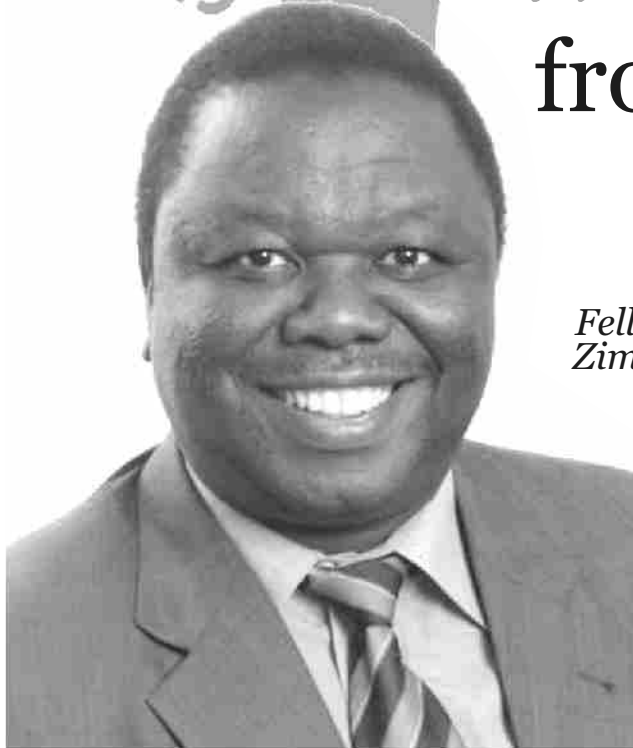


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NEWSLETTER OF THE MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE



Christmas Message from the MDC PRESIDENT, Morgan Tsvangirai

*Fellow
Zimbabweans,*

It is that time of the year again when we celebrate Christmas. It is the time for rejoicing and sharing: the time when we sit down with our families and

extend goodness and charity to our families, friends and neighbours.

It is saddening that for the fifth year running, the nation experiences unprecedented suffering due to high commodity prices and diminishing wage value. We are spending a fifth consecutive hungry Christmas. The crisis of governance in Zimbabwe is now clear for all to see.

The past year has seen continued food shortages. Of course government claims that you all have enough maize, that your granaries are full and that therefore you are not starving. We all know this is false. The government has even said to the donor community that they should take their maize elsewhere. The truth is that Zimbabweans need food. Under my government in a new Zimbabwe, we will open doors to international food aid and allow food relief agencies to assist the vulnerable rural and urban folk in need of food. As a long term strategy we will rationalize agriculture with a view to increasing productivity and promoting self-sufficiency.

Prices for basic commodities continue to skyrocket. The government claims that inflation is receding and that therefore the ordinary man on the street can afford a decent living. I am aware that most Zimbabweans are earning salaries way below \$750 000 per month. The workers representatives, the ZCTU say workers need more than \$1,5 million per month for basic survival. We agree with the ZCTU.

The danger posed to the country by the scourge of HIV/Aids pandemic remains unabated. With more than 1,8 million Zimbabweans living with the virus this scourge threatens the

nation's very existence. It threatens the future of our children. Our priorities in the AIDS scourge should be in declaring it a national disaster thereby elevating the issue as a national priority. We need to show compassion and ensure that all AIDS patients have access to cheap Aids drugs to mitigate their condition without delay.

Millions in the national workforce remain unemployed because there are no jobs. Massive retrenchments are taking place everywhere as hundreds of companies close shop in this hostile economic environment.

Our education system has virtually collapsed due to mismanagement and corruption. Poor working conditions, remuneration and intimidation have negatively affected the morale of our teachers and shortchanged the students. We believe in creating a future for every child in Zimbabwe. Corruption is an enemy of the people and should be eliminated from our society. Our civil servants deserve the best. Their morale is an issue of primary concern to us.

Zimbabweans deserve a violence free environment. We need peace. An environment where citizens and visitors alike are able to go about their daily lives confident of the inalienability of their rights.

The MDC, through its economic blueprint, RESTART has outlined its policies on issues of the economy, land, health and HIV/Aids and education.

