

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition

Contents

Cover: *Loopholes and loose ends*

Update: *The week in review (p1-2)*

Analysis: *What they died for: Honouring the liberation struggle (p3); Zimbabwe's Crossroads- situational analysis (p4)*

Statements: *Solidarity statements from SANGOCO and COSATU (inserts)*

This bulletin has been produced by the Zimbabwe Crisis Committee to communicate perspectives from civil society in the run-up to the 2002 Presidential Elections.

*Contact: B. Kagoro, Coordinator
Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition
Tel: 263-4-793246/7
Email: crisis-zim@transparency.org.zw*

About the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition

The Crisis in Zimbabwe initiatives derives from a groundbreaking conference held on 4th August 2001. This Conference produced the most comprehensive statement on the Zimbabwe Crisis to date, as well as a set of 13 resolutions for resolving the crisis. The Committee (Zimbabwe Crisis Committee) was mandated by the Conference plenary to continue to drive the initiative. The Committee consists of:

The National Constitutional Assembly; The Zimbabwe Election Support Network; The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union; the Women's Coalition; The Media Institute of Southern Africa (Zimbabwe); Transparency International Zimbabwe; Zimbabwe National Students' Union; The Human Rights Forum; The Civic Alliance for Social and Economic Progress.

* This is how we do it ... Loopholes and loose ends

President Mugabe has pulled all the stops in an attempt to ensure a polling process that guarantees him the advantage, mostly unfair advantages, whether through legislation, intimidation or disenfranchisement. It is however on the technical level - the level that all the administrative measures to run elections are carried out - that clearly betray Mugabe's determination to rig the elections.

The passing of the General Laws Amendment Act which has now been overturned which effectively disallowed any independent monitoring of the elections, to the point of refusing polling agents and monitors the right to travel with boxes at all times. Other measures which were put in place to facilitate rigging the poll include:

The printing of ballot papers far in excess to normal requirement : The registered voters appearing in the voters roll, are only 5,4 million. The authorities have printed 7.5million ballot papers. This is by far in excess to ordinary requirements of the election, even given the need to cover for contingencies, given the fact that voting patterns in the past elections reveal not more than 50% of the turnout of registered voters.

The manipulation of the voters roll: The Registrar General has arbitrarily removed hundreds of thousands of voters from the roll, those perceived to be part of the MDC.

The disenfranchisement of permanent residents. An extremely controversial and non-transparent citizen's law is being used to disenfranchise citizens who have been eligible to vote in past elections.

The requirement to produce proof of residence has disenfranchised thousands since many citizens reside in lodges and have no electricity bill etc in their names.

The confiscation of ID cards at illegal militia run road blocks making it impossible for citizens to vote, given the difficulties in getting a replacement card.

The inflation of the roll with ghost or non-existent voters. In the provinces of Mashonaland East, West and Central, registration of voters continues. In most cases, these are non-existent, voters who are put on the roll to facilitate multiple voting.

The impartiality of personnel monitoring key positions. The whole rigging machinery depends on the personnel drafted to run all the key administrative and technical aspects of the elections. The army, which has assumed a partisan role, has been drafted to man essentially all key administrative and technical rolls. Every stage of the electoral process which requires utmost integrity and professionalism has been compromised.

The reduction of polling stations in urban areas: The number of polling stations has been radically cut down in urban areas, where the opposition is a clear favourite and information on voting stations has only started coming.

Adapted from a paper by Kumbirayi Hodzi

Election Countdown

The last ten days in review

The last 10 days before elections has seen little let up in controversy barometer in the lead up to the Presidential race, as Zimbabwe continued to grab international and regional media headlines, with each day bringing a new twist. Further disarray was cast around the issue of how the electoral process will be run by a decision by the Supreme Court overturning the Electoral Law amendment passed by the government late last year. While civil society groups condemned the law roundly, the Supreme Court's timing could not have been worse. Civil society groups working to monitor the elections found themselves between the old and new laws, with very little time to reorganize themselves accordingly.

The overall result was to confirm claims that the rules of the game are not made to help, rather to frustrate. This is not helped by the fact that a large number of issues still remained outstanding. Among them, the reduction in the number of polling booths, and in Harare, where Presidential, municipal and mayoral elections will be held concurrently, the confusion in relation to where people should vote. This arises from the fact that voters have to be in their constituency to vote for the President, but in their ward to vote for their councillor and mayor. A number of wards straddle several constituencies so that it was feared that some voters would end up in a polling booth that was either in the right ward but wrong constituency or vice versa.

