

ZIMBABWE: Weekly Update Monday 24 January 2011

1. Electoral Environment

- Former Mavambo/Dawn/Kusile strategist retired Major Savious Kudzai Mbudzi has made damning revelations that the party now led by former Finance Minister Simba Makoni is a project of ZANU (PF). He made the confession while announcing that he was defecting from ZAPU to ZANU (PF) this week. Rtd Mbudzi said that Mavambo was created to ensure that there would be split votes so as “to remove ZANU (PF) from the mud” while insisting that

“People must never be fooled, there are only two parties in the country, Zanu (PF) and MDC-T, the rest are other people’s projects.”

- The Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network has indicated that 27% of people on the national voter’s roll are dead. This was disclosed in a report produced by the organisation on Thursday. In the report, ZESN says that

“The list to people test showed that 27 percent of voters registered in the voters roll were deceased...The computer test revealed 2344 people born between 1901 and 1909 aged between 101 and 110 years old. It also revealed 9 people born between 1890 and 1900 aged between 111 and 120 years old.”

2. Reconstruction

- Public Servants begin an indefinite strike for increased salaries today the 24 January. This is after negotiations with Finance Minister Tendai Biti and Public Service Minister Eliphaz Mukonoweshuro ended in a deadlock. Workers are demanding 150% increases on salaries, while the government has only offered 24%. Most civil servants earn US\$241 a month, up from US\$180 last year. The strike is expected to have a major impact on the fragile economy, with the Finance Minister begging the workers to be patient with government, saying that

“Last year we were averaging collections of US\$140 million I have always argued that for this economy to actually adequately pay for fees, pay for teachers, pay for hospitals, we need to be collecting at least US\$400 million a month, and we are collecting, in the case of January, less than US\$100 million dollars.”

- Meanwhile, a statement released by the Movement for Democratic Change led by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai blamed ZANU (PF) for the impending strike. In the

statement circulated after the MDC-T National Executive Meeting on Saturday, the party blamed ghost workers, the mismanagement of the Chiadzwa diamonds proceeds, increased recruitment of soldiers and other civil servants as well as the employment of militias and ZANU (PF) supporters in government positions. The party also went further to demand the immediate release of the Public Service audit.

- The public service strike is expected days after diesel supplies in major cities has resurfaced, something that is expected to affect business operations. The shortages have been blamed on financial problems facing the national procurement agency, National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM).

3. International Relations

- Relations with South Africa are set to come under scrutiny this week after ZANU (PF) supporters and war veterans invaded a bird sanctuary near Lake Chivero that is governed by a Bilateral Partnership Agreement with South Africa. Kuimba Shiri in Mashonaland West was invaded by about 150 people clad in ZANU (PF) regalia ostensibly to make way for President Robert Mugabe's nephew, Patrick Zhuwao. Gary Stafford, the South African founder and owner of the tourist resort housing over 450 species, charged that the invasion occurred after a ZANU (PF) meeting at which it was allegedly agreed that only 12 commercial farmers would remain in Masholand East.

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