

The Church's Social Responsibility in Zambia: The Catholic Response to the 2016 Prejudiced Attacks on 'Others'

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In April 2016, Rwandan refugees and other foreign nationals in Zambia sought refuge in a Catholic church after days of violence. They were targeted after claims associating them with a series of ritual killings. Residents from compounds were reported to have resorted to riots and violence in a quest to safeguard their lives. This paper investigated the Catholic Church's response to these 'xenophobic' attacks in Zambia's residential compounds to mirror the church's role in social responsibility in contemporary times.

The case study employed document review (media reports) and recorded interviews with Priests from St. Ignatius parish as the main data collection methods, which was thematically analysed. The paper advances that the Catholic Church, guided by its social teaching was not only a mirror of society, but also a place of refuge by hosting the refugees and condemning the violence in various compounds in Lusaka through pastoral letters and homilies.

Keywords: social responsibility, Church, xenophobia, Catholic social teaching and social justice

Introduction

Xenophobia as used in this discussion is associated with 'fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners or of what is strange or foreign (Mish 1997; Nyamnjoh 2006:5). In other words, the phenomenon evokes attributes of dislike of certain foreigners (Warner *et al.* 2003) and as Harris (2002) adds, Xenophobia is not

just an attribute but an activity - a violent practice that results in bodily harm and damage. One factor that has been attributed to in explaining xenophobic violence is competition for scarce resources, which the insider and outsider are to share. The discourse of 'othering' is magnified when the insiders want to reclaim what is theirs from 'others' who they come to ascribe the tag to, of 'foreigners', 'refugees', and 'strangers', as was the case with Rwandan refugees (Bailey 2008:190).

Othering is described as a 'process of construction of the identity of both the self and the Other. Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996:8) define Othering as 'who and what Others are... we use Others to define ourselves: 'we' understand ourselves in relation to what we are not. Othering is essentially the construction of dualism.

Premised on the concept of othering, this paper explored therefore the social responsibility of the Church in contemporary Zambia with reference to the Catholic Church's response to what was deemed as 'xenophobic' violence on 'others – Rwandese' in April 2016 (Amnesty International Report 2016/17). The involvement of the church in the social sphere is not new in the history of Zambian Christianity, as different Christian Churches have been involved in the life of the country since inception and throughout the colonial era to the present (Hinfelaar 2004; Hinfelaar 2009; Mwale 2013). In all these different historical periods, the church has played a role that responds to the needs of the times though not to suggest that the church has not errored in all these roles. Religion like any other cultural phenomena, religious community or institution, has used religious markers to mask itself when it wages war around rival claims to scarce resources ... economic advantages (Lincoln 2003:74).

Gifford (1998:189) observes that the mainline churches have traditionally been involved in service delivery and today are considerably influential, particularly in the educational sector where a large number of secondary schools are run by the churches. In the case of Zambia, Carmody (1999; 2000; 2004; 2007) among other scholars has extensively reflected the role of the church in education. This role has however transformed over time. Gifford argues that after the 1980s, the churches played an increasingly major role in the wider society, 'a role that involved churches not only in the traditional activities of education, health, and development, but also in direct

political activity such as challenging political structures, urging reforms, advocating political change, and even presiding over the change itself' (Gifford 1995: 3). Phiri (1992) also affirms the political role played by the church in Zambia's political change.

The paper focused on what has been regarded as xenophobic violence because this was not only an aspect alien to the country's history, but also a phenomenon that is yet to receive attention in academia. The April 2016 attacks were thus received by shock by different organizations including the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) against the backdrop of the historical reputation of Zambia as being a safe haven for persecuted Africans. Many people who have fled wars and political persecutions in countries such as Angola, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo have sought refugee in Zambia, including political exiles from the Apartheid South Africa era, notably African National Congress members, were sheltered in Zambia (Larmer 2003).

The changing face of Zambia from being a beacon of peace in the region to one associated with disregard for refugees is made clear by the statement by Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, Council of Churches and the Zambia Episcopal Conference to Commemorate World Refugee Day, 20 June 2005. They noted that:

One does not have to look far for evidence of the fact that refugees are increasingly unwelcome in Zambia. We have seen a disturbing rise in the verbal abuse, harassment, arbitrary detention, and physical violence that refugees suffer in Zambia. The church regrets the fact that people with genuine protection concerns have been forcibly returned from Zambia to countries where their lives or freedom are in jeopardy. Needless to say, this practice violates the human rights of refugees and does not reflect well on Zambia's international image ...?.

