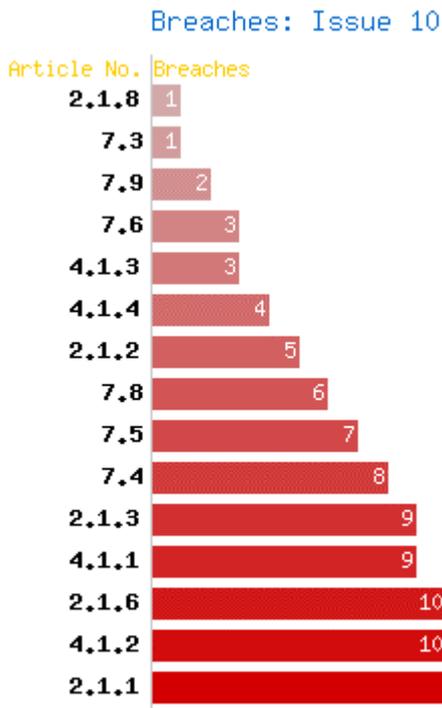


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Sokwanele - Enough is Enough - Zimbabwe PROMOTING NON-VIOLENT PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVE DEMOCRACY



Zimbabwe Election Watch

Issue 10 : 6 November 2007

Executive Summary

At this point it is not clear whether the Zimbabwean joint elections - presidential, parliamentary, senate and municipal - will be postponed to June 2008, a move which would allow more time for preparations and for the lack of crucial financial resources to be resolved. The elections are currently scheduled to take place during March. David Coltart, MDC (Mutambara) for Bulawayo South says that the country needs at least six months to put everything in place before calling an election.

The South African mediated negotiations between the ruling Zanu PF party and both factions of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) have resumed. According to the Zimbabwe Independent (ZI), they are expected to discuss issues such as the demilitarisation of state institutions, the role of traditional chiefs in politics, use of state and donor food relief for political gain and foreign broadcasts to Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe Election Watch 2007
www.sokwanele.com

So far, according to the ZI, the parties have agreed on a draft constitution, which has been circulated to their respective leaders, but have not reached an agreement on electoral laws, security legislation, media laws or the political climate. Delimitation of constituencies has not yet started and registration of voters is still continuing.

The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition held a rural outreach programme which presented an overview of the governance crisis and perspectives on the 2008 elections, with close reference to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) initiative.

The resolutions made were:

1. No to elections without a new constitution
2. Development programmes should be isolated from politics
3. Zanu PF should be confronted through holding joint meetings with the opposition
4. People should be allowed to vote using their national identity cards
5. People of foreign origin should be allowed to vote as they are citizens
6. Delimitation of boundaries should be undertaken by an independent body
7. Village heads should not be used for partisan political programmes
8. People should be engaged in intensive voter education
9. Election officers should not be politically biased

10. The MDC should be allowed to participate in the 2008 elections

Tribune

In our media overview, Zim Online reported this week that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has turned down an opposition request for an all-party meeting to discuss voter registration and demarcation of voting constituencies.

The Registrar General's office has admitted that the outdated voters' roll - which requires major surgery - has not yet been printed due to inadequate funds.

The government has reduced the number of voter registration centres by over 60 percent amid reports of critical shortages of financial and human resources.

Civic groups report they are restricted by the country's electoral laws from conducting efficient voter education programmes.

Thousands of Zimbabwean-born people whose forefathers came from neighbouring SADC countries could fail to vote if their citizenship is not restored in time.

Home Affairs Minister Kembo Mohadi has acknowledged that opposition supporters are being victimised and has undertaken to study an MDC dossier detailing 4 122 incidents of political violence and human rights abuses between January and June. Further examples, threats and incidences of human rights abuses, as well as the withholding of food aid from opposition supporters are included in this report.

Elections body rejects MDC request to discuss voter registration

Source Date: 06-11-2007

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has turned down an opposition request for an all-party meeting to discuss voter registration and demarcation of voting constituencies for next year's polls....

The MDC, which says an audit of the voters' roll by the party had unearthed anomalies on the register, wanted an all-party meeting to discuss civic education and a publicity campaign to raise voter awareness of an extended registration exercise....

Ian Makone, director of elections for the MDC (Tsvangirai) said the constitutional amendment enacted with backing from the MDC required that a new commission and not a "sanitised" version of the existing one be appointed to register voters, demarcate constituencies and oversee preparations for next year's elections.