Accreditation for local observers and monitors has not yet started, and there has been very little by way of information and clarity as to how the process would move. This week the ESC announced a meeting for observers, monitors and the media to clarify all the aspects of the voting process (Wednesday 6 March). Accreditation has generally been a strictly controlled affair; a large group of South African civil society observers were not permitted accreditation and were given 4 days to spend in the country, ensuring that they would leave before the days of the election.

Confidence in the voting process has been undermined by stories in the press that police officers and soldiers had already cast their votes, a claim that has been denied by the government. Largely unnoticed was another report that more Zimbabwean troops had been brought back from the DRC. We welcome them home and hope that they will be a part of rebuilding the democratic, peaceful society that we are aspiring to and that they will honour their duty to protect citizens whatever the outcome of the election.

The international observer presence has brought some reassurance to embattled citizens. Some observers from the region have come under fire locally for declaring that conditions for free and fair elections exist in the country. Unless they are clinically delusional, it is difficult to understand the desire of these observers to downplay or deny the realities in relation to the violence in the country, and particularly the main source of this violence. What is the value of a human life and how many lives are worth the sacrifice of the political expediencies and friendships they are defending?

The trade union leader Ephraim Tapa who was abducted is still missing. The ZCTU have demanded his immediate release and gave a press conference on the subject today. The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition expresses its solidarity with the family and colleagues of Mr. Tapa and his wife and its outrage at yet another example

of lawlessness and brutality by the supporters of the ruling party.

The state media spent most of the week passing and re-passing footage of the "assassination video" with one Mr. Ben Menashe being given red carpet treatment on arriving in the country to make a statement to the police and tell the Zimbabwean public his story. The MDC leader has been charged with treason so that the government has an axe hanging over his head should he lose the election. The credibility of the charges, which have been so vigorously pursued has been damaged by the fact that the footage shown to the Zimbabwean public had obviously been "rearranged" (to put it politely) to flow with a narrative that suited the story it wished to tell.

Wisely, most Zimbabweans have preferred to ignore this story to attend to more serious issues of basic survival. That this was simply an election ruse was bolstered by the fact that such a precedent has already occurred in the context of Presidential elections, when the late Ndabaningi Sithole was also accused and charged with plotting to assassinate the president (date??). Regardless of the embarrassment, the state media has become more blatant in its bias for the ruling party, with coverage of Presidential campaigns sometimes taking up over half of the time on the nightly "news hour" programme..



Chaz Maviyane Davies

The country had scant rain during the week but not enough to rescue food crops which are wilting in fields throughout the country. The spectre of a deepening food crisis looms large with the staple food maize meal generally unavailable. In the few days left in the elections, we might expect a story to come out about how hoards of maize meal the size of China have been

found on the white owned commercial farmers in a plot with the British to starve the country and bring chaos to our peaceful land. The situation is so bad that we would almost welcome such a story if it meant that there was going to be food. But that story will not be told because there is just no food in the country.

CHOGM produced little to inspire Zimbabweans' dwindling faith in world leadership, with the African blocking attempts to suspend Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth and the final judgement being deferred until after the election. Suspension or otherwise from the Commonwealth is not the issue; the wrench comes from the failure of such a high level meeting condemn the role of the ruling party in the violence and intimidation that has prevailed in the past two years. Rather than debate the merits of the positions of the different sides in the stand off, it is more interesting to investigate what trade-offs were made between one group and the other at the expense of Zimbabwe. The million dollar question is

What they died for Honouring the liberation struggle

By *Tawanda Hondura*

Thousands of Zimbabweans lost their lives in the war of liberation, which culminated in independence in 1980. Majority rule was not brought about solely through the barrel of the gun, but through one man-one vote. It was the first time that universal suffrage, irrespective of the race of the citizens was introduced in Zimbabwe. It was through one man-one vote, and the expression of the people's will that ZANU PF was mandated and given the responsibility to rule this country.

Political violence, the systematic and wanton killing and torture of fellow citizens for political differences, destruction of property, and the displacement of civilians in the name of politics negates the gains of independence and undermines the spirit, ideology and the purpose for which the war fought. Did we go to war in order to replace one dictator with another?

