

ZIMBABWE BRIEFING

a crisis in zimbabwe coalition regional office weekly report

05 - 11 September 2012

ISSUE 90



Court Application For Deadline Extension Confirms Political Inconvenience Of By-Elections

Weeks ago, the Supreme Court of Zimbabwe issued an order requiring President Mugabe to set dates for by-elections in three constituencies after a challenge on three disgruntled ex-members of Parliament. By law, the by-elections were long overdue and the President was at fault in failing to set the relevant dates. Some, more loudly expressed by Nathaniel Manheru in his column in the Saturday Herald, thought the decision was actually a boon for President Mugabe and ZANU PF, who although on the wrong side of the judgment, was supposed to be happy with a decision that compelled him to set dates for by-elections. Never mind the fact that the decision confirmed that the President had breached the law (which, by the way, the President is constitutionally obliged to uphold), supporters interpreted it as a victory that would enable him to call for early elections.

This was mainly because at the time, there was much noise from that quarter about holding early elections before the end of the year. With the urgency and noise that attended the clamour, it looked almost a certainty that the by-election dates (and probably the General Election dates) would be set well before the August 30 deadline. Yet barely a couple of days before the deadline, the news is that the President has made an urgent chamber application at the High Court for the extension of the deadline (see: http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51164:president-seeks-by-elections-deadline-extension&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130).

So it now appears that where there seemed to be urgency to hold elections, there is now a new urgency to delay them. It is not clear how and why this has become urgent, when the August 30 deadline was known all along since the Supreme Court issued the deadline. The more plausible explanation seems to be that there was a deliberate and calculated delay until just before the deadline to create a sense of urgency and therefore pass the usually stringent test for urgent chamber applications. A normal court application would have taken months, if not years, if you go by the pace at which the wheels of justice in such matters usually move in Zimbabwe's courts. Lodging an application would not suspend the Supreme Court decision compliance with which would still be required. An urgent chamber application on the other hand, if deemed by a judge to be truly urgent (and a pliable judge would probably say that it is urgent even if the deliberate delay would suggest otherwise), would be heard quickly with a decision issued immediately and if it is for an extension, would become effective promptly thereby getting around the August 30 deadline.



President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe

This is a world away from what was described a victory in defeat for the President, who was supposed to receive the Supreme Court decision and happily implement it without any further dilly-dallying. What is happening appears to confirm the political inconvenience of the Supreme Court decision but there are also events since the decision was issued which may have made the by-elections a less pleasant prospect than they appeared initially. A brief reminder of those factors of inconvenience may be useful:

First, it was politically inconvenient because although the decision was in respect of only three constituencies, it had implications for almost 40 parliamentary constituencies which are in the same situation since the seats are vacant. There would also be by-elections in respect of vacant local authority council positions. It would therefore be a mini-general election, at a time when Zimbabwe was gearing up for a major General Election within less than 12 months. The life of the current Parliament is due to expire in June 2013. MPs voted in through a by-election would serve for far less than 12 months.

Second, although, there was no legal rule preventing the holding of by-elections, the political parties, along with SADC seem to have had an unwritten understanding that the interim years of the GNU would be election-free. This is signalled by the fact that no significant player in the political parties pushed for the by-elections in vacant constituencies. Instead the challenge was brought by disgruntled MPs. As the blog stated, there seems to have been a general understanding to have "electoral detoxification" in Zimbabwe until at least the next General Election. The decision to extend the deadline appears to be in line with the general object of avoiding any form of elections before the next General Elections.

It also means those constituencies would also have to go through two elections within a period of less than 12 months, implying that the parties, the

candidates and the people would be in permanent election mode for the next 12 months.

Third, more than anything else, the by-elections would be a crucial indicator of the competing parties' political fortunes after 3 years of the GNU. The by-elections are spread across the whole country, which would mean a general indication of the popularity of the political parties ahead of a crucial General Election. The reaction to the recent Freedom House Survey is indicative of the importance of general indicators of political parties' popularity. Compared to the Freedom House Survey, the by-elections would be a far more robust and credible test of political popularity. No doubt, the Freedom House survey has created a favorable impression in respect of ZANU PF and less so of its rivals. Suddenly, there is no need from their position to disturb this political profile which suggests that they are in the ascendancy and better than their rivals politically.

