

The Failure of Regional Leadership

22 March 2009



I have often said that the only country in the world that has the power, and therefore the responsibility, to get Zimbabwe out of the crisis it is in, is South Africa. The reasons are geopolitical and easily demonstrated. It is the failure of South Africa to exercise that responsibility with the effective use of power that has resulted in this country becoming what it is – a failed State.

If we go back to the start of the real collapse in 2000, South African leadership knew full well what the government was doing in Zimbabwe and its implications. This was clearly revealed in the Mbeki memorandum of 2002 which argued that Zanu should stop the farm invasions and human rights abuse, not because it was the right thing to do, but because these actions might lead to the collapse of the economy, international isolation and the loss of power by the “Party of the Revolution”, Zanu PF. For eight years,

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South Africa used its regional and international influence, not to protect the rights of the Zimbabwe people or to foster the interests of the country and the region as a whole, but to prevent the MDC coming to power. What Mbeki called “negating the Chiluba factor”.

This policy was perpetuated right through to the end of 2008 and was instrumental in not only denying the MDC its legitimate claim to power after the March elections, but to 15 months of tortuous negotiations, facilitated by South Africa on a totally partisan basis and resulting finally in forcing MDC into a shotgun marriage with Zanu PF and the Mutambara group. These negotiations were characterised throughout by a stance that pitted MDC against all three groups at the talks – South Africa, Zanu and the Mutambara Group. Having forced the consummation of the marriage, the South Africans proposed that both the AU and the SADC, even though neither organ has any leverage inside Zimbabwe, would “guarantee” the deal.

South Africa is also unique in its knowledge of the Zimbabweans situation. After early failures in intelligence, the South Africans have built an intelligence network in Zimbabwe that is second to none. They have infiltrated the CIO and now monitor every move and every initiative by the various parties involved. They know what the real results of successive elections have been, they know the relative strengths of the MDC and Zanu PF, and they know what Zanu is doing to thwart the efforts of the transitional government. Ignorance is no excuse.

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So here we are, almost exactly one month into the SADC/SA brokered deal. Still no movement on any of the issues accepted at the last SADC summit as being matters to be sorted out in order for the new government to make progress. Still no movement on the Governors, no movement on the question of Permanent Secretaries, no movement on the recall of Ambassadors and new appointments. Still no movement on the positions of Attorney General or the Reserve Bank Governor.

The farm invasions have actually intensified and spread to urban areas where smallholdings are being taken over by force. The use of the legal system to intimidate and cripple the MDC and Civil Society has continued – we still have eleven abductees missing and several still in Prison on trumped up charges. No progress on the absurd allegations by the former regime that Botswana was engaged in training military insurgents even though these allegations are directly linked to the treason charges against MDC leadership in the new government.

Now to crown it all, the region is withholding critically needed economic assistance to the new government. In recognition of the reality that only the region can assist us with our essential financial needs at short notice, the new government lost no time in defining and presenting its needs to the South African government. All they got in return was sympathy and the organisation of a larger group under the SADC to consider the requested package. Still no visible progress.

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Just how critical the situation is, was clearly revealed last week when Tendai Biti, the new Finance Minister introduced a revised budget. He stated that in the first two months of the year, total revenue to the State had amounted to US\$36 million. Simply to meet essential basic needs and pay much reduced salaries to State employees will cost about US\$100 million a month, so we were able to meet a mere 20 per cent of this from our own resources. Revenues are unlikely to recover for at least six months and we desperately needed the US\$500 million we requested for budget support until our own revenues were able to take up the slack. South Africa not only denied us any sort of support, but also was instrumental in blocking any aid from any other SADC States. A feeble plea to the so-called "rich" nations for assistance to the new government was the best they could muster.

Even in respect to the appeal for a US\$1,5 billion line of credit on commercial terms for private sector funding has not materialized though this would be petty cash to South Africa let alone the SADC States as a whole. What value is the so called "guarantee" given by the SADC States if they cannot enforce compliance with the deal negotiated and signed and cannot provide even the minimum financial support requested?

For our part, I think the Zimbabwean people have been superb and disciplined in the way they have handled themselves over the past decade. In spite of all the provocation they have never turned to violence, even when it would have been totally justified. In February the Civil Service (236 000 people) went back to work after the payment of a paltry US\$100 a month allowance to

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each employee. In March the State was unable to improve on this because the resources were simply not available. I think the reaction of teachers, doctors and nurses and all the others, has been just incredible. Their reward from their brother States in the region has been to send them away empty handed, to return to their shattered homes where there is no food or other essentials.

Not only to send them away empty handed, but also to turn a blind eye to the continuing human rights abuse, violations of the State controlled media and the flagrant violation of private assets. Even this past weekend South Africa was unable to get their Zimbabwean counterparts to sign up to an investment protection agreement that has been pending for years.

It is a mystery to me as to why regional leaders behave in this way. We can excuse ignorance but there is none, we can even excuse poverty, but the resources to help would only make a small impact on their collective resources. We might even excuse them if they themselves were living under tyrannies and were denied the basic freedoms that we have been denied, but they actually claim to be democratic States with a reputation for freedom and security. So what is their excuse? I am afraid they have none. For this I think they fully deserve the opprobrium that their inaction and failure is bringing upon them from a watching world.

The Theft of Private Assets

17 February 2009

When I left school at the age of sixteen and went to work on a farm, my father sent an insurance salesman to see me and said that I should take out a life insurance policy that would give me a pension when I retired in 49 years time. I forget what the monthly payments were but I signed up and sacrificed some of my meager salary to the Old Mutual.

As I grew older, periodically I revised my insurance cover and took out new agreements – eventually leading me to a situation where I was contributing via a bank stop order to five contracts with the Old Mutual for life cover and pensions of various sorts. By the time I left my last job, I was a Managing Director of a large corporate and had a salary commensurate with my position. I certainly never had to really worry about my family's basic needs. In that position I had to fund not only my personal policies but also the company pension scheme.

My father retired in 1978 and when he did, his pension was Z\$268 a month. After a lifetime of hard work. They could never have lived on this and I was glad

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to be able to bring them into my own family, build a cottage next to the house and support their basic needs. When he died 17 years later, his pension rights barely paid for his immediate personal needs. But his lifetime medical aid was still valuable.

When I reached the magical age of 65 and my lifelong savings in the form of contributions to the Old Mutual matured, I expected to receive a reasonable pension. The total value of all five contracts was insufficient to pay for the petrol required to travel to the Old Mutual and collect the cheque. I never received a cent for all the years of my contributions and not even a letter of explanation.

One day I will do a calculation of what my total lifelong contributions to the Old Mutual; were worth – but this I know, that until 1980, 24 years into my payments, the local dollar still bought a pound and two US dollars. It was real money. When I started my payments in 1957, the local currency bought two pounds. I would like to know what those sales guys got in the way of a pension when they retired? I bet it was not linked to the local!

We now have many thousands of pensioners here – some 300 000 from the civil service, 16 000 from the railways and many thousands like myself who were in the private sector. They are nearly all totally destitute. Many have to be supported by relatives and friends and even special organisations that have been set up to help.

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This is not the only theft of private assets that has taken place. Anyone, whose assets were held in monetary form, is now destitute. I well remember a couple in Harare who when they retired sold their family home and rented a smaller home, putting the money onto fixed deposit in a financial institution (remember those days?). At the time I advised them not to go that route and to buy a smaller home and invest the rest in blue chip equities (do they exist anymore?) – they did not and they now live on small monthly remittances from family abroad. How did this happen and is there a remedy? It happened because the massive cash flows from this myriad of small individual monthly payments went into the pool of national savings and were easy pickings for the major players in the economy. The first heist was in the form of the chunk taken off the top and invested in government bonds (prescribed assets) at low interest rates. Then the companies administering the funds took their share for expenses and overheads.

