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The Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe
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State media take sides in battle of the Moyos

THE jockeying for the post of Speaker of Parliament between ZANU PF and the MDC-T, retained last Tuesday by MDC-T's Lovemore Moyo after the Supreme Court had set aside his initial election, was a prominent feature in the media this week.

The official media openly campaigned for the ZANU PF candidate for the post, party chairman Simon Khaya Moyo, while maligning the credentials of Lovemore Moyo. Of the 11 reports that these media carried on the two's prospects of landing the post, including profiles, six approvingly reported on Khaya Moyo's credentials while five were dismissive of those of Lovemore Moyo.

An analysis piece carried in *The Sunday Mail* (27/3), for example, 'exposed' the MDC-T candidate's alleged failure during his tenure as Speaker, which reportedly included an overbearing attitude and "**disrespect**" for MPs, while it marketed Khaya Moyo as a "**scholar**", "**astute politician and diplomat**" whose "**impeccable curriculum vitae**" would bring dignity to the Speakership.

In a front-page report, the paper also reported on how the "**former de-facto**" Speaker of the House of Assembly faced arrest for contempt of court for his alleged attack on the judiciary after the Supreme Court nullified his election to that post, which an unnamed lawyer contended "**raised doubts about his suitability for the speakership**".

The official media endorsed Clerk of Parliament Austin Zvoma's postponement of the resumption of business in Parliament on Tuesday, March 22nd to facilitate fresh elections for the Speaker, his decision to bar Lovemore Moyo from participating in parliamentary activities and strip him of his parliamentary privileges on the grounds that he could not revert to his previous position as Matobo MP, without balancing it with expert independent views. Expert legal opinions included advice from constitutional lawyer Lovemore Madhuku and even Attorney-General Johannes Tomana who both argued that, according to law, Lovemore Moyo should revert to his former position as Matobo MP (*The Herald*, 22/3).

Neither did these media raise questions on the timing of the arrest and detention of some MDC-T MPs, which the private media viewed as a ZANU PF ploy to whittle down the MDC-T's parliamentary majority ahead of the election for the Speaker. Reportedly, the number of MPs from ZANU PF and MDC-T stood tied at 98 each with the smaller MDC faction led by Welshman Ncube contributing seven.

The private media quoted the MDC-T criticizing Zvoma for cancelling a parliamentary session, widely expected to hold elections for a new Speaker, as unilateral and a ploy to give ZANU PF more time to strategize (*Studio 7* and *ZimOnline*, 22& 24/3).

They also quoted analysts and the smaller MDC formation, which eventually decided to back Lovemore Moyo's candidacy at the weekend, viewing the latest crackdown on MDC-T MPs as a scheme by ZANU PF to win the Speaker's election (*Daily News*, 27/3).

Did you notice?

In this week alone, ZTV and the official papers referred to Lovemore Moyo as the "**dethroned**" Speaker of Parliament 15 times.

PM takes SOS to SADC over political crisis

PRIME Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's two-week regional diplomatic initiative, which follows widespread allegations of a fresh wave of persecution of his party's officials and supporters, reinforced the belief that political temperatures in the troubled coalition had soared to boiling point.

The official media either censored or distorted these developments by exclusively presenting the MDC-T as the authors of Zimbabwe's troubles. In their two reports on the power-sharing issue, *The Herald* and *Chronicle* (23/3) distorted the purpose of Tsvangirai's regional diplomatic initiative by projecting the MDC-T's calls for SADC to initiate the drafting of a **"roadmap"** for free and fair elections in the country as an attempt to **"initiate a parallel process"** to the Global Political Agreement (GPA).

The papers quoted presidential spokesperson George Charamba accusing the MDC-T of trying to **"create a roadmap out of a roadmap"** and **"rig the GPA"** by replacing it with its **"own wished roadmap"**. He also blamed the MDC-T for **"making false claims of political violence against ZANU PF in the vain hope of deferring elections to next year"** and as a way to **"drum up support for its position"** ahead of the SADC Troika meeting in Zambia (*The Herald* and *Chronicle*, 23/3).

