

# Domestic Media Monitoring Report on Zimbabwe, October 8<sup>th</sup>-October 17<sup>th</sup> 2010

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## 1) Elections Only Feasible in 2012 by Faith Zaba

- A top government official who wished to remain anonymous said that Zimbabwe should not expect elections in 2011 unless the country is willing to have them under the same conditions as the bloody June 27 polls of 2008.
- The earliest possible time that Zimbabwe can expect elections is in 2012, when all agreed democratic reforms outlined in the GPA, which include electoral, media and security reforms, would have been implemented.
- This was said as political parties in the inclusive government were now talking about a negotiated draft constitution, a process which the official said is likely to be as protracted as the negotiations that led to the signing of the global political agreement (GPA), which gave birth to the unity government in February last year.
- The anonymous government official added that "[i]f you want an election which is predicated on Zanu PF [Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front] retreating or a government of Zimbabwe retreating and you suddenly have outsiders run an election, you are joking, it's not going to happen. At the very least 2012. If you want to have an election in 2011, you will have to say it is an election that generally repudiates the GPA - no new constitution, no electoral reforms, no media reforms - nothing. So if that is the election we want, then that's fine. The bottom line is that if you want to walk away from the GPA and have an election as if there was never a GPA then you can have an election next year. But if you want to go through some semblance that we are at the end of the GPA processes that we agreed upon then the earliest we can talk about is 2012."
- Contrary to press statements from the Constitution Select Committee (Copac), which has announced that a drafting committee would be appointed in January, the state official said people should not expect one any time soon and that the three political parties in the unity government will now have to go back to the drawing board and agree on how best to proceed.

- The anonymous official said they would have to decide on whether they go back to the initial agreed model whereby they were going to use the Kariba draft as the reference point: "Even the (Douglas) Mwonzoras (Copac co-chairperson) are busy saying that a drafting committee of the constitution will only be appointed in January. But first of all there will not be any drafting committee at all anywhere in the future. How do you draft a constitution from the data which is there, if you have no power to negotiate? Can I say these are the notes to draft a constitution; from which of the voices are you going to take? They don't have anyone in that select committee who has negotiating powers."
- The government official said they would have to decide on whether the committee would go back to the initial agreed model whereby they were going to use the Kariba draft as the reference point. "Basically, the model that we had selected of making a constitution is no longer there. We have to find another. That model was based on the understanding we were going to take Kariba to the people and the people would say yes to this and no to that,"
- He added that he believes that 80 per cent of the Kariba draft constitution will not be a problem and that the committee would have to change 20 per cent based on the people's views. "If you repudiate Kariba, you are starting from scratch. You have to have people who have the full authority of the political parties to negotiate, to give in and to compromise. In that select committee there is no one from all the political parties who has the mandate to negotiate because this was supposed to be a PR thing, so who is going to negotiate for you there? So that whole structure is not capable of delivering anything. Because now you have the different voices from the people, people in Masvingo want one thing, now you have to have people authorised to derecognise that voice and recognize this voice. This is a self-inflicted problem."
- The Kariba draft was negotiated by negotiators from the three political parties to the GPA.

## 2) ZANU-PF Structures Collapse by Brian Chitemba

- According to senior Zanu PF officials in Bulawayo, former information and publicity minister Sikhanyiso Ndlovu, who is the politburo member tasked with heading the party in the province, is under fire for failing to establish viable party structures. ZANU PF bigwigs in Matabeleland are now fighting over the collapse of party structures as senior members snub critical meetings.

- Ndlovu also prematurely announced last week that the province would host Vice-President John Nkomo's celebrations to mark his ascendance to his current position, angering other politburo members in the region who felt that they had done enough preparations for the bash.
- For the third time this year, the celebrations which were scheduled for October 2 at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair grounds in Bulawayo were cancelled.
- Politburo members Eunice Sandi-Moyo, Angeline Masuku, Edson Ncube and central committee member Tshinga Dube cornered Ndlovu, who is Zanu PF secretary for education, on August 26 at Zanu PF provincial headquarters, *Davies Hall*, and demanded an explanation why officials were snubbing party meetings. Apparently, only 50 members out of 150 officials attended the provincial coordinating committee (PCC) meeting on that day, raising the concern of the senior party officials in the region.
- PCC consists of politburo, central committee, national consultative assembly and provincial executive members.
- A senior Zanu PF member said that "Ndlovu was summoned to a closed-door meeting by Masuku, Dube, Sandi and Ncube who asked Ndlovu why he was failing to mobilize party members to attend critical gatherings. Masuku and company who are seen as powerhouses in Matabeleland lambasted Ndlovu for failing to maintain vibrant party structures." Dube confirmed the meeting, but declined to discuss details: "I was at the meeting but we left early. I cannot discuss much concerning the issue."
- Another important issue at the closed-door meeting by the Zanu PF stalwarts was Ndlovu's announcement that Bulawayo province would host Nkomo's celebrations when Nkomo had not confirmed he would attend. "The senior party members told Ndlovu that he was not supposed to call for Nkomo's celebrations at a time party members were snubbing meetings. Ndlovu was asked if he wanted to embarrass Nkomo due to a poor attendance."
- Ndlovu denied on October 7<sup>th</sup> that party structures had collapsed and that there was infighting in the province.

