

ZIMBABWE BRIEFING

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Regional and International Development crucial for Zimbabwe's transition- Professor Raftopoulos

Professor Raftopoulos' presentation at the Cape Town public seminar focused on regional and international developments which affect political developments in Zimbabwe. He pointed out that the Global Political Agreement (GPA) that brought about the Zimbabwe Government of National Unity was meant to prepare necessary conditions for an acceptable free and fair election in Zimbabwe.

According to Professor Raftopoulos, the year 2008 was crucial because for the first time the party that carried the torch of liberation for 28 years lost an election and refused to give up power. This is very crucial because it is a message to the liberation movements in the region that the legacy of liberation has to be constantly renewed and that the aspiration for one person one vote that drove people to fight for independence has to be respected.

Prof. Raftopoulos added that demands by the opposition parties and civil society for reforms like security sector realignment and speedy full implementation of provisions of the Global Political Agreement are also being made by the region and international players interested in Zimbabwe. This means that all the parties will be seeking legitimacy on two fronts.

He gave an example of President Jacob Zuma's recommendations to the 9 March 2013 SADC Troika meeting discussing Zimbabwe in which he emphasised on the need for speedy implementation of the outstanding GPA provisions and also that the issue of security sector realignment cannot be ignored any longer. He also gave an example of a recent communiqué released by the Friends of Zimbabwe acknowledging the importance of SADC mediation in Zimbabwe. Like SADC, their key demand is



Professor Brian Raftopoulos addressing the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Seminar at Cape Town University



A participant making a contribution at the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Seminar

the full implementation of the GPA. There is a convergence of agreement between the

dates and other crucial decisions pertaining to Zimbabwe's transitional processes,



Part of the crowd that attended the Crisis Coalition meeting

regional and international players on Zimbabwe.

In terms of setting election

Professor Raftopoulos added that no party has the right to unilaterally make decisions. He pointed out that it is cru-

cial that Zimbabwe is able to manage processes which gives us the right to vote without violence and give pax the right to vote in a violence free election and take Zimbabwe forward.

In Prof. Raftopoulos' opinion, even if Zimbabwe manages to hold a free and fair election, balance of power remains crucial. Given the nature of polarization and the amount of support enjoyed by the main political parties in the country, no party will have dominant control. There is thus need for all political parties to work together. Parties should engage in dialogue to avoid issues like militarist positioning as witnessed in 2008. An election alone will not resolve the Zimbabwe situation.

His message to Zanu Pf was that it should stop delegitimizing MDC as a puppet of the west that is meant to effect regime change in Zimbabwe because the MDC is a legitimate force that emerged from national processes and so has a right to equal participation. He also emphasised that sovereignty is not only from the gun but from the will of the people.

According to Prof Raftopoulos, violence in the coming elections will be prevented through intolerance from SADC and international players who of late have been converging in terms of understanding the Zimbabwe situation.

By Crisis SA Media Desk

‘Disjuncture between policy and practice a threat to a free and fair election’: Mcdonald Lewanika

In a diplomatic engagement with the South African Parliamentary committee on International relations and cooperation at the Parliament building in Cape Town, the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Director, Mr Mcdonald Lewanika, argued that the next election will not meet the minimum requirements of a free and fair election because of lack of reforms. He also emphasised that a failed election in Zimbabwe will dent the image and reputation of South Africa and SADC as brokers.

Lewanika emphasised the need to ensure smooth administration of the electoral process. First, he noted that the so called ‘aliens’ are finding it difficult to register as voters despite the interventions by government. He said, ‘despite the cabinet directive that aliens be allowed to register to vote, there is a dissonance between what is and what is supposed to be’. Mr Lewanika highlighted that some implementers of government policy



