Richard

Subject: FW: Sokwanele: Constitution Outreach 12 July - 18 July - FOR SITE

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PROMOTING NON-VIOLENT PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVE DEMOCRACY

Constitution Outreach: News Round-Up, 12 July - 18 July
Sokwanele : 18 July 2010

The constitution outreach programme was suspended for the past week to allow parliamentarians to attend the opening of Parliament on Tuesday last week. These are media extracts appearing during this week - 12 July -18 July. To review previous news items, or follow updates daily, please visit the Constitution Resource page on the Sokwanele website. Please note that links to sources and full articles are also available on the resource page. These extracts are being emailed to our subscribers - click here to sign up for our newsletter, or email info@sokwanele.com with the word "Subscribe" in the subject line.

12 July 2010 - cont

Constitutional outreach program breaks for one week

The countrywide constitutional outreach program has been suspended for a week to allow parliamentarians to attend the opening of the second session of the seventh Parliament on Tuesday. President Robert Mugabe will officially open the session. According to the clerk of parliament, the session is also expected to facilitate the presentation of the mid term budget review statement by the Minister of Finance, Tendai Biti, on Wednesday. Our correspondent Simon Muchemwa told us the COPAC management committee will use the break to carry out a post mortem of the exercise since it was launched last month [...] The outreach program is expected to resume on Sunday [Via SW Radio Africa]

Shut your mouth or else

This article from IRIN highlights intimidation tactics used by Zanu PF youths: "... for the past two months the members of the youth militia aligned to President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party - have been warning villagers to either shut up or support ZANU-PF's view on the new constitution, which includes no limit on the number of presidential terms that can be served. They have dubbed their operation "Vhara Muromo", or Shut Your Mouth [...] "I am a victim of the June 2008 elections and still live in fear," Mukotosi told IRIN. "Even though we were living in peace following the formation of the inclusive government [in February 2009, when ZANU-PF and the two factions of the MDC formed a coalition government], the ghost of violence and fear is returning. I am not taking any chances; these militia stole and killed my cattle because they thought I was a member of the MDC, since my son works in Harare [the capital, an MDC stronghold]. Now I will not participate in the constituti on-making process because they might kill me and my family this time," he said [Via IRIN].

Defiant police arrest monitors

Defiant police on Thursday arrested fivemonitors observing the constitution making process inspite of an endorsement of the monitors by the Constitution Select Committee (COPAC).In what appears to be a response to a call by COPAC co-chairperson Hon. Paul Mangwana to arrest monitors, police in the Midlands province arrested fiveZimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, Zimbabwe Election Support Network and Zimbabwe Peace Project Independent Constitutional Monitoring Project (ZZZICOMP) monitors who had been deployed to monitor the outreach meetings in Chirumanzu area. The fiveKanikoga Ernest Mudzingwa, Farai Agnes Tete, Rev. Clever Valemi, Isaac Makoni, and Torevei Munhangu were arrested and detained at Charandura Police Station near St Joseph's Mission, Hama area in Chirumhanzu, Midlands province. The police confiscated the monitors mobile phones, noted down their contacts and read messages received and sent from their cell phones. The police also searched their wallets and took their national identity cards. This was despite the fact that they had not preferred
Army officers threatened with dismissal

Army officers [in Nyanga] last week were threatened with loss of jobs if they do not back Zanu (PF) ideas and President Robert Mugabe during the ongoing constitution making process. Addressing army officers at All Arms Battle School in Nyanga, Army Chief of Staff, Major General Martin Chedondo said all army officers should support and remain loyal to Zanu (PF) and its leadership. Chedondo added that Zanu (PF) had monopoly to rule Zimbabwe because it participated in the war of liberation struggle. Chedondo said any army officers who supported opposition parties risked dismissal from the army. "I urge you as army officers to be loyal and rally behind the country’s leadership. The leadership is Zanu (PF), which brought freedom to this country. All of you went to school because of Zanu (PF) education programmes and you should support it through and through," said Chedondo, adding "You are all here because of Zanu (PF)." [Via The Zimbabwean]