What was left they invested – not in productive ventures but most often in high rise luxury buildings that even today stand as monuments to our hard work and savings. I am told that 80 per cent of all the buildings in down town Harare are owned by pension funds and insurance companies. It explains how this country – one of the poorest in the world can boast a skyline in Harare that would rival many cities in the richer developed States. After that they invested in equities – so that they had some liquidity in case they needed it to meet the occasional payout after a crisis.

The Old Mutual started out as a Mutual Fund owned by its policyholders, became a major listed public company and gave us all shares – I got 400 or so

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and sold them to help fund my business. It is now one of the largest investors in the world – certainly in South Africa. But it pays little or no attention to the plight of the tens of thousands of policy holders in countries like Zimbabwe, who have had their lifetime savings wiped out.

The reasons are, of course inflation – in the States right now you will struggle to find an investment that will return you more than the cost of inflation. Dividends from equities are a joke. When you have a spell of hyperinflation like we have are having then cash assets just get wiped out over night. It's a storm from which there is no protection.

I am told that credit card debt in the USA is bigger than the national debt. It is now clear that the entire developed world have been living so far out front on credit that any loss of confidence will result in just what we have experienced – the collapse of finance houses and the equity markets and the value of real estate. Until savings deals with burden of debt and real earnings in goods and services match incomes, the crisis will persist and real living standards will fall.

At least here in Zimbabwe we have no debt – at least not in Zimbabwe dollars, they were wiped out together with our savings. What we have to do now is get our real assets working again and then make sure that in future we invest our surpluses in real working assets and not in gilded towers that do not produce anything.

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One thing is also certain, we must do something to support our pensioners – they after all were responsible for everything you see in modern Zimbabwe. This probably means that we will have to all sacrifice some of our future income to meet the needs of those who supported us in the past.

Street Fighting

15 February 2009

I am sorry for the long delay in sending out another of my weeklies, but we have been rather busy to say the least!! Events here have been dramatic and are moving so fast that it is difficult to keep track if you are not at the centre of things. A struggle is under way – not with guns, at least not yet! But in every other way this is street fighting – building by building, street by street, close combat between two forces.

On the one side is the secret cabal that has run Zimbabwe since the quasi-military coup in 2002, when the military chiefs stated that they would not salute Mr. Tsvangirai if he were elected President. On the other side is a peculiar coalition of forces, led by Mr. Tsvangirai but including elements of Zanu PF, civil society and even the armed forces themselves.

The Cabal was noticeably absent when the Prime Minister was sworn in – as were a number of other key players, this was not a coincidence. The Commander of the Air Force has not been seen since the assassination attempt on him in Shamva, the others were all busy making mischief. The most serious issue remains what role is the State President playing in this drama, if anything.

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But however it is described we are seeing a situation where a small group is fighting back and trying to bring about a breakdown of the transitional government which has just been sworn in and on Monday will start to take charge. The three key elements in this shadowy force are – the Reserve Bank (under Gono), the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney Generals Office and the Military and Police. Gono is the paymaster and is funding this fight back using the very considerable resources at his command, the Ministry of Justice – or elements in the Ministry, is providing the “legal” justification and the armed forces, including senior elements in the Police, are executing the strategy and providing the muscle.

The legal ruse is the allegation – now totally discredited, that elements of the MDC are involved in “treason” in that they planned the violent overthrow of the State. In fact the real situation is that it is the armed forces chiefs themselves who are trying to do so and in so doing are committing treason against the State. For, no matter how you construct the transitional government, Zimbabwe now has a democratically elected government that is constitutional and legitimate. Any attempt therefore, to overthrow the State by force, is an act of treason.

This fight is most clearly illustrated by the detention of Roy Bennett at Charles Prince Airport yesterday. Roy was hauled off the plane, bundled into a car and then driven at high speed to Mutare. The vehicles in which he was transported were followed by volunteers so that he could not just disappear in the same way that 42 others have in recent weeks.

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When the news reached the Prime Minister he was already in consultation with regional leaders on another crisis regarding the appointment of Zanu PF Ministers and the matter was discussed. Senior Zanu PF Ministers agreed to order that Roy be released. The President of South Africa left the country thinking that this had been done and a major diplomatic and political crisis (among many) averted. It was not so, whether or not such an order was given, the Police and the CIO did not release Roy, instead they announced he was to be charged with treason!

If the Ministers of State Security and Home Affairs did give the order for his release, then the government agencies that are accountable to them did not obey the order. If they did not give the order, they lied to the South African President and the Prime Minister and are part of, what is, in effect, a military coup. The treatment of the 42 other abductees is further evidence of this defiance of the new order. They were clearly abducted illegally, held illegally in various State institutions, finally brought to Court and charged with various crimes involving absurd allegations, and denied bail. A number are still missing and are unaccounted for.

In one of his first actions, the Prime Minister visited them in the High Security Prison outside Harare and instructed that 4 be taken immediately to hospital for treatment. Two of the four, including Jestina Mukoko are very ill with life threatening symptoms, they were then taken to hospital and in the evening, they were taken by force from the hospital back to prison in clear defiance of the Prime Ministers instructions.

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Many other battles are being fought – the coup plotters have people in key places all over government and they are clearly working together. The question is can they win this struggle. I do not think so. They are up against the majority of the people, a democratically elected government negotiated with the support of the entire region and they must now fight to defend their positions from within government where they no longer have legal and political control. The key player to watch in this struggle is Gono. If he goes, then the flow of resources (except for illegal resources such as gold and diamond sales) will dry up and they will not be able to sustain their fight. If he stays, the new government will be seriously weakened, as they cannot then secure the backing and support of important financial players who simply will not work with the Bank whilst he is still in charge.

While this is going on the looting of State assets and resources continue. Right now they are trying to do a deal with a local firm to sell Tel One – a major cell phone operator that is State owned, for US\$200 million, which they want to use to support US dollar denominated vouchers to pay the Civil Service with, so that they can at least buy food. The Prime Minister has instead instructed that the Civil Service be paid in hard currency – Chinamasa defied the Prime Minister last week and insisted they go ahead with the deal even though after Friday he was no longer Minister of Finance.

As for me? The Prime Minister announced on Monday that I was his choice for Minister of State Enterprise and then on Friday the post was switched to a friend

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and colleague, Sam Nkomo. A victim of the present constitutional dispensation where Ministers must be Members of Parliament and carry over into their government posts, their political constituency. In the American system, the positions of Secretaries of State are selected from outside the political system and the President can – as is the case with the Obama government, select from his whole society, the people to run his government. Under the Westminster system no such clear distinction exists between the executive and Parliament.

The American system has the advantage that Ministers (the Secretaries) are selected not only for their political influence and experience but also for their technical background and experience. They essentially are managers of the Ministries they run. Under our system the process is much more political and the PM has to balance contending interests politically. In my case, I was a victim of the process. I am sorry – I would have loved to have had the chance to help make this deal work and to get whatever piece of government I was responsible for, functioning again. But it is not to be and its back to making my own living and working in Parliament to supervise government and look after the public interest.

Zanu PF backtracks on inclusive government

4 February 2009

The Zanu PF caretaker government has begun to backtrack on the inclusive government by dithering to discuss contentious issues in line with the SADC resolutions.

