

Zimbabwe Domestic Broadcasting, 30 August, 2010 (19 August-29 August, 2010)

by Marie Lamensch, MIGS reporter for Zimbabwe

Government-owned media

(The Herald, government-owned daily, article dated August 20, 2009, in English)

“Zimbabwe: Indigenisation Moves Gear Up” by Golden Sibanda

- The government has set up 13 sectoral committees responsible for facilitating the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act. Youth Development, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Minister, Saviour Kasukuwere, said the role of the sub-committees was to develop implementation modalities, not review its purpose. Their goal will be to advise the government on appropriate minimum net asset value thresholds for compliance with indigenization, to assess ways to overcome obstacles to the indigenization process and to recommend sector specific strategies in order to enhance the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act.

(The Herald, government-owned daily, article dated August 24, 2009, in English)

“Zimbabwe: Government Says No to Handouts” by Tendai Mugabe

- During a meeting with diplomats and ambassadors, Foreign Affairs Minister Simbarashe Mumbengegwi said Zimbabwe would not accept handouts from the international community. The minister argued that the country only needed for the sanctions to be lifted to achieve self-reliance. He added that the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe created the conditions for dependency on aid. He believes humanitarian assistance to be demeaning and criticized Western powers for channelling assistance through NGOs, not through the state, therefore allowing NGOs to serve the West’s interests.
- The minister briefed journalists about the SADC summit and said the organ had criticized the sanctions, despite protests by the German ambassador.

Privately-owned media

(The Financial Gazette, private daily, Harare, article dated 19 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: No to Elections!”

- The Financial Gazette criticizes the SADC’s decision to hold elections in Zimbabwe. The newspaper believes elections will have a negative impact on the nation’s economy.
- While the MDC-T and Zanu-PF welcome the elections because they have been unable to co-habit, a heavy price is being paid and will continue to be paid by the general public as a result of Zimbabwe’s poor economy. The party leaders’ position is described as “selfish.”

- Restoration is more important and elections would not necessarily bring peace: “Rather, Zimbabwe could drift into a more disastrous catastrophe that could further lurch the country into a pariah state when we had already started moving towards slow integration.”
- Advocacy groups are worried by an election’s “potential of bloodbath” and have called on the Sadc to address the issue.
- The Financial Gazette calls on Zimbabwe to respect principles of free and fair elections, and calls on authorities to be impartial.
- Deputy Prime Minister Mutambara has insisted that elections should not be held because the country is not ready for it. Other parliamentarians have backed him up as they believe elections would not be in the best interest of the nation.
- The Financial Gazette calls for a new constitution, even though civil society has brought attention to the current process’ flaws. Zimbabweans should be taught about their rights.
- The government should have committed more resources to the national healing programme and should have created an environment of tolerance. Instead Zimbabweans still remain divided, particularly as a result of deep divisions at the top.
- “The fact that we even want election monitors from the United Nations and other international bodies, betrays the fact that Zimbabwe is currently not ready to hold a free and fair election.”

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 20 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: MDC Devise Local Ways of Dealing With Constitutional Violence” by Tererai Karimakwenda

- MDC officials and activists have come up with their own strategies to deal with Zanu-PF sponsored violence during the constitutional outreach programme.
- While some have resorted to fighting back, supporters in Manicaland suspended the process in areas where violence and intimidation have been reported.
- Activists believe the MDC has not been vocal enough about the matter and instead of only thinking about the elections, the parties should educate people about Zimbabwe’s constitution.
- Cases of arson, assaults, intimidation and threats have been widely reported by civil groups and it is believed that violence will only increase.

(The Standard, private weekly, Harare, article dated 22 August, 2010, in English)

“Southern Africa: Mugabe Disciples Dominate Region” by Ndamu Sandu

- The Standard criticized the Sadc for refusing to condemn government who silence "dissenting voices to sustain unpopular regimes," including Swaziland, Zimbabwe and the DRC.
- The Namibian government refused to let advocacy groups from countries such as the DRC, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, the DRC and Swaziland to organize a march.
- Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) held a photo exhibition in Namibia’s capital exposing human rights abuses in Zimbabwe.

- Analysts believe that the re-emergence of repression in Southern Africa comes from the fact that Sadc an "'Old Days Club' and ruling parties in the region believe that their legitimacy is derived from the barrel of the gun and not democracy [...] Sadc leaders are paying lip service to democracy while relying on military might for political authority."

