exacerbates beliefs that women are not capable, creating low aspirations and limited opportunities for appointment to influential positions;*

*Prevailing social inequalities that fuel violence against women and impede access to other human rights by women such as the right to political participation, education, health and economic well-being*

*Social exclusion of women from public life, decision-making and politics leading to negative profile and opinions for women leadership.*

Lillian emphasizes: “These negative deep-rooted beliefs and stereotypes against women leadership undermine their influence in society. Women contributions and achievements are under-recognised. Mostly women leaders receive negative and sexist visibility. In addition, there are gender disparities in access to media and other visibility platforms, which favour male leaders and decision-makers. This fuels the stereotypes against female leaders as there are limited platforms through which to address them”.

## 4.1.2 Youth Participation

**The youth are the vibrant component** of the population and they are more in number than the elderly people. Statistics indicate that the population of the youth in Zambia (15-35 years) is placed at 4.8 million and this, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), is the largest population of young people in the history of the country. Threats of bursary withdrawal from students for exercising their democratic rights has adversely affected youth participation in civic and political spaces. Students have learnt hard lessons where a government thinks that Bursary Schemes are a favour rather than a responsibility of the state.

**Youth participation** in social, economic and political affairs of the country is important

and supposed to be guided by the revised National Youth Policy 2015. From the time of independence, students have been playing a major role in the country's democracy in an organised manner through student unions and other youth platforms. The Minister of Higher Education Prof. Nkandu Luo, in May, 2017, banned student union activities in higher learning institutions, notably Copperbelt University (CBU) and University of Zambia (UNZA), and further in 2018 threatened to abolish meal allowances for students to further neutralize their militancy and participation in national affairs. In 2015, government threatened to withdraw meal allowances/Bursaries from students who demanded to be paid their perks. Students from both UNZA and CBU were arrested and with some students expelled from these two universities.

The banning of student unions at universities and the consequent death of a female student at UNZA in 2018 due to police action to quell a riot, was a clear move by the current government to suppress the student voice in the country. Not only are student Unions crucial in the functioning of universities, but they are an essential part to securing the future success of Zambia and for enhancing academic freedoms. Banning students' unions is weakening the voice of students and consequently the youth populace by instilling fear of arrests, death and clampdowns. Unions play a key role in administering the affairs of students and prepare youth for leadership roles in society.

Students must be allowed to congregate and formulate their own opinions and views not only on university issues but national matters too. Some students interviewed noted that the current government's banning of Unions in the two public funded universities was meant to weaken education services and ultimately prevent the educated youth from challenging the 'corrupt' and 'broken' hierarchy currently in existence. During the FGD in Kitwe, the youths submitted that any voice of dissent is currently under attack from government using its structures of power and closing youth spaces of engagement is currently another strategy government is using to shut down platforms that are youth friendly. Another incident is the locking up of PF Youths who, early in 2018, demanded accountability in the Mukula trade and exportation by intercepting truck loads en route to South Africa through Chirundu Border Post.

Youth and women organisations and platforms also have challenges of funding and access to economic opportunities, including media coverage. Youths noted with regret that many schemes or empowerment funds and land favour political cadres from the ruling party. Political regalia magnets youth schemes, leaving ordinary youths either with opposition or jobless and hopeless at the end. *'Regalialisation' of youth economic empowerment schemes and public service jobs and businesses automatically limit freedom of association and expression and thus a serious tool of oppression.*

### **4.1.3 Youth empowerment funds**

In terms of Total Youth Labour Force, latest statistics indicate that there are 1,966,074

youths, of which 1,149,265 are males and 816,810 are females. Youth labour force accounts for 56.2 percent of the total national labour force, which by 2017 stood at 3,498,847 (2,036,339 males and 1,462,508 females). This means that the young people must play an active role in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This could be made possible if civic and political platforms are deliberately opened for youth participation.