Zimbabwe's ZANU-PF Pledges Nonviolent Constitutional Process, Amid Skepticism

The ZANU-PF party of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe has declared that it will not tolerate violence or intimidation in the ongoing public outreach phase of the country's constitutional revision process, urging its members in a public statement to behave in an orderly and peaceful manner. ZANU-PF said it is committed to implementing Article VI of the 2008 Global Political Agreement for power sharing in Harare by supporting efforts by the parliamentary select committee on constitutional revision to collect public feedback on what should be in the country’s new constitution [...] Bhekilizwe Ndlovu of the Union for Sustainable Democracy told reporter Ntungamili Nkomo that ZANU-PF's call for peace is welcome, but he questioned whether the party was sincere in its call for tolerance [Via VOA News]

COPAC summons Zanu PF official

The Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) last week summoned a senior ZANU PF official and warned him against disrupting outreach activities in the Chivi area. COPAC co-chairperson Douglas Mwonzora, Chief Fortune Charumbira and Senator Rorana Dndajena Muchiwa summoned Sanders Magwizi, the ZANU PF District Coordinating Committee (DCC) chairperson for Chivi District, to a meeting last Thursday following reports that he was disrupting some constitution making outreach meetings. After the meeting held at a Masvingo hotel Magwizi refused to comment about the meeting in which he was reportedly grilled over reports that he did not want COPAC meetings to be held in Chivi district. Mwonzora confirmed that the meeting, which lasted almost two hours, was meant to ‘clarify things.’ "There was nothing unusual about the meeting we had with Mr Magwizi. He has promised to cooperate. That is all I can say,” said Mwonzora [Via ZLHR's 'The Legal Monitor']

Activists bid to join COPAC fails

Three civil society activists have failed in their High Court bid to force the Parliament-led Constitution Select Committee (COPAC) to include them in the on-going constitution writing process. A judgment delivered in Bulawayo by Justice Nicholas Ndou, dismissed the application against COPAC, which alleged unlawful termination of “quasi-employment contractual relationship”, lodged by Qhubani Moyo, Mqondisi Moyo and Phathisani Nondo. The three are members of a civil society organisation known as Ibhetshu LikaZulu, a pressure group advocating for equitable development of all parts of Zimbabwe. Sindiso Mazibisa, the lawyer representing the three activists told the media last Friday that the Court had dismissed the case with costs. COPAC said: “The Constitution Select Committee (COPAC ) would like to advise the public that the application by Qhubani Moyo et al was dismissed with costs. COPAC would like to advise members of the public that the said litigants are not members of COPAC constitution outreach teams and may not carry out and work with this capacity.” [Via The Zimbabwean]

‘Waiting For The Constitution’ more popular than COPAC

The play, ‘Waiting For The Constitution’ appears to be doing a better job than the real constitution outreach teams. The play has become more popular than the actual teams. Villagers continue to mistake it for the COPAC outreach teams. Whereas the outreach team meetings are full of tension and fear, ‘Waiting For The Constitution’ has no hassles with the people. The people feel so free that they open their hearts to the actors - telling them that they wished they were the ones collecting their views. They said they liked the play because it was coming to the people unlike COPAC teams, which were asking people to gather at certain venues where they could not go because they were being watched [...] One headman told the organisers of the play that although the people did not know what talking points were, they knew what they wanted. Yet Zanu (PF) continues to believe that silencing or suppressing all voices of dissent is the way to go [...] What the people know and what Zanu (PF) cannot stop - fortunately - is that they know they have the power for a ‘NO’ vote if they are prevented from speaking out during the constitutional
**Rapporteur axed from outreach program for stealing audio recorder**

A rapporteur appointed as part of the constitutional outreach program has been dismissed from the exercise, after he allegedly stole an audio recorder on Friday in Mutare. 23 year-old Vivian Tapfumaneyi, who was part of ZANU PF’s choice of rapporteurs, was immediately axed from the program after he stole a recorder and hid it under a car seat. The incident happened during a consultative meeting at a place called ‘tennis courts’ in Mutare central. Tapfumaneyi was working in team five of the outreach program in Manicaland [...] Senator Cephas Makhuyana, the co-team leader said it appears the motive behind the theft was that Tapfumaneyi didn’t want certain views from other people, perceived to be MDC supporters, captured on the recorder. “When it was realised that an audio recorder was missing, we brought in the police who conducted body searches on everyone present. When they failed to find the recorder, the police turned their attention to vehicles parked at the venue. After a thorough search of the vehicles the recorder was discovered hidden under a seat,” Makhuyana said [Via SW Radio Africa].

