

ZIMBABWE BRIEFING

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Disjuncture as 'political unity' grows at the same rate as repression

The past three months have seen an upsurge in attacks on civil society and this includes arrests, detentions, and office raids, confiscation of equipment and threats of more action. ZANU PF chairperson Simon Khaya Moyo was on national television making it clear that ZANU PF will not tolerate what he calls interference in national/political affairs by NGOs. Moyo represents the voice and thinking of ZANU PF that human rights defenders are a nuisance that must be confronted with force.

While there is a veneer of political unity as the GNU parties seem to be singing from the same hymn book on the constitution, ZANU PF has not dropped its key political strategy which is violence and intimidation. What a better way than to start with human rights defenders who will be forced into a retreat and cower under their desks in fear. The attacks on Zimrights, Youth Organisations, CSU, ZPP, ZESN and Radio Dialogue are all meant to force human rights defenders to retreat from their monitoring work hence leave the space wide open for ZANU PF thugs to do business unhindered in rural areas. Anyone with contact with rural communities will tell you that there is an increased level of fear as communities are forced to attend meetings, have ID numbers recorded, and forcibly given party positions in ZANU PF.

I know this for certain because my own mother is a victim of such intimidation in Marondera and my family in Wedza can hardly tend to their crops as a result of the forced meetings. Direct threats of war and beatings are made at such meetings. The sinister part is that ZANU PF is preaching a message of peace at the top political table while underneath their feet is trampling on citizen rights to freedom of association and expression. Nothing demonstrates this more than the six months imprisonment of a Gwanda man for insulting President Mugabe. This seem to be the



The father of the late Christpowers Maisiri [holding hat, explains to Tsvangirai and his delegation which had come for the funeral] who died whilst asleep when the house he was sleeping in was burnt. The house in picture is believed to have been burnt in a political motivated assassination.

2013 *modus operandi* that is ZANU PF talking of peace at the top, while the foot soldiers are beating, threatening and harassing citizens and the security sector hounding civil society. Nothing has changed and nothing is likely to change as

as little reporting of their hideous actions. Slowly but surely the noose is tightening on rural communities even as the spurious peace messages get louder in Harare.

It is for this reason that civil

nity based capacity. More than, ever civil society needs to put in place sustainable leadership plans that ensure continuation of activities even as many more are arrested and detained. The role of the MDCs parties in this whole fiasco must be put under more scrutiny as the parties are expending too much energy on promoting the new constitution and not monitoring the environment, which is deteriorating.

There is need to remind the MDCs that they need a 360 degree appreciation of the political situation and not necessarily focus on one issue as is the case now. At the same time civil society must step up its advocacy pressure on SADC as well as the international community. We need to know under what conditions is the UNDP funding the election. Is the UNDP giving ZANU PF and the MDCs a blank cheque or is it tying support to conditions that enhance the freeness and fairness of the election.

I dare say UNDP support is not needed as long as the electoral environment is not free. Zimbabwe does not need quick fix solutions that do not address fundamental democratic problems, more solutions that negate the right of citizens to elect a leadership of their choice in peace. As things stand ZANU PF has not learnt anything and is, on the contrary strengthening its instruments of violence. The military and police are clearly demonstrating which sides they support by mobilising their ranks to register and vote for ZANU PF. We also know that when these agents visit rural areas to campaign they do not use persuasive language but violence. Expectations of a peaceful election are fast fading and action to stop ZANU PF is needed now.

Rashweat Mukundu is Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute



The Chipangano gang linked to ZANU PF which is terrorising residents of Mbare in Harare. The gang is protected by ZANU PF big wigs in their operations

we head towards the constitutional referendum and elections. ZANU PF sees a danger in the capacity of human rights defenders to document its excesses in an election they hope to beat citizens and 'win' with

society need not lose sight of the intentions of ZANU PF to shut them down, but more importantly that community protection, violence monitoring and reporting must be intensified through building commu-

Zimbabwe sliding toward the politics of elite cohesion: (2013-2018)

The next six months in Zimbabwe are going to be fairly decisive for the next five years. This is not least because there has been any particular epochal shift in the way our society is run. Be this in relation to our inclusive government's pending end of tenure or its attendant undemocratic constitutional reform process. Nor will the next six months be made significant as a result of a major change to the national economy either by way of discovery of another major mineral resource or by way of any major government policy pronouncement.



From Left, Morgan Tsvangirai, president of MDC-T, Welshman Ncube-president MDC-N and Robert Mugabe-president of ZANU PF

Instead the next six months in Zimbabwe are the prelude to a conclusion of elite cohesion in relation to varying aspects of our society from the political, to the economic, social and even the religious. It is essentially a period in which our history will enter a phase in which elitist political and economic permanence of privilege will be attempted. In this phase the major players will be the political parties and individuals who have been in the inclusive government and those that have been closely associated with it either via affiliate organizations or (in the wake of indigenization) those in charge of business and capital.

