

Latest violence unfortunate: German Ambassador

THE German Ambassador to Zimbabwe Albrecht Conze has described the latest wave of violence that dominated the constitutional outreach process in some parts of Harare recently as unfortunate.

Officially opening the Zimbabwe Youth Network (ZIYON) Ukubambana Youth Summit reception that was organised to celebrate the International Day of Peace at the German Society, Ambassador Conze said that recent weeks have seen a spate of violence clouding some parts of Harare which did not auger well with the peace and tranquillity that has been obtaining in the country.

“In the past week we have seen some ugly scenes in some parts of this city, a situation which is very unfortunate considering the relative peace that has been prevailing. We hope that things are going to get back to normal,” Ambassador Conze said.

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition

Coordinator McDonald Lewanyika took a swipe at the current socio-political and economic environment, describing the stability that was brought about by the Government of National Unity (GNU) as meaningless because of its failure to transform the lives of people.

“People should realise that the stability that is there is jobless, the stability does not allow divergence of opinion,” said Lewanyika.

Lewanyika however said that Zimbabweans should acknowledge the current period of relative stability and peace saying that the challenges that people are facing now are much different from the challenges of 2008.

“Let us not be blind to the realities that are on the ground, there is a great difference between the situation now and the period surrounding the 2008 election.

“The problem that we have is that we have been subjected to a triple evil of

impunity, violence and fraud,” Lewanyika said.

He said that young people should turn the ugly legacy that was left behind by older political leaders into a positive legacy which should embrace peace initiatives that are led by organisations such as the African Union (AU).

“There is only one struggle but being fought from different fronts, lets lay down the gauntlet and finish the unfinished business of the liberation struggle. The aspirations, values and beliefs have not been met.

He said that the country needed an alternative political and social culture that allows for open, democratic and peaceful processes to take place.

“We need to change the way we think about democracy in the country,” said Lewanyika.

The latest spate of violence by Zanu PF thugs comes at a time when the

World was about to celebrate the International day of peace which passed unnoticed in Zimbabwe.

“Zimbabwe is home to thousands of youths directly and indirectly affected by politically motivated violence since independence both as instigators and as survivors. Owing to the high levels of unemployment and absence of social cohesion, political players have continuously used youths as cannon and fodder to further their political careers.

“Despite the commitments made by the three principals of the GPA, political violence remains an eye sore with the youth militia unleashing violence on innocent civilians under *Operation Chimumu* (Remain silent) which is broadly aimed at promoting ZANU PF's position on the proposed constitution and silencing dissenting voices.

“There is need for the inclusive government to deactivate the youth militia and other Para-military groups to allow for a conducive environment for the holding of free and fair elections, which are expected in 2011,” said Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition in a statement.

Shun violence: youths urged

YOUTHS countrywide have been urged to shun violence during election time but engage in sustainable dialogue, at the same time aiming for leadership positions instead of being used by politicians who do not have their interests at heart.

Speaking to youths from various political backgrounds who gathered at the parliamentary constituency centre in Kwekwe's Mbizo 4 Suburb, Officials from Student's Christian Movement of Zimbabwe (SCMZ), Youth Agenda Trust (YAT) and Achieve Your Goal Trust (AYGT) implored youths to take a leading role in condemning violence.

Fortune Nyamande of YAT rallied youths to expend their energy by working to develop their communities and challenging for top leadership positions in order for them to harness the potential in them and to ignore calls to engage in violence.

SCMZ's Douglas said that youths should spread the message of peace and unity. He said that the national healing

process should focus on the youths with the church playing a leading role.

Oscar Dhliwayo of AYGAT echoed the same sentiments of his counterparts by reiterating the need to say no to politically motivated violence which he said is counter-productive.

The programme is supported by the European Union.

Pellagia Chitaye (31) of Mbizo said that the reason why youths engage in violence was that the political leaders in the country were sowing seeds of disunity among youths.



Pellagia Chitaye of Mbizo Kwekwe

Another youth from Mbizo Kizito Mupunga said that high levels of unemployment were fuelling divisions among the youth because most of them are comfortable with crates of beer instead of going to work or engaging themselves in income generating projects.



Unemployment fueling divisions: Kizito Mupunga

“We need jobs and funding for our projects, the status quo should change the way youths are living their lives, they must show us the way,” Mupunga said.

Irvine Namate (28) also of Mbizo said that there were too many youths out

there who are idle, whether educated or not who should be given something to do.

“If one is not gifted intellectually he should be able to find something that he can do instead of spending time engaging in political activities. Some politicians contribute towards the demise of youth by buying them beer to perpetrate violence,” he said.