**13 July 2010**

**Activist threatened with death**

In Mashonaland East, the MDC vice chairperson for Murehwa North district and a Zimrights activist, Ranganai Shonhiwa was on June 27 abducted by three State security agents. Shonhiwa was kept at a secret location for two days before she was released and told not to tell anyone. She said she was approached by the men at her house and was shown a Zimrights ID before they asked her to accompany them to Zhombe claiming they there were cases of human rights abuse that needed urgent attention. When she indicated that she could not go with them they forced her into their car and drove off. She said that on their way to Murehwa centre, they blindfolded her and took her to a farm house where they kept her two nights. During her abduction she was told not to attend any Constitution-making meetings or she would be killed. Shonhiwa said after two days the men drove her back to Murehwa before dumping her near her home [Via MDC Today - 13 July 2010].

**Hurungwe villagers terrorised by CIO over Kariba draft**

Members of the dreaded Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) are terrorizing villagers in Kariba, dismantling tobacco growing groups, threatening them to surrender their patronage to the Movement for Democratic Change immediately and at the same time dictatorially coaching the few selected what to say in the Constitution view-gathering process [...] Villagers in Chief Chundu’s area said they were living in fear and wish the constitution making process would not come in their area. They said a well known CIO identified as Chiveya stationed in Karoi was leading a terror team in the entire Hurungwe district including Chief Chundu’s area where he was threatening villagers with unspecified actions if they defy his orders. “Chiveya is approaching suspected MDC supporters whom he is telling that he has their names which he got from MDC offices in Karoi and forcing them (MDC supporters) to name their party members in the area. He is moving with a number of other unidentified men who are threatening us.” The group [are accompanied by] Zanu PF supporters whom they have ‘taught’ what to say during the COPAC outreach programme. "These people are not locals and we do not know them but we are told they are the ones to speak on our behalf," said villagers of Chitindiva in Chief Chundu’s area [Via ZimEye]

**Property: Your Constitutional right**

Social and political commentator Rejoice Ngwenya believes that the right to property ownership should be enshrined in Zimbabwe’s new Constitution. He writes: "Property ownership – whether it is land, trademarks, brand names, patents, and works of art or literature – needs title in order to realise real market value. Ownership is not just a historical fact of life, but also a right whose spinoffs go well beyond the individual. It is about self-confidence, wealth creation, identity, legacy, inheritance and economic growth. Make property rights part of the Zimbabwe Constitution today. Let’s go down in history as being the first country in developing Africa to enshrine private property in the Bill of Rights. If you do not agree with my ideology, let’s talk about it!” [Via Kubatana]

**Abducted activists beaten by State security agents**

Two MDC activists Lovemore and Passmore Nyamana who were abducted by State security agent on Sunday were found in Mutare yesterday. The two brothers were found after being dumped in Mutare town in the early hours of Monday morning. Both were severely assaulted by their abductors who said they had been too vocal during the Constitution-making outreach meeting that was held at Madanga business centre on 28 June. The two have made a report at Gutaurare police station and they are receiving treatment for injuries in Mutare. One of the abductors has been identified as Major Mapuranga. Lovemore is the MDC Ward 36 chairperson while his brother, Passmore
National Chairperson of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) Dr Lovemore Madhuku has dismissed the ongoing constitutional reform process being undertaken by the Constitutiona Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) of parliament as complete loss of time and resources[...]. Dr Madhuku said that COPAC was wasting resources which could be used for the development of the nation while engaging in their useless process which has already been marred by logistical problems. “What the COPAC is doing can only be described as completely useless and nothing else basing from the reports we have been getting from the outreach exercise. The writing of a country’s constitution is a very important process and that can only be achieved through an all inclusive process and led by an independent commission and not the politicians of the day,” said Dr Madhuku.