The Zimbabwe delegation to the South African Parliamentary Committee on International Relations and Cooperation

were partisan such as the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) secretariat, ‘governance is not about who the commissioners are but the secretariat’, he said. The Coalition Director also pleaded with South Africa to persuade the Zimbabwe government to accept election observers from all over the world. ‘An election is not like a birth-

day, where you invite your friends. Isn’t it better when the British come and hail the election? That would enhance the credibility of the election’. Lewanika further highlighted that the continuous criminalisation of the work of civil society organisations like Zimrights that are mobilising people to register as voters worked to delegitimise

the election. He took the opportunity to dismiss ZANU PF allegations that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) pumped 2.6 billion dollars into the coffers of civil society. He explained to the South African Parliamentary chair of international relations committee that most of the money from UNDP was meant to provide food aid given the drought and bad agricultural policies by the government. He lastly called upon ZANU PF, through its representative at the meeting, Mr Gabriel Chaibva, to respect the rule of law and not cherry-pick election related clauses that suit them.

By Crisis SA Media Desk

The final lap to a free and fair election in Zimbabwe: The impediments, constraints, challenges and opportunities.

Presentation at the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Zim-Political Update Public Sminar and South African Parliament by Qhubani Moyo of the MDC formation led by Professor Welshman Ncube

Introduction

Zimbabwe held a successful referendum on the 16 of March 2013 in which the citizens voted overwhelmingly for a new constitution. The referendum was held in a free and fair environment in which the parties opposed to and those promoting the new constitution were given space without hindrance to express themselves. The public broadcaster the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Cooperation also provided substantial space for all the parties to express themselves. The electoral management body the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission also acquitted itself fairly well in the election. The conclusion by various observer missions were that the run up and the actual voting as well as the counting process was free and fair. Some of the observer groups that endorsed the referendum as free and fair included the SADC observer mission, the Joint Monitoring and implementation commission (JOMIC) and the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) amongst some of the local observers. It is however important to realise that while the referendum was conducted in a free environment the conditions



Qhubani Moyo from MDC, giving his party's position on the preparedness of Zimbabwe to hold credible election

may be different in the next election given that the contestation will be higher. In the coming election the three major parties the MDC led by Professor Welshman Ncube, The MDC T led by Morgan Tsvangirai and ZANU PF led by Robert Mugabe who were fighting from one corner will be squaring against each other. This is likely to increase the tension as there is more at stake than there was in the referendum. It is therefore important to approach the upcoming

election with an open eye and a need to make improvements on the electoral system based on the requirements of the new constitution. To that end we believe the following are important if the upcoming elections are to have any credibility:

Election Dates

The need to ensure that the fixing of election dates is process driven and is by

consensus by the parties and not a political declaration by one individual. We think that elections should be held by end of September and that the constitution supports that position. The constitution allows for elections to be held 4 months after the dissolution of the parliament. In this case the parliament stand automatically dissolved on June 30 meaning that elections can be held any time between July and October 2013. But give the amount of work that has to be done post the enactment of the new constitution and the need to accommodate the World Tourism Organisation summit in August we think end of September would be the most appropriate time.

Voter Registration

The voter registration process should be open and transparent to allow all those interested to register as voters. The referendum results showed that there were closer to a million new voters compared to the last elections and the probability that most of

them are not registered voters is very high. Also the mandatory 30 day voter period after the promulgation of the new constitution should be respected and resourced so that all people regardless of political affiliation have equal chances to register.

Role of Security Organs

The security organs of state should be made to execute their duties in a non partisan manner. There is need for the security forces to regain the confidence of the citizenry by making public statements of their commitment to upholding the constitution and not partisan interests. The senior army officials who have made subversive statements that they will not accept any election result other than that which produces a Mugabe victory should be made to rescind their statements publicly.

The Voters Roll

The voters roll remains one of the biggest threats to the elections as it is skewed in controversy and continues to be a source of conflict. There are accusations and counter accusations of it containing many people who have since passed mother earth and that it is not accessible to the contesting parties. However there seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel as this week the Cabinet directed that there be accelerated voter registration and that the price of the voters role be reduced from the exorbitant \$30000 to a moderate \$5000 and that the parties can now access it electronically free of charge.

