



The Changing Times

Movement for Democratic Change

A Party of Excellence!

The Official Mouthpiece of the MDC

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Chombo in hot soup

- Explosive council report details massive land theft
- Corruption report handed to Police, Prime Minister

HARARE - A preliminary report unequivocally adopted by the Harare City Council last Thursday heavily implicates Local Government minister Ignatius Chombo in the massive theft of land in Harare's metropolis, with the MDC-run council resolving to alert police about the shocking plunder matrix.

According to the hot report, which will be handed to head of Government, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, Mr Mugabe, the legislative committee on Local Government, and the anti-corruption commission; there is credible evidence that minister Chombo was directly involved in the conspiracy to defraud council of vast tracts of land.

The explosive report has details of minutes on how the scandal was hatched. The report further reveals that the tender award was based on a forged valuation report of the land seized by Chombo working in cahoots with a syndicate of corrupt city council workers.

Contrary to council policy that an individual must not get more than one residential property from the Council, Chombo acquired vast tracts of land within greater Harare and registered them in companies associated with him, the report says.

"It remains disturbing to note that the Minister (Dr Chombo) would identify pieces of land in the city, influence council officials to apply to him (Chombo) for change of land use, and then sit over the same applications and approve the changes," the report says. "He would then write to Council officials asking to buy the same stands and obviously get them. Land reserved for recreational activities would end up having Title Deeds in his company's name."

A full council meeting last Thursday debated the special report on the land scandal, with a detailed chronology of corrupt land allocations and deals running between October 2004 and December 2009.

Council directed that land grabbed illegally be recovered from those responsible for fraudulent purchase of the land, comprising tens of thousands of acres. The report called for disciplinary action against the officers who were involved in the procurement and those who perpetuated the underpayment and quick recovery of the lost funds.

Harare mayor Muchadeyi Masunda has said everyone implicated in the scam, their collaborators including lawyers and agents, should be prosecuted for the serious fraud which he said was committed against the Harare public. Attempts to fiddle with documents at the Company Deeds office to cover up their tracks, made the case a prime candidate for a police investigation, he said.

According to the report, Chombo benefited massively from the land loot, with well-heeled council employees implicated in the scandal.

Chombo abused his powers in grabbing council land, and used front companies to cover up his tracks.

"The investigations have proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the Minister abused his powers in many instances by verbally issuing instructions on what council should do or not do concerning council properties," the report says.

The report singles out the corrupt purchase of a 20ha prime piece of land valued at US\$2 million which Chombo bought for only US\$2,300 on 61 Helensvale in Borrowdale. Chombo has earmarked the land to build 25 cluster houses even though the land is set aside by urban planners for recreational purposes.

In Glen Lorne, Chombo has grabbed stand numbers 267, 349 and 802.

"Minister Chombo gave a directive to council to surrender all the three stands to government free of charge, and government would avail land to council when it requires more land from neighbouring farms," the report says. "All the stands were sold to people who were not on the housing waiting list through directives from the minister. This was against the standing council policies and regulations.

"The committee noted with concern that there was clear abuse of office on the part of the minister, since he wrote directives of allocation to council, which is not under his purview."

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Zuma receives talks progress report

HARARE - South African President and SADC-appointed mediator, President Jacob Zuma will today be furnished with a progress report by Zimbabwe's negotiators on the status of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) talks.

The negotiators from the ruling MDC, Zanu PF and Arthur Mutambara's party last Friday concluded the latest round of negotiations meant to fully implement the GPA and prepared a report, which they presented to the principals yesterday.

The principals, MDC President and Zimbabwe's Prime Minister and Head of Government, Morgan Tsvangirai; Zanu PF's First Secretary, Robert Mugabe and Mutambara, have studied the reports ahead of their presentation to President Zuma today.

MDC negotiators, secretary-general, Hon. Tendai Biti and deputy treasurer-general, Hon. Elton Mangoma, confirmed progress at the talks but called for finality.

