

The Worker

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Voice of the Labour Movement

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ZCTU forces government climb down on SEZ Bill



Lessons from Rio Olympics



Anti wage-theft campaign launched

BY STAFF REORTER

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) has launched a wage theft campaign in the wake of non-payment of wages for several months and years to the majority of workers in Zimbabwe describing it as a threatening circumstance akin to slavery which cannot be tolerated.

The "Working Without Pay—Wage Theft in Zimbabwe" campaign was launched following the conclusion of a survey on non-payment of wages in Zimbabwe by the ZCTU research arm, the Labour and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe (LEDRIZ) and The Solidarity Center. The survey which was carried out on 442 companies, showed that an estimated 80 000 workers have not received their wages and benefits on time for periods extending beyond 12 months without receiving their monthly wages, but are still expected to report for duty.

The report also indicated that the non-payment of wages is no longer a private-sector phenomenon, but had extended to the public sector, where many workers are also going without pay.

Both government and parastatal institutions have been complacent about dealing with this issue.

The report further notes that between 2011 and 2014, the number of workers in informal employment grew from 84,2 percent of the currently employed work force to 94,5 percent, translating to 5,9 million workers by 2014.

Among the approximately 350 000 workers in formal employment in 2014, are the more than 80 000 workers who did not receive wages and benefits on time.

"Wage non-payment affects an estimated 22 000-plus workers for urban councils, 12 000 in agriculture, and more than 7 500 each in the security sector, automotive industry and railways. Workers in several sectors are averaging more than 20 months without a pay cheque. Those affected include people who are still formally employed and required to go to work, as well as others who have been laid off without receiving their wages and benefits due to

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The editor would like to apologies for the disruptive production of the hard copies of your favourite newspaper, **The Worker Newspaper** during the few past months. This is due to high costs of printing that we are facing. However, readers are encouraged to visit our website www.theworkerzimbabwe.com every month to read your paper if you fail to get it in the streets. Be assured that we will strive to give you the best and accurate labour stories as we remain the only genuine Voice of the Labour Movement. We apologies of any inconvenience caused. Good reading! - **Last Tarabuku** - Editor

All set for ZCTU elective congress



ZCTU LEADERS, Secretary General Japhet Moyo, President George Nkiwane and WAC Chairperson Miriam Katumba leading from the front at a demonstration will be convening for the congress later this month

BY ADMORE MARAMBANYIKA

The county's largest labour body, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) is set to hold its 8th National elective congress later this month at a venue to be identified in Harare.

The congress which will be held under the theme *Protecting Workers*

Rights Our Prerogative will elect the labour body's President and his three lieutenants as well as two deputy Secretary Generals. The congress will also appoint two trustees.

The congress dates have been slated for the 28th of September to 2nd of October and proceedings will kick-start with pre-congress workshops with the final assault of elections being

the epilogue on the last day.

"The pre-congress workshops would be used to evaluate the progress made so far in the last five years and to come up with resolutions that would guide the activities of the ZCTU in the next five year term of office," said Secretary General, Japhet Moyo.

Moyo said the ball was rolling and

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Zim back on ILO radar over labour violations

Zimbabwe is back on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) radar for serious infringement of labour rights and a high level delegation is set to be dispatched to assess compliance following a damning report by labour.

The report which was presented at the ILO conference in June implicated the government for failure to implement recommendations made by a commission of inquiry eight years ago as well as continuing to ignore the perpetration of anti-labour practices.

The country has failed among other things to harmonise the country's labour laws in line with international standard procedures.

A recent report by the ILO technical committee found out that the country still had serious discriminatory and repressive labour laws.

The ILO conference noted that the government had escalated the assault on labour rights especially with the promulgation of the Labour Amendment No 5 following the July 17, 2015 Supreme

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Parastatals to retrench thousands

BY ADMORE MARAMBANYIKA

THE government plans to fire workers in its parastatals as it moves to comply with recommendations of international lending institutions to qualify for credit lines.

Plans are afoot to fire 70 percent of the workforce at the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) and about 1000 workers from Hwange Colliery Company citing poor business environment and the parastatals' low capacity utilisation.

Transport and Infrastructural Development Minister Joram Gumbo told a conference to discuss the ZimAsset economic blueprint that NRZ presently employs about 5,700 workers, much higher than the company can support while operating at the current level of 30 percent of capacity.

"At the moment, NRZ is overemployed with about 5,700 workers and this figure is high compared with the capacity at which the railways company is operating. There is need to embark on a staff rationalisation programme in relation to the business NRZ is generating," he said.

The NRZ is smarting from a 78 - day industrial strike by workers who have not been paid over 15 months' salaries, amounting to a total of \$87 million.

THE Government has also reversed a block to a proposed retrenchment of more than 1000 workers by Hwange it had imposed last month leaving more than 1000 workers in the firing line.

The coal mining company had proposed to retrench but the government intervened and ordered the management to cut working hours for workers to two weeks per month as measures to avoid retrenchment.

Mines and Mining Development Deputy Minister Fred Moyo said the company could not afford to retrench given the state of the company hence Cabinet agreed to have a two-week working arrangement.

"Cabinet has agreed that we can't have 2 000 workers losing their jobs at this moment so the retrenchment will only be focused on the top hierarchy. So I suggest as management



The NRZ no longer has electric locomotives and the rail network has delapidated

you sit down with the workers and introduce two weeks in, two weeks out programme," said Deputy Minister Moyo.

HCCL employees have not been paid their salaries for over 27 months and had approached the High Court in Bulawayo seeking to have the company placed under judicial management to save it from lawsuits.

"We advise that as workers of Hwange Colliery Company Limited we have not been paid regular salaries for the past 27 months. As at 30 November 2015, we were owed over US\$ 46.10 million in unpaid wages / salaries, since 2014 and partly 2012 [4 months ring fenced]. We are concerned that the company seems to be progressively sliding towards bankruptcy and its going concern capability is under serious threat. The likelihood of the company's recovery seems to be elusive given the trends that are evident to us."

"We have as workers watched a development where those entrusted with the leadership and management role of the company consistently make decisions which are prejudicial to the company. We have over time become aware of decisions which in our view are calculated to siphon money out of the company to the detriment of the workers' and other stakeholders' interests.

It has been our observation as workers that the company is being made weak deliberately through negligent decisions emanating from the top leadership of the company. We wrote to the managing director on the 29th July 2015 as representatives requesting for answers to a number of issues which were of concern to us on the [seeking for his assurance as to the] survival of the company. We also pointed out to him about certain contracts that we saw as not serving the interests of the company. The managing director has not responded to our letter up to date. The issues we raised have still not been responded to, or addressed," read their submissions.

They said they had also raised their concerns, with the responsible Minister of Mines Walter Chidakwa.

NRZ and Hwange are some of the 10 strategic parastatals targeted under a transformation programme designed to aid economic recovery.

Zimbabwe has 91 state owned enterprises, many of which are loss making. At their peak, state enterprises employed tens of thousands of workers and contributed up to 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), but they have been pulled

down by debt, corruption and mismanagement.

Last year the International Monetary Fund which had earlier recommended that the government cuts its workforce provided funding for "specialized audits" in state run enterprises with the aim of finding manoeuvres of revival.

Among the state enterprises which have collapsed are the Cold Storage Company (CSC), National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ), Air Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and the Grain Marketing Board (GMB).

Management at most of these parastatals have been accused of looting, at times fraudulently awarding themselves hefty salaries and personal loans at the expense of their workers and struggling entities.

Corporate Governance, State Enterprises and Delivery Unit permanent secretary in the Office of the Specialised audits have already started in some of these state enterprises with the aim of 'finding' a lasting solution to the failing firms.

The parastatals need billions of dollars in the long-term to restore full viability.

Anti wage-theft campaign launched

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them under their contracts," reads the report.

Despite these violations, top managers continue to receive high salaries and generous benefits.

International standards, particularly the International Labour Organisation Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), which has been ratified by 98 countries, mandate the regular payment of wages to workers and the prioritisation of such payments over other financial obligations of employers.

ZCTU secretary general, Japhet Moyo, said the number of workers going for months without wages is on the increase, contributing to the disintegration of the family, higher rates of poverty and greater numbers of the working poor.

"Even having a single meal a day is becoming an elusive achievement for most workers. It is our hope that through this report, the story of the exploited worker, whose rights are being violated in full sight of the government and by the government itself, can be told. The ZCTU will continue to fight for human rights and workers' rights in Zimbabwe. In particular, the ZCTU will continue to

insist that a living wage becomes a reality for all workers," he said.

Imani Countess, the Africa Regional Program Director for the Solidarity Center said that workers should receive the rewards of their work—decent pay, benefits, safe working conditions, respect and fair treatment.

"So when in 2013 we heard that over 100 women in Hwange peacefully protested—demanding that wages owed to their men be paid—and were met by police violence resulting in injuries for several: We were shocked."

Since 2013 the number of anecdotal stories of wage arrears and wage non-payment in Zimbabwe has grown, as is people's confusion and alarm. The issue should have been of major concern in the SADC region.

"In the early 20th century radical unionists in the U.S. coined the term "an injury to one is an injury to all." In this globalized world where companies, frequently acting in collusion with governments are engaged in this mad race for profit at the expense of worker rights, worker protections, the rule of law, gender equality and environmental protection, that term resonates today as much as it did 100 years ago.

"That workers in Zimbabwe can go for months and sometimes years without pay is a threat to workers

everywhere and it simply cannot stand. That near slave conditions exist simply can not be condoned or ignored by anyone," Countess said.

Presenting the findings, Nyasha Muchichwa, a researcher with LEDRIZ said that for the past four years the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) has been highlighting the salary disparities with business claiming incapacity to pay decent wages at the same time paying obscene salaries to managerial employees.

"In 2009 the ZCTU launched a campaign against 'Obscene Executive Salaries' after making public executive salaries and perks compared to what ordinary workers were earning monthly. We said it in 2011 and they jumped on it in 2014. In 2014 a Study was conducted and the emergence of non-payment of wages was now visible. From May to August 2015, this study was carried out," Muchichwa said.

Muchichwa said that there was sufficient legislation compelling the payment of wages both locally and internationally. At the international level there is the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention C95: Protection of Wages Convention, 1949, which states that wages shall be paid in the legal tender at regular intervals; in cases where partial payment of wages is

in kind, the value of such allowances should be fair and reasonable. It adds that workers shall be free to dispose of their wages as they choose. In cases of employer insolvency, wages shall enjoy a priority in the distribution of liquidated assets.

Locally we have the National Labour Law. The Labour Act, Section 6 (Protection of employees' right to fair labour standards), states that, No employer shall— 1 (a) pay any employee a wage which is lower than that to fair labour specified for such employee by law or by agreement made under this Act; and (2) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding level seven or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

The Act even defines an employee, as any person who performs work or services for another person for remuneration or reward.

On the enforcement of the employment legislation, it emerged that the regulator (government) was also the violator. The government and the employers often argued that the economy cannot afford the inefficiencies currently obtaining in the employment sector where workers accrue wages in circumstances where there is no production.

The impact of the non-payment of wages is very severe. Many are walking to work with parents transferring their

children to cheaper schools. Urban dwellers have cut the number of rooms they rent. Many have reduced their food consumption and most people have been relocated owing to such developments.

Godfrey Kanyenze, the Director of LEDRIZ, said that there are several other points of concern. These include the widespread wage theft which is also a critical indicator of the state of Zimbabwe's economy.

Parliament has passed the Special Export Zone legislation that will create industrial zones where the labour law will be suspended. If new debts are assumed, on top of unpayable old debt and new policies and laws are passed on this foundation of gross exploitation, Zimbabwe's future will be bleak.

The Solidarity Center pledged to continue to tell the stories of the Zimbabwean workers and to work in partnership with ZCTU and labour allies who regularly remind the government that development built upon the exploitation and abuse of the men and women who produce the country's wealth is simply not sustainable.

Trade unions representing workers in the affected companies were encouraged to demand that government act to bring criminal procedures against those who were not paying workers as well as to vigilantly monitor issues arising related to non-payment of wages.

Supreme Court dismisses Econet's bid to dodge NEC subscriptions

BY STAFF REPORTER

The Supreme Court has dismissed an application by Econet Wireless in a case in which the mobile phone company is challenging the constitutionality of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) compelling employers to register and pay subscriptions to the National Employment Council (NEC) for Communications and Allied Services.

The application was dismissed on the basis that Econet had approached the court with dirty hands and was directed to first comply with an earlier High Court ruling compelling to register with the NEC before it is granted audience by the courts.

The application which has the potential to paralyse the effectiveness of national employment councils and collective bargaining in all sectors if Econet gets its way is unpopular with the business' most representative body, the Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ) which is against the annihilation of NECs.

The CBA being challenged was published under Statutory Instrument 1 of 2012, compels all employers in the communication industry to register with the NEC for Communications and Allied Services within a month of the publication of the law but Econet did not comply.

Instead it contested the certificate of registration of the NEC. Government confirmed that the NEC's certificate was genuine and that Econet must comply.

In open defiance of the law, Econet did not register with the NEC or pay its union dues protesting that the promulgation of SI 1 of 2012 was irregular and invalid. Econet, through its lawyers Mtetwa and Nyambirai Legal Practitioners, filed a High Court application to nullify the sections of the CBA.

The High Court ruled that Econet's hands were dirty and the company could not be heard by a court of law until it cleanses itself of the dirt.

The judge held that the SI in question was already law, which must be complied with until a time when it is nullified. Econet appealed to the Supreme Court.

In a Supreme Court judgment, Justice Chinembiri Bhunu threw out the appeal and upheld the High Court decision that the communications firm had approached the courts with dirty hands.

"While Section 69(3) of the Constitution guarantees the appellant's right to access the courts, it is no licence for it (Econet) to approach the court with hands dripping with dirt. What

appellant is being asked to do is to cleanse itself by obeying the prevailing laws of the land before approaching the courts.

"The learned judge in the court a quo did not fall into error in any way by denying the appellant access to the court until it had cleansed itself by complying with and obeying the prevailing laws of the land," ruled Justice Bhunu.

The court said all questioned laws and administrative Acts enjoy a presumption of validity until declared otherwise by a competent court.

While Econet is challenging the validity of NEC's Labour and business already have a common position NEC's.

The two parties confirmed their commitment to the bipartite bodies last year despite a Constitutional Court challenge by another cellular mobile phone company NetOne seeking to exonerate an employer from forwarding contributions to NEC's.

