

The New Age Voices

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Amplifying youth voices

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Lessons from Zambia: Is Tsvangirai Zim's own Sata? 'Youths hold the key to Mugabe successor'

By Francis Rwodzi/Reuters

FOLLOWING an election that many have said is certain to change the political landscape of the region, young people in Zimbabwe have urged the leadership in Zanu PF to emulate the conduct of former president Rupiah Banda and his party, before, during and after the Zambian general elections which saw perennial campaigner Michael Sata finally being sworn in after decades of frustration.

The Zambian elections which were monitored by local and international observers have been described as credible and were conducted under the SADC guidelines on free and fair elections and can easily be used as a benchmark in countries such as Zimbabwe.

Comparisons have been drawn between Zimbabwe and Zambia with some saying Morgan Tsvangirai may emulate Sata in the forthcoming national elections.

Rupiah Banda belongs to a party, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) that had been ruling Zambia for the past 20 years but recently lost to Sata in an election that has won the hearts of many admirers within the region especially Zimbabwe where Civil servants like Brigadier General Douglas Nyikayaramba have sworn not to recognise any other winner in the forthcoming elections unless it's Zanu PF leader Robert Mugabe.

Ed Cropley notes that veteran Zambian opposition leader Michael Sata built his election upset on an army of young support fired up by promises of no corruption and lots of jobs, a winning formula that may carry lessons for politics across sub-Saharan Africa.

"At the ripe old age of 74, the silver-tongued former trade unionist has been mobbed by young supporters whenever he hits the streets of the former British colony's bustling capital. On a visit to a polling station on September 20, the crowd burst into spontaneous chants of "We want change, we want change," Cropley says.

Sebastien Spio-Gabrah of DaMina Advisors, a frontier Africa consultancy says Sata's victory was won on the backs of disillusioned 'swing voters' and strong support from the one million new youth voter bloc".

"Banda's thwarted re-election may send signals to other beleaguered incumbents in Liberia, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya and elsewhere facing tough upcoming re-election battles to focus on the youth vote," Sebastien said.

Successful mass uprisings in North Africa, driven largely by young men and women armed with little more than mobile phones,

have already set alarm bells ringing south of the Sahara, where many entrenched leaders base their credentials on winning independence rather than building stronger societies, Cropley also noted.

Chris Melville of political risk group Menas said Sata's victory was anchored on the youth vote. "Capturing the youth vote has been an increasingly important electoral strategy for governments since the return to multi-party democracy across the continent in the 1990s," he said.

"However, the approach most have taken is that reaching out to the youth is really something you only do during election campaigns," said Cropley.

Speaking to *The New Age Voices*, journalist Valentine Maponga said that the Zambian government led by Rupiah Banda showed that it is possible for sitting heads of states to gracefully accept defeat in elections instead of resorting to violence and many other such actions to avoid exiting office.

"The peaceful election and subsequent transfer of power in Zambia is a lesson to Zimbabwe in many aspects. The first lesson we get is that it is possible to respect the will of the people and to effect a smooth transfer of power in Africa.

"State institutions, including the security sector, quickly respected the people's will and this was quite commendable considering our situation here in Zimbabwe. Service chiefs are not for political parties and should respect the leadership that is elected by popular vote. No one has the right or power to veto what the people want, said Maponga.

Analyst Blessing Vava said that the Zambian example's greatest lessons was that politicians must respect the will of the people and that the electoral process must be transparent and be able to retain the confidence of the masses.

"The first lesson is that leaders are not indispensable. Once people are tired of you they boot you out. We commend Banda for accepting defeat, and it's a call to all African leaders that they should respect the will of the people. Thirdly, we need to appreciate the role of proper and non-partisan institutions in electoral processes as witnessed in Zambia.

"Sata's victory exhibits that perseverance pays in politics. He has been an opposition leader for 20 years and becoming a president does not need one to be educated. He is a man who came from grass to grace, starting as a sweeper at London's Victoria Train Station and now he is a Head of State," said Vava.

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Director Macdonald Lewanyika noted, "The Zambian elections outcome was a victory for the people's will and shows that real power resides on the streets where the people live. The resolve shown by the people of Zambia in enhancing their democracy through change of government is worthy of salute, and in spite of the skills that Sata and the PF party possessed, the Zambian people are the real victors of this election.

"The celebrations were far from being from members of the Patriotic Front only, which had won the presidency, making Michael Chilufiya Sata the fifth president of post-independent Zambia, but for all Zambians, judging by the multitudes of people who stormed into the streets in their bed clothes to celebrate.

