...summit to reject Zanu PF delaying tactics to a lasting solution

Our last chance

Zimbabwe needs more than an election as it still on quicksand - Zuma

Zanu PF paper wholly inappropriate is that it narrows the dispute in Zimbabwe to a single issue of elections at a time when SADC prefers to handle the crisis in a holistic manner, a process the people and the MDC see as the only appropriate approach to Harare’s multi-faceted social and economic emergency and decades old political malady.

For example, Zanu PF’s traditional embed to the security sector, in particular the rogue elements, has not proved to be the panacea as a powerful interest group continue to call the shots, directing the party’s political life and dishing out incoherent orders to subvert a Constitutional civilian order for personal gain.

The meeting takes place against a frantic effort by Zanu PF and Robert Mugabe to down play the troika’s observations and suggestions; to influence a change of course for sanity in Zimbabwe; and to introduce fresh impediments to a smooth transition to a full democracy in Harare. An earlier attempt in Windhoek fizzled out after Zanu PF tried to undermine the troika’s resolutions by means of a belated and futile diplomatic offensive in which the former ruling party tried to explain itself.

With an array of moribund ideas, documents and a propaganda blitz, Zanu PF sneaked what it called its position on the future that sought to portray the MDC as a roadblock to progress, contained a tired nationalist line; a whisper of the so-called sanctions against Zimbabwe; a misguided call for an early election to fort the Global Political Agreement; and a desire to prematurely terminate the Inclusive Government. The position failed to find its way into the official SADC file where the regional leaders paid scant attention to call for a review of Livingstone.

Zimbabweans and SADC must force Zanu PF to disband its militia and dismantle its torture bases in the rural areas before the next election.

In its latest bulletin, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) says it is aware of the resurgence of militia bases in the rural areas to create a culture of fear in these communities after Zanu PF’s reckless calls for an election in 2011. Zanu PF used these bases as “torture and coercion” camps during the past violent and disputed elections.

The election network said its resident observers in many of the 210 parliamentary constituencies noted a build-up of “tolerance to diversity” and free expression. There were widespread human rights violations countywide, as the police seem to ignore acts of lawlessness.

“The tension in the air cannot be ignored,” the bulletin, covering the past two months, said. In addition to these observations ZESN continues to advocate for minimum conditions that need to be addressed before an election is conducted. These include:

- The creation of a violence-free environment where freedom of assembly, association and speech among others are upheld.
- Election observation forms a critical element to ZESN calls for the opening up of election observation to all interested stakeholders and for the invitation to be given by ZEC and not any political party.
- Furthermore, ZESN remains concerned about the state of the voters’ roll and calls for the production of a fresh voters’ roll.

ZESN advocates that ZEC should be independent of executive influence and report to Parliament, be well resourced and account for its mandate in the management of the election.

ZESN believes that for elections to be free and fair there is need for transparency in all processes of the elections which include among others results management, transparency in the processing of postal votes, the provision of privacy and secrecy to special needs groups such as the elderly and “assisted voters.”

Meanwhile, a local research group says the only way to prevent a bloody, disputed election is for Zimbabwe to go through the adoption of a tough stance on Zanu PF and Mugabe to meet their obligations to the Global Political Agreement (GPA).

The Institute for a Democratic Alternative for Zimbabwe (IDAZIM), on the local political situation beyond the Livingstone troika summit and its forlorn recommendations for order, that the regional bloc has made it clear it will no longer tolerate rogue groups such as Zimbabwe that flaunt its guiding principles on elections and democracy.

As a result of that firm stance, the SADC committee turned down Zanu PF’s request to force an election in 2011. The troika’s resolution is set for a formal endorsement at a full summit in South Africa later this week.

“Tis the first time SADC has clearly put its foot down on Mugabe which shows its determination to adapt to global change,” Ramsamy said. SADC’s previously woolly approach toward Zimbabwe was a result of historical links between the old guard with a claim to unbridled liberation war solidarity and camaraderie.

That is fast disappearing because of the recent generation changes to political actors who are keen to exploit opportunities availed by regional peace and security, and who see beyond the usual nostalgic notions of history and colonial struggles.