Trade unions and employer associations both poured cold water to the constitutional appeal with a potential to set a wrong precedent if it comes out in favour of the employer saying they still needed the arrangement to continue carrying out its duties regardless of the new labour law provisions and the court challenge.

EMCOZ director John Mufukare said the challenge by NetOne against belonging and contributing to an NEC within its industry was an isolated case not shared by the employers' body.

"EMCOZ takes NEC business very seriously and remain committed to the arrangement. We are alarmed by the challenge, this (court challenge) is something that is brought about by the dire economic hardships but at heart we believe in the NEC's. If the economy improves you will see all those employers who are seemingly against the bipartite arrangement coming back," he said.

Mufukare said withdrawing subscriptions to the national employment by an employer had little or short term benefits which do not promote national interests in the long run.

"We are taking a strategic view we are taking the long term view it is short termism to say because we do not have money to contribute to the NEC now and we are pulling out of the NEC. The long term approach is for us remain in there and make our enterprises sustainable. Let us avoid short term solutions because in all cases these short term solutions leave us worse off than we were before," he said.

The employers chief stressed that his body needed to maintain the bipartite arrangement after being quizzed on EMCOZ's sincerity to continue



Econet chief executive officer Douglas Mboweni

engaging in negotiations with workers following its reaction to dismiss thousands of workers following the July 17 Supreme Court Judgment that allowed employers to terminate employment contracts on three months' notice.

"From the look of things it does not make sense to have your head shaved in your absence. You need to be part of these institutions because they are going to set up minimum wages and standards in industrial sectors and you will have to comply with them. As employers you have all our support and at the end we are going to be a one big happy family. The negotiating platform is not only healthy to employers and employees but also for the good of the nation. Negotiations can be held at company level but as employers we are awake to the fact that NEC agreements have a legal binding effect and set minimum wages that ensure uniformity and harmony in the industry," he said.

He added that EMCOZ was not going to whip its members to belong to NEC's but was rather going to highlight to them the advantages of remaining as subscribing members against the disadvantages. He further stressed that EMCOZ was also still very much committed to the Tripartite Negotiating Forum regardless of the court applications it filed against some provisions of the new labour law amendments.

"While we are pursuing the social dialogue route we still have to protect our membership. We are saying no to retrospective laws but when

parliament makes a law in retrospective we in business are left confounded. ZCTU demanded to be co-joined to fight on the side of government on that issue and we have no problem with that," he said.

ZCTU secretary general Japhet Moyo said the stance by employers was encouraging but expressed concern on the impact and policing aspect for those employers who would not want to contribute to the NEC if the case in the courts comes out in the employer's favour.

"There is a group of employers who feel that they should not be compelled to contribute to the NEC. Our advice to them is that it is very dangerous and would pose a lot of problems to them if they disassociate themselves from the main industrial negotiating platform. The platform is part of the international convention on collective bargaining and it also seeks to promote social dialogue. So this group of employers is seeking to go against the international norms for selfish reasons," he said.

Moyo added that NEC's created uniform industrial conditions and it has been easier to manage industrial relations and any move to pull out would result in more labour unrest.

"Employers stand to benefit a lot from NEC's and should be sensible enough to contribute towards their sustenance. We have people that carry out researches and enforce compliance, they need to be paid," he said

Labour, business gang up against IMF

BY STAFF REPORTER

Labour and business have expressed concern over the implementation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s Staff Monitored Programme (SMP) by the government saying it was a drive to recover dues without considering the socio-economic effects of sponsoring a government to implement a policy with riotous negative effects.

THE Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ) met the IMF delegation recently where they blankly told the international funder that it should set funding conditions to the government.

The IMF was told by the two parties that they were sceptical of its move to give the Zimbabwe government because the money would be used to decimate the civil service to ensure that the IMF gets paid its dues.

"The IMF was told that it should include both business and labour when it engages the government for it to get a clearer perception of the situation. It was a no holds barred meeting and the IMF representatives were told that the

money would be used to commit human rights abuses by the government. Instead labour and business proposed that if the government was to be given aid it should be used for productive purposes not to be channelled to recurrent expenditure. They were told that the reason why the debt had ballooned was that the money was never used productively," said a source who attended the meeting.

The source said the labour and business representatives told the IMF delegation that without their buy-in and cooperation government programmes would not succeed.

ZCTU and EMCOZ officials met the visiting IMF delegation last week to discuss Zimbabwe's labour law reform process within the context of the Staff Monitoring Project (SMP), an economic rescue plan prescribed to Zimbabwe by the Bretton Woods institution for it to qualify for relending.

Some of the conditions attached to the government include the relaxation of labour laws, which the IMF has already noted that the government has achieved following the Labour Act amendment number 5/2015. The amendment was a hurriedly

implemented to curb carnage on workers who were being fired following the July 17, Supreme Court judgment which allowed employers to fire workers on notice in the Zuva Petroleum case.

The IMF head of delegation to Zimbabwe Domenico Fanizza recently told a Parliamentary Committee on Budget and Finance that by and large the SMP had been successful.

The IMF delegation had invited ZCTU and EMCOZ to discuss the impact of the labour law reform process since the July 17 Constitutional Court (ConCourt) ruling.

Representatives from ZCTU and EMCOZ said the international lender was impressed with the labour law reform process, partly because it had achieved some of its demands especially on labour flexibility.

EMCOZ president, Josephat Kahwema, said the IMF delegation called for all stakeholders to support government's efforts to bring capital into Zimbabwe.

Kahwema said the country needed the IMF more.

"While we concur with labour unions on the labour law reform process, let us bear in mind that as a

nation we are all hard hit by the economic decline. The fortnight's salary per every month served in retrenchment packages is too little; there is need to balance the scale and consider that businesses are not performing well to be in a position to pay better packages," said Kahwema.

ZCTU general secretary, Japhet Moyo, however, said the union was unhappy with the SMP as it had fuelled massive job losses and worsened the standards of living for the majority of Zimbabweans.

He said since IMF's engagement with Zimbabwe, thousands of jobs have been lost because the cash-strapped government is doing everything possible to please the fund in a desperate bid to clear their debt for them to be able to borrow.

"The fact that IMF has advised government to trim the civil service wage bill simply translates to thousands of civil servants being fired. To this end, it can be pointed out that the draconian July 17 ConCourt ruling and the subsequent Labour Act Amendment was done to impress the IMF," said Moyo.

"By advising the government to cut on recurrent expenditure and subsidies, this will result in the suffering of the ordinary people who will seek assistance through the Social Welfare Department. The IMF is advancing capitalistic interests and wants the government to save as much (money) as possible so that they get

their money back at other social groupings' disadvantage," he said.

Labour is sceptical that the SMP, already under implementation by the government would result in massive job losses in the civil service as the government moves in to mop up cash to settle their debt with the Bretton Woods institution.

IMF economic blueprints have resulted in serious economic misfortunes and suffering for the ordinary people.

The 1990s, Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, resulted in company closures and massive retrenchment thousands of Zimbabwean workers. The government eventually ditched the programme describing it as unworkable after realising that it was sinking.

The government has already committed itself to a herculean task to clear \$1.8 billion in arrears owed to international lending institutions by April 2016 as it hopes to unlock the credit lines that have been closed by the same institutions.

The strategy is to pay the IMF, World Bank (WB) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) as was passed at the IMF/World Bank annual meetings in Lima, Peru.

The government has already instituted cost cutting measures within the civil service and resources to offset the debt.

The Worker

Voice of the Labour Movement

Comment

It is a cliff hanger as Zimbabwe face the future

THE wave of demonstrations, strikes and disgruntlement taking place almost every day in Zimbabwe are undoubtedly signs that the country is heading for an implosion any time soon and a new era is about to be ushered in.

From workers in public and private sector, civil society, churches and clerics, students, academics, war veterans, politicians and trade unions, the war cry is the same- Mugabe has to make way for a new dispensation. At 92 years, surely it is time for him to rest. He no longer has the stamina to move on.

There is no doubt that Zimbabweans have endured much and are fed up with the Robert Mugabe regime and want change, not tomorrow but yesterday. Even people in Zanu PF itself have now come to realise that Robert Mugabe has become a liability to their party and they also want change. This explains the fight between the so-called Team Lacoste and G40. It is a fight to replace Mugabe. But for some Zimbabweans, they simply want to replace him because for 36 years Robert Mugabe has been ruining the country by clinging to power at whatever cost. As one commentator once said, the country has moved from Great Zimbabwe to Zimbabwe ruins.

What is sad is Mugabe will be leaving behind a ruined legacy. He will also leave behind a battered image a reputation of a once great leader who moved from a hero to zero. Maybe he was not a great leader after all. Here is a former liberator who was hero worshiped by everyone but turned villain by his insatiable hunger for power. If Mugabe had retired twenty years ago, today he could be the most revered leader. But unfortunately, he thought otherwise.

What is more particular about the current wave of protests against Mugabe is that they remained sporadic and coordinated by various pressure groups. There is no single person who can be said to be responsible. Everyone is protesting and this has left the regime in a quagmire as they cannot pinpoint one group. It is a social movement.

As the wave of protests against Mugabe's rule sweep across the country, it is important to warn Zimbabweans of the dangerous kicks of a dying horse. We have already seen the brutal response of the police to the protests. Just like what happened in 2007 and 2008, the police have not hesitated to use brutal force against un armed civilisations. The regime will also soon unleash its militia against Zimbabweans and the possibility of violence and bloodshed is there. Zimbabweans need to be vigilant and be alert. Already this protracted fight for democracy in Zimbabwe has so far taken with it many lives and there is no need to add more. From Tichaona Chiminya and Talent Mabika to Itai Dzamara, these are all our modern heroes who perished at the hands of Robert Mugabe's dictatorship. As Zimbabweans confront the regime to demand answers to their problems, casualties cannot be discounted. Indeed Zimbabwe looking like it is facing a precipice and there is no turn back. The country is on the cliff as the future beckons. Put more aptly, it is a cliff hanger.

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Zanu PF crumbles as the MDC re-emerges



The MDC-T has rejuvenated its fortunes as exhibited by massive demonstrations in all the major towns and cities. The party only needs to tun the popularity into votes for the 2018 elections

AN interesting political narrative is unfolding within Zimbabwe's body politic. Of particular interest are two dynamics playing out: one involving the seemingly inevitable demise of President Mugabe's Zanu PF and the other involving the re-emergence of Tsvangirai's MDC outfit. These two parties have feverishly competed for space and relevance in the last two decades.

Whilst the drama within Zanu PF has been happening since 2014, events of the last six months have been quite informative. Since 2014, numerous Zanu PF activists have either been suspended or completely expelled from the party. Their crimes share an almost similar characteristic, similar trait, similar fashion and similar intent: that of undermining Mugabe with the ultimate aim of removing him from power. The wording in the charge sheet may be slightly different but the verdict is almost the same. 'GUILTY'. For the last two decades, Mugabe's grip on power has been made possible partly by the unconditional support rendered to his regime by the veterans of the country's liberation struggle, popularly known as the 'war vets'. Across the country, the veterans used violence to crush any opposition support particularly in the rural areas and the newly resettled farming areas. In return, Mugabe gave them unfettered discretion and power to preside over the controversial land distribution exercise, assuming the role of land officers across the country. In fact, the war vets became part of the land committees set up in each province to deal with the land distribution exercise. As a result, the majority of beneficiaries of the country's land reform program are supporters of the ruling party. In addition, Mugabe gave the war veterans monthly pensions, health insurance as well as educational tuition assistance for their children among other inducements which kept their loyalty in check.

But the marriage between Mugabe and the war vets has gone sour. It began in 2014 with the expulsion of former Vice President Joyce Mujuru, herself a veteran of the liberation struggle. She was expelled from the party together

with other party stalwarts like Rugare Gumbo and Didymus Mutasa to mention but a few. Their crime? Plotting to unseat Mugabe. They were even accused of plotting to assassinate him.

At the time of Mujuru's expulsion, the purge was rumoured to have been orchestrated in favour of Emmerson Mnangagwa, a long time and close associate of Mugabe, himself a war veteran too. The dirty work was done by President Mugabe's wife Grace who traversed the width and breadth of the country holding rallies, chastising Mujuru and her coterie for plotting to unseat her husband. Before her rallies, Grace Mugabe had been nominated as leader of the women's wing and endorsed by the party at congress. Her position became one of only two powerful positions to be given the nod at the five yearly gathering, together with her husband who was elected first secretary and leader of the party unopposed. It became a family affair at the top.

Attendance at Grace Mugabe's rallies was dense. She swept across the plains like a violent avalanche devouring everything in its path. Everybody knew about her, but no one agreed on a definitive narrative about her character or her values. The media accused her of extravagance and an insatiable appetite for expensive shopping, accusations which she constantly denied. According to some sceptics, she was given an easy pass to the top ostensibly as part of President Mugabe's grand succession plan. As time went by it became clear that she was not cheerleading for anyone, at least not for Mnangagwa. She was her own horse running her own race. However, her political diction became perverse, illogical and at times irrational, going as far as attacking the very same war veterans who had propped up her husband's stranglehold on power for decades. No sooner had she settled in her new position that she started to face opposition and ridicule from within her own party particularly from the war veterans. The war veterans, although they supported Mugabe, were not in a position to

Chinamasa misguided on salary cuts

BY ADMORE MARAMBANYIKA

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions has blasted Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa over his utterances praising companies for cutting salaries describing the move as misguided as labour costs are not the only factor that affects the viability of companies.

Chinamasa said the government and the private sector can cut salaries and wages to align their employment costs to the operating environment in praise of TelOne which effected a 15 percent salary cut last year.

Speaking at TelOne's annual general meeting Chinamasa commended the parastatal for aligning its costs to the prevailing economic environment.

"I want to commend you highly for aligning your employment costs to the operating environment. The decision that you took to undergo a 15 percent cut in salaries and wages needs to be emulated not only in the private sector, but also in government. It's a very positive decision, a very courageous one that you took in order to align your costs to the operating environment," Chinamasa said.

He also commended Econet Wireless

which and trashed bonuses.

ZCTU Secretary General Japhet Moyo said such utterances pose serious interference to collective bargaining with the potential to plunge the already underpaid workers in poverty.

Moyo said the development reveals that Ministerial interference in labour issues continues to surge despite protestations by labour at all foras including at the International Labour Organisation.