The private media reported Tsvangirai's meeting with South African President Jacob Zuma over Zimbabwe's political crisis but did not shed light on its outcome or assess the effectiveness of the diplomatic offensive.

The Standard (27/3), for example, passively quoted Tsvangirai's spokesman Luke Tamborinyoka saying the visit was aimed to **"update"** Zuma on the **"dire situation"** in Zimbabwe and to urge him to implement a roadmap for democratic polls. They noted that Tsvangirai would also visit Namibia, DRC and Tanzania.

Radio VoP (27/3) quoted Zuma's spokesman, Zizi Kodwa, saying Tsvangirai's meeting with Zuma was aimed at assessing progress made in implementing the GPA, while *ZimOnline* (26/3) reported Zimbabwe's Cabinet as having failed to agree on the future of the national unity government in the week.

ZANU PF CAMPAIGNS FLOOD STATE MEDIA

THE state media carried 190 stories on the campaign activities of Zimbabwe's political parties: ZBC (144) and official papers (46).

Of these, 85 percent (161 stories) promoted ZANU PF campaign activities.

The party's anti-sanctions campaign received publicity in 86 of the reports, 18 others advanced ZANU PF ideology relating to the exhumation of the remains of Zimbabweans who allegedly died in the liberation struggle, while President Mugabe's defence of ZANU PF policies, particularly its controversial indigenization agenda, at the burial of national hero and ZANU PF Harare provincial governor, David Karimanzira, was captured in 57 stories.

The remaining 29 portrayed the MDC formations in a negative light.

The government media did not carry any critical analysis of ZANU PF's campaign activities. For example, while they portrayed the party's anti-sanctions crusade as popular and even supported by white commercial farmers and the Indian community (ZTV, 21/3, 7am and 8pm), they either ignored or failed to verify reports that ZANU PF was coercing Zimbabweans to sign the petition (Radio VoP, 26/3).

The government media did not expose the police's continued reluctance to let ZANU PF's opponents hold rallies across the country, the latest being their refusal to grant permission to the MDC-T to hold its rally at Zimbabwe Grounds in Highfield, Harare.

The private media carried 42 stories on the parties' campaign activities. Twenty-one of these were on ZANU PF's campaign activities and 14 on the MDC-T. The remaining seven were on the smaller MDC formation, led by Welshman Ncube.

The private media publicised the uneven political environment in the country by highlighting, among others, the police's alleged selective application of the law.

For example, *NewsDay* (26/3) reported that police had again stopped an MDC-T peace rally scheduled for Zimbabwe Grounds on the basis that ZANU PF had "**booked the venue for a football tournament**". Reportedly, police prohibited another MDC rally earmarked for Budiro.

Earlier, *NewsDay* (24/3) reported on an affidavit to the High Court by Harare Mayor Muchadeyi Masunda dismissing claims by the police that ZANU PF had made "**block bookings**" of its facilities in and around Harare for the whole year, insisting that council did not permit such bookings. It quoted him saying that "**no booking had been made**".

The daily also reported on coercion of people, particularly the police, to sign the anti-sanctions petition.

Mass graves propaganda ignites Gukurahundi controversy

ZBC's ongoing saturation coverage of the exhumation of the remains of Zimbabweans allegedly killed during the liberation struggle from a mass grave at a disused mine in Mount Darwin, ignited controversy over the fate of thousands of Zimbabweans killed in Matabeleland in the 1980s during the Gukurahundi era.

The private media reported analysts dismissing the Mount Darwin exhumations as part of ZANU PF's campaign strategy ahead of national elections and quoted ZAPU threatening to conduct a parallel exercise to exhume the remains of its members who died before and after Zimbabwe's independence (*The Standard*, 27/3).

ZAPU defended its intentions as aimed at countering ZANU PF's attempts to **"distort"** the country's history by giving the impression that the mass graves in Mount Darwin only contained the remains of its liberation fighters and **"cover up evidence"** of the Gukurahundi atrocities (*The Standard*, 27/3).

