

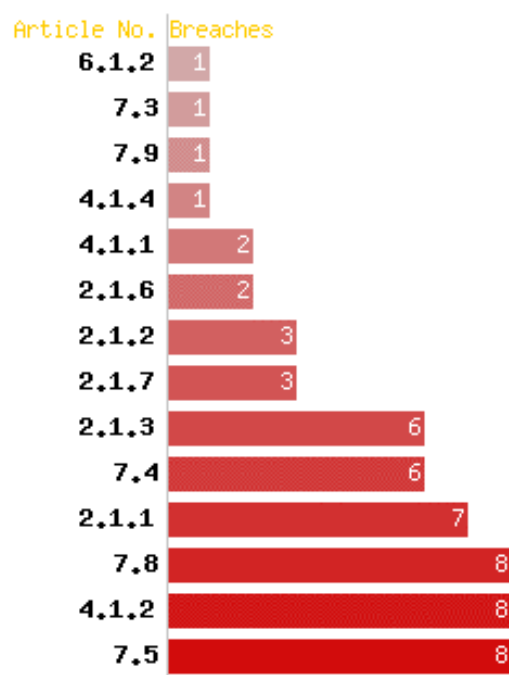
Sokwanele - Enough is Enough - Zimbabwe

PROMOTING NON-VIOLENT PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVE DEMOCRACY

Zimbabwe Election Watch

Issue 15: 15 January 2008

Breaches in Issue 15



Executive Summary

Bone-weary Zimbabweans dragged themselves into the new year after a Christmas season memorable for the chaotic monetary situation, dearth of food, grinding poverty and endless queues.

In a weekly open letter from a small Zimbabwean town, the writer comments: "It is hard to believe that Zimbabwe will be ready for an election in just 56 days time. The logistics of an election are enormous under normal circumstances, but mammoth in a country which has all but collapsed". Every aspect of an election, from the campaigning to the advertising, voting, monitoring and counting is swamped with problems..."

In his new year message, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader Morgan Tsvangirai reminds Zimbabweans that the situation requires a great deal of courage, endurance and resilience. With respect to the forthcoming elections (presidential and legislative), he says a lot of work is still pending to repair the voters' roll and the historically disputed electoral management system before any legitimate election, with a legitimate result, can take place.

He notes that, contrary to the letter and spirit of the current Pretoria negotiations, the Zanu PF regime has deployed the military, Tobaiwa Mudede (the Registrar General) and the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) to mark constituency boundaries and register voters. Tsvangirai reiterates it will be impossible to hold an election in March.

MDC MP David Coltart (AM) expresses a similar view in his January newsletter: "The concern of many is that if elections are held too soon, Zanu PF will be able to claim legitimacy through a process which has a democratic facade but which in reality does not allow for a genuinely free expression of the informed will of the electorate... We in the MDC say that there must be a new democratic constitution in place and sufficient time for its provisions to be implemented before an election is held. Zanu PF appears to be determined to

push ahead with a March election without any opportunity for (the newly negotiated) laws to have any meaningful effect on the electoral environment..."

Even provincial chairpersons of Zanu PF have reportedly told the leadership that the present schedule leaves little time to choose candidates and organise campaigns.

The Zimbabwe Diaspora Forum, a pro-human rights group, is adamant that no election can ever be free or fair if the estimated five million Zimbabweans who have been forced to leave the country for political or economic reasons are denied their right to vote. Contrary to international electoral regulations, the Zimbabwean government does not allow citizens based outside the country to vote.

In this issue we report that the Zimbabwean government will prohibit foreign observers deemed to be biased from overseeing the elections.

Independent local and regional election observers have expressed concern about the lack of transparency in the delimitation of new constituencies and the MDC says it will not recognise the exercise because it is seriously flawed.

The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa says the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission has no mandate to determine that elections must be held in March, as talks between the ruling party and opposition have yet to be concluded in Pretoria.

Lawyers representing the publishers of The Daily News and The Daily News on Sunday say the Media and Information Commission has yet provide them with a date on which the newspaper's application to resume operations will be held.

Intimidation and harassment of non-governmental organisation workers by Zanu PF youth militia and traditional leaders in rural areas is increasing.

Traditional chiefs in most parts of the Midlands province are being forced to take charge of Zanu PF cell branches in an attempt to coerce villagers in rural areas to vote for the ruling party.

Impoverished farmers are having to show they are loyal members of Zanu PF if they want free equipment being handed out by the government.

