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FEYA Feya, a campaign for free and fair elections, on Wednesday July 17, took ventured into the arts world when it co-hosted a 'Teaser Party' in partnership with the Magamba Network where a comic news bulletin, from Season 2 of the Zambezi News show was screened at the Book Café.

Sam "Comrade Fatso" Monro said the purpose of Zambezi News, a comical and satirical news project, was to create alternative narratives, promote plural voices and encourage free expression without censorship or the threat of incarceration.

"As we go into this important period we need to take humor on our side," he said, adding that Zimbabwe had many divisive issues such as "race" and "land reform".

Comrade Fatso said Zimbabweans were entitled to participate in the elections "but to do it with a healthy dose of sarcasm and humor" while reiterating that free speech should not be criminalized to allow citizens to freely critique their politicians.

The Zambezi News Teaser screened at the event is Episode 5 of a series with six episodes that satirizes Zimbabwe's elections season in a cheeky tongue-in-cheek manner, but one that raises important questions about the meaning, nature and tragic things associated with Zimbabwean

electoral processes.

Subjects explored in the viewed episode include the lies peddled by politicians in their promises ahead of every election, the rigging of elections by means of stuffing ballots and the restrictive nature of the requirements for voter registration.

The show is a witty take on the political idiosyncrasies that have become a norm in our elections and as such, the viewer can easily relate to the hard-hitting comedy show which is a daring artistic reflection of the situation witnessed by Zimbabweans ahead of the July 31 poll.





Micheal K introducing the comic news bulletin

In one of the viewed clips, a visibly drunk and young character who is a voter boosts that “power is in the hands of the beer-holder” hinting who he will vote for and highlighting the susceptibility of youths to vote buying owing to their financial desperation.

Incidentally, the issue of vote buying and coercion one that speaks to the concerns raised by one the 11 Feya Feya principles, namely principle number 5 which states that free and fair elections require

“That free formation of voter preferences takes place without coercion, manipulation or intimidation and the insulation of this choice through effective secrecy of the ballot”.

Sam Farai “Cde Fatso” Monro and Michael “Michael Kay” Kudakwashe who are part of the cultural activist outfit, Magamba Network, promised the audience drawn from civil society, artistes, journalists and members of the public that the entire six Zambezi News Episodes would be ready for viewing soon.

The teaser party ended with the screening of a catchy musical video by Even Mo Lil Swaggery Boys called ‘Ballots in the Box’ which calls for Zimbabweans to exercise their right to vote to achieve democratic society while emphasizing that they must do so in peace.

Meanwhile, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC) Information Officer Delta Ndou read out a mock speech on Feya Feya campaign written by a democratic activist, Vivid Gwede, to the audience.

“Regardless of which way we look at our national politics we must feel the same comfort to reveal our standing and have the same freedom of speech.

“We must have a vote that weighs the same for each citizen,” were part of the words in the mock speech.

The venue was packed and those who attended the event walked away with free DVDs of the news bulletin and some feya feya paraphernalia.

Regional civil society and counterparts rally behind Feya Feya Elections in Zimbabwe

MORE than 30 regional civil society leaders who attended the Feya Feya Election Conference and campaign launch hosted by Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition on the Saturday, July 13, pledged their commitment and support to the campaign in Zimbabwe.

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Regional Information and Advocacy Coordinator, Mr Joy Mabenge said that the conference was meant to rally solidarity partners around a common cause for free and fair elections in Zimbabwe.

“The spirit of this conference is solidarity. We are saying that peace is not the absence of bodies on the street but peace is about the prevailing conditions which ensures that there is no intimidation and that there is free choice,

“The conference is also set mobilise international support for peaceful free and fair elections in Zimbabwe,” said Mabenge

The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition is a broad based civil society network of over 72 active members comprising churches, women’s groups, social movements, residents associations, labour unions, human rights lawyers, and health professionals. It was formed in August of 2001 to focus on democracy, human rights, good governance and sustainable development issues – working locally, regionally and internationally.