"The government continues to prop up such violations by heaping praises on errant companies while inciting unfair labour conduct to employers. Such a sick mentality within an individual who controls the national purse spells doom for civil servant's quests for better salaries and could be used to sanitise labour market flexibility and his capitalistic tendencies to the looming axing of thousands of workers from the civil service. The ZCTU will not take such threats against the livelihoods of thousands of workers and their families and is sternly warning Chinamasa to retract his unfortunate utterances and depart from this dangerous path before it drags the government before the ILO for violating Convention 154 - Collective Bargaining Convention of 1981," he said.

The ZCTU said Chinamasa was on a drive to incite employers to effect salary cuts to justify his intention to retrench the civil service and introduce drastic cost cutting measures.

"The minister needs to be urgently reigned in before he jerks a reign-of-terror of wage and job cuts across all sectors disguised as operational validation. Chinamasa needs to be schooled that labour costs alone cannot solely affect the viability of business entities because there are various factor some at national policy level as well as the country's political risk factor that have a huge bearing on investments and business viability compared to labour costs. Chinamasa and his friends in cabinet need to do a reality check on the problems bedeviling the economy instead of fighting shadows and projecting the problem to hapless workers," he said.

He said workers are not to blame for the current economic malaise and the buck stops with government which has inculcated a culture of corruption and non-accountability at the expense of its core business.

"Government officials and Chinamasa's bosses spend millions of dollars flying all over the world at the expense of the country. We even have a Vice President who has decided to live in a hotel for nearly two years



PATRICK CHINAMASA

gobbling thousands of dollars in tax payers' monies. Even Chinamasa himself must lead by example by refusing to be allocated a Mercedes Benz to cut government costs. It is high time government officials walk the talk," said Moyo.

An attempt by Chinamasa to forgo bonus payments for the civil service was overturned by President Robert Mugabe who gave the minister an angry public reprimand.

Retrenchment Board gives nod to sham Lobel's retrenchment

BY STAFF REPORTER

LOBEL'S Bread Holdings is pushing through with a retrenchment exercise after getting blessings from the retrenchment board despite protestations from the union representing the employees.

The union is planning to file an appeal with the Labour Court to challenge the decision of the principal labour officer who granted the bread making entity the right to retrench without following procedures stipulated under the Labour Act.

The company short-listed several employees for compulsory retrenchment and offered them a package in the form of three months' notice pay and one month salary for every two years served. It also undertook to settle their leave pay as well as paying for medical aid for three months up to June.

Lobel's had planned to cull the workers in May but the process was stalled by the Food Federation and Allied Worker Union of Zimbabwe which filed opposing papers to the retrenchment board.

In its letters to the affected workers, Lobel's alleged that the retrenchment packages followed negotiations with the works' council conducted on April 1.

The union's legal representative, Gift Maoneka, said the retrenchment board did not even sit to deliberate on the issue and they were surprised that the retrenchment was granted without due processes.

"We were invited by the labour officer only for us to be advised that company was going to proceed with the retrenchment despite our objections and we are in the process of filing a case with the Labour Court.

Maoneka said under the Labour Act, any company wishing to embark on compulsory retrenchment must first notify the employees through a works council meeting to deliberate on the need and justification of the retrenchment.

Should these measures fail to yield any meaningful results, Maoneka said the company must call for another works council meeting and inform the prospective retrenches on the state of affairs.

"The company then gives three months for negotiations for a retrenchment package. If the parties involved fail to agree on a package then they refer to the statutory minimum two weeks' salary per every year served. So for Lobel's to push all these stages within a fortnight renders the plan illegal and void. Lobel's started negotiating, and within three days offer letters had been issued and this directly contradicts the procedures prescribed by law," he said.

The Baking Industry Workers' Union has since written to the Lobel's informing the company that they would challenge the process.

"Please be advised that the affected employees intend to challenge the process on the basis that there is no need to retrench. It is our understanding that the company can easily absorb the intended retrenches, the majority of who are women. There is therefore no basis for embarking on a discriminatory retrenchment process especially considering that you are hiring staff in other departments. There is no evidence of implementation or an attempt of any measures to avoid retrenchment," the letter reads in part.

Lobel's acting chief executive officer, Sindiso Masuku said the company was retrenching but dismissed allegations of irregularities in the process.

All set for ZISEGU congress

BY STAFF REPORTER

The Zimbabwe Security Guards Union (ZISEGU) is set to hold its third national elective congress in October if the union manages to gather enough resources as the term limit for the current executive is about to expire.

The union is also in the process of organizing its National Women Advisory Council (NUWAC) and Young Workers Committee conferences to elect their committees as a build up to the main elective congress. The NUWAC and Young Workers elected executives feed delegates to the national congress which elects national leaders.

The main election will elect the national Chairperson or President, Vice Chairperson, and Treasurer. Also to be elected at the national congress are committee members from regions. The last national election which ushered in the Kenneth Matare led executive was held in 2012 Masvingo. The position of General Secretary will not be contested since it is a full time post.

ZISEGU General Secretary Phillimon Nhema said the union was working flat out to hold the congress when it is due.

"We are working towards our congress because it is a constitutional obligation that has to be fulfilled. We are gathering resources as well as restructuring our branches country wide. Our members are geared for the

congress. We want to build a healthy union with a foundation of accountability and democracy and holding congress timeously is one factor of fulfilling the democratic dictates of a people driven organization like a trade union," said Nhema.

He added that the union had not yet finalized on the dates and venues for the main congress but hinted that if they are resource constrained the union would hold the conferences and congress on the trot.

"We may be forced to hold our NUWAC and Young Workers conferences on the same day and then go on to hold the main congress the following day if our resources are not enough to cater for separate activities," he said.

All set for ZCTU elective congress

FROM PAGE 1

unions have been advised to send motions for discussions at the congress and nomination forms for those interested in running for positions. The ZCTU has already held its Young Workers and Women elective Conferences as a build up to the main congress. The conference will be attended by affiliate unions which are up to date in their subscriptions as dictated by the ZCTU Constitution section 9.2 which reads *"The general Conference shall be composed of accredited delegates from fully paid affiliates and the elected officials of the Congress and members of the National Women's Advisory Council and National Young Workers Committee who shall have the right to vote"*.

The last ZCTU elective congress was held in 2011 in Bulawayo and had its result contested by the then President Lovemore Matombo who lost

George Nkiwane.

Matombo had his application challenging the outcome of the ZCTU 2011 congress saying it was unconstitutional, dismissed the High Court for lack of merit. Matombo, who did not attend the congress, withdrew his nomination on the last day despite having participated in the preparations for the congress.

Matombo and his then cabal calling themselves Concerned Affiliates of the ZCTU, had approached the High Court seeking an interdict barring the Nkiwane-led executive from accessing ZCTU assets and purporting to be the bona fide leadership of the country's biggest labour movement. They claimed the then secretary-general, Wellington Chibebe, had doctored the ZCTU constitution to bar Matombo from contesting after serving two terms as the labour body's president.

In passing the verdict, Justice Priscilla Chigumba said the court did not find Matombo to be a

believable witness.

"Matombo demonstrated an impressive in-depth knowledge of the origins of the ZCTU, its constitutions, both accepted and disputed; and its internal working committees and qualifications of bearers. Yet when it came to his responses during cross-examination on the aspect of the constitutional amendments and which constitution was the legitimate ZCTU constitution, the court found Matombo unusually reticent . . . He appeared to develop selective amnesia. For a man who had in-depth knowledge of the ZCTU constitution during evidence-in-chief to now appear confused as to the question of whether the ZCTU constitution was amended and if so, to what extent, was disingenuous to put it mildly. It was a blatant and dishonourable attempt to evade the truth. The court was not impressed," ruled Justice Chigumba.

ZTWU holds congress amid massive job losses as cheap imports suffocates industry



The influx of cheap imports has forced the textile industry to scale down operations resulting in thousands of workers losing their jobs over the years

BY STAFF REPORTER

THE Zimbabwe Textiles Workers Union has held an elective congress and replaced its former General Secretary Silas Kuveya who left the organisation in June.

Kuveya was replaced by the union's national organiser Norman Makono who was elevated to the lead the union's secretariat.

The congress also saw the election of Boniface Mbeve to the position of President. He is deputised by Cloud Chikohwa.

The union held the congress at a time it is faced with a number of challenges including the shortage of lint and closure of companies resulting in thousands of workers losing employment. The industry is faced with serious competition from cheap imports and second hand clothing that have flooded the local market.

Recently the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) noted with serious the near collapse of the spinning industry and its ripple

effects down-stream as most ginning companies, that produce cotton lint, prefer to export all their cotton lint at the expense of the local companies.

"It has come to the attention of the ZCTU that ginners, surprisingly with the support of the Government and Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, is exporting almost all of their products leaving the local industry in serious shortage of cotton lint. In turn, this has led to massive layoffs of workers by the spinning industry while other employers are forcing workers to stay at home as they cannot afford to pay them. Some employers are being forced to import cotton lint from outside the country, which has proved to be unviable for local companies," said the ZCTU Secretary General Japhet Moyo in a statement.

The ZCTU called on the government to direct ginners to release cotton lint to save the local industry from imminent collapse as well as to save the few jobs that still remain. Following the outcry by labour government announced that it had resolved that they will only allocate 25 percent of the lint produced to local consumption while the remainder goes to those exporting it because they funded the farmers.

Call to end police brutality against demonstrators

BY STAFF REPORTER

THE Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) has called on the government to respect the rule of law and end police brutality against the demonstrating public.

In a statement the ZCTU said it was worried because the political situation was sliding back to the pre Government of National Unity (GNU) period as shown by the refusal by the police to respect a High Court order that granted political parties under the banner of National Electoral Reform Agenda (NERA) the right to demonstrate, thereby increasing the country's risk factor.

"The barricading of roads, destruction of property, loss of production as a result of wanton use of teargas around business premises squarely lies in the unprofessional handling of the situation by the police. Such careless response by the security cluster is contrary to what other clusters are doing to attract investment. Even the so much hyped Special Economic Zones initiative will not get any attraction from investors. Who will bear teargas being thrown into their premises? Government is literary shooting itself in the foot and they should blame themselves if this army of unemployed youths start to enjoy the game," said the ZCTU Secretary General Japhet Moyo.

He said the ZCTU was worried that authorities were taking the citizens for granted and urged the state to respect the rule of law and court judgments.

"Reports indicate that a number of demonstrators

were injured by overzealous baton wielding ZRP officers who went on a rampage, beating everyone on site. The ZCTU strongly condemns the police brutality as it is contrary to the Constitution of Zimbabwe that gives citizens the right to demonstrate peacefully," he said.

Meanwhile the MDC-T has hit out a State media reports describing party as a "terrorist organisation" and rejected allegations it was training its youth wing in para-military tactics and urban violence.

The government-controlled Sunday Mail claimed that the MDC-T "started planning civil disobedience and sent youths for training in certain African countries.

"These groups were deployed last week to unleash unprecedented violence in Harare's central business district".

But the opposition party said "such utterances by a confused Zanu PF are extremely disturbing, grossly offensive and patently untrue".

The party demanded that the "Zanu PF-controlled media immediately desist from peddling lies and falsehoods that are wickedly meant to portray the MDC-T as a violent, terrorist organisation".

In a statement, the MDC-T said, "As the fourth estate, the media should, at all times, report facts and desist from fabricating malicious, false and defamatory stories against President Morgan Tsvangirai in particular and other opposition political leaders in general.

"The people of Zimbabwe are watching and one of these fine days, all these evil men and women who are violating and thrashing the people's constitutional

UNION NEWS IN BRIEF

Sexual harassment rife at banks

BY STAFF REPORTER

Sexual harassment is rife on female bank workers who are now at the mercy of managers who are frequently abusing them, parliament has been told.

Members of Parliament were told that that female workers were being forced to sleep with bosses or get termination letters by representatives from the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and who appeared before the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare.

ZCTU vice president Peter Mutasa who is also the general secretary of the Zimbabwe Banks and Allied Workers Union (ZIBAWU) said female employees were the most affected following the Labour Amendment Act that was passed into law last year to convert workers' contracts from permanent to one-year fixed contracts.

"You have to choose between being harassed and three months' notice. If it's a female-headed household you can guess what the employee will choose. In short, the impact of that amendment is that it eroded all the other pieces of law that seek to protect workers. We have done a survey in the banking sector and the figures that are coming from these banks are too high. You hear women testifying that 'our managers are telling us to book for lodges and hotels using our own money and say call us when you are ready'. 'Managers will be holding a three-months' termination letter. If you don't want, you are put on the (termination) list. So people are suffering. Women are suffering much more than men with this amendment. If we don't protect labour by protecting job security, we are destroying the nationhood of this country which is against our ideals," said Mutasa.

Mutasa said some companies such as the Metropolitan Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, Econet Wireless and Steward Bank were abusing employees using the Act.

He said at MetBank, employees contracts were converted from permanent to fixed term contracts while at Standard Chartered Bank, several workers were retrenched.

In December last year scores of workers stormed the Harare Standard Chartered head office protesting against the alleged victimisation of the bank's workers' committee chair, Samuel Mukozho who was fired for exposing the sexual harassment of junior female staff by senior management.

ZIBAWU wanted the bank to investigate the alleged sexual harassment cases which Mukozho raised as opposed to targeting the whistle blower.

The bank accused Mukozho of attempting to defeat the course of justice by following an arrested employee to the police and rescuing him.

Mukozho had been asked by ZIBAWU to assist a bank employee who had been arrested by looking for a lawyer who would be paid by the Union as per its policy.

Commercial workers get increase

BY STAFF REPORTER

Workers in the commercial sector have been awarded a 15 percent wage increase backdated to December last year following a collective bargaining agreement sealed by parties to their National Employment Council.

The National Employment Council for Commercial Industries largely caters for workers in the retail sector, funeral parlours, dry cleaners, merchandisers and wholesalers was last awarded an increment in 2013 and previous efforts to have the wages increased were met with fierce resistance from employers as well as factional feuds among trade unions in the sector.

The announcement is contained in a Statutory Instrument of a Government Gazette published last month Publication of the schedule in a Government Gazette means the collective bargaining agreement has been registered and is binding on all members. According to the new wage schedule, the lowest paid worker's salary in Grade One will rise from \$220 to \$253 while that of the highest person in Grade 12 is set to rise to \$471 from \$410.