“Tis are new political leaders... looking for economic development, security and stability,” he said. Zanu PF and Mugabe were clearly overwhelmed by the new thinking in the region and tried, in vain, to exploit Zimbabwe’s economic emergency and the anti-colonial revolution – a trudge that has long outweighed its value and relevance in a technologically fast-shrinking world.

Zanu PF militia standoff in 2008

But they firmly believe and uphold the reality that the struggle paved the way for the capture, by the majority, of a national legislative, executive and judicial independence under a
Activists tortured in cells

HARARE – Twelve MDC activists arrested on trumped-up charges of murdering a police officer in Glen View, Harare, jumped into court last week, as a result of severe torture during the time they were in detention.

Magistrate Shane Kubonera ordered that Tungamirai Madokore, Yvonne Musaruro, Rebecca Mufakweni, Last Maingwanda, Lazarus Maingwanda, Gabriel Shumba, Phelani Nhuturwika, Stefan Taiidakwada, Stanford Mawengu, Cyrillus Magadza, Reuben Mame and Donald Mase were to be held at the condemned Matapi cells in Mharare.

Charles Kwaramba, who is representing the activists, said the court that they were illegally arrested by police while being held at the condemned Matapi cells in Mharare.

The eight men and four women were incarcerated for four days where they were exposed to all sorts of abuses, an aspect which Kwaramba said was outside the confines of the law.

“The beatings raise a sense of shock and outrage to an extent of qualifying them as torture,” he said.

The activists had visible swollen cuffs and faces. Kwaramba asked Magistrate for ward 32, to show the court his left leg which had a visible bleeding wound.

In his application for the activists to receive medical attention and the need for an inquiry, Kwaramba gave a narration of how the activists were tortured.

“They were assaulted by the police, and the modus operandi in executing such heinous acts was the beatings on the buttocks, under the feet and all over their bodies and the implements used included gun butts, booted feet and open hands,” Kwaramba told the court.

“Those who were more unfortunate were subjected to some “special treatment”. They were handcuffed and police officers would jump on their handcuffed hands,” Kwaramba said.

The activists also explained that they were interviewed while in front of a video camera.

As the court was in session, fully-gripped riot police officers manned the court premises from all directions.

The MDC activists were advised to bring bail at the High Court and were remanded in custody to 17 June.

16 Anglicans granted bail

The 16 Anglicans who were illegally arrested in Harare last week for resisting and protecting their homes from intruders associated with a rival political group, were released on bail following a failed attempt by local police to embarrass the details and ambiguity, the charges brought against them.

“The trumped-up charges were amended several times as they could not come up with charges that could stick,” Bishop Chady Gundu of the Diocese of Harare said last week.

“First they were charged with unlawful assembly, then that was changed to theft, and finally public nuisance. It’s very sad indeed,” he said.

Bishop Gundu, who was elected to lead the Church of Harare in May 2009, bemoaned the treatment of the detained Anglicans, two of whom are diabetic and were refused medication.

“Thank God that their sugar levels have now stabilized,” he said, adding that one priest failed to sit a graduate exam because he was incarcerated.

Zimbabwe’s Anglicans have faced repeated harassment and violence from the ruling Zanu PF in Zimbabwe. Bishop Nolbert Kunonga was officially excommunicated by the Church of the Province of Central Africa in May 2008.

A Zanu PF ally, Kunonga still claims ownership of the diocese’s Anglican churches and backs the persecution of the country’s loyal Anglicans who stand out and prevented from worshipping in their own church buildings.

Zimbabwe’s last chance

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Constitutional and civil order as the sole legitimate actor in public and political affairs. The right of the people to make far-reaching choices in a climate of total freedom shall always remain a local guide and an international obligation for all Zimbabweans.

After Zanu PF’s defeat on the 29 March 2008 election, Mugabe lacks the mandate to represent his other partners in the Inclusive Government. He is in every respects an unelected, unelected person who stands discredited by his own people.

The regime in Harare is a coalition government for personal use, so the Zanu PF’s lack of interest and the government’s inaction on the political transition under the GPA.

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Imagination remains a political crisis to Zimbabwe that led to the recent coalition has yet to be retired.

In particular:

• The machinery that destabilised politics and ensured electoral outcomes in favour of Zanu PF is still intact and continues to spread the rule of law still persist.

• Intimidation remains widespread countrywide.

• Service chiefs have yet to remove Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai more than two years after he began to share the government with Mugabe.

