

Zanu PF must rid itself of Mugabe says former ZBC head

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe is seeking endorsement from his own party, an increasingly difficult lobe for his loyalists. Leading his re-election campaign are hardliners in the war veterans movement. Methuseli Moyi who recently quit his job as head of the ZBC's Spot FM after rejecting a posting to a new 24-hour propaganda station, Voice of Zimbabwe, says Mugabe is at his most desperate.

By [Methuseli Moyi](#) 19 Oct 2007

The latest charade by Jabulani Sibanda and his comrades, of marching through provinces in “support of President Mugabe's candidature in next year's elections” – to use catch phrase in the state media these days – is a futile and desperate, yet revealing event in the political life of Robert Mugabe and his party Zanu PF.

From 1980 to 2002, we have never witnessed any stage-managed march of this magnitude in support of Mugabe's candidature, nor have we seen irrelevant constituencies – from a Zanu PF internal politics point of view – such as chiefs, mujibhas, chimbwidos, mayors, and even war vets themselves, being marshalled to declare in public like they have been doing this time around, their support for “President Mugabe's candidature”.

Why would they do it this time? It is clear that Sibanda's tired marches are designed to scare would-be challengers to President Mugabe within Zanu PF. It means the enemy is within Zanu PF. Who is the enemy? Sibanda has been very reckless to reveal that the people he is marching against are Vice President Joice Mujuru and her husband Solomon, Zanu PF national chairman John Nkomo, ex-minister Dumiso Dabengwa, and others in Zanu PF believed to be ready to challenge Mugabe's leadership.

Scare tactics

What is clear is that Mugabe does not want that sort of competition, and is resorting to scare tactics to keep them at bay, going to the extent of compromising himself and letting a discredited character of the sort of Sibanda (who is still suspended from Zanu PF) and his deputy Joseph Chinotimba lead his campaign. Why would Mugabe stoop so low to place his arguably legendary political career – which I am afraid, is nearing its demise very soon – at the hands of the people like Jabulani Sibanda?

Wherever he goes – in the war veterans' association and in the Zanu PF Bulawayo provincial executive – Sibanda has lived and fallen by the sword, and there is no reason to doubt that even now he is going to be removed by the sword, as was done in 2004 in the aftermath of the so-called Tsholotsho Declaration.

To start with, Sibanda was expelled by the same Mugabe and the rest of the leadership of Zanu PF for his involvement in the alleged palace coup planned in Tsholotsho. They even ejected him from the war veterans association and replaced him with Andrew Ndlovu, who like Sibanda, is from Matabeleland.

I was there at Nhlambabaloyi Secondary School in Umuza district in Matabeleland North sometime towards the end of November 2004 when Mugabe asked Ndlovu to stand up at a rally and introduced him as the new leader of the war veterans. Where is Andrew Ndlovu now? Where are you Cde Andrew? It is clear that things are so bad for Mugabe in Zanu PF that he has decided to throw away principle for his own political survival, and he has found another willing tool in Sibanda, who like other well-known tools before him, is from Matabeleland. It is also clear from Sibanda's high-sounding speeches that he is targeting people within Zanu PF.

No clue

He seems to have no clue that it would do him a lot of good as a Zanu PF cadre if the party won next year's polls even without Mugabe, than for Mugabe to win the polls without the party. What would they do then? It would be a hollow victory that may not last beyond the declaration by Tobaiwa Mudede or whoever will be running elections come March.

It is clear that Sibanda and his followers have chosen Mugabe at the expense of Zanu PF. Why I say so? Zanu PF is, or was, a massive political grouping that has survived for 44 years, of course with Mugabe at its helm in the last 31 years or so.

What is obvious to many is that Mugabe is now old, weary and redundant. Listen carefully to his speeches in the last five years and analyse them and see if you will find anything new or inspiring. Does Sibanda really believe that Mugabe is strong enough to campaign with the same vigour he did five years ago, in view of the spiralling economic problems? What will he do for the people? That Bush and Blair are behind the food shortages? That Brown is driving inflation?

Why support a failure?

So if Bush and Blair are behind the shortages and Mugabe has failed to stop them from causing the shortages, why would we elect him to be President for a further five years to make it 33 years in power, when he has failed to protect the nation from Bush and Blair's machinations? Isn't it time to elect a new leader who could "deliver us" from the suffering caused by Bush and Blair?

Sibanda needs to open his mind and look ahead and not tie his own existence to that of someone who has seen his better days on earth and is just whiling up time while waiting to meet his creator in the not so distant future. If he lives longer as he is praying for, then tough luck for him as he may find himself having to answer to some of the things that happened during our "moment of madness" in Matabeleland and the Midlands in the eighties, and even more recent during the 2000 and 2005 elections.

Had it been Mujuru, Nkomo, Dabengwa and others marching in support of Mugabe that would be understandable. They have been with him since the 1960s, and are bound together by their experiences in the struggle and in government in the last 40 years. Yet they are not. Why are they not participating in the marches? It is clear they have waited for too long for Mugabe to go, and can't believe he still wants to stay on.

The Bulawayo march was more revealing than any other that has been embarked upon. To start with, the Zanu-PF provincial executive distanced itself from the march, saying they have not been told to choose a candidate, and there was no need to march in support of a candidate who has not been chosen and endorsed by congress. The executive also locked out of the offices war veterans who wanted to gather there for the march.