In this regard, by-elections, which a few weeks ago were hailed as an important "victory in defeat" by the likes of Manheru, have suddenly have become politically inconvenient since they could easily bust the favorable impression created by the Freedom House survey. It is generally accepted that the Constitutional Referendum in February 2000 was, in effect, a test of political fortunes between ZANU PF and the MDC and defeat for the former was a rude but useful awakening for them. But it is always better to go into an election with a more positive outlook and the Freedom House Survey provides that to ZANU PF and yet this could so easily change in an unpredictable by-election.

Fourth, there may be a genuine failure to raise resources to hold by-elections within the same period that there should be a constitutional referendum and harmonized elections. Three separate elections will consume resources that could be deployed elsewhere. The government, political parties and candidates will have to expend huge

amounts of resources. It may be that the delay is designed to accommodate a combined Constitutional Referendum and the by-elections.

Fifth, another interpretation is that the extension is sought to prepare ground to declare General Elections and do away with the constitution-making process. The apparent deadlock after ZANU PF suggested a new set of amendments that have the effect of re-writing the COPAC Draft Constitution may be insurmountable. It may be that the proposed changes were designed to achieve that purpose: to kill the constitution-making process, revert to the current patched-up Constitution and proceed to hold elections. That is this may be the case is evident from the fact that ZANU PF Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa pushed ahead with the Electoral Amendment Bill, which was passed into law in July this year at a time when not only the COPAC Draft Constitution was being written to introduce new fundamental changes to the electoral laws but also he (Chinamasa) was part of the COPAC Management Committee negotiating those changes.

There was no need to rush the Electoral Amendment Bill through, if the same Electoral Law was going to be changed again were the COPAC Draft adopted as the supreme law of the land. That this happened can only mean that the intention was to abandon the constitution-making process but still pave the way for elections on the basis that electoral amendments have been effected by Parliament. So the prospect of seeking an extension for purposes of buying time – not simply to harness resources but to declare General Elections remains high.

"It looks like the choice is one in the middle – comply with the Supreme Court decision but only if the decision's effect can be delayed a little more while the political mind games are being played.



Dr Alex Magaisa
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The Politics of By-Elections

Dr Alex Magaisa's end note above is correct; definitely there are political mind games at play in reference to by-elections. President Mugabe was indeed granted an extension by the High Court to proclaim the dates for by elections in the three constituencies of Nkayi South, Lupane East and Bulilima East by the 1st of October 2012. What we need to do here is to extend the nuance. Will President Robert Mugabe have the *macho* to declare by-elections and comply with the new court order? And off course what kind of politics is at play for MDC T, MDC N and ZANU PF?

Strictly speaking President Mugabe will not be in contempt of court if he announces by elections in just the three constituencies. However, more important is the electoral politics at play. If by-elections are held in the three Matabeleland constituencies, it is definite that ZANU PF will get zero seats. Never mind the current Freedom House and Afrobarometer surveys showing an increase in ZANU PF's support base, the margin is insignificant to translate into winning the three seats. There is no realistic way ZANU PF can spring a surprise.

All faculties being normal ZANU PF would obviously expect to lose in these three constituencies but the party is not prepared to deal with the defeat's psychological impact a few months before a general election. Because ZANU PF will be humiliated in these three constituencies the MDCs would not mind by elections in these areas. If this political reality makes sense it is unlikely President Mugabe would only announce by elections in the three constituencies as the turf is between MDC N and MDC T. Recent political surveys point to a massive decline of support for not only the MDC N but



From Left, Morgan Tsvangirai, President MDC-T, Welshman Ncube, President, MDC-N and Robert Mugabe, First Secretary and President of Zanu PF.

smaller parties in general. Nevertheless, there is no clarity in recent surveys as to whether the outflow from smaller parties is leading to an inflow to larger parties. In addition the by elections will be an early barometer to indicate who is who in Matabeleland and a re-strategizing opportunity for either parties.

If President Mugabe calls for by-elections in all the vacant seats this might work for the image of MDC T and ZANU PF but the move will dent the image of MDC N as the latter is still working to stretch its national claws.

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For the two big parties the by elections will have no serious political consequences. Why? Taking a micro-focus on the 16 vacant lower house parliamentary seats, the status quo in terms of balance of power in Parliament is not likely to change. The MDC T loss of support indicated in the surveys is not likely to affect the MDC T's fortunes in parliament. In the

same breadth, the ZANU PF gain in support is insufficient to wrestle parliamentary seats from MDC T. Even if one is to go by the Freedom House report, which shows the most significant decline in MDC T support, the party would still retain most of its parliamentary seats if by-elections were to be held.