This article will therefore seek to demonstrate how the Catholic Church responded to a social challenge as part of her social responsibility by using the case of the xenophobic attacks against refugees in Zambia. The Catholic Church was selected because of the public role it played in the incidence. In addition, as observed by Gibbs and Ajulu (1999), of the mainline churches, the Catholics are probably the most numerous and certainly the most influential in

terms of advocacy work, which is called differently as either justice or social teachings in different circles in Zambia.

The Catholic church's institutions such as the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) among others enable the church to often be found leading the way, both in terms of their involvement in service provision and in their prophetic role (Gibbs & Ajula 1999). This inquiry is deemed significant by way of contributing to the existing dialogue of religion and social responsibility from a Zambian context, a theme that has not received much attention in academia. This should be understood in light of contributing to the conversation on Xenophobia in the region as extensive studies have been covered from the South African context.

For example, Valji (2003) narrated the forms of Xenophobic discrimination and the crippling impact on the population by exploring the rise of the violent Xenophobic in the New South Africa while Neocosmos (2006) provided an explanation for the existence of Xenophobia, arguing that existing explanatory accounts were deficient as they were primarily asocial and apolitical. Palmary (2002) explored the role of local government in the provision of services to refugees in South African cities and contented that in a context where the role of local government in providing services to refugees was not spelt out, there was need to begin to identify their role in relation to providing services and safety to refugee communities.

These examples of the studies on Xenophobia demonstrate that studies and analysis on Xenophobia have focused on the economic and migratory elements of intolerance. Thus the main contribution of this article lies in extending the conversation to the church and in turn recording the contributions of the Catholic Church in social responsibility in the Zambian context for posterity.

Theoretical Framework

Creswell (2007:27), and Guba and Lincoln (1994:110) note that studies that are both sensitive to power imbalances and that help empower human beings to transcend constraints are associated with the critical theory as a theoretical orientation. Kincheloe and McLaren (2003) point out that a critical social theory is concerned in particular with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class and gender, ideologies, discourses,

education, religion and other social institutions and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system.

In this study, the call to work for social justice embedded in critical theory is seen through or aligned with a similar vocation rooted in the Catholic social teaching hence the Catholic Social Teaching is used as a lens to make meaning of how and why the Catholic church responded to the Xenophobic violence in Lusaka. The Catholic person must not only work to alter the circumstances of individuals, but also strive for institutional change (Roman and Baybado, 2008). This commitment represents a reliance on agency, whereby individuals have the ability and the obligation to work for justice, and is similar to that found among critical researchers.

Like critical theory, Catholic Social teaching emphasizes the distribution of power by calling upon Catholics to act alongside the oppressed in an effort to end repressive situations and structures. The linkage between Catholic social teaching and power should be understood in light of Neocosmos's theorizing on Xenophobia anchored on political and social connotations (2006). Bradley-Levine and Carr (2015) note that the earliest foundations of Catholic Social Teaching appear in the Old Testament where God guides the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Hearing the prayers of the oppressed, God acts to protect their interests including their liberty and right to earn a just wage (Roman & Baybado 2008). Bradley – Levine and Carr (2015) argue that the biblical example reflects the connectedness of individuals through which one person's actions have the potential to affect others in positive or negative ways, and individual's responsibility to respond to the needs of others—especially those who have been marginalized by oppressive situations, institutions, policies, histories, and so forth.

In its modern state, Catholic Social Teaching (CST) was developed through encyclicals and letters written by the Popes. These focused on a global world in which the human condition is shared rather than a world in which only a few hold power and privilege (Roman & Baybado 2008). Several current themes of CST describe the responsibilities of researchers engaged in critical research. For example, the call to care for family and community, recognizes that 'how we organize our society in economics and politics, in law and policy directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community' (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops n.d.). The themes covered in the Catholic Social Teaching are supported through individual and Church work that preserve human rights and protect the poor and vulnerable,

including children. They distinctly oblige Catholics to seek equity and justice in our world.

In addition, Catholic Social Teaching also focuses on communalism for the purpose of achieving social justice and overcoming aspects of inequality. These responsibilities are supported by the Catholic Social Teaching theme of working toward human solidarity, or the unity of the human community (Komakoma 2003). Solidarity emphasizes cohesion and collaboration among all people regardless of 'national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences' and requires that people seek peace by working for justice (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops n.d).