However, the year 2004 has given us a ray of hope. In August SADC adopted a regional protocol on elections, which will have far reaching effects on election national management in the region. By adopting the protocols SADC accepted our leadership and reaffirmed the universality of our demands for free and fair elections. SADC accepted that equal access to the media, an independent election management system and free campaigning among other issues are prerequisite for a legitimate government.

The spirit of Mauritius gives us a starting point for a new beginning. Legitimacy is equal to Democracy. We will continue the democratic struggle, the struggle for political space until the SADC protocols are realized in their entirety.

As we celebrate Christmas and the New Year let us spare a thought for the poor and vulnerable in our midst as well as those of our cadres who died during the course of this struggle for change.

Zimbabwe needs a new beginning.

I wish you a prosperous 2005.

Ayanda amalunga eMDC eLupane

Abantu be Lupane lokhu bebuhlungu kakhulu ngokuqilwa abakwenziwayo kukhetho lommeli wephalamende. Ngalokho baqhubeka besebenza nzima ukuze izifiso zabo zokumelwa ngummeli weMDC zigwaliseke.

UNjabuliso Mguni owamela iMDC kukhetho oludlulileyo uqhubeka esebenza nzima labantu beLupane, abamnxusa viki zonke kundawo ezitshiyeneyo.

“Sibuhlungu, ngokuqilwa esakwenziwayo”, kutsho UNTando Khumalo umama ohlala eLupane.

“Ngakho sisebenza emini lasebusuku sinxusa ukuba umuntu wonke ukuze abhalise ukuba lelungelo lokuvota. Nsuku zonke sithola amalunga amatsha, inengi ngabasuka kuZanu PF ngoba sebonile ukuba bathenjiswa amanga”

UKhumalo uthi iLupane iphakathi kobunzima ngenxa yendlala lokusweleka kwemisebenzi.

“Siyalamba kodwa uhulumende utshela abantu amanga ethi siyasutha. Sowavala uncedo esasiluthola kwamanye amazwe ayesilethela ukudla engakhethi abantu

ngokuthi ngabaliphi ibandla kwezombangazwe. Ukudla okukhona kuphiwa abeZanu kuphela,” kutsho uKhumalo.

“Sizwa ubuhlungu ukubana abantwabethu bahlala bezula emakhaya beswela imisebenzi ngoba uhulumende lo sowavala amakhampani.

“Banengi abantu abagulayo kodwa nxa ufika esibhedlela ufica kutshaya umoya, akulamithi, akulakudla pho nguhulumende wani lo?”

Abasiki bebunda bathi iMDC izaphumelela eLupane njengoba nje iphumelela kundawo ezinengi kukhetho lomnyaka ka 2005.

A New Zimbabwe, A New Beginning



Mistrust of regime compromises ARV supplies

ONLY one percent of the people who are HIV and AIDS infected are having access to anti-retroviral (ARVs) drugs as humanitarian organisations are unwilling to provide funds to the country due to ZANU PF's mismanagement of the economy.

As a result of the embargo, thousands of Zimbabweans continue to die from HIV/AIDS every week as the government is failing to provide the ARVs and other drugs.

However, most countries especially in the southern African region, that have been hard hit by the AIDS pandemic are getting funds from international humanitarian organisations such as the Global AIDS Fund to tackle the spread of the disease.

The donors are unhappy with governance in Zimbabwe as they fear that the drugs could be used as a political weapon.

The ZANU PF government has in the past used food aid from the international organisations such as the World Food Programme, as a political tool to woo voters.

Those perceived to be anti-ZANU PF have in the process been denied food aid.

Figures revealed during the World Aids Day held during the first week of December, show that an estimated 1,8 million Zimbabweans out of a population of 12,5 million are living with the deadly HIV/AIDS virus.

A majority of the infected people are in need of ARVs, which are life prolonging drugs.

However, because of the high cost of the ARVs, most people cannot afford them from the pharmacies where they are available.

Only one percent of the population is having access to the drugs either through the counter or through government hospitals.

Although the ARVs are not a treatment, they work as a palliative making one's life more comfortable.

