

Transitional Justice and Human Rights in Zimbabwe's Gukurahundi Mass Grave Exhumations

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Abstract

Transitional justice requires a multi-stakeholder as well as a multidimensional approach. In Zimbabwe, the issue of atrocities committed by the state (now commonly referred to as Gukurahundi) is a topic that evokes emotive debate, especially around the process of exhuming the remains of those who were buried in mass graves. One controversial issue surrounding the exhumation of mass graves is the idea of letting "by-gones be by-gones." This political strategy potentially allows perpetrators to circumvent the human rights issues that arise after mass graves are exhumed. It also denies the victims proper burial and closure for their families. Using an analysis of data in the form of legal reports, international laws, and case law, among other literature, this article examines the international norms on exhumation and the politics inhibiting exhumation of the Gukurahundi mass graves in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: transitional justice, exhumations, ideation, Zimbabwe, Gukurahundi