Further, CST emphasizes the need for individuals to work in solidarity to resolve social issues and to take responsibility for one another's well-being. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994; 1997:524) states that socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all forms of solidarity: solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, of workers among themselves, between employers and employees, for example. Hence Catholic Social Teaching was adopted in the study as its themes reveal a commitment to struggling with local injustices in one's own community in ways that preserve human rights and protect the poor and vulnerable, in this case those who suffered the Xenophobic violence. This impartiality toward the most vulnerable aligns with the critical research mission to bring voice to those who have been silenced. *Gaudium et Spes* (Pope Paul VI 1965) also calls for attention to working for justice among the most vulnerable. The encyclical identifies that 'differences appear tied to age, physical abilities, intellectual or moral aptitudes, the benefits derived from social commerce, and the distribution of wealth' (#24). Because these are not dispensed equally, some people must contribute more than others in order to achieve a society that is socially just.

Defining Concepts

The discussion of the church and social responsibility is not without diverse understanding on the concept of church and its role in society. For example, Reken (1999) makes a clear distinction of the ways of thinking and speaking of the church between the church as an institution and the church as an organism and admits that neither one of these ways is right nor wrong as they both have legitimate use. Berkhof also considers the church in terms of its

threefold character (Berkhof 1979:339-422), as an institution, community, and its orientation to the world.

The church is an institution through a number of activities and ministries organised in a particular societal institution where the church ministers Christ to the people (Berkhof 1979). As an institution, the Church has nine different facets and activities and these include instruction, baptism, preaching, discussion of the sermon, the Lord's Supper, the diaconate, the meeting, office, and church order. Therefore, the church as an institution is a formal organisation that sets out to accomplish a specific purpose. The church is an agent, can do and say things and has its own voice (Reken 1999). This is because the church has its own purposes and plans, structure and officers, and its own mission. By this, it parallels other institutions, like governments or schools.

The church can also be conceived as an organism. This relates to perceiving the church as a body of believers, or the communion of believers. As a community, people are not only or even primarily in the church as institution, but are themselves and collectively the church, the communion of saints (Berkhof 1979:392-410; Kritzinger 2004). Reken distinguishes the church as organism from the church as institution by noting that the church as a community does not refer to the church, as a unified organisation, but rather as an aggregate of individual believers. In this aggregate, each Christian is a personal agent, and has a purpose and a call in God's plan, and a vocation. The church as a community thus has been given diverse gifts for the sake of building up the body of Christ.

The third dimension, the church's orientation to the world is also important as the final goal of the church cannot be the individual believer nor even the ecclesial community but the renewal of all of humanity, all of humanity's life, and all of creation (Berkhof 1979:345). Most importantly, Berkhof speaks of a chain running from Christ to the world: Christ is mediated to the congregation through the institution; the congregation mediates Christ to the world (Berkhof 1979). By focusing on the response of the Catholic Church to the April 2016 violence, the paper speaks of the church as an institution, community and its orientation to the world as will be demonstrated. Social responsibility is another concept that is significant in this paper. Social responsibility according to Pachamama Alliance (2017) 'is an ethical theory, in which individuals are accountable for fulfilling their civic duty; the action of an individual must benefit the whole of society ...'. Further

conceptualization of Social responsibility has related it to an 'ethical framework and suggests that an entity, be it an organization or individual, has an obligation to act for the benefit of society at large'. Some scholars have put emphasis on public interest denoted in the theory.

In relation to the Church and Social Responsibility, it has been argued that 'Christian salvation also includes the social order; that the Christian Church is responsible for the social condition and must provide redemptive measures for the society' (www.questia.com/library/226732/thechurch-and-social-responsibility).

With regard to the relationship between the church and social responsibility, literature acknowledges the contributions of the Christian churches in promoting what the global economy now emphasises as corporate social responsibility in the pre- and post- industrialisation era. For example, Tounés, *et al.* (2011) suggest that the earliest proponents of corporate social responsibility were the Protestants in the United States of America and that both Protestantism and Catholicism shared the credit. They advocated the religious philosophies of 'public service' and 'stewardship' and implored the elites and aristocrats to support the society and the poor with their wealth.