A visit early in December to Harare Hospital, one of the country's major referral hospitals, revealed that the government through the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare had failed to

cope with the demand of supplying ARVs to the infected due to lack of funding.

"This is my fifth time coming here since I was told that I should use ARVs in order to live longer since I was tested HIV positive in 2001," said William Bakasa, 32, of Highfields.

"But," he said, "I have again been turned away as the nurses at this hospital are saying they cannot place me on the programme as they have very few stocks of the ARV tablets.

"However, the prescription that the doctor recommended says that I should get access to an ARV drug known as lamivudine or Zidovudine. But I cannot buy it as the last time I enquired from the pharmacy it was selling for \$155 000 and I think it has since gone up," a visibly ill and dejected Bakasa who is unemployed said.

At private pharmacies the ARVs are available for \$55 000 to \$200 000 for a month's supply.

The prices are however beyond the reach of the majority of Zimbabweans who on average earn a monthly salary of \$750 000.

In most cases, a family that has been infected by the virus, two or three of that

family's members would need to get access to the drugs every month.

The high costs of drugs has resulted in an average of 4 000 people dying each week from HIV/Aids in the country.

Life expectancy has also been reduced from 62 years in 1990 to 43 years.

At least 70 percent of bed occupancy in most hospitals is of people who are suffering from HIV/AIDS.

However, even for the few people who are fortunate enough to access the ARV tablets that are being provided by the government the issue of failing to get a balanced diet is making more harm than good.

A person taking the ARVs needs to eat high protein foods and very few people can afford that.

The MDC has put in place a comprehensive strategy that will ensure that cheap drugs are available to all the people.

"We will ensure we have access to funds from the Global Fund as well as commit huge reserves from the budget to helping the people who are affected by HIV/Aids", said Blessing Chebundo, MDC Shadow Minister on Health.

It is time to choose:

Leaders of the Nation, or rulers of widows, widowers, wounded and orphans.



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I the Lord thy God will uphold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not; I will help thee.

Isaiah 41:13

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Chinja maitiro!

Exodus from "Zanu Republic Police"

Selective prosecutions and frustration
take their toll on officers' conscience

A NUMBER of police officers fed up with the politicisation of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) by ZANU PF are resigning from the police force, a Member of Parliament has said.

Willias Madzimore, the MDC MP for Kambuzuma said police officers were being forced to perform some duties which their conscience cannot allow and hence the resignations from the force.

"We now have a number of police officers resigning from the police force because of their conscience. A number of senior police officers have been asked to perform unscrupulous duties and if they refuse to do so, for example the commissioners are demoted to the Commissioner's pool," Madzimore told Parliament last month.

He said some of unethical methods the ZRP continued to use were the selective and impartial enforcement methods of the

law especially when dealing with political cases.

This was however a violation of the Police Charter.

"I am disturbed by the selective and impartial enforcement, or non-enforcement of the law by the Zimbabwe Republic Police.

"Taking note of the selective prosecutions or non-prosecutions of political cases and associated delays in the same matters, I am further disturbed with the deliberate politicisation and emasculation of the ZRP by ZANU PF," said Madzimore.

The legislator's statements come at a time when Zimbabwe is one of the countries that has a poor human rights record.

The government is using every violent means possible for it to stay in power.

Madzimore said the police should allow all Zimbabweans freedom to peacefully express and organise themselves, with the police only being informed of the intention to hold political and civic meetings but having no power to authorise them.

Since ZANU PF realised that it was facing certain defeat from the MDC, it started a war using the police and other state security agents to intimidate the people.

ZANU PF's tactics have included setting up terror bases in order to intimidate the voters, but the police have however ignored pleas to take action against the party.

MDC supports TEACHERS

Striking educators victimised by the state

MORE than 1 000 teachers in Bulawayo who took part in strike organised by the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) last September have gone for two months without getting salaries.

According to Raymond Majongwe, PTUZ secretary-general, the teachers were being victimised by the government for expressing their democratic rights by participating in a demonstration.

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture is accusing the teachers of engaging in an illegal demonstration.

The teachers went on strike demanding better salaries and improved working conditions.