Last week, a full SADC summit resolved that the negotiators of the three major parties meet "immediately" to consider the National Security Council Bill and the modalities and formula for the distribution of governors.

Today, the Zanu PF negotiators said they could not talk about the issue because they have no mandate from their leader who is attending the AU summit in Ethiopia.

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We in the MDC are convinced that there is no intention on the part of Zanu PF to put all these issues to rest. There is no wish to consummate an inclusive government in line with SADC resolutions.

There is no wish to alleviate the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe through a negotiated political process. In short, there is no wish to tackle the outstanding issues as directed by the SADC Heads of State.

Zanu PF is panicking. It has been caught flat-footed. Zanu PF never budgeted that the MDC would agree to be part of the inclusive government and now they are in sixes and sevens while trying desperately to scuttle the deal.

For the record, the contentious issue of governors was supposed to be dealt with last Tuesday in South Africa. But the Zanu PF negotiators said their tickets did not allow them to stay a day longer and they returned with their principal to Zimbabwe. On Wednesday, nothing happened as they said they were preparing for the budget.

On Thursday, preliminary but inconclusive discussions took place before the Zanu PF negotiators said discussions should break to enable them to attend the budget, which Zanu PF again unilaterally presented against the spirit of the inclusive government.

The Zanu PF negotiators then suggested that discussions on the matter be deferred to today ahead of the passage of Constitutional Amendment number

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19 on Thursday, but true to culture and tradition; they have shifted goal posts and are now saying they have no mandate.

Zanu PF is spoiling to scuttle the inclusive government which SADC directed should be in place by 13 February 2009. We are ready to clear all outstanding issues so that we collectively confront the challenges facing the people of Zimbabwe. Zanu PF is not. We are ready to tackle cholera, unemployment and the collapse of basic services such as education and health. Zanu PF is not.

We are ready to sort out the working conditions of civil servants so that our children go back to school. We are ready to save lives. Zanu PF is not. We are ready to recover this economy and to bring back confidence in our institutions. Zanu PF is not. We are ready to give the people hope and faith. Zanu PF is not.

We are a party of excellence. We are celebrating a decade of commitment, courage and leadership. We are committed to the Global Political Agreement but Zanu PF's acts of commission and omission risk derailing the smooth passage of Constitutional Amendment 19.

The acts of insincerity also risk dislocating the swearing-in of the Prime Minister and his deputies and the formation of an inclusive government thereafter.

We derive our comfort from the unbridled support and loyalty of the working people of Zimbabwe, the poor and the downtrodden, our parents in the rural

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areas, our brothers and sisters in the urban areas, the students, and the church and minority groups.

Our wishes are anchored on the wishes and aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe who spoke unequivocally on 29 March 2009. The people are our compass.

MDC Information and Publicity Department

Decision to form a Transitional Government Morgan Tsvangirai's Speech

2 February 2009

Today, the MDC's National Council met as we once again find ourselves at an historic crossroads in our decade-long struggle for democracy. Throughout this struggle, the MDC has been guided by the principles of democracy and by the will of the people. This campaign is neither easy nor straightforward and often we have had to change the fronts on which we wage the struggle in response to changing circumstances and conditions.

The MDC was established to bring about change through the ballot box. This we achieved despite overwhelming odds, culminating in our historic victories in the March 29th Parliamentary, Presidential and local government elections.

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Then, the brutal campaign of violence unleashed against our supporters by Zanu PF, forced us to withdraw from the June 27th event. Thus it became obvious that we could no longer wage our struggle via the polling booth.

We looked to the region to support our position and the will of the people by acknowledging the results of March 29th as the basis on which a new government should be formed. Subsequently, we succeeded in forcing Zanu PF to the negotiating table which became the new frontline in our quest for a democratic Zimbabwe. It was for this reason that we signed the Global Political Agreement on September 15th, 2008.

I know that you are very familiar with the events from that date. We in the MDC have abided by the letter and spirit of both the Memorandum of Understanding and the GPA. Sadly, Zanu PF was not the type of constructive and positive partner that we envisaged when we signed the GPA and therefore, the consummation of the agreement has been subject to unnecessary delays.

Nonetheless, we have consistently tabled our outstanding issues to SADC and we have remained committed to finding a negotiated settlement to the political crisis in Zimbabwe. This process culminated in the SADC summit on Monday 26th January, where the Southern African leaders made the following resolutions:

The parties shall endeavour to cause Parliament to pass the Constitutional Amendment 19 by 5 February 2009.

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The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Ministers shall be sworn in by 11 February 2009:

The Ministers and Deputy Ministers shall be sworn in on 13 February 2009, which will conclude the process of the formation of the inclusive government.

The Joint-Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC), provided for in the Global Political Agreement, shall be activated immediately. The first meeting of JOMIC shall be convened by the facilitator on 30 January 2009 and shall, among other things, elect the chairpersons;

The allocation of ministerial portfolios endorsed by the SADC Extraordinary Summit held on 9 November 2008 shall be reviewed six (6) months after the inauguration of the inclusive government.

The appointments of the Reserve Bank Governor and the Attorney General will be dealt with by the inclusive government after its formation

The negotiators of the parties shall meet immediately to consider the National Security Bill submitted by the MDC-T as well as the formula for the distribution of governors: While we felt that these resolutions do not represent an acknowledgement of all our issues, they do represent significant concessions on the part of Zanu PF and a recognition by SADC that our demands are justified as a first step towards a sustainable solution to the Zimbabwe crisis.

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Our National Council's meeting today was therefore convened to evaluate the party's position in relation to the inclusive government. The concessions made by Zanu PF incorporate four out of the five outstanding issues. These four issues are the allocation of Provincial Governors, the National Security Legislation, Constitutional Amendment 19 and the breaches to the Global Political Agreement.

Thus, the parties have agreed on the sharing of Provincial Governors portfolios and have already met to begin negotiations on the allocation formula. Similarly, with regard to the National Security Legislation, the negotiators have met to discuss the draft bill submitted by the MDC.

It is clear therefore that these two issues are subject to negotiation and therefore constitute work in progress. It is hoped that the work in progress will be concluded to the satisfaction of all the parties as soon as possible.

The third issue relates to Constitutional Amendment 19. The MDC has insisted that Constitutional Amendment 19 is enacted by parliament and signed into law prior to the swearing in of the Prime Minister and this has been agreed to by the parties as reflected in the SADC communiqué.

On the issue of the equitable allocation of ministerial portfolios, SADC reiterated its position from November 9th, 2008 and expanded its commitment to review the allocation of all ministries, not only Home Affairs, within six months of an inclusive government being formed.

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On the breaches to the GPA and the MOU, SADC resolved that the Joint-Monitoring Implementation Committee (JOMIC), is established to review and reverse these breaches. This committee comprises four members from MDC-T, four members from MDC-M and four members from Zanu PF.

However, the MDC is concerned that the issue of the unwarranted and illegal abductions and detentions of MDC members and other democratic activists needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency and to this effect, the MDC will ensure an end to the persecution of all Zimbabweans.

In light of these resolutions, today's debate centred around two issues:

Firstly, what will allow us the best opportunity to continue to pursue our goal of achieving a free, democratic Zimbabwe in line with the roadmap from our Congress of March 2006? and;

Secondly, what is the best way of alleviating the suffering of the Zimbabwean people, stabilising the economy and restoring and retaining some semblance of a normal society?