Whilst youths acknowledged that the youth empowerment fund or schemes are facilities designed to contribute to youth empowerment as a strategy for job creation and poverty reduction, they, however, observed that those schemes or funds have strong political characteristics. Youths indicated that at district levels, the office of the District Commissioner has an 'invisible hand' in the selection of beneficiary groups/individuals. This contributes to poor loan repayments as the funds were meant to be revolving. Those who receive such funds consider them as reward for their support to the ruling party. This was confirmed in an interview with a PF party official in Kitwe. This is a systematic exclusion of ordinary youths from accessing youth empowerment schemes and services. Ultimately, this defeats the independent youth participation in political and civic processes and thus takes away the freedom of association and expression. Those not benefiting from such schemes become economically disempowered and cannot even aspire for elective positions due to lack of financial muscle.

## **Bursaries/Student loans/scholarships**

These are the social protection initiatives given to the vulnerable children whose parents/guardians cannot manage university fees. In case of scholarships, these award full or partially paid education opportunities at various levels to the citizens of the Republic of Zambia. However, youths, especially those from rural areas, submitted that access to bursaries or student loans and scholarships are also administered in a selective manner. Youths were concerned that the facilities were meant for the very poor people but the children of the rich and those highly connected to political power have more advantages than those the service was designed for. The Youths lamented that there seems to be 'politics and struggle for in everything!'

The growing challenge of youth unemployment has resulted in government formulating Labour Market policies that seek the inclusion of young people in the mainstream economy. As a result, public policy on the participation of young people in the economy is well documented in terms of policy statements and frameworks. However, in practice, the implementation of these policies has remained very weak (Bhorant et al, 2015). The most pronounced of all the youth policies currently is the 2015 National Youth Policy, which defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 35. In addition, Zambia also has a strong legal framework for youth participation in the economic, social, and civic life within Zambia.

It is, however, clear that young people are currently hopeless and are used as tools of political violence in various political parties, especially during elections. The Assessment Team had time to meet with youth groups, including the one youthful presidential



candidate from People's Alliance for Change (PAC) who confirmed the use of youths for political expediency by political parties and their leaders.

## 4.2

### **Extent to which shrinking political and civic space is affecting the operation of human rights activities in Eastern, Northern, Southern, Western, Copperbelt, Southern and Lusaka provinces.**

Part of this study was to exactly identify the impact of shrinking civic and political space. During the workshop in Lusaka and FGDs in other provinces, the study zoomed on the impact that shrinking civic and political space has on Human Rights Activists, Civil Society/NGOs and political players. The following were some of the findings:

- a) Human Rights Defenders acknowledged that most Human Rights Activities (HRA) revolve around advocacy for reforms and so shrinking space in whatever form affects HRA work. Political parties revealed that shrinking space has disabled them to mobilise membership, thereby impacting negatively on the growth of their parties. The media confessed that due to shrinking space, information gathering has been difficult, thereby relying on the same news sources, making news monotonous. Principally, there are limitations on freedom of association, expression and media through the restriction in the operations of CSOs, political parties, religious organisations, media and control of internal and interparty meetings. NGO laws and political parties Bills are perceived to be used to advance this objective.
- b) The NGO Acts have been used to put surveillance on the work of NGOs in the country. This is not only common in Zambia but a number of SADC countries. For instance, in Tanzania, organisations are required to disclose their source of funding and their contracts and ensure that all projects are in line with the State's determined national priorities. Freedom of expression is restricted and further restricts free speech through the application of cyber laws, the Statistics Act 2015, amended in 2018; Media Services Act 2016; and Online Contents Regulation Act of 2018. Prosecution of individuals, unlawful arrests and attacks and forceful disappearances, banning and fining media outlets such as TV and newspapers are not uncommon. This is very close to the provision of the Zambia NGO Act and proposed Cybercrimes Bill. This affects the freedom of assembly in both the physical and electronic civic spaces. This limits the extent activists could advance advocacy work on various human rights.

