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**Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe  
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Election Watch 2012-10**

## **TSVANGIRAI'S MARRIAGE**

# ***Media take PM to task over 'colourful' love life***

A LEGAL battle between the Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and his estranged lover Locardia Karimatsenga, gifted the media a feast of salacious news to feed on during the month of September. They all lived up to the gift.

On September 8<sup>th</sup>, a day after Karimatsenga filed a US\$15,000 monthly maintenance claim against Tsvangirai in the Harare civil court, she made an urgent High Court application seeking to prevent the Prime Minister from marrying his present fiancée, Elizabeth Macheke, a ceremony set for the following Saturday.

These court applications sparked a media frenzy, with newspapers plastering their front pages with sensational headlines reflecting their own perspectives on the events: "*Tsvangirai wedding war*" (*NewsDay*, 8/9), "*Plot against PM intensifies*" (*Daily News*, 8/9), "*PM ex-lover humiliated*" (*NewsDay*, 13/9), and "*Locardia outshines Tsvangirai in court again*" (*The Herald* 28/9).

While the private media agreed that Tsvangirai's public fallout with Karimatsenga and his alleged bed-hopping had damaged his reputation, in addition to causing serious divisions in his party; the state media pounced on the scandal, attempting to discredit the Prime Minister and his party by suggesting this was evidence that he was unfit to govern ahead of national elections.

This was reflected in 52 (85%) of the 61 reports the state media carried on the topic.

The remaining nine were straightforward reports on court proceedings.

*The Herald* (15/9) even ran a front-page comment: *Can anyone trust Tsvangirai with Zim?* Celebrating the cancellation of Tsvangirai's wedding licence by Harare provincial magistrate Munamoto Mutevedzi, a day before the proposed wedding, and the dismissal by the High Court of the PM's urgent chamber application to suspend the lower court's ruling, the paper gloated over the Prime Minister's predicament: ***"The groom was rightly hoist by his own petard in circumstances that call into question his suitability for the highest office in the land. So grave have been his errors of judgment, and failure to handle personal affairs that probably only his mother can still repose faith in his ability to be Head of State and Government and Commander-in-Chief of our defence forces"***.

In another article, (17/9) the paper published an opinion piece by former ZBC newsreader Gilbert Nyambabvu, declaring: ***"To be fair...Tsvangirai did well to become head of the country's largest union body, but to seek to propel him beyond that achievement is to promote the man beyond his capabilities and appropriate station in life"***.

While the state media sympathized with Locardia and other women who were allegedly ditched by Tsvangirai, the *Daily News* prominently reported the PM's dismissal of these court cases as a grand project by ZANU PF and the CIO to tarnish his image, without questioning the truth of such claims, or how he had contributed to such a dilemma in the first place.

But most of the private media blamed Tsvangirai for mishandling his private affairs in most of their 35 reports.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* (14/9), for instance, argued that while Zimbabwe's state security agents might have been involved in some of the scandals, this argument was ***"not sustainable"***, as it ***"wholly ignores the issue of Tsvangirai's character and judgement"***.

The weekly's *Muckracker* column dismissed attempts to exonerate Tsvangirai on the grounds of alleged CIO involvement: ***"Whether the accusations are true or not Tsvangirai's conduct has been less than exemplary"***.

## **Copac postpones second All-Stakeholders' Conference**

THE postponement of the second All-Stakeholders Conference by the Constitutional Select Committee (Copac) was the most significant development in Zimbabwe's chaotic constitution-making process during the month.

All media reported Copac announcing the postponement of the three-day conference from October 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> to the end of October, citing **“logistical challenges”** such as lack of funds and the need for more time to accredit delegates (ZTV, 25/9, 8pm and *The Herald*, 26/9).

Reports of the postponement of the conference constituted 10 of the 33 reports the media carried on the long delayed constitutional reform process.

Of the 127 stories, 71 (56%) featured in the private media, while the remaining 56 appeared in the official state media.

Forty-one of the 127 stories were on reports that ZANU PF had backed down on its demand to amend Copac's draft before the conference and allow the meeting to proceed.

Sixty (47%) others were on claims by ZANU PF and other interest groups that the Copac draft was a Western-sponsored scheme to reverse the gains of Independence and assist Prime Minister Tsvangirai and his MDC-T party to seize power.

