

CRACKING THE CODE: ZIMBABWE'S DNA POLICY FRAMEWORK TO COMBAT SERIAL SEX OFFENDERS

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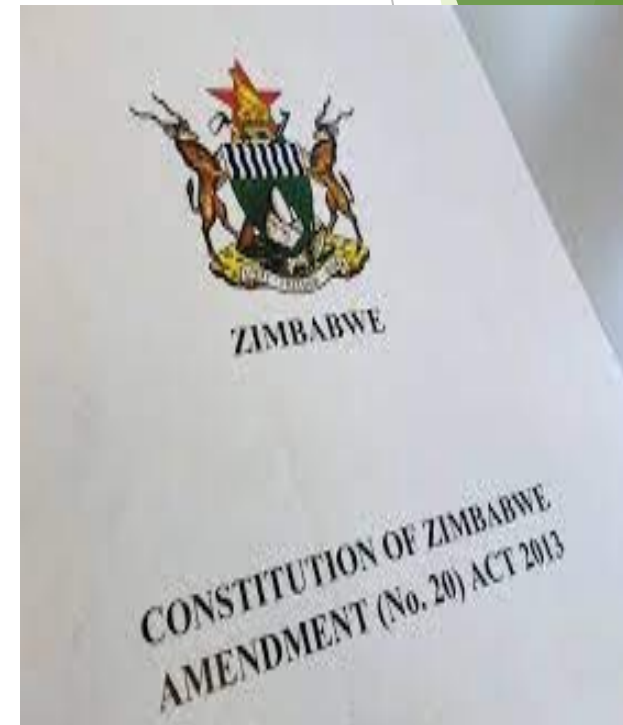
- ▶ (Msc-UZ (pending); Bsc, UZ; Bsc-MSU)
- ▶ IACME (US);
- ▶ HSJFSCI(US);
- ▶ OPCW Instructor;
- ▶ FDA ;
- ▶ DNA Analyst
- ▶ Police Academy Lecturer
- ▶ Police Staff College Lecturer;
- ▶ AWFN
- ▶ Published Poet

Brief history of Forensic Science in Zimbabwe

- ▶ Started in 1963
- ▶ Was a civilian manned unit of Criminal Investigations Department (CID) until 2020
- ▶ 2021 Police manned unit separated from CID to form a separate Forensic Science Department (FSD)
- ▶ Legal framework acknowledges use of forensic science but is limited

Legislation development

- ▶ New constitution 2013
- ▶ 2016 DNA Bill
- ▶ Law development Commission,
- ▶ Centre for Allied Legal Research , EU and other
- ▶ stakeholders





There was a huge gap in the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act:

- ▶ No full description of who is an expert in Forensic DNA issues
- ▶ No certification and accreditation minimum requirements for experts
- ▶ No minimum prescribed standards for collection, preservation, storage, analysis and examination
- ▶ No governing authority/ council

Solution

- ▶ DNA Evidence Bill
- ▶ Started 2016 and last meeting was done 22 December 2022.
- ▶ Write workshop was conducted and a zero-draft submitted to attorney general for further management
- ▶ Data Protection Act 2021 (Act 5 of 2021). (available here https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiE0Lal467_AhWfQvEDHdMpBMcQFnoECAoQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ilo.org%2Fdyn%2Fnatlex%2Fnatlex4.detail%3Fp_isn%3D114001%26p_lang%3Den&usg=AOvVaw2zpKFWH-SU6YmraDGO1opv)
- ▶ Amendment of the CP& E Act (Chapter 9.07) ongoing

Forensic Skills

- ▶ Real Forensic skills were lacking in Zimbabwe
- ▶ Serious and gross mismanagement of evidence was observed
- ▶ from first responders, detectives and the scientists
- ▶ Even the courts had no clue what forensic science was all about

The trainings

- ▶ ZRP and University of Zimbabwe signed an MOU in 2016
- ▶ Forensic Science degree launched
- ▶ 13 police Officers as part of the pioneers
- ▶ Attached in Namibia at National Forensic Science Institute
- ▶ Another batch went to Russian, Indian and the UK

- ▶ 2020 August Police Team took over the white elephant and started operations
- ▶ Detective Inspector Mushove became the first Head of Forensic Biology
- ▶ UNICEF, ICRC, EU for development of Forensic Biology

Evidence Collection Improvement

- ▶ SOPs
- ▶ The evidence collection procedures were now outdated
- ▶ Produced an SOP document is contemporary (in line with new technology) and elaborate (easy to understand for a first responder)
- ▶ UNICEF provided a forensic consultant to review and assisted with printing of over 6.5K copies

Evidence collection kits

- ▶ We had no ideal tools
- ▶ Now we have temper evident packaging, crime scene taps, disposable coats, cameras, faraday bags, Body bags and many more courtesy of UNICEF and ICRC
- ▶ We rebranded our sexual assault kits from “Rape Kit” to “SAFE Kit”
- ▶ This greatly improved crime scene investigation, evidence collection, preservation and integrity.

