

## **Internally Displaced Populations and Implications for Development in Zimbabwe's Cauldron.**

Munyaradzi Mushonga  
National University of Lesotho  
Department of Historical Studies

Zimbabwe, Africa's once famed breadbasket, now a bottomless basket-case, has one of the highest rates of forced displacements and migration, across all sectors of the economy in southern Africa. Given that one of the biggest development challenges in Africa today is lack of human resource capacity, forced displacements and migrations, both internally and externally, can only serve to derail Africa's development. Political instability and repression, economic mismanagement, public and private sector graft, low productivity, foreign currency crises, poor remuneration, dwindling work facilities, run-away levels of inflation, intermittent strikes and job stoppages, unemployment and deepening poverty are among some of the reasons for the forced internal and external displacements and migrations in Zimbabwe, while attractive and dramatic differences in salaries, perks and allowances, research and study opportunities, health facilities are among the pull factors. However, this paper focuses on the internal forced displacements and migrations with special reference to the brain drain in Zimbabwe's education, health and the civil service sectors. Taking off from the year 2000, the paper looks at the factors that have precipitated the internal displacement and migration of Zimbabwe's highly qualified and experienced personnel; the kind, nature and forms displacement and migration in terms of when it has taken place, how it has taken place, where it has taken place, and of course why it continues to take place. It also looks at the internal destinations of the displacees in terms of where they have gone to and where possible in what numbers; and finally what modes of survival, adaptation, and even prosperity, be it in official or unofficial spaces, have been devised in order to keep body and soul together under these conditions of crisis and uncertainty. In the total of things, the paper will discuss and examine the implications of this forced internal displacement and migration in the context of both human and economic development.

The paper will show that as the economic and political meltdown in Zimbabwe continues, education, the health sector, and the civil service among others have suffered, and continue to suffer from a debilitating internal brain drain, losing the best qualified and highly experienced teachers, lecturers, professors, doctors, nurses, health professionals, engineers, lawyers, and senior civil servants, exposing schools, colleges, universities, clinics, hospitals, public institutions and ministries to less qualified, less experienced and even unqualified personnel, with serious consequences for development. The paper is in five parts. The first part of the paper provides the background to the Zimbabwean crisis, showing how the current crisis is connected to longer historical periods, exploring such factors as the unequal distribution of wealth and the highly emotive land issue. The second part will look at the various and immediate factors that have led to the internal displacement and migration of Zimbabwe's highly qualified and experience staff across the sectors, and analyzing and weighing the role of each factor in the phenomenon. The third major part of the paper looks at the nature of the internal displacement and migration process, the times and frequencies of displacement and migration, the various modes of displacement and migration, the most and least affected areas and the reasons thereof, and why the internal displacement and migration has persisted. The fourth part looks at how the displacees have devised survival strategies that include even the operating of minibuses, taxicabs, beer parlours, flea markets, tuck shops, speculative buying and selling of scarce goods and foreign currency etc in order to make ends meet, let alone other illegal means of adaptation, survival and even prosperity. Obviously, this internal brain drain is very worrying because not only does it rob the country of the much-needed capacity for developmental purposes, but also because it depletes the government's tax revenue base as it has no means of policing the informal sector. The fifth and final part discusses and summarises how development and lack of it can be linked to Zimbabwe's internally displaced populations.