

The Constitution We Want - Get Involved

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 Tuesday, 27 April 2010
 Last Updated Tuesday, 27 April 2010

The questions or statements to be posed by the Outreach Teams when they come to consult the people on what they want in the Constitution have been finalised by representatives of the political parties from a list of statements and questions which came out of the training workshop for Outreach Teams. Part 1. The constitution is to have preamble, which is a preliminary statement that introduces the constitution. Normally it carries the major historical legacies and challenges of a nation and its values and aspirations. The Talking Points and Key Questions agreed about the preamble are:

- a) What are the legacies, values and aspirations that should be carried in the preamble?
- b) In dealing with our historical legacies, should the preamble single out sections of our society or should it identify our legacies as collective endeavours?
- c) Should the constitution recognize post-independence internal challenges and conflicts?

The first of seven themes dealt with the Founding Principles Of The Constitution

Founding principles are those values that citizens commit themselves to their adherence. They are the both the soul and the spine of the constitution and they reflect the manner in which the people desire to be governed (or should it be to govern themselves?).

The agreed Talking Points and Key Questions on this were:

- a) Should the founding principles recognize the need to address the historical imbalances in the ownership and utilization of land and natural resources?
- b) Should the founding principles of the constitution recognize the irreversibility of the process of land reform having regard to the vision of the liberation struggle and the provisions of the GPA?
- c) Should the founding principles recognize and celebrate the struggle of the first Chimurenga, second Chimurenga and the struggle for democracy and the rule of law by Zimbabwean men and women?
- d) Should the founding principles of the constitution acknowledge diversity of religion?
- e) Should the constitution recognize matters like non racialism, good governance, gender equality, non tribalism, non-discrimination, equal treatment before the law, accountability, and adherence to the rule of law, peace and tranquillity?
- f) Should the constitution be the supreme law of Zimbabwe?
- g) Should the founding principles of the constitution recognize our cultural diversity, traditions and customs and their diversity?
- h) Should the founding principles acknowledge the national flag, national anthem and public seal?
- i) Should the founding principles of the constitution recognize our international relations with other countries?
- j) Should the founding principles of the constitution define by whom and how should hero status be conferred?
- k) Should the founding principles of the constitution recognize the calling for patriotism and loyalty to Zimbabwe?
- l) Should the founding principles of the constitution recognize the status of international treaties, conventions, and protocols and practices in our constitution?
- m) Should the founding principles of the constitution define the land question? If yes, what principles on land reform should be specified?
- n) Should the founding principles recognize the role and relevance of traditional institutions and customs in national development?

The second theme is Arms of the State (Principle of the Separation of Powers)

There are three principal functions of the state; that is, making laws, interpretation of the laws and implementation of the laws. These are vested in the legislature, executive and the judiciary respectively. The Talking Points and Key Questions that arose out of this and were agreed on, were divided into the following three sections: Executive Arm of the State

- a) Should the principle of separation of powers be acknowledged in the Constitution?
- b) Who should be head of state; President or Prime Minister? (Implies that they have already agreed there should be a President and a Prime Minister)
- c) Should the head of state also be the head of government?
- d) How should the head of state and/or government be chosen?
- e) What are the requirements for one to become head of state and/or head of government?
- f) Should there be term limits for the head of state and/or government?
- g) Under what circumstances should a head of state and/or head of government leave office?
- h) Should the constitution prescribe the maximum number of ministers?
- i) Who should act as head of state and/or government if the incumbent is unable to perform his/her duties?
- j) Should ministers be MPs?
- k) How should ministers be appointed?
- l) How should the Attorney General be appointed? Should he/she be a member of cabinet in particular? What should be his/her functions?
- m) Should we have an independent National Prosecuting Authority?

Legislature - Houses of Parliament

- a) How many houses of Parliament should we have?
- b) What should be the size(s) of the house(s) of parliament?
- c) How should members of parliament be elected or appointed?
- d) What role(s) should the house(s) of parliament play?

- e) Should MPs be allowed to cross the floor with their seats?
- f) Should any seats be reserved for women and/or special interest groups? If so how should they be selected?
- g) Should seats be reserved for traditional leaders; if so, how many?
- h) How long should be the life of Parliament?
- i) Under what circumstances should an MP lose his/her seat?
- Judiciary
 - a) Who should appoint judges and judicial officers?
 - b) How many levels of courts should we have?
 - c) Do we need a separate Constitutional Court?
 - d) What should be the qualification of judges?
 - e) What should be the role of traditional courts?
 - f) Who should determine the conditions of service of the judiciary?
 - g) Who should be the head of the judiciary? How and by whom should he/she be appointed?
 - h) Under what circumstances should a judge be removed from office?
 - i) How long should be the tenure of office of judges?

The Third Theme, Systems of Government refers to the manner state is organized, that is, the distribution of political power and responsibility within the state.

There are three major systems of governance in modern states. These are federations, unitary states and devolved states.

Federal System: A federal system of governance obtains where two or more pre-existing independent states agree to have one national government (Seems irrelevant since there are not pre-existing independent states, unless Zimbabwe and another neighbouring country decide to form a federal state.

Unitary System: A unitary system is where power is held by a single central government that controls all the political and administrative power with some devolution of power throughout the state.

A Devolved System: Devolution is whereby political and administrative power is shared between a national government and lower level spheres of the state, for example, provinces and local authorities. (Though this needs further clarification, we will have to answer the questions as presented)

The talking points and key questions on Systems of Government are:

- a) What systems of national government should Zimbabwe have?
- b) What relationships should exist between central government, provincial government, local government (councils) and traditional leaders.

- c) Who should lead provincial governments and how should they be chosen?
- d) How many provinces should Zimbabwe have? How should they be demarcated and named?
- e) If there are provincial and local governments, how should they be chosen?
- f) What should be the functions of provincial governments?
- g) Should all the different levels of government have a tax sharing system?
- h) Should traditional leaders be part of the national, provincial and local government structures?

The fourth, Citizenship and Bill of Rights has talking points and key questions [divided into two sections: Citizenship:

Citizenship is one's membership of a country which a person gets because they were born in that country or their parents were born in that country, lived in that country or were registered in that country)

- a) How should citizenship be acquired?

- b) Should dual/multiple citizenship be allowed?
 - c) What are the rights and obligations of citizens and non-citizens?
 - d) Should foreign spouses be entitled to Zimbabwean citizenship?
- Bill of Rights:** A Bill of Rights sets out the rights and freedoms which all people in Zimbabwe are entitled to.
- a) What rights and freedoms should be contained and guaranteed in the constitution?
 - b) Should the Bill of Rights be amendable? If so how should it be amended?
 - c) What are the remedies that can be made available to a citizen who is aggrieved by the violation of their rights?
 - d) Should the Bill of Rights contain separate and specific human rights and freedoms that relate to women in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women?
 - e) Should it be permissible to suspend or limit rights during a state of emergency?
 - f) Should the death penalty be retained?
 - g) Should there be derogation from this Bill of Rights to redress historical imbalances for purposes of empowerment?
 - h) Should the Bill of Rights apply to State as well as non State actors?
 - i) Should a woman be allowed to marry another woman and a man to marry another man?
 - j) What are the rights of children that should be protected in the constitution?

The fifth them: Women and Gender Issues has the following talking points and key questions:

- a) Should men and women be treated equally in the constitution?
- b) Should the constitution contain provisions to ensure, guarantee and enforce gender mainstreaming?
- d) Should the constitution guarantee a quota system for women's participation in politics and other decision-making public and private bodies?

e) Should there be a gender commission? If so how exactly is it to be constituted?

Theme 6: Youth Talking Points/Key Questions

- a) Who are the youth in Zimbabwe? From what age to what age?
- b) Do we need a national body or commission for the youth? If so what should its composition, powers and functions, tenure/lifespan and funding be?
- c) Do we need national youth service? If yes should it be provided for in the constitution? And for what purpose?

d) What specific rights of the youth should be guaranteed in the constitution? Theme 7: The Disabled Talking Points/Key Questions

a) Should the disabled have the right to state protection?

b) How can the Constitution guarantee Parliamentary representation for the disabled?

c) How can the constitution ensure the full participation of disabled persons in all socio-economic and cultural activities of the communities?

Themes 8 to 16 of the Constitutional debate deal with Media, War Veterans, Land, Natural Resources and Empowerment, Labour, Elections, Transitional Mechanisms and Independent Commissions, Elections and Transitional Mechanisms, Independent Commissions, Anti-Corruption/Media/Human Rights/ Public Protector/Electoral, Independent commissions, Executive Organs of the State: Public Service, Defence Forces, Police Force, Prison Service and their Commissions, Public Finances, Comptroller and Auditor-General; the National Budget, the Central Bank, Government Borrowing, Traditional Institutions and Customs, Religion, Languages, Arts and Culture. Theme 8: Media Talking Points/Key Questions a) Should the constitution guarantee media freedom? b) What limitations, if any, should be imposed on media freedom? Theme 9: War Veterans Talking Points/Key Questions a) Should there be a war veterans' commission? If so, what should its composition, powers, functions, tenure and funding be? b) Should there be a law to deal with specific issues relating to war veterans from time to time? Theme 10: Land, Natural Resources and Empowerment Talking Points/Key Questions a) Should the constitution highlight that land reform is a necessary process to correct historical imbalances? b) On property rights, is there need to make special provision on land and natural resources in the constitution? c) What type of land tenure system should Zimbabwe have? d) Should the right to land ownership and/or occupation by previously disadvantaged people be entrenched in the constitution? e) Should compensation be paid when the State expropriates and/or acquires land? f) Who should pay compensation in respect of acquired land? g) Should there be a right to approach the courts in the event of land dispute? h) Should traditional leaders have a role to play in land administration? i) Who should own the land? j) Should foreigners be allowed to own land and if so, under what circumstances? k) Do we need a land commission and/or land court? If yes, what should be its powers and functions? l) How should marginalised groups be empowered with regards to land and natural resources? m) What role should traditional leaders play in the administration of land and management and exploitation of natural resources under their jurisdiction? Theme 11: Labour Talking Points/Key Questions a) What exact labour rights should be included in the constitution? b) Should the constitution recognize the right to strike without exception? If yes, how do you deal with the issue of essential services? c) How should the constitution promote and protect women workers' rights? d) Should the constitution recognize and incorporate international treaties, conventions, protocols and practices relating to labour? Theme 12: Elections, Transitional Mechanisms and Independent Commissions: [This is divided into two sections] Elections and Transitional Mechanisms An election is an opportunity for people to choose their leaders. There are a number of electoral systems obtaining the world over the most popular of which are the first past the post system, the proportional representation system and the hybrid system comprising the two. First Past the Post System: This is where the person with the highest number of votes becomes the elected representative of the electorate. Proportional Representation: This is a system by which the elected people are determined by the proportion of votes obtained by each party. Hybrid System: This is where some of the representatives are elected on the basis of the first past the post system and others on the basis of proportional representation. Talking Points/Key Questions a) What type of electoral system should Zimbabwe have? § First past the post? § Proportional representation? § Hybrid? b) How often should we have elections for: § Head of State? § Head of government? § Parliament? § Local government? c) Should we have harmonized elections for the Head of State and/or Head of government, parliament and local government? d) Who qualifies to register as a voter and to vote at elections for the Head of State and/or Head of government, parliament and local authorities? e) What body should run elections and what should be its powers and functions? f) Should Zimbabweans living in the Diaspora be allowed to vote? g) Should voter registration be mandatory? h) Should the constitution incorporate international treaties, conventions, protocols and practices dealing with free and fair elections? i) How should we deal with electoral disputes? j) Should there be term limits for elected officials? k) In the event of vacancies arising, how should these be filled? l) Should a specific time frame be given for the inauguration into office of the President, Prime Minister, Members of Parliament, Cabinet and Councillors? m) If there are term limits, should the person whose term has expired run for another post? n) If the Head of State and/or Head of government becomes incapacitated, who should run the country before an election is held and how long should it take for such an election to be held? o) How long after the referendum should the constitution come into force? p) Under what circumstances should a candidate be barred from standing in an election? q) Who should assist those unable to vote on their own? r) How many Parliamentary constituencies should the country be divided into? Independent Commissions: Anti-Corruption/Media/Human Rights/ Public Protector/Electoral: Independent commissions are constitutional watchdogs for monitoring and implementation of their areas of specialty. Talking Points/Key Questions a) What should be the mandate and functions of the Anti-Corruption/ Media/Human Rights Commissions, Public Protector, Electoral Commission? b) What should be their composition? c) How and by whom should they be appointed? d) What should their qualifications be? e) What other executive commissions and organs should we have? f) What should be their functions? g) How should their members be appointed? h) Who should they be accountable to? Theme 13: Executive Organs of the State: Public Service, Defence Forces, Police Force, Prison Service and their Commissions: Are bodies through which the state implements laws and policies. Talking Points/Key Questions a) What is the Public Service/Defence Forces/Police Service/Prison Service? b) What is their role and function? c) How should members be recruited and/or appointed? d) What other executive commissions and organs should we have? e) Who should they be accountable to? Theme 14: Public Finance: Any funds that accrue to the state: (a) the Consolidated Revenue Fund, (b) Auditing of Public Finances. Talking Points/Key Questions [these are divided into four sections] Comptroller and Auditor-General a) Should

