

Zimbabwe Domestic Broadcasting (15 February - 21 February, 2011)

By Zuzia Danielski, MIGS media monitor for Zimbabwe

State-owned Media

“Violence perpetrators warned”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 15 February 2011, in English)

- Police said they are on high alert, after disturbances in the capital within recent weeks. They praised ZANU-PF supporters for not retaliating against MDC-T after recent bombing of party offices in Mbare.
- Police will remain on the ground to monitor, ensuring peace and stability.

“Sanctions extension non-event: SK Moyo”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 16 February 2011, in English)

- The European Union’s decision yesterday to extend the illegal sanctions on Zimbabwe by a year is a ‘non-event’ the ZANU-PF National Chairman Moyo told ZBC.
- ‘The EU decision on sanctions is a non-event, it will not deter us from the bigger vision of empowering the people of Zimbabwe’, Moyo said. He added that the removal of 35 people from the list would not be celebrated, as ZANU-PF believes all sanctions are to be lifted.
- Moyo declared the EU meeting illegal, ‘...the matter it deliberated on is a bilateral standoff between Zimbabwe and Britain, not the entire EU’.

“EU delegation exhibits double standards”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 16 February 2011, in English)

- EU Head of Delegation to Zimbabwe said that the organization is willing to cooperate on development programmes, a day after it extended illegal sanctions.
- Ambassador Aldo Dell Ariccia’s comments have been described as a double standard.

“Parties condemn violence”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 17 February 2011, in English)

- Harare provincial leaders of the three parties signatory to the Global Political Agreement condemned violent clashes that took place in the region recently, calling for their supporters to stop the violent activities.

- ZANU-PF, MDC-T and MDC provincial chairpersons, together with JOMIC agreed to set up operation committees to curb violence. The chairmen said the leadership had a responsibility to calm tensions and urged people to refrain from violence.

“NGO’s should complement govt: VP Mujuru”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 18 February 2011, in English)

- Vice President Joice Mujuru said that the greatest contribution of non-governmental organizations is promoting sustainable growth and development in their communities, and their success cannot be judged by their time in operation.
- Mujuru said that Zimbabwe’s government welcomes public voluntary organizations, but insists any intervention must be ‘done within the confines of the laws of the country’. She added that Zimbabweans do not need assistance from foreign institutions in directing local politics.
- Mujuru was addressing representatives from various international NGOs at the World Vision Extraordinary Southern Africa Region Meetings in Bulawayo.

“Tsvangirai says ready for polls”

(The Herald, government-owned daily, 20 February 2011, in English)

- MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai told party supporters yesterday that his party would participate in the elections expected to be held this year if conditions were upheld for a free and fair poll. The Prime Minister made the statements at a rally west of Beitbridge.
- His statements were contrary to earlier reports after a meeting with business leaders in Harare that he might boycott elections.
- Tsvangirai says that the parties forming an inclusive government had agreed on a road map for elections and were expecting a team from South African later this week for consultations on the election road map.
- Conditions for a poll include availability of ‘clean voters’ roll, new constitution, independent electoral commission and prevalence of peace during election period.

“Do not retaliate, ZANU-PF supporters urged”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 20 February 2011, in English)

- ZANU-PF supporters were urged not to retaliate against recent acts of MDC-T violence, but shame perpetrators by resoundingly voting for the President’s revolutionary party in anticipated elections.
- Thousands of ZANU-PF supporters gathered in Harare for a belated Christmas Party hosted by Politburo Member Tendai Savanhu, and members took the opportunity to denounce the violence committed by suspected MDC-T supporters.

“Nation celebrates President Mugabe’s 87th birthday”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 21 February 2011, in English)

- Zimbabwe joined the First Family in celebrating President Mugabe's 87th birthday on Monday.
- ZANU-PF National Chairman Moyo said the event was a celebration for every Zimbabwean, 'While the nation celebrates, this should also be a moment of stock taking for the country's youth who are tasked with emulating the excellent leadership qualities of Cde Mugabe'.
- Ahead of the anticipated elections, the population was urged to celebrate the President's birthday 'in the context of his leadership qualities that have seen the empowerment of ordinary people through his visionary leadership'.

"President on Cabinet sitting" by Tendai Mugabe

(The Herald, government-owned daily, 21 February 2011, in English)

- President Mugabe said that Cabinet can sit twice a week if there is anyone who feels Government business is lagging behind schedule. The President spoke with reporters after his birthday celebrations, addressing claims by private media that his absence last week while in Singapore for an eye operation had compromised government business.
- The traditional Tuesday sitting of Cabinet sitting was postponed while the President was away. The President chairs meetings as Head of State and Government.
- Mugabe told journalists that crucial Government meetings could not be held in his absence but the postponement of a single Cabinet session would not affect Government as Ministers should have continued with their normal activities.

