

ZIMBABWE BRIEFING

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1000 march against rape

More than 1,000 people under the Katswe Sisterhood banner, on Friday 25 November 2011 staged a march under the theme 'Code red against rape' in commemoration of the 16 days of activism against gender based violence. The march started at Town House and ended at the Harare Gardens main stage, the march was aimed at enlightening citizens about the evils of rape and encouraging rape victims to report to responsible authorities.

Ms Grace Chirenje the Vice Chairperson of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition in an interview with The Catalyst said, "It is now time to stand up against perpetrators of this unspeakable evil act which is disgusting, sickening, sad and enraging." Ms Chirenje attributed worsening child abuse to family tensions caused by the economic meltdown.

Theresa Matsvayi the Information and Communication Officer of Katswe Sisterhood in another interview with the Catalyst



said, "The march is a stepping stone towards the fight against evils of rape which are increasing in the country without being

thoroughly looked at, most of the victims are mainly women and children who do not report when victimized as there is a belief

that it is a private or personal matter and also fearing reprisal from the assailant." From the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Information Desk, Harare.

On 16 Days of activism

The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition's Regional Information and Advocacy unit in collaboration with CIVICUS and Women's Net are hosting a seminar on the 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence on the 9th of December. A documentary with 16 stories on violence against women will be screened at the event as well as a discussion on politics as a driver of violence against women especially in the Zimbabwe context. The speakers will come from the participating organisations.

The 16 Days Campaign theme, 'From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence against Women', puts the spotlight on militarism and its role in perpetuating violence against women and girls. "The violence we encounter is often profoundly influenced by national, regional, and international policies and practices, and challenges us to act in solidarity to promote an end to militarism and violence against women," says Dr. Radhika Balakrishnan, Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership; the coordinator of the 16 Days Campaign.

This year's theme comes in the backdrop of the political violence against women in Zimbabwe. The upsurge of reported cases of violence in Zimbabwe shows a disturbing trend.

The Financial Gazette (November 17-27, 2011) reports that 2 536 cases have so far been reported in 2011, compared to the 1100 cases reported in the first half of 2010.

There has been a significant rise in violations of women's rights with the arrests and detention of human rights activist women, including mothers with minors, their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful protest violated which is in contravention to Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women act (CEDAW).

Zimbabwe has done a lot in terms of awareness, perception, definition and documentation of domestic violence and yet thousands of women and men continue to protect their abusive partners citing customary consideration. According to a UNICEF analysis, Zimbabwe's increase in gender-based violence appear to arise from traditional practices and principles that include the subjugation of women, which is culturally permissible for a man to physically "discipline" his wife and children.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence is an international campaign origi-



CIVICUS, Crisis Coalition in Zimbabwe and Women's Net invite you to attend the:

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence: 16 Stories to Raise Awareness, using technology to end Gender Based Violence

Event Date: 9 December 2011

Event Time: 9am to 12noon

Event Venue: CIVICUS HOUSE – INDABA Room, 24 Gwigwi Mrwebi Street, Newtown Johannesburg

Contact: Rumbie on 011 838 9642/ pa@crisiszimbabwe.org

Programme:

09h00 – 09h05: Introduction & Welcome

09h05 – 09h15: The 16 Days of activism Campaign (history and today)

09h15 – 09h50: Screening of the DVD: 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence: 16 Stories towards ending Violence Against Women

09h50 – 10h05: Using Technology to end Gender Based Violence (Women's Net)

10h05 – 10h20: Discussions

10h20 – 10h35: Politics as a drivers of violence against women – the case of Zimbabwe (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition)

10h35 – 10h50: The health and legal cost of gender Based Violence

10h50 – 11h15: Question & Answer session and Closing Remarks

11h15 – 12h00: Lunch

nating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates, November 25, International Day of the elimination of violence against women and December 10, In-

ternational Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights. The 16 Days Campaign has been used as an organizing strategy by individuals and groups

around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

By Regina Pazvakavambwa and Rumbidzayi Mataba, Regional Office.

Polarization and Apathy: Zimbabwe's Twin Evils

Coordinator's Note



dewaMAVHINGA

Zimbabwe is trapped in a perennial governance crisis that is kept going by the twin evils of extreme political polarization and widespread apathy among ordinary Zimbabweans. Polarization and Apathy are also the biggest stumbling blocks to finding a lasting solution to the various challenges confronting Zimbabwe today.