the office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General be specifically provided for in the constitution?b) Should the office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General be independent?c) By whom and how should the Comptroller and Auditor-General be appointed?National Budgeta) Should the constitution ensure and guarantee transparency and accountability in the management of public finances?b) How should the constitution provide for the national budgeting process?c) Should the National Budget be gender sensitive/responsive and allocate resources in a way that recognizes men and women's differential needs?d) How should we ensure that there is transparency in the utilization of public finances?e) How do we ensure that Government procurement is transparent?Central Banka) What should be the primary function of the Central Bank?b) Should the constitution stipulate the role, functions, duties and obligations of the Central Bank?c) How and who should appoint the Governor of the Central Bank?d) Should the Central Bank be independent?e) Who should play an oversight role over the operations of the Central Bank?Government Borrowinga) Who should oversee the borrowing and granting of government guarantees?b) How exactly should government loan contraction be implemented?c) Who should set the limits for government borrowing and granting of guarantees?d) Should the constitution provide for the oversight powers of Parliament on government borrowing?Theme 15: Traditional Institutions and CustomsTalking Points/Key Questionsa) What ought to be the relationship between elected representatives and traditional leaders?b) Should traditional leaders have judicial functions?c) What constitutional provisions should we have to guarantee the security of tenure, dignity and status of traditional leaders?d) Should we have a special commission to manage the day to day affairs, welfare, appointment and removal from office of traditional leaders?e) Should the constitution stipulate that all traditional leaders should not be active in politics?Theme 16: ReligionTalking Points/Key Questionsa) Should the constitution guarantee freedom of religious practice, worship, association, assembly, conscience and expression?b) Should the constitution acknowledge the supremacy of God?Theme 17: Languages, Arts and CultureTalking Points/Key Questionsa) Which languages spoken in Zimbabwe should be protected, preserved, promoted and developed?b) Should the constitution guarantee protection of monuments, cultural practices, sites and localities?c) What rights and interests of artists should be acknowledged, protected, preserved, promoted and developed?In association with VeritasEnd ConstitutionLetting of Steam is your column, you the reader, to express yourself. Just write to editor@changezimbabwe.com, copy to czeditor@googlemail.com. There Will be No Free election, UnlessBy TAMBURAI. S. CHIREWO

Dear Editor

It has now been three weeks since Jacob Zuma left Zimbabwe and we still don't know what is going on.I believe there will be no free and fair elections in Zimbabwe as long as Robert Mugabe and HIS judges are still controlling the electorate election machinery and appointing their own observers.Our MDC Treasure general and deputy agriculture minister-designate senator Roy Bennet has again been summoned to appear at Chipige magisrate court for another spurious charge of hoarding maize in 2001! And the Judge is still taking months just to decide whether he should be put on trial after AG Tomana failed to pin anything on him on the terrorism charges.Does anyone eve remember what was going on in 2001. What about all those Zanu (PF) people who killed people in the 2002 election but were never brought to court?If Robert Mugage wants unity why are 2001 issues coming up now? He and his cabinet have a strategy to destroy MDC and cling to power.Not this time; the peoples will speak by their vote if Mugabe does not rig the election.VOTE MDC ZIMBABWE FOR YOUR FUTURE

TAMBURAI. S. CHIREWO

MDC Member UKI Want FreedomBy Gilbert Navonika I get so puzzled by events happening in Zimbabwe, when are our leader going to realize that this is the 21st Century.Gone are the days when people used to get fooled by Zanu PF, with Chimurenga story, am glad that people have woken up. Thanks to Mr Tsvangirai and co for the effort and the strong challenge that they have shown over the last year or so. Many of our fellow Zimbos were perishing because of their belief, I don't know why Mugabe thinks that He can rule that country alone, using iron fist. Watchout Matibili the new generations are coming to get you old timer.Mugabe you talk about illegal sanctions, what about your so called POSA, what sort of parasite is it, we need justice in Zimbabwe. How can you expect the West to remove the sanctions when you hold on to power and trying to get rid of everyone who opposes you. The world knows of your crimes against humanity, and all the other evil things you have done.I myself was served with two warrants of arrest at my parents home in Harare, charge POSA, back in 2002 and 2005. I now in exile in UK where I have lived here for the last 9 years. I feel very much let down by the country which I call home, I am now very much afraid to come back home because of fear of persecution, because of my political belief.I will never forget the trauma I faced back in 2001 in the hands of the Green Bombers, back then I was only 17 being abducted from my home forced into joining the militia. I witnessed things that I will never ever forget, I never want to relive those moments.I find this POSA to be an unlawful act which needs to be abolished.People of Zimbabwe lets joins hands and fight this tyrant, together will change Zimbabwe. Gilbert Navonika

POSA Amendment An Urgent Necessity. By Handsome Banda

The proposed amendments to the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) in Zimbabwe by the civic groups is a much welcomed idea.As a victim of the law myself, I support the proposed amendments or the eradication of the law entirely. The law was never meant to protect the majority of the Zimbabweans but a few Zanu PF individuals who still believe they should rule forever without any opposition. Only people with dwindling popularity can come up with such draconian laws.The law places sweeping powers in the hands of the partisan police which allows Zanu PF to meet while the other parties are told to go through cumbersome applications.University students have suffered considerably under the

overzealous application of the law by the police. As a former student leader we were raided and beaten up by police when we were legitimately addressing the students. POSA is the weapon used to suppress and squash student activism. I feel for my fellow student leaders who are still being harassed and arrested for standing up for their rights to better education. Peaceful demonstrations are not allowed. One wonders, how then should people express themselves? Yes we know the police will continue to abuse their power but we don't want to legitimise their action now that we have a government of national unity. POSA is an infringement of citizens' rights to participate in the affairs of their government and Mugabe has ruthlessly used it to crush any meaningful public debates, worse still different opinion. Zanu PF must now accept that the MDC is there to stay; in fact they are now the opposition by virtue of being the minority in government. The successful amendment of POSA is going to usher a new era in Zimbabwe's history whereby humanity is going to be accorded the importance it deserves for the prosperity of the country. I believe all repressive laws should be amended for the benefit of all Zimbabweans in and outside the country. The need to have a free society really makes the drafting of a new constitution a necessity, which must be kick started by the removal of these draconian laws. By Handsome Banda Maintain Sanctions Until...

Dear Sir

I have read with interest the opinion piece written by Isaac Dziya calling for the lifting of sanctions by the EU and US. He states that Robert Mugabe claims tremendous improvement under the new Unity Government; however this is nothing but a claim by Mugabe. The reality is always something different with these politicians. The writer has called for the dropping of sanctions without elaborating which sanctions, is it the travel ban on Mugabe that is causing this untold grief to the common man in Zimbabwe? Is it the refusal to trade with Zanu PF controlled companies? Zidera was never implemented according to the US spokesperson! I am surprised that the writer blames all the economic woes on these sanctions and not on the incredibly corrupt Zanu (PF) government that created this poverty in Zimbabwe - perhaps he lives in a different part of Zimbabwe to me in Harare. The effects of Mugabe being unable to shop in Harrods made no impact on my life. Perhaps he might claim that the bad press on Mugabe has deterred investors, however if this was the case then it would be in the interest of the Mugabe government to try to make some good press instead of insulting the intelligence of every foreigner. Don't send the bully boys into the premises of international companies trying to force them to do their bidding. Until the GPA has been fully implemented, the travel ban should stay in place and even when this is implemented the EU and US should look long and hard before deciding to lift the travel ban. Why should they be forced to let these evil people into their countries.

JR Put the Agreement into Practice The Global Political Agreement (GPA) was signed to give Zimbabweans peace, economic growth, political freedom and social cohesion. It is a year now since the inception of the GPA and the most pertinent issues in the agreement remain unresolved. As President Mugabe continues with cheap politicking, the world wonders whether Zanu PF genuinely believes in this agreement. While it is commendable that the agreement has brought economic revival, it remains to be seen whether Zanu PF is willing to seriously engage and stop perpetrating political violence. Fundamentally, media laws should be revamped, police and army should refrain from harassing civilians and all principals in the GPA should share power proportionately in Government. The Movement for Democratic Change should draw a line to stop human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The MDC leaders should only participate in a government that represents the people's will. It is now time to remind Zanu PF that they can no longer continue monopolising power in Zimbabwe. Frazer Muzondo, Milton Keynes UK

GNU Meeting and meet again then meet and have another meeting to plan for another meeting that will happen after another meeting!

Simbarashe Dziruni

Invasion of my dreams

Joshua Nkomo invaded my dreams! He said, "BMC, I need you to speak out against what is taking place in the party". Before I could ask, we were joined by Simone Muzenda. I said, "Why me? What of the leaders in your party? Scotch tape on their mouth?" "This is one of the things that I want you to speak about. Political prostitutes should not be entertained in the party leadership." "But, Mdala Joshie, I thought it was the highest ornamental himself who needed the political prostitute to salvage himself and to propel the party." I said reluctantly. "Exactly BMC, you have to have a wide perspective of the situation. Before the sunset of Bob, we need to encourage new blood to take over the affairs of the party, but not in the person of Nutty Prof. We can't surrender leadership into the hands of this young Turk" said Mdala Joshie, before the quiet Simon looked pleadingly at me. "Well, Bob is hanging precariously on the presidency. He is now known to have more leaks than an old toilet; soon there will be a vacancy in the presidium. The young Turks are watching". Simone spoke with a shaking voice. "That is what I want you to tell the MDC boys not to allow the inclusive government to be hijacked by Nutty Prof. He had the temerity to hijack the party for succession purposes. He resuscitates himself from the foiled Tsholtsho Declaration. That young man has got dreams", Joshie looked miserable. "Bob has over the years

become something crude and boorish, something repellent to a more delicate democracy and to a truly modern taste. Ought he not become at least a little refined? Now he invites back Nutty Prof who alienates rather than seduces” said Simone with a groaning voice. “Shout up Simone. Let’s look at the issue at hand. When I left in 1999, Nutty Prof was not in picture, when he came you were there, what did you do to obstruct him? Nothing! Shame on you!” He was fuming.