Let me illustrate with the five vacant seats in the lower parliamentary house which were previously held by the MDC T. These are Makoni central, Mabvuku-Tafara, Matobo North, Gutu South and Emakandeni-Entumbane

post system. For example, based on the Freedom House survey, in Makoni central the MDC T vote might decline from 7,069 in March 29 2008 to 5,789 while ZANU PF's vote will rise slightly from 4,035 to 4,600 which is not enough to wrestle the seat. The same trend applies to all the other four constituencies. However, in Matobo North, ZANU PF might peep MDC T by a slight margin.

The loss of support indicated by Freedom House would mean ZANU PF's votes in Matobo will increase from 3, 102 in March 29 2008 to 3,536 votes compared to MDC T's decline from 3,503 to 2,873 votes. The overarching message is that the MDC T will win the majority of its seats in the by election because the loss of support is insignificant to upset the balance. On the other hand, given that the Freedom House survey points to a rise in ZANU PF support, this means that ZANU PF will retain 8 of the vacant seats that previously belonged to it. These are Mutare North, Bindura North, Guruve North, Mt Darwin East, Shamva South, Marondera East, Mwenzei West and Gokwe -Gumunyu.

By and large, the by-elections will retain the hung-parliament and will provide no solution to the hanging government. Politically, holding by elections in just the three Matabeleland constituencies will leave ZANU PF bruised, whereas by elections in the entire 28 vacant seats will demoralise the MDC N and as for MDC T either way things will remain more of the same. Not forgetting that the thrust of the struggle is to make sure that the by elections and any subsequent electoral processes are held in a free and fair environment with procedural certainty.

By Dr. Phillan Zamchiya, Regional Coordinator

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Dr P Zamchiya

Inbrief Around Zimbabwe

Reprieve For Mugabe

The Judge President of the High Court on Thursday 30 August 2012 allowed a request by President Robert Mugabe for more time to fix dates for a “mini-general election” by 1 October 2012 rather than 30 August 2012 as dictated by the Supreme Court recently. The consent order came after President Mugabe pleaded with the High Court on Thursday 30 August 2012 to be allowed more time to mobilise and ascertain the availability of financial resources to stage a “mini-general election” in all the vacant parliamentary and senatorial constituencies in the country including local authorities. In an urgent chamber application filed by the Civil Division of the Attorney General’s Office, President Mugabe disclosed that he would not be able to comply with the Supreme Court’s order compelling him to gazette dates for the by-elections by 30 August 2012 and would need a month’s extension to do so.

The Supreme Court in July confirmed a High Court order that President Mugabe should call by-elections in three Matabeleland constituencies by the end of August. This came after President Mugabe had appealed against High Court Judge, Justice Nicholas Ndou’s decision in October 2011 ordering him to ensure by-elections for Nkayi South, Bulilima East and Lupane East were held, as they were constitutionally long overdue.

Zimstat Reopens Census After Miscalculation Outcry

THE body running the 2012 census says it is redeploying enumerators for a so-called “mop-up count” after an outcry by people who say they were not counted.

Residents of several Bulawayo suburbs said Monday they were excluded from the 15-day population count which was carried out between August 12 and 27. Similar complaints have emerged from areas such as Harare and Masvingo. Zimstat’s population census director Washington Mapeta said the agency would deploy enumerators for a mop-up count to address the problem.

"We are checking all those reports and for the purposes of making the whole process credible, enumerators will visit areas where people are said to have been left out," he said. "It is something we are looking at seriously because we know that there are single households where occupants might not have been there during the official days."

Botswana Extends \$70M Credit Line to Zimbabwe



President of Botswana, Ian Khama

Botswana has extended a credit facility of about \$70 million meant to revive Zimbabwe's ailing industrial sector. The line of credit, announced Monday, comes at a time when Zimbabwe has no access to international lenders like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

According to the African Development Bank, Zimbabwe needs at

least \$4 billion in lines of credit so its struggling industries can get back on their feet. Speaking after the signing ceremony for the Botswana credit facility, Zimbabwean Finance Minister Tendai Biti outlined the rise and fall of his country's economy.

Parliament Resumes Sitting Today



Speaker of Parliament, Lovemore Moyo

Parliament resumes sitting today with both houses, the House of Assembly and Senate, starting business after more than a month-long recess. The committees will also resume their business with the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Water, Lands and Resettlement indicating they would summon Reserve Bank Governor Dr Gideon Gono once again to provide information of how agriculture equipment was distributed under the Farm Mechanisation programme.

