

ZIMBABWE BRIEFING

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Zimbabwe headed towards another Global Political Agreement?

Zimbabwe is set to go for a General Election on the 31st of July 2013, two weeks from now, despite that the environment is still not conducive for the holding of free and fair (Feya Feya) elections. Possible scenarios continue to emerge as articulated by Professor Brian Raftopolous, Professor Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Dr Ibbo Mandaza at a Zimbabwe Elections Conference, which preceded the Public Launch of the Feya Feya Campaign in Johannesburg on Saturday, 13 July 2013.

Speaking at a conference organized by Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition in partnership with South African Council of Churches [SACC], Human Rights Institute of South Africa [HURISA], Congress of South African Trade Unions [COSATU] and the South African Forum for International Solidarity [SAFIS] on Zimbabwe Elections in Johannesburg on the 13th of July 2013, Professor Raftopolous, who is the current Chairperson of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition SA Board, suggested to an audience of over 100 participants drawn from South African based and SADC solidarity partners and representatives of Zimbabwe Diaspora Civil Society Organizations from the SADC region and political formations, that there are three possible scenarios to emanate from the forthcoming election:

A Zanu-PF victory coming through Zanu-PF riding on a restructured political economy, the threat of violence and rigging. Prof Raftopolous views this scenario as the most likely based on the Inclusive Government's failure to fully implement political and institutional reforms in accordance with the Global Political Agreement (GPA), hence ZANU PF is able to manipulate the electoral process to ensure its victory.

An MDC [led by Morgan Tsvangirai] outright victory, which however faces resistance from the military. Professor Raftopolous intimated that an election under



Professor Brian Raftopolous addressing the conference whilst Professor Gatsheni-Ndlovu and Dr Mandaza look on

the obtaining environment would block the transfer of power. Again, this sits as a likely scenario.

The third possible scenario is a possibility of another negotiated settlement as the country may have another hung parliament. This scenario emanates from a totally disputed election marred by intimidation and violence. This is likely to force intervention by SADC and the African Union (AU) and another negotiated settlement will be the solution.

Professor Raftopolous' views, on the most likely scenario that sees a Zanu-Pf victory through stealing the election, resonate with some political analysts' views predicting a stolen election through the use of subtle means such as the manipulation of the voter registration exercise, lack of media and security reforms, amongst other crucial reforms.

Speaking at the same platform, Dr Ibbo Mandaza, Director of Harare based policy think-tank-SAPES Trust, argued that contrary to submissions that ZANU-PF still had a social base, the party had instead lost this social base over the years. He pointed out that the survival of ZANU PF was purely on the basis of its reliance on an unevenly strong state. "ZANU PF's only social base is the state; powerful disproportionate state which controls the media and the security", said Mandaza. He argued that 60% of the newly registered

voters were likely to vote against ZANU-PF given the tendency for new voters to vote against the incumbent. He argued that Mugabe has won elections by rigging since 1996.

He however postulated that the stakes are so high that if elections are allowed to be rigged, the outcome will result in violence, chaos and the poll will be disputed hence a possible military coup, forcing regional and international intervention and the possibility of another GPA.

Speaking to accusations that the election in Zimbabwe has already been rigged, Dr. Mandaza argued that it is not enough to say that elections were rigged but for both local and international observers to more importantly expose the methods used by showing how and where elections were rigged. He argued that Mugabe had lost the past elections since 1996, but remained in power through perfecting the art of rigging, whose legacy Zimbabwe is still stuck with even today. Dr Mandaza further noted that if the art of rigging, which remains the sole survival kit for ZANU PF is exposed and in the absence of any method to ensure their victory, ZANU PF may call off the elections by unleashing violence and chaos to disrupt the process. Mandaza argued that this a high stakes election where ZANU PF actors individually or collectively could not let go. Thus a rigorous scrutiny of the electoral process is needed to get ZANU PF out of office.

On timing of the election, Dr Mandaza stressed that it is not too late to postpone the election

if the conditions are not allowing for a free and fair election. He argued that postponing the election would mean sticking to the letter and spirit of the SADC election roadmap and implementation of all outstanding reforms to enable the holding of an undisputed free and fair election.

Based on three themes, namely (1) history and memory, (2) stakes and issues and (3) imagination of the future, Professor Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Head of the Archie Mafeje Research Institute of the University of South Africa (UNISA), affirmed that given the prevailing conditions on the ground, Zimbabwe cannot expect conditions for free and fair elections in the remaining two weeks. "What we will instead have is something between the botched 2008 election and a free and fair election only in the future", said Prof Ndlovu-Gatsheni.

He reiterated the need to make this election an issue based election as he expressed worry on the manifestos of political parties and what they are bringing to the people's table. He urged Zimbabweans to seriously consider what these political parties are promising to avoid a "choice-less democracy" after elections. Professor Ndlovu also expressed worry on the fact that most people seem to believe that the holding of the forthcoming election will be the end of Zimbabwe's problems, yet, in his view, they should be a stepping stone towards democracy. He concluded by posing the following questions, "what is the future of Zimbabwe beyond the elections, what are political parties' election manifestos saying, do we want a situation where we will have another dominant party syndrome?"