When all issues of national importance are framed in political terms – or are viewed through colored political lenses – then it is unlikely that an objective analysis of the problems or possible solutions will emerge. Matters of social and economic development, education, road safety, health facilities and food security all play second fiddle to political considerations in our highly polarized political environment. For instance, acknowledging a national typhoid outbreak where Harare alone has recorded more than 500 cases becomes an intrinsically political process where information is given or withheld or manipulated depending on what perceived political gain or damage such information may bring. At the height of the food crisis in 2008, very senior government officials refused to seek international food aid

timeously because it was viewed to be politically improper and that to receive aid without asking for it infringed on the country's sovereign right to ask for support.

Polarization holds Zimbabwe captive – no progress is possible for us because of the extreme divisions in the country. The dysfunctional inclusive government's dramatic failure to institute democratic reforms to pave way for credible elections is a direct product of an extremely polarized environment which has given risen to the second evil of apathy – widespread disinterest among Zimbabweans in matters to do with their livelihoods and development individually and collectively. It seems the extreme polarization has pushed people to retreat into their individual shells in the hope that 'minding their own business' would save them from being victimized by elements in the polarized environment.

Because polarization is characterized by, on the one part, an extremely violent and intolerant group that has the de facto backing of state power, and – an unarmed, but vocal group of rights and political activists on the other, this has led to the creating of a large group of indifferent Zimbabweans who

are like spectators. This group of indifferent spectator Zimbabweans rapidly adapt to whatever difficult circumstances that come as a result of bad governance and mismanagement of national resources.

When there is a water crisis, instead of taking issue with government officials, they would rather dig shallow wells to get water, or, for the well off, sink boreholes. When there are electricity cuts clearly associated corruption and poor management – for the victims – the solution is rather to buy electric generators for those who can afford, or to fetch firewood for cooking and heating.

The devastating impact of polarization and apathy is to prolong suffering, prolong the life of a regime on its last legs, and keep Zimbabwe in a state of crisis perennially. At the moment there is virtually no movement forward in Zimbabwe, there is no serious reflection about real development issues – or emerging issues such as the climate change summit – COP17 taking place in Durban, South Africa. Instead, focus is rushing headlong into an ill-prepared-for election with both sides of the political divide staring at each other – looking to see who blinks first.

Predictably, due to extreme polarization, the

timing of the next elections has nothing to do with the country's preparedness to hold a genuinely free and fair election, but everything to do with Zanu PF's sense of preparedness to force a win in that election. For them this should be possible because the leadership of the security forces who control the state machinery of violence is behind Zanu PF, there is more disposable income courtesy of the un-quantified and unaccounted for Marange diamond revenue, the indigenization policy where foreign owned companies are forced to cede 51% of their shares will likely benefit a number of party cronies and the extremely polarized and partisan state media remains behind Zanu PF. As elections approach, state owned media will most likely be reduced to a Zanu PF mouth piece openly campaigning for the party while demonizing the MDC-T and the main challenger to Zanu PF.

All it takes for Zimbabwe to achieve significant, positive democratic change is for people to fight the twin evils of polarization and apathy by choosing to actively participate in programs that deliver change. It is difficult to fight apathy in the face of real fear that violence or things worse will happen to you or your loved ones if you become a

target as a result of active participation in the democratization project. A way to address the risk of violence or some other danger is to actively participate in the democratization project without being public about it. There is need for stronger support, including financial support, to those individuals or groups that stand for democracy, human rights respect and development for all Zimbabweans. There is need to expose and shame those that stand for an unacceptable status quo.

Now is the time for Zimbabweans to stand up and be counted when it comes to denouncing divisive politics that hold us back from achieving our full potential as a people. For us to move out of this cyclic mode of self-destruction and stagnancy we need direct support from out neighbors in the form of SADC to push us out of this pit. To keep the effects of extreme polarization at bay, and to neutralize the fear that feeds apathy, it is necessary that when Zimbabwe goes for the next elections, a SADC peace-keeping force be on the ground to reassure all that the world is watching – and will not stand by when things begin to go wrong.

-coordinator@crisiszimbabwe.org

Getting it right with words: The art of true activism against violence

Socialization plays a very critical role in the life of each and every person. There is no running away from the whole notion that a person is influenced by their background and the way they relate and behave is a result of where they have been.

However, it is also true that people make choices of varying degrees everyday and that everyone has a mind of their own to choose what they deem important. It is with this reflection that I was inspired to write about the subtle forms of violence people experience daily. It is what we say that usually affects people psychologically and they too may chose to act.

