Save us from Zanu PF- chiefs...traditional leaders plead with President Tsvangirai

HARARE - Several chiefs have appealed to President Tsvangirai and the MDC to help restrain ZANU PF from politicising traditional leaders and abusing their office for selfish political ends.

“We have been abused by successive colonial governments to work against the people,” said a spokesperson for five chiefs from Mashonaland East.

“We are told to hate, to discriminate and to favour members of a certain political party against our will and better judgement.”

Our Masvingo correspondent reports that three chiefs from the province reported to the MDC office seeking an appointment with President Tsvangirai. They requested for the MDC’s President’s intervention after accusing ZANU PF officials of forcing them to don that party’s regalia at a recent political rally.

“We are apolitical. We have suffered enough from political abuse,” said one of them, who requested anonymity for his personal protection.

In the past week several chiefs and headmen telephoned the MDC office complaining about what they called “a biased selection of candidates” to a chief’s conference in Kariba. They asked why only ZANU PF aligned chiefs were chosen to attend.

President Tsvangirai has already met Chief Fortune Charumbira, the leader of the Council of Chiefs, and his deputy, Chief Khumalo. The two pleaded for protection, saying they preferred to be apolitical after years of political abuse.

The two chiefs cited, as examples, the respect accorded to their counter-parts in South Africa, Botswana and Ghana as something they desired in Zimbabwe. They said as community leaders, culture and tradition demands that they embrace all their subjects in their society observers, MDC officials, and even by the police.

The party is particularly disturbed by the selective arrests and harassment of MDC activists particularly in Harare South, Mbare and Hatcliffe for expressing themselves during the hearings. In all the cases, the assailants are known to be ZANU PF supporters but the police left them alone and proceeded to punish those associated with the MDC or who dared to say anything that differed from the contents of a ZANU PF template.

Among those arrested and injured in sporadic skirmishes are: three MDC officials, Eric Murai, an MDC youth leader, Diana Nyikadzino, the Harare provincial administrator and their driver, Phineas Nhatukwaga.

In Hatcliffe, police arrested two MDC members, James Katso, Peter Garanewako and Tinashe Mutyasa soon after the MDC met the public on Sunday.

The three had made robust contributions during the hearings, Garanewako was badly beaten before being handed over to police officers, who were driving a ZRP Nissan single cab registration Number ZRP 3195 M.

The party strongly condemns ZANU PF for the violence and the military intervention during the hearings. While such a barbaric attitude is unfortunate and regrettable – with no place in civil society – the MDC maintains that without a people-driven Constitution, Zimbabwe shall remain in a dark hole and a cesspool of political instability.

Together, united, winning, ready for real change!
Save us from Zanu PF chiefs

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MDC spokesman Nelson Chamisa said: “How do you have soldiers, how do you have Nyika-yarumashinga chanting a Zanu PF party slogan in uniform? How is that possible? Then he was on TV chanting a Zanu PF slogan. How is that possible? A senator military guy? Is this the wrong message and the wrong signal? Our soldiers are supposed to be soldiers for all of us and not soldiers for political parties.” Chamisa said historically and traditionally, chiefs have been reduced to being ‘political football’ used by successive unpatriotic rulers to attack against the people and to oppress them.

Three Marimachad chief and eight headmen visited the MDC provincial office in Mutare soon after they were summoned to 3 Brigade headquarters by Nyika-yarumashinga to complain about the meeting.

“I am supposed to report back to my people on my return home,” said one of them. “But that community has long abandoned Zanu PF and it is difficult for me to relay Nyika-yarumashinga’s message. It was a divaice message. I thought the war ended 30 years ago.”

During the liberation struggle, the Rhodesian settler regime used and even created some chiefs who were used as weapons against the citizens. The Zanu PF regime has simply learnt nothing and forgotten nothing from Smith’s Rhodesian template of repression.

For more than a century, several generations of chiefs and traditional leaders have suffered under the hands of successive colonial authorities and subsequently the Zanu PF government. Given their role in the formation of the culture, national symbols and heritage, the interest of successful regimes as politicians sought to undermine the people and confine them to a state of perpetual subjugation and bondage. “This is a Smithian philosophy,” Chamisa said.

“Some of these chiefs have been removed from their roles by the Zanu PF regime and this is a desperate attempt by the council to manipulate the people,” the MDC leader said. “They seem to have placed everything from Smith’s colonial tactics of repression. Its Rhodesia with a black face. We are back to the worst of the colonial period.”

MDC Women’s Assembly has criticized Zanu PF’s Olivia Nyembesi Muchena who was appointed to police the International Women’s Day.

“The Women’s Assembly expressed outrage at attempts by Muchena to politicize a national event, a move that made many apolitical women of Zimbabwe uncomfortable. Despite causing outrage, it is a blatant violation of the spirit and letter of the Global Political Agreement.”

Muchena turned the women’s day into a Zanu PF rally. And even more outrageous was the fact that Zanu-PF’s John Nkomo, who not only is a man but vice president of an unpopular party, was guest of honour at a women’s event. Zanu PF based its regalia-clad supporters and the entire event was only a reenactment of the PF parthenalia.