Namate said that there should be equal opportunities for everyone whether you are Zanu PF or MDC because the ultimate goal is to develop Zimbabwe and to make it a better place to live.



Irvine Namate: Politicians contribute to violence



VOICE OF THE VOICELESS: Mbizo residents captured here reading copies of the New Age Voices, last week.



SWEET MELODIES: the Steelthrob Band led by Duemosteel (left) entertains youth at a sustainable dialogue and national healing event in Kwekwe.

GPA 2 years later: Zim a country in dire straits

ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2008, the three main political players in Zimbabwe, namely Zanu PF, MDC-T and MDC-M signed the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which became a precursor to the unity government that took off in February 2009.

September 15, 2010, marked the second anniversary of the GPA. Political, economic and social analysts have expressed varying opinions in their assessments of the achievements of the coalition government but there has been a general consensus among many that the arrangement has been a great betrayal.

On the economic front, the coalition government has managed to stabilize the economy which has seen inflation which peaked at 500 billion percent to go down to just under 7 percent.

In the social services sector, the Government of National Unity (GNU) has seen the return of civil servants to work, notably the return of nurses, doctors to hospitals and clinics which had become ghost centres while the return of teachers saw schools reopening after lengthy periods of dog fighting with the then Robert Mugabe led government.

Despite the return of civil servants to work, the government has failed to properly remunerate them, most of them averaging US\$150 which falls far below the poverty datum line. They have threatened to strike for the second time this year if the government continues to pay deaf ears to their calls.

Millions of youths are still jobless, with the unemployment rate hovering above 90 percent.

Although supermarket shelves have filled, basic foodstuffs still remain beyond the reach of many while most parents continue to struggle raising tuition fees for their children with tertiary fees around US\$800 but the majority of them earn less than US\$100.

On the political front, the GNU only ensured the suspension of fierce rivalry



Match made in hell: The GPA principals Tsvangirai (L), Mutambara (C) and Mugabe (R)

between the political arch rivals but the backstabbing has never ceased.

However, despite the marginal successes of the coalition government, it has been clear on the surface that there has been a lot of discord among the 3 principals to the agreement.

There has been a lot of heckling among the principals on what they have termed “outstanding issues” which has seen the SADC appointed mediator Jacob Zuma occasionally engaging them in a bid to find a lasting solution but to no avail.

Mugabe has refused to abide by the SADC communiqué that compels him to swear in 5 MDC-T Governors, and 1 from MDC-M, a clear indication that he is not prepared to relinquish power to the other partners.

He has also been adamant to swear in deputy agriculture minister designate Roy Bennet arguing that he is facing criminal charges ranging from banditry to terrorism.

Realising that he was losing the war to incarcerate Bennet, Zanu PF aligned Attorney General Johannes Tomana cooked up fresh charges accusing him holding huge stocks of grain.

Mugabe has also refused to dismiss Tomana and Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono from their positions saying that they were properly appointed to their positions while Tsvangirai is adamant that their appointment was done against the spirit of the GNU.

Mugabe on the other hand says he is not prepared to address MDC-T concerns unless sanctions are removed.

Amanda Atwood on her take on Governance told Kubatana.net that the trauma faced by Zimbabweans is beyond political violence.

“I think the trauma Zimbabweans have experienced goes beyond just political violence. It's about our economy, our governance, and the myriad ways in which

people have been disempowered over the past 10 years.

“We're so traumatised that we are grateful that “some things are happening,” that there is fuel at the service station and bread in the shops. We view that as progress – rather than viewing that as normal, and demanding more from our government,” Atwood said.

Alex Magaisa who is based at Kent Law School in UK said that it was difficult to measure the successes of the agreement but said there has been some movement.

“I am not ashamed to admit that when the GPA was signed, I was among those who thought the options were limited and that it was the lesser of many evils available at the time. I don't know if it has made a difference but I do know that there is a difference in the physical appearance and atmosphere among the people I met between the end of 2007 and the start of 2010.

“Virtually every person that I have met at home has described 2008 as the year of the greatest suffering. They way they describe it, you're almost moved to regret that you weren't there to experience that moment of history. There are many challenges still, no doubt, but the GPA provided a soothing effect, albeit temporary, to a severely wounded nation,” Magaisa said.

Financial Gazette Assistant Editor Njabulo Ncube said that while the inclusive government has scored some marginal successes, it has largely under-performed on the premise of the agreement upon which it was set.

“The GNU has succeeded in arresting runaway inflation and ruinous economic depletion that had become characteristic of the country's economy.