Those in Grade Five, for instance, will see their wages increase to \$300 from \$261.

"All percentage increases awarded to employees from 1st of July, 2013 may be taken into account when implementing the new percentage on condition that, if the adjustment awarded falls short of the collective bargaining agreement's specified percentage, the affected employees shall receive further increases in the form of the difference between the stipulated percentage increases and the percentage already awarded," reads the notice.

Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions secretary general Japhet Moyo said the increase vindicated their position that it was wrong to impose a blanket salary freeze or to reduce salaries.

"We have said sectors are performing differently and it is important that these sectors determine what they should earn because they have the knowledge of how they are performing.

"One example is that of the food industry and banking sector that are performing well. We expect that to translate into more money for their workers," said Moyo.

He said as labour, calls for a wage freeze by some captains of industry were misplaced.

"We know that our economy is not performing well but that should never be used as an excuse to impose a blanket freeze on salaries because there are sectors that are doing well even in these difficult times," he said.

Most companies have now gone for years without offering pay increases citing a harsh economic environment. Others have resorted to retrenching workers on three months' notice as part of measures to stay afloat.

Gvt forced to climb down on SEZ Bill

BY STAFF REPORTER

THE government has been forced into a major climb-down to strike off section 56 of the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Bill which sought to oust the application of the Labour Act in the Zones after threats of massive demonstrations by labour.

Impeccable sources from the Tripartite Negotiating Forum said parties had also resolved the sticking issue of retrenchment with employers and employees given the power to negotiate packages and only refer the matter to the retrenchment board in the case of a deadlock. The provision which exempted employers from paying retrenchment packages if retrenchment board fails to respond to an application for exemption within 14 days was also struck off. The development paves way to the conclusion of new labour amendments which are set to be effected by December.

The government had bulldozed parliament to pass the Bill which is now awaiting Presidential assent despite serious protestations by labour which was critical of Section 56 the legislation that ousts the application of the Labour Act in the zones. Labour, through the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) raised the issue with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which also condemned the section 56 of the bill but the government called for a truce to give a chance to dialogue.

The ZCTU had mobilised for countrywide demonstrations to force the President from assenting to the Bill which jerked the ministry of labour to call for a round table.

Labour Minister Prisca Mupfumira assured the ZCTU that their concerns regarding the SEZ would be addressed after it had

demanded commitment that the bill would not be signed in its current state if it was to defer its demonstrations.

"I write to acknowledge receipt of your letters to the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Services dated 24th June and 12 August in which you express concerns on the provisions of the SEZ bill that seeks to oust the jurisdiction of the Labour Act, as amended in the operations of the envisaged licenced investors.

"Kindly be advised that your concerns and observations are already receiving the necessary attention and appropriate levels in government to ensure that the eventual passage of the Bill into law is fully supported by all relevant stakeholders including workers' organisations," reads the letter.

Masoka said the ministry was working other ministries to ensure that the envisaged Act does not undermine workers' fundamental rights, particularly those guaranteed by section 65 of the Constitution," reads the letter.

Labour had earlier dismissed an inter-ministerial letter written by the Labour Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Ngoni Masoka to his Macro-Economic Planning and Investment Promotion counterpart, Desire Sibanda suggesting that government wanted to amend the Special Economic Zones Bill.

Masoka copied the letter to the ZCTU, the Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe who are government's partners in the tripartite negotiating forum (TNF) as well as the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions.

In the letter, he said government needs the input and support from the stakeholders before passing the Bill into law and needed to deal with Section 56 of the Bill, which sought to exempt companies in the SEZ's from subscribing to the Labour Act Chapter 28:01.

The ZCTU then deferred its



Workers demonstrating against Labour Market Flexibility last year.....they have threatened to fill the streets if the government insists on passing the SEZ Bill into law

demonstrations after getting assurance from the ministry of labour that the bill was being reviewed.

"The ZCTU wishes to advise that the proposed demonstrations slated for the 20th August 2016 have been deferred until further notice. The deferment has been necessitated by commitment to engage made by government at both international and national level. We sincerely acknowledge and applaud the high level of mobilisation that had been undertaken by your structures. In as much as we are committed to dialogue, we defer the national demonstration but watching closely the commitment of government and social partners to an amicable resolution of the non

inclusion of the Labour Act 28:01 in the Special Economic Zones Bill H.B 15.2015," said Japhet Moyo the ZCTU Secretary General.

He said the ZCTU affiliates should remain alert and use this opportunity to sensitise structures on the effects of the Special Economic Zones Bill, particularly none application of the Labour Act in those zones.

Moyo said government had remained mum on the issue despite the fact that the ZCTU had written two letters while its affiliates who are affected by the SEZ had also written to the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Services, Priscah

Mupfumira, which she only responded to after immense pressure from unions.

He said government should only consider reframing the Bill so that the SEZs were covered by the Labour Act Chapter 28:01 instead of trying to come up with other provisions to protect workers' rights when the Labour Act in itself already had such provisions.

"We would have preferred that the Ministry narrows down on the issue that you cannot ouster the Labour Act from the special economic zones because it provides for the fundamental rights of workers. This is so because workers' rights are already protected by the Labour Act Chapter 28:01," he said.



ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

Workers Time to Fight the Special Economic Zones Bill H.B 15.2015

In 1994, the government established what was called Export Processing Zones. Section 56 of the Export Processing zones Act did not allow the Labour Relations Act to apply to investors in export processing zones. This left many workers without adequate protection from slavery. This was changed in 2000. Now the government has started it again by changing the name to Special Economic Zones.

What are Special Economic Zones?

Special Economic Zones are industrial zones with special incentives set up to attract foreign investors in which imported materials undergo some degree of processing before being exported.

What is the Special Economic Zones Bill (proposed law) about?

- It is about setting up some industries for export;
- However, Section 56 of the Special Economic Zones bill seeks to take away your rights protected by the Labour Act Chapter 28:01
- It gives employers operating in the Economic Zones the power to dictate to you the salary or wage they want to pay you;
- And only foreigners will be paid in foreign currency if Zimbabwe adopts its own currency;
- the employer will dictate the hours you will work;
- The employer is given power to hire and fire you at will;
- It promotes casual work;
- The employer has power not to contribute to pension, medical aid, etc
- Your right to strike and collective bargaining is taken away from you or seriously limited
- It takes away the Ministry of Labour's power to protect workers and the power of employment councils to protect you (NECs)
- It Limits your trade union power to protect you
- You are being taken back to slavery, master and servant period of 1901
- It does not include informal economy workers
- Only the Minister will set incentives for investors
- Information is secretly protected and can cause corruption



Why is government making such a law?

- Government is desperate for investment, it thinks selling out workers to investors will bring economic development and create employment;
- It wants to earn foreign currency from investors;
- Government has failed to solve our problems and the country's problems so it is running everywhere like a headless chicken. It is copying China and Mauritius' laws where workers are overworked and suffer from work stress and low pay

Who is pushing for such a law?

- The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development led by Minister Patrick Chinamasa has pushed this law into parliament. Yes, parliament passed this law on 16 June 2016. It is now waiting for President Mugabe's signature for it to be law

And is Parliament aware of this bill?



So what can workers do to stop this form of slavery?

- Demand that the Labour Act must apply to employers and employees in the Special Economic Zones;
- Appeal to President Mugabe not to sign this bill
- Remind President Mugabe that Zimbabwe is becoming a colony again through Special economic Zones
- Join this campaign, share this information with others
- Participate in labour forums and workplace meetings
- Call your union for action
- Join the forth coming protest action to defend your rights

DO NOT BE AFRAID, THE CONSTITUTION OF ZIMBABWE PROVIDES FOR THE RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE AND PETITION.

For more information: Contact your union and the following ZCTU offices for updates:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Eastern Region: 020-60083 | HEAD OFFICE:
2nd & 3rd Floor Gorlon House
7 Jason Moyo Avenue
Harare, Zimbabwe
Tel: +263 4 793 093/794 742/794 702 | Northern Region: 067-24243
Central Region: 054-223312/230443
Southern Region: 039-262276/266443 |
|---------------------------|--|---|

Katsande retains ZIBAWU Presidency

BY DICKSON CHAERUKA

The Zimbabwe Banks and Allied Workers Union (ZIBAWU) re-elected Farai Katsande as its President at the union's 9th National Elective Congress recently held in Mutare.

Convened under the theme; "Embracing Change through: Innovation, Democracy, Education, Action and Solidarity (I.D.E.A.S)," the congress was held from the 26th to 27th of May.

90 delegates participated at the union's elective conference officiated by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) President, George Nkiwane.

According to ZIBAWU Constitution, delegates to the congress in their branches nominate candidates of the National Executive three months prior to the election date.

And it was all joy and praises upon the election time as all the delegates acknowledged the candidature of Farai Katsande for the union's Presidency.

It was such an honour for Katsande who was mandated to lead the union for a second term after he unanimously attained nominations from the union's 8 branches countrywide.

The statuesque also remained on the 1st Vice President position

which was retained by Afurejineti Goto after he attained majority nominations from the union's 7 branches for the post whilst Tawanda Mutami grabbed the 2nd Vice President's position after being nominated by all the union's branches.

But it was on the 3rd Vice President position where nominations differed and an election was held where Linda Mwanga won the position with 66 votes to 22 votes received by her competitor; Rumbidzai Mungwanda.

The Treasurer post was won by Clever Tonhai who garnered 51 votes against his competitors; Chakanetsa Nhutu who had 33 votes and Tendai Madamombe who received 6 votes.

Speaking to delegates in his acknowledging speech, ZIBAWU President; Farai Katsande said gone are the days when leadership make decisions without consulting.

"Cdes, we have moved a long way together and with the membership as well with delegates here present, we registered successes together in the last term from 2010 to 2016. As I assume this Presidency going forward for the term, I assure you I remain your President. We together lift ZIBAWU because this movement needs our support. We remain geared to face the way forward and



Delegates at the bank workers union congress

importantly we need your ideas, innovations and everything that you can contribute to strengthen the union" he said.

Katsande said the union's role was not limited to the delegates neither to its membership but expands across and transcends communities around the country.

Addressing the same gathering in an officiating statement, the ZCTU President George Nkiwane hailed ZIBAWU for 'honouring their constitutional obligations.'

"We are impressed to note that you are one of those very few

Unions who continue to honour their constitutional obligations and we are really proud of you comrades. This is the best possible way to account to the membership as well as allowing them to redirect the leadership by giving it a fresh mandate," he said.

Nkiwane said the strength of unions is rooted in numbers and unity of purpose.

"There is no way we can advance and defend our class interests than unity of purpose. In trade unionism it is not our individual strength that makes us strong, it is

the collective power that makes us strong. Our ideas are founded on the principles of equality, oneness, openness and the universality of the human race," he said.

He applauded ZIBAWU for religiously remitting affiliation dues to the country's biggest labour movement.

"I always say that ZCTU is nothing but a body of its own affiliates. The Labour Centre is facing a hard time because the majority of our affiliates are not remitting anything to ZCTU," said Nkiwane.

ZIBAWU ploughs back to community

BY DICKSON CHAERUKA

The Zimbabwe Banks and Allied Workers Union (ZIBAWU) has extended a helping hand to three charitable institutions in Mutare as part of its programming for its 9th National Congress held in the city.

The union donated groceries amongst other basic commodities included maize-meal, cooking oil and rice to Forward in Faith Children's Home, Chengetai Children's Rehabilitation Centre and Zororai Old People's Home.

Chengetai and Forward in Faith Children's Home further received 100-day old chicks and poultry feeds each to start poultry projects.

Other non-food items donated to the organisations were 40 blankets for the underprivileged children whilst Zororai received 17 blankets.

The official handover of the donations was led by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) President, George Nkiwane and Secretary General Japheth Moyo at Meikles Park following a sponsored march of about 5km facilitated by the union from Christmas Pass on the 25th of May.

FBC Bank partnered ZIBAWU in the march and contributed a total of \$1400 worth of groceries which were distributed to the charitable organisations.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, ZIBAWU General Secretary, Peter Mutasa said the union initiated the walk seeking a partnership with employers to remind the society to help the less

privileged.

"We are grateful to FBC who heed our call to partner in this noble cause. They are the only bank who provided such a generous hand of all the 18 banks operating in the country approached by the union. Nevertheless, in the procession we raised the banks flags to market their services in this employer-employee partnership initiative which also creates awareness to society that money should be banked," he said.

In a statement, FBC Manager, Lovemore Manikai said their participation was a culmination of a strong belief in partnerships.

"FBC is a member of ZIBAWU as such we have partnered them in this noble initiative where we chipped in with some groceries. We also have with our corporation a firm commitment to assist in the markets that we operate thus our involvement in giving through ZIBAWU these groceries he said.

Manikai added that the livelihoods of the underprivileged need recognition by every player in the country's political, social and economic arena.

ZIBAWU then pledged that it was commencing fundraising projects from which the proceeds will continue to benefit the three organisations in the city.

Meanwhile FBC Bank Limited received the ZIBAWU inaugural Partnership Award.

The award was the first of its kind after the bank generously and exceptionally responded to the union's call for partnership in its corporate social responsibility program.

"We felt honoured that of all the 18 banks operating in the country, FBC only came forward and donated groceries worth US\$1400,00 channelled through ZIBAWU to 3 charitable institutions in Mutare. As ZIBAWU we work with employers because we are stakeholders in the same sector. This kind of employer employee partnership goes a long way in improving livelihoods of the less privileged in the country," said Mutasa.

At the same occasion, the ZIBAWU National Executive also rewarded loyal members to the union.

It was the union's cadres, Cain Mubango and Cornelia Mulambo who were rewarded with Commitment Awards along with \$500 price money each.

The cadres were honoured for faithfully serving the union and participating in most union activities.

Outgoing WAC Chairperson, Verity Mutsamwira and the union's President, Farai Katsande were rewarded the Freedom from Fear Award.

The Award was named after an ambitious workplace program by the UNI Global Union code named; Freedom from Fear Campaign.

Mutasa said the 2 recipients befitting the honour as they remained resolute in advancing the workers' voice despite suffering gross victimisation by their employers.

Working women cry foul over EMCOZ's maternity proposals

BY ALOIS VINGA

WOMEN from various sections of the economy have condemned the Employers Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ) for advocating for the non-payment of salaries to female employees on maternity leave.