The Thematic Committee on Peace and Security will continue with their investigations on whether Energy and Power Development Minister Elton Mangoma was not in contempt of Parliament when he failed to appear before it to give oral evidence on electricity supply to wheat farmers and the situation and the Green Fuel project at Chisumbanje.

Harare Still Dogged By Water Crisis

HARARE residents continue to be dogged by water shortages, with areas in the central business district and most residential suburbs having to endure frequent long-lasting water cuts.

In a service delivery update for August, the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) said water supplies remained a problem in most parts of Harare. In Kambuzuma, residents said they had had intermittent water supplies for two months. They said their taps were always dry, save for a few days, where the service was restored during the night, only for the taps to run dry before 5am.

Chief Justice Urges Peace, Political Tolerance

Zimbabwe's Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku has called on political leaders to preach peace and shun violence ahead of general elections widely expected sometime next year.

Addressing a police pass-out parade in Harare Thursday, the chief justice also urged ordinary members of the public to live in harmony despite their political differences.

The country is still traumatized by the 2008 election violence that left more than 400 people dead - most of them supporters of the Movement for Democratic Change. A few Zanu PF members were also killed

Zimbabwe Political Stalemate: What is to Be Done?

Zimbabwe finds itself back in a familiar spot, a political stalemate that defines the leadership crisis in the country but more pitiful, how the rest of society is trapped in a vise-like grip and are governed by whims of the political sector, in the name of the dominant political party, ZANU PF. The events of the past few weeks are confounding in their confirmation of the lack of respect for citizens and more importantly how ZANU PF as the dominant political party, despite its lack of popular support, is still in control of national politics and determines the agenda, timing of issues and when to move debates and in which direction. The key lesson on the constitutional stalemate is that this process is not about societal interest but advancing the political interests of the political sector.

The hijacking of this process by political gladiators in ZANU PF is a betrayal of processes that citizens have placed faith-in as potentially redeeming of the political, socio-economic crisis many are enduring. Politics in Zimbabwe is now so debased and poisoned that individuals in control of state institutions are not ashamed to publicly state that they are defending what amounts to personal interest. In this regard the push by ZANU PF to maintain an overbearing Executive Presidency is to protect its privileged political position that allows for the manipulation of state institutions for its benefit. This in-turn allows for the looting of national resources for the benefit of a few and impunity with regard to human rights violations. Despite all its pronounced public statements on how 'nationalistic' and 'patriotic' it is, ZANU PF is ultimately exhibiting all signs of a vampire political grouping that survives on the blood of the people of Zimbabwe. The party cares more about its interests and far less about the concerns and issues of ordinary citizens.

It is also becoming clear that in negotiating in bad faith and in demonstrat-



From left, Morgan Tsvangirai, Prime Minister, Authur Mutambara, Deputy Prime Minister and Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe

ing its power at every turn, ZANU PF is making a statement to all that it is in charge and that change, whatever that means, can only be on its terms. This brings an interesting dimension to the fore. If ZANU PF is still so much in control, and in a position to stall progress at any moment and anyhow, can Zimbabwe hold a free and fair election under such circumstances?. I hazard to say that a lot more needs to be done beyond the constitution as ZANU PF is meshed with the state, and the state is ZANU PF. The intricate process of disengaging ZANU PF from the state and building strong state institutions from the electoral bodies, human rights bodies and security sector is the key issue to end this crisis. The challenge with Zimbabwe is that of governance and weak state institutions, and to move on this we need ZANU PF to give-up, by whatever means, its control of such institutions. Under the current circumstances an election is a mere academic exercise to legitimise

ZANU PF's political stay. For this reason the MDC parties and Civil Society need to highlight in more detail the nature of the change that is needed for ZANU PF to disentangle from the state and the reforms and environment that will allow for free and fair elections.

It is increasingly becoming a reality that Zimbabwe's crisis is not so much about the Lancaster House constitution, but the control of the state by ZANU PF. With hindsight, this should have been the key agenda of the Global Political Agreement negotiating process. The rest would have followed with ease. The failure to rein in ZANU PF by both The MDCs, Civil Society and SADC is now an albatross on Zimbabwe. And to be precise, this failure is more defined by the continued control of the security sector by ZANU PF and the increasing power and political space given to the same sector. What this means is that if this

one and only problem was resolved or is still resolved everything else will move positively. The power and arrogance of ZANU PF comes from the knowledge that the police, intelligence and army are behind them, and that anyone who dares step out of line will be dealt with severely by these institutions. It was better the millions in USD spent on the constitution were spent on this matter alone, it is better civil society realise that ultimately Zimbabwe's future will be determined by strong state institutions and not a singular election which might be rigged or still disregarded if results are not favourable to ZANU PF.

