

The Daily Catalyst

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EX-DETAINEES IN SEARCH OF 'FORMULA FOR UNITY', The Herald 30 January 1980

By Political reporter



The former top ZANU PF officials released this week from detention in Mozambique yesterday declined to align themselves immediately with any political party.

Despite intensive lobbying by the UANC, ZANU and the NFZ, the former detainees' spokesman, Mr Rugare Gumbo, told a Press conference in Salisbury yesterday that the group would immediately open talks with the six political parties and various non-political bodies in search of a formula for national unity.

"Our immediate task now that we are home and free is to find a common basis for the unity of all the people of Zimbabwe. We hold the view that all the people of Zimbabwe contributed to the achievement of national independence in

their own way", said Mr Gumbo.

The statement ended speculation about the former detainees' next political move since arriving in Salisbury on Monday. Mr Gumbo said the parties with whom consultations would be held were: ZANU PF; ZANU; the patriotic front; the UANC; the NFZ; and the ZDP.

The proposed talks would also include combatants, trade unions, farmers' and women's' organizations, teachers, students, business associations, and religious organizations. "The aim of the exercise would be to establish a complete framework for harmonizing our views on national unity and mutual confidence on the basis of a democratic solution", Mr Gumbo said.

The press conference was attended by Mr Henry Hamadziripi, former ZANU PF secretary for manpower and planning; Mr. Mukudzei Mudzi, former secretary for foreign affairs; Mr Crispin Mandizvidza, former secretary for construction and development; and Dr Joseph Chimurenga, former members of the military committee. About 200 people from various political parties were at the conference.

Mr Gumbo said the group would ask the Governor, Lord Soames, to postpone the election "to give equal chance to all parties and candidates that have not had the opportunity to register". Saying their release was due to the pressure exerted by "the masses of Zimbabwe" and the international community, Mr Gumbo also expressed appreciation for the "firm and fair stand" taken by the Governor. He thought, however, the Governor could have secured their release when he proclaimed an amnesty to all political prisoners, so that the group could have had ample time to put its case to the people. He said political strife and a civil war after independence could be averted only by national reconciliation and unity.

The group said the deployment of foreign troops in Rhodesia could deprive the people of the right to determine their own future in an atmosphere of non-interference.

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