MDC outlines election benchmarks

HARARE – Zimbabwe needs critical electoral reforms before holding credible elections in 2011, the MDC Secretary-General, Hon. Tendai Biti has said.

Hon. Biti said that there was need for far reaching reforms to the electoral law, addressing key issues such as the shambolic voters’ roll and ensuring the full independence of the discredited Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), its commissioners and its secretariat.

“What we are saying as a Party is that the ZEC secretariat should not be a rat hole of CIO (Central Intelligence Organisation) operatives,” Biti said. “We need to strengthen the independence of ZEC, having a new voters’ roll, and embarking on a new transparent delimitation exercise.”

He said the voters’ roll is currently in tatters, accusing some voters have been removed from the voters’ roll while a lot of ghost voters are still registered. The voter register is also replete with names of dead people and others who would be over 100 years of age were they alive.

Zanu PF has over the past two decades abused the voters’ roll, registering non-existent people with fictitious addresses.

Hon. Biti said the MDC advocates that the integrity of the voters’ roll be protected constitutionally and be subject to scrutiny by the citizens of Zimbabwe and Parliament.

“The voters’ roll must be available to the electoral stakeholders in a usable format and on time. There is need for an overhaul approach to the rule of law in the country to level the playing field for the holding of free, violence-free, credible elections,” Hon. Biti, who is the Finance minister in the inclusive government, said.

“Now is the issue of political violence where a number of things must be resolved like the work of the Organ of National Healing. The role of the MDC and the presence of election monitors in Zimbabwe six months before and six months after the elections. There is also need to strengthen the role of ZIMSEC,” he said.

Hon. Biti explained that there was need to ensure that we have credible institutions that are involved in the running of the election process, including voter education institutions.

“But most importantly there is need for security sector realignment to make sure these institutions protect people’s rights against abusers of the law, rather than the situation we have right now where people no longer have confidence in our security sector,” said Hon Biti.

Due to the abuse of the State security sector, during the 2008 elections by Zanu PF, Hon. Biti reiterated that having police officers manning inside polling stations was likely to intimidate voters.

“How the MDC calls for the deployment of police officers outside polling stations and confining the military to the barracks during the polls which will greatly reduce the chances of intimidation,” he said.

Hon. Biti said those were the key MDC election signposts. He said the delimitation of constituencies must be done properly, and then there can be an agreement on the date for elections by all the three political principals and agreement on the code of conduct by the contesting political parties.

The MDC calls for a conducive environment fit for holding free and fair democratic elections where proud Zimbabweans can choose a legitimate government and leaders with neither fear nor cohesion. The people spoke in March 2008, they overwhelmingly voted for the MDC, and will do so again at the next poll which Hon Biti said the MDC was ready for.

Of concern to the MDC is the intimidation which has continued unabated throughout the country, prompting the party to demand enactment of necessary political reforms and practices as preconditions to the holding of a free and fair election.

Independent election observers concur that the groundwork needs to be laid for a free and fair vote.

In a statement this week, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, (ZESN) said it had not seen any meaningful attempt to identify the perpetrators of political violence of 2008 and bring them to book.

“The victims of violence remain vulnerable to fresh attacks should elections be held before this critical action is taken. This has also meant that there has not been any healing and reconciliation among the people, and any proposed elections are likely to be held in an environment that is very similar to the one obtaining in June 2008,” said ZESN.

The organisation said it was concerned about an electoral environment in which the oppressive Public Order Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) remain on the statute books, draconian laws that have been selectively used to curtail fundamental freedoms.

Nyanhongo, Midzi bankrolling Chipangano shock-troops

HARARE – Two senior Zanu PF Harare province officials, Hubert Nyanhongo and Amos Midzi have been implicated in sponsoring political violence taking place in some parts of Harare suburbs, investigations by The Real Change Times have shown.

There has been an upsurge of political violence engineered by Zanu PF youths in Harare since the Constitution-making process moved to the capital city last month.

Investigations by this paper reveal that Nyanhongo, the Harare South MP and Midzi, a losing parliamentary candidate in Epworth in 2008 elections are financing Zanu PF youths to unleash violence.

Nyanhongo is the Zanu PF Harare provincial chairperson and deputy Minister of Energy and Power Development. He is a retired Brigadier General.

