

Weekly Press Review
September 24-30, 2011

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Politics/International Relations

ANC tells Zanu PF to back off

The Standard, September 25-October 1, 2011

The African National Congress (ANC) has told Zanu PF that it will not brook any interference in its internal affairs, after Zanu PF youths petitioned the party to halt disciplinary action against its youth league leaders.

ANC secretary general Gwede Mantashe expressed his displeasure at the Zanu PF youths saying the case is an internal issue that should not involve Zanu PF.

Zanu PF secretary for Administration, Didymus Mutasa allegedly apologised to Mantashe and disowned the youths, saying they were not Zanu PF.

VP Mujuru meets British, German ambassadors

The Herald, September 30, 2011

VICE President Joice Mujuru yesterday met the new British and Germany ambassadors to Zimbabwe Deborah Bronnert and Hans Gnodtke and expressed displeasure over their failure to lift the illegal sanctions they imposed on the country.

Speaking to journalists after meeting VP Mujuru at her Munhumutapa Offices, the two envoys confirmed her "grave" concern over the maintenance of the sanctions.

Although VP Mujuru told the two diplomats that illegal sanctions were hurting Zimbabwe, Ambassador Bronnert indicated that London was not yet ready to entirely lift them.

She said her government this year reviewed the illegal sanctions and would continue to do so basing on what she termed "progress on the implementation of the Global Political Agreement".

Political Violence/Elections

Zanu PF youth gets 18 years for murder

NewsDay, September 27, 2011

The High Court yesterday sentenced the son of the Zanu PF provincial chairman for the Midlands, who is also a party youth executive and three others to 18 years each for the murder of an MDC-T activist in 2009. Two members of the Zimbabwe National Army were acquitted of murder in the same case, but were given a wholly suspended 12 month prison term after they were found guilty of assault.

Police attempted to conceal evidence in Gokwe murder-Judge

NewsDay, September 29, 2011

High Court judge Justice Nicholas Mathonsi rapped the Gokwe police who investigated the murder of MDC-T activist Moses Chokuda, for attempting to

conceal evidence in favour of the accused persons at the just-ended trial.

Delivering judgment, Justice Mathonsi said the court noted a worrying trend in which it appeared the police were attempting to conceal evidence in favour of the accused persons.

The convicted murderers are Farai Machaya, a member of the Zanu PF provincial youth executive and son of Midlands Zanu PF chairman, Governor and Resident Minister Jason Machaya, Edmore and Bothwell Gana, sons of Zanu PF Gokwe District Coordinating Committee chairman Ignatius Gana, and Abel Maphosa, a close friend of the Machaya's and a Zanu PF activist.

"The manner in which the Gokwe police who investigated the murder handled the matter was far beyond expectation and we cannot exclude the fact that the police attempted to downplay what happened in favour of the defence. The police omitted vital evidence which was led by State witnesses and this is not acceptable," Justice Mathonsi said.

Police accused of Chiadzwa murder

NewsDay, September 29, 2011

A Chiadzwa villager, Tsorosai Kusena (39) died last Friday allegedly in police custody while his two brothers are battling for life at Mutare Provincial Hospital after being allegedly assaulted by police over allegations that they were illegal diamond miners.

According to a post-mortem conducted at Mutare Provincial Hospital on Monday by a Dr Kasongo, the alleged victim, Kusena succumbed to traumatic shock due to assault.

Tsorosai and four family members were allegedly arrested by Mbada Diamonds security guards and taken to a police post in Chiadzwa on suspicion they were digging for diamonds.

The family says the brothers were sinking a well at their homestead.

Army ready to crush any revolt-Mnangagwa

NewsDay, September 27, 2011

Defence minister Emmerson Mnangagwa has vowed to crush any possible revolt against President Robert Mugabe's continued rule.

He dismissed as wishful thinking suggestions that Zimbabweans could stage an uprising similar to those that rocked North Africa recently.

Mnangagwa said this on Friday during a tour of Chinhoyi University of Technology's Hunyani Farm, where the institution has partnered the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) and a Chinese investor in a 300-hectare wheat production project.

The farm was taken from the renowned Nicolle family, one of Chinhoyi's leading commercial farmers.

Mnangagwa was accompanied by ZDF Commander General Constantine Chiwenga, Air Force of Zimbabwe Commander Air Marshal Perence Shiri, Agriculture minister Joseph Made and other senior government officials. Mnangagwa said Zimbabwe's land reform programme was a success and had empowered the formerly marginalised black majority.

No money for elections-ZEC

NewsDay, September 30, 2011

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) does not have the capacity to conduct a referendum or any election at the moment because of an acute shortage of resources, acting Chairperson Joyce Laetitia Kazembe said yesterday.

She said ZEC needed more than \$30 million for capacity building alone while a referendum may need up to \$88 million and much more for elections. Before yesterday's donation, Kazembe said the commission had no vehicles and even commissioners were using personal cars for ZEC business.

Kazembe said the government had not done enough to fund the commission resulting in it being incapacitated although it had skilled manpower. She challenged politicians calling for elections to ensure the commission was adequately resourced.

Commissioners, however, pledged when elections were eventually held, the commission would ensure free and fair elections with Commissioner Bessie Fadzai Nhandara declaring ZEC would surpass the Electoral Commission of Zambia and give Zimbabweans a free and fair election "for the first time".

"ZEC should follow SADC guidelines on polls"

DailyNews, September 30, 2011

European Union (EU) Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Aldo Dell'Aricecia says the EU wants the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to follow regional SADC Guidelines on elections as a benchmark for the country's forthcoming polls.

Dell'Aricecia gave the example of Zambia where an incumbent president lost an election and stepped down without causing a scene.

SADC Guidelines dictate that member states should ensure freedom of association, political tolerance, and equal opportunity for all political parties to access state media, independence of the judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions as well as intensive voter education.

Economic Issues

Current account deficit widens

NewsDay September 27, 2011

An African Development Bank (AfDB) report says Zimbabwe recorded a current account deficit of \$2, 6 billion in the first eight months of the year reflecting the continued absorption of substantial imports by the country from South Africa and the United States of America.

During the period January to August this year, the country spent \$5, 3 billion on imports against exports receipts of \$2 697 billion.

Current account deficit occurs when a country's total goods, services and transfers is greater than the country's exports in goods, services and transfers.

AfDB said the widening trade balance was recorded in August in imports that increased by 142% to \$1 254, 6 billion from \$517, 9 million.

Land/Resettlement Issues

Eviction of Gonarezhou invaders stalls

NewsDay September 26, 2011

The government has made an about-turn on its intention to evict about 1 000 villagers of the Chitsa clan who invaded the Gonarezhou National Park at the height of the chaotic land reform programme amid reports there is no money and alternative land to facilitate their relocation.

The families have locked horns with the government since 2003 over plans to eject them from the area, resisting eviction, on the grounds that the land on which the park lay was traditionally theirs.

Masvingo governor and resident minister Titus Maluleke recently said that the province had run out of land for resettlement purposes.