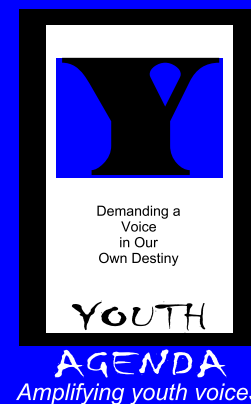


The New Age Voices

A newsletter published by Youth Agenda Trust website: www.youthagendazim.org.zw.



For feedback please email Youth Agenda Trust on youthagenda@gmail.com Issue 12 10 Feb-24 Feb 2011 Cost: Free

State Security Agents disrupt Youth Summit

STATE security agents disrupted a democracy summit that was held in Harare from the 27th and was supposed to end on the 30th of January.

The summit, which was organised by Youth Agenda Trust (YAT), was forced to end pre-maturely after state agents stormed the gathering and demanded to see police clearance letters despite the fact that it was a private gathering.

Three officers from the Law and Order section who could only be identified as Detective Sergeant Chakerema and Detective Sergeant Manje summoned YAT Coordinator Arnold Chamunogwa and asked him to explain why his organisation had organised the summit without their knowledge.

Chamunogwa tried in vain to explain to the officers that the organization was not supposed to seek police clearance because it was an internal meeting which was not open to the general public, much to the fury of the officers who could not take any of the explanations.

The police details disappeared from the scene but in no time suspicious unregistered vehicles took turns to visit the venue, leaving the youths with no option but to call off the summit with another day to go.

The youths were visibly terrified by

developments that some of them who had come from as far as Tsholotsho, Chiredzi, and Mudzi had to pack their bags in the evening of the same day.

The frightened youths who refused to be identified told *The New Age Voices* that the developments at the venue were a clear sign that the government of Zimbabwe was not willing to open up democratic space despite committing itself to uphold human rights.

"This is a clear sign that Zanu PF does not want democratic processes to take place in this country. However, we will continue to fight until we have a new Zimbabwe that is tolerant to democratic gatherings and processes," said the youths.

In Zimbabwe, freedom of association and assembly remains a borrowed phenomenon and more often than not, nongovernmental and civic society activists have either been beaten up or arrested on trumped up charges of violating the draconian Public Order and Security Act (POSA).

The controversial legislation is believed to have been crafted by Zanu PF spin doctor and Politburo member Jonathan Moyo during his forgettable first dance with the party that was fraught with human rights violations and saw many activists being arrested, while many opposition party

activists and supporters especially from the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) were unlawfully incarcerated.

Another youth activist who requested anonymity said, "We have never seen such a calculated attempt to trample on the liberties of the young people in the history of the youth movement. It is a clear act of provocation."

Meanwhile, police details from the law

and order section phoned Chamunogwa last week threatening him and summoned him to report to Southerton Police Station.

Chamunogwa told *The New Age Voices* that the latest incident is clear testimony that Zanu PF is running scared and is not comfortable with the youths of this country taking the lead in championing democratic processes.



Some of the delegates to the disrupted Youth Democracy Summit

.... intensifies hunt for Youth Leaders

The violence which has rocked Harare has now taken a new form as state security agents have started targeting youth leaders in a bid to decapitate the pro democracy youth movement. On Monday 7 February 2011, the coordinator of Youth Agenda Trust, Arnold Chamunogwa, was once again taken for questioning by Detective Sergeant Manje, Detective Assistant Inspector Jani and Officer Commanding Harare South

District Chief Superintendent Chagwedera. He was represented by Mr Halimani from Wintertons Law firm which was instructed by the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. The police officers were demanding to know why the organization was mobilising youths across the country.

Meanwhile suspected Central Intelligence Officers (CIO's) driving unmarked vehicles have been frequently

visiting the Youth Agenda Trust offices in Eastlea demanding to know the whereabouts of Lawrence Mashungu and Trust Nhubu who are programmes officers with the organization. Just yesterday they kept vigil at the offices and this has forced the organization to temporarily shut down.