The remaining 16 were on a campaign by the two MDC formations for Zimbabweans to support Copac's draft.

Although all the media agreed that Copac's postponement of the Stakeholders Conference was an indication of chaos in the constitution-making process, the government media reported this and other related developments from ZANU PF's perspective.

The official media mostly quoted ZANU PF and its usual **“political analysts”** such as Goodson Nguni, Danny Musukuma and Goodwill Masimirembwa in 41 (73%) of their 56 reports, discrediting Copac's draft as **“an MDC-T document”**, which **“promoted homosexuality”**, and **“ignored the views of the people”** (ZTV, 3 – 25/9, 8pm).

These sources also accused Copac of being reluctant to publish the National Statistical Report because it **“knew that it had subverted the will of the people”** (ZTV, 3, 5, 7, 13 & 19/9, 8pm).

None of the government media's reports questioned the truth of ZANU PF's claims.

The views of the two MDC-T formations were briefly captured in seven stories. The remaining eight reports were event reports on Copac Press conferences.

The private media's coverage of the topic was varied.

These media criticized ZANU PF for opposing Copac's draft despite the fact that its representatives in Copac had approved the document, a move the private media viewed as equivalent to **"backtracking"**.

The private media also reported political analysts predicting a deadlock at the stakeholders' conference **"because of a lack of consensus between ZANU PF and the two MDC formations"** (*The Standard*, 30/9).

They also expressed concern over the decision by Prime Minister Tsvangirai to launch a "Vote Yes" Campaign for the draft, warning the MDC-T that such action was **"premature"**, especially coming ahead of the conference that is supposed to debate the draft (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 14/9).

The *Independent* urged Zimbabwe's political parties to stop viewing Copac's draft as a political party document and allow Zimbabweans to decide for themselves: **"Zimbabweans have not been afforded the opportunity to see if their views were properly captured and attempts to persuade them to reject or accept the draft suggests the process is compromised by political party positions"**.

# ***Soldiers descend on 'ZANU PF' touts***

A JOINT crackdown by the army, the police and Harare City Council on rank marshals, most of them known members of the ZANU PF-aligned terror group, Chipangano, also made headlines in the media.

The blitz was reportedly precipitated by an attack on two soldiers by rank marshals at the Charge Office rank after the soldiers came to the rescue of commuters who were being harassed (*The Herald*, *The Zimbabwe Independent* & *The Zimbabwean*, 8, 14 & 20/9).

Reportedly, the soldiers staged a revenge attack on the rank marshals, resulting in the arrest of four of their colleagues on September 10<sup>th</sup> (*The Zimbabwean*, 20/9). The next day soldiers, angered by the arrests, accused the police of siding with Chipangano, and embarked on a week-long campaign against the touts (*The Zimbabwean*, 20/9).

The media carried 29 reports on this campaign, which resulted in the arrest of 546 touts (*The Herald*, 17/9).

All the media reported commuter crews and operators, members of the public, ZANU PF secretary for administration Didymus Mutasa and the army condemning the attacks on soldiers and the police's failure to rein in the touts, believed to be "**runners**" for a shadowy group known as "**Mandimbandimba**" that controls kombi ranks and charges operators extortionate and illegal fees for carrying passengers (*The Herald*, 8 & 13/9).

In one case *The Herald* (8/9) reported Mutasa urging the party's provincial administration to investigate, since some of the touts claimed to be ZANU PF members: ***"The party does not allow that kind of behaviour and we are calling for the Harare provincial committee to act and stop that behaviour. ZANU PF does not win friends in that way and the President has spoken on numerous occasions against violence"***.

Asked to comment, police spokesman Chief Inspector James Sabau appeared to be defensive: ***"People who are assaulted have to report to the nearest police station or police officer. I would be able to comment if the soldiers had lodged their complaints with the police."***

Apart from complaining about the police inaction, all the media reported some of these rank marshals as having built mansions in Harare's up-market suburbs and bought flashy vehicles, as commuter omnibuses and operators were losing as much as US\$20 000 a day (*The Herald* and *The Standard*, 8 & 23/9).