- c) The shrinking civic and political space in Zambia and some of our neighbouring countries has created an environment of fear and intimidation, making Human Rights Activists unable to hold authorities to account. Those who demand accountability are targeted by state institutions and, in many cases, face arrests or any form of victimization. In many instances, Human Rights Activists are a target for state surveillance and blackmail, undue influence on the justice system, resulting in a lack of access to justice. In this regard, this limits the extent the HRAs could do their work under such conditions. It is sad to note that shrinking civic and political space has a lasting impact on the livelihood of the victims, be it Civil Society leaders or political actors.
- d) The other serious impact of shrinking civic and political space is that there are limitations of free expression, assembly, access to information and cyber bullying of people with opposing views which results into closed and few to no alternative spaces and limits Human Rights Activists' ability to engage with authorities. This also affects the ability of Human Rights Activists to mobilise the public around governance issues. They become lone voices and usually labeled as public nuisance!
- e) State, CSOs and religious institutions are politicized, creating inadequate solidarity and leaving Human Rights Activists open to physical and emotional vulnerability.

Lack of knowledge of Legislations and public policies by CSOs: Notably lack of knowledge of laws and public policies has had negative impact on the CSOs, Human Rights Activists and Defenders. Lack of knowledge was even demonstrated by law enforcement officers in the case of Laura Miti and 5 others Vs People in which the Arresting Officer charged the 6 'Fire truck' demonstrators using an old Public Order Act whose content had been amended. During trial, the Arresting Officer displayed and quoted a clause and section that had been struck out of the law after the Christine Mulundika VS the people, Judgement No 25 of 1995, [1996] ZMSC 26 (9 December 1996); Held (by a majority, CHAILA, J.S.) that: dissenting):

Section 5(4) of the Public Order Act Cap 104 contravenes articles 20 and 21 of the Constitution and is null and void; and ii. The exemption granted to certain office holders does not fall under the categories listed in the Constitution.

Furthermore, in the case of Resident Doctors Association of Zambia and Others Vs Attorney General (SCZ Judgment No. 12 of 2003) [2003] ZMSC 31(27th October, 2003), The Supreme Court of Zambia held:

- 1) The rights to free speech and freedom to assemble are not only fundamental, but central to the concept and ideal of democracy;
- 2) Courts as final arbiters, when interpreting the Constitution and the laws made thereunder, which confer the freedoms, there is need for the court to adopt an interpretation, which does not negate the rights. Most jurisdictions adopt a generous and purposive construction of human rights instruments, so as to confer on a person the full measure in the enjoyment of the rights; and
- 3) The Police flagrantly violated the Public Order Act and consequently, infringed the petitioners' rights as enshrined in Articles 20 and 21 of the Constitution.

This implies that the ignorant public is charged with criminal offenses that do not exist in our legal statutes and innocent citizens religiously are made to undergo unnecessary torment. This affects the level of participation due to fear of arrests, detention and judicial processes.

On the other hand, lack of knowledge of public policy also affects citizens' participation. It was clear that development platforms such as Ward Development Committees (WDCs) are not adequately utilized. This is due to the fact that the guidelines are not publicized, hence the public perceives that there is a creation of the ruling party and members must be drawn from the ruling party.

This affects youth and women participation, especially those who are not politically affiliated. Where established, WDCs are also male dominated in most areas we visited, specifically Nakonde, Sesheke, Chipata, Choma, Mongu and Livingstone.

### 4.3

## Identify and explain the structures/ways or processes in which shrinking political and civic space is taking place.

Notably, the structures and ways in which shrinking civic and political space is taking shape are by closing opportunities for livelihood. Human Rights Activists and political actors cannot openly trade in markets or operate in bus stations. Public assets have been politicized and provide more opportunities to political cadres from the ruling party, the Patriotic Front. This is a direct affront to freedoms of association and expression. In the same vein, obtaining police permits for assembly by activists and opposition political parties is very difficult. Like Chama Fumba, also known as Pilato, and Maiko Zulu indicated, their livelihood as musicians depends on musical performances/concerts, and as such, the continuous refusal by the police to grant them permits for holding public performances truly affects their economic survival. Similarly, the politicisation of public assets such as markets and bus stations directly affects more women who in turn would fail to provide social services such as school fees for children and also failure to meet costs of other social and economic amenities such water, electricity and health related needs. Otherwise, the majority employ copying approaches such as the “Water Melon Strategy” – green outside and red inside. Meaning that even those who do not support the Ruling Patriotic Front (PF); who are members of other political parties (opposition), would wear the PF regalia just to access public services such as market stores or bus stations (in the case of bus drivers).

