

The New Age Voices

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Amplifying youth voices

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Youths give ZYC ultimatum, threaten tough measures “Our hands are clean”: ZYC

BY FRANCIS RWODZI

LAST week *The New Age Voices* carried an article with reactions of some youth organisations and other stakeholders on the suspension of YETT's licence by the Zimbabwe Youth Council. The Editor of *The New Age Voices* Francis Rwodzi had a no holds barred interview with the Chairman of ZYC, Hamilton Pazvakavambwa and Director Livingstone Dzikira to get an insight into the rationale behind the council's decision and its subsequent implications. This week we also give you the latest developments within the civic society over the ZYC-YETT story.

Pazvakavambwa told *The New Age Voices* that the decision to suspend YETT is not aimed at attacking any youth organisation but on enforcing the rules and regulations and setting parameters based on the development of young people.

“There must be no illusions. Youth organisations must simply conform to the rules and regulations that govern the youth sector and as the Zimbabwe Youth Council we are there to enforce those regulations. People should not just go about doing as they please as if there are no regulations. If you go to America and Britain and so on, the rules are clear, you have to observe them,” Pazvakavambwa said.

When asked whether the suspension was procedural or not, Pazvakavambwa was elusive but maintained the decision taken by the council was for the good of young people.

“The bottom line is that we cannot have a situation where people can receive and parcel out funds willy-nilly, what if those funds are terrorist funds? We have no bone to chew with YETT but we want them to do the proper thing. As you are aware this is just a suspension and not a cancellation like what some people are saying, they just have to explain themselves,” he said.

“You quoted someone saying that the council is equivalent to a burial society. It is quite strange because it is that same institution they seconded board members to,” said Pazvakavambwa.

He said Youth in this country are actually disempowered because they waste their time writing concept papers to countries struggling with their economies instead of writing business proposals meant for development.

Dzikira said that contrary to rumours that they are clamping down on youth organisations, the council is committed to serve youth organisations and said that Youth Forum was never an issue but just a case study.

“We are surprised at the reaction of Youth Forum because we have no issues with them, they are just beneficiaries. We are more concerned with the people who are funding their operations. We didn't know YETT until they registered with us about a month ago but what we have seen is that they are funding pro-MDC youth organisations. If they want to fund youths they should just give money to all regardless of political affiliation. We are saying YETT should depoliticise,” Dzikira said.

“If Promise Mkwanzani sets up a youth fund for his youth assembly, we have no problems as long as it has declared its political nature,” he said.

In latest developments, this paper was able to peep through the council's fresh communiqué where Dzikira has written to YETT asking them to furnish the council with details of the YETT-SIDA youth fund outlining details of the total amount of the grant, the organisations that they are working with and the total amounts that they have received and the addresses where they are found including the nature of their activities. Dzikira says that this is in accordance with section 13, 14 and 15 of the ZYC Act.

Meanwhile, youth organisations under the banner of Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition have given ZYC a 7 day ultimatum to lift the suspension of YETT or face action.

The organisations said they are concerned about the continued harassment and political meddling in the affairs and work of youth organizations by the ZYC and the executive, as represented by the Minister of Youth Development, Indigenization and Empowerment.

The Crisis youth committee said the suspension of YETT from ZYC was unprocedural because the Registration and Compliance Committee of the ZYC board did not meet to discuss the issue as per the provisions of the ACT.

They also said that YETT was not asked to appear before a disciplinary committee as provided for by section 22 (2) of the act which states that “the council shall not suspend or suspend the registration of any club until it has given the club an opportunity to be heard.”

“The decision to suspend YETT from the Council was

taken by the Director in direct contravention of the ZYC Act section 3B which provides for the establishment of the Council further supported by Section 16.

“We further condemn the spate of tension that has been witnessed in the operations of the Zimbabwe Youth Council with other youth organizations.

“ZYC must immediately stop the harassment and victimization of youth organizations and reinstate YETT as a council member of ZYC within a period of 7 working days,” said the committee.