The Tripartite Negotiation Forum partners have not yet reached agreement in the course of discussions aimed at harmonising the Labour Amendment Act No.5 of 2015. The bone of contention is that employers have not agreed to uphold the payment of salaries to women who go on maternity leave for more than three times while serving under one employer. Employers proposed that a maternity scheme should be established by National Social Security Authority (NSSA) to cushion the employees under such circumstances.

Most women expressed shock over the Emcoz proposals and described the development as accelerating the marginalisation of women.

Former Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Paurina Mpariwa added that the harmonisation of the labor law should not contradict constitutional provisions. She pointed out that business should be in the forefront when it comes to protecting women because they have contributed immensely.

"While such sentiments might be influenced by economic hardships being currently experienced, employers should not forget that they are children who were also birthed by women and they also have wives who bear children for them hence the need to seriously consider their proposal," said Mpariwa.

She added that there was need for employers to consider that they do not only exist to make profits but also to support social values for the well being of society.

Fiona Magaya, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, Head of the Gender desk acknowledged that it is government responsibility to pay women on maternity leave but raised concern over the fact that NSSA is funded by workers hence passing down the salary responsibility burdens the already overtaxed employees. She highlighted that the country's constitution and the International Labour Organization's convention 183 guarantees express rights for maternity leave without any limitation.

"These proposals mean that women are being asked to pay for national duty. The social partners must come together and study how other countries have balanced the extreme interests without infringing

Colourful June 6 commemorations in Mutare

BY TAPIWA MARUFU
LABOUR INFO OFFICER

This year the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) Eastern Region successfully commemorated the National Health and Safety Day at Work held under the theme: workplace stress management contributing to safe, healthy and productive work.

Veteran trade unionists, civic organisations and workers across industrial sectors belatedly celebrated the day on the 18th of June in the region's capital, Mutare.

The day kicked off in style when over thirty participants mostly workers clad in their trade mark red regalia engaged in a cleanup exercise at Harare Mudzviti Bus Terminus.

So thankful were travellers, vendors and transport workers as participants scooped off piles of litter living the populated rank with a fresh breathe of air.

Participants later convened at the Regional Offices for the full commemoration.

Addressing the gathering in a speech by the ZCTU President, George Nkiwane read by the Region's Chairperson, Francisca Gurure, Nkiwane said the ZCTU joined the rest of the Country in

commemorating the National Safety and Health Day at Work with particular reference to the Hwange Mine disaster on the 6th of June 1972 which left 427 miners dead after all rescue operations failed.

"It is in our strong view, had the employer applied proper mining safety management systems, the disaster could have been averted. We have no doubts that the mining conditions at that time were not in line with Occupational Safety and Health Operating Standards," he said.

He expressed concern that the general workplace accidents and fatalities have continued to rise saying if sound intervention strategies are not initiated the country will continue to register high rate of injuries and fatalities.

Speaking at the same event, NSSA Inspector, Mr. Kambarami reiterated that the nation has in the past few years witnessed unacceptable high incidences of occupational injuries, diseases and fatalities.

"In 2015 alone we recorded under the Worker Compensation Insurance Fund (WCIF) 5 380 serious injuries, 54 fatalities and 33 cases of pneumoconiosis. In 2015 & 2016 we added to our register grossly disabled pensioners 8 paraplegics and quadriplegics. This



Workers in Mutare during a clean up commemorating June 6

is unacceptable ladies and gentlemen," he said.

Kambarami said NSSA will continue to put effort in OSH through training programs, promotions programs, enforcement of OSH legislation, offering Occupational Health Services as well as coming up with domestic guidelines of implementing.

In its solidarity message, a Ministry of Labour Representative, Ms Ngwenya said stress affects millions of people but one of its

common form is that related to careers and the workplace.

"Stress at work is a big problem as it affects our health and productivity. However together we can successfully manage it and yield better results," she said.

The Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ), representative Bight Masamvu said at an organizational level communicating effectively at work can improve team work, decision making as well as problem solving which goes a long way in reducing stress at the

workplace.

"Affording employees opportunities to participate in decision that affect their jobs is also important to reduce work induced stress," he said.

The commemorations were also spiced with a line up of entertainment activities. Shop stewards exchanged the platform in reciting poems emphasising on the need to maintain Occupation and Healthy Safety at the workplace which captivated participants.

Zimbabwe on ILO radar again for labour violations

Court ruling which resulted in almost 30 000 workers losing their jobs on notice. The amendment also stifled collective bargaining and the freedom of association at the workplace. It further empowered ministerial interference in matters involving workers and employees.

Also under the scrutiny of the ILO was the non-payment of wages and remittance of trade union dues by the employers and the proposed Special Economic Zones Bill which has provisions which are not in compliance with international labour standards.

"The government should accept a high-level ILO mission before the next International Labour conference in order to assess progress towards compliance with these conclusions. It must provide detailed information on the current situation of collective bargaining in the export processing zones and on the concrete measures to promote it in those zones; ensure that collective bargaining can be exercised in a climate of dialogue and mutual understanding," read an ILO report released after the conference.

The ZCTU, representing labour told the ILO that the amendment exposed workers to more serious job insecurity as it strips them of the power to effective collective bargaining.

Zimbabwe was placed under surveillance despite spirited protestations by the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Prisca Mupfumira, who tried to extricate the country from being bunched among the rogue nations in labour standards.

Mupfumira admitted that the Supreme Court ruling of July 17, 2015 had exposed loopholes in the existing laws, giving employers the right to terminate employment contracts without notice leading to massive job losses but was quick to point out that government had taken measures to expedite the enactment of labour legislation to stop the dismissals with the promulgation of the Labour Amendment Act of 2015.

She also indicated that government

was committed to addressing all issues with the social partners at the national level adding that there was a decline in incidences of clashes between the law enforcement agents and trade unions.

Labour represented by the Zimbabwe Congress of trade unions presented concern over the fact that under section 17 of the Labour Act, government, through the Minister of Labour, continued to maintain its prerogative to issue regulations on an extensive list of matters that included conditions of employment, while denial of registration of collective bargaining agreements which the Minister considered unreasonable and unfair, continued to be allowed by sections 78 and 79 in contradiction to Article 4 of convention 98 which guarantees non-interference by government in trade union activities.

ZCTU also complained that Section 19 continues to hamper collective bargaining the harmonisation of labour laws by continuously denying public employees the right to collective bargaining.

Government also increased its discretionary power with the adoption of the Labour Act of 2015, which provided that collective bargaining agreements had to include measures to promote high levels of productivity and economic competitiveness.

The government continues to violate Article 1 of the convention, which states that workers enjoy adequate protection against acts of anti-union discrimination which is under threat from the proposed Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Bill, which seeks to oust the application of the Labour Act in such zones. Instead of the Labour Act, the Minister would provide rules for conditions of service, termination, dismissal and disciplinary procedures to apply in the zones. Workers in these zones would be excluded from the right to collective bargaining and be subjected only to regulations unilaterally made by the SEZ authority with the power to declare any area a special economic zone. Employees noted that the impact on

workers under such arrangements could be devastating.

The employees also lamented that the Public Order and Security Act had not been repealed despite having been condemned by the ILO years ago.

They added that the Labour Amendment Act only made the situation worse by empowering, under section 120, government to appoint an administration to run the affairs of a trade union it believed was being mismanaged. This provision undermined Article 3 of convention 87 which protected the right of trade unions to administer their activities without interference by public authorities.

In her submissions Mupfumira blamed the socio-economic challenges experienced by the country and the El Niño induced drought having contributed to the failure by employers to comply fully with collective bargaining agreements, especially with respect to payment of salaries and remittance of trade union dues.

On the SEZ Bill, the minister said it could not undermine the fundamental rights of workers especially those relating to conventions 87 and 98, as the Constitution of the country already guaranteed these rights adding that government was ready engage social partners to iron out sticking issues.

Mupfumira said government had demonstrated full respect towards the comments by the ILO supervisory bodies as well as towards the diverse opinions of social partners.

Having considered presentations made by EMCOZ, ZCTU and government, ILO's Committee on the Application of Standards welcomed government's indication that steps would be taken to harmonise the labour and public service legislation with Articles 1 and 4 of Convention No.9, including effected and proposed amendments to the Labour Act.

The conference also ordered that government:-

hold meaningful consultations with social partners in order to fully and

effectively implement the Commission of Inquiry recommendations with respect to the amendment of the Labour Act, the Public Service Act and the Public Order and Security Act;

ensure that dissuasive sanctions are imposed on those engaging in anti-union discrimination and that all workers who have been targeted for discrimination have access to effective remedies;

collate and submit to the Office all statistical information about cases of anti-union discrimination, as requested by the Committee of Experts;

provide detailed information on the current situation of collective bargaining in the export processing zones and on the concrete measures to promote it in those zones;

ensure that collective bargaining can be exercised in a climate of dialogue and mutual understanding;

enhance the capacity of the social partners to fulfil obligations under existing collective agreements; and

avail itself of ILO technical assistance to ensure full compliance with Convention No. 98.

In 2009, ILO sent a commission of inquiry which noted harassment of trade unions and violations on the right to freedom of Association and collective bargaining. The commission report outlined Zimbabwe's flagrant disregard of the most basic rights for workers and recommended the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry which found that systematic violations of conventions 87 and 98 were rampant in the country.

Convention 87 guarantees the freedom of association and the right to organise while convention 98 guarantees the right to enjoy collective bargaining and protection from anti-union discrimination in respect of employment.

COSATU supports popular protests by Zimbabweans

BY STAFF REPORTER

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has called on the people of Zimbabwe to intensify their mass action until the government addresses their concerns while pledging support to protests against injustice and corruption which has reduced the country to sterility and resulted in mass crisis.

In a statement, COSATU International Relations Secretary Bongani Masuku said they reached the decision after consultations with the workers of Zimbabwe under their federation, the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

He said COSATU fully supports the people of Zimbabwe for engaging in peaceful protests and stay-aways to demand government accountability after decades of suffering and serious economic decline caused by bad governance, corruption and economic mismanagement. He urged trade unions, civil society and pressure groups in Zimbabwe to stand up against the government misrule.

"COSATU urges the people of Zimbabwe to continue with the struggle and not to watch in idle while the government tramples upon the rights of workers and ordinary citizens. Zimbabweans have, for a long time now, tolerated their miserable conditions resulting from the violation of their rights by the government. Such coordinated mass action is the only language that unresponsive regimes understand," said Masuku.

He blasted the Zanu PF government for championing anti-people policies in pursuit of power.

"Memories of Operation Restore Order/Murambatsvina of 2005 that left 700

000 households without jobs and accommodation echo the heavy handedness of the ZANU-PF regime in dealing with its perceived enemies. Houses were demolished, people were displaced and thousands were rendered jobless as a result of company closures instigated by poor investment policies and generalised crisis of poor economic management. The government has committed serious socio-economic atrocities against its people for years, with the latest being the cutting off people's livelihoods in banning importation of basic commodities and well as trying to introduce the valueless bond notes to the populace," read the statement.

Masuku said COSATU will continue to support the ZCTU and the current wave of peaceful protests in Zimbabwe which show the people's determination for a united action to confront corruption, poverty, hunger, unemployment and other inequalities that cause misery to the majority.

COSATU also castigated the brutal manner in which the Zimbabwe Republic Police treated protesters in custody where they were subjected to police brutality of torture

"The government is annihilating its tax payers by unleashing its police to terrorise them for exercising their constitutional right to demonstrate against social ills and bad governance. Zimbabweans must stand up and force the government to account for the brutality and demand an end to misrule, corruption, exploitation, and economic meltdown. The ZANU-PF government must not take lightly the growing voices of discontent but instead attend to the issues being raised by the masses, instead of diverting attention through populist rhetoric. The masses have the power and right to determine who and how should they be ruled. With an



Police brutalising an anti-bond note protester in Harare as the wave of protests against the government escalates

unemployment rate of alarming and very huge percentage Zimbabweans are now scattered around the region, which is a clear sign of failure by a government to cater for its people. COSATU further reminds the government of Zimbabwe that it has a duty to create employment and meet the basic needs of its citizens if it wants to curb civil strife and improve their living conditions," reads the statement.

He warned the government against introducing unpopular policies that fail to deliver tangible results like the Special Economic Zones Bill.

"The Bill in its present state is a conveyor

belt to slavery as it seeks to ouster the application of labour standards in the economic Zones. The government needs to be warned that such an approach would foment unrest and public revolt. Zimbabweans need practical economic revival solutions not the piecemeal approaches disguised as SEZ's that follow the failed Export Processing Zones of the 1990's," reads the statement.

He said COSATU would remain in constant touch with the ZCTU to determine how best working class solidarity can assist the workers and people of Zimbabwe to take forward in concrete terms, their legitimate struggles.

Zanu PF crumbles as the MDC re-emerges

FROM PAGE 4

let him have his way and impose his will as heiress apparent. Gloves were off.

Meanwhile after years of inconsequential campaigns, Mnangagwa had finally emerged victorious over Mujuru and had been elevated to the position of Vice President. For years before his elevation, he seemed to bounce from epic highs to desperate lows. And now boom, he was finally there. In his dreams, he saw a magical kingdom, one in which his rise to the top was cloaked in the presumption of inevitability. Over the years, he had matured to become a much more potent candidate than the rest within his party. But is he really assured of succeeding Mugabe? Not so fast!

Give it to him. Mnangagwa is blessed with the gift of patience. The concept of time, as it's commonly understood by many, does not exist in the same realm to him. Over the years he has proven to be a shrewd schemer, lurking behind the scenes, radiating silhouetted images of power which could not be seen clearly but acknowledged. He is a man who hardly shows his emotions even under constant attack from his opponents. For close to four decades he waited patiently for his turn.

But there are simmering problems to his ascendancy. The first problem has to do with his past. He is despised in many parts of Matabeleland and has a lot to do to endear himself with the Ndebele people, a large ethnic tribe making up more than 20 percent of the population. He is alleged to have been part of the masterminds of the Gukurahundi 'madness', a state sanctioned military exercise which terrorised parts of Matabeleland, Masvingo and the Midlands provinces killing thousands of civilians in the process. His part in the Gukurahundi massacres is partly explained in a book written by David Coltart, a former opposition MP for Bulawayo South. On his part, Mnangagwa has

vehemently denied the claims, threatening to sue those who are out to soil his name and reputation.