Let us make no mistake, by joining an inclusive government, we are not saying that this is a solution to the Zimbabwe crisis, instead our participation signifies that we have chosen to continue the struggle for a democratic Zimbabwe in a new arena. This agreement is a significant milestone on our journey to democracy but it does not signify that we have arrived at our destination – we

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are committed to establishing a democratic Zimbabwe regardless of how long that struggle takes us.

We have the majority in parliament, we control all the main urban councils and many rural councils, we will have control of 13 ministries and a presence in the key decision-making bodies of the executive.

Throughout the course of our deliberations today we referred to, and were guided by, the road map that we established for ourselves in March 2006, namely - negotiations, a transitional authority, a people driven constitution and fresh, free and fair elections.

In this respect, the National Council resolved that through joining an inclusive government in line with the GPA and the SADC resolutions the party will be able to achieve the following:

- To move towards a new, democratic Zimbabwe by ensuring that a people-driven constitution is crafted and adopted.
- That this inclusive government will serve as a transitional authority leading to free and fair elections.
- The restoration of the people's freedoms through creating democratic space, restoring the rule of law and basic human rights.
- The stabilisation and rebuilding of the economy and the provision of all essential services, in particular health care and education.

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- To maintain the principles of the working people's convention established in 1999.
- To ensure that we begin a process of national healing and integration.

Therefore, in accordance with the party's constitution, the political agreement we signed on September 15th 2008, and in the best interests of the welfare of all Zimbabweans the MDC has resolved to form an inclusive government with Zanu PF and MDC-M.

The success of this inclusive government is dependent on many factors including the goodwill of the parties involved, the support of the people of Zimbabwe and the continued engagement and vigilance of SADC, AU and the broader international community in ensuring that all parties are bound by the letter and spirit of the GPA and the commitments made at the last SADC summit. In this respect, the party shall continue to monitor the implementation of the agreement, in particular in shall assess and review its position in the inclusive government after 6 months in line with the SADC resolutions.

Now is the time for us to put aside our political differences , to prioritise the welfare of the people in both our policies and our actions and to focus on stabilisation, development, progress and democratization. In this I know that we have the support of the vast majority of Zimbabweans, both in Zanu PF and the MDC, in the civil service, the workers and the business community and we look forward to working with you to rebuild our great nation.

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In conclusion, I would like to note that in this struggle we have not been alone. I wish to acknowledge the commitment and perseverance of SADC to finding a negotiated solution to the political crisis. In particular, we have had the unwavering support of our regional allies who have stood by us and our democratic ideals throughout this process and we are grateful for their solidarity.

We would like to acknowledge the support and solidarity that we have had from trade unions, civil society and democratic peoples' and governments all over the world. We appreciate this support and know that we could not have come this far without them.

Most importantly of all, we have had the support of the people. A people who have stood by their right to live in freedom, with access to jobs, health care, education and prosperity in such a principled and peaceful manner.

I would like to appeal to all these forces to continue to support us in whatever decision we take because the struggle is not over, our commitment is not lessened, our vision is not dulled and our resolve has not been weakened.

We will deliver a New Zimbabwe to the people.

The struggle continues.

I thank you

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** Morgan Tsvangirai's statement on the Resolutions of the Party's National Council Meeting at Harvest House was circulated by Press Release on 30 January 2009

Despair and Despondency 24

January 2009

An immediate outcome of the meeting last Monday was nationwide despair and despondency. On the street, the people have virtually given up any hope that the political process will deliver a solution. At the same time they are not looking elsewhere, just thinking about moving on to another country where sanity might prevail.

It is the possibility of flight that has changed the character of African conflict. Its implications are yet to be fully understood or appraised. When failed by their leaders at home, increasingly Africans are simply packing their bags. I saw a study this past week where a think tank in the UK estimated that remittances from the UK to Zimbabwe alone, could be running at over US\$1 billion a year. If this is true, it puts a new dimension on this issue – it shows that the actual Zimbabwe origin population in the UK is much bigger than estimated and that they are sending much more money home than we ever imagined.

This would explain where all the foreign currency that keeps this country going, is coming from. It explains why many more people are not actually dying from the present crisis in terms of hunger, malnutrition and neglect. It also explains why the regime in Harare prints money to buy foreign currency on the street in

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such quantities and then uses the resulting hard cash to buy luxury items and food or to send abroad to secret bank accounts.

The total population of Zimbabwe is certainly now down to below 9 million. An astonishing figure when you know that it should have been close to double that had conditions remained the same as had existed at the time of independence in 1980. Some of the decline can be explained by millions of deaths due to the deteriorating situation here, but even more by the flight of millions as economic refugees. The most popular destinations being South Africa and the UK followed by the USA and Canada and then Australia and New Zealand. And I am not talking about white African migrants.

I am convinced that the authorities in South Africa have little understanding of the implications of this massive human migration. Half of the population of Somalia and the Sudan has left their homeland. Millions of Congolese are on the move and if this migration is not slowed down, it has the potential to drown the social and economic systems of South Africa.

There is the upside in terms of skills and experience with thousands of migrants now occupying key roles in their destination countries. I personally know of men and women who have quickly assumed top positions in their new homelands. The problem is that this just reinforces the collapse of the societies they are fleeing and makes recovery and growth more difficult to sustain.

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So when the SADC leadership gather outside Pretoria on Monday, a great deal is at stake. It's not just about power sharing. It's about acting decisively to bring to an end a political and economic crisis that has plagued the region for over two decades. The fact that SADC clearly backed the position of the Mugabe regime at last weeks meeting in the face of overwhelming evidence and rationale, is a real indictment of African leadership. They were not even acting in defence of their own interests, let alone the interests of the long-suffering Zimbabwe people.

As for the Zanu PF and the Junta in Harare, they continued to behave as if it was business as usual. There was no change in the propaganda that pours out of the Ministry of Information via the print and electronic media; there was no let up in the spurious allegations about the MDC sponsoring terrorism. Those abducted and disappeared in recent attacks were still not seen or heard from and we fear the worst. Those being charged with treason are still in custody. Food is being interfered with and directed on the basis of political affiliation, agricultural farm invasions and the theft of private property continue in the face of the SADC Legal Tribunal rulings.

One of the most bizarre aspect of the past week was the leaking of a paper prepared by Gono, the illegally appointed Governor of the Reserve Bank, where he sets out plans to adopt the Rand as an anchor currency and suggests that mineral and other high value exports could generate up to US\$1,2 billion a MONTH. His figures and rationale show no understanding of the scale of the crisis we are in or the remedies required. The astonishing thing is that this buffoon is actually taken seriously in Zanu PF circles. I am sure the officials in

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government departments do not give this sort of rubbish any credence – but they are not directing our affairs. Another of his astonishing ideas is a 30 per cent export tax!

In the meantime, Rome burns. Cholera infections (official only) are now nearly 50 000 with reported deaths at over 3000. Aids deaths continue at about 3000 a week, human flight at whatever figure you want to estimate – but not less than 25 000 a week. Deaths from TB, malaria, child deaths and death of women in childbirth run at another 1000 or so a week. It is a silent genocide and Graca Machel said it best this past week when she slammed SADC leadership for standing by and doing nothing, in fact making the situation worse by not acting to support democracy, the rule of law and all international standards of human and political rights.

One of the worst centers for cholera and the town with the highest death toll (18 per cent of all infected) is Chegutu, about 100 kilometers from Harare to the south. This past week a fellow MP told me that he went to the local hospital to try and get an impression of what was going on. All he found was an empty shell – every thing that could be moved had been stolen, there were no staff on duty and the complex was abandoned.

