

ZIMBABWE BRIEFING

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Zimbabwe Churches Call for Lasting Peace

We are encouraged that, following a meeting with Zimbabwe church leaders in Geneva last October (see picture, right) under Ecumenical Zimbabwe Network (EZN) auspices, today they have put out a statement in several local papers calling on government to create a conducive environment in which citizens can freely exercise their rights and also denouncing politically motivated violence. Below, we reproduce the statement. May the church long continue to provide moral leadership in a time of crisis and to shine a light upon our s o c i e t y .



We the churches in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches [ZCC], THE Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference [ZCBC] and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe [EFZ] reaffirm our conviction that all human beings are born with God given inalienable rights. It is therefore the duty of every Government to ensure that a conducive environment is created so that citizens are able to exercise these rights and in the process to attain their potential. The church has a mandatory call to be the voice of the voiceless to offer pastoral services to the nation and be part of the reconstruction process.

In pursuit of its vision of justice, peace, prosperity and total salvation for all, the Church acknowledges and appreciates the progress that has been made so far by the Inclusive Government to bring about peace and healing to the nation and desirous of preventing a repletion of the political violence that rocked our nation in 2008, we call upon the government and the political parties to note the following concerns.

Global Political Agreement

All aspects of the global political agreement should be fully implemented before an election is held. We also call on the Southern Africa Development Commu-

nity SADC, the guarantors of the GPA, to ensure that the agreement is fully implemented accountably and timeously. The Church is ready and willing to facilitate and support dialogue between the Principals and political parties to ensure the resolution of the outstanding issues.

The Constitution Making Process

This constitution making process should ensure that the views of the people are respected. It should also take cognisance of some flaws in the outreach process that might have subverted the views of the people in some areas.

Elections

We implore our political leaders in the coalition government to reflect deeply on the timing of elections bearing in mind the unhealed state of the nation and the fragile state of the economy. However, whenever elections come it is essential for government to implement the SADC guidelines in full if they are to be credible.

Peace and Security

Churches are concerned about reports of politically motivated violence in the provinces of Mashonaland, Masvingo and Manicaland caused by the revival of the structures that perpetrated violence in the run up to 2008 Presidential elections. The Church urges the political leadership to exercise restraint and avoid making statements that can fuel political violence. Whilst the occasional denunciation of violence by our political leaders is encouraging, we believe that it must become more regular and translated into reality.

The Church calls on the security forces to maintain peace and security for all citizens. They should exercise their duties in a non-partisan manner

to fulfil their constitutional mandate. Also, the church notes the strategic role of traditional leaders in ensuring that peace is maintained within communities. The church, therefore calls upon the chiefs to work in partnership with other stakeholders to ensure that peace and security is maintained within their communities.

The Role of the Mass Media

Aware of the power of the media in shaping public opinion, the church is concerned about the hate language published in the media and calls on journalists to adhere to professional ethics and to exercise justice and fairness in their reporting.

National Healing

The church is concerned about lack of clear national framework on the healing and reconciliation process which is a critical component of this transitional period.

In its absence, the church will continue with its Biblical mandate to reconciliation through various forms, but notes the strategic importance of the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration, which should facilitate a comprehensive and inclusive process of crafting the national framework that will deal with issues of truth telling acknowledgement of the past wrongs, reconciliation, restorative and transitional justice issues.

Call to the Churches

We urge the Church community to organize prayer vigils and be part of the Campaign for Peace as God leads our nation into a new peaceful and prosperous New Year. We believe that this is a god's time for our nation to progress into a new era of peace and prosperity for all. **God Bless Zimbabwe!**

President Mugabe cannot unilaterally call for elections

ON SUNDAY, 23 January, president Mugabe made the following astounding declaration: “ I have the constitutional right – in the absence of the GPA (Global Political Agreement) position regarding the constitutional process – to cause an election to be held on the basis of the old constitution.”

This statement is as incorrect as it is politically dangerous. It is an undisputed fact, which even ZANU-PF agrees to, that the June 2008 presidential runoff election did not produce a legitimate result, despite Mugabe’s rush to be sworn in as president of Zimbabwe after that poll. This is why Mugabe could not form a government on his own – hence the SADC mediated talks with the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai to form a power-sharing government.