“Look Joshie. If allowed, the Nutty Prof will slowly strangle the party through patronage. What do you think BMC?” he immediately turned to me. “I am not sure of what you guys want me to do, I am not a party member”, I stammered.

“This is the more reason BMC why you should speak out against what is going on because, you are impartial, and if Nutty Prof takes root in the party, that very evening, the inclusive government is bound to suffer a great hemorrhage”. Simone shook his head in agreement. “But why can’t the party members speak against this entry into the Jongwe Brothel?” I asked in a resigned voice, imbibing of the carrot-juice on offer. “The MDC and its policies are bound to fail when the Nutty Prof comes into politics and possibly campaigns for Bob at the next congress, knowing full well that the old man has few summers and maybe a single winter to live. Nutty Prof will have positioned himself, Joice stands no chance. There is lots of in-house fighting to Nutty Prof’s advantage. He plans to bring in lots of young political pick pockets, and he becomes their chef.” Mdala Wethu, started shedding tears. “Oh, I get the point. Hadn’t looked at it from that angle. But now who do you think should lead the party at the fall of Bob and whence therefore the inclusive government?”, that was Jose Msika whom we did not know was listening all along.

Before I could answer, I woke up shivering. Clyde B. Chakupeta

Pretoria Dear Sir, (Commenting on Tsvangirai/Obama) Probably those who chose Obama ahead of Tsvangirai considered the sphere of influence of the peace initiatives. Obama had an impact internationally, while Tsvangirai's was confined to Zimbabwe. I fully agree with all that Tsvangirai would also have been a worthy winner, but there had to be only one. As acknowledged by Tsvangirai that the mere mention of his name was enough encouragement let us accept the decision and integrity of the awarding body. If Obama was white I am sure the scream to heavens above would have been RACISM!!!! But because Obama is of mixed race and widely accepted as black through his Kenyan roots all we can hear are mumbles and low key grumbles. Batshela Nduna GNU Is Nothing ZIMBABWEANS must know that as long as President Robert Mugabe remains in power they will continue to suffer — remember Gukurahundi, Murambatsvina, Elections 2008, Operation Whom did you vote for etc. The government of national unity is nothing, Mugabe continues to reign. It’s now time to stage massive protests to make sure he goes. No one should cry about the situation in Zimbabwe because we are not doing anything to drive away the dictator. Mugabe must leave office for the good of the country Simbarahse Dziruni

GNU Must Protect People By Owen Chitsamatanga The birth of Zimbabwe’s Government of National Unity brought great relief to the suffering and starving masses of Zimbabwe. Even sceptics, armchairs, commentators, and political stalwarts altogether agreed that Zimbabwe deserved a respite. However it is now increasingly evident that what was agreed in principle is not what is in practice. Today the number of MDC MPs shuttling to courts on trumped up charges is approaching ten. Furthermore MDC activists in remote villages are being silently victimised. The recent assault of an MDC activist in Mudzi by a Zanu PF headman is a case in point. Scores of opposition activists are similarly and silently victimised across the country. The recent BBC documentary entitled : Bankrolling Mugabe is an alarming revelation of human rights abuses that will shock the whole world. Members of Parliament should represent and articulate the people’s will. They anchor government and craft legislature. Mugabe’s government has always treated them as rubber stamping clerks. The actual people who wield power in Zimbabwe are MPs not cabinet or government. It is the MPs and not Mugabe nor Cabinet who authorised the Government of National Unity. It is naive for the Government of National Unity to turn a blind on arbitrary arrests and victimisation of MDC activists. Time has come for MDC MPs to act collectively and make a statement. Their collective voice and votes will supercede pretences from Mugabe, SADC or even AU. The MPs are entrusted with the people’s power in their hands and they should use it. They should use the people’s power to protect human rights, to discipline the transitional government and to craft a people driven constitution. If the violence continues, fundamental questions will be raised on how elected MPs failed to protect the masses of Zimbabwe. Owen Chitsamatanga

Disruption Was Calculated To Derail Election Yesterday’s disruption of the constitution indaba by Zanu PF militia has made me caused me to agree with Alex Magaisa’s assertion that Lovemore Madhuku may not be the crybaby most of us thought he was after all. VaMagaisa posted to the web on the 3rd of July an article entitled ‘constitution will not save us’. I had reservations about this article because I thought that the constitution was our only way out of the quagmire we are in right now. I was of the idea that the crafting of the constitution would lead us to free and fair elections and to a new Zimbabwe where human rights are respected once more. I was not the only one lost on this one .Most of my fellow citizens also shared this idea that the new constitution will bring a new political, economic and social environment. Even the lawmakers who are directly involved in the constitution making process openly told the media that the constitution will change everything to the extent of even labeling Madhuku as a saboteur. But latest events on the ground prove otherwise. Alex Magaisa’s discussion went on to say that what is happening in Zimbabwe is not because of a defective constitution but rather its ‘more to do with the progression and evolution of society as a civilized entity.’ I concur here and with the lack of political will to respect the constitution it may be just a another waste of time pursuing this process because at the end of the day it seems there is no guarantee that the contents of the constitution are going

to be adhered to. Courts of law may still remain biased towards Mugabe and Zanu PF. The executive may still continue bypassing Parliament. Lovemore Madhuku recently said that politicians should not be trusted to write the constitution. Zanu PF wants the Kariba draft to be adopted because it leaves Mugabe with all the executive powers and on the other hand MDC wants a new Parliament driven document. Civic organizations are crying foul because they feel left out; they say that set up is dangerous as they can't trust politicians to write the constitution for us. This is where the problem is right now. This recent development makes me think that all Zimbabweans including diasporas should be involved, we don't want a repeat of the talks that led to the formation of the inclusive government, where decisions are done by politicians alone, that's bad for democracy. MDC should also think twice and try to accommodate the services of the civic society in the crafting of the constitution including letting them co-chairing the process as Madhuku suggests. A constitution should be people driven and inheritable. We don't want to go back to the drawing board again. But it seems these are just wishes as latest developments say that the disruption of the indaba was sanctioned from the top amid reports that an MDC councillor was assaulted by Zanu PF militia. People questioned why no one was arrested and why the 'always alert' riot police took time to arrive at the scene. The motive behind all this is now known, Mugabe is afraid of free and fair elections to be brought about by the new constitution. So the tactic is to disrupt the process by all means possible so that it doesn't become credible in the eyes of the voters so that come referendum time people will vote a resounding 'NO' and if that fails it will be the first of its kind in the world where a sitting government rigs an referendum, in this case, so that they lose. Verengerai Mavesere, Scotland.

Heed Tsvangirai's Call To Go Home Please allow me to respond to Rudo through your website. I am not against Vigil because they have done some work for the country but I have heard some allegations that Vigil and ROHR were behind the Cathedral noise. I have no evidence for this but what I said about Vigil is what I saw. I am just telling it like it is. The MDC has a policy on those in Diaspora. I have extracted the following from the MDC website and if you want more please go to Policy Objectives on the following website http://www.mdc.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58&Itemid=73. Here is part of the MDC Policy on the people in Diaspora: To achieve its international mission the MDC will set for itself targets of performance that reflect, but in no way are dominated by, global interests, in addition to those that will advance the livelihood and socio-economic well-being of Zimbabweans citizens at home and abroad. In accordance with this policy the MDC has periodically sent here party officials to get our grievances. Before the Prime Minister we were graced by the Speaker of Parliament and MDC National Chairman Lovemore Moyo. We are for a department in government responsible for Diaspora Issues and I was informed on Saturday that the department is taking shape in Elton Mangoma's ministry. Within the same ministry plans are afoot creating opportunities for investment for those in Diaspora. Clearly it's untrue to say that MDC has no policy on the members in Diaspora. The Prime Minister did not just come to say 'come home'. The truth is that the Prime Minister was not given the opportunity to say what he wanted to say and people who have their objectives are seizing half his speech and are now trying to exploit that without allowing him to speak or answer back. The Prime Minister spoke at the dinner and anyone who was there will tell you that the Prime Minister had much more to say than he was allowed to say at the Cathedral. As I see it from your article, you may be surprised to find out that you are in agreement with him. Why denying him the right to express himself? You have referred to Andrew Maar programme. Yes Mugabe still has power in Zimbabwe. The Transitional Government is headed by three people with EQUAL power. They are Mugabe, Tsvangirayi and Cabinet. When a deadlock is declared matters are referred to SADCC for arbitration. This is what is happening to Gono and Tomana issue. That's why they are called Principals. Like Smith in 1980, Mugabe is at an advantage because he was there for the past 30 years, but this government's main task is to create a conducive environment for free and fair elections to be held after 18 months - winner will take all. Yes the Prime Minister is calling you to Zimbabwe where there are dire problems and disease. The Prime Minister is saying come and let us sort our country together. You can refuse and nothing will happen to you. The choice is yours. Zimbabwe needs you. This is very clear. There are people who want help in Zimbabwe and Tsvangirayi is saying come and serve your people. Engineers are being asked to come and unblock burst sewerage pipes all over the country. Those who go there will only get an allowance of 100 dollars. Volunteers are also welcome. Those who do not want to go home will not be punished. The Prime Minister was appealing to those who want and there are some who are going to go. There was no way to hear a plan from someone who is not allowed to speak. Come to our meetings here in the UK for more details. By saying that something is not a permanent feature does not mean that it is not there. At the moment the issue of the Diaspora is a feature on MDC programmes. There is going to be a time soon when the issue of the Diaspora will not be receiving the attention of the party. Thousands of Zimbabweans would still be living in the United Kingdom but will receive no special attention from the party. That is what he was saying. The issue of the Diaspora is not an issue to ZANU PF. You say that the Government must know that we want to come. The Prime Minister is aware of this and this is why he is in a hurry to sort out Zimbabwe even by asking people to come to a country with nothing. He wants to improve the quality of life for Zimbabweans. Tsvangirayi wants to see the country up and running immediately even by engaging volunteers if necessary. You say the government must put up programmes together with donors and I want to say that is exactly what Prime Minister is trying to do. We are doing ourselves a great disservice by jeering a man who is working for us in front of donors like what we did at the Cathedral last Saturday. Donors are not going to take him seriously because of our uncomplimentary behaviour in a foreign country. What we did at the Cathedral last Saturday may backfire in many ways. What I said about donors is that if we are used to having things done for us then we are likely to always expect someone to solve our problems. Too much of donations is not good. The young lady I am referring to wants the government to give her a job that will enable her to support five people. What I am saying is that we need to have independence by depending on our own things. Let us have our own freedom and not to wait to be given freedom by other people. Let us eat our own food and not to wait to be spoon-fed by donors. Let us develop our country with our

own hands and not to wait for angels from heaven to go to Zimbabwe and develop our country for us then when the angels finish they go back to heaven and leave the fruits of their sweat to us to enjoy. Rubbish independence is eating food that you do not know where it came from. If you do not want to work to lift your country then the country will never be yours. If you went to a finished house and get in with your family without knowing who built it then you will be in deep trouble. You have to build your own house. That is what the Prime Minister is saying. Let's build our country. You can decide not to go but when someone does that work then that person will own Zimbabwe. The problem about the British Government pushing you is not the views of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister did not come here to ask the British Government to flush us out. He is not at war with asylum seekers and refugees. He loves all those in Diaspora and wishes them well. You may have heard Mr Mangoma saying that 'you people in Diaspora you do not know how much you SAVED the party'. That is a loaded statement of thanks. The British government has a policy on asylum seekers. They will only give asylum to people with a well-founded fear in their countries. If that fear ceases to exist in Zimbabwe then there will be no asylum for us. That is the British Asylum policy and whether the Prime Minister says it or not it does not change. The British government does not consult the Zimbabwean Prime Minister on how to implement their policies. Kana musikana achinowanikwa nemukomana wake haamuti tanga watenga orthopaedic bed, tenga motokari, cheresa borehole pamba, tenga motokari, tega cellphone ndozouya. Hanzvadzi enda kumurume wako wonoshanda nemaoko ako woita pfuma yako yawawana nemaoko ako. Izvi ndizvo zvinokupa Rugare pamusha pako. Izvi ndizvo zviri kunzi naTsvangirayi huyai tiite. Ukasvika pava neSatellite TV paruzevha ziva kuti divorce haisi kure. Hanzvadzi ndakubaira zanzi. Farai Maruzani