The two are paying and oiling Zanu PF youths who operate under a rogue outfit known as “Chipangano” to unleash violence on suspected MDC supporters. The Zanu PF shock troops operate from Carter House, a booking house owned by the Harare City Council in Mbare.

The youths are not paying rent and any attempt by the city council to evict them has been met with violence against council officials.

The MDC Harare province chairperson, Chikomwe senator, Morgan Femai confirmed that the Zanu PF youths were disrupting funeral wakes of MDC members and MDC public meetings although the police would have authorised them.

Senator Femai said suburbs that had been seriously affected by the political violence are: Mbare, Harare South, Hatcliffe and Epworth.

“We have tried to engage the police at Mbare Police Station for them to arrest these perpetrators as they are known but the police have not been forthcoming,” he said.

Last week, Zanu PF activists besieged and attacked mourners at the funeral wake of an MDC district organising secretary, Sekai Kudzubuka at Mbare Block 2 flats.

In September, an MDC activist, Chrispen Mandizvidza was murdered by Zanu PF youths after he had participated at a Copac outreach meeting at Mai Musodzi Hall in Mbare. The Copac outreach meetings have been indefinitely suspended due to the violence that took place.

The killers have been identified and police notified but no arrests have been made.

“We want these people to be arrested,” demanded Senator Femai urging political leaders to desist from fanning violence.

Nyanhongo and Midzi were in 2009 implicated in sponsoring a spate of violent activities in Harare as they fought for the Zanu PF chairperson position of Harare province.
MDC MPs slam Sibanda

HARARE – MDC MPs have roundly slammed purported war veteran, Jabulani Sibanda, who is fanning violence in Masvingo province, blaming him for a terrorist who should be immediately arrested and removed from the province.

Debating in the House of Assembly last week, West Matabeleland MP, Festus Dumbu said Sibanda was misguided as he had no law of survival as a normal human being.

“While the people are trying to heal their wounds, Zanu PF sends Sibanda to terrorise people in Zaka. The most painful part in that Sibanda is very disheartening. He has no code and no law of survival as a human being,” Dumbu lashed out.

He castigated Sibanda saying he was an insult to the peace loving people of Matabeleland where he hail.

“Sibanda is terrorising people in Zaka as we speak right now. He is force marching kraal – heads, village wards and chiefs to his meetings. People no longer have any space for their freedom because they are being force march to Sibanda following the agenda of Operation Budirama Pachuna,” said Dumbu.

He said after being annoyed by Sibanda’s disordered behaviour, villagers in Zaka sat down and decided to boycott his meetings.

“Sibanda has now transformed his approach again. He is now terrorising the civil servants. Only yesterday, the Durre Educations Officer for Zaka, Mr Chikwange force-marched all the headmasters in the district to Zaka’s meeting,” he told a stunned Parliament.

“The people of Zaka demand that this terrorist who is terrorising them be ejected from Zaka as soon as possible. They demand that the powers that be understand their plight and have him ejected or arrested because he is actually provoking the people,” said Dumbu.

He said two weeks after Chief Bota had held a memorial service for his daughter, Bertha Dzigarwi who was murdered by Zanu PF youth militia in 2008, Sibanda after the service, called everyone who had attended and told them that Zanu PF is going to come back to the near future and kill more people.

Dziraiyi was an MDC activist who was murdered by Zanu PF youth militia on 6 June 2008.

“Zaka is the same district where people were murdered. Jerena is the same area where Mr Muvyaika (an MDC activist) was killed and where people are trying to heal those wounds through a national programme. This programme of national healing is being disabled by just one individual. Where is the police? Where does he get his resources from? Is it the government of Zimbabwe, Zanu PF or Mugabe,” said Dumbu.

Debating on the same issue, Bulawayo East MP, Hon. Thabitha Khumalo said Zanu PF had a record of violence dating back to 1980.

“As we speak today, Mavingo is on fire. It is Sibanda who is being supported by Zanu PF and none of these Zanu PF hon. members have stood up in public to tell their people that we are saying no to violence. They are not man or woman enough to stand up and tell the truth,” she said.

The MDC resolved at their annual conference in 2009 that they will implement the 50-50 representation of women in the Party.

“Zanu PF is good at preaching peace and practising war veterans, in this August House and preach peace. The moment they walk out of this august House, they are practising war. When they come back, they want that war to be transferred to somebody who did not do it,” said Khumalo.

She said Zanu PF made peace-look like war, lies like the truth.