In the case of students, the threat of withdrawal of bursaries/student loans or scholarships undermines their freedom of expression as they cannot take part in any demonstration. The limitations on freedom of expression and association have given rise to artificial support to the ruling party. In Mongu, for instance, all marketeers were forced to show solidarity to the Republican president when his eligibility to stand in 2021 as the presidential candidate was ‘confirmed’ by the Constitutional Court.

### 4.4

## Current engagement strategies with civil and political structures by human rights activists and CSOs and advise on the best adaptation mechanisms given the current civic and political environment

In terms of engagement strategies in the civil and political structures that are being used by the human rights activists and CSOs, it was clear during consultations that many CSOs and Human rights activists are using various strategies that include the private media such as community and commercial radio and TV stations. Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp groups and platforms are being used frequently to engage with the public, authorities and media. This is also one way in which CSOs and human rights activists are adapting themselves to shrinking civic

and political space. While shrinking civic and political space makes the work of the human rights activists, political actors and CSOs very difficult, it also exposes the weaknesses of the government in delivering services to the public.

## 4.5

### Key opportunities, constraints and other needs relevant to the success of engagement efforts by AAZ and partners

ActionAid works in taxation and the politicization of public assets such as markets and bus stations provides an opportunity for ActionAid to demand for enhancing revenue sources by initiating advocacy and campaigns to depoliticize the public assets such as markets and bus stations to enhance revenue sources for Local Authorities. A study could be undertaken to ascertain income loss by Local Authorities through polarized and parallel structures of political and official levy collection from markets and bus stations. In terms of constraints, rural districts have very few CSOs that are vibrant to support the work of AAZ. It was also clear that after long time and massive investment in local Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and CSOs, there is limited capacity building initiatives because these initiatives are short lived and there seems to be no sustainability mechanisms. The funding model is not sustainable as there is a heavy hand of international organizations on the local organizations. This takes away innovation and creates a master-servant approach in which local CSOs are to look up to international organizations for support. The CSOs civic space shrinks with limited resources, poor funding that are project activity oriented with little or no administrative support to local CBOs/CSOs and this weakens civic engagement.

## 4.6

### Recommendations on how Human Rights Activists can operate in the context of shrinking political and civic space.

Human Rights Activists (HRAs)/Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) proposed the following strategies:

- Strengthening a local NGO coordination mechanism and alliance building of HRA to enhance collaboration and solidarity; working through an umbrella organisation with national, regional and global networking opportunities;
- Designing and developing a social media and community media strategy to raise awareness of human rights and their fulfillment, and the role of HRAs and HRDs;

- Identify strategic litigation cases that must be used for legislature advocacy;
- Developing a coordinated local and regional HRDs protection, defence and response mechanism, including an Emergency Survivors' Kit
- Develop a common local and regional agenda focused on one priority/thematic issue and implement a campaign that supports HRAs/HRDs and their work

## 4.7

### Analyse the various pieces of legislation that have impact on CSOs political and civic engagement processes.

Government has used various apparatus and instruments to constrain the civic and political space in Zambia. Mainly, legal instruments have been deployed into state machinery to deter citizens' participation and holding elected leaders accountable. Consequently, there are overarching challenges in realising the provision of the above cited policy and legal frameworks.

Currently, there are key Civil and Political legislation that have been used to shrink civic and political spaces. A number of them have undergone **incomprehensive reviews**. The main ones are: the **Public Order Act (1955)**, **Penal Code (1930)** while new ones enacted after independence include the **Organisations (Control of Assistance) Act (1966)**, **Emergency Powers Act (1964)**.

Others enacted post 1991 to further shrink the civic space are the **NGOs Act (2009)**, **Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act (2015)**, **Independent Broadcasting Authority Act (IBA)**, AML/FATF regulations, **proposed Cyber Laws, among others**. In terms of policies, new ones have been born such as the NGO Policy (2018) while others have been reviewed such as the National Youth Policy (revised 2015) and Decentralisation Policy.