Youth Agenda Trust has this year convened a Young People's Democracy Summit and successfully held Youth

Discussion Forums on electoral processes and constitutional reform in Wedza, Marondera, Murehwa, Tsholotsho, Lupane and Nkayi and a Thematic Workshop on constitutional reform for civil society youth leaders. This has caused panic within the security sector and has prompted them to intimidate the leadership and secretariat of the organization.

Inside the hotspot-News In Brief

Murewa- Suspected Central Intelligence Organisation operatives tried to abduct a Murewa youth last week who they tried to force into an unmarked Toyota Corolla at Chitowa village in Ward 6.

The youth, Tendai Muronda (21) survived death by a whisker after the assailants failed to contain him after he had produced a kitchen knife that scared them.

Muronda was on his way to Murewa to attend a community discussion forum that was organised by Youth Agenda Trust to discuss issues pertaining to the constitution reform process.

The forum included participants from all political parties and was well attended with youth

at the forum speaking with one voice.

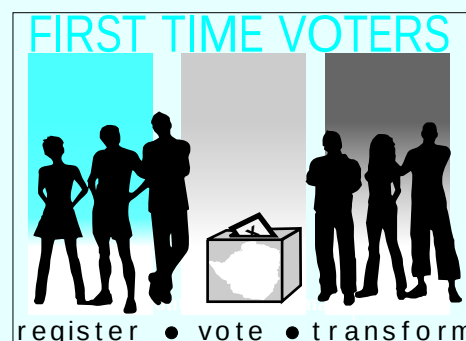
Muronda vowed to confront anyone who try to persecute him because of political affiliation.

Epworth- Youths in Epworth have vowed to remain vigilant in the face of brutal and violent attacks by Zanu PF thugs and state security agents despite being displaced from their homes and now camped in the bushes. There have been reports of political violence in Epworth involving youths from Zanu PF and the MDC and in most instances the latter group has been forced to retaliate to the violence orchestrated against its members. The New Age Voices correspondent in Epworth caught up with some of the youth who have been displaced and have sought refuge in nearby bushes and they declared that they have a

moral obligation to defend their rights as well as the rights and dignity of their communities.

Violence is alleged to have escalated after Ambassador Amos Midzi, a former Zanu PF cabinet minister and Zanu PF chairman for Harare Province, addressed a meeting on Sunday 6 February 2011 at Epworth Secondary School. Youth militias who attended the meeting then went on a rampage and destroyed flea market stalls which are being constructed in Wards 2, 5 and 6 under the Constituency Development Fund. The youth militias were singing songs and chanting slogans which were denouncing Hon. Elias Jembere of the MDC who had initiated the project. Ambassador Amos Midzi of Zanu PF lost in the 2008 elections to Hon. Elias Jembere. As if

that was not enough the marauding youths went on to destroy houses owned by MDC activists and its suspected sympathisers and looted their household goods. Some of the people who lost their properties are Rutendo Bvute, Lewis Mutugwi, Takaguta Chikanga and Timothy Saramunda.



“Vote for young people into leadership positions”

YOUTHS should just vote for a young person in order to assume leadership because advocating for a quota system has failed to work over the years, youths in civic society have said.

The young people who gathered in Harare to discuss the constitution making process said that it has proved over the years that politicians were not willing to open up leadership space for young people.

They said that the revolution should start with having a young minister and not one who is a youth at heart because the past youth ministers have failed to champion values of young people.

“We need a young and independent minister because the ministry is very crucial in shaping the aspirations of young people. We are tired of ministers who claim to represent young people during the day but subvert the same young

person in the evening,” said Shyleen Chitsiga who was part of the delegates.

Member of Parliament for Sunningdale Honorable Margaret Matienga, who is also the chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on youth, women and community development said that young people should be resolute and fight for their own cause in the same manner in which women fought for their rights.

“Vote for your own. Do not think that there are people who are going to fight for your cause. As women we fought very hard for the 50/50 representation, it was not easy but we were resolute. One thing you need to know is that you must shelve political differences if you fancy any chances of winning your war,” she said.

