

Zimbabwe Domestic Broadcasting (22 February - 28 February, 2011)

By Zuzia Danielski, MIGS media monitor for Zimbabwe

State-owned Media

“SADC mediation team jets in”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 22 February 2011, in English)

- South African President Zuma’s mediation team, led by Lindiwe Zulu, arrived in Zimbabwe Tuesday afternoon. The visit is part of an ongoing process to provide an update on the inclusive government.
- A source says the team will meet with all parties, and an unconfirmed report states the team will also meet with the three principals later in the week.

“Senators clash over violence claims”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 22 February 2011, in English)

- A heated debate on which party is to blame for the recent political violence took place in the Senate, after a recent attack in a Harare suburb resulted in one death.
- Despite overwhelming police evidence that disturbances have been perpetrated by the MDC-T, Senator Morgan Komichi moved for a motion accusing the President and police of inciting violence.
- The President of the Senate warned the senator to withdraw his statement. ZANU-PF members did not take Komichi’s accusations lightly, telling him to prove how security forces have failed to act in their duties.
- ‘MDC-T has a history of violence with its climax being the ill-fated call for a final push that was meant to remove the establishment through violence means’.

“I’m still a principal - Mutambara” by Daniel Nemukuyu

(The Herald, government-owned daily, 25 February 2011, in English)

- Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara said that he is still a principal of the Global Political Agreement and will be attending meetings related to his position.
- An interim order issued by the Bulwayo High Court interdicts the DPM from exercising any power vested in the office of MDC President. Mutambara’s lawyer filed a challenge yesterday.

“Let us defend our sovereignty: President”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 26 February 2011, in English)

- On the 25th anniversary of the 21st February Movement, President Mugabe urged Zimbabweans to carry the burden of responsibility bestowed on them by predecessors in order to uphold the country's cultural values and traditions.
- Addressing thousands of people who had amassed at Harare International Conference Centre since morning, the President said, 'I am not just Robert Mugabe, but Robert Mugabe the carrier, the bearer of the burden left on us by those who have departed', referencing Joshua Nkomo and Simon Muzenda.
- He added that Zimbabwe, 'will wage war to defend its sovereignty and win it in the same way it defeated British colonialism'.

“Anti-sanctions lobby gathers momentum”

(The Herald, government-owned daily, 27 February 2011, in English)

- Thousands of Zimbabweans are expected to crowd the Harare Agricultural Show Open Car Park on Wednesday where President Mugabe will launch the National Anti-Sanctions Petition Campaign.
- The ZANU-PF Information and Publicity Department issued a statement saying that Zimbabweans across the political divide should sign the petition because the embargo was affecting people indiscriminately. The theme will be 'Sanctions do kill'.
- Chairperson campaign, John Nkomo, said all parties part of the GPA agreed the sanctions need to be removed. There is no limit to the number of signatures to be gathered.

“Funding won't stall elections” by Kuda Bwititi

(The Sunday Mail, government-owned weekly, 27 February 2011, in English)

- President Mugabe said that lack of funding should not be an excuse to avoid national elections this year, adding that Zimbabwe has the capacity to complete the constitution making process which will pave the way for the polls.
- Speaking at the 21st February Movement celebration in Harare, the President criticised Finance Minister Biti for his reluctance to provide funds for elections, noting it was an impediment to the GPA.
- Mugabe noted that nothing except 'very good reasons' should push the polls back.

“President warns against externalising funds”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 27 February 2011, in English)

- President Mugabe warned foreign owned companies against externalizing funds earned from the sale of Zimbabwe's resources, saying the country will soon enforce measures to restore accountability.
- Addressing delegates at the 21st February Movement celebrations, the President said it was time the government took 'an audit of foreign owned companies who are raking in billions of dollars while contributing nothing to the country's revenue'. He used Zimplants and other gold mines as an example.

- He urgently called on the Minister in charge of indigenisation to ensure these companies fell under the policy.

“US official jets in to court Zim support” by Tafadzwa Chiremba
(The Sunday Mail, government-owned weekly, 27 February 2011, in English)

- The US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs is expected this week in Zimbabwe as the US attempts to gain support for deputy chairmanship of the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it had been notified of Susan Page’s visit on March 1.
- The world diamond body is scheduled to hold a plenary meeting in Zimbabwe next month. But this meeting will be a major retreat from the hostile clause US diplomats inserted into a draft document allowing South African to export diamonds from Chiadzwa.
- Sources revealed that Zimbabwe’s vote on the matter of chairmanship is crucial as it is based on consensus.

