

Lest we fail



Ketayi Makosa

That Zimbabwe had become a sorry basket case, before the inclusive government was formed, is self-evident to all but the willfully blind. All the machinations for depraving Zimbabweans had been put into operation by Zanu PF. Suffering and abject misery; satanic cruelty; torture and murder; corruption and thievery had become a daily experience. Through having the restricted vocabulary of deprivation and the thin minds of ignorance, or simply slavish opportunism, Zanu PF chose rulers who chained them by shackles of iniquity to their cars as captives. Bewildered and deceived, they staggered in a gloomy

procession toward ruin; into pawnshop's utter penury with not the slightest hope of redemption; to death with no hope of life; toward night to which comes no dawn. The only pleasure they had was knowing that they were reducing other people to a worse level of misery – the hapless populace of this country. Zimbabwe was now dark through a malignant, cancerous dictatorship. That the gloomy shadows may be lightened, that the country may be brought back to the people, the deceptive power of Zanu PF had to be smashed. This could not be done by military means. The exercise of armed force is contrary to the principles of, nay, anathema to, the MDC. After all it is the Movement for Democratic Change. So the route of negotiations, elections, negotiations, and ultimately the inclusive government.

The MDC is now in the inclusive government. Again, nothing will reconcile us to the restriction of our power. It is a continuing humiliation that we toil under the heavy burden of those whom the people have rejected; who have failed to accept the people's will; maybe have never at all beforehand respected it.

That being the situation, there remains the barest minimum of change to the regime that the MDC must effect, or else dump the deal and its resultant government. There are basic non-negotiable changes to people's lives that the inclusive government must bring to pass, and do so quickly.

The footsteps of premature, premeditated, politics-induced death, silent as the moving sundial of a sun-blasted giant baobab tree, have for too long traipsed and trampled this country. Politics and death, the partners who have for too long operated conjoined in Zimbabwe, leaving a trail of weeping, wailing widows and widowers, must be severed from each other for ever. The song "Jojo" by Thomas Mapfumo must forever henceforth become meaningless. Else the change agenda will have failed; and the lost, the vanished, the disposed, the frightened, suffering souls who have been violently wrenched from this life by Zanu PF thugs will find no rest in the spirit world.

Dictatorship must never again arise in this fair, large, and goodly land. Despising, disregarding, setting aside, trampling and spitting on the people's will should never again happen in

Zimbabwe. Through the following ages, however short or long they may be, all her citizenry must forever be secure from the evil and calumny and hate and pain of tyranny. It must touch them not and stain them not again. Ever. Never shall power be used for selfish and mercenary purposes. This should be guaranteed, as it is in the USA, for all time in a people-driven democratic constitution. There should never again be chance given to the "disgusting ... military fufu heads, Swiss-bank socialists, crocodile liberators, quack revolutionaries, briefcase bandits and vampire elites" who get power only in order "to loot the treasury, to quash all dissent and to perpetuate themselves" in power, as succinctly put by George Ayittey, (September 2009). Never again a dictator who thinks the world revolves around him; the sun is dimmed by his presence, the moon darkened by him, the rainbow made for him, and the stars dazzled by him.

The inclusive government must lay the foundations for the pillars of a modern 21st Century democracy. One is an independent, efficient, and functional judiciary, with its independent, efficient, resourced, corruption-free police force. The second is a truly free,

unfettered, independent, and diverse media that is self-governing and self-correcting. The last is a strong, vibrant, people-centred, people-responsive, and people-mandated legislature that serves up developmental, progressive laws. If in doing so a weak, fettered and responsibility-accepting executive is produced, so much the better for us and all future generations. Long-suffering Zimbabweans deserve no less.

Then Zimbabweans in the Diaspora, who have hung their harps upon willows and mourned for a country laid waste, should feel the flood of warm, life-giving light, engendering a surge of patriotic love for their country, as the night of woe that enshrouded the country finally, irrevocably and forever departs. "Cry the beloved country" will no more be their elegy. This will prove that the exquisite foretelling in "a new Zimbabwe, a new beginning" was but a carrying further of the implications of that cry from the ramparts of the unconquerable, "Chinja maitiro, guqula izenzo!" The change agenda is irreversible and unstoppable.