In light of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, I thought it would be important to reflect and talk about verbal and psychological abuse. Research has shown

that women tend to talk more than men do – not that men do not talk! However, it is critical to understand that it is not the talking that is bad but the content of conversation that is critical whether one is male or female.

As people grow up, parents model them into the kind of persons that society expects them to be so they live in harmony with other people. However, when the order of the day is violence (or the threat thereof) or even verbal abuse, it is likely that the very same speech styles will be carried forth into one's adult life.

Here, it is critical to note that what one says is very important, the choice of words people use on a daily basis has an effect of elevating to the next level someone or destroying them completely. In this regard, when words are negative and constantly undermining the next person, that becomes



Grace Chirenje-Nachipo

verbal abuse and it has negative psycho-social effects on people.

The result in most instances is that the person who is verbally abused becomes a perpetrator themselves and may end up even resorting to violence! Although people may not think of it often, words have a way of breaking souls and thus the need to choose to be economic

with them and speak the truth with a hint of gentleness so as to begin to curb violence in homes and the world at large.

As mentioned above, verbal abuse usually leads to psychological abuse where a person is disturbed and even lacks concentration for critical tasks such as eating, working and caring for their own life and even that of others. In the true

African sense, people do not seem to care about one being psychologically distressed unless that person becomes visibly insane and are deemed schizophrenic.

However, in everyone's daily interactions, there are people they interact with who are being abused in this manner. On the flip side, you and me may actually also be guilty of psychologically abusing others knowingly or unknowingly. What is critical is that people become careful with how they utilize their words so that they do not end up abusing others psychologically.

During this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence (25 November to 10 December), it is important that we go on and work with the theme of bringing peace from the home to peace into the world.

However, this can only be possible if each person takes up responsibility of acknowledg-

ing their past, possessing their present and claiming responsibility of the words they speak and how they may have both negative and positive effect on other people.

Once people make the wise choice of ensuring that their words build the next person, there are very high chances that there will be peace in each one's personal life and eventually this peace will touch lives from the private domestic sphere into the world.

It is not just individuals who have this mandate but even governments should be careful what they say lest they face the wrath of a people who are tired of the verbal and psychological abuse.

This world needs this sort of transformation so let us begin today to make the necessary adjustments and stop hate speech so we become ambassadors of peace from the home to the world!

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE, HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Violence against women is described as any “act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, force or denial of freedom, whether happening in public or in private life.” Worldwide, one out of every six women is physically assaulted or forced to have sex by her husband or intimate partner. The culture of silence means that help seeking behaviour is stalled.

Gender based violence (GBV) has a vast array of sequelae, of concern in health and human rights. The well documented physical effects of GBV include injury, and possible disability, sexual health problems and a cycle of self –injurious behaviour such as unprotected sex.

Considering mental health - fear, anxiety, low self esteem, various eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disease as well as post traumatic stress disorder have a direct or indirect causal relation to GBV. Violence against women has a specific effect on increasing risk of HIV.

Directly through sexual assault, indirectly through the threat of further assault

crippling women’s ability to negotiate for safe sex. Self- as well as community stigmatization reduces health seeking behaviour and timely access to Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). Coerced sex, intimate partner violence and child marriages are also factors which increase HIV risk.

The campaign against Gender based violence is indivisible from issues of economic social and cultural rights. Social ineq-

Training of health professionals to manage rape and other forms of violence has been taking place. Essential components for the management of GBV include Medical support, Emotional support, and documentation. Effective programs involve linkages with legal support for victims as well as other medium to long term interventions to support survivors.

The extent of the problem how-

other health programs at the health centres mean that GBV survivors may receive less than ideal attention. Entry points for involvement of men in GBV interventions, even in the health care setting remain limited. In conclusion, various key messages remain in the campaign against GBV

1. Economic and social justice for women and girls as a priority intervention
2. GBV is strongly linked to major physical and mental health problems
3. Increasing the capacity for the health care system to respond to GBV, and provide linkages for survivors to legal and other long term support.
4. Involvement of men in GBV interventions as a turning point

From the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights 6th Floor, Beverly Court, 100 Nelson Mandela Ave, Harare; PO Box CY 2415, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe Tel: (263-4) 703528, 703430, 705370 Fax: 705641; email: infor@zadhr.org

Considering the right to health (the highest attainable standard of health care and living conditions), the role of health services to respond to GBV remains critical

uity, harmful cultural practices and unequal power dynamics increase women and girls vulnerability to this victimization. Multi-sectoral approaches remain necessary to address economic justice for women and girls.