Civil society need to trend with caution on its language and talk on elections and maintain the demand for reform of state institutions. The ensuing political stalemate on the constitution must focus our analysis on why ZANU PF behaves so and that we untangle ZANU PF from its abuse of state institutions to allow society to move. Talk of transparency in mining, talk of indigenisation, talk of corruption at the RGs and AGs office, talk of human rights abuses, name it, all is related to ZANU PF being meshed with the state. For this reason we might even have an election, but the winner is already ZANU PF before any ballot is cast. This calls for a re-thinking on the strategic angles to tackle this matter. One such is to see ZANU PF not as a monolithic entity. It is up to the MDCs to reach out to the moderates in ZANU PF and agree on a common future. Civil society needs a holistic approach to the reform agenda not piece-meal approaches or tinkering with the electoral law, but that elections be free from political manipulation and that the state be freed from control by and for ZANU PF.

By David Mutomba

Around Africa

Mubarak Sentenced to Life in Prison

Cairo - Egypt's ex-president Hosni Mubarak was sentenced to life in prison on Saturday for his role in the killing of protesters during last year's revolution that forced him from power, a verdict that caps a stunning fall from grace for a man who ruled the country as his personal fiefdom for nearly three decades.

The harsh sentence against the 84-year-old former leader appeared aimed at defusing tensions ahead of a divisive run-off presidential race that pits Mubarak's last prime minister against the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate.

Mubarak, the first Arab leader to be tried in his own country, remained silent inside a court cage while his once-powerful sons appeared nervous and had dark circles under their eyes.

Mali asks African forces to intervene

Ouagadougou - Mali's interim president Dioncounda Traore has formally

asked west African forces to intervene to take back northern Mali from Islamist rebels, a senior French official said here on Tuesday.

"President Traore formally sent a request to the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) to provide a military contribution to stabilise the country and especially re-conquer the north," said France's special representative for the Sahel region, Jean Felix-Paganon.

NAM Support for Iran Nuclear Program a Dark Day for Humankind

AJC called the 120-member Non-Aligned Movement's unqualified and unanimous support for Iran's nuclear program "a dark day for humankind that will further undermine the UN Security Council and endanger global security."

Endorsement of Iran's right to a full nuclear fuel cycle to enrich uranium was included in the lengthy NAM summit final declaration, adopted yesterday. The heads of state from at least 29 countries, including Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Qatar and Zim-

babwe, participated, as well as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Other countries were represented at lower levels.

Kenya's navy Shells Kisimayo in Somalia

The Kenyan navy has shelled Kisimayo, the main Somali city controlled by militant Islamist group al-Shabab, a military spokesman has told the BBC. Colonel Cyrus Oguna said the attack was part of a push by an African Union (AU) force to capture the city. Residents told the BBC that al-Shabab was reinforcing its positions in the city and people had started to flee. AU forces have vowed to capture Kismayo - a port city that is key to financing and arming the al-Qaeda affiliate. The move on Kismayo comes as Somali MPs prepare to choose a new president under a UN-brokered peace plan.

Angola's Ruling Party Wins General Elections

Angola President Jose Eduardo dos Santos' nearly 33 years in power looks

set to be extended after his ruling People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) party took 74.46 per cent of votes in national elections, according to provisional results.

The results from Friday's voting announced by the National Elections Commission showed the governing party with three-fourth of the vote - far ahead of its nearest rivals with votes counted from over 85 per cent of polling stations, but the party's margin of victory is down from the 82 per cent that it won in 2008.

The daily *Jornal de Angola* newspaper on Sunday declared Santos the president-elect, two days after general elections, but the opposition said it was gathering evidence of fraud.

State Ownership and the Façade of Indigenisation in Zimbabwe

The current indigenisation discourse in Zimbabwe has been beset by pitfalls of development as elites shape and model the exploitation of national resources for their own selfish ends. Development is guised under the mask of national projects and the state is used to substitute the citizens. Interestingly, the state is argued to be the best custodian of national interest despite that behind all this smokescreen is the pillaging and plundering of national resources.