The *Changing Times* has it on good authority that only six out of the 27 outstanding issues remain unresolved by the negotiators.

The remaining six outstanding issues are; the illegal appointment of the Attorney-General, Johannes Tomana, the reappointment of the Reserve Bank governor, Gideon Gono, the swearing in of MDC treasurer-general, Senator Roy Bennett as the deputy Agriculture minister and the appointment of five MDC provincial governors.



SADC-appointed mediator, President Jacob Zuma

The other outstanding issues on the front burner are targeted sanctions, with a Zimbabwe delegation led by Prime Minister Tsvangirai poised to travel to Brussels on April 21 to persuade the 27-bloc to lift the restrictive measures imposed on Zanu PF officials over electoral theft and rights abuses.

Zanu PF has used the targeted sanctions issue as a bargaining chip at the talks.

The other outstanding issues are attempts by Zanu PF to bar President Tsvangirai from chairing Cabinet meetings in the absence of Mugabe; and demands by Mugabe's party that private radio stations such as Studio 7 and SW Radio Africa beaming into Zimbabwe from exile, be banned or repatriated and registered home.

The latest round of talks resumed on March 26 after President Zuma's March 16 to 18 visit to Zimbabwe. Zuma set a March 29 deadline for conclusion of the talks.

President Zuma's facilitation team, comprising Charles Nqakula, Mac Maharaj and Lindiwe Zulu, is expected to jet into Zimbabwe this week to complete work on the remaining outstanding issues.

The team, which was also in Zimbabwe last week, was given an oral briefing by the negotiators last Wednesday.

After receiving the report, President Zuma will forward it to Mozambique President Armando Guebuza, who also chairs the SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security.

Zanu PF has been reneging in implementing the outstanding issues, which is seriously affecting the operations of the inclusive government, formed in February 2008.

Roll of shame

The *Changing Times* continues this week to publish names of perpetrators of political violence and their dastardly handiwork as reported to the Attorney General. These people continue to roam the country scot-free.

- **Biggie Joel Matiza (MP Murehwa South)**
Matiza sponsored all Zanu PF militia bases that were set up in Murehwa West and South. He was present when hundreds of MDC supporters were assaulted at St Peters Mission, Mukarakate. He supplied Zanu PF youths at the bases with food and money. The Zanu PF thugs killed MDC activists, Edward Pfukwa on June 17 and Moses Nyada on June 19, 2008.
- **Hubert Nyanhongo (MP Harare South, deputy Minister of Energy and Power Development)**
On June 6, 2008, Nyanhongo led a group of Zanu PF youths that included Tedious Maruta, Chimbi, Edmore Kanyama, Gwenambira that attacked Brian Mamhova an MDC Harare council candidate and his family. Mamhova escaped but they petrol-bombed his house leading to the death of his wife Pamela Pasvani and their six year-old son, Mashoko.

- **Luke Mushore (MP Muzarabani North)**
Mushore led a group of Zanu PF youths that destroyed MDC activist, Prisca Mutizwa's home in May 2008. He also sponsored and assigned Zanu PF youths to go around villages assaulting MDC activists and destroying their homes. The youths also murdered another MDC activist Ratidzayi Dzenga on April 1, 2008.

Real Change Musical Show

Featuring Paul Madzore, The Mhenyamauro Band and others

Venue: Mucheke Stadium • Masvingo

Date: 17 April 2010

Time: From 10am - till late

Venue: Mpandawana Growth Point • Gutu

Date: 18 April 2010

Time: From 10am - till late

Tickets available @ MDC office in Masvingo

Matutu's Office - Masvingo and PTUZ - Masvingo

For more information, please contact:

P. Madzore on 0912 876 663 or Murimoga on 0915 425 829



Lets prepare for elections

By Samuel Wadzai Mangoma

There is no greater chorus than the fact Zimbabwe must gear its political infrastructure towards election preparedness. If there was anyone within the democratic fraternity who doubted the lore that ZANU PF is a fake, archaic and unrepentant cog in so far as the Inclusive Government machinery is concerned, then the recent threats that were made against the Head of Government and our President Morgan Tsvangirai by the ailing party's youths must serve to bury the doubts.

