

Zimbabwe Domestic Broadcasting (17 January - 24 January, 2011)

By Zuzia Danielski, MIGS media monitor for Zimbabwe

State-owned Media

“17 Harare City workers arrested for slashing residents maize”

(The Herald, government-owned daily, 19 January 2011, in English)

- Provincial police confirmed the arrests of 17 Harare City Council workers after complaints they were cutting maize belonging to Kuwadzana residents. The group had been arrested the day before while slashing grass and was expected to appear in court to face charges of ‘malicious damage to property’.
- Police dismissed earlier media reports stating the City Council employees had been instructed to slash maize in and around the city. Certain councillors claimed the instruction to destroy maize came from police in order to ‘taint the image of the MDC-T council’.

“ZANU PF to launch anti-sanction campaign”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 19 January 2011, in English)

- ZANU PF explains it is launching ‘anti-sanction campaign’ ahead of the elections. The campaign, headed by President Mugabe, plans to mobilize 2 million people to sign a petition, sending a message to Western states that the illegal sanctions are aimed at regime change in Zimbabwe and negatively affect the entire nation, rather than targeting specific individuals as claimed.
- At its National People’s Conference in Mutare, ZANU PF passed a resolution calling for the takeover of Western companies in Zimbabwe which were not advocating for the lifting of sanctions.

“President scoffs at ill health talk”, by Tendai Mugabe

(The Herald, government-owned daily, 23 January 2011, in English)

- Western media reports that President Mugabe had been undergoing surgery in Malaysia were ‘lies’ and ‘usual rhetoric’ accompanying the President’s annual leave.
- At Harare International Airport on Saturday morning, Mugabe stated he had been on holidays with his family in Singapore, near his daughter who is in Hong Kong studying, and not Malaysia as reported by the Western press.

“President’s stance hailed”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 24 January 2011, in English)

- Political analysts accept that President Mugabe's decision to call an election if the Global Political Agreement (GPA) fails to agree on a new constitution is the only way forward in a parliament which has resorted to bickering. Mugabe stated earlier this year that with or without the new constitution, he still had the mandate to call for elections, setting the stage for polls later this year.
- Political analyst, Professor Jonathan Moyo, stated that since the start of the inclusive government, 'the MDC-T has been on the forefront demonising the GPA as being a transitional structure which would not last for more than 24 months' and it is time the President assumes his authority within the chaos of Parliament.
- Political analysts explain that the MDC fails to understand legal issues such as separate holdings of presidential and parliamentary elections, and they cannot withstand that the ZANU PF will dominate the inevitable general elections.

“Service chiefs not partisan: Mnangagwa”

(Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, government-owned broadcasting, 24 January 2011, in English)

- After accusations from Western media that service chiefs within the defence forces are pro-ZANU PF, the Defence Minister, Cde Emerson Mnangagwa has refuted, stating that service chiefs are 'professionals who serve the nation and do not belong to any political party'.
- Mnangagwa stated that the service chiefs were appointed on merit as visible by the numerous awards won by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces.

Private-owned Media

“State agents compiling database of potential violence victims in Binga”, by Tererai Karimakwenda

(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 19 January 2011, in English)

- A councillor in the remote district of Binga has said that state security agents are compiling a visual database of MDC officials they believe are potential candidates in the next elections. Some have already been photographed, and others refused, fearing their images will identify them as potential targets violence during the elections.
- Jabuba ward Councillor, Tenba Toonse Kunjulu, was approached by security agents who wanted his photograph to include on official documents. After further research, the councillor found no official documentation process was taking place and fears that the images will be used to identify candidates who are involved in the human rights movement.

"Mashaba Housing warns Gweru employees to support ZANU PF", by Tererai Karimakwenda

(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 20 January 2011, in English)

- Management has reportedly warned employees at the Mashaba Housing Project in Gweru they will lose their jobs if they do not support ZANU PF, according to the Bulawayo Agenda civic group.
- A statement released by the Bulawayo Agenda questions the Indigenisation Act initiated by the ZANU PF requiring all foreign owned companies to give 51% of their shares to locals or risk government takeover. The policy has been criticized as a strategy of the government to takeover the business sector and enrich party chiefs and allies.

“ZANU PF resorts to old tactics to get Tsvangirai” by Kholwani Nyathi
(The Standard, independent weekly, Harare, 23 January 2011, in English)

- Attorney General Johannes Tomana was quoted in state media last weekend saying he was establishing a panel of legal experts to guide on how to advise on high-profile politicians names in US diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks. The comments were assumed to target Prime Minister Tsvangirai who could possibly be facing treason charges.
- Tomana has since withdrawn his comments; however a news website this week published the names of lawmakers on this panel which was made up of the main legal fighters for ZANU PF.
- This would be the second round of such charges for the Prime Minister. In 2004, Tsvangirai was acquitted of plotting to kill Mugabe.

“ZANU PF supporters invade lodges, bird sanctuary”, by Jennifer Dube and Indiana Chirara
(The Standard, independent weekly, Harare, 23 January 2011, in English)

- Over 300 people suspected as ZANU PF supporters invaded tourism properties on Friday in the Lake Chivero area in the Zvimba district, in an effort to indigenize the area. Unconfirmed reports pointed to more than 20 properties, belonging to both black and white citizens, being invaded.
- Properties included lodges, chalets, boating clubs and a bird park. The Standard journalists had been denied entry and sources said that officials from the American embassy and the Red Cross Society were not allowed to enter. It had also disrupted tourism in the area.

“Wave of violence rocks Harare”, by Tichaona Sibanda
(SW Radio Africa News, independent Zimbabwean radio, London UK, 24 January 2011, in English)

- A wave of weekend violence in the capital resulted in dozens of injuries among MDC supporters, some seriously, as gangs of ZANU PF youth rampaged through

the streets. William Mukuwari, the MDC Budiriro district youth treasurer was shot in the leg and assaulted.

- The politically motivated violence comes after MDC secretary general, Tendai Biti, warned Zimbabwe would see a 'bloodbath' during elections if the international community does not help prevent the crisis.
- The ZANU PF mobilized earlier, bussing in youth to the capital from Gutu, Tsholotsho, Shamva, and Bindura to demonstrate against the maize slashing by Harare City Council.