The elite cohesion will begin with the common messaging around the constitutional reform process where all of the parties in the inclusive government will campaign for a 'yes vote', ostensibly as a demonstration of national unity but in reality in order to save face over and about the manner in which they handled the process. While political rallies will be awash with exhortations to support the inclusive government's draft constitution at a referendum, the reasons given by the party leaders will be different but all the same will be tantamount to a cajoling of party faithful to ignore their own doubts and 'trust' the party leaders at the expense of an objective pursuit of democratic truth. Some rallies will be held jointly, others separately, but the message will be the same, 'vote yes' and trust the party leader.

Those who were foes in the last election will be occasionally forced to stand side by side and give testimony to how good the

draft constitution is. As the process wears on and as elections get closer, it will be difficult to discern particular differences in policies and manifestos from the political parties for the electorate. Should the 'yes vote' triumph, the electoral campaigns themselves will be ambiguous to say the least. From being campaign buddies in the 'yes vote' to being once again competitors in the electoral playing field may be something that most electoral candidates will find hard to understand. All the same, the campaigns will once again be undertaken with an anticipation of partial, not complete victory by all political parties.

The language may appear confident but there will be silent admission that 'we are in this together' by the political parties. Where and when the election occurs, there will be hope that as the ballots are counted, each of the major parties that currently serve in the inclusive government will have enough parliamentary presence to warrant inclusion in a government formed by the winner of the executive presidency position. The reality may turn out to be different, but in their occurrence the elections will betray an anticipation of the firm arrival of a default two party political system in Zimbabwe and therefore the arrival of a new but false political permanence where nothing can happen without the other.

While there may be no second inclusive government in similar fashion to the present one, there will most certainly be grounds for the formation of some sort of coalition government (which is the hope and prayer of the smallest party in the current

government). There will however be no SADC mediator to reign in the winning party after the elections and Zimbabwe will most certainly be removed from being high up on the regional body's agenda. In essence, after the elections there will be a permanent and less negotiated government until 2018. And this probably led by a singular party with the other two in tow and willing players in a continuation of the elitist politics that have characterized the inclusive government.

Major components of capital/business will also be aware of this and are ready to deal with any of the parties that win so long their interests are protected (even within the context of indigenization). Apart from praising either the draft constitution if it passes the referendum stage, they will praise all parties in the electoral process, support their respective campaigns and hope that all three parties will have some sort of role in the new government. This not necessarily because of the urgency of 'progress' but more in seeking to deal with the proverbial 'devils' that they know. A majority of civil society players will also be roped into the 'yes' campaign, not least because of their preferred political parties but also in relation to saving face after the undemocratic constitutional reform process. As such, a majority of CSOs are participating in the 'yes' campaign with political parties and are intend to mask the deficiencies of the process and content of the draft constitution, all in aide of the political brinkmanship of one inclusive government principal or the other.

Where elections will occur, the

role of the CSO's will be less critical of electoral processes than was the case in 2008 and their potential complicity in the arrival at an elitist political settlement will be more apparent. There will be significant anger if a favoured political principal loses and there will be attempts to mobilize some sort of new coalition together in aide of redress, but it will not be as effective as in 2008. Essentially, there will be limited reason for civil society to dispute the legitimacy of the elections, given the latitude they allowed the major political parties in the inclusive government to compromise on democratic principles without negotiating down to the wire.

All of this while the general social and religious scenes are increasingly dominated more and more by borderline occult and bizarrely superstitious religious/cultural movements and organizations that will provide alternative visions of how to live a better life, without the politics.

As it is, the next six months are most likely to be less decisive or historical as many in the inclusive government or in civil society would have us believe. Indeed there will be landmark political events such as a referendum on the draft constitution and a general election but their outcomes will point to an augmentation of elite cohesion in Zimbabwe's body politic.

And by definition, elite cohesion in a country in as precarious a political economic situation such as ours, it cannot be a good thing to anticipate. There may be those that will ask, what option do we have? The answer may reside in taking back the narrative from the narrow confines of the political parties and debating issues beyond their partisan interests.

Takura Zhangazha writes in his personal capacity

The Zimbabwe Crisis is Rooted in the Bad System of Governance

Since the 1990s Zimbabweans in the opposition have identified ZANU PF as their hindrance to development. Their cause to the turmoil, violence, poverty, inflation, political and social disorder, corruption among many other is ZANU PF. I want to bring a different dimension to this thinking. ZANU PF has indeed caused a lot of suffering to Zimbabweans but it is short sightedness to then see ZANU PF as the ultimate threat to the development of Zimbabwe. The system of governance is in my view the challenge. It is the goal of this piece to bring reasons why I say the governance system of Zimbabwe is the problem of Zimbabwe.