Regional counterparts called on Zimbabweans to navigate and confront the quagmire of disputed election and legacy of rigging.

Speaking at the same conference Mr Bongani Masuka COSATU Secretary for International Relations concurred that regional and international solidarity for free and fair elections was of paramount importance not only for Zimbabwe but also the region.

"It is important to render solidarity. The Zimbabwean issue is not for Zimbabweans but for all of us in Southern Africa.

"We don't do anyone a favour by rendering solidarity, it is our responsibility and to do so"

"An injury to one is an injury to all of us," said Masuka



Civil Society Organisations from South Africa and SADC countries who attended the conference issued a communique expressing their desire and commitment to promote a conducive, peaceful, free and fair election in Zimbabwe.

"We commit ourselves to stand in solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe in their struggle for a democratic society.

"We also commit to put pressure on the region and international community to put mechanisms in place that will ensure that the forthcoming elections are conducted under fair rule and the spirit of fair play to produce an acceptable and uncontested outcome," noted the communique.

The regional counterparts also made a clarion call to SADC to be well-versed with the conditions on the ground in the run-up to elections and the process as a whole as well as to put in place strategies to deal with issues that will emerge from the election process, but post-election period as well, given the potential for disputed or inconclusive electoral outcome.

"We commit ourselves to the FEYA FEYA campaign and hold our conviction to be true that a feya feya election in Zimbabwe is the great hope of not only the Zimbabweans but of the people of Southern Africa," concluded the communique.

Civil Society condemns Zanu PF Jomic pull out

THE civil society has condemned the decision made by the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), which is one of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) parties, to pull out of the inter party Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) that was created to monitor the implementation of the GPA, stop violence and create cohesion in communities.

The inter-party body was formed at the advent of the GNU following a sham and violent Presidential run-off election in June 2008 and has been hailed in some quarters by political analysts as being instrumental in reining in violent party youths across the political divide.

Zanu-PF reportedly pulled out of the important Committee citing abuse of Jomic property such as vehicles by its partners, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations, but civil society said it doubted the motives behind the move ahead of the crucial July 31 harmonized elections.



CIZC Spokesperson Thabani Nyoni

Reacting to the news, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CIZC) Spokesperson Thabani Nyoni said Zanu-PF's motive cannot be taken for granted; neither can the reasons be accepted at face value.

"The sincerity of the pullout is questionable considering that there is no evidence of any other action taken before which shows that intervention may have failed leading to a pull out," Nyoni said.

Nyoni added that whilst the allegations of abuse of Jomic vehicles in political campaigns may have been true, there was an inherent insincerity and hypocrisy by Zanu-PF since they are well known culprits in abusing state institutions and property.

Nyoni said Zanu-Pf has been abusing Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) and *"all other state institutions for the past thirty years unabated"*.

"Zanu-Pf must be the first to admit and stop abuse of state institutions for political expediency so that it can begin to be a credible and moral whistleblower," added Nyoni.

Prior to the Zanu-Pf allegations of abuse of Jomic vehicles, a Jomic vehicle belonging to the MDC-T Deputy Youth Chairperson and House of Assembly Candidate for Budiriro Costa Machingauta was reportedly shot at by unidentified gunmen on July 10, 2013 in suspected politically motivated violence along Willowvale road in Harare. The youth leader was subsequently arrested by police.

Zanu-PF's Jomic pull out fulfills threats made as long back as November 14, 2012 when a negotiator from the GPA party, Hon. Nicholas Goche, alleged that the MDC formation led by Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Morgan Tsvangirai and one led by Industry and Commerce Minister Hon. Welshman Ncube were using Jomic meetings to enter ZANU PF strongholds.

There have been many areas especially in the rural Mashonaland provinces, which have been perceived as "no-go areas" for the MDC formations due to alleged violence against its supporters.

