

### Zimbabwe Program Summary

Since 1993, the International Republican Institute (IRI) has been committed to supporting political parties and civil society organizations seeking to institutionalize democratic governance and principles in Zimbabwe. Amid the ongoing political and social challenges facing the citizenry of Zimbabwe, IRI has sought to assist underrepresented groups and promote democratic principles and institutions throughout the country. IRI has worked with pro-democratic stakeholders on communications tactics, organization strengthening, and outreach skills.

### Media and Communications

Though political space has gradually opened following the swearing-in of the unity government in February 2009, free speech and freedom of the press remain heavily restricted under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. IRI has worked closely with democratic partners on developing techniques for media, particularly international media outreach, as well as how to develop messages conveying their democratic vision for audiences in-country.

### Political Organization

Core policies under Zimbabwe's previous regime claim to protect national interests by limiting the role and influence of political parties and civil society organizations, particularly those that advocate for human rights and democratic values. Formal and informal elements of the state's security apparatus often uphold restrictive legislation through violent means. The bulk of IRI's work in Zimbabwe correspondingly focuses on organizational capacity-building of pro-democratic parties and civil society organizations. Through training sessions and workshops, IRI works to better educate democratically-inclined groups on methods of mobilization, leadership, strategic planning, and volunteer and membership recruitment.

### Issue Advocacy and Outreach

IRI has sought to encourage democratic organizations to focus on democratic consolidation and advocacy, and to push for issue-driven reform that can benefit all Zimbabweans regardless of their party affiliation. Through training sessions and workshops, IRI has worked with partners on coalition building and message development and works to equip them with the tools necessary to reach out to the grassroots level and leverage popular support for lasting democratic reform.