The youths unanimously agreed to rally behind young candidates in the forthcoming election.



Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Youth Hon Margaret Matienga

COPAC comply or else...

YOUTHS in civic society held the first constitution workshop of the year where they outlined the demands they want the Constitutional and Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) to meet or else they will reject the draft constitution.

The youths said this at a youth thematic workshop that was held at the Cresta Lodge in Harare last week. The workshop ran under the theme, “Facilitating Zimbabwe civil society's immediate contribution to the constitutional reform process.”

The workshop was organised by Zimbabwe-Europe partnership for Democracy (ZEPAD) and was facilitated by Youth Agenda Trust (YAT).

Say What, a youth organisation on health said that the government needed to take health as a priority and recognize it as a right. It also said the right to health for young people especially in tertiary institutions must also be prioritized.



Parliamentary Portfolio Committee Members On Youth, Women And Indigenisation And Clerks Of Committees follow proceedings at the workshop

“The constitution must speak so loud on health, it must have justifiable claims, and the Kariba draft remains silent on this issue. We want a separate section that has clear claims to the right to health, a mere statement is not enough,” said the Say What representative.

Lewis Makurumure of Action 24 said that the new constitution must recognise climate change as a huge threat to society and to youth development.

He said that it was the duty of the government to protect people from natural disasters, hunger and poverty and hence the

new constitution must include this.

“People must also be able to benefit from the resources in the area from which they originate, the constitution must be clear on this,” Makurumure said.

Bhekumusa Moyo of National Youth Development Trust (NYDT) said that the draft referendum should have sufficient space for civil liberties because it has proven over the years that the government is not willing to open up democratic space.

Masimba Kuchera of Students Solidarity Trust (SST) said that the government needed to be more responsible by ensuring that the rights of the disabled are equally respected.

He said that since the disabled in the country constituted about 10 percent of the country's population, state planning must also mirror such demographics.

The youths here said that they expected the draft referendum to match their compendium otherwise they would reject it.

We want control of our resources: Tsholotsho youths

YOUNG people in Tsholotsho have decried the manner in which resources from their area are being siphoned on a daily basis to unknown destinations yet the area remained largely undeveloped.

The youths said that unemployment in the area remained very high despite the area being endowed by natural resources especially timber which they said had been leaving the area at alarming rates.

They said that the draft constitution must ensure that locals benefit first from the resources before anyone else through developing the area and creating employment for the growing number of school leavers there.

“There is a lot of timber here that should bring development to the area and must be utilized to the maximum benefit of the people here. If you visit any classroom here, you will be shocked to find out that many pupils may be

sitting on the floor despite the fact that we have so much timber.

“The new constitution must protect local people, it must ensure that the local people benefit first before anybody else,” said Mxolisi Dlodlo of Tsholotsho at a Constitution Discussion Forum meeting organised by Youth Agenda Trust (YAT).

The youths here also said that they expected an increase in the number of vocational training centres in the area and said that youth empowerment should be apolitical.

They also called for the meaningful participation of youths in policy advocacy and challenged lawmakers in the Constitutional and Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) to ensure that there is 50 percent representation of youths at all levels.

“The constitution must also make the government

responsible for the high unemployment levels in the country and should compel it to address the situation,” said another youth at the forum.



Participants at a Community Discussion Forum on the constitution in Tsholotsho

District registrars refusing to take new voters?

DISTRICT registrars are refusing to allow new voter registrations especially from young people unless one is accompanied by officials from Zanu PF, *The New Age Voices* has learnt.

Youths who spoke to *The New Age Voices* said that they have tried to visit their respective district offices to have their names on the voters roll but they have been told to 'come back later'.

The situation is said to be well pronounced at Murewa centre where the District registrar reportedly told a councilor from Kambarami village who had brought about 20 youths

who wanted to register that the office was busy removing the dead on the roll.

However, an official at the offices who spoke to this paper said that Zanu PF councilors who bring their people to get registered always find their way without difficulty.

