



## TOP HARARE BUREAUCRATS OPPOSE POWER-SHARING

**They are reported to feel betrayed by Mugabe and still consider Tsvangirai an enemy.**

**By Nonthano Bhebhe in Harare**

A number of senior civil servants are said to have no intention of cooperating with those members of the Movement for Democratic Change, MDC, who will be appointed to join the new inclusive government.

Sources at Munhumutapa Building — which houses the offices of the president, the two vice presidents and the ministries of foreign affairs, finance, and information and publicity — told IWPR that some partisan senior civil servants are uncomfortable with the deal signed between ZANU-PF's Robert Mugabe and the leaders of the two MDC factions.

Mugabe signed the power-sharing agreement on September 15 with Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur



Credit: Lazele

*Robert Mugabe during the power sharing deal signing ceremony held in Harare. Picture taken September 15, 2008.*

**According to sources, senior civil servants will not cooperate with MDC.**

Mutambara, leaders of the larger and smaller factions of the MDC respectively.

In the new government, while Mugabe would remain as president, Tsvangirai

### NEWS IN BRIEF

■ On September 25, the European Union, EU, announced it will provide 10 million euros (15 million US dollars) of aid to Zimbabwe to provide health care, water and sanitation for the country's most vulnerable people.

In a statement, EU Aid Commissioner Louis Michel said the humanitarian aid was "neutral and impartial" and not a political instrument.

The commissioner also expressed grave concern over the dire living conditions faced by Zimbabweans.

"I am deeply concerned by the continued dramatic humanitarian

situation in Zimbabwe. This situation must be addressed urgently," said Michel.

Earlier in the month, EU foreign ministers said that Zimbabwe's new unity government — to be formed after a power-sharing deal was signed on September 15 — must take steps to restore democracy before EU sanctions can be lifted and economic aid injected into the country.

Zimbabwe's economy — which has been spiralling downwards for close to a decade — is in worse shape than ever, with official levels of inflation now at 11.2 million per cent.

Michel said he expected all restrictions on humanitarian operations to be completely lifted as a result of the recent political settlement.

Under the deal, Robert Mugabe will remain president, while Movement for Democratic Change, MDC, leader Morgan Tsvangirai will become prime minister and will chair a council of ministers responsible for managing the country's affairs.

According to reports, rival parties ZANU-PF and the MDC have failed to agree over which party will control each ministry, and have now passed the matter to negotiators.

would be prime minister and chair a council of ministers which would be responsible for the day-to-day management of the country's affairs. Mutambara would be one of the deputy prime ministers.

The sources said top government officials were still to embrace the deal, but from discussions amongst themselves it seems they were not prepared to see the agreement succeed.

**“My colleagues don’t want this deal to work and have vowed to sabotage it. They want to make sure that Tsvangirai gets so frustrated that he pulls out of the deal,” said one source.**

A source from the office of one of the two vice presidents said it was going to take a very long time for his colleagues to accept the new situation and transform into non-partisan civil servants. He said the problem with some civil servants was that they had benefited immensely through patronage from the land redistribution programme and were used to getting cheap fuel, seed, fertiliser and other agricultural inputs. They were counting on this situation continuing.

“There is a big problem which has to be dealt with if the deal is to succeed. My colleagues don’t want this deal to work and have vowed to sabotage it. They want to make sure that Tsvangirai gets so frustrated that he pulls out of the deal,” said the source.

“When you talk to them, it’s as if the signing ceremony never happened. They have not seriously considered the possibility of the power-sharing agreement working. They feel betrayed by the president and cannot imagine reporting to Tsvangirai, whom they still consider as an enemy.”

One of those opposed to the deal is the information and publicity permanent secretary George Charamba.

According to sources at the state-run Herald newspaper, Charamba summoned editors and political reporters to his office to tell them that their editorial policy had not changed despite the signing of the power-sharing deal.

One source said Charamba was angry at some stories published in state newspapers praising the deal and giving coverage to the prime minister-designate. Some articles in the public media for the first time acknowledged that Mugabe was surrounded by corrupt ministers whom one writer accused of looting and gross inefficiency.

“Charamba was fuming and he told us that nothing had changed and we should disregard the agreement and continue operating as we had in the past. This was quite a shocker, considering that the president had just signed an agreement with Tsvangirai,” he said.

The journalist said following the meeting, The Herald refused to run an MDC advertisement.

