

## **Governance, Civil Society and State Crisis in Zimbabwe**

**Arnold Sibanda**  
**University of Zimbabwe**

The questions of governance and civil society have hardly been problematised in terms of oppositions of social forces within social formations. These concepts are posed in the Zimbabwean case in the context of state crisis. It is urged here that the Mugabe regime which never had any organic link with the popular masses, specifically defined in class terms, has come to face a crisis of legitimacy which is the present political crisis. This crisis has been brought about because of the bad governance content of the state which has antagonized virtually all social classes or significant portions of them. Its marginalization of key civil society organizations rendered the state's legitimacy crisis even more acute when such organizations rose to challenge the state in the face of deplorable governance and economic conditions. The state's violent response to the crisis before it leaves few democratic options open for Zimbabwe.

However, the above position would be incomplete if it does not pose the question in the context of a general ideological crisis that practically faces all African petty bourgeois nationalists holding state power after independence. This ideological crisis is seen in the schism with the masses, a schism rooted in economic marginalization and high-handed and authoritarian repressive politics against the people and sections of civil society.

The paper proposed is located within the context of the theme discussing the problems and prospects of democratic renewal in Southern African State and civil society.