(The Standard, private weekly, Harare, article dated 22 August, 2010, in English)

“Southern Africa: Mugabe Wins Big at SADC Summit” by Kholwani Nyathi

- Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai’s “charm offensive” ahead of the Sadc summit’s had created optimism that President Mugabe would be brought under control yet instead of rebuking him for failing to implement the GPA, the Sadc praised the principals to the GPA “for their efforts towards implementation of the GPA”.
- A communiqué published at the end of the summit also called for the removal of the sanctions against Mugabe. The Sadc also refused to address the issue of the “racist” and “illegal” land reform programme and succumbed to pressures by Mugabe.
- Analysts believe Tsvangirai failed to understand the Sadc’s relationship to Mugabe and the organ’s reluctance to meddle into national affairs. Mugabe is the sole survivor of the Sadc original team.
- Shortly after the Sadc’s summit, Mugabe said he would no longer cooperate with his coalition partners on the resolution of outstanding issues in the GPA until sanctions were removed.
- Nonetheless, a report on Zimbabwe by South African President Zuma was presented to the Sadc troika on defence, politics and security. The document called for the principals to implement the GPA and for the Sadc to take an active role in ensuring free and peaceful elections.

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 23 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: MDC Dismisses Zanu PF's Claims Over Sanctions” by Alex Bell

- The MDC-T dismissed claims by Zanu-PF's Patrick Chinamasa that governors would be sworn in only once targeted sanctions against the Mugabe regime have been lifted. The party called Chinamasa’s claims “misleading and mischievous” and part of “primitive tactics” trying to delay the implementation of the GPA.

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 23 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: Diamonds Controlled by New Group of Zanu PF Hardliners” by Tichaona Sibanda

- A powerful group using the sale of diamonds to enrich Zanu-PF said to be in control of Zimbabwe’s diamond riches. The group is comprised of Zanu-PF hardliners such as senior military officers, cabinet ministers and top civil servants.

- The two mining companies given government approval to mine the Chiadzwa diamond fields - Mbada Investments and Canadile – are also headed by former senior military officials.
- Analysts believe revenue will be used to mobilize support, particularly ahead of the elections. The military is now benefitting from the diamond sale and therefore refusing to engage with Tsvangirai to discuss ways of bringing peace to Zimbabwe.

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 23 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: MP Behind Land Seizure Snubs High Court Order” by Alex Bell

- Jabulani Mangena, MP responsible for the illegal seizure of a farm in Somabuhla, snubbed a High Court order protecting the land from invasion by refusing to leave the property. Mangena is responsible for leading a campaign of violence and intimidation against the former owners of the farm.

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 24 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: MDC-T Legislator Blasts Police for Treating Them Like Criminals” by Tichaona Sibanda

- MDC-T Senator for Zaka Misheck Marava criticized the police for treating MDC-T legislators as criminals. Marava is one of the five individuals facing charges of disrupting a ZANU PF meeting in Masvingo.
- Marava argued that Zimbabweans are being let down by the justice system which is treating perpetrators of violence as victims. He believes the country’s security forces want to destroy the MDC party while Zanu-PF officials and activists are “untouchable” and free to commit acts of violence.

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 24 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: Zanu Pf Officials to Be Questioned in Torture Trial” by Alex Bell

- Zanu-PF officials, four Cabinet ministers and a number of service chiefs, will face the court on allegations of torture, unlawful detention and deprivation of liberty after the abduction of Mapfumo Garutsa during the 2008 elections.
- Garutsa was accused of bombing two bridges, police stations, and undergoing training in Botswana. He was subjected to torture and starvation during his 22 days detention.
- The ministers and service chiefs have denied the allegations, arguing Garutsa and other suspects were kept in 'safe houses' and 'volunteered' information
- Zimbabwe has not yet signed the UN Convention against Torture.

(Voice of America Zimbabwe, independent, Washington, August 25, 2010, in English)

“Mugabe Refused Hero Status for MDC Leader” by Peta Thornycroft | Johannesburg

- The two MDC formations have expressed their anger over President Mugabe’s refusal to accord national hero status to Gibson Sibanda, one of the MDC’s founding fathers who died during the week. Sibanda was a promoter of national and reconciliation and PM Tsvangirai said he would remain "an indelible imprint in the sad narrative of our determined and brave march towards a new Zimbabwe."
- The Prime Minister’s spokesman Nelson Chamisa said the president’s refusal to declare Sibanda a national hero was motivated by "cruelty, contempt and revenge." Meanwhile, Priscilla Misihairabwi, the deputy-secretary general of the MDC-M, said Mugabe only wanted Zanu-PF party members to get hero status.

