

Zimbabwe Weekly Update 30/2011 – 18-24 July 2011

Overview

1. **Elections:** **Violence Erupts at Parliament – Constitutional Referendum in December - Continued Worrisome Utterances on Threat of Military Coup**
 2. **International Relations:** **Mugabe to Table “Sanctions” Issue at SADC Summit**
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1. Elections:

- Hundreds of ZANU PF supporters reportedly stormed Parliament in Harare on Saturday 23 July 2011 forcing the cancellation of business and beating MPs and journalists. The crowd forced the Joint Committee of the House of Assembly Portfolio Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs, Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs and the Senate Thematic Committee on Human Rights to abandon a public hearing on the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) Bill. According to reports the crowd threatened anyone they suspected of being an MDC supporter. People were beaten up in front of the police who finally restored order but reportedly did not arrest anyone. The Secretary-General of the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, Foster Dongozi is quoted stating: “We note with alarm the escalation in terms of harassment and abuses of journalists as we inch towards referendum and elections.” Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights stated: “These disruptions, which constitute contempt of parliament in terms of the law, are criminal offences. As such, these actions must be immediately investigated by parliamentarians and the Zimbabwe Republic Police, and the culprits — including the invisible masterminds behind the disruptions — identified in order to bring them to book.”
- Zimbabwe’s draft constitution is expected to be ready for a referendum in December. The Co-Chairman of the Committee of the Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC), Douglas Mwonzora MDC-T, is quoted stating that the September deadline was no longer possible because of failure to adhere to agreed positions and the lack of funding. COPAC is understood to be in urgent need of about US\$1 million to complete the district and provincial outreach reports.
- It is reported that the stalled constitution-making process is expected to resume today after the Management of COPAC held a crisis meeting to solve differences on what methodology to use to

compile data from the outreach exercise. Officials are quoted saying that it has been agreed that both qualitative and quantitative methods be used in compilation of district and provincial reports after heated discussions. Eric Matinenga, Minister of Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs, MDC-T is quoted: “We have found a way forward. [...] We came up with an agreement that we should recognise the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. I hope we are not going to go back on this latest agreement.” The MDCs has been supporting the use of qualitative methods arguing that numbers were not important but the quality of submissions made by the public during the outreach. ZANU PF has been pushing for quantitative methods of compiling reports.

- Asher Walter Tapfumaneyi, a retired brigadier general who is principal director in the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs, reportedly stated that a MDC victory could “mean from the extreme either the military could stage a coup or Zimbabwe could go to war. [] The MDC mistrusts the military and we, to the last man, particularly the (liberation) war generation, we mistrust the MDC completely. [] The leading establishment in the military are from the liberation struggle [] we have grown up (with) and were groomed by Zanu PF, it’s what we are. The MDC represents a threat to everything we represent”. The comments come at a time when other serving and former commanders have made similar comments. Brigadier General Douglas Nyikayaramba, a commander in the national army, recently accused Tsvangirai of being a “national security threat”. He reportedly added: “We will die for him (Mugabe) to make sure he remains in power.” According to reports, Tendai Biti, Finance Minister, MDC-T claims that the military has anointed itself in the role of kingmaker.

2. International Relations:

- President Robert Mugabe will table the issue of “sanctions” at the SADC Summit to be held in Angola in mid August according to the government press. According to ZANU PF spokesperson Rugare Gumbo more than 2,2 million Zimbabweans signed the so called National Anti-Sanctions Petition: “We have collected more than two million signatures and we are waiting for the President to announce the decision on the results of the campaign. He [Mugabe] will go with that result to the forthcoming SADC Summit.”

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