**KETAYI MAKOSA
IS THE MDC PROVINCIAL
VICE-SECRETARY FOR
MIDLANDS NORTH PROVINCE**

Letters to the Editor

Free Gwezere now

Dear Editor

Can Zanu PF be humane just for once? What happened to the doctrine of innocent until proven guilty? Major Maxwell Samudzi died of torture wounds, not this supposed suicide Zanu PF and its propaganda machinery described in The Herald of Wednesday 11 November 2009.

How can someone, in detention, in solitary confinement hang themselves with a copper cable plus have pills in his pockets? Where would he get such drugs when even the Remand hospital does not have such? Their plot is naïve and lacks intelligence.

That is how they killed Learnmore Jongwe, now they have done it on someone who could have exposed them. Zanu-PF youths are going around farms shooting innocent farm workers, where are they getting the guns from? Why is Gwezere behind bars? Why has he been assaulted so, when they do not have proof or evidence of guns in their investigations.

This issue of implicating MDC officials in their games should just stop and stop immediately. Why don't they arrest those trigger-

happy thugs they call youths and find out where they are getting the guns?

Zanu PF has relieved itself of so many guns to their youth, and they want to implicate the MDC in their circus. This should just stop. We are tired. Free Gwezere now, Free Bennett now. We want peace. We wish for peace in Zimbabwe. Two wrongs do not make a right!

Musa

Chitungwiza

Thank you MDC

Dear Editor

It is a breather to finally read an informative newsletter from the party after years and years of being exposed to unsophisticated propaganda from The Herald and The Zanu PF broadcasting cooperation. I enjoy reading *The Changing Times* as it clearly informs us on what is exactly happening in the Inclusive government because no one else is. We voted all these leaders into power and we deserve to know what is happening without any distortions. Thank you MDC for *The Changing Times*. Thank you for the good work keep it up.

Kudakwashe

Zvimba

We will conquer

Dear Editor

With the fluctuations that we may endure I encourage my fellows to remain with the strong pride & passion to save the nation we all know that we will conquer our enemies. When the going gets tough the tough get going.

Muswere M

Norton

Gono is corrupt

Dear Editor

Thank you very much for allowing the people of Zimbabwe to send their letters to your newsletter. It has been a while now that I have been sending our letters to papers like The Herald but they have never been published.

I have always wondered why the Finance Minister was having issues with Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor, Dr Gideon Gono but now I understand. Gono is corrupt and should be thoroughly investigated.

Here in Gutu he is dishing out an assortment of farming equipment to his wife's family and relatives in the Chitsa communal area.

Although the families do not have the capacity to produce food for the nation they received farming equipment at

the expense of genuine farmers who are determined to produce food for the nation. The Mushanyuri family in Makuvaza village ward 12, Gutu North constituency was allocated two tractors, a scotch cart, disc harrows, a generator and several ox-drawn ploughs.

The Madzikanda family in the same village also received two tractors, disc harrows and plough while one Clemence Magaya from the same village received some farming equipment despite the fact that they are not involved in full time farming.

It is disheartening to see such corruption taking place and no one doing anything about it. I am a renowned farmer but have never received anything despite numerous applications to the Reserve Bank for farming equipment. I am appealing as a Zimbabwean to whoever is responsible to investigate Gono.

Disgruntled farmer

Gutu

Stop the hate

Dear Editor

I want to express gratitude at the production of this newsletter. I am so amazed that my country, I so live in and love is still as violent. Well, last year the news we got was mostly via the internet and one would think its not happening.

But your paper has brought out the wrought in community. When will the violence stop? When will the hate stop?

Are we not family? Why should we be separated because of differences in ideology? Why should we be brought backwards and not forward? Are we not one family? What happened to the love, unity and togetherness? What happened to our conscience? What happened to the social values we grew up knowing? Are we not afraid of avenging spirits?

Oh, I am so pained to note the bitterness in my brothers, mothers, sisters and family. How oh, when are we going to move forward? Even today, when tears have not dried from our cheeks, when society is trying to rebuild, when those maimed are trying to find their footing, when those who lost their loved ones seek to close the chapter and start afresh, when those who were murdered have not found rest in their graves, when other's souls are wandering in the wilderness, trying to locate where home is.