It is now a statement of fact that the former ruling party is on a war path with both logic and sanity. Its now very clear, they don't want progress in this country for they only thrive where there is social chaos and political pandemonium. So in a nutshell, the current set up is under serious threat from ZANU PF, hence the need for the people of this country who are under siege to press for preparations MDC for elections with an undisputed outcome.

The paramount and crucial role of the inclusive government, civic society and the people themselves to expedite the crafting of a new Constitution needs no cosmetic mentioning and emphasis. Both government and the broader civil society should begin a process which ensures that people are geared towards an election which includes campaigns encouraging voter registration, voter education, polling agents generation and training, campaigns against violence and other unorthodox electoral practices which ZANU PF is known to rely on to claim false victory. We must all hit the ground running, assessing the progress and efficacy of the newly appointed electoral (and other relevant) commissions, examining their probity and exposing their partial or

unprofessional conduct. We must begin to raise the electoral tempo within the region and the international community so that we terminate the temporary life of the inclusive government and replace it with a credible people's government which will obviously be led by Morgan Richard Tsvangirai. There are reputable electoral institutions in the region and the international community and all patriotic Zimbabweans have a desire for electoral observers and monitors to be in the country as early as practically possible.


The MDC must also look inwards to gear its structures and alliances towards an effective campaign. The youth is the vanguard of the party and must be seen to be taking the lead in the political processes. Never again should the youth allow the election result to be stolen without acting. It is the youth who can lead the party in their defeat of ZANU PF electoral tricks. While the youth should form the formidable nucleus of this vanguard, it does not mean that the women and the main wing must resign themselves and watch from the terraces. Rather, they should strengthen their structures and work in unison with the vanguard youth to ensure that ZANU PF has no chance for violence and rigging.

The time for procrastination is over. The MDC needs to start the real thing, that is engaging the leaders of the region to see the efficacy of putting in place legal and institutional mechanisms for a free and fair election in Zimbabwe. When the MDC disengaged from their 'dishonest and unreliable partner' in October 2009, The president of the party made it graphically clear that the solution would be holding of a free and fair election to be marshalled by the guarantors of GPA; SADC under the supervision of AU and the UN.

There are clear signs of frustration on the part of South Africa as a result of slow implementation of GPA, it is now important for all diplomatic efforts to be directed towards convincing other regional leaders that elections provide a compelling alternative to the

Global Political Agreement. It would not only bring finality to a festering regional problem, but it would enable Zimbabwe's full reengagement with the family of nations.

The MDC has bravely endured endless public humiliations by its arrogant

and continuously abusive partner. It must now drop any pretence that this marriage is working and file for divorce papers by taking its case to SADC and the international community for adjudication. 

MDC Harare Province Youth Assembly leaders arrested

HARARE – Two MDC Harare province's Youth Assembly leaders were last week detained and charged for petitioning Attorney-General Johannes Tomana to arrest perpetrators of political violence.

MDC Harare Youth Assembly provincial chairperson Costa Machingauta and secretary, Robert Manyengavana were last Tuesday detained for three hours by police officers from the notorious Law and Order section at Harare Central police station.

They were later released into the custody of their lawyer, Irene Petras and told the police would proceed by way of summons.

The complainant, Johannes Tomana is quering why they gave him a petition to prosecute violence perpetrators.


Last month, thousands of MDC youths held a peaceful demonstration in central Harare demanding that the Attorney-General prosecutes perpetrators of political violence.

Over 500 MDC members were callously murdered by Zanu PF supporters while thousands were raped, displaced, maimed or lost their property including livestock in the violence the country suffered in the run-up to the sham Presidential election run-off on 27 June 2008.

