

Time for ZANU PF to reciprocate goodwill...

On Friday 17 February 2012, the European Union announced the removal of 51 ZANU PF politicians and party functionaries and 20 companies linked to the political party from restrictive measures.

The measures, which include travel restrictions, arms embargo and asset freezes, were put in place in 2002 in response to a flawed electoral process and continued human rights violations by the Mugabe regime following the 2000 Parliamentary Elections. 112 people and 11 companies remain on the restrictions including President Robert Mugabe and the security chiefs.

According to the EU, the sanctions were lifted in recognition of the progress made by the inclusive government in creating conditions which are conducive for the holding of free and fair elections in Zimbabwe and as an affirmation of the bloc's desire to engage in serious political dialogue with the country.

The goodwill shown by the EU should be reciprocated by ZANU PF which has maintained sanctions against citizens by continuously perpetuating human rights abuses, disrespecting citizens' rights and disregarding electoral outcomes.

Conditions which led to the imposition of targeted measures against ZANU PF and its cabal in 2002 are still existent despite the formation of an inclusive government in 2009. Democracy and the rule of law are yet to be firmly established in the country. ZANU PF, as the chief culprit in the disregard of the rule of law and disrespect of people's fundamental rights, should ensure that conditions are created which promote the holding free and fair elections in the country.

Repressive laws including the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection Act (AIPPA), which curtail the fundamental freedoms of citizens such as the freedoms of expression, association and speech are still in place despite commitments made by the inclusive government to repeal draconian laws.

Over the past two months, pro-democracy players including Restoration of Human Rights (ROHR) Spokesperson, Stan Zvorwadza and Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) national coordinator, Jenni Williams were arbitrarily arrested under POSA. Efforts by progressive legislators to repeal POSA were met with disdain by some ZANU PF Members of



Parliament. ZANU PF's disregard for citizens' rights was clearly exhibited by Justice Minister and ZANU PF official, Patrick Chinamasa on October 2011 when he defended POSA and AIPPA at the United Nations Working Group on Human rights Symposium saying they are 'justified pieces of legislation'.

Moreover, the continued incarceration of prisoners of conscience including MDC Youth Chairperson, Solomon Madzore is testament to the fact that the political environment in Zimbabwe remains highly restrictive. The lifting of restrictive measures by the EU should be coupled by the following;

1. Constitutional Reform
2. Institutional Reforms and depoliticisation of state institutions
3. Legislative Reform
4. Creation of a conducive electoral framework and political environment
5. Participation of marginalised groups which include women and people with Disabilities in all national processes
6. Transitional Justice and National Healing
7. Media Reform

Creation of conditions for free and fair elections in line with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections



NHEWEYEMBWA VILLAGERS LIVE IN FEAR

On Sunday the 19th of February 2012, the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, together with Savannah Trust held a community theatre forum at Chingwaru Business Centre in Nheweyembwa Village, Mrewa. The purpose of the community theatre forum was to educate and inform people on the progress of the constitution-making process and the holding of the referendum and elections. Savannah Trust staged a drama entitled 'Simudzai Mureza' whose thrust was on encouraging people to shun political violence.

However, only a few villagers drew near to watch the drama as most only stole a glance from afar. Most young people could be seen standing a distance away while a number of the elderly came nearer and followed the proceedings attentively. They raised questions over the leaked draft constitution which had been published in the media as well as on issues to do with elections and when they were to be held.

A businessman in the area, Mr. T.L Muziri, who is also the treasurer of the ZIMRIGHTS Mrewa North committee, told a story of how he had been approached by ZANU PF youths and forced to take off a Crisis in Zimbabwe



Mr Muziri was forced to remove a Crisis in Zimbabwe T-shirt he was wearing.

Coalition T-shirt that he was wearing. He expressed concern over how some ZANU PF supporters were going around threatening villagers and telling them not to support the draft constitution. He said it was because of this that most people were watching the proceedings from afar as they feared they would be targeted.

The villagers recommended that, even though people were afraid of participating, forums of this nature should be available more often to discourage people from intimidating others and perpetrating violence.



Kuwadzana residents speak out on typhoid

On Friday, the 17th of February 2012, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition together with Combined Harare Residents Association held a Meet the People Forum at Kuwadzana 2 Community Hall. The topic of discussion was Typhoid Outbreak: What is the extent of the Outbreak and what can be done to stem the outbreak in a long term manner? The event was graced by Honourable Member of Parliament for Kuwadzana Nelson Chamisa who is also the Minister of Information, Communication and Technology, Dr Rutendo Bonde who is the Chairperson of Zimbabwe Association of Doctor for Human Rights, Mr. Itai Rusike, the Director of the Community Working Group on Health, Simbarashe Moyo who is Chairperson of the Combined Harare Residents Association; and Mr Tsoka, a representative from the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare who also came on behalf of the Ministry's director of Epidemiology and Disease Control, Dr Munangazira. Also in attendance were councillors, Mr. Mangwiro and Mr. Mandere.



The meeting, attended by over 150 residents, discussed the typhoid outbreak that arose in Harare in October 2012 and had most devastating effects in areas like Kuwadzana, Dzivarasekwa and Warren Park. Speaker after speaker blamed the outbreak on City of Harare's poor service delivery. Mr. Tsoka told the gathering that as of the 13th February, 2716 cases of disease had been reported; and of these, 1279 were from Kuwadzana. He said the typhoid scourge is everyone's problem and thus demanded a collective response for it to be solved.

Dr. Bonde, who gave a human rights perspective to the outbreak, said the government, through its failure to set up adequate primary prevention mechanisms, was denying Zimbabweans their fundamental right to health. She urged residents to stand up and demand accountability from the government.

The government was called on to honour the Abuja Declaration, to which it is a signatory, by allocating 15% of the country's total budget to the



health ministry. Mr. Rusike, who described typhoid as a medieval disease, said this would enable the ministry to whip into life and assist local authorities when they failed to cope. He called for the amendment of the Public Health Act of 1924; to make it more suited to the current situation and to give provisions that address the weak urban primary health structures currently in place. Mr. Rusike also encouraged political leaders to desist from politicizing health issues and to take responsibility by giving the issues the attention they deserve.

Honourable Nelson Chamisa, who spoke in his capacity as Kuwadzana East legislator, bemoaned the government's failure to protect its people. He described the typhoid outbreak as a testimony to the fact that the current government is failing and that even if cholera and typhoid outbreaks were contained, there would still be an urgent need to address the issue of a failing government. However he also castigated the city council for failing to provide essential services like safe drinking water, consistent refuse collection and repair of burst sewer pipes; and yet demand that residents pay rates every month.

The residents of Kuwadzana expressed dissatisfaction over the city council's failure to take a pro-active stance towards diarrhoeal disease outbreaks, saying that the same conditions that resulted in the 2008 Cholera outbreak had been allowed to prevail and thus gave rise to the typhoid outbreak. Councillors, Mr. Mandere and Mr. Mangwiro, however, took the opportunity to re-affirm their commitment to serve the people in their respective wards and also called on the government to prioritise the construction of the Kunzvi Dam to boost water supply to Harare and Chitungwiza. The speaker also urged people to practise strict personal hygiene by boiling water before drinking; and by washing hands with soap or ash after using the toilet and before handling food.