While the MDC Women’s Assembly had understood that such events would be held in a woman’s constituency, they were dismayed by Mulikombe’s attempt to use the day as a constituency represented by a man, Emmunson Munangwwa.

“The Women’s Assembly noted that 30 years after independence, there was still blatant and continuous violation of women’s rights. They attributed this to Zanu PF women who still see women as the enemies and are desperate to prop up their dying political party instead of helping other women in society.”

“Muchena should really know better than to campaign for Zanu-PF using funds earmarked for all the women of Zimbabwe,” the statement said. “It is disheartening that there is systematic discrimination of women by Olivia Nyembesi Muchena in national development initiatives, as she has done with Treasury Funds meant for all the women, which she has disbursed using the original structures that were used by previous ZANU-PF governments to marginalise and punish all women who are and are not members of ZANU PF.”

The MDC has vowed to stop Muchena from hijacking the ‘16 days of activism’ against gender based violence’ from November 25 to December 10, and fear that she will again turn this national event into a Zanu PF event meant to prop up a political party suffering appalling and sliding popularity ratings.

Muchena - dishonest, hinky

Zanu PF vandalised, looted parastatals: Moyo

BULAWAYO - Minister of Parastatals and State Enterprises Hon. Gordon Moyo has said he was moving to revive collapses companies which were vandalised by Zanu PF in 30 years of misrule.

“The current government of national unity is trying hard to deliver excellent services to its people but the problem emanates from the last decade,” Hon. Moyo said.

He was addressing the Bulawayo community at a public forum organized by a local trust to focus on water and electricity service delivery.

Residents complained about a punishing load shedding regime. Poor provision of basic services was also affecting the people’s livelihoods, they said.

The minister explained that continuous power outages and shortages had a direct negative impact on the country. Moyo said the country has the capacity to do better in terms of power generation if it fully utilizes its power stations, Hwange and Bulawayo, but boosting capacity was hamstrung by shortages of financial resources.

“Who ever wants to run a nation should first understand that service delivery of especially water and electricity are of utmost importance,” Hon Moyo said. He said that if all the power stations were in use, they would be able to supply the entire country.

“The first chairperson of Hwange Council was Jessie Majome who was a woman and the minister of Local Government,” Hon Kagurabadza said.

“After that, the MDC Women’s Assembly was a draconian piece of legislation which lampsared the effective and efficient functioning of local authorities,” Matimba said to the House last Thursday.

They recommended the amendment of the Local Government and Urban Councils Act to okay the deal is gathering in Zimbabwe’s power woes. But the minister was identified as a potential rescuer of the electricity service delivery.

“Who ever wants to run a nation should first understand that service delivery of especially water and electricity are of utmost importance,” Hon. Moyo said.

“They are aware that the document was long completed and that since its completion it is held by the Attorney General who is blocking any possible progress,” Moyo said.

“If the agreement is revived, our city of Bulawayo will not be stuck in this dire power situation controlled by power outages. There is hope for our industries.”

Conclusively, the minister said that he was responsible in seeing to it that all parastatals perform up to standard, adding that he was dedicated to make sure that parastatals stop harassing ratepayers. Moyo expected ‘parastatals to behave properly for the sake of the people of Zimbabwe and were a key cog in efforts to attract investment.

He castigated service providers that raised bills wildly-unify to bankroll his salaries of top management. Moyo slammed the fast pay chques of parastatal bosses as 'outrageous' warning his ministry was working on a legislation bill to rationalise the salaries. The proposed bill had already been revised before Cabinet, and will see to it that all salaries will be verified and approved by respective line minister.

“The minister uses the Urban Councils Act as a bible and the table is how mayors and councillors are being mauled from power. We are losing capable mayors, capable councillors who drive the cities but we have losing politics involved in this,” Hon. Kagurabadza.

The MP for Mangwege, Hon. Felix Sibanda said MDC was using the Urban Councils Act to manipulate council operations.

“So what it entails is that we have problems of local government because they do not have executive powers in the city. Let councils be given the roles as they used to be given by the law of March 2008 elections. The MDC is in charge of all urban councils except Chitungwiza.

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Audit set to clean-up civil service

HARARE - The long awaited audit report was that the mess in the civil service has been a monumental task because it has never been done in the history of this country. “Naturally, it had to take a long time because there was a lot of preparation that had to be done to run up to the real audit,” Mukonoweshuro said. “In the process we had to do what we call a central human resources repository which never existed.

This meant that we had to convert over a quarter of a million files from hard copy to soft copy. We then used that central repository which took about six to eight months to create as a basis upon which a physical enumeration of the entire civil service was conducted.

“The enumeration was conducted and completed in December last year,” Mukonoweshuro said after realising that there were some gaps in the coverage of the enumeration, the audit started the exercise all over again to make sure everything was captured.

“If we did not find anything then we did not want to leave any civil servant outside the enumeration process,” Mukonoweshuro said.