The celebrations were those of a nation, saluting itself for maturing its democracy and enhancing the culture of change. The celebrations were of a nation staying true to the founding principles of democratic governance, where the authority and right to govern is determined by the collective will of the people as expressed through elections. As Zimbabweans, we can only look to the north with envy and guilt," Lewanyika said.

MDC Youth Assembly Secretary General, Promise Mkwanzizi said: "In Zimbabwe, there is an emerging broad consensus that the youth are the potential game changers in the struggle for the accomplishment of the elusive democratic revolution. These new developments are in part a result of an accelerated economic recession which has destroyed the hope of young people from the US, China, Europe, Asia, Africa you name it.

"There are less and less opportunities for young people to prosper, global unemployment has reached fever pitch and so has the anger in young people. Thus the assumption of critical leadership by the youth has both negative and positive implications. The ball is in the court of the authorities to ensure that they channel youth energy towards positive use, he said.

In his tearful and dignified concession speech, Banda acknowledged the shift in demographics that is occurring across the continent. "My generation, the generation of the independence struggle, must now give way to new ideas, ideas for the 21st century," he said.

He also set an important precedent on a continent where peaceful transfers of power are all too rare.

"Thou shall not kill": Murdered youth hit back

By Staff Reporter

AS chickens continue coming home to roost in the murder case of Moses Chokuda, observers say that this should serve as a lesson to all youths across the country that being used to serve cheap political goals is as good as digging one's grave, because the long arm of the law will eventually catch up with you, no matter who sent you!

That some youths killed other young people during and after the horror June 2008 plebiscite is not a secret. In most politically volatile parts of the country especially strongholds of the Zanu PF party led by President Robert Mugabe, stories of youths who are now roaming the streets as vagrants are often told.

During election times, aspiring parliamentarians usually ride on the back of vulnerable youths whom they buy toxic substances such as the 'popular Zed spirit' so that they can act outside their common senses and do such things as killing others.

Moses Chokuda was slain in cold blood by Zanu PF youths among them the Midlands Governor Jason Machaya's son Farai (29) and his accomplices, Abel Maposa (52) Edmore Gana (29) and his younger brother Bothwell (26) and two other accomplices (both aged 25) who were sentenced to 18 years apiece in prison last week, it has proved that the legal system will not suffice at least for now.

In our African culture, If one murders another, it follows that his family is compelled to pay restitution to the aggrieved family so as to appease the avenging spirits (Ngozi), failure to do so always has telling consequences.

Tawengwa Chokuda, father to Moses says his son

was killed like an animal and believes his spirit is now fighting back. "The way he was killed was ruthless. He was beaten to death, tied with ropes and dragged like an animal. I think he is now fighting his own war," he said.

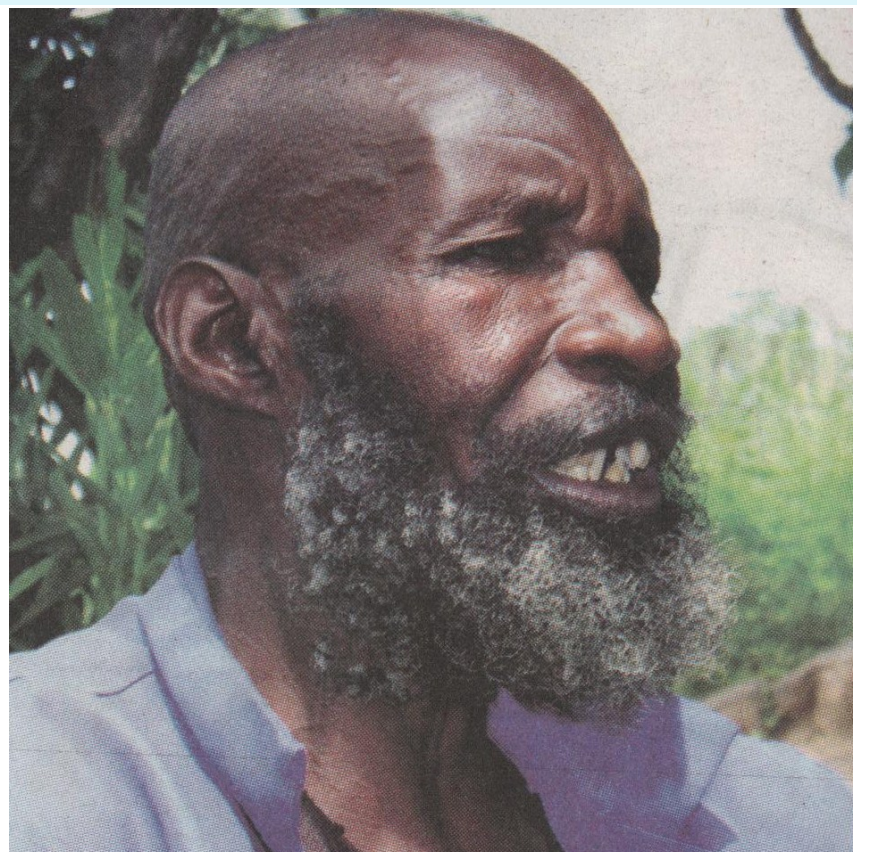
Close sources in Gokwe said the police had tried to bury Moses by force after his father had refused to participate in the process but they failed to move the coffin out of the mortuary.