The youth coalition demanded that “ZYC must with immediate effect stop harassing and traumatizing the Director of YETT based on patriarchal tendencies and irresponsible male dominance. That the ZYC space be all inclusive including space for young women's participation in all youths spheres without discrimination”.

They also demanded that “The Zimbabwe Youth Council Act must be amended to allow youths to determine their leaders, free expression and association and reduce executive powers of the Minister of Youth in ZYC affairs with special reference to sections 3A(1); 3D(C); 3E; 3F(1)(a); 3G; 6(1); 8; 9; 10(1); 24(3); 26”.

“Principals of the Global Political Agreement together with Parliament of Zimbabwe must set up a credible, Independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate the composition and operations of ZYC.

“ZYC must, in a non partisan manner, fulfil its mandate of providing an inclusive platform for all youths to deliberate on youth issues,” the coalition demanded.

They also said as the principal chief advisor to government on youth issues and concerns “ZYC must embark on thorough and inclusive processes that holistically encompass the input of youth from various backgrounds”.

The coalition threatened that failure to abide by the demands, civic society will recall all pro-democratic youths from the ZYC Board, youth organizations will disengage from the council's activities and affairs, civic society will pursue legal avenues to challenge both the legality of the suspension and constitutionality of the ZYC Act and actions and that youth Organizations in Zimbabwe and the youths at large will cease to recognize the existence and or establishment of Zimbabwe Youth Council.

Harare burning: Country sliding into anarchy

BY STAFF REPORTER

AS Zimbabwe warms up to key elections namely the referendum and national elections likely to take place next year, the country's capital city has been engulfed by waves of violence which have taken various forms and magnitudes casting into doubt Harare's capacity to hold a serious election.

The violence which has been slowly unfolding in various parts of the country especially the marginalised areas reached fever pitch two months ago when rowdy Zanu PF youths descended on Parliament building and assaulted members of parliament, a journalist and members of the audience who had come to the hearing of the human rights bill.

Such behaviour has been condemned by human rights watchdogs and civil society organisations notably the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights and Youth Agenda Trust among others.

On Tuesday Zanu PF took its terror campaign a gear up by assaulting commuter omnibus drivers, conductors and rank marshals right at the charge office in full view of the police. The violent youths believed to be members of the dreaded Chipangano youth militia from Mbare descended on the Charge Office bus terminus and demanded fees from minibus drivers plying the Sunningdale-City route. It is believed the gang is attempting to control the terminus.

The gang assaulted drivers who resisted their demand for one dollar per trip. *The New Age Voices* is reliably informed that the money is eventually forwarded to senior ZANU PF provincial officials for use in party activities.

The militia reportedly attacked rank marshals, drivers,

conductors and anyone who resisted but Zanu PF spokesperson Rugare Gumbo disowned them saying Chipangano “does not belong to us”, although it is clear the militia is the backbone of Zanu PF Harare province violence team.

Only two weeks ago, members of Chipangano took their violence to Parliament again and this time attacked people who had come to witness the official opening of the 7th Parliament by President Robert Mugabe, an indication that the Zanu PF leader might be struggling to reign in his errant youths.

One Zanu PF legislator who requested anonymity for fear in of reprisals just summed it up saying, “I have never seen anything like this in my entire life. Who can dare engage in violence in the presence of the president?”

Also this month, Zanu PF youths descended on Highfields high density suburb and assaulted traders at the Mukambo market before they looted wares worth thousands of dollars in their bid to also take over the market stalls.

With the re-emergence of the Border Gezi Training camps lookalike known as the Youth Build Zimbabwe programme, it is a sure bet that the impending elections may take a violent route as was with the case with the March 2008 which

left without limbs while others are still missing up to today. Analysts say if the Zanu PF youths are allowed to continue with their violent activities, a free and fair election will continue to be a pipe dream for the millions of Zimbabweans who have been searching for a democratic solution to the numerous challenges that the country has been facing for 3 decades with the last decade having been the most daunting.



Minister of Youth of Youth Indigenisation and Empowerment Saviour Kasukuwere of Zanu PF. His ministry has been accused by many for resurrecting Border Gezi training camps where youths such as Chipangano of Mbare used to subject other youths to untold suffering and abuse.