As early as the 1950s, even Bowen (1953) had also acknowledged that corporate social responsibility draws from the old doctrine of social responsibility in American society called paternalism, a common nuance among the religious group. The goals of the public service and stewardship philosophies as taught by the Catholic and Protestant groups centred on spirit of selfless service and concerns for collective well being of the society (Raimi *et al.* 2013). It was the church's philosophy drawn from the Old and New Testaments that inspired ethical consciousness and personal sense of responsibility, which were later adopted and christened social responsibility (*Ibid*). The old doctrine of social responsibility in American society thus started as paternalism among the religious group (Bowen 1953; Tounés *et al.* 2011). Success was equated to public service, doing of good, love for the neighbour and shunning the evils of covetousness (Wilson 2009).

Thus, by exploring the Catholic Church and social responsibility, the paper acknowledges the long contribution of the church in social responsibility. Carroll (1999) alluded to this while exploring the origin and evolution of corporate social responsibility, but in this regard we seek to show how the church has played this role.

Context

Though the article focused on the Catholic Church, it is not the only Christian church in Zambia’s religious landscape. The vast majority of Zambians are Christian. Cheyeka (2014) reported that of Zambia’s population (14, 222, 000), 95.5 per cent were Christians, 0.5 per cent were Muslims, 0.1 per cent were Hindus, while other and non-affiliated categories accounted for 2 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively.

A religious profile of the world by PEW research projected the future of world religions in Zambia from 2010 to 2020 as follows:

Years	Christians	Muslims	Unaffiliated	Hindus
	12,770,000	70,000	70,000	10,000
2010	97.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.1%
2020	97.4%	0.6%	0.6%	0.1%

Years	Buddhists	Folk Religions	Other	Jews
	<10,000	40,000	120,000	<10,000
2010	<0.1%	0.3%	0.9%	<0.1%
2020	<0.1%	0.3%	0.9%	<0.1%

From the population of approximately 13,090,000 Zambian in 2010, PEW research reflected the religious distribution in Zambia with Christianity having the largest adherents (www.pewforum.org).

Cheyeka (2014) further observed that until the early 21st century, Zambia’s Christianity was referred to in terms of three mother bodies: the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ). The CCZ was established in 1945 as the umbrella body of mainline Protestant churches. The EFZ was officially formed in 1964 to oversee evangelical churches. In 2001 a fourth umbrella body, the Independent Churches Organization of Zambia (ICOZ), was formed to bring together charismatic churches, ministries, fellowships, and centers.

Officially instituted in 1963, the ZEC is the administrative body of all Roman Catholic dioceses (Hinfelaar 2004). Needless to mention, there are a number of Catholic orders, primarily the White Fathers, Jesuits and Franciscans, and other religious congregations (both male and female) who have had a particular influence in their areas of operations (Weller & Linden

1984). Most importantly, Zambian diocesan priests and bishops are a major force throughout the country.

Refugee Legislation in Zambia

Darwin (2005) notes that Zambia does have a relatively tolerant policy towards refugees. As such, over time, many thousands of refugees have been granted asylum in Zambia and have grown up in Zambia, attended Zambian schools and universities and otherwise made Zambia their home. According to the Refugees (Control) (Declaration of Refugees) Order (No.2) of 1971, (which amends the Refugee Control Act) refugees are defined as,

Persons who are, or prior to their entry in Zambia were, ordinarily resident outside Zambia and who have sought asylum in Zambia owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality membership of a particular social group or political opinion are declared to be refugees for the purposes of the Refugees Control Act, 1970.

Zambia is a party to both local and international treaties and conventions such as the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol as of 1969, including the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Party as of 1992) and the 2000 Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (signed in 2002). As earlier noted, Zambia is a member of the Organisation for African Unity. Domestic legislation includes the Refugee Control Act 1970, Immigration and Deportation Act and the constitution among others.

Zambia has had a reputation for being a safe haven in southern Africa and thus since independence, the country has hosted more than 50,000 people that have fled wars in countries such as Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Therefore, as many as 200,000 foreigners including refugees from Rwanda, Angola, Burundi and Congo have until the recent attacks coexisted peacefully alongside Zambian nationals (Gamble 2016).

According to the Minister of Disaster Preparedness and Refugee Affairs Seraphine Mukantabana, there are over 10,000 Rwandan refugees in

Zambia, mainly those who fled after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and are acknowledged by the Zambian government and that a majority of these have remained for economic reasons with over 6,500 Rwandans running businesses in the capital Lusaka (The East Africa 2016; BBC News 2016; Onyango-Obbo 2016). Other official statistics indicates that out of the 4,200 refugees that were present in Zambia, only 400 former Rwandan refugees had their refugee status restored. The Minister of Home Affairs, expressed concern with ‘how to humanely address the legal status of over 3,000 former Rwandan refugees currently living in Zambia illegally (Mwansa 2017). It is this community of refugees that have remained and been integrated in the Zambian communities, although this integration has been met with ‘increasing difficulties ... due to a resurgence of xenophobia and related violence’ (UNHCR 2016) the case of April 2016 violence.

