

WAR VETERANS' COMMUNIQUE ON THE STATE OF ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMY, THE ZANU (PF) PARTY LEADERSHIP AND THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE

There are problematic issues that have caused concern and restlessness to Zimbabwe's War Veterans. As a result, the War Veterans from the country's ten provinces, including all district chairpersons and representatives from all economic and other sectors, decided to meet and deliberate on these issues, on this, the 21st day of July 2016. Following that meeting, it has been unanimously resolved to issue this communiqué.

1. Recalling the ideals of the National Liberation Struggle in which the blood of the departed heroes was shed in order to address the National question;
2. Reaffirming the Founding Provisions in Chapter 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe, in particular Section 3 thereof, which enunciates the supremacy of the Constitution; the rule of law; the fundamental human rights and freedoms; good governance; as well as the entrenched recognition of, and respect for, the liberation struggle;
3. Remembering the heroic success of the national liberation struggle, culminating in the birth of our Republic, the Republic of Zimbabwe, thereby igniting in our new nation and people, hopes for a better life in the New Zimbabwe;
4. We, the surviving Veterans of the War of Liberation, secure in the historical support that we cultivated selflessly among the broad masses of Zimbabwe, make this statement, to spell out our disappointment, and those of the broad masses and working people of Zimbabwe, at what is clearly ZANU (PF)'s abhorable and poor leadership, and to articulate the wishes of the broad masses, together with the working people of this great country.

5. The ZANU (PF) Party Leadership has dismally failed to use the resounding mandate given to it in the 2013 general election, to address the economic problems that have beset our great nation since independence from British rule.

6. We note, with concern, shock and dismay, the systematic entrenchment of dictatorial tendencies, personified by the President and his cohorts, which have slowly devoured the values of the liberation struggle in utter disregard of the Constitution, as demonstrated by the following:
 - a) The deliberate neglect and abandonment, by the Party President, of the masses, who are the foundation upon which the liberation war was fought and won, and who have, thereby, become the bedrock of the Party. Suddenly, ideologically bankrupt million man marches are being organized in honour of bankrupt leadership! The same leadership has failed to address the bread and butter issues which stick out like a sore thumb.

The systematic decimation of the party political structures through which the militarized and mobilized veterans prosecuted the struggle.

When Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe arrived in Mozambique, he walked in to join those of us who were already armed and prosecuting the war as political soldiers. He was not the President of the Party ZANU (PF), but we made him so, thinking he was one of us. Our decision to make him the President of ZANU (PF) was accepted here at home, regionally by the Frontline States, and internationally.

The President forgets that his release from JAIL was not out of sympathy by his jailers, but because of our war effort. That is why, after his release, he joined us. Yet, today, he refers to us as irrelevant! This depicts the President's lifetime character of always

manipulating situations, and delineating others from vantage positions for his personal interests. Examples abound:

- None of the President's political colleagues in prison have benefitted from Zimbabwe's independence the way he has, as he has put all his effort in sidelining them;
- The President's systematic elimination of those in the struggle's leadership in Mozambique, and his continued outfoxing of colleagues in leadership after independence up to this day, is unmistakable;
- The current situation, whereby the Party is fragmented with formations, so-called factions, is clearly the President's project, again to outfox his peers in leadership;
- The President has always thrived on divide and rule tactics in order to protect his party presidential position, each time he has felt threatened. Examples go a long way to pre-independence. However, recent examples are of interest, where the Gamatox faction was created out of nowhere, its so-called members being charged with all sorts of crimes, including treason. Then followed new creations, the President's own G40 to look after his interests, and some Lacoste, a label of those who might be in positions to challenge the President. Typical of this president, he has mobilized those of his Gamatox nemesis to boost his G40 project, rewarding them with all sorts of gifts, including ministerial posts, despite the charges originally made against them.

After independence, the Party's successes at elections have always been predicated on our political campaigns. To date, the Party still remains strong in the rural areas, yet the Party President thinks we have no right to challenge his bigoted political views in terms of which we should be restricted to discussing welfare issues when he

has turned the party into his personal project where expulsions are the only known agenda.

His persecution, decimation and expulsion of War Veteran members from the Party under his watch are legendary. From the days of the liberation struggle to date, history records that his egocentric approach to party and national politics has led to the demise of many a party member, on flimsy grounds. We say not anymore! Never again shall we allow him such free reign.