Youths in the area said they had become sick and tired of the lame excuses that the registrar continues giving them saying that it was a ploy to get rid of young voters who are viewed as a threat to President Robert Mugabe's grip on power.

The youths called on Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai

to ensure that the voters roll is not tampered with as elections draw closer.

They also urged other youths countrywide who are already registered to go and inspect the voters roll.

Registration as a voter in Zimbabwe is a continuous process that runs concurrently with other national registration purposes such as births, deaths, but suspiciously the doctrine is always kept under tight wraps which has left many believing that it is done during election time only.

Statement on the proposed National Youth Service structure

The Youth Forum is deeply depressed by recent media reports that the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenization and Empowerment led by Savior Kasukuwere has decided to introduce a new structure for the National Youth Service that will see preschool and kindergarten kids being roped into the already controversial program. While we welcome the idea of national service in the proper context, it is the motive behind this new structure and the manner in which it has been designed that worries all concerned citizens. Worse still, the timing of his initiative smacks of an ulterior motive.

The National Youth Service Training Centers, or “Border Gezi” training institutes as they are popularly known, are infamous for producing a crop of youths that have unleashed unwarranted violence on innocent and unsuspecting civilians. It is this violent history and nature of the service that raises questions on the current motive by the notorious Minister's motives on tapping our young brothers and sisters into such atrocious systems before they even reach double-digit pronounced years.

Having someone indoctrinated with such violent thoughts, as has been the norm, from a tender age will only lead into more disastrous consequences for our beloved nation that is still struggling to recover from past experiences of violence like Gukurahundi and the post March 2008

election violence. How will the community in general and parents of such children be able to control and guide them judging on what has so far been produced by such institutions?

While the idea of teaching young children on national matters like the national flag, national anthem, coat of arms and so on is not a terrible idea, it is the manner in which Minister Kasukuwere intends to do it that is puzzling. We are of the strong conviction that such issues can be handled well by the current pre-school teachers as part of the pres-school curricula as opposed to a national program aimed at brainwashing the little ones.

Instead of coming up with a costly and brainwashing program, the ministry should be looking at ways of incorporating such important education and knowledge into the current primary and pre school curricula as well as inculcating such values and education into the kids from their friendly environs and not some dreadful institutions.

While it is important for the youths to be taught on the history of the country especially the armed struggle that got us independence and freedom from colonialism and racial discrimination, we should not be overly obsessed with such issues to the extent of forgetting that the nation also has a future.

The designing of the National Youth

Service program should take into account the history of the nation as well as the current state and future of the country. It is only after training the young men and women of the country on the country's current state and the nature of global politics, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, economic empowerment and other such issues that we can expect the country to move forward.

It is also disturbing to note the clandestine and secrecy manner in which such an idea can be crafted considering there are a lot of institutions and organizations that deal with youth issues. In crafting such an important national program, such organizations that have the necessary experience in dealing with young people should be given a voice as they have a stake in the implementation of such programs. Organizations that quickly come to mind include Child Line, Girl Child Network and a host of other youth-oriented organizations like the Youth Forum.

Such organizations have vast experience in dealing with issues and will add value to the design of the youth service program. Involving such organizations will also help in ensuring that the program is not designed to serve some political party interests but national interests. This is very vital for the program to be accepted by the youths as it has been, from its inception, been serving some party interests and has turned he

program into being skeptically viewed by its intended beneficiaries.

The Youth Forum, as a platform for youth voices, the intended beneficiaries of the program, would like to make the following recommendations to the ministry:

- First and foremost, they must involve the youths themselves in drafting the new program, this can be achieved by consulting organizations that represents various youths interests as major stakeholders in the program
- Come up with laws and regulations that will ensure that matters of national value are taught to young children in classes both at primary level and preschool level instead of taking this kindergarten kids to some raining institutions.
- Contract non-partisan experts to come up with the curriculum for the training institutions so as to make these institutions credible to all stakeholders.
- Ensure that participants at these institutions are taught in other areas of life that are of serious importance to the nation like HIV/AIDS, economic empowerment and entrepreneurship and other areas of life.

