

# ZIMBABWE LIBERATORS PLATFORM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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## ZLP's RESPONSE TO THE UTTERANCES BY BRIGADIER DOUGLAS NYIKAYARAMBA

We the members of the Board of Trustees of the Zimbabwe Liberators Platform, a registered civic organisation formed by genuine former liberation fighters wish to express our profound disgust at the outrageous statements attributed by the Zimbabwe Independent of the 27 May edition to Brigadier Douglas Nyikayaramba, the commander of 3 Infantry Brigade of the Zimbabwe National Army. The statements, if true, are not only a callous disregard for democratic principles that entitle the people of Zimbabwe to vote for political parties and leaders of their choice without let or hindrance but also undermine the letter and spirit of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which provides for free and fair elections for people to elect their leaders and for the establishment of a professional and non-partisan military force through the Defence Act.

If Brigadier Nyikayaramba, and those of like mind, fought for ZANU PF and Mugabe to rule Zimbabwe forever, we wish to state unequivocally that the majority of the freedom fighters within both ZANLA and ZIPRA fought among other things, for unfettered political freedom and democracy based on the right to vote on the basis of one-person-one vote. We wonder whether the Brigadier had any political education at all during the war. Maybe, as he says he joined the struggle at the age of 14, he was intellectually challenged at that age to have comprehended the purpose and objective of the liberation war. For the record, the overwhelming majority of the freedom fighters were never card carrying members of political parties. We wonder whether the Brigadier pays the dues for his party card and duly carries it to office everyday as a sign of eternal loyalty to ZANU PF.

We are surprised that Brigadier Nyikayaramba, a very senior army officer who once served as a leading national elections officer does not appreciate the need and purpose of elections by insisting that Mugabe must rule forever. What therefore is the need for elections if the outcome is predetermined? On what basis does he demand that elections be held this year? Is he really itching for a bloody fight that he insists that the elections be held this year? Maybe the war ended too early for him as he was too young to have demonstrated his military prowess. We have full respect for liberation fighters who demonstrated their heroism by fighting against the enemy during the war but only abhorrence and revulsion for those who lead bloody campaigns against defenceless civilians whose only crime is to resist

ZANU PF misrule and repression. Shame on all those commanders and fighters who wear acts of terror against unarmed civilians, black or white, as a badge of honour!

The Brigadier goes on to rubbish the need for security sector reform, something that all the principals to the GPA, including President Mugabe undertook to carry out. What an irony? Brigadier Nyikayaramba is alleged to have boasted that he would never salute Tsvangirai were he to be elected President and head of state in a national ballot. He is thus placing himself above the will of the people for which most of us fought and he is prepared to trample it under foot. It is this very despicable conduct and unfortunate utterances like Nyikayaramba's that underline the dire and urgent need to reform Zimbabwe's state security sector. The national defence forces and other arms of state security should be rid of unprofessional officers and political activists; rotten apples like him. The objective of security sector reform is to mould a professional non partisan national defence force and other state security arms into national institutions that respect the will of the people, submit themselves to civilian control; place human security above the security of the state and its leaders; respect the country's citizens, its constitution and all its laws. A truly national defence force can thus do without Nyikayaramba and other officers who believe that Mugabe and ZANU PF should rule forever.

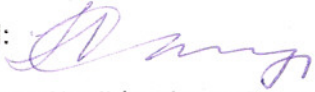
The conceited Brigadier needs to be reminded that the Zimbabwe Defence Forces are a national institution funded and supported by the tax payer's money and not from ZANU PF coffers, and that is where their loyalty should lie. The defence forces are not a ZANU PF militia as he imagines. If that were the case then he would have to direct his concerns about funds for rations and uniforms to the ZANU PF headquarters. And most interestingly, for his own information, ZANU PF does not even have a secretary for defence in its leadership structure as an enlightened acknowledgement that they do not have defence forces of their own as a political party. If the Brigadier is filled with enthusiasm to campaign for ZANU PF, well and good, he should just go ahead and do the honourable thing like what RTD Air vice Marshal Henry Muchena did and take off his uniform and join the ranks of the ZANU PF Commissariat and submit himself to the leadership of Jabulani Sibanda and Joseph Chinotimba, the commanders of ZANU PF's war veterans. It would be his constitutional right to do so and no one would have qualms with that.

We would like to hope and believe that Brigadier Nyikayaramba's views are not representative of the thinking of the officer corps of defence forces and that they are just the ranting and raving of an isolated overzealous ZANU PF zealot; a clear misfit and an anachronism within the ranks of the national defence forces. It would be interesting to hear what his superiors within the defence forces and Minister of Defence have to say about his clearly treasonous statements.

No professional soldier should ever be seen to be expressing public contempt for the Constitution by stating partisan political support and we demand his immediate resignation. Furthermore, we demand a disciplinary hearing into his conduct as should be required in a

professional army. We therefore would expect an immediate repudiation of the view expressed by his superiors.

Signed:



Happyson Nenji (Webster Gwauya)

for

ZLP Board of Trustees



Wilfred Mhanda (Dzinashe Machingura)

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