Writing in the Herald after the political leaders sealed the deal, Nathaniel Manheru — thought to be a pseudonym for Charamba — said the MDC was now an “embedded” enemy and that ZANU-PF should be on guard.

“For a party that has always relied on government and intellect for policy incubation, it [ZANU-PF] now has to learn to govern in a new environment where the enemy is now within, well embedded,” wrote Manheru.

“The West will now have an eager listening post, right up to cabinet. There will be lots of policy pre-emption.”

Manheru wrote that prior to September 18, when the deal was sealed, he had been very angry at ZANU-PF for doubting itself and being too anxious for peace.

“Until September 18, I was very angry with the ruling party, ZANU-PF. The ruling party was viewed as beginning to believe that it depended on the MDC’s collaborative goodwill for its own legitimacy, never on the people of Zimbabwe who gave it the mandate to form the next government on June 27,” he wrote.

Manheru questioned why ZANU-PF, which he described as a liberation movement with a “spectacular” history, would give Tsvangirai’s party so much power.

**Information and publicity permanent secretary George Charamba remains opposed to power-sharing deal.**

A senior MDC official said there was a need to transform the civil service into a non-partisan body.

He said it might be necessary to retire or fire some civil servants, who would try to frustrate efforts to make the deal a success.

“You can tell by the language of some senior civil servants that they have not accepted that things need to change. It is going to be very difficult to work with such persons. To balance things, some might have to be fired,” he said.

The power-sharing deal is supposed to open the way for international donors to help to revive Zimbabwe’s economy, where inflation is more than 11 million per cent.

Zimbabwe has not been receiving financial and technical assistance from international organisations like the International Monetary Fund, IMF, since 2006.

*Nonthano Bhebhe is the pseudonym of an IWPR journalist in Zimbabwe. ■*

# TSVANGIRAI PRIORITISES HEALTH AND EDUCATION

**Both sectors have virtually crumbled under the weight of the economic crisis.**

**By Hativagone Mushonga in Harare**

At the signing ceremony for Zimbabwe's long-awaited power-sharing agreement, new prime minister Morgan Tsvangirai promised to tackle the struggling health and education sectors as a matter of priority.

"We need medication and doctors back in our hospitals and we need teachers back in our schools," said Movement for Democratic Change, MDC, leader Tsvangirai, to resounding applause.

**"We need medication and doctors back in our hospitals and we need teachers back in our schools," said Morgan Tsvangirai.**

Zimbabweans are now waiting to see who Tsvangirai and President Robert Mugabe will appoint to head the two vital ministries, both of which have virtually crumbled under the weight of the country's economic crisis.

Under the agreement, the new government will comprise 13 ministers from the Tsvangirai-led opposition group the MDC, 15 from the ruling ZANU-PF and three from Arthur Mutambara's MDC splinter group.

Many hope that Mugabe will hand control of the two ministries to Tsvangirai's party, since ZANU-PF seems to have run out of ideas about how to resuscitate the sectors, which were once Africa's finest.



Credit: Lazele

*A disinfecting basin awaits everyone who comes to the clinic in Chitungwiza where people infected with cholera are quarantined and treated. The latest outbreak of the disease has claimed more than 15 lives in the cities of Harare and Chitungwiza. Picture taken September 25, 2008.*

However, Tsvangirai — who also vowed to address the widespread starvation affecting many across the country by lifting government restrictions on aid agencies — will have his work cut out in turning the beleaguered health and education systems around.

**The health and education ministries have virtually crumbled under the weight of the country's economic crisis.**

A shortage of health-care professionals, drugs and essential medical equipment has meant Zimbabweans are being denied their right to healthcare. The collapsing health sector — and soaring cost of medical care — has forced thousands of ailing people to seek treatment from

traditional and self-proclaimed spiritual healers.

The economic turmoil in the country — which has pushed many poor and middle-class Zimbabweans to the brink of starvation — has caused healthcare professionals to leave in droves for neighbouring countries and positions abroad.

**Unable to afford health care, thousands of Zimbabweans have turned to alternative health practitioners.**

According to statistics from the ministry of health, government hospitals require at least 1,530 doctors to function smoothly — they currently have less than half that number and a little more than half of the required 11,640 nurses.