Oh, when others are giving burials to no bodies, after they went missing a year ago. Why do we have all these fights again? Why? Maybe my questions could never be asked, but to those who give instructions, where are your values and conscience? We want a peaceful country. God please help us!

Sister Grace

St Mary's

No single party should determine a hero - Sibanda

HARARE - Magwegwe MP, Hon. Felix Magelela Sibanda has challenged the conferment of hero status saying the process should not be the preserve or prerogative of a single party organ.

Moving a motion on the conferment of heroes in the House of Assembly last week, Hon. Sibanda said that there was an urgent need to amend the National Heroes Act for it to be compatible with the current political dispensation, which is inclusive in nature, character and spirit.

"In simple terms or in brief, the Act's objective is to provide for the Heroes and Heroines of this country.

"Heroism is earned not made. The truth is the list of such heroes and heroines is not exhaustive. Both the fallen and living heroes are determined by their deeds while alive not dead. We should honour and recognise them while living and be honest to them thereof," said Hon. Sibanda.

He recommended the House of Assembly to set up a committee to determine the constitution of a non partisan body which should debate and confer hero-status to all deserving citizens across the political divide.

"I am disturbed by the current situation where national heroes and heroines are declared in a partisan and biased manner. Several deserving Zimbabweans have not been accorded the heroes and heroines status.

"I am convinced that it is undesirable for the organ of a political party to determine such national issues," said Hon. Sibanda.

Responding to the same motion, Bulawayo East MP Hon. Tabitha Khumalo said it was disappointing to note that Zimbabwe was not praising its heroes when they were still alive.

"This country is pregnant with heroes and heroines who are still living.

The problem is that we do not sing praises about them whilst they are still alive.

"What then happens is that we are using their deaths as a talk show to challenge each other? We know that national heroes and heroines are for the nation but today a single party declares someone a hero," she said.

She also said it was disheartening to notice that dependents left by heroes had been turned into destitutes.

"The dependents are turned destitutes the moment we bury a hero. It is no longer moral justice. It is all about me not us," said Hon. Khumalo.

The MDC believes that conferment of hero status cannot be an exclusive prerogative of either the Zanu PF Politburo or the MDC National Council.


"There must be an inclusive national policy and an independent body with set parameters and clearly defined yardsticks which determines who qualifies to be a national hero



Hon. Felix Magelela Sibanda

or heroine. The same panel must define the meaning of a hero," the MDC said in a recent statement to commemorate Heroes' Day said.

The statement said Zanu PF Politburo could not be an objective substitute of an independent panel.

"The MDC believes that we need a panel of respected and eminent persons to come up with set criteria for the conferment of hero status," said the statement released by the party in August. 

MDC Ministers' Forum

Rehabilitation of public infrastructure a priority-Minister Makone

HARARE - Efforts by MDC President and Zimbabwe Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai to spearhead the resuscitation of the country's economy have helped the Ministry of Public Works to complete most of its projects countrywide.

In an interview with *The Changing Times* in Harare this week, Public Works Minister and MDC Women's Assembly chairperson Hon. Theresa Makone said Prime Minister Tsvangirai and the MDC secretary-general and Finance Minister, Hon. Tendai Biti had worked hard in securing funding for her ministry under the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP).

"When the MDC formed the inclusive government, hospitals such as Harare Referral Hospital had ground to a halt. Equipment in the children's ward, main theatre and mortuary had broken down," she said.

In March, Prime Minister Tsvangirai tasked Hon. Makone, who is also Harare North MP, to provide the Prime Minister's Office with the infrastructural needs of all government hospitals, schools and other government offices across the country.

This was after Prime Minister Tsvangirai had expressed shock during his visit to the 1 200-bed Harare General Hospital, which had deteriorated to such grave levels that it was turning away critically

ill patients after failing to raise US\$1.5 million needed for rehabilitation.

"The ministry has since finished refurbishing Harare Hospital after it underwent a major rehabilitation. Gas lines have been put in place and all the wards have been reopened," she said.