## **4.8 URGENCY OF THE ISSUE AT HAND - SHRINKING CIVIC AND POLITICAL SPACE**

Shrinking Civic and Political space has been exhibited into increased harassment, intimidation, arrests and jailing of opposition political, civic, media and religious activists in the country. Also, it has encouraged government to resort to developing and maintaining pieces of legislation that maintain the status quo of shrinking space. In addition, it has encouraged the emergency of passive citizenry and voter apathy in some instances.

Shrinking Civic and Political Space has potentially compromised the provision of checks and balances to state, government and ruling party institutions and their organs. This has bred or likely to breed corruption, abuse of public resources, facilities, authority and power. It may lead to unilateral development of unfriendly national policies and make decisions devoid of citizens' participation by the government which is likely to result to the sprouting of 'democracy without the people'.

Shrinking civic and political space also has led to weakened advocacy and lobbying activities among civil society/NGOs, associations, political parties and activists, media and human rights defenders/activists, academia, trade unions and students' unions and a general diminishing civic and political activism in the country for fear of arrest, harassment, intimidation and loss of government economic, education and business opportunities. It has suffocated divergence and plurality of views and opinions while promoting the spirit of silent separatism based on common interests and opposition as the discriminated and marginalised converge to find collective means of promoting their interests and needs away from state and government apparatuses which, at times, have been unorthodox. This has been demonstrated by the polarization of the Zambian society, the violence and voting patterns currently being exhibited in the country. Consequently, the shrinking space has potential, if not already, to suppress the growth of multiparty democracy, undermine the rule of law, constitutionalism and the democratic electoral competition thereby encouraging a one party governance system mentality and attitudes.

Women and youth participation have also been hampered by a systematic and deliberate efforts being applied to shrink the civic and political spaces which are already male dominated by those above 35 years. Ultimately, decision making processes do not favour women and youths thereby perpetuating gender, age and generational inequalities in most spheres of civic, political and economic development. Women and youths remain discriminated and underrepresented into key social, political and development platforms at national and local levels.

Therefore, the impact of the shrinking civic and political space in Zambia has been the emergency of a fearful and passive citizenry that rarely engage in effective national and local affairs dialogue, discussions, conversations, discourses and deliberations; a citizenry that has adopted a "wait, watch and see" approach to national and local processes; and a citizenry that wait for the election date to come in order for it to speak through the ballot either in favour or against the perceived oppressors.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Historically, the civil society sector and political activism have been around since the 1850s though operating without a clear policy framework with laws governing the sector being first promulgated in the 1920s and 1950s (GRZ, 2018). Mumba (2010) in his paper entitled 'civil society activism in Zambia: historical perspective', agrees with the above finding that civil society development in Zambia started in the colonial days though the 'colonial administration did not create an enabling or conducive environment to its healthy development' due to restricted operating spaces that existed then for the indigenous black citizens.

Regardless of the restrictions, the civil society and political activism managed to emerge and became the epicenters of the nationalist movements leading to independence struggle and subsequently, self-rule. Immediately after independence and under the one party regime which had the idea of the supremacy of the party, civil society and opposition politics were stifled as all institutions were subordinated to the ruling party then, United National Independence Party (UNIP) and business, job and appointment opportunities accrued to the supporters of the party and sparingly for those who criticised the party and its leadership.

This situation limitedly changed at the dawn of multiparty politics in 1991 as the one party system mentality and attitudes continued to exist among the political, state and government leadership in an effort to create political hegemony. Nonetheless, and the re-introduced multipartyism era saw the emergency of numerous service, governance and human rights oriented non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to compliment and challenge government policies and also numerous political parties being formed to challenge the hold to power of the then ruling party, UNIP. Donor support to these new institutions and movements was readily available and in adequate supply. There was much for the current civic and political actors to learn from the behaviour of indigenous political regimes that formed government; in which ruling parties' works to systematically and deliberately shrink civic and political space to create political hegemony.