The Chisumbanje Ethanol Project, Marange Diamonds and of recent the Save Conservancy Valley are cases in points where elites in ZANU PF have been plundering resources behind the façade of national development and sovereignty. The state is presented as a depoliticized entity, neutral arbiter and free of human agency in all these projects. These attempts to depoliticize the state are based on misinformation, myths and unscientific claims. More so, this paper will argue that development is not necessarily a neutral term and at the same time entail progress. Development is a term full of contradictions and pitfalls, thus the need to interrogate it thoroughly.

Following debates on indigenisation in most particular on the supposed national projects, one is overdosed with the propaganda that the state is in partnership with a foreign owned company through a state owned enterprise. The paperwork points to a win-win situation in which the state either through the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC) is claimed to 50% shares. However, a further interrogation of the ownership network and syndicates pontificate to fronting of the state as highlighted by the Global Witness Report on Ainjin's shady dealings in Chiadzwa diamond fields. The same controversy surrounds the Chisumbanje Ethanol project where the government is claimed to be a partner through ADA (Agricultural Development Authority). Similarly the Chisumbanje ethanol project is entangled in murky dealings as revealed by Themba Mliswa's sour grapes outbursts on Billy Rautenbach's failure to honour the patronage facilitation fees. In all these projects the interests of the state are not defined and the question of who disposes benefits and how they are disposed remains murky. The major question is who is the



Minister of Youth Development, Indigenisation and Empowerment of Zimbabwe, Saviour Kasukuwere

state in all these dealings? Can the state substitute the citizens in these cases? Is the state a depoliticized and neutral arbiter in these projects? Overwhelming evidence point to the contrary as there are faces behind the state. The state in these cases becomes a vehicle of accumulation as elites plunder national resources for their own selfish gains whilst

pardonable to replace that minority white with a minority black, in the face of a crisis of expectations and thirst for empowerment from our black majority. This business of empowering people who are already empowered severally in other sectors, such as farming, ranching, sugar cane farming, mining, etc, will not pass the moral test

Indigenization needs to go beyond benefitting a cabal of politically connected elites. More so, it is time where Civil Society needs to unpack this whole concept of the state and it being the sole custodians of the people's interests. We need indigenization models that speak to the empowerment of people and communities. The current indigenization discourse and practice pontificate to elite accumulation and plunder of national resources.

the ordinary masses suffer.

It is the contention of this essay that civil society needs to challenge the ruling elite especially in ZANU PF that has abused resource nationalism to fatten the pockets of its leadership. The disturbances in the Save Conservancy Valley highlight the degree of greedy and corruption, as people who have been empowered in other sectors are doled hunting licenses. Mzembi's outbursts on New Zimbabwe sums up the extend of the rot; "It is wrong to have minority ownership of conservancies, but it is even more un-

nor will it endear us to the people except to ourselves." Therefore, to address all so called development initiatives as progress is very problematic. These so called national development projects in most cases have alienated the citizens and resultantly faced resistance.

Calculated or not development has intended and unintended consequences and as such there is need to address citizens concerns around these so-called national development projects. Whilst there is talk of 4500 jobs around the closure of the Ethanol project there is silence on

the more than 30 000 households displaced and whose livelihood has been affected by this 'development'. There is nothing progressive about the displacement of villagers and destruction of their livelihoods. More so, the hyped 4 500 jobs do not necessarily translate into development as not all villagers will be eligible as workers due to a number of factors. For instance an illiterate villager cannot work up and be employed as an engineer at the Ethanol project but can on his or her piece of land be able to subsist. The Chisumbanje villagers currently have a pending court action in the High Court challenging their displacement, and this highlights that communities cannot be passive recipients of development. Politicians need to listen to people and move away from this elite approach to development.

The State has repeatedly failed to be a neutral arbiter over the usage of natural resources to the benefit of communities. This calls for a rethink of the role of the state and a new form of citizenship. Civil society needs to challenge the state if the pitfalls of development are to be avoided. The cases used in this essay are just a tip of the ice-berg as many communities in Zimbabwe remain at the mercy of politicians in the name of national development.

Indigenization needs to go beyond benefitting a cabal of politically connected elites. More so, it is time where Civil Society needs to unpack this whole concept of the state and it being the sole custodians of the people's interests. We need indigenization models that speak to the empowerment of people and communities. The current indigenization discourse and practice pontificate to elite accumulation and plunder of national resources.

By Tamuka Chirimambowa