Chipinge youths threaten massive protests ...as concerns over unemployment and unfair labour practices rise

By Platform for Youth Development

YOUNG people in Chipinge feel hard done by Green Fuel and its sister company Macdom Investments' failure to provide the much needed employment opportunities, despite the company's passionate promises to be the hub of employment in the district.

Despite expectations that the woes of young people and the general community will be solved, it has come to pass that youths in Chipinge remain disadvantaged and excluded from the company's catchment area. The desperate youths said they remain stuck in the corridors of poverty when they are supposed to be primary beneficiaries of the Ethanol project in terms of employment opportunities. Questions are being asked, as to whose interest the company is serving.

The youths have threatened massive demonstrations at the company offices to demand fulfilment of employment promises by the company. They complain that the company is employing people from other districts ahead of Chipinge. Nepotism and favouritism has reared its ugly head at the company as top managers are recruiting their relatives and friends into influential positions relegating a few lo-

cal to menial jobs.

Reports are rife that the few locals who have been employed in menial jobs are subjected to unfair labour practices. There is no job security as locals are hired and fired at the will of managers. PYD is reliably informed that in the month of August 2011 alone, 30 people were fired without compensation. This proceeded to the month of September where quite a number were also relieved of their duties without hearing. The matter is now before our lawyers and the National Employment Council.

When asked for a comment PYD Director, Claris Madhuku said his organization had recorded very heartrending and emotional reports of colonialist and unfair labour practices the company was using against its workers.

A case in point is a one eyed security guard at the company who was fired by a senior white Manager only referred to as Doink. Doink is alleged to have said "*ngaiende kumba kwayo aizooni nzimbe dzangu*" (go home, you won't be able to see my sugar cane).

Another villager Innocent Chikamhi was electrocuted while on duty and has not received professional medical attention and compensation despite the fact that he has

suffered up to 70% disability. Such reports of injuries at work not getting adequate attention from the management are high at the company.

Young people in the district are unanimous that action has to be taken against the Investor. They are bitter and convinced the problem has to be resolved without delay as this will set a bad precedent in the country. This unanimous need for action came after a spate of meetings organised by PYD to commemorate the International Youth Day. Meetings in Chibuwe, Rimbi, Muumbe, Zamuchiya and Chikore reinforced the same issue that locals should be the direct and first beneficiaries of any community project in the district.

PYD continues to represent Chipinge communities in development issues. Last week they highlighted the still pending horrible situation of livestock dying after drinking contaminated water from the Ethanol plant. The company constructed dams close to the community in Munepasi. The dams have become the latest threat to human life as they are constantly breaking and flooding the community drowning livestock and washing away huts and other properties.

Youth Agenda Trust on International day of peace

THE Youth Agenda Trust (YAT) joins the rest of the world in commemorating the International Day of Peace and Tolerance. The day which is held annually on the 21st of September was established in 1981 by resolution 36/37 of the United Nations General Assembly and is dedicated for peace and the absence of war the whole world over.

The commemorations are being held as we continue to witness disturbing developments in the nature of politics and youth activism in the country. This is evidenced by the recent havoc at Parliament where suspected ZANU PF youth militias assaulted members of parliament, policemen, a journalist and ordinary citizens during the official opening of the 4th session of 7th parliament. Prior to this sad incident suspected ZANU PF youth militias and war veterans had also disrupted the official hearing of the Human Rights Bill at the August House severely assaulting the Hwange Central legislator Honourable Brian Tshuma in the process.

YAT also has it on good authority that the notorious Border Gezi training programme has resurfaced albeit being disguised as the Youth Build Zimbabwe training programme. In this programme youth militias pretending to be undertaking developmental projects in rural areas are recruited, indoctrinated and given strict orders to undertake violent activities within the communities on suspected political opponents to the ZANU PF regime. Innocent and poor villagers are being forced to provide food supplements to these youths participating in such a shoddy project.