As War Veterans, we are dismayed by the President's tendency to indulge, in his usual vitriol against perceived enemies, including peaceful protesters, as well as War Veterans, when the economy is on its knees. He has a lot to answer for the serious plight of the national economy. His distaste and disregard of divergent views is unfathomable and must be stopped. We are dedicated to stop this rot which he has nursed over time, to everyone's disgust.

The labeling of peaceful War Veterans as dissidents induces in us a sense of shock, dismay and revulsion in light of the history of the 1980's. It will be recalled that our fellow War Veterans and masses in the western region suffered brutal purges which only the Unity Accord pacified. Particularly worrisome in this context is the fact that, whilst the man has dismissed that sad period as "a moment of madness", such language belies his insincerity in the Unity Accord. He should be extending an honestly remorseful regret over this foul deed, yet he appears to extol this as some macabre virtue. His continued resort to genocidal language should worry every right thinking citizen as to his true nature. This is unacceptable to the memories of those who perished during that time.

We need not remind the Party President and First Secretary that respect for those in leadership should not be equated to fear. We do not subscribe to the idea of unbridled exercise of power without consultation, where threats of genocidal magnitude are made against us. He should be reminded that he remains the major beneficiary of the National War effort at every stage including the Unity Accord. He has used the privilege of leadership to build a patronage system around him, which has turned into a personality cult. It therefore shocks us to the core that, gauging from his recent statements, he now wishes to turn the present young generation against us for his own continued personal aggrandizement.

The Land Reform Programme, which was a historical culmination of the valiant liberation struggle, made more land available to the State. The President and his hangers-on, to our utter dismay, now uses that land as reward for his foot soldiers, who have become his personal mercenaries. These mercenaries, strangely, are getting urban land as reward for destroying the War Veterans' legacy and the Party and, with it, the national heritage. We stand firm and resolute in the defence of that legacy. The tragic consequences for the hare-brain decisions are there for the nation to see.

His leadership has presided over unbridled corruption and downright mismanagement of the economy, leading to national economic ruin for which the effects are now felt throughout the land.

The lack of leadership manifests itself in the following examples:-

- The multiple ZESA scandals;
- Netone;
- ZINARA;
- ZISCO;

- NRZ;
 - ZUPCO;
 - Hwange Colliery;
 - Chiadzwa diamond fields;
 - Public management and financial scandals replete in numerous Comptroller and Auditor-General's Reports;
 - Proliferation of land barons through systematic land-grabbing by those in positions of authority;
 - Youth fund;
 - Housing fund;
 - Parceling out urban land on partisan grounds thereby rendering urban authorities irrelevant;
 - Distribution of national assets at Party rallies thereby depriving deserving development priorities;
- Commandeering and frog-marching parastatals' financial resources to fund party political functions to the detriment of the public purse and public welfare.

The above instances demonstrate beyond any reasonable doubt that the party leader has absolutely no clue as to the difference between public funds earned from taxation of the people, and private individual income. It is our sacred duty as the vanguard of the people to speak out against these instances of maladministration and misrule. This rot needs to be uprooted, and right now.

We noted with regret that when some of us peacefully gathered around Harare, the leadership unashamedly and in humiliating fashion, tear-gassed and water-cannoned us for no reason. Regrettably, the general citizenry has previously been subjected to this inhuman and degrading treatment without a word of disapproval

from us. That time has passed. We wish to categorically condemn the brutal suppression of the freedom of expression, whether as exercised by ourselves or by anyone else. We therefore abhor instances where the instruments of State power have been used to brutalize private citizens who share our desire to exercise our constitutionally entrenched rights and freedoms. As the vanguard of the liberation struggle we categorically reject the notion that those expressing views different to those that we hold are agents of foreign powers or agents and therefore enemies of the State. This notion, which to us is a diversionary tactic, contemptuously implies that Zimbabweans lack the capacity to rationalize issues; think through their problems and take decisive action against clear evidence of misrule.

Instruments of State power in the hands of a responsible administration remain constitutionally bound to defend and uphold the Constitution, the rule of law and defend the sovereignty of the Republic of Zimbabwe. We therefore condemn the use of excessive force by the State against the citizens who were peacefully exercising their right to demonstrate against poor governance. We demand that those who exceeded the call of duty be held accountable in terms of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. We further demand that the State and all its actors respect, promote, protect and uphold our Constitution.

In view of the above, we the veterans of Zimbabwe's war of liberation, together with our toiling masses, hereby declare that henceforth, in any forthcoming elections, will not support such a leader who has presided over untold suffering of the general population for his own personal aggrandizement and that of his cronies.