The youths also gave petitions to the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Lovemore Moyo, the ministers of the Organ on National Healing, Truth and Reconciliation and Justice and Legal Affairs minister, Patrick Chinamasa.

However, Machingauta said the MDC Youth Assembly would not be deterred by the harassment by the police.

"The demonstration we held was a request from the people who want justice. Our demonstration was peaceful and the police even accompanied us to hand over the petition to Tomana," he said.

Machingauta said they would hold other peaceful demonstrations across the country. 

Chombo in hot soup

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The inclusive government has now been put on the spot to explain why a "senior Cabinet Minister" was still in office despite being adversely mentioned in the fraudulent purchase of the land.

It is not yet clear if Chombo would be interdicted over the matter.

But council has ordered the immediate prosecution of the officers and the recovery of the funds.

It remains a mystery why no action had been taken against Chombo despite being indicted in a council report containing irrefutable evidence.

Mugabe has repeatedly been censured for condoning endemic corruption and protecting corrupt cronies within his Zanu PF party.

His cronies are also in the thick of abusing his farm input scheme and making a complete mockery of his controversial land-redistribution plan. 

Letters to the Editor

MDC youths' peaceful demonstration commendable

MDC youths should be commended for holding a peaceful demonstration in Harare last week. What touched most of us who saw the youths running through the streets of central Harare was that the MDC youths were talking about key issues that are affecting our daily lives as peace-loving Zimbabweans.

The youths were talking about justice, democracy and to have the people who unleashed untold violence against innocent Zimbabweans to be brought to book. The youths were also calling for a stop in the looting of diamonds at Chiadzwa.

As the Finance minister, Tendai Biti has said before, if the looting at Chiadzwa by those connected to Zanu PF could stop then the

country would be able to pay civil servants better salaries and part of the proceeds would go a long way in resuscitating the economy. Some of the demonstrators are the victims of Zanu PF brutality and they know the perpetrators but what make these youths worried is that no action is being done by a partisan Attorney-General.

What made the MDC youths stand out against their Zanu PF counterparts was that they were demonstrating for real issues that can change the live of Zimbabwe not the removal of the so called sanctions that will enable corrupt Zanu PF officials to go to Europe for personal shopping trips while the country is left bleeding dry by these looters. The Zanu PF youths on the other hand are not raising any issues about this blatant looting of state resources by their leaders.

Edward Mhuriro

Masvingo

Zanu PF loses the plot

For once Gideon Gono was right on the indigenisation issue. He was part of those who oversaw the chaotic land reform and has seen the disaster it has caused.

He is trying to redeem himself now that it is clear that the game is up for him.

This whole economic empowerment thing, just as the land reform, is just another election gimmick. It's amazing that Zanu PF can insult Zimbabweans' intelligence to the extent of using the same method of violence and so-called empowerment tactics to try to woo the electorate.

Where will the ordinary people get money to buy shares when the majority of the population are struggling to survive?

Who does not know that the majority of workers in this country are earning far below the poverty datum line.

In any case why can't these proponents of indigenisation start their own companies if they are really serious about black empowerment?

Those who want to empower themselves should simply go to the Zimbabwe Stock Market and buy shares. Companies and investors alike are desperate for capital to revitalise their operations. I urge Saviour Kasukuwere and company to buy shares as it is the only civilised route of empowering themselves.

Shambala

Harare

We cannot cover up the truth

It is a great idea that a photo exhibition was held which narrated the story of Zimbabwe's political violence in the last decade.

MDC President and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai aptly stated at the

exhibition that without justice there can be no forgiveness.

It is true because anyone who believes they can cover up the truth of our past is delusional. Covering up old wounds can only make them fester. Indeed as he said we must face them so that we don't perpetuate the wrongs of the past.

However, they should not just focus on recent events alone. They should also showcase the gory story of the 1982-1987 Gukurahundi orgy of violence which occurred in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces.