Considering the right to health (the highest attainable standard of health care and living conditions), the role of health services to respond to GBV remains critical. In Zimbabwe, I applaud the efforts of the public health, medical academia and other non-state actors in this regard.

ever may dictate that every contact with women in a health care setting involves a level of routine screening, as long as safety and confidentiality may be assured. Health system issues remain a stumbling block to realizing this ideal. Human resources for health inadequacy remains a concern for peripheral health centres, availability of trained personnel at clinics, and the absence of supporting supplies e.g. rape kits for correct forensic collection of evidence.

The call for integration of many

BAZ LICENSING EXPOSES PATRONAGE

The awarding of the said, “first ever licensed free-to-air independent national commercial radio stations since independence in 1980”- (i.e. the AB Communications (Zi Radio), Zimpapers (Zimpapers talk Radio) by the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) should be welcomed with caution. Acknowledging that there is a numerical increase in sources of information, it needs to be realized that there are high chances that there might be no change in terms of services and contents. The government, which has been in control of the highly patronized Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings and Zimpapers, holds a majority shareholding in the newly promoted Zimpapers talk radio.

The integrity of Supa Mandiwanzira, who once served for the ZBH is also questionable and as for long been speculated to be an appendage of the former ruling party, Zanu PF.

Of late, he is rumored to have been offered a constituency in Manicaland, to stand for Zanu PF, the development also brings us to question whether Tafataona Mahoso (pictured), the Chief Executive Officer of BAZ has changed. Mahoso became a disgrace after he campaigned for the ban of The Daily News, earning him a nickname Media hangman in the media fraternity.

It therefore means that the authority is not peppered to fro the airwaves, rather, the approval of the two is more of entrenchment and strengthening of the existing patronized national airwaves. Information is one of the vital components of democracy as its availability directly or indirectly impacts on other factors.

It is only through the availability of information that citizens can meaningfully participate in governance issues. It also enables people to make



informed choices during electoral times and as well as discussing issues of accountability and transparency.

With such knowledge on the significance of information, we demand initiatives that undoubtedly practically work towards bridging the information gap that has largely affected ordinary citizens, our hope that the body shall issue licenses based on merit and not meant to further serve the selfish interests of politicians at the expense of the people of Zimbabwe.

From the information desk, ZimRights, Harare.

On every Thursday, read

ZIMBABWE BRIEFING

IN

An ambiguous change of gear: Zimbabwe Budget 2012

Zimbabwe's proposed national budget for the year 2012 is now formally before the Parliament of Zimbabwe for approval. Its functional political premise, according to Finance Minister Biti, is the promotion of what the inclusive government calls a 'democratic developmental state' (DDS). And this is the departure point for any analysis of the 2012 budget.

The DDS is described in the Medium Term Plan (MTP) as that characterized by ten definitive points. These being, good governance, macro-economic stability, a diversified economy, maintenance of political stability, access to social services accelerated rural development, equal opportunities for all, development and utilization of modern science and technology, a vibrant culture, and sustainable natural resource management.

To measure the 2012 budget against these objectives of the MTP and the intentions of the inclusive government's vision of DDS would be well and good were it not akin to the biblical accusation of 'healer, heal thyself'. This is because the national budget is not there to massage the rather grandiose plans of a sitting government. Its primary purpose and function is to make pragmatic the priority needs of the country, in real time and for people centered reasons. The current budget proposal is the second annual one to be proposed and most likely implemented as is by the inclusive government.

Its fundamental proclamation of seeking to work toward a DDS is not as obvious as it should be. In fact the question that arises immediately upon reading the priorities, is what does the government mean by this? Is it similar to the years of popular economic programmes such as 'gutsaruzhinji' or 'gore revanhu' and further still where did the model of DDS emanate from? If it's a borrowed concept, it would be most helpful for the government to inform the public from whence it was borrowed so we can all have a general idea as to how the national economy and our livelihoods will look like by 2013.

This will also assist citizens to understand the extent to which the inclusive government is working on the budget on the basis of collective responsibility, and not on the basis of political competition over an expected election. Regardless, the 2012 budget is a different one from the previous one. This is in respect to its theme which is very similar to that espoused by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions in one of their recent publications, that of a transformative economy.