If Mugabe had genuinely won the election there would have been no need for any negotiations to ‘share power.’ The idea was to bring on board MDC – the party commanding popular support in Zimbabwe but lacking support from the security chiefs who stood by Mugabe, threatening to plunge Zimbabwe into civil war.

What this shows clearly is that there is no legitimate government that exists outside the framework of the GPA – the SADC brokered agreement that led to the formation of



RUSHED JOB: Robert Mugabe prepares to take oath of office after he was declared the winner of the much-disputed June 2008 poll. - www.zimbabweinpictures.com

a power-sharing government with Mugabe as president and Tsvangirai prime minister. There is no old constitution that Mugabe can go to outside of the current constitution as amended to include the GPA political dispensation, which is schedule 8 of the constitution. Once the power-sharing government collapses then there is no government to talk about, or a president with any legitimacy for that matter.

However, president Mugabe’s utterances are a worrying indicator of frenzied electioneering and a dangerous political route which ZANU-PF may take if unchallenged. Zimbabwe at this point needs adequate preparations for credible elections that can be a solid foundation for lasting peace, political stability and development.

SADC and the AU should be supporting initiatives for democratic elections in Zimbabwe as a conflict anticipation and

prevention mechanism. In preparation for a transparent plebiscite in which Zimbabweans can genuinely and freely express their will, key issues to be addressed include the demilitarization of Zimbabwe’s politics.

Sadly, we have it on good authority that ZANU-PF recently made a resolution to reserve at least 25% of all parliamentary seats for serving and retired military personnel, and that Vice-Air Marshall Henry Muchena is now working fulltime as director of ZANU-PF’s elections campaign. The proximity of Zimbabwe’s securocrats to politics and civilian affairs is of great concern and does not augre well for democracy.

The military must immediately and completely separate itself from politics and the day to day governance matters of the country. Once this total separation is achieved it will be possible to create a conducive environment to holding free and fair

elections. The military belong in the barracks – not in politics. Zimbabwe is a strange country – perhaps the only country where all senior military figures are known by name and rank to almost everyone – they are ubiquitous in national affairs.

In other countries naming the military commander would make the most difficult of quiz questions. As a people, we have a huge challenge, one now put in perspective by events in Egypt and Tunisia, a challenge to stop authoritarianism through a determined fight to promote democracy and respect for basic rights.

On that note, let me close with an african proverb quote: “Rabbit, rabbit what are you doing? I am going out to kill the elephant. Rabbit, rabbit can you really do that? Well, I will try... and try again.”

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Coordinator's Note



dewaMAVHINGA

Is ZANU-PF reforming?

The January 21 attempted tourist sites invasions by ZANU PF supporters, especially in the Lake Chivero area which were immediately thwarted by the police and attracted an apology from the Veep, Joice Mujuru appear to be clear testimony that the former ruling party has repented and turned over a new leaf on its path to reform. ZANU PF is now walking on the straight and narrow path and has seen the error of its ways. Or has it?

For all we know, these so-called invasions could have been stage-managed to hoodwink unsuspecting citizens and interested observers into believing that the former ruling party had encountered its Damascus moment and was now pursuing the rule of law and respect for basic rights for Zimbabweans. With talk of a possible election this year taking root, despite the insistence of civil society groups, including the *Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition*, not to go that route in the absence of tangible reforms, ZANU PF now looks like a party so desperate to spruce up its battered image locally and internationally.

But we all know the party's appalling human and property rights record. In a country that has received so much goodwill from investors, such developments can only be aimed at convincing the business world that it is safe to keep its money in Zimbabwe, and perhaps through that, the party can gain a remote chance of being financed towards this possible 2011 election. More importantly, the point is to have as little criticism of the party as possible going into the election.

Some months back, another ZANU PF stalwart, Emmerson Mnangagwa declared to the mourners who had gathered at his brother's funeral that him too, like his party, had had a personal Damascus encounter. "For those of us comrades who were taught to destroy and kill and have seen the light in the last days of our lives, and will die in Christ, our rewards are in heaven," he was quoted in the media as saying.