"The coffin did not move out when about 10 police officers tried to lift it out of the mortuary to bury him against my will and without my consent. My son is seen alive by those who are linked to his death. I hear he (the dead man) is herding cattle belonging to one of the suspects at a farm," Chokuda was quoted as saying by the press.

"Don't forget you cannot stop an avenging spirit by going to jail or through the courts. Even if you die, the rest of your family that remains behind will suffer from that avenging spirit," he said.

The Gokwe case is only one example out of numerous others that were a result of the dreadful June 2008 presidential run off, which shows how the largely unemployed youth of this country are being used by some politicians to commit heinous crimes.

Analysts say that if young people are to take a leaf from the recent conviction of Farai Machaya and his accomplices, they would immediately desist from engaging in violent activities. For all those who committed similar crimes, they should know that only the truth shall set us free.



NO!!: Tawengwa Chokuda, father to slain youth activist Moses says he wants compensation before he can bury his son.

ZYC threatens civil disobedience, passive resistance Castigates corrupt African leaders

By Staff Reporter

IN a sensational case of frustration and anger, the Zimbabwe Youth Council (ZYC) has threatened civil disobedience and passive resistance as a way of pressuring government to make meaningful actions towards the upliftment of the lives of young people in the country.

The council said that if the government failed to tackle issues affecting young people, it risks a revolt from young people which can actually turn out to be “a revolution”.

“Truthfully speaking, we are sitting on an active mountain, a volcano is going to erupt soon. If I was a policymaker, as each day passes by, I would fear for my life. I am here to tell you that the patience of the Zimbabwean youth has almost ended”, said ZYC board member Luckson Kandemiri on behalf of other board members in their submission to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on youth on the status of youth in Zimbabwe.

Kandemiri said that the country risked revolts such as those

witnessed in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Malawi and others if problems of poverty, inequality, discrimination, unemployment, underemployment and general ignorance continue.

“We have been left for dead by our leaders. The more compassion society owes us, the less we receive, and all doors are closed for us even if we have the right to let them open. Nothing significant has been done for the young person in general, 8 million youth receive US\$1 million to fund their projects but a few ministers receive US\$20 million for luxury rovers, how different is this spectacle?” asked Kandemiri.

He also bemoaned how young people are graduating at our universities but at the end fail to get employment.

“As board members here present, we have a responsibility and we have also failed to raise our voice and challenge the older generation that has grown complacent on developing their own young brothers. So from now on we take a stand to forward the needs of youth even if it means employing civil disobedience and passive resistance.

“As young people continue to tell us that we have failed to

champion their cause, so we also tell you that you have not done much for the young person. We have been given piece meals as young people, fancy words and popular phrases characterising us with nothing. Although this sounds like a threat, the main thrust is to try and find some common ground and help the young person to get involved into policy making as enshrined in the African Charter. The time for us to be quiet is past,” Kandemiri said.

Kandemiri also chronicled how African leaders failed to deliver to the people what they had fought for in the struggle for independence and castigated leaders such as President Nguema, under fire Muammar Ghaddafi and deposed Hosni Mubarak of being corrupt.

He said these leaders acquired extreme wealth and their administration became worse than them and the cumulative effect has taken its toll on the youths.

Meanwhile the ZYC has proposed that 50 percent of revenue collected from the alcohol levy be allocated to youths for the purposes of implementing policies and programmes for the empowerment of youths in order to achieve sustainable and equitable development.

MDC Youth Assembly President arrested

By Francis Rwodzi

SOLOMON Madzore who is the MDC Youth Assembly president was arrested on Tuesday afternoon and charged with murdering Inspector Petros Mutedza in Glen View over two months ago.

Madzore was arrested at lunchtime and was immediately taken to Harare Central Police Station for ‘questioning’ but was slapped with a murder charge after hours of detention.