The persistence exhibition of the one-party attitude towards plurality of and critical views by post multiparty era leadership has continued to promote and nurture an uneasy relationship between the state, the government and ruling party on one hand and the civil society, opposition political players, private media and human rights Activists/defenders on other.

Notwithstanding all this, plurality of views, being promoted and supposed to be enjoyed by civil society, opposition politics and all citizens in Zambia have become a reality of life which is here to stay and can no longer be ignored, stifled or stopped by any leadership of, authority, power and/or legal regime existing in the country.

It is the conclusion of this study that the structures and ways in which shrinking civic and political space is taking shape is through the closing of livelihood opportunities by ensuring that Human Rights Activists and political actors fail to openly trade in markets or operate in bus stations, access government business contracts, education opportunities or associate with institutions and associations of their choices and are blacked out in disseminating their views and opinions on public media and platforms. Public assets and facilities have been politicized and provide more opportunities to ruling party cadres and sympathizers as little information available for citizens. Furthermore, access to some wards in some districts such as Sesheke and Nakonde remains a challenge due to poor roads and long distances to and from Civic Centers.

There is an outcry by political actors that there is inadequate funding to Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to meet public expectations and statutory obligations such as continuous voter registration, delimitation, recruitment of competent poll staff and conduct civic and voter education on time. The Commission is perceived to be not accountable and lack transparency thereby affecting the realization of a transparent and accountable electoral process/system and fails to undertake specialized media capacity building in the electoral process