Notwithstanding that ZANU PF operated an illegal radio station in Mozambique during the war, the government in Rhodesian chameleonic fashion maintains an illegal monopoly buttressed by an equally obnoxious Broadcasting Services Act. This is truly a study in how yesterday's liberator has turned into today's oppressor.

Shockingly the government uses the Public Order and Security Act, an even more draconian act than the Law and Order Maintenance Act, which prior to independence was used by the colonial regime to suppress popular dissent and to arrest and detain for many years the leaders of the struggle. Gatherings, without police authorisation are outlawed, persons are forced to carry identity documents, and trivial offences are severely punished. Somehow it seems that if it is done by a white man it is oppression – when it is done by a fellow African, it is branded “the chimurenga.”

All this has been done in the name of freedom, sovereignty and self-determination in what has been a cynical hijacking and distortion of the liberation struggle.

With all that has happened, this election can never be judged to have been free and fair. It is not a question pre-empting the outcome, simply of stating the facts as they are. However, this does not mean that we should refuse to go out to vote. Quite the contrary, it is if anything because of these circumstances, that every voter who has been lucky enough to guard that right must now go out and exercise it. The running of elections has always been skewed in favour of the ruling party. The response in the past has always been to boycott the election giving the government exactly what they want – victory if not legitimacy. It will be a sign of a new awareness and empowerment amongst citizens that against all odds, they will exercise their most fundamental political right.

Zimbabweans must regain the spirit of independence and claim their right to self-determination through the ballot. In so doing, we will wrest from the government its monopolistic claim as the sole liberators of this country. It was the ballot that brought about independence and it is the ballot that must maintain the gains and fruits. We must not allow any party or person to dictate the political, economic and social destiny of this country. Every person has an obligation to vote.

It is imperative that we express our displeasure and disgust at the use of torture, death and kidnappings simply to protect the privileges and wealth of a small political elite. Zimbabweans have the right to live in peace and prosperity. We must all therefore speak through the ballot. It is in that way we will return honor and dignity to the liberation struggle and it is in that way that we will retain the gains that were fought for.

Week in review (cont'd)

why a government that has been at such pains to express its outrage at Britain's imperialist machinations should put so much effort into fighting suspension from a group where the person of the British monarch holds the enviable position of head for life.

The level of concern in local spheres could be witnessed by the large numbers of adverts taken out in the press by numerous civic groups calling for peace. It is clear that the mood is one of anxiety and the only recourse left is to appeal to citizens not to allow themselves to be swallowed into a cycle of violence whatever happens. Groups included the Zimbabwe Liberators Platform, churches, the Crisis in Zimbabwe coalition, the civic education trust. ZIMCET and ACPD are distributing a manual on community peace building intended to further support these issues at the practical level. The churches have launched an appeal that citizens should wear a white ribbon; ZCTU is holding nationwide prayer meetings during the week and 5 minute work stoppages each day at 11am. Civil society websites are featuring peace as the major issue in the run up to the elections (second perhaps to encouraging those who can to go and exercise their right to vote). Despite the climate, the Crisis in Zimbabwe has joined this effort to put positive messages forward “Vote, stay committed, be positive. Give Zimbabwe the green light for peace, progress and prosperity.”

Civil society organisations, assisted by the independent media have continued with their voter education drive which was greatly hampered by the Electoral Laws Amendment Act and the general inaccessibility of many areas. The past two years will clearly mark a turning point in the history of civil society in Zimbabwe – particularly as regards building the practice of building coalitions and generally building civic confidence in responding to political challenges as they come.

Acts of violence continue and the Human Rights Forum has released its report for the second half of February. Civil society groups and others continue to collate information on militia training bases and a number of locations that are gaining notoriety as torture bases. Human rights lawyers and victim support groups have their hands full dealing with the cases that are coming in of people who have had to flee their homes, had their property destroyed or been assaulted or attacked. Militia road blocks are now a common place occurrence and indeed should be seen as a cause for alarm for maintaining peace in the immediate post election period. Alongside these heavily depressing realities, the recently enacted Public Order Security Bill is being assiduously applied particularly in relation to public meetings and demonstrations. The opposition party claims that 83 of its meetings have been stopped by the police; indeed a meeting stopped between the MDC President and a group of diplomats made headlines when the police came in a stopped the meeting. On the other hand, Harare residents are treated to daily helicopter flyovers of the presidential entourage going around the country campaigning.