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 25 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: Ten Days Pass With No GPA Implementation” by Alex Bell

- While the unity government was given a 30 days deadline to implement the GPA, ten days have passed without any steps being taken. There are serious doubts that the deadline will be met.
- President Mugabe said he would not make concessions unless the sanctions against him are lifted. Zanu-PF's Patrick Chinamasa also added that governors would not be appointed either unless sanctions are removed.
- Sadc has not said what would happen if case of non-compliance.
- Advocacy group leaders called on the MDC to engage with their supporters, civil society, churches and the SADC to ensure safe elections.

(Zimbabwe Independent, private weekly, Harare, article dated 26 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: Families Given 10 Days to Vacate Diamond Field” by Wongai Zhangazha

- Forty families from the Chiadzwa diamond fields and Mukwada villages in Manicaland have been given a 10-day notice to leave their homes and make way for Mbada Diamonds.
- Though villagers were promised groceries and school fees, there is no written agreement and villagers will only be compensated after relocation.
- The villagers are said to be angry that the government failed to consult them. They want compensation and want to benefit from the diamonds.
- Some villagers have also complained about the way they are being handled by a Chinese company in the area

(Zimbabwe Independent, private weekly, Harare, article dated 26 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: Chihuri, Ministers Sued for Police Brutality” by Wongai Zhangazha

- Police Commissioner-General Augustine Chihuri and cabinet ministers are being sued for torturing a woman from Mt Hamden. Another victims is suing them as well after

allegedly being abducted and tortured in 2008. She was pregnant at the time and the assault led the child's death.

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 26 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: Nation Ranked 10th for Food Insecurity Worldwide” by Tichaona Sibanda

- Zimbabwe has been ranked 10th in the world in the Food Security Risk Index 2010. Factors include cereal production, risk of extreme weather events, quality of agricultural and distribution infrastructure, conflict and effectiveness of government.

(Zimbabwe Independent, private weekly, Harare, article dated 26 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: So Many Elections, So Little Change” by Leonard Makombe

- The Zimbabwe Independent and Zimbabweans are skeptical over the prospect of new elections as they believed that while elections can be held, leadership does not necessarily change. The 2008 election violence are said to be a proof.
- Analysts believe there is a sense of powerlessness and fatigue among Zimbabweans.
- However, others think that elections could bring the country out of its crisis as the parties to the GPA have failed to work together. Yet the problem is that Zimbabwe has yet to see free and fair elections.

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 26 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: Police Corruption Suspected in Eviction of Borrowdale Settlers” by Alex Bell

- Raids by 30 uniformed police officers on an informal settlement in Borrowdale have led many to question their motives. Shacks were burnt down and settlers were detained for several hours before they were taken to Harare's central police station. Lawyers from the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) were denied access to the group of 55 settlers. 52 of them have now been released yet have lost all of their belongings as a result of raid.
- ZLHR Communications Officer, Kumbirai Mafunda condemned these “unlawful police actions.”
- Yet, some residents said a number of criminals responsible for thefts in the area lived in the settlement and it is believed that the police initially benefitted from the crime. The destruction of the settlement is therefore seen as a act of revenge after possibly having been left out of a deal.

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 26 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: War Vets And Zanu PF Youths Charged With Assaulting Chief” by Tererai Karimakwenda

- A group of eleven Zanu-PF war vets and youths appeared before a Masvingo magistrate. They are accused of assaulting a traditional chief during the 2008 elections. All eleven pleaded not guilty to the charge of public violence.
- The MDC is said to be surprised by prosecution these Zanu-PF elements since they usually enjoy impunity and as a lot of activists are still freely committing violence.

(Zimbabwe Independent, private weekly, Harare, article dated 27 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: MDC-T Protests to SADC Over 'Doctored' Communiqué” by Farai Mutsaka

- The MDC-T has officially criticized the Sadc secretariat for the way they handled Zimbabwe’s political stalemate at the Sadc’s summit last week.
- The party also asked for the organ’s assistance ahead of the elections.
- A letter was written to the Sadc secretariat criticizing the organ for “doctoring” of the communiqué and blocking the debate on Zimbabwe.
- Party secretary-general Tendai Biti is said to have authored the letter.
- The party noted three areas of concern, including the implementation of a roadmap to free and fair elections in Zimbabwe and the completion of the constitution-making exercise.

(SW Radio Africa, independent Zimbabwean radio, London, UK, dated 27 August, 2010, in English)

“Zimbabwe: Tomana Dismisses MDC-T Report On 2008 Atrocities”

- Attorney-General Johannes Tomana has dismissed an MDC-T report documenting the 2008 political violence. The attorney general said he did not take the report seriously and should not have been sent the document in the first place as it disrespects the system.