Another colleague stood up in Parliament and said he had just visited a relative in the local Prison. He detailed conditions in both the remand section and in the main prison itself. Hundreds of prisoners ill with cholera, little or no treatment available, dead bodies left in the cells for days and food rations down to 25 per

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cent of “normal”. It was a chilling statement and was received in complete silence by the House.

The Forced Closure of Private Schools

13 January 2009

The forced delay in the opening of all private schools with the threat that any school that defied the order would face the imprisonment of their Heads is an incomprehensible action that defies all logic.

In 2008, children attending State controlled and managed schools were virtually denied any formal education because of the collapse of the system due to shortages of teaching staff and teaching materials. What learning was achieved was due to the Herculean efforts of parents who dug deep to feed children in school hostels and to augment teacher salaries. Mission schools did likewise.

The only sectors that worked consistently and were able to maintain a high standard of education were the small number of private schools where parents fund their childrens education completely. Despite constant harassment by the Minister of Education, these schools have been able to pay reasonable salaries to staff and maintain their standards.

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Now, with one days notice, the Acting Minister of Education has forced all these schools to remain closed simply because he has been unable to ensure that State schools will be able to open.

The facts are that Zimbabwe has 2,8 million children in its State administered education system. At an average class size of 30, this would require the services of 105 000 teachers. In fact it is understood that barely 20 per cent of this number remained at these schools at the end of December 2008 and over the holidays, many thousands of teachers have left the country to try to secure work in South Africa and Botswana.

On top of this, virtually no materials for schooling are available, even if the State had the resources with which to pay for these items. The stark reality is that State schools are unlikely to open at the end of January although the Ministry will attempt to do so. If a Transitional Government is formed in February, the new Minister will need at least two months to prepare to open the State schools and to mobilize the resources to make this possible.

Under these circumstances it is an act of folly to stop the private schools, where parents have already paid their fees, teachers are ready to start teaching and in some cases children had already started to arrive at schools for the new term. This action will cost the private schools many millions of dollars and the children vital weeks of learning.

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The private schools teach the children of the very people in Zimbabwe who are keeping the whole country going. Skilled and experienced managers and specialists from all walks of life, without which the country could not sustain even the present level of economic and social activity. They are a vital segment of a collapsing society and every effort should be made to support their efforts to stay open and in business.

Comical Ally

12 January 2009

I am sure we all recall that press conference in Iraq when the Minister of Information for the Iraqi government was holding forth on the status of the war against them launched a few days earlier by the Americans. He boldly declared that the American forces would never reach the city of Baghdad. Behind him and clearly visible on camera, were American tanks crossing the bridge into the suburb where the press conference was being held.

The shrill protests and hysterical claims of the regime in Harare take on a similar character. I include in that the statement by Mugabe at the Bindura conference of Zanu PF that he would “never, never, never give up – Zimbabwe is mine”. I found it curious that my last letter headed “Let it Crash and Burn” has evoked a storm of debate in the State controlled media here. I have also been attacked by the War Veterans and called all sorts of names. They seemed frightened of the prospect of being left to their own devices in the chaotic situation we are living in here at present. A bit like the horror of a killer who finds himself locked into the room containing the body of his victim and forced to sit there while it stinks and rots and the killer himself faces the prospect of dying from thirst and hunger.

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The reality is that Zanu PF finds itself hooked on a line that leads back to a transitional government that will in fact be controlled and managed by MDC with the obligation only to consult and gain consensus with the Zanu PF minority in its ranks. This fish is fighting the line, but losing the battle. This coming week they must decide whether to tear the hook out of its mouth and dive into deep water, or to allow it to be landed on the beach.

The situation is quite clear, Zanu and MDC have signed an agreement, that agreement is backed and guaranteed by regional and continental bodies and leaders. It provides for the formation of a transitional government that will last about 27 months before a free and fair election under a new constitution and observed by the international community. In that transitional authority, Zanu is in the minority – in every organ of the State. All it has is consultation rights and the need to agree with the MDC on what has to be done to fix the economy and our shattered society.

“Zimbabwe is mine” Mugabe is stripped of much of his power, has to deal with Tsvangirai on all policy issues and before any senior appointments are made. The JOC is replaced with a new National Security Council that is dominated by the MDC and is democratic in character. The Zanu PF Politburo saw the implications immediately after the SADC signing ceremony and has been furiously fighting a rear guard action ever since. But the pressure from the region on the regime has been relentless.

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This coming week is the Rubicon for the regime. They must decide to either go with the deal, conclude the steps necessary to complete its implementation or to refute the deal and go ahead with the formation of an illegitimate government without the MDC or the approval of the region. This decision must be made before Parliament is convened on the 20th of January.

If they decide to go into the transitional government then they must accept what the MDC is proposing – a draft of new legislation to set up the National Security Council, the equitable allocation of ministerial portfolio 's and they must accept that all the senior appointments made since June 2008, in violation of the MOU and the GPA be rescinded and new appointees agreed with the MDC and substituted.

Once this happens then everyone can expect that events will move quite rapidly; Parliament will debate and adopt the new legislation – followed by the appointment of both Mugabe and Tsvangirai to their respective posts, followed by the nomination and swearing in of all Ministers. This could all be over by the 31st January and a new government could start work on the 2nd of February.

If however they decide not to go this route, they will walk away from the deal and in the process walk into the wilderness. Their problems will multiply exponentially; they have no idea how they are going to finance salaries this month, whatever they pay civil servants and the army and police, and it will be worthless. They will plunge the region as a whole into a real crisis – they could jeopardize the prospects for the World Cup next year, (over 400 000 people

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crossed the Beitbridge border post in December), South Africa would be swamped with economic refugees.

The Zimbabwe regime would be even more isolated and regional leaders would have no choice but to repudiate the new government. Internationally, sanctions would be tightened and broadened to include financial restrictions on all deals with Zimbabwe. China and Russia would not be able to maintain their neutrality and political pressure would grow for fresh, internationally supervised elections. Elections that Zanu PF would lose totally.

What the criminals in the Mugabe regime have also got to understand is that this is their last chance to avoid their very worst fears becoming a reality. Inside the new transitional government, working with and not against the MDC, the leadership of Zanu PF would be able to avoid prosecution and probable imprisonment for various crimes for at least the period during which they would be in the transitional government. It is unlikely that the government, operating on a consensual basis, would agree to going over all the violations of the past 30 years and bringing the perpetrators to book.

In fact, for the Ministers and other senior officials in the present regime, it would take the form of a type of enforced community service. They would have to accept the failure of their policies in the past and their shortcomings in many areas. They would be confronted by the very people they beat and tortured yesterday and be required to work with them in repairing the damage and helping to build a new Zimbabwe.

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Zimbabweans are a unique people in many respects, if these erstwhile masters accepted their fate and willingly gave themselves to the task of reconstruction, many would find forgiveness and reconciliation. I think the decision facing Zanu PF this week is quite simple and straight forward, but then we have been there before.

Let it crash and burn!

4 January 2009

When I hear people talking about putting pressure on the regime in Harare they often express concern about the impact on the ordinary men and women living in the country. No such sentiments are in fact heard as grass roots level – in fact quite the opposite, ordinary people are the most vociferous in their view that the MDC must not enter into any sort of deal with Zanu PF as a junior partner.

A good friend in Harare called me just after Christmas and said that in his conversations with people in the capital, he was hearing the view that we should let the country crash and burn and then pick up the pieces. People are very perceptive in what they think and say about sometimes complex and difficult issues. Take for example the use of street traders of the word “burn” to describe changing money from hard currency to the local paper. It aptly describes the otherwise complex process that simply destroys the real value of the currency once it is in local form.