“Economic stabilisation was achieved through the adoption of a multi-currency regime, the removal of price distortions and the introduction of cash budgeting among other austerity measures,” said Ncube.

COPAC crumbles at final hurdle

THE Constitutional and Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) has crumbled like a deck of cards after failing to finish off its chaotic outreach programme that is way behind schedule.

Although the violence that has characterized the outreach process countrywide was played down by the three co-chairpersons of the committee namely Douglas Mwonozora of MDC-T, Paul Mangwana of Zanu PF and Edward Mukhosi of MDC-M, the penultimate canvassing in Harare all but exposed the glaring realities on the ground.

The outreach process in Harare saw an MDC-T youth dying from wounds sustained from outreach violence that suffocated the process while scores of others were injured after Zanu PF unleashed a reign of terror that sent COPAC officials scurrying for cover.

The aftermath of the violent

skirmishes saw Mangwana and Mwonozora trading accusations and counteraccusations for the roles their parties played in stalling the process.

Mangwana accused Mwonozora of not being truthful by declaring that the constitutional outreach meetings that took place in the capital were held in an atmosphere of violence, intimidation and racism and that they had been annulled.

“It is not true that Copac has said those meetings are null and void,” said Mangwana. “Mwonozora is only politicking because out of the 74 meetings we have held in Harare, 69 were successfully done under such peaceful conditions that someone passing by would have thought they were church meetings,” Mangwana was quoted as saying. Mwonozora rubbished Mangwana's claims saying that it was not noble someone who

is supposed to be viewed with honour like Mangwana to deny the violence that took place.

“Mangwana himself was a victim of that violence on two occasions and the preliminary reports that we have compiled indicate that 90% of the meetings held were under circumstances of violence and intimidation as well as racism,” Mwonozora said.

Meanwhile, NCA Chairperson and constitutional law expert Dr Lovemore Madhuku last week called for the disbanding of COPAC to pave way for an independent commission to lead a fresh and genuine constitution making process.

“COPAC must be disbanded because it is not going anywhere. We need a fresh process that is not led by politicians, but by an independent commission,” he said.

He also appealed to the country's political leaders to accept that the COPAC process was a mistake.

“From day one, it became evident that this

process was not people driven, our appeal now to our leaders is that they should re-engage the broader society, churches, students, and the workers,” said Madhuku.

Chrispen Mandizvidza (32) a Mbare resident died on Friday after he was assaulted by Zanu PF youth during last weekend's violent outreach meetings. He is one of the 11 Mbare residents who fell victim to Zanu PF's violent disposition.



The COPAC constitution outreach collapsed last week after Zanu PF unleashed a reign of terror

Zims fear Zanu PF's latest violence will escalate

CIVIC society organizations and ordinary Zimbabweans have castigated the former ruling Zanu PF party for violently stalling the constitution reform process that saw the suspension of thirteen outreach meetings in Harare.

Last week, MDC-T President who is also the country's Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai warned that his party would boycott elections if elections slated for next year were “a declaration of war”, referring to violence unleashed by Zanu PF hooligans in Harare's high density suburbs during the Constitutional and Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) outreach meetings.

Tsvangirai Wednesday told journalists at a press briefing that the violence-ridden constitution outreach programme was a “messy” process.

Under a two-year-old coalition agreement between President Robert Mugabe and opposition rivals Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara, a new constitution must be drawn up before fresh elections can be held.

Five members from Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party were injured while three more were arrested as President Robert Mugabe's supporters ran amok disrupting outreach meetings in Harare.

MDC-T information and publicity secretary for Harare province, Willis Madzimure, said a Zanu (PF) “rented crowd” was distributed to specific centres to disrupt meetings.

Suspected soldiers in Mbare shot three civilians attending an outreach

meeting while hired Zanu PF youths barred whites from attending another outreach meeting in Greystone Park.

Those who were injured in the skirmishes were admitted at a private clinic in Harare.

According to MDC-T COPAC chair Douglas Mwonozora the police did not provided adequate security for Harare outreach meetings.

“In Dzivaresekwa soldiers sang Zanu PF songs and beat up people. The outreach team had to run for their lives after they had been threatened by a team of hired Zanu PF youths. The same had also happened in Greyston Park where whites were barred from attending the outreach team and as a result the meeting was aborted,” said Mwonozora.

Youth Agenda Trust (YAT) programmes officer Lawrence Mashungu said that it was not surprising that Zanu Pf behaved in the manner it did because they have never been interested in having a new constitution.

“There is nothing surprising about Zanu's actions because it has been the way it has been behaving whenever there is talk of reforms. A new constitution would mean usurping some of Robert Mugabe's powers, a situation they are not comfortable with. Zanu PF has never been interested in reforms.