Harare residents were treated to the only debate between candidates from all parties when the Harare Combined Rate-payers Association organized a meeting of mayoral candidates to defend their programmes to the public. The MDC candidate failed to show up but in case there is any doubt about the number of alternatives Zimbabwe can offer, the other opposition candidate – one of the “unknowns” in the race - won the debate hands down in terms of ability to address issues and articulate a vision.

End

Zimbabwe's Crossroads

A Situational Analysis.

By Takura Zhangazha

The political situation in Zimbabwe has obviously reached fever pitch. The political parties and their candidates are clearly focused on the technicality of the election in as far as it relates to votes cast for and votes cast against. And in this electric electoral atmosphere the struggle and the pain of the citizens of Zimbabwe in the period that led to these elections will temporarily be shelved in anticipation of a result that will bring Zimbabwe back to being a fairly peaceful country. It is a period that has been fraught with politically motivated violence, displacement of civilians from their rural homes and a major increase in the repressive tendencies of the incumbent government. The number of lives lost, maimed and displaced shall not be the issue of this short analysis. Instead it is more important to delve into the impact that the political events leading to 9 and 10 March 02 have had on the political culture of Zimbabwe and propose concerted solutions to be undertaken by Zimbabwean civic society.

Broadly spoken for, the people of Zimbabwe in the run-up to the election have lost confidence in the institutions of government in the country, especially the security organs such as the police force, the army and prison services. This is largely due to the partisan manner in which the latter have carried out their activities as well as their seeming inability to protect members of the public from incidents of violence. Other institutions such as the Parliament of Zimbabwe and the Judiciary remain toothless bulldogs in the public eye for reasons that range from their endorsing of repressive legislation as well as to the manner in which they are overshadowed by the executive arm of government. As a result the citizens have either taken the law into their own hands or else flocked for protection to the cities or to those institutions that seem to be above the law such as the war veterans and the ruling party militia. This has had the disastrous effect of curtailing freedom of expression, freedom of movement and generally the right to equal protection before the law.

Another important effect that the run up to the Presidential election has had on Zimbabwe's political climate is that it has led to the polarisation of Zimbabwean society along party lines. What should be genuine, non-violent political contest

has been reduced to a low scale civil war between those in the ruling party and those in the opposition. The link between the rural and urban communities that has been a consistent characteristic of Zimbabwean society has now been severely compromised by the activities of the ruling Zanu Pf party that has consistently set up illegal roadblocks to victimise people wishing to visit relatives and friends in the communal areas.

The media in Zimbabwe has also not been spared by the government and ruling party. The government has abused the public media by turning the state owned Zimpapers Newsgroup and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation into its leading propaganda mouthpieces. This has further increased polarisation in the country because the government has referred to the main opposition as "terrorists" a label that its supporters have used to justify the beatings and murder of opposition party supporters. The alleged assassination plot by the main opposition leader that the State Media has projected as true has further exacerbated this division of Zimbabwean society.

The interactions of Zimbabwe and the international community have not yielded much either. The divisions that are

more than evident in the Commonwealth are more or less are turning the Zimbabwean crises into a petty contest between Europe and Africa, a situation which is regrettable to say the least. And in this standoff it is democracy and the people of Zimbabwe that will stand to suffer.

In light of all the matters highlighted, Zimbabwean citizens and leaders of Zimbabwean Civic Society need to seriously think about a healing process after the election. This will include fundamental changes to the current constitution of Zimbabwe that has allowed the incumbent government to run the country as if it were their fiefdom. The healing process will include a rebuilding of society's confidence in the institutions of government especially the security organs through collaborations between civic organisations and the government that will be in power after the votes have been counted. It will also be imperative that Government of National Unity be formed to help keep the focus of the country together. We however do not claim to have the ultimate solution to Zimbabwe's problems but remain cognisant of the fact that there all that has transpired in the run-up to the election will play a significant part in the political situation of Zimbabwe after the election. As such, solutions must be ready in hand in order to avoid a repeat of the period before or

"The only way we'll get freedom for ourselves is to identify with every oppressed people in the world"

"You're not supposed to be so blind with patriotism that you can't face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who says it."