Water under the bridge? By Thokozani Chiwaral imagine the shame, humiliation, bitterness and disgust of being raped as a punishment for what you believe in. This is what a friend of mine and other women in Zimbabwe suffered under the hands of the ZANU PF youth militia for being MDC supporters or members (the two parties now have an uneasy power-sharing). Targeted victims were raped in front of family members, women have been stripped naked and flogged in public, while others said that pesticide had been shoved into their private parts. Everyone knows how dehumanising these experiences were. Speaking of these experiences now is just water under the bridge. It's hard enough to remember these issues let alone think of pursuing justice as it seems no one is to blame. Members of Mugabe's inner circle who turned (ruling party) ZANU PF's youth militia into rapist and killers are responsible for crimes against humanity. A close friend of mine was raped and tortured by ZANU PF youth in 2003 and infected with HIV. Every time we spoke she had no one to blame for this except herself. I tried to convince her that someone was going to pay for what they did to her. To think of it now, I begin to doubt if anyone is going to pay for it after all. Perhaps the most unbelievable act of all has been the unilateral pardoning of all ZANU PF murders, tortures and rapist involved in the orgy of violence that left 200 murdered, 300 missing-suspected murdered, and hundreds of thousands injured or displaced. I remember my former Director at Girl Child Network, Betty Makoni saying a 13 year old girl was abducted and traded to a youth militiaman in exchange for a goat and 60 year old woman was raped by 18 militiamen. After one gang rape, a woman was told, 'we are coming again until you give birth to a ZANU PF child', Makoni said. Although the Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed, ZANU PF politicians, including those now occupying senior positions in the unity government should be held accountable for the roles they played in the violence. Since the Zimbabwe government lacks both the motivation and ability to prosecute these human rights abuses, the international community must step in. Let's put a fight to injustices and we cannot allow this history of rape to repeat itself. To my friend I say the fight is still on, you did not have the opportunity to fight for yourself but I will carry the fight on for you. Thokozani Chiwara

Work For The People ZDF Told

By Chiedza Murandu

Zimbabwe's military chiefs seem to have a propensity to shoot themselves in the foot. When you think they have learned their lesson, they surprise you with utterances that are only bound to bring the entire constructive process in Zimbabwe to a halt. Recently but not surprisingly they scored yet another own by making a pronouncement in support of the controversial Reserve Bank governor Gideon Gono. Typical of Zanu PF and its apparatus, isn't it. This comes as no surprise because Zanu PF and the Zimbabwe military are one and the same. This raises many questions with regards to the seriousness of Robert Mugabe and his men in this government of national unity. Mugabe's behavior and that of his henchmen since September 15th 2008 has been unpretentious. They have shown that they don't share, they don't like to share and they are not used to sharing at all. Yes he has made some few changes here and there but only when it suits him or only in an attempt to hoodwink the world. The military chiefs, being Mugabe's henchmen have a lot to loose if the GNU succeeds. No wonder they have always made utterances that are ill informed at best and irresponsible at worst. For starters, prior to the March 29 elections they said they would never salute a person with no liberation war credentials. Whatever they meant by 'liberation war credentials', but we definitely know that they don't salute democracy, the will of the people, the rule of law, the government of national unity nor the Prime Minister, Mr Morgan Tsvangirai. They showed this at the Heroes acre. They showed total disrespect and immature behavior. The kind of behavior you would expect from gangsters or a private army or something like that. Not a professional army. They didn't even have the decency to wait for Mr Tsvangirai's speech. But then what do you expect, this is Zanu (PF) we are dealing with here, need I say more. On Sunday Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai gave a very depressing description of the coalition government, calling the unity a marriage of convenience. He went on to say that the coalition government had not been able to enforce the rule of law. This was also supported by the United

Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs report which noted that the unity government had neither compensated the victims of past political violence nor punished the perpetrators thereby creating a culture of impunity. Of course its no secrete that some of these perpetrators were the military. The same UN organ also noted continuing and disturbing instances of abuse of police powers. Politically motivated abductions are still reported.Zanu PF still deploys military personnel into the countryside. This perpetuates a sense of fear among the rural folks .Zanu PF still has the Militia on its pay roll and still the military chiefs refuse to recognise the existence of MDC in the inclusive government. Before the GNU there were numerous reports of abductions by the police, by the military, by Zanu PF militia which included the so called war veterans and the green bombers, the security forces refused to document cases of political violence committed by Zanu PF loyalist. Now after the unity government political activists are still being abducted and the police still refuse to do anything to stop this. Farmers are still being attacked, media is still stifled, Mugabe still appoints and disappoints people willy-nilly.MDC has been appealing to the conscience of Gono and Tomana, the attorney general, to resign. Question is, What conscience? These two are Zanu (PF) and Zanu (PF) has no conscience. I think the truth must be told, Mugabe must be told that either he is in this GNU or he is out and the military chiefs must be put in their place and stop meddling in politics. They should stick to protecting the country and learn to know that they work for the people not Mugabe.

By Chiedza Murandu (UK)

Gono Letter Is Meant To Intimidate

Under fire Reserve bank governor Gideon Gono`s `letter` to Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai where he seems to be complaining about `personal attacks` from Finance Minister Tendai Biti is a product of Zanu PF. There is no doubt, on a close scrutiny of the letter, that its editorial team consists of the following repressive and partisan arms of the Zanu PF government; the police specifically, the commissioner general Augustine Chihuri, secondly the public prosecutor general i.e. Attorney General Johannes Tomana. Given the delay and subsequent refusal by president Robert Mugabe to rescind the appointment of Gono and Tomana and the insistence of the MDC that these two guys should leave their offices as their appointments are irregular, the letter is meant to intimidate the MDC into giving up negotiating these two issues as enshrined in the Global Political Agreement. The tactic is that if the MDC doesn't give up, they will prosecute Biti for money

laundering and foreign currency externalization which, Gono claimed, was done at Biti`s law firm. In the letter Gonop takes credit for drafting STERP, the economic recovery document and shamelessly even says that all the lines of credit that have now been activated from African banks to resuscitate the Zimbabwean economy were his handiwork and what Biti only did was to finalize the deals. Gono`s sentiments about taking credit for the positive developments happening in the Zimbabwean economy lately is always on the pages of Zanu (PF) propaganda newspapers, The Herald, and on the Webster Shamu-controlled ZBC television and radio. The Herald is on record saying that STERP was drafted by the Zanu (PF) government before the MDC joined the government and it was handed to Biti for presentation to The Cabinet. A lot of mud slinging being done by Zanu (PF) through The Herald tried to portray Prime Minister Tsvangirai's comments in South Africa - that some the achievements so far of the inclusive government are dollaristion, bringing inflation down and filling shops with food. Rather, the herald claimed that dollaristion was introduced by then acting finance minister Patrick Chinamasa. Gono`s letter also claimed credit for this, saying that he had introduced wholesale licensing and services to be charged in foreign currency. The Herald is also full these days with statements

like `Gono cannot go before sanctions are lifted`. This says it all; it's a war of words between Zanu (PF) and MDC which unfortunately or rather fortunately the MDC doesn't want to be associated with.

A funny and rather silly statement after this goes on to say that shops were already full with food when the MDC agreed to join the government. This is the propaganda machinery from Mugabe and company who want to reap where they did not sow. They are so clever enough to think that we don't know what is happening and who we must give credit for. Gono`s letter is part of this machination. He knew that the letter is going to reach our eyes and in the end believe what he was saying. These guys believe that if you tell a lie several times people will end up believing you. The learned Professor Jonathan Moyo who is now in total political oblivion who coined this idea should better be the best one to remind these guys that this propaganda notion doesn't work anymore in this modern world. These are signs of the times. This is how Zanu (PF) contacts its business. If they calculate that they are losing the war of words, they will resort to intimidation and then violence. In this case Gono`s letter is both `a war of words` and intimidation, the next thing will be violence. Very soon we will hear of arrests and court appearances on trumped up charges for all those people mentioned in that Gono letter merely because the MDC is demanding nullification of the appointments of Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono and the self confessed Zanu (PF) defender, Attorney General Johannes Tomana. Gono will be the complainant and Tomana obviously the prosecutor. Zimbabwe at your service and you expect it to be the bread basket of Africa again? Verengerai Mavesere writes from Scotland We Beg To Differ

As a passionate MDC member I cannot help but feel we have been castrated by Mugabe and the deal signed by our leader Morgan Tsvangirai. To this day I am still to be convinced that that was the best and only right thing to do given the circumstances. On one side I am aware that the situation had really become dire and perhaps Morgan saw this as the only way to try and change things from the inside, since he was not getting anywhere from the out! I understand that all avenues were first explored and every possible alternative was looked at before Prime Minister Morgan put his pen to that agreement with Robert Mugabe, which his unscrupulous Minister tried to alter nefariously in an attempt to hoodwink the MDC. We have learnt from history that Mugabe is not an honourable man as he does not honour his word and have seen how he rendered ZAPU and Joshua Nkomo useless once they joined ZANU. It is said that we are all the wiser after

an event, well are we Mr. Tsvangirai? History has a way of repeating itself and if Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai has not learnt anything then we are in for another roller coaster ride. My heart is with my fellow countryman that have lost close relatives, brothers, fathers and have watched soldiers that are supposed to protect them, killing and raping our mothers and sisters all in the name of ZANU PF. I too have lost close family members during this political nightmare and am really at a loss for words as to why Tsvangirai would then go to bed with the enemy! Does this mean that my relatives blood shed by Mugabe was lost for nothing? Families like myself have been dispersed through desperation to survive. Does this mean it all counts for nothing when you then agree to "Power share"? If we have a close look at this agreement it really does nothing to stop Mugabe from controlling/killing the country! What Tsvangirai has done is, he has given the world at large a false impression that everything is going to be alright even for people like me in exile, when that clearly is not the case. God help us, lest we perish Bleeding in exile Kay.F.Kembo