“They have believed in their lies and that is now real. For any Zanu PF person to say the truth, I think, the dead gut windows. They have accepted that their government is a war government. They lie in such a way that it is so convincing for them that they are lying. Tell the truth and it shall set you free,” Hon. Khumalo said.

Kambuzuma MP, Hon. Williams Madzimure said Sibanda had no right to be in Zaka telling the people how to live.

“Sibanda traversed the country from Tsholotsho going to Zaka. Jabulani is in a factionalism in this country. The moment you want your time fighting, you are defeating development. Sibanda is a war veteran because my own parents and relatives are still going through a war and have not been healed and threatened,” said Madzimure.

Addressing people at a consultation meeting in Malwau last week, President Morgan Tsvangirai said he would push for justice in the rural areas where Sibanda was terrorising innocent villagers.

MDC News Briefs

Jongwe memorial

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The memorial will be held at Emire Park in Zvimba, an opposition party supporter, stained law and became a loyalist of the opposition, before practising law at a Harare legal firm.

He was elected to parliament in January 2002. He was a Bindura MP and was subsequently appointed to the cabinet as Justice minister.

The memorial will be held on Saturday.

Bennett in exile

Harare – Former MDC deputy leader for agriculture, Eliah Jembere. has been joined in exile by former MDC secretary general and deputy Agriculture minister diyly Madhuku. The two are in exile as they fear a political climate was worsening and is wary of further judicial actions against them.

But he wanted his persecutors that soon they will be the ones in the dock at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands.

Bennett was arrested in February last year while his MDC colleagues were being sworn in as ministers.

He has been acquitted of terrorism charges but Mugabe continues to refuse to release him.

Biti adamantly

Harare – MDC secretary general Tendai Biti’s lawyers have returned to court this week seeking to keep Biti’s case heard in a case where Biti is seeking determination of his application for an Order authorising detention in 2008 where he was arrested.

Supreme Court Judge, Justice of Appeal Cyprian Zvinosha, last week refused to consider the matter after rejecting Biti’s application for an Order authorising detention in 2008 where he was arrested.

The application for an Order authorising detention was filed by Biti when he was arrested and detained on 17 July 2008 when he was denied bail by a judge and was held in prison.

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Once more into the fray

By Eddie Cross

The MDC Road Map for resolving the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe is being undermined by a movement of democratic resistance to force Zanu PF into negotiations, negotiations for a transitional government, the drafting and adoption of a new constitution followed by a national election to resolve the issue of leadership of the State.

This roadmap has been more or less achieved and even since Zanu PF signed the GPA in September 2008 they have been significantly blundering around to avoid the agreed reforms.

The impression that has been created by the propaganda machine of Zanu has been to try and establish the image that they are still in control and that the only reason why the economy is in such a state and further reforms are impossible is the “illegal” imposition of “sanctions” on Zimbabwe.

The reality is that they know, that if the GPA is implemented in full, they are unlikely to be able to control the next elections and the consequence will be a comprehensive and humiliating defeat.

They do not believe the fiction about sanctions and they understand full well that the economic collapse they have been manipulating and bludgeoned to death and absent voters, the delimitation of constituencies remains the same with a 60:40 split between rural and urban constituencies, despite the 63.37 percent split in the actual population – urban/rural.

They want an election where they can ring fence the former commercial farming districts as no-go areas for the MDC where they can effectively cleanse the same areas of all elements that might be sympathetic to the MDC.

They want to be able to control the media, especially radio and the print media, they want to be able to control the political intimidation, targeted violence and confirm that this is the thinking in the high places of local leadership in the region and in Zimbabwe.

The first reaction of most people to such a scenario is – not again, more violence and killings, more house burnings and intimidation. In a nutshell, rape and mayhem.

I am not so sure. I think the South Africans are going to insist on compliance with the GPA and are going to force adoption of the essential reforms required for a free and fair election that is recognised by the international community. In fact recognition by the major powers in the world is so critical to the region, that they are likely to be more amenable to pressure from the US and Europe than normal on issues such as the Zimbabwe crisis.

What we have to decide is what steps lie on the road map to an acceptable electoral process? I would list the following:

• A truly independent Electoral Commission with its own budget and freedom to control the whole electoral process, preferably in the form of a new entity, separate from the Registrar General’s Office

• The provision of a comprehensive system of supervision and observation of SADC and AU Monitors of the electoral process, campaign and subsequent elections

• Regional guarantees that the results of the election will be respected and implemented without delay after the poll.