Emmanuel

Plumtree



Women and Gender

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|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p>1.1 The Constitution must provide for political and socio-economic equality between women and men.</p> <p>1.2 The Constitution must provide for a Gender Commission.</p> <p>1.3 The State must ensure gender balance and a fair representation of marginalised groups on all constitutional and other governmental bodies.</p> <p>1.4 The State must promote full participation of women in all spheres of Zimbabwean</p> | <p>society on the basis of equality with men.</p> <p>1.5 The State must take all practical measures to ensure that women have access to land and other resources on the basis of equality with men.</p> <p>1 Every woman has full and equal dignity of the person with men and this includes-</p> <p>(a) equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities and</p> <p>(b) equal rights in civil law</p> | <p>1.1 All laws, customs and cultures that infringe on the rights of women are prohibited</p> <p>1.2 Women have the right to affirmative action for the purposes of redressing the imbalances created by history, tradition or custom.</p> <p>2 Rights of Children</p> <p>2.1 The State must adopt reasonable policies and measures, within the resources available to it, to ensure that children -</p> <p>(a) have a nationality from birth;</p> | <p>(b) enjoy family or parental care, or appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment;</p> <p>(c) receive shelter and basic nutrition, health care and social services; and</p> <p>(d) are protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse, exploitation, corruption or degradation.</p> <p>2.2 The State must take appropriate legislative and other measures -</p> | <p>(a) to protect children from exploitative labour practices; and</p> <p>(b) to ensure that children are not required or permitted to perform work or provide services that</p> <p>(i) are inappropriate for the children's age; or</p> <p>(ii) place at risk the children's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development.</p> |
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Local Government Forum

MDC-led Mutare city council working hard to bring back the lustre

MUTARE – The city of Mutare has come up with a development plan to cope with the vast numbers of people who are coming to live in the city following the discovery of diamonds in Marange, the city Mayor, Brian James has said.

Following the discovery of the diamonds in Marange and gold deposits in Chimanimani, both in Manicaland province, Mayor James told *The Changing Times* on Monday, that service delivery to residents and industries has been seriously affected as the city had not planned for the minerals rush.

“However, we felt that it was necessary for the residents and the business community to have better service delivery despite the continued increase of the population in Mutare,” said Mayor James.

To control the population increase and avert disasters, the city has since gone into partnership with several organisations including a non-governmental organisation, SIDA to assist in infrastructural development.

Last week, SIDA gave the City of Mutare US\$1 million for development in various areas and repairing the city's fleet, which had been grounded due to lack of spare parts.

“This loan will definitely make the city clean and functional once again. It is an opportunity for the city to get back on its feet and deliver better service to its residents. The objective of this loan is to contribute to the re-establishment of sound service delivery,” the mayor said.

The city is also grappling to restore its status, which had collapsed due to the maladministration and corruption by the previous Zanu PF run-council.

“A lot of the council's systems had collapsed due to maladministration by the previous Zanu PF led council. We are now tirelessly working towards rebuilding the jewel city of Manicaland,” said Mayor James.

The city is run by 19 councillors who are all from the MDC and it has a population of nearly one million.

However, the current infrastructure of the city has a capacity to cater at least a population of 300 000 only.

The influx in the city has been caused by the discovery of diamonds at the controversial Chiadzwa diamond fields, where senior Zanu PF officials and State security agents have been implicated in illegally mining the diamonds.

There are also reports of gross human rights abuses as illegal miners are being shot and killed by State security agents.

The mayor said although business was being brought into the city following the discovery of the diamonds, the town was not directly benefiting as most of the deals being done by the miners were illegal.

However, he said the eastern border town, which is the third largest city, had no option but to see that proper service delivery was made available to its ratepayers.

“When proper systems are there, better service delivery will be inevitably noticed. I want to guarantee the residents of Mutare that we are progressing well and although we maybe a little behind, we are in line with our city master plan that was implemented last year,” said Mayor James.

