

**ZIMBABWE'S NEGOTIATED INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT: IS IT A MESSY POWER-SHARING
EXPERIMENT OR A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS DEMOCRATISATION?**

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The inclusive power-sharing government in Zimbabwe that came into power in February 2009 is the product of a long drawn-out SADC led negotiation process between ZANU-PF and the two MDC factions (MDC-T led by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC-M led by Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara). This negotiated political settlement was reached after the country had gone through almost a decade of ZANU-PF dictatorial rule characterised by economic decline, media repression, human rights violations, political violence, abductions, arrests, torture and murder of opposition politicians and activists. This paper examines whether this power sharing government is a positive step towards moving Zimbabwe away from ZANU-PF's authoritarian rule towards a democratic dispensation or simply a façade masking the continuation of ZANU-PF's authoritarianism. Such an examination is provoked by the fact that over the last few months there have been numerous violations of the Global Political Agreement (the political working document signed by all three parties) by ZANU-PF politicians and aligned elements suggesting that the pre-inclusive government status quo remains intact and in control of state institutions of power. The paper further questions whether such a negotiated inclusive government which accommodates President Mugabe—who lost the first round of the last presidential elections—as head of state is a good precedent for Sub-Saharan Africa or an affront to democracy as it encourages losing incumbents to reclaim power through undemocratic and often violent means.