As if these staff shortages are not enough in a country ravaged by HIV/AIDS, the public health sector has been hit by perennial strikes and has been turning away patients, advising them to seek treatment at private health institutions — a luxury few Zimbabweans can afford.

### **Health workers say AIDS patients can no longer afford drugs they need.**

Private hospitals are demanding a deposit for a three-day stay of the equivalent of more than 300 US dollars before they will even admit patients. Maternity sections are charging 1,700 US dollars, and a major operation may cost as much as 60,000 US dollars.

And these amounts don't guarantee that patients will be properly fed, as the country's food crisis has hit the private hospital sector too. At one such institution, which IWPR monitored for a month, patients were served cabbage and maize meal porridge only on some days, with an occasional egg for supper.

With the cost of medicine escalating almost weekly, health workers say many AIDS patients can no longer afford the life-saving antiretroviral drugs they need. Stopping treatment is not only putting their own lives in danger, but creating ideal conditions for the emergence of drug-resistant strains of HIV.

"[The crisis is] creating a health-care apartheid. We're no longer looking at the colour of the people, we're looking at the fatness of their wallets," said physician Elopy Sibanda.

The failing health system, combined with the rampant HIV/AIDS pandemic, has contributed to a plummeting life expectancy. The World Health Organisation, WHO, has estimated a Zimbabwean man's life expectancy as 37 and that of the average woman as 34.

Education is also in crisis. Zimbabwe, which once boasted the highest literacy rate in the continent, is now experiencing an unprecedented dropout and failure rate as the country's education system has gone into freefall.

As recently as 2000, according to United Nations figures, 90 per cent of young Zimbabweans attended primary schools. By 2003, that figure had plummeted to just 65 per cent and has continued to drop.

**"[The economic crisis is] creating a health-care apartheid. We're no longer looking at the colour of the people, we're looking at the fatness of their wallets," said physician Elopy Sibanda.**

The education system is yet another casualty of the country's economic crisis. Many parents can no longer afford to pay school fees and teachers are demoralised by monthly salaries of as little as 1,200 Zimbabwean dollars, just enough to buy a loaf of bread.

The result has been an exodus of teachers. According to the Progressive

Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, PTUZ, a total of 25,000 teachers left the country in 2007.

In the first two months of this year, 8,000 teachers quit and a shocking 150,000 teaching vacancies cannot be filled. Parents lucky enough to have qualified teachers for their children have to contribute transport allowances in US dollars.

### **There has been an exodus of teachers from Zimbabwe. A teachers' union said that in 2007 alone, 25,000 left the country.**

They are also buying groceries to retain the teachers and ensure that their children receive some form of education.

"We are paying 5 US dollars a day and buying monthly groceries for my daughter's teacher. We understand that the teacher cannot offer proper services if she is demoralised. This year, our children have really suffered," said Harare resident Angeline Mabika.

"I, personally, am excited about the [power-sharing] deal and am hoping that the new government deals with education once and for all. We want to go back to the standards of the 1980s and 1990s. I believe education is as much a priority as the economy."

*Hativagone Mushonga is the pseudonym of an IWPR journalist in Zimbabwe.* ■



# JOURNALISTS CALL FOR MEDIA DEREGULATION

**Media workers hope MDC inclusion in government will usher in new era of freedom of expression in country.**

**By Jabu Shoko in Harare**

Journalists here are calling for the media stranglehold in the country to be relaxed following the signing of a power-sharing deal between the ruling party and the opposition.

Under the agreement signed by President Robert Mugabe and the leaders of both factions of opposition party the Movement for Democratic Change on September 15, all parties have pledged to recognise the importance of the right to freedom of expression and the role of the media in a multi-party democracy.

Since the arrival of the MDC on the political scene in 2000, Mugabe has tightened control of media in the country by introducing heavily restrictive press and security laws.

Legislation such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, AIPPA, the Broadcasting Services Act, BSA, and the Public Order and Security Act, have resulted in the closure of independent newspapers and radio stations, and prompted hundreds of journalists and other media workers to flee the country.

The majority of Zimbabweans shun the state-run media, preferring to install expensive satellite dishes and buy foreign newspapers, particularly those from neighbouring South Africa.

Yet the signing of the power-sharing deal appears to have buoyed the jittery media sector.

In interviews with IWPR, media stakeholders have called for the new



*A man in Harare reads a South African weekly. Most Zimbabweans buy foreign newspapers instead of consuming the state-run media in their country. Picture taken September 27, 2008.*

Credit: Lazele

government of national unity — which is to be formed following the signing of the agreement — to move rapidly to deregulate the sector.