So what is outstanding? We have got a decent draft of the amendments required for the constitution to give effect to the Global Political Agreement, now all that remains are four issues – the legal basis for the National Security Council, which will replace the Joint Operations Command, the equitable allocation of Ministerial

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portfolios, the rescinding of the appointment of the 10 provincial governors and their replacement with 10 new ones agreed with the MDC as required by the GPA and now a new condition – the production in safe and sound condition of the 42 people abducted by the regime in recent weeks.

Mr. Tsvangirai has received his passport – that was finally extracted from the Registrar General's hands and taken to Gaborone by the South African Ambassador and handed to him by the Ambassador on Christmas day. They have also "found" 30 of the abductees and produced them in Court to be formally charged. 12 still; to be produced. A number will be in Court on Monday and we will then learn what the State intends and what case they will try to make against them.

This leaves the question of the Ministerial portfolios, the governors and the Security Council. South Africa is still trying to persuade the MDC to go into the transitional government without these issues being resolved. What they fail to understand is that we will not get on the bus until the steering wheel and the accelerator and the gear lever are in our hands. Last time someone did that they ended up in the bush, dumped on the side of the road and having to walk back to civilization – they are still walking.

So the stage is set – Parliament will sit on the 20th of January and is ready to debate and vote on the amendments and the new legislation to set up the Security Council – but we will not do so if the outstanding issues are not agreed and in place. It is not grandstanding, because of the way the GPA was agreed,

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largely at the behest of the South African mediation team; this bus is a peculiar one in design.

In the front of the bus – up against the windscreen, is a large sitting area that will be empty most of the time until we have to decide which direction to go next. Then the President will get on the bus and meet the driver and passengers and hear their views and together with the driver, will map out the next stage in this journey. He will then get off the bus and the driver and his passengers will move to the drivers seat, take charge and actually drive the bus to its next destination. Clumsy, but workable if there is no doubt about who the driver is and how he will operate. The Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers is clearly designed to take this role but the bus hasn't been built yet.

Since this machine was designed in South Africa we expect them to deliver a completed vehicle into our care. To do this, the South African President has to return to the factory and give final instructions to the factory staff on the completion of the bus. Then, if we are satisfied it's to specification, we will take delivery and be prepared to drive the bus to its destination.

Spectators underestimate the MDC. In March 2006, when 22 000 delegates and guests crowded the National Sport Stadium in Harare for the MDC Congress, the Congress resolved to adopt a road map – first the democratic resistance campaign, then negotiations, a transitional government, new constitution, then free and fair elections – and only then, a genuine MDC Government. I do not

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recall any commentator saying that this was a brilliant plan or commenting at the time on the prospects for the MDC achieving its stated objectives.

Yet two years later, stage one is complete, stage two is about to be completed and we are shortly to start work on stage three. What people also need to know is that we have a detailed road map of how to traverse the ground ahead of us. A road map exists already and is agreed with Zanu PF, as to how and when we are going to complete a new national, people driven constitution to guide us into the future. It even has a timetable and the next elections will be in mid 2011.

We also have a detailed understanding of the territory we must traverse in the next two years. The shambles in education and health, the collapsed economy with closed mines and factories, the deserted farms. The absence of the rule of law, freedom of association and information, the destruction of our own currency by stupid, myopic bad management. We know what the obstacles are and how rough the road will be – we think we will have to fuel for the bus and we certainly know how to steer us back to sanity.

But you cannot drive a bus with two drivers trying to do so at the same time. The GPA says the MDC is in charge of the bus and MT is the driver. We just need to make sure, absolutely sure that there are no dual controls in the front of the bus – they remain where they were designed to be – further back in the hands of the Prime Minister.

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What the people at the bus stop are saying is “we will not get on the bus until we are satisfied that the driver is our man and not Mugabe”. And that is not negotiable. If Mugabe is anywhere near the wheel, we would rather let the bus crash and burn.

False Accusations

3 January 2009

In late 2001, the local media covered a story claiming that a war veteran, Cain Ncala had been murdered – the story was elaborate and carefully constructed. The State claimed that he had been abducted by MDC operatives, taken into the bush and strangled. His body was found in a shallow grave some 40 kilometers from Bulawayo.

National television showed pictures of two MDC activists in shackles and handcuffs showing the site of the grave to the Police. Several people were arrested in the aftermath and eventually charged with the murder and complicity with the murder. In front of a High Court Judge appointed by the regime and known to be sympathetic to the regime, the State case collapsed when the defence demonstrated that the whole case was a fabrication.

The Court dismissed the charges and all the accused were released – but only after they had been subjected to six weeks of incarceration and mistreatment. Below is the account of one of the co-accused in that case. It is his personal recollection of what he was subjected to during the 35 days he spent in Police custody and in Remand Prison.

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This story is apt because this is exactly what Jestina Mukoko and others are being subjected to right now in Zimbabwe. In late 2008, the regime decided to concoct a story about the MDC training military insurgents in neighboring Botswana. The objective was to discredit the Botswana Government and strengthen a case for the declaration of a State of Emergency as a result of which the State would ban the MDC, call off the talks and the formation of a transitional government. In tandem with this elaborate hoax, they staged bombings in Police Stations and at various strategic points and, although there was no evidence, blamed elements linked to the MDC.

To support their story – distributed to SADC Heads of State by a team of Zanu PF Ministers and security officials in the form of a 27 page dossier with color photographs of young trainees in a camp in Botswana, State agents (we now know they were police with CIO and others assisting and authorized from the top) abducted at least 42 individuals and in three cases produced film of confessions that they had participated in this training after being recruited in Zimbabwe by MDC related individuals.

If you are going to construct such an elaborate plan why not hit more than one target and that is how Jestina and her colleagues came it. Their crime was to run a human rights organisation that was recording violations of basic rights in Zimbabwe. They were picked up and were to be charged for recruiting the people sent to Botswana for training. The main difficulty since the plan was hatched has been the reaction of the region to all of this. Botswana simply said to the SADC – please send a team to investigate the allegations. They did and

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came up with nothing. Then, the President of South Africa simply poured scorn on the story.

In order to carry out the scheme the regime had to violate its own laws – and get the Courts to collude. This they have done without compunction. In addition, to get those abducted to confess they had to torture them – Jestina has confirmed this and in addition we know that the two year old abducted with its mother was beaten in front of the mother to get her to confess.

Now Morgan Tsvangirai has further compounded their problems by demanding that those abducted be produced in Court and charged or released. South African pressure led to them being eventually produced in Court and now the State faces to unpleasant reality of going through Court proceedings in public and being further embarrassed by the disclosures that are bound to emerge.

But what is also essential is for everyone to understand just what Jestina and the others are going through and this true account of the 2001 incident and its aftermath involving another elaborate scheme to implicate the MDC in crimes against the State sets out that in graphic detail. I found it difficult to read. In fact the conditions in our Prisons and Police holding cells are much worse today than they were in 2001. Food conditions are worse and many prisoners are dying in Prison from hunger, disease and general mistreatment.