“President Mugabe tours Chiadzwa”
(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 28 February 2011, in English)

- President Mugabe said the exploitation and marketing of diamonds was a devastating blow to those who imposed illegal sanctions on Zimbabwe. He made the remarks after his first tour of diamond mines in Chiadzwa, Manicaland province.
- Mugabe stated that despite the embargo, Zimbabwe had its own resources which would be used to benefit its people, ‘The diamonds are ours, the resources belongs to us and nobody can deny us. They [the west] would want some other people to own our resources, but these are God-given. Sanctions have been nullified by the resources [diamonds] which are a big economic punch against anyone’.
- 5 companies are operating in Chiadzwa, including Mbada and Ajin. Ajin has already mined diamonds in stock but is waiting for Kimberly Process certification.

“Tsvangirai’s MDC exposed”
(The Herald, government-owned daily, 28 February 2011, in English)

- Former South African President Thabo Mbeki revealed in a recent interview that MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai heavily relied on the United States during the inter-party talks ahead of the Global Political Agreement. British-based Zimbabwean academic Blessing Miles Tendi says Mbeki told him of Tsvangirai’s reliance on the West during an interview last month.
- Mbeki said Tsvangirai would interrupt discussion to telephone former US Ambassador to Zimbabwe James McGee to provide updates and get instructions

on how to proceed. Intelligence agents monitored the calls and transcripts were provided to Mbeki and other SADC leaders.

- Tendi said the two MDC parties were guilty of numerous “strategic errors”.
- The MDC-T has responded in a statement to Tendi’s claims, calling him a ‘ZANU-PF apologist’ and accusing Mbeki of working to destabilize a united MDC in 2005, ‘Mr. Mbeki has always deployed effort to discredit, rubbish and weaken the MDC. We are also well aware of his disposition and role in the destabilization of the MDC in 2005’.

Private-owned Media

“Zims urged to follow Egypt, Tunisia and Libya’s lead” by Alex Bell
(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 22 February 2011, in English)

- Various internet campaigns hoping to defy President Mugabe’s clampdown on civic action have been launched, encouraging Zimbabweans to follow the lead of other African nations protesting against their dictators. Launched over email and the social networking sites of Facebook and Twitter, the campaigns encourage for peaceful marches to call for Mugabe’s resignation.
- The campaigns have been greeted with a level of indifference with less than 100 people showing support for these groups on Facebook. This might be blamed on low levels of internet access in Zimbabwe, compared to Egypt.

“Gwisai and 45 activists charged with treason” by Lance Guma
(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 23 February 2011, in English)

- 46 activists were charged with treason or plotting to ‘overthrow a constitutionally elected government’ in Harare Wednesday, following mass arrests during the Saturday meeting of Zimbabwe’s Congress of Trade Unions and National Students Union when video was shown of protests in Egypt and Tunisia.
- Among those detained and charged is Munyaradzi Gwisai, the radical leader of the International Socialist Chapter in Zimbabwe, who police allege addressed the crowd, saying Mobutu was in power too long and Zimbabwe needed an Egyptian-style revolt.

“Mwonzora’s arrest stalls progress in COPAC” by Tichaona Sibanda
(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 23 February 2011, in English)

- The MDC-T MP for Nyanga North, Douglas Mwonzora, is in ‘high spirits’ at Mutare prison amid reports that his incarceration is a deliberate attempt by ZANU-PF to stall progress on a new constitution.

- Mwonozora is co-chairperson of the Parliamentary Select Committee heading the new constitution and due to his absence no major decisions can be made. He was arrested in Harare following allegations he instigated violence against ZANU-PF supporters in his constituency. He denies the charges.
- Mwonozora accuses his ZANU-PF opponent of sending militias to storm his rally. Following a standoff between ZANU-PF militia and MDC activists, 24 villagers detained.

“Hundreds flee violence in Nyanga North and cross into Mozambique” by Tichaona Sibanda

(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 24 February 2011, in English)

- Hundreds of villagers from Nyakomba in Nyanga North are fleeing from ZANU-PF violence, and crossing the border into Mozambique.
- MDC spokesman for Manicaland said that three truckloads of ZANU-PF militia arrived in the area and went house-to-house looking for MDC supporters. The trucks were allegedly supplied by Hurbert Nyangongo who is attempting to overthrow MDC-T MP Mwonozora.

“Zimbabwean army helping Gaddafi in Libya” by Lance Guma

(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 24 February 2011, in English)

- Speculation that members of the Zimbabwe National Army are in Libya aiding Colonel Gaddafi has gained momentum after Zimbabwe’s Defence Minister avoided answering the question when asked in Parliament.
- Emmerson Mnangagwa said, “...that there are mercenaries who are African and are in Libya – I have no mandate in my duty as Minister of Defence to investigate activities happening in another African country’. It has been widely reported that mercenaries from several African countries, including Zimbabwe are aiding the Libyan dictator.
- It has been suggested that Gaddafi is planning on fleeing Libya for Zimbabwe.