The second problem comes from within his own party and particularly from the G40 faction which is opposing his rise and rooting for Grace Mugabe instead. To his advantage, he has the war veterans in his corner. However to weaken his support base, Mugabe had to wield the axe, expelling prominent leaders of the veterans from the ruling party in an effort to silence his wife's critics. Whilst the tactic of expulsion worked in the past, the strategy appears to be backfiring at least for now. The war veterans have shown unprecedented resistance to Mugabe's force, going as far as issuing an anonymous communique decrying his leadership and labelling him a dictator. As it stands, the ZANU PF house is in disarray and in a perpetual state of disharmony.

On the while Joyce Mujuru together with her fellow former ZANU PF colleagues have gone on to form their own political outfit, the Zimbabwe People First. As the child of ZANU PF, the new outfit chose to keep its surname, the 'PF' part, to remind the founders and supporters alike of their roots. It is ZANU PF number 2 in many ways. The supporters making up the new party's core base are from ZANU PF, not to mention the founders and the top leadership which is made up of people expelled from ZANU PF. In essence, ZANU PF is divided into three camps namely the Mujuru, the Mnangagwa and the Grace camps respectively.

On the other side of the spectrum is Tsvangirai's MDC outfit, a party that has given Mugabe sleepless nights for almost two decades. Unlike ZANU PF, the MDC appears to be tackling its succession problems quite well. Few weeks ago, Tsvangirai appointed two more vice presidents in the name of Nelson Chamisa and Elias Mudzuri to deputise him, together with Thokozani Khupe who was already

Tsvangirai's vice before the two additions.

But Tsvangirai's appointments were not without drama. As expected, Thokozani Khupe was reported to have been unhappy with the appointments, together with a sizeable section of the MDC leadership who felt the move was a vote of 'no confidence' on her ability to take over from Tsvangirai. Coming as they did, the appointments were made at a time when Tsvangirai was not feeling well, having disclosed to the nation his battle with colon cancer. It was, therefore, natural that Khupe would feel short changed, underrated and betrayed by the appointments as they appeared designed to pass the baton to somebody else in the event of Tsvangirai's incapacitation.

But the succession drama within the MDC camp was short-lived. The appointments were ratified by the MDC's national council whilst, on her part, Khupe decided to swallow her pride for the sake of harmony and unity within the party, a decision for which she must be applauded by the MDC followers. The flames of discontent appear to have been doused on time before creating any fissures with potential to split the party. But is the atmosphere in Tsvangirai's MDC truly harmonious, and if so, does the party have grassroots support? I set out to find out for myself.

It was on a Friday afternoon when I left Harare for Gweru by road. Generally I love travelling. Travelling tends to magnify all human emotions. If travelling were free, you'd probably never see me again. There is nothing much to indulge the eye along the way except for nature's mystical spectacle in the form of vegetation and undulating plains and mountains. Since summer is upon us, the grass has turned brown, the leaves from our deciduous forests have turned yellow, some crimson even and are about to fall off before the onset of the rainy season.

I gave three gentlemen a lift; their destination? KweKwe. In a country like ours where life is a daily nightmare, every dollar counts. For more than two hours we discussed almost anything and everything, from politics, the economy and everything in between. As we were approaching Selous, there and behold, a semi derelict farm running parallel to the left side of the road. 'Farm ra Mutsvanguwa ivo. Pamwe vachamutorera. Handiti akadzvingwa mu party', said one of my passengers.

There was nothing to suggest a fully utilised farm, yet it was better compared to other farms along the road. We talked about how the land issue had been politicised, how land was given to non-deserving beneficiaries with no interest in farming, how it was still used as a tool to buy loyalty and votes and how the poor implementation of the land reform program had destroyed the country. In my mind the words of my passenger echoed the sad truth about the irrefutable divisions within ZANU PF.

The following morning I was far away from home, haunted and tired with travel, in a cheap hotel room by the Midlands hotel, a colonial vintage hotel that has seen the best of its days. Its ground floor walls were crammed with hanging portraits of yester year giants such as Joshua Nkomo, Simon Muzenda, the former midlands godfather Patrick Kombayi and even Robert Mugabe. I woke up to the sound of singing youths clad in red regalia, some toy toying while others sang from the back of lorries. I didn't know what to expect. Will the police allow the demo to go ahead? I constantly asked myself. Riot police presence was quite heavy. As Zimbabweans we live our lives in a constant state of expectation, always curious about the possibilities that could unfold in front of us.

I had other business to attend to before participating in the demo. I took a drive to Mtausi Park, a new

residential suburb to the east of the city. Along the way I saw youths heading to town on foot. I could see determination in their walking, a symbol of the hardships faced by today's youths as well as the sacrifices being made by their peers across the country in supporting a cause they genuinely believe in. A dream for a better tomorrow that seems to never come. When I came back to the city, the demo was already underway. The city was covered in a sea of red. Gweru had heeded the MDC's call to come out in numbers and show their frustration with Mugabe's regime and its failure to properly govern.

For me, the purpose of attending the demo was to regulate imagination with reality, and instead of thinking of how things may be, see them as they are for myself and in the process impart new vigour and knowledge to the mind as well as share solidarity with others. The whole of MDC top leadership was there, from Tsvangirai, to Khupe, Chamisa, Mudzuri, Makone, Mpariwa, Mwonozora and Bhebhe to mention but a few. They were united in purpose. And of course the surprise of all: Mujuru's presence at the demo. Her presence together with that of Didymus Mutasa and other former ZANU PF stalwarts signified the resurgence of the MDC, and to the contrary, the demise of their former party ZANU PF.

I left Gweru convinced that the MDC was getting stronger by day. It might have taken them time to achieve their goals. But in all political journeys, only those who finally get there are the ones to understand that the journey of politics is about sacrifice, perseverance and total commitment to a cause.

Addmore Zhou is a Zimbabwean writer and trade union veteran. He can be contacted at addmorez@gmail.com.

Workers remind govt of ZCTU popularity in Rufaro snub

Zimbabwean workers reminded the government that they are fully behind the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) when they snubbed a state funded workers day commemoration resulting in Vice-President Emmerson Mnangagwa to address an almost empty Rufaro Stadium.

Workers did not turn up at the venue despite an earlier order by the ruling Zanu PF party to shut down all vending sites and small-scale businesses in Harare as it sought to frog march people to the commemoration which was boycotted by the ZCTU which is the largest representative labour body.

The government, decided to hold a parallel workers day commemoration as the minister of labour and social services Priscah Mupfumira was under pressure from cabinet over snubbing workers, a development which sources said had widened the gap between the government and workers. Mupfumira was forced to hurriedly organise the commemoration after the ZCTU had openly told the minister that it was not going to be part of a government orchestrated workers day. Earlier the minister had tried to force the ZCTU to hold a joint commemoration with the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) at Gwanzura Stadium, a request which the ZCTU declined.

The ministry of labour was then forced to hurriedly organise a parallel commemoration to save face and comply with a government directive.

The Rufaro event had the blessings and oversubscribed state media bias as a local daily newspaper, The Herald splashed a headline "All roads lead to Rufaro Stadium... as workers snub ZCTU sideshow"

The state media tried in vain to discredit the ZCTU as a spent force while depicting the ZFTU as a rising giant as the tone for anticipated 'all inclusive' belated May Day celebrations was already telling of a full to capacity Rufaro Stadium.

However, the government sponsored event became an embarrassing debacle after a handful of workers attended with rival ZANU-Pf factions blaming each other for the poor turnout.

ZFTU secretary-general Kenias Shamuyarira lashed out at the government for soiling their image and also confirmed political involvement in the flopped Workers Day celebrations in a local daily newspaper, the Newsday.

"It's true political meddling was there. We were given the mandate to organise at short notice together with the Ministry of Labour," he said.

"It was then the duty of the federation

and the ministry to co-ordinate everything because it was for workers, but in the process, we have seen political activists trying to assist, yet they were trying to measure their popularity and to try and outshine one another within political factionalism."

Shamuyarira said ZFTU had been assured that transport was catered for and the money was given to Zanu PF provincial commissar Shadreck Mashayamombe, but many workers were not ferried.

"He (Mashayamombe) should explain what happened. A lot of workers were left stranded for transport. In a post-mortem review, we discovered that we should not include political parties at such commemorations. Politicians should stay away," Shamuyarira said, adding it was wrong to group workers along political party lines.

Shamuyarira's comments blew the cover on government efforts in propping up ZFTU where it has no capacity and also exonerated the ZCTU for refusing to wine and dine with the devil at Rufaro describing the event as a 'political rally' where individuals responsible for the workers' plight wanted to masquerade as 'saviours'.

Even the presence of music icons Sulumani Chimbetu and Jah Prayzah could not pull the anticipated bumper crowd. In his address to less than 1 000 people in attendance, mostly members of the uniformed forces who are not unionised, Mnangagwa admitted that government needs to do more to incentivise workers and change the current demotivating working environment.

The government, in cahoots with the ZFTU and ZANU PF functionaries had ordered the closure all vending sites in the city and frog-march vendors to the commemorations.

The state media had, already psyched up workers that the Rufaro event would be more than successful as workers had lost faith in the ZCTU and dumped it in favour of the ZFTU. However, the turnout at Rufaro put to rest the debate on which labour federation commands the majority of workers.

ZFTU and the government wanted to woo members with unsubstantiated promises of \$5 million for business start-ups to workers fired following the July 17, 2015 Supreme Court ruling allowing employers to fire employees on three-month notice.

"Following the massive job terminations in the aftermath of the July 17, 2015 judgment, government committed to address the plight of the affected workers through facilitating their empowerment. "To this end, government has to date disbursed \$5

ZCTU COMMEMORATIONS AT GWANZURA STADIUM



Development Company to provide capital to the affected employees. Access to this fund means greater access to decent work. As a way of implementing the decent work agenda, government, through the National Social Security Authority, is working on modalities of establishing a National Health Insurance Scheme, which will ensure universal health coverage for the formal and informal sectors as well as vulnerable groups in society," said Mnangagwa to the handful party faithfuls who pitched up at Rufaro.

A high profile government delegation including minister Prisca Mupfumira (Labour), her deputy Tapiwa Matangaidze, Saviour Kasukuwere (local Government, Sports minister Makhosini Hlongwane, Harare Provincial Affairs minister Miriam Chikukwa, Minister of State in Vice-o's

President Phelakezela Mphoko's Office Tabitha Kanengoni-Malinga and Health deputy minister Aldrin Musiwa, were in attendance.

The ZCTU claimed that the same government officials that were billed to attend the commemoration at Rufaro were the masterminds of a system that had presided over massive job losses and company closures in the country.

The ZCTU drew thousands of workers to its Workers' Day commemorations held at Gwanzura Stadium in Highfield. The attendance at Gwanzura though not a capacity crowd was a reflection of the high levels of unemployment as thousands of workers have lost their jobs as government fails to contain the prevailing economic crisis.

Non payment of wages costs workers in property mortgages

BY ALOIS VINGA

The high rate of job losses and non payment of salaries has negatively impacted on the Zimbabwe's property market resulting in most workers failing to pay mortgages.

Sources in the sector who spoke to the Worker confirmed that most clients were failing to honour their agreements with some going for over six months without paying.

The situation has been very unfortunate as it is resulting in some workers losing money in forfeited agreements. "I have not been paid for the past eight months and this has made it difficult for me to honour the monthly instalments for the property that I am purchasing through a Harare based land developer," said Edmund Ndudzo. The trend has not spared the property sector which thrives on rentals since a number of tenants

have not been able to honour the payments on time. Empty offices and unoccupied residential homes have become a common feature across the commercially viable cities in the country. The Estate Agents Council of Zimbabwe Spokesperson, Oswald Nyakunika said many people have lost jobs due circumstances beyond control, the development have presented mixed fortunes. "To keep afloat many estate agents have had to reduce properties prices

and rentals by 15 to 20 percent with the concurrence of landlords. As regards sales, deed of sales has been re-introduced. These vary in length from three months to two years," he said.

Assessing the current scenario Economist, John Robertson confirmed the situation said that there is a symbiotic relationship between the properties market and unemployment. He explained that economic growth bolsters demand for housing upon income since higher economic growth and rising incomes enable people to send on houses and this pushes demand while recession, falling incomes translates to the failure to purchase the properties. He explained that factors such as being formally or informally employed also influences the property market. "If we had more people employed

in the formal sector, most of them could borrow through mortgage bond and use their employment status as security to purchase properties. Mortgage is dependent on secure jobs and the current environment in which the informal sector is employing the bulk of people cannot sustain the market," said Robertson. Statistics gathered by the country's main labour organisation, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions confirm that thousands of workers have lost employment in recent years. Coupled with a host of poor economic policies pursued at the turn of the millennium the July 17 2015 Constitutional Court ruling which saw over 27 000 workers dismissed from employment worsened the situation.

2016 paralegal class graduate

BY STAFF REPORTER

The 20th paralegal course graduates were conferred with certificates of competence last month amid calls for unions to fully utilise them in grievance handling.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) third Vice President Peter Mutasa urged the graduates to look beyond the paralegal training and attain higher qualifications.

This year 20 students graduated after having undergone the course covering subjects in introduction to Law, Labour Law, Conciliation and Arbitration, Constitutional Law, International Labour Standards and Advocacy skills.

He said the programme had the potential to develop individuals and unions into formidable entities as witnessed by some graduates who rose to higher political offices.

He said the objectives of the paralegal training course were to impart legal knowledge and skills to trade unionists to enable them to

adequately represent their members, to develop leaders who are capable of articulating and interpreting broader issues relevant to trade union work at all levels and be in a position to influence policy formulation or reform at union level, national level and internationally.

"The paralegal course has been an anchor to the trade union movement. Its results are an open secret. Most of our affiliate union's leaderships, including general secretaries, and presidents are graduates of this programme. Some cadres joined politics while others went on to become leaders in some civil society organisations. We believe we gave them the foundation and demystified the field of law which previously was dominated by learned colleagues only "lawyers" but now we have trade unionists who are now learned colleagues, capable of interpreting the law," he said.

Mutasa said the programme has huge benefits for the trade union movement as unions have managed to save millions of dollars in legal



Paralegal graduates and their trainers at graduation ceremony

fees as they now have people capable of handling labour disputes from plant level to the Labour court level.

