

ZWE105030.E

Zimbabwe: Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), including political status, organizational structure, leaders, membership cards and activities; treatment of MDC members by authorities (2013-2014)

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1. Political Status

The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) *World Factbook* lists two political parties in Zimbabwe called Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) (US 20 June 2014). One is called the Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai, also known as MDC-T, and its leader is Morgan Tsvangirai (ibid.). The other is called Movement for Democratic Change - Ncube, also known as MDC-N, and its leader is Welshman Ncube (ibid.). Various sources say that the MDC split into two factions in 2005 (*PHW* 2014, 1624; *The Guardian* 30 Apr. 2014; *Times Live* 26 Nov. 2014).

All Africa (2 Dec. 2014) and *Times Live* (26 Nov. 2014) both report that the former finance minister in Zimbabwe's 2009-2013 coalition government, Tendai Biti, and others left Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC to form the MDC Renewal Team. Sources report that, in April 2014, Biti instigated a meeting of the MDC national council that resulted in the suspension of Morgan Tsvangirai (*The Guardian* 30 Apr. 2014; *Think Africa Press* 24 June 2014). A *Think Africa Press* article states that Tsvangirai rejected his suspension and expelled Biti and eight of his allies (ibid.). Moreover, the article states that MDC vice-president, Thokozani Khupe, asked the Speaker of Parliament to recall nine Biti-aligned MPs; however, the speaker "eventually responded by saying he had no such authority over the internal affairs of a political party" (ibid.). The *Times Live* article indicates that Welshman Ncube and Tendai Biti, leaders of "breakaway factions of Zimbabwe's main Movement for Democratic Change party officially signed a unity pact ... coming together under a new movement dubbed the Democratic Union" (26 Nov. 2014).

According to the MDC's website, the congress is the "supreme" organ of the party and meets every five years (MDC n.d.). A description of the organizational structure of the MDC, taken from the party's website, is attached. Information on MDC membership cards could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Various sources indicate that Morgan Tsvangirai and Robert Mugabe shared power between the 2008 and 2013 elections (AFP 31 Oct. 2014; BBC 26 Apr. 2014; Reuters 6 Nov. 2014). Morgan Tsvangirai served as prime minister (AFP 31 Oct. 2014; BBC 26 Apr. 2014); Mugabe was president (ibid.).

The 2014 Freedom House *Freedom in the World* report on Zimbabwe indicates that elections were held in July 2013 and President Robert Mugabe "won the presidential vote with 61 percent of the vote, with 34 percent going to [Morgan] Tsvangirai" (Freedom House 2014). According to Reuters, the MDC "holds 90 seats out of a total 351 in the two houses of parliament" (6 Nov. 2014).

The Freedom House report indicates, with respect to the 2013 election, that "Tsvangirai and the MDC-T accused Zanu-PF [Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front] of vote rigging but abandoned a legal challenge of the results in August 2013" (2014). Various sources report that the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) endorsed the election results (All Africa 2 Dec. 2014; BBC 5 Aug. 2013; Freedom House 2014). A

5 August 2013 BBC article reports that "the most critical account came from the largest group of monitors, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), which had 7,000 workers observing the vote" and said "problems with voter registration had left up to one million people unable to cast their ballots, mostly in urban areas regarded as MDC strongholds" (BBC 5 Aug. 2013). The article notes that the AU also had 70 observers and the SADC 560 (ibid.).

In December 2014, sources reported that Morgan Tsvangirai had been re-elected leader of the MDC for a five-year term (ibid. 9 Dec. 2014; All Africa 2 Dec. 2014).

2. Treatment of MDC Members

The US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013* indicates that "[l]eaders of both the Movement for Democratic Change parties reported that state security agents and Zanu-PF party supporters abducted and tortured MDC-T and Movement for Democratic Change - Ncube (MDC-N) members, civil society members, and student leaders as part of an effort to intimidate them" (US 27 Feb. 2014, 3). Incidents reported include an assault on an MDC-T official by uniformed soldiers of the army's Third Brigade in February 2013, and another in May 2013, when three MDC-T ward officials in Harare South were assaulted by Zanu-PF youth members (ibid., 5).

A 5 August 2013 BBC article reported that 11 members of the MDC said they were attacked in Harare by Zanu-PF supporters after the 2013 election results were announced. Similarly, a 6 August 2013 Amnesty International (AI) article reported that women political activists in rural Zimbabwe were "threatened with violence and forced to flee with their children for refusing to reveal their vote to supporters of Robert Mugabe's party." The article goes on to say that "[t]he families say they were targeted due to their support - real or perceived - for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party led by Morgan Tsvangirai" (AI 6 August 2013).

A 17 September 2013 SW Radio Africa report indicates that 13 families were evicted from a farm owned by a Zanu-PF minister. According to the article, amongst the families evicted was a MDC-T council candidate, Shadreck Sibanda, who was also targeted with an arson attack prior to the elections (SW Radio Africa 17 Sept. 2013).

A 31 August 2013 article in the *Zimbabwean* reported on a MDC-T party statement that Gift Kapawu, an MDC-T local-councillor candidate in Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe, was attacked by ZANU-PF's militia (*The Zimbabwean* 31 Aug. 2014). According to the article, the statement indicated that the militia had destroyed Kapawu's home and displaced his wife and children (ibid.). The article further notes that Kapawu reported the incident at the Chitsungo police station but no action was taken (ibid.).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact the following were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Editor in Chief, Maximum Africa Journal; Information Officer, Zimbabwe Human Rights Association; Regional Director, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; representative, Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa; representative, Movement for Democratic Change – USA; representative, Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum; representative, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights.

Internet sites, including: Africa Confidential; Africa Research Bulletin; African Arguments; Al Jazeera; ecoi.net; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme; International Crisis Group; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; Mail & Guardian; Nehanda Radio; Reporters Without Borders; United Nations – Integrated Regional Information Networks, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Refworld, ReliefWeb; U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants; Zimbabwe Democracy Institute.