Zimbabwe is largely a Christian country and Marx could have been right after all; religion is the opium of the people. Many would have swallowed, hook line and sinker, the shrewd politician's confession of having met Christ. Ironically, Mnangagwa – referred to as



MASTERS OF DISGUISE: A ZANU PF rally with hints of agricultural support to loyal party supporters ahead of the March 2008 election. - www.zimbabwepictures.com

Ngwena (Crocodile) on account of being a shrewd, cold tactician - is at the centre of a raging power struggle with Mujuru in a bid to succeed the leader of the party, Robert Mugabe. Obviously, the two's efforts at advancing a

conditions will neither be democratic nor peaceful, just like in 2008. Some reforms, contested as they are, will need further critical engagement and political will in order to be passed, especially those reforms targeting operations of media and the running of elections.

Hence, it will take much more than apologies for tourist sites invasions and repentance to Christ to convince the masses that ZANU PF is firmly on the plausible path of reform. It will take tangible reforms and a demonstration of genuine political will by this party to convince Zimbabweans at large

that it has indeed changed for the better.

But to achieve that requires a different kind of radicalism and the dialogue needs to be transformative, not empty. Radicalism is needed, for example, in the fight against corruption, an ill from which Zimbabwe has bled for far too long. And the country badly needs to move away from a dialogue (if it can be called that) that promotes hate, violence or seeks to make less of another person by taking away their citizenship rights.

Ultimately, a positive image needs to be an effortless act; one must never try too hard to rally support and get the backing of the people. As we used to say back in the day, they'll do *thega*.

- Levi Kabwato, Media & Communications Officer, SA Regional Office.

“The uneasy balance of power in the past two years within the so-called GNU has exposed those dangerous spots; the chaos in the constitution-making process, insincerity between parties, hate speech, a lack of clear commitment towards necessary reforms”

picture of a reformed party are based on the viability of their own candidatures.

The “good girl/good guy” image that is being pushed forward will strike positive political resonance with some, negative reactions with many possibly who have borne the brunt of ZANU PF in the past three decades.

But as the old adage goes, a leopard will never change its spots. Even that leopard which immerses itself in mud in a bid to hide its spots will be found wanting on a rainy day. The uneasy balance of power in the past two years within the so-called government of national unity (GNU) has exposed those dangerous spots; the chaos in the constitution-making process, insincerity between parties, hate speech, a lack of clear commitment towards necessary reforms and so on. Clearly, an election under the current

Why foreign observers need to be in Zim before elections



UNDER WATCH: A SADC Parliamentary Forum observer on duty - www.zimbabweinpictures.com

Zimbabwe is witnessing a resurgence of cases of politically motivated violence. Urban areas, which were often times spared from the horror of violence have become targets. Ordinary Zimbabweans were maimed in Mbare, Mabvuku, Budiriro and other suburbs on political grounds in previous election years. People are still reeling from the assaults and murders which occurred in 2008 yet political parties still contend that elections should be held in 2011.

Most Zimbabweans argue that if elections are to have some semblance of peace, there is need for an early deployment of foreign observers drawn from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) some six months prior to elections. This could increase prospects of a violence and intimidation free, and transparent election. The demand for foreign observers in the country have been characterised by cases of violence, intimidation and harassment of perceived opponents.

Despite the clear indications of most elections falling short of the

benchmarks for free and fair elections, observers have given them the green light, partly owing to their failure to assess the electoral environment months before the actual elections. Electioneering is a process which begins on the day the election date is announced, through the campaign process, the Election Day and finally the transfer or retention of power. It is a fragile process which, if left unmonitored could leave room for manipulation and subsequent disregard and disrespect of the people's choices.

In a society where the security forces, whose primary role is to protect citizens, are the main perpetrators of political violence, it is difficult for citizens to place their trust in their hands. It is no secret that Zimbabwe's security sector is polluted with partisan securocrats who block the country's quest for democracy. The security elite have often times proclaimed their unwavering support for ZANU PF and President Robert Mugabe and threatened war on civilians if their interests are not upheld. Can they then be entrusted with protecting all civilians regardless of their political affiliation or views during elections?

It is apparent that the people

of Zimbabwe yearn for some form of change and renewed hope for a productive country and this change they feel will be brought about by a new political dispensation which is a reflection of the people's will. And to them this can take place if SADC, AU and UN impartially monitor the electoral process.