**Financial Gazette website, Harare, in English, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010.**

### **ZBC Monopoly Set To Remain** by Clemence Manyukwe.

- The Zimbabwe executive has given notice to table amendments to the country's restrictive broadcasting laws that have nothing to do with introducing more players, but maintaining the monopoly of the State broadcaster.
- This is a clear sign the government is insincere about freeing the airwaves.
- Last week, the Minister of Media, Information and Publicity, Webster Shamu, said government was committed to breaking the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's monopoly on broadcasting. Though, on Tuesday the Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, Patrick Chinamasa, tabled a new Bill in the House of Assembly whose amendments will not facilitate the ushering of new players in the industry as it only deals with the theft of broadcasting equipment. The bill is called *Criminal Laws Amendment (Protection of Power, Communication and Water Infrastructure)*, and will amend the *Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act* (Chapter 9:07), the *Postal and Communications Act* (Chapter 12:05) and the *Broadcasting Services Act* (BSA) (Chapter 12:06), among others.
- In amending BSA in Clause 4, the Bill only provides for the arrest of persons tampering with broadcasting equipment, and does not loosen the restrictive law when it comes to licensing new players. It also does not address concerns of media players to provide for pluralism.
- Part of the bill announces that "[t]his clause seeks to amend the Broadcasting Services Act in several respects. Firstly, the Act at present makes no provision for penalising willful damage to or interference with broadcasting infrastructure. Accordingly, it proposes to insert a new part dealing with this topic, which includes a new section 39G (willful damage to, interference with or theft of infrastructural broadcasting apparatus, equipment or appliances). Secondly, a new special power of citizen's arrest of persons engaged in willful damaging or interfering with infrastructural broadcasting apparatus, equipment or appliances is included in the new section 39H."
- The Bill also adds that to prevent theft of broadcasting equipment, persons wishing to transport such material must first obtain a special police clearance certificate from the regulating authority for that area. Failure to produce the said police clearance certificate attracts jail sentences of up to 10 years.

- The cosmetic amendments to BSA came as a shock to media stakeholders after Shamu publicly stated that the government was committed to opening up the airwaves by licensing new independent radio and television stations.
- Zimbabwe is the only country in southern Africa without independent or private broadcasters despite being the first country in the region to have a television broadcast as far back as the early 1960s.

***The Standard* website, Harare, in English, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010.**

**1) IMF predicts 6 per cent growth for Zimbabwe's economy in 2010.**

- The International Monetary Fund has revised upwards Zimbabwe's growth forecast for 2010 in an indication that the economy has been on a rebound in the second half of the year. In its World Economic Outlook Report for October, the Bretton Woods institution projected a real GDP growth of 5.9 per cent this year.
- In April, the IMF had slashed its growth forecast to 2.2 per cent from the 6 per cent the institution had earlier projected. According to the October report, Zimbabwe is projected to record a real GDP growth rate of 4.5 per cent next year, up from the zero growth rate it had projected in April. It sees inflation ending the year at 4.7 per cent and 7.8 per cent in 2011.
- The upward revision of growth projections follows Finance minister Tendai Biti's forecast last month that the economy is expected to grow by 8.1 per cent from the 5.4 per cent earlier projected, underpinned by a serious rebound in agriculture, mining and tourism.
- Biti called warned that the country's treasury is still constrained and requires "fiscal marksmanship" to meet the growing needs, since revenue generated is chewed up by recurrent expenditure with salaries getting a huge chunk. Little money is allocated to capital expenditure necessary to revive the economy.
- Moreover, the debt overhang is threatening to stymie growth. Zimbabwe is saddled with an over US\$7 billion debt to multilateral institutions meaning that it cannot access lines of credit to revive the economy.
- Zimbabwe suffered a decade of recession when the political crisis took a toll on the economy.

## **2) Outbreak of Swine Flu in Matabeleland** by Nqobile Bhebhe

- An outbreak of the deadly influenza H1N1 has been reported in Tsholotsho, Matabeleland North, where two people have tested positive out of the 300 cases reported.
- Themba Moyo, the Tsholotsho District administrator wrote to Matabeleland North provincial administrator on October 15th, Latiso Dlamini notifying her of the outbreak. "We hereby report on the outbreak of influenza H1N1 in Tsholotho District. A total of 300 cases have been reported, seven tests done and two have been confirmed positive.
- When the virus was first detected last year, all entry points to Zimbabwe were put on high alert.
- Early this year the United States Agency for International Development donated medical supplies to fight a future influenza outbreak, including 50,000 personal protective clothing kits worth 645,000 dollars, for influenza preparedness for use by health care workers in Zimbabwe and throughout southern Africa in case of an outbreak.
- It is not clear whether the two who tested positive are quarantined in hospitals or not.