He said an evaluation of the programme in 2011 by an independent consultant gave a thump up to the programme as: "one of the successes of the programme has been the outstanding demonstration of legal

knowledge and skills by the paralegal officers which has distinguished the work of the ZCTU from the work of rival federations...With ZCTU paralegal officers, militancy has been replaced by reasonableness and reference to the law and you can see the difference with other worker representatives...."

FES representative Auline

Chapisa said graduates should look beyond legal work as labour was faced with several challenges.

"Fellow workers we are now faced with labour market flexibility. Already it is on the ground without any social security systems. It is now a task before us to retain membership," she said.

Vendors to contribute to NSSA pension scheme

BY STAFF REPORTER

THE National Social Security Authority (NSSA) has put in place plans to introduce a pension scheme for informal traders.

This was revealed by the NSSA board chairman Robin Vela on the sidelines of the official opening of the authority's banking unit the National Building Society last month. He said the scheme would allow informal traders to contribute in the same way formally employed workers do towards a pension fund. Formally employed workers contribute 7,5 percent of their basic salary towards NSSA monthly contributions.

Vela said the scheme would target the informal sector will leverage on the use of mobile platform to ensure that the informal traders can easily transact.

"We want to create a scheme for informal traders. That scheme is going to leverage off mobile platforms. At the moment if you are a formally employed person your contribution to the pension fund is actually easy, it comes through your employer. As a result we want to make it easy for the informal trader to contribute but remember if you are an informal trader, for you to contribute you have to first see the real benefit at the end of the day. So we want to rebrand NSSA, get it back to having the credibility where you say my money is safe when I invest with NSSA. When we do that, we are then more attracted to come to the informal sector scheme that we are setting up," he said.

NSSA was established in terms of the NSSA Act of 1989. According to the Act, NSSA is based on the principle of social solidarity and pooling of resources and involving drawing of savings from periods of employment, earnings and good health to provide for periods of unemployment, old age, invalidity and death.

Meanwhile the Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economies Association (ZCIEA) has said NSSA needs to a lot before it can successfully launch the fund.

ZCIEA secretary General Wisborn Malaya said there was a lot of suspicion among informal traders on the proposed move by NSSA which needs to be demystified.

"Informal trader organisations are the ones that tabled the proposal to NSSA and it embraced it, surprisingly on implementation we are now being left out. NSSA needs to ensure policy cohesion before it begins anything. There is need to ensure job security of informal traders

NSSA is administering two schemes: Pension and Other Benefits Scheme and Accident Prevention and Workers' Compensation Scheme. Under the Pension scheme, people start receiving payouts after the age of 60. On the issue of housing, the new NBS was meant to cater for everyone including the informal sector due to the low interest rates.

"If you compare what other building societies are charging you will see that the NBS is by far the lowest. Others charge 15 to 20 percent compared to our nine percent. This is not just a gimmick, it is a real offer and we are saying to the ordinary person stop paying rent and get a bond if that bond is accessible and by getting the bond you are now able to own a house," he said.

Working women cry foul over EMCOZ's maternity proposals

FROM PAGE 8

the law," said Magaya.

A legal expert, Maureen Chitewe said that the stance being proposed by business is retrogressive as it takes the country back to the 20th century when laws did not protect women's rights to play their reproductive roles at the same time as their productive roles without compromising one role in favour of the other.

"The proposed stance requires a working woman to choose between keeping a job, furthering her career or fending for her family and performing the natural role of bearing children on the other. To require a woman to make such a choice is to oppress her, and discriminates against her purely because she is a woman. "It means she has to forego having a job because she wants to have a child, she has to forego advancing in her career because she wants to have a child; she risks losing her earnings while she is on maternity leave which paradoxically is the time when she needs the income most due to the additional medical expenses. It is discriminatory because men, who make up the other half of the child-bearing equation, are not affected in any way and they do not pass up chances of promotion, career advancement since their earnings are not cut," said Chitewe.

She said that the stance expressed by employers is unconstitutional because it violates the constitutional provisions enshrined in section 24(2)(b) which enjoins the state to remove any restrictions that unnecessarily prevent people from working and section 56(2) which

promotes the right to equal treatment of men and women, including the right to equal opportunities in economic spheres. Section 65(4) which provide that everyone has a right not to be treated in an unfairly discriminative manner on the grounds of among others, their sex or economic status. She explained that section 65(7) which assures women employees of the right to fully paid maternity leave for at least 3 months and section 80(1), which assures every woman of full and equal opportunities in, among others, economic activities will also be infringed if the Emcoz position sees the light of the day. Virginia Muwanigwa, a women's rights activist and past chairperson of the Women's Coalition regretted that the business community in Zimbabwe was now being influenced by developments taking place in neighboring countries.

"The business stance is informed by experiences in other countries like South Africa where maternity pay came from a national fund. Obviously before responsibility to pay shifts from business a fund has to be built up and it is likely that a part would still come from them. Maternity pay is a right to women not a privilege as is implied as giving birth is national duty whose choice should not become a gamble of one's security of employment," she said. However Chido Nyakudya Marketing and Business Development Director at Boka Tobacco Auction Floors interpreted the situation from a different perception as she hinted that the stance proposed by business is valid because paid

maternity leave is not linked to productivity especially true in our economy where businesses are struggling to stay afloat.

"In developed countries companies are not obliged to pay employees while they are on maternity leave. In these countries the employee can be insured for their maternity leave benefit by the employers. As a female professional I think it is important for the employers understand that employees are assets to organisations and job satisfaction is linked to productivity. In order to protect women as well as to protect productivity there should be a middle ground where the law can make it mandatory for the employer to pay a minimum portion perhaps 50% of the employee's salary while they are on maternity leave.

Contacted for comment EMCOZ President, Josephat Kahwema underscored that the business community will not take away the rights guaranteed by the constitution but expressed concern over the need to balance interests.

"Maternity leave is a right that is guaranteed by the national constitution and as employers we cannot infringe on those rights. We are proposing that NSSA must pay female employees who go on maternity leave for more than three times in the course of serving one employer because if this responsibility is left for employers it will not be in the best interests of business," he said.

Young Workers hold serene conference

BY STAFF REPORTER

The youth structure of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) held its second elective conference recently and elected a new executive that would steer its activities for the next five years.

The elective conference which had no surprises was tasked with spearheading the activities and national actions for the ZCTU was held under the theme "Ensuring Trade Union Continuity and Sustainability Through Young Worker Participation".

Speaking at the conference, ZCTU President George Nkiwane urged the youth to play their vanguard role in furthering the interest and agenda of the labour body.

"Your theme... was aptly chosen as it is a fact that any organisation that has no youth structure has no future. The perpetuity of any organisation rests with the youth hence they are the vanguard of any movement that is mass based. You are the future of the organisation and I urge you to play your vanguard role in defending and furthering the interests of the organisation. The youths are the roots of every people driven organisation such as ours and it's very important to have the right orientation for the continuity of such," he said.

He also urged the young workers to be conscious and defend their working class interests.

"Class consciousness, identity and interests should be our guiding principle and bond in our quests to achieve full civil liberties, genuine democracy, based on mass participation which then results

in full freedoms. As workers our friends are those whose actions and thinking do resonate with our interests. We should not leave any vacuum as far as class interests are concerned as this may give room for demagogues to meddle on our terrain and affairs," said Nkiwane.

Nkiwane called for synergies between the outgoing and incoming executives to continue working together in building youth capacity and participation in trade union activities.

The outgoing chairperson Ian Makoshori said his executive had worked tirelessly to popularise the introduction and establishment of the structure at affiliate level but the results had not been pleasing.

"I salute the interim leadership, councillors and the Young Workers in general whose contribution made the Young Workers structure a formidable outfit that sent shivers into the spines of those whose understanding of trade unionism is still at its infancy. Young Workers were viewed with suspicion by the older generation of union leaders some of whom have not yet changed their mind-sets towards this emerging force to date. Inroads have been made for recognition but practically speaking we are still a long way to go to match our WAC counterparts who have structures at affiliate, district, regional and national level. The war is not over we have not yet achieved what we envisaged in 2008. We have managed to make our mark at the top level, yes it's an achievement but we still have a long way to go. Most unions have not yet constituted Young Workers Structures and that alone is cause for concern. The structure managed to establish itself with footprints of dominance during national commemorations, national action days,



CALM BEFORE THE STORM: Young Workers waiting for accreditation for elections

meetings and other trade union activities," said Makoshori.

He said the structure worked tirelessly to establish an appropriate foundation for the smooth flow of Young Workers' activities which included creating policy guidelines and constitutional amendments adding that there were still numerous challenges to be ironed out.

He called on the incoming executive to continue with the legacy and momentum obtaining in the structure.

Incoming chairperson Tirivanhu

Marimo pledged to steer the structure to higher levels to see through the establishment of structures at union, regional and district levels.

The conference elected Chairperson, Tirivanhu Marimo from ZIBAWU was uncontested

Vice chairperson, Loveness Mashingaidze RAYOS was uncontested after Chipamaunga Runesu of RAE had withdrawn. The secretary's position was won by Anna Ibamu of RAU after shrugging off Given Dingwiza of ESWUZ and Runesu Chipamaunga of

RAE.

Chipamaunga played a dead rubber as he was uncontested for the position of vice secretary. The treasurer's position was also a no contest for Takura Mushweswe of ZIMRATU.

The conference came up with several recommendations which will be discussed at the ZCTU national congress. Some of the recommendations centred on gender equity, labour law reform climate change and the sustainability of the organisation.

.....As Women hold colourful elections



WAC Conference delegates and participants in Mutare

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) women structure recently held an explosive elective conference as the labour body girders towards the main congress set for later this month.

The conference which had its high and lows elected executive members for the Women Advisory Council (WAC) in a tension filled environment was held in Mutare under the theme "Building Women's Power: A Commitment to Gender Parity".

Pre-Conference deliberations went on well and the high note of the conference was the election process which saw all the executives strolling

unopposed but with fierce resistance in some instances by delegates who wanted the nomination process to be re-opened to accommodate their favourable candidates.

Some of the delegates even proposed to withdraw their nominations in the congress but the ZCTU General Council Credentials Committee which was tasked with running the election explained the constitutional provisions obtaining in running the elections and urged delegates to use the appropriate avenues if they were not satisfied.

In his speech at the conference, ZCTU President George Nkiwane commended the structure for meeting its constitutional obligation of

holding the elective conference timely adding that the trade union needs more unity as it is faced with the threats from capitalism and political forces.

"The members or affiliates are the owners of the trade union or national centre and time and again they need to be afforded the chance to choose their leadership. The purpose of a congress is not entirely to boot out the leadership but to evaluate progress and give mandate. The membership know and values the contributions that their leaders provide to their organisation and usually recognise such sacrifices," said Nkiwane.

Nkiwane urged the women to resonate with their theme in their

programmes and deliberate deeply and widely on the way forward for working women. He warned delegates to guard against divisions and efforts to derail the labour agenda.

He said the structure worked tirelessly to establish an appropriate foundation for the smooth flow of Young Workers' activities which included creating policy guidelines and constitutional amendments adding that there were still numerous challenges to be ironed out.

He called on the incoming executive to continue with the legacy and momentum obtaining in the structure.

The conference also came up with several recommendations which will

be discussed at the ZCTU national congress. Some of the recommendations centred on changing the structures title to Women Advisory Committee so that it functions just like other committees of the General Council, gender equity, labour law reform climate change and the sustainability of the organisation.

The incoming Chairperson Miriam Katumba as a way forward in her acceptance speech called for unity urging delegates to bury differences and focus on the common good for working women and the labour movement at large.

The conference elected Katumba from the National Union of the Clothing Industry as Chairperson, Rumbidzai Choto, Zimbabwe Banks and Allied Workers Union as Vice Chairperson, Barbra Tanyanyiwa from Commercial Workers Union was retained as Secretary deputised by Emmaculate Chingwere from the Railway Artisans Union. The treasurer is Bertha Mabambe of the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority Trade Union.

The ZCTU Women and Gender coordinator Fiona Magaya urged the delegates to promote the *Count Us In* campaign which was launched on Women's Day to promote women involvement in trade union issues.

"You need to take the campaign seriously if women are to be more involved in trade union activities and rise to decision making positions. The campaign needs to be popularised to all structures of affiliate unions and it is your duty as women leaders to do that. The involvement of women in trade unions is still very low despite the formidable numbers that we constitute. There are misconceptions that need to be demystified over women's participation in trade unions in our society and the campaign is an able vehicle for that," she said.

ZDI discriminates civilian employees

BY ALOIS VINGA

BROKE state owned Zimbabwe Defence Industries (ZDI), an entity which specialises in the manufacture and supply of army uniforms and ammunition for the local and international markets is up in arms with its civilian employees who have gone for one and a half years without salary.

The employees who spoke to the on the conditions of anonymity for fear of victimisation said that the ammunition manufacturer is in its dire straits and risks losing property as the employees are mulling taking legal action to recover their outstanding salaries. They lamented that the situation at the ZDI turned for the worst when the company was placed under new management led by Brigadier General C. Masuku who was tasked to turnaround the company's fortunes.

"Since the new management's inception nothing has been paid and the working conditions continue to deteriorate. The company is not prioritizing the payment of salaries even though huge sums of money are generated at times. Only at rare circumstances we are given US\$100 transport allowances," said the source.

The employees blasted the new management for not prioritizing their welfare despite that most of the members had served the company for periods ranging between 15 to 30 years and also

warned the new management to desist from getting their lucrative allowances at a time when ordinary employees are not getting anything.

"What boggles the mind is that the management staff are getting their perks on top of the salaries which they are paid by the government and this factor is pushing us to the edges of taking legal action," the source added.

The employees also bemoaned the fact that the company is operating under the guidance of misplaced priorities since management spends hugely on purchasing assets like generators and groceries. Inexperienced military appointees have also been pointed at as one of the impediments to good corporate governance and competency at the ZDI.

Contacted for comment, ZDI Public Relations Officer, Captain Jennifer Dube said that she could not immediately divulge any details on the matter since she was out of office.

"We are off duty today since you know that we were working over the public holidays. I cannot give a comment on the matter before I get permission from my superiors and as soon as we get back to work we will be able to respond," she said.