Zimbabwe Election Support Network National
Command Centre Contacts

General Information

799106 - 15

Harare & Chitungwiza Tripartite Election Details
799120

Legal & Medical Information

091 274 357 (toll free) & 011 424 398/9

Logistics & Technical Support

799118 & 799119

Physical details: Holiday Inn Harare, Mezzanine
Floor

E-mail: zesn@africaonline.co.zw

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition

Solidarity statements from COSATU and SANGOCO

Cosatu Condemns Abduction of Union Leader

PRESS RELEASE

March 4, 2002

Johannesburg

The Congress of South African Trade Unions is extremely concerned at the abduction of the President of the Zimbabwe Civil Service Employees Association, Ephraim Tapa, and his wife Faith Mukwakwa, who have been missing since 16 February when war veterans intercepted the vehicle they were travelling in. (...)

The area where Mr and Mrs Tapa were abducted is known to be one of the "hotspots" where incidents of human rights violations have been particularly high.

The tragic abduction of the couple demonstrates the levels of viciousness that citizens are subjected to in the country and the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators.

COSATU supports the ZCTU's call for a halt to "state- sponsored terrorism" in the run-up to the presidential election on 9-10 March. It endorses the statement of ZCTU President, Lovemore Matombo, that "under the circumstances, it would be very difficult in this country to have what could generally be considered free and fair elections."

COSATU also deplores President Robert Mugabe's recent threat in a campaign speech to de-register the ZCTU. This would be an attack on basic democratic rights and threaten to end trade union freedom.

COSATU calls upon the Southern African Trade Union Co- ordination Council and the South African government to put pressure on the Zimbabwe government to secure the release of Mr and Mrs Tapa.

For further information contact: W. Chibebe, ZCTU, 09263- (011) 610593.

Patrick Craven and Moloto Mothapo, Acting COSATU Spokespersons

Zimbabwe Elections: South African NGOs denied observer status, committed to transformation in the region.

5 March 2002

Faced with massive underdevelopment and poverty at home and across the region, the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO) has been working with partner organisations in SADC to transform the lives of poor peasants, workers, and the unemployed.

We support the radical redistribution of land in our region. We remain convinced that a market-driven redistribution programme will never meet the needs of our regions' poor and landless.

We have also heard and responded to calls from Zimbabwean Civil Society requesting solidarity to monitor the build up to the Presidential Election. In the pursuit of this objective SANGOCO has been denied the opportunity to contribute - as observers - to strengthening the democratic process in Zimbabwe. The delegation, our communities in South Africa, as well as our counterparts in Zimbabwe are deeply alarmed at this snub to progressive Civil Society.

We believe that this is not an isolated incident, but rather a systematic exclusion of our organisations across the SADC region. Despite the lip service paid by heads of state to transparency, accountability, and the participation of Civil Society both the Zimbabwean and South African authorities have ensured that we will not be able to stand in solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe as they go to the polls this coming weekend.

Efforts to secure accreditation, engaging both the Zimbabwean and South African authorities, did not prevail. Interventions from the SADC NGO Council in Botswana have also fallen on deaf ears.

This closing of space for Civil Society organisations is a disturbing precursor for what may happen across the region, as governments increasingly feel threatened by their growing inability to deliver sustained improvement to the lives of their citizens.

It is in this context that we are considering the withdrawal of SANGOCO's participants from President Mbeki's Multi-Stakeholder Observer Mission. Given the significance the South African government attaches to the presence of NGO representatives, we have no confidence that their presence in the South African delegation will have any impact on the final report of the Multi-Stakeholder delegation.

We have exhausted all diplomatic and administrative avenues and are no longer in the position to stay in Zimbabwe legally. We will return to South Africa this afternoon.

We remain committed in our solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe. We will continue to deepen our regional ties – ensuring that all citizens are able to access substantive human and economic rights. In the case of Zimbabwe we watch with great interest as people head to the polls and return to the land.

The SANGOCO Presidential Election Observer Delegation consists of 23 activists working in Civil Society Organisations from all nine provinces of South Africa. For more information or comment contact Abie Dithake on 27 82 411 2946 or SANGOCO Communications Coordinator, Mark Weinberg 27 82 375 9454 / mark@sangoco.org.za