• Warlords, partisan war and the Zanu PF militia continue to roam around the country and are operating in the streets with daily threats, hate speech directed at the people.

• The military is now engaged in commercial, civilian activities in a direct violation with its Constitutional mandate.

• The premature talk of an election has polarised Cabinet, parliament, national institutions and the people.

• The 24 agreed positions due for implementation remain unmet by the Zanu PF and the people.

• The Zanu PF’s lack of interest and the absence of a political will.

• Key players in the state sector still view and treat the MDC and civil society as enemies of Zimbabwe.

• The absence of the supremacy of the people in the current political culture is still evident as the Zanu PF’s inaction and the need for an independent civilian oversight and civil society organisations on its role in a democracy.

Because of the factors cited above, an environment for a free and fair election does not exist in Zimbabwe today.

As long as such a climate remains elusive, the MDC and SADC maintain that no credible or legitimate elections shall be possible, certainly not this year.
Police officer jailed after using Mugabe’s potty

Bulawayo – A police officer, arrested and detained for three weeks after using a public toilet an offence.

While on duty at the ZITF on May 6, Mahbuwa responded to the call of nature rushed to a nearby privy but was surprised to see his colleagues stopping him, saying the privilege outlet had already been classified as a VIP relief point that should be necessary.

As he was under extreme bodily pressure, the officer forced his way in and when he had relieved himself, he picked up the following day on orders of Mugabe for interrogating men and senior police officers.

Machtenhloko Moyo, the Bulawayo police spokesperson was in court again, this time charged with making derogatory remarks against the Mugabe’s portrait saying “Hesi made derogatory remarks against the Mugabe’s portrait saying “Hesi makes it illegal to “undermine the authority of or insult the president.”

While he was on bail in Nyanga, a new constitutional government.

As the spokesperson for the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) then, Mugabe was trying to pay his way past an unnamed police officer for an unclear reason.

The case had to be postponed to September 6 in Harare after the court failed to decipher a record of the charge. It is unclear what happens next.

Hon. Mwonzora was arrested in Nyanga and spent a month in remand prison on suspicion of being violent.

His incarceration in Nyanga delayed the processes in the constitution making process as he is one of the chairperson of the Constitutional select committee, COPMC.

While he was on bail in Nyanga, a new case emerged when the State charge him making insulting remarks against Robert Mugabe.

He is being charged under a law that makes it illegal to “undermine the authority of or insult the president.”

The State says he was abusive and made derogatory remarks against the Mugabe’s portrait saying “Hesi made derogatory remarks against the Mugabe’s portrait saying “Hesi makes it illegal to “undermine the authority of or insult the president.”

One of the activists who were arrested and detained together with Hon. Mwonzora, was Rvisiyo Nyakusa, 82.

Nyakusa, a village head, later died in April from chest pains, severe broncho spasm and respiratory infection during his detention in prison.
**Rugare Gumbo feigns ignorance about Zanu PF violence**

**Rugare Gumbo, the Zanu PF spokesperson, either has a very short memory or is out right dishonest.**

For a man who boasts the threat of Zanu PF violence during the last days of the liberation struggle, Gumbo needs to fare better. Last week, Gumbo stunned Zimbabweans during an interview with SW Radio Africa when he tried to deny the terror violence that followed election day. At the time of writing, Gumbo was yet to address the electorate in the elections held on 29 March 2008.

"Ah, come on, come on, you know you talk about these things. Violence is not there, it’s absolutely ludicrous and monstrous," Gumbo said.

 Asked specifically if he was denying that Zanu PF had in fact committed the violence that followed election day, Gumbo said: "I don’t know. People talk about those things. I don’t know. I don’t know whether people die or don’t die. It is a new thing that people could die in presidential elections."  

Over 500 MDC activists were murdered by the Zanu PF militia and state security agents during this period.  

Edgar Tengey’s memoir, *A Lifetime of Trouble* revealed that Gumbo had become a victim of Zanu PF violence at the real estate agent in Bulawayo during the election. Gumbo was admitted to Robert Mugabe that he had been badly battered with allegations of trying to topple the party’s leadership.

Mugabe, according to several accounts, is reported to have zealously ignored Gumbo’s protests.  