“Despite Mugabe assenting to the Zimbabwe Media Commission Bill, there have been no meaningful reforms in that regard because the state media is still under the armpit of Zanu,” Mashungu said.

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition also had no kind words for the chaotic scenes that disrupted the meetings.

“The disturbances of the outreach process and the unprofessional and partisan conduct of the police proved false the



Home Affairs Co Minister Theresa Makone

unqualified and unjustified statement by co- Minister of Home Affairs, Ms. Theresa Makone that the Zimbabwean police are now professional and non-partisan.

“It is also ironic that while ZANU PF supporters were disrupting a national process, the police chose to arrest Minister Makone's aide, Edmore Manyofa in Hatcliffe rather than the ZANU PF supporters who were bused from other areas to cause commotion and disturbances,” said Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition.

Zimbabweans countrywide have expressed dismay at Zanu PF's behaviour saying that it was a clear indication that the revolutionary party has not reformed.

Many fear a massive backlash from the fallen party which is hoping to recover from the March 2008 defeat at the hands of Tsvangirai's party and last week's actions by

belief that they are likely to unleash another orgy of violence that will again plunge the country into incessant periods of turmoil and economic upheaval.

Youths who spoke to The New Age Voices said that Zanu PF want to use the outreach process and the referendum as a dress rehearsal to next year's plebiscite and would want to use it to gauge the powers of its arch rival, the MDC-T.

Stanley Kamwendo of Glen Norah said that next year's election is going to be bloodier than the 2008 runoff election because Zanu PF has regained confidence.

“Now that we have discovered diamonds in Chiadzwa, it has renewed Zanu PF's quest to stay in power because they want to continue looting the country's resources, they will not let go this time,” he said.

Students shaken by university murders

THE students' community was plunged into mourning last week when news filtered that two students were ruthlessly murdered by overzealous security guards when they wanted to enter the university premises for the institution's graduation ceremony.

The gruesome act by a group of the university's security guards left sixteen other students seriously injured when they tried to bar a significant number of students from graduating because of their failure to pay tuition fees.

The heinous murders have been described by many as satanic and have been compared to the prominent student Batanai Hadzizi murder case where the security details with the help reinforcements of unknown assailants descended upon the unarmed students beating anyone within reach and it is from injuries of this brutality that the two students were killed and injured sixteen.

Brian Chirume and another as yet unnamed student lost their lives because they tried attending a graduation ceremony without having paid their tuition fees.

Ironically, the barbaric act came barely two weeks after the minister of Higher and Tertiary Education Stan Mudenge announced that no student shall be barred from sitting for examinations, harassed or victimised for failing to pay fees.

A faction of the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) led by Tafadzwa Mugwadi fired a broadside at the killings and demanded that the culprits be brought to book.

“The 17th of September shall and is surely a sad day for the students of Zimbabwe which depicts government deceit and cruelty. However it must be kept in mind that this is not the first time Bindura University has witnessed such barbaric conduct by the security details.

“In 2006 police descended with the same vigour after an explosion at the faculty of commerce department and a nerve-racking group of AK47 wielding riot police took siege of the university campus, said Kudakwashe Chakabva the spokesperson.

Chakabva challenged President Robert Mugabe to urgently address the universities tuition regime which he said was too prohibitive for students.

“ZINASU further calls upon, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, in his capacity as the Chancellor of state universities, and Stanslius Mudenge, the minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, to recant this fees regime, as it is clearly unsustainable, and a superfluous assault on the right to education.

“This is an attempt to decimate the students union, our struggle is on trial, but from these trials we must emerge stronger and even more resolute. Go well comrades, the road is mined but we shall continue matching ahead drawing strength for you never dead spirits and aspirations, Chakabva said.

Zanu PF MP threatens villagers over outreach motion ...As police attempts to scuttle civic education

MWENEZI East Zanu PF Member of Parliament Kudakwashe Bhasikiti threatened villagers in a Zaka Ward 24 Constitutional and Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) outreach meeting with violence after they moved a motion to ban aged politicians from contesting in elections.

The meeting was held at Mushungwa primary school and was well attended.

A day before the outreach meeting at the same venue, Zanu PF and War Veterans held a pre-outreach meeting that was poorly attended which was meant to rally villagers to support the Zanu PF stance in the constitution.

However, the meeting was held contrary to COPAC regulations prohibiting political gatherings 24 hours before outreach meetings.

The meeting was chaired by retired Army Colonel Livingstone Chineka who is also the shortlived MP for Zaka East for about 3 months before the then Robert Mugabe led administration was dissolved to pave way for the Inclusive government.