He revealed that in the city's endeavour to provide meaningful service delivery to the residents, the council had embarked on a survey on water and sewerage infrastructure, roads, environment and health and urban agriculture.

Mayor James said the survey would assist the city council in planning and making informed decisions that would see the city restore its glamour as Zimbabwe's gateway to the sea.

The city has also contracted a private engineering company in restoring its burst water pipes.

The burst pipes were seriously affecting water delivery as most households were failing to get water supplies.

Through the Zimbabwe National Road Authority (ZINARA), the city of Mutare has also managed to repair



Mutare City Council mayor, Brian James

all major roads in the city and refill potholes, which had become a menace to motorists.

The mayor also commended the residents for freely volunteering to help in various community projects especially in refuse collection, road and drainage clearing.

“I would like to thank the public for their assistance especially during the time that we went into office in May 2008,” he said.

He said he would also ensure that the councillors and all employees continued to execute their duties in an open, transparent, democratic and accountable way.

The city of Mutare, established in 1897, is located 290 kilometres from the rail and road accessible port of Beira, Mozambique.

It is also a tourist attraction and is surrounded by some of the best resort areas in the country such as Vumba and Nyanga mountains.

Yet another charge for Hon. Bennett

HARARE-MDC treasurer-general and deputy Agriculture minister-designate, Senator Roy Bennett was last week summoned to appear at the Chipinge Magistrates' Court on yet another spurious charge of hoarding maize in 2001 while judgement on his terrorism charges has been postponed to 10 May.

As Hon. Bennett was entering the High Court today, he was served with court papers by the

Attorney-General's office to appear at the Chipinge Magistrates' Court next Tuesday on charges that he breached the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) Act in 2001 for hoarding 92 tonnes of maize he had farmed at Charleswood Estate in Chimanimani.

At the High Court today, Justice Muchineripi Bhunu postponed judgement to 10 May on the trumped up terrorism charges and also suspended his bail conditions to the same date.

Justice Bhunu also ruled that Sen. Bennett could access his passport from the Clerk of Court if he wanted to go on a business trip outside the country.

The MDC views the latest charge on Hon Bennett as a contrived political plot to haunt him and prevent him from taking up his post as deputy minister of Agriculture. The latest so-called charge is the height of persecution of a man whose only crime is that he is white and he is MDC. Last Friday, state security agents blocked Sen. Bennett

and his wife, Heather from proceeding to Charleswood Estate despite being granted permission to collect his personal property including the remains of his father.

Attorney-General Johannes Tomana has once again proved why he is an outstanding issue. His blatant abuse of office to persecute an innocent man has reached ridiculous heights and there is no wonder why there is a national call for him to be investigated for abuse of office.



Senator Roy Bennett

Vice President Khupe bars DA from closing orphanage

NKAYI – Each and every community has a mandate to take care of orphans and the elderly in their areas while the government should come up with a policy on welfare for the less privileged and child-headed families, the MDC vice president and deputy Prime Minister, Hon.Thokozani Khupe has said.

Hon Khupe, who last week continued with her social responsibility drive, visited Ginyuhlupo Care centre, an orphanage and elderly home in Nkayi after she had received reports that the District Administrator (DA) Nosizi Dube wanted to shut down the centre.

Hon. Khupe expressed her displeasure with the move of the greedy officials likening their move to the Zanu PF sponsored Operation Murambatsvina that left thousands of people homeless.

"We have more serious issues to deal with at the moment, issues of the non-implementation the GPA (Global Political Agreement), human rights abuses and the writing of a new people-driven Constitution. We should be talking of how we can move the country forward, let us concentrate on issues that will turn around our economy, how we as communities can assist the less privileged children in our midst instead of causing fear especially amongst vulnerable children." Hon. Khupe said

The centre which has been operating for six years, houses 21 orphaned children and three elderly women. It had been instructed to close down by Dube, because they did not have running water and were using pit latrines.