Earlier, Spot FM (16/3) reported the discovery of another mass grave at a mine owned by a Canadian firm, Caledonia, in Gwanda as another **"clear testimony to the atrocities that the Rhodesian forces (committed against) Zimbabweans who were fighting to free themselves from colonial bondage"**.

ZBC (21/3, 8pm) also dismissed suggestions that some of the remains were victims of Gukurahundi massacres in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands or of ZANU PF-sponsored violence during previous elections. The state broadcaster reported **"medical expert"** and former Health Minister Felix Muchemwa as having **"poured cold water"** on concerns by **"spin doctors in the MDC and their accomplices in the private media"** over the discovery of what appeared to be "fresh bodies" in Mount Darwin.

Muchemwa argued that **"acid"** might have been used to **"mummify"** the bodies **"to prevent further decomposition, which could have attracted dogs and people to the evidence of the Rhodesian massacres"**.

Rights violations increase

ZANU PF's campaign to regain Zimbabweans' support ahead of national elections, which President Mugabe wants held later this year, appeared to be behind the recent upsurge in politically motivated violence across the country.

The media carried 27 fresh incidents of human rights violations. Most of these (24) appeared in the private media. Eight of the incidents were linked to ZANU PF's anti-sanctions campaign, while civil society activists and MDC members were targets in the remaining 19 incidents.

The private media viewed the harassment, arrest and detention of MDC-T MPs, especially the re-arrest of Energy Minister Elton Mangoma and Gokwe-Kabuyani MP Costin Muguti, as a ZANU PF tactic to reduce the MDC's parliamentary majority so that it could win elections for the Speaker of Parliament (Studio 7 and Radio VoP, *NewsDay* and *New Zimbabwe.com*, 24 & 25/3).

Other incidents included:

- Threats of arrest of MDC-T officials: Home Affairs Co-Minister Theresa Makone, Glen View South MP Paul Madzore and Chipinge West MP Sibonile Nyamudeza (Studio 7, SW Radio Africa, Radio VoP, *Daily News* and *NewsDay*, 25, 26 & 27/3).
- The arrest of MDC-M Muzarabani South chairperson Simon Waiton for allegedly refusing to sign ZANU PF's anti-sanctions petition, and the arrest of MDC-T Deputy Prime Minister's driver, Witness Dube, for criticizing ZANU PF's anti-sanctions campaign (*NewsDay* and Radio VoP, 25/3),
- The raid on MDC-T headquarters and assault of party supporters who had converged to hold primary elections in Harare by the police, who were allegedly chanting liberation war songs (*The Standard*, 27/3), and
- The deportation of German national Yvonne Paperndorf for "**working without a work permit**" in Zimbabwe (*The Standard*, 27/3)

What they said...

“Whites who want to work for us are free to come to be our servants, those who don’t want can stay out. No one is forced to come and invest here...” – President Mugabe addressing mourners at the burial of Harare Metropolitan Governor and national hero David Karimanzira at the National Heroes acre in Harare (*The Zimbabwean*, 31/3).

“President Mugabe will continue ruling this country. Nobody will stop him, even if the GPA collapses, he will continue ruling. Zimbabweans are actually lucky to have a brave man like him” – Defence Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa addressing ZANU PF supporters in Bulawayo (*Daily News*, 25/3).

“As ex-combatants we want to understand from him (Finance Minister Tendai Biti) what type of weapons he has to fight this war. He is also part of the Government, which he wants to fight. If this is his mentality, then he should resign because he does not understand his duties” – Issa Madzivanyika, Harare provincial war veterans’ lands secretary, speaking during a demonstration by war veterans against Biti for allegedly refusing to increase civil servants’ salaries, which would result in better monthly pensions for them (*The Herald*, 24/3).

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The MEDIA UPDATE was produced and circulated by the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe, 9 Knight Bruce Road, Milton Park, Harare, Tel: 263 4 741816 / 778115, E-mail: monitors@mmpz.org.zw For previous MMPZ reports, and more information about the Project, please visit our website at <http://www.mmpz.org/>