Zimbabwe's voters' roll has been in shambles for years with millions of names of voters who died or left the country to live abroad still appearing on the register, while thousands more voters have failed to vote in previous polls either because their names were entered in wrong constituencies or did not appear at all on the register.

The MDC has in the past accused the government of taking advantage of the lack of accurate figures on the number of voters to rig polls and of gerrymandering constituencies to ensure it wins. The government denies rigging elections.

Source: Zim Online (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=2268>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
 - 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
 - 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
 - 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
 - 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
 - 4.1.3: Non-discrimination in the voters' registration;
 - 4.1.4: Existence of updated and accessible voters roll;
 - 7.3: [The member state holding elections shall] Establish impartial, all-inclusive, competent and accountable national electoral bodies staffed by qualified personnel ...
 - 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
 - 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
 - 7.6: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the availability of adequate logistics and resources for carrying out democratic elections;
-

Cash shortages hamper preps for Zimbabwe elections

Source Date: 31-10-2007

Zimbabwe's preparation for the synchronised presidential and parliamentary elections next year is running behind schedule as it emerged yesterday that there is inadequate money for the printing of the voters' roll.

Edwell Mtemaringa, chief accountant at the Registrar General's office that prepares the voters' register told a parliamentary portfolio committee on Defence and Home Affairs yesterday the voters roll is supposed to be printed this year but this had not yet happened because of inadequate funds.

"... We requested \$3.5 trillion and were given only \$110 billion," Mtemaringa said...

The voters' roll requires major surgery to put it in order. For example, the roll is said to contain millions of names of voters who died or who have left the country over the years to work and live abroad.

Thousands of voters have failed to vote in previous polls either because their names were entered under wrong constituencies or did not appear at all on the roll.

Source: Zim Online (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=2240>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
 - 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
 - 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
 - 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
 - 4.1.4: Existence of updated and accessible voters roll;
 - 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
 - 7.6: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the availability of adequate logistics and resources for carrying out democratic elections;
-

Harare cuts voter registration centres

Source Date: 02-11-2007

The government has reduced the number of voter registration centres in the country by over 60 percent amid reports of critical shortages of financial and human resources.

It emerged yesterday that the second phase of the voter registration exercise was not budgeted for, resulting in a last-minute rush to raise the required funds.

The exercise to update the roll ahead of next year's joint presidential and parliamentary elections that was completed last August had to be extended last Friday after complaints mostly from the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party that thousands of newly eligible voters from areas it controls were left out.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) yesterday confirmed that not all registration centres had been reopened for the mop-up exercise that began last Friday....

The extended voter registration exercise runs until mid-November.

Sources said urban and rural constituencies seen as opposition strongholds were hardest hit by the reduction of mobile registration centres.

In Masvingo province, only 90 registration centres re-opened when the exercise was extended compared to more than 200 centres that operated in the province's 14 constituencies during the first phase that ended in August.

Just one centre is serving Masvingo urban, home to more than 500 000 people.

"The problem is not in Masvingo alone but is countrywide where over half of the centres are yet to open," (ZEC spokesman Utoille) Silaigwana told Zim Online....

Source: Zim Online (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=2253>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 4.1.3: Non-discrimination in the voters' registration;
- 4.1.4: Existence of updated and accessible voters roll;
- 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
- 7.6: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the availability of adequate logistics and resources for carrying out democratic elections;
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

Electoral Commission says March 2008 elections on track

Source Date: 30-10-2007

The chairman of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, George Chiweshe, said Tuesday that his agency is on track in preparations for national elections slated for March of next year.

But many other involved parties are expressing concern about the timetable, and civic groups say that so long as President Robert Mugabe has not signed a constitutional amendment concerning elections into law, no definitive preparations can be made.

Electoral authorities will have a lot on their hands creating new constituencies as the constitution calls for the addition of 90 new elective seats to the lower house.

Also, a delimitation commission will have to redraw many constituency boundaries and voter rolls for those districts will have to be manually compiled...

Source: VOANews (USA)

Link to source: <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/Zimbabwe/2007-10-30-voa48.cfm>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.4: Existence of updated and accessible voters roll;

Civic groups press Zimbabwe to soften electoral laws to allow voter drive

Source Date: 29-10-2007

As Zimbabwe braces itself for presidential, parliamentary and local elections scheduled for March 2008, some civic groups says they are restricted by the country's electoral laws to efficiently conduct voter education programs.

Under the Zimbabwe Electoral Act, civic groups are prohibited from sourcing foreign funding to carry out their various voter education drives.