Participant at the conference emphasized the importance and need for regional and international solidarity on Zimbabwe to be scaled up in preparation for a most likely inconclusive [in the fight for democratization] election the country is headed toward.

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A call for regional solidarity and consensus...as Zimbabwe heads for a disputed Election

Speaking at the Feya Feya Conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa on the 13th of July 2013, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC) Executive Director, Mr McDonald Lewanika called for regional solidarity and consensus on credible elections in Zimbabwe to overcome the legacy of June 2008 elections.

Lewanika called for continued solidarity from regional counterparts across Africa who attended the conference.

The CiZC Regional Information and Advocacy Coordinator, Mr Joy Mabenge also speaking at the same conference noted the key role that the region continues to play in Zimbabwe.

“The spirit of the Feya Feya Elections’ conference is solidarity.

“One of the objectives of the conference is to mobilise international support and solidarity for peaceful, free and fair elections in Zimbabwe,” Mabenge said.

CiZC Director however raised concerns over electoral irregularities, mystery and lack of reforms as Zimbabwe is left with only two weeks before the crucial harmonised election.

Zimbabwe election heading for dispute

Lewanika pointed out that the obtaining situation in Zimbabwe indicates that the election on the 31st of July 2013 is heading for dispute.

“Zimbabwe’s political terrain is constant flux of shifting sands! Elections are only one thing that are supposed to be uncertain,” noted Lewanika.

He made reference to scarcity of election resources, side-stepping of Parliament and Presidential decree on the election date on the 13th of June 2013, questionable judiciary (constitutional court) and a barrage of cases before the constitutional court challenging the decision to hold the elections on the 31st of July 2013.

“There has been no transparency in the drawing up and implementation of procedures that govern the conduct of election which has seen the use of presidential decree using Presidential



McDonald Lewanika-Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Director making his presentation

Powers (Temporary Measures) Act through Statutory Instruments (SI 85 and 86).

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“Zimbabwe is not heading calls from the region, laws are selectively aligned while pieces of legislation like POSA, AIPPA which curtail free political activities are still in place.

“There hasn’t been fair and equal coverage of contesting candidates and plural sources of information in the media. While political parties seem to be purveyors of journalists’ intimidation and harassment,” Lewanika said.

Overcoming the legacy of 2008

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the

age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of

hope, it was the winter of despair...”

Lewanika noted the June 2008 period making reference to William Shakespeare.

He pointed out that the June 2008 election triggered regional and international condemnation because it did not come anywhere near the regional standards and guideline governing credible elections.

Lewanika made reference to the democratic chain of the five I’s by Robert Dahl, as elaborated in a recent Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition publication “Countering Electoral Manipulation: Strengthening Zimbabwe’s Chain of Democratic Choice”, which include *Insulation, Information, Integrity, Irreversibility and Inclusion*.

“The five I’s form a metaphori-

cal chain, which like a real chain holds together only as long as each of its links remain whole and unbroken

“Any violation to any of the links does not lead to ‘acceptable’ or ‘credible polls’ but to unacceptable and disputed polls,” Lewanika said.

Regional Consensus and solidarity

In order to overcome the legacy of 2008 election and for Zimbabwe to hold credible, peaceful free and fair election Lewanika called for regional solidarity and consensus for credible polls in Zimbabwe.

He noted that the discernible hunger for progress and moving forward by ordinary citizens presented some opportunities.

“There is need for enhanced scrutiny and interest in Zimbabwe electoral process by local and international and international stakeholders because of the 2008 election.

“As such there is also need for regional solidarity partners and networks to amplify Zimbabwe issues and also support the campaign for Feya Feya elections in Zimbabwe.

“There is need to maintain pressure on regional governments not to accept a shame election and to continue demanding a credible process” Lewanika said.

CiZC director called upon the regional solidarity partners present at the conference to organise activities in support of International Day of Action and support for free and fair elections in Zimbabwe on the 27th of July 2013.

Lewanika concluded by noting that although there are indications towards troubled waters and a prolonged transition, the trend towards democratization is strong and may be hard to overturn depending on New Government and Institutions put in place.

“There is light at the end of the prolonged transition tunnel and Zimbabwe is on a transitional trajectory regardless who wins or loses the election” concluded Lewanika.

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Elections Must Transform Societies for the Better... Zimbabwe No Exception– COSATU

Giving a key note address on behalf of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) at the Zim-

babwe Election conference in Johannesburg, Cde Bongani Masuku, who is COSATU’s Secretary for International

Relations, emphasised the importance of ensuring strong regional solidarity on Zimbabwe as the election draws closer.