To be specific, the theme of the 2012 budget is 'Enhancing a democratic state anchored by a growing, and transforming, socially just economy'. Unlike previous budgets under the inclusive government, this one gives the distinct impression of being left leaning, but is more firmly within the ambit of general recommendations that are to be found in nascent World Bank related documents as well as mainstream sustainable development knowledge systems.

Such themes are usually the stuff of 'five year plus' national plans, and where the inclusive government has chosen this theme, it has not necessarily indicated how it can achieve these very broad objectives within 12 months. Moreover, this sort of narrative is more template than political reality driven.

This is to say, while there was consultation on issues that members of the public would expect in a national



Finance Minister, Tendai Biti.-zimbabweinpictures.com

budget, the final version suits more a pre-determined framework than the real expectations of the public. It is the latter point that brings me to the pragmatic nature of the interventions that are proposed by the inclusive government. In the 2012 budget there are six very significant proposals to the everyday person. These are a proposed fund for jobs, a proposed fund for small to medium enterprises, another for vulnerable agricultural households, an intervention into the livelihoods of 'rural women' and a youth fund.

The nature of the distribution of

Affairs sanction) because they had no central guideline as to how to utilize the resources. A further point of concern with the 2012 budget is that of the ambiguity of public-private partnerships within the context of the delivery of social welfare needs of the country. Where it comes to health, education (tertiary included) the government is pledging money in partnerships with either private companies/banks, development banks and the donor community as to the implementation of these social welfarist programmes.

These are models that have been

It would have been preferable that there be a much more evident, independent, well thought out and transparent distribution agency for these monetary resources

these funds is essentially left to the relevant line ministry. This in itself is a problem that must be mitigated directly and in relation to the contested party politics of the inclusive government. It would have been preferable that there be a much more evident, independent, well thought out and transparent distribution agency for these monetary resources. As it is for example, how the youth fund shall be distributed is a vague matter.

The nature of the 'creative projects/ideas is also unclear within the current framework. Unless it becomes clearer as to the standards and measurement of what sort of business/social/economic ideas the 2012 budget will fund, there is the risk of creating a seriously patron-client loan acquisition system between those in the inclusive government and their supporters.

This is also increasingly evident with the first such fund under the aegis of the inclusive government, that of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) which at one time saw some members of parliament prioritizing the wrong matters (such as buying generators for police stations without Home

tried before and depending on the profitability of the endeavor generally end with the private component of the partnership pulling out, and doing so rather abruptly. The same can be said for the international donors who are funding most components of our health services provision, who when the global recession affects their funding, also scale down their operations leaving our citizens at their most vulnerable (this is the current risk with the Global Fund on HIV/AIDS).

In order to mitigate these issues, the state should have at least indicated the minimum standards that it must meet to ensure key achievables in the provision of health services, education for all and water provision, wherein the engagement of the private sector or the international community would be an added benefit.

On the matter of industrial production, land, manufacturing and trade, the 2012 budget, skirts dealing directly with the issue of indigenization and its impact on the same. This is probably because of the disagreement on the policy in the inclusive government, but

it must be noted that the same policy is now a political and economic reality.

It is therefore imperative that the 2012 budget takes this matter directly into account, after all, some of the public-private partnerships under this policy are the ones that, by default, are funding the very much competed for Community Development Trusts. A penultimate point is that of the the budget making provision for democratic processes around national healing, the constitutional referendum and constitutional commissions but not factoring in the matter of elections. Essentially this points to three possibilities.

The first being that perhaps the elections budget is factored into the allocation is factored into the allocation for the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission or secondly that the government does not want to fund its own country's electoral processes and thirdly that there are no elections in 2012.

It is the third point that is most likely to be true, mainly due to the political competition in the inclusive government and also due to a general disdain by government at not wanting to upset the apple cart that is the inclusive government. There are many other areas of the budget that are of importance that this short analysis cannot undertake due to the limitation of space as well as the reader's attention span. It is however imperative that the inclusive government comes up with a clear plan of implementation of the 2012 budget for all of its ministries and their related parastatals. Failure to do so will lead to a budget that may be high sounding on paper but completely vague and politicized in implementation.

Simultaneously civil society organizations must also take into account the fact that where the budget makes provisions for social welfare and social service delivery, it is the methodology of implementation that is now most important.

By Takura Zhangazha, an independent political and social commentator. This article can also be accessed via: <http://takura-zhangazha.blogspot.com/2011/11/ambiguous-change-of-gear-zimbabwe.html>