MDC youth Assembly secretary general Promise Mkwana

anzi told *The New Age Voices* on Wednesday that the party will be writing to SADC facilitator Jacob Zuma, JOMIC, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Youth and to the principals in the Global Political Agreement (GPA) over the arrest and the ‘unwarranted harassment and intimidation of its leaders and members’.

“The arrest of Madzore comes in addition to thousands of our members and supporters that are either in detention, or being intimidated by Zanu PF terrorist outfits such as Chipangano that continue to walk scot free.

“The Youth Assembly wishes to state that Solomon Madzore is innocent, he has not committed any crime. Recently, the police arrested the MDC Youth Assembly deputy president Costa Machingauta for no valid reason. This is an obvious ploy to weaken the Youth Assembly ahead of the coming elections,” the Assembly said in a statement.

Mkwana in solidarity with their leader, called on all progressive young Zimbabweans to fill the courtroom when the trial commences.

Young Women’s response to the Suspension of Registration of YET Trust with the ZYC

Having met on 22 September 2011 as young women’s organizations under the banner of the YET Trust and deliberated on the suspension of YET Trust by the ZYC for yet unclear and obscure reasons cited by the ZYC Director in a letter dated 30 August 2011. We express our deep shock and dismay over this suspension, which we view as a clear assault on the progressive youth of this country, and in particular as a direct attack on young women’s participation in the development of the country.

As young women’s organizations under the banner of YET Trust, we are deeply concerned by the continued harassment of the Director of YET, which is clearly turning out to be a new and subtle form of gender-based victimization of the YET Director solely on the grounds that she is a woman.

We are also concerned that the unilateral actions of the ZYC director in suspending YET Trust registration are not only illegal in terms of provisions of the ZYC Act, but are a clear violation of the provisions of CEDAW and the SADC Protocol on Gender and an assault on the advancement and representation of young women in leadership positions. The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has ratified these and other statutory instruments that work for the advancement of women yet such misdirected efforts by the ZYC director clearly violate and negate government efforts to empower women and afford them equal opportunities with men, and are also retrogressive to government Policy on MDG 3.

Having studied the letter of suspension carefully and consulted other parties cited in the said letter, we stand in solidarity with a fellow sister, the YET Trust Director and assert the following:

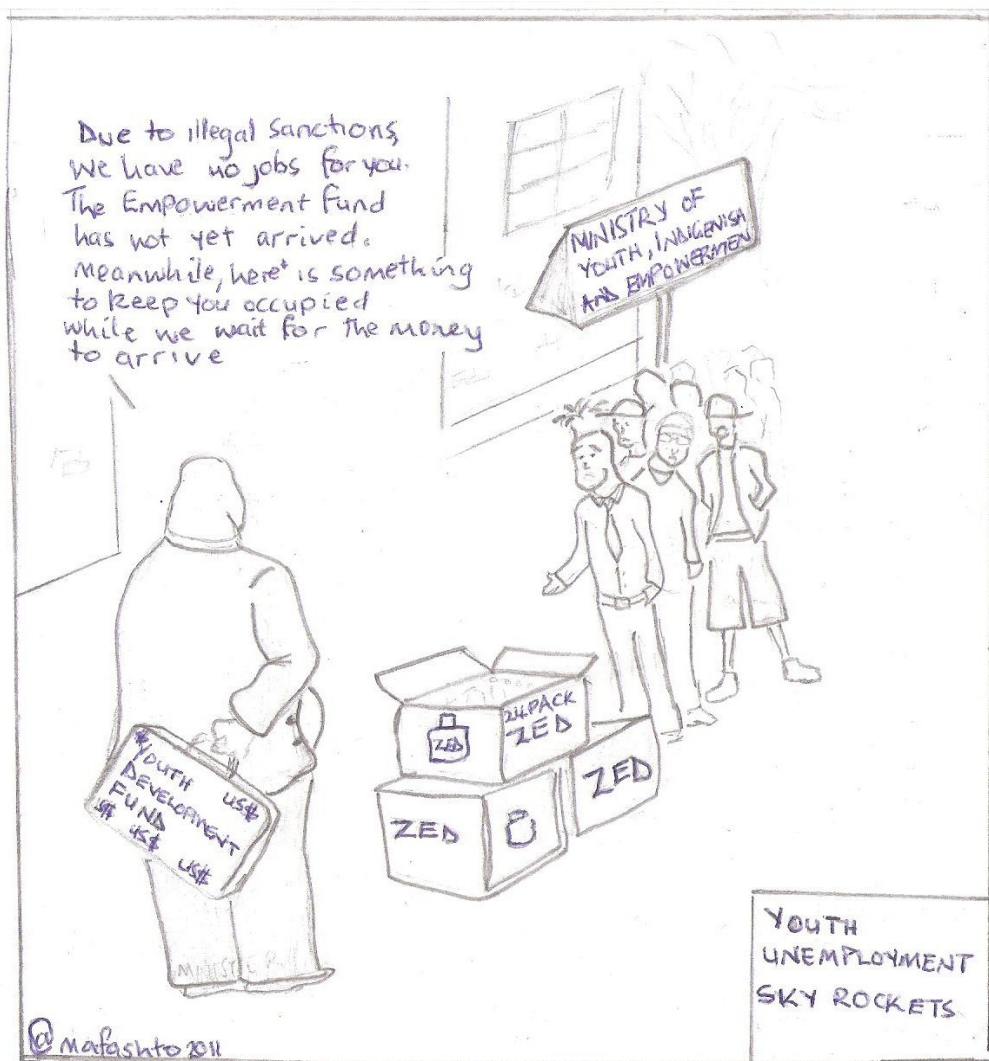
- The alleged suspension of registration is null and void as proper procedures were not followed by the ZYC director. The Registration and Compliance Committee of the ZYC Board did not meet to discuss this issue prior to the suspension and the suspension was clearly a unilateral move by the male chauvinistic ZYC director;
- YET Trust through its representative was never given an opportunity to lay out their side of the story on the alleged issue. No disciplinary hearing was ever convened as provided for in section 22 (2) of the ZYC Act