According to the founder of the centre Sithabile Nyathi, the centre has been operating without running water and a pit latrine since its establishment in 2004 and therefore it was unjustified for Dube to close down the centre.

"We are in the rural areas where everyone uses a pit latrine and draws drinking water from the wells, so it is normal. The children that we keep here are already living in fear because they have been told they should leave their home, most of them were dumped by their mothers at birth or have been picked from the streets. So for the DA to tell us to close this place on those reasons it's not fair" Nyathi said.

The Police in the district have refused to assist the care givers saying that they can not be involved if the DA had instructed that the children be evacuated from the place.

The traumatised orphans are so scared that they are not comfortable in the presence of strangers following their encounter with the DA and the provincial welfare director who said that they should be evicted back to where they came from.

The DA is said to have also made sure that the orphanage does not receive any form of aid be it food, farm inputs or others through NGOs.

However, Hon. Khupe has pledged to support to centre and make sure that it is not closed down. She also donated food hampers.

War vet gets 16 years for killing MDC supporter

BULAWAYO – A self-proclaimed war veteran and Zanu PF supporter was last week sentenced to 16 years in jail for murdering an MDC supporter in Kezi, Matebeleland South province last year.

Henry Ncube, 56, in a frenzied knife attack, killed 70 year-old Nicholas Nyathi, an MDC supporter, at Malaba Business Centre in the Sun Yet Sen area in Kezi.

State prosecutor Thompson Hove told the High Court in Bulawayo, that Ncube grabbed Nyathi who was in a bar by the collar and drew a knife and stabbed him in the chest while simultaneously pushing him to the ground.

The stabbing continued as Nyathi writhed in agony.

He was later rushed to Tshelanyemba hospital, before being transferred to the United Bulawayo Hospitals where he died a day later.

A post mortem later found Nyathi died of haemorrhagic shock as a result of a ruptured artery in the neck caused by a stab wound. He also had stab wounds in the head.

Bulawayo High Court judge, Justice Nicholas Ndou softened his sentence after finding, in Ncube's favour, that he was in the "afternoon of his life".

Over 500 MDC members were murdered by Zanu PF supporters in 2008 after their party and president, Robert Mugabe had been defeated in the March 2008 harmonised elections by the MDC and President Morgan Tsvangirai.

Last year, another self-proclaimed war veteran and Zanu PF supporter, Lovemore Manenji from Rusape in Manicaland province was sentenced to 32 years in prison for raping two MDC supporters in the run-up to the 2008 sham presidential runoff election.

Manenji, 56, who is also a bishop at Mabasa Avapositioni Church, was found guilty of five counts of rape and sentenced to 32 years in prison by Rusape regional magistrate, Hosea Mujaya.

Chombo, public media in bid to tarnish MDC councillors

HARARE - City Council employees in the housing and community services department fraudulently changed ownership of council tenants to those of Harare councillors in a well-orchestrated Zanu PF attempt to mislead and discredit the MDC and its councillors.

In what has turned out to be a desperate attempt by the Minister of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development, Ignatius Chombo to stop councillors from investigating his illegal acquisition of council land, Chombo clandestinely used council workers in the housing department to malign councillors from the MDC.

The department and Chombo falsely claimed that the councillors were evicting desperate tenants from their lodgings when in fact it was Harare city Council that was evicting tenants from its houses.

In connivance with the Director of Housing, Justin Chivavaya, council employees and the public media, Chombo incriminated Clr Wellington Chikombo of Ward 28 in Glen Norah claiming that he had fraudulently acquired house number 1739 in the same suburb.

Clr Chikombo has neither applied for nor has he occupied the said property, which is a privately owned house currently being occupied by its owner, Mr Ben Kapesi and his family. The house in question is not a council property but is under a home ownership scheme. There is no way a councillor or anyone else can engage in a hostile take-over ownership of the said property.