She said the ministry was now working on rehabilitating Mpilo General Hospital in Bulawayo under the PSIP.

The role of the Public Works ministry is to offer accommodation to all government ministries and parastatals and supply infrastructure to schools and hospitals.

Under the PSIP, the ministry is undertaking 550 developmental projects, which among other issues include building hospitals, schools and government offices across the country.

The projects, which need at least US\$100 million, are at different levels of completion.

However, Minister Makone said most of the projects were being hampered by lack of money and the brain drain that had seen most of the technicians and architects in the ministry looking for greener pastures across the country.

Turning to her ministry's 100 day plan that all government ministries were assigned by the Prime Minister to carry out, Hon. Makone said it had not been an easy assignment for her ministry.

"It was not easy for us as when I came to this ministry, government infrastructure



Public Works Minister and MDC Women's Assembly chairperson Hon. Theresa Makone

across the country had collapsed to unprecedented levels due to lack of funds.

"This was also affecting staff morale among the civil servants as they were working under environments that had no running water, electricity and infrastructure that had been vandalised," she said.

"However, infrastructural development has improved since the formation of the inclusive government and staff morale has also improved considerably," she said.


The ministry has been promised at US\$30 million in the 2010 national budget.

Minister Makone was also working on a project to build a new parliament building as the current one could not accommodate both members of the House of Assembly and the Senate.

"The building was constructed to accommodate less than 100 MPs but now we have over 210 MPs in the House Assembly and over 60 Senators. So there is congestion, which is unacceptable," she said.

She said the Public Works ministry was also gearing for the Soccer World Cup to be played in South Africa in 2010 and as a result the ministry would complete the refurbishing of the giant National Sports stadium on 31 December 2009.

The ministry has also asked the Rainbow Tourism Group to uplift the five star Rainbow Towers hotel ahead of the World Cup.

The hotel is owned by the government. 

Bennett's arresting officer stutters in court

HARARE – Senator Roy Bennett's defence lawyer has told the High Court that police should have recorded a new statement from the State's star witness before arresting the MDC legislator on trumped-up charges of treason and banditry in February.

Senator Bennett, who is also MDC treasurer-general and deputy Agriculture minister-designate, appeared again at the High Court yesterday in his ongoing trial, with his lawyer, Beatrice Mtetwa cross examining the arresting officer, Chief Superintendent James Makone.

Mtetwa, a leading human rights lawyer, asked the police officer why he had not re-interviewed State witness Peter Michael Hitschmann, an arms

dealer, before preferring the current weapon and terrorism charges against Hon. Bennett.

She said it was unacceptable to try and use a warned and cautioned statement recorded from Hitschmann four years ago.

"As a seasoned policeman, there was need to re-interview Hitschmann even before the arrest of the accused," said Mtetwa during cross examination before High Court judge, Justice Chinembiri Bhunu.

She challenged the authenticity of a police statement allegedly adduced from Hitschmann in 2006, which is being used by the State to implicate

Senator Bennett, saying it was obtained under duress.

The statement was recorded at Adams Army Barracks in Mutare, Manicaland province at 5am.

Although Makone staunchly denied that Hitschmann was tortured before signing the statement, a report produced at the High Court yesterday showed that the arms dealer was severely tortured by State security agents, forcing him to implicate Hon. Bennett.

The medical report showed that Hitschmann had sustained swollen legs and blisters under the foot.

The trial continues on Monday.



Hon. Roy Bennett

Councillor abducted

ZAKA - MDC Councillor for Ward 23 in Zaka West constituency, Mungoni Mazhindu, was on Friday last week abducted by 10 men using a Madza pick up truck and severely tortured. He was dumped near his homestead after nearly 11 hours.

According to the Chairman for Zaka Rural District Council (RDC), Peter Imbayago, the incident occurred at around 9pm when the men stormed Mazhindu's house and demanded to see him so that they would have a 'chat'.

Mazhindu tried to escape through the window but he was manhandled and taken away from his home. He was severely beaten by clenched fists, open palms, booted feet and baton sticks. The men reportedly told him that he was getting the 'sweet' reward of supporting MDC.

Imbayago said the matter was reported at Zaka district police station but the police have not done anything about the case.