This article was submitted by Youth Forum . The views contained in this article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of The New Age Voices.

National youth service: ministers children first

YOUTHS have said no to the National Youth Service (NYS) until senior government officials that include ministers, permanent secretaries and members of parliament have sent their own children if the idea is noble and shows patriotism.

The youths said this at a youth thematic workshop that was held at the Cresta Lodge in Harare last week. The workshop ran under the theme, “Facilitating Zimbabwe civil society's immediate contribution to the constitutional reform process.”

The workshop was organised by Zimbabwe-Europe partnership for Democracy (ZEPAD) and was facilitated by Youth Agenda Trust (YAT)

Speaking at the Workshop, National Youth Development Trust (NYDT) programmes Officer Bhekumusa Moyo said that the NYS had been politicized in such a way that youth no longer want to be associated with it.

“Young people need to know their history from a very clear angle. It must be a purely national process and not partisan. It should not teach youths to beat others,” Moyo said

However, youths at the workshop unanimously rejected

the political exercise saying that it was not necessary because it has been taken up as an extension of a certain political establishment.

The youths said that if the government was proud of the programme, top officials should start by sending their own children as an example then others would follow suit.

“If we are proud of the national youth service then ministers should send their own children as well then we will all see that it is patriotism,” one delegate said.

The youths said the government should revitalize the Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and forget about the skewed youth service programme.

Member of Parliament for Sunningdale Honorable Margaret Matienga, who is also the chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on youth, women and community development said that young people should push for the VTCs because they offered better life changing skills.

The NYS has since its establishment been used as an extension of the then ruling party and has seen the recruitment of seventy thousand of militias known as Green Bombers who terrorized the country with impunity.



**National Youth Development Trust (NYDT)
Programmes Officer Bhekumusa Moyo**

“COPAC, we are watching you”

YOUTHS in Mashonaland East Province have vowed to reject the draft document that will be produced by the Constitutional and Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) if the contents do not reflect the contributions made during the outreach process.

The youths said recent developments where some information was reported to have been tampered with were worrying.

Speaking to *The New Age Voices* in Marondera, Wedza and Murewa, the youths said that the constitution making process should be transparent and independent of

political influence because politicians are elected by the people.

During the discussion forums in the province, youths called for a cautious approach to the constitution reform process saying that political meddling has affected other democratic processes in the country before and indications are that the constitution reform process may go the same way.

A Former Junior Governor for Mashonaland East said that young people should actively take part in national processes such as the constitution making

process because it has an impact on their daily lives.

“We must be cautious about this constitutional process, we must be on guard,” she said. She also urged youths to take part in the second all stakeholders conference that is scheduled to take place later this year.

Another Former Marondera Junior Mayor told delegates that it was high time people realized that their destiny is in their own hands and can achieve that by making a constitution that they can call their own.

“We have a problem in this country

because there are certain politicians who think that they can impose the constitution on the people, we cannot allow that because we are watching them, we will wait and see,” he said.

Youths in Wedza said that all progressive young people should prepare for the all stakeholders conference and continue monitoring the process.

Olivia Nyati of Zaire said that young people must be involved in all political processes including the constitutional reform process to enable them to safeguard their future.

Youth democracy summit held

YOUNG people from across all the country's provinces converged at Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) conferencing facility in Westwood, Harare for a democracy summit which was scheduled to run from 27 to 30 January.

The summit however failed to enter the last day after state security agents disrupted it.

The summit was hosted by Youth Agenda Trust (YAT) and was running under the theme quote from Victor Hugo, "There is no stronger army in the world than that of an idea whose time has come."

The summit was highly successful and managed to achieve its set targets but failed to decisively exhaust all the issues after state security agents swooped on the unsuspecting youths forcing the summit to a premature end.

Lawrence Mashungu of YAT said the summit was an overwhelming success and thanked all the participants who took part for coming forward to chart their destiny by putting together demands of a Zimbabwe that they want to see despite security threats at the venue.