Madhuku maintained the NCA’s position to challenge the outcome of the process and added, “As the NCA we will continue providing civic education to the people of Zimbabwe about what constitutionalism is all about”. The NCA leader further stated that events have clearly shown that COPAC has failed the first test (process) adding that the NCA was now waiting to see whether COPAC will pass the next test which would be the content of the final draft. “These guys (COPAC) have completely failed the first test. As NCA we are eagerly waiting to scrutinise the final draft, which we firmly believe will be a flawed document,” said Dr Madhuku.

Issues related to gay rights, devolution of power and the inclusion of all minority languages as official languages in the new constitution took centre stage at an outreach hearing in Victoria Falls yesterday. At an outreach meeting held at the Victoria Falls Municipality chambers, residents said minority languages like Tonga, Nambya, Dombe and Lubale should be enshrined in the constitution as official languages of Zimbabwe. “For example Matabeleland provinces are rich with different languages like Tonga and Nambya but unfortunately our children are forced to learn Ndebele. The same situation is found in other provinces where pupils are taught Shona while English is considered the national language. We ask for the inclusion of these so-called minority languages in primary schools,” said one participant.

President Robert Mugabe’s ZANU PF party will block any draft constitution that does not reflect the views and values of the party, a top official has said, signaling more problems ahead for Zimbabwe’s troubled constitutional reforms. Mugabe’s party, which controls enough parliamentary seats to block passage of a new constitution, has previously demanded that a proposed new governance charter must be based on the controversial Kariba draft constitution. ZANU PF deputy legal affairs secretary Patrick Chinamasa – who neither mentioned the Kariba draft nor his party’s ability to block in Parliament a new constitution it did not like -- said Mugabe’s party would campaign against a draft that does not reflect its views in a referendum on the new constitution expected early next year. Chinamasa said ZANU PF [...] was mobilising its supporters to back the party’s position during an ongoing exercise to gather public views on the new charter. “We are going to the people saying, no gay rights in the (new) constitution. People understand that... we are going for a referendum…. if the outcome does not faithfully reflect what the people have said, you can be sure that ZANU PF will say no,” said Chinamasa.

Extract from Robert Mugabe's speech in relation to the constitutional process: "We are now at the critical stage where outreach teams are traversing our country, collecting the people’s views for inclusion in the new Constitution. It is, indeed, important that the Outreach Programme ensures that we emerge with a Constitution, which is genuinely Zimbabwean in letter and spirit". Full speech available via The Chronicle.

This Herald article makes no reference to Chinamasa’s worrying words reported in ZimOnline on the same day: Addressing journalists on Monday, Minister Chinamasa said the reason the Lancaster House Constitution was amended several times in 30 years was because the document was crafted to transfer power and not to meet national aspirations and values [...] “The constitution must serve Zimbabwean interests,” Minister Chinamasa said. He added: “Everyone is writing the constitution through contributions at Copac meetings on what they want to be
included in the supreme document. The process is all-encompassing and it is not a prerogative of a few." [...] Minister Chinamasa slammed the media for fuelling conflict while doing little to inform the public on the ongoing constitution-making process. He said his party, Zanu-PF, promoted the interests of the people and would abide by the people’s decision [Via The Herald - state-controlled media]