Civic groups said the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission gave them only two weeks to carry out voter education programs, throughout the country, before the 2005 parliamentary elections.

Many complained that the time was too short to effectively educate citizens about the voting process....

Source: VOANews (USA)

Link to source: <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/Zimbabwe/2007-10-29-voa52.cfm>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
 - 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
 - 2.1.8: Voter education.
 - 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
 - 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
 - 7.9: [The member state holding elections shall] Encourage the participation of women, disabled and youth in all aspects of the electoral process ...
-

Source Date: 02-11-2007

With only four months to go before the 2008 elections there are fears that thousands of people rendered stateless following the enactment of the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act No 12 of 2001, could again fail to vote as they are still to have their Zimbabwean citizenship restored, it has emerged.

Perceived aliens from neighbouring SADC countries like Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia, including their off-spring born and bred in Zimbabwe, some of whom have never been to their forefathers' original countries, were all rendered stateless in 2001.

Some have since renounced their alleged foreign citizenship and others are doing so in the current voter registration mop-up exercise.

However, it has emerged that a large number could fail to do so as they do not have the required long birth certificates due to migration and death of parents and guardians...

Irene Petras, the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) director whose organisation submitted evidence on the issue to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Defence and Home Affairs earlier this year, confirmed in a statement that her organisation was representing affected alien farm workers.

(She said LHR regretted that), despite the recommendations of the committee, the Registrar General had nevertheless continued to apply his own blatantly wrong interpretation to deny Zimbabweans their rightful citizenship in contravention of (the country's) national law as well as international human rights standards which protect against an individual being rendered stateless....

Source: Zimbabwe Independent, The (ZW)

Link to source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711020722.html>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 4.1.3: Non-discrimination in the voters' registration;
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...
- 7.9: [The member state holding elections shall] Encourage the participation of women, disabled and youth in all aspects of the electoral process ...

Mugabe's minister acknowledges violence against MDC

Source Date: 25-10-2007

Home Affairs Minister Kembo Mohadi on Wednesday acknowledged that opposition supporters were being victimised and admitted this could jeopardize on-going dialogue between the ruling Zanu PF party and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party.

Sources told Zim Online that Mohadi told senior MDC officials he met Wednesday morning at his offices to personally report to him acts of violence against members of the opposition party.

"He (Mohadi) also undertook to study a dossier prepared by the MDC detailing all acts of violence against its supporters that took place after March," said a government official who attended the meeting between Mohadi and the opposition officials...

The meeting ...was held following the minister's request to MDC president Morgan Tsvangirai that he wanted the opposition to corroborate statements that politically motivated violence was on the increase despite the South African brokered talks between the opposition party and Zanu PF. ...In the dossier submitted to Mohadi, the MDC claimed that 4 122 incidents of political violence and human rights abuses were recorded between January and June 2007.

Source: Zim Online (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=2214>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.9: [The member state holding elections shall] Encourage the participation of women, disabled and youth in all aspects of the electoral process ...

'MDC activist shot dead in cold blood'

Source Date: 02-11-2007

MDC activist Clemence Takaendesa was shot dead on Wednesday while fishing ... in KweKwe, by a retired army Brigadier with a well-known penchant for violence.

Brigadier Benjamin Mabenge shot and killed Takaendesa and seriously wounded his brother Taurai Chigede without firing a warning shot. ...

Mabenge was arrested on Thursday and is expected to appear in court soon facing murder charges.

Mabenge has told the police he saw a group of people, including the deceased and his brother, poaching fish from the river that runs through his farm....

The MDC said Mabenge does not own exclusive rights to the river and that there is no law in the country that prohibits people from fishing in a river, unless it is from a private dam. Mabenge, a war veteran, is reported to have grabbed the farm during the violent farm invasions....

The retired army officer has a history of violence and causing mayhem in the Midlands town. Between 2000 and 2005, under the protection of Zanu PF strongman, Emmerson Mnangagwa, Mabenge left a trail of broken bones among MDC activists.

... .. " MDC "

belonging to leading party activists.

MDC MP for KweKwe, Blessing Chebundo, is one of his other victims. In 2000 a group of youths led by Mabenge doused him with petrol but he escaped death by a whisker when he grabbed one of his attackers. This prevented him from being set on fire because the attacker would have been burned in the process....

Identified perpetrators: Brigadier Benjamin Mabenge

Identified victims: Clemence Takaendesa, MDC activist and his brother Taurai Chigede

Source: SW Radio Africa (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news021107/mdcshot021107.htm>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...