But last week, Gumbo – answering a question on whether the violence and murder that occurred in 2008 could possibly be justified, he said: "We are saying institutions in Africa are fragile especially when it comes to elections. You know there’ll be all sorts of accusations and all sorts of false reporting and yet the MDC Movement, the President won overwhelmingly and yet we are saying let’s go for an election.”

On why soldiers had been deployed in the provinces by the Army chief’s office, Gumbo professed ignorance about this. He said: "We are saying let’s go for an election.”

He was challenged further especially on Commissioner-General Augustine Chihuri’s public utterances when he said: "This country came through blood and the barrel of the gun; it can never be re-colonized through a simple pen which costs as little as five cents.”

While the presence of a top police officer, could Gumbo maintain his argument? "Ah yes, Chihuri is an individual; he is his own person, that is his view, OK," said Gumbo.

"That is his. As far as we as a party, we believe our supremacy is there after every five years we have to go to elections, every five years we have to go for elections.”

"We have been doing this since 1980 and we will continue doing so. Why should you have security sector reforms? By the way if Chihuri is not interested in that kind of cheap politics. We know your radio, we know the thing which is there, it’s propaganda … nothing more, its propaganda,” he said.

Asked why Zimbabwe still had no independently owned radio stations, Gumbo charged: "Why should we have them? Why should we have them? Propagating what interests?”

-SW Radio Africa

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**Youth have a role to play - Matutu**

**MASVINGO - Youths have a crucial role to play in rebuilding Zimbabwe after age and gender bias in violence and social disintegration, deputy minister of Youth Development, Sport, Arts and Culture, Hon. Tongai Matutu said last week.**

Hon. Matutu, who is also the legislator for Masvingo Urban Constituency, urged young people to adopt a proactive role towards rebuilding the nation and said the younger generation must not be used by politicians to advance sinister political motives.

"We know that youths have, in the past, been abused by self-centred politicians for the purpose of self satisfaction. Some even used them to suppress human rights such as murder people as a way of suppressing democratic change but it is high time for the youths to open their eyes and refuse to be used by politicians to maim and kill their parents.”

"I feel sorry for youths who are being abused by politicians and the habit must cease forthwith,” said Hon. Matutu.

Speaking on the repercussions of political violence, Hon. Matutu stated: "I strongly discourage violence and nobody will be rewarded for committing acts of violence. Eventually the law will catch up with all the perpetrators of violence so it is better for the youths to distance themselves from barbaric acts.”

"It is common knowledge that known politicians are promoting political hooligans in a democracy there should be tolerance of different views. "Youth must be able to define themselves. If they fail to do so, they will be used to commit acts of violence. No one will be rewarded for violence. They can be acknowledged but not rewarded. No one ever gets rich or educated from violence," said the Deputy Minister.

He said the role of his ministry was to fight unemployment among the youth and to promote projects for self help among the young people.

"It is vital for youths to be empowered and that is why we encourage them to join collective efforts for better job and tertiary qualifications since it will help them to focus on more progressive matters in life.”

Matutu bemoaned the lack of coordination in youth policy noting that despite the fact that there is a youth ministry, other ministries also have their own youth policies. However, he defended government indigenization policy noting that it was in the implementation that there are divergent views points.

Presenting a speech at the same event, Talent Maphosa, the spokesperson for Community, Youth Affairs, Maternal Health and Development (COTRAD) said youths are torchbearers of emancipation and the vanguard for democracy and had the mandate to participate in national socio-economic elections, referendum and policy making.

"Youths have a leading role to play in shaping the destiny of the country. However the million dollar question is whether the environment is conducive for young positive participation.”

"Since the turn of the millennium in 2000, violence has erupted and the youths have since then been used to commit acts of violence. Young people are victims of political affairs in the country," said Maphosa.

The dialogue in Masvingo is the second such event supported by the United States Embassy.

It was part of the United States’ ongoing engagement of young African leaders that began in August 2010 with President Obama’s Forum with Young African Leaders in Washington, D.C.

"The U.S. is committed to supporting African solutions to Africa’s challenges and we have, through the Forum, worked with young American and Zimbabwean leaders who will lead to lasting partnerships,” said Charles Ray, U.S. Ambassador.

The next Youth Dialogue session will be held in Bulawayo on the Day of the African Child.