Most teachers in government schools are earning between \$750 000 and \$1 million a month. However, Manjongwe says the salaries are a mockery and the teachers

should be earning at least \$3,5 million.

"PTUZ strongly condemns the vindictive manner in which the government has responded to the strike by the teachers in Bulawayo," Majongwe said.

"More than 1 000 teachers in Bulawayo have now gone for two months without pay.

"The MDC stands in solidarity with the teachers at this trying time. In a new Zimbabwe, all professionals will be commensurately rewarded for their service", said Fidelis Mhashu MDC Shadow Minister for Education.

Meanwhile, Manjongwe has said that with the 2005 March parliamentary election approaching, it is important for politicians to desist from uttering reckless and inflammatory statements meant to incite violence against teachers and students.

"Teachers especially those in rural areas, should be left alone to do their work, without fear of brutal attacks or victimisation," he said.

regime's disastrous economic policies create xmas misery

The Zanu PF government's economic mismanagement and the much publicized RBZ Governor Gideon Gono, continue to play havoc on the financial sector in Zimbabwe.

Despite the regime's propaganda that the economy is recovering, the revelation that the new CFX bank was the latest casualty of the banking crisis reveals a different story to Zimbabweans.

The CFX bank offices have been besieged by angry depositors who will now find themselves without money over the holiday period, with more uncertainty in the New Year.

Now the seventh bank to fold this year, CFX had acquired previously troubled Century bank. This acquisition had given century depositors some hope of securing their money, however this seems to have been short-lived. The RBZ (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe) has placed the new CFX Bank under curatorship, with reports of liquidity

problems. For how much longer will Zimbabweans continue to live with such economic uncertainty, while the current government lies to all that the country is recovering. The regime says that inflation is dropping while Zimbabweans continue to witness prices rising beyond their incomes.

Zimbabwe will continue in this path if it does not make the change to a transparent and accountable government such as the MDC is offering to Zimbabwe.

Many experts point to the distorted economic policies, and overspending of the Zanu PF government creating the current liquidity crisis.

MDC's "Restart" economic policy, designed and planned with input from all sectors of the country, is designed to end Zimbabwe's economic problems.

"Restart" will secure the people's hard earned savings and rapidly stabilize the economy.

freedom of expression

The MDC wants to hear
from you!

Tell us what you've seen or
what you want
To read about in
The Changing Times.

Write to us at:

P.O.Box A1728,

Avondale, Harare

Telephone: (04) 781138-9

Email: mdcinfo@zol.co.zw

Guqula isenzo!

Disaffected Zanus seek change through MDC

SEVERAL disaffected senior members of Zanu PF have approached the MDC leadership with a view to joining the opposition movement following the widening rift within the ruling party.

The MDC leadership has yet to take a position on them, but several of Zanu PF's senior members--including some of Zanu PF's six provincial chairpersons who were suspended two weeks ago-- approached the party's President Morgan Tsvangirai and secretary-general Welshman Ncube to express their wish to join the MDC.

This follows the recent disaffection within the Zanu PF ranks which saw six provincial chairpersons being suspended from the party for attending a secret meeting to block the nomination of Water Resources minister Joyce Mujuru as vice-president.

The secret meeting---which has since been dubbed the Tsholotsho Declaration--was called for by the Information and Publicity minister Jonathan Moyo. Moyo, whose name Mugabe removed from those nominated into the Central Committee by the Matabeleland North province -- was heavily reprimanded and is awaiting a decision on his fate by the Politburo, Zanu PF's supreme decision-making body.

It is common knowledge within Zanu PF circles that Moyo was being used by Emmerson Mnangagwa, the Speaker of Parliament and Zanu PF secretary for administration who lost the vice-president's nomination to Mujuru.

The disaffection within the Zanu PF ranks has also resulted in high sales of MDC cards in most areas of Matabeleland, Midlands and Manicaland as former Zanu

PF supporters aligned to Mnangagwa and his gang defect to the MDC.