In light of the above sad developments which we believe is a litmus indicator of the broader politics in Zimbabwe and as we celebrate the International Day of Peace, YAT demands that:

1. Zanu PF immediately disband the youth militia training camps that are mushrooming across the country. The Zimbabwe Republic Police must arrest all those responsible for the spate of violence that has engulfed the country regardless of their political affiliations or connections.
2. A proper organ on national healing and reconciliation be set up and deal with all the atrocities committed in Zimbabwe for the realisation of lasting peace and unity.
3. The Inclusive government should commit itself to the protection of ordinary citizens from violent activities and create a conducive environment for the holding of peaceful, free, fair and democratic elections under a new constitution.

War Vets descends on village

BY FRANCIS RWODZI

FOLLOWING a successful all inclusive ball games tournament that brought together youth in Chegutu and was held at Bonzim grounds where Youth Agenda Trust took the opportunity to denounce violence and divisions among young people, War Veterans in the area have evicted all the families that were represented at the event.

Speaking to *The New Age Voices*, a dejected Member of Parliament for the area Honourable Takalani Matibe was at pains to explain how families in the area have been forced to leave their houses on the basis that they attended the function which was officiated by Matibe who is from the Movement for Democratic Change led by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai.

"People in Bonzim are living in fear because war veterans are evicting all the people who attended the ball games tournament simply because I was the guest of honour. I do not know why the villagers are being persecuted because the event was not partisan," Matibe said.

Matibe said since the day of the event, War Veterans have been terrorising villagers in the area and said that the situation went out of hand when Bonzim was liquidated. Bonzim has not been operating for years now after collapsing at the height of the economic meltdown but the workers were allowed by the company to continue living in the compound, the only home they had known for decades. They are being forced to leave now by rogue War Veterans.

Commenting on the behaviour of the War Vets, Civil Society activist Admire Zaya said this showed that war vets are partisan and do not tolerate divergent views. "This is a free country where young people must be able to enjoy their freedoms. There is freedom to choose, freedom of assembly and no one is above the law to deny people of these freedoms," Zaya said. "Anyway, how did they see these people? It means they were also present," he said.

War Vets in Zimbabwe have demonstrated that they are above the law because more often than not, they have defied government policy including court orders but they have always found support within the rank and file of Zanu PF.

MVUMA: George Makoni reports that in yet another dramatic scenario of partisanship and politicization of traditional leaders a 27 year old MDC-T activist, Josphat Kanonge who from Gambiza village in Chirumanzu South was slapped with a fine for attending the 12th anniversary of MDC-T by the headman of the area. The anniversary was hosted at Gwanzura Stadium early this month. He was ordered to pay in form of a goat, or else he risked being evicted from the village.

"I was ordered to pay a goat by the village head. I don't know if it is a crime to support a party of your choice," Josphat said.

His parents paid the fine under protest to ensure they live peacefully in the community. Chirumanzu South is one of ZANU P.F strongholds were many perceived MDC-T supporters and civic society activists were victimized in 2008.

**ARE YOU 18 AND ABOVE?
ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?**
Take the First 5 Steps to Democracy...

1. COLLECT YOUR IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS
2. VISIT YOUR NEAREST VOTER REGISTRATION OFFICE WITH YOUR I.D AND PROOF OF RESIDENCE
3. REGISTER TO VOTE AT ALL COSTS
4. COLLECT YOUR REGISTRATION SLIP AND KEEP IT SAFELY
5. PATIENTLY WAIT FOR THE NEXT ELECTION TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATE OF YOUR OWN CHOICE

YO VOTE CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE
CLAIM YO VOTE, CLAIM YO FUTURE

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FIRST TIME VOTERS



REGISTER • VOTE • TRANSFORM

**TAKE PART
IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL MAKING
PROCESS
LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD IN TIME**

The stages that have been implemented

- ✓ The Appointment of the Constitution Select Committee
- ✓ All stakeholders Conference
- ✓ Outreach consultations
- ✓ Data uploading
- ✓ Sitting of thematic committees

The stages that remain

- Drafting stage
- Second all stakeholders conference
- Draft constitution debate in Parliament
- Referendum

Contact us for more information on how to take part in the remaining processes