

CURRICULUM VITAE

SHARI A. EPEL

PERSONAL DETAILS

DATE OF BIRTH: 23 July 1960
PLACE OF BIRTH Harare, Zimbabwe
NATIONALITY: Zimbabwean

OVERVIEW OF TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE EXPERIENCE: ZIMBABWE

- I have worked in the field of **transitional justice since 1995**. I was the primary author and sole researcher of the very first transitional justice report written in Zimbabwe, which recorded the massacres of the post-independence 'Gukurahundi era'. This report was released by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and the Legal Resources Foundation, entitled *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1982-1988*. An estimated 20,000 civilians died in regionally targeted massacres in the western provinces of Zimbabwe between 1982 and 1987. This report remains the primary document of this era, and the first to make recommendations on how to repair the past in Zimbabwe.
- As a **clinical psychologist**, much of my work has been longitudinal engagement with affected, very rural, communities, pioneering peace-building and healing processes for victims and survivors. The Zimbabwean political situation remains repressive, and much of the work happens quietly, with the support of grassroot traditional structures, including Chiefs, and families of those murdered.
- As a qualified **forensic anthropologist**, I have trained a team of colleagues and we have been exhuming victims of extrajudicial killings for purposes of respectful reburial since 1999 until the present. This programme developed out of a recognition that in terms of local beliefs in the importance of the ancestors, we needed to '**heal the dead**' to heal the living: this meant removing the remains from shallow graves in the forests and reburying the properly identified human remains in the right place, with the right rituals, with the right people in attendance. Our work with exhumations has facilitated the basic *right to truth, the right to know* and the *right to mourn* for communities where these killings are still basically denied by the state.
- I have also played a longitudinal role in **working with victims of more recent political torture** since 2000. I have provided rehabilitative services, documentation and reports on this.
- Through working with affected families, I have also written **six major reports on the impacts of state-orchestrated demolitions in Zimbabwe in 2005**, (known as 'Murambatsvina', or 'get rid of the filth') that resulted in 500,000 urban citizens losing their homes and livelihoods in the space of two months. I have tracked some of the same families for more than a decade, to document the long-term impact of families being driven into abject poverty by deliberate state action, at a key point in their lives.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS and EXPERIENCE OF TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

- I have been hosted as a consultant or partner by NGO and INGO programmes working on the frontline of human rights and TJ issues
 - ***In Latin America:*** Guatemala, Honduras, Argentina, Colombia
 - ***In Asia:*** Sri Lanka, Bangladesh
 - ***In Africa:*** South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Liberia
- I have worked with the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), including as a consultant compiling a report for them on their conference in Bosnia in 2019. This focused on family support groups for the disappeared globally.
- I have worked closely, including in the field, with the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team and the South African Missing Persons Task Team.
- I continue to work closely with the African Union, through Redress in London, to develop guidelines that all African countries should abide by, in relation to prevention and resolution of enforced disappearances on the continent. These guidelines should be presented to the full AU during 2021.
- Through initial facilitation of Swiss Peace, we have over the last six years successfully externalized and digitally archived our large collection of documents and artefacts related to political violence in Zimbabwe. This work continues.
- Several consultancies mapping conflict and effectiveness of peace-building, including a 2015-2017 project in South Africa, 'combatting drivers of xenophobic violence' in 16 municipalities.

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE TRAINING: EXPERIENCE

- Extensive facilitation experience, formal and informal, with civic society personnel, grassroots community members, health care professionals - in relation to all aspects of Transitional Justice, including working ethically with victims, security of information, and accountability in repressive contexts.
- Five years' experience as a formal trainer in counselling methodologies working with torture victims, with a cross section of trainees.
- Fifteen years' experience, in training others in research methods, and archiving, within our own organisation and training of staff of other civic organisations in Zimbabwe.

PAPERS, SEMINARS

- Seminars at University of Oxford, England: Queen Elizabeth House, 2019: also 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, on Zimbabwe human rights situation, transitional justice, and research into social consequences of torture, exhumations; political updates.
- New York University, USA: 2021 and 2020 (via Zoom) paper presented in 2010 on human rights and accountability.
- University of Oxford, England: African Studies Seminars presentation, New College, 2008.
- University of Stellenbosch, 2018, lecture in conference on trans-generational trauma, zoom follow up 2021.
- University of Sussex, England: seminar on HR situation in Zimbabwe, 2019.
- University of Central Florida, USA, lectures on exhumations in Zimbabwe: 2021 and 2020 (via Zoom), in person 2019, 2014.
- University of Pretoria, South Africa, lectures on exhumations in Zimbabwe: 2020 via Zoom, in person 2017.

- University of Copenhagen, Denmark: papers on TJ presented in August 2014 and in 2011.
- Princeton University, USA: lectures on violence and accountability, in 2012, 2009.
- University of Berkeley, California: paper presented 2000, conference on DNA and Human Rights.
- Numerous papers and presentations at international conferences, NGO meetings and diplomatic briefings since 2000.

AWARD

WINNER of the 2000 BARBARA CHESTER AWARD (ARIZONA, USA): To “Clinicians and Healing Practitioners for their Work with Survivors of Torture”. (www.barbarachesteraward.org)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN; Currently registered for Doctorate in Anthropology: 2018 => “Bones in the Forest: an anthropological study of how exhumations of massacre victims in rural Matabeleland, Zimbabwe have been understood and incorporated by families and communities”.

MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY, PENNSYLVANIA, USA: MSc Forensic Anthropology: August 2012 to May 2014. Training included detailed osteology, also expert witnessing in the USA court system, bone trauma and practical field experience in USA context of recovery and documentation of remains.

HARVARD PROGRAMME IN REFUGEE TRAUMA: 2010-2011. Mastery course in Global Mental Health: Trauma and Recovery

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL, DURBAN: 1980 – 1984: B.A (English, Psychology) 1980 1982 Cum Laude: Honours (Psychology) conferred April 1984. Psychology Clinical Internship: Ingutsheni Psychiatric Hospital, Bulawayo 1997.

EMPLOYMENT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Ukuthula Trust (Bulawayo, Zimbabwe) January 2014 to present.

- To direct the programme in Zimbabwe and South Africa, which is aimed at conflict resolution, repairing the social fabric and community empowerment in rural Matabeleland, particularly working with victims of HR abuses.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Solidarity Peace Trust (Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and Johannesburg, South Africa), January 2003 to December 2013.

- **More than 30 human rights reports produced since 2002.** (www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/reports/).
- **Archiving of HR violations on which these reports are based.**

DIRECTOR, Amani Trust Matabeleland (Bulawayo, Zimbabwe), January 1998- December 2002.

- Community based programmes of healing of victims of Gukurahundi and documentation of violence. First exhumations.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Borosky, A., Rotondo, M., Eppel, S. *et al.* Allele frequency data for 23 aSTR for different ethnic groups from Republic of Zimbabwe. *Int J Legal Med* **135**, 1753–1765 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00414-021-02514-1>

Eppel, Shari, “In Pursuit of Policies of ‘Reconciliation’ from an Intransigent State: An Exercise in Folly?”: in Tendi, Miles, JoAnn McGregor and Jocelyn Alexander (Eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Zimbabwean Politics*, Oxford University Press, in progress, selected chapters including Eppel, published online July 2020.

Eppel, Shari, “How Shall We Talk of Bhalagwe? Remembering the *Gukurahundi* Era in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe”: in Wale, Kim, Pumla Goboda-Madikizela, Jeffrey Prager (Eds), *Post-Conflict Hauntings: Transforming Memories of Historical Trauma*, Palgrave MacMillan, Cham, Switzerland, 2020.

Eppel, Shari, “Healing the Dead in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe: Combining Tradition with Science to Restore Personhood After Massacres”: in Benyera, Everisto (Ed), *Indigenous, Traditional and Non-State Transitional Justice in Southern Africa: Zimbabwe and Namibia*, Lexington Books, New York, 2019.

Eppel, Shari: “The Heroic and the Hidden Dead: Zimbabwe and Exhumations”: in Groen, W.J. Mike, Nicholas Marquez-Grant, Robert C. Janaway (Eds), *Forensic Archaeology: A Global Perspective*, Wiley Blackwell, Netherlands, 2015.

Eppel, Shari: “‘Bones in the Forest’ in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe: exhumations as a tool to transformation”, *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, September 2014.

Eppel, Shari: “Repairing a Fractured Nation: Challenges and Opportunities in Post-GPA Zimbabwe”: in Raftopoulos, Brian (Ed), *The Hard Road to Reform: The Politics of Zimbabwe’s Global Political Agreement*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2013.

Eppel, Shari: “The silencing of the bones” Zimbabwe Update No 2: Solidarity Peace Trust, March 2011. Can be accessed at: <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/author/shariep/>

Eppel, Shari: “A tale of three dinner plates: “truth” and the challenges of human rights research in Zimbabwe”: in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, (4) 2009.

Eppel, Shari, Daniel Ndlela, Brian Raftopoulos and Martin Rupiya: *Developing a Transformation Agenda for Zimbabwe*: IDASA and Zimbabwe Institute, Cape Town, 2009.

Eppel, Shari: “Healing the dead: exhumation and reburial as a route to truth telling and peace building in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe”: in Borer, Tristan Ann (editor) *Telling the Truths: Truth telling and peace building in post conflict societies*, Joan B Kroc Peace Institute, Notre Dame University Press, 2004. Can be accessed via <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/488/healing-the-dead/>

Eppel, Shari: “‘Gukurahundi’: the need for truth and reparation”: in Raftopoulos, Brian, and Tyrone Savage (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and political reconciliation*, IJR, Cape Town, 2004.

Eppel, Shari: “Reburial Ceremonies for Health and Healing after State Terror”: in *The Lancet*, Vol 360 (issue 9336), 14th September, 2002.

Eppel, Shari, Hans Draminsky Petersen: “Rule of Law, Law, and the Health Profession in Zimbabwe”, in *Danish Medical Bulletin*, Vol 49 (3), pp 247-52. August 2002.

Eppel, Shari, “Torture in Zimbabwe”: in *The British Medical Journal*, Vol 324 (issue 7333), February 9th, 2002.

Keller, Alan, Samantha Stewart, Shari Eppel: “Health and Human Rights under Assault in Zimbabwe”, in *The Lancet*, Vol 371, March 29th, 2008.

Physicians for Human Rights, Denmark: written in collaboration with Eppel:

“The Presidential election: 44 days to go”: January 2002.

“We’ll make them run: a report on post election violence in Zimbabwe March to May 2002: June 2002.

“‘Vote ZANU PF or Starve’: Zimbabwe, August to October 2002”: November 2002.