



**Robert Mugabe:
New President,
Old Record**



**Zimbabwe State
Media No.1 on
Hate Speech –
Report**

Robert Mugabe: New President, Old Record

PRESIDENT-elect Robert Mugabe accepted his new mandate for a five-year term of office before Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku who swore him in at the National Sports Stadium on Thursday, August 22, 2013 at a ceremony characterized by pomp and fanfare.

The event mirrored his Prime Ministerial inauguration in 1980, or perhaps surpassed it given that the menu included fast food meals that were dished out to people as part of the festivities.

Zanu-PF Deputy Director of Information Psychology Maziwisa has been cited in the press stating that the celebrations had

been stage-managed to mirror Mugabe's inauguration 33 years ago and to many observers the president's speech yesterday had similarities to his 1980 inaugural speech.

"We have sought the political kingdom, we have found it.

"I stand before you as now a sworn President of Zimbabwe.

"My mandate comes from the just ended election which my party won resoundingly.

"As we move into the future, our work as a nation is cut out for us.

"Let me share with you my vision for the future, lay out for you the work that must be done," 89-year-old Mugabe said.



Swearing in of Robert G. Mugabe as the president of Zimbabwe, on August 22nd by Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku (red gown)



Robert Mugabe at a press conference in Salisbury following his landslide election victory, April 1980. Photo: AFP

In 1980 President Robert Mugabe and Zanu-Pf won the elections with a similarly definitive landslide as his latest ostensible victory of 61.09% in the July 31 election and in both instances Mugabe has sought to placate his political foes with conciliatory speeches.

In his 1980 “ploughshares” speech he told a country rising from the ashes of war “*I cannot avoid the love that binds me to you and you to me*” which resonated with his Thursday address at the National Sports Stadium made after a protracted fight with opposition parties, and, like in 1980, the reality of a negotiated new constitution.

“We worked together. Initially compelled by GPA protocols, we eventually found each other and proceeded to produce the current Constitution.

“This is our land, our country together and for as long as our nations subsist, so will elections and the opportunities they offer.

“Our common destiny bids us to work together, never at cross purposes.

“More important, that destiny bids us to work for the well-being and in defense of our people who must always come first,” Mugabe told his erstwhile GNU partners, former Prime Minister (PM) Morgan Tsvangirai, former Deputy PM Arthur Mutambara and Welshman Ncube, whom he said he owed “*nothing but praise and respect*”.

However, people remain wary of Mugabe’s conciliatory messages given that he made overtures of reconciliation with whites beyond the first five years of independence, yet simultaneously pursued his black enemies in the opposition nationalist movement the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) with whom he later signed a unity accord in 1987.

Two decades later he would break ranks with his policy of racial reconciliation as his supporters violently invaded land owned by whites in some cases killing them around 2000.

But, unlike in 1980 where reconciliation, peace and stability seemed to be Mugabe’s main challenge, there are further questions about whether there is any new thing he could offer with his seventh presidential term after over three decades in power.

Ibbo Mandaza, an academic, political analyst and former government technocrat who served in the first post-independence administration in the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Planning, but a critic of the July 31 election process said, “*I find the euphoria misplaced*” in reference to the big bash held for Mugabe’s inauguration.

Even the President-elect himself, distanced himself from the many challenges facing the nation which he identified such as de-industrialization in Bulawayo, saying “the industrial capital of Zimbabwe” has become “a sorry scrapyard” seemingly impervious to the role his governance has played in causing these problems.

Mugabe admitted that the country was plagued by “social service challenges” like erratic water and attendant disease outbreaks, ill-equipped health facilities, poor roads, infrastructural backwardness, youth unemployment, poor working conditions in the civil service, and ailing agriculture.

He summed up the manufacturing gap and trade imbalance thus: “We are fast turning into one huge warehouse, dumping ground for all manner of imports.”

Three founders of his Zanu-Pf party, who are now deceased, Eddison Zvobgo, Edgar Tekere and Enos Nkala (yet to be laid to rest) have publicly criticized Mugabe’s leadership in the past.

Tekere said the desire to establish a one party state by Mugabe around 1989 did not resonate with why Zanu-Pf was formed, “experience in Africa has shown that it brought the evils of nepotism, corruption and inefficiency”. Zvobgo said some of Mugabe’s laws were “the most serious assault on our constitutional liberties since independence” around 2002.