Minister threatens MDC supporters

Source Date: 28-10-2007

Hubert Nyanhongo, the Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications, has threatened to repossess houses at Hopley Farm from beneficiaries opposing his candidature in next year's elections, infuriated residents told The Standard.

Hopley is home to thousands of families uprooted by the government-sponsored Operation Murambatsvina in May 2005. The houses were built under Operation Garikai.

Two weeks ago, the residents said, Nyanhongo called a meeting and singled out former government social welfare officer, Ezekiel Mpande as his "enemy" and ordered him out of Hopley

The deputy minister ordered the youth militia to beat up Mpande if he was seen at the settlement again....

Mpande ...claims that he is being victimized for calling for equitable distribution of food at Hopley, where MDC supporters were being denied assistance.

Other MDC supporters said they now feared for their lives as next year's elections draw nearer....

Identified perpetrators: Hubert Nyanhongo, the Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications

Identified victims: Ezekiel Mpande, former government social welfare officer

Source: Zimbabwe Standard, The (ZW)

Link to source: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/oct28_2007.html

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;

- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
 - 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
 - 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
 - 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
 - 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
 - 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
 - 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
 - 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...
-

Chief bans MDC rally in Rukweza, Manicaland

Source Date: 24-10-2007

A chief with strong Zanu PF links has banned the MDC from holding a rally at Rukweza business centre in Makoni East, Manicaland province on Friday.

The MDC has however said it would defy Chief John Rukweza's ban and go ahead with its planned rally because he does not have the powers to ban or stop a political rally....

This is not the first time that a chief has tried to ban a rally in Manicaland....

'This is why we say Mugabe rigs the elections, because he uses chiefs to force their subjects to vote Zanu PF. All chiefs in Zimbabwe are now paid handsomely and move around with top of the range 4x4's. It's all part of the game by Zanu PF,' said Pishai Muchauraya, (the MDC spokesman for Manicaland province)....

Identified perpetrators: Chief John Rukweza, a chief with strong Zanu PF links

Source: SW Radio Africa (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news241007/chiefban241007.htm>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
 - 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
 - 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
 - 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
 - 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
 - 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
 - 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
 - 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
 - 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...
-

Hunger keeps children from school

Source Date: 24-10-2007

Children are staying away from school as hunger takes its toll in rural Matabeleland North Province.

Villagers are going for weeks without their staple maize meal and blame the lack of food on the state-run Grain Marketing Board (GMB). In the Buda resettlement area in Umguza district, people complain they last received maize from the GMB in July....

Villagers said they were risking their lives in accepting the staple food from their relatives in the cities, as they were sometimes accused by war veterans of getting the food from the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

"If they learn that that is how you are surviving, the war veterans storm your home and take away everything and there is nothing you can do about it, as they are literally ruling this place....," said another villager...

Some of the villagers said they were not getting food from humanitarian organisations, as staff at these non-governmental organisations were being harassed by the war veterans and some traditional leaders...

Source: Zimbabwean, The (ZW)

Link to source: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/oct25_2007.html

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
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- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...
- 7.9: [The member state holding elections shall] Encourage the participation of women, disabled and youth in all aspects of the electoral process ...

Villagers denied food aid

Source Date: 24-10-2007

Several villagers in drought-prone Mwenezi district in southern Zimbabwe were yesterday denied food aid by ruling Zanu PF officials amid fears President Robert Mugabe could increasingly use the humanitarian assistance bait to elicit support ahead of watershed elections next years.

Hungry villagers gathered at Rata rural service centre in the district were shocked yesterday after being told by Zanu PF officials and members of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) that they would not get any assistance because they supported the main opposition faction led by Morgan Tsvangirai....

"Only a few people managed to get food while hundreds were denied the opportunity to get the maize for allegedly supporting opposition political parties," said villager Albert Manjengwa....

"Officers from the president's office told us that the people in our area were not politically correct hence they must starve or get food from their party," added Manjengwa.

"We are also not happy to hear that members of the CIO have since taken over the distribution of food in rural areas where they screen beneficiaries on political grounds," added (MDC Masvingo central legislator Tongai) Matutu.

Agriculture Minister Rugare Gumbo yesterday confirmed that operatives from the CIO were part of food distribution teams in rural areas....

... Mugabe, in power since independence in 1980, is accused of employing dirty tactics such as manipulating the voter registration exercise, politicisation of food aid and harassment of opponents to ensure victory.

Source: Zim Online (ZW)

Link to source: <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=2207>

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
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- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
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- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

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