The recent government decision to abolish the executive mayor's office is yet another political strategy aimed at undermining the MDC's influence in urban areas, the party's holders of the posts have said.

Zimbabwe to keep out biased election observers: minister

Source Date: 14-01-2008

Zimbabwe will prohibit foreign observers deemed to be biased from overseeing its upcoming presidential and legislative elections, Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa said Monday.

"Our stance on foreign observers is that they are not a legal requirement," Chinamasa was quoted as saying by the state-controlled Herald newspaper, as Zimbabwe prepares for the polls which are expected before the end of March.

"We do not have to allow people to come here to legitimise or delegitimise our electoral processes and outcomes as a means of furthering their interests," he said.

"Hence we will not entertain anyone or any institution that does not have an open mind."

Both the European Union and the Commonwealth denounced as flawed the last presidential election in 2002 that saw Robert Mugabe win a new term in office, while an African Union observer mission gave the vote a clean bill of health.

EU monitors were meanwhile barred from the last parliamentary elections in 2005, although teams from so-called "friendly countries" - mainly from Africa but also including Russia - were allowed in....

Source: [AFP](#) [1]

SADC standards breached

4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections

6.1.2: Accreditation as election observers on a non-discriminatory basis:

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 ...

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission under fire over pre-election redistricting

Source Date: 07-01-2008

Independent local and regional election observers have expressed concern about the lack of transparency in the delimitation of new constituencies which the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission says it has just concluded.

ZEC Chairman George Chiweshe was quoted in the state-controlled Sunday Mail newspaper that the boundaries of 210 constituencies – increased from 150 under a 2006 constitutional amendment – has been completed.

Chiweshe said presidential and general elections set for March won't be postponed as the opposition demands.

Chiweshe said he will present a preliminary report to President Robert Mugabe on the delimitation results, which will eventually be tabled in parliament.

The commission is reported to have allocated 143 of 210 seats to rural areas where the ruling Zanu PF party's support is strongest. Only 67 seats were allocated to the urban and metropolitan areas dominated by the opposition.

Chairman Noel Kututwa of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network said the Zanu PF government has kept stakeholders in the dark on crucial election aspects.

Elsewhere, the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa said the electoral commission has no mandate to determine that the elections must be held in March, as talks between the ruling party and opposition have yet to be concluded in Pretoria.

Senior Program Officer Belinda Musanhu (said) there should be an investigation into how the delimitation was carried out if stakeholders remain disgruntled with the process.

Source: [VOANews](#) [2](USA)

SADC standards breached

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

2.1.7: Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions ...

4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens

4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections

7.3: [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...

7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

MDC will not recognise new constituency boundaries

Source Date: 09-01-2008

The head of the MDC (MT)'s election directorate, Ian Makone, said on Wednesday his party will not support the Zimbabwe Election Commission's delimitation exercise because it is seriously flawed.

Makone said they would not recognise the exercise that is almost complete mainly because of the dialogue process (mediated by South African President Thabo Mbeki), which is still in progress. The opposition had already rejected new constituency boundaries. The ZEC had announced these new boundaries for parliamentary constituencies for the country's 10 provinces in December....

'Our reasons for objecting are that the dialogue between the MDC and Zanu-PF is still in progress. We've insisted that at the end of the talks, the voters' roll needs to be looked at carefully because it is horribly flawed and inaccurate,' Makone said.

The country goes to vote in key presidential and parliamentary elections in March, with polls to be held concurrently for the first time in the nation's history. The number of parliamentary seats has been increased from 120 to 210.

The government claims that over 5,6 million people have been registered to vote and the 210 parliamentary seats will get an average of over 26 000 voters a constituency....

But Pishai Muchauraya, MDC spokesman for Manicaland said the major MDC strongholds have gained just 28 out of the 90 new constituencies.

The remaining 62 have been allocated to predominantly rural Mashonaland provinces (traditionally Zanu PF strongholds).

'Of the 210 constituencies, 143 are now rural constituencies, (Zanu PF strongholds) while only 67 are urban or peri-urban (MDC strongholds). Zanu PF already has an advantage of more than two-thirds majority before people

even go to vote. This is insane, it's a discredited exercise not worth noting,' added Muchauraya.

Source: [SW Radio Africa](#) [3](ZW)

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

2.1.7: Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions ...

4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections

4.1.4: Existence of updated and accessible voters roll;

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 ...