Sources who spoke to *The New Age Voices* said that Chineka organised

night vigils and door to door campaigns that were meant to align people with the Zanu PF position but villagers in the area defied the intimidation and thronged the venue in droves.

After chairing the outreach meeting for 2 hours, Bikita West MP Heya Shoko rotated the chair to Bhasikiti who immediately set new ground rules which were rejected by the people.

The villagers then moved a motion for the new constitution not to allow those above 70 years to run for presidency, a contribution that infuriated Bhasikiti who immediately confronted the villagers and threatened them with violence.

“Imimi marimba kuti vadhara varambe vari pahutongi, kana marambidza madhara kuti aroore mhandara ivo vachizvinzwa muchasara muchivhunzwa uye muchazviona (You have refused to let the older generation remain in power, if you have refused to let the older generation to marry virgins when they feel they can handle them then you shall be answerable and you will see the consequences),” Bhasikiti said. People immediately left the venue after Bhasikiti's remarks.



EXPOSED: Bikita West Zanu PF MP Kudakwashe Bhasikiti

Meanwhile, The Zimbabwe Republic Police one Inspector Badza who was the

stationed at St Mary's police station tried to block Youth Agenda Trust (YAT) from holding a constitution awareness rally at Huruyadzo shopping centre in Chitungwiza despite the officials having secured a clearance from the provincial office.

Two police officers, one constable Chikuhuhu and one who could not be identified tried to force the abandonment of the rally until they dragged two YAT officials to the police station where they were met by

officer in charge. Badza quizzed the officials on why they had not informed them of the rallies they had lined up of which he was told that they had clearance from the provincial office. However, Badza eventually complied but refused to release police officers saying that they would have to be paid. The rallies went ahead with two others being held at Zengeza 2 shops and Chigovanyika shopping centre.

Zimbabwe sitting on a time bomb

TONS of ink has been expended about the cliff hanger which the 2011 elections being talked about in the media and political circles constitute in terms of its potential to pitch the two main political arch rivals namely Zanu PF and the MDC-T in a decisive election that will eliminate the failed Government of National Unity (GNU).

Despite the talk of next year's election, very little has been said about the social time bomb which ticks away as the army of unemployed and unemployable youths swell, as poverty and squalor deepens, as preventable diseases spread, and as violent crime continues unabated.

Social analysts say that it is a matter for regret that the nation's urgent social crisis has featured very little if at all in the muscle flexing and preparation of the politicians for the imminent elections.

Beyond platitudes and tired slogans, there is little or no appreciation of the emergency we live in, an emergency

produced by the cumulative failure of the political class to make an appreciable dent on the simmering array of political and social problems overtime.

Unemployment rate in the country has now peaked at over 90 percent, which implies that there are no employment opportunities at all in Zimbabwe which has seen many youths resorting to unorthodox means for survival.

Zimbabwean politicians especially from the Zanu PF side have mastered the art of taking advantage of the vulnerable jobless youths during election time by promising them the moon and buying them beer to engage in political violence.

Ever since the emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai in 1999 and the period between 2000 and 2008, a lot of blood has

been shed which has seen thousands of MDC supporters mainly falling victim from a Zanu PF that has never felt so unsecure before.

The period saw the murdering of MDC activists such as Talent Mabika, Tichaona Chiminya, and Tonderai Ndira among others by youth militia from the former ruling Zanu PF party.

If the 2011 election goes ahead, it remains to be seen how the army of unemployed youths are going to react given that this time they will be dealing with the devils that they know.

The International Trade Union Confederation has described the high and rising levels of youth unemployment globally as a “social time-bomb”, which risks damaging the social, economic and political fabric of countries around the world.

While youth unemployment has

been steadily increasing for more than a decade, an International Labour Organisation (ILO) report shows that the economic crisis caused an explosive increase in the jobless rate.

The report analyses the situation in industrialised and emerging economies, which have the highest overall levels ever recorded, as well as the developing world, where increasing youth unemployment is compounded by some 152 million young “working poor” caught in extreme poverty.

Youths who were interviewed by *The New Age Voices* in Kwekwe, Chitungwiza and Epworth said that they were worried about the economic situation in the country which they say has not been able to create jobs for them and neither has it allowed them to access capital to start projects.

The youths concluded that urgent action must be taken if the government intends to avert a social catastrophe that may easily degenerate into chaos



HUNDREDS of youth converged at Chigovanyika Shopping Centre where they expressed their willingness to contribute to constitution making.



The crowd listens to Youth Agenda Trust crew as they give out prizes to youth Who were able to answer constitution related questions.