Despite facing much disenchantment with the country's elections, Zimbabweans remain determined to chart their own destiny with the assistance of the regional and international communities who have played a key role in the quest to bring lasting solutions to the Zimbabwean crisis.

There is no doubt that the key to ending Zimbabwe's crisis lies in holding free and fair elections and ensuring a clear and undisputed power transfer. This can be achieved if the region defines elections in a more holistic way which includes the process from the announcement of the date of the election to the actual transfer of power to the eventual winner.

- Maria Mache, Information Officer, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Head Office, Harare

Zimbabwe Food Security Outlook

About 1,7million people are estimated to be food insecure during the current peak lean season running from October through February. About 400, 000 of the food insecure people are estimated to be in urban areas and those in the rural areas

are outside of the central districts and are classified to be moderately food insecure. Food assistance program plans for the period of January through to March should be sufficient to cover the assessed needs. - FEWS NET

GET IN TOUCH

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ZANU-PF forms anti-sanctions committee, people forced to sign petition

ZANU PF is reported to have formed an anti-sanction committee headed by Jabulani Sibanda a former ZIPRA cadre.

With the help of local village leaders, Sibanda is said to be forcing people to append their signatures on the petition. Members of the anti-sanction campaign group are seeking signatures from all household.

Gokwe Central MP Dorothy Mangami with the help of war veterans and ZANU PF youths allegedly forced villages to attend rally at Gokwe centre to sign a petition calling for the removal of sanctions. She told the villagers that the party was looking for 3000 signatures or more from the Gokwe constituency alone. Failure to put their signatures on the petitions would result into intimidation threats and torture.

Meanwhile ZANU PF national spokesperson Rugare Gumbo, has pointed out that the campaign is yet to be launched at national level. He said the major task is to hold meetings in the country with members of the public urging them to denounce sanctions, after which the petition will be handed over to the three principals of the GPA.

In as much ZANU PF supporters have a right to drive an anti-sanction campaign, forcing people to participate

Self-styled war-veterans leader, Jabulani Sibanda on Al Jazeera TV. - www.zimbabwein-pictures.com



is a human rights violation, according to **ZimRights**.

Last week, *Zimbabwe Briefing* reported that Mhangami with the help of war veterans and party youths on January 26, 2011 force-marched the villagers to attend a rally at Gokwe Centre where she told scores of people in attendance to come in their numbers to sign a petition calling for the removal of sanctions.

This is part of a ZANU PF campaign to have more than a million signatures throughout the country against the targeted sanctions imposed by the West on President Robert Mugabe and his allies endorsed on a petition.

According to a ZRP monitor

present during the meeting, Mhangami told the people gathered that they were not expecting less than 3000 signatures from her Gokwe Central constituency.

The Member of Parliament issued verbal threats to the scores of people who attended the meeting urging them to bring their identity cards on January 31, 2011 the day set aside for the signing of the petition. She told them that all of those who failed to sign will have to explain why they want the sanctions to remain on force.

Report by ZimRights. Additional reporting by the Zimbabwe Peace Project

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

> Zimbabwe Dialogue Series: GNU: Gains & Losses, Jo'burg, South Africa (February 11)

>The World Social Forum, Dakar, Senegal (February 6 to 12)

>ZIMRIGHTS Europe tour photo exhibition Dublin, London and Geneva (February 16 to March 12)

> UN Human Rights Council Session, Geneva (March 1 to 12).

Who are we?

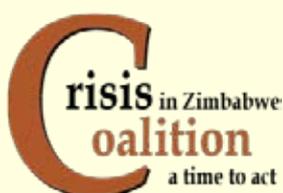
The **Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition** is a conglomeration of 350 civil society organisations. It was formed in August 2001 as a collective response to the multi-faceted crisis of governance and legitimacy. The Coalition operates under five committees; Advocacy, Information, Peace Building, Youth and Human Rights. Our objectives are:

- To respond timeously to government position regarding various key policy areas;
- To share ideas and information for use by civil society

organisations (CSOs) in the articulation of credible, alternative and practical views;

- To ensure rapid development of democratic governance in Zimbabwe;
- Via the Regional and Advocacy Office, to amplify the collective voice of civil society organisations in Zimbabwe and;
- To highlight debate, research and propose solutions to the multi-layered national crisis.

Our vision is to see a democratic Zimbabwe



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