Lawyers worried by MIC's delay to hear Daily News case

Source Date: 09-01-2008

Lawyers representing Zimbabwe's largest privately-owned newspaper that was banned four years ago, say they are worried by the slow pace the reconstituted Media and Information Commission (MIC) has taken to set a date for the hearing of their case.

In an interview yesterday, Mordecai Mahlangu the lawyer of the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), publishers of The Daily News and its sister paper, The Daily News on Sunday, said the MIC was yet to write to them giving a date on which the newspaper's application to resume operations would be heard.

"It is almost two months since MIC was reconstituted but there is nothing that has taken place," said Mahlangu. "... It seems everything was just a political ploy to create an impression out there that something was being done pertaining to The Daily News case."

In November last year, the Information Minister Sikhanyiso Ndlovu reconstituted the MIC and said he wanted the body to “start in earnest” reviewing a ban on Zimbabwe’s largest privately-owned paper imposed in 2003.

Ndlovu admitted that the new MIC had taken longer than he had expected to start the ANZ matter....

The Daily News, which was Zimbabwe’s best selling daily paper, was banned after the Supreme Court ruled it was operating outside the law because it was not registered with the MIC.

A tough government media law requires journalists and their companies to register with the commission in order to operate in Zimbabwe....

Hope had been raised that The Daily News would return early this year. But journalists and political observers remain sceptical that the government would allow the mass circulating paper it often accused of being a voice of the opposition, months ahead of tricky presidential and parliamentary elections this year.

The issue of media freedom is part of ongoing talks being mediated by South Africa between Mugabe’s ruling Zanu PF party and the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party.

Source: zimbabwejournalists.com [4] (ZW)

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4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections

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Zanu PF shuts out 'hostile' NGOs from rural areas

Source Date: 06-01-2008

Zanu PF has tightened the screws on the operations of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) perceived to be against the ruling party, The Standard has learnt.

Representatives of NGOs last week said intimidation and harassment of NGO workers by Zanu PF youth militia and traditional leaders in rural areas was increasing as the 2008 elections draw nearer.

The NGOs said political harassment was most pronounced in rural areas countrywide where Zanu PF commands most of its support and is determined to maintain its stranglehold.

The party has on several occasions accused NGOs of working with the opposition and the West in order to effect "regime change".

National Association for Non-Governmental Organisations (Nango) expressed concern at the harassment of its affiliates.

"We are worried by the increasing cases where workers of NGOs are seen as enemies of the State," said Fambayi Ngirande, Nango's advocacy and communications manager. "The NGO Human Rights Forum has documented several such cases."

He lamented the lack of a democratic structure to facilitate the full participation of civic society in development activities in the country.

Another organisation, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) said it has recorded increased cases of people being intimidated for their involvement in civic society activities in November.

ZPP said among the organisations targeted are the Civic Education Network Trust (Civnet), Zimbabwe Election Support Network (Zesn), Women of Zimbabwe Arise (Woza) and the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA)....

In some rural areas, people seen reading newspapers other than the official State newspapers are being threatened or being beaten up, in scenes reminiscent of previous violent elections when people were assaulted for carrying The Daily News.

Just before the 2000 elections, people caught reading or carrying newspapers critical of the government such as The Daily News, The Standard or the Zimbabwe Independent, were assaulted. Some were forced to "eat" the newspapers.

The ZPP said in Mashonaland Central Province people were recently harassed for listening to the Voice of America-based Studio 7, reading the Zimbabwe Independent and The Zimbabwean newspapers, viewed as opposition tools for regime change.

"The ruling party, Zanu PF, continues to stifle people's access to alternative information from the only state-owned broadcasting stations and few local newspapers," said ZPP...

Source: [Zimbabwe Standard, The](#) [5] (ZW)

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;

4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections

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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 ...

Zanu PF forces traditional leaders to head rural party structures

Source Date: 07-01-2008

Traditional chiefs in most parts of the Midlands province are being forced to take charge of cell branches of the ruling Zanu PF party, in an attempt to coerce villagers in rural areas to vote Zanu PF, Newsreel learned on Monday.

Blessing Chebundo, the MDC MP for KweKwe, told us that headmen and chiefs are being forced to join ruling party structures starting from cell, up to district levels.

'We have received reports of intimidation and we also have irrefutable evidence of chiefs and headmen being forced to become part and parcel of Zanu PF. These are all well orchestrated moves by the regime to ensure they force villagers in rural areas to vote Zanu PF,' Chebundo said.

Chebundo's allegations come in the wake of reports over the weekend of Zanu PF tightening the screws on the operations of non-governmental organisations perceived to be against the ruling party.