Eddie Cross Bulawayo, 3rd January 2009 35 DAYS OF HELL I am an MDC activist and a Zimbabwean Patriot who is committed to bringing about true democracy in Zimbabwe Jan-Jun 2009

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our country. In early November 2001, I had just returned by car from a trip to Masvingo to meet with other activists in the area in preparation for the upcoming Presidential Elections. At 0830 hours, Monday 12th November 2001, 3 plain - clothes gentlemen arrived at the Office and asked if I could accompany them to Central Police Station to answer some questions. I asked them to produce identity and they came from the notorious Law and Order Section of the ZRP, whose specific responsibility was to use muscle in all its forms to enforce both the archaic laws of the past and those more recently introduced, in the course of the subversion of Justice. I knew at this time that, what I had psychologically prepared for, and hoped would not come to pass, had happened. I managed to quickly pass word to my assistant to urgently inform the shadow Justice Minister for whom I work, of my predicament. I knew that I would soon be focusing on mustering all the strength and discipline that I would need to face what was in wait for me. My time had finally arrived. On walking to the Central Station, I was informed that the questioning would be in regard to the murder of two members of Zanu PF. I was taken to the top of the building and told to sit and wait and I took the opportunity to use my cell phone and managed to warn a work colleague of my predicament, knowing precisely my fate. I focused my mind on all the positives of my situation and immediately re-examined my likely timetable in terms of the legal process - can't be held more than 48 hours without appearing in Court, High Court application etc. The cell phone was snatched from me and in about an hour's time, a young lawyer appeared on the scene only to be physically forced from the room and told that he could see me at 1600 hours. The 'time factor' was already being brought into play, during which time I was treated to the sight of scrofulous disheveled plain-clothes

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Officers slopping over their food from the canteen. I was refused a glass of water. Within minutes of their lunch, I was shackled by the wrist and had leg-irons fitted and was promptly moved by armed escort to a waiting Land Rover. I realised then that they would make every effort to deny me access to my lawyer and various thoughts went through my mind. I suspected that I was being taken out of Bulawayo to be hidden in an outlying Police cell, a favourite strategy of the state thugs in control of the "law". An amateurish attempt was made to confuse me by driving in zigzag fashion to Esigodini, 45 kilometers on the Johannesburg road. I knew then what I faced. This station and its cells were notorious in the genocide days of Gukurahundi when over 20 000 people were murdered by the same regime that was attempting to put me out of action. I recall the stories of screams from the cells where torture regularly took place. Earlier, all my questions were refused and it was only when I was "logged in" did I see the charge of "KIDNAPPING AND MURDER. Stripped to my trouser and shirt, I was then moved to the cells which I could smell some 20 metres away. Once my eyes had adjusted to the darkness, I counted 12 forms prostrate in the cell which was indescribably filthy. The toilet in the corner (a hole in the concrete floor) was overflowing with a mound of excrement over a foot high with rivulets of fluid spreading across the floor as urine dissolved the solids. There was only enough room for me to sit with my knees under my chin. Three heavily fouled floor mats were available for the 13 inmates and 10 filthy blankets stiffened with excrement and dirty bodies. There was neither toilet paper nor water and due to the inevitable runny stomach, prisoners had to use their hands when using the toilet and wipe them on the walls. Opposition party graffiti scribbled with stone and cigarette stubs were in evidence everywhere. The

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ceilings were polka-dotted with the blood of engorged mosquitoes, millions of which swarmed the cell continuously. It was like some unique wallpaper and the drone reminded me of old film footage of bomber squadrons in a blitz. Lunch was served a dirty bowl of sadza (maize meal), The prisoners were forced to use their hands, finger nails of which were filthy for the reasons referred to earlier. I refused the food, as I knew I probably had a long stay in prison and that any food poisoning would deem me defenseless in terms of contending with my situation and my captors. My fellow inmates, who were petty criminals from the local tribal areas, greeted me warmly and treated me with great respect and compassion, despite their lowly status. Once they knew that I was MDC, the spirits of the group rose, as they were all supporters of the opposition. The cell - wall graffiti testified to this. Supper consisted of the same meal and again I declined, taking only water from a sink, in an area adjoining the cells. It was eventually time to bed down for the evening and an elderly tribesman offered to share his blanket with me. The only floor space available was that alongside the seepage of the "toilet". I had no choice but to eventually lie down on this filthy floor and accepted the shared blanket gratefully. The mosquitoes were so bad that the prisoners tried to cover their bodies as best as they could. When I tried this, the stench of the blanket was simply too much, but this was a choice between that kind of smell and that which emanated from the oozing mass in the corner. I eventually covered my face with my shirt and somehow slept through to the morning. When the first officer visited, I appealed to him for more blankets and floor mats and indicated that I had money, which I understood that I could use to buy in additional food and cigarettes for my colleagues and me. A decision could not be made and was referred to the

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Officer - In - Charge. Needless to say, he did not consent or give any decision. Eventually, all the others were sent to Court and I was left on my own. Lunchtime passed and no food was forthcoming, despite my shouts in the direction of Officers coming and going from the offices some 20 metres away. They would pause, listen, turn and move on. It was my intention to insist that I be able to phone my lawyer as was my legal right and endeavor to buy some food. At this stage, I would have been happy to be fed sadza if other dirty hands were not in evidence at mealtime. I was completely ignored throughout the day and in the early evening (supper time) I began to realise that I was to be abandoned, at least for the time being. At all times, I remained positive albeit in a disciplined sense and knew that somehow, Justice would be done and that someone would find me, before my captors realised that they would be able to deal with me in the usual manner. It is a matter of fact that torture and brutality had become the order of the day. Eventually I managed to attract the attention of a cleaner as I was tall enough to peer out of a top window into a Courtyard, where he was working. He was obviously nervous but realised my predicament. At this stage, I was now thirsty and although empty, was not hungry, as the stench was enough to put one off one's food. I thought at the time that there is a reason for everything and a good reason at that - filthy stench, no hunger pains. It was now some 48 hours since the last time I had a proper meal other than a very light breakfast at 0630 hours on Monday morning. I continued to try and attract the attention of passing Officers, and they all ignored me. Eventually, the cleaner "worked his way" towards me so that he was not noticed and whispered "your friends are here. Two white men and a black man". I had heard a car draw up to the station earlier. My spirits rose.

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Earlier that morning, a young man who had been detained for 5 days without trial had picked a piece of cement plaster with his finger nail from the wall and used it to scratch my office telephone number on his shin bone under his trousers. Had he been remanded out of custody he would have phoned for help. Little did I know it, but the area was staked out by local MDC activists monitoring and recording all activity and vehicles that came and left the station. An hour and half passed. I heard nothing. For the first time my spirits dropped. A car drove away and I did not know who the occupants might have been. After half an hour, and various further appeals to Police Officers, I heard a jingle of keys and an Officer handcuffed me and took me through to the Charge Office, where I found my lawyer seated. My wife had prepared a meat and salad roll and a fruit juice and only after my lawyer pleaded, was I allowed to eat. At this stage, there was still no Warrant for my Arrest and I was illegally detained. My wife sat in the next office but was refused access to me. The lawyer switched on his Dictaphone and asked whether I was ill treated or physically harmed in any way. He was able to reassure me that a High Court sitting had been sought to force the Police to confirm my whereabouts and that they would be reminded that I was already becoming overdue for court appearance in terms of the regulations. It was obvious that the Senior Officer was hostile and had a political motive. I was then moved back to my cell and later on joined by three other petty criminals. This time we were able to share the blankets available and position ourselves in the furthest point away from the cesspit in the corner. Again, sleep was difficult due to mosquitoes, but we endured. Next morning, no breakfast appeared and soon I was led to the Charge Office dressed and greeted by Officer Ngwenya from Law and Order Bulawayo, who said we were on our