If You Kiss A Thief, Count Your Teeth By Nesbert Mhondoro Nelson Chamisa, the Information suprimo of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and now the Minister for Information and Communications Technology, has always said that when you kiss a thief, you have got to count your teeth. Or when you shake hands with a thief you have to count your fingers. Soon after MDC kissed ZANU-PF, one tooth (Roy Bennet) went missing. Of course the milk teeth had fallen off during the struggle and still more are falling off even after the struggle. It is sad to say that it is not only one tooth that went missing, but there are many of them, in the mouth, which are shaking and can go missing any moment. Yes the MDC has come of age and has gathered some experience as it fought for the people. It has now gone into dinning with the monster (ZANU-PF), for the good of the general populace. We applaud the MDC for having taken this bold and dangerous move. They are warned to keep on guard (really alert) for, while the man and his team are pretending to have given in, more repression is in the making, hence the questions, why the diasporans are not in a hurry to go back home? Why will many of them will take long sitting on the fence? Why is the international community is so skeptical about this deal? The answer to many and all of these questions is only ONE. The man is still sitting at the helm. People are disappointed that, the loser is still in charge. ZANU-PF is failing to realize the truth; rather it is imposing itself on the people. MDC has been so magnanimous and this is where ZANU-PF made a mistake, a deadly mistake. How deadly? For this, Morgan is the man of the moment. MDC is the party of the moment. ZANU-PF is so scared of any election that may come up in the next two, five, ten or fifteen years. Though the man may put on a brave face and say we want to hold a referendum on the constitution and hold an election in the next two years. Why in two years? ZANU-PF is hoping against hope, that the man will be strong enough to campaign for his party. In five years the man will be too old to do anything, too old to be effective. I don't foresee anyone, among the currently recycled dead wood who is strikingly unique to take over from the old man and be able to challenge Morgan Tsvangirai. Even Jonathan Moyo agrees with me on this point. ZANU-PF is so vulnerable and weak to the point of parasitically wanting to stick to MDC. If not so it is dying slowly. YES, it (ZANU-PF) has been quite clever and so cunning to pretend to be fit and try to survive in the political juggle as a wounded lion, whose wounds are so deep (down to the bone ‐ even eating the bone towards to marrow) that it is incumbent on the bacteria to overwhelm the beast and lead it to the graveyard. Under such a situation, MDC should be very careful not to sit on its laurels and think everything is okay. Keep counting your teeth. Keep guarding the shaking teeth, even those that are strong. ZANU-PF is corrosive. Nesbert Mhondoro

Lets Send Matibiri Back To Malawi By Kay Kembo

Lets face it my fellow Zimbabweans, if we do not help ourselves no one will lift a finger, and I mean a finger, to help us and thats a fact! How long has the world watched and only rebuked the illegitimate government from a distance? Come on my fellow brothers and sisters lets wake up and start to act upon this critical and dire situation. Before you dismiss this, take a moment to think and ask yourself, how many people have been killed just the past 5 years alone? Either from the Zanu P.F green bombers, followers and including those that lost their lives from diseases that in this modern day and age cannot realistically be considered as life threatening, and yet, yet indeed thousands have lost their lives. I will not keep quite and watch while a foreign man hell-bent on destroying our country continues to suffocate and destroy us! Mugabe leave our country you are not even from it, go back to Malawi. I know a lot of people have hope with the the new American President, Barack Obama, but realistically what can he do when our very own neighbours aren't speaking out? "My God my God" I pray, "Save us oh dear Lord for it is only you who can, lest we all perish and die." 100 trillion dollar note? Oh Jesus Bleeding in exile Kay F. Kembo Activist in Birmingham Obama: Why Not Zimbabwe

By Masimba Kadzviti Our children are our future as a nation .They will grow to become the leaders (Presidents and ministers), doctors, scientists, commerce and industry captains. My heart bleeds when I see what the illegal government is doing, tinkering with the opening of schools, yet the majority of these youngsters lost a lot of valuable learning time in the election year of 2008. Zimbabwe is not going to die when the current crop of politicians die, so it is against this background that the powers that be should stop destroying the future of this once vibrant and beautiful country. We were once renowned for having one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. Education used to be a right; now it's a privilege for the elite who can afford to send their children to school outside the country. The postponement of the start of the academic year to 27/01/09 is a clear indication that this government has lost control of all systems, and therefore should give the reigns to the legitimate party which has the people's mandate to govern. On the health front , hospitals have closed down, surgeries are almost nonexistent, most hospitals are slowly turning into white elephants, those which are still open are crawling with diseases to the point that even those faced with death will shun them. The death toll from cholera stands at over 2000 and more continue to die despite the fact that Mugabe does not acknowledge that, this disease is a problem. Obviously we all know that this octogenarian lives on mars. According to Mugabe all

problems facing Zimbabwe are a figment of western journalists and politicians. How long does he think he can bury his head in the sand? With an inflation rate of 89,7 sextillion, prices of basic commodities changing about twice a day, even though most shops now charge the US\$ as the acceptable currency. One wonders how a civil servant paid in local currency is expected to make ends meet. The world economy is experiencing a monumental recession, if Zimbabwe still has an economy I don't know what it is we are having because my layman economics has no word for it. The return of Morgan Tsvangirai since leaving the country on 10/11/08 should be fully embraced by Mugabe. Unfortunately we all know the results of 19/01/09 talks. Mugabe and his party do not have Zimbabweans at heart. Our only hope is that with the new government of the USA, maybe we the oppressed can have somebody who can apply pressure without Mugabe pulling the race card. I hope Mugabe watched Obama's inauguration speech and will get some inspiration to salvage the rot of our nation. Masimba Kadzviti

ZANU PF RUNNING OUT OF STEAM

By Joyce Museka ZANU PF is virtually living on the strength of its record of violence mass murder and intimidation as Zimbabwe descends in to total economic, social and political catastrophe. Since the 29th of March 2008 Zimbabwe is living on the grace of God without a government and in total paralysis exacerbated by rampant corruption of president Mugabe's, criminal cabal.

Robert Mugabe who clearly lost the ballot to MDC's, Morgan Tsvangirai but grabbed it by force has failed to form a government in the last nine months. He clearly knows that the only man with the mandate of the people to put up a government is Morgan Tsvangirai, but he has failed to shun his barbaric rants of hate for the opposition. Many people would wonder why Robert Mugabe has no mercy for the suffering masses of Zimbabwe. This is not the first time that Mugabe's government has shown no care for the common people. During the liberation struggle many Zimbabweans were killed by Mugabe's forces on false accusations of selling out and witchcraft. For those of us who were old enough to recall the activities at "pungwe" gatherings can bare testimonies to the bullying, maiming and raping that went on. The early years of independence witnessed one of the most brutal times experienced by our people with the extermination of more than twenty thousand people in Matebeleland and Midlands. Mugabe's lies seem to have now hit a brick wall with many common Zimbabweans realising that they have been taken for a ride. Today the present political impasse in Zimbabwe is a result of pure insincerity on the part of ZANU PF. They lost the election but they still want to control the reigns of power. The use of violence will not bring the food on the people's tables. There are those who believe that the MDC should falter and allow ZANU PF to rule the country by default. This is unfortunate, as this will be tantamount to leaving the devil running away with the gospel in the eyes of the believers. The MDC should stand firm and unequivocally demand its right to lead the Zimbabweans as mandated by the people in the March 2008 ballot. The scenario that we have today is that of a greedy political party that has run out of options. It is sad to hear that Mugabe goes around blaming cholera on Gordon Brown the British Prime Minister. This is a sign of madness, replica of the post liberation war uncontrolled euphoria that brought us in to this predicament. All sane Zimbabweans know that no one else but Mugabe is to blame for the present state of affairs. There was need to put checks and balances on ZANU PF on the eve of independence, to prevent them from trampling on the people's liberties. Now the the people have done it by voting it out. Joyce Museka, UK

Open Letter to Thabo Mbeki

The letter from MDC secretary general, Tendai Biti to SADC facilitator Thabo Mbeki, which elicited a ten-page tirade from the former Head of State in which Thabo Mbeki denounced Morgan Tsvangirai, was actually an innocuous and factual statement that the SADC "ruling" should be rescinded before negotiations can continue. The SADC-appointed facilitator for negotiations between Zanu-PF and the two MDC parties, Thabo Mbeki, responded to Biti's letter by denouncing Morgan Tsvangirai as a puppet of the West. Further, South African immigration authorities attempted to force Tsvangirai to remain in South Africa against his will, citing his one-return-trip-to-South-Africa travel document. Biti's letter, courtesy of the zimbabwean.com stated:

Dear Sir, Re: Constitutional Amendment No 19
Beloved Chiweshe

Given the fact that the SADC resolution is a nullity and has not been rescinded, it is then difficult for any of the parties to move in any direction for fear of legitimising the SADC Summit "ruling". It means then that the negotiators cannot meet and work on the draft of Constitutional Amendment No 19.

There is a total meltdown in Zimbabwe and indeed a complete collapse of the state. Put simply, the state has lost any capacity to provide the basic amenities to the people in the form of food, education, health, transport. This situation, if left unresolved, will explode or implode and indeed such explosion or implosion will have a contagious multiplier effect in the region.

In addition to the meltdown, there are vicious attacks on the members of the MDC contrary to the dictates and spirit of the MOU and the GPA. There is a renewed wave of violence, abductions and assaults against the MDC and the people of Zimbabwe in the obvious direction of replicating the post 29 March barbaric violence, in particular the arrest and continued detention at unknown centres of MDC Mashonaland West senior leadership such as Concilia Chinanvanana and 11 others. Furthermore, the Zanu PF regime is crafting an assassination plot, code-named Operation Ngatipedzenavo (Let Us Finish Them) intended to eliminate the MDC leadership and decimate the party through frivolous allegations.

There are flimsy attempts to frame the MDC as a terrorist organisation that is training people for the purposes of banditry

and insurgence. There are people that are being used to frame confessions and militias are being trained by Zanu PF to act as MDC bandits in an attempt to delegitimise the MDC.

We look forward to hearing from you on the way forward.

Tendai Biti, MP

MDC Secretary General

Mbeki responded by calling the MDC President a puppet in a letter that has been widely quoted in the media. This has elicited this response from Beloved Chiweshe, a former Zimbabwe National Students Union secretary general, currently studying in The Netherlands.

Amsterdam, December 1 2008

Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki: Facilitator in the Zimbabwe Crisis Talks
Former President of the Republic of South Africa
Pretoria, South Africa

Your Excellency,

I am writing this letter because I am convinced your efforts and mediation in the Zimbabwe crisis have failed and your services as mediator have outlived their usefulness and purpose. I write this letter, which I believe, any ordinary Zimbabwean would have written to you.

From the time you were relieved of your duties as president of the republic of South Africa, you have been writing a lot. First it was to the president of your party, the African National Congress (ANC), Jacob Zuma and then to the president of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Morgan Tsvangirai. Your letter to MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai specifically prompted this response.

Your Excellency I took the following quotes from your letter to MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai as appearing in The Sunday Mail of 30 November 2008.

"…no longer treat themselves as opposition parties or protest movements..."

"…Such manner of proceeding might earn you prominent media headlines. However, I assure you that it will do nothing to solve the problems of Zimbabwe."