The Zimbabwe Standard reported that intimidation and harassment of NGO workers by Zanu PF youth militia in rural areas was increasing as the 2008 elections draw nearer.

Political harassment is pronounced in rural areas countrywide where Zanu PF purports to command most of its support. National Association for Non-Governmental Organisations spokesman Fambayi Ngirande told the paper they were concerned at the harassment of their affiliates.

He said; 'We are worried by the increasing cases where workers of NGOs are seen as enemies of the State. The NGO Human Rights Forum has documented several such cases.'...

Source: [SW Radio Africa](#) [6] (ZW)

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Zimbabwe election observers report problems three months ahead of poll

Source Date: 10-01-2008

Impoverished Zimbabwean farmers have to show they are loyal members of the ruling party if they want free equipment the government is offering, and opposition supporters have been threatened with dogs, independent democracy monitors said Thursday.

Thursday's report by the Zimbabwe Election Support Network three months ahead of planned national elections also outlined problems with voter education and registration. The report underlined concerns by the main opposition party about the fairness of the poll.

There was no immediate response from the government, which has insisted that the elections will be open and democratic.

The support network, in its latest election bulletin, said it deployed 120 observers throughout the country and based its findings on information from members of the public attending its community workshops.

Zimbabwe Election Support Network observers reported in the Masvingo district in southern Zimbabwe, ox-drawn plows being distributed by the government were allocated only to people holding cards showing they were dues-paying members of the ruling Zanu PF party and who could chant three party slogans. The local governor said that donated plows would be taken away in districts won by opposition candidates, the network reported.

In the central district of Gokwe, villagers were told they would not have to pay for plows as long as the ruling party won the March polls, the report said.

The distributions were part of a Reserve Bank program begun in November to get 120,000 plows, tens of thousands of donkey carts, seeds and other equipment into farmers' hands to revive crop production and end acute food shortages in the former regional breadbasket.

The election report said in Zaka in southeastern Zimbabwe, a ruling party councilman threatened to set dogs on opposition supporters in his area.

In the southwestern community of Silobela, traditional leaders "indicated they do not welcome opposition supporters in their areas."

The election support network reported that although campaigning was still low key, observers reported cases of violence and of voters being forced to attend a ruling party rally in December....

The support network reported voter education programs had still not been put in place by the state Electoral Commission and irregularities were seen in voter registration and the compiling of voters' lists by state election authorities....

Source: [International Herald Tribune, The](#) [7]

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Why Zanu PF wants executive mayors out

Source Date: 13-01-2007

The recent government decision to abolish the executive mayor's office is yet another political strategy aimed at undermining the MDC's influence in urban areas, the party's holders of the posts have said.

The government gazetted the Local Government Laws Amendment Bill last month, which seeks to abolish the post of executive mayor and empower the minister responsible for local government to appoint commissioners for urban areas.

Clause 12 of the Bill seeks to abolish the office of executive mayor, created in 2002. The executive committees of municipal councils will also be abolished, their powers being reassigned to the council....

"Both these institutions also imposed additional financial burdens on the municipal councils.

"As a result of this bill, the office of mayor, deputy mayor, chairperson and deputy chairperson of a municipal or town council will revert to being elected by local authority councils.

Executive mayors who spoke to The Standard this week described the bill as yet another attempt by Zanu PF to regain control of the cities and towns it lost to the MDC in previous elections from 2002.

Zanu PF enjoys little support among the urban electorate which has consistently voted for the MDC.

The executive mayor of Bulawayo, Japhet Ndabeni-Ncube (MDC), accused the government of trying to frustrate the MDC since most local authorities were controlled by the opposition party...

The MDC mayors have in the past accused the Minister of Local Government and Urban Development, Ignatius Chombo, of interfering with their jobs...

Chombo replaced (four MDC) mayors with commissioners, (who are) now being blamed for running down local authorities (notably Harare and Chitungwiza).

Source: [Zimbabwe Standard, The](#) [8] (ZW)
SADC standards breached

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[2] <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/Zimbabwe/2008-01-07-voa39.cfm>

[3] <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news090108/mdcboundaries090108.htm>

[4] <http://www.zimbabwejournalists.com/category.php?cat=1>

[5] http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jan6_2008.html

[6] <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news070108/trad-leaders070108.htm>

[7] <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/01/10/africa/AF-GEN-Zimbabwe-Elections.php>

[8] <http://www.thezimbabwestandard.com/printpage.cfm?id=8151&siteid=1>