Whereas Nkala, who died on Wednesday August 21, 2013, said he did not want to be buried at the National Heroes’ Acre because it was a North Korean idea, the same North Korea that reportedly trained the soldiers who were involved in Gukurahundi.

The president’s speech on Thursday was not without a hint of irony, stating that “a strong sense of right must always temper might” whereas it is clear that part of his political survival today might have owed to a partisan security establishment which valued “might” more than “right”.

The security forces have been accused of overturning, with sheer violence, the people’s will in June 2008 and in 2013, the judiciary stands accused of being compromised, having denied

Mugabe’s opponents access to election material amid rigging allegations in August 2013.



Former South African President Thabo Mbeki arriving at the National Sports Stadium

Another tongue-in-cheek comment came when Mugabe thanked SADC for its mediation during the GPA, yet in his march to a controversial election victory he ignored the bloc’s resolution to request a delay on the elections and implement key reforms, then he insulted its facilitation team’s advisor before conducting elections which fell below SADC standards.

“In particular I thank SADC and AU for standing with us during our difficulties.

“I thank the sister Republic of South Africa, I thank its leadership which, in succession, played the difficult role of facilitating political dialogue and settlement in our country,” Mugabe said.

Zimbabwe State Media No.1 on Hate Speech – Report

ZIMBABWE's state-controlled media is the leading propagator of hate speech, a trend which was more pronounced one month before the July 31 harmonised elections, according to a research done by a media monitoring non-governmental organization.

The Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) released a report in which it proved through diligent monitoring of the country's print and broadcast news that the state media had churned the most hate speech in June 2013, showing an unmitigated trend that the MMPZ unearthed since its inception in 1999.

"Previous research by the Media Monitoring Project has established that hate language is endemic to the Zimbabwean mainstream media, particularly the state-controlled arm of these media," the non-governmental organisation said in the report titled, *Hate Speech and the Media* (June 2013).

Ironically, Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) chief executive officer Tafataona Mahoso was a notable perpetrator of hate speech during the month of June on the ZTV Current Affairs programme African Pride.

Hate speech is prohibited in Section 61 subsection 5 (a-d) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act and section 16 F of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Act.

The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act outlaws "criminal insult", which "seriously impairs the dignity of another person" while the Constitution of Zimbabwe restricts freedom of expression when it is likely to result in "advocacy of hatred or hate speech...or malicious or unwarranted breach of a person's right to privacy".



Outgoing Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party were the main hate speech targets, followed closely in the line of attack by South Africa's Lindiwe Zulu, international relations adviser to South African President Jacob Zuma and by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The research which revealed that the state controlled The Herald newspaper recorded 38% in "counts of messages of hatred and intolerance" along the national television station, ZTV, whereas former Tsholotsho legislator and Zanu-PF member, Prof. Jonathan Moyo was found to be the leading hate preacher through his opinion pieces.

The report revealed that hate speech in the private daily newspaper Daily News had gone down by 57% between May and June.

"Only The Herald was responsible for spreading hate messages in its editorial comments.

"Prime Minister Tsvangirai and his MDC-T party were the most targeted group in the government media.

"Other targets of the language of hate were non-governmental organisations and other political parties, all contained in the State-run media.

“Other victims were members of the international community critical of ZANU-PF.

“These included South African President’s international relations adviser, Lindiwe Zulu, who is also a member of Zuma’s facilitation team in the Zimbabwe political dialogue acting on behalf of SADC,” the report says.

The methods of hate speech included dehumanizing metaphors, insulting, false and divisive language, flawed argumentation and falsehoods, which were peddled through print media opinion pieces and the ZTV Current Affairs program African Pride.

The four methods of hate speech identified in the MMPZ report follow a categorization borrowed from a study into hate speech on American commercial radio by Noriega and Iribarren in 2009 plus a fifth category identified by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration of America in 1993 as speech advocating violence.

African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) electoral observers who were recently in the country noted in their preliminary reports that the state media was biased towards Zanu-PF during the July 31 elections, reinforcing the findings of the MMPZ report.

At a Bulawayo conference organized by Crisis in Zimbabwe (CiZC) in June 2013, 83 Zimbabwean non-governmental organisations endorsed the Feya Feya campaign one of whose objectives has been to demand “fair and equal chance to be covered in the public media” for all political parties and citizens.