Private-owned Media

"Mugabe's poor health crippling government business", by Lance Guma

(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 15 February 2011, in English)

- Mugabe's mounting health problems have limited the number of times Zimbabwe's cabinet has met to discuss important issues. State-owned media confirmed Sunday the President left for Singapore for a cataract operation.
- The Cabinet has only met for two hours in the past two months. PM Tsvangirai is to chair cabinet meetings in the President's absence, but Mugabe has ensured the Cabinet does not meet while he is away, not even entrusting the power to his own two Vice Presidents.

"Miss Zimbabwe pageant turned into ZANU-PF rally", by Tererai Karimakwenda

(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 16 February 2011, in English)

- The Miss Zimbabwe Tourism pageant held in Harare on Saturday turned into a ZANU-PF rally with top party officials quizzing contestants on party history and philosophy.
- This year's pageant, 'Promoting Peace through Tourism', had the ladies escorted down the runway by uniformed soldiers.
- The MDC-T released a statement blasting the politicization of the pageant, reminding the party, 'ZANU-PF and Mugabe banned the Miss Zimbabwe pageant in 1981, saying this was against our African tradition and the party's socialist dream'. It was later restarted due to popular pressure.

"UK faces criticism over £100 million 'reward' for Zim", by Alex Bell
(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 17 February 2011, in English)

- The UK is facing criticism after announcing Tuesday its plans to increase aid to Zimbabwe by more than £100 million as a reward for democratic reform despite renewed political violence across the country.
- Andrew Mitchell, the UK's International Development Secretary will outline details of the planned extra spending next month, but said, 'it is vital that the government prepares a new constitution which reflects the interests of the people and puts in place conditions for credible elections'.
- The UK's announcement came on the same day the EU said it would remove 35 people from its list of targeted sanctions against the Mugabe regime.

"Tsvangirai threatens boycott of 'rushed' election", by Lance Guma
(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 17 February 2011, in English)

- Tsvangirai has threatened to boycott a rushed poll this year, arguing it is necessary to first create conditions for free and fair elections.
- Addressing German business executives, the PM said that the country should probably hold elections next year, after the pre-requisites of a new constitution, biometric voters roll, a peaceful environment and credible electoral commission had been filled.
- He said, 'Once the constitutional making process is complete and a referendum is held, Mugabe and I will sit down as the main parties and decide on the election date'.

"Zim can revert to old constitution if GPA fails" by Paidamoyo Muzulu
(Zimbabwe Independent, independent weekly, Harare, 18 February 2011, in English)

- Lawyers said this week that Zimbabwe can revert back to the old constitution, minus Amendment No 19, if the Global Political Agreement collapses.

- This follows statements from President Mugabe who said he would call for elections using the old constitution, as it was before the 19th Amendment, which created the framework for the current coalition government.
- MDC-T Secretary General Biti, as one of the GPA negotiators, said that Amendment 19 would fall as soon as the GPA collapsed, but added that he did not believe that was in the best interests of any party.

“Zuma facilitation team due in Harare next week”, by Tererai Karimakwenda (SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 18 February 2011, in English)

- South African President Zuma’s facilitation team is due in Harare next week to meet with Zimbabwe’s three main political parties. They will draw up a framework and discuss what to include on the roadmap for elections. Zuma’s international advisor confirmed that the team would meet with parties separately and collectively.
- ZUMA and the SADC have been criticized for being too lenient on Mugabe and his party.
- Zuma’s advisor added that a time frame for elections would not be discussed.

“ZBC TV viewership hits rock bottom” (The Standard, independent weekly, Harare, 20 February 2011, in English)

- Viewership of the state-owned Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation fell during the last quarter of 2010 as the country’s only broadcasters increased a propaganda campaign against Mugabe’s opponents, in what has been labelled ‘hate speech’.
- Results of the Zimbabwe All Media Products and Services Survey (ZAMPS) show that viewership of ZBC TVI fell to 24% from an earlier 34%.
- The news hour programme led the decline, with numbers falling from 30% to 26%, although it was still a favourite.
- ZBC Channel 2 is now watched by only 10% of the population.
- 46% of Zimbabweans continue to use satellites tuning into foreign TV stations.
- ZBC is suing The Standard for US\$10 million after the newspaper reported that listeners were deserting the station because of partisan programming.
- A recent survey has revealed that readership of The Standard has increased by 75% between October-December 2010, with the newspaper enjoying 7% market share, making it one of the most read in the country.

“Can failing health stop Mugabe?” by Kholwani Nyathi (The Standard, independent weekly, Harare, 20 February 2011, in English)

- While President Mugabe’s health is one of Zimbabwe’s ‘best kept secrets’, last week handlers were forced to break with tradition as they revealed he had left for Singapore for a minor cataract operation.
- Last month, they had vehemently denied the President had undergone an operation for prostate cancer, only revealing he was in Singapore for ‘medical

review'. This week was the first time it was announced he had undergone an operation.

- The recent statement has fuelled rumours that the President, who turns 87 tomorrow (21 Feb), will be increasingly unable to withstand a demanding election campaign.
- Academics say there is no evidence that Mugabe is preparing to hand over power to anyone within the party. According to released WikiLeaks cables, diplomats who spent time with Mugabe found him 'alert, articulate, in apparent good health'.

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