"We are not happy with the suspension of the six chairpersons and Mugabe's involvement in the whole nomination and election process. Mugabe should not have shown his bias towards Mujuru, otherwise it was not a democratic contest but an endorsement of his wishes and as such, some of us believe the time has come to call for change," said a former Zanu PF supporter who has since defected to the MDC.

As the MDC continues to enjoy widespread support across the country, Zanu PF is now riven with factionalism, with serious cracks emerging both in the upper echelons and within the rank and file of the disintegrating party..

However, Robert Mugabe, the ZANU PF

president, has moved in and purged the alleged "coup plotters", among them six provincial chairmen.

The six suspended chairmen are Jacob Mudenda (Matebeleland North), Daniel Shumba (Masvingo), Lloyd Siyoka (Matebeleland South), Mike Madiro (Manicaland), July Moyo (Midlands) and Themba Ncube (Bulawayo). Jabulani Sibanda, the former chairman for Bulawayo and war veterans' national chairman, was suspended for four years.

Also in trouble is aspiring Glen Norah MP and vice chairman for the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association, Joseph Chinotimba, who also attended the Tsholotsho meeting. Although he was nominated into the Central committee, sources say his colleagues in the Harare provincial executive who voted for Mujuru want him out.

The discontent in ZANU PF shows that a lot of Zimbabweans are now unhappy with that party's policies and any efforts to raise pertinent issues are met with scorn while the top leadership accuses the Young Turks of indiscipline and unbridled ambition, as conceded by national chairman John Nkomo.

"The case of discontent and indiscipline has become a source of worry within ZANU PF," Nkomo told the nation during a live television broadcast.

"We however do not support rebellious attitude. In any society, senior people are respected," he said.

And as the bickering continues within Zanu PF, the MDC continues to march for change and a better Zimbabwe.

Your LETTERS

What about Votelink?

WHILE Mozambique and Botswana have been encouraging their citizens based outside their countries to register and vote, our government has shown how cruel it is by doing the exact opposite of that.

As summed up by the ever mis-firing Patrick Chinamasa, Zimbabweans based outside Zimbabwe are MDC supporters who do not need to vote.

However, it is the same government led by the RBZ governor Gideon Gono, which is encouraging Zimbabweans in the diaspora to "Homelink" their hard-earned foreign currency back to Zimbabwe.

What a disgrace this has proved to be. At one point you want money from that person and then you again turn around and deny him the right to vote saying he or she is an MDC supporters. Anyway are MDC members not allowed vote.

Ellen Moyo
The United Kingdom

Bennet's PUNISHMENT shameful

THE transfer of Roy Bennet, the MDC MP for Chimanimani, to a prison in rural Mutoko shows how evil the government of Zimbabwe continues to be when it comes to dealing with people who are willing to assist the suffering masses of Zimbabwe.

Unlike ZANU PF and its supporters who are bent on looting the country's resources leaving the majority of the people suffering, Bennet has proved to us that he is a progressive leader who is a darling among the people of his constituency in Chimanimani.

Pachedu, as we affectionately call him in Chimanimani, is being tortured by an oppressive regime for improving the livelihoods of the people who elected him as there MP.

However, besides its continued oppression, one day very soon and being a true custodian of this country, I know that with the help of people like Bennet, we will save this country's from this continued suppression from a government that is clinging to power by employing dubious means.

Andrew Murimwa
Chimanimani.

Only MDC will deliver our freedom

THE recent visits by our President, Morgan Tsvangirai to some Southern African countries, the African region and Europe are a true testimony that it is only him and the MDC that can save this country from its present economic and political meltdown.

The trips, which have seen Tsvangirai meeting world leaders since he was acquitted by the courts for trumped up charges of treason, are a testimony that the leaders are willing to help Zimbabwe come out of the country's political turmoil if the current regime is done away with.

This international isolation that the country is facing because of ZANU PF's misrule of the economy can only come to end if the MDC is in power.

We should all back Tsvangirai as he has shown that he has the vigour and strength to help the country which has been brought to its knees by a ruthless regime.

Together We will win.

Chris Mtetwa
Harare.



How do **THEY** sleep at night?

Fear not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with my right hand of my righteousness.

Isaiah 41:10

Please **pass** on!