‘Challenging Zimbabwe's Bloat ed Executive’ – RAU

The Research and Advocacy Unit have issued a report challenging the current number of Minister as unconstitutional: "Once 15 ZANU PF nominated Ministers, 13 MDC-T nominated Ministers and 3 MDC-M Ministers had entered into office, the constitutional quota of 15 ZANU PF, 13 MDC-T and 3 MDC-M Ministers (31 Minister in total) appeared to have been filled. The basis upon which 10 additional Ministers (referred to in what follows as “the extra Ministers”) were sworn in thus becomes questionable. These 10 Ministers were John Nkomo, Gibson Sibanda, Saviour Kasukuwere, Joseph Made, Walter Mzembi, Flora Bhuka, Sylvester Nguni, Henry Madzorera, Giles Mutswewka and Sekai Holland. Until recently, no formal objection appears to have been raised in any quarter about these questionable appointments. On the 7th May, 2010, however, one Moven Kufa (describing himself as a Zimbabwean citizen and civil society activist) and the Voice for Democracy Trust (which has amongst its objects the promotion of democracy in Zimbabwe) filed papers in the High Court challenging the constitutionality of the appointment of the extra Ministers." [Via This is Zimbabwe].

A case to watch and a name to remember: Moven Kufa

A comment in response to the RAU's report highlighting the fact that more Ministers were sworn in than the constitution allows for, this blogger writes: "Zimbabweans [...] can be forgiven for wondering whether, when we do have this new constitution (assuming it’s one we want), the parties will uphold it and respect it!" [Via This is Zimbabwe]

Zimbabwe Parliamentary Committee Says Constitutional Outreach Running Smoothly

The select committee of the Zimbabwean parliament responsible for overhauling the country's constitution said on Wednesday that the public outreach phase of the exercise, troubled initially by disorganization and reported political intimidation especially in rural areas, is now going well with more than 1,000 meetings successfully held. But non-governmental organizations monitoring the process said intimidation and violence continue to cast a shadow over the process, discouraging participation in politically contested provincial and rural areas. Committee co-chairman Edward Mkhosi said outreach teams have held 930 meetings nationwide involving some 153,000 people - 42 percent men, 41 percent women, and 15 percent youths. Queried about reports of violence or intimidation in certain parts of the country, Mkhosi said his committee regards such reports as rumor and has not yet ascertained the facts [Via VOA News].

15 July 2010

MDC-T slams alleged harassment

MDC-T MPs have condemned the alleged harassment of participants in the constitution outreach process by soldiers, Central Intelligence Organisation officers and known Zanu PF activists. In a caucus meeting held yesterday at Harvest House and chaired by the party’s organising secretary, Elias Mudzuri, the legislators complained that there was a lot of intimidation taking place around the country, mainly in Mashonaland East, Mutare and Masvingo during the constitution outreach process. “The meeting was basically about the delivery of a new message within the party that we should remain united and move together as far as the constitution process was concerned. A lot of complaints were raised by MPs in the meeting and one of them was on people trying to interfere with the process, some of them known to have been very active in the areas in as far as violence is concerned. MPs complained that the CIO were attending some of the meetings, instilling fear in participants to freely express their views. Soldiers, particularly in Mutare, were said to be harassing people and chiefs were intimidating people in Masvingo,” said the source [Via The Zimbabwe Independent].

Chiweshe bars COPAC debates on ZBC radio stations

The country's sole state controlled Broadcaster The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation has banned Constitution-making debates from all its radio stations, with the ZBC’s senior bosses calling the inclusive government “a theoretical thing which exists only on paper”. Sources at the broadcasting station’s Highlands studios said the embargo came last week when one presenter of Spot FM(formerly radio1), invited for one hour into Constitution making program a critical analyst who opposed the Kariba draft. They said last week the company’s Radio and programming General Manager visited all radio substations and threatened with dismissal anyone who would invite
people on radio for constitution making discussions. “During his visit at our station Allan Chiweshe told us that he was aware of MDC-T symphasers among us, and warned anyone caught on the wrong side of his directive that he or she risks dismissal [Via Zim Eye].