Methodology

The article is based on a qualitative case study of the Xenophobic attacks against refugees, that erupted in Lusaka in April 2016 and sought to demonstrate how the Catholic Church responded to this social challenge as part of her social responsibility. Consistent with the principles of case study research (Merriam 1998), the Catholic Church was purposively chosen due to her public role in the incidence.

For example, the ITUC-Africa saluted the responsiveness and empathy of the St. Ignatius Roman Catholic Church Parish, which unreservedly offered shelter to those who fled to it for refuge. Despite the problem having been known to the general public, no institution responded to the crisis with the urgency that it deserved, but the Church. The Church became a place of refuge, synonymous to the ‘rock of ages’ where the needy sought shelter.

The sources of data included document review (media reports) and recorded interviews with Priests from St. Ignatius parish (the parish that hosted the refugees). The authors were cognizant of the weaknesses associated with media reporting on migration in times of xenophobia. The following were in check when using the media reports on the phenomenon of inquiry: ascertaining facts over biases; knowledge of regulatory framework or pieces of law in use; show of ethical journalism; speaking for all; and challenging hate (EJN 2016).

Document reviews also included the study of policies that relate to

refugees in Zambia, both local and international treaties and conventions such as the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol as of 1969, the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Party as of 1992) and the 2000 Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (signed in 2002) among others.

The data that was collected from these sources was inductively analysed through coding and analysis of recurring themes which have been presented.

Brief Perspectives on the Xenophobic 'Violence'

Different people have described the violence differently. Some have associated the violence to socio-economic and religious-economic situation. Those who hold such views share Peberdy (2001) argument that in the 'context of compounding frustrations and uncertainty, it is easy to turn migrants and 'other' minorities into scapegoats'. For example, Fr. Lungu observed that the attacks could be a reflection of the growing frustration in Zambia at the high levels of youth unemployment and the rising cost of living resulting in using the immigrants as scapegoats (Vatican Radio 22nd April 2016). Gary Van Staden (a Zambian analyst at NKC Africa Economics) also observed that:

The attacks on foreign nationals are more likely prompted by the fact that they were targets and the victims of frustration and desperation... the fact that the violence occurred in generally poor and marginalized communities provides a clue as to the real underlying causes (26th April 2016).

Other than these purely economic reasons, the violence also had a religious dimension through the rumours of ritual killings. Ritual killings occur when human body parts and organs are needed to enhance the outcome of a particular situation (Lyncaster 2014). Gamble (2016) observed that to others, the violence was motivated by reports that foreign business owners were conducting ritualized murders so as to 'harvest' body parts for use as charms to support their struggling enterprises. This indicates that the religious worldview of the people can not be detached from the cause of the violence as Fr. Lungu (2016) further linked the so called ritual killings to the people's traditional beliefs of

witchcraft and the modern phenomenon of people believing and practicing Satanism or devil worship for economic advantage.

Radford (2009) had also expressed similar linkages between the belief in witchcraft and ritual killings in Africa. Similar forms of ritual killings have been reported over time in Lesotho and Swaziland (Evans 1993), South Africa (Vincent 2008) and other sub-Saharan countries (Bailey 2010; Rickard 2010). While the real cause of the violence cannot be easily isolated, the effects of the violence were however easily noticeable through the looting, damaged property, homelessness, loss of life and arrested suspects. Most importantly, while acknowledging the multifaceted nature of the possible causes of the violence, this paper rather concentrated on the role played by the church as part of her social responsibility.

Nature of the Violence

Since the violence broke out in April 2016, different views have been expressed over the nature of the violence. For example, Hill (2016) notes that the anti-foreigner violence started in a densely populated low-income area in the west of the city (George and Zingalume Townships) after residents accused a Rwandan shop-owner of being behind the killings. Weekly (9-16 September 2016) reports and discovery of bodies believed to have been ritually killed led to widespread riots in Lusaka, including looting of shops and houses belonging to foreigners, as residents vented their anger and fear. Residents looted shops and houses belonging to Rwandese in particular, though soon, the attacks had spread throughout Lusaka's poor residential areas and involved other nationalities.