**Both ZANU-PF and the MDC have pledged to recognise the importance of the right to freedom of expression and the role of the media in a democracy.**

Loughty Dube, chairman of the Zimbabwe branch of the Media Institute of Southern Africa, MISA, said the onus is on the new government to transform state broadcasting company the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, ZBC, into a truly independent public broadcaster.

“The signing of the [power-sharing] agreement should be seen as a

development that ushers in a new era of tolerance and diversity of views underpinned by fundamental reforms that respect the rights to freedom of expression and access to information by citizens,” said Dube.

He said that the media — particularly radio and television, because of their wider reach — would play a critical role in creating a platform for national dialogue and promoting national reconciliation and economic development in the country.

Dube said MISA-Zimbabwe was calling for the new government to prioritise turning ZBC into an independent outlet.

“The role of a [public service broadcaster] is to enhance the national collective responsibility of engaging the people of Zimbabwe to actively participate in national discourse by freely expressing... and accessing information through the broadcaster, irrespective of one’s political affiliation, religion, ethnicity, colour or creed,” he said.

By signing the agreement, ZANU-PF and the two MDC factions have committed themselves to free media.

In the text of the agreement, they note that while the BSA permits the issuing of licences, only one has been given to the public broadcaster. Independent media have blamed the BSA for the perpetuation of the ZBC's monopoly of the airwaves.

**The power-sharing agreement states that steps should be taken to ensure that the public media provide balanced and fair coverage of the legitimate political activities of all parties.**

“Desirous of ensuring the opening up of the airwaves and ensuring the operation of as many media houses as possible, the parties agree that the new government shall ensure the immediate processing by the appropriate authorities of all applications for re-registration and registration, in terms of the BSA as well as AIPPA,” said the agreement.

Steps should be taken to ensure that the public media provide balanced and fair coverage of the legitimate

political activities of all parties, continued the agreement.

Irene Petras, executive director of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, ZLHR — an organisation which has represented more than 1,000 journalists arrested by the Mugabe regime since 2000 — said the authorities must restore the credibility and independence of the state media so that they function in the public interest.

“The parties to the agreement must immediately commence processing of applications for commercial and community broadcasting licences, finalise the long-standing application for re-registration of the Daily News and remove the punitive duty being charged on foreign publications, which are meant to restrict their circulation within Zimbabwe,” said Petras.

The Daily News, the country's only independent daily newspaper, was closed down in September 2003.

Dube said the African Charter on Broadcasting, which was adopted in Windhoek in May 2001, could be used as a benchmark when creating new media legislation and policies.

He said that appointing an independent board would stop the state broadcaster being influenced by political or economic interests that compromise its public service mandate.

“The ZBC should therefore be run by an independent board representative of civil society, the media, churches, labour and the business community, among others,” he said.

Yet not all media workers are optimistic following the signing of the agreement. One Zimbabwean journalist exiled in the United Kingdom told IWPR that he is in no hurry to return home. “I would rather give it time until the rule of law is back,” he said.

**A Zimbabwean journalist exiled in the United Kingdom told IWPR that he is in no hurry to return home following the signing of the agreement.**

He pointed out that there was still much uncertainty surrounding the future of Zimbabwe's media.

“What is going to happen to the media: the banned papers, those taken over by the intelligence?” He asked. “What's going to happen to [the state paper] The Herald and others in the same stable that have been turned into mouthpieces for Mugabe and ZANU-PF?”

*Jabu Shoko is the pseudonym of an IWPR journalist in Zimbabwe. ■*

The Zimbabwe Crisis Report is an initiative of IWPR-Africa's Zimbabwe Programme. This programme promotes democratization and good governance with Southern Africa and contributes to the development of a culture of human rights and the rule of law. Focusing on Zimbabwe the programme has three core components —

information provision, capacity building and dissemination and distribution.

The key purpose is to increase awareness in the Southern African region of the Zimbabwean situation and the implications for regional peace, security and economic development.

It also contributes to the development of regional policy, promotes dialogue and builds bridges within the region. It also raises the Africa wide and international profile of Zimbabwe in the context of the region. Importantly it also builds the skills and capacity of the media to reliably and accurately report political transition, governance and human rights issues.

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