# **6.0 Key Policy Recommendation and Implication**

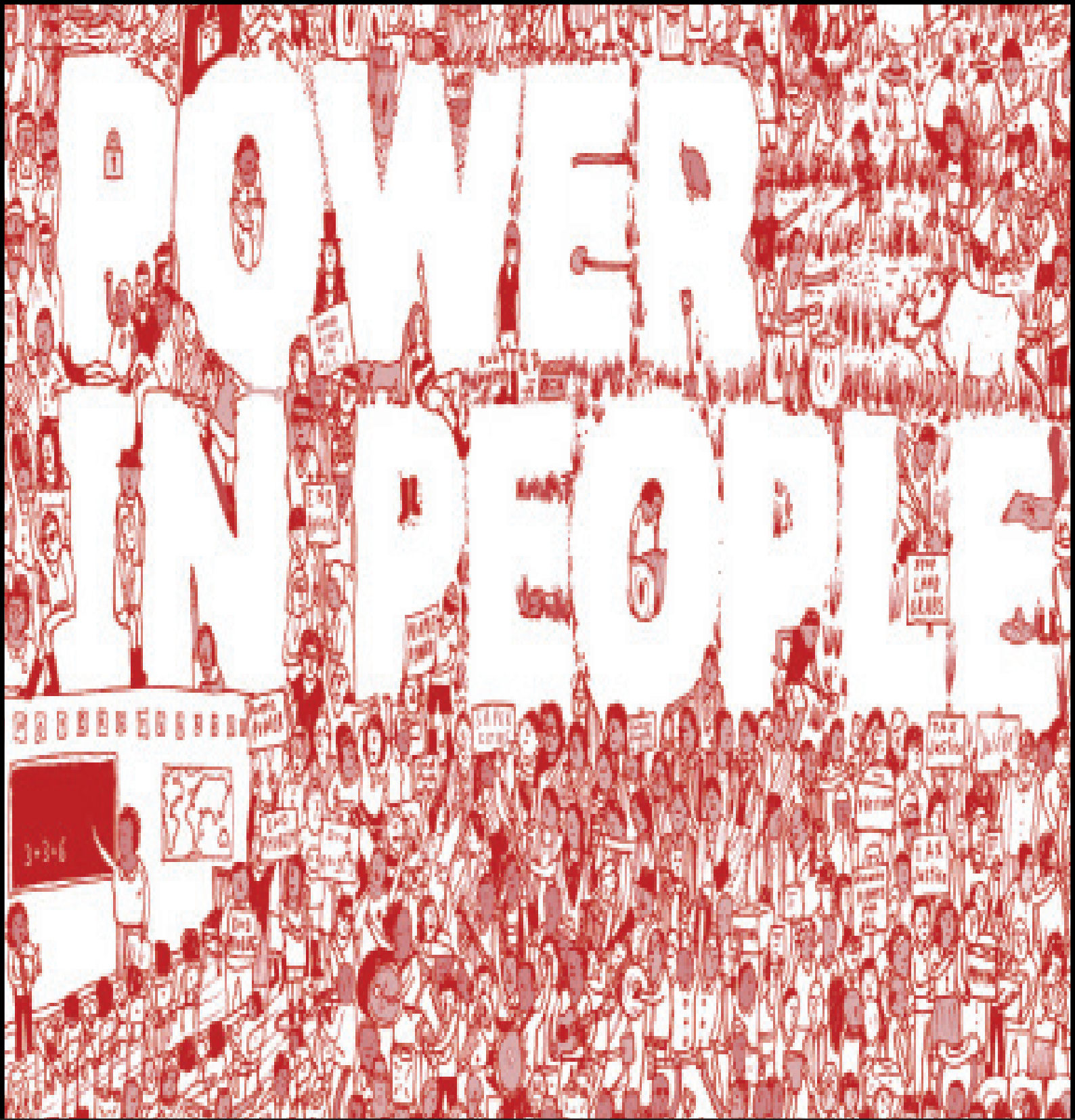
- 1) Evaluation and highlighting triggers and root causes of shrinking civic and political through case studies will be important. There are cases that in this report have not generated evidence. For example, transferring and retiring of civil servants in national interest perceived to be supporting the opposition though in itself legal, needs to be interrogated further. For transfers, Civil servant sign Public Service Form 5 in which they commit to serve in any part of the country. However, this has been used to punish those perceived to be anti-establishment. Case Studies could bring necessary background information and circumstance of those affected under these vices and how this has adversely affected freedom of expression and association and participation in civic and political spaces;**
- 2) Develop civic education toolkit on legal, economic, social protection and policy apparatus used to silence activists and shrink civic and political space. Lack of information and absence of legal and policy knowledge among citizens and among law enforcement is proved to be inhibitive to citizens' participation in civic and political spaces. This has negatively affected the state of democracy, accountability and transparency and above all poor and inclusive service delivery;**
- 3) Advocate for an affirmative action to adopt more youths and women candidates at both local government and parliamentary and presidential levels in the electoral process. The absence of considerable number of youth and women in civic and political platforms robs women and youths of pushing an engendered agenda and service delivery strategies especially that decisions that would translate in improving women and youth oriented public services are decided by a dominantly men and older people's courts. More Women and youths in decision making platforms would make a difference;**
- 4) Capacity Building programmes for women in politics in all political parties focusing on media relations, resource mobilization, campaign messaging among others could be a necessity to break the barriers.**
- 5) Development of the Human Rights Activists/Defenders Survival or Emergence Kit such as legal funds as a support system to support Human Rights Activists/Defenders whenever arrested or their lives are threatened;**
- 6) Improve NGO coordination at national, provincial, district and community levels and through the establishment of platforms for information sharing and collective actions on common agenda;**
- 7) Creation/establishment of a CSO capacity building, networking and community mobilization fund and advocate for the Council of NGOs strengthening to enable it carry out its statutory mandate;**
- 8) Undertake a Legal Audit of all pieces of legislation and prevent the generation of new ones that impact negatively on civic and political space; Advocate for the review/**

repeal of bad pieces of legislation such as the Penal Code, Public Order Act, electoral laws to improve citizen participation in political, religious, social and electoral spaces.

**9)** Advocate for adequate funding to ECZ for it to meet public expectations and statutory obligations such as continuous voter registration, delimitation, recruitment of competent poll staff and conduct civic and voter education on time; Advocate and lobby for an accountable and transparent electoral process/system and undertake specialized media capacity building in the electoral process;

**10)** Advocate for the review/repeal of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act and ensure that the IBA becomes an authority that promote true independent media environment for all media houses both private and public.





The findings in the report do not represent the views of the Embassy of Sweden in Zambia but those of Actionaid Zambia.