Foreigners took refuge at police stations, while some brave residents sought to protect their shops and the police post in Zingalume from being vandalised for the second time (the police post was set on fire in March after the discovery of the first four bodies). The riots spread to Mandevu, Chipata, Chaisa, and Kabanana Townships in the north, and there were also reports of unrest in Lilanda and Chunga in the west and in Garden Township in town.

The Secretary General of Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), Father Cleophas Lungu noted that the violence was two fold: On one hand, there were reports of at least four people who were killed by unknown people in some densely populated compounds of Lusaka whose bodies were found, with some

parts missing and rumours of ritual killings on the other.

When rumours started circulating that these were ritual killings being perpetrated by foreign nationals doing business in Zambia, scores of residents in affected areas of Lusaka unfortunately took the law into their hands and started looting shops and business houses owned by foreign nationals and immigrants, especially those from Rwanda (Lungu Vatican Radio, 22nd April 2016).

Other than reporting the loss of lives, 62 shops were destroyed by gangs of marauding youths and several cars set ablaze. As a way of arresting the situation, the police arrested some suspects and the government put security measures by deploying over 1,000 Zambian troops.

Dachs (2016) reported that Zambia last deployed such a large number of police in 2014 to quell riots shortly after the death of President Michael Sata. The Zambian police arrested over 250 people linked to the attacks while dozens of Rwandese sought refuge at their country's High Commission and later at St. Ignatius Catholic parish (Chawe 2016). The foreign nationals were later taken to Mayukwayukwa refugee camp in Western province and Maheba Refugee camp in North-western Province while others were flown back home (Karuhangha 2016). Mayukwayukwa and Maheba are two of the six camps and settlements, which include Kala, Mwange, Nangweshi and Ukwimi.

It is in this violence that the Catholic Church took up a social responsibility to deal with the effects of the violence. While acknowledging that it was not the only church that responded to the violence, it is clear that it played a bigger public role than any other church as reflected in the Zambia's public media.

Catholic Response to Violence

Different Churches in many countries have played an important role in offering assistance to the poor and marginalized through both short and long term programmes and interventions for development. Notably, the churches have played a major role in the provision of basic social services since the nineteenth century when the missionaries began to set up mission schools, hospitals and dispensaries.

In addition to its role in service provision, the churches have also played a role in speaking out against abuses of human rights, social injustice, and poverty. Advocacy on behalf of poor, marginalized and the oppressed people has been and remains a major contribution of churches to civil society. The social responsibility of the church as demonstrated in the April violence is broadly categorized and discussed around the church as a mirror and voice of society, and as a place of refuge.

Catholic Church as Place or Home for Refugees

The church as a place of refuge was a home where the victims who were displaced in the April violence found refuge. This experience was not peculiar to Zambia alone, in 2008, the Central Methodist Mission (CMM) in central Johannesburg took in refugees after the spread of xenophobic violence in South Africa. Bompani (2012) observed that ‘from being simply a religious site, this institution became a sort of improvised ‘refugee camp’ hosting around 3,000 migrants ...’. Back home in Zambia, Fr. Lungu noted that one parish had provided refuge to victims of the acts of violence. More than 300 people from Rwanda, Burundi and the DR Congo sought protection at Saint Ignatius Catholic Church in Lusaka (*Zambia Weekly* 2016). The church did not only provide shelter to these victims, but also provided material support based on the Church’s quest to respect human life and promote social justice. Catholics and other people of good - will generously came on board to offer food and provided some warm clothing (Fr. Lungu, interview 22nd April, 2016).

St. Ignatius Catholic Church priest, Father Chilinda said the Church had continued to take in more people and to this call; well wishers and church members from all walks of life came to the aid of the victims (in Hill 2016). For example, Cardinal Turkson urged Zambians to embrace Rwandese and other refugees when he delivered a card and an undisclosed amount of money to the affected families at St Ignatius’ Kalembe Hall. Cardinal Turkson also expressed gratitude to the local church in Zambia for the hospitality and love it had shown to the affected communities during the period of riots and attacks (Hill 2016).

It was relieving on the part of the affected families to see that the world was standing with them during their difficult time as several people had come on board and donated a number of items to the affected people (Chilinda 2016).