“So we had to engage on a second enumeration process, which took us to January this year. I am giving this chronology to demonstrate the kind of work that was required. We then submitted the raw data to an audit firm which was the audit firm appointed to conduct the audit. The firm had been working meticulously on the audit and we are to receive the preliminary draft report some time this week.”

Police bias promotes Zanu PF violence

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The process requires political maturity and needs to be handled with extreme care by all Zimbabweans. While the hearings are now considered complete, work on the Constitution-making process, in line with the Article VI of the Global Political Agreement, has yet to be concluded. The MDC respects the fundamental right and duty of all Zimbabweans to make a Constitution by themselves and for themselves in an inclusive and democratic way.

For that reason, any hasty positions on what the people should do with a Constitution that is still work-in-progress and has yet to be drafted, debated and widely circulated for national consideration smacks of fresh, shotgun attempts to exert undue influence on the outcome. As such, recent remarks by Joice Mujuru of Zanu PF at a meeting in Bindura that the people must endorse a Constitution which currently does not exist reflect unbridled carelessness and interference in a process that is still unfolding.

The MDC is closely following this process, in particular the current efforts to effect remedies on challenges faced by the overall COPAC outreach programme which should culminate in a report from the COPAC management committee and the resultant due actions as defined by Amendment Number 19 of the Constitution. What the MDC has deplored so far were Zanu PF’s deliberate games to subvert the process.

From that report the MDC will then come up with a decision on the way forward. However, the violence that took place in Harare, Chitungwiza and other parts of the country shows that Zanu PF is a leopard that has not changed its spots. That is why the MDC is calling for assistance from the SADC and the AU, “said Hon. Chiumisa.

The MDC eagerly awaits the completion of the process, the drafting of the Constitution and the accompanying report of the Management Committee before pronouncing its position on the substance and content of the draft. The party, therefore, views as irresponsible and reckless any political statements purporting to direct the people on how they should ultimately behave. The MDC was an early supporter of the Global Political Agreement, has been following this process that is still unfolding.

The MDC national chairperson, Hon. Nelson Chamisa said the MDC was waiting for a report from the Copac management committee on the committee’s evaluation of the outreach meetings.

“From that report the MDC will then come up with a decision on the way forward. However, the violence that took place in Harare, Chitungwiza and other parts of the country shows that Zanu PF is a leopard that has not changed its spots. That is why the MDC is calling for assistance from the SADC and the AU,” said Hon. Chiumisa.

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The people need to see, review and debate the contents of the draft and the report before they can make an informed choice.

President Tsvangirai has the final word.

“My Government is a strong advocate of the framework for Public Private Partnerships as a strategy for financing housing and related infrastructure. In this regard, building societies, pension funds and insurance companies will be expected to play a leading role in housing development programmes,” he said. “...as we move together with the people

HARARE - MDC President and Zimbabwe’s deputy Prime Minister Hon. Morgan Tsvangirai has said government has disbursed an additional US$6.7 million to the US$25 million already promised to the government’s parallel home ownership housing loan facility for civil servants as a way of recognizing housing as a basic human right.

At the groundbreaking ceremony of the Willowvale Flats project, Phase II, last week, Hon Tsvangirai said the additional amount will enable civil servants to land and build houses for themselves and their families in recognition of the important role they play in Zimbabwe. It was government’s way of recognizing housing as a basic human right.

“This focus on the wellbeing of our civil servants in recognition by my Government of both the important role they play within our nation and the difficult circumstances under which they fulfill their duties,” he said.

He added that the housing scheme was in line with the Habitat Agenda that was adopted in 1996 at the Habitat II Conference and which Zimbabwe is a signatory and the inclusive government’s determination to meet the housing objectives set out in the Millennium Development Goals as reflected in the Short Term Economic Recovery Programme (STERP) and the Medium Term Economic Development Plan 2010-2015 which emphasis is on provision of social infrastructure such as housing, health and education to all the people.

Hon Tsvangirai reminded the people about the devastating effect of Operation Murambatsvina upon urban residents and its damaging aftermath that is still being felt today.

“In this respect, I am hopeful that this programme will not only help to stimulate the construction and associated industries, but will also be seen as a step towards righting the wrongs of Murambatsvina,” said Hon Tsvangirai.

The National Housing Loan Facility is being launched at a time when the Zimbabwean economy is recovering after a decade of poor management and destructive policy implementation by the then Zanu PF government.

The construction and building supply industries have been adversely affected by the hyper-inflationary environment impacting negatively on housing construction programmes characterized by a shortage of building materials, lack of basic infrastructure services, as well as a lack of financing for construction projects and maintenance.

The housing project is being run throughout the country, with the Kwekwe project completed and the Sunway City project and the Bulawayo projects underway and near completion. The Willowvale flat project will involve the construction of 15 blocks of flats with a total of 240 self contained units each with a kitchen, lounge and two bedrooms.

Hon Tsvangirai added that government will be reviewing its policies and regulations to facilitate all partners to participate effectively.
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Those who have names of perpetrators of violence during the Constitution Outreach programme feel free to phone or write to MDC Information and Publicity Department.

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