Clr Chikombo has never applied for a council rented house and is currently staying at his house, number 1738 Glen Norah A.

The Herald, through its news editor, Mabasa Sasa recently apologised to Clr Chikombo for erroneously and unprofessionally reporting that he had evicted a tenant in order for him to move in.

The discredited public medium made a retraction claiming that it had written the story following a street interview with a fictitious Glen Norah resident, Tendai Sithole, who claimed that Clr Chikomba was in the process

of evicting Mr Kapesi without getting any comment from the two.

This desperate attempt by Chombo to tarnish and malign Clr Chikombo and other councillors from the MDC is meant to block the repossession of council land that Chombo illegally possessed in 2008.

Other councillors were falsely accused of having evicted tenants. These are Clrs Peter Marange (Ward 29) and Hebert Gomba (Ward 21) both in Glen Norah.

The councillors never evicted anyone and neither do they occupy council rented houses nor are they paying any bills to council for the houses in question.

They have since gone to *The Herald* seeking retraction over the incorrect press reports.

Claims by *The Herald* were that Clr Marange had taken over house number 2321 and Clr Gomba number 4910.

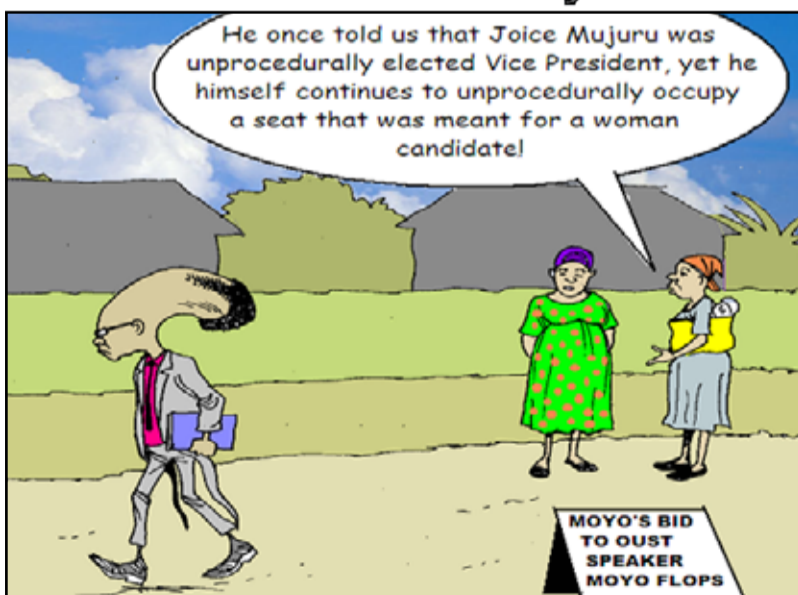
Clr Marange is staying at his Glen Norah home, number 2643, while Clr Gomba stays at number 5335 and neither has occupied the said council properties, which are believed to be occupied by council employees.

This month there was a council resolution to repossess 20 hectares of land at Number 61 Helensvale, Borrowdale that were illegally possessed by Chombo.

Following Chombo's attempts to tarnish the image of the elected councillors, all the Harare City councillors have since resolved to withdraw their applications for the occupation of council-rented accommodation.

The MDC calls for an investigation of council employees who fraudulently incriminated MDC councillors when they falsely accused them of evicting tenants when in fact they have not evicted anyone.

As a party of excellence, the MDC has zero tolerance towards corruption and the party will not hesitate to take appropriate action on any of its public officials who engages in corrupt activities.



The MDC as a people's project, values your opinions. Are there Zanu PF torture camps near you? Are you being victimised because you are an MDC supporter? Do you know any perpetrators of violence? If your answer is YES to any of the above please email the details to mdcnewsbrief@gmail.com or call on (04) 770708 Please also feel free to send news, alerts or letters expressing your views and comments to MDC Information and Publicity Department