“SA mediation team meets political parties.... Again” by Tererai Karmakwenda

(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 24 February 2011, in English)

- Representatives from the three main political parties briefed South African President Zuma’s mediation team in Harare on Wednesday about the ongoing violence and conditions necessary to hold free and fair elections. The team was also to meet President Mugabe and PM Tsvangirai. No information on the meetings was made available to the press.
- While Zuma’s international relations advisor, Lindiwe Zulu, has in the past said the team needs to brief President Zuma before any public statement can be released, the media blackout was criticized.

- The MDC-T spokesperson confirmed Thursday their representatives had met with the mediation team, ‘We placed the issues squarely at their feet and what their do with it is up to them’.

“MDC-T complains to ZBC” by Tichaona Sibanda

(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 24 February 2011, in English)

- The MDC has launched a complaint against state-owned ZBC after a surge in criticism against the party and recent blackout of its officials. The letter of complaint was copied to SADC mediator, Jacob Zuma, and the three principals in the GPA.

“MDC members attacked by axe-wielding ZANU-PF mob” by Alex Bell

(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 25 February 2011, in English)

- Three MDC members from Mutare North are recovering after a politically motivated assault by a mob of ZANU-PF supporters. The MDC said the violence was part of intimidation ahead of possible elections.
- Farai Matsika was admitted to hospital for a deep wound on the leg. Two others were bruised and had their homes burned down. Police refused opening a docket, citing the need to conduct an investigation.

“Secessionists pile pressure on Mugabe”

(The Standard, independent weekly, Harare, 26 February 2011, in English)

- The campaign for a separate Matabeleland state intensified after activists formally wrote to President Mugabe and the Prime Minister calling for self-determination.
- Mugabe’s spokesman refused to comment, but the documents circulated on the internet last week. They include a draft “independence agreement for Mthwakazi Republic”.
- The militant movement, Matabeleland Liberation Front, was formed last year in Bulwayo and has been pushing for secession due to marginalization.

“Sikhala arrested for alleged kidnapping” by Jennifer Dube

(The Standard, independent weekly, Harare, 26 February 2011, in English)

- MDC-99 leader Job Sikhala was arrested Friday for kidnapping two adult men in Mutare, his brother-in-law and a long-time friend who often stays at his house.
- Harare spokesperson said he had no information on the case as it was being handled by the Border Control Minerals Unit due to a lack of printers and laptops.

“Job Sikhala arrested and tortured” by Irene Madongo

(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 28 February 2011, in English)

- MDC-99 leader, Job Sikhala, was severely beaten and tortured in police custody as part of a wider plan to prevent him and others from participating in a planned anti-government march Tuesday.
- MDC-99 spokesman Aaron Muzungu said that Sikhala was picked up by members of the Central Intelligence Organization on Friday who claimed they were to brief him on minor issues. On Sunday he was told that he was being charged with kidnapping in Mutare.
- Muzungu explained, 'On Saturday night [Sikhala] was tortured using electrical cables and beaten with an iron bar, which led to dislocation of his pelvis. Police are refusing for him to go to hospital; they are saying they are waiting for a command from someone from 'up-there. Right now he can't walk. He has been brutally assaulted. It's a pity that they are denying him the right to get medication'.
- Police signed a warrant holding Sikhala for a further 48 hours, meaning he will only be released after the planned march.

“Security presence intensifies ahead of anti-Mugabe march” by Alex Bell
(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 28 February 2011, in English)

- Security forces loyal to the ZANU-PF party were intensifying their presence in Harare Monday ahead of a planned public protest against the Mugabe regime.
- Heavily armed soldiers and riot police were seen arriving in military vehicles in Harare city centre near the gardens, while water cannons were also seen on the streets. The increased security presence is believed to be an attempt to discourage participation in the protest scheduled for Tuesday.
- Veteran journalist in Harare, Angus Shaw, told SW Radio Africa that tensions are high ahead of the planned protest, 'We have seen riot police today [Monday] so the authorities clearly are aware that there is a protest being planned and they will want to try and nip it in the bud if it goes ahead. So business people are particularly worried about trouble'.
- Shaw added that businesses were worried ZANU-PF supporters would be bussed in for Wednesday's anti-sanction campaign rally, which would see thousands of Mugabe supporters in the capital, posing a real threat, 'There will be many ZANU-PF youths and there is the potential that things will flare up and business will be looted. So they are too ready to close on Wednesday'.