In this way, by being a place of refugee, the church as an institution and community played a social role. This is what Bompani (2012) expresses as religion and religious institutions re-emerging as public actors and the only 'safe' alternative in a very adverse society.

Catholic Church as Mirrored in a Voice

The Church extended its social responsibility as a voice in different ways for the victims and itself. This voice was firstly that of condemnation. For example, the Catholic Church in Zambia condemned the violence in the country's capital following 'rumours about ritual killings' and subsequent reprisal attacks on some foreign nationals and termed the xenophobic assaults 'regrettable.' Fr. Cleophas Lungu, the Secretary General of ZEC, confirmed that the Catholic Church had 'issued statements condemning these barbaric acts of violence' and called for peace (Vatican Radio, 22nd April, 2016).

The Church voiced out on media reported acts of violence through the Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection - the Faith and Justice Programme. In the JCTR Press Release – 'Recent Disorders in the Nation', expressed concern over what it called a 'gross degradation of moral fiber... with reference to occurrences relating to ritual killing, looting of shops and subsequent displacement of foreigners ... (JCTR March 12 2016). This was amidst silence in the face of grievous violence and senseless loss of human life. The Centre condemned the acts and appealed to relevant authorities to take appropriate action. Other Church mother bodies that issued statements that added to the voice of the church on xenophobic attacks acknowledged a missed opportunity in the case of the church in what would have prevented the April 2016 attacks. The Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ 2012) remarked that:

The church should have spoken loudly against the xenophobic violence and killings in South Africa, the post-election killings in Kenya in 2007, the genocide of Rwanda in 1994, or the seizure of white owned farms in Zimbabwe in 2000. In Zambia, the locals have been complaining that government contracts and business conditions favour foreigners and such utterances (if tolerated) can easily become a recipe for xenophobia. We should act early and prevent the worst from happening.

The voice of the church further challenged the government to act. Fr. Lungu noted that the Church had challenged the government of Zambia ‘to be more proactive and do everything possible to bring an end to this unfortunate trend of behavior.’ It is in this vein that President Lungu visited the foreign nationals seeking refuge at Kalembe Hall of St. Ignatius Catholic Church in Lusaka and assured them of full protection and security of person and property.

The church further spoke on behalf of the refugees on the repatriation calls. This involvement of the Church was not new. In 2012, the refugees had called upon the Church for help. Pintu (2012) observes that about 6,000 Rwandan refugees in Zambia wanted the Catholic Church to help stop the state plans to repatriate them and instead to regularise their Zambian citizenship. They also wanted the bishops’ conference to remind the government to respect their human rights and right to choose where to settle, as indicated in documents by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

In this regard, the church addressed the compulsory repatriation as one of the topics in the bishops’ pastoral letter in which they argued that it was not right for the office of the Zambian government’s Commissioner for Refugees and the UNHCR to remove the refugee status from (Rwandan) nationals based in Zambia or those from other countries and to oblige them to return to their own country against their wishes. The Bishops asked the Zambian government to regularise the status of some refugees in the country and facilitate that they be accorded local integration, including freedom of movement and of employment (Catholic Bishops 2012). Resulting from these calls, some refugees were given Zambian citizenship.

By being a voice, the church’s social responsibility was linked to advocacy, here taken as a very broad and overarching concept, which can involve engaging with the general public to raise awareness on an important issue as well as influencing policy-makers towards a desired solution (Gibbs and Ajulu 1999). While advocacy has been closely related to development agencies, concerned individuals and groups have for hundreds of years been involved in advocating for change and Churches in particular have had advocacy at the heart of their work, which they have called ‘justice’ or ‘the churches’ social teaching.’ The work of the Catholic church as guided by her social teaching has been fully described by Komakoma (2003). In other words, most contexts and at most times, advocacy has been a recognised and important part of the churches’ work.

Catholic Church as Protector

The church also played the role of being a protector by protecting the foreign nationals from those who were after them. The church was a protector when the victims were unsafe in the places where they had been integrated. The expressions of the church's protection were communicated in some sentiments of the people who were hosted at St. Ignatius parish. For example, Kezamahoro noted that 'I will not leave the St. Ignatius Roman Catholic church in Lusaka, even after President Edgar Lungu has assured me and more than 400 others that it was safe to return to our homes following anti-foreigner riots this week'. Another 27 year old, war refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo when asked how long he would stay at the parish said, 'forever if possible... we are not safe.' Many others expressed being safe and protected at church. For example, Benigne Miyungeko was also not convinced that moving back to the Mayukwayukwa refugee camp was a good idea because of inadequate medical facilities and food supplies.