ZDI made headlines last year when former General Manager Retired Colonel Tshinga Dube told the Sunday News the company was facing serious liquidity crisis precipitated by Western sanctions which have prohibited its United States and European Union customers from



ZDI manufactures ammunition and of late has not been struggling to pay its employees. The company has resorted to employing from the army

doing business with it since 2002. Dube also said that the company's woes have been actively compounded by high local production when compared to mass producers like China.

According to the report Dube said that the company needs at least US\$20 million to refurbish and replace most its antiquated machinery and an additional US\$10 million for the acquisition of raw materials.

The company needs at least \$20

million to refurbish and replace most of its antiquated machinery. An additional \$10 million is required for the acquisition of raw materials and the payment of immediate overhead costs, which include salaries.

ZDI was recently under siege from employees who had reportedly gone for seven months without salaries. Those still reporting for duty allege they are being forced work at the company farm. In an interview this week, ZDI managing director retired colonel Tshinga Dube said the company has been forced to diversify in order to survive.

"We are now buying and selling scrap metal from ZiscoSteel (NewZim Steel), National Railways (of Zimbabwe) and other companies that have huge piles of scrap metal lying around in order to keep afloat," he said.

Dube also confirmed his firm has been failing to pay its workers, but is in the process of rectifying the problem which is currently affecting the majority of companies in Zimbabwe.

"It is not true that we have not paid our workers for seven months, but there was a time when we could not pay them," Dube said. "We have a backlog of three months and we have started disbursing some funds although the money is not enough.

"We are in serious problems because our main client, Zimbabwe Defence Forces, has not been buying weapons and our products are a bit expensive on the international market."

He also said apart from suffering from the effects of sanctions, the company was also feeling the pinch of the prevailing liquidity challenges and high import duties levied on raw materials.

Problems bedeviling ZDI come amid reports that the company owns a 40 percent stake in the diamond mining company, Anjin Investments — a joint venture between Zimbabwe and China and one of the companies operating in the country's Marange diamond fields.

EXHIBITION TIME : ZCTU @ HARARE AGRICULTURAL SHOW



ZCTU LIBRARIAN Patience Jongwe takes time to attend and explain the role of the ZCTU to workers at the Harare Agricultural Show

Of Tsvangirai and fly by night pastors

Because of what has been happening in Zimbabwe in recent months, Chigumura thought to restrict comments on events that have been happening in Zimbabwe during the past few months. I am talking about the wave of protests that have been taking place across the country.

Lest we forget and some people want to take dubious credit, it all started with the MDC-T deciding staging marches across the country's major cities and towns against Robert Mugabe's regime. The Harare march was a resounding success another one was staged in Bulawayo which was also very successful.

Rattle by the MDC-T success, Zanu PF did its own "million" march. This was also followed a another march as well by war veterans in support of Mugabe.

But the real deal was started by cross borders after the government's ill-conceived idea of banning imports from South Africa without giving alternatives to the thousands of people who earn a living through cross border trade. Thousands of people marched on both sides of the South African and Zimbabwean borders, blocking roads and demanding a reverse of the policy. Then enter Pastor Evan Mawarira of #ThisFlag and then #Tajamuka fame. Several social movements sprouted out speaking out about bad governance. They called for a mass stayaway and Zimbabweans heeded the call.

Of all the social movements, the one fronted Pastor Evan Mawarire of #ThisFlag took the lime light as people quickly identified with it. It took the country by storm.

However, Chigumura is one of the few people who was very sceptical of this Pastor him from the beginning. Zimbabwe has had its fair share of fake Pastors who are looting a lot of money from hard pressed people.

We also have fake Pastors who are busy dining with the enemy that has been oppressing Zimbabweans for the past 36 years. Yes Pastor Mawairire's campaign resonated well with the masses (although there was nothing new), but I wondered if he could last the distance and if he was brave enough.

For starters, when he was 'arrested' I wondered how he could move around with the police (including going with him to search at his offices and home) with cameras in tow. We all know how vindictive our police officers are, they would not allow any camera near them. But the Pastor was allowed to be searched with cameras flashing. That was unusual.

Some of my colleagues called me names when I said these are fly by night pastors who are looking for fame and would soon disappear as they cannot endure the brutal regime of Robert Mugabe. I said I think Patson Dzamara is better, genuine and brave. When I said this struggle need brave man like Morgan Tsvangirai, Chigumura was quickly labelled a fanatic of Tsvangirai. Even Lovemore Madhuku is far much brave, but none would listen.

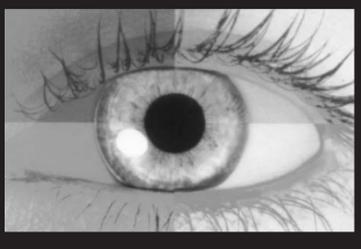
Whenever I listened to the Pastor, something about Baba Jukwa came to my mind. The same way we were all duped by the Baba Jukwa character that was created by Zanu PF spokes, we all followed this Pastor.

Now that the good Pastor is now living comfortably in America having skipped the country leaving his supporters clutching straws Chigumura is vindicated.

I still stand by my assertion that Tsvangirai is the real deal. He endured humiliation, beatings and incarcerations but soldiers on. Without a single clap, the Pastor has escaped!

The action of Pastor Evans is a serious indictment to people of Zimbabwe who believe in anyone who comes along and

CHIGUMURA



MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai after being battered in police custody at the height of political violence against opposition forces



Pastor Evan Mawarire and Patson Dzamara

claims to be a fighter of democracy. The Pastors says his concerns are for his family, wife and child. My foot! When the people left the country to fight the war they left their loved ones behind. This is selfish thinking.

So whom does the good pastor want to die for this country. He has left his followers exposed and he does not care a hoot. **Hatidi vanotumira vana vevamwe kuhondo. I am out of here!**

Call to end police brutality against demonstrators



Police officers batter a helpless woman at the Harare Magistrates Court in an apparent display of police brutality and state repression

FROM PAGE 6

rights shall be brought to book. That's for sure!"

Party spokesman Obert Gutu added: "The fact of the matter is that the MDC-T is not training any terror squads allegedly to destabilize Zimbabwe. For the record, the MDC-T is a lawful and peace-loving social democratic political party that was formed in September, 1999. If anything, it is the opposition party, over the years that has been the victim of relentless and sustained State-sponsored violence, thuggery and banditry."

President Robert Mugabe has warned his rival about recent protests in the country, and declared that there would be no "Arab Spring in Zimbabwe". He was referring to a series of uprisings that toppled leaders across the Arab world.

Responding to Mugabe's remarks, Gutu said: "We totally agree with him. It is not the intention of the MDC-T and its leader, President Morgan Tsvangirai, to violently and unconstitutionally overthrow the Zanu

PF regime. Of late, it is the Zanu PF regime itself that has been unleashing wanton violence and brutal physical force on peaceful demonstrators."

"On Wednesday, August 25, 2016, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) embarked on an orgy of violence in downtown Harare; beating up and vandalising innocent and peaceful demonstrators who had been embarking on a lawful march led by the MDC Youth Assembly."

The MDC-T and 17 other opposition parties under the National Electoral Reform Agenda (NERA) platform, tried to stage a peaceful demonstration in Harare and being cleared by the High Court but police used tear gas, baton charges and water cannons to disperse the protesters.

"Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri and Home Affairs Minister, Ignatius Chombo, should be held personally responsible for the mayhem and barbarism that was caused by the

Lessons from Rio Olympics



Inexperience and lack of international exposure costed the Mighty Warriors at the Rio Olympics

BY SPORTS REPORTER

Team Zimbabwe's outing at the just ended Rio Olympics was a disaster which can best be described as failure despite the excitement and high hopes the nation had on the team which was a blend of armatures and tired horses which needed not to be given a chance to excel by all sporting standards.

It was an absurdity to expect the Golden Girl Kirsty Coventry who is past the golden age to perform miracles at the Olympics when she is a decade past her hey days. Coventry, last won an Olympic medal in Beijing 2008 and the country has not made any efforts to mould another world class swimmer of her mould.

The back-stroke sensation won three medals at the Athens Games in 2004 gold, silver and a bronze. In Beijing 2008 she went on to take another one gold and three silver to take her tally to seven but she. It's now back to the drawing board for Zimbabwe as the Coventry is over without a clear 'succession' plan.

The Mighty Warriors made their mark and got the experience of playing at the world stage. They have learnt their lessons which need to be followed up with serious capacity building which is nowhere in sight at the moment. Corporate sponsorship for sport has diminished over the years leaving sports development to individuals with a passion.

The country has eight medals at the Olympics, the first medal came from the women's hockey team in 1980 in Moscow, Russia and the other seven from Coventry's individual efforts.

The lack of vision for continuity is not only peculiar to swimming alone but its cuts across almost all sporting disciplines. Local sports bodies have not done anything in the past decade to develop sport, instead they have relied on individual talent. Sporting disciplines have been dying slowly as a result of lack of investment and capacity building in both human talent and the very facilities. Most sporting facilities have been left to rot under the watch of the responsible ministry and boards. Clear examples are the Khumalo Hockey Stadium,

Chitungwiza Aquatic Complex and the Mbare netball complex are just some of the facilities which have been condemned.

The rot has not only ended with national sports facilities, local facilities in residential areas have largely been turned into religious shrines or residential areas with local authorities turning a blind eye to the demise of a sporting culture they inherited at independence.

Sports and Recreation Minister Makhosini Hlongwane has admitted that Team Zimbabwe failed the nation at the just-ended Olympic Games due to poor planning.

"The performance of Team Zimbabwe in the recently ended edition of the Summer Olympics Games in Rio shows that we did not consider the Olympics as a four-year cycle. In other words, two years ago, three years, and four years ago there were no seeds that were planted to begin the process of preparing the athletes for Rio 2016. Olympics are a four-year cycle. What that means is we must always, on time, make sure that the preparations are done. For Rio, when we are talking about the team that we were assembling beginning of this year, late last year it was already late. Work had already not been done prior to that, so I want that to be very clear," said Hlongwane.

Hlongwane said his ministry will now start to prepare for the next international sporting competitions saying the ministry had tasked Zimbabwe Olympic Committee start preparations for Tokyo 2020.

He added that the ministry was also rejuvenating the National Youth Games to include all Olympic sport codes and broaden the Games so that they can produce world class athletes.

The Sports Commission has not been supporting the sporting disciplines and preparing them for such grand stages blaming the economy for the failure to produce top class athletes.

ZIFA CONDEMNS HOOLIGANS

The Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) has criticised acts of hooliganism that continue to dog local premier league games in the wake of clashes between the police and supporters at the end of a premier league match between Highlanders and Chicken Inn at Barbourfields Stadium.

ZIFA spokesperson Xolisani Gwesela said the association is disappointed to note that despite overwhelming condemnation of violence and punitive measures levelled against clubs and offenders, unruly incidents still occur at premier league matches.

"ZIFA is utterly dismayed by heinous acts of hooliganism that characterised the Chicken Inn Highlanders match at Barbourfields stadium.

"These ghastly acts of violence must be condemned in no uncertain terms.

"The beautiful game of football celebrates aesthetic values of peace, tranquillity and good sportsmanship. The Association takes great exception to any individual or groups who breach these sacrosanct values," Gwesela said.

The mother body also extended a plea to all premier league clubs to partake in the drive to bring an immediate end to disruptions at football matches.

"ZIFA encourages clubs to educate their fans and devise strategies to curb these despicable acts of violence," he added.

Gwesela further reiterated the need for law enforcement agents to ceaselessly fight this criminal behaviour by apprehending all harmful elements at football matches.

"ZIFA also urges the law enforcement agencies to be resolute and clamp down heavily on these malcontents to serve as a disincentive for future occurrence," he concluded.

The match in question ended in a one-all stalemate.

Namibia send Zimbabwe packing in try-thriller

... as hosts qualify for world youth rugby tourney

Windhoek - While the Namibian senior second strings rugby fifteen, the Welwitschias, are finding the going tough in the South African Provincial Currie Cup, the Namibian youth team is making serious inroads in world rugby.

Hosts Namibia made full use of home ground advantage to advance through to next year's Under-19 World Junior Rugby Trophy.

The Namibians easily waltzed past their opponents in the four-nation mini tournament qualifiers to book a berth in next year's second-tier Under-19 global showpiece.

The fired-up Namibians retained the Under-19 Africa Cup Division 1A Crown for the fifth year in succession via a comprehensive 42-29 triumph over Zimbabwe in a ten-try thrilling clash of the titans at the Hage Geingob Stadium in Windhoek on Saturday.

Namibia and Zimbabwe booked themselves a place in the final having outscored their opponents in the semifinals with ease three days earlier.

Namibia registered the biggest win in the youth tourney, thrashing hapless debutants Tunisia by 64 points without a reply.

In the other semifinal clash, Zimbabwe rode their luck in a nail-biting narrow 27-26 victory against the gutsy Kenyan side in the competition's opening match on Wednesday.

Namibia's well-deserved victory was a repeat of last year's final that saw the Namibians narrowly eliminate eternal rivals Zimbabwe by 34 points to 32 to confirm their dominance on the African continent – thus claiming the bragging rights as the continental youth tourney's most decorated team in the past five years.

Meanwhile, North African representatives Tunisia dropped to the Africa Cup 1B after suffering a 24-17 defeat at the hands of Kenya in the play-off played as curtain-raiser to the final. (By Carlos Kambaekwa)

Zimbabwe Cricket in search of new head coach

It was in May this year that the board sacked their head coach Dav Whatmore.

The board had appointed former South Africa pacer Makhaya Ntini as the interim coach. After some sudden changes in the support staff recently, Zimbabwe Cricket has now started searching their new head coach. It was in May this year that the board sacked their head coach Dav Whatmore while also took away captaincy from then captain Hamilton Masakadza—a decision that left the world surprised. However, they had appointed former South Africa pacer Makhaya Ntini as the interim coach who served as the same for the following two series at home against India and New Zealand. Now, the board looks to sort things out and get a permanent solution as they seek for a head coach for the national cricket team. The new coach will have a lot to do to improve Zimbabwe's domestic cricket in order to make sure they produce more promising options.

Zimbabwe, after trying Elton Chigumbura and Masakadza, have now settled for Graeme Cremer as the captain across formats. The board, apart from appointing Ntini, also hired Lance Klusener as their batting coach and former captain Tatende Taibu as the convener of the selection panel. The board, in a released statement, said Taibu "will have additional responsibilities in development and high performance, and will also assist ZC in bringing former Zimbabwe players back into local cricket," reported the same source.