"We reported the case to the police but up to now nothing has been done," said Imbayago.

MDC MP for Zaka West, Hon Festus Dumbu said that the incident was a sore reminder of the bloody campaign spearheaded by Zanu PF during last year's Presidential run-off vote.

"The people in my area are saddened and shocked by fresh abductions in Zaka. They are forced to remember sad events of last year's bloody campaigns where our youths were petrol bombed by Zanu PF youths and died at Jerera," said Hon Dumbu.

Provincial Chairperson, Wilstaff Sitemere told The Changing Times that cases of violence being instigated by Zanu PF members are on the increase in Masvingo as he was receiving reports almost on a daily basis.

"This is a serious matter. I am receiving such reports everyday. There is no peace, there are fresh abductions at a time when we were persuading our supporters to forgive Zanu PF thugs for the sins they committed,"

Sitemere said the most affected areas are Zaka, Chivi, Bikita and Gutu.

Last week some soldiers in Chivi were forcing civilians to attend meetings aimed at forcing them to accept the Kariba draft constitution, without debate.

Gwezere bail judgement today

HARARE - The judgement in the bail application for MDC transport manager, Pascal Gwezere will be handed down today.

Justice Charles Hungwe said he will deliver judgement in the application today after receiving submissions from both State and defence lawyers in his chambers.

The State is opposing bail and claims it has recovered all missing weapons and arrested five people who they claim have implicated Gwezere in the theft of 21 firearms from Pomona Army Barracks in Borrowdale.

The State claims the weapons have been recovered from a sewer where they were hidden and the five were ex-soldiers who had allegedly fingered Gwezere as their accomplice.



Pascal Gwezere

Gwezere's lawyer, Alec Muchadehama, said Gwezere was a good candidate for bail as he was a first offender, had a fixed board and could lodge surety with the courts.

The hearing was first postponed on Wednesday after State prosecutor Chris Mutangadura,

who is handling the case, was not available.

Gwezere is facing trumped-up charges of ganging up with a woman only identified as Gertrude and stealing 21 firearms from the highly-secured Pomona Army Barracks in Borrowdale, Harare last month.

On Monday, Gwezere had a laughable charge of undergoing military training at Soroti Training Camp in Uganda 10 years ago thrown out by a Harare magistrate.

Gwezere through his lawyer, submitted that he had no capacity to commit the offence and that he had no connections in the army. His lawyer said the State's case was very weak.

His lawyers have argued that there was no evidence that he had entered Pomona Barracks.



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Former Zanu PF mayor refuses to vacate council house

KWEKWE-Former Zanu PF Kwekwe Mayor Stanford Bonyongwe is refusing to vacate the mayoral mansion despite being served with more than three letters of eviction.

According to council resolutions, Bonyongwe was supposed to have vacated the mayoral house after his term of office expired to make way for newly elected MDC Mayor, Clr Shadreck Tobaiwa.

The Kwekwe town clerk has sent three letters of eviction to Bonyongwe, but he is said to have defied the order and has since sought assistance from the permanent secretary for Local Government to support his continued illegal stay.

"Bonyongwe never responded to any of the letters written to him, but went behind our back and approached the permanent secretary for Local government Killian Mupingo who wrote a letter to the council saying that he (Bonyongwe) should be left staying at the mansion," said mayor Tobaiwa.

The letter from the permanent secretary also advised the council to identify another house within the council properties which they could sell to Bonyongwe at 50% of its actual value as an alternative to evicting him.

The Changing Times has also learnt that Bonyongwe received his exit package with benefits that include a mayoral Benz, a stand of his choice, a bedroom suit and a cellphone but still insists on staying at the mayoral mansion.

Bonyongwe is among several Zanu PF members and some former senior government officials who are resisting eviction from government houses even though they are no longer serving in government.

Apart from being denied his right as Mayor to stay in the mansion, Mayor Tobaiwa is facing challenges of using public transport to carry out official civic duties.

"I have no official car that I can use to carry out my duties especially if am supposed to attend urgent meetings and during weekends. Sometimes I use a pool car which is supposed to be cleared by the Town Clerk first and I have no control over the administration vehicle and the driver," said the mayor.