Outreach: MPs bid to make quick buck backfires

THE Constitution Parliamentary Committee (Copac) has refused to pay MPs who hired out Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe-loaned cars for the outreach programme, forcing the withdrawal of the vehicles from the process. MPs and senators had hoped to cash in on the outreach programme, but Copac co-chairperson Douglas Mwonzora told the Zimbabwe Independent on Wednesday that only lawmakers who provided their personal cars had been paid. The legislators hired out the vehicles for the ongoing outreach programme despite warnings that they would not receive a cent for the service since the cars legally belonged to the RBZ. Mwonzora said other legislators who provided their own cars were paid last week. “The money for the cars will not go to the MPs because the vehicles belong to the Reserve Bank,” Mwonzora said. “CMED (Central Mechanical Equipment Department) is handling the matter and I doubt whether the legislators who had hired the central bank vehicles were paid. However, those who had used their personal vehicles received payment.” The Copac co-chairman described as criminal the move by the MPs to hire out vehicles that did not belong to them. [Via The Zimbabwe Independent]

Zanu PF activists besiege roadshow on constitution

A group of ZANU PF activists ransacked a road show organized by the Centre for Community Development in Zimbabwe (CCDZ) at Mutawatawa Growth Point in Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe yesterday. The activists ordered participants to leave the venue of the road show because they said the road show had not been authorized by the party leadership in the area. Only a few brave participants remained at the venue of the road show to listen to speeches by CCDZ director Phillip Pasirayi, Programmes Officer Tsungai Vere and ZINASU President Obert Masaraure. Some of the ZANU PF youths who were chasing away participants were riding motorbikes. The activists were asking people to leave the road show and not to listen to NGOs which they claimed are fronting the regime change agenda. The people who had accepted CCDZ t-shirts and leaflets were asked to return the materials [Via Nehanda Radio]

Copac process a circus: Madhuku

The Zimbabwe Independent contains extracts from a debate between Minister of Justice Patrick Chinamasa, Constitution Parliamentary Committee (Copac) spokesperson Jessie Majome, and National Constitutional Assembly chairman Lovemore Madhuku: "This week, main actors in Zimbabwe’s constitutional discussion, Minister of Justice Patrick Chinamasa, Constitution Parliamentary Committee (Copac) spokesperson Jessie Majome, and National Constitutional Assembly chairman Lovemore Madhuku met for a public debate in the capital to defend their positions. First on the podium was Chinamasa who defended Zanu PF’s insistence on using the Kariba Draft as a basis for the new constitution. Madhuku, a fierce critic of Copac, described the whole process as useless. Jessie Majome, a member of Copac’s media committee, defended the process as imperfect but necessary" [Via The Zimbabwe Independent].

Constitution: Political parties’ views set to prevail

As the constitution outreach programme gains momentum, analysts say the new constitution which will be put to a referendum will be determined more by political parties in the inclusive government than ordinary Zimbabweans. The analysts said clauses in the global political agreement empower parliament to reject, amend or adopt the draft constitution with or without amendments. Article VI reads: “The draft constitution and accompanying report shall be tabled before parliament within one month of the second all stakeholders’ conference and the draft constitution emerging from parliament shall be gazetted before holding a referendum.” After an affirmative referendum, the draft constitution shall be introduced in parliament no later than one month after the expiration of the period of 30 days from the date of its gazetting" African Reform Institute executive director Trevor Maisiri said: "So the parliamentarians who are obviously the driving force of the current outreach will once again have an opportunity to check the draft document after the second stakeholders meeting. This is ironic because how can the very people driving a process check a document before it goes to referendum. He added: "What is the special interest for parliamentarians to check the document and debate it before it goes to referendum? Again I wonder what will happen with the MDC-T and Zanu PF in parliament at this stage given their divided desires for the constitutional provisions. In the end what we are likely to experience are dramatic scenes of political contestations across the political divide for a constitution of their choice." [Via The Zimbabwe Independent]

Few participants attend outreach meetings Matabeleland
Concern has been raised by the Constitution Parliamentary Committee (COPAC) over the low turnout of participants at outreach meetings in the two Matebeleland provinces. Out of 1000 meetings held so far countrywide, Matebeleland North and South provinces have only held 73 and 78 meetings, compared to the Midlands province which has held 158. According to Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai’s weekly newsletter, COPAC co-chairperson Edward Mkhosi told journalists they were worried by the low figures of participants attending the consultative meetings [...] Despite Manicaland attracting many participants to its outreach programs, the province is still grappling with incidents of violence and intimidations. Provincial spokesman for the MDC-T, Pishai Muchauraya, told us ZANU PF has not only re-established torture bases, but has also armed its militia members and war veterans. ‘It’s not a sign of good things to come. Violence must be condemned at all costs but we are seeing more and more cases where the police are taking orders from ZANU PF to crackdown on MDC supporters. In Rusape for instance, the District Administrator who is also a ZANU PF loyalist, is helping police to flush out MDC activists who on Wednesday demonstrated against moves by Chombo (local government minister) to impose a commission to take over council affairs at Rusape district council,’ Muchauraya said. Despite supporters from both ZANU PF and the MDC-T clashing during the protest, only MDC-T supporters were arrested by the police [Via SW Radio Africa].