Is that too much to ask for? I do not think so, but it is the minimum that we need if we are to conduct a free and fair election in Zimbabwe which will finally resolve the political and the economic crisis.

Does the region need it – you bet, like yesterday. Can we do it in the time allotted? – Of course, if we work together...
7 councillors ditch Mutambara

BULAWAYO – MDC activist, Patrick Nabanyama, who disappeared in 2000 after being abducted by known Zanu PF and war veterans in Bulawayo, has finally been officially declared dead, even though his remains are still at large.

The declaration was officially made by a Bulawayo provincial magistrate on August 11, but it was announced last week by Nabanyama’s wife, Patricia.

Provincial magistrate, Rose Dube made the declaration.

“After reading all the documents, Patrick Nabanyama is declared dead,” reads the order.

Soon after making the announcement, Mrs Patricia Nabanyama applied for the private prosecution of her husband’s murderers.

The late Nabanyama was an MDC election agent in the June 2000 parliamentary election.

Nabanyama was kidnapped by 10 armed Zanu PF and war veterans from his Nketa home on 19 June 2000. The murderers were driving a white Maize truck with no number plates. He was beaten and bundled into the vehicle, which drove off at a high speed.

He has never been seen since then.

Mrs Nabanyama last week applied for a private prosecution of the remaining six accused persons who were implicated in her husband’s kidnaping.

The six are; Stanley Ncube, Ephraim Moyo, Julius Sibanda, Simon Rwodzi, one Moyo and Ngoni.

The other four, Cain Nkala, Howard Ncube, one Ndluvu and one Samords, died in mysterious circumstances. Nkala was declared a national hero and was buried at the National Heroes’ Acre.

A private prosecution follows when the Attorney General (AG) officially declines to prosecute for whatever reason. The AG then issues a certificate that allows one to engage any other lawyer or prosecutor, other than the AG, to deal with the case.

“I have noted with grave concern that your office has failed and/or refused to prosecute the individuals listed below with the offences of murder and/or kidnaping.

“In the face of your failure to do so, I request your offices to issue a certificate in terms of section 16 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act Chapter 9:87, so that a way is paved for a private prosecution of the said individuals,” Mrs Nabanyama’s application reads.

“The deceased Patrick Nabanyama was my husband and in terms of Section 13 and 14 (c) of the same Act, I believe I am well within my rights to pursue this case in this manner. The individuals concerned are; Stanley Ncube, Ephraim Moyo, Julius Sibanda, Simon Rwodzi, Mr Moyo and Ngoni,” the application reads.\footnote{Mrs Patricia Nabanyama}

The secretary general of that party, requesting them to relinquish their seats in council.

According to the letter, the councillors are free to resign and join any other political party of their choice but their resignation must be accompanied by giving up all positions and seats that they hold on the Mutambara-led party ticket.

Mutambara party’s secretary general was apparently piqed by the en masse resignation with the group firing off a group resignation letter.

“I also advise that as a party we do not accept group resignations,” Ncube wrote in his letter. “Thus your resignation letter must be by yourself alone. In the premises, I am requesting you to write a personal resignation letter to me in which letter you must state that you are resigning from the party as an individual and that you are also resigning from your council seat which is an MDC seat.”

The Prof went on to threaten to drag the municipality of Local Government if the councillors fail to adhere to the party’s resignation demands.

“We will be very happy to accept that resignation. Failing which, you must as an individual, withdraw, in writing your letter of 21 July 2010. should you not do so, you stand forthwith to be expelled by the 31st October 2010 we will take that you are determined to act unfeelfully, in which case we will secure your dismissal from council by the relevant ministry of Local Government,” said Ncube’s letter.\footnote{Those who have names of perpetrators of violence during the Constitution Outreach programme free to phone or write to MDC Information and Publicity department. Telephone: 84-779708 Email: editor@newshub@gmail.com Postal Address: Harvest House, 4th Floor, 44 Nelson Mandela Avenue, Harare.}

HARARE - The MDC has heavily condemned the police in Harare for barring three of its scheduled consultative meetings that were to be addressed by the MDC leadership in Harare last week.

In a statement, the MDC said the police had shown lack of adequacy by barring the three meetings and that they held a meeting addressed by the MDC leadership in Harare.