What is a system of governance? I want to describe governance as the primary means of maintaining oversight and accountability in an organisational structure. System is then described as an organised purposeful structure that consists of interrelated and interdependent elements. These elements continually influence one another [directly or indirectly] to maintain their activity and the existence of the system, in order to achieve the goal of the system.

Zimbabwe was reduced from the bread basket of Africa to a citizenry that begs in every African country. In order to understand why the system of governance is the challenge of Zimbabwe, one has to look into the main events and factors that crippled the Zimbabwe economy and its political image. Since Zimbabwe’s attainment of independence from colonial rule in 1980, the security sector, particularly the military, has played a significant role in the political and electoral affairs of the country. The famous pronouncements by many military personnel on how they will not salute any elected leader apart from ZANU PF should not be taken as a military threat to take over the country. The generals are protected by a system that allows one to get away with anything as long as you salute the leader [in this case President Mugabe]. In governance systems where roles are defined and laws followed such utterances will mean automatic expulsion.

The system of governance in Zimbabwe is built on creation of super humans [papa gods] translated as *tumambo* in shona. The

highest of these super humans is President Robert Mugabe. The circle goes further to create these super humans in different levels of society. These people are not questioned and the sole reason is that they are linked to the papa god- the President. This system is also found in the private sector, civil society, and opposition politics and even in churches in Zimbabwe. The close the vicinity of one to papa god means one can do anything without being questioned. The same system is being used even in the MDC formations, the Presidents are not just Presidents, but they are bigger than their titles. The system is now so entrenched in the Zimbabwean community that supporters of a political party think their leaders are immune to wrongs. The Zimbabwean community has come up with a slang title name to these super humans- *mudhara*. The state house of Zimbabwe is socially known as *kwamudhara*. In this system there are a lot of disgruntlements among members or citizens but no matter how genuine the disgruntlement can be no one can accuse the chosen one by papa god. Many ZANU PF people are not happy with the

corruption in the local governance ministry run by Ignatius Chombo for over ten years now but no one can openly say it. ZANU PF can be removed out of power anytime but as long as this system of governance is there the country will find it hard to move towards development.

Zimbabwe is a trend political setter in Africa. ZANU PF despite taking the country from colonial rule and building a respectable state, it again destroyed the same state it had created. The destruction caused despondent among citizens and therefore the creation of many movements, political parties and active civil society. However, the ZANU PF cancer seems to be eating the fabric of society and without a change of culture Zimbabwe might be going nowhere.

By Tafadzwa Maguchu

A SYNOPSIS OF Civil Society Arrests

A close look at the arrests and raids by the Zimbabwe police since December 2012 to date shows that there has been systematic targeting by state security forces of NGOs working in areas of democracy, human rights and good governance. The arrests and

raids have all the indications of political persecution and they expose the extent to which our security sector still remain partisan and how repressive legislation like Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act and AIPPA is being used to suppress freedoms.

Below is a table of the arrests and raids on Civil Society by state security forces since December 2013.

The table clearly shows an intensification of police action again

civics in 2013 with a sharp increase in the number of raids and arrests in February 2013, the month when the country officially went into an election mode after announcement of referendum dates.

Organisation/Person	Date of arrest/raid	Reasons for raid/arrests	Place of Arrest/Raid
Zimrights;Leo Chamahwinya and Dorcus Shereni arrested	13 December 2012	Alleged voter registration and fraud	Harare
Zimrights: Okay Machisa arrested	14 January 2013	Alleged voter registration and fraud	Harare
National Youth Development Trust[NYDT] offices raided and staff arrested	06 February 2013	Contravening section 40 of the criminal law codification and reform Act	Lupane, Matebeleland South
Community Tolerance, Reconciliation and Development Trust offices raided	11 February 2013	Alleged to have evidence of conducting voter education and also that they are not allowed to operae	Masvingo
Zimbabwe Peace Project offices raided	11 February 2013	Warrant to search for subversive material documents, gadgets, recordings and illegal immigrants	Harare
Women of Zimbabwe Arise members arrested	13 February 2013	Arrested for staging lunchtime protest outside parliament	Harare
Combined Harare Residents Trust:David Charamba and Tatjana Buret arrested	14 February	Unclear charges	Harare
Centre for Community Development in Zimbabwe: George Makoni and Reverend Deve arrested	16 February 2013	Carrying out civic education ‘without police clearance’	Chegutu Mashonaland West
Zimbabwe Election Support Network offices raided	19 February 2013	Warrant to search for subversive material documents, gadgets, recordings and illegal immigrants	Harare and Masvingo
Radio Dialogue Zimbabwe offices raided	01 March 2013	a search warrant which in part read “... possession of smuggled radio receivers”	Bulawayo