New Electoral Regulations

The expectation is that after the constitution is signed into law sometime in the middle of May there should be enough time to allow for alignment of electoral legislation to the new constitution and that period is crucial as the resultant legislation is the bedrock of a free and fair election.

Creation of New Institutions Arising from the New Constitution

The expectation is that if the elections are to have credibility, the institutions that arise out of the new constitution should be created in a transparent manner and they should be empowered to carry out their functions and mandate without hindrance in the run-up to the elections.

The Credibility of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

The credibility of the ZEC still remains in doubt despite a fairly good job in the referendum specifically because of the secretariat which is perceived to be infested with individuals linked to the partisan Central Intelligence organisation and ZANU PF. There could be a need to encourage some of these people



A participant responding to Mr Qhubani Moyo of MDC's presentation

to recurse themselves because of the role they played in the controversies of the previous elections.

Appointments of ZEC Chair

There is also the issue of deliberate disregard of other key players in the government with regards to major appointments for instance the appointment of the ZEC Chairperson and the appointment of the Human Rights commission are the cases in point. In both appointments there was disregard our existence and this again creates tension which may create conflict. However given that the appointments have been finalised we only pray for impartiality in the execution of the duties by them.

Attempt to Rewrite the GPA

We are concerned at the attempts by the MDC T and ZANU PF to rewrite the GPA and disregarding the SADC resolution on who are the principals in the government as the two parties continue to disregard the SADC by excluding Professor Ncube from the forum of principals. We request that the SADC make an intervention to ensure that there is respect of the same

The Media

The public media continues to be used as propaganda tools of ZANU PF and we think this will be a source of conflict as we get to the elections, in that regard we urge the media to be impartial in its execution of duty. In particular we draw them to the section 19 of the GPA which urges them to refrain from hate speech. Most importantly we urge that the public broadcaster and the newspapers accord

equal opportunities and space to all the contesting parties to market themselves and their policies.

The Election Observers

Our position is that there should be space for all election observers domestic, regional and international to observe the elections. We believe in transparency and have nothing to hide, as a result we are not against any nation coming to observe our elections. As such we call upon other partners in the government to also open up and accept the need for re-integration of Zimbabwe to the greater international community by allowing observers from all interested countries to observe the elections.

The Role of Jomic

It is our belief that the JOMIC organ should be strengthened and resourced to play an even more pronounced role in the run up to the elections in particular by ensuring that the SADC team that was seconded to Jomic be given its space and seats in the Jomic so that they have a role to play on an everyday basis. We believe they should have unlimited and unhindered access to the Jomic programmes and activities.

The Role of SADC Facilitation

The SADC facilitation should continue with the role of ensuring that the parties find each. We find it unacceptable that some parties want to label the facilitation team foreigners who should be excluded from the process and urge the Troika to put its foot down because our thinking is that the reason why some want to eliminate the facilitation from the scene is to run the election in a discredited way. We appreciate the role they have played so far in resolving the Zimbabwean conflict.

Political Violence

There are still some incidences of organised political violence in some parts of the country which have a huge potential of discrediting the electoral process. Some of the violence is perpetuated by known groups with known political affiliation they are not being arrested. It is our position that the police should act impartially and not be selective in their application of the law. Accordingly we urge the arrest and disbandment of these terror groups in areas like Harare among others

Politicisation of Food Aid

Some parts of the country especially the southern parts have been hit by a serious drought which have necessitated that food aid be distributed to the starving citizens. We however have already started to hear of cases that there is politicisation of food aid and that it is being distributed in a partisan manner in some parts of the country. In some areas we understand it is being used as a tool for mobilisation of votes. It is our position that there should be impartial distribution of food aid.

Conclusion

It is our conclusion that significant strides have been achieved since the formation of the inclusive government and that if the parties address the above 15 remaining impediments it is possible to have a credible election that will have an acceptable result. The achievement of the above rests on the political will of the Zimbabwean parties but most importantly on the increased participation of the SADC as directed by the African Union.

By Qhubani Moyo