President Morgan Tsvangirai was scheduled to hold three meetings at City Hall in Highfields, Baiditiro Community Hall last Thursday and Glen View I Hall on Friday and a rally on Sunday at Stodart in Mhure.

“However, the officer Commanding Harare South district, Chief Superintendent T.A. Chawpreda barred the meeting citing provisions of the repressive Public Order and Security Act (POS Act),” the MDC spokesman said.

The nationwide consultative meetings were launched by President Tsvangirai on Tuesday at Mabvuku Hall before thousands of Harare residents.

The consultations are designed to examine why the GPA, violations and the Constitutional crisis was allowed to be created by the Zanu PF and MDC as they continuously disregarded the provisions of the GPA. The meetings are also set to chart the way forward.

“The MDC is appalled by the action showing the police in using the draconian POSA to bar peaceful public gatherings. The Party is equally disturbed by the attempts by ZANU (PF) to abuse the police in achieving political ends,” the MDC said.

Addressing people at Mabvuku Hall, President Tsvangirai reiterated that Robert Mugabe had no authority in making unilateral senior government appointments and extending or revoking them without consultation of the inclusive government without consulting other political principals as stated in the Global Political Agreement (GPA).

“Mugabe must know that this is sham. All this is to allow Mugabe to be now part of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. All what Mugabe did appoints judges and ambassadors is illegal and contrary to the GPA,” President Tsvangirai said.

However, President Tsvangirai said the MDC was ready and prepared for the elections to end the inclusive government.

He said the MDC would guarantee that SADC, AU and international observers including peacekeepers were in Zimbabwe before the elections to allow for a peaceful, free and fair election.

He assured the Mbewu residents that in that disregard of the GPA by Zanu PF, the MDC was not leaving the inclusive government.

“We are not abandoning the inclusive government as we have the majority of votes from that last election. Our goal as the MDC is that the will of the people must be respected,” he said.

Turning to the drafting of a people driven Constitution, President Tsvangirai said the process was now in limbo because of the violence that happened in the rural areas and parts of Harare and Chitungwiza.

“We are now waiting for a report from our Commission to find out the people were beaten and how the process went.

“There is need to redo the exercise in areas that were affected by violence, but before that happens, perpetuation of violence must be arrested and proceeded with the people feeling free to peacefully contribute,” he said.

He said the MDC was not against the idea of holding free and fair elections in 2011.

“But there is need for SADC observers and a peacekeeping team before the elections. We want a peaceful and credible election as this will save us from the current crisis,” he said.

However, he urged the people to pease the youth to register as voters.

“Register to vote. Don’t betray the cause of political change,” he urged the people.

President Tsvangirai also had a chance to get feedback from the residents about issues affecting them.

One of the main issues raised was the removal of a number of residents in Mabvuku which in turn nullifies allegations that they are aliens.

President Tsvangirai assured the people that it was an issue that would be looked into.

President Tsvangirai was accompanied by senior MDC officials, Cabinet ministers, MPs and some women from the Secretary – General, Hon. Tendai Biti, the Deputy Organising secretary, Senator Morgen Komichi, National Spokesperson, Hon. Nelson Chamisa, Women’s Assembly chairperson, Hon. Theresia Makone and Harare Provincial chairperson, Senator Morgan Feneul.

Also present were the Ministers of Labour and Social Welfare, Hon. Paulina Mapiwira and Hon. Sekai Holland from National Healing and Reconciliation.

CHINHOYI – Sixteen families in Chinhu’s have been left homeless after being evicted from the Golden Kopje mine.

According to Chinhu, MP, Hon. Stewart Garadhi, the affected families were MDC sympathisers. Involved in the evictions were Zanu PF and war veterans.

Among those affected by evictions are former workers at the Golden Kopje mine.

“This is why we are that we were deposed of ownership on the basis of political affiliation,” Hon Garland said.

“Is that not reasonable to consider that the sale of the 16 houses was political and premeditated,” Hon. Garudzi said.

He said the move has caused untold suffering for the affected families who despite working for more than 24 years at the mine find themselves being evicted with nowhere to go.

“There is need to reconsider what was done. We have heard that the purchasers bought these 16 houses because of nothing but greediness and selfishness,” Hon. Garudzi said.

The MDC Information and Publicity department, Harvest House, 44 Nelson Mandela Ave, Harare, Zimbabwe • Tel: +263 4 770 708 www.mdc.co.zw