Forensic Genetics laboratory

- ▶ With the help of UNICEF, we designed and equipped our forensic genetics lab
- ▶ The laboratory was commissioned November 2021
- ▶ Mr Mushove (who was the Head of Forensic Biology then, designed the laboratory and Axiom technicians assisted in fine tuning the design)
- ▶ The flow of work is two way such that reference samples come from the other end and crime scene samples come from the other end, they only meet as profiles!
- ▶ One analyser is for reference samples, and another is for crime scene samples
- ▶ We use closed plate system

First Responder Trainings

- ▶ Conducted a first responder training programme in all provinces in Crime Scene investigations
- ▶ A total of 2 000 Police details were trained from February to April 2022 with Sponsorship from UNICEF
- ▶ A consultant from UNICEF assisted in the trainings
- ▶ Took the opportunity to school the participants on the use of the new SOP document, and distributed the document to all participants
- ▶ Follow up Training programmes trained another 3 000 police details (this was ZRP sponsored and trainings are still ongoing)

CSI Trainings

- ▶ ICRC training on management of the dead and forensic photography for Crime scene investigators and forensic experts
- ▶ A total of 25 participants were trained in 2021
- ▶ Internal trainings conducted by these participants has seen 1200 more participants benefitting

Stakeholder trainings

- ▶ Training of medical personnel on sample collection and coordination with VFU Officers (November 2021 in partnership with Adult Rape clinic -ARC)
- ▶ Training of Magistrates and Public Prosecutors of forensic investigations and the role of Forensic experts to the courts (July 2021- ARC)
- ▶ VFU officers every month since January 2022 we are training and retraining at least 100 VFU officers

Quality management

- ▶ ISO 17025 training offered by DNA Biotech courtesy of ICRC sponsorship
- ▶ This has greatly improved our forensic quality management system in terms of evidence integrity
- ▶ We are working towards accreditation by 31 December 2024

Databases

- ▶ Currently no DNA database available
- ▶ This was caused by lack of profiling equipment and absence of legal instruments
- ▶ Legal instruments now in the pipeline and we anticipate a positive stride come 31 December 2023 (electoral business had delayed the Bill in Parliament)
- ▶ ZRP has partnered ZCHPC to develop various databases and forensic tools which use AI

Missing persons Database

- ▶ We will introduce a criminal DNA Database and a Missing persons DNA database
- ▶ We have already joined the Interpol DNA Familia Databases initiative for missing and unidentified persons
- ▶ Working with our partners (ZCHPC) to establish databases which conform to easy information sharing with other countries through interpol

Report formats and Expert witnessing

- ▶ Have improved the report formats to include evaluative reporting a concept which is a bit novel, but popular among EU countries
- ▶ ZRP experts spent 5 months (May-September) learning DNA analysis, report compilation and expert witnessing from Access Forensic (UK based company) courtesy of UNICEF sponsorship in 2021

Combined efforts

- ▶ Use of cyber investigations
- ▶ Use of forensic chemistry -in drug facilitated sexual assault cases
- ▶ Forensic genetics
- ▶ Forensic microbiology- in cases where an infection has been passed on to the victim
- ▶ Questioned document examination- in cases involving fake documentation in trafficking of women

The future efforts for the future

- ▶ Have introduced a Diploma in Cyber Security and Investigation at ZRP Staff College for our CSIs
- ▶ Comprehensive two-year programme which started in 2021
- ▶ We have also introduced a two- and half-year Diploma in Forensic Investigations for CSIs
- ▶ More programmes to come

Stakeholders

- ▶ We can never achieve this alone
- ▶ We need everyone who wants to work with us on board
- ▶ So far we have worked with UNICEF, EU, ICRC, ARC, Katswe Sisterhood, ZCHPC and Family Trust
- ▶ The abuse of women is something that has been there since time immemorial but, it must stop somewhere! Our Generation must fight to close the gap!

Protection -the poem!

I deserve your endearment
To be under your refuge and to enjoy your tenderness
I am a crucial to the consistent existence of mankind
That is a gift I have been entrusted with
Why do you torment me?

You ill-treat me daily
The maltreatment is too much to bear
I am bruised physically and, in my heart,
Protect me, don't mistreat me
I am the woman next to you
I need your protection not abuse!

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