16 July 2010

Assess risk of home return: Khupe

Deputy Prime Minister Thokozani Khupe has said Zimbabweans who left the country at the height of its social and economic strife in the last decade should carry out their own ‘risk assessments’ before deciding to return home [...] “I am not going to say you come home, but encourage you to make your own assessment of when it would be ideal for you to come home,” she said to applause from the audience [...] Still, Khupe said she was confident progress would be made in drafting a new constitution and implementing other political reforms. "You have to understand that where ever you build, someone will try to destroy. Where ever you put light, someone seeks to put darkness. (But) we must not allow these to distract us from the progress we need as Zimbabweans," she said [Via New Zimbabwe].

The fox guarding chickens

Comment by Alois Masepe: The current road shows being conducted by the COPAC fall far short of constituting a clarion call to the country’s best sons and daughters to be full participants and partakers. We have partisan participation across the political divide with party youth and adherents going around “coaching” the masses on what to say to COPAC. The middle class — the natural reservoir of knowledge and experience of any country — remains largely unaffected, uninterested and unconvinced and have adopted the role of touch-line observers. In my view, the current exercise will produce a hybrid constitutional framework representing the wishes of ZANU-PF to retain power on the basis of dictatorship and the wishes of MDCs to assume power on the basis of multi partyism — more of the same of the GPA scenario. The nation must wait a bit longer for a truly democratic constitution given the fact that the old order is yet to come to terms with the need for democratic reform [Via The Financial Gazette].

Zanu (PF) Supporters Clamour For Death Penalty

Supporters of President Robert Mugabe’s Zanu (PF) party want the death sentence to be retained in the new constitution. Zanu (PF) supporters made their point known during an outreach programme that the death penalty must be retained saying those who did not value human life should not be allowed to live as well. The outreach programme was at Rujeko Primary School in Dangamvura, Mutare’s second largest high density suburb. “The death sentence should be retained in our new constitution. If I do not respect someone’s life then why my life should be respected? I cannot take an axe and then kill someone and expect my life to be respected too. I must definitely be killed too,” said a known Zanu (PF) supporter in Dangamvura [...] If the right to life is enshrined in the constitution, then the death sentence should be scrapped, as it violates the same constitution," another resident said, but was heckled down and immediately took his seat” [Via RadioVop]

Zimbabwe’s Constitutional Revision Public Outreach Process to Resume Monday

The public outreach phase of Zimbabwe’s constitutional revision process will resume on Monday following a break of one week for the reopening of Parliament, and outreach teams will be distributing a new set of talking points to sharpen translations into the country’s two main indigenous Shona and Ndebele languages. In the version circulated when the outreach campaign started in mid-June, for example, the phrase “the arms of government” was rendered in Ndebele as “the weapons of government,” confusing many Zimbabweans [...] Co-Chairman Douglas Mwonzora said that his committee has used the week-long break to make sure outreach teams have adequate equipment - logistical and technical issues plagued the early stages of the effort. Elsewhere, police in the
Goromonzi South constituency of Mashonaland East province disrupted a meeting Friday in Ruwa organized by the Youth Agenda Trust to encourage youths to take part in the outreach process, saying the gathering had not been sanctioned by authorities, this despite suspension of public meeting restrictions [Via VOA News]