*The Zimbabwean* (19/9) claimed that the manner in which the police handled the criminal activities of Chipangano was not only ***"bound to expose the ties between Chipangano and ZRP,"*** but also ***"exposed tensions in the senior ranks"***, with its public relations department ***"reeling in confusion"*** and ***"issuing conflicting statements"***.

This private weekly speculated that the subsequent ***"reassignment"*** of senior police officers such as James Sabau, Wayne Bvudzijena, Oliver Mandipaka and Andrew Phiri was ***"a retributive reaction as a result of the embarrassment caused"***.

# ***Chipangano's criminal activities dominate rights abuse reports***

REPORTS on the criminal activities of ZANU PF's vigilante group Chipangano dominated the media's coverage of rights violations in the month.

The media reported that although ZANU PF had consistently denied any ties with this Mbare-based terror group, Chipangano has for long been accused of kidnapping and beating up suspected ZANU PF opponents; extorting money from commuter operators and flea market vendors; stealing goods from vendors; and disrupting meetings - even inside Parliament – all with absolute impunity.

Eleven (34%) of the 32 incidents of rights abuses the media reported were linked to Chipangano.

Other incidents included:

- The eviction of shop owners from their business premises in Kwekwe by a new militant group calling itself *Al Shabab*, taking over businesses under the guise of ZANU PF's controversial youth empowerment (SW Radio Africa, 18/9).
- Police raid on suspected pirate television station DDB Harsh 3 in Belgravia, Harare, seizing equipment it claimed was used for broadcasting (*The Herald* and SW Radio Africa, 27/9), and
- Clashes between MDC-T supporters and suspected gold panners at Shangani Business Centre. The MDC-T members, who were on their way to the party's 13th anniversary celebrations in Bulawayo, stopped at Shangani to buy refreshments. A fight reportedly broke out when MDC-T youths tried to force panners to chant their party's slogan, resulting in two MDC-T activists being injured and three vehicles damaged (*Chronicle*, 1/10).

## What they said...

***“The fellow (Prime Minister Tsvangirai) has been enjoying without restraint his clearly voracious lust, in the process paying little, if any, regard to the old maxim that the upper orders of society should be careful to minister to their vices with a sense of finesse, discretion and proportion”*** – Gilbert Nyambabvu, deputy editor of UK-based online news agency New Zimbabwe.com (*The Herald*, 17/9).

***“Can a man who can’t uphold the sanctity of promises made to loved ones, who share his bed, be trusted with honouring the promises he makes to strangers whose names and faces he doesn’t even know or recognize? Can a man who, at 60, toys with the emotions and the lives of women young enough to be his children or even grandchildren be entrusted with an office that makes him the virtual father of the nation?”*** - *The Herald*’s front-page comment (15/9).

***“Any male can open a zip, but it takes a real man to know when, where and for whom to open it; and to accept the consequences of those actions. On this score, Mr Tsvangirai has been found wanting...”*** - (*The Herald*, 15/9).

***“ZANU PF is acting in bad faith and since 2007 we have been negotiating with them. They have more learned people than any other party but whatever happens when they get into a room with that old man makes them stop thinking as if that man is going to live forever”*** – MDC-T secretary-general Tendai Biti accusing ZANU PF of stalling constitutional reforms (*NewsDay*, 29/9).

***“The issues (raised by ZANU PF) are very fundamental and as a party that brought independence, ZANU PF can never accept that you can create a constitution out of anger, a constitution that has an anti-Chombo clause, an anti-Mugabe clause and anti-service chiefs clause, an anti-war veterans clause in as (part of the) a constitution”*** – ZANU PF analyst Goodson Nguni (*ZTV*, 12/9, 8pm).

***“ZANU PF is like a cornered rat that has nowhere to run, that’s the reason why they now demand a national report when actually Article 6 of the GPA says Copac should produce a draft – not a report”*** – MDC-N spokesman Qhubani Moyo (*NewsDay*, 24/9).

***“These guys (Mandimbandimbos) think they have the country in their hands. How long is it going to take before responsible authorities listen to our concerns? How can soldiers be beaten up in public by these people and nothing happens? We are afraid of lodging complaints to anyone because they say they are protected by powerful people”*** - Chiremba Road Omnibus Operators Association member Jackson Mavhunga (*The Herald*, 8/9).

Ends

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