"The summit was highly successful and I am glad that it has managed to put together youths from all corners of the country who lively contributed to the often untouchable

democracy domain. It shows that youths in this country are determined to see a better Zimbabwe that embraces democratic values," Mashungu said.

Youths there bemoaned the absence of democratic space in the country saying that the Inclusive government has failed to deliver on its promises of a free and democratic Zimbabwe.

The youths blasted state security agents for being partisan despite the fact that their mandate entailed that they should be apolitical but should be there to protect all citizens.

The youths called on the inclusive government to ensure that state institutions are demilitarized in accordance with the constitution of Zimbabwe saying that the current state is not in line with the international democratic conventions to which the country is a signatory.

Young women at the summit said the government should ensure that they are not abused in political processes because they have been used in the past in pursuit of selfish political goals.

The young delegates also called for the de-politicization of the Presidential Scholarship which they said was being used by a certain political party to strengthen its patronage system.

The youths said that the lack of independence among the country's judiciary was also a cause for concern because youths have lost faith in the manner in which legal cases were being administered. They said that there should be a clear separation of powers between, the executive, judiciary, legislature and the fourth estate.

Another area of concern that they tackled was the de-politicization of food aid and the manipulation of non-governmental activities by one political party which they say has negatively impacted on the thinking of marginalized and poor citizens of the country.

The summit also touched on the continued victimization of students in tertiary institutions, the abuse of youths during times of elections, political appointments of civil service staff, the 51 percent indigenisation policy which they say was good but should be done in a transparent manner and not benefit a few greedy politicians, liquidity and cash flow crisis, the rising cost of living, the continued farm invasions which they say were scaring away investors.

They also slammed the continued politicization of the youth fund and the ministry of youth in general. They also said that there was need to put to an end to

inflation which is starting to rise and bemoaned the slow economic growth saying it was impacting negatively on the drive to eradicate unemployment which stands at over 90 percent.

On the access to the country's resources, the youths said that locals should be allowed to benefit from the resources in their areas and also said that there must be equal access to economic resources and opportunities regardless of political affiliation.

The youths also said that the government needed to quickly step in and put an end to poverty levels which have reached alarming heights. They also said that access to education, health, legal and social services must be availed to all.

They attacked the continued presence of security details in villages and communities, the politicization of state media and the general suppression of civil liberties.

The youths called on all other young people to register as voters so that they exercise their democratic right of choosing who they want to lead them. They said there is need to increase voter education among the youths as most of them were not registered and also raised the possibility of petitioning the Registrar General's office to that effect.

Soldiers deployed in Murewa?

THE usually sleepy town of Murewa has been engulfed by a cloud of fear with young residents in the area saying that at least seven soldiers have been deployed in the area for yet unclear reasons.

Youths who spoke to The New Age Voices on condition that their names would be withheld said that the soldiers have been deployed in the area since the start of the year.

The youths said that the latest development has thrown residents in the area into panic mode as they fear that the

armed military men would descend on them 2008 style.

Although no reports have been heard about their exploits in the area so far, the youths said that the soldiers are seen roaming the area almost every day but they could not ascertain their motives.

"People here are afraid of the soldiers because they move around here holding their guns. They feel that they have been sent here to start another trailblazing orgy of violence. We need to be protected," said one of the youths.

The youths said that some of them were beginning to flee the area as they are the ones who are usually targeted by political violence.

In 2008, Zanu PF deployed soldiers into rural and farming communities around the country forcing people to align with their ideology which saw thousands of opposition supporters living in hills and mountains for fear of being gunned down.



Delegates to the Youth Democracy Summit follow proceedings at a brainstorming session



Lawrence Mashungu of YAT illustrates a point to participants at a discussion forum in Murewa



Lewis Makurumure of Action24 addressing delegates at a Constitution Workshop in Harare



Trust Nhubu of YAT emphasises a point to participants at a discussion forum in Lupane