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way. Again, auxiliary police armed with AK47's squeezed in the Land Rover with me and I was taken to Central Police Station, Bulawayo. Again, no food or drink was made available and I was delighted when a Senior Advocate managed to speak to me although Officers refused to move out of earshot though were continually asked to do so by the Legal Counsel. He did his best to prepare me for Court and it was made abundantly clear that he had overstayed his welcome. When I arrived at the Magistrates Court, it was my first introduction to two of the co-accused and we then proceeded to the dock, remanded in custody and sent to cells below the Tredgold Building. These had not been swept or cleaned, seemingly for years - broken toilets, no light bulbs and a bare concrete floor. We were offered no lunch, or anything to drink and eventually placed in leg-irons and handcuffs, herded into a vehicle and driven to Khami Maximum Security Prison. On arrival there, we were documented and issued soiled prison clothing consisting of khaki shorts and shirt. Finally, shackled, we were moved to our respective cells, which were essentially concrete boxes, 4 metres x 1 ½ metres x 3 metres high. We were then stripped naked, as was the practice for solitary confinement. The cell was furnished with a plastic dog bowl as a toilet and 3, now familiar filthy blankets on a concrete floor. The "bush telegraph" as we call it, had obviously been operating and somehow the prisoners knew that MDC activists were arriving and the whole block of 3 floors of cells erupted into MDC Political Slogans and Chants. Eventually, other prisoners on their way to exercise, passed scraps of toilet paper, small pieces of soap and even a tooth brush and ballpoint pen through the brass peep hole. The daily routine consisted of a wake-up bell at approximately 0600 hours (we had no idea of time nor date as all contact with the outside world was virtually denied) and

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then we were issued with a cup of sweet tea and a piece of bread covered with margarine. We were allowed to empty our dog bowls into one of six broken non-flushable toilets for 120 inmates and return to cells. Some time before midday, we were allowed out into a courtyard for one hour's exercise and approximately ½ hour in mid-afternoon. At the discretion of the Guard, MDC inmates were usually separated and sent to cells considerably earlier than the convicted criminals. At any time between 1120 and 1330 we were issued "lunch" which consisted of a portion of rice, a third of an inch deep and four inches across, which was soiled with brown filth from plates stacked above. There were no cleaning materials and the risk of dysentery was high. A handful of bitter cabbage was dished out as well and a cup of sweet tea. Anywhere between 1430 and 1530 we had our supper, which was made up of the same size portions but with red beans, substituting cabbage. From that time through to approximately 0700 hours the next morning, there was no access to food and drink. It was evident from the facilities and information from long-serving prisoners that excellent facilities once existed even for the Maximum Security section. The Medical Officer's, Office and Store Room was virtually empty of all drugs, which had to account for 1400 prisoners. One draw of drugs was all that remained and empty shelves extended the length, breadth and height of a room 6 metres x 6 metres. The libraries were all completely empty and prisoners had no access to reading material. In the adjoining A Block, 1200 prisoners shared the same space as the 120 in our solitary confinement block. Records show of the total number of approximately 470 at any one time being on remand. Some of these have been in this situation since 1995. There were reports of beatings and recriminations and the death rate from AIDS Related TB and Pneumonia and

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Dysentery and general ailments was very high. In A Block, there was so little room, that at night time, prisoners were forced to sleep in shifts and those lucky enough for floor space had to sleep on their sides, stacked like sardines all facing in one direction. On the hour, when sore shoulders and hips could no longer withstand the discomfort of the concrete floor, everyone stood and turned to lie on the other side. At nighttime, we often heard prisoners screaming from nightmares. It was chilling experience. Somehow, despite being locked in a concrete block for 22 ½ hours per day, with no reading or writing material, we still considered ourselves lucky. As remand prisoners, we were virtually denied every privilege due to us, such as weekly visits from wives, additional food, and reading and writing material. After much protestation, I personally managed to eventually receive letters and some books but this was towards the end of my internment. We were allowed two letters to be posted in a month. None of mine reached their destinations. This was commonly understood by the prisoners who, through this total lack of contact with friends and relatives, were effectively denied legal representation. The tragedy of remand prisoners appearing in Court with no one present to pay their bail was almost sometimes too hard to bear. On each remand hearing we were shipped like cattle, handcuffed with leg-irons to Bulawayo. Due to lack of transport any form of vehicle was used and at one time, in a fully enclosed metal truck, panic broke out, as we had been left in the hot sun for nearly an hour waiting for the gun-toting auxiliaries who had to be present because MDC prisoners were on board. Fortunately, we were able to calm ourselves down and it was not long before the escort arrived and we began to breathe freely again. In my own situation, I witnessed the appalling treatment of my fellow prisoners, both at the magistrates Court, where the cells

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were totally insufficient to cater for the masses of wretched prisoners who were fed from a bag of poorly cooked sadza with no eating instruments available. The filth and flies simply meant that there were more victims of a variety of ailments, related to these conditions. At the High Court, where I was imprisoned for approximately one week during my bail application, the cells were appalling. No lighting, no blankets or floor mats and a broken toilet, choked and foul. The graffiti on the walls was written in the medium of prisons excrement. A mere few feet above us, judges reclined in wooden paneled Court Rooms, completely unaware of the plight of those that stood in the stands before them. My own experience was that Prison Officers refused offers of fruit juice from my own lawyer and counsel and at times we would go for as long as 8 hours with anything to eat and drink. If we were lucky, before leaving prison to travel to Court, we were able to shovel dried sadza and beans into a dirty bag and carry that with us, to be shared in the middle of the day. On arriving back in the evening at prison after the day in Court, it was always too late for our "supper", which was scheduled at no later than 1530 hours. On the one occasion, we were lucky, as plastic plates of food had been left in the sun in the Courtyard for us by some caring fellow prisoner. However, the food was blackened by blow flies, the species which is renowned for its attraction to rotting fish and faeces. My wife attempted day after day to visit me and spent hours at the external boom gate waiting for permission to enter, which was her and my right (once per week for 10 minutes). Of the 35 days in detention, she was able to visit me twice at Khami Maximum as it was the habit of Senior Officers, who were often politically appointed to deliberately delay the process of visitors accessing their relatives. On the one occasion she spoke with me for 3 minutes and the second for 7

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minutes. When finally, my lawyer succeeded in a High Court application, ordering the prison authorities to grant me my remand prisoner rights, I was present when he served the order on the Officer Commanding and he gesticulated violently several times and said "..... will get nothing. Nothing !! No toothbrush, no food, no writing paper, no books, Nothing !!" My lawyer had numerous, on occasions brought letters from my doctor explaining the digestive problems from which I suffered and still special food was denied. I suffer from a displaced spine and only after a good number of attempts, was I finally allowed to wear a back brace. This is just an indication of the deliberate political motive in dealing with what were effectively political prisoners. Through my lawyer, and the help of friends, I was able to arrange for a football to be delivered to the prison by my lawyer, but in all four attempts, the prison authorities refused the offer. Football is the only activity permitted and their ball had long exceeded its usable life. Finally, after winning my release and after being re-detained after 17 hours of freedom, due to a technicality, I won my appeal in the country's Supreme Court and joined my family, 8 kgs the lighter. Subsequently, after other vague chargers were laid against me, I finally was absolved of my crime although there is still no acquittal as such. This allows the authorities to find new evidence to re-detain me. It is on this basis that some of my colleagues are still incarcerated and others due to stand trial in November. This whole episode has been counter productive for the authorities as my resolve has strengthened, my appreciation for my compatriot and colleagues has grown tremendously, and my faith in the future of my country is stronger than ever. (In the subsequent Court hearing all charges were dropped against all the accused. The Judge found that the Police "diary" of events had been fabricated

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and it was found that a policeman had actually been protecting the site of the dead body for 24 hours before “discovery”.)