- The Ministry of Women’s Affairs Gender and Community Development, under the inclusive GoZ should investigate the actions of the ZYC which are in clear contravention of some of the policies it has adopted, especially in the advancement of young men and women. The ZYC is mandated through a statutory instrument (ZYC Act) to work towards providing a conducive environment for youth participation and empowerment, yet it is clearly working against some of these ideals through partisan execution of its duties and adopting retrogressive patriarchal tendencies that allow for the discrimination and harassment of women;

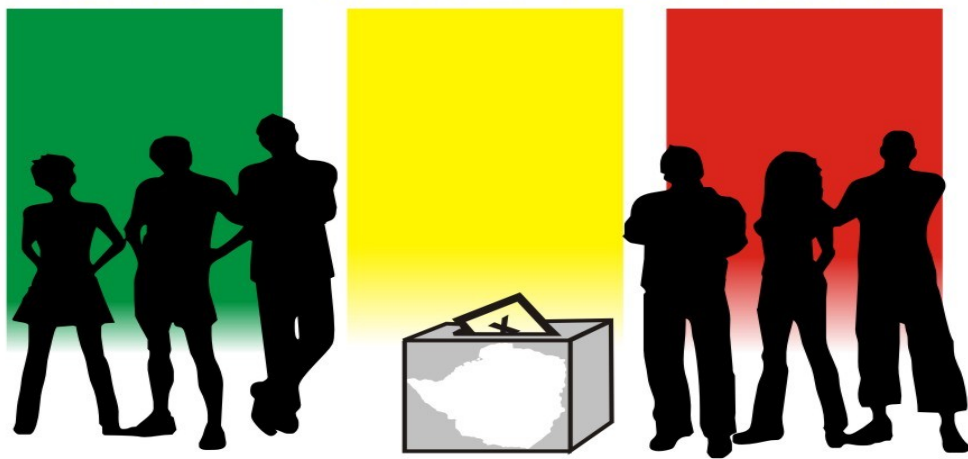
We condemn the continued harassment of the YET Trust Director which we are well aware is a plot to intimidate the YET Trust Director based on her gender and steadfast pursuit of young women and youth empowerment. We reiterate that we will take up this case with relevant ministries to safeguard the participation of young women and work towards confining such chauvinistic tendencies by the ZYC Director to the annals of history; we will mobilize women, young women and other straight thinking Zimbabweans to challenge such blatant acts of gender-based discrimination and harassment as such practices have no place in present-day Zimbabwe.

As young women, we stand in solidarity with a fellow sister, the YET Trust Director as she faces an unjustified onslaught from a male chauvinist in the form of the ZYC director. As youth organizations also registered with the ZYC, we will not hesitate to withdraw our membership with the ZYC as it is clearly reneging on its mandate and wantonly discriminating against women. Further, we will challenge this suspension of YET Trust on purely legal grounds. We will also mobilize our constituencies to challenge this new form of young women harassment and discrimination, which is a clear violation and negation of the GoZ policies towards women’s empowerment.

HARRASSMENT OF ONE WOMAN IS HARRASSMENT OF US ALL



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