Youths opt out of constitution outreach

Surveys conducted in some parts of the country indicate that youths are not taking part in the consultative process for various reasons, which range from lack of information to alleged political intimidation and violence. Reports of citizens being coached by ZANU-PF and the two formations of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) continue to filter across the country, incidents analysts say discouraged the youths from participating in the choreographed process. Statistics released by the Constitution Parliamentary Committee (COPAC) reveal poor turnout for people between the age of 18 and 35 at meetings convened so far in the country’s 10 political provinces. Douglas Mwonzora (MDC-T), Munyaradzi Paul Mangwana (ZANU-PF), and Edward Mkhosi (MDC-M), the three co-chairpersons of COPAC, attribute the youth apathy to what they said was an apparent disinterest by the youths and school-leavers [Via The Financial Gazette].

Title deeds make land bankable

Comment via NewsDay: Zanu PF MPs are angry with Finance minister Tendai Biti for suggesting that resettled farmers need title deeds to ensure their land can be used as tradable security. [Biti said] “Governments, especially this government, have no capacity to adequately finance agriculture. If we say that we want to develop this economy through agriculture, then we need banks to come in and finance agriculture. 99-year leases are not enough. We need title security.” [...] Biti is right after all that government should expedite interventions to overcome the challenges related to absence of a land tenure system which guarantees entitlement to land. [...] Therefore, without title deeds or securitised 99-year leases recognised in a Constitution and in an Act of Parliament, land in Zimbabwe will remain as dead capital [...] The disapproval by Zanu PF MPs to the proposals is solely for selfish gains by ‘chefs’ who after vandalising the farms that they resettled themselves on, have continued to hop from one property to another in search of well-maintained and fully utilised properties [Via NewsDay]

Exiles in SA speak out

The majority of Zimbabweans living in South Africa are looking forward to a constitution that will limit the Presidential term as well as ensure that the state media, judiciary, police, army and other government organs do not become puppets of a single political party. Scores of people who spoke to The Zimbabwean said they would only consider returning home to vote when such a constitution had been put in place. “History has taught us that we have to limit the term of the President,” said a 25-year old youth who refused to be named. “We do not want to create another monster. It is no longer a question of making sure that Mugabe must go. Whoever replaces him should not be allowed to have unlimited terms because we can see the results of such a policy,” he added. Tawanda Chitongo, who comes from Masvingo, echoed the same sentiments and pointed out that reduced Presidential terms had become the norm worldwide [Via The Zimbabwean].

17 July 2010

Youths tasked to maintain Zanu-PF political dominance

ZANU-PF’s Youth League should ensure that the party maintains its dominance in national politics, an official has said. Addressing the Zanu-PF national youth executive in Harare yesterday, national secretary for youth Cde Absolom Sikhosana said provincial, district, village and cell structures must be robust. "We have a challenge, individually and collectively, to ensure that Zanu-PF maintains its dominance as a dynamic governing party capable of defending the legacy and gains of the liberation struggle, and of realising the aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe. The youth have no choice but to be equal to the task. Always bear in mind that Zanu-PF is supreme and must — and will — remain in power," he said [...] Cde Sikhosana said the party’s younger members should be educated on the reasons behind the liberation struggle. “Tell them that the liberation struggle was waged to politically and economically free the nation and acquire sovereign authority over everything under its control,” he said. He urged youths to actively participate in the writing of a new constitution [Via The Herald - state-controlled media].

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No gay voice in new Zimbabwe constitution: Mugabe
Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe said the country will not listen to those who want gay rights to be mentioned in a draft of the new constitution, state media reported on Sunday. "We say no to gay rights, We will not listen to those advocating for their rights in the new constitution," said Mugabe while addressing an Apostolic Church gathering in the country's eastern Marange district [...] Homosexuality is illegal in Zimbabwe and the Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) association suffers police harassment. Two GALZ employees are currently facing charges of breaching censorship laws after a pornographic video disc and booklets were allegedly found in their offices during a police raid in May. Neighbouring South Africa is the only nation in southern Africa that gives equal rights to gays. In Malawi, a couple was jailed in December after holding the country's first same-sex wedding and they were later pardoned by President Bingu Wa Mutarika following global condemnation [Via AFP].

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