The harsh exchange of words, a shift from your previous stance of quiet diplomacy, has made me come to the conclusion that you can no longer effectively play the role of mediator between the feuding parties ZANU-PF and the MDC. Recent remarks by MDC Vice President, Honorable Thokozani Khupe and the letter written to you by the chief negotiator and Secretary General of the MDC, Tendai Biti typify the relationship that exists between you and the MDC. It is under this background that I am calling on you to, in the same manner you stepped down from presidency of the Republic of South Africa, recuse yourself gracefully. I personally admire the glorious exit you had from the office of the president of your republic after you were recalled by your party. In the same manner, I expect you to have a dignified exit because I feel that you are no longer fit for this purpose as you have become part of the crisis in Zimbabwe instead of providing good counsel on how to address the monumental crisis in my country. Let me take this opportunity to remind you of some important political developments we can never pretend to be oblivious of, not because you are not aware, but to emphasize the importance of the particular events to us the people of Zimbabwe. It is now more than a dozen and half months from the time you were appointed mediator at a summit in Tanzania and exactly nine months after the last credible election which Mugabe lost. On 29 March 2008 Zimbabweans went to the poll to choose a new leadership for their country. 1,195,562 votes were cast in favour of Morgan Richard Tsvangirai of the MDC and 1,079,730 votes were cast in favour of Robert Gabriel Mugabe of ZANU -PF. Simba Hebert Stanley Makoni and Langton Toungana shared the remainder of the votes. The results of the parliamentary and other elections were not as disputable as the presidential election. Notwithstanding the delay in the announcement of the results, and other practices inconsistent with holding of democratic elections, local, regional and international observers concluded the poll to have been fairly credible and reflecting the will of the people of Zimbabwe. Jose Marcos Barrica, the head of the Southern African Development Community observer mission, described the election as "a peaceful and credible expression of the will of the people of Zimbabwe." Controversial as the result of the presidential election was expected, the poll did not produce an outright winner and there was need for a second round of polls which was scheduled for June 27 2008 by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party unleashed a trail of violence characterised by threats, abductions, torture, murder and arson targeted at the supporters of the MDC. Morgan Tsvangirai was forced to withdraw from the "violent sham" to save lives since the environment was no longer conducive for the holding of free and fair elections. ZEC and Robert Mugabe proceeded with the election despite having been discouraged to do so by leaders of the region (except yourself), the continent and the United Nations. What boggles the mind is the manner you responded to the MDC's view of your role. While you were quick to attack the MDC leader in manner akin to ZANU PF's political cousins, you have never publicly condemned Mugabe's murderous and ruinous policies in Zimbabwe. These two events form the basis of your continued mediation, post election for the establishment of a unity government based on the last credible election of March 29 which had failed to produce a result that would have possibly solved the political crisis then, an issue you seem to have relegated to the periphery of the whole mediation process. The manner in which you wrote to Morgan Tsvangirai show a tendency towards an attitude opposite to that you have for Robert Mugabe who you marvelled as one of your greatest leaders in your letter to ANC president Jacob Zuma. The alteration of the Global Political Agreement which you again relegated to the periphery serves as a clear testimony that there is insincerity which will forever make it difficult for the MDC to go into a government of national unity in which they do not have guarantees and "power". In his own words MDC Spokesperson, Honorable Nelson Chamisa said "It's difficult to be hopeful when you are dealing with an insincere, deceitful and dishonest party like ZANU-PF" I strongly believe these are among the issues the facilitator must be solving rather than force march negotiators into a hotel to agree on a constitutional amendment. We have seen documents being authored, tempered with and thrown into the dustbins while the masses are scrambling for wild fruits with wild animals. Your insistence that a unity government be established at all costs leaves more questions

than answers. Things are not well and people have been placing their hopes on these talks which you seem to be taking lightly and are far from delivering the change we can believe in. Your Excellency I strongly believe your continued mediation in the Zimbabwean crisis is thrusting yourself on people who no longer want you as mediator, which is unlike what you did concerning the issue of your presidency. Charity begins at home but should not end there. I want to put to you that Zimbabweans are no lesser human beings than South Africans or any other people. If the people of South Africa through the ANC asked you to leave office why should you insist to remain mediating in the Zimbabwe crisis? If you are not serving Mugabe's interest, whose interests are you advancing by refusing to relinquish that role? Your Excellency let me also highlight the humanitarian crisis that led to the refusal to cooperate by the government of Zimbabwe with the "Elders" when they wanted to assess the crisis. I strongly believe you either failed to convince Mugabe to accept the elders, or deliberately blocked them, fearing they wanted to usurp the role of the mediator. The current Cholera outbreak is only symptom of an even graver situation and a total collapse of the running of the country due to mismanagement and greed. People are desperate for food and unfortunately we failed to prepare for this season, with disastrous consequences, which could not have been avoidable even with the support your country had pledged, under the current corrupt government of Robert Mugabe. Let me also inform you that all the universities, some polytechnics and primary and secondary schools have closed, signalling the total collapse of the education sector, which will result in a general generational intellectual deprivation in the not so far demographic prognosis, if not addressed. Literally everything has stopped working. There is no fuel in the country, no electricity, no water, no currency, no president and the list goes on. I hope you will soon realize the importance of this matter and recuse yourself from the role of facilitator and pave way for a neutral facilitator before we decide to free ourselves through means which may not be confined to conventional means, since a conventional fight is proving difficult under your mediation.

Yours Truly,
Beloved Chiweshe

* Beloved Chiweshe is a former ZINASU Secretary General now studying in The Netherlands.

From Breadbasket To Husk Of Destitution By Masimba Kadzviti One of the popular multiple-choice questions asked in ZJC geography, was, "Which country is sometimes referred to as, The Bread Basket of Africa?" The answer was Zimbabwe. Ironically the books still have this question with the answer unchanged. Mugabe's government has turned Zimbabwe from a Breadbasket into a husk of destitution. Watching news in the past two weeks, the world has been shown starving Zimbabweans, those affected with the cholera outbreak, what with the taps having run dry in most urban areas as the power cuts have made it almost impossible for effective water reticulation system. The rural folk, whom Gideon Gono is quoted as not doing enough to ensure adequate food supply in the country cannot secure hybrid seed, nor fertiliser and draught power is almost non-existent due to subsequent droughts and mismanagement by Mugabe's government. Mugabe's government does not seem to be having solution to the looming human catastrophe other than to lay the blame on the MDC and the sanctions imposed on individuals not the country. With the donor community's trust in Mugabe's government at its lowest after the disappearance of US\$7.3M from the global fund, which had been deposited in the Reserve Bank. Gono, as admitted that this fund was looted, there is no hope to get any more help for HIV, TB and Malaria from the Global Fund. How callous is that, and what does this tell us about the people in charge of Zimbabwe Economy. We are faced with a humanitarian crisis perpetrated by one of Africa's longest serving dictators, who apparently seems to be unmoved by the catastrophe. And now he has reappointed the same Reserve Bank Governor! With the power sharing agreement having hit a brick wall, and Mugabe now threatening to go ahead and form his own "inclusive government", exclusive of MDC-T, one wonders, for how long do we have to suffer before these heartless politicians in Zanu-PF realise that a government should reflect the will of the people. Americans voted for "Change That They Believed In" and ushered in Obama, right now the world is witnessing a smooth transition prior to Obama taking office in January. I will say to Robert Mugabe, you and your party know that Zimbabweans voted for change as the slogan goes and you were rightfully shown the red card on 29/03/08. "Ushwe Madzoro", "Kugara Nhaka Kuona Dzavamwe". It is not too late to tell your lieutenants that you are conceding defeat, and handover power to the man who won the elections, Morgan Richard Tsvangirai. You have no solution to the myriad of problems that Zimbabwe faces today, whether it's political, economic, social, etc. Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans not you alone Mugabe and a few of your handpicked cronies, therefore pave way for the others so that they can have a go at rebuilding the country. It is evident to all and sundry that Mugabe and Zanu-PF are the problem with Zimbabwe and will never form part of the solution. This should sink into the heads of the troika, AU and UN. Unfortunately for Zimbabwe, Mugabe has the troika wrapped on his fingers, the troika is content running round in circles, changing venues for summits, wasting the much-needed scarce foreign currency, and Zimbabwe's economy desperately needs help.

By Masimba Kadzviti

Mugabe's Obama Dilemma. The ascendancy of Barack Obama to the American Presidency is going to raise interesting dilemma for Robert Mugabe and his regime. Mugabe who in the past has used the race card against George W Bush and Gordon Brown is going to find himself in a tricky situation. Unlike in the past when he could he could say to hell with Bush and Brown, this time it's going to be very difficult to use the same language on Obama. Obama is not white. He not only is another African American but African American who has direct live and traceable roots to the African continent. Will Mugabe say to hell with him as well? The attitude of other African leaders is not going to be ambivalent like before. Obama to them is African and is one of their own. This will leave Mugabe isolated by his peers, as they would not like to be at odds with Obama. He is them. Its time for Mugabe to be on the straight and narrow otherwise

his days are numbered. Foresight and insight on the part of his sidekicks will be welcome virtues. We are getting into exciting days now Ndini Wenyu

Enough Kindergarten Politics - By Masimba Kadzviti

The Troika summit held on 27/10/08 at the Rainbow Towers had very little to offer in terms of progress to the political impasse in Zimbabwe.

The state media and the propaganda machinery would want us to believe that it is only the Home Affairs portfolio that remains a bone of contention.

If that is the case, why is Robert Mugabe so unwilling to give it up given that he has had this ministry for the past 28 years.

It actually makes us suspicious as to why he will not give up this ministry to the MDC. What does Zanu-pf have to hide or what is it afraid of; is it the more recent Mushangwe case, or now that Amnesty International is advocating for the publication of the the 1980s Matabeleland massacres or all the violence that has been associated with all the elections held after independence, or the passport case of Morgan Tsvangirai, or the violence which erupted over the 1st and 2nd November 2008 in Epworth where Zanu (PF) militias have started beating up MDC supporters for reasons only known to Amos Midzi and his paymasters.

Is Mugabe afraid of the rule of law prevailing in Zimbabwe after such a long period of lawlessness?

What Mugabe and Zanu-pf should realise is that power sharing agreement was not about egos but, it was about compromise, and the MDC gave in so much, given that, it is the party which won the March 29 elections and by right should have led in the formation of a new government and would have the mandate of choosing whom they wanted to be cabinet ministers.

If we take into perspective who won the elections then surely there is no need for these non-stop conferences to decide on cabinet portfolios and continue to drain the government coffers.

One has to laugh at the suggestion put forward by Zanu (PF), that of co-sharing of the Home Affairs responsibilities. It is surprising to note that Dr Tomaz Salomao, SADC, Executive Secretary, and the South African President, Kgalema Montlanthe, are in agreement to this proposal which has all the hallmarks of impracticability.

This will cause so much confusion on a vital arm of the government. We need one person who will make decisions concerning security, law and order and other responsibilities which fall under this government arm. Enough of this kindergarten politics if the country is to make progress in building bridges politically and economically.

Zanu-PF has had this ministry for 28 years and for all we know it has reduced this ministry to a laughing stock, i.e you need to bribe the passport officials to get your new passport in less than 24 hours or less, that is if your name is not Morgan Tsvangirai; you can turn a blind eye to the breach of law as long as its Zanu-PF involved, and descend heavily on opposition supporters or anyone if deemed to be against Zanu-PF.

You only have to check what happened on Monday 27/10/08, Zanu-PF women demonstrators were allowed to demonstrate but the other group of women demonstrators were tear-gassed and 43 of them ended up being arrested.

What the country needs is a return to the rule of law. This will result in the population gaining confidence in the government, and will in turn result in gaining investor confidence and let me not overemphasize how badly this is needed and how long overdue it is in Zimbabwe.