Zanu-PF has reportedly over the past months hindered the participation in Jomic of three appointees of the SADC troika drawn from Namibia, Zambia and Tanzania to the Jomic as reaffirmed and informed by earlier resolutions by a Summit of

the SADC Troika on Politics, Defence and Security on March 9 in Pretoria in South Africa.

The pull out comes after President Robert Mugabe threatened to pull out of SADC and berated South African President Jacob Zuma's International Relations Advisor Lindiwe Zulu, calling her "an idiotic little street woman".

Heal Zimbabwe Trust Director Rashid Mahiya said the pull out was a slap in the face of GPA guarantors SADC and the African Union (AU), and Zanu-PF was fleeing from the infrastructure of collective violence prevention and peace-building as the 2013 election campaigns turn the heat and pressure on political parties.



Heal Zimbabwe Trust Director Rashid Mahiya

Mahiya said: *"It is also part of the plan to legitimize a contested election result mainly because Jomic's documentation of violations cannot be disputed by Zanu-PF if it is party to the documentation and verification of violations."*

"It is part of the plan to defy SADC because SADC has seconded people to Jomic. It feeds perfectly well into the verbal abuse of Lindiwe Zulu by President Mugabe."

"In short it leaves them unaccountable to both their partners in the GPA unbound by the voluntary political parties' code of conduct and whatever remains of the GPA."

The Heal Zimbabwe Trust Director alleged that Zanu-Pf was trying to "unfetter the intimidation machinery thus making it only accountable to itself" since Jomic has been effective in dealing with violations, investigating them and holding the parties to account.

He added that: *"Jomic provided a platform for demonstrating that the parties in the GPA are equal to the extent that every party to Jomic should subject its structures to scrutiny by all,"* and Mahiya concluded that, by pulling out Zanu-Pf was trying to find a way of being unaccountable to SADC and its GPA partners as elections beckon.

Soldier, Zanu PF militia disrupt YAT event

MVURWI: In a move that has reminded villagers here that a free, fair and peaceful election is still a pipe dream, Zanu PF youths in Mvurwi led by a retired soldier on Tuesday disrupted a sports tournament that was organized by Youth Agenda Trust (YAT) arguing that the organisation is a front of the imperialist agenda.

The soldier only identified as Chishaka formerly with the presidential guard in cahoots with local farmer identified as Nhepera

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led Zanu PF youths in a door-to-door campaign on Monday warning villagers against attending the YAT event and threatening them with unspecified action.

The group, which received logistical support from aspiring Zanu PF MP Edgar Chidavaenzi, stormed Pembichase farm located in Ward 26 of Mazoe North Constituency and ordered youths, some of whom had walked about 10 kilometers to the venue, to abandon the Play Your Vote sports tournament.

The youths were supported by a group of policemen from the area who warned the youths against defying the militia's orders.

Despite spirited efforts by the YAT secretariat to negotiate with the hostile militia, the tournament was stopped after the group became violent and started pushing and shoving the youths. YAT was only able to address youths who stay close to the farm.

YAT Coordinator for Mashonaland Central Tonderai Samhu was taken for questioning and threatened with death if he dared organize a similar event in the constituency.

Addressing youths who had braved the intimidation, YAT coordinator Fortune Nyamande challenged them to be resilient and turn out in large numbers and vote for progressive politicians.

He called on the young people to choose politicians who have sustainable solutions to their problems such as unemployment, basic education and health facilities and a government that respects fundamental freedoms as enshrined in the constitution.

On the sidelines of the tournament, the youths discussed their right to vote, issues around the secrecy of their ballots and the provisions of the new electoral act.

Youths who attended the meeting received t-shirts courtesy of Zimrights and the Election Resource Centre, The Zimbabwean newspaper and newsletters from the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights.

YAT maintains that although Zanu PF has been telling anyone who cares to listen that it is ready for elections, it is evident that it wants to conduct the polls under an intimidating environment and steal the people's vote.