



**National Peace and Reconciliation Commission**  
**PROVINCIAL PEACE COMMITTEE MEETINGS CHAIRPERSON'S**  
**STATEMENT**

1. Honourable Minister of State
2. Provincial Development Coordinator
3. Fellow Commissioners
4. Representatives from the Council of Chiefs
5. Deputy Chairpersons of the Provincial Peace Committee
6. The Executive Secretary
7. Senior Government Officials
8. Members of the Provincial Peace Committee
9. Representatives from our partner organizations
10. General Managers
11. Members of the Fourth Estate
12. Managers and Officers of the NPRC here present
13. Ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning to you all and welcome to this important Provincial Preventive Dialogue and Peace Committee Meeting. Allow me to thank you and appreciate you for sparing your precious time and setting aside your busy schedules to attend this important meeting after a long time without physically meeting due to the Covid-19 pandemic induced restrictions. We thank the Lord despite the disruption in all our plans and conversations around various peace building initiatives we had set to improve social cohesion in our beloved country. However I trust that with the training you received before the lockdown you

were able during the lockdown to apply your skills to intervene and resolve conflicts amicably and bring more social cohesion in your communities.

I appreciate the Committees for continuing to work tirelessly in organizing and facilitating the smooth flow of peace operations since 2019. Two years down the line, these local infrastructures for peace in every province around the country are becoming more solid, proactive and visible. The Commission is proud to work with all of you and remain grateful for your unwavering commitment to build a peaceful Zimbabwe for all generations. Remember peacebuilding is about promoting healing, rehabilitation, Reconciliation, unity, social cohesion and peaceful resolution of conflicts in Zimbabwe without external interference. In our round hut we can dialogue until we resolve our differences amicably. The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission was established to precisely facilitate that dialogue in resolving past conflicts and guarantee a future of non recurrence. Resolution of these conflicts will inevitably lead to the promotion of healing, reconciliation and ultimately Peace in the country.

The setting up of Peace Committees to contribute towards the promotion of peace through dialogue, mediation and conciliation of disputes among communities, individuals and groups as well as the implementation of programs deemed necessary for the prevention of conflicts all fall squarely within the Constitutional mandate of the NPRC. This is in sync with the national development strategy which recognizes how violent conflicts before and after independence have negatively impacted not only on development but also on the social cohesion among Zimbabweans, and that these unresolved conflicts need to be addressed in order to have a cohesive nation. This is a job for all of us from Government to every citizen in the country regardless of age, gender, religion, politics, race and region etc. to work together. To achieve this, the National Development Strategy 1 and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission strategy outlines the following three specific focus areas:

- a. Inclusive dialogues to promote healing ,reconciliation and tolerance among citizens;

- b. The promotion of peace building initiatives among communities, and;
- c. Strengthening citizens' engagement through establishment of Local peace structures such as these Peace Committees.

Over the past two years, the global Covid-19 pandemic has hit the underprivileged and marginalized groups the hardest. People caught in conflict are especially vulnerable in terms of lack of access to healthcare, socio-political rights as well as livelihoods support. As Peace Committees it is your role to be observant and intervene whenever and wherever possible. The pandemic has also been accompanied by a surge in stigma, discrimination, unresolved disputes and hatred, which only cost more lives instead of saving them. Covid-19 has also made Zimbabweans more aware of the need to come up with measures to address conflicts at a local level hence emphasis on the preventative dialogues. Currently, there is an increasing shift in focus to the 2023 elections. In order to guarantee non-recurrence of perennial elections related conflicts, the onus is on you to engage robustly and deliberately in preventive dialogues with all stakeholders to ensure that re-emergence of past experiences are curtailed;

With the recently relaxed lockdown measures in place the Commission thought it prudent to hold these preventive dialogue meetings with all the ten provincial Peace Committees who are the infrastructures for Peace in every province, these should soon rather than later cascade to district right up to village level. These meetings are a perfect opportunity to also reflect on the challenges and experiences that the peace committees have encountered so that together we can strengthen the institutions to effectively promote unity, peace, healing and reconciliation. We trust that as we deliberate the following objectives will be met:

- a. Sharing of conflict experiences during the Covid-19 restrictions and review measures to curb such in future;
- b. Reflect on the upcoming elections and develop provincial plans of the preventive actions that will be taken to ensure peace, unity and cohesion;

- c. Review other conflicts affecting social cohesion in the province and develop strategies and approaches to addressing them.

You have already been introduced to the new Commissioners who were sworn into office by His Excellency the President ED Mnangagwa in May 2021. This meeting therefore serves as a platform to meet and engage them freely. I therefore implore all of you to participate effectively in this constructive dialogue process so that your province develops full proof strategies for peaceful environment now, before, during and after elections and forever thereafter. As a Commission let us heed the calls from all corners of the country for Zimbabweans to unite; reduce polarization; minimise hate speech even on social media. As members of the Commission we should be the first to counter such speech and promote love, respect our value of Ubuntu; celebrate our differences and affiliations. We should be the first to condemn divisive political and resource based conflicts and facilitate closure to past national conflicts, restore trust and confidence in ourselves as a people. This is the bedrock upon which true peace, healing, reconciliation and cohesion in society can be founded.

Let us all work towards the building of peaceful and a harmonious nation. Thank you once again for the work you put towards this journey. Zimbabwe needs peace in order to achieve the vision of an empowered upper middle-income society by 2030. Let us walk the journey together. As always together we are more than conquerors. I heartily wish you an enjoyable meeting and fruitful deliberations.

Peace begins with me, peace with you and peace begins with all of us,

I thank you all.