In for the meat, nothing else

When the march finally took place, there was no recognisable Zanu PF supporter from Bulawayo who participated. I was there and I know all the senior Zanu PF officials and supporters in the city. They were not there. Instead, there were strangers and new faces, who I believe were brought by the five ZUPCO buses I saw parked somewhere in town. To me, that clearly revealed that the march was futile in terms of geographical relevance as the people of Bulawayo did not participate, save for a group of street kids who joined in after learning that there would be meat galore at Stanley Square after the march.

Where was Nkomo, Dabengwa, Sikhanyiso Ndlovu and other political luminaries in Bulawayo? We now know that they held their own meeting after the war veterans' march and mandated their political leader Vice President Joseph Msika to ask Mugabe if he still cared about the Unity Accord between PF-Zapu and Zanu? If he cared, why would he send a party rebel like Sibanda to go about lambasting them in public? We are yet to hear what Mugabe's answer to that would be.

One strange observation that I have made about Sibanda is that he takes delight in lambasting Zanu PF leaders from Matabeleland, in particular from the PF-Zapu side. He has rubbished Msika, Nkomo, Dabengwa and all, yet he does not dare do the same with the Zanu PF leadership from Mashonaland, Masvingo, Manicaland and the Midlands. Let him do that and he will find himself out of Zanu PF. Prove me wrong Sibanda.

Ejected instantly

Just say one or two negative statements about Mugabe, Nathan Shamuyarira, Didymus Mutasa or someone from the other side and we see that you are your own man. It would appear Sibanda is on a paid-up mission to denigrate and weaken the standing of the old Zapu leadership in the eyes of the public in order to eliminate them from the race to succeed Mugabe.

What a shame! Is Sibanda a later day version of Enos Nkala?

I remember how Prof Jonathan Moyo got away with his fights against Nkomo and others in Matabeleland, until he touched Shamuyarira and Mujuru. He was ejected in an instant from Zanu PF. I also remember how nothing happened to Joice Mujuru when she made those unsavoury remarks about Joshua Nkomo years back.

It would appear former PF-Zapu leaders are not Zanu PF enough, and can be abused by junior party members and nothing happens to them. Sibanda's latest schemes buttress this view. This does not help Mugabe in any way. He may need the vote from Matabeleland if he succeeds to squeeze himself in as his party's candidate, and hopefully faces off against a single opposition candidate. He may live to regret the way he has failed to protect and show true unity with his colleagues from F Zapu. The people are watching.

Why do I say Sibanda's charade is futile? In my view, it is an own goal because it exposes Mugabe as a desperate incumbent who needs solidarity marches from discredited quarters to win an internal competition, and who is isolated by his colleagues, who all along have supported him.

A party at war with itself

Sibanda's actions dramatise for all to see the internal problems in Zanu PF as a party at war with itself, a party that is expending its limited energies in an internal war, a few months before a crucial vote which they would be advised to conserve their little energy for.

There is just too little time between the congress in December and the elections in March for Mugabe to mend relations with his bruised comrades and close ranks to confront the opposition. What makes it worse is that Mugabe – if he succeeds to get himself declared the Zanu PF candidate – does not know his opponent or opponents in the actual poll would be. Is it going to be Morgan Tsvangirai, Simba Makoni, Gideon Gono, Joice Mujuru, Arthur Mutambara or Paul Siwela? Worse still could be Emmerson Mnangagwa, who seems to be taking a rest as he gets Mugabe to square-off with the Mujuru camp.

Even if Mugabe wins the election, will he survive the economic opposition that seems to be intensifying against him? Will Sibanda successfully march against the economy and keep Mugabe in office after March? What will the rest of the people do? Watch as a few hundreds old men and women march in support of something they in the least understand?

Time, the magician, will tell.

In the meantime, Zanu PF would do itself a lot of good to advise Mugabe to go peacefully in his own interest, that of the party, the country, and the future.

Stop Mugabe – and be a hero

Whoever stops Mugabe from declaring himself the Zanu PF candidate for next year's polls will be a hero, and State House the prize. It's better for Zanu PF for that hero to emerge from within their ranks, than to wait for that hero to emerge at the polls in March. It may be too late for Zanu PF and its officials who may find themselves in a Charles Taylor scenario.

It is clear that the people who want to dislodge Mugabe in Zanu PF are not doing it simply because they do not like him anymore or are sell-outs, but have genuine fears that fielding the man in next year's election would be a big electoral risk, which could backfire spectacularly and engulf them all, and are tempted to serve themselves and their business empires by removing Mugabe themselves.

Sadly, others like Sibanda imagine that Mugabe is a supernatural being, who at 84 next year and having being in power for 28 years, is the same respected and inspiring revolutionary he was in 1980. The sooner they realise that isn't the case, the better, otherwise they will continue misleading Mugabe into believing that he is there forever. How can that be?

In short, it is better for the people in Zanu PF to remove Mugabe themselves than to let the masses do it for them in March lest they live unhappily ever after. Jabulani Sibanda and company should actually be organising farewell marches for

Mugabe than marching for him to stay longer.

I am dead certain the so-called million-men-march that Sibanda dreams of would explode in Harare if he invited us to participate in a Mugabe farewell march. It would not even need a week of invitations on TV and radio like is the case now with the “solidarity marches”, which have still failed to attract the intimidating marches that would boost Mugabe's confidence.

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