BY MASIMBA KADZVITI

AS I SEE IT By Masimba Kadzviti

When Robert Mugabe signed the power sharing agreement on 15/09/08 with the opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, and Arthur Mutambara, the world thought peace and sanity had come to Zimbabwe and this would put to rest the fighting between parties. The signing ceremony was the most watched news programme on this day by Zimbabweans in the diaspora. The signing ceremony even prompted some to pack their bags, ready for the return migration. Evidently during the signing in ceremony, the body language of Robert Mugabe revealed a lot about what he thought about the whole process. We now know that Mugabe went into the signing in ceremony half heartedly. What Mugabe's said was soon to manifest itself into negative actions preceding the event. Mugabe has failed to honour the agreement and continues to behave as if his party is the only one with the right to be in Parliament and make decisions without consultation. Mugabe has proceeded to allocate cabinet portfolios without consulting the opposition leaders. The thorny issue in the whole whole saga which has dragged for an eternity is the key ministries of Defence, Home affairs, and Finance. It is evident that Mugabe does not want these ministries under Morgan Tsvangirai as he fears reprisals for past atrocities against the people of Zimbabwe. He wants to continue manipulating the army, and the Home Affairs as with the current case of Morgan Tsvangirai's passport. Insecurity manifests itself in his continued intransigence as regards cabinet portfolios. The SADC summit in Swaziland was scheduled to try to resolve the Zimbabwe situation but unfortunately Mugabe, played his dirty tricks again on Morgan Tsvangirai. To come up with an excuse, that Tsvangirai could not get a passport because there was no paper to print passports is just awful. How convenient is that to Mugabe given the time frame that Morgan Tsvangirai applied for the new passport. Surely by now paper enough to print one passport could have been sourced. One does not need to be a rocket scientist or a fundi as we used to say back home to see that all this is designed to portray Mugabe as a saint and Tsvangirai as the devil. What Mugabe does not realise is that his actions and mentality have become so predictable and transparent like a see-through dress for everyone to see. The question we have on our minds as we get into the weekend is what does Mugabe, have up his sleeve to derail

the negotiations next week. The political impasse has dragged for eight months and one wonders how long is the economy going to withstand all the battering associated with this political selfishness before a total collapse. With almost all rich nations faced with an unprecedented recession, it would be wise for our leaders to resolve the political impasse and move forward to tackle the economic problem with the rest of the world. With luck financial institutions like the IMF, World Bank, might help mend our economy with financial support. Masimba Kadzviti A Cry In The Wilderness - By K.F. Kembo

Zimbabweans, my brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts have been displaced, and abused, and recently were given a very brief but also false hope. We were all apprehensive about the signing of an agreement between Robert "The Snake" Mugabe and the people's party, the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai. We are all too familiar with Mugabe's tactics and trickeries as we have learnt from history itself. I know that our leader Morgan Tsvangirai has come out and said that the only reason why he has signed the agreement is for the people, that they might start to live a somewhat humane life with food in the shops and possibly jobs to go to every morning. But my worry goes to our Prime Minister Tsvangirai, "Do you not know the Shona saying which, translated, says that a leopard cannot change its spots?" What you have done is you have created an impression on the international scene at large that all is well or soon to be, yet we are not closer to a solution than we were before or during the talks! Are we going to soon witness Zimbabweans being sent back to that black hole which was once a beautiful country but made so by Zanu P.F? The western countries are now under the illusion that Zimbabwe is on the mend and yet that is not the case. Personally I would definitely want to return home and help in the rebuilding of it, but as it stands how can you when you are not allowed to work or study lawfully without the right documentations, and are being denied the right to live in the country which you came to seek refuge? I'm sure my feelings are shared by a large majority of Zimbabweans who have fled the country and have had their lives halted by not being allowed to exercise their qualifications and or reach their full potential in studies. In the words of bishop Sentimu, "Zimbabweans are in a state of limbo." Is this the curse of the Zimbabweans in diaspora? My heart bleeds for my people. We cry out to the good Lord Almighty as only he alone can save us.

Kay. F. Kembo Activist in Birmingham

Your Judgement Is Coming RG Thank you for keeping the ongoing talks between Mugabe and Tsvangirai well publicised because people of Zimbabwe and onlooking countries need to keep up with the progress or lack of it. If Mugabe claims to be democratically elected, then why won't he allow the media in on the talks? Surely as Zimbabweans we have a right to be kept up to date with the ongoings of the talks that Thabo Mbeki is overseeing. Mugabe you know you were not the people's choice and you know you have brought the country to its knees, have the moral decency and just pass the baton to someone else because clearly you have failed. You were once a hero but now you are just a living nightmare and a curse to your own country and its people. The failure of the talks does not surprise me as it was only too obvious that it would come to such because that vile dictator who calls himself our president had already shown his unwillingness to cooperate nor to give up the throne. Surely a man who is as brutal, calculating and conniving as him could never share power with someone who truly has the country's best interests at heart. These are two opposites that are as far apart as the north and the south pole. Mugabe has really shown the world at large that he truly is a dictator who will stop at nothing getting his way. The sanctions that were imposed are really not affecting him and his cronies, it is the man in the street that feels every pinch. Why can't Britain and or America intervene and remove him by force? They obviously have the ability and capability to do so! Instead of helping us, all the westerners are doing is exposing Mugabe for his cruelty and heinous acts on their news channels as top stories and that's about it, finished, finito! One wonders if the westerners really care about us as they are fully aware of the people dying each and every day needlessly in my country Zimbabwe. They will not lift a finger to do anything about it but talk about it and sell lots of papers with our country's crisis as front page news. My heart bleeds for my people and our country, as we have all been scattered all over the globe and are continually tormented and ill treated as though we did not come from a country of our own. Fleeing a sure death sentence does not mean we cannot speak out or be denied our basic and common human rights from the countries we seek refuge in, the right to work, live and to a somewhat normal family life or what is left of it. Not only have we suffered at the hands of that dictator, we have also lost touch with normality, as most of us Zimbabweans are now scattered across the globe fleeing from our own motherland. We not only have lost touch with our relatives, but we have also been denied the right to a normal family life with our brothers and sisters, parents and cousins, even spouses spread all over the world. What's more there is no way of knowing whether your close family members are dead or alive? Mugabe the people of Zimbabwe plead and I plead that you do the honourable thing and leave office. You have ruined lives, killed thousands and destroyed generations of your own people. When you torture, rape and kill your own then surely you are just as bad as cannibals. The police are supposed to stand for justice and serve the people and not beat them up for not supporting Mugabe. The youth militia commonly known as the green bombers, along with the army and police force, are terrorising the weak, starving and defenceless people of Zimbabwe. How do you fight against the supposed "law enforcers"? For petty money Mugabe is paying young men and women, the youth, my age, to beat up and displace their own. Instead of going to further their education or trying to achieve something in life, hopeless young men and women are being taken advantage of by our country leaders and being encouraged to cause havoc in the communities. Mugabe you must know that every living thing comes from the Lord and one day, at judgement day, you will stand trial for all the precious lives you have taken and the blood you have spilt in the name of keeping power. Bleeding in exile Kay. F. Kembo Activist in Birmingham

Congrats Moyo We had our hopes on the talks after the much celebrated MoU and to be honest I personally still have hope and I know a lot of people still believe in the talks. I know there is going to be a lot of twist and turns, morning and groaning, but the will of people will prevail in the end. Zanu PF can never be trusted. They have done more U turns than a dodgy plumper and they are back to their old tricks .They seem to have struck an agreement with the not so original MDC. I don't blame them they are doing what we all knew they would do. We kinda hoped they would not do itbut hey this is Zanu (PF) we are talking about. In my earlier article I said we have to be careful and watch out for wolves in sheep clothing, boy wasn't I right?Between the signing of MOU and now violence has not been uncommon and yes you guessed it right its Zanu PF thugs beating people, killing people and having the so called war veterans becoming the de facto rulers especially in rural areas and on the farms. The last time I checked more than three people had been killed and it included a policeman. Mr Mugabe and Prof. Mutambara seem to be singing from the same hymn sheet and there is a possibility that these two may choose to go ahead and agree on a "government of national unity " and I am using this GNU loosely. Mutambara seems to be hanging on Mugabe's robes; he is an opportunist plain and simple. He was not a presidential candidate in the March 29th Presidential elections but here he is right in the midst of the tripartite negotiations. Whatever happened to Makoni and his so called Mavambo Kusile dawn thinging? All this is Zanu PF trying to hoodwink the people of Zimbabwe.Word is that Mugabe is actually preparing to relaunch a crackdown on opposition, civil society and the media. Do we need any more evidence that this man has completely lost it? Frankly he is off his trolley now. I am told he once said that he was being stalked. He said wherever he goes people are following him. Finally Nathaniel Manheru aka George Charamba told him that it was the CIO. Dementia is setting in now and for goodness sake he is better off retiring and let the young generation take over.Lets just hope that the talks will yield a good result and like I mentioned before we are the majority we should be referred to as the ruling Party and we don't want just positions and titles but real power, bestowed unto us by the people of Zimbabwe.Lets change the status quo and rebuild our economy and make the lives of each and everyone of us better. Lets keep up our support for president Tsvangirai. We are in this together hard times are just beginning, we need to keep our eyes on the ball.Congratulations MDC. Congratulation Mr Lovemore Moyo.By Chiedza Murandu Zims Have The Right To Be Informed on MoU

As a Zimbabwean citizen, I am very much concerned about of the contents of the Memorandum of Understanding. (Understanding what?) The MoU does not appear to say anything of substance. The signing of the MoU brought some euphoria in many Zimbabweans who dreamt of a nearing end to the democratic deficit, the arrests, the torture, killings, and politically-motivated displacement of ordinary citizens in their country by Zanu PF regime. The signing of the MoU had ushered hope towards the possibility of the re-establishment of independence and the basic freedoms of the people of Zimbabwe. That euphoria is slowly dying as I think and question all things about the secret talks.Why are the talks happening in secret with no media access to it? Who benefits from the talks? The people of Zimbabwe should not expect to benefit from anything that they are not allowed to have knowledge of. It appears as if this was a deliberate Mugabe-Mbeki ploy to extend the pain and suffering of the majority in Zimbabwe...for the umpteenth time!! am concerned about the blackout on the information regarding the progress or lack thereof regarding the talks. The mediated talks are supposedly about Zimbabwe and if that is true why are the talks involving only a handful of people? These discussions ought to be held in the open just like all internationally-recognized mediation processes. The Lancaster House negotiations prior to independence were a perfect example of an open and transparent process.The Lancaster House negotiations were open and the media was allowed briefings on the developments regularly. Even the then national newspaper, The Rhodesia Herald had daily updates on the developments from day one, including the final day's news information was readily available.During the final day of the Lancaster House summit the people of Zimbabwe were paying so much attention to the developments that the Rhodesia Herald printed a rare Second Edition for the day, and the unprecedented sales were for the record books. I was young but I was interested in what was taking place in the country of my birth. To the contrary, twenty-eight years after independence we are now being told these talks about the future of Zimbabwe are being held behind closed doors. Why is that? The citizens of Zimbabwe and other people all over the world should know what is going on. As Zimbabwe citizens we are all going to be affected by the outcomes of this negotiating process hence there is need for us to be informed. No amount of dilly-dallying can alter or obliterate the urgency and critical nature of democratic change in Zimbabwe. On March 29, the world heard what the people of Zimbabwe want. These talks have gone for a week now but Zimbabweans are still scrounging for information as to what is really taking place. If these talks are about the future of Zimbabwe, we demand the right to be informed now.Zvidzai RuzvidzoColumbus-OhioUSA

