

Hate Speech Within the Electoral Political Processes in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

In Zimbabwe, it is becoming apparent that there are no rules for winning elections. The existing electoral guidelines are theoretical because politicians use all sorts of shenanigans to gain support from the electorate. As Zimbabwe draws closer to the 2023 harmonized elections, political hate speech has become more rampant. The availability and access to social media have heightened political name callings, derogatory speeches and sarcasm. The current political landscape is a conducive breeding ground for hate speech, decorated with multiple political rivals, party conflicts, schisms, coalitions and re-coalitions. This chapter explores the factors that perpetuate toxic political hate speech and hate infuriated political violence in Zimbabwe from a historical perspective. It taps into the Hate Speech Theory propounded by John Stewart Mill in the mid-nineteenth century, which argues that hate speech is an unavoidable part of free speech. Qualitatively, this paper uses grey literature to gather data.

Keywords: Electoral politics, Hate speech, Political landscape, Political rivalry, Zimbabwe