While the hand of the church in social life of the country is not new, the social teachings of the church were at the centre of the church's response to the violence. Fr. Lungu noted that as the church celebrated the Jubilee Year of Mercy and bearing in mind the fact that among the corporal works of mercy is the call and mission to welcome strangers, feed the hungry and shelter the homeless, the Church has responded with compassion (Vatican radio 22nd April 2016). This explains the church's open arms to the victims of violence.

This further illuminates the church's voice through statements issued to condemn barbaric acts of violence, calling for peace, and calm among the people, and at the same time challenging civil authorities to be more proactive and do everything possible to bring an end to this unfortunate trend of behaviour among our people. As Nthamburi (2003) notes, the proclamation of the kingdom of God may involve doing acts of mercy.

The Justice and Peace Commission under the umbrella of Caritas Zambia also sought to explore the root causes of what had transpired in order to find some long-term solutions. Once again, the Church as an institution, community coupled with its call to the world, fulfilled her social responsibility at an urgent moment. This merely demonstrates that the Catholic Church has had an advocacy role, but also a service provider for decades even in instances where no one comes to rescue the needy. For example, the bishops have issued a number of pastoral letters on different issues of not only the refugee status,

but also on the subject of economic decline and corruption (July 1990, one of the first, was entitled: 'Economics, Politics and Justice'). Other Catholic bodies such as the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) also makes statements on diverse issues (Gifford 1998: 211). The Church through the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) also tackles the social realities and engages in initiatives, which enable a monitoring of the impacts of the economy on people's lives.

A particular contribution of the centre had been to start calculating on a monthly basis what a food basket for a family of six in Lusaka would cost (JCTR 2010). The basket includes mealie meal, charcoal, cooking oil, vegetables, meat, eggs, bread, sugar, salt, tea, soap, washing powder, and Vaseline but not the cost of housing, water, electricity, transport, clothing, education, healthcare or recreation et cetera.

The role of the church in social responsibility can be explained in diverse ways, but the response of the church to the violence mirrors the description of the church as an institution, as manifested through the collective response of church (leadership, structures), church as community (as individual members came on board to offer their time, food, clothes and other donations through cleaning the premises and cooking for the needy among other ways) and the church's orientation to the world by reaching out to humanity, which are all anchored on the Catholic Social Teaching. As Gifford (1995) argues that the Church has become more involved in the wider society. Most importantly, the Catholic church has been the voice that speaks to the people's living conditions, this is achieved through their pastoral work at the parish level in both rural and urban areas as well as through their service delivery work, in schools and hospitals. This gives them an understanding of people's living conditions and the problems they face and at the same time enables them to speak with authority and when combined with the legitimacy that their moral position in the community lends them, they undoubtedly have the potential for influence (Gibbs & Ajulu 1999).

While the Church has been driven by the social teachings in her social responsibility, others have opined that the levels of expertise and the professionalism of the Catholics, particularly those working in the CCJP and the ZEC, are of critical importance (*ibid*). This demonstrates that the multiple understanding of the church as institution, community and orientation to the world are significant for the church to take up her social responsibility. The church demonstrated the works of the historical Jesus whose ministry involved

attending to people's needs in totality... he fed them with food when they were hungry, ... and spoke against the injustices of his time (Kamaara 2004:128).

Conclusion

The paper reflected on the church and social responsibility by exploring how the Catholic Church responded to the so-called 'xenophobic' violence of April 2016, which has been taken as a single event because this had never happened in the history of Zambia. The xenophobic violence in a nation where the majority of citizens are Christians, questions the faith of the perpetrators. Christians or not, history has demonstrated that people of faith have used violence to justify wrong. Its without doubt that some of the perpetrators of violence were actually Christians, who chose to undress their Christian faith during violence to put on their traditional dress as a lens to view the foreigners as threats - ritual killers who were using witchcraft as a means to grow their business. Scholars who studied African conversion to Christianity or Islam in Africa have explained before this syncretic tendency among Christians in Zambia, during the day Africans would profess the Christian faith, at night they would fall back on their traditional culture.

The paper observes that the church while being guided by her social teachings and celebrating the year of mercy, reached out by being a home or place of refugee, a protector and a voice of the foreign nationals who were displaced and had their homes and property destroyed. Therefore, the church as an institution and a community played its public role as it has done before.

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