Wake Up And Smell The CoffeeBy Chiedza Murandu Negotiations have been going on for a week. That all parties are still committed to the talks is a good sign. Off the field activities have not escaped the eagle eyed press both at home and abroad – including the story that delegates were unhappy about their accommodation – they should get a life. But if swankier accommodation can help in achieving the illusive peace in Zimbabwe, I say give them them what they want, as long as they promise to deliver.EU and American sanctions were widened. Talk about wrong timing. This sends mixed signals.The Zanu (PF) party are in control at the moment, legitimately or not; that's a fact we need to accept. Sanctions have been there to twist Zanu PF's arm and now that they have agreed to negotiate with MDC I think the world has to relax that grip a bit.The negotiations are delicate. Zanu PF seems to have taken the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as their victory, with Mugabe saying after the signing: "We must act as Zimbabweans, think as Zimbabweans, be masters of our destiny...No need for us to call on Europe to sanction us - a cheap shot by Mr Mugabe, uncalled for, especially just after signing the MOU.Though Zanu PF is in control right now, the real power lies in Mr Mbeki

who, if he is impartial, should not allow Zanu (PF) to dictate the course of these negotiations, but rejecting dictates such as the Zanu (PF) Politburo's statement about what is and what is not negotiable. Who are they to say that and why should they be left to say that the Presidency, the land reforms that they oversaw etc are not negotiable, when in fact they have parcelled out land to themselves and their cousin's cousins. The fact as we all know it is that Mr. Mugabe lost to Mr Tsvangirai. Why then should he cling on to the presidency? The land reform was and is a good idea; the only problem is how Zanu PF define Land Reform. According to them it's giving large farms to the Zanu PF leadership and some pieces of land to Zanu PF supporters and let the war veterans go about looting and killing farmers and farm workers, and grab what they can. The people say no, land reform has to benefit every Zimbabwean, black or white, Zanu PF supporter or MDC supporter. But then I think now we know that Zanu PF lives in a world of its own and we urgently need to bring them back to the world of reality. Zanu PF needs to know that the world knows, and even Mr. Mbeki knows, that their days are numbered and this is the time they are at their weakest point. The fact that the world is willing to let them negotiate their own exit is something they should appreciate. They have to know that they now have to understand our stand point before we can understand theirs. Their politburo has just put up a defence mechanism and it's all natural; we know they are at that stage where they are trying to cope with the reality that they have lost power, and they are now trying to maintain self-image. We shouldn't be worried that much but we shouldn't give them that much room to mess about. Truth is we have suffered enough and these guys have to wake up and smell the coffee. C Murandu

Conscience: How foreign is that to Mugabe

It is now four months since the harmonised elections in our beloved country, yet we operate with an illegal cabinet, no Parliament and no government. Do we deserve to be a country? Does Mugabe have any conscience or realise the repercussions of his actions or he is just a selfish megalomaniac who is hell-bent on trying to make everyone suffer as long as he and his cronies enjoy. Where is the conscience of this man when almost all his subjects are starving, some scattered in the diaspora left, right and centre as no one is really prepared to baby-sit somebody else's children. Where is Mugabe's conscience when day in and day out he watches young children die of malnutrition? Where is Mugabe's conscience when everyday he witnesses opposition members dying at the hands of state sponsored terrorism. Where is his conscience when each day he witnesses the brutalisation of opposition members (rape, beatings, you name it). Where is Mugabe's conscience, when the once bread basket of Southern Africa can no longer feed even a quarter of its population? Where is Mugabe's conscience when a once vibrant economy is non-existent and he is supposed to be President? Where is Mugabe's conscience when the number of zeros can no longer fit on the calculator? Where is Mugabe's conscience when you can no longer calculate the country's inflation due to lack of commodities on the market. Where is Mugabe's conscience when supermarkets resemble playing fields or barren pastures? Where is his conscience when cash is no longer part of our economy? Where is Mugabe's conscience when everyone sings change and he turns away from it? Where is Mugabe's conscience when hospitals are turned to places to go to die not to be treated? By Masimba Kadzviti

Mugabe An International Pariah

Presidential Parliamentary and Local government elections for Zimbabwe were held on 29/03/08. Robert Mugabe was able to do this in accordance with the constitution of the country. Robert Mugabe pigheaded as has always been the case, was bullish and confident that he would roll to victory without shedding a brow of sweat. Misinformed by the propaganda machinery unleashed by his press secretary George Charamba, he was made to believe that he was still as popular as he was in 1980. Mugabe went into the elections and lost dismally on three fronts. The voting system was transparent and people of Zimbabwean had spoken with one voice for the first time. The man who considered himself the messiah for Zimbabwe was rejected and rightfully thrown to the bin not to be recycled. How did Mugabe respond to that? We all know what happened. Mugabe could not stomach the results being announced and this took a month before the world and the peace loving Zimbabweans were told the outcome of the elections - results that were scheduled to be announced in three days. To add insult to injury, Mugabe tried to accuse the opposition and the West for trying to influence the results through bribery. What planet is this man from? With all the degrees he has, surely he must be intelligent enough to know that no one on earth would believe him unless the only degree he has is in violence. "Conscience is what hurts when all of your body feels happy." I hope and hope for the nation that you have this, because you stole the elections and whatever credibility you had left, went through the window and doors and unfortunately you will never be able to get it back. You are an international disgrace shame on you, Robert. By Masimba Kadzviti

Zim Is Now A Failed State

Zimbabwe is now a failed state, thanks to Robert Mugabe and his henchmen. This is the fact that everyone on the negotiation table has to concur with before they proceed with the talks and hope to resolve the current situation in Zimbabwe. The fact that Mugabe himself nor his henchmen are failing to acknowledge this obvious fact goes to show how disillusioned they all have become. When a government becomes ineffective and weak and loses any practical control over its territory then it frankly becomes a Failed State. The Zanu PF government has lost control in Zimbabwe, oh yes, because they cannot control the so called war veterans who have become an authority in their own right. All the murderers who have killed women and children, the thugs and militia that have been murdering MDC supporters and are not arrested, are a clear sign that the government has lost control. That a government has and should have the monopoly

the foot. Even if he becomes the President of Zimbabwe by default, there is no legitimacy to his presidency. No country should recognise him as the legitimate leader of Zimbabwe. Many people are asking what Plan B should be. I think we should encourage Zimbabweans at home to leave Zimbabwe in millions, and go into neighbouring countries, especially SADC countries, and claim asylum. We should have a mass exodus like the ones we saw in Rwanda when the Hutus were fleeing to neighbouring countries after Kigali fell over to Tutsis.

People should grab whatever item they can, blankets, clothes and start the mass exodus into neighbouring countries. This will destabilise the region, and hopefully, Thabo Mbeki will enjoy a peaceful 2010 soccer match in such an environment.

Mugabe will rule a ghost country. The EU and other western countries should impose total sanctions on Zimbabwe, including deporting ZANU PF children enjoying Western democracy and education. However, one thing Tsvangirai must never do is to participate in a government of national unity with Mugabe as its leader. We saw it happen to Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU in 1987. Tsvangirai has done his role, he is a true son of the soil, a leader and a statesman, an ambassador of a new African democracy. Mugabe says Tsvangirai chidzoto he is not educated. Now that all the universities which gave him honorary degrees are withdrawing their degrees, we want to see how many degrees he will remain with. Well done Morgan Tsvangirai Sarudzayi Barnes (Writer and human rights activist, UK) Don't Lose Hope, June 27 Talkmore Bvururu (crouched) with another Birmingham member Richard Dzirutwe (r), and Elliot Pfebeve (l) an MDC activist whose brother was killed by Zanu PF thugs in the last campaign and whose parents have been victimized again in the current campaign. By Talkmore Bvururu.

As Zimbabwe's presidential elections, due to be held on June 27 hang in the balance, I believe we must urge the people of Zimbabwe not to lose hope and go back in masses to vote for CHANGE. The MDC leaders now have a bigger task ahead and have to lead from the forefront, offering tangible solutions to ameliorate the crisis so that Zimbabweans will in turn support them in turning around the sinking fortunes of our country, blighted by Zanu-PF's misrule. Zimbabweans are at the worst time in their lives with some being beaten at home, while thousands outside the country are not accorded their right to vote, and many are being forced back home, fleeing South Africa's xenophobic violence. A positive way of looking at it is to say these are more votes for the MDC. But we need to strategise our campaign as ZANU-PF has already set-up several committees tasked with activities like food distribution, transport, and information to mobilise for President Mugabe - besides the violence. Information flow is a major issue in preparation for run-off, in view of the dominance of the state media. ZANU-PF and its extension, Zimbabwe Electoral Commission need to be monitored closely so that they do not proclaim imagined mistakes in an effort to rig the election this time again. Clearly the long delay after the March 29 elections, allowed for ZEC to doctor the presidential results. It should be borne in mind that rigging started even in the very first post-civil war elections in 1980. Mugabe, instead of moving all his freedom fighters into assembly points agreed under the Lancaster House peace deal, instructed a large number to stay among the rural electorate to 'campaign for Zanu'. The campaign however entailed telling the local chiefs that if any of their subjects voted for anyone beside ZANU PF, they would be decapitated. Now he is using the same war vets, youth militia, army and CIO to do the same. Zimbabweans don't lose hope, for we all have a developmental role to play in bringing a change for the betterment of our future. We will mark this year 2008 as 'The Year for Regime Change'. Rwendo Runo Hazvikoni! (This time around, the mountain will move). Obama Winds of Change To Sweep Sekuru Bob Away

Dear Sir The ongoing abuses in rural Zimbabwe cannot go unchallenged. In his quest for peace and justice Martin Luther King said, 'We must not wage a war'. Being a 'born free' I was told about how the Smith days were difficult, how the black person was restricted to sitting at the back of the bus and how the black person was not allowed to even walk along First street. Everything good was meant for the white man in Rhodesia. My parents fought a liberation war to free oppressed black people and many lives were lost in the process. As a young girl, born after independence, I felt I owed it to them for being born enjoying my rights in a free Zimbabwe. Now when I look at the appalling situation in Zimbabwe today I start wondering whether the war of independence was worth all this. It seems we now have a new war on the horizon but for what really? I am sick and tired of hearing Mugabe blaming all the woes of Zimbabwe on Britain and the West. To some extent it is true; the sanctions against the country are not doing the ordinary Zimbabweans any favours but are the young militias entitled to wreak havoc on the streets of Harare? Does the violence being perpetrated on innocent Zimbabweans have anything to do with the West? Colonialism was never a good thing and we have to embrace that as part of our history. That is what makes us who we are today. What was done in the past we can not change but we should forgive and forge ahead as one nation. This is why Nelson Mandela is a respected man today. After all the long years of endurance, Mandela managed to forgive the perpetrators of apartheid and encouraged reconciliation. My heart bleeds so much because of the situation in Zimbabwe. Right now I don't know the purpose of this discourse but all I know change is definite in Zimbabwe. Sekuru Bob you have no heart at all and it's time to go! How can you possibly enjoy sweet dreams at the state house when people are being incarcerated in the villages? Barack Obama is preaching change in America and surely the winds of change will one day sweep across Zimbabwe. The will of the oppressed shall prevail. Petronella Matibwira, Manchester

Kureto Mushava

The situation in Zimbabwe needs collective action from all Zimbabweans, both home and abroad. It is high time all Zimbabweans come together and force Mugabe out of office.

With free and fair elections, MDC will defeat Zanu PF in the 2008 elections. Mugabe and his people know that, but they

will always try to find ways of stealing the elections. One way of doing this is by not holding free and fair elections. This starts from now, well before 2008.

Our friends and relatives back home (Zimbabwe) are not allowed to demonstrate. If they demonstrate they are beaten and threatened with death. Some are even killed. This is what the Zanu PF government does.

People can no longer express themselves and neither are they allowed to support the opposition party in open. This is very unfair in an independent Zimbabwe. That is, if the word "independent" still exists in Zimbabwe.

We, Zimbabweans in diaspora have an advantage that we can demonstrate and express ourselves without fear. It is therefore high time for us to put more pressure on Mugabe through demonstrations.

Mugabe should feel the impact of Zimbabweans in diaspora. More demonstrations means more pressure on Mugabe.

Also, through demonstration, the Zimbabwean situation comes to the attention of more and more nations and more civil rights organisations.

Last year I attended a demonstration in Leeds. The attendance by None Zimbabweans and local civil rights organisations was encouraging. Infact none-Zimbabweans outnumbered us.

This shows that there are a lot people out there who sympathise with us and are always willing to support us in our struggle. What is only needed is for us to be on the forefront.

I therefore call upon Zimbabweans to come in big numbers when ever a demonstration is called.

Mugabe and his ruthless people's days are numbered and this is the right time to put more pressure on him kusvika aita BP

Kana tati Ngachitsve Ngachitsve!

Kireto Mushava: MDC activist: Leeds