“It is important to encourage solidarity because the Zimbabwean issue is not only a Zimbabwean issue but a re-

sponsibility for all of us in Sothern Africa”, echoed Cde Masuku.

In his address, Mr. Masuku stressed the im-

portance of endurance as this is what has taken the struggle for democratization in Zimbabwe to where it today. “As friends of the struggle in Zimbabwe, your endurance is what has taken us to where we are today...and consistency at this hour is critical” said cde Masuku. However Bongani noted that the barometer and temperature might be different from someone who is in Zimbabwe.

Cde Masuku encouraged participants to embrace the notion that solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts is not rendered out of pity or favour, but as a responsibility which all concerned must whole heartedly embrace. He emphasised that there is no one country in Africa or beyond that will be able to solve its own challenges without embracing the fact that countries are now interdependent and thus people to people solidarity is crucial. Cde Masuku premised the Zimbabwean issue on for thematic areas that participants were challenged to reflect on:

Problematizing elections and explore the meaning of people governance

Cde Masuku challenged Zimbabweans to scrutinize how often they are responsible for their destiny through active participation in decisions that have far reaching ramifications in their lives. He emphasised the need for societal transformation to be based on solidly grounded changes to people’s lives and characterised the Zimbabwe Election conference in Johannesburg as an opportunity for Zimbabweans and partners in the Diaspora to define the terms and conditions of the 31st of July election. He also challenged Zimbabweans to examine the relationship between those who govern and those



Part of the participants to the Zimbabwe Election conference in Johannesburg, South Africa.

who are governed.

Why should elections matter and for who?

Cde Masuku encouraged participants to consider that as Zimbabwe gears for election on the 31st of July, “Elections should not be

to ensure that mobilization towards participation is anchored on emphasising that there is something in elections for ordinary citizens and therefore they matter.

Elections and the struggle for social, economic and po-



Cde Bongani Masuku [secretary for international relations of Cosatu] giving the keynote address at the Zimbabwe Election Conference in Johannesburg

about appointing people to do things on our behalf, but a value adding process to society and people’s lives”. He encouraged participants

litical transformation of society

Participants were reminded that as much as they could be tired of getting involved

in elections, they should know elections are a sight of struggle, and therefore people must never underestimate the power of elections to change society. The challenge remains with civics to combine elections as a sight of struggle and the attendant transformation of society. The relationship between those that govern and those that are governed should change in Africa, noted Mr Masuku.

Elections and road to a new democratic Zimbabwe

Discussing Zimbabwe today without looking at history is an anomaly, said Masuku. He noted that discussions on Zimbabwe today were rooted in the liberation struggle and as much as that struggle remained alive, the road to a new, democratic Zimbabwe could also be likened to the liberation struggle [just that methods of execution are different...(our emphasis)]. Cde Masuku ended by challenging Civil Society and interested stakeholder to begin to ask themselves about the form, nature and structure of the new democratic model for Zimbabwe, beyond elections.

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Johannesburg Catches The Feyya Feyya Fever

Residents of Berea and surrounding neighbourhoods finally caught up with the Feyya Feyya fever when Feyya Feyya hosted a public concert in Berea Park, Johannesburg as part of getting the campaign to the people. The concert which featured famous Zimbabwean artists kept the crowd entertained on the afternoon of July 13 after the formal Conference held the same morning.

The line-up included South

African based singer-song writer Enock Guni a.k.a Nox, well known for the song “Ndinonyara”. Nox, who kicked off the show, entertained the crowd with a mix of some of his chat topping songs, to which the crowd sang along, as well as a few of his latest releases. He also took time to educate the crowd on the concept of Feyya Feyya and give away prizes.

During the show, the South

African based Civil Society Organizations provided scores of people who thronged the public launch of the Feyya Feyya campaign with an opportunity to check if they are on the voters roll through the only available online facility myzimvote.com.

Over 150 people had the opportunity to check for their names although some were worried that financial con-

straints may deny them the opportunity to travel back home to vote at the coming general election.

Next on stage was Gweru born Itai Madzikure known to his fans as Madiz, who with the help of his dancers kept the ecstatic crowd mesmerised with their rumba moves. Madiz and his dancers had the crowd cheering and asking for more. The final act was from one of the biggest urban grooves art-



Madiz entertains Zimbabweans in South Africa at the Feya Feya Launch in Berea, South Africa



Mcdonald Lewanika, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Director speaks to Zimbabweans in Johannesburg at a Feya Feya Launch in Berea.



Zimbabweans at the Feya Feya Launch in Berea check their names on the voters roll through the myzimvote.com platform



Nox as he performs at the Berea, Johannesburg Feya Feya concert

ists coming out of Zimbabwe, Exquisite AKA ExQ, of the 'Musalala' and 'Mazirudo' fame. The crowd sang along with the singer as he went through his song line-up. As part